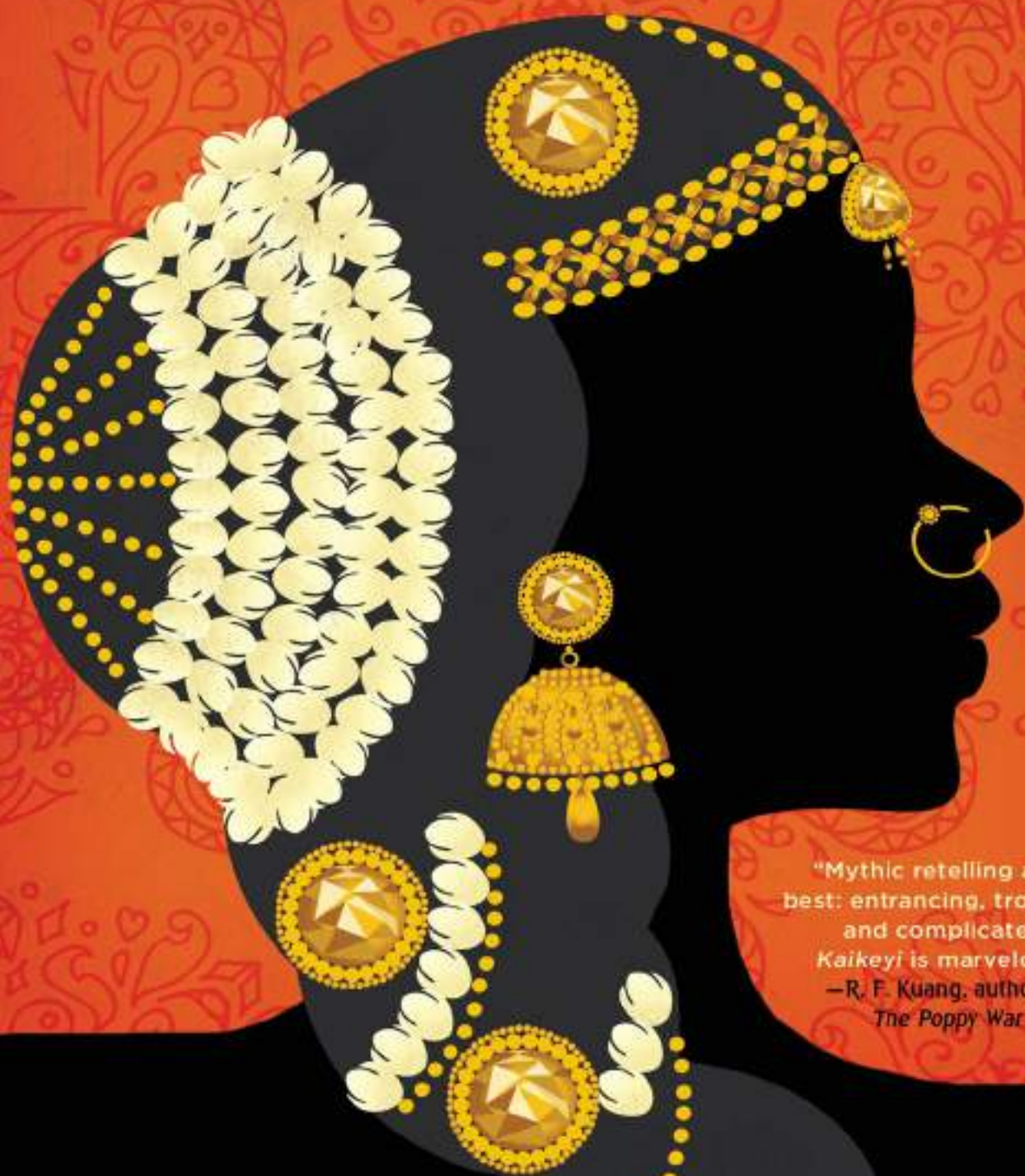


VAISHNAVI PATEL



"Mythic retelling at its best: entrancing, troubling, and complicated. *Kaikeyi* is marvelous."
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KAIKEYI

A NOVEL



VAISHNAVI PATEL
KAIKEYI
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*To Ajji, Aai, and Ananya, three generations of
strong women*

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

The seeds of *Kaikeyi* were planted seventeen years ago in a discussion between my mother and my grandmother. Each summer, my grandmother would tell my sister and me stories, passing down myths and legends centered around Hindu gods and heroes that she herself had grown up hearing. One particular summer, she told us the story of how the noble prince Rama was exiled by his jealous stepmother Kaikeyi, who was convinced to banish him by her wicked servant Manthara. At this, my mother stepped in to add that Kaikeyi had actually *helped* Rama. Without Kaikeyi, my mother pointed out, Rama would have never achieved his destiny by slaying the demon king Ravana, his main adversary in the *Ramayana*. My grandmother disagreed, arguing that it was cruel to exile your child, no matter the circumstance.

And then we moved on. But their minor dispute stuck with me for years, and I would periodically search for stories told from or studying Kaikeyi's perspective to make sense of the contradiction. I never found them. Eventually, I decided to write my own. I wanted to give Kaikeyi a chance to explain her actions and explore what might have caused a celebrated warrior and beloved queen to tear her family apart. I hope that *Kaikeyi* gives voice not just to its titular character but to the many women who populate the world of the *Ramayana* and have rich and worthy lives of their own.

As a primary text, I used the Ralph T. H. Griffith English translation of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, available online through Project Gutenberg. Although there are many Sanskrit versions of the *Ramayana*, Valmiki's *Ramayana* is considered the original text—but even Valmiki's epic was born of several antecedent stories. Beyond the Sanskrit epics, there exist many other versions in a multitude of languages across South, Southeast, and East Asia.

Each of the surviving iterations of the *Ramayana* has a slightly different focus or purported author. Readers familiar with Valmiki's *Ramayana* may notice in *Kaikeyi* unfamiliar variations of the story, some of which have been inspired by these alternate tellings. For example, in some versions, including the *Adbhuta Ramayana* and the *Jain Ramayana*, Ravana is in fact Sita's birth father. The idea of Ravana as a tragic or misunderstood figure who may not be purely evil is present in many Southeast Asian tellings. And some elements that may feel new, such as Dasharath's promise that Kaikeyi's son will become king, are in fact present in Valmiki's *Ramayana*—but they are not often included in popular adaptations or dinner table recitations.

Of course, there are deviations from the *Ramayana* that are my own invention for *Kaikeyi*. There are too many to concisely name, but among the more important ones stand the presence of Ahalya's husband as Rama's tutor and Bharata agreeing to take the throne during Rama's exile. And Kaikeyi's magic and aspects of her story, including her journey to Janasthana and confrontation with Bhandasura, are my own imaginings, as much of her life is simply a blank space in the original epic. This book does not strive to be an exact retelling of any version of the *Ramayana*—it is Kaikeyi's story, and thus it is its own story.

Kaikeyi also does not seek to replicate the world, technology, or customs of any exact time period or civilization in South Asia. Instead, it draws on aspects of culture and science from across thousands of years of ancient Indian history, primarily before 1 BCE. As but one example, it borrows elements of political structure and governance from Patrick Olivelle's translation of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, an ancient political science text purportedly written by the teacher of Chandragupta Maurya. While it would be impossible to name here every source consulted to determine, for example, the build of chariots or the type of windows or the varieties of court entertainment in ancient India, I owe a great debt to scholars of ancient civilization. Of course, creative choices

have also been made in fashioning Kaikeyi's world—for example, paper was not in common use in ancient India, but is present in the narrative.

For those interested in learning more about the *Ramayana*'s evolution and breadth across its many tellings, I found A. K. Ramanujan's "Three Hundred Rāmāyaṇas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation," an essay in *The Collected Essays of A. K. Ramanujan* edited by Vinay Dharwadker, absolutely invaluable. Ramanujan's essay can also be found in *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*, a collection of essays edited by Paula Richman. I highly recommend this collection as a whole—in particular, I drew inspiration from stories recounted in Velcheru Narayana Rao's essay, *A Ramayana of Their Own: Women's Oral Tradition in Telugu. The Rāmāyaṇa Revisited*, a collection of essays edited by Mandakranta Bose, was also of particular use to me in thinking about the portrayal of gender and ethics in the *Ramayana*.

The *Ramayana* is not a static story. Like any myth, it evolves and changes with each telling. Even today, the *Ramayana* exists as a Sanskrit epic and as hundreds of different translations, as stories told around dinner tables and episodes of television shows, as movies and plays, as comics and books. Each version says something slightly different and new about these familiar characters. With *Kaikeyi*, I add my own voice to this long tradition. Thank you for reading.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

AGNI: God of fire; carries offerings to the gods

ASHA: Servant of Kaushalya and Kaikeyi

ASHVIN: Prince of Kekaya, younger brother of Kaikeyi

ASHWAPATI: King of Kekaya, father of Kaikeyi

BHANDASURA: A fire demon

BHARATA: Prince of Kosala, son of Kaikeyi and Dasharath

DASHARATH: King of Kosala, husband of Kaikeyi, Kaushalya, and Sumitra, and father of Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana, and Shatrugna

DHANTERI: Servant of Kekaya

KAIKEYI: Princess of Kekaya, Queen of Kosala, wife of Dasharath, and mother of Bharata

KAUSHALYA: Queen of Kosala, mother of Rama

KEKAYA: Queen of Kekaya, wife of Ashwapati, and mother of Kaikeyi

LAKSHMANA: Prince of Kosala, son of Sumitra and Dasharath

MANTHARA: Trusted servant of Kaikeyi

NIDRA: Goddess of sleep

RAMA: Prince of Kosala, son of Kaushalya and Dasharath

RAVANA: King of Lanka

SARASVATI: Goddess of wisdom and learning

SHATRUGNA: Prince of Kosala, son of Sumitra and Dasharath

SITA: Princess of Videha, wife of Rama

SUMITRA: Queen of Kosala, mother of Lakshmana and Shatrugna

VAMADEVA: Sage blessed by the gods, learned tutor of the princes of Kosala

VIRENDRA: Minister of War of Kosala, advisor to Dasharath

YUDHAJIT: Prince of Kekaya, son of Ashwapati and Kekaya, and twin brother of Kaikeyi



CHAPTER ONE



I WAS BORN ON the full moon under an auspicious constellation, the holiest of positions—much good it did me.

In Bharat, where the gods regularly responded to prayers and meddled in mortal affairs, the circumstances of my birth held great promise. This did not matter to my father, who cared only that my brother Yudhajit followed me into the world minutes later under the same lucky stars. Regardless of birth position, Yudhajit, being a boy, was the heir to the Kekaya kingdom. I was but a dowry of fifty fine horses waiting to happen. For each of my mother's subsequent pregnancies, my father made sacrifices to the gods, requesting sons. In return, he was blessed with six more healthy boys, portents of future prosperity.

The people of Bharat have often blamed my father for my sins, as if a woman cannot own her actions. He was not a perfect man, that I freely admit, but for all his faults he loved each of his sons fiercely, playing with them in his throne room, bringing them the finest tutors in all the kingdom, and gifting them ponies so they would grow into brilliant cavalrymen.

If he bears any fault for my actions, it is through his inaction. I remember few occasions when we exchanged words, and fewer still when he sought to speak with me—save one.

My brothers and I were playing hide and catch in the sweeping field behind the palace and it was my turn to find them. I kept my eyes shut as their laughter faded into wind, opening them only after counting to twenty. I immediately saw a glimmer of movement by the stables.

I crept slowly toward whichever brother was hiding there, knowing that they would get more nervous by the second, and planning how best to catch them. I doubted it was Mohan, who was three years younger than me. He was short and slow and knew I could easily grab him. Shantanu was a bit older and was fast as a deer, but I could try to trap him by chasing him toward the palace wall. If it was Yudhajit, he would be almost impossible to catch, though maybe—

Shantanu stumbled out from behind the stable. With a whoop, I began sprinting toward him, my blood racing through my veins. But as I followed him past the side of the building, I stopped short. Had I just seen movement? I whirled around to find Yudhajit pressed against the wood, and my face split into a wild grin. He must have shoved Shantanu out of their mutual hiding spot to distract me.

I spun, chasing Yudhajit around the stable, knowing as I did that I could never beat him in an outright footrace. He rounded the corner out of sight, and from just beyond the wall came a strangled shout. A second later, my shin collided with bony flesh, and I fell onto a tangled heap of bodies, Yudhajit right below me.

“I got you!” I shouted breathlessly. Someone, probably Shantanu, groaned. I rolled off the pile and onto the hard ground, laughing, asking if they knew where Mohan was, when I saw legs coming toward me.

I sat up, squinting at the guard, aware my white kurta was smeared liberally with dirt and grass and my hair was falling from its braids, but only half-embarrassed. “Yudhajit, get up,” I hissed.

“You two,” the guard said, nodding his chin toward the group of us. “The raja would like to speak with you immediately.”

I rose to my feet. “We can play later,” I said to my brothers. “You two go, I’ll find Mohan.” I had started to walk away when the guard called.

“Yuvradnyi Kaikeyi, the raja wants you *now*.”

I turned to look at Yudhajit, shocked. He only shrugged at me.

We trailed behind the guard back to the palace, and each of my steps felt heavier than the last. Something had to be amiss for my father to summon me. But if I had done something to anger him, why would he want Yudhajit too?

As we approached the throne room, I dragged my feet against the stone, letting the guard and Yudhajit get farther and farther ahead. At the end of the hall the guard turned and glared, waiting by the closed door until I reached him, then swinging it open in a precise movement.

Yudhajit went in first, and I lingered a few seconds longer before following him into the flickering light of the hall. He half turned his head as I approached, and the light cast strange shadows on his wide forehead and narrow nose. His dark brown eyes held a flicker of apprehension and his lips were pressed into a thin line, in what I was sure was an eerie rendering of my own face.

I took my place a pace behind him and glanced surreptitiously around the room, afraid of attracting attention. During feasts, the high-ceilinged room was filled with rows of tables and throngs of people, and its cavernous depths did not seem large at all. Absent these preparations, the wooden pillars cast long shadows, the carvings of bulls and snakes and long-plumed birds that so entertained my younger brothers fading into the gloom. The huge crackling firepits, built partially to warm the entire hall when the weather turned in the winter and partially—I suspected—to intimidate visitors, made me feel even smaller than I usually did.

My father’s throne was carved out of dark wood into stark, undecorated lines, much like the man who sat upon it. One hand stroked his beard as he stared unwaveringly into the nearest pit, his thick eyebrows deeply furrowed. Despite the warmth of the flames, gooseflesh crawled up my skin, and I tried not to shiver.

After several minutes, Yudhajit, with all the patience of a twelve-year-old boy, blurted out, “Why did you call us here if you wanted to sit there and say nothing?”

Raja Ashwapati looked up at him as if he had not realized we were there. He did not spare so much as a glance for me, hidden behind my brother.

“Your mother—” he began. I glanced around the room, looking for her, but she was nowhere to be found. She would not have added much warmth to the room, but she was rarely cold the way Father was. Father opened his mouth, closed it, opened it again, then said, “Your mother had to leave. She will not return.”

At that, Yudhajit laughed, and I winced. I wished we had learned this news from the guards, without Father present, so I could tell him it was not a prank. Had he not seen how distant our parents were toward each other, how quick to snap they were, how the edges of their relationship were fraying? But my brother, the brilliant heir, said, “We’re too old for you to joke with us this way, Father. Mother is radnyi. A queen wouldn’t just leave.”

“Kekaya is no longer radnyi,” Father said, and his eyes sought me out for the first time.

“Why—what—” Yudhajit’s shoulders drooped. “Who will...?” He trailed off, apparently unable to describe what our mother actually did.

Our father sighed. “As the yuvradnyi, Kaikeyi will slowly assume some of the duties of the queenship, until you are old enough to wed.”

I bit down on my tongue. The metallic taste of blood filled my mouth and I swallowed before it could stain my teeth. I had no idea how to take on any of my mother’s responsibilities, nor did I have any desire to.

Yudhajit took my hand and squeezed it. “Surely Mother will come back,” he said. “She would not just leave us like that.”

The raja shook his head. “She told me she would never return. Kekaya is no longer welcome here.”

And just like that, we were dismissed.

In the hall, Yudhajit tried to speak to me, but I brushed him aside and raced back to my room, slamming the door behind me and falling to my knees. I knew what I needed to do.

Please, I prayed to the gods, those who watched over the land of Bharat. *Please help me.*

I invoked Chandra, the god of the moon, Nasatya, the god of twins, and Kubera, the god of the north. *Please, bring my mother back. Please, grant me the knowledge I need in her absence.*

There was no reply.

The gods always answered the prayers of princesses, my tutors liked to tell me, for princesses were the most devout and holiest of all. But whether it be for rains or sunshine, for strength or knowledge, for new toys or clothes, they had never answered a single prayer of mine. Yudhajit, it seemed, had stolen all the good fortune of our birth for himself, leaving me bereft of any assistance at all.

But now, surely, they would answer. They would understand that a girl needed her mother. Who else could show me how to make my way through this world? Without her I was alone.

Kekaya did not act toward her children the way other noblewomen at court did. She never kissed my scrapes or held me when I cried after fighting with Yudhajit, never cuddled me before I went to bed at night. Instead, she taught me how to read, drawing the characters in a pan of sand and repeating them with me ten times, and ten more times, until I knew them by heart. And even then, she did not praise me. But she gave me scrolls and listened as I picked out stories.

My favorite was the churning of the ocean, that wondrous tale of the gods and the asuras together churning the Ocean of Milk, seeking in its depths the nectar of immortality. The

nectar must have been unimaginably delicious for them to form such an alliance—I could understand, for I loved sweets too. As they churned, they split between them the spoils that emerged from the Ocean: a tree twisted like the claws of a tiger, with sharp red flowers that could draw blood and grant boons. Wise and powerful goddesses including Lakshmi, seated on a pale pink lotus, her hair dripping gold. Even the moon itself, a luminescent pearl caught among the waves. And at last, they found the treasure they sought.

But the gods did not wish to share the nectar with the asuras, for this demonic race had long terrorized the earth and heavens with their lust for power. They were the only beings with the power to rival the gods, and the two were often at war. And so, the great Vishnu tricked the asuras out of the share they had been promised.

“But how could the gods lie when they are good?” I asked my mother, puzzled.

“The gods do what they must,” she said, but she gave me a smile and I felt clever.

When I had finished the legends, she took me alone through the maze of palace corridors and through a polished door of teak, set into the floor with a great, glinting silver handle. Together, we descended into the library cellar filled floor to ceiling with precious texts and dusty scrolls. And this felt like the greatest compliment of all. It was because of her I loved reading, consuming even the dullest treatise in my quest to learn all I could.

I had often doubted whether she even liked me, her only daughter. But now, my heart clenched oddly at the thought of losing her presence. I felt as though I could not breathe deeply enough.

I did not cry. But I continued to beseech the gods, even as the chamber grew dark around me, my knees stiff and aching from my seated position on the floor.

Finally, Manthara came to comb my hair and put me to

bed. I was relieved to see her. At least I would not lose her too.

“Would you like to hear a story?” she asked, smiling at me in the mirror. “I have a new one for you.”

I shook my head, crossing my arms. Normally, I would beg her for songs or tales, and she would comply until my eyes grew heavy and images of splendid feats danced beneath my eyelids. But tonight, I said nothing at all. “Kaikeyi, I know you must be upset, but—” I slipped out of the chair, my hair half-braided, and flung myself onto the bed. Manthara could not bring my mother back. She did not understand how this felt. I had been relieved to see her, but now all I wanted was to be left alone until I could go find Yudhajit. I could not take her sympathy, and I hoped if I was rude to her, she might leave. But Manthara simply stood and came to sit at my bedside. I turned away from her, and still she only clucked her tongue, one hand rubbing gentle circles into my back.

“All will be well,” she said, before bending down to press a kiss on the back of my head. My eyes filled with tears, so I clenched them shut, refusing to turn my head. Eventually, she rose and blew out the candle, closing the door very quietly behind her.

Seconds passed into minutes and I continued to lie there, waiting until the quiet of night had fully descended and I could safely leave.

Finally, breathlessly, I opened my door slowly and checked both ways, then padded down the hallway on bare feet. There were no torches, and the dark gray stone turned nearly black at this hour, the moonlight barely filtering in through the few windows lining the corridor. The low ceiling seemed to bear down on me with every step, but I was intent on my task.

“Kaikeyi?”

My heart stopped for one agonizing moment. I pressed myself against the wall as it restarted at double speed. It was only my brother, whom I had ventured out to find in the first place. “Yudhajit?”

He was a few steps away now, clad in crisp white cotton sleep clothes that had clearly not yet been slept in. His eyes shone brightly in the darkness. He too must have been waiting for this still hour to leave his room. “What are you doing up?” he asked.

“What are *you* doing up?” I retorted, not wanting to admit I had been coming to get him.

He made a face. “I asked you first.”

I shrugged and started walking away, trying to feign indifference. The court had taught me patience, but it had taught Yudhajit impulsivity. Only one of us knew how to hold their tongue.

“I couldn’t sleep. I miss Mother. She did not even say goodbye to us. I—I don’t understand.” His voice twisted and broke, and I found myself fighting back tears as well.

Unwilling to face my own grief, I kept walking, and he easily caught up to me, filling the space by my side as he always did.

We slipped like ghosts through the hallways, not wanting to return to bed just yet. In unspoken agreement, we found ourselves heading toward the door to the kitchens, our stomachs growling in unison.

Yudhajit moved ahead to open the door. I had grown distracted thinking of what sweets I might find to snack on and did not realize he had stopped until I walked right into him. He stumbled slightly but did not make a sound, pointing his chin toward the entrance. After a moment, I heard what he did—the faintest murmur of voices. We tiptoed closer, closer, closer, until the murmurs became words.

“So long as nobody learns the truth, it does not matter.” I could not recognize the deep voice, resonating through the small space like the beat of an animal-hide drum.

Yudhajit, more familiar with the men of the palace, mouthed *Prasad* at me. An advisor who I had seen at formal court occasions, but never interacted with. He sat near the

king, so my father likely valued him.

The second voice I recognized immediately. It belonged to my mother's former lady-in-waiting, Dhanteri. "It matters to me," she said sharply.

"It shouldn't," Prasad replied.

"I know. Manthara knows. Why keep it a secret? The children deserve to know."

"Neither of you can tell another soul, or both of you will find yourself unable to work."

Dhanteri laughed, a sound without any happiness at all. "I am already without work. The raja saw to that when he banished Radnyi Kekaya."

If our bodies had not been nearly occupying the same space, I would not have noticed Yudhajit's quiet gasp.

Banished.

I was listening, straining for answers, as though by will alone I could force these adults to tell me what I craved to know.

"Woman, she is not your radnyi anymore. You will not speak another word, or I will ensure that you are the last of your name," Prasad hissed. His tone frightened me.

I snuck a glance at Yudhajit to see if perhaps he understood what that threat meant, but he looked as confused as I did.

"If you keep your mouth shut," Prasad added, "I will see to it that you are kept on, to manage the women's work in the court."

There was silence for a moment. "As you say, Arya Prasad." The faintest rustle of cloth came from behind the door. "I will speak to Manthara."

"See that you do. So long as everyone believes Radnyi Kekaya left of her own accord, it will not matter what really happened."

Yudhajit and I backed away from the door as one, rounding the corner slowly, carefully. But when we were sure we would not be heard, we darted fast, bare feet leaving brief impressions of dampness against the cool stone. Only when we reached our rooms did we stop, facing each other and panting.

“What do we do?” Yudhajit asked. “Surely they could not have been telling the truth.”

“There’s nothing we can do,” I said.

“We can talk to Father—”

“No!” I cut him off. “Please, we cannot tell anyone. You heard what Prasad said. If you tell anyone, Manthara will have to leave.” I couldn’t stomach the thought.

“You shouldn’t need your nurse anymore, Kaikeyi. We’re twelve, almost adults.” Yudhajit scoffed. He had only recently become taller than me. I hated his new height and the way he could look down upon me now, but I hated even more that he was right. Still, I would not give up Manthara.

“Please?” I asked.

He held my gaze for a moment, then sighed and nodded. “Perhaps we can pray to the gods to change Father’s mind,” he said.

I shook my head at him. “The gods cannot force someone to change their mind. You know how Father is. He has made this decision, and it will be final.”

Yudhajit’s shoulders slumped. “I suppose.”

We stood there together in silence for several moments more, until I yawned, the energy that had pushed me out of bed and through the halls finally draining out of me. Yudhajit caught my yawn, and we both grinned at each other.

Even so, when I went back into my room and climbed into bed, sleep evaded me. I stared up at the ceiling, wondering what gods my family might have displeased to have such misfortune.

CHAPTER TWO



THE NEXT MORNING, I woke with the realization that I had not tried everything to bring my mother back. I had prayed to the important gods, to the ones I knew, but she always told me I had more to learn. She had showed me the cellar full of scrolls, and what better place than that to find a minor god? Perhaps one less busy answering the prayers of others would find time for me. They might not change my father's decision, but perhaps the gods could spirit her to me in secret. Or alter her face so my father could not recognize her. I had heard of such things in stories, at least.

I had no obligations that morning, and so I set out alone for the cellar, located in a far corner of the palace. The golden light of the morning sun filtering in through the small windows did little to make the narrow corridors feel less unwelcoming. The palace was laid out in a tight, intricate maze, and without my mother to guide me, I got lost twice on the way to the library. The wooden door embedded in the floor was heavier than I remembered without my mother's help, but eventually I heaved it open, then stood on my toes to fumble a torch from the wall so I could set off down the steps.

Immediately, the earthy scent of the room filled my nose. I breathed deeply, remembering how not so long ago, my mother had explained to me where I could find whatever I might want to read.

"Here, Kaikeyi, there are old stories," she said. "And here are histories of old kings. On this shelf are scrolls of prayers and rituals, and there some older religious texts. They are not much good to read, but if you want to, you may. Anything in

this room is yours to know.”

At the time, I had barely paid attention to her, opening and closing scrolls like a young child at a feast, unable to believe the sight that lay before me. She simply laughed and let me explore until I settled on a geography of Kekaya and its surrounding lands. I picked it simply because I knew Yudhajit was currently studying the same geography and I wished to impress him—but my mother did not care to know such information.

She picked a scroll of her own and beckoned me over to a corner. We sat and read together for some time, and although I quickly regretted the boring treatise I had picked, I basked in the closeness to my mother.

I picked my way through painstaking details about the swirling waters of the Chandrabagha River at the northern border of Kekaya, which sprang from the high peaks of the Indra Mountains, where stone pierced the clouds, and ran until it met the gentler waves of the tumbling Sarasvati River. That river marked the southeastern border of Kekaya and was the holiest place in the kingdom. I recalled few other lessons from that scroll, but I still held within me the memory of the steady presence of my mother, the feeling that we shared something.

Now I tried to remember her explanations, walking among the shelves until I found one devoted to prayers and rituals. I could tell after only a few minutes that these would not help me—they contained nothing I didn’t already know. So, I moved on to the older scrolls.

The first one I opened referenced a goddess I had never heard of. The second was a prayer to a god whose name I could not decipher. This was what I needed. I grabbed as many as I could fit under one arm and then clambered back up the stairs, closing the door with a thud and returning the torch. I crept back to my rooms, hoping to avoid attention, for I did not want to answer any questions about why I had taken these scrolls or who had shown me where to find them.

I spent all day reading. I learned about the goddess of

elephants, a lesser known avatar of Lord Ganesh, and sent a fervent prayer to her, although I did not expect she could help me much. I prayed to the god of travelers, Lord Pushana, thinking this more apt, for he was one of many brothers, overshadowed by Lord Surya, whose fiery red chariot pulled the sun through the sky, and Lord Indra, who wielded a five-pronged spear of thunderbolts and ruled the gods. If anyone might be sympathetic to my plight, surely it would be him.

There were other scrolls too, about which penances would help someone obtain boons from the gods. Except these were no use, as they all required the gods to answer in the first place.

Finally, I gently unfurled a scroll that was so thin and worn it seemed to have been written over one hundred years ago. Its edges were frayed, and the patterns of the language hard to decipher. I turned my attention to the neat rows of text and tried to remember my tutors' lessons as I used my finger to trace each word.

About halfway through, I realized this text made no mention at all of gods. It was simply a meditation exercise.

I threw it aside, frustrated. After a moment, I pulled a small box of sweets from under my bed and ate one, then another and another. Slowly my anger dissipated, the sugar softening the hard knot within me. I licked my fingers clean.

Calmer, I reread the title of the scroll: "Summoning the Power of the Gods by Concentration Alone." Perhaps it was a meditation ritual that would bring general godly attention? I laid the paper down in front of me and performed each of the steps in turn: I slowed my breath, fixed my gaze at a point one hand's length from my solar plexus, concentrated my energy, and—

I must have mistranslated, for the next step, to my best estimation, read, "Let your gaze slip into the Binding Plane. If you have trouble locating such a place, seek out the threads that connect you and use the words of focus given below."

This sounded like nonsense. But still, I had nothing else to try. I committed them to memory.

My breathing slowed and I stared ahead of me, focusing as hard as I could, then recited the syllables.

Nothing happened.

I tried again, and again. Nothing. The scroll provided no further insight, for the last few lines merely stated that this art was impossible to master by all but a select few.

I set the scroll down, tears stinging my eyes. Another day, another failure. I could not bring my mother back. I remembered what Prasad had said last night about why my mother left, and anger welled up in me at the idea that my father was responsible. It did not matter what my mother had done. How could he do this to me? My brothers needed her too, but what was I to do without her guidance? A tear slipped down my cheek, then another and another, as I gathered all the scrolls in a haphazard pile and pushed them under my bed. I curled up on top of the covers until dinnertime. Then I washed my face and joined my brothers, all of us silent and pale-faced.

The kitchens must have been trying to cheer us up—the table was laden with trays of hot roti glistening with ghee, delicately spiced vegetables sending a delicious fragrance into the air, and fresh yogurt dotted with bright pomegranate. Ordinarily such a feast would've been a treat, all of us negotiating for the largest portions—but today all it did was reinforce the fact that we were to be pitied, for our mother was gone.

That night, as Manthara combed out my hair in long, gentle strokes, I asked, “What did my mother do?” If anyone knew, it would be Manthara. She was my mother's age and had been my servant as long as I could remember, attending my mother before that. She was my favorite person in the world besides Yudhajit, the one who nursed me when I was ill, sat by my side if I was afraid of monsters at night, or wiped my tears away when my brothers pushed me down.

Manthara started. “Why do you think she did something?”

“I—” I knew I could not lie to Manthara, and so after a half-hearted second of considering it, I told her the truth. “I overheard someone talking.”

She sighed, her movement pausing. I turned to look at her. Her nearly black eyes were soft, sad, and the dupatta she usually wore over her head had slipped down to her bun. “Kekaya would never willingly leave you, child.”

“Then why did she make Father—”

“She did not force the raja to do anything,” Manthara said. “I doubt anyone could.”

She returned to combing out my hair, cool fingers brushing against my neck and providing some small relief from the pressing heat. I remained quiet. I knew her well enough to suspect she had more to say.

Some time passed before Manthara asked, “Do you know about your father’s boon?”

This question surprised me. Boons were powerful gifts, granted by the gods to those mortals who had won their favor through their piety or goodness or courage, after they prayed and fasted and performed intricate rituals. People who received boons rarely discussed them, as they did not wish to lose their gifts through arrogance or carelessness.

But I was aware of my father’s gift—it had been granted many years ago, for his steadfast devotion to Lord Vishnu. It was a boon I found oddly whimsical, when I considered my distant and pragmatic father. I nodded, then hissed in pain as the motion caused the comb to catch on a particularly nasty tangle. “Yes. He can understand the language of birds.”

I hoped to earn a boon one day, but I intended to ask for something better, wiser than the gift to comprehend the chatter of the silly myna birds or ill-tempered peacocks that frequented our gardens. I would ask to be the ruler of a great kingdom. Or for the power to heal all the sick. Perhaps I would wish for the ability to find whomever I wished, or better

yet to keep the ones I loved close to me.

Manthara's voice pulled me back. "That is correct. But there is a cost to his boon. He may never divulge what he hears, on pain of death. Not to anyone." Manthara worked through the knot with her fingers, slowly separating the strands of wayward hair. "He claims that while on a walk, he was privy to a conversation between two swans, and your mother begged him to tell her what the pair had said."

I twisted around, yanking my hair out of Manthara's grasp. "Why would she do such a thing? Surely she doesn't want Father to die!"

"Who knows?" Manthara replied, pushing my head forward again. She acted very familiar with me for a servant, but I loved her and did not care. "Kekaya told me a different story, but I do not wish to contradict our king."

We were both silent as she moved in front of me to rub oil into my scalp. Her fingers pressed into my skin, relaxing me. I thought of leaning against my mother in the quiet library, the scent of scrolls and the hidden mysteries they contained all around us. I thought of the texts filled with descriptions of the gods and their boons, how none of them had warned of the path that my family had traveled down. Suddenly, the words of the meditation mantra I had read earlier leapt unbidden into my mind.

I recited them silently, sleepily, leaning into Manthara's deft hands.

All at once, a red rope shimmered into existence, starting just above my stomach and ending at Manthara's. I almost cried out. I blinked hard, sure I was imagining it—but it didn't vanish. My mouth dropped open, and slowly I lifted my hand to touch it. But my fingers passed straight through.

"Kaikeyi? Did you see a fly?" Manthara asked, her hands stilling as she glanced around the room. The rope dissolved into the air. Bewildered, I continued to stare at the area where it had been. "Kaikeyi!"

“Y-yes.” I stammered the lie. “But it’s gone now.” I rubbed at my eyes and saw the imprint of the rope dancing behind them.

“Hmm.” She went back to her ministrations.

Cautiously, I repeated the words to myself again.

The rope reappeared. I nearly toppled out of my chair, Manthara accidentally yanking my hair as I started.

“What is it?” she asked, alarmed. “Are you well?”

“I—” The rope did not change but simply vibrated in a slow pulse. There was no way to explain what I was seeing. I righted myself. “I think I am just tired.” I kept my eyes fixed on the rope.

Manthara sighed. “You are a child,” she said. “I am sure this must be very difficult for you. I want you to know that I spoke to your mother before her departure. She was distraught. She did not want to leave you.”

I had never seen my mother express any emotion on my behalf, and this absurdity was enough to distract me briefly from the rope. “Why would my father not tell us he banished her?” I asked. As I spoke, a small current seemed to shimmer down the rope, starting at my chest and going to Manthara’s.

“I do not know what goes through the mind of the raja,” Manthara said. “And it is not my place to guess.” She bound the end of my braid and pressed a kiss to my head. “You’re ready for bed. Be a good girl and go straight to sleep.”

She left, the glimmering cord between us lengthening but not thinning as the door closed behind her. I climbed into my bed and stared at the place where the rope seemed to pass through the wood. Was this even real? My heart raced with the possibilities.

As I studied the red rope, an even stranger thing happened. I noticed other glimmerings in the air. When I shifted my concentration toward them, more cords materialized, all leading back to my solar plexus and extending out through the

door. There were threads of gold, broad strands of varying thickness and color, mottled woolen strings, and floss so fine I could barely see it. It seemed impossible that I could have somehow imagined such a rich tapestry—but what other explanation was there?

Or perhaps my mother's departure had driven me to madness. I shut my eyes against the onslaught of color.

When I opened them again, the web of light was gone. I breathed a sigh of relief. I wanted the gods' approval so badly that I had convinced myself that some silly meditation on an old scroll had power in it. That was all. That had to be all.

Yet still I lay in bed, once again unable to sleep, reality as I knew it warring with curiosity over this strange world, even if it was of my own creation. I turned from one side to the other, trying to find a position that would allow me to relax, but I could not remove from my mind the possibility that this was real. My skin itched, and my limbs felt restless.

Finally, I decided, I would test it out just once more. I whispered the mantra all in a rush, almost hoping that it wouldn't work. But there the strings appeared again. I could find the red one I had originally associated with Manthara, more vivid and glowing than the others.

Breathlessly, I waved my shaking fingers through the strings, but once again, they shimmered around my skin, allowing my hand to pass through.

I focused instead on Manthara's strand and imagined plucking it like the string on a veena. It leapt up, vibrating as though I had touched it.

Excitement thrummed through me. I got out of bed, lit a small lamp, and pulled the Binding Plane scroll from beneath my cot. "Seek out the threads that connect you," it said. I pondered this. Perhaps from those words, *thread* and *connect*, I had convinced myself that this mantra showed me the connections between myself and others?

Suddenly, the door swung open. The strings disappeared

and I dropped the scroll, nudging it behind me as Manthara hurried in. “Are you okay?” she asked.

I hastily snuffed the candle. “Yes?” I ventured after a moment. “Are you?”

Manthara had never come into my room this late at night before, but now she stood before me in a simple shift, her hair in a long braid down her back, breathing hard. “I’m sorry to disturb you. I was lying in my room when suddenly I grew so worried about you. I just had to check—” She seemed to notice then that I was out of bed with a lamp in my hand. “What were you doing up?” she asked suspiciously.

I stayed silent for a moment, considering her words. A few minutes ago, I had pulled on the rope that I imagined connected me to Manthara, and now she was here before me. Could it be that these threads were not made up at all—that I had somehow summoned her here?

I thought the mantra to myself and gave the red rope a light brush with my mind.

Manthara took two steps forward and wrapped her arms around me. “Are you sure you’re all right?” she whispered in my hair. She smelled of mint leaves and crisp cotton, warm and comforting.

I hugged her back. “Yes, of course,” I said. But my mind was reeling. My hands were shaking, so I clasped them together, pulling back from her. “I was only looking for some sweets,” I lied. I resolved in that moment to never tell Manthara the truth of whatever I had discovered. She would think me mad, and I could not lose her.

Even in the darkness, Manthara’s squint was evident. “You had the lamp lit. Were you trying to sneak out?”

“No!” I protested, casting about for some explanation that wouldn’t involve admitting to the stolen scrolls. Nothing came to mind. “I really was just hungry.”

In the Binding Plane, the thread between us jumped of its own accord. Did it know I was lying? Or was this due to

Manthara's skepticism? I reached out with my mind to calm it. *Please let her believe me.* And somehow, as if by magic, the thread quieted.

Why had I done that? Had I harmed her? It had happened so instinctively.

I studied her anxiously, but she appeared to be fine. She merely sighed and said, "I suppose you must not have had an appetite at dinner, with all that has happened. But you need to rest. I will sit here until you fall asleep."

I did not think I could possibly sleep, knowing these threads existed—that I had somehow brought them into existence with my words and my mind. But I hadn't anticipated the power of Manthara's hand stroking my hair, smoothing away the emotional turmoil of the day, and the heartsick ache that filled me when I thought of my mother. Sleep pulled me under before I could stop it.

CHAPTER THREE



YUDHAJIT CAME EARLY TO my room the next morning, hoping to pull me into a rematch of hide and catch. But I was tired and irritable, and by the time I joined him outside, I didn't want to run around. The day was beautiful, the sky cloudless and a vivid blue. I settled myself on the grass and grabbed a pebble instead, hoping to play a contest where we threw it up into the air and tried to clap as many times as possible instead.

Yudhajit groaned. "No, Kaikeyi. That is such a boring game."

"Well, I think your game is boring," I argued. He remained standing stubbornly before me, arms crossed.

I frowned in return. Normally, he would complain until he got his way. But today, I thought of the previous night and how I had summoned Manthara.

I silently repeated the words from the scroll and found myself gazing at a deep sapphire bond, thicker even than my connection to Manthara.

"Come on," he whined. "Let's go." As he spoke, I poked at the bond with my mind, thinking, *Can we play my game instead?*

Out loud, I said, "Please, Yudhajit?" The ripple from my touch moved down the bond until it reached my brother's chest.

He groaned again. But to my astonishment, he sat down, reaching for the pebble. "Fine, fine. We will play your game first."

I beamed at him as he threw the stone into the air.

Once might have been random, but twice? I knew better than to think so.

I watched him carefully for any sign that he knew what I had done, but he clapped his hands happily enough and then tossed the stone to me, a smile on his face. “Six! I bet you can’t get seven.”

I could get seven, and in fact, I had practiced this game alone just so I could beat Yudhajit. But now, watching him, and distracted by the feeling inside of me—magic! I had *power*—I only managed four claps before fumbling the stone and nearly dropping it. Yudhajit laughed at me, and after a few seconds I laughed with him. I had lost, but by making him play the game I had won. I could hardly believe it.

When we were done playing and Yudhajit had gone to his archery lessons, I spent hours wandering the palace, following different strings to discover my ties with others.

My bonds with my brothers stood out, bold and strong, while other servants and people in the palace had varying degrees of connection to me. I had so many bonds tying me to others, and seeing them all laid out this way caused tears to prick at my eyes. I often felt lonely, with only my mother’s quiet coolness and brothers who could not fully understand me for company. But here was proof that I was not alone. I tried, at one point, to figure out which one was my mother’s. Perhaps I could send her a message. After all, I had been trying to bring her back when I had discovered this magic. But among the tangle of strings, I could not ascertain which would lead me to her.

By the time the sun set, my muscles were aching, and I limped on trembling legs back to my room, the strain of using the Binding Plane taking its toll on my body. But my mind still thrummed, even after I lay in bed.

On ordinary nights, I would pray to Nidra, goddess of sleep, for restful slumber and pleasant dreams. She was one of

my favorite gods—Manthara had told me her story on many nights when I wished to stay up instead of sleep. Once, Vishnu fell into a deep, mysterious sleep and could not be roused by any of the gods. While he slept, two asuras were born from Vishnu's own ears, and they found Brahma defenseless. They conspired to steal Brahma's powers, and Brahma was unable to withstand their might. He tried with all his power to wake Vishnu, but Vishnu would not wake. Desperate, Brahma called upon Nidra, the goddess of sleep. She slipped into Vishnu's conscience and roused him from within. And so Nidra saved the gods from the asuras.

But despite this, I knew of no rites for Nidra, no prayers or festivals for her. She was forgotten, as I was. And she was my favorite for another reason—sometimes, if my dreams were soothing or my sleep deep and restful, I could wake pretending that she had favored me.

The thought struck me then—perhaps I *was* favored. The gods had ignored me for years, but was this not a great gift indeed? Could this power be from the gods? They may have bestowed this upon me for my patience. My cheeks flushed with excitement at the possibility. I would have to search in the cellar to see if any scrolls said more about this strange magic. But for now, I clasped my hands together and whispered a prayer for Nidra.

The next evening, my father had a guest of honor for the meal, some warlord who he could not put off, even with my mother's departure. Manthara was busy with preparations, so Neeti had been sent to help ready me. Aside from Manthara, Neeti was my favorite among our servants. She was only two years older than me and had been in the palace since we were small. We had played dolls together when we were younger, using scraps of cloth given to us by Manthara to dress them in colorful saris we were too young to wear and finding small stones and ribbons to build them gilded thrones. Even now, on the occasions she would come to ready me, we would rush through the preparations so that we could steal a few moments sitting on my floor and sharing sweets as she told me tales of

her life outside the palace.

“You will never believe what my neighbor did,” Neeti said, straightening out the front of my stiff silken skirt. “He has a goat now. Can you imagine it!”

But today I did not want to hear her stories, for I did not intend to go to the feast. I could not bear to see my father, pretending as though nothing had happened. Pretending as though he hadn’t exiled my mother. Just thinking of him caused my fists to clench.

“Neeti.” I clasped her wrist, stopping her from pinning my blouse. “Will you tell my father I am ill and cannot attend?”

“Are you ill?” Neeti asked, her thick eyebrows furrowing in concern. She was shorter than me, and one hand worried her braid as she reached up for my forehead with the other. I ducked out of her grip.

“No,” I said. “But please, can you do this for me?”

She looked uncertain. “I could get in a lot of trouble,” she said. “Please, Yuvradnyi, can you not just go?”

I entered the Binding Plane, the mantra racing through my mind. It was becoming easier each time. *It’s a small lie; you can do it*, I told the dark orange bond between us. “You know everything that has happened,” I said to her, trying to make myself look as small as possible. “I only want a bit of time.”

At this, her wide mouth softened in sympathy. “It must be very hard,” she said. “I am so sorry. I suppose this is a small thing. Yes, I will do it, Yuvradnyi. Do not worry.”

My heart warmed at her affection, and I wondered if I had even needed to use the Binding Plane. Neeti was my friend, after all.

Neeti turned to go, and only when she reached the door did I realize I had not even thanked her. “Wait!” I called. I reached into my secret stash of sweets and offered a handful to her. “Thank you,” I said. “Perhaps you can tell me about the goat next time?”

She popped one in her mouth immediately, the dimple in her cheek flashing in delight. “Of course, Yuvradnyi.” She took a small step toward me. “You... you can come and find me if you would like,” she said. “If you are ever lonely.” She bowed and took her leave.

I stood where she had left me, my eyes feeling hot. Nobody else had thought about whether I might be lonely, a girl in a family of men.

I scrubbed at my eyes with my hands. I had a task to do.

The corridors were deserted and dim with shadows. I made my way to the library quickly and tore through scroll after scroll, searching the shelves for any mention of the Binding Plane or the strange, shimmering threads.

I found all sorts of stories, tales of the gods granting wondrous powers and even bringing mortals to the brink of immortality—but always in exchange for great penance. The more I read, the more my heart sank; it seemed unlikely the gods had chosen to grant me a boon when I had done no such thing. But I could find no example of my own experience either, of anyone discovering such magic in meditation, and unaided.

In the end, I took with me several more guides on the practice of meditation, hoping that the exercises in them might contain more hidden secrets.

I was to be disappointed as far as further secrets, but the meditation instructions helped me in another way: They taught me to focus my mind. It became easier and easier to use the Binding Plane to get what I wanted. Not only could I enter the Plane more smoothly as I practiced, but I could stay there for longer spans of time.

All of us children spent our mornings seated in a small chamber on flat cushions before low wooden desks, where tutors instructed us in reading, writing, and basic mathematics, which I enjoyed well enough. But only I was forced to endure weekly instruction in the arts, for princes were not expected to

learn such gentle crafts—embroidery and weaving, painting and so on. My instruction was overseen by a number of minor noblewomen, women who had attended to my mother and would one day attend to the new radnyi. I never felt they much liked me, and now, with my mother gone, I was even more uncomfortable among them. I was useless to them, too young and unimportant to have attendants of their status, and they barely tolerated my clumsy efforts at the arts I cared little for.

Could the Binding Plane be put to use in my favor here as well? If my mother had been here, I never would have attempted it, knowing how important she deemed these skills. She was an excellent painter, her renderings joyful and unrestrained, marked with bright splashes of color that delighted even my untrained eye. While I thought her work beautiful, I had no desire to follow in her footsteps, though I doubted any magical manipulation would have altered her resolve.

But had she still been here, I would not have found the Plane at all. Now I had to move myself through a world that did not contain her.

“I do not wish to do this today,” I said, putting down my brush.

The woman—Medha, or Megha, I could never remember her name—did not even look up from her sewing. “Your father says you must, so you will.”

“My father does not know if I come here or not,” I said, finding a thin gray cord between us in the Binding Plane and sending the same sentiment to her.

She looked up at me, her needle still moving. “Regardless, I know, and I care. Now sit down. If you don’t wish to paint, pick up your stitching.”

As I was only a young princess, the nobility could speak to me like this. But it made me hate this particular woman more. “Why should it matter to you if I can paint a tree or stitch in a straight line? There are others who can do such work.” In the

Binding Plane I tried again. *You dislike this task. Would it not be easier to leave?*

“That is true,” she said. “But do you not think this is an important skill? It will aid in bringing you a good husband.”

“Do you not think my father can bring me a good husband?” I retorted, a bit rudely. She gave a long exhale, then lifted her shoulders in a very ladylike shrug.

“If you do not think it is valuable, then I suppose you will not bother to learn whether I keep you here or not.”

“I can go?” I blurted out, surprised at her acquiescence.

“If you insist.” She did not look up from her work, and I backed out of the room, hardly believing it had worked.

I intended to spend my newly free afternoons wandering and playing in the Binding Plane. I managed to do this for about three days before Manthara came to my room one evening, looking rather cross with me. “You must think yourself very clever. But I know you snuck away from your lessons. So tomorrow afternoon, you can take lessons with me instead.”

I could tell Manthara would brook no argument, and likely no manipulations either. And I was curious to see what her lessons would be, confident she would not let me languish with a paintbrush or a needle.

The next day, she brought me to meet the other servants and observe what they did. I learned their names and the names of their children and watched as our bonds in the Binding Plane slowly thickened.

Manthara also bid me accompany her when she attended to the highest-ranking noblewomen during their weekly gatherings. They were all wives to the men of the Mantri Parishad, my father’s council of advisors. They had rarely spoken to me when my mother was around. The pleats of their saris fell just so, even when they were seated in chairs, and not a hair was out of place in their high buns. I found their effortless perfection intimidating. But Manthara simply deposited me at the table as though I belonged there.

The first time I attended, the ladies fawned over me, complimenting my hair and dress and asking after my studies. I sat there scowling, plucking at the bonds in the Binding Plane to *leave me alone* until they finally did.

Afterward, in the privacy of my room, Manthara chastised me. “Why did you behave like that?” she demanded, aggressively straightening my things so that I would know she was angry. “You had a chance to win them over. Think of what you could learn from them.”

I could not think of anything to say, overwhelmed by shame at having disappointed Manthara.

The next afternoon, when they again asked about my studies, I told them the truth, explaining how I found most of the arts extremely boring. At the back of the room, Manthara pressed her lips together. So honesty too was wrong?

I gave a quick, awkward laugh, and said, “I am joking, of course.” What did they want to hear? “I am enjoying my lessons,” and “I hope my father will be pleased with my progress.” I forced a smile onto my face as I added, “I hope to one day be as accomplished as my mother.” At this I received a few sympathetic clucks.

But soon I grew bored of their discussions, of their veiled manner of speaking and of giving polite, forced responses. My mother had not seemed like the type to put up with such chattering—but then again, I had never seen her in such situations. I took Manthara’s advice and decided to see what I could learn, not of the noblewomen themselves, but of the Binding Plane.

So at first, I simply told them, *Kaikeyi is so kind and clever*, and watched them warm to me, giving me praise for my maturity and intelligence. After a few meetings, when our bonds were better established, I began to ask other questions, things I was curious about. *Why is my father displeased with your husband?* I would ask, plucking the string, and the woman would sigh and start talking of how her husband had made a small error in his tribute and she was worried about

him. Her kohl-lined eyes darted to me as she spoke, as though she was worried about me hearing too, but I gave her an innocent smile and told her, *Kaikeyi is too young to understand.*

At the end of each gathering, I was weary and drowsy with using the Binding Plane. But our bonds grew stronger, and so did I. With each passing week, my confidence grew. I could be good at this with time. I could take my mother's place.

Although mornings and afternoons were devoted to my improvement, some evenings I would hitch up my skirt, race to meet Yudhajit at the stables, and ride with him across the great fields behind the palace. In the dusk light, the tall grasses seemed to sparkle, and when the wind whipped around us I imagined we were flying through stars. We would travel for miles, until the palace was a toy house in the distance. In a soft valley between two hills, we would sit on a rough quilt Manthara had given me and feast on foods stolen from the kitchens, laughing freely without the watchful eyes of the court censuring us.

Sometimes, I could even convince Yudhajit to train me in the arts of war.

"Why do you want to learn?" he asked, the first time I made such a request of him.

"You never question why you are taught such things," I countered.

"I will have to lead Kekaya's armies one day," he said. "But women are not allowed on the battlefield."

There was little I could say to that. The sages had made it very clear: It was the gods' will that women should be left to tasks more suited to them, to keep our fragile bodies and delicate minds safe. The sages supposedly stayed apart from the governance of kingdoms, living in their temples and devoting their lives to interpreting the will of the gods. They performed penances and studied texts, and in return received visions and guidance. And while some wandered the lands,

moving from kingdom to kingdom and sharing what they had learned, others lived and worked in one kingdom alone.

But despite being separate from my father's council, the proclamations of Kekaya's sages often became the law of our kingdom—for my father's council would take their words and turn them into decrees. I could not imagine that other kingdoms did differently. Nobody was so foolish as to risk failing to take advantage of assistance from the gods, or worse, drawing their wrath by ignoring their wishes.

From the time we were small children, it had been instilled in us that the gods required prayer and sacrifice, a life lived according to dharma and moral virtue. The rulers were to care for their subjects. The wealthy were to care for the poor. Parents were to care for their children. And men were to care for women. The sages went beyond this, divining specifics of how the gods wished us to behave to comport with this order. To hear it told by my tutors, the sages protected all of humanity from ruin with their rules upholding these virtues.

And so if I questioned why women could not be unaccompanied in public, or why they should allow their male relatives to speak for them, I was met with sharp admonitions from my instructors to bend my head in prayer and apologize for my audacity. Even the sages, however, could not account for a combination of sisterly annoyance and clumsy tugs in the Binding Plane, and my shameless exploitation of Yudhajit's vast affection for me.

He showed me how to shoot an arrow and hold a sword. But after my first mistake, he would flop onto the ground and complain about the difficulty in teaching a girl such things, and I would give up, tired by my brief lesson and the strain of using the Plane to convince him to do something he did not want to do.

At least as a princess of Kekaya, I was allowed freedom to practice my riding.

It was a point of pride that even many of the common people of Kekaya knew how to ride. Our horses were sought

by other kingdoms, for they were without compare. It was said that they were relatives of the winged steeds that graced the heavens. That long ago, in the time before men rode, Indra clipped the wings of a few of his prized creatures so that they could bear his chariot in a war against the asuras. But when the battles were won, the horses could no longer return to their immortal home. Humans watched them with confusion and fear, for they had never seen horses before. These proud creatures wandered the plains, until they were found by a young man who built a stable for their shelter, cleaned their coats, and kept them warm. In return for this kindness, the gods granted him their blessing. Nobody could stand against his speed and prowess on horseback. Before long, he had united the neighboring tribes and founded the kingdom of Kekaya.

I often wondered, as our horses flew across the fields, as their hooves kicked up dust from sun-warmed earth and their breath dissipated into the cooling air, if they remembered where they came from. If they longed for more, for the vast expanse of the skies. Perhaps we were kin, they and I, yearning for something unnameable, a place where we could stretch our wings and belong.

CHAPTER FOUR



YUDHAJIT AND I PASSED the first months of our mother's departure in this way, straddling that strange space that precedes adulthood. I was trying to prove to the women of the court that I was a woman myself, even though I did not feel or act like one, and Yudhajit was trying to earn his way into our father's confidence, although he had little idea what the men of the palace really did when they were not out fighting.

One evening, about a year after my mother left, my father announced to us that a week hence we would travel to the Sarasvati River to pay tribute. There had been rumors of a rakshasa hiding in the northern foothills, where sparse herding villages dotted the rocky outcroppings. Each tale brought to our court was more fanciful than the last—that the rakshasa lived in a village and raided their neighbors, that the villagers worshipped the rakshasa for his protection, that some of the humans had begun drinking the blood of the rakshasa's victims just as the rakshasa did. But it was indisputable that one of my father's own scouts had seen the demonic ugliness of the rakshasa, and that any rakshasa walking our land was a threat.

Rakshasas were demons, though not as powerful as asuras. They satisfied the evil in their hearts by stalking humans rather than gods. I had only heard about them from scrolls and in Manthara's tales—rakshasas ate misbehaving children, slaughtered those abandoned by the gods—but we all knew they still walked the outskirts of civilization. And so, my father thought it best to obtain the blessing of a goddess before facing the monster.

The Sarasvati was the source of many blessings for our

people—women went there to pray and nine months later were gifted with sons. Warriors who stood in the Sarasvati and asked for strength returned from battles where greater men died. But most of all, the river was known for granting visions to the most learned of sages, who used their knowledge of things to come to avert disasters. They would see a rising flood and pray to the gods to change its course or foretell a poor crop and pray for better harvest. When their visions did not come to pass, the kingdom was grateful for their work.

Sarasvati prized intelligence above all else, and for this reason I had prayed to her daily as a young girl. It was due to this river that Kekaya was the powerful kingdom it was. Our sages had used the knowledge granted by the goddess to ensure our people remained holy—and in return we had her favor.

It had been some years since we had last visited the river, for with a royal retinue the trip could take several weeks there and back. My brothers and I greeted the announcement with great enthusiasm—while traveling, we all got to ride and play and sleep together in tents with no lessons or other responsibilities.

But the last time we had visited the Sarasvati, my mother had still been with us, and as I thought of traveling without her, a strange loneliness came over me. Manthara would not be attending, for she did not like to ride, and so one evening when Neeti came to my quarters, a small silver platter of sugared almonds and pistachios in her hands and a story ready on her lips, I asked her, “Will you come with me to the river?”

Her face fell instantly. “I’m sorry, Yuvradnyi. I have not been asked to go.”

“That is quite all right. I could arrange for it,” I said confidently.

She shook her head. “Even if you could, I would not wish to go.”

“It will be fun,” I wheedled, slipping into the Binding

Plane as I did. Our orange cord had about the thickness of a thumb, and I sent the simple message through it in a slow, steady pulse. “We will travel with a whole retinue.”

Despite my work in the Binding Plane, though, Neeti shook her head. “I really am sorry, Yuvradnyi. Perhaps someone else can accompany you? I know a girl, Shruti, in the kitchens. You would like her.”

Frustrated, I gave another tug on the cord. It started to move up and down more quickly, gathering speed as I said, “Neeti, I am asking you for this. Please.” Now that I had the idea in my head, I would not be so easily dissuaded.

“I really do want to come,” she said quietly, and I assumed victory was near. After all, with the Binding Plane on my side, I could not fail. Then Neeti shook her head. “But I can’t.”

In the Binding Plane, the cord between us was just a blur of orange movement. I was sure that soon she would acquiesce. “I am asking as your yuvradnyi that you attend to me.”

Neeti’s expression hardened from regret into anger.

And then, in an instant, the cord reached its highest peak and snapped.

I stumbled back, forgetting for a moment that the bond was not in the real world. Around us, the shattered remnants of the cord drifted like orange ash, and my heart hammered in my throat. What had just happened? Neeti took a step toward me and hissed, “My mother is very sick. Just because your mother left you does not mean everyone else’s world is the same.” And then she upturned the plate of sweets onto me, her kind eyes sharp with fury, and disappeared out the door.

I stood there unable to believe what had happened, repeating the events in my head over and over. I had seen hatred in her eyes as she left. In my mind’s eye, I could see her face clouding over with ugly anger, directed at me. My stomach churned, and I reentered the Binding Plane, hoping to find this had all been a silly nightmare. But our orange bond was nowhere to be seen. A tear slipped down my face, my

vision blurring as the Plane disappeared, but I brushed it away. It was stupid to cry over a servant who would turn on me so readily. But she had been more than that. She had been my friend, one of the few I'd had. And this was my own fault.

For it had been a normal enough request, and even if she had not wished to listen, that would not have ordinarily warranted such a reaction. The only thing out of the ordinary was that I had used the Binding Plane. Rather than merely annoying her, it appeared as though I had broken our connection. Did this mean, then, that my friendship with Neeti was over forever? That there was nothing connecting us anymore? Surely the effects of overusing the Plane would not be so severe—and yet, at potentially great consequence to herself, she had whispered those hateful words to me. Years of friendship gone in an instant, and over something so unimportant.

I had to be exceedingly careful about using the Plane on those I cared about. What if I had accidentally done this with my father... or Manthara, or *Yudhajit*? Just the idea brought the taste of acid to my mouth. My hands shook.

How could I have been so foolish? I should have known better than to use this power without thought, without knowing its full extent.

I would have to go to the Sarasvati alone. It was what I deserved.

For the first few days of our ride, I was subdued. Yudhajit tried to pull me into mischief, but all I could think about was Neeti. Every day I checked for our bond, but found nothing. But eventually the shock of it faded, and I joined Yudhajit, Shantanu, and Mohan racing through the camp in the evenings, chasing one another and shrieking with laughter. I reveled in the freedom I was afforded, for my opportunities to play with my brothers were becoming more and more scarce. We ran in and out of the forests near our camps, the air under the leaves cool and refreshing after a sweaty day of riding. We tried to catch small creatures, squirrels and little gray rabbits,

and climbed up the branches of the smaller trees.

The day before we were due to arrive at the river, Yudhajit snuck into my tent and shook me awake. As the only royal girl, I slept alone with a guard posted outside the front of my tent—but clearly nobody had thought to protect the back flap. I had been in the throes of a nightmare that was already slipping away, and perhaps it was the adrenaline already coursing through me that made me hear him out instead of going back to sleep.

“The soldiers said that an elephant was seen in these forests not too long ago,” he whispered. “I want to go find it. Come with me?”

Yudhajit knew as well as I that elephants did not live in our kingdom. They lived in the south of Bharat, far from our cooler climates. “They must have been joking.”

“No, they said it was one of the elephants of the gods.” His voice grew more excited as he spoke. “A *white* elephant.”

My eyes widened. White elephants were incredibly rare, and even seeing one at a distance was considered a great blessing. The stories said that the first white elephant had risen out of the churning of the ocean.

But it was the middle of the night, and we were in unfamiliar forests.

“Come on, Kaikeyi,” he cajoled. “Nobody will know.”

I could never resist Yudhajit for long. I shooed him out and quietly pulled on a dark kurta before joining him outside. It was a few days before the full moon, so there was ample light to navigate by, but the cold silver glow gave the forest an eerie cast. I suppressed a shiver and followed Yudhajit as he confidently plunged into the woods.

“How do you know where to go?”

“Elephants need water, right? We have to find a pool.”

As far as I knew, Yudhajit had no interest in geography. “This is a huge forest. We’re searching for one animal within

it.” I turned and looked back toward the camp, which was nearly obscured by the tall trees, their branches swaying slightly in the wind. “Are you certain about this?”

“I’m praying to find it,” Yudhajit said. “You should be praying to Lord Ganesha too. With his guidance, I am sure we will be blessed to see it.”

I stared at Yudhajit’s back for a moment, envious of his easy confidence. Then I followed him once more.

We remained silent as we marched, wary of garnering the attention of any passing predators. At some point, we twined our fingers together, not wanting to get lost in the darkness caused by the thick canopy. Just when my feet were beginning to tire, and I was going to suggest we turn back, Yudhajit gave a soft gasp. “Do you hear that?”

I strained my ears and, after a moment, heard the soft murmur of water. “A stream!” We rushed forward with new energy.

Soon we could see light glinting off running water. “Slow down,” he whispered. “If it’s there, we don’t want to scare it.”

But as we stepped cautiously toward the tree line, my spine tingled and a chill ran through me. Something was very wrong. I moved in front of Yudhajit, trying to tell myself I was being irrational, and peered between two thick trunks.

I stuffed my thumb in my mouth and bit down on it to keep myself from shouting, flinging out my other hand to hold Yudhajit back. “We have to go,” I whispered.

“What is it?” he asked, jostling me slightly to see. I clapped a hand over his mouth so he wouldn’t make any noise and felt his body stiffen against me.

On the other side of the stream stood a rakshasa.

It could not have been anything else. It was tall, taller even than some of the young trees that lined the water, with orange-red skin that gleamed, unnaturally slick in the moonlight. Its skin matched its eyes, orange pupils and yellow where there

should have been white. It had horns breaking through its skull, like some fiendish ram, and from here I could see the sharp curve of two wicked white fangs protruding from its lips. It had four arms, each hand gripping a different weapon, casting twisted reflections in the water. And where it should have had feet, it instead had clawed paws, hairy and grotesque with sharp talons.

Even many years later, it would have been impossible for me to describe the naked fear that filled me at the sight. This monster could rip me limb from limb and drink my blood without a second thought. The frightening stories had not been frightening enough.

But just as suddenly as the fear came, it was replaced by clear thought. We needed to get away. I took a careful step backward, then another. Yudhajit remained standing, paralyzed. I tugged at his hand.

“It’s crossing the stream,” he whispered.

There was no time to spare on words. I pulled him this time, hard enough that he fell into me, though I maintained both our balances. This seemed to be enough to wake him from his trance, for his hand clasped mine more tightly as we backed away, one step after another.

Behind us came a mighty roar, and we broke into a run. I imagined the earth itself was shaking. I did not know if it heard us running, but we did not dare turn around for anything. My chest ached and my lungs screamed for air. When I felt as though I would falter, Yudhajit pulled me on. At last, at long last, we burst into the clearing where we had made camp, behind my tent once more. We stood there panting for several seconds, gulping in the air, before I could gasp out, “We must tell our father. If it comes to the camp—” I could not finish the sentence.

“We have plenty of soldiers,” Yudhajit said. “If they are prepared, they could slay it.”

“But they are not prepared.”

Yudhajit's mouth twisted into a grim expression, and then he set off without a word toward the center of camp. "We must see the raja immediately," Yudhajit said, drawing himself up as tall as he could get outside of our father's tent.

The soldier guarding his tent seemed unimpressed. "It is the middle of the night, Yuvraja. You can speak with him in the morning."

"We must speak to him now," Yudhajit said. Before, I would have ordered the soldier to do so in the Binding Plane. But now I simply waited with Yudhajit, afraid of using the Plane after what I had done to my bond with Neeti.

The soldier held Yudhajit's gaze for another moment, then nodded sharply and entered the tent. Yudhajit turned to me, reaching for my hair and pulling a leaf from it. I gave him a small smile, just as the soldier returned to beckon us in.

Our father was standing, still in his sleeping clothes, looking quite annoyed. "What is it, at this hour?"

"There is a rakshasa coming toward the camp," Yudhajit said confidently.

My father raised his eyebrows. "And how would you know this?" To my ears, his tone sounded slightly mocking.

Yudhajit turned toward me, the panic evident. We could not admit to sneaking out of camp, but we had to give our father proof. "I had a dream about it," I blurted out.

"You woke me about a bad dream?" Anger was seeping into my father's tone.

"I had it too," Yudhajit said quickly. "We both had the exact same dream about a rakshasa with orange-red skin and four arms. Headed toward us. That could only be a message from the gods."

My father rubbed his chin, thoughtful. I clenched my hands at my sides. Of course my father believed Yudhajit's identical story, without so much as considering what I had to say. "There have been reports of some horrible monster terrorizing

nearby villages. I thought it a wild animal, but—” He broke off and strode toward the front of the tent to have a hushed conversation with the soldier there. Then he came and clapped Yudhajit on the shoulder. “You have done well to come to me about this. Did the gods see fit to show you where it was?”

“There’s a stream in the forest,” Yudhajit said. “To the south. It comes from there.”

“Good boy,” my father said. “Stay here. I will lead a party to put an end to this monster.”

At that moment, a servant came in and wordlessly began helping my father into his armor. Outside, we could hear the sounds of others conversing despite the dark hour. The whispers were growing, and I imagined the news spreading like wildfire from tent to tent, the camp rousing to the sound of weapons being prepared.

Once our father had departed, I sank to the earth floor of the tent, suddenly exhausted. Even the anger at my father was gone, for now he was marching to fight a rakshasa. My eyes pricked, thinking of the danger we had been in and the danger our father would soon be in. Yudhajit sat next to me, looking equally afraid. We sat for what seemed like an eternity and must have drifted off, because the next thing I knew a clamor was echoing all through the camp. Yudhajit sprang to his feet, racing for the tent entrance. He ran straight into our father.

“You were right, Yudhajit,” he said. His face was frightening in his grimness. “There was a rakshasa in that forest, and he looked to be coming for our camp. We were able to slay him, but not without a cost.”

“What cost?” Yudhajit looked stricken.

“We lost three men.” My father’s voice was weary. “We will cremate them at the Sarasvati River. We were lucky this was a weak rakshasa, barely capable of intelligent thought. The gods smiled upon us to give warning—we would have lost more than three had the demon made it here. You have done well, my son. I will think on how to reward you.”

I glanced at Yudhajit, wondering if he would mention me at all, but he just inclined his head and said, “Thank you, Father.”

Father gave him a genuine smile, the kind that transformed his whole face. “You are quite welcome. Now make preparations to leave. We will still ride this day.”

We left together.

Outside, I spun to face Yudhajit, unsure what to say. He smiled, tired but relieved. “I am so glad you were with me.”

He walked away, not even waiting for me as I stood there dumbfounded. No thanks for saving him at the stream or covering our disobedience, not even an apology for Father’s oversight.

But then, this was the way of the world to Yudhajit. And standing there, I knew that I would never truly grow accustomed to it.

The next day, our somber party reached the banks of the river. As relieved as we were to have survived, the deaths of the men weighed heavily on us all.

As we approached the water, silence fell over our group, a sort of mounting anticipation.

Even though I had seen it before, the sight of it took my breath away, a clear white and blue ribbon weaving through the hills, its current dancing in the wind, seemingly playful but swift enough to carry unsuspecting travelers to their doom.

Standing barefoot, my toes pressing into the damp earth and the sound of the water surrounding me, I was gripped once again by the urge to pray. Around me, people were kneeling next to the water, cupping it in their hands and pouring it on their heads, each absorbed in their own rituals. The sages were preparing to perform the funeral rites, to ask for the river to bless my father.

I stepped forward, feeling uncertain, until I reached the edge of the water. For once, I knew nobody would scold me for getting my dress muddy.

“Sri Sarasvati, I pray to you for wisdom,” I whispered. I glanced around, but nobody was near enough to hear me speak so softly. “I ask you for knowledge of my gift. Why do I have it? What am I meant to do with it?”

I shut my eyes so tightly that I could not even see the redness of sunlight behind my eyelids. There was some small hope still inside me that now, after helping to save our camp, the goddess might see fit to bless me. I waited for a vision, for a spark, but nothing came. “Please,” I begged. “I have always prayed and tried my hardest to be good. Please give me a sign. Help me to understand how to use it.” Even then I thought of Neeti, of her face and what I had done.

But Sarasvati did not seem inclined to help me fix what I had broken. There was silence, save for the rustling and murmuring of those around me. A breeze blew down the river, pricking my skin. I unclasped my hands and rubbed my arms, abandoning the last bit of hope that the goddess might listen to me. The sages began ringing their bells and I rose to my feet, rubbing at my stinging eyes. Slowly, I walked back toward the horses, knowing Father would not notice.

“Are you okay?” Yudhajit asked from behind me.

I whirled around. “I’m fine.” Where had he come from? He should have been with Father. “You should go back.”

“You looked sad,” he said instead. “I wanted to check on you. Is it what happened with the rakshasa?”

“No, I said I’m fine.” There was no way for me to explain to Yudhajit what was truly wrong. How could he understand what it was like to be ignored?

But Yudhajit wouldn’t leave. I felt a flicker of annoyance that he would not let me have this solitude until he said, “Do you miss her? Mother? Last time we came here, she was with us. I miss her too.”

I blinked at him, surprised at the sudden show of emotion. “I suppose,” I said, though I hadn’t been thinking of my mother at all.

He put a hand on my shoulder, his warm touch chasing away some of the abandonment I felt. “It will be all right.”

“I know that,” I said, pulling away and swatting at him.

He laughed for a moment, then grew serious. “Do you want to rejoin the others?”

I shook my head. “You go on, though.”

“Is there anything I can do?” he asked. He seemed sincere, and all of a sudden I remembered there was something I wanted from him.

“There is,” I said.

“Whatever it is, I’ll do it,” he said immediately.

I looked behind him, to where the ceremony was well underway. “You need to go now. But when we return to the palace, if you remember your promise, I’ll tell you.”

CHAPTER FIVE



THE DAY AFTER WE returned to Kekaya, I made my request to Yudhajit.

“Why are you so intent on this anyway?” he asked, but I noticed he did not say *no*. “You will never have need of it.”

“Father and the soldiers were able to bring down a rakshasa with their training,” I said. “If it had caught us, you would have stood more of a chance than I. I want to be able to protect myself.”

He stayed silent, observing my face, so I added, “It won’t hurt you at all to train me. Haven’t you heard the masters say that teaching a skill helps perfect it? So in that regard, you will be improving too.”

And that was all it took. The rakshasa had left us both shaken, and perhaps Yudhajit felt the need to protect me. It seemed I didn’t need the Binding Plane all the time.

He refused to do it anywhere we might be found out, so we took our horses into the fields, riding beyond the view of prying eyes.

As soon as we dismounted, I went immediately to his saddlebag, eager to see what weapons he had chosen for our first lesson. My hands itched to hold a bow, for I found archery most elegant, but perhaps wooden staffs would be more practical—more like what might be found in a forest.

It was empty.

“What—”

“The instructors at the palace do not give us weapons for

years,” he said.

“Years?” I asked, incredulity coloring my voice.

He laughed. “I will not make you wait that long. But I think maybe it would be helpful to show you some forms first. Without that, you may as well ride home and ask Manthara to help you practice your embroidery.”

I scowled at that but watched him intently as he moved slowly through a series of stretches and exercises. As he repeated the motions, I began to follow along, relishing the stretch and pull of my muscles, the solid ground beneath my feet, the brush of wind against my braids.

I had always thought myself fit, racing around with my brothers and riding as I did. But by the end of it, I could barely mount my horse. My whole body trembled.

“Does it always feel this way?” I asked him.

“What way?” he said. I did not answer, too tired and frustrated with my own abilities. “What way?” he asked again.

“Nothing,” I muttered. But I vowed that my weakness would not last. I would master these forms and prove to Yudhajit I could handle weapons.

Every day I practiced the forms alone in my room. Each time left me drenched in sticky sweat, but I pushed through, celebrating every small victory.

Only Manthara knew of my determination to succeed in this—even with Yudhajit, I feigned a certain amount of casualness, for I sensed that there was a danger in letting him know the depth of my longing to prove myself worthy. But Manthara sometimes observed me struggling to balance on my hands or hold a lunge as she tidied my room. Once, she asked, “Why do you do this, when you have so many other things to spend your time on?”

“Why shouldn’t I?” I responded, panting with the effort. I dropped to the ground, brushed stray hair from my eyes, and turned to face Manthara, whose expression was pinched. I had

been rather rude. “I’m sorry,” I added. “I just...” I could not articulate it, this need to learn. Manthara eyed me intently.

“You do not need to be able to fight,” she said. “You will be radnyi of a kingdom one day. That will be all the power you need.”

In a way, she was right.

I was learning my own power more and more each day as I took over duties of the court. This had recently come to a head with Dhanteri, my mother’s former chief lady-in-waiting. I would never forget her whispered conversation with Prasad the night my mother had vanished, where she held her tongue in exchange for control of the palace’s workings. In the week before Holi, Manthara had taken me to the kitchens to hear the plans for the celebration that would follow the great bonfire. Each year, we burned an effigy of the Holika, a wicked asura who had tried to immolate her devout nephew alive. Burning the effigy would cleanse our kingdom and bring a good harvest.

The supplies were limited for the feast; the usual caravans that would bring grain and rice had been delayed, and only after the harvest would our kitchens be replenished.

I listened carefully to our cook and, when Manthara nodded, encouraged him to use our flour stores to prepare vadas, delicious balls of dough mixed with fragrant herbs, then fried until they were golden and sizzling before being dipped in tangy yogurt. Our bins of dried chickpeas were plentiful, which meant we would be able to prepare my father’s favorite spiced stew, and it was decided that we would slaughter several chickens besides—those who had become too old to lay. I felt a pang for the chickens but overall was quite pleased with myself, until the next day when Dhanteri came to confront Manthara.

“I heard you spoke to the cook,” Dhanteri said without any pleasantries.

“I did—” Manthara began.

“It is my place to make such decisions until the yuvradnyi is able,” Dhanteri continued. “I will ensure that Prasad hears about this. I cannot imagine he would want to keep you around after—”

“It was me,” I blurted, not wanting Manthara to get in trouble for my actions. “I spoke to the cook.”

Dhanteri stopped. Her expression fell slightly, before she marshaled a thin-lipped smile. “I see, Yuvradnyi. But you are still so young. You should not concern yourself with such matters.”

“I want to,” I said, stepping forward. “It is my role, is it not?” Manthara coughed behind me, or perhaps it was a laugh. Dhanteri’s eyes flashed up to Manthara, then back down to me.

“Perhaps the raja would want a more capable—”

“I hope you are not saying that Kaikeyi is not *capable*,” Manthara said behind me. There was an unpleasant note to her voice, one I had never heard before.

“I have been doing this for some time,” Dhanteri said. “It is simply that I am more experienced. It is laudable that you want to help. In that case, it is my place to assist you.”

“I appreciate your help,” I said, for Manthara had always taught me to be generous. “But I do not believe I need your assistance.”

“You don’t need it?” Dhanteri asked, and now she looked a bit afraid, although I did not know why.

I looked to Manthara, confused, but she gave me a small smile and a nod. “No, I do not. If these responsibilities are mine, I should be the one to handle them.”

Dhanteri looked at Manthara. She seemed sad now, only moments after looking so angry, and I did not understand.

She pivoted on her heel and walked away so briskly she might have been running.

It was only after the feast, at which Dhanteri did not appear, that I realized what I had done. I had all but dismissed her. Of course, she might have stayed, but her place would have fallen, and she was unwilling to bear that. Once I had fully claimed my role, she had no reason to stay.

This was a different sort of power than the Binding Plane, and it didn't feel good, even when Manthara assured me that Dhanteri's departure was inevitable, and I was simply doing my duty.

I remembered how I had felt when my father disbelieved me, dismissed my dream, and then trusted Yudhajit in the same breath. The despair that had rocked me the first evening after he sent my mother away. Even a radnyi did not have the power to stay with her children, or a yuvradnyi to gain the trust of her father. That could not—would not—be my whole life. I wanted to have power over *myself*, and I did not have that. In that regard, I was no different than Dhanteri.

This discomfort was still on my mind when I explained to Manthara why I wanted to fight. She must have observed something in the set of my jaw and the clench of my fists that gave her pause. “If it makes you feel strong, then by all means do it. But you do not need to prove yourself to anyone. If Yudhajit has put you up to anything—”

“No,” I interrupted. “He thinks I am foolish as well.”

“I do not think you are foolish,” Manthara said gently. She moved in front of me and secured a strand of runaway hair with a pin, giving me a small smile. “It is admirable that you want to improve yourself. I just fear you will have little use for such things. I am sure it is hard to live here, surrounded by men, but there are other ways to be strong. You are already learning—see how the palace staff admire you.”

“Can I not be strong in many ways?” I asked her. “I want to learn this for myself.”

“Of course.” Manthara picked up my dirty clothes, her expression grave. “You are your own mistress.”

Yudhajit stayed true to his word and his teachings. As time passed, he began bringing weapons to our lessons. First, a simple bow. He stood behind me as I drew the string, lifting my elbow, correcting my stance, giving encouragement. It was hard work that left my arms numb, and so between lessons I began lifting objects around my room to gain strength.

After several months, Yudhajit set up a range of targets for me throughout the hills. I ran across the grass, and each time I spotted a target, I planted my feet, pulled the bowstring back, and let loose. Yudhajit followed behind me, shouting with joy at each hit. Some targets were far away, but when I pulled the string back as far as it would stretch, my arm did not tremble. Others required me to crest an incline, and yet my thighs did not burn. For almost an hour, I practiced. And when we studied the targets at the end, nearly every arrow had hit the center.

We flopped onto the grass afterward, tired from the exertion. I closed my eyes for a moment. With both of us lying sweaty in the dirt, I could imagine that I had been a warrior my whole life.

After that, Yudhajit insisted that I learn how to drive a war chariot, even though what I really wanted was to learn how to use a sword.

I had cautiously begun reentering the Binding Plane, using only the gentlest of touches on the strings and threads around me, and withdrawing at even the smallest tremor. So I sent a suggestion, just a tiny push, across our blue cord. *Would swordfighting not be more fun?*

“Our kingdom is known far and wide for its horsemanship,” he insisted. “You know how to ride. Driving is what you need to master next.” And, reluctant to test him or our bond, I complied.

At our next meeting, I arrived at our usual spot and found him waiting there with two matched horses and a chariot he had clearly stolen from the palace grounds. The horses tossed their heads, nickering, and I rubbed their noses in affection

before examining the chariot itself.

It was large, designed to be swift and easily maneuvered. I ran a hand against the wood, marveling that something so vicious could feel so smooth.

“You can observe while I drive them in a simple circle,” he said.

The day was a beautiful one, so I settled on a rock on the side of the hill to watch.

It went well at first, but after a few minutes, the horses seemed to decide they preferred to run in a straight line. He struggled to get them back in control, eventually pulling them to a halt and dropping the reins in disgust. He hopped down from the chariot, face red, and any jibing remark I was considering slipped from my mind. “You did very well,” I told him sincerely.

“I don’t know what happened,” he growled.

“Shall I try?”

He shrugged half-heartedly, and so I climbed into the box of the chariot and took the reins in my hands. As I stood behind the team of horses, adrenaline rushed through me. I flicked the reins and the horses began moving forward, slowly at first, then faster. The box was steady beneath me, and I felt as though the world had slowed. I tugged instinctively on the reins, bracing my weight, and the team turned in a smooth arc. My heart pounded in my chest, light and free. I pulled a bit harder, and the horses responded, moving in a steady circle. The grin that split my face was not a conscious choice.

I snapped the reins and the chariot leapt forward, but I kept my balance. I was one with the wheels, the horses, the world. We danced our way across the field, until at last, the surge of power buoying me began to fade and I remembered my audience.

I climbed down from the chariot, trying to force my cheeks into a more reserved expression. Yudhajit’s face was stony, his shoulders hunched in palpable frustration, and I felt a slight

churn of guilt. “You were a good teacher,” I said.

“No, I wasn’t,” he said, and seemed to shake himself. “But you—you were excellent, Kaikeyi!”

I had truly not been expecting such praise “Really?” I asked.

“You’re a natural.” He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, then gave me a small smile. “Maybe in this, you can teach me.”

So Yudhajit passed on the words of his instructors and memories of how maneuvers were supposed to look while I figured out how to get the horses to actually respond, and in the end, we taught each other together.

We practiced through the harvest and the cooler season, bundling ourselves in coarse woolen cloaks to stay warm. It was cold enough to see our breath, but we knew that in a few months our chariot practice would have to halt for some time. As the air warmed, it came with a warning that rains would not be far behind. The ground would turn to mud, and while horse riding was still permissible, charioteering was not. The mud could break in one moment what craftsmen had labored over for months.

One evening, storm clouds loomed on the horizon and the air was almost damp with moisture. We rode out in silent agreement that this would be our last practice, but when we arrived at our usual place, I saw there was a second chariot already there, with horses.

I looked around, worried we had been found out by some disapproving advisor.

“Stop looking so serious,” Yudhajit said with a laugh. “I brought it out here just before, then rode back to get you.”

“But how?” I asked. “Wouldn’t it be strange if—”

“Nobody asks such questions.” Yudhajit hopped down, face bright with excitement at his own ingenuity, and I bit my tongue. I was questioned all the time by advisors, by the

nobility—where was I going? What was I doing? Why was I not elsewhere? This was perhaps the most useful application of the Binding Plane—it was slowly becoming instinct to redirect any unwanted inquiries. I would grasp a bond with my mind, pulling ever so slightly on the rope between us while suggesting, *You have important business elsewhere, or Kaikeyi is very responsible and you need not worry.* “I thought we could practice against each other.”

I eyed him, skeptical. “There’s no point in two charioteers practicing against each other unless they are carrying warriors.”

I could tell from the way he blinked up at me that he had not thought this fully through. His expression fell slightly, and I immediately felt sorry. He had gone to a lot of effort to surprise me with this. “You know what,” I said. “Maybe we can make it a contest through the forest paths. There’s plenty of obstacles. That would be wonderful practice.”

Yudhajit smiled so widely I could have counted his teeth. “Shall we race to the river?” he asked, excited. There was a small river running several hundred paces away from where we stood at the edge between the forest and the hills. Soon it would be swollen and dangerous, but that was many hours away. I gave him a nod, and he clambered into his chariot, steering the team into place next to mine.

“Ready?” he called.

“Three, two...” I counted, drawing it out and tensing my body.

“One!” Yudhajit shouted, growing impatient. He took off.

I snapped the reins and sent the horses running to catch him. We jostled for room on the path, and he used his narrow lead to block me time and time again. I snarled in frustration, scanning the quickly passing surroundings for an opening.

Yudhajit let out a whoop as I slowed my horses slightly, then turned his head, confused, as I swung my team to the side. The chariot bumped uncomfortably over the uneven trail,

giving a groan, but I gripped the reins and spurred the horses onward. They were racing now, the chariot lifting slightly into the air. When we burst back onto the main path, we nearly collided with Yudhajit. My heart leapt into my mouth, but I made myself hold firm, and he, in an equal moment of panic, slowed his team, allowing me to take the lead. He cursed behind me, and I felt his horses nudging my chariot. With a flick of my wrists, I sent the horses weaving along the path so that he could gain no advantage.

The river was in sight. With a whoop of my own, I spurred the horses, slowing only as we reached the edge, their hooves splashing into the shallow water, droplets cooling my flushed skin.

I leapt from my chariot, all decorum forgotten. I threw my arms up and cheered and spun around to find my brother.

Yudhajit climbed down from his chariot and stalked toward me, lips pressed into a line. I held up a conciliatory hand, but before I could ask if he was all right, he tackled me into the river. I shouted, indignant, as the cold water hit my back, the shock setting my teeth chattering. I wondered if this had been a bad idea. I should have let Yudhajit win. But he rolled away, laughing so hard he was nearly crying, and as I caught my breath lying in the shallows, I quickly entered the Binding Plane. Our bright blue bond was calm, undisturbed, and so I turned to look at him. He was on his knees, preparing to stand, and was looking at me with open admiration. “You were incredible!” He offered me a hand up.

“Then why did you throw me into the water?” I asked, shivering slightly.

“You’re too serious all the time,” he said, putting his arm around me. Yudhajit radiated heat. “I wanted to set you off-balance. The look on your face when I threw you in?” He grinned. “Remember, Kaikeyi, never take your eyes off your enemy.” He put on a serious face, but I snickered at his pronouncement, and soon we were both choking with laughter.

“You’re not my enemy,” I told him, elbowing him in the rib

cage. “Just my competitor. But we should get back and change before we take ill.” He gave a good-natured groan but willingly followed me home.

“Manthara, I need to practice my swordplay,” I said one evening. The monsoons were well and truly here, and watching the ground become a lake of mud outside the palace was boring me to tears. I itched to *move*. “Can you help me?”

She laughed slightly. “I know nothing about swordplay.”

“All you need to do is stand and hold a shield,” I said. I could tell she was resistant to the idea, and so I sent a plea in the Binding Plane, *Kaikeyi most fervently desires this. It would make her happy*. I had learned that such entreaties worked best with Manthara. I worried sometimes that she only humored me because she had to, but then Manthara would, when she thought I was asleep, whisper in my ear how much she loved me, and I would put the thought from my mind.

She hummed, considering. “Stand and hold a shield?” she asked. “I don’t have to use a sword?”

“No,” I said, already turning to find the shield in anticipation of victory.

“All right.” I picked up the wooden circle and turned back to her when she added, “Then you must do something for me.”

“What do you want?” I asked cautiously. If Manthara needed something from me, would she not have already asked for it?

“I suppose really it will be helping you,” she said. “For every blow you deal me, you must correctly answer a question about the court.”

I groaned. “That’s so boring. I know everything I need to.”

“Do you?” Manthara took the shield from me and slotted her arm into place. “You attend all the functions, that is true, and you are well-liked among the staff. But I think you could be doing more. Though if, as you say, you know everything already, then this should be very easy.”

I slipped into the Binding Plane, more than ready to convince her that I did not need such childish lessons. I touched our bond with my mind, and then actually listened to her words. She was right. This would be easy. And if I manipulated away her condition now, it would only come back in some other form later. Instead, I could prove to her that I already knew everything I needed.

I picked up my wooden sword and did a basic approach, rapping the shield with my blade to finish. It was a far cry from the double-edged khanda the best warriors fought with, but even so I struggled to maneuver with it. “Very nice,” Manthara said, although I could tell she didn’t really care. “Your father is inviting a guest this evening. What is his name?”

That was easy. “Tarush.” I tried a more complicated maneuver, hitting the shield from the side. “Arya Tarush,” I repeated, adding a title of respect.

“Why has he been invited here?”

I knew that too. “Father just took over his land.” Kekaya’s borders had remained stable for some time now. The kingdom of Kosala, which lay to the southeast, its territory beginning just across the Sarasvati River, had recently conquered a cluster of smaller villages that had been causing us trouble. With our southern border secured, my father had taken this as an opportunity to wage war on some northern tribes that were posing a nuisance before they had the chance to become stronger.

Manthara lowered the shield and gave me a level stare. “You think your father invites all those whose land he has conquered to his home as an honored guest?”

I frowned at her. “He wants to make sure Arya Tarush won’t try to fight this?”

“That’s better.” She lifted up her shield again. I took several spinning steps, tripped, and missed Manthara by several paces. She laughed, but there was no ridicule in it. I

laughed as well, shaking my arm out before trying again, concentrating on my footwork. This time, I managed a weak hit against the shield.

“What should the palace do to ensure that your father’s plan succeeds?”

I truly paused at that, the sword dropping to my side. “What do you mean? There’s a feast for his arrival.”

“You believe that’s all it takes?” she asked.

“It’s a great honor,” I insisted.

“Would you be honored to sit in the hall of your enemy after you were defeated by their hands?”

I bit my lip. “I suppose not.” It sounded rather humiliating.

I searched my mind for what else might be required. “He should be seated close to my father. And... perhaps the kitchens could prepare foods from the north? His people are almost from the mountains. We can serve mutton as a show of respect.”

Manthara nodded. “That is one way.” She lifted the shield once more, but now I was curious.

“What other ways are there?”

She raised an eyebrow at me. “I thought you knew everything.” At my frustrated glare, she smiled slightly and continued, “We should ensure his chamber is comfortable and laid out in the fashion he is used to. Uncomfortable beds make for uncomfortable men. He should be served immediately after the king, before all others. He should be well attended, with a servant within shouting range at all times. And he has a friend in the court—do you know who that might be?” I shook my head. “Devi Tara is his sister, although she left his lands when she married Arya Karthik many years ago. We should make sure that she is seated near to him and treated as an important figure, so he knows his family is taken care of and respected.”

“How do you know all this?” I asked, swordplay entirely forgotten.

“Because I listen. You should know all this too. Raise your weapon, Kaikeyi. We will practice until you are ready.”

CHAPTER SIX



AS MANTHARA HAD INTENDED all along, my practice sessions with her changed me. Once I learned how to use information gathered around the palace, I wished to do it.

Over the years, trips to the kitchen to steal a snack became hours-long visits. I would mention to the head cook, “I believe my father intends to host a wedding at the palace next month.”

“We have not been told yet,” he said. He was a tall, willowy man who was unfailingly kind to everyone working below him. I wondered how he managed to still run such a competent kitchen.

“I know, I just heard it from Devi Megha.” Despite my long-ago evasion of her sewing lessons, my old tutor had warmed to me over time. “I wanted to tell you first, to be sure you had enough notice.”

“Whose wedding?” he asked.

“The chief of Singapura’s son is to marry Devi Megha’s niece.” The marriage had been arranged over ten years ago when the son was still quite young, but the chief had recently begun making noise that he was unhappy with his grant of land and wanted more. My father had offered him a great celebration in the capital to avoid conflict breaking out. The kingdom was constantly engaged in a balancing act, keeping the men who governed its towns and villages happy without allowing them to come into dispute with one another. Of course, I did not say any of this to the cook. “I do not know how many people will be in attendance, but I believe it will be an outdoor celebration, monsoons willing.”

I came back the next week, bearing information from Megha. “Her niece prefers milk sweets,” I said. “And the chief has a sensitive stomach.”

The cook frowned. “I can prepare a separate dish for him.”

The point of this wedding was to soothe the chief’s ambitions. It seemed to me that singling him out would make him feel weak, embarrassed. “Perhaps it might be easiest to prepare all the dishes with milder spices instead?”

He clucked his tongue. “A bland dinner will be savored by no one.”

I found the grass-green bond between us, gave it a soothing touch. *You can do this*, I encouraged him. Out loud I said, “It will be a challenge, but you have never failed to impress before.”

His expression became thoughtful. “I suppose I could. Do you know if he is simply sensitive to chili heat, or other foods as well? What about oil?”

“I will find out for you,” I said, giving him a sunny smile, and watched our bond grow stronger before my eyes.

Over those same several weeks, I began readying the guest wing of the palace for heavy use. I took a survey of the rooms with Manthara and another servant, Shilpa.

The palace’s dark stone structure, with its high windows and narrow corridors, did not seem restrictive to me. But I had heard that to some, the rooms felt chilly and unfriendly, and so with my father’s complete ignorance of my activities at my disposal, I set about righting it. Despite their occasional usage, some of the furniture and linens had not been changed in years, and so I spoke to the head tailor, requesting brighter, lighter materials to soften the stone rooms and make them just slightly more hospitable.

I also met with our most skilled weaver, commissioning a fine tapestry for the wall, bearing out my prediction to Megha that I would not need such sewing skills myself. It arrived the night before the chief, and I supervised its hanging myself.

The next morning, I made sure to be present at the chief's arrival, meeting him and accompanying him to his rooms. Manthara had advised me to ask about his journey on the freshly maintained roads connecting Singapura to Kekaya, and the chief was more than happy to oblige, extolling the quality of the work. When we stopped outside his door, he paused to admire the tapestry. "The work is lovely. I believe I have seen this spiral pattern work on the temple of Brahma in the forest near Singapura."

"Thank you," I said, ducking my head so as to appear modest. "The weavers of this city are known for this particular pattern."

"You are a very poised young woman," he said when I took my leave. "Your father must be very proud."

That little shard of praise wrapped itself around my heart, but not as much as what happened at dinner the next evening.

I had just carefully sopped up some curry with a small piece of roti. It was mild, as the cook had promised, but nutty and fragrant with cardamom, the mutton melting like butter on my tongue. Next to me, Yudhajit made a happy noise. "The cook has done so well," he said. "It's not very spicy is it? But you hardly notice."

I said nothing, my gaze flicking up to the high table where my father sat next to the chief. The chief was gesturing to his plate, and my father's eyes connected with mine. He gave me a small smile—so small, I would have thought it was an accident, except he followed it with a brief nod.

My stomach fluttered with happiness, and I looked down at my plate. I knew, logically, that he would go back to ignoring me soon enough, that there would be no words of praise for my machinations. But I could not help my happiness.

After a week of wedding ceremonies and celebrations, the palace went back to normal. I had missed my usual weekly lesson with Yudhajit, but that was a more common occurrence than I would have liked. It had been almost three years since

we started training together, and in those years we had acquired real responsibilities. I even found I had less and less time to take short trips to the cellars, though I had still managed to work my way through every scroll I could hunt down involving magic and meditation.

I slipped down there every so often and wound my way through the shelves, wondering what to read now that I had exhausted all the magic scrolls.

I found myself drawn to the shelf that housed recent stories and histories, and my eyes instantly alighted on one scroll at the top of the pile, with a distinctive border of red vines on the outside. I remembered my mother's slender fingers unrolling it, for she had read it many times.

I opened the scroll, eager for this small scrap of connection, and found at the very top a short note. My breath caught.

My dear Kaikeyi,

I do not have much time to write this. I hope that when you find it, you will also find it in your heart to forgive me. I do not wish to leave any of you, but especially not you, for being a yuvradnyi is no easy task. But I know you are strong, Kaikeyi. Be careful. Remember the lessons of these scrolls. I know you will thrive.

There was no signature, but I did not need one to recognize my mother's elegant hand.

I dashed a hand across my eyes so my tears would not fall on the scroll. For years now, I thought she had left without saying goodbye. But she had thought of me. Believed in me. Told me things she had never said aloud.

After a few moments, I turned my attention to the rest of the scroll, to the story that had so captivated my mother that she had thought to leave a message buried within it. It was the tale of a sage from the southernmost end of Bharat named Gautama who had been blessed by the gods with centuries of longevity, and who had amassed several powerful boons with

his piety besides. He had also won from the gods a prize: the beautiful bride Ahalya.

Brahma had fashioned Ahalya out of water to temper the pride of the apsaras, the dancers in Indra's heavenly court. All the gods wished to have Ahalya, and so Brahma declared that the first god to complete a race around all the worlds would win her hand in marriage. Indra, with his immense power, leapt into his golden chariot. His winged horses pulled him with ease around the heavens, the earth, and the home of the asuras. But when he returned, he found that Gautama was already married to Ahalya. He had walked in prayer around a cow giving birth to a calf, and this was equivalent to all the worlds.

Despite losing, Indra still coveted Ahalya for himself, so he bided his time, until one day Gautama left their home on some errand. Indra took Gautama's form and came to Ahalya, and they lay together. But as the day wore on, Ahalya realized she had been tricked. She begged Indra to leave, for she knew her husband's considerable wrath. It was too late, however, for as the god departed, he ran straight into Gautama.

Gautama recognized immediately what had happened, as he had long known Indra lusted after his wife. He cursed Indra to wear his shame on his skin, covering his visage in lewd markings. When Indra returned to the heavens, Brahma took pity on him and turned those marks into eyes.

But Gautama saved his true wrath for his wife, for he believed she should have known the man at the door was Indra and resisted his advances. With another of his terrible boons, he turned Ahalya to stone and left her alone in their forest home.

The scroll ended there, and I knew there was no redemption for Ahalya—the gods would help Indra but never a woman who had slept with another man. It ate at me, for how was Ahalya to have known? The fault was Indra's from start to finish. Gautama could have chosen to understand and forgive her. But neither gods nor men had such mercy.

I understood too why my mother, living in a cold and forbidding court and exiled by her own husband, would write her missive to me on this particular story. It was a warning.

I took the scroll with me to my room and hid it among my things. I could not stop thinking about Ahalya, doomed to remain a stone statue in a forest, slowly eroding while her husband continued to wander the world. If a woman crafted by the gods themselves could be consigned to this fate, what hope was there for a woman born of a woman? Was that not what my mother had wished for me to know?

I read the scroll enough times to commit it to memory, absorbed in thoughts as overcast as the weather.

Eventually, the season passed and so did my mood. Yudhajit and I took advantage of the firmer ground by fighting particularly hard, beginning with spears and sparring until both our arms burned from effort, our breaths coming short and painful. “Father frets about the harvest from Sakala this year,” Yudhajit said as we slumped against the cool ground, exhausted.

“Why? We have had ample rain.” I plucked a stalk of long grass from the ground and shredded it as I spoke.

“I could not make much sense of it. He talked of blood and of the gods, but what would that have to do with the harvest?”

I closed my eyes and envisioned a map of Kekaya. Sakala was a small farming village on the southwestern border of the kingdom, near the Chandrabhaga River, which was sacred to Vishnu. Something about this pricked the back of my mind. During the rainy seasons, we had received a rare visit from some rich merchants from a town upriver of Sakala. Had I learned something then?

Of course—Manthara. She had told me of a strange event reported by the merchants’ servants as we practiced—the river had split after a torrential downpour, adding a new bend. I hadn’t thought much of it at the time, more focused on striking her shield with my sword. But now I said, “Oh!”

“Oh?” Yudhajit asked lazily, rolling to lie in a patch of sunlight.

“The outlying villages all perform animal sacrifice, including Sakala,” I explained. “It’s one of the few customs that Father has allowed them to keep, even after the sages declared the practice to be barbaric and contrary to the wishes of the gods. The village must not have realized that the new split of the Chandrabagha River runs right to them. Perhaps when they sacrificed their animals, some of the blood ran into the flooded river, offending Vishnu, as the sages had warned.”

The color drained from Yudhajit’s face. I understood his fear. Vishnu was among the most powerful gods. In his immortal form, he could turn fields to ash with only a thought. Just as the gods regularly answered the prayers of the pious, so too did they often visit destruction on those who they deemed immoral.

“What is Father to do about it, then?” Yudhajit had only recently been allowed into the Mantri Parishad. He often told me of their discussions, and we tried to find ways for him to prove himself to the others.

“Pray to Vishnu?” I phrased my words as a question, for I did not actually know the answer. “Perhaps if the people of Sakala make an elaborate offering, or—they could hold a Yagna! It would likely bankrupt the village, but that would surely appease Vishnu.”

Yudhajit hummed thoughtfully, then threw a loose fistful of dirt at me. I supposed that meant *thank you*.

The thick, royal blue rope between us was so full and solid it seemed nearly made of metal. I could sense my brother plain as sunlight. It was difficult for Yudhajit to admit that I had a talent for matters of governance. To him, the throne was merely another tiresome responsibility. He knew well how to navigate the court and create spectacles but hated the intricacies that kept the kingdom running, the ones that I navigated as easily as I did the Binding Plane. Yudhajit liked to make fun of me for it, teasing me for how enthusiastically I

threw myself into studies of history and administration.

“Ashvin is falling behind, have you noticed?” Yudhajit interrupted my daydreaming.

I pushed myself up onto my elbows. He had spoken quite casually, but this was not a casual matter. “Falling behind? In what?”

“Mostly his physical studies. He used to be a decent archer, but now he’s merely passable, and he’s not progressing at all in swordplay or riding.”

“I hadn’t noticed,” I said, dismayed. I was rarely allowed out onto the practice field where my brothers trained. And Ashvin was the quietest of my brothers and least likely to complain.

“You don’t have to notice everything on your own.” Yudhajit sat upright so he could face me. “That’s why you have me. Should I talk to him?”

Ashvin had come down with a fever two moons ago and complained of pain so great that two servants carried him down to the deepest cellar and submerged him in the coolest bath they could draw. He had seemed to recover—but perhaps he hadn’t, not fully. “I think it might be better if I speak to him,” I said.

“If you insist.” Yudhajit glanced up at the sky, noting the position of the sun. “Kaikeyi! We should go.”

I collected and wrapped the spears and secured them to Yudhajit’s horse. Despite my protests and attempts to kick him, he lifted me up onto mine, then mounted his in an easy motion.

“Race you back?” he asked.

“That’s not fair, I have to let you win. Nobody can catch me riding at such an unladylike speed.”

“I’ll race you to the top of the first hill then,” he said, smiling at me. I knew that smile worked wonders on all the court ladies, but I merely rolled my eyes.

“What will you give me if I win?” I asked.

“My undying love and affection?”

I snorted and spurred my horse. “I already have that!” I shouted over my shoulder as Yudhajit cursed at me.

My brothers adored me. But, now that Yudhajit had mentioned it, it occurred to me that Ashvin had not chosen to spend much time with me since his illness. I lingered by the stables, thinking I might speak to him after his riding practice, but was told he had missed it entirely. So I went instead to his rooms, and found him reclined on his cot, reading.

“What?” he asked sullenly when I entered the room. Out of all my brothers besides Yudhajit, Ashvin usually looked the most like me. But his small nose and tapered chin had become sunken over the past few months, giving him a sickly appearance that his shoulder-length curtain of black hair could not hide. Ashvin acted nothing like how I would have behaved had I had the privilege of being a boy, but then again, most boys knew nothing of their incredible luck. Instead of immersing himself in his weapons training or speaking his mind when invited to by my father, he always tried to shrink into the shadows and avoided the outdoors and the training fields whenever he could.

“How are your riding lessons going?” I kept my voice deliberately light and didn’t look at him, instead moving to the paper window. He would wilt under too much attention.

“Fine.”

“And your swordplay? How is it progressing?” I pressed.

“Fine.”

“That’s not what I’ve heard,” I said gently, lowering myself to the edge of his bed.

He shrunk away from me ever so slightly.

“I think I will be dismissing your instructor. Clearly he is not doing a good job.”

“No!” Ashvin protested, showing more emotion than he had for our whole conversation.

I hid a smile. “No? We cannot have you falling behind.”

“It’s not his fault,” Ashvin whispered, almost to himself. I stayed silent, waiting and—

“I can’t do it.”

“Do what?” I asked.

He hung his head, and I clenched my fingers to stop myself from stroking his hair. It would only embarrass him. Instead, I found our bond, a strong white sinew, and sent him the lightest of suggestions. *Tell me.*

Ashvin sighed. “Ride. Or hold a sword properly. My elbows and my knees—” He stopped.

“Take your time,” I said.

Ashvin shifted slightly. “They hurt. Ever since I got sick, they hurt all the time and even more when I’m in the practice yard.”

“I see.” At last I turned toward Ashvin. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

“I thought it would get better,” he said. The admission clearly bothered him. “What’s wrong with me?”

“I don’t know.” To Ashvin, false vows were worse than worrisome truths. He hated the usual childhood promise that *everything will be fine*. “But I will speak to the healers. This is a side effect of some of the worst fevers; you are not alone. I think they have herbs and exercises that have helped others. They can help you.”

“No,” he said instantly.

“No?” I asked. “They can ease your pain.”

“I don’t want anyone else to know. Besides, I hate training. I hate warfare and anything to do with it. Please, didi, don’t tell them,” he begged. *Didi* simply meant elder sister. But even

though he had used it as a term of endearment, to manipulate me, the word still filled me with warmth. The white cord between us thrummed.

“Have you always hated it?” I asked. “Or is this only because of the pain?”

“Don’t act like I’m stupid,” he said, turning away from me.

“Okay,” I relented. “You really hate it. You can’t abandon it altogether, but perhaps we can tell people you have taken an interest in healing and wish to pursue that. It’s an important profession, and as the fourth-born, you would be allowed that path.”

Ashvin’s eyes widened. “I never thought of that.”

“You’re eleven. I’m sixteen,” I reminded him, and finally gave in to the urge to ruffle his hair. He squirmed away from me, but I did not care, pleased with myself and my solution. “Besides, that’s why I’m here.”

When I received the summons to my father’s private rooms, I assumed it was to discuss Ashvin’s new placement. I silently rehearsed my reasons for the decision as I navigated the halls, and mentally prepared myself to try to use the thin, slippery string between us to bring him around.

But when I pushed open the door, ready for battle, I stopped short in surprise. My father and Yudhajit were seated together at a small table, papers fanned out before them. The high window and the squat flickering lamps placed in the wall niches did nothing to ease the coldness emanating from the room.

“Kaikeyi,” Yudhajit said, smiling at me. It did not reach his eyes.

Dread pooled in my belly. The blue cord that connected Yudhajit and me in the Binding Plane vibrated a warning, and I imagined I could feel the thrum extend into my heart, sending a jolt through my limbs.

“Ah, Kaikeyi, thank you for joining us.” My father did not

sound grateful at all and did not lift his gaze from the letters in front of him. “Have a seat.”

I obeyed, perching on a low wooden stool. My father’s spare style did not even extend to his own comfort, although he did use a small footrest. When it became apparent he would not immediately speak, I drew a letter toward me. It was a flowery missive, extolling the virtues of some chieftain’s son. My stomach flipped in awful anticipation as I read about the young man’s skills in hunting and his fairness when adjudicating disputes among the clan. And there it was, right at the end: *the honor of your daughter’s hand*.

Panic shot through me. I shoved the missive away from me. Only Yudhajit’s quick reflexes stopped it from flying off the table.

Stay calm, he mouthed. I took a deep breath to keep myself from leaning across the table and shaking him. Calm? Father had summoned me here to discuss marriage.

Although I knew in a removed way that I would one day be wed, I could not believe it was happening now. Was I supposed to be eager for this? I felt no desire to take a man as a husband, to share a bed or a life with him. I had always assumed that I had more time to prepare myself—that it would come later, when I was older.

As if reading my thoughts, my father said, “You are already sixteen, and it is time to speak of your marriage, Kaikeyi.” He finally lifted his head to look at me. “I should have arranged it years ago, but I thought your brothers needed you here, in your mother’s place.”

“They still need me,” I protested. My voice sounded high, girlish. “I just helped Ashvin with—”

“But now I’ve realized your influence is making them soft,” he interrupted coldly. “And we cannot postpone the matter of your marriage any longer. Our kingdom needs to make new alliances.”

“Please,” I began, but Yudhajit jerked his head at me and I

swallowed my words. Instead, I plucked at the fragile thread between me and my father. I did not apply too much pressure, for fear it would break, even though a large part of me wanted to cut our bond straight in two.

“You bear the name of our kingdom,” my father said. He seemed to soften as the thread between us quivered under my influence. “You are the first of your name and it is your duty to represent Kekaya. We are struggling. We need alliances. And you cannot stay here forever.”

I bowed my head. I knew what small scraps he gave me were poor attempts at manipulation. He did not even care enough to put real effort into it. These pretty words about firsts and duty were only there to make me compliant.

When I stayed silent, he sighed. “These are the proposals we have received so far. Once we make it publicly known that you are ready, more will arrive—”

“I want a swayamvara,” I said immediately, then clapped a hand over my mouth. I had interrupted my father. For all my newfound sense of self-worth, I was still his daughter. I had broken every rule of decorum and protocol.

Anger clouded my father’s features. “Don’t you—”

“It’s a good idea,” Yudhajit said hastily. Gratitude flooded through me. I could rely on him blindly, without even going to the Binding Plane. “A swayamvara will bring attention to Kekaya. Such a contest for a woman’s hand is only hosted by great kingdoms, and it can secure our place among them. And Kaikeyi will be able to pick a match among the best contestants, so she will not have to marry a man she has never met. Everyone will be happy.”

I prayed for the possibility, however remote, that our father’s love for Yudhajit might distract him from his anger, convince him of this plan. Yudhajit’s hands were clasped, knuckles turning white. I realized he was praying too. The gods never listened to me, but perhaps they would bend for my brother. My father stared at Yudhajit for a long minute, and I

held myself as still as possible, hoping to escape attention.

Finally, Raja Ashwapati nodded. “You make intelligent points, Yudhajit. You have a fine head on your shoulders.”

“Thank you, Father,” Yudhajit said. My father flapped a hand toward me, and I rose, thus dismissed from the preparations for my own engagement.

Yudhajit said little, leading us out past the hilly fields and into the cool forest. Unlike the densely wooded land south of Kekaya, the growth here was sparse and the brush presented little obstacle. There was no large game to be found among the trees, so hardly anyone ventured out here, giving us near total privacy. The only sounds were the thin cries of birds. For the first time, I wondered what it was they were saying.

I went to remove the weapons from his saddlebag, but he shook his head.

“Come sit,” he said. I sat beside him on the slightly damp earth, leaning against rough bark and drawing my knees close to my chest. I took several slow breaths, enjoying the sharper scent of the air here. Yudhajit was silent, which was unusual. Just when I entered the Plane intending to suggest that he *speak*, he gave a small sigh.

“It will be a contest of strength,” Yudhajit told me, turning so that his shoulder was against the trunk and he was facing me.

I groaned at his admission, but in truth I had not expected any less. Cleverness or charity were not much prized in a kingdom such as ours. Besides, while a swayamvara supposedly allowed a bride to pick among her suitors after they showed their skills in competition, in reality the bride’s father always made clear which options were truly suitable.

But it was still better than having no choice at all. “How long do I have?”

“One year.”

“Don’t jest,” I said. “How bad is it, really? A moon? A

fortnight? Be honest.”

“I am being honest. I convinced him that one year was the best option, that it would give us time to arrange a truly spectacular contest and ensure that the most powerful princes accepted our invitation. The young prince of Gandhara will certainly come—they have been seeking an alliance with us for some time. The Kambojas should send a delegation. Even Kosala might come.”

Yudhajit took my hand, traced the lines of my palm with a finger. As young children, we had pretended to be soothsayers, reading each other’s palms and mapping ludicrous futures. In hindsight, the stories he created for me were nowhere near absurd enough to describe the catastrophe of my life, but I had no way of knowing it then.

“A year,” I breathed, nearly unable to comprehend the words. The litany of kingdoms, all powerful and important potential allies, did not excite me nearly as much as the gift that was time.

“And a choice—or at least more than you would have had,” Yudhajit said. My heart surged and I tackled him into the dirt, embracing him.

“Thank you! Thank you, *thank you*, you are my favorite brother.”

“Obviously,” Yudhajit scoffed. “Who else would it be? Shantanu?”

“Ashvin,” I said, rolling off to lie next to him in the dirt. “Ashvin is next.”

“Of course. Our strangest brother.”

“And who is your favorite brother?” I guessed, “Mohan?”

“You’re my favorite,” he said, sitting up and brushing himself off.

I remained on the ground, content. “I’m not your brother.”

“You wrestle in the dirt, you like weapons and fast horses,

you're smart," Yudhajit listed off. "I'd say you're more man than woman."

I rolled my eyes. "That's idiotic. Women can be all of those things. Intelligence doesn't make me less of a woman, and I would think that you knew that." The contentment faded. His words hurt, more than I could tell him.

"Don't take offense," Yudhajit said. "It's a compliment. Who wants to be a woman?"

The words were callous, careless, a joke. He was my brother, my twin, and I thought at the very least he believed me his equal. I had fooled myself into thinking I could be an exception, an intelligent woman in control of her own destiny. That he saw me that way too.

But now I was to be married off, and he would be a king.

For now, though, I was still his twin. I took his hand when he offered it, let him haul me up from the dirt, and walked with him shoulder to shoulder to our horses.

CHAPTER SEVEN



I RETURNED MANY TIMES to my mother's note, to Ahalya's story, and dreamed of finding a man who might allow me some measure of power. Of possessing more control than my mother had been granted. This hope made the idea of marriage seem easier to tolerate, and I made my peace with it. Perhaps I would only understand its pleasures once I was married. And a swayamvara—some measure of choice—was something to be savored.

Manthara was the only person I told of my impending marriage, well before my father announced the plan to the greater court.

"I don't mind the thought of a husband, but I wish to be a person my husband will *listen* to. How do I accomplish that?"

She cocked her head at me. "What do you want him to listen to you about?"

It was a hard question, for my future plans were so half-formed I could not articulate them. "I want to live my life freely," I said at last, and that much was true. "I do not want the life my mother had."

"That is more a matter of choosing the right husband." There may have been a time when Manthara watched her words around me, but it was long gone.

"Still," I said. "You have been preparing me for years. Certainly, you know what I must do."

"You're already doing it," she said. "Learn to run a palace and a household. And be irreplaceable."

I took her words to heart. And I returned fully to the Binding Plane.

I did not need to force anyone to do things against their will and put myself, or them, at risk. My relationship with Neeti had never recovered. She turned away from me in the halls, glared at me when nobody else was looking. Instead, I used my connections to solicit information. Rather than aiming to accomplish particular small goals, I used my connections now at random. I would often enter the Binding Plane without even realizing it, grasping my bond with a servant or minor noble and tugging to ask, *Do you have something to tell the princess?* One of the servants would tell me, “I think Arya Karan is ill.” The next time Karan’s cousin approached me at court, I would inquire about Arya Karan’s health. My bonds within the palace increased in number and strength. This was armor of a different kind.

I sat with Manthara in the evenings, trying to work out how to manage it all. “I want to oversee Rahul’s training tomorrow, as he was complaining about his instructor at dinner. And some of the ladies have invited me to a gathering, but I wonder whether it will be completely frivolous. Might I offend them if I do not go? Because there is to be an offering to the gods in the main square of the city at the end of the week, and I want to talk to some of the servants to make sure the preparations are moving smoothly.”

“You do not need to attend the gathering,” Manthara told me. “They want to discuss suitable matches for some of the younger nobles—you were invited as a courtesy.”

“I can go to Rahul’s lessons directly after my tutoring, then, and speak to the servants in the evening.”

“Are you even learning anything in your lessons anymore?” Manthara asked. “Surely you can read and write better than your tutors.”

My tutors did not even glance at my work. But I liked having the time to sit and read old texts and scrolls and write my thoughts, to learn new stories and histories and to think

without interruption.

Similarly, my lessons with Yudhajit were no longer about new skills, but to hone my abilities. This had another purpose too. Through him, I could absorb as much information about the council and the men's work as possible.

But one evening, Yudhajit came to find me outside of our scheduled lessons, a nervous expression on his face. Before he even opened his mouth, I could tell he was about to shatter my fragile acceptance of my fate.

"Father's doing *what*?" I shoved Yudhajit into my room, slamming the door behind me.

Yudhajit raised his hands in surrender. "I'm sorry, I only just learned. I thought you would want to know right away."

"Did you say anything to him? Did you tell him it was a stupid idea?" I kicked my bed, hard, biting down a yelp of pain as my foot began to throb.

Yudhajit winced and backed away. "No."

I pushed air through my lungs, in, out, in, out, until my fists stopped trembling. I could not—should not—punch my brother, heir to Kekaya.

"So, you have some sort of plan, then?" Rage made the Binding Plane hard to summon, so in my mind I returned to the old meditation guide, reciting the mantra to find it. When the blue bond between us finally appeared, it throbbed with wild energy, resembling a skipping rope turned by two uncoordinated and excitable children. I let it slip away at once, conscious of my roiling emotions.

Yudhajit turned away and pressed his forehead against the door. He mumbled something that I couldn't make out.

"What was that?"

"I said, I don't think it's a stupid idea." He looked over his shoulder at me, but whatever expression I made must have frightened him, because he quickly dropped his head back against the door.

“I think I misheard you,” I said after a moment, grinding the words out through my bared teeth. “Unless you meant to say that it is worse than stupid?”

Yudhajit shook his head. “I know you were promised a swayamvara. And I meant to see it through. But things are changing quickly. The harvests were terrible this year. We can barely find the coin for a swayamvara, let alone the full spectacle other kingdoms will expect of us. And the dowry would have to be immense. It can’t happen the way you wanted, Kaikeyi. You need to get married soon,” he said. “The bride price that they have asked is manageable, and Kosala is so prosperous that this alliance should improve Kekaya’s situation. Raja Dasharath himself is respectable and—”

“*You’re* not married,” I countered.

“I’m not a woman,” Yudhajit snapped, turning around. “You have a responsibility to your family.”

“I have fulfilled the duties of the woman of the household,” I all but shouted at him. “I raised our brothers. I have helped make our court one that is widely known, admired even, in our region. Please, tell me how I have not yet fulfilled my responsibility to my family.”

“You—”

“No,” I cut him off. In that moment, I hated him. “I will not be lectured on my responsibility by you. What have *you* done for this kingdom?”

“One day, I will be the raja,” he said, as if that in and of itself was an achievement rather than a birthright. “This is a good match for you, Kaikeyi. You will be a radnyi.”

“What a burden to be raja,” I spat out. A deep, visceral anger had taken over my being. I could not believe he had the gall to act as though he knew best for me. “If I marry him, I will be his third radnyi, and the youngest. He has asked for me because he remains childless.” I shook my head, unable to meet my brother’s eyes. There were some things I could not share even with him, and my tangled knot of feelings about

motherhood was one of them. “Everyone knows he wants a son. What does he believe? That Mother was fertile, so I must be too?”

“Is that so bad?”

“How can you be fine with consigning me to life as nothing but a brood mare? You’re my brother, Yudhajit! You’re my brother.” I blinked back hot tears.

“It won’t be like that. You will be radnyi of a great kingdom,” Yudhajit said. He took a step toward me. “It is a great honor. Even when planning the swayamvara, we did not believe Dasharath would seek your hand. Kosala is a greater kingdom than ours, perhaps the greatest Bharat knows. It has the most fertile land, the most powerful army. Just think. One day your son could have that.”

I knew rationally that Dasharath was an honorable match for me and, more importantly, my family. And yet—

“I wanted to have a choice,” I said softly. “My swayamvara is only two months away. Surely, we can wait. I will at least be able to meet the men, pick among those who complete the task, have some control over my future.”

Yudhajit snorted. “Did you really believe that at the swayamvara Father would let you have any choice among your suitors? None of us have a real choice. My first marriage has been arranged since I was seven years old. As a third wife, you may not have power, but you will have freedom.”

I shook my head. What a fool he was, believing that some small portion of freedom was a better prize than power. “You don’t understand. You’re not a woman.”

“Perhaps not,” Yudhajit said. “But I understand you, Kaikeyi. This is best.”

“I know what’s best for me, not you, not Father, not anybody,” I snapped. “Do not force me to go through with this!”

“I’m not forcing you to do anything. Father has made this

choice. I am simply trying to counsel you in this matter.”

“I don’t need your counsel.” I met his gaze squarely. “In fact, I don’t need you at all.”

Yudhajit reared back as if I had slapped him. Bitter satisfaction flowed through my veins as the cord connecting us, once full and vibrant—the strongest bond I had in the Binding Plane—began to wither like a dying flower. “You’ve always needed me. But the truth is I’ve only ever had myself.” It wasn’t true, not exactly, but I knew how to hurt him and so I did.

Yudhajit just stared at me, eyes wide.

“Get out of my room.”

He blinked. I saw a tear upon his eyelashes. Another blink, it rolled down his face. He scrubbed at his eyes with the heels of his hands and looked back up at me, pleadingly. Our bond, now a delicate thing, quivered.

“I said, get out.”

He went.

The next morning, several attendants were sent to my room to prepare me for court. I felt numb as I watched them unfold my sari, a bejeweled length of shining red silk adorned with delicate blossoms of gold. They wrapped it around me, the material surprisingly soft, although the regimented fan of knife-like pleats restricted my movements far more than I would have liked.

They pulled my dark hair back, coiling and pinning and coiling and pinning until it sat in a heavy bun against my nape, then covered it with one end of the sari cloth, leaving only a few strands free to frame my face.

They laid an ornate ruby necklace around my throat in an attempt to draw attention away from my too-wide shoulders. Its gold links were studded intermittently with small red stones, and the large gem in the center gleamed like a drop of blood against my collarbone. I was grateful for the years of

training that allowed me to stand tall beneath its weight. A delicate gold pendant hung down onto my forehead, all of Kekaya's supposed riches now on display for this mighty raja.

They applied rose water to my wrists and dark kohl to my eyes and painted my lips in a sticky red dye. I had to remind myself every few seconds not to rub the heaviness from my face.

When I looked in the mirror, I was surprised that I could still recognize myself. But all of my features were slightly altered, my eyes larger, my mouth more... noticeable. The drape of the sari pallu brought out my curves. For previous appearances at feasts and important occasions, I had been dressed well, but as one would dress a child, with little face paint and simple jewelry. But now—I looked like the other noblewomen of the court. And, with a jolt, I realized I looked a bit like my mother. She had been considered very beautiful, and I could see that maybe, accentuated by all this finery, I could be too.

I would not want to look like this every day. But it was nice, if strange, to see this other version of me.

I walked to the court accompanied by two guards, my chin lifted in a passable imitation of a radnyi. The finery gave me confidence to face whatever came next, like a thin layer of armor between me and the world.

A herald announced my entrance to the throne room, and I swept in with all the grace I could muster, avoiding the urge to look to the various nobles who lined the walls to gauge their reaction to my new appearance.

My father stood upon my arrival, as did the stranger next to him. I checked the cord connecting Yudhajit and me and found it recovered from yesterday. But it had undoubtedly diminished. I forced myself to look away from my twin and instead turned to the foreign man.

The first thing I noticed was that he was much younger than my father, and I might have sagged in relief. My lips

quirked upward before I could stop my reaction, and his own mouth twitched in response. He was watching me intently, spine straight as a spear. I saw something in his expression, a ferocity, that I recognized as kin. But with a belated start, I realized everyone was waiting for me as I studied this man. I pressed my hands together and bowed to my father, and then to Raja Dasharath, my husband-to-be.

My father extolled the accomplishments of the fair-haired king, speaking not to me but to the assembled court. I barely paid attention to his words.

My conversation with Yudhajit had made clear one thing. If I wanted power, I would have to take it. And after spending half the night tossing sleeplessly, I thought I knew how.

Raja Dasharath was childless, and he needed me to give him a child.

“And, if you are amenable,” my father concluded, “I will provide my blessing for the marriage and you will be wed in a fortnight.”

If you are amenable. I knew the words he expected me to say, the expressions of gratitude and the praises of Dasharath, the acceptance of the marriage.

All I had to do now was make one simple request. One simple, improper request.

I turned to the man in question and asked, “You would have me as your third wife?”

If he was surprised at my forthrightness, it did not show on his face. But in the Binding Plane, a golden bond spun into existence between us.

“Yes, my lady.” His reaction gave me the confidence to continue.

“And you are thus far without child?” I asked.

He leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees, but his calm expression gave nothing away. “Yes, my lady.”

“I would accept your proposal of marriage, but on one condition.” I kept my gaze on his, my shoulders back, my chin high. I could not take back the words now.

“I will consider it,” he said. Was that a smile playing on his lips?

I took a deep, steadying breath. “If I should bear you a son, he will be named your heir, regardless of any other sons you may have in the future. I may be your third wife, but my child will be first.” As I spoke, I fed the idea into our golden connection as well.

My eyes stayed fixed on Dasharath, for I was too afraid to look at my father and see his rage and disappointment. There was every chance that Dasharath would refuse, and that I had made a fool of our entire kingdom. I could not even fathom what would become of me then.

My clasped hands grew damp with sweat and I clutched them tightly together so they would not shake. Each beat of my heart sounded in my ears. As the seconds went by, I regretted my decision.

“Done, my lady,” Raja Dasharath said suddenly, rising and descending the steps.

I gave a small gasp, and then, as elation swept through me, I smiled. It was wide—too wide for court—but I could not hide my relief, my happiness. He smiled in return, the corners of his eyes crinkling. In that moment, he looked exceedingly kind.

“Then I am yours.”

Whatever my father had initially thought of my foolhardy scheme, he had only words of praise once the decision was made.

“Our bloodlines will rule and unite two great kingdoms,” he told Ashvin. “She has done well,” he told Shantanu. It was the most genuine praise I had ever received from my father, albeit indirectly, and it was some consolation to know that I would be thought well of in Kekaya after my departure.

Manthara too seemed inordinately pleased at my maneuverings and gave me a crushing hug when she heard the story of my engagement. I knew that Manthara would always act in my best interests. She was the only person in my life I could truly rely on. And so, as the wedding preparations began and I readied myself to leave for the palace in Ayodhya, the capital city of Kosala, I insisted upon bringing her with me. Dasharath easily agreed. He must have been quite desperate for a son.

The only obstacle to my happiness, then, was Yudhajit. We studiously avoided each other, except regarding preparations for the various ceremonies. As the eldest of my brothers, he had duties to perform at the wedding. I did not want to bring dishonor upon the court by requesting that Shantanu act in his stead. Sometimes, in these moments, I thought I saw Yudhajit staring at me out of the corner of my eye, but when I turned toward him, he was never looking my way.

This time passed in a haze. I selected my wedding sari, a dark yellow silk creation with crimson embroidery and precious stones winking in swirls along the blouse. I conspired with the head cook over the menu, the two of us ensuring there were as many desserts as courses. I said my goodbyes to the palace staff and spent precious moments with my brothers.

On the day before my wedding, I walked through the halls, committing them to memory. And then, I made a special, final pilgrimage to the library cellar.

The scant light and strange stone shadows had made the room seem immense to me as a child, but now I could cross the room in twenty paces. I spent a full hour wandering there, running my hands down the rows of scrolls, trying to embed the most important place in the palace into my mind. I closed my eyes and tried to remember the feel of sitting next to my mother in the quiet corner. Her message to me, Ahalya's story, remained safely tucked among the few possessions I would bring to Ayodhya.

I emerged into the waning day.

Alone, I took one last ride on my favorite horse, a powerful gray mare who would not be making the journey southeast with me. When I reached the hilltop where Yudhajit and I had raced so many times, I watched the sun sink slowly away. From this height, I could just barely make out the stables. And if I closed my eyes, my heart remembered the feel of running through the grounds with my brothers, of sparring with Yudhajit and lying in the grasses talking for hours. I wished I could capture the feeling somehow, etch it into my bones so I would have it always.

That night, I lay in my near-empty room and stared up at the ceiling.

It occurred to me, as it often did while I waited for sleep to take me, that maybe the gods had marked me for my mother's sins. Sons could not be held responsible for maternal sins, but daughters? My mother had told me to remember Ahalya's lesson. Nothing protected me.

I was surprised to feel hot tears pricking my eyes. I blinked them away, helplessly infuriated. My mother should have been here. I needed her comfort and guidance. Manthara had helped me through my first moon cycle, and more recently had explained the mechanics of the acts Dasharath would expect from me, but she had never actually been married. If Manthara had done such things herself, she could never say, and so I could not ask her my real questions. But perhaps I could have asked my mother: Did you feel the same disinterest contemplating such matters as I did?

For when I thought about the acts Manthara described, or when I studied the illustrations in some of the more well-hidden recesses of the library, I felt only indifference. I had heard serving girls talk in whispers and giggles about men they found charming, or how it felt to steal a covert kiss with their betrothed. I thought of Dasharath and searched for the same desire within myself, but nothing ever emerged.

The faintest of knocks sounded against my door, disturbing me from my thoughts. I held my breath, wondering if perhaps

I had imagined it. But the knock came again. I slid out of bed, padded to the door, raised my hand, and then hesitated.

In all likelihood, Yudhajit stood on the other side. We had a secret signal. I would tap it out—four beats, a pause, four beats, then he would tap out a pattern of three beats with an emphasis on the last. But I did not know if I wanted to face Yudhajit right now.

Maybe he had come to apologize. Maybe I still had a chance to leave him on good terms. I rapped out the pattern, and he immediately knocked his reply. I opened the door a crack. He stepped inside and closed the door behind him.

I crossed my arms, trying my best to keep my face impassive.

“Why are you here?”

“It’s the night before your wedding!”

“It’s the night before a wedding you pushed me into,” I reminded him coldly. “This night is your fault.”

“Kaikeyi, you can’t hold this against *me*.”

“I can and I will. It may not have been by your hand, but your silent agreement is just as bad. Had you stood with me as you promised, the both of us might have changed Father’s mind.”

Yudhajit frowned. “I thought perhaps the past few weeks would have cleared your head. I prayed to the goddesses that you might realize your folly. But no. Do you really think either of us, or even both of us together, could have changed his mind? I was being reasonable. As you should’ve been.”

Taking two steps back, moving as far away from Yudhajit as possible, I slipped into the Binding Plane. Once again, our diminished bond vibrated with angry energy, but today I was beyond caring. He had not come to apologize. He had not even bothered to see it through my eyes. “You think he is more reasonable than I am?”

“No! I mean, yes. But, Kaikeyi, *think*. You’re leaving.

Whether now or later, you were always going to go away, to leave me. I have to live with Father, stay in his graces. You can't understand. When he asked me if I thought Dasharath was a good match, I encouraged it. For *you*. He is a good man. He will take care of you."

"You encouraged it?" There was a familiar coldness in my voice, a tone that belonged not to me but to my father.

"I thought it was your best choice," he said quietly.

"But I didn't choose. You chose! That's not a choice."

"You're not the only person in this palace."

I groaned in disgust. "You sold me for what? A few peaceful months with Father?"

"This is all going wrong," he said. He sighed and moved to sit on my bed, but I stood in his way. He hung his head. "I came here to make things right. Before you left."

"Congratulations on another job well done." I pushed as much venom into my voice as I could. Yudhajit flinched. *Good*. "What you did is unforgivable. You will perform the rites at my wedding tomorrow and then we need never see each other again."

"Please, Kaikeyi, I didn't mean—" The thread between us shook with such emotion it was almost a blur. I tried to catch it with my mind, to still it somehow and force Yudhajit to see reason, but it slipped through my uncoordinated grasps.

"Leave, Yudhajit. This time, I mean it. I cannot wait until the moment we never have to see each other again."

"I did what I thought was best." He reached for my hand, squeezing it. I yanked it away.

"Go, now. I'll be someone else's problem soon enough."

"I do love you," he said sadly. "You'll always be my sister."

As though from far away, I heard myself say those poisoned words: "You are no brother of mine." Without my

conscious thought, the idea passed through our dark blue connection, a black disease speeding its way toward my brother's chest with the force of a piercing arrow.

My aim struck true. The bond between us shattered, falling in a rain of blue pieces only I could see as Yudhajit fled my room.



CHAPTER EIGHT



THERE ARE THOSE WHO would blame Manthara for what I did, claim that she forced me to take her to Ayodhya and manipulated me from there. But my choices were my own, and to pull Manthara's name down with mine would be quite simply cruel. Because without Manthara's continued presence by my side, I would never have ridden off to battle or saved the king, and Kosala would have fallen, heirless, into the depths of time.

My first impression of Ayodhya was one of beauty. The sight of the palace and the grounds completely arrested me. A lush expanse of greenery sprawled to the edges of the walls, dotted with gracefully curving paths, framed by a rich profusion of flowers. Their fragrance perfumed the air, rose and jasmine mingling into a gentle and welcoming scent. It was a marked change from the tall grasses and simple, unadorned lawns of Kekaya. Before me, the palace rose upward, constructed out of light gray stone that glinted here and there in the light as though infused with gems. It was crowned by a curved dome that pointed toward the sky, proclaiming Ayodhya's power for all to see.

And the size—the grounds stretched outward, extending like an unfurled flower. A series of delicate open arches surrounded the interior of the palace, lending the structure depth. I took a few steps closer and was able to make out intricate carvings above the arches, patterns of intertwined stars and moons. Above the arches, I could see large windows covered in paper that must have let in much light during the day. Now I could understand why others had found my old home, with its dull stone and stark decoration, dark and

foreboding. Just the sight of this place lightened my spirits.

“Do you like it?” Dasharath asked, smiling at me.

I nodded eagerly. “It’s incredible.”

I followed behind him in a daze, reveling in the tapestry-covered halls. In Kekaya, the fashion had been black figures patterned against a single color, when tapestries were hung at all. But here, it was all I could do not to stop and stare at each of the colorful scenes laid out in the weavings before me.

One was done in such vibrant hues of blue and green that I had to pause to look more closely. It was an image of a great fish pulling a boat, and I recognized the story of Matsya and Manu. Manu was a young man, a chief of a tribe, when he discovered a small fish in his drinking water—Matsya. Manu was a kind man, and when Matsya spoke of his fear of being eaten by bigger fish, Manu offered his protection. When the fish grew large enough to be safe, Manu released Matsya into a river. Before he left, Matsya instructed Manu to build a boat and board it on an appointed day. No sooner had Manu finished the boat and ushered his family onto it than a great flood swept through the land, destroying all in its path. But Matsya returned to Manu, carrying him to the safety of the Indra Mountains until the waters had receded. There, Matsya revealed his true form—for he was no ordinary fish, but an avatar of Lord Vishnu come to earth, and he was rewarding Manu for his kindness. It was fitting to see this tapestry here, for legend tells that when Manu descended from the mountains, he founded the first city of men—Ayodhya.

“It’s one of my favorite stories,” Dasharath said, coming to stand beside me. “The story of our city.”

“I used to love it as a child.” I suddenly wished to tell him about the library cellar, about sitting in the flickering light with my mother and reading through scrolls, but I found myself unable to share this piece of me. Still, our golden bond seemed to sparkle a bit more brightly.

“Are there other stories you enjoyed? We could have a

tapestry made for you,” he offered. I shook my head, for I was far too overwhelmed to think up other tales I might want to see. But it was a kind offer, and I was glad for his kindness.

Dasharath walked slowly after that, letting me take in the sights, until we arrived at the left wing of the palace. Fresh garlands of small white mogra hung from the walls, enveloping the whole corridor in sweetness. I wondered if this was how the halls were adorned every day, or if they had made special preparations for my arrival.

My husband threw open the doors of a vast chamber with a great papered window on the opposite wall that let light into all corners. It was a strange living space, though, for I could see no bed. As I hesitated, fumbling for what to say, Dasharath said, “Do you not wish to see the rest?”

“The rest?” I echoed, and he beckoned me inward. I realized only then, stupidly perhaps, that there were carved doors set in the walls on either side of us. The one on the left opened onto another spacious chamber, dominated by a great bed that four people easily could have slept on. A covering of dark red wool warmed the floor, and an exquisite wooden cabinet inlaid with intricate swirls of mother-of-pearl stood against the wall. I touched the decoration with my fingertips, tracing the carved vines and flowers.

“Do you like it?” he asked.

“It is beautiful,” I said, unable to wrench my gaze away.

“Not unlike you, then.” His voice was filled with a quality entirely foreign to me. I turned to look at him, but he was already striding past me, through the main room and onto the other side. There he revealed a small chamber mostly taken up by a table and cushioned seating.

“If there is anything you need, you can ask any of our servants.” He sounded—nervous? Or perhaps impatient.

“Thank you, my lord,” I said with a bow. “You honor me. I am sure you have more important matters to attend to.”

“The happiness of my wife is one of the most important

matters I can think of.” He gave me a small smile. “I will leave you now, but not for long.”

Manthara was waiting outside of the door, only entering when Dasharath had departed. I went back into the bed chamber, marveling at the space, while she examined every nook and sill. “He has done well,” she said at last. “Now I must find some maidservants to help you prepare. Of course, you will have to choose your own staff eventually...”

Manthara bustled about, talking of preparations, as I sat and pondered what this new life might have to offer.

The next morning, Manthara and I set ourselves to the task of turning my quarters into a living space. My belongings had been moved into the room, and as Manthara unpacked, I cast a critical eye over each item I had brought, having taken in the opulence of Dasharath’s court. All my best outfits appeared frumpy in comparison to the elegant eastern fashions. I tried to recapture my confidence from the day I had been adorned to meet Dasharath—the glimpse of my mother, the assurance to hold my head high—but I could not. I might have been worthy to be a radnyi in Kekaya, but here...

I lifted one blouse, which extended past my waistline. “Not one woman wore a blouse this long,” I said.

“You can get it hemmed,” Manthara answered without looking up from her work. “Or have new ones ordered.”

I picked up one of my favorite saris, a lovely sky blue thing that I secretly had always believed suited me well. “This color is so dull.”

“You have never cared much about such matters before,” Manthara said. “Where is this concern coming from?”

“I never had to worry about whether what I wore was in fashion before,” I replied. “I want the court to like me, not see me as backward.”

“They will like you,” Manthara said as a knock sounded on the door. I liked the sound of it, the solidity of the wood of the door and the slight echo that spoke to the size of my room.

Manthara went to receive the caller while I stood by my bed, still considering what I could wear in the evening's court assembly.

"I apologize, but the radnyi is busy," I heard Manthara say.

"I won't be but a moment." The woman's voice sounded familiar, and I gave up on making a decision, dropping the fabric in a bundle and entering the main room in a plain cream dress, only to find Radnyi Kaushalya.

I panicked and bowed to her, before realizing I did not need to do any such thing, and straightened so abruptly that I stumbled forward a step. My face flushed with heat and Kaushalya's lips twisted into a barely concealed smirk. "Are you all right?" she asked.

"Yes," I whispered, embarrassment making me curt. She lifted a single eyebrow, and I added, "You honor me with your presence. Won't you come inside?"

She stepped into the main room, the scent of sandalwood sweeping in with her, and glanced around.

Kaushalya was Dasharath's first radnyi. She stood a head above me, but her graceful neck and perfect posture made her seem even taller. The drape of her rich orange sari suggested soft, womanly curves, at odds with her sharp bun and cutting cheekbones. Garnets glinted at her throat, setting off her luminous skin. The effect was so lovely that I wished to hide myself behind a curtain to avoid any attempt at comparison between us.

"It's quite bare," she said.

"No different than my rooms back home," I said immediately. Before I could give offense, I hastily added, "But these are much bigger."

Kaushalya turned to look at me, brow furrowed. Somehow even that was elegant. "This is your home now." She sounded kind, but I sensed an undercurrent of disapproval. I bit my tongue, annoyed that somehow every word I had said so far had come out completely wrong. "Do you need assistance?"

Perhaps her offer was genuine, but in that moment, it seemed like a challenge. She believed me a simpleton, a bumbling fool. “No, I am perfectly fine on my own.” I straightened my shoulders and met her eyes.

“I see,” she said. She glanced me up and down, then gave a little half shrug, casting me back into my girlhood and all of my early interactions with the Kekayan court. My cheeks burned. “I suppose you have no need of me, then.” She turned neatly on her heel and departed, leaving me bewildered at the exchange. I entered the Binding Plane and found only a slim wisp of black between us. I grasped it, hoping to leave her with the impression that this conversation had not been a complete disaster, but even the slight brush of my mind against the cord caused it to tremble, and so I withdrew.

I had never been in this position before, where my bonds were so tremulous that I could not even attempt my usual methods of influencing people. I felt small, useless, as though I was twelve years old and without my mother for the first time, unable to comprehend the palace without her.

I soon discovered the same was true for Radnyi Sumitra, who invited me to take my afternoon refreshment in her rooms. I assumed this would be much the same as the gatherings I had attended in Kekaya, with several noblewomen and much gossip. Instead, it was just Sumitra and I perched on delicate chairs, her watching me as I tried not to marvel at her rooms. They were laid out in a similar fashion to mine, but bursting with colorful ornaments, beautifully painted clay lamps, and divans adorned with emerald-colored cushions, all giving the place a full and joyful feeling.

“How have you been settling in?” she asked me. Unlike Kaushalya, Sumitra smelled of rosewater, and her clothing was always in light, pastel shades—today she wore blush. She was a much less intimidating figure, but her easy cheer still set me off-balance.

I gave her a small smile. “Well, and you?”

“I am glad to have you here,” she said. She was only a few

years older than I was but seemed to know so much more. “Do you need anything? I know all of this can be overwhelming at first. Especially for one as young as you.”

I had been with her for all of three minutes and already it felt like she was poking fun at me. Had Kaushalya told her about our first meeting? Did she too think I was some naive yuvradnyi? “I assure you, I am fine.”

“I am happy to introduce you to people, if you would like,” she pressed on.

It would have been so nice to have someone guide me, to tell me who and what I needed to know. And yet, would she not think me weak for admitting so? “Perhaps,” I said, hoping not to seem too eager. I was desperate for her to think of me as independent.

But instead, Sumitra’s brow furrowed briefly before her expression smoothed over. “At your convenience, then.” Her voice had taken on a distance. In the Binding Plane, our silver bond was as wispy as cotton.

It was no better with the other courtiers. I wondered if Kaushalya had spread rumors about me, or if the same things that had made me so off-putting to her were apparent to the rest of the court. I could barely touch any of my new Ayodhyan connections with my mind for fear of accidentally snapping them—they could not be of any real use to me. After a few awkward failed attempts at conversation with even lower nobility, I resigned myself to loneliness. Everyone remained polite, of course, greeting me at court or if they passed me in the corridors, but they did not seek me out or try to gain my favor. Word spread, I am sure, of the strangeness of Dasharath’s new radnyi.

When I was able, I wandered the palace halls, learning my new home as best as I could on my own. I occasionally attended Dasharath’s open courts in the main hall, seated in a balcony with the other women, or skirted the training fields when the men were too engrossed in practice to notice me. I made appearances at celebrations and rituals, observing all of

the rites of the gods, knowing full well it would not help me even in this new land. I attended evening dance performances in the elegant main courtyard, a practice that had been confined to temples in Kekaya, and admired the talent of these men, who floated despite the weight of bells at their ankles, arms extending toward the sky, spinning and leaping as they told wordless stories that made my heart ache. I even tried to search out the library, but the cellars were hard to find in Ayodhya. I discovered one, near the kitchens, but it was filled with food, not scrolls. A servant happened upon me and hovered at my elbow, clearly wishing for me to leave. Fearful I would gain a reputation for being a glutton or a nuisance, I stopped searching.

Dasharath was the only person in Ayodhya I regularly spoke with, other than Manthara, for he summoned me to his rooms at least once a week, save when I was bleeding.

The first time he kissed me, on our wedding night, I had flinched away, and he laughed, presumably finding my strange virgin behavior endearing and amusing. The next time he kissed me, on my third night in Ayodhya, my body bucked involuntarily, and in desperation I had tried to use our cord to stop him. He did not find it endearing the second time. “Surely you cannot be surprised now,” he had said, his voice gentle but firm. “You are the one who wanted a son.” The look on his face worried me, for I needed him at least to like me, and so I held myself stiff but did not move away.

After several weeks in Ayodhya, I had become accustomed enough to his attentions that I had learned to mime the correct response, even though I did not understand why it was necessary. Our bond was not yet strong enough for me to influence or redirect his desires—perhaps it would never be. So I would bear his kissing for a few minutes, and then he would lead me by the hand toward his bed. He would set to my clothes with a brisk efficiency, the pleats of my sari unraveling under his hands as I stood still as a statue. He thought me submissive and meek in the bedroom, but that was better than him sensing my disinterest in the acts he wished to

perform.

“It does not matter what you feel for him,” Manthara had told me, one week before my wedding. “All that matters is what he thinks you feel for him. And perhaps, in time, you will grow to like it.”

“I will never like it,” I had said then.

Manthara had only chuckled. “That matters very little when you are a radnyi.”

And she was right. For although I had no appetite for such things, I pretended to, and he pretended to care about what I felt, using his body and, on a few occasions, his tongue. In a way, I was thankful that I had a kind husband, one who at least wished for my pleasure as well as his. I knew I could have done far worse than this.

And yet, sometimes I found myself wishing that I did care for him in this way, that I could give myself to at least this duty of a radnyi. Men were allowed to be more open with their desires, but I had of course heard women speak of the wanting that accompanied marriage. They had all made such desire seem like one of the most important parts of becoming husband and wife. But I lacked it. What did that make my marriage?

Once, I came to Dasharath earlier than he had expected, and when he did not open the door, I let myself in. It was an old habit, formed by years of entering my brother’s rooms without warning.

I found him poring over a cloth laid out on a large table. I approached it, curious, and saw a very detailed map of Kosala, beautifully and precisely inked, depicting the settlements within the kingdom.

I took a step closer, and at my movement, Dasharath glanced up.

“Kaikeyi, I did not expect you so soon!”

“I apologize for disturbing you, Raja,” I said immediately.

“I can leave if you are occupied.”

He shook his head, smoothing out the map with one hand. “I was merely thinking.”

I stared at the map for several moments more, taking it all in. I had seen versions of such maps of Kekaya in the library cellar but had never had the opportunity to study a map of Kosala. My eyes were immediately drawn to where the kingdom’s borders began just east of the Sarasvati River, although to look at this map, that area was no longer well populated.

Despite my brother telling me about the might of Kosala, and my own distant awareness of it as our southeastern neighbor, I had not had a true awareness of how vast my husband’s kingdom truly was. The Indra Mountains ran diagonally across the top of Bharat, forming the northernmost borders of Kekaya and Kosala, which divided at the source of the Sarasvati River, high up in the mountain peaks. But in addition to the section of the Indra Mountains within Kosala’s control, its borders encompassed an entire mountain range to the south, as well as several cities beyond even that. I swept my eyes over the map again, a bit awed.

A cluster of red markings just to the north of Kosala’s borders caught my attention. I peered closer, to find dashed arrows from villages at the foothills of the Indra Mountains running in and out of Kosala’s borders—raids, it seemed.

“Who are they?” I asked, brushing my fingertips against the shading. I worried perhaps I was being too forward, but I didn’t wish to stop. I had not had any real conversation with my husband since our unexpected moment in the throne room so long ago.

He raised an eyebrow. “You read that quite fast.”

“Thank you?” I said, uncertain.

Dasharath’s eyes flicked up to my face before looking down at the map with a sigh. “It is a newer kingdom, or at least, they proclaim themselves to be a kingdom. In reality

they are just a collection of villages united by the warlord Sambarasura, who has promised them a share of Kosala's riches if they only arm themselves."

"They've been targeting trade routes," I observed.

"Yes, but you see there?" He pointed to a cluster of villages next to the River Ganga, and when I looked closer, I saw annotations—*burned, thirty dead, harvest ruined*. "They have made several forays into our farming towns and are growing more violent. Stealing is one thing, but this—" He shook his head.

This time, Dasharath actually studied my face, and I could see him losing interest in the conversation as he remembered why I was there. "You do not need to worry," he said, coming around the table to take my hand. "It will be taken care of."

"All right," I told him. "Kosala is my home now too." I wanted to add, *If there is anything I can do*—but no, it was not worth going down that path. After all, what could he possibly need from me?

Without Manthara, I might never have survived those first months. In the privacy of my rooms, free from the restrictive dress and the formal speech of court, I was often too dispirited to do anything but spend hours lying in bed. Manthara would sit patiently beside me, embroidering and teaching me the names and roles of nobility I was certain I would never meet. Once she even offered to practice swordplay with me, as we used to do. I could tell from a glance at the Binding Plane she did not really want to, and it made me realize just how worried she was about me, so I rose from bed to stretch and pace, and then lift objects and review the footwork Yudhajit had once taught me.

But when Manthara was not around, I would lie back in bed and enter the Binding Plane and stare at the strings, despairing at how I had so quickly become useless. If there was other magic out there, something that might help me become a part of this foreign place, it was within the purview of the gods. I was alone.

On one such day, she returned early from whatever other work she did in the palace and found me lying in bed once again. Where before she often viewed me with sympathy, instead she clucked her tongue at me. “Get up,” she ordered. I was so surprised to hear this tone in her voice, one that had been missing for so long, that I obeyed instantly. “Wear your pale blue sari, the one from Kekaya.”

“The court will laugh,” I muttered.

“We’re not going to court.” Her voice brooked no argument and so I dressed myself, intrigued despite the fog that still surrounded me. I followed her down the hallway to a small door, presumably the entrance to a servants’ passage, designed to help them move more easily through the palace. After descending a rickety stair and navigating a short maze of walkways, Manthara pushed open a second door, giving a quick nod to the guard stationed there. He just yawned, barely glancing in our direction.

We had emerged onto a small side alley, on the other side of the palace wall.

“What—” I began, turning around. But Manthara gripped my arm and pulled me out of the alley and into a bustling road.

This was nothing like Kekaya, where the quarters nearest the palace were sparsely populated. Here, just beyond the palace, merchants sold their wares to the streams of city dwellers passing by on their business. Manthara’s arm snaked around my shoulders, and she pulled the pallu of my sari up so the cloth covered my head.

“I have been asked to buy some things by the ladies of the palace. I do not work for them, of course, but it is good to do them favors from time to time. I thought you might want to accompany me. Stay close.”

We set off, and I felt almost giddy to be swept up in the bustle. The thoroughfare next to the palace let out quickly into a large open square. Manthara approached one man who had laid out a gorgeous array of glass bangles in a rainbow of hues.

I watched as Manthara haggled for a few minutes before sweeping up a collection, deep crimson and cobalt and saffron all glinting in the sunlight.

“What need have noblewomen of those?” I asked. The bangles were lovely, but not the type of thing the fine women of court arrayed themselves in.

“Trinkets for their children or grandchildren,” Manthara said. “They do not have the money to let small fingers break their precious objects, wealthy though they may be.”

At another stall, Manthara stopped to buy a bundle of fragrant dried herbs. She carded through the selection with deft fingers before alighting on one that looked to me the same as the others. “Can these be mixed with milk?” she asked.

“Of course,” the man said briskly.

“Are you sure?” Manthara pressed. “I have heard complaints of stomach pain after doing so, and I do not want to displease my mistress.”

“Yes,” he insisted, just as another voice said, “No.”

A woman who had been crouched next to the stall and tending to a brazier that let off a smoky aroma rose to her feet. “Those should not be taken with milk. You are correct that it can sometimes cause digestive upset, and in that case won’t take effect.”

The man’s hand darted out quick as a cobra, landing a slap on the back of the woman’s head. “Did I ask you?” he hissed. Flinching, she shook her head and silently squatted back down to her work. To Manthara the man said, “Forgive her, she does not know her place. As I was saying, the herbs can be taken with or without milk. But if your mistress has difficulties with milk, there is no harm in trying without.”

Manthara’s mouth was pursed in a thin line of displeasure, and she haggled with the man for far longer than she had at the previous stall before exchanging the herbs for a scant few coins and moving on. As we pressed farther into the square, I turned back to look at the woman. I thought perhaps I would

find her crying. But she was staring down at her brazier, turning the drying stems of her plants carefully, as if nothing had happened.

I had never been taken to a marketplace in Kekaya, but I was grateful to have the chance to witness such a thing in Ayodhya. The market seemed full of chaos, and possibility. People shouted and bartered, their anger at a bad bargain or pleasure at good craftsmanship flowing freely. There was something alive about this place. And yet as I swept my gaze over the stalls, I saw not a single woman standing alone behind one. There were women to be sure, folding fabric, rearranging their goods in preparation for customers. But all were accompanied by men, and none seemed in control.

“Kaikeyi?” Manthara said softly in my ear. “Are you ready to go?”

“Is it always like this?” I asked.

“Today is the busiest day of the week,” she said, misunderstanding my question. “But that means the best wares are on offer.”

There was nothing amiss to Manthara, I realized. Why would there be? Even in palaces, women were rarely heard. The gods did not wish for women and men to mingle overly much, and even in Kekaya the sages had created rules to keep such order in place.

I could not expect any different outside the palace walls, and yet I found myself hoping that the market, this place so full of life, might be better. In that moment, I felt like the old Kaikeyi, who had convinced her brother to teach her to fight and had negotiated the terms of her marriage. I could see myself again, just within reach.

CHAPTER NINE



THE TRIP TO THE marketplace woke me from the depressed fog I had been living in. I began asking questions of Manthara. *Can we go back? Can I go as myself? Are there other markets? Could I arrange a formal visit?* I knew I could not navigate the chaos alone, but Manthara promised me that we would work out a plan together. But before we could, she came back to me with a different sort of news.

Dasharath had decided to challenge the warlord in the north.

Radnyi Kaushalya, first among the wives, hated the war camps and had refused the raja's invitation to accompany him. Sumitra never even entertained the idea of going. But a war camp sounded exhilarating to me.

So, when Dasharath requested my presence in his chambers at the end of the week, I was prepared. Manthara chose a forest-green sari for me, one that lay soft and pliant against my body, and an attendant younger even than I wrapped my body in the gauzy fabric, lined my eyes with kohl, and decorated me with strands of delicate golden jewelry that I knew to be lovely, but to me just felt tiresome.

Dasharath did not so much as look at me when I entered the room, but thankfully years living in the same palace as my father had inured me to such treatment. I simply stood quietly, contemplating the golden cord that stretched between us in the Binding Plane.

"Ah, Kaikeyi," he said at last, as if only just noticing me there. "I wished to speak to you."

“Yes, Raja,” I replied, keeping my head bowed. I grasped our cord firmly in my mind. It was the same thickness as my smallest finger.

“I am headed off to battle in a few days. The warlord Sambarasura has become too greedy, too arrogant. It is time for me to put him in his place.”

“That is all,” he added, when I did not respond. “Have you nothing to say to me?”

I met his eyes, opened my mouth, and discovered that words would not come out. Despite Manthara’s information, I found myself tongue-tied.

Dasharath’s face fell. He turned away from me. “You may go, then,” he said, and the rudeness of the dismissal shook me from my stupor.

“Take me with you!” I blurted inelegantly.

Dasharath turned back around in shock.

“My king,” I added, sending waves of deference and longing through our golden connection. “Please. It would be an honor to accompany you.”

He squinted at me, then reached out and grasped my chin, tilting my head side to side as if searching for something. “You wish to come to the camps?”

“Yes,” I said softly.

“They are filled with men. Soldiers. Far cruder and baser than you are used to.”

I held my tongue, for now was not the time to remind him that I had been raised with seven brothers and had heard many crude and base things. “I can bear it, for the honor of staying by your side.”

Pretty words, flattery. Such things may have been the art of women, but they were the weakness of powerful men. A well-placed strum of the cord between us with my mind certainly did not hurt my case.

“Very well,” he said slowly. “I will consider your request.”

He kissed me then and led me to his bed.

When he was spent, and we were lying beside each other, Dasharath raised himself on an elbow to look at me. “You may come with me to the battle,” he said gruffly. “And you may spend the night here if you wish.”

I wanted nothing more than to leave, to race barefoot to the women’s quarters and climb into my own bed, alone. But I mustered a small smile. “You honor me, Raja. I will gladly stay by your side.”

Soon Dasharath’s breath turned soft and even, and I turned away, my back to him. I willed myself someplace else, in a vast field in Kekaya, astride my fastest horse, and as the imaginary wind whipped through my hair, I found brief haven in sleep’s dominion.

I awoke the next day before Dasharath and slipped away. He did not like company in the morning, and I did not want to risk his good favor. I found my way back to my chambers without incident and sat on the edge of my bed, stroking the cool silk cover beneath my hands.

“Ah, there you are.” Manthara’s voice came from the next room. I jumped, despite myself.

“Manthara?” I called out.

“Who else would it be?” she replied, walking into my bedroom. “When you did not return last night, I assumed you would be accompanying Raja Dasharath today. I took the liberty of packing your garments and ensuring that a palanquin would be prepared.”

“Why—I mean, of course,” I said.

There was no point in protesting to Manthara, who did not have the power to change this arrangement. In Kekaya, palanquins were used only for the elderly and the sick, and it would have brought my father great shame to see me riding in one. But here, a radnyi would never be allowed to ride off on a

horse. With a sudden pang, I thought of Yudhajit, imagined how he would have laughed at my predicament.

I banished that thought from my mind and rose. “Do you know when we depart? He told me nothing.”

“Because you need to know nothing.” Manthara put her hands on my shoulders. “You are a radnyi now. Do not worry yourself with details. You managed the hardest part. You persuaded the raja to take you with him. All the rest leave to me. You will depart in a few hours.”

“And what am I to do once I get there? Dasharath will be fighting. Am I to manage his camp?”

Manthara shook her head. “His soldiers will handle that. You are simply there to provide your husband some comfort.” That sounded—incredibly boring. Perhaps Manthara sensed my hesitation, because she added, “Was there something else you wanted to do?”

Now that she asked me, I felt foolish. “I... I want to fight alongside him. I know how, I am not some wilting flower.”

Rather than laughing at me, Manthara only looked thoughtful. “I’ve heard that Raja Dasharath has recently grown dissatisfied with his charioteer. He feels that the man is more interested in proving himself with extraordinary maneuvers than listening to commands.”

Manthara had deftly created her own circle of servants from which she gathered information for me, and for this I was grateful. “You believe the raja will allow me to be his charioteer?”

“I believe that you could convince him.”

I closed my eyes and allowed myself for a moment to imagine it. Standing at the front of a war chariot, steering Dasharath out of danger, creating opportunities for him to destroy his enemies. I was an excellent charioteer. Even Yudhajit had said so, and he did not give out praise lightly. We had honed my gift with years of practice. I could feel the slap of the reins in my hands, hear the rhythm of the wheels against

the ground...

A soft bump against the door startled me out of my reverie. Manthara had vanished to secure something or the other from my bedroom, so I opened it myself.

Radnyi Sumitra. I forced myself to smile and gesture her in.

“How are you?” she asked. She had not come to see me in months, but unlike Kaushalya, she at least gave me a kind smile or word in court.

“I’m well, and you?” I resisted the urge to fidget with my dress.

“I just came by to wish you a safe and blessed trip,” she said, staring at my feet. I squinted at her, surprised she already knew. She looked up at me and gave me a small smile. “It wasn’t hard to guess. You seem suited for it.”

“Suited for it?” I echoed blankly.

Her face fell slightly. “Well, I suppose I have never been north, but from what I’ve heard—” She took a deep breath to stop the torrent of words and then started again. “I wanted to wish you well. For your trip. It is very kind of you to accompany Dasharath.”

“I—thank you?” I stuttered.

“I’ve never gone myself,” she continued with a shudder. “It is too much for me. Kaushalya used to go, but she felt it was...” Sumitra trailed off, but I could guess at what she meant to say. *Beneath her. Not ladylike. Unrefined.*

My cheeks grew hot. I considered shoving her, as I used to do to my brothers, or making a snide remark. But instead, I remembered my evenings practicing with Manthara for welcoming guests in Kekaya. Sumitra could give me veiled insults, and I would prove to her that I could receive them with a smile. “I am glad to be of help,” I said instead. “Thank you for the kind wishes.”

We reached the fields of battle within a week. The Indra

Mountains loomed over us, rising up beyond the vast plains of rippling yellow grass, stark and foreboding against the pale skies. Sambarasura and Dasharath had agreed to fight here, in the flatlands, one army against the other for supremacy. I did not see much value in communicating intentions so clearly, but my people were considered half-barbaric in the western kingdoms for our war methods, so I did not voice such apprehensions to anybody.

The only company I had on the long trip was a young handmaiden named Asha. She had a round, cheerful face and wore her hair in two thick, oiled braids down her back. Ordinarily, Asha was in the service of Radnyi Kaushalya, but the raja had requested her presence for me.

I worried Asha might hate me, as Kaushalya obviously did, but to my surprise she did not seem to. Each night, she arranged my hair and dabbed at my face, and although I hated it, she made me look more lovely than I ever had, her clever fingers coaxing my hair to fall just so. And each day the leaf-green braid between us thickened with a new strand.

Before my nights with Dasharath, I had evenings, when the soldiers set up camp and Dasharath busied himself with his advisors, discussing strategy. Recalling my rides with Yudhajt, I used this time to slip away in the twilight gloom and visit the Master of Horses.

Ashwasen was a grizzled man who had once been the charioteer to Dasharath's father. His long brown hair was streaked through with gray and though he walked with stiffness and spoke with a certain gruffness, Dasharath still found him indispensable.

The first night, I told him I simply wished to spend time with the horses. "They remind me of home," I said, and as I did, I took a brush from one of the servants and began tending to a large brown stallion.

He observed me for a moment, arms crossed. "It's dirty work," he said at last.

“I don’t mind,” I murmured, and truly I didn’t. Standing here, one hand rubbing the horse’s warm flank as the other gently worked, was the most like myself I had felt in some time.

“Hmm.”

“You have done a fine job caring for them,” I said. “My father’s own would not be treated better.”

At this, his face softened slightly. He walked away, but as he did a friendly brown thread materialized between us in the Binding Plane. The next day, he offered me a ride on one of the smaller horses, a dappled gray mare, and I accepted eagerly. Our bond thickened without my even noticing it, so that when I checked it on the third evening, it had developed into a supple wood-like bow. One of my first true connections in Ayodhya.

That evening, I asked to see the king’s chariot, fully prepared to use the Binding Plane if needed. But magic proved unnecessary—Ashwasen led me to it willingly. We discussed the chariot’s properties at length, and he appeared suitably impressed by my knowledge.

On the fourth night, I asked him if I might drive the chariot, just for a few moments to ensure everything was in order. He was reluctant at first, but I told him how Yudhajit’s chariot had once lost a wheel, during one of his first skirmishes—and added a gentle push in the Binding Plane. He gave in, harnessing the team and cautioning me to drive no farther than a short stretch of dirt road.

The chariot was magnificent, with massive wooden wheels and a beautifully curved partition between charioteer and warrior. I stood in the front, knees bent slightly for balance as I wielded the reins. I pretended that a warrior stood behind me, loosing a volley of arrows, each hitting their mark guided by the smooth motion of the wheels, and life surged through me. Something of my old spirit came back to me with every second I drove those horses.

I longed to race off farther down the path, to race away into the distance, to some unknown future. Instead, I obeyed Ashwasen's parameters, finishing a loop in barely a minute.

"The left back wheel is indeed loose," I said as I carefully hopped down.

Kaikeyi is an excellent charioteer, I told him in our connection, watching as the thought raced along the relaxed curve of the bond like a reflection on polished wood.

The fifth evening, the Master of Horses sought me out by asking Asha to relay a message to me. I met him barely an hour later, buoyant and eager, and he handed me the reins of the chariot, already prepared for riding.

"Try a few maneuvers," he said. "I wish to watch."

He had attached two powerful Madhuvan bays to the chariot in a field at the edge of camp. I set them into motion with just a flick of my wrist, then pulled them to a quick stop. A fierce grin spread across my face at their responsiveness. I could not erase it as I imagined a battlefield before me. Instincts from the obstacle courses Yudhajit and I once raced through came rushing back, and I urged them forward, riding down soldiers separated from the pack. Then I brought the horses to a sudden halt so the raja could launch a spear. The moment he let it fly, I brought the horses into a tight circle, fleeing from an enemy chariot bearing down upon us. I slowed our pace while they were in pursuit, so they passed us, turning from hunters into hunted. Then, with a cry, I urged the horses to charge down the gap. I imagined Dasharath leaning out of the chariot and carving through enemies with his khanda.

I lost myself in the feeling of movement, of power, until a familiar voice pierced through my happiness. "Kaikeyi?"

Dasharath.

I pulled the horses to a halt. In the Binding Plane, our golden thread vibrated dangerously. I dismounted, windswept and sweating, nearly stumbling in my haste, and dipped into a shaky bow.

“Raja.”

The bond between us jittered. I focused on sending waves of calming energy across our link, though I was hardly calm myself.

In that moment, it occurred to me that perhaps I had been misusing the Plane in Ayodhya. In Kekaya, where all my bonds had once been solid and sure, it was easy to send suggestions and accomplish my goals—so that was all I did. But I did not have that luxury here. So perhaps I could instead try to strengthen the bond ever so slightly rather than use it to influence. It would not help me immediately, but over time...

My mind rushed with adrenaline, crystallizing the idea. And as the bond between me and Dasharath began to quiet, I suddenly noticed a third thread, fully unconnected to me.

I blinked, and it disappeared. I blinked again, and it reappeared, more solid than before.

A thick maroon cable connected Dasharath and the Master of Horses. As I focused my attention upon it, Dasharath turned to Ashwasen, who was smiling smugly.

“What is the meaning of this?” he demanded. His face was thunderous.

“Your radnyi comes from a kingdom renowned for their riders and their war horses. I sought to consult her on such matters, to ensure everything was in order for you,” he lied. Their bond was the width of a forearm and rippled with vitality. Clearly, they held each other in high esteem.

Could I manipulate that cord? I wondered. Even though it is not connected to me?

“And why is the radnyi driving a chariot?” Dasharath demanded. I tried to grasp their cord with my mind, but it slipped away from me, disappearing for good.

“She has a talent for it. You watched her just as I did. Do you not agree, my raja?” He was far more brazen than I could ever be. I hid my amusement as Dasharath opened and closed

his mouth, unable to find a response.

Finally, he turned to me. “Where did you learn to drive like that?” he asked.

“My brother Yudhajit,” I said, averting my eyes in a poor facsimile of humility. Our golden cord had fully calmed, so I knew there was little danger of it breaking. “When I was a child, he included me in his games and lessons. I apologize if I have caused you any offense.”

“Offense?” Dasharath closed his eyes. “You drive better than my own charioteer.”

“Thank you,” I said demurely, hoping my triumphant pleasure was not evident in my face.

“You were looking to replace him,” said the Master of Horses. “I think you have found your match.” He walked out toward the chariot and began unhooking the team, as if the discussion had already ended.

“My match,” Dasharath repeated, as if pondering the words. And then, “I do not wish to ask you to risk your life for me.” I met his eyes, and there was no anger there. “The heat of battle is no place for a woman. You would not be wielding a weapon—the gods forbid that, and we would not disobey them—but it is still dangerous. But Ashwasen is right. You are excellent. Would you be my charioteer?”

“I accept.” I had to force myself to modulate my voice. I did not think my husband would appreciate my shouting with excitement. “Yes. I will gladly stay by your side.” As I said the words, the thread between us thickened into a chain of metal, and the smile that crept onto my face was entirely genuine.

The following evenings, Ashwasen had me put through my paces, conscripting other soldiers on horseback so I might practice formations. The men all respected Dasharath so deeply that if they were surprised at their raja’s decision, they did not show it or question it. They approached the task with discipline and rigidity.

Despite the rigors of the tiring practice, on the appointed

day of battle I woke before Dasharath—before even Asha lifted the flap of my tent. She had somehow managed to procure a set of men’s breeches and armor, and we had spent the past two days furiously fitting them to my body.

I slipped them on and beamed. I could finally move comfortably.

When I had made the request, I worried that my bond with her would fray from my unladylike conduct. Instead, it had grown stronger.

“You look excellent, my lady,” she said now. “It suits you.”

“It suits me?” I repeated. Sumitra had said something quite similar just a week ago. Was Asha mocking me as well? Had I judged her too highly? But when I checked the Binding Plane, I found no evidence of the cloudiness of deceit that I had come to recognize on some cords.

“I only meant you wear it well. Not that you are suited to men’s clothing. My apologies. You look excellent in anything.” Her voice and face painted a picture of perfect sincerity.

“You have done a masterful job on this in such a short time,” I said by way of apology. “Perhaps when we return to Ayodhya you might create a similar suit for me, in a more feminine material? They can be my riding clothes.”

“You would wear breeches in the city?” Asha looked me up and down, and I tried not to show any traces of self-consciousness.

“I would wear breeches that look to others like normal women’s clothing. If you are up to such a task.”

Asha was missing a front tooth and unafraid to show it in her smile. “Very well, my lady. Survive the battle and I will make you breeches.”

“Sambarasura is a minor warlord,” I scoffed. “I am not afraid of him.”

In truth, he was more than that. He had carved a small

kingdom for himself, which took willpower and steel at the very least. But there was no room for me to let fear in here.

She shook her head. “Do not underestimate him, my lady. I have heard he is a formidable warrior.” She bent her head. “Lord Vishnu, please protect Radnyi Kaikeyi and Raja Dasharath and the armies of Kosala. Allow the righteous to prevail.”

I gazed at her bent head. Would prayers made for me fall into the same empty void as prayers made by me? Only Manthara had ever mentioned praying for me, so I had no way of knowing. But I appreciated Asha’s sentiment all the same.

I had heard that the gods of war had long favored Kosala, allowing them to emerge victorious in battle after battle, ensuring the kingdom was the largest in the land. My presence could not change that. I hoped.

The sun had not yet risen, but by now the men were stirring in the camp. I made my way to where the Master of Horses waited for me. I spoke to each of the animals in turn, stroking their manes. Being with them, working with my hands and doing something useful, calmed my fraying nerves.

I harnessed Dasharath’s team myself, inspected every turn of the chariot.

Then I watched the bloody sunrise as I waited for the battle to begin.

CHAPTER TEN



THE BATTLEFIELD OVERWHELMED ME.

The horses had been trained for war, but I was unprepared. The moment the archers began shooting, any semblance of my control slipped away. The neat lines of men broke into chaos, assaulting my senses. The screams of men dying, the scent of blood—it churned my stomach and slackened my grip dangerously. I forgot my lessons with Yudhajit and my drills with Ashwasen. I breathed through my mouth, trying to get calming air into my lungs, but my body had seized with panic. The horses slowed, making us a target. I watched a few men turn to us, readying their spears. It was this fear that finally penetrated through the haze, somewhat clearing my head.

I spurred the chariot onward, my shaking hands pulling the horses into an arc. Dasharath leaned out of the bay, the powerful strokes of his khanda cutting through three of Sambarasura's men.

“Excellent, Kaikeyi!” he shouted out to me. I would have responded, but the battlefield was rapidly devolving into a tangle I could not parse. As the long yellow grass was trampled into a mess of matted red, as bodies fell and the rising dust coated the men on foot in a haze of gray, it became impossible to discern our formations—let alone who held the upper hand.

The glint of a spear cut toward me. I jerked the reins in a panic, and Dasharath gave a shout of surprise behind me. Icy fear coursed through my veins and shook my hands, and the noise of the battle and sounds of death became too much to bear. I turned this way and that, desperate for a reprieve, and

nearly drove our chariot over a group of our own men. An arrow flew past the horses, and although they were well-trained beasts of war, the front horse reared up. I pulled them all in, bringing us to a near standstill, when another arrow came whistling through the air, shearing through my sleeve. I barely felt the sting of it, for I was driving the team forward again, trying to keep my head.

Dasharath, for his part, did not shout angered instructions, but I could feel his frustration radiating from behind me. He threw another spear, but I twisted the chariot at the last moment and we both watched as it went wide.

“I’m sorry!” I shouted, knowing it was absolutely inadequate. Words were meaningless right now; he needed action. I scanned the battlefield, trying to pick out places where our men were struggling or locate Sambarasura’s own chariot, but I was so disoriented that my vision blurred. Tears pricked at my eyes, and I dashed them away with my hand, ignoring the sharp pain in my arm at the motion.

Yet another spear came toward us, and Dasharath dove to one side of the chariot to avoid it for I was too slow. We tilted precariously as I fought for control, both of the team and of myself. An arrow embedded itself in the chariot’s rail next to me. Inches higher, and it would have pierced my husband.

My heart beat so hard I thought I felt faint from the force of it. My failures were putting my husband, my raja, and maybe even my friend in danger. Right now, I was responsible for his life, and I was getting nowhere in this panicked, frenzied state.

So, I stopped.

For just a brief moment, I brought our chariot to a standstill, closed my eyes, and filled my lungs with air. As my heart calmed, I opened my eyes and entered the Binding Plane, muttering the mantra to myself for the first time in years. As I gazed across the battlefield, I saw the faint, gossamer threads that connected me to Dasharath’s men. And I saw the places where there were no threads at all.

I heard Dasharath inhale sharply behind me, but before he could speak, I set us back in motion. This time, I was grounded. Focused. While I could not tell the soldiers apart visually, I used the Binding Plane to steer us to a group of men who lacked any connection to me at all. As we approached, I was able to differentiate their mismatched armor from that of our own soldiers and I let out a bark of triumphant laughter.

Dasharath expertly launched a spear at the man in front, then drew his khanda, slashing with speed and precision. He gave a whoop as his blade connected, and then I pivoted the chariot so that it collided with another two soldiers. Something crunched and I flinched. But Dasharath shouted “Well spotted!” and urged us on.

There was no time to think, let alone to question the way I had just crushed the life out of a man. I blocked out everything but the Plane, seeking out new gaps to pursue. We took down knot after knot of enemy, and I grew more confident, bringing us to the edges of clashes to the aid of our men. My blood sang with the cruel work, and Dasharath’s weapons brutalized Sambarasura’s army.

A spear rammed hard into the side of the chariot.

Dasharath stumbled, and this time it took him several moments to regain his balance. As I twisted around to check on him, I realized—I was wasting time. I was helping our men, yes. But the battle would only end when Sambarasura was defeated.

I kept the chariot moving at a steady pace, searching for only one man who mattered. Fallen standards kept catching my eye, but none of them were Sambarasura’s. Of course he had not fallen—we would not be so lucky, nor his men still fighting were that the case. Some banners still whipped in the wind, but most were our own, the brilliant gold stark against the pale sky.

Dasharath’s men were gaining the upper hand, and the field was scattered with broken chariots. For several moments, my focus was fully directed to navigating around the dead and the

dying. It was almost frightening how quickly I had acclimated to the suffering. I lifted my gaze once more, sweeping across the battlefield, and something caught my eye. I flicked the reins, pushing the horses to move more quickly, and a standard came fully into view. It was the enemy's: embroidered with the snarling face of a tiger but dyed in a deep green that made it stand apart. Sambarasura.

We raced toward him, and I knew that Dasharath immediately understood my plan. He loosed an arrow at Sambarasura that barely missed when the enemy's charioteer swerved at exactly the right moment. We careened toward each other, and just as I put Dasharath within spear range of Sambarasura, our opponent hurled his own with a triumphant cry.

The spear glanced off one of our wheels with a crack, and the horses reared in fear as the chariot came to a bone-halt. I do not think it would be arrogant to say that with my driving, Dasharath's chariot itself had become a brutal weapon. Sambarasura had not been trying to kill us, not yet. He had been trying to stop us.

"Get down!" I cried, all decorum lost in the face of danger. I crouched low as the horses' hooves churned the ground.

"I'm not a coward," he called back. He drew his khanda with a rasp of steel.

"Get down!" I repeated, but he was a raja under no obligation to listen to his charioteer—or his wife. Sambarasura's chariot raced toward us. The warlord hefted another spear in his hand and, with a great cry, sent it soaring through the air.

Time seemed to slow, then came rushing back far too quickly as the weapon pierced Dasharath's chest.

Never take your eyes off your enemy, Yudhajit's voice cried in my ears. So I did not turn to help him.

Instead, as Sambarasura drew closer, preparing to finish us, I pulled off my helmet for a better view of the whole field. I

could see his eyes now and watched with a grim sense of satisfaction as they widened in surprise. A woman charioteer was not a common sight.

And then he made his last mistake. He hesitated.

Take the opening, Yudhajit said, but I did not need his advice.

Holding the reins of the horses firmly in my left hand, I reached behind me and grabbed the smooth wooden shaft of one of Dasharath's mighty spears. Relying on instinct, on the muscle memory of years of old lessons, I adjusted my grasp on the haft, finding the center of gravity. I threw, my breath rushing out of me in a shout.

By the time obsidian-tipped death found Sambarasura, piercing his neck and shoulder in a deadly blow, I had jumped down from my injured husband's chariot to examine the damage, conscious it was our only form of escape.

My hands shook as I examined the smashed wheel, two spokes broken, the whole thing fallen off its axis. Steel clanged behind me, the shouts of fighters mixing with the cries of dying men. My magic could not help me now.

"Indra, please," I whispered, desperate.

Indra was the god of charioteers and had long been considered a protector of Kosala. Perhaps he would help me to save a favored raja. "Guide my hand."

No inspiration struck me. Maybe the gods were punishing me for joining the fight after all. And Dasharath... He might already be dead.

I grabbed the bottom of the wheel and tugged with all my strength, trying to push it back into place. My shoulder blade pressed back into the splintered spoke. I strained with the effort, eyes clenched shut, until a battle cry sounded too near for comfort.

Never take your eyes off your enemy!

I opened my eyes as the wheel popped back into place. A

soldier lunged toward me, sword ready.

I rolled out of the way and he buried his blade into the earth as I swung myself back into the charioteer's seat. If only Yudhajit could see me now—he would laugh and call me as agile as a monkey for clambering back up so quickly. I spared a moment of gratitude for my brother's words, for they had kept me alive. Then I snapped the horses into motion, barely hearing the soldier scream beneath the wheels as I carved a path away from the battlefield, my mind fixed firmly on my husband.

Dasharath's troops parted for me like ghee on a warm summer day. An observant rider outstripped me, racing back to camp to prepare them for our arrival. In the broken chariot, it took us several precious minutes in which I felt as though with every breath I was the one bleeding and not my husband. If he died in a chariot I drove into battle, they might as well put me on the pyre with him.

I pulled up into the middle of camp, and healers swarmed us before I'd completely stopped.

“Is he alive?” I asked, leaping onto the dirt, uncaring of who might witness my unwomanly behavior. Not that it mattered, because nobody so much as looked at me. Their chattering overlapped into an undecipherable din.

I slipped into the Binding Plane and studied the fragile ties binding me to the men around me. The threads were thin, brittle, and dull besides, as though I was trapped in an aged wheel. Magic would not work.

“Is. My. Husband. Alive?” I made each word ring like metal blades.

The raja's retinue all turned to me with varying expressions of confusion, contempt, and horror. A small man next to Dasharath's prone form nodded. “Yes, Radnyi. He still draws breath.”

The work resumed, but now the advisors encircled me.

“What happened?” one demanded.

“Sambarasura cracked one of the chariot’s wheels, and in the ensuing confusion, his spear struck true.” Skepticism radiated through each on the Binding Plane.

“And where is Sambarasura now?” This voice I knew. Virendra, the Minister of War. He was Dasharath’s favorite advisor. He shouldered his way into the circle. The string between us was orange, made thicker than the rest through familiarity, although I knew that did not mean much.

“Dead,” I said, turning to face him. “The raja slew him before succumbing to his wounds.”

The lie was easy. It felt as though I prepared my whole life to tell it.

Their discussion subsided as they stared.

“How did you escape?” another asked.

“I jumped down from the chariot and pushed the wheel back into place,” I said. “And then I brought him here immediately.”

In the corner of my eye, I saw the healers lift the raja onto a hammock and carry him off to another tent. I thought his arm moved, but perhaps that was simply the jostling motion.

“You?” the advisor said, pulling my attention back. He looked me up and down, just as Asha had that morning. But whereas I had felt at ease under Asha’s gaze, under his I felt disgusting. His mouth pulled into a slight grimace. “How could *you* fix the wheel of a war chariot?”

“I prayed to Indra, and he guided my hand.” Another lie. The only one that would quiet them, for of course the gods would assist in saving their beloved raja.

Accepting that as truth, they turned away from me and followed Dasharath into the tent.

CHAPTER ELEVEN



DASHARATH'S DEATH WAS, IN some ways, my fault. In the end he was a casualty of a much greater war, his undoing meant as a punishment for me. Let it be known that I did not wish it so; on the contrary, even when I stopped all other prayer, I always prayed for my husband's long life.

Perhaps that was his doom.

For two days and two nights, Dasharath lay pale and still in the healing tent. The camp physicians assured me that they had diagnosed and treated him according to the most comprehensive Ayurvedic texts, but still the outcome was uncertain.

I sat by his bedside, leaving only to eat and bathe. I constantly slipped into the Binding Plane to look at our golden cable, just to ensure Dasharath still lived. *Live*, I instructed him. *Wake up*. But he did not respond. I slept on a straw mat next to his bedside for the first night, and on the second, Asha managed to construct a more comfortable makeshift bedroll.

On the third day, Dasharath woke every few hours, disoriented and confused. Each time, I patiently explained what happened. Each time, he subsided back into sleep upon learning that he had dealt the decisive blow, and our men had routed Sambarasura's remaining forces.

The next day, Dasharath woke at dawn in full possession of his faculties. He managed to sit up, drink water, and consume a light broth. I wished for him to stay secluded and rest, but soon his advisors crowded around him. I was relegated to the corner of the tent until one of them noticed my presence and tartly informed me that this was no place for a woman.

Somehow my daring rescue had not endeared me to them.

Feeling low, I went to visit the horses. Dasharath's team had escaped unscathed, and the brown stallion I had first met greeted me eagerly, pressing his soft nose into my hand. I stretched out to rub his neck and heard someone clear their throat behind me.

"You did well," said Ashwasen.

I did not turn around to meet his eyes. "The raja almost died."

"But he did not. And the battle was won." I said nothing, and after a moment he continued, "I have seen many charioteers in my time. You are not the most skilled I have ever seen, but you are certainly the most determined. I doubt any other would have brought him back alive."

At this I did spin around. The Master of Horses was smiling at me, and I felt hot tears rush into my eyes. I blinked rapidly before they could spill. "Thank you," I whispered.

"Take as long as you need," he said. "I find they are quite calming."

But I did not feel calm. As I pet the horses, tears began falling down my cheeks, until I pressed my face into the side of the chestnut horse and wept. I cried not just for Dasharath, but for the men I had killed, and for the horror I had seen. Battle was nothing like the glorious martial exercise I had thought it would be. My hands shook as I stroked the horse's mane, whispering praise to it just to calm myself.

Once the adrenaline of battle had faded, I had been left with only despair. I had been wrong, I saw now, to think war glorious. Nothing could be further from glory, from righteousness. I knew that I would never go back to battle, never seek out war.

Eventually, the storm passed. I felt spent, and I suddenly craved company. I returned to my tent, where Asha sat waiting for me.

“How are you, Radnyi?” she asked, setting aside her needlework. If she noticed my swollen eyes, she made no comment.

“Fine,” I said. “I just wish to sit with you for a time.”

At this she gave me a smile. “You are very kind. And not at all what I expected. The radnyis, sometimes they—” She stopped talking and stared down at her needle and thread.

“Sometimes they what?” I asked.

“Well, they are very close. Radnyi Kaushalya and Radnyi Sumitra. And they wonder why you don’t seek them out.” Asha did not meet my eyes.

“Why would I seek them out?” This conversation, however awkward, was so much better than being alone with my thoughts. “I am an intruder in their home.”

“The raja has the right to take as many wives as he pleases,” Asha said, looking up with surprise. “They do not begrudge him this.”

“Then why have they never sought *me* out?” I added a gentle push for information along the emerald strand of our bond.

Asha furrowed her brow but gave in as my magic bumped lightly against her sternum. “They have sent you several invitations to join them, for private meals, walks in the gardens. You have ignored them all.”

“I have done no such thing,” I insisted. But as she spoke, I remembered Manthara telling me that she had received several missives. In my fog of unhappiness, I had ignored her, unwilling to read their words after I had humiliated myself before them. “Oh.”

“Oh?” Asha repeated.

“I suppose I may not have properly... opened them.”

Asha snickered, then covered her mouth in horror. “I did not mean any offense, my lady.”

“None taken. I suppose it is somewhat amusing that a radnyi could be so incompetent,” I said wryly.

Asha looked at me with appraising eyes. “And here everyone has been wondering whether you are shy or superior.”

“Instead, I am simply a fool,” I said with a small smile.

Asha giggled, and soon we were both laughing with abandon.

Of course, that was the moment Virendra arrived at the tent. The Minister of War pushed open the flap and ducked inside, looking strange and out of place. I sat up straight. Asha became quiet, suddenly busy with her needle, but by his expression, he had witnessed our moment of levity and disapproved.

“Raja Dasharath has requested your presence, Radnyi,” he intoned after a few uncomfortable seconds.

I rose immediately and strode from the tent, keeping my back straight, wanting to mask my apprehension from Virendra, who stayed a disconcerting two paces behind me. After all, I had no reason to be nervous. Dasharath, unconscious as he had been, would have no reason to question my story.

But perhaps he would be angry, or embarrassed that I had been the one to save him.

“Go on,” Virendra said when we arrived. “He’s waiting for you.”

“Why does he want to speak with me?” I asked, spinning around to face him in an attempt to stall for time. I carefully plucked the small string between us.

Virendra pressed his lips together. “I imagine he simply wants to be with his wife. He is in pain and has dealt with important affairs of the state all day.” It did not feel like a lie.

“Oh.” I turned to face the entrance again. Would Dasharath want to bed me? It normally took considerable exertion on his

part, and he was sorely wounded. No. He probably wanted companionship, someone to talk to.

I took another breath, released my hold on the Plane, and entered the tent.

Dasharath lay in his bed, propped up against several pillows. Strips of cloth covered his torso, and he had dark smudges under his bright hazel eyes. But he smiled up at me when I entered, showing all his teeth, and gestured to the place next to him with a careful motion of his arm. "Please, sit."

I perched on the edge of the cot, sandals sliding for purchase in the dirt floor. "How are you feeling?"

"Like I was grievously wounded in battle," he said in a teasing tone. He had never used such with me before. "But better injured than dead. I was informed that I have you to thank for that."

I gave him my best impression of a demure smile. "I only drove the chariot to safety. You did all the work."

"Did I?" Dasharath asked, and my heart sank. "You see, my sweet wife, I do not remember throwing any spear. In fact, when Sambarasura broke the chariot wheel, I recall drawing my khanda."

He had trapped me. I could not contradict my husband. Neither could I agree with his remembrances. My head throbbed, whirling in panicked circles, and in my panic, I could not focus enough to find the Binding Plane. I was reduced to averting my eyes.

"Have you nothing to say?" he asked.

"No, Raja."

"Then you agree that I could not have slain him. And yet we have his body. How can this be?"

"Perhaps a spear from another one of our soldiers?" I offered. My whole body tensed, and I fought the urge to spring up from the bed and flee. *If you cannot fight, run*, Yudhajit used to say, but this was not combat. Dasharath could banish

me for lying, for unwomanly conduct. For defying the will of the gods by raising a weapon. Would my father take me back? I doubted it.

“Perhaps. Though my advisors tell me that when they received the body, it was my spear that was embedded within it.”

I forced myself to look at Dasharath and accept his judgment. But his face was blank. Somehow this neutrality calmed my heart just enough for me to slip into the webs of magic around us. Our armored thread had somehow thickened into a rope the breadth of a strong arm. Only Manthara and I had a stronger connection.

“That is strange, my husband,” I said at last.

“Do you find it so?” he asked. “Because I do not. My wife grew up among the ferocious Kekaya people. She has seven brothers. She can drive a chariot better than most men I’ve seen. That she can also throw a spear is not strange.”

I stood up from the bed and knelt, knees in the dirt. “I am sorry. Please, I beg for your forgiveness.”

Dasharath struggled for a moment, then managed to lever himself off his pillows, and swing his feet off the edge of the bed. “Kaikeyi, there is nothing to forgive.”

His words stunned me. “There isn’t?”

“You slew my enemy and saved my life,” he said simply, laying a hand on my shoulder. “Why would I be angry?” Before I could answer, he continued, “I understand why you lied to my advisors, although I would be remiss if I did not request that you refrain from doing so in the future. But between you and me there should be no secrets.”

“Yes, Raja.” My voice shook. To my shame, tears welled in my eyes. Through my blurry vision I watched our connection grow ever stronger, a shining beacon of gold.

Dasharath cleared his throat. “For your valor on the field of battle, I grant you one boon. For your efforts in saving my life,

I grant you a second boon. I place no restrictions on these. You may ask anything of me, anytime you wish, and I will do everything in my power to fulfill your request. This I swear by the River Ganga, by the Indra Mountains, and by the gods themselves.”

I rocked back onto my heels in shock.

“Two boons?” I asked, just to be sure I had heard correctly.

Dasharath kept his face stern, but his eyes were soft. “Yes, Kaikeyi. Now please, help me lie down again.”

I scrambled up, helping guide his body back against the pillows. “Will you tell your advisors the truth?”

“Do you want me to?” he asked. In the six months we had been married, he had never once asked what I wanted.

I considered carefully. I had risen in Dasharath’s esteem after he learned the truth, and after my conversation with Asha, I thought it possible that I had misjudged the Ayodhyan court as a whole. Perhaps his advisors would like me better if they knew what I had done. But I also knew how fragile my connections with all of them were, and experience had taught me that lying was considered more unbecoming on a woman than on a man. “No, Raja. That is not necessary.”

“Would you have told me? Had I not surmised the truth?”

“I don’t know,” I said. But of course, I would not have.

Dasharath made a small humming noise. “Are you afraid of me? Is that why you lied?”

I studied him, injured on the bed. Was I afraid of him? I was certainly afraid of the power he held over me, and perhaps before today I had feared him. But just now, when he gave me two unrestricted boons, he had made himself vulnerable. I might order him to make me his chief radnyi or to abdicate the throne, and he would be forced to obey. Those were the laws of the gods, and while they may not have ever governed me, they certainly still governed Dasharath. I thought, improbably, of Ahalya. Had she possessed a boon from her husband, she

would not have been turned to stone. I had power too now.

“That’s not why I lied,” I said at last.

Dasharath laughed and his body folded over in pain. “You’re witty,” he said when he had recovered. “I had never noticed that about you before. But you did not fully answer my question.”

You’re smart. I had never noticed that about you before, I wanted to say, but I held my tongue. “Perhaps I once was afraid. When you came to Kekaya and sought my hand, I was certainly afraid of you then. Not anymore.”

His fingers found my own in an oddly comforting gesture. “I was the supplicant then. You had no reason to fear me.”

“I had no choice in the matter. You and my father and my brother made all the decisions. I had no part in it. No part in determining my own future. Of course, I feared that. I did not know what kind of man you were, did not know what kind of husband you would be.”

“And what sort of husband have I proven myself?” he asked.

“A fair one,” I said without hesitation. “And kind.”

“I could do worse.” His thumb stroked my hand.

“You could,” I agreed.

“But is that what you wanted?” he asked after a moment. “A fair and kind husband?”

“Isn’t that what every woman wants?”

“I asked what *you* wanted,” Dasharath said with a grin. “I hope you learn to answer my questions directly one day.”

“Very well,” I conceded. Manthara had instructed me to trust my instincts, and my instincts had led me true so far. Given the strength of the cord between Dasharath and myself, I thought I could risk this. “I did want a kind and fair man. And I wanted more than that. I wanted to be able to speak my mind and make decisions for myself. To be trusted by my

husband, to have responsibility beyond child-rearing.”

Dasharath’s expression grew serious. “And what responsibility do you desire?”

“A seat on your council,” I said, before I could convince myself not to say it.

He gave a slight laugh at that. But our golden bond shimmered as though lit with sunlight, and I realized his amusement did not come at my expense. “Might I ask why a radnyi would need to sit on the Mantri Parishad?”

“I—” My truthful answer—that I mistrusted men and wanted my own independence—would likely offend him, but neither did I want to start such a momentous step with a lie.

My hesitation was obvious to him. “What is it? I promise I will not make light, whatever your reasons.”

As I searched for what to say, I thought of the marketplace I had seen with Manthara. The women there were capable, some perhaps more so than the men who ran the stalls. “I want to help others,” I answered at last.

“Do you feel my council does not already do that?” His tone was curious, not defensive.

“You help some of the kingdom,” I conceded. “But there are others who might benefit if they had someone to champion their interests.”

To his credit, he understood immediately. “Other women, you mean to say.”

“Yes.” I met his gaze and found no judgment. “I would help them however I might.”

“Why?” he asked.

“Excuse me?” I asked, too quickly. “I’m sorry. I don’t understand your question.”

“You are free to do what you please from now on, and your situation is far removed from your serving girl’s.”

He had a good point, and my thoughts on the matter were as of yet half-formed. But the more I thought about what I had seen, the less sense it made. “It is possible to want something for others too. Is that not my responsibility as radnyi? They are also your subjects, and they are capable.”

Dasharath was silent, and I hesitated to look at our connection. But when at last I did, I found it swaying only slightly, as though in a contented breeze. “And to that end, you want a seat on the council.”

“I would not ask you to change things on a whim or without consideration, for I know that you will undertake to do so only when you are satisfied it is truly best for the kingdom. But on your council, I might be able to prove to you that change could benefit us all. So yes.” I kept hold of his gaze.

“Would you ask that of me? As one of your boons?”

“No,” I said at once. I would not use up so precious a gift mere moments after receiving it, and I did not have to. “Now that you know this is my dear wish, I would ask it of you as your wife. If you feel I have proven myself, then it would be in your own interests to trust me, to consult me as an equal, would it not?”

He looked at me, and for once I let him see the true Kaikeyi. No averted, soft eyes, but as much fierce flint as I could muster.

An eternity passed in nervous silence, and then Dasharath closed his eyes. His lips tugged upward into a smile. “Six months we have been married. Six months. And you reside in your rooms, only attend court when summoned, seem a shy recluse. And here you are, a warrior, a woman who wishes to be made an advisor.”

My cheeks burned hot. I did not think he intended to shame me. And yet, like Yudhajit’s accidental barbs that had marked my childhood, his words stung. “I am sorry. I meant no offense.”

“No, I am sorry. I have done little to ease your transition to

Ayodhya, preoccupied as I was with Sambarasura and other matters. I will grant your wish, allow you access to my Mantri Parishad. But in return, you must promise me something.”

I took a deep breath before I spoke. It helped, giving me time to bury the urge to agree immediately no matter the terms. “What would you ask of me?”

“That you actually talk to Kaushalya and Sumitra, and that you properly fulfill your duties as my wife. I am granting you an unconventional request, but you must obey convention too.”

The request was reasonable and, perhaps, a way to finally end my seclusion. A seat on the council would be worthless if I remained in hiding the rest of the time. “Yes, Raja. We have an agreement.”

He took my hand in his again even as he closed his eyes, and his thumb moved in slow circles. I covered his hand with my own, stopping the movement so that he knew he could rest. He did not pull away, and neither did I, content to sit in the comfortable silence until his breaths deepened and he slipped into a healing sleep.

CHAPTER TWELVE



WE RETURNED TO THE palace one week later, when Dasharath was well enough to travel. There was a huge feast in honor of the victory, and I sat at Dasharath's right hand. It was a joy to have a palace-cooked meal, and even more of a joy to lie on my bed. I slept for half a day and woke feeling ready to start the work Dasharath had set for me.

I approached Radnyi Sumitra first. I still had the memory of her well-wishes fresh in my mind, and she appeared less intimidating, with her pleasantly rounded cheeks and ever-present smile.

Sumitra responded with enthusiasm when invited to my chambers for an afternoon repast. As we ate the colorful milksweets, Sumitra gossiped about a servant who had allegedly been asked to leave Kaushalya's service. I nodded along, but my attention was in the Binding Plane, trying out the idea that had struck me the evening Dasharath made me his charioteer. I shaped our bond, doing my best to augment it, and I watched as the thin filament thickened into a robust embroidery thread. But by that point, the string was shaking side to side quite dangerously, so I let go of the Plane entirely.

Sumitra was talking about some sewing project she was working on, and so I decided to take a risk. In a drastic maneuver, I dug out my own haphazard work I had occupied myself with in the carriage to the battlegrounds. Sumitra laughed so hard that she cried, and our bond strengthened tenfold to a firm cable that looked like thick wool, more than I could have done with my magic.

Toward the end of our time, the topic turned to a ceremony

that was being planned in a few moons' time. I listened with half an ear, for a radnyi's job at such events was to observe and look beautiful, until Sumitra said, "Of course, because it is for the goddess, we will take part in the ritual."

"What?" I asked, bemused. That had certainly not been the custom in Kekaya. The sages performed all rites, with the occasional assistance of the men.

"It will not be much work, don't worry." Sumitra patted my hand, as though my concern was with the difficulty of the task. "We will wash the statue and make the offerings. Lakshmi has blessed this kingdom with prosperity."

I had not given much thought to the rules of public rituals, for I cared little about trying to please the gods. But now Sumitra's words struck me differently. Here was yet another place where women were largely pushed aside—even the most devout.

I barely heard the rest of what Sumitra said as we bade each other farewell, wrapped up in my own thoughts.

The next day, I attended the Mantri Parishad for the first time.

None seemed surprised to see me—Dasharath must have warned them—but I caught several men glaring at me when they thought I was not looking. In the Binding Plane, my connections to most were nonexistent wisps. But despite his severity, Virendra seemed to respect me, as did the Minister of Finance. These two men, along with the religious advisor, Manav—an elderly man with whom I shared no bond at all—formed Dasharath's inner council. I focused on strengthening the few cords I had ever so slightly, but even by the end I had not yet built adequate rapport to contribute to the council's deliberations. Even many of the men seemed bored, for the meeting was primarily occupied by a few ministers seeking custodianship of Sambarasura's old territories. I doubted I would ever build the necessary connections to shout *You are idiots* at the arguing men without severe consequences.

When the meeting was over, I returned directly to my chambers, wanting to remove my heavy jewelry. Only after stripping off my necklace and one jhumka did I realize I had company.

Kaushalya stood at the other end of my room, half-hidden in the shadows near the window.

I dropped into an instinctual bow and then committed to it rather than repeat my first error. “Radnyi, I did not notice you there.” If she had wanted a better reception, she should not have entered my chambers and gone into my bedroom without permission.

“That much is apparent.” Kaushalya walked slowly toward me. She looked lovely as always, dark kohl framing her eyes and delicate gold gracing her long neck. “I came here to talk to you after court, but it has been some time since the public audiences adjourned.”

“I was listening to the meeting of the Mantri Parishad,” I said, gesturing behind me in a useless motion. Kaushalya knew where the court was located.

If Kaushalya was surprised, she hid it well. “A council meeting. That is no place for a young woman.”

I wanted to protest that I was not a young woman, but petulance would hardly sway her. Besides, to all others the council was no place for any woman at all.

“I am sorry you feel that way,” I said at last, blinking into the Binding Plane and finding the black bond between us. It flickered in and out of my vision, which was concerning, to say the least. I had long ago trained myself to only look at my magic from the corner of my eye, but part of me wanted to stare at Kaushalya’s chest and watch the bond. I could hardly do that though.

“You have been here half a year,” Kaushalya said, arriving in front of me. “In that time, you have barely attended court, never spoken to me or Sumitra without prompting, and shown little interest in the affairs of the king. Now you accompany

him to battle, invite Sumitra to your rooms, attend council meetings, and steal my best servant.”

“I’ve done *what?*” I squeaked. Most women considered poaching help to be one of the most despicable sins.

“Asha. All she has done for the past several days is speak about you.”

I remembered with a start that Sumitra had talked about Kaushalya dismissing a servant just the day before. “Oh—oh, please, do not dismiss her. She was forced to attend me during the battle, and perhaps something about that frightening experience stuck in her mind.”

“Dismiss her?” Kaushalya asked, her lips disappearing entirely into a thin line. “Why on earth would I do that? No, I simply assigned her to the kitchens for a week as punishment. It was annoying, hearing her tell stories of the camp and your deeds for the fifth time. Then who should visit me yesterday but Sumitra, also talking about the great Kaikeyi. It seems I cannot escape you.” Her manner conveyed the utmost annoyance, but at the end of her tirade the bond between us had flared into firm existence.

I ducked my head to hide my grin and examined the bond. It was delicate and gleaming, like molten obsidian, and I imagined that it would feel exquisitely polished to the touch. “I am sorry, Radnyi.”

“You do not sound sorry,” Kaushalya said. “And you do not need to call me Radnyi. We are equals.”

“You will always be the first among us,” I said.

Kaushalya’s nostrils flared as she inhaled and exhaled dramatically, and still her high cheekbones and large eyes kept her face the picture of beauty. “What do you want?” That was now twice in the span of a moon someone had asked me that, when I had gone most of my life never hearing it.

As I had with Dasharath, I decided to answer her honestly. “I would like to rest. It is a hot day, and I have been wrapped in these stifling layers of silk for hours. You are the one who

came to my room. I think the question is: What is it that you want?"

Kaushalya smirked. "I wanted to speak to you. I wish to know your plans, to know why you have suddenly decided to act the part of a radnyi. And I want to know what you hope to gain from Sumitra. She is a sweet woman, kind, unassuming. I won't have you using her for your own ends."

"You—" I spluttered. "You—you should speak to your husband."

"What does our raja have to do with this?" Kaushalya asked.

"He requested I take up my duties with the court. No—as a matter of fact, he ordered me to take up my duties with the court." The words poured out of me in indignation. "He brought it to my attention that I am a radnyi and should act like one. You are correct, I have neglected my responsibilities for months. I have been remiss, uncertain in this new environment. And yet you too have neglected your duties. I did not ask for this marriage. Whatever resentment you have because of it should not fall on my shoulders. I am eighteen years old; you are nine and twenty. You are Dasharath's first wife. You should have helped me."

By the end of this speech, I was breathing heavily and had advanced several steps, forcing Kaushalya back. But improbably, in the face of this onslaught, Kaushalya laughed.

"Why are you laughing?" I demanded, unsure whether to be mortified or livid.

"Of course this was Dasharath's idea," Kaushalya gasped out. Her lovely features had transformed with the laughter, smoothing her furrowed brow and opening up her expression so that it appeared nearly inviting. "I should not be surprised. And you are quite young. It did not occur to me. I married Dasharath at your age, but he was younger then, still yuvraja. And I had no other wives to contend with."

I could tell this was the closest I would get to an apology.

“Sumitra and I walk in the gardens almost every morning,” Kaushalya continued. “From now on, you may join us. But do not be late.” And she swept past me and out of the room, leaving me gaping.

My tirade had pushed me out of the Plane, and I forced myself back into it. Our bond had thickened in a matter of minutes, vibrant and polished as the jet-black rocks on the banks of the Sarasvati River. Had my anger somehow endeared me to her? I prodded it with my mind, and it rippled lightly, cool water flowing over a stone.

I thought over the conversation, hardly able to understand what had happened. Why had Kaushalya’s suspicions been so easily allayed? Had her defense of Sumitra been genuine?

I removed my other earring and my silk shawl and lay on top of my covers, the questions circling about in my mind.

A knock on the door startled me awake. Drowsily, I wondered if Kaushalya had come back to further interrogate me. But when I opened the door, I found Asha, fidgeting in the hallway.

“Radnyi!” Asha said, brightening. “Radnyi Kaushalya sent me to you. She thought you might appreciate having another lady-in-waiting.”

My mind immediately provided every possible negative interpretation. Asha might be a spy, beholden to report back to Kaushalya. Or Kaushalya might have used this as an opportunity to be rid of Asha for some imagined fault.

As if sensing my hesitance, Asha added, “She wanted me to tell you this is a gift, and that if you do not want my service, she would gladly have me back. She said that everything is shared between sisters.”

Between sisters. I could not push aside the warmth that radiated through me at her words. “She said that?” I asked, unable to believe it.

“Yes, my lady.”

I smiled even as my body sagged in relief. My prospects in Ayodhya were rapidly brightening. “Please, come inside.”

The next morning, I stood at the entrance to the gardens at sunrise. I filled my lungs with the crisp morning air, delighting in the slight chill that reminded me of home.

When would Sumitra and Kaushalya come down? I had not asked what time they usually met.

As the minutes went by, I began to wonder again whether this had been a ruse on Kaushalya’s part to humiliate me, to prove my powerlessness. The confidence I’d felt upon finding Asha at my door yesterday quickly dissipated.

I checked the Binding Plane several times as I waited, for once glad that I had so few true bonds with people here. It made my search for Kaushalya’s easy. Our thread remained the same, black and shining. I picked out my bonds with Dasharath, with Manthara and Asha, grounding me in Ayodhya from all directions. I did not often go into the Binding Plane without a particular person nearby to focus on, so I spent some time making a game of determining who the thinner tangle of threads might represent.

After what felt like an hour of standing at the entrance, I gave up. Slowly, I turned toward my rooms. Absorbed in my shame, I rounded the corner—and ran right into the women I had been waiting for.

“Where are you going?” Kaushalya asked from behind Sumitra as I scrambled to maintain my balance.

“I thought I had missed you,” I hedged, hoping that would be an adequate answer.

Both women were wearing light, plain kurtas and simple sandals. I felt mortifyingly overdressed in comparison. Manthara had suggested something less formal, but I had insisted I knew better, donning the elaborate skirt of a mint green ghagra. The stiff silk was heavy against my legs as I walked, and the embroidered hem dragged against the ground if I was not careful.

Kaushalya walked past me toward the garden's entrance and gestured toward the sundial in the center of the courtyard.

"If you arrive by the time the dial is here, you will not be late," she said, indicating a time only a few minutes earlier.

Sumitra offered me a smile as she walked toward the gardens. "I'm so pleased you could join us today."

We wandered the looping paths, me on the left, Sumitra in the middle, Kaushalya on the right. I had come out here only once or twice, months ago when I first arrived. At that time, many of the flowers had not yet bloomed, and the walls of identical greenery seemed an unsolvable maze that had deterred future visits.

Now, walking among silky blossoms of blue and purple and red, I could almost enjoy the surroundings and the company. Jasmine scented the air with a light sweetness, and the hum of insects provided a pleasant accompaniment to the conversation. I had noticed very few birds in Ayodhya's palace garden. But then, birds always made me think of my father and my banished mother, so perhaps it was a blessing in disguise.

"Kaikeyi was there when it happened," Kaushalya said suddenly, pulling me from my reverie. "She not only accompanied Dasharath to the camps but drove his chariot into battle."

"What?" Sumitra stopped walking and grasped my wrist. I made a half-hearted attempt to tug it away before realizing that would be rude. After all, I had spoken quite noncommittally about my time away at battle in hopes of avoiding any mention of such unwomanly conduct. "Is this true?"

"Yes," I said, deeply uncomfortable with the attention. *Don't blush*, I instructed myself, as if that might help. I could feel the heat staining my cheeks.

"Dasharath himself told me," Kaushalya added. "He said you were the bravest person on the battlefield that day. That you saved his life."

I flushed further at the praise, hating my face for giving me

away so easily. Dasharath had stayed true to his word. He had kept the truth hidden from the outside world—but had given me my due all the same.

“After he was wounded, I drove him to safety. That is all.”

“That is all?” Sumitra repeated. “That is a great feat. Why did you not tell us?”

“Anybody would have done the same.”

Kaushalya snorted. “Neither of us could drive a chariot down a wide road, let alone through a battlefield.”

“The gods guided me,” I lied.

“All the same. The gods do not assist the unworthy. They cannot make talent where there is none.” Sumitra reached out and embraced me.

I stiffened for a moment, not expecting such a thing—but then I forced myself to relax and return the embrace. It was sincere. “Thank you,” I said with a smile.

We resumed our stroll. I was trying to think what new subject I could introduce when Kaushalya spoke again.

“Perhaps that is why you are so ill at ease among women, talking about women’s work,” she said. “You were raised by men to perform the tasks of men.”

I considered correcting her, telling her that the men I had been raised with had never thought of me as one of them, but thought better of it. “Perhaps,” I agreed. “Perhaps.”

We had completed a circle of the garden. As we reached the sundial, Sumitra begged leave to go back to her chambers and prepare for the day. I wanted to do the same—but Kaushalya’s friendship would dramatically improve my life in Ayodhya. By the same token, her enmity could make it intolerable.

So I lingered, quiet, as she crossed her arms and stared at the muddied hem of my skirts for what seemed like an eternity. I wondered if I would ever feel put together in her

presence.

“We meet outside my chambers,” she said at last, the hint of a smile playing on her lips. “In the mornings, when we take our walk, that’s where we meet. When we want to present a unified front to the court—typically in the wake of scandals or threats—we also meet there.” Kaushalya lifted her gaze to my face as she spoke.

I was unsure of how she wanted me to respond. Anger had worked well for me before, in my chambers, but it no longer seemed appropriate.

“And we will all go to court together today. There is to be a performance by dancers who have traveled all the way from Videha. They are renowned for their Shiva Tandava.” Kaushalya started walking away from me, then turned back around. “You will want to change out of that dress. And in the future, you need not dress so formally.”

I smiled ruefully. “I hope the mud will come out.”

“If not,” Kaushalya said, her voice dropping to a dramatic whisper, “just have a new one made. You are a radnyi.”

CHAPTER THIRTEEN



AFTER THAT, I SETTLED into the pattern of court life. On a typical day, I would wake and stretch, until I was warm and loose-limbed enough to practice fighting forms. I had no wish to go back to the horrors of the battlefield, but I still enjoyed pushing my body, feeling the rhythm of the movement. I borrowed a wooden sword from the training grounds and would occasionally practice with it in the main room for variety. But still it held less wonder than it once had, for I could remember how these objects had been used to steal life before my eyes.

After this, on most days I would join Sumitra and Kaushalya in the gardens for a walk, learning about the workings of the palace. Some of these mornings, Dasharath would hold open court as well, and men from across the kingdom would come to plead their cases and causes before the raja, asking him to settle their land disputes, requesting he revise taxation agreements, and so on. I would infrequently observe from the balcony, but there was little part for me to play, and I preferred the company of my fellow wives.

After that, if there was no council meeting, I would study, determined to understand the workings of Kosala's administration.

The evenings were devoted to court pastimes, far more varied than the austere Kekayan palaces. There were feasts, of course, but also dance and musical performances, and traveling troupes of storytellers. These last groups were my favorite, for they gave voice to the stories I had long loved—the men dressed in fantastical costumes and unearthed

different voices for each character, setting the scenes with lyrical ease. The esteemed artists of the city were sometimes in attendance to paint portraits or views of the palace, and it was a pleasure to observe their work. Often we would sit and enjoy the entertainments of court until the torches burned low.

But by far, what I enjoyed most were my infrequent trips into the world beyond the palace, whenever Manthara was able to slip me away. For even as I grew to know my fellow queens, I realized I had so much to learn about the lives of other women. I had long cared only for my own independence, but there were so many who were far less free. Knowing this bothered me for reasons I could not quite understand.

On one such occasion, Manthara brought me to a small mud home where a friend of hers resided, farther from the market than I had previously ventured. When I complained—for I had been hoping to once again drink in the sights and bustle of the stalls and vendors—she shook her head. “Not today. There is only so much you can do watching. Here is a chance for you to listen.”

I was about to ask what I was meant to learn, when a woman my own age opened the door and ushered us inside. “Manthara-ji, it is so good to see you! And I see you brought —” Her eyes widened, and she brought her hands together and bent deeply into a formal bow.

“Please, there is no need for that,” I said, stepping inside. A small etching of Lord Ganesha hung above her door.

“Radnyi Kaikeyi, you honor me with your presence,” she said, her voice several pitches higher. “If I had realized you were coming, I would have prepared.” She turned from us and walked quickly across the packed dirt floor toward the stove. Her entire home appeared no bigger than my room in Kekaya. From here I could see the low cot she slept on and a small shrine filled with statues of the gods.

I slipped off my sandals as Manthara did the same. “Truly, there is no need for that,” I said. “What is your name?”

“Riddhi,” she said, ducking her head. It meant wealth and prosperity—a kind, hopeful name for a commoner.

“Riddhi is an excellent cook, employed in the palace kitchens,” Manthara said. “But recently there has been some trouble.”

“What sort of trouble?” I asked her.

She shook her head. “It is no matter,” she whispered, looking down and playing with her fingers. “I am used to it.”

She was obviously lying. “Perhaps if you tell me—”

“It is no matter, Radnyi Kaikeyi,” she said, speaking more firmly now. Clearly, something was upsetting her, enough so that she risked interrupting me. “Nothing to bother yourself with.”

“I would like to help, for you are a friend of Manthara’s,” I said, trying to imbue my voice with kindness.

Manthara had been quietly observing, but now she said, “You can trust the radnyi. I am sure she will be able to assist.”

The furrow in Riddhi’s forehead deepened. “Nobody can help, unless the gods decide to change the circumstances of my birth.” She sighed. “If you must know, I am... illegitimate. And there are some who dislike that my father found me a position in the palace—the only thing he ever did for me.”

“Your father is a noble?” I asked.

She nodded. “Yes. But it is not his fault. After all, he did not decree that illegitimate daughters were unmarriageable.” She was right, of course. It was the sages who had made it so, for an illegitimate daughter was deeply inauspicious and impure—unmarriageable, a terrible curse for a woman. But of course the gods and sages had nothing to say about illegitimate sons, who were still able to quietly inherit both money and power. Suddenly her name took on a much crueler cast.

“That is no matter. It does not mean you should be mistreated,” I said at last.

“I am not being mistreated,” she protested. “But there have been... remarks made to the head cook, and when it comes to me, my father can only do so much. If the head cook decides to throw me out—well, I doubt there will be another chance for me.”

“Who is making these remarks?” I asked. “Perhaps I can talk to them.”

Riddhi shrugged. “I cannot tell you. My father has many rivals in court, and I am sure that is all this is. This is my burden to carry.”

“But—”

“How are your neighbors?” Manthara asked, cutting me off. She shook her head slightly at me. I wanted to ask many more questions, but instead I sat back, half listening as they chatted, my mind spinning. Riddhi was being punished for something entirely beyond her control, but I did not see how I could help her. I had no power to oppose the words of the sages or to change the laws themselves.

I had long thought of Ahalya as the foremost example of how a man might devastate a woman, but as I saw more of the world, I was realizing there were many ways to ruin a person’s life. Most women were not cursed by their husbands, but they suffered all the same. Manthara was right—I had learned something.

And yet, Riddhi did not have to suffer or carry her burden alone. She worked in the palace where I was a radnyi. What good was learning if I did not take action?

That afternoon, I made my way down to the kitchens.

The space was cramped, far more than I would have expected and a strange contrast to Kekaya given that the rest of the palace in Ayodhya felt so much grander. The room was dim with smoke and bustling with movement, the scent of garlic, ginger, and cumin mingling in the air.

“Radnyi Kaikeyi, can I help you?” A stout older woman stood before me, head bent in deference.

She spoke with a slight air of authority. This must be the head cook. “I was hoping to speak to you about Riddhi,” I said, making sure there was no trace of uncertainty in my voice.

“What is it now?” the woman asked with a sigh.

“No complaints,” I said quickly. “I wanted to tell you that if you receive any further complaints about her, you may direct them to me. Unless you believe their grievances are legitimate, of course.”

The head cook squinted at me through the smoke, as if trying to determine whether I was serious. I held still, waiting, until she relaxed and gave me a small smile. “That is a most generous offer, Radnyi, although I doubt when they hear you have favored her, there will be any further complaints. The girl is smart and skilled. I would not have wanted her to leave.”

I had not meant to go so far as to favor her, but by protecting her I supposed I had indeed done just that. Instead, I gave the woman a nod.

“Riddhi!” she called.

Riddhi emerged from the back, bearing a plate of saffron-hued sweets arranged in a many-petaled flower. “It is ready, I am sorry for the delay—oh, Radnyi Kaikeyi.” She bowed, balancing the plate aloft to preserve the design.

“I do not wish to disturb you,” I said. “Only to tell you that you need not worry any longer.”

Her face flitted through emotions quickly—confusion, shock, then happiness. “Truly?” I nodded. After a moment, she smiled broadly, bouncing slightly on her toes as if unable to contain herself. “Thank you, Radnyi.”

“It was my pleasure,” I said.

“I don’t know how I can ever repay you—” She looked around frantically, then said, “Wait one moment. Please.” She walked quickly to one of the storerooms.

“You have not shown interest in the kitchens before,” the

head cook said to me. “Although we appreciate your attentions.”

I knew that she was really asking *why*. “She did not deserve to suffer.”

The head cook studied me, hands on her hips, a twinkle in her eye. In the Binding Plane, a rose-hued thread unspooled between us. I knew from my time in Kekaya how useful it was to have the goodwill of the kitchen staff, and now with one act of kindness I seemed to have accomplished that here.

In helping another woman, I had in fact helped myself. The head cook’s favor would increase my own power in court.

At that moment, Riddhi emerged again with a smaller dish of the same saffron-hued sweets and offered the plate to me. “I think you will like these,” she said.

As I lifted one, I caught the faint scent of mango. I took a bite, and a delicious burst of flavor danced across my tongue, the rich sweetness of sugar, the tart vibrance of mango, and the creamy undertones of milk. I had eaten such boiled sweets before and enjoyed them, but here there was an extra hint of nuttiness that made them divine. With a noise of pleasure, I put the whole thing in my mouth.

“That was extraordinary, Riddhi, thank you.”

The young woman grinned again, and I quickly took two more before departing, delighted with my success.

I entirely forgot the festival of the full moon, until Asha approached me to show me what she had chosen for me to wear that evening.

The sari was a diaphanous white, for the full moon, heavily embroidered with exquisite silver branches that danced like shadows on water when I moved. The necklace she had laid out held three obsidian stones nestled among intricately woven webs of gold. Her taste was excellent—the delicate necklace and embroidery would suit me well.

Because all other happenings had been canceled for the

day, I decided to take a stroll in the gardens and enjoy a moment of solitude. There would be a great feast tonight, to celebrate the end of the fasting period for the sages, all of whom would be in attendance. Their day would be occupied in ceremonies for Shiva, but women were not permitted to attend those, for fear it may anger him and lead to a poor monsoon season. It seemed absurd to me that such a great god would care about such a small thing. Still, we had all heard of Videha, the kingdom to our west, where an entire harvest had been lost when they failed to properly observe the same rites. They were much closer to the mountains, and catastrophic mudslides from the slopes had killed many. It was not worth the risk.

But for the moment, I was content to wander in the breeze and enjoy the beauty of my surroundings. Lost in thought, I rounded the corner of a hedge and promptly collided with what felt like a stone pillar and fell with a thump. *Have they added a new statue?* I blinked up at the object. After a moment, I realize that it was in fact a very tall man who was staring down at me in concern.

“I am so sorry, Devi. May I assist you?” I took the proffered hand, strangely delicate compared to his size, and he hoisted me to my feet.

“Thank you. I apologize for my clumsiness. I thought myself alone here.” I did not recognize him, but he was finely dressed. Most likely he was a noble visiting for the feast.

“There is no need for an apology—I thought the same. I don’t believe we’ve been introduced, Arya. I’m Kaikeyi.” I deliberately omitted my title. Knocking over royalty could be a criminal offense, and I did not want to scare him—though on second glance, he did not look like an easily intimidated man.

In fact... he looked like he might not be fully a man at all.

His deep brown skin seemed to have the faintest glow—or was that the light of the waning sun? His hair was curled so tightly it may have had muscles of its own, styled in a manner unfamiliar to me. And his eyes shone like gemstones, a

brilliant deep orange flecked with red. Inhuman eyes. I had seen those eyes once before, deep in a forest near the banks of the Sarasvati River. My heart beat quicker, and I took a small step back without thinking.

But the recognition that flared in his expression was quite human, halting my panicked response. “Radnyi Kaikeyi!” he exclaimed. “It’s a pleasure to meet you. I am Ravana, of Lanka.”

This surprised me. I had known Ravana would be our guest for the evening, but I had not expected to find him wandering the gardens. Immediately, I swept into a bow. “Raja. A pleasure to meet you.”

Ravana’s territory existed on an island at the very southern tip of the known world. His kingdom had long been plagued by the disapproval and punishments of the gods, and he was making pilgrimage to the high mountains in order to seek Lord Shiva’s grace. It was a long, fraught journey, and everyone knew he hoped it would bring his people better fortune.

When Dasharath had told me of his coming, I had wondered why such a seemingly devout leader would have the need for such a pilgrimage. But looking at him now, I knew. He had rakshasa blood in his veins.

“I am not sure how pleasant being knocked over was for you,” he said, and I found myself laughing. The disconcerting color of his eyes was softened by the kindness held within them.

I shook my head. “It was my fault. As I said, I should have paid more attention to where I was going.”

“I understand. Sometimes I find myself lost in thought for hours on end.” He sat down on a nearby bench, and drawn in by his easy manner, I sat down next to him.

“Lost in thought about what?” I asked.

He raised his eyebrows as though surprised to be asked. “Flight, for one thing,” he said.

“Flight? Like birds?” I was intrigued.

“Yes. I am trying to find a way to make it possible for us intelligent creatures to take to the sky,” he explained, his eyes taking on a distant look. “If birds, with no language or tools, can fly, then why shouldn’t we?”

“Birds can speak,” I said immediately. “You and I cannot understand them, but that does not mean they don’t communicate.”

He looked at me as if seeing me for the first time. “And how would you know such a thing?”

My cheeks reddened. “I have read of it,” I mumbled. I would not reveal my father’s boon, especially not to a stranger.

“That does not sound like information one would find in a scroll,” Ravana pressed. “But I am fascinated by this. If I were to wear a pair of wings and flap as hard as I could, I would still not take flight. Something else must buoy birds. If I could only speak to them, I might be able to divine what allows them to fly.”

I laughed at the thought of little sparrows or finches relating the secrets of their wings to this man. I wondered if this was one of the many things my father knew and could never share. “They are far more trouble than they are worth.”

Ravana turned to face me fully. “Now, Radnyi Kaikeyi, you really must tell me. How have you come by such knowledge?”

I had talked myself into a predicament. I needed to distract him, and for want of a better option, I entered the Binding Plane. Happily, we had already formed a bond, a cord the color of the cloudless sky. I could work with that. I sent him a gentle suggestion: *Drop the matter.*

His brow furrowed, and he shook his head as if to clear a fly away.

To my shock, I felt the suggestion recoil from him, the same way I had bounced off him on the garden path. Such a thing had never happened before. I frowned, concentrating this

time, and sent the message again, more firmly.

Ravana sprang to his feet. “What are you doing?”

“Nothing!” I insisted, too quickly.

“Are you a witch?” he demanded, taking a step away from me. His features twisted, eyebrows knitted together and lips pulling back into a scowl. For a moment, he looked like a creature from the tales, from my nightmare in the forest. And yet, however frightening he looked, his actions betrayed his own, mortal fear.

“No, of course not!”

“I received a suggestion in my mind,” he said. “Some sort of magic is afoot.”

“That’s absurd.” I rose to my feet, pretending insult. “I will not be maligned in such a way.”

But he stepped in front of me, blocking my path. “Why such an extreme reaction?” he asked. “I am sorry. I was rude just now, but please do not leave.”

“What do you want?” I asked, eyes darting to the path behind him.

“Only to talk,” he said. “I mean no insult, but you have magic. I know it; I felt it. Look, here. I will swear that I mean no harm. Would that put your mind at ease?”

Cautiously, I nodded. He would be honor bound to such an oath.

“I swear to the great Lord Shiva that I will not tell another soul anything you share with me about this matter of magic, and furthermore, that I mean you no ill will on its account.”

I repeated his words back to myself, searching for any gap in his statement, but found none.

“What would you like to know?” I finally said.

“Everything,” Ravana replied. “Shall we walk back to my rooms? There is something I wish to show you, which I think

will be of great interest to you.”

And so, for the first time in my life, I revealed my secret. I told someone about the text I had discovered in the library cellar of Kekaya’s palace. I told of the Binding Plane and my ability to influence others. I had always feared that my story would sound like madness—or worse, like heresy—for the gods were the origins of all magic, and my power came from no god. I could not tell anyone—not even Manthara—for fear they would never trust me again. But Ravana could not be so easily influenced. I felt protected by his vow, and flattered by his interest, and the words spilled out of me.

When we reached his rooms, Ravana checked to make sure no servants were present, then unlocked one of his trunks and rummaged inside. After a moment, he pulled out four scrolls, each made of fine leather.

“These are my texts on magic,” he said to me. “I thought I would bring them to the mountain of Lord Shiva, in the hope that perhaps in that sacred place I would be able to use them. I thought they might help me with my investigations into flight. But I have never wielded magic myself. And now I see that these were never meant for me. They were meant for you.”

This was a precious gift indeed to give to anyone, let alone a near stranger. I shook my head. “That is too much.”

“Read them,” he insisted. “You have time. If they make sense to you, then you should keep them. Knowledge is meant to be shared.”

I knew that politeness dictated I protest more vigorously, but in truth I ached to read the scrolls. I had never succeeded in discovering more of my own in Kekaya’s library and had been too fearful to even look in Ayodhya. So, I gave in to the desire, carrying them to the fine teakwood desk in the corner.

The first was a treatise with faded illustrations of the five elements sketched in feathery ink and painted: orange and red fire, dark blue water, pale gray wind, green and brown earth, and yellow lightning. Below each element was listed a mantra.

Ostensibly to create it?

I mouthed each mantra in turn, concentrating as I did when I entered the Binding Plane. When I recited the final one, my fingers brushed against the page and I felt a light tingling sensation. Excitement jolted through me—but I could not seem to replicate the sensation.

The next text was nearly impossible to decipher. I managed to discern that whatever power it contained had been discovered by devotees of Lord Brahma, but that was all.

Most magic in this world belonged to the gods, this I knew. But it was still discouraging to see it laid out this way. I opened the third, expecting the same, but—

The third dealt with the Binding Plane. I recognized the language immediately.

I read it quickly, my vision nearly blurring in my haste. And then, puzzled, slowly read it again.

It had nothing to do with personal connections. It took me several moments to understand that it was referring to other people's bindings. The scroll contained a different mantra to the one that was now as familiar to me as breathing. This mantra supposedly allowed me to access a new aspect of the Plane. Beneath it was an explanation of concentration techniques to strengthen or weaken these connections as one pleased.

My heart thrummed in my chest as I recalled that day on the field, when Dasharath had seen me maneuvering the chariot and confronted the Master of Horses. I had seen such a connection then. At the time, the bond between them had been slippery, unwilling to come into my grasp. But if I had known this mantra, perhaps I might have touched it.

I could feel anticipation pooling in my stomach at the idea of sitting at the council table and changing not just my own relationships but the alliances and rivalries themselves. Incredible potential unspooled before me, and I fought to keep my excitement in check.

I glanced around and realized Ravana had retired to the other room, offering me privacy to read the scrolls.

“Raja?” I called. Ravana returned immediately. “May I try something on you?”

“Of course.” His face lit up, his excitement mirroring my own. “What should I do?”

“Just stand there,” I said. I focused my eyes on his solar plexus and repeated the mantra to myself. I sensed the faintest glimmer of something but lost it. No matter.

I tried again, emptying my mind of all else and repeating the words with more force. The world *shifted*, as though the mat beneath me had been lightly jerked.

A strange veil fell over my surroundings, shrouding them in gray. And at the center of this faded world was Ravana, and the web of bonds that radiated from him in a tapestry of light.

“Incredible,” I breathed, walking toward him. I resisted the urge to duck, knowing that the threads of the Binding Plane were not real; I had never seen threads that did not move with me. It felt as though I could get tangled and trapped in them, as though I could reach out and touch one. Underneath my feet, the world was solid, even though it had dulled to a distant gray. But I could tell that I was not quite fully in my reality anymore. I lifted my hand and lightly touched a bond—but my fingers passed right through. It was only magic, after all.

“What is it?” Ravana asked.

“You could sense earlier when I tried to use my ability on you, yes?” I asked. He nodded. “Tell me what you feel right now.” I found the brightest, strongest bond and sent an aimless thrum of energy at it, not changing or suggesting anything, but trying to merely sound it out.

“My wife,” he said instantly. “Mandodari. Whatever you did, I am now thinking quite strongly about her. You would like her. She’s brilliant and beautiful and a great asset to our kingdom. I love her so—” He frowned. “I think that is your influence, pulling this out of me.”

“Amazing,” I said, hardly able to believe it. “If you would permit me, I would like to try something regarding someone you do not care for very much.”

“Not my wife, then,” he said immediately.

“No, no.” My eyes fell upon a very fine green floss. “Who is this?” I plucked it just barely.

“I am picturing a stranger I met on my travels a few years ago. We both camped in the same cave for a night, when it rained.”

“He is of no matter to you?” I asked.

“None. I had not thought of him since that night.”

“Lovely,” I said, and focused on the bond, feeding it with energy. Before my eyes, it swelled to twice, then thrice its size.

“I liked him,” Ravana told me thoughtfully. The bond quavered, and I could not calm it. My mind’s grasp slid from it again and again. “I liked him immensely. Should I have offered him a position in Lanka?”

I sent one final push, but it was too much. The bond frayed and snapped even as I tried to prevent it, the two ends crumbling like ash just as had happened to my bond with Neeti so many years ago.

“No. I hate him.” Ravana sounded bemused. “I have no idea why, but I do. Did you change something? Is this usual for your workings?”

I blinked, and my shoulders sagged with exhaustion. I let the Binding Plane drop away, and the gray veil lifted. Color snapped back in the world, and a wave of dizziness washed over me.

What was the strange, colorless place I had just been? I looked around, disoriented for a few moments, before the realization hit me. That world *was* the Binding Plane—truly another world, a half step from our own. In the past, I had glimpsed only a small part of it, seeing only my own connections. But this was the true Plane, foreign and

wondrous. Already I could not fathom that I had been so ignorant.

But using it was *difficult*. When I had been a girl and had first discovered the threads, using them would leave me feeling like I had sprinted the length of the palace thrice over. I had grown comfortable, complacent with time. And now I could hardly stand.

I would have to strengthen myself all over again for this new world.

I looked up at Ravana and realized he was waiting for an answer. “Not usual. I have never done such a thing before. And it is you who are most unusual. You are the first to have been able to discern any of my workings. I had never thought that possible until meeting you. Thank you for allowing me to experiment in such a way. This scroll is very valuable.” I held it to my chest, a sense of wonderment energizing me.

“I am half-rakshasa,” Ravana admitted. “That is how I can feel your magic. And why I have some immunity to it. Radnyi Kaikeyi, you should keep the scroll. Keep all of them. You have a talent.”

“You hardly know me,” I protested. “Why would you give me such a gift?”

He said simply, “I think it incredible that anybody in our world can harness magic. I am happy to do my part in helping yours.” Through our bond, I could feel he told the truth.

“A raja cannot be so altruistic,” I warned him, because I liked him and did not wish to take advantage of his kindness.

“Perhaps. You have shared your secret with me, so I will do the same. What if I were to tell you that I wish for magic in the world, because I hope it can move us out from under the thumb of those with more power?”

“You mean the gods?” I whispered, as though they were not capable of hearing every conversation among mortals.

“Their rules hold us back, do they not?” Ravana shrugged,

as though he was not speaking complete blasphemy. But my stomach clenched, for if we were overheard—or if the gods took notice—we would suffer greatly, royalty or not. “My kingdom is constantly punished for every improvement we make, every step we take toward healing and science. I am going to Lord Shiva to beg him to spare us, to let us go forward and bring others into enlightenment as we see fit.”

“What are you talking about?” I hissed. “The gods—” I wanted to say *always have our best interests at heart*, but my mouth said, “protect us.”

He stepped toward me. “Are you sure about that? Then why should they punish me for progress? Or you, or anyone else for that matter?”

I moved toward the door, studiously ignoring his question, for I did not want to admit what it stirred inside me. Some part of me heard Ravana’s words and recognized truth.

But it was all too much. A whole world had just opened up to me, and with it, opportunities I did not yet fully understand.

Maybe Ravana had a grander vision for the future. But he was a man, and could dream like that. This new Binding Plane, the potential of the present—that was enough for me.

“I am still not sure I can take the scrolls from you,” I said. “It does not seem fair.”

He sighed. “All right. Let us simply say that in exchange for the scrolls you owe me a favor, should it be in your power to give it, and leave it there.”

The symbolism of the gesture felt right.

“Thank you, Raja Ravana. I truly hope one day I can repay you.” I clutched the scrolls to my heart and left his rooms, wondering what favor I could possibly ever grant him. But I quickly put it out of my mind: I doubted our paths would ever cross again, and I had other things to concern myself with.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN



THANKS TO RAVANA'S INCREDIBLE gift, the whole world opened up to me in a burst of color. I learned how to view all of the Binding Plane at once and lost myself for hours in the brilliant webs. Thin skeins of orange and red created tracks of fire around the palace, while threads of blues and greens sent beautiful rivers through every part of the court. Against the faded gray hues my surroundings took on when I entered the Binding Plane, the bonds and connections stood out ever more brightly. The Plane had its own landscape, and I came to feel like its god.

But one problem remained that couldn't be solved with the Binding Plane. As the weeks went by and I went again and again to my husband's bed, my moon cycle did not change. Every moon I bled, and every moon I failed to produce an heir.

In the privacy of my own room, I worried over the many possibilities for my childlessness. My occasional evening horseback rides. My work in the Binding Plane.

My divine abandonment.

Hardest to bear was the disappointment of Kaushalya and Sumitra. Kaushalya especially had given up on the idea that she would ever bear the raja a child, and I had come to consider her a true friend. Letting her down filled me with shame, and sadness at causing her such pain. Despite all my maneuverings in becoming Dasharath's bride, I was now a worthless third queen.

When Dasharath summoned me to his chambers nearly fifteen moons after my move to Ayodhya, I delayed as long as possible. Just the idea of trying again twisted up my insides.

Manthara forced me out the door, reminding me that no matter how I felt about it, Dasharath was my raja and I had to obey.

My treacherous feet bore me forward even as my mind protested. I stood outside his rooms, considering for a fleeting moment using my influence over Dasharath to make him forget his desires. Finally, I lifted my hand to knock. The door swung open before I even touched it, and Sumitra's cheerful face peered out at me.

I blinked. Did Dasharath now want two of us at a time?

"Here she is! No need to send a servant out to find her," Sumitra said, beckoning me inside. I followed her through the chambers.

"Good." Dasharath sat on the edge of his bed, and Kaushalya sat on the floor by his feet. Sumitra knelt beside her, and I forced myself to assume the same submissive posture. At least it seemed that I would not be expected to perform any conjugal acts tonight.

"I believe there is a reason why all of your wombs have failed to bear a child," Dasharath said. He spoke quickly, as though he did not like the words. "That reason is me."

I nearly toppled into Sumitra, trying to hide my surprise. Men never took responsibility for infertility—that was a woman's curse.

"I have not performed the proper rituals for the gods. I have been too preoccupied with expanding our territories and administering to the needs of the kingdom, and so neglected my spiritual role. This kingdom has not had a Yagna in a generation. The gods are punishing me by withholding an heir."

Ah. That made more sense.

"How will we rectify this, Raja?" Kaushalya murmured.

"I have arranged to perform a great Yagna in a fortnight. We will sacrifice our best animals, offer our best foods, and pray that one of you will bear a child."

Sumitra clapped her hands together, but I had her measure well enough by then to know without checking that she only feigned enthusiasm. She believed herself fully barren, despite evidence it might be Dasharath's fault.

“What should we do to prepare?” she asked.

“I have consulted the city's sages. They tell me there are purification rituals you must undertake. Our court sage will instruct you. And you must fast for the next fortnight.”

Despite knowing such rituals were unlikely to work for me, I was willing to try, not only for myself and my kingdom, but for the promise Dasharath had made me in my father's throne room.

And so, I forced myself to observe every preparation for the Yagna. I fasted for two weeks, subsisting on water and the occasional fruit, hiding my irritation that Dasharath, as a man, was allowed to eat freely. It was another inequality that I had been ignorant of. How many poor women had undergone similar rituals, forced to go about their days with only a few sips of water? How many were forced to fast during their cycle? It was a small indignity, not as bad as the laws that prohibited women from speaking in public or forced illegitimate daughters into a life of poverty, but it rankled me.

By the day of the Yagna, none of us could contain our irritation. Dasharath had promised us an enormous feast afterward, but that seemed so far away when servants woke us before dawn to bathe.

“Sage Rishyasringa better move quickly,” Sumitra griped as we began dressing. Her usually sunny disposition had fully faded in the face of the court sage's potential long-windedness.

“I might eat whatever animals they sacrifice,” Kaushalya added, pulling on her shift with more force than strictly necessary.

I groaned. “I might eat Sage Rishyasringa himself.”

They both stared at me, and I thought I had gone too far—but then the room echoed with their peals of laughter.

“Not nearly meaty enough,” Sumitra joked.

“Well, he has those horns and a little tail. Perhaps he would taste like goat meat,” Kaushalya said, her voice remarkably even for someone speaking so ludicrously. It was common knowledge among the court that Rishyasringa’s mother had been an apsara, a dancing spirit in the court of the gods, who had been cursed to live in the form of a deer. The gods liked to remind apsaras of their place, lest they get too arrogant in their beauty—Brahma had fashioned Ahalya to humble the apsaras too.

Born of a human father and a divine deer, Rishyasringa was a renowned sage, even if he took after his mother in some respects.

“Just a few more hours. When the sun sets, we can eat.” My stomach rumbled agreement.

“You know what I want?” Sumitra asked. “Kheer. I want kheer.”

I made a fake gagging sound. “I hate kheer. I don’t think even now I’m hungry enough to eat it. It’s so... grainy.”

Kaushalya flicked my shoulder. “If you can eat Sage Rishyasringa, you can eat kheer.”

“I wouldn’t be so sure,” I said. “But there will be many other desserts at the feast. Gulab jamun—I could eat one hundred of those.” The delicious fried dough soaked in rose-flavored sugar syrup had been my favorite dessert for as long as I could remember.

“Only if there’s a hundred for me too,” Kaushalya said. “Otherwise, I will fight you for them.”

I laughed. “You would lose.”

“Would I?” Kaushalya asked, voice cool, and I worried again that hunger had loosened my tongue overmuch. Then Kaushalya dissolved into a fit of giggles. The hunger had turned us all hysterical. We struggled to dress ourselves. When our handmaidens entered the preparation rooms, the sun had

barely risen over the horizon. Their deft fingers undid and redid our clothes, fastened jewelry.

Asha snuck each of us a small peach, and despite the fact that we were not supposed to eat until the feast, we devoured them as if they were the choicest dish in the entire kingdom.

“That just made me hungrier,” I groaned. When no one was looking, I quickly licked a drop of juice from my finger.

Asha only grinned at me. “You’re welcome.” She acted far more familiar toward me than a servant normally would. She had become a friend, and the thick braid of green between us proved that.

A sudden pang of sorrow shot through me, for the way she treated me made me think of Yudhajit. I missed him dearly. He had been wrong to send me away, even if he had been right about my life in Ayodhya. I might have swallowed my pride and apologized for the chance to get my brother back. But the door was closed, and the bond broken.

I walked to the Yagna, shivering in the cool morning air. We had all been dressed in plain yellow cotton saris that did little to warm our bodies. Sage Rishyasringa lit the sacred fire, and despite the smoke, I was grateful for the beacon of warmth before me.

Much of the ceremony passed in a fog of sadness and hunger and exhaustion. The sage would intone prayers and instruct Dasharath to repeat holy words after him. Every so often, we would be instructed to sprinkle water into the fire and speak a mantra or make offerings of flowers or fruits to the flames. The sage scraped ashes from the fire and used his thumb to apply them to our foreheads, marking us as Dasharath’s wives. At his command, we rose to our feet and completed three pradakshina, circling the statues of the gods and the flames while we repented any sinful acts of our past. I thought of Neeti, how I had so foolishly lost her friendship. I thought of Yudhajit, how even though he had been at fault, my cruelty had sealed our fate. And even though I had not forced her away, my mother’s face flashed before me. I had lost so

many people.

I walked around the flame in a daze, not looking up from my own feet. My mind felt hazy, half-removed from the world. Perhaps that is why I did not notice anything amiss until Sumitra shrieked my name, her hand pulling me back. I stumbled, not quite reaching her, and felt at my back an all-consuming heat.

Never take your eyes off—

I spun back toward the sacred fire. But it was gone, replaced by a column of pure flame towering above me. Before I could move away from the radius of destruction, a male form coalesced out of the blaze. He stepped forward, eyes falling immediately on me. Despite the heat, a shiver ran down my spine. I recognized him.

Agni, god of fire.

His hair and eyes were molten gold, his skin a searing red. Bright light fell off him as though he was the sun. He towered over me, taller even than the half-rakshasa Ravana had been.

“Why do you not bow before me?” he asked, voice crackling. Out of the corner of my eye I saw that all the others, even Dasharath, had dropped to their knees.

“I do not know,” I answered. My lips were incapable of forming a lie. Raw power came from him in waves.

“Kaikeyi,” he intoned, each syllable like the strike of a gong in my head. He approached me and placed a single finger under my chin. Instant pain rose where he touched me. He tilted my face up toward his, and I fought down a scream at the unbearable heat.

Instead, I made myself look into his burning golden eyes. I would not show the gods weakness, no matter how they hurt me.

His lips quirked upward into a smirk. “Radnyi Kaikeyi. We have expected you.”

I blinked at that. “Expected me?” I echoed, jerking my chin

from his grasp. Cool relief.

“You think we ignore you for our amusement?” he asked, voice a whisper. “There is a reason.”

“Why?” I demanded. “What have I done?” I hated that I needed so badly to know.

“It’s not what you have done,” he said. All mirth had left him. “It is what you will do.”

“What will I do?” I asked. “Tell me and let me be done with it.” Behind me I could sense the quiet murmurs of the watching crowd. Half of Ayodhya had turned out to witness the spectacle of the Yagna. And now they watched as Agni singled out the third wife of the raja. How would I explain this to Dasharath, to the others?

“I cannot tell you that,” he said. “But the gods-touched are immune to the charms of the gods. Forsaken. You are forsaken.” He brushed past me then and strode purposefully toward Dasharath.

“Gods-touched?” I called after him. “What does that mean?”

But he had already forgotten me, turning instead to the raja. In the god’s hands appeared a small silver pot, and Dasharath was nodding, smiling, prostrating himself to touch Agni’s feet.

I managed to gain enough control over myself to find the Binding Plane. I did not know why, but my instinct in this frightening situation was to flee there, to a place where I had power. Gray overlaid the world and I searched for Agni, hoping to demand answers.

He was not there.

In the Binding Plane, even his shadow had disappeared. The space in front of me stood empty, and I reached out a hand, hoping to touch the blank spot where I knew a god should stand. But there was nothing.

“Feed this kheer to your three wives,” Agni rumbled, and I jerked my hand back, exiting the Plane to see Agni still

standing by Dasharath. I blinked the magical threads back into existence, and once again, the god disappeared.

“Once they have consumed it,” Agni continued, “they will bear you strong sons.” His voice had amplified so the whole crowd could hear him. Perhaps the whole city.

“Thank you, my lord,” Dasharath said. “We are unworthy of your blessing.”

Agni stepped back and back into the fountain of fire and the flames rose up around him, consuming him until he was indistinguishable from the towering blaze. In the blink of an eye, the fire died down to its normal, mortal size.

I raised my hand to my chin, expecting to feel a blistering burn, but my fingers met only smooth skin.

“What did he say to you?” Sumitra whispered, coming to stand beside me. Kaushalya stood on Sumitra’s other side.

“He wanted to know why I had dared not to bow,” I whispered back. “I apologized. I explained that the hunger had made me faint and I was not in my right mind.”

“What did you shout after him?”

“I was begging forgiveness,” I said. My explanation was flimsy, so I gave our connection a quick strum.

“If you begged for forgiveness, he granted it. Put that out of your mind. The gods are not cruel.” Sumitra straightened as Dasharath approached Kaushalya with the kheer. I reached for her hand and squeezed it, trying to thank her. She squeezed back.

Kaushalya lifted the kheer to her lips and drank long and deep. As Kaushalya’s throat bobbed, my stomach roiled. I really did despise kheer. It tasted sickly sweet, like fruit that was several days overripe. It was the only sweet I could not stomach. Even in this, the gods mocked me.

Kaushalya finished drinking and passed the vessel to Sumitra. Sumitra took several swallows, then handed the vessel to me. I looked into the silver pot, and the sight of the

creamy rice pudding made my empty stomach turn. I lifted it to my lips, held my breath, and took two fast swallows. When I paused to breathe, the thick coating on my tongue choked me. I could not make myself drink again.

I passed the vessel back to Sumitra. “I don’t wish to take more than my due,” I gasped out. Perhaps the others would view it as generosity and humility, rather than simply a deep hatred of kheer. I watched Sumitra struggle and could tell the moment that hunger and a desire to be out of the intense scrutiny of the public won out. She gulped down all that remained.

Dasharath raised the empty pot up to show the crowd. “It is done!”

The kheer churned in my belly. I focused on breathing in, out, in, out. Soon we would be in the palace, soon we would be at the feast, soon, soon, soon.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN



“WHAT DID AGNI SAY to you?” Manthara asked the instant I entered my rooms.

I knew I could not lie to her. “He said they have expected me.”

“They?”

“I assume he meant the gods,” I said, sinking down onto my bed. I turned my face to the side slightly so that Manthara could hear my next words. I did not want to repeat the ugly truth. “He admitted that the gods have forsaken me.”

Manthara was silent. “I am sorry,” she finally said.

I glanced up at her, shocked by the gravity of her voice. The dupatta she often wore over her hair had ridden forward, casting shadows over her face. Her dark eyes were black, sorrowful.

“All this time I insisted that you must be mistaken, when you said the gods didn’t hear you. I treated you like a foolish child.” Her words warmed me. She believed me.

“I *am* foolish,” I admitted after a moment. “Sometimes. But I knew this to be true.”

“Did he tell you why they did such a thing to you? You have not committed any great sins.”

“He said—” I stopped myself, considering what Agni had told me, and despair coursed through my veins. Agni was a powerful god who acted as a conduit to bring mortal offerings to the heavens. But this time he had brought something from the gods to us—and he had brought me a message besides.

Such a reversal could mean nothing good for me. “He said I was gods-touched. That the power of the gods could not work on people such as me.”

“Gods-touched,” Manthara echoed, placing a cool hand on my head. I told myself I was imagining the reverent wonder in her voice. I knew in my heart Agni’s words were a curse, not a blessing. “I always knew you were destined for something great, but this...”

“I am not destined for something *great*, Manthara. I am destined for something terrible. He said I was forsaken because of what I will do.” I buried my face back in my bed to mask the tears that slipped down my cheeks. I could not fathom what I might do. But to have incurred such divine wrath from birth—

Is this how Ahalya felt, knowing Indra’s eye was always upon her? Or when her husband returned and she stood in that moment between innocence and condemnation, knowing what was to happen and yet powerless to stop it?

I had wished merely for a measure of freedom for myself, and perhaps now for others. There was nothing evil in that. Was there?

“The gods would smite you down if they thought you would be the source of terrible deeds.” Manthara ran her fingers through my hair, and I relaxed despite myself. “You are meant to help the world.”

“He didn’t look at me like I would help the world,” I told her. But she couldn’t possibly understand. She loved me. “He looked at me like I was wicked.”

“I’ve known you your whole life,” Manthara said to me. “You don’t have a wicked bone in your body.”

“Then maybe I am to become wicked,” I said. My voice trembled, but Manthara had seen worse weakness from me. I needed her reassurance right now.

She did not disappoint. “That is entirely within your power. Now, if you are done with this foolishness, you should rest.

Your body has work to do.” She sat on a chair next to my bedside. “Shall I tell you a story?”

I was not a child anymore, and it had been many years since Manthara had spun me a tale. But I nodded anyway, lying back and letting her voice wash over me as she spoke of Savitri and Satyavana. I had heard this story before, of how brave Savitri bargained with Yama, the god of death himself, for the life of her husband, Satyavana. Yama offered her any wish, except for the life of Satyavana, and so she wished she would have one hundred children with her husband. Impressed, Yama brought Satyavana back to life.

I had found it a boring story as a child, for there was no fighting or danger, no wondrous gifts or thrilling escapes—just a woman and a god, speaking. But now I heard it anew. A woman, speaking to a god as her equal. A woman, saving her husband. A woman, outsmarting death. It soothed me, for a few minutes, to imagine myself as Savitri, even if I knew deep in my heart that hers was not my path.

After the story was done, I felt calmer, more peaceful. And when I briefly opened my eyes, before I slipped at last into sleep, Manthara was still there.

I might have been immune to the magic of the gods, but Dasharath was not. The kheer we all consumed allowed his seed to stick inside us, and soon we all swelled with child.

I knew that if I bore a son, Dasharath’s vow would make me the most important woman in the kingdom. I also firmly believed that, although they had promised Dasharath strong sons, the gods would give me a daughter just to laugh at me.

I did not wish to bring a daughter into this world of men, into a world that would silence her thoughts before she could even speak them. I wondered how many women had felt this same fear, deep in their bones. If my mother had. It turned my stomach, kept me awake at night, thinking of all that might go wrong.

I had to change it.

I had to build a world where my daughter would not be exiled by her husband on a whim, where her opinion could be valued without first having to save her husband's life in battle. The thought of my daughter marching to war was like an ache I could not shed. I lay awake night after night unable to breathe for fear of it. I would not always be there to protect her myself. Confined to only the least strenuous of activities, I had far too much time to think of these remote possibilities, for myself and my daughter, until I felt my chest would break with the fear, my ribs crackling like brittle wood under the weight of it.

But in time, the fear also brought clarity. I was a radnyi and had a seat on the council—if anyone could change this, it was me. I had to try.

The sages had made the wishes of the gods clear, putting rules in place to keep women separate and protected. But in truth, it was little protection. If the gods had already ordained my evil deeds, then I had nothing to lose by defying them now. So, I would defy them.

I could not change the minds of the gods, but I could change the minds of men. Ravana had given me a monumental gift, and I began to wonder what I might be able to accomplish with it. How I might make this kingdom a better home for my daughter than Kekaya had been for me, or my mother. Opening the court to women. Permitting women to learn in the open market schools. Allowing women to maintain their own stalls in the market—and perhaps even hold property. Being unmarried would no longer be a life sentence then.

I spun out the possibilities like strings in the Binding Plane, identifying the difficulties. The more traditional men, I knew, would be unhappy—Dasharath's religious advisor still barely tolerated my presence in the room, although he held his tongue around my husband. But perhaps I could weaken their ties with Dasharath and his closest advisors and bind the others to me instead.

It would take slow and careful work, work that I could not

begin until after my pregnancy—the court healers had told me in no uncertain terms I could not tax my mind or body—but I began to believe in myself again.

After my second missed cycle, I wrote to my father, explaining briefly about the Yagna, the kheer of the gods, and the simultaneous pregnancies of all of Dasharath's wives. I reminded him of Dasharath's promise not so long ago and asked for his prayers that I bear a son, playing the part of a dutiful daughter. I imagined that he would be pleased when he read it, and it warmed me to think that he might be proud—though I still believed I would bear a daughter.

And even though we had not spoken in well over a year, I tried to write to Yudhajit as well. My first attempt—a meandering and apologetic ramble—I tossed into the fire. Perhaps I had something to apologize for, but the fault was not mine alone. My pride, lessened though it was, still would not allow me to be the first to bend.

In the end, I essentially copied my letter to my father and made no mention of my emotions at all. That way, I told myself, his eventual failure to respond would not hurt me.

Manthara handed me a thick package from Kekaya nearly a moon later. I ignored it for a few days, assuming that my other brothers and various courtiers had likely been conscripted into sending bland well-wishes.

This assumption was right, and I wanted to scream as I contemplated the thin strips of reed paper and realized how many I would be obligated to return. I almost ignored the final letter in the package. But as I idly turned it over, I recognized —

Yudhajit's handwriting. Just the sight of it transported me to our childhood, practicing our letters in that cold stone room and racing each other to finish. I was filled with a homesick longing for my brother. *He had written to me.*

My eyes blurred for a moment. I blinked furiously, desperate to read.

Dear Kaikeyi,

I am heartened to hear of your pregnancy and have nothing but the best of wishes for you as you carry this child. I hope you are taking care of yourself in Ayodhya. Father tells me that you have taken to court well, and that he hears nothing but praise of you. I would expect no less.

I miss you desperately, and I apologize for not writing you sooner. I confess I was quite angry at what you said, but I am sure you now regret it—as I regret my role in your departure. My previously arranged marriage has fallen apart, and Father has set a new match with the princess of a mountain clan that will soon be joined with Kekaya. I think I understand a bit, now, of what you must have felt when I told you of your imminent wedding, and I do not even have to leave my home. For that, I am as sorry as I am glad that things have worked out for the best.

I know you and your propensity to assume the worst in all situations, so you must be well convinced by now that you are carrying a daughter. But I am confident that you will bear Dasharath a son.

Love always,

Yudhajit

Heart pounding in my chest, I reached for the Binding Plane, welcoming the familiar tug as the world shifted slightly underneath me. I rose from my chair and spun in a slow circle, finding and discarding in turn each bond that lay shimmering against the drab curtain covering the world.

There. It was smaller than before, which is perhaps how I had missed it in the time it took the letter to reach me, but the deep, rich blue was unmistakable. It extended out through the west-facing wall of my window, and I imagined it crossing the plains and fording the rivers, navigating the city and entering the vast stone palace of Kekaya, until it arrived at the heart of

my beloved twin.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN



YUDHAJIT WAS RIGHT. FOR all my plans in bearing a daughter—all I had begun to do to prepare to raise a girl in this world—I bore a son.

At first, when the midwife proclaimed my child was a boy, I did not understand her meaning. Then I shook with the force of my shock and relief, for I had truly never believed I might bear a child who could live an unconstrained life.

Remembering that my father had named me for his kingdom, I named my son Bharata, after our entire continent.

Kaushalya's son was Rama, born the day before my Bharata. Sumitra followed us one week later with sweet-natured twins, Lakshmana and Shatrugna.

In the span of a fortnight, childless Dasharath became the father of four heirs. The sages proclaimed his sons to be evidence that the gods smiled upon Dasharath, and they recognized him as a great and pious ruler.

In the moments after I gave birth to Bharata, as I lay foolish and sweaty, I looked into his beautiful face and believed with all my being that one day he would rule.

The relief I felt at having a son was indescribable, so bright and hot that I nearly fainted from it. Instead, I cradled him, his soft skin filling me with a joy so deep it dwarfed the relief. I looked into his eyes, and I made him two promises: I would never leave him, not the way my mother had left my brothers and me. And I would never use the Binding Plane on him, never risk that destruction.

I had wondered, in the weeks leading up to the birth,

whether I would be a good mother. What if I was too strange, too warlike and rebellious for it? But I need not have worried. I took to child-rearing quickly. After all, I had years of experience helping to raise my brothers, and I had far more help in prosperous Kosala than had been provided in Kekaya.

At first, Kaushalya and Sumitra and I tended separately to our children, our camaraderie ignored as we jealously guarded every precious moment we could spend with our sons. But one evening, several moons after their birth, Kaushalya arrived in Bharata's nursery, bouncing a sobbing Rama.

"He won't stop crying," she explained, the dark shadows under her unadorned eyes telling all. "He is perfectly fine, but... I heard from someone that you always know how to soothe Bharata, and I thought..." The long gaps in her speech, as though she could barely cling to thought, cut through my own tired reluctance.

"Give him here," I said, glancing at Bharata, who lay cooing on his mat, waving his small fists in the air at the arrival of his brother. I held Rama close and gently bounced him, stroking the down of his hair and pressing kisses on his soft cheeks. He continued to cry, but his wails softened, and without thinking I began to sing to him, a nonsense song I had sung to my littlest brother, Rahul, when he was upset. A song I hazily remembered my mother singing to me and Yudhajit long, long ago.

Rama quieted, looking up at me with wide eyes and trying to grab at my lips, and I felt my heart melt for him. I bounced and swayed, still singing, as Kaushalya leaned against the wall and slowly sank to the floor. "How did you do that?" she whispered.

Rama's eyes were closing now, and I hugged him close to my chest, lowering my voice to a soothing hum. In a few more minutes he was fast asleep, and Bharata had also drifted off. I did not want to let him go, but exhaustion clung to me too. I lay Rama down by his brother, smiling as they unconsciously turned toward each other, and then went to sit by Kaushalya.

“Practice,” I said.

“Even I want to sleep now.” Kaushalya leaned against my shoulder, the weight of her head inexplicably comforting. It was the closest we had ever been.

We both awoke some time later to the sounds of Rama and Bharata babbling to each other.

From then on, we spent much of our time together. I quickly found myself thinking of Rama and Lakshmana and Shatrugna as my own, and I believe Kaushalya and Sumitra thought of Bharata as theirs. And in my heart I vowed that I would raise all of them to be good men—men like their father, not like mine.

In the exhausted fog of those first few moons and the bittersweet relief of bearing a son, I had little time to think about the daughters of my kingdom. But it remained in the back of my mind, a seed of understanding that even if Bharata and his brothers were not going to suffer, someone else’s child would. And as I began to get my bearings once again, I realized Bharata’s birth brought me a gift: He solidified my position in the eyes of the court.

The first time it happened, I nearly fell out of my chair. “Radnyi Kaikeyi, do you think the harvest will be sufficient to increase the tribute?” Arya Suresh asked. I had learned through my acquaintanceship with Riddhi that he was her father. My bond with Suresh had grown since I helped her, so I imagined that he knew what I had done.

Still, I was so shocked at hearing my name that I barely heard the rest of the question, and I felt heat rise in my cheeks. I took a deep breath, collecting my thoughts about the tax the rest of the men had been discussing. “Perhaps it would be best to keep the tribute the same?” I said, then chastised myself for answering a question with a question. “The rains have been sufficient, it is true, but the gods must also bless our fields. The contributions were set based on last year’s harvest, which was abundant, so keeping it the same would not hurt us. If the harvest is worse than expected, the people will be glad there

was no increase, and if the harvest is better, they will remember our generosity.”

I glanced toward my husband as I finished. Dasharath was practically beaming at me.

I had the power to change my kingdom.

Bharata was all of six moons old when I finally decided to raise the subject of the marketplace.

My suggestion was to modify the law to allow women to sell at the stalls twice a week. As I spoke, I kept an eye on the Binding Plane. A few of my bonds trembled, but my golden connection to Dasharath was like sunlight on a cloudless day.

Virendra, the Minister of War, cleared his throat when I had finished. I still did not know him well, although our relationship was respectful. I had always gotten the impression that he found me too strange after the whole affair with Sambarasura, as though he suspected I had not told him everything.

My heart sank. This subject had little to do with him. If he was speaking now, it was surely to rebuff the proposal.

“That is a fine idea,” he said. I gaped at him. His eyebrow went up slightly, and I snapped my mouth shut. “Our merchants may be more willing to part with their sons if they know their daughters may help them. We are always in need of more soldiers.”

I had truly not even thought of that benefit, although it now seemed an obvious way to appeal to a Minister of War who cared about recruiting soldiers, if not aiding women. I saw a few men nodding along. But on a Mantri Parishad with fifteen members, I would need more than a few.

Another man cleared his throat, and this time I knew it would not be in my favor. Manav rarely spoke, but as religious advisor he was quite devout and traditional. “That is blasphemy. The sages have been clear on this point—allowing women to sell in the market would certainly offend the gods.” He spoke as if it were the last word on the matter.

But I had prepared for this objection. “The sages would defer to our king, if he thought it in the best interests of the kingdom. After all, they want Ayodhya to prosper, as do the gods who have blessed us with their favor. If this new rule improved our city, I do not think the sages would have objections.”

At this, Suresh joined in, “Allowing women to sell might encourage trade too, for merchants could make more trips and leave their wives to tend their stalls.”

One after the other, most of the advisors spoke up briefly. I counted nine who agreed with my proposal. Ultimately, though, the decision lay with Dasharath.

I looked up at him, giving him a small smile, and entered the Binding Plane. My husband seemed in agreement, but I was gripped with a sudden worry that my first proposal would fail. I hesitated for a moment, then found the strong cord between us and gave it a featherlight touch. *It is a good idea. Most of your council supports it.* The idea traveled down our bond, and when it reached Dasharath he gave a small nod. “I am convinced,” he said. “This seems a wise decision.”

I could not hold back my beaming grin.

As the men filed out, I sought to catch and thank Virendra. But before I could, Manav loomed before me, blocking my path to the door. “I wish you would reconsider, Radnyi Kaikeyi,” he said softly. His voice held a disquieting energy. I did not step back, but I entered the Binding Plane as a precaution. The thin bond between us jumped this way and that.

“I am sorry we disagree,” I said politely. “But why not give this idea a chance? There is wisdom in it, and benefit to our people.”

“Perhaps. But you cast aside the words of the gods so easily,” he said. “This will anger many.”

I did not respond, for I could tell he would not listen. But neither did I pay him any heed.

On quiet evenings, when there was to be no dancing or music in court and the children were soundly sleeping, Sumitra, Kaushalya, and I would gather with our favorite ladies and servants and talk. We would pretend to busy ourselves in embroidery or the like, but mostly we would sit on the soft cushions in our rooms, lamps lit like so many tiny stars flickering around us, and tell stories about what we had heard around the palace.

One such night, we sat in my quarters sampling delicate sweets made of crushed pistachio and spun sugar—Riddhi’s magical creation—giggling at Sumitra’s story of happening upon a newlywed noble couple acting amorously in the corridor outside the main hall. Kaushalya gave a quite undignified snort, and the shock of that sound coming from the most elegant of us sent us into another round of laughter. It was at this moment that a knock sounded on the door.

This quieted us, for it was unusual for anyone to call at such an hour—everyone who might have done so was already here.

We straightened, trying to recapture a sense of decorum, and Asha answered, opening the door only a crack. I heard the voices of two other women speaking in hushed tones. My lady-in-waiting turned to us. “It is two serving girls from the kitchens,” she explained. “They seek an audience.”

It was strange to hear such a formal request, but seeing that my fellow radnyis had regained their composure, I waved the girls in and asked Manthara to serve them tea. Only once they were settled and drinking did I ask, “How can we help you?”

One of the girls, the younger of the two, straightened her spine and stared right at me. I immediately liked her. She looked to be fourteen or fifteen, with large brown eyes that held a barely contained spark.

“My name is Saralaa, Radnyi. Hers is Mugdha. We are from Chedi.”

I knew of Chedi—it was a small village in the farthest

southwest reaches of Kosala. They bred fine sheep and were known for their lovely textile weaving—I had a quilt from Chedi that was as light as a simple sheet and yet as warm as a summer day. But of course, that fact was no use now.

“We have heard a rumor, my lady, that Kosala intends to make war against the southern villages. I was hoping you could tell us... Should our family flee?” She spoke haltingly, tripping over her words so I could barely make out her meaning. I glanced at Manthara, who came to stand beside me. Perhaps an elder servant’s presence would calm the girl.

“Let me make sure I understand.” I took a sip of tea, forcing myself to go slowly. “You and your friend are from Chedi.” A nod from Saralaa. “You heard a rumor that Kosala wants to declare war on Chedi.” Nod. “And your family plans to leave?”

The girl shook her head. “No, my lady. My brother has just arrived, to take up a position in the stables. He’s the one who said that the village elders in Chedi are preparing for a war with Kosala. I just want to make sure my family is safe.”

We had in fact discussed Chedi at last week’s council meeting. Their village council had refused to pay its tax this year, so one of the Minister of Finance’s men would accompany a small group of soldiers there to collect payment.

But to a village like Chedi, on the outskirts of Kosala, that might seem like a declaration of war, a possibility we had not considered.

“King Dasharath does not plan to wage war on Chedi,” I said at last. “He is simply sending a delegation.”

“A what?” Mugdha asked softly. She seemed a few years older than her friend and spoke to her hands instead of to me.

“A... small group of people,” I explained. “Some soldiers, some officials. They have matters to discuss with your elders. I would not worry. I would, however, tell your brother to stop spreading such rumors.” As I spoke, I found the threads of trust between us and added some firmness to my words.

Saralaa grabbed my hand between both of hers and bowed over it. “Oh, thank you, Radnyi! We were so worried.” Her friend elbowed her, and she dropped my hand, a look of horror drawing over her face. “I’m so sorry, Radnyi.”

I reached out and squeezed her fingers. She had spirit, and I did not want her to fear me. “Thank you for trusting me with this matter.”

After they left, I looked at Asha. She seemed a bit too pleased by the exchange. “How strange, that they should come to my door so late,” I said mildly.

“They call us the Women’s Circle,” Asha said, not looking up from the small tunic she was hemming for Bharata.

“Who calls us that?”

“Almost the entire palace,” Sumitra chimed in. She too had picked up her sewing. Sumitra embroidered beautifully and was currently sewing tiny jewels onto small dhotis for each of the boys.

“What does it mean?” I pressed, and wondered, *How did I not hear about this?*

Perhaps I relied too heavily on the Binding Plane for information. It could never help me answer questions I did not know to ask.

“People know that we gather in the evenings in this manner. Not all of them use the term in a kind way, but I think the women in the palace do.” Asha put aside her work to look at me, leaning forward onto her elbows. “They wish for invitations. Some of the servants ask me for them.”

Like lightning, a revelation coursed through me.

This social gathering had become something more without my even trying. People wanted to come and speak to me, to us, because we had power. Here was my chance to do what I had always wanted, handed to me on a silver platter.

“If you trust them, bring them here,” I said. “It’s our responsibility.”

A few days later, Kaushalya and I sat suffering together through a particularly boring kavita performance. Sumitra had begged off as too tired, and I silently envied her brilliant thinking.

The man was telling the history of a tribe of monkey people to the far south of Bharat. Although they appeared fully like monkeys, they had built a great city among the trees. They were ruled by kings and waged wars just like us, and so it should have been a fascinating recitation. But as the man plucked at his veena and droned on in a nasal tone, all I could think was that this was an insult to that monkey tribe.

After some time, Kaushalya leaned in toward me, pulling her pallu forward to mask her whisper. “What do you think of the Women’s Circle business?” she asked.

I chanced a glance at Dasharath, who sat several feet away and looked half-asleep. “I’m glad of it,” I said. “Why do you ask?” I did not think Kaushalya would harbor reservations about it, at least not in secret.

She shuffled the cushion on which she was seated closer to me, in a movement that should have been ungainly but looked completely graceful on her. “It seems a silly name, does it not?” she whispered. In the Binding Plane, our ebony bond was solid and still, and I chanced a glance at Kaushalya. She was giving me a mischievous smile, her golden jhumkas winking in the torchlight as if they too knew her joke. “Your advice the other day stopped a panic that might have spread dangerously. It’s the sort of work the Mantri Parishad could do, if they bothered with the problems of serving girls.”

I smothered a laugh, for I did not want to attract too much attention. “Agreed. But you do not like us being called the Women’s Circle?”

“I would not say I have a particularly strong feeling about it,” Kaushalya said. “Just that it sounds frivolous.”

“We could make it less frivolous in other ways,” I offered, the idea coming to me as I spoke. “Asha spoke of invitations.

But instead, we could hold an open audience, the way Dasharath does. The radnyis of Kosala attending to the people's problems. It is certainly more imposing an image than the idea of a... matron's sewing circle."

"The people?" Kaushalya raised an eyebrow at me, astute as always. "Beyond the servants, you mean?"

The music quieted for a moment, and we both split away, sitting up straight for several moments as the man hummed. I saw Dasharath open his eyes hopefully and only barely school his disappointed expression into feigned interest as the man launched into the next verse. Next to me, Kaushalya shook her head, an affectionate smile on her face.

When it was safe to continue the conversation, I whispered, "We could use the public gardens, near the main marketplace. It's like you said. The men do not—" I narrowly stopped myself from saying *care* and glanced around to make sure I had not been overheard. "They do not have time to listen to such small matters. But we do. We already are."

I could sense Kaushalya was skeptical, and so I plucked at our bond, holding in my head the image of us, providing counsel to women, giving aid and comfort as we stood among our people. I could see it now, women young and old gathered before us, all of us filled with hope at what futures we might build together.

"Perhaps," she said, considering. "But who would come to such a thing? Only the most desperate, surely."

"Is that not who we should seek to aid?" I asked. "We are radnyis, are we not?"

At that moment, the man finally finished with a flourish. There was an awkward silence for a moment, before Dasharath began giving lukewarm applause. Kaushalya and I joined in, politely tapping fingers against our palms until the moment was over and we could rise to our feet. "There are those who would be offended," Kaushalya said. "First the new rules about the marketplace—no, don't say anything, I know

that was your proposal—and now this? Surely if it pleased the gods, this type of council would have been established long ago.”

“Those rules were written long ago,” I argued. “But these are different times.”

“Different times indeed,” she murmured thoughtfully. “I have an idea, then. Let us simply call it the Women’s Council.”

And so, once a week, in the evening, Sumitra and Kaushalya and I went to the public gardens in the heart of Ayodhya with several of our staff and held audiences. It came together in fits and starts, such that it was hard to say the first time we truly became a council. The first meeting, a few palace servants who we had turned away throughout the week sought our audience, and it was as if we were simply back in our rooms. The next time, it was much the same, small and unassuming. I struggled to ignore the gaping of passersby, the imagined titters.

But slowly, week by week, the number grew. The gaping stopped. It began to feel like something more. Like a Women’s Council.

I was the unspoken leader of the group, and both Sumitra and Kaushalya deferred to me when it came to major disputes. And yet without them, the Women’s Council could never have been. For they spread the word among the noblewomen, the elite social web that I still remained on the outskirts of, despite the fact that I now dressed fashionably and moved confidently about the palace. I supposed that I had made more efforts to strengthen my relationships with the noblemen of the palace than the women—but now, with this council, that was slowly changing.

After the first moon, people stopped watching to see if the gods would punish us for so flagrantly disregarding their edicts. Instead, members of the city trickled in to seek audiences: the poor who could not make trips to the palace for open court, those with problems they did not wish to bring to male advisors, and those whose pleas for help had been turned

away everywhere else.

Was Dasharath proud, I wondered, that we were saving women from husbands who spoke only with their fists? That Kaushalya and I had modified grain storage quotas to distribute food to children on the streets, that Sumitra had employed homeless women in the palace kitchens? That we were conceiving of projects at the Women's Council that I would then bring to the Mantri Parishad to complete?

The last was not our only work, of course, but it was what I loved the most. I think Kaushalya enjoyed resolving disputes, and Sumitra loved best matters of the heart. On occasion we would get young couples, who professed their love for each other despite their families' disapproval, hoping for the Women's Council's blessing. Sumitra loved to hear their stories and bless the matches. Even Kaushalya occasionally became interested and joined in. They thought me shy when it came to such matters, for I would sit back quietly, but in fact I had nothing to add. No such feelings for Dasharath, or any person, had ever surfaced in me. I was comfortable with my husband, loved him as a dear friend, but the pull of romance meant nothing to me. I could be happy for those in love, but I could not understand.

Fortunately, most of the Women's Council's business concerned matters at which I was more skilled.

This particular day was quite cool, clouds covering the sun and a brisk breeze stirring through the gardens. "Step up," I called to the next person in line, and shifted my shawl over my arms as an older woman approached. Her sari pallu obscured part of her face. "What is your name?"

"Dhanteri, your majesty," the woman said.

It was like someone had plucked me from my seat and dropped me back into that chilly stone corridor in my father's palace, standing by a door next to Yudhajit, both of us longing for our mother.

I could not forget that voice. Instantly I began to sweat,

despite the cool air. I tried to recall the face of the woman who always stood behind my mother, but it kept slipping away.

I checked the Binding Plane almost instinctively and quickly recognized it: one of the first threads I had ever followed. It was merely a wisp now, and perhaps I would have once struggled to locate it. But in the washed-out world of the true Binding Plane, even the smallest bonds stood out in stark relief.

“Dhanteri,” I said, grateful that my voice remained steady. “Former lady-in-waiting to my mother, Kekaya.”

“Yes. I am so glad to see you again, Radnyi Kaikeyi. You have grown so much.”

An inane comment, considering I had been barely out of girlhood when she had departed. Of course I had grown. And Dhanteri did not sound glad to see me in the slightest. She had lowered her pallu but still held herself rigid, like a single hard line connected her creased forehead and her clenched legs. The stiff pleats of her light blue sari and the severe bun sitting high atop her head did little to soften her image.

“It is good to see you too,” I said, but I leaned back in my chair. “How can I help you?”

“The last time I saw you, you were only twelve? Thirteen? To see you now, a radnyi of the Kosala kingdom, brings me great joy.”

“Indeed, I was thirteen.” I kept my tone neutral. Dhanteri’s face fell an infinitesimal amount. Had she really expected such mundane flattery to work? At our last meeting, she had threatened Manthara.

I crossed my ankles and waited.

Dhanteri approached me, and the palace guard that typically accompanied us stepped forward to intercept her. It must have galled her, to be treated like a commoner. I lifted my hand in a purposefully lazy motion and the guard fell back.

“There are others who seek an audience,” I said. “What is it

you want?”

“I have news,” Dhanteri said. “About your mother.”

And there it was.

She must be after money, or a job in the palace, and she planned to blackmail me with my mother’s shame. It would not work. “What sort of news?”

“Perhaps it would be best to speak of it in private,” Dhanteri suggested.

“You came to the Women’s Council to seek an audience with me,” I said. “And now you have it. Please tell me what you wish to say.”

“Your mother did not leave the court of her own choosing.” Dhanteri lowered her voice as if to keep her words between us, but I knew she intended others to hear.

“I am aware. My father banished her, did he not?” She thought to blindside me with something I had learned long ago. I smirked at her shock. “Do you have anything else you wish to tell me?”

“She lives now in Janasthana.”

This I had not known, but I did not want to admit it. Still, traitorous interest built under my skin.

Interest, and anger, for clearly she had a permanent enough residence that Dhanteri might know about it. And yet she had not written to me in the decade since she left, not even to provide well wishes for my wedding or the birth of my son. Dasharath’s Yagna, from the appearance of a god himself to the birth of four sons, was the kind of story that had been proclaimed across the kingdoms.

Someone with a shred more self-respect would not care about this news. But it turned out that beneath all my confidence, I was still a child.

“Janasthana,” I repeated. “That must be... nice... for her.” I tried to put the mildest hint of distaste in my words.

Janasthana meant little to me. It was a faraway city, two moons' journey at least, beyond Chedi. One had to cross mountains and jungles to get there, and for what? A few exotic goods. And apparently my mother.

Dhanteri's disappointment was obvious. "That was all I wished to tell you. Thank you for speaking with me." She turned to leave, her movements slow as molasses.

I sighed. "Wait." A woman like Dhanteri would not resort to such desperate measures lightly, and no matter my dislike for her, I had sworn to myself to help all women who came before me.

"Yes, Radnyi?"

"What do you do now?"

"I recently came to Ayodhya. I am still seeking work. Nobody wants to hire an old lady like me."

I leaned over to Kaushalya, who I knew had been listening to the exchange with great interest, although her expression was serene. "I owe you for Asha," I said quietly. "This one is caustic, but also a hard worker and an excellent servant." I could sense my sister queen's skepticism, and I hoped she could in turn sense my need.

Kaushalya nodded. "You may join my staff, if you wish," she said to Dhanteri, with the perfect cool composure I could never mimic, even though I occasionally practiced.

Dhanteri's face lit up—she had come to try to weasel into a position on the third radnyi's service and gotten one on the first radnyi's instead.

I spent the rest of the council session on edge, worried Kaushalya might press me on the matter or judge me poorly for my family's secrets once we were in private. But when we arrived at the palace, she simply squeezed my arm and whispered, "We are lucky to be in Ayodhya, are we not?" And that was the end of the matter.

"I ran into an interesting person on my way to your

chambers,” Manthara said, and I startled. I hadn’t even noticed her entrance. Her arms were crossed and her mouth pressed thin, the lines around her eyes more pronounced, as though I was an unruly child skipping my classes once again. I remembered the enmity that had always existed between her and Dhanteri, and I bit back a groan.

“She came to speak with me at the Women’s Council. She wanted a position and I pitied her. But she will work under Kaushalya, not under me.”

Manthara’s eyed me. “That is all?”

Somehow, after all these years, I was still foolish enough to try to hide things from Manthara. “No. She told me that my mother lives in Janasthana.” Now as I said the words aloud, they filled me with some unidentifiable emotion, loosening my tongue. “Why would she go there? I always assumed that... that she had died, and that was why she never contacted us. But to know this? That she simply did not care enough? That makes me—” The torrent of words stopped as I realized I had no idea how I felt.

A small child standing in her father’s throne room. Alone.

Manthara, however, made no move to comfort me. “And here I thought you were intelligent, child.”

“Excuse me?”

“What, you thought that your father would let her send you letters or visit you on important occasions? You think that she could show her face even in Kosala after being banished by her husband? Kekaya had no choice. If she is still alive, I am sure that it eats at her every day. She was not heartless. A woman wishes to see her children. To meet her grandson.”

I sank abruptly to the floor. Manthara’s words made sense, and yet they sounded like an excuse. In my heart, I still felt there was no justification good enough for my mother to leave me and my brothers.

Manthara must have sensed my skepticism. “Come, Kaikeyi. You have seen this happen enough times to others.

You know this is the truth.”

And she was right. How many women had come before me in this exact situation? I did not blame them for leaving their husbands and children. But this felt different, because it had happened to me. I was being unfair, but I felt twelve and alone again, and that had been unfair too. I wasn't yet who I wanted to be, unquestioningly just. I had so much work left to do. So much to learn.

Watching the realizations play out across my face, Manthara sighed. “You carry on as bold as a man, and as clever too. It has served you well so far, but you cannot assume it will always be so. Or that others will do the same. You are unusual.”

“I do not carry on like a man,” I protested, sprawling on the floor dramatically.

Manthara knelt down next to me and rubbed my head. “Only you see it that way, Kaikeyi.”

I closed my eyes and accepted the comfort of Manthara's touch.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN



THE WOMEN'S COUNCIL AND Mantri Parishad took up most of my time, and I thrived on the work. I loved stepping into the world of the Binding Plane, that gray world that was fully my own, and walking through it as its mistress. And I enjoyed the careful shaping and altering of bonds, and the sweet thrill of victory that came with success. Here I could solve the kingdom's problems with the strength of my own power, strategizing and pushing and arranging the council to best serve the people. Perhaps the only thing more satisfying was watching my sons grow older.

It was my blood son, Bharata, and Sumitra's Shatrugna who got into the most trouble. As twins, I had expected Shatrugna and Lakshmana to be inseparable, as Yudhajit and I had been. But I suppose that all the boys were born so near to one another that the idea of twins did not take hold with them. Shatrugna and Bharata frequently ran from their nurses and tutors and would be found hours later hiding in various corners of the palace. They would feign injury and cause everyone to panic, only to spring up, laughing. They played pranks on their brothers and, on one memorable occasion, evaded various palace guards to burst into the throne room in the middle of a diplomatic meeting.

All children must learn right from wrong, and princes more than most. Sumitra and Kaushalya hated disciplining the children, could not bring themselves to cause the princes to cry or feel ashamed. And so, it often fell to me.

With Shatrugna and Bharata, punishment was simple: I separated them until they learned their lesson. I had vowed at

Bharata's birth that I would never manipulate him with my magic, and I quickly extended this promise to the other children. The heart-wrenching pain of what had happened when Yudhajit's bond had snapped would never be fully gone from my mind, even if, all these years later, we had spun it back into existence with our steady correspondence. With my sons I could not risk it. I never even allowed myself to enter the Plane around them.

Lakshmana acted like Brahma incarnate, although between his light hair and hazel eyes he appeared to all the world as Dasharath made small. He never misbehaved, unless one of his brothers talked him into it, and even then, he would only serve as a lookout—or earnestly take the fall for his brothers. I never truly disciplined him for that, for it was adorable to watch him attempt to explain how the fault was his. And looking out for one's family was a virtue.

Rama was the most difficult to manage. As a young boy, he barely cried. I remembered only one true tantrum from him from his early years. At maybe two or three years of age, he had begun sobbing one evening about not being able to play with his friend. When asked what friend he missed, Rama replied, "The moon." Kaushalya's attempts to explain the moon was far away and could not play with Rama only made matters worse, and at last she sent for me, unable to bear his tears. When I arrived, Rama was sitting in the corner hiccupping, fat droplets rolling down his flushed cheeks. He held his chubby arms out to me, and I scooped him up.

"Ma, I want to play with the moon!" he cried, burying his face in my shoulder.

"I know, I know," I said, bouncing him up and down while I tried to think of some way to calm him.

Finally, my eyes landed on a small hand mirror propped on top of a chest. Still holding Rama with one arm, I snatched up the mirror and carried him out onto the veranda, where the vast expanse of the night sky arched above us. The sight of the full silver moon hanging there only made him wail more

loudly. I deposited him on the ground and turned him away from the moon.

“I’m going to give you a magic toy,” I said. “And it will bring the moon into your hands.”

He quieted and stretched his hands toward me. I gave him the mirror and maneuvered it until the moon shone brightly in its reflection. Rama gasped in delight, then looked up at me. The brilliant smile on his face sent a pang straight through my heart. I ruffled his short black hair and sat next to him. Kaushalya brought me his plate of food, and I fed Rama as he happily babbled at the moon.

When they were a bit older, seven or eight, I taught the boys games from my childhood. Kaushalya and Sumitra hadn’t wrestled their siblings in the dirt, it turned out, and the boys’ tutors were only interested in formal instruction. The boys all ran about the palace halls in a pack, and while they did not mean to cause disruptions, they generally created chaos. So one evening I brought them outside to a grassy courtyard behind the palace.

“What is this, Ma?” Rama asked, his small hands on his hips, looking at the empty space in confusion.

“We’re going to play a game,” I said. “I used to play it with my brothers. One person closes their eyes and counts to twenty. Everyone else hides. When you find someone, you have to catch them. The first person to get caught becomes the next finder, and the last person to be caught wins the round.”

The boys all nodded to me, faces serious. “It’s a game,” I repeated. “It is meant to be fun. It is not a test. I will count first.” I covered my eyes and began counting slowly and loudly. Behind me, the boys whispered, arguing among themselves. I wondered if I would have to count for longer, but eventually the argument stopped and I could hear them running off.

I opened my eyes, squinting across the courtyard. There was a bench some distance away that was slightly askew, and

at the farthest corner of the grounds, I could see someone crouching behind a large urn. I decided to make my way toward it, creeping forward until I could make out Bharata's form, kneeling and trying not to laugh.

"Go, run," I whispered to Bharata. "You're supposed to start running."

He got to his feet slowly and I waved him along until he took a few hesitant steps. As I started to chase him he picked up his pace, but I kept jogging slowly so he would feel like he had a chance. As he ran toward the bench where I knew another son was hidden, I spotted Rama, who had peeked his head out from behind a pillar to watch the scene. Without warning, I turned to catch him instead. His eyes widened in surprise, and then he sprinted away in the opposite direction of Bharata, his laughter ringing out. I loved the sound of that laughter so much, I almost stopped to listen to it.

Bharata, meanwhile, dashed for the corner of a shed, where he must have found Shatrugna, because each of them tried to push the other until they both tumbled out, laughing so hard they could barely move. I remembered the feeling, lying in the tall grass of Kekaya with my brothers, and wished I could somehow preserve this moment so they would always have it.

They picked themselves up, and I changed directions to run after them, adding speed to reach Shatrugna and tap him on the shoulder. His face fell, until I said to him, "Chase your brothers with me." It was not part of the game, but he immediately whooped and ran after Bharata while I spun back to Rama.

In the end, both were caught before we found Lakshmana, who had rolled himself up and squeezed himself into an empty water barrel. He tried to stand when Rama finally found him, but he was stuck. His face turned red with effort as he wriggled about. We had to pull on him, me and the other three boys tugging at his arms, until he burst free with a *pop* and we all fell in an undignified heap.

"You're really fast, Ma," Bharata said. I laughed at his tone

of wonderment, because of course even my jog would seem fast to a seven-year-old boy.

“You all should play again,” I said. “Shatrugna will be counting this time. I’ll watch.”

I stayed in the courtyard, the sun warming my shoulders, watching them hide and chase and wrestle one another.

And yet, as I watched Rama take a turn finding his brothers, his soft face set in determination, a strange wave of foreboding came over me. We had played this game the day my mother was exiled. The day that everything had changed. I couldn’t preserve this moment. This precious happiness could not last.

These are different children, I reminded myself. *And you are their mother, not Kekaya.*

I took a deep breath and turned to go inside. But even in the warm summer air, the chill remained.

I was not my mother, but just as importantly, Dasharath was nothing like my father.

A few days after I taught the boys this game, I happened upon Dasharath tiptoeing through the children’s wing of the palace. When he saw me, he shook his head with a slight smile and put a finger over his lips. I covered my mouth to stop my laughter, for I knew instantly he had been pulled into one of the boys’ games. Dasharath carefully opened Bharata’s bedroom door and disappeared inside for a few moments.

“I have checked every room,” he grumbled when he emerged empty-handed. “They told me they would be hiding somewhere in this corridor.”

“And are you sure you have searched thoroughly?” I teased.

Dasharath drew himself up, feigning indignance. “I am the raja of Ayodhya. I think I am capable of finding some children.” His eyes belied his tone, pinching at the corners as he tried not to smile.

“It appears your children have outsmarted you, raja or not,” I said, not bothering to hide the laughter in my voice now.

“Oh, and I am sure you know where they are,” he said, voice light. He took a step toward me, boxing me in toward the wall.

“I have my suspicions.” I leaned back carefully against a tapestry, crossing my arms.

“As your raja, I command you to tell me.”

“Alas, Raja, my loyalty belongs to my sons,” I said as seriously as I could.

He kissed me very quickly, for we were in a hallway. “What if I command you as your husband?”

I pretended to consider. “I still feel bound to keep their secret. Who can they trust, if not their mother?” I said innocently, and he groaned.

“Ah, but you are one of my wisest advisors,” he tried again. “Please advise me.”

I gave a put-upon sigh. “Very well, if I must.” I paused, and Dasharath gestured at me to go on. “They are not here. They let you count and ran off outside. You have been duped, oh great Raja.” I had seen them play such tricks on their caretakers before, and I knew they would leap at the chance to do it to their father too.

He threw his hands up. “I have spent half of an hour searching their rooms and they left?” Dasharath took off down the corridor, toward the training grounds, and I followed. We emerged blinking into the sunlight, to find Bharata, Shatrugna, Lakshmana, and Rama holding wooden swords, seeming for all the world like they were studiously practicing their sparring. But Bharata’s shoulders were shaking slightly, and Lakshmana kept glancing toward the entrance.

“You thought it would be funny to trick your poor father,” Dasharath called out, and they all whirled around. “But I have found you, and you cannot outrun me!”

He began chasing after them, and the boys shrieked and scattered. I thought of what my father would have done had my brothers tried anything similar. He would have been furious, I was sure.

But this was a different time, of different kings. My father did not even sit on the throne of Kekaya anymore—he had abdicated in favor of Yudhajit so that he could receive treatment for an old war injury.

Dasharath caught Lakshmana first, gently tackling him into the dirt. “I have captured your brother,” he shouted to the rest. “Are you going to defend him?”

He picked up one of the wooden swords that had been discarded in the dirt and gestured for Rama, Bharata, and Shatrugna to take up the rest. Bharata charged first, shouting out, but Dasharath easily batted his sword away. I watched as he expertly fended off all three at once, a grin of delight on his face. Behind Dasharath, Lakshmana got to his feet, and I silently cheered him on, watching as he quietly approached his father and then jumped on his back. Dasharath fell to his knees dramatically and the rest of the boys swarmed onto him. He gave a great cry as he tussled with them on the ground.

“Radnyi Kaikeyi, help me!”

I stepped forward, and the boys turned to look at me. “What do you think?” I asked them. “Should I help him?”

“No, Ma—” “Stay there—” Their shouts overlapped.

I looked to Dasharath, lying on the ground. “I am sorry, my raja. It seems there is nothing I can do.”

“I have been betrayed,” he moaned.

I could no longer contain my laughter. It spilled out of me, echoing around the grounds, and soon the rest of my family was laughing too.

I felt peaceful, light in a way I hadn’t been in years. I had a place here, with four perfect, beautiful sons, who could be happy in a way I had never been as a child. I had a family, and

they loved me.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN



LONG AFTER I RIPPED apart the entire kingdom, old servants claimed that they saw me behave cruelly toward Rama when he was a child. They said it was proof that I disliked him from the beginning. They had always seen me as neglectful, and indeed I was busy, for by the time my children were ten years old and I had acquired twenty-nine years, the idea of a Women's Council had spread beyond Ayodhya, brought there by the wives of nobility and diplomats who had witnessed our success and wished to find their own. I wondered how they would fare, for they did not see, of course, the continued—if ineffective—opposition of the more traditional men, like Manav. They were not privy to Dasharath's occasional meetings pacifying our sages, who performed their public duties to bless the kingdom and praise its ruler but privately warned that the Women's Council was a step too far. They certainly did not see the retaliation some of the poorer women who came before us faced, including one who was banished from her husband's home and her father's after telling us of the beatings she was forced to endure.

But these women who aspired to start their own councils were right about one thing—there was a power in listening, in trust between women.

By the age of ten, all of the boys were polite and well-spoken, but Rama especially so, and so I did not notice at first when things began to go wrong. In fact, Asha was the first one to realize it. She had volunteered to watch the boys one afternoon, and when I returned to my rooms, she was waiting for me.

“Have you noticed anything odd about Rama recently?” she asked me.

I shook my head, alarmed. “Is he ill?”

“No! No, nothing like that, but...”

I breathed a sigh of relief. “I have some work I need to do for tomorrow’s council meeting—perhaps we could discuss this later?”

“He is physically well, but this is urgent nonetheless, Radnyi.”

Asha almost never addressed me so formally when we were alone. I finally took a good look at her. She was biting her lip and twisting her hands. Incredibly nervous, by Asha’s standards.

“What is it?” I asked.

“Rama and I were talking. He asked where everyone else had gone, so I explained. I think the nurses and tutors don’t speak frankly with the boys, because he had never heard of the Women’s Council.”

“That’s hardly a sin,” I told her. “He’s young. I’m sure you provided him with a good explanation.”

Asha’s face fell. “I thought I did. He stayed silent for a few minutes and I went to check on Bharata and Shatrugna. I hadn’t heard anything from them for some time, and that got me worried. But they were just painting with intense concentration.” She smiled slightly.

“That’s lovely,” I said. “But what does this have to do with Rama?”

“When I came back, he told me that he had been thinking carefully about what I said. And that he believed we should stop.” She looked at me, uncertainty in her eyes. I nodded encouragement. “He said that women shouldn’t hold a council because it was immodest. That it defies the laws of the sages, and thus of the gods.”

My stomach tightened. My son, accusing me of behaving immodestly. He was only ten years of age.

“Why?” I exclaimed. “Do you have any idea what led him to say such a thing?” Could it be one of his tutors, filling his head with such ideas? It wasn’t impossible. Though their tutors were considered the brightest scholars Kosala had to offer, we hardly interrogated them about their views on reform when appointing them.

Miserable, Asha shook her head. “I asked him who told him such things and he said nobody did. He informed me that it was a fact of life and everybody should know it. And then he told me not question him, and he tried to send me away.”

“Send you away?” I echoed weakly. It *must* have been his tutors. He would not have learned such behavior from Dasharath, who allowed us to create the Women’s Council and continue it without complaint. His tutors must have taught him this, or perhaps other men and boys he interacted with at court. I had not considered the possibility that my sons might learn such old-fashioned attitudes from others.

Asha stepped forward, her warm hand reaching out to gently rub my arm. I realized I was hugging myself around the middle. “I told him I answered to you, not him.”

A wet laugh bubbled out of me. I could imagine Asha, arms crossed, telling the prince of Ayodhya she wasn’t going anywhere. “I’m sure he didn’t like that.”

“Oh no. His sweet little face turned so red. I thought he would burst into tears, or maybe kick me. But he just yelled that I was lying and ran off.”

I dashed away the tears pooling in my eyes with the heel of my hand. So Rama had, despite the best efforts of all of his mothers and even his father, adopted a poor attitude toward women. I could still fix this. I would speak to Lakshmana, who was Rama’s confidante and the most observant of my four sons. I would try to determine if all the boys felt the same way, and then regardless I would dismiss all of their tutors. I

had always taken an interest in the boys' learning, teaching Bharata his letters, observing Rama's physical training, telling Lakshmana and Shatrugna old stories about great heroes that I recalled from my childhood trips to the library cellar. But maybe I needed to do more. Perhaps I could even find a female scholar for one of their subjects, just to make sure the boys understood that women could be learned as well, and could hold many respected positions.

"I'm sorry, my lady," Asha said.

"Why are you apologizing? This is not your fault. It is mine. Rest assured I will impress upon Rama the rudeness of the way he spoke to you."

"There's no need. I am just a servant, and the princes can speak to us however they wish. I should apologize to him, for refusing his orders." Asha enjoyed walking the edge of impropriety with me, but she did her best to be perfectly courteous to all others.

"If you apologize, it will further reinforce for him that women should know their place and be submissive and modest and all of the rest. Please do not."

She bowed her head. "As you wish."

That evening, I hurried to the courtyard, intent on finding Rama and giving him a piece of my mind. Instead, I rounded the corner straight into a familiar stone.

"We must stop meeting this way," a booming voice said, chuckling as he helped me up.

I looked up and up, a smile splitting my face despite my worries. "Raja Ravana! It is so good to see you."

He chuckled. "It is wonderful to see you, Radnyi. How long has it been?"

"Ten years," I said. "How times change."

"I think about you often," he said. While the years had given me the first glints of silver in my hair, and deepened the lines around my mouth, Ravana appeared completely

unchanged, his glowing skin still perfectly smooth and his black curls gleaming in the evening light. He lowered his voice. “How goes the magic?”

“Very well,” I told him. “Does your vow still hold?”

“Of course.” He placed a hand on his heart. “Whatever you tell me will stay between us alone.”

“Ayodhya has a Women’s Council now, and it is thanks to you and your scrolls.”

“I have heard all about that—indeed, we have one of our own in Lanka,” he said. “But having met you, I think all credit is due to you, and not any paltry scroll. I believe you could have accomplished the same without magic.”

I blushed at his praise, warmed by the thought that even faraway Lanka had embraced what I had begun. “How have you been? How is your flying machine?”

“Almost ready.” A hint of bitterness colored his tone. “I can now get it to go up, but not come back down without utter destruction.”

“That is a difficulty. But I have no doubt you will figure it out eventually.”

“Mm. I hope so.” He looked down at me. “Are you not going to ask me why I am here? Have you become all-knowing since last we met?”

“No, no, that is still reserved for the gods.” His lips quirked and I returned his smile. “Would you tell me why you are here?”

“I am going back to Lord Shiva,” Ravana told me. “After I completed the necessary penance, he granted my request to spare Lanka for a time. But in the past few years, some villages at the southern tip of the continent requested Lanka’s protection, and they brought with them new troubles.”

“What troubles?” I asked.

“A wave of illness. Sudden and ferocious lightning storms.

Destruction that is obviously divine in nature. Have you not experienced such things when your kingdom expanded its territory?"

I shook my head, thinking of the vast expanse of Kosala. "No. Dasharath accepts new tribes often, and without unhappy incident."

Ravana's mouth twisted, and he looked forlorn. "Well, I always knew the gods disliked me particularly."

"They have no fondness for me either," I told him, placing my hand on his. "I am sure Lord Shiva will see your piety and grant you reprieve."

"My piety is in short supply these days. But thank you." We both stood in silence for a moment. "Where were you rushing off to, if I may ask?"

"A matter regarding one of my sons. I must have a difficult conversation with him."

"A very important matter, then," he said seriously.

"Do you have children of your own?" I said with a smile. He spoke as if he did.

The sadness in his face deepened. "No. Mandodari gave birth to a daughter, but... she is no longer with us."

I could see from his expression that I had stumbled into his greatest pain. "I am so sorry. That is a terrible loss to bear."

"She would have been almost your son's age," he said. "Nine."

"Perhaps you and your wife will have another child, if that is what you wish."

Ravana gave me a small, sad smile. "I hope so. But none will ever replace her. I do not think Mandodari will ever be the same, and neither will I." He shook his head, as if throwing off his sorrow. "What an unseemly topic of conversation. I apologize, Radnyi. Will I see you at the feast tonight?"

"Yes, of course, Raja."

How strange, I thought as we parted ways, that I had run into this faraway king twice in my life. Then I put him out of mind. If only I had paid more attention to his troubles, recognized them as warning, perhaps things would have ended differently. But I remained blissfully unaware of the gods' disapproval.

Later, I would sit next to Ravana at the feast, laughing and swapping stories of Mandodari and Dasharath, of battles and victories, of Kekaya and Lanka. I wonder if anyone else remembers the feast, remembers how friendly we were. Maybe they recalled it years later, after the start of the great war, and believed I had been a traitor all along.

But before the feast, there remained the problem of Rama. By the time I made it to the courtyard, the boys' studies had ended for the day. I found Rama playing a complicated game that involved the throwing of various stones with his brothers.

"Rama?" I called out to him. "Come here."

He dropped his stones immediately and ran over.

"Hi, Ma," he said, giving me a hug without prompting. I buried my face in his mess of hair, then pulled away to study his face. His large, light eyes stared up at me, bright and loving, fringed with thick, long lashes. Seeing all my sons arrayed before me, I could feel in my chest a love so bright it nearly hurt. Hope tingled inside me. Asha might have been mistaken—or maybe Rama had merely been joking, in a silly ten-year-old way.

"How was your day?" I asked, taking his hand and leading him a few steps away, out of earshot of his brothers.

"Good."

Experience with my brothers had taught me that directness would get me nowhere. I idly wished that the men in my life could be as straightforward as the women, but I had to pick my battles.

"Did you do anything fun?"

“No.” As he shook his head, one perfect curl fell over his forehead. He was the most handsome of his brothers, and I knew that in a few years he would be invited to every swayamvara in Bharat.

“I did something fun today,” I told him, lowering my voice to get him interested.

“What did you do?” It worked. I had his attention.

“I went out to the public gardens and held a Council. Just like your father does sometimes. Your other mothers came with me.”

Rama wrinkled his nose. “You shouldn’t have.”

“Why not?” I asked.

“You shouldn’t leave the palace. What if men come and see you when you’re out?”

I put my hand on his shoulder and smiled at him. “Plenty of men come to us with their problems, and we help them. We always have guards with us. It’s quite safe.”

Rama’s eyes narrowed, as if I had only confirmed his suspicions.

“What is the matter?” I asked.

“Women are meant for the eyes of their husbands only,” Rama said, as though in recitation. “Aren’t women who invite the attention of other men whores?”

I slapped him.

I had always sworn I would never raise a hand to my children, and I have been ashamed of my actions ever since. Rama cried out and all the servants in the yard turned to look at us. Lakshmana and Shatrugna and Bharata stared with wide, horrified eyes.

Rama drew himself up. For a moment he appeared far larger than ten, far larger than even an adult man.

“How dare you raise your hand to me?” he cried, and it was

as though a hundred resounding voices spoke with his tongue. I stumbled back.

His eyes flashed a clear, unnatural blue, and he seemed to loom over me. The air sparked as it would before a storm.

The day of the Yagna flashed in my mind. His presence felt as Agni's had. Like a god.

But that was impossible. I had been there when he was born, had held Kaushalya's hand. It was impossible.

Rama collapsed back into himself, a normal child once more. He began crying, his cheeks turning red. I moved immediately to comfort him.

"I'm sorry, I should not have done that," I said in his ear, holding him tight.

"I'm sorry, Ma, I'm sorry, I don't know why I said that, please don't be angry, I'm sorry, I didn't mean it," he babbled, small body racked with sobs. Sympathy made my own eyes water. He was only ten; of course he did not mean it.

"Shh, shh, don't cry." I kissed the top of his head and rocked back and forth to soothe him. "You should not call any woman such a word," I told him.

"I'm sorry, Ma," he said. "I won't do it again, I promise."

When he was calm again, I surveyed the courtyard. Everyone had studiously averted their gaze, but I was certain that others had seen. But I doubted from their reaction that they had seen Rama's form as I had.

"Where did you learn to say such things about women?" I asked gently.

"I am sorry," he whispered again, his fingers clutching at my dress. "I heard some soldiers talking on the field. Our soldiers are good men, are they not? I just said what they said."

"Our soldiers are very brave," I agreed softly. "But many of them hold beliefs from a different time. Our kingdom has

changed, and as a prince of this city, you should be glad of that. You must not take every word you hear from others as the truth. You must learn to listen and decide for yourself.”

“But I asked my tutor, Sage Vamadeva,” Rama protested. “He told me—he told me women who behave too freely are bad, and that I should not associate myself with them.”

“Did he tell you that your own mothers were such women?” I asked, making a mental note of the name. Dasharath had spoken to me about the man before—he had been excited that the sage had agreed to tutor the boys in their religious studies, for he was renowned for his piety.

Rama shook his head against me. “Then you do not have to worry about us, all right?” I rubbed his back a few more times before releasing him. “I’m so sorry I raised my hand to you.”

Rama shrugged, eyes downcast.

“No matter how badly you behave, I should be better than that.” I said it half to him, half to myself, as a reminder. “I will never do it again, I promise. Now, go play with your brothers?”

He hugged me briefly. Then he ran off, and I stood, a wave of exhaustion sweeping through me. What had come over me? What had come over Rama?

Maybe I had imagined that flash of godliness, my mind trying to teach me a lesson after my body had done something so horrifying.

Maybe there had been something more in the kheer than just rice.

No. We would already know. Wouldn’t we? I distrusted the gods, but I had been with Rama his whole life. No. Rama was just a normal ten-year-old boy. That was all.

Sumitra and Kaushalya were not angry with me for slapping Rama.

“I am surprised you have not raised your hand to any of them yet,” Sumitra said, offering me some tea.

“Did your mother hit you?” I asked, curious. Manthara had been the closest thing I had to a mother, and aside from yanking my hair once or twice while combing it, she had never physically punished me.

“All the time,” Kaushalya said wryly. “It helped me to remember to stand straight, and lower my eyes, and memorize my recitations. Rama said such a foul thing—he deserved it. Nobody will think any less of you. It’s a mother’s prerogative, after all.”

I hummed an acknowledgment, considering the possibility that perhaps Manthara had never hit me because she couldn’t. The fact that she was a servant did not stop her sharp words, but it might have stayed her hand. My mother had never raised a hand to me, but she had been distant through my childhood. I thought of her, suddenly, in faraway Janasthana, living an entirely new life. What might she think of what I had done?

Kaushalya continued on, oblivious to my musings, “With Rama especially, it is important to train this out of him. Imagine otherwise how he might treat his subjects.”

This shook me from my reverie. I stared at her, utterly bewildered. On instinct, I entered the Binding Plane—but our bond lay calm and assured.

Kaushalya believed Rama would be raja.

Had Dasharath never told them? I racked my brain, trying to think if he and I had ever discussed his promise to me in the years since the boys had been born.

We had not.

I excused myself, sending a quick thought through the Binding Plane, *She’s still upset about what happened, give her time*. But as I walked toward my own rooms, my thoughts were consumed by Dasharath’s promise.

That evening, I went to Dasharath’s bedchambers unannounced after checking that neither Kaushalya nor Sumitra had been summoned. He smiled widely when he saw me, embracing me. For all I did not care for acts in his bed, I

had developed a taste for his hugs. It was soothing to be held in his firm arms, to feel the heat of his body warming me.

“It is good to see you,” he said. “I was just reading the most recent report from the governor of Sripura. That is Kaushalya’s birthplace, and I am sure she would be pleased to hear that they are prospering. And for you, it even mentions that he has appointed a woman to oversee their grain reserves.”

I smiled at this, for he knew me so well and shared such tidings because they would bring me joy. “That is indeed good to hear,” I said to him as he set the papers aside. “But I have something else to tell you.” I worried, as I told him what had happened with Rama, that he might grow angry, but he seemed just quietly contemplative.

“Boys need a firm hand, and you are the strictest of my radnyis.” He unclasped my ornate necklace as he spoke.

“He implied we were whores. That’s why I slapped him.”

At this, my husband spun me around to face him. “He really said such a thing?” I nodded. “Why did he believe that?”

“Because we go out in public and hold the Women’s Council.”

Dasharath’s brow furrowed. “Your reaction was warranted. I will need to speak with the children.” It warmed me, that he trusted me enough that he would not even consider my actions to be anything but necessary.

“No, no. He is just a boy. He apologized profusely. Leave him be. Although... he did mention that Sage Vamadeva helped plant the ideas in his head.”

“How so?” Dasharath looked even more concerned at this. “He is a very holy man. He has held the gods’ favor for years. At one point he was able to divert the course of an entire river to prevent a flood—I could think of no better tutor for them in religious morals.”

“Rama asked him about what he overheard the soldiers saying, and Vamadeva warned him of the dangers of impropriety in a woman.”

At this Dasharath’s expression relaxed. “Well, that is of course his job, to explain such values. Even you agree that impropriety is a danger. So long as he did not insult you.”

I tried again, sending the smallest of nudges in the Binding Plane. “I am sure there is another who can teach Rama and the others just as well.”

Dasharath gave a small laugh. “Kaikeyi, we cannot dismiss a venerable man for such a small matter.”

There was only warmth in Dasharath’s voice and so I forced myself to accept his rebuke. After all, I too was imperfect—I still could not quite forgive myself for slapping Rama, no matter what everyone else thought.

Besides, I had other matters to discuss with Dasharath. “I was talking with Kaushalya afterward, and she mentioned something about Rama taking the throne. She seemed to believe that he would be your heir.”

“Did she?” Dasharath had busied himself with unwinding my elaborate bun as I spoke, and I could tell that he was not really paying attention to my words.

I twisted slightly to face him. “I thought, perhaps, you might have told them about our arrangement already. The promise you made to me and to my father before we were wed.”

Understanding dawned on his face. “No, no I have not. But rest assured, Kaikeyi, our promise still stands. Bharata is yuvraja of Kosala.” Tension bled from my shoulders as he called Bharata the crown prince, and I fully relaxed against him. He brushed some hair from my face. “Would you like for me to tell them now? I did not wish to make things strange between all of you.”

I thought about how much I valued their friendship, Kaushalya’s steadiness and Sumitra’s optimism. I did not

believe this revelation would damage our relationship, but I could not take the risk. If they liked me less, or even began to dislike me... They were the sisters I hadn't realized I needed—my family. I could not lose them.

“It is all right,” I murmured. “I would not want to cause them any pain. When they are older, and Bharata can prove himself...”

Dasharath smiled and embraced me again. “You may be the strictest of my radnyis, but you are still too kind,” he murmured. “The way you hold your court, always speaking for the lowest of our citizens, and even now thinking of Kaushalya's and Sumitra's happiness. You have a bleeding heart.”

“Do you mind it?” I asked him, genuinely curious.

“No.” He lifted me onto his bed. “It's an attractive quality, in a woman.”

“And in a man,” I said.

“I should hope so,” he replied. “Or else there is really no point in how much of my treasury I've set aside for my radnyis' projects, is there?”

I laughed at that, then quieted as he began removing my blouse. “It helps your people, that should be reason enough. Not seduction.”

“Yes, yes,” he grumbled, and when I looked to the Plane for sincerity, our thick, gold-plated bond stayed still and clear.

CHAPTER NINETEEN



ON A SEEMINGLY RANDOM session of the Women's Council, just after midday break as the sun began its slow descent, Sumitra leaned in and whispered to me, "Is that the royal procession?"

Sure enough, over the amassed crowd, I spied several guards on horseback, and then the top of the royal palanquin only used when Dasharath wished to make an entrance.

"It is. But why is he here?" I whispered back.

"If anyone knows, it would be you," Sumitra said, no trace of malice in her voice.

I gave my head a small shake and tried to pay attention to the woman speaking to Kaushalya while keeping one eye on my husband as he drew closer. Kaushalya's patient questioning uncovered that the young mother was a widow with a mind for sums, and so we provided her a reference for the treasury. After several tearful expressions of gratitude, the woman turned around to leave, then froze, nearly stumbling on the edge of the steps.

The rest of the crowd followed her gaze. Like tall grasses under a strong wind, they all sank into low bows.

"So much for subtlety," I muttered. Sumitra laughed, but Kaushalya did not say anything at all.

"Did he tell you about this?" I asked her. "You seem unsurprised."

Kaushalya only smiled enigmatically. "It will all be clear in a moment." I found the cord between us but decided at the last

minute not to use it. She would have cautioned me if I needed more preparation.

Dasharath dismounted and came toward us. He was dressed in an ornate kurta with glinting gold embroidery, and his ceremonial khanda was strapped to his waist. He reached the steps to the dais where we sat, then ascended to stand in the place of our usual petitioners. “I have a matter for the Women’s Council,” he declared, his voice echoing over the hush.

Sumitra and I blinked in bewilderment. It was Kaushalya who spoke. “State your case, Raja.”

“I come seeking advice.”

“Tell us of the matter, and perhaps we may be able to help you.”

Dasharath knelt, one knee on the ground, and looked up at us. “I am searching for a way to reward a member of my Mantri Parishad.”

“What have they done to earn such a reward?” Kaushalya asked immediately, and I realized: They had rehearsed this little performance. But why?

“This person has made themselves an asset to the kingdom of Kosala. I trust their advice above that of almost anybody else. They are kind, hardworking, and beloved by all of Ayodhya.”

“And you need help in determining a reward?” Kaushalya asked. “Land and jewels, perhaps.”

Dasharath shook his head. “They have no need of that.”

“Fine clothes or servants?” Kaushalya suggested.

“They have no need of that.”

Kaushalya smiled. “Are they your most trusted minister?”

“They are not a minister.” A minister was the highest position one could obtain—either a member of Dasharath’s inner council or a governor of a piece of Dasharath’s vast

territory. They had the ears of the raja, their counsel trusted above all. It was certainly strange for Dasharath to so revere someone who did not already hold such a title.

“Then make them a minister,” Kaushalya said simply. “That is an excellent reward.”

Dasharath smiled at me again. “I would have to create a new position for them.”

“I see.” Kaushalya paused, seeming to ponder for a moment. “If they are your most trusted councillor, then make them saciva.” Saciva was an old title, out of use in most kingdoms. It referred to a king’s chief advisor. They used to be members of every raja’s inner council, perhaps the most powerful member, but over the years too many of them had attempted coups or other forms of dissent, and so the position had fallen out of favor.

“You have excellent judgment, Radnyi,” Dasharath said, bowing his head and rising to his feet. He turned to face the crowd, now grown several times larger as word had spread of the king’s arrival. “Today I create a new minister for my council—Saciva Kaikeyi!”

It was lucky that I was seated, for even as it was, I almost fell over. Lucky too that he stood between me and the citizens of Ayodhya, so most could not see the dumb expression on my face. He spoke words I knew, and yet their meaning was incomprehensible.

“Get up,” Kaushalya hissed at me. “Go stand beside him.”

“What?” I asked stupidly.

“Kaikeyi, he’s naming you saciva!” she said. “Get up!”

“But... I’m a woman,” I said.

Kaushalya rose from her chair, took my hand, and pulled me to my feet. “And you are always the one claiming that women can provide value to their kingdoms beyond bearing children, are you not?” She smiled, nudging me, and I stumbled forward a few steps to stand by Dasharath. The

crowd cheered as Dasharath presented me to them.

“Congratulations, my saciva.” His voice was too soft for anyone else to hear.

“I don’t understand,” I said, equally softly.

He raised my hand and pressed a kiss to it. “You have already been my saciva for a long time. And after what you told me about the boys, I had to make sure they understood that their mother—all of their mothers—are strong and valuable women.”

They held a feast in my honor that evening, a joy-filled occasion where Sumitra, Kaushalya, and I finished an entire carafe of sweet wine, and I drank enough to shed a few tears when Kaushalya presented me with a stunning necklace of emeralds set in gold and arranged like the petals of a flower. For nearly a full day, I believed that Dasharath had created this spectacle solely out of his love for me. But when the next meeting of the Mantri Parishad adjourned, he asked me to stay behind.

“I need to send an emissary to Kekaya,” he said, once we were alone.

I understood immediately. He wanted to send me, former yuvradnyi of the kingdom, to negotiate some favorable conditions on his behalf, and so he had made a public declaration of my virtues in order to bolster my position. All of this... spectacle... was merely a way to convince Kekaya that sending a woman rather than another minister—or attending himself—was not a snub.

“Stop that,” Dasharath ordered.

“What?”

“You think I named you saciva solely so I could send you off to Kekaya.”

It was irritating how well he could read my thoughts. “Did you not?” I retorted.

“Of course not, Kaikeyi. I have been planning this for a

long time. I have counted you an advisor for nearly ten years. You have proven yourself to this kingdom and to me many times over. But the incident with Rama and the need for an ambassador forced me to move more quickly. Otherwise, I wanted to throw a parade in your honor.”

I laughed despite myself. What he said made sense. Was this not what I had always wished for? I had wanted Dasharath to value me, to treat me as equal to his male ministers. He already did. And wanting his motives to be pure was ridiculous—a king with pure motives was at best inept and at worst injurious.

“Really, you must believe me. I am your raja.” His tone only made me laugh harder, and his stern glare dissolved into mirth. As it faded away, we both stood there in the comfortable silence.

“Kekaya,” he said at last.

“Yes. Kekaya. Why do you need to send an emissary? Has something happened?”

Dasharath sighed. “Since your brother took the throne two years ago, our traders have reported that Kekaya is providing highly unreasonable terms. Our merchants are returning with only half of what they expect. One trading season I would think it a random chance, but two we must respond to.”

That sounded like Yudhajit. He had always claimed that other kingdoms took advantage of Kekaya, and that when he was raja, he would make them respect his value. I assumed that when the time came, his temper would have calmed, but apparently this had not come to pass.

“I can reason with Yudhajit. I’m sure I can make him understand that this stance will only hurt Kekaya.”

“Thank you,” Dasharath said. “I will, of course, provide you with a carriage and gifts for the court.”

I imagined Yudhajit’s face if I arrived in a carriage. “No, that will not work.”

“Why not?” he asked, but he did not sound angry. He had become accustomed to my mulishness.

“In Kekaya, only those who cannot ride on horseback ride in carriages. To arrive in that way would signal weakness.”

Dasharath raised an eyebrow at me. “I arrived in a carriage when I came to seek your hand.”

“And my father and brother probably interpreted that as eastern foolishness. But I was a yuvradnyi of Kekaya once, and I know better. If I want to show them that I still have their interests at heart, that I might have gone east but my blood is still of the west, then I must arrive on horseback.”

“Very well. What would I do without you, my radnyi?” he asked, drawing me close.

“You would do just fine.” He kissed me, and after a moment I drew away. “May I take Bharata with me? He should see the court of his forefathers.”

“Yes, of course. But he will need company, on the road. Take Rama as well. He should see more of the world.”

“Why not all the boys?” I asked, because I knew Bharata would want Shatrugna to come along, and Rama would miss Lakshmana’s company. “They can ride in a carriage, of course, and I’ll take a few more servants to accompany them. And when we get there, I am sure my brother will treat them as his own children.”

“I do not want all four of them to leave at once,” Dasharath said. “What if something were to happen during the journey?”

He had a point. “Very well. I will take Bharata and Rama with me. When should we leave?”

“In the morning, if you can be ready.”

The first day of our journey, I had the boys ride. I reveled in the feeling of being on horseback again, at the breeze in my hair and the easy rhythm of the horse beneath me. Until the sun reached its peak, the boys did too, enjoying this glimpse at the settlements west of the city. It was refreshing to see a place

so uncrowded and unhurried, the yellow straw roofs an exciting novelty for the boys who would never see such a fire risk in the city itself. But as Surya began his lazy arc down the horizon, and the villages surrounding Ayodhya faded into the distance, the complaints began. We were riding through flat plains, a sea of yellow before us and behind us—and I could sense not only boredom but weariness. I did not countenance any of it to their faces, but told Asha to ensure they could have a warm soak that evening.

The next day, I asked if they wanted to move to the carriage. Bharata agreed immediately, but Rama insisted he would continue on horseback. Once he heard this, Bharata quickly changed his mind, eager to be with his brother.

By midday I knew they must be desperately sore—even I was feeling the pain of the ride, despite our relaxed pace—but they bore it bravely.

That evening Bharata limped into my tent and flopped onto my bedroll. He would soon be too old to show such easy affection, and I felt a pang of loss at the idea.

“How did you do it?” he asked.

“Do what?” I gave him a hint of a smile to let him know I was teasing him. “You should be more specific.”

He groaned. “Horseback riding. My legs hurt.”

I knew he must be in quite a bit of pain to admit it so freely. I rubbed his legs, and he gave a deep sigh of contentment. “Practice,” I said. “Where I grew up, I rode almost every day, and I still do it when I can.”

“And we are going to the kingdom you grew up in?”

“Yes. I’m sure my brother would love to give you a riding lesson.”

At this, Bharata sat up. “The raja?” he asked. “Won’t he be busy?”

“For you he would make time,” I said, remembering the escapades of my youth. I wondered if Yudhajit had become

more serious since then, if out from the thumb of our father he had come into his own.

Given his recent actions, I doubted it.

“What was it like?” Bharata lay back down, then added very quickly before I could chide him for being too vague, “Kekaya, what was it like?”

“I grew up in a palace, as you and your brothers do,” I said. None of my children had ever asked me this question before, and I found myself at a loss. I certainly could not tell them of my mother and father, absent in different ways. “It is colder there than in Ayodhya, and there were fewer people around. We had many magnificent horses, and the palace was surrounded by huge open fields—perfect for riding. It was good that we had so much space, because I had seven brothers.”

I wondered what would they look like now, as adults. It had been so long since I saw them.

“I wish I had seven brothers,” Bharata said wistfully. “A younger brother would be nice.”

I stroked his hair. “Why do you want a younger brother?”

Bharata blushed and turned his head away from me. I stayed silent, knowing that he would tell me eventually. Finally, he said, in a small voice, “So I can be first at something.”

I put a hand on his cheek and turned his head back toward me, looking into his troubled eyes. “What do you mean? You are first at many things. I know you are excellent at sums, and your tutors tell me that you are one of the fastest readers they have ever seen.” I remembered these things vividly, because while I loved all my sons, I took the most pride in Bharata. I was happy when any of the boys succeeded, but Bharata’s triumphs made me want to smile all day. It helped that he was a very bright young man when he decided to sit with his tutors instead of causing mischief.

He shook his head slightly, adjusting his legs and then

wincing. “Those things don’t matter. Rama says a raja must be a warrior first. I want to be a good one. A *great* one. So I must become a better warrior.”

“Your father is a raja, is he not?” I leaned forward and started massaging his legs again, wondering if it was Rama’s insistence on toughness that had caused the boys to ride all day without asking for the carriage.

“Yes?” Bharata squinted up at me, clearly sensing a trick but unable to figure out exactly what it was.

“And how many wars have you seen him fight?”

Bharata looked up at the canvas ceiling for several moments trying to recall. “I can’t remember any.”

“That’s because since you and your brothers were born, he hasn’t fought any. He has ridden with his soldiers a few times on patrols, and of course there are small skirmishes at our borders every so often. But the last major battle he fought was before you were born. Almost twelve years ago.”

I did not think about it often, but sometimes in my dreams I would revisit that bloody battlefield and wake up in a cold fear that Dasharath was dead, that I had failed. I did not want my children to ever have such dreams.

“I didn’t know that.” He turned toward me, resting his head in my lap.

“Your father is a great raja—the greatest in Bharat—and he spends most of his days looking at numbers and reading reports so he can make the best decisions for the kingdom. That is the work of a raja, and you excel at it. Being a warrior is worthy. But war is not something to wish for. It destroys people, destroys kingdoms. A raja should not wish for it. There is far more to being a ruler than that.”

I couldn’t see Bharata’s face, but when he said, “Thanks, Ma,” I could sense the happiness in his tone. He fell asleep in my lap, and I let him stay all night in my tent, treasuring each moment before he would grow too old to want this proximity anymore. And when he staggered to his feet the next morning,

legs shaking, I ordered both boys to the carriage with no room for argument. Rulers had to be wise as well as strong.

One week into the trip, the boys reached the edge of the world they knew. They had never been farther than this while hunting, and they did not want to stay trapped inside the carriage any longer. They rode beside me for as much of the day as they could manage, commenting with wonder on everything they saw: the cone-like trees bristling with slender needles, the vast rolling hills, the roaming herds of shaggy goats and horned sheep.

Their enthusiasm gave me fresh eyes, and I viewed it all with pleasure. I remembered all too well feeling trapped inside the carriage on my bridal journey from Kekaya to Ayodhya.

At the end of the second week, we reached the bridge that spanned the Sarasvati River. I remembered my adventure with Yudhajit near its banks long ago, that surreal glimpse of the rakshasa in the hush of the forest, and apprehension rippled through me.

As we had written back and forth over the last eleven years, our blue bond had grown. But it did not even approach its former strength. The love and tranquility of his letters, filled primarily with news of our respective courts and memories of childhood, might not translate when he set his eyes upon me.

Even though I could gain no real assistance from the goddess, when I saw the river, I longed for the calming ritual familiarity of taking its blessings.

I stopped our party on the banks and instructed everyone to bathe their faces in the water. Manthara waded in several steps, an expression of true contentment on her features. She had insisted on accompanying me, for she was getting older and might not be able to make the long journey back to her homeland again.

“Why is Manthara so cheerful?” Rama asked me. Excitement shone in his features, boyish enthusiasm

propelling him onto his toes.

“The Sarasvati River is sacred to us,” I answered. “We say that it is the pathway to heaven and the stars. The goddess protects our rivers and waters and expands the minds of men.”

Rama shook his head. “Lord Vishnu is the protector, not Sri Sarasvati,” he argued.

I turned to look at him. “Rama, you cannot say such a thing in the presence of this holy river. Apologize at once.”

“Why? What can she do to me?”

Irritation flashed through me at his dismissal of the goddess, followed closely by fear. If Sarasvati heard such blasphemous words, she might rise up to strike my son.

I positioned my body between Rama and the river. “Sarasvati is a goddess, and worthy of your respect.”

“I respect her. Of course I do,” Rama said quickly. “But I do not—”

A scream came from behind me, and I spun around, pushing Rama farther back. The steady waters of the river had become a churning menace, creeping up the banks toward us. The servants were scrambling backward and away. With the cloudless, sunny sky above us, there could be no question what was causing this.

“Move,” I told Rama. “You need to run.”

“I am not afraid. I will not flee.”

“Go!” I begged him. “Rama, please!”

“No,” he said calmly. “But if you are so afraid, you may leave.”

I could not abandon my child. The waves surged higher, white and frothing like a great beast, defying all laws of nature. I stood over Rama and braced myself, determined to protect him at all costs.

The water crashed over us in a shock of icy cold that

drenched my body and numbed my mind. Still, I held Rama tightly in my arms and prayed, knowing full well it would have no effect. I could feel the utter powerlessness of our position. But no matter what happened, I would not lose my son.

The waves beat at us again, pulling us forward. I slipped and caught myself, digging my heels as deep as I could into the muddy bank.

“I’m sorry,” I whispered. “He is sorry. Please, he is only a child. Please, please.”

I clung to Rama, bracing for another wave—but none came.

I twisted around to watch the last of the torrent subside and the water slide back into its place. In a moment, it was serene, the very picture of stillness. A sob caught in my throat. Had the goddess heard me?

“I told you I was not afraid,” said Rama, and I turned to look at him. I was soaked to the skin, water and clothes plastered against me, but Rama was—

Rama was completely dry. In fact, he was glowing. A halo of white light circled his head, and he shone from within as though he had the sun itself under his skin.

A cry came from the hill where the rest of the party had fled.

“My lord!” someone shouted.

“My lord!” another cried.

They knelt in awe, bowing to Rama. He raised his hand toward them in the universal sign of divine benediction.

Fear made bile rise in my throat. I stumbled back a step, and I could see it more clearly, the aura that surrounded him.

“He is gods-touched!” someone proclaimed, and the rest took up the chant.

To them, it must have looked like the river had crowned

Rama, had put on that performance just to show his holiness, but I knew better. My son had angered Sarasvati. Perhaps my love for Rama had saved me, or perhaps the fact that I was gods-touched had prevented me from feeling the worst of her wrath. But Rama was *not* gods-touched. The fools on the hill did not know what that meant.

Heart pounding, I broke my own sacred rule, that which I had sworn never to do around my sons. I entered the Binding Plane.

I briefly leaned into the feeling of control as the world shifted and grayed until only the bonds were colored, and then looked up to find—nothing.

Rama was not there. I let the threads around me disappear, and Rama's glowing form came into view.

Only then did I know it for sure.

My son was a god.

CHAPTER TWENTY



“HOW DID IT FEEL?” Bharata kept asking Rama during the final week of our journey. “When the river blessed you?”

Terrifying, I wanted to say. *I thought I would lose my son*. But he had not asked me. And Rama only laughed.

I wondered if he knew he was a god, or if his immortal memory had somehow been suppressed when born here on earth.

Over the remainder of our journey, I became convinced that Agni himself had been reincarnated. After all, Agni had provided the kheer at the Yagna, and it would follow that Agni could repel an attack from a river.

But *why*? Why would Agni have come down to the earth? In the stories, the gods only took human form in times of great strife. Bharat was mostly at peace. Rama had some higher purpose here, that much I knew. But I could not figure out what.

It was a relief to arrive in Kekaya, its narrow streets like an embrace. The city had changed only slightly, just enough that I knew time had passed. The wood and brick homes were dark, darker than the sandstone buildings of Ayodhya, but they welcomed me home. A familiar warmth blossomed in my chest. I had missed this place, perhaps more desperately than I had ever realized given the stinging in my eyes.

I spied a figure standing at the gates of the palace. Yudhajit. I spurred my horse forward, and the moment I saw the smile on my twin’s face, all apprehension melted away. My horse outstripped the guards in front of me and as soon as we halted,

I threw myself off the steed and into his waiting arms.

“Kaikeyi,” he said into my hair. “Kaikeyi, I have missed you so much.”

I buried my face in his shoulder to hide my tears, but I could hear his breath hitch as well. “I missed you. I am so sorry, Yudhajit.”

“Don’t you dare ask me to forgive you. I was in the wrong too. We were young, and stupid. There is no need to apologize. I love you.”

I pulled away to take a long look at him as he scrubbed a hand over his eyes. “When did you get so wise?” A few strands of gray streaked his hair, a mirror image of mine. The beginnings of lines had formed in his features. I had left him at seventeen and returned at twenty-nine. Of course he had aged.

“When did you become saciva?” he countered. Pride shone on his face. “There will be a celebration in your honor tonight.”

I grinned at him. “In my honor only? What about your nephews?”

He turned toward them as if only just remembering I had come with a retinue and my sons. “Yes, of course.”

“Bharata, Rama!” I called out. My sons dismounted eagerly and came to stand beside me. “Brother, this is Prince Bharata, and this is Prince Rama.”

Bharata stepped forward and bent to touch Yudhajit’s feet, but Yudhajit caught him around the middle and embraced him instead. He did the same to Rama.

“Welcome to Kekaya, my nephews.”

My grin split my wind-chapped lips, but I did not care.

Our whole party streamed inside. The servants took our belongings while Yudhajit gave the boys a tour of the palace, rambling on as he led us from one room to the next, clearly trying to impress his nephews. When his enthusiasm became

embarrassing, I sent him a slight suggestion of calm through the Binding Plane, and the torrent of his words slowed.

Still, I had to admit, Yudhajit's staff had done an excellent job—every room hinted at more wealth around the edges, moving away from the forbidding austerity of my father's time. The harsh stone chambers of my childhood had a softer cast, maybe because of the patterned tapestries in the hallways and the soft fabrics on the floors and furniture. While such decorations were commonplace in Ayodhya, I never recalled seeing them in Kekaya. Or perhaps the years had cast my childhood in the strange light of hindsight.

I lingered in the familiar maze of corridors. Did the palace feel smaller because I had grown accustomed to larger or because I myself had grown?

As I stood there, several paces behind the rest of the group, strong arms wrapped around me and lifted me up into the air.

I screamed, kicking at my attacker as my guards spun around, drawing their swords. Yudhajit ran toward me.

My attacker dropped me with a strangled yelp as my elbow landed in his belly. Yudhajit stopped and... doubled over in laughter?

I turned, holding up a hand to stop my guards.

"Missed me?" my attacker asked, his mouth twisting up in a familiar smile.

"*Ashvin*," I said, gaping up at him. Then, "Do that again and I will ensure you cannot have children."

Ashvin shrugged, lifting one enormous shoulder. "Good thing I have plenty of brothers to carry on the family line."

We embraced, my arms barely wrapping around him. The slight, sickly boy who had taken up with the healers had grown into a giant.

"It is good to see you again, didi."

"Didi?" Bharata echoed, eyes widening at the sight of

Ashvin's bulk.

"It means 'older sister,'" explained Yudhajit. "It's common only to the western dialects."

"An honorific," Rama said, confident even though he had never heard the word before.

"Yes." Ashvin smiled down at me. He wore a crisp white dhoti and a deep-orange cloth wrapped around his torso—the raiment of a healer or a sage. "And Kaikeyi is most deserving."

"Ashvin is Court Healer," Yudhajit informed me. "He has you to thank for that, *didi*."

"I had very little to do with it," I said, hiding my pride. "And by the way, I am your *didi* too, so you should not be so mocking."

"That does not count," Yudhajit countered immediately. It was the oldest argument between us.

"Were you the firstborn?" Bharata asked, eyes wide.

Yudhajit put an arm around me, and I pretended to shrug it off. "Kaikeyi is supposedly firstborn."

"Supposedly?" I repeated. "What does that mean? I was born several minutes before you."

"Oh, you're twins," Bharata observed, surprised. "Like Shatrugna and Lakshmana. Why did you never tell us?"

"Does it matter?" I asked. "It would be very boring for you to know every detail of my life."

"Boring? No, annoying," Ashvin said, his voice a deep rumble.

"Annoying? I see. And did you find it annoying when we worked together to get you apprenticed to the healers?" Within these walls, everything transformed, and we were children again, bickering back and forth.

"No, I found it annoying when my two siblings would run

off into the hills every evening and leave us behind.”

“You *knew*?”

“They figured it out,” Yudhajit said. “We were not as stealthy as we hoped.”

“Also, we were insufferable, and we followed you more than once.”

“That I believe,” I said with a grin. “I’m just ashamed we did not notice you.”

“You were rather preoccupied,” came another voice. My brother Mohan stood in the doorway at the opposite end of the room, easily identifiable by the scar on his cheek. He had once convinced Shantanu to shoot an arrow at a mango balanced on his head, in the manner of the heroes of myth. Shantanu had missed and cut Mohan’s cheek open instead. Yudhajit and I had yelled ourselves hoarse after that particular incident.

I beckoned him forward and he too lifted me off the ground in an embrace. “I can’t imagine what you mean,” I said.

Mohan said, “None of us were surprised when just a few moons after you left, we heard wild tales of you on the battlefield. Driving chariots, shooting arrows. A true warrior queen.” There was an undercurrent of pride in his teasing.

“You are trained in archery?” Rama asked, eyes lighting up, and I remembered that the boys were watching this entire conversation.

“Yudhajit taught me a few things. That is all.”

“More than a few things. And she’s excellent,” Yudhajit said, ruining my attempt at deflection. “But far better at spear-throwing.”

“Come show us!” Rama begged. “Can you? Please?” He seemed so like an eleven-year-old boy that it was nearly impossible to think of what he had become at the banks of the river. I studied his excited face, trying to reconcile the heart-stopping fear with the love that filled me at his enthusiasm. I wrapped an arm around him in a quick hug, feeling a sense of

relief.

“Well, Kaikeyi?” Yudhajit asked. “Have you kept up with it?”

I had, though with decreasing frequency over the last few years.

“Are you not raja?” I teased. “Have you nowhere more important to be?”

“Nothing more important than diplomacy on behalf of the kingdom,” Yudhajit answered, winking at me.

We all followed Yudhajit down to the training yard. It was strange to walk there without any questioning looks—and stranger still to have Yudhajit freely accompanying me. I had spent many hours staring longingly down at my brothers from an upstairs window.

In my mind, the training fields of Kekaya had always been a large, shadowy place, but now in the open I realized they were smaller than the grounds in Ayodhya’s palace, although they were far better equipped. Kosala, with its strangely polite rules about war, liked to limit its weaponry to swords and spears and arrows.

“Well, what do you think?” Yudhajit asked.

Rama and Bharata looked around in delight, gravitating immediately to the stands of heavy iron clubs. Bharata reached to take a flail off the rack and nearly dropped it on his foot.

“Careful!” I called out, walking briskly toward them. As I approached, Rama picked the flail up, moved a few paces from Bharata, and gave it a measured, perfect swing with an ease uncommon even in a fully grown man.

“Strong boy,” Yudhajit said, catching up with me.

“Yes, he is,” I said softly.

Yudhajit looked down at me, sensing my distress, so I forced a smile onto my face and tried to dispel his concerns with a tug in the Binding Plane. The radiant blue cable shifted

slightly, and his attention glanced off my discomfort. By then, such little manipulations came as naturally to me as breathing. It would have taken more effort *not* to use my magic. “We are very proud. He will be a great warrior.”

Yudhajit studied me for another moment, then turned toward Bharata and Rama. “Boys, have you ever seen your mother throw a spear? She is absolutely deadly.”

Bharata ran up to me and threw his arms around me in a rare display of affection. “Could you, Ma?” His manipulation was so obvious, and yet I could not resist. I nodded to my brother, and he waved a hand at an attendant at the other end of the yard.

A straw target was set two hundred paces away. It was far, but within distance for me, even with my skills rusty from lack of use.

Yudhajit pointed me toward the array of spears. “Practice or—” He broke off as I reached for one that called out to me, long and slim with a wickedly sharp point. I weighed it carefully, my palms recognizing the feel of the polished shaft like an old friend.

“This is the one.”

As I reacquainted myself with the spear, I noted more and more people stopping at the edge of the field. There appeared to be servants and courtiers alike gathering.

“I think news has spread,” Yudhajit murmured. “We have an audience.”

“Why?”

“The story of the warrior princess of Kekaya has inspired people here. We even have a few noble daughters who train now. They do not fight in battle, but they can defend themselves. Several are excellent at driving chariots.”

Change. Even here, despite the censure of the gods, things were changing. To my mortification, tears welled in my eyes.

“Are you crying, Kaikeyi? Some warrior radnyi you are,”

Yudhajit teased, but he rubbed the tears from my face with his thumb.

“I’m going to hit the target,” I said, then strode past him.

In the short walk to the mark, my hands turned clammy. I took a deep breath but could not shake the intense awareness of the crowd behind me, watching. If I missed, would they remove the young girls from their lessons? Would years of progress be erased? Would news of my failure reach Dasharath? Despite all the accomplishments I had accrued over these many years, my old insecurities rushed in to greet me here on the grounds of my childhood home.

I closed my eyes and let the whispers of the noblemen turn into the cries of the battlefield.

Never take your eyes off the enemy, Yudhajit liked to say, but right now, the people watching me were not the enemy. The target was my enemy.

I leaned the spear against my body and wiped my hands against my traveling breeches, designed by Asha. They were an iteration of the warrior garb she had cobbled together in an encampment over a decade ago, and that memory gave me adrenaline now. The target was my enemy. My nerves stilled. My muscles tensed. I hauled the spear into position. There was a taut silence, broken only by my grunt as I released the spear with a mighty heave.

The spear ripped through the center of the target. I stayed motionless for a moment, legs spread, one arm forward, basking in the sheer joy of it.

Cheers rang out behind me. Rama and Bharata rushed forward, jumping up and down with glee. “That was incredible, Ma!” Bharata called.

My eyes sought Yudhajit, my lips automatically responding to his ridiculous grin. He ran toward me, lifting me up in the air and spinning me. “Put me down!” I scolded him, acutely aware of the number of eyes on us. “I am the ambassador from Kosala! You cannot treat me this way in public.”

He laughed and set me down, not looking at all contrite. “I am so happy to have you back,” he said.

“I thought Father had returned to the palace,” I said to Yudhajit when we convened in his council room after the feast. I had met Yudhajit’s wife, Mohan’s wife, and Rahul’s wife, which still amazed me. Rahul had been only eight when I left. Now he was twenty, married, and considered the most brilliant warrior Kekaya had produced in decades.

While the rest of the palace had changed, in the council room my father’s presence hung heavy all around. As a child I had never been allowed in here, relying on Yudhajit to report its happenings to me. But looking at it now, I could see Yudhajit’s descriptions had been quite faithful: a bare stone room, a window covered in stretched animal-hide, a large circular table. Yudhajit had clearly not made any alterations, and the severity of it brought memories of my father flooding back.

“He went back north to the mountains, to take in the air.”

“The moment he found out I was coming, I presume.”

Yudhajit tipped his chair back. “He left a week before we even found out. He does not hate you, you know.”

“I doubt that.”

“He did not know what to do with you. He wanted sons, and he got them, and he didn’t know how to speak to a daughter, so he didn’t. But he never hated you.”

I shook my head, but something compelled me to enter the Binding Plane. Our bond lay quiet, the truth of Yudhajit’s belief evident. For a moment, I considered telling him what I had learned from Dhanteri about our mother. But I thought better of it. I did not know what her life there might be like, or what would be accomplished by spreading the pain of the knowledge that she lived just beyond our reach.

“Kaikeyi, Father has grown ill, more gravely than I even let on in my letters.” Yudhajit had apparently taken my conflicted silence as leave to keep talking. “Resigning the kingship has

not eased his sickness. Ashvin thought his only chance of seeing out the year was going north and consulting with some of the sages who reside there.”

I looked at him in shock, then looked away, both ashamed of my stubbornness and unwilling to concede. “In that case, we should talk about why I’m here,” I said at last, changing the subject. “We need to discuss our kingdoms’ trade relations.”

Yudhajit rubbed the back of his neck, looking sheepish. “Would it be terrible if I told you that I only did it to get you to come here?”

“I’m sorry, you... What did you just say?” I blinked, certain I must have misheard.

“I know it was foolish policy. But I couldn’t swallow my pride enough to beg you to come, and I did not think you would come of your own accord after everything that happened between us. I had heard about your Women’s Council and Dasharath’s deep trust of you and knew that he would send you to negotiate in the event of poor relations with Kekaya. My advisors were appalled, of course. It will probably take me a year to undo the damage I’ve done. But I wanted you to come.”

I stood up, knocking my chair back. “Yudhajit! I cannot believe you! You jeopardized trade relations, ruined people’s livelihoods—”

“The kingdom of Kekaya has compensated our traders for its losses, and we will send you home with enough gifted gold to cover whatever deficits you may have experienced.”

I covered my face with my hand. “Would it really have been *that* difficult to ask?”

Yudhajit shrugged.

“You can’t just do things like this!” I could not believe he had been so careless. “Next time, behave like an adult.” I poured the suggestion into our bond as well, making it as near to a command as I could.

“Next time, I will.” The corners of his mouth turned down. “But I can do whatever I like, Kaikeyi. I am raja, after all.”

I turned away from him and set my chair to rights. He was correct. As raja, he could make whatever decisions he wished, however stupid. *Would Dasharath ever behave so foolishly?* I wondered. No. I knew he would not.

But it had all worked out in the end, had it not? It was the same luck I had often resented Yudhajit for when we were children. And now Yudhajit would stop his ridiculous charade. Relations between our kingdoms would be fine, with no effort required on my part. I was in Kekaya, sitting beside my brother who loved me. There were worse things in the world. I sighed and shook my head even as I smiled at him. “It was an idiotic decision, Raja Yudhajit,” I said at last. “But I am here now.”

We stayed almost two full moons in Kekaya. Yudhajit and I waited a week before dispatching an emissary to Dasharath, spelling out the new trade terms we had agreed upon, and I sent Dasharath a letter that heavily implied how hard I had pushed for Kosala’s interest. There was no harm in using this to increase my stature, after all.

I also sat with Yudhajit’s Mantri Parishad to help rehabilitate him in the eyes of his advisors. I strengthened the weakest threads among them until I could leave confident in the knowledge that Yudhajit had not lost anything on my account.

Just once, I snuck out of my rooms at night and made my way to the library cellar. It was as I remembered it—as though time had not touched this room.

I breathed in the scent of paper and dust. It was like stepping into a memory, as though if I rounded the corner I would find myself squatting next to my mother, squinting to make out the geography of Kekaya on a faded scroll. Would she be proud of what I had done? I touched the shelf where I had found her note to me, scrawled on the story of Ahalya. I still had it, hidden in a chest in my rooms in Ayodhya. She had

been right—I had proven myself strong, capable.

I stayed in the room for a long time. But in the end, I took nothing, shutting the teak door firmly and leaving the cellar to guard its secrets.

I spent the rest of the trip showing the children around Kekaya, riding with them across the hills, and traveling to meet the rest of my brothers.

After the first moon, Rama seemed to have little interest in repeating treks we had already made, instead preferring to train with Kekaya's warriors. He was quite skilled, and he would find no such instruction for Kekayan weapons in Ayodhya, so I allowed him to continue what clearly brought him joy. But Yudhajit and Bharata and I would ride out for short picnics in the cool forest where I had spent many youthful evenings. Yudhajit would set up a target and teach Bharata how to shoot two or three arrows at once, a trick that delighted my son to no end. Other times they would wrestle in the dirt and proudly present themselves to me covered head to toe in mud, both so similar in their delight that I could only laugh.

The afternoon before our going-away feast, Yudhajit and Bharata took one final ride together, returning after an hour with red eyes. I would not use the Plane on Bharata, but I did not need to—their love and affection were clear, and I knew our departure would be difficult for them both.

So it was that by the time we left, hearts and bellies full, I had almost forgotten what had happened on our journey here.

But as we approached the Sarasvati River, I could think of nothing else. It was evident by the murmurs around me that nobody else in our party could either.

I called for us to make camp early that evening, not wanting to cross the river in the dark, and lay down in my bedroll without eating. I stared up at the canvas of the tent, a single candle casting eerie shadows around me, and came to a conclusion. There was only one thing I could do to protect my

son. And so, even though I was unaccustomed to it, I clasped my hands upon my chest and tried to pray to Sarasvati. *I am sorry for my son. Please let us pass safely.* I repeated it over and over again, my eyelids falling shut, and then—

I was standing on the banks of the river. Mist rose from the waters. How did I get here? I turned to look behind me, but there were no footprints in the damp earth. “What—” I began to ask, but a gust of wind whipped through the clearing, carrying the rest of my words away. The river surged up until it was almost to my knees. I tried to take a step backward, to flee to safer ground, but my feet had sunk into the earth. I was rooted fast.

“Sri Sarasvati,” I whispered. Ice ran through my veins. Was this real?

The water rippled, and I felt her presence all around me, my shoulders bowing with the weight.

“Please,” I called out. “Spare my son. I am begging you.”

He is in no danger. She spoke with a thousand voices, both in my head and from outside, as though I was pressed between two great forces. My teeth rung with the force of it. *He needed to be reminded.*

“Reminded of what?” I asked.

The mortal world corrupts, but he will be stronger than you. He was sent to this world for a reason.

As the echo of her words faded, I turned them over in my head. “He... he is a god?” There was only silence, as if to reproach my asking a question I already knew the answer to. “Why was Rama sent here?” I asked instead.

To cleanse your world of injustice.

A singularly unhelpful answer. I opened my mouth to ask another question, but the river before me was dissolving into shining blue wisps of mist. *Cross without fear.* The voice was still in my head and yet sounded distant, as if she was speaking from the heavens. The water receded and I felt myself falling

back and back—

I startled awake in my bedroll, breathing hard in the darkness. The candle had been extinguished.

I blinked, heart pounding wildly. Had that truly been Sri Sarasvati, speaking to me in a dream? Or had I been so preoccupied with my fears about Rama and the river that I had imagined it?

No. Something about it had felt divine, her presence unknowable. I could not have invented that myself.

He will be stronger than you, she had said.

She likely had meant mortals generally. She probably meant to cast aspersions on human vice.

But... she was a goddess. And not just any goddess, but the goddess of scholars, of the wise, of intelligence and knowledge.

And she had chosen to say *you*.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE



“WHAT IS THIS I heard about Rama controlling a river?” Dasharath asked. I lay in his bed, studying the pattern of light on the ceiling. We had returned to Ayodhya a few days prior.

“He did not control a river. We were crossing the Sarasvati, and I stopped to pay my respects. Rama wanted to know why we were asking the river for its blessing.” A revised version of events, to be sure, but Sarasvati’s words were still fresh in my mind. “His question must have provoked the goddess, because the river became very angry and advanced toward where Rama and I stood.”

“Why did you not take Rama and flee?” Dasharath asked, turning onto his side to face me.

“I begged him to flee, but he insisted on standing his ground. I had no time to pull him away against his will, so I stood over him and tried to bear the brunt of it.”

Dasharath sat up, an expression of horror on his face. “You did what?”

“What would you have done?” I countered. “Would you rather I have run away and left Rama to face the wrath of a goddess?”

He huffed but did not respond to that.

“The waves beat against us, and then after some time they retreated. I was unharmed but completely drenched. Rama was dry. He seemed to shine with light—or perhaps that was just the sun. I do not know.”

“Gods-touched,” Dasharath breathed, sinking back down.

“He was able to protect himself from the river.”

I shook my head. “I do not know if he is gods-touched, or something else.”

Dasharath stretched out his large hand to trace patterns on my stomach. “Something else?”

“I think...” I bit my lip. “I think he might have some piece of a god inside him.”

Surprise made him laugh. “What?”

“Maybe, when Agni came to us...” I hesitated, worried the suggestion might give offense.

“You think some part of him has incarnated within Rama?”

“I do not know. But there is something within him. I can sense it.”

His warm palm settled on my belly. The heat felt good, even if I was indifferent to desire. “How do you know so much about all this?”

“I liked to read stories about the gods, when I was young.” It was not quite a lie.

Dasharath wrinkled his brow. “Does it matter what Rama is? Gods-touched or part-god?”

Yes, I wanted to say. Yes, being gods-touched is a curse.

Except... it was not. I had made a blessed life for myself, even without the approval of the gods. I had learned a power of my own and used it.

Yes, I wanted to say. Yes, being a god is a blessing.

Except... it was not. My flesh-and-blood son, Bharata, the son of a woman abandoned by the gods, would still rule Kosala.

“No,” I said. “It does not matter.”

“You are worrying too much about a gift,” Dasharath said. “If you would like something to worry about, there are plenty of reports waiting for you.”

That surprised a laugh out of me. At this encouragement he added, “I am sure the palace staff have been missing your visits. And of course, the horses in the stables, how they have suffered without you. In fact, why are you still here? You should be working through the night.”

His arm kept me in place, happy and secure, and I did not even pretend to carry out his order. Instead, we lay there, content. I am sure I was still smiling when I drifted off.

A few weeks after our return, I went to see my sons before their morning lessons and was nearly knocked over by the four of them rushing down the corridor. “Slow down!” I called. “Why are you in such a hurry?”

Rama turned. “We don’t want to be late! Sage Vamadeva said we had a special lesson today.”

“A special lesson?” I echoed. “I have never seen you boys so excited for that.”

“It’s a surprise,” Shatrugna said. “But Rama said it’s going to be amazing.”

It made a bit more sense now—Rama’s excitement looked to be contagious. “Perhaps I should come see this incredible lesson for myself,” I said, half-teasing. I had a meeting of the Mantri Parishad soon.

But Rama’s face brightened, and he reached out to take my hand. “Yes! Ma, you have to come!” I found myself tugged along with them, unable to stop myself from smiling as we made our way to one of their lesson rooms. I supposed I could stay for a few minutes.

The boys calmed themselves before entering, filing through the door and bowing their heads to an elderly man dressed in crisp ascetic robes—Sage Vamadeva. I dipped my chin to him as well. “My son invited me,” I said by way of explanation.

Sage Vamadeva gave me a curt nod but did not acknowledge my presence further. The boys arranged themselves on the floor next to four low desks, and I leaned against the wall in the back of the room. After a moment, Sage

Vamadeva said, “As you boys know, today’s lesson will be different. I have invited some of the eminent men of our city to come speak to you and offer their thoughts on the matters we have been studying. Why is this important?”

Rama’s hand shot up. “Because a good leader must listen to others.”

Sage Vamadeva’s stony expression softened ever so slightly. “Very good. Lakshmana, please summarize what we studied in our last class.”

“We studied the responsibilities and duties within family relationships,” Lakshmana said. “The role of the husband and the wife, of the parents and children.”

Although the answer was apparently right, Sage Vamadeva did not praise Lakshmana. Instead, he opened the far door of the chamber and gestured three men inside.

One was dressed similarly to Sage Vamadeva—another sage, then. The second man was clad in a richly dyed crimson tunic, but I did not recognize him, so he was likely a wealthy merchant rather than a noble. The final man was a commoner, judging from his cleanly pressed, worn-looking cotton dhoti. He could have been anyone plucked from the stalls of Ayodhya’s main market.

“It is important we listen to all men, regardless of stature,” Sage Vamadeva said, a sentiment I could heartily agree with. “Vikram will speak first. You are a father and a husband, yes?”

“Yes,” the man in the dhoti—Vikram—said. He sounded nervous, his eyes flicking around the room but never alighting on any face.

“And how do you carry out your duties to your family?” Sage Vamadeva asked.

At this, Vikram stood a bit taller. “I am a builder. I work hard every day to ensure my family has enough to eat and a good home to live in.”

I could not imagine that this was the exciting lesson the

boys had been hoping for, but I was glad they were hearing about lives so different from their own. Sage Vamadeva gave Vikram an approving nod. “And what about their duties to you? To each other?”

“When we build, we enter into an agreement that we will be paid in exchange for our work,” Vikram said. “A family also has such agreements with one another. I support my family in every way, and so they obey me and attend to my needs. And my wife has a duty to our children to raise them and care for them, and my children in turn have a duty to obey my wife until they are grown.”

Nothing he said was incorrect, I supposed—but I was less enthused with every word he spoke.

“Now, these boys will one day rule Kosala,” Sage Vamadeva said. “Is there anything important they should know about families like yours?”

For the first time, Vikram’s eyes met mine. He swallowed. “Nobody will be angry for anything you say here,” Sage Vamadeva added.

“Some of my wife’s friends have started to go out and work themselves,” Vikram said, fixing his eyes back on my sons. “They bring their children along or leave them to be watched by older children. Some have been left in the roadside schools for many hours. This is not how children should be raised. I can provide enough for my family. There is no need for my wife to work as well.”

As Vikram spoke, Sage Vamadeva glanced at me. Was that a small smile on his lips? I did not believe this laborer was speaking from any place of ill will, but regardless, his words were entirely inappropriate as teaching material for the princes of Kosala. The future could not be taught by the past.

“Thank you, Vikram,” Sage Vamadeva said. “That was quite enlightening. Do the princes have any questions?”

Rama’s hand flew up once again, but I did not stay to hear his question. I had learned enough.

After the meeting of the Mantri Parishad, I returned to the lesson chamber, hoping to catch Sage Vamadeva before he departed. In a moment of luck, he was gathering his books, his eyes firmly on his work as I approached him. When the silence became too awkward to bear, I coughed, put on a small, polite smile and asked, “How did the remainder of the lesson go?”

Still he did not look up from his work. “It went well, although I know you did not come here to talk to me about that.”

I tilted my head, keeping my gaze upon him. “Then tell me why you think I’m here.”

Vamadeva braced his hands on the table and slowly lifted his head to look at me. His eyes were light, gray like mist against the dark brown of his skin. Absentmindedly, I wondered whether one of his parents had been from the south, for he did not look fully like a man from Videha, the northern kingdom he hailed from. “You were unhappy with what you heard.”

He had addressed me twice now but had yet to use my title. I pushed past the disrespect. “Do you truly think that was a worthy use of their lesson?”

His stare was cold, and I remembered that despite his age this man had the blessings of many gods and had performed miraculous works on their behalf. There was a reason Dasharath had sought him out. “It is important for them to hear other perspectives. No one person can know everything—not even you.”

So I had not misinterpreted the disrespect.

“I never claimed to know everything,” I said evenly. “But you are instructing them in religion and morals. Hearing about how one man prefers his wife and children to live is not instructive.”

“I am their teacher, and I find it instructive.” He looked back down at his books. “Your sons do not seem to mind.”

“My sons are children,” I said. “It is your duty to guide

them. Surely you would not take them to the irreputable parts of the city, though one might argue that certain knowledge resides there.”

“Of course *I* would not do such a thing,” he said, shaking his head slowly, his white hair catching the waning sun from the window and throwing flashes of light as though he was anointed. “But I will not argue with you about this. The will of the gods is immutable. They must learn these truths somewhere.”

My temper was fraying quickly. I slipped instinctively into the Binding Plane, but there was nothing between us. I needed to goad him into saying something he would regret, something I could use to get him dismissed and end this foolishness. “And they will not learn it from me? Is that what you’re implying?”

Vamadeva quirked his lips as though I had said something funny. “I have no problem with you. But this world is awash with immorality, and I do not see you stepping up to stop it.”

I was appalled that this loathsome man had been teaching my sons for so long, that I had not sought to speak to him before. But this was enough. I could tell Dasharath, quite truthfully, that he had disrespected me. “I see. Well, thank you for speaking with me,” I said.

I did not wait to hear his response, but swept from the room without a backward glance.

As I had thought, Dasharath proved easy enough to convince. I had first come to him with implications that I had heard secondhand from Rama, but now—

“And he did not even call you *radnyi*?” he confirmed.

“Why would he do that, when he plainly thought me immoral?” I said. And although I rarely did so anymore, I found the golden bond between us and tugged on it for good measure.

Dasharath sighed. “He may be a pious man, but plainly he can no longer serve as a tutor. I will have him dismissed in the

morning.”

It was far harder to explain things to Rama. “Sage Vamadeva has left,” he cried.

“I am sorry,” I said, reaching out my hand to him. “I had to send him away.”

Rama did not take my hand, and instead looked at me with suspicion. “*You* sent him away?”

“Yes. His teachings are not fit for princes of Kosala.”

“But I liked him,” Rama said. “He was an excellent teacher.”

“You have many fine teachers,” I told him. “There was nothing special about this one, I assure you.”

“But he knew,” Rama protested. “He knew I was a god, and he wanted to help me.”

He said it simply, but those words caused my heart to catch in my throat. Rama knew what he was. Rama knew of his godhood and had spoken about it with this sage rather than his own family. “I did not realize you knew who you were,” I said, my voice sounding strangely raspy.

“I have always known something was special about me, that something else is inside of me.” Rama spoke so matter-of-factly, I hardly knew what to say. “Sage Vamadeva taught us that gods come to Bharat to rid it of evil. He was going to prepare me.”

“You don’t need him.” I said the words too quickly, and I hoped he could not sense my jealousy toward a man whom we would never see again. “You will have other teachers. And I am always here to help you.”

Rama did not care for my platitudes. “But I wanted *him* to help me.” His lower lip trembled. “I don’t understand why you have to do this!” A few fat tears slipped down his cheeks, and he stomped his foot in frustration. Despite my anger at Sage Vamadeva for commanding such a place of prominence in Rama’s life so quickly, I felt bad for my son, who was

blameless.

“What he was teaching you was wrong,” I said. “You don’t want to take guidance from someone who does not even understand how the kingdom should work, do you?”

“What did he say that was wrong?”

I considered how best to explain this to Rama. “Kosala is changing. Women like me and your other mothers are doing important work. Some people don’t like that, and he is one of them. You need a more modern tutor.”

“I don’t want someone else,” Rama said softly, and I could tell no explanation would be satisfying to him.

“Oh, Rama,” I said. “Come here.” This time he took my hand and I held him close. I understood in many ways how he was feeling, although I had not realized he was so attached to Sage Vamadeva. I thought briefly of my mother. “Sometimes people we want to stay with us cannot. I am sorry to have done that to you.”

And I was sorry to have caused him pain, even if I knew it was for the best. I had to do what was right for Rama, even if it went against his wishes. But this pain would pass, and I could ease it along. “How about we go to the kitchens, hmm? I am sure we could sneak some sweets before lunch.”

Rama nodded enthusiastically, extricating himself from me. The hurt was already forgotten. He was a god, but he was also just a boy, and I was determined to let him stay one.



CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO



JEALOUS WHORE. THE GREEN-EYED radnyi. I have heard every name people have called me behind my back. Some claim I sent Rama into the forest because I could not bear for Kaushalya to become Queen Mother, because I could not bear for a son I had not carried in my womb to take the throne.

If only it were that simple.

For five perfect years, I suspected nothing at all. Not of Rama, nor of discontent in our kingdom, nor that any plan of mine could go awry. Time carried me along its current, ignorant and happy.

In being named saciva, I had achieved all the freedom I could hope to. But I found myself continuing to work, for if it was in my power to assist other women, I felt I had to. And there were still plenty of women who needed help, for attitudes changed slowly. Even outside of the Women's Council, people brought their problems to me, and I did my best to help.

One evening, after I returned from a meeting of the Women's Council, Rama came to me. "Do you have a moment?" he asked.

"Of course." We spoke often, but today he looked unusually pensive. "What is it?"

"Have you spoken recently to the sages of the city temple?"

Whatever I had expected, it was not this. In truth, I avoided the sages as much as I could, both because of my discomfort

with worshipping the gods and because I knew they disliked me. “I have not. Have you?”

Rama nodded. “Please do not be angry.”

“Why would I be angry?” I asked, still confused. “You can tell me anything.”

“I have been seeing the sages, to further my religious studies. Our tutor on the subject—well, he is not perfect.” I could hear, running below Rama’s words, some hint of years-old annoyance that Sage Vamadeva had been dismissed. The prince’s new tutor was not a sage, but rather a low-ranking noble who was very studied in the religious texts.

But I could not fault Rama for wishing to learn more about this—about who he was. “Of course I would not be angry. It is admirable to seek out more knowledge, so long as you form your own opinions.”

Rama’s posture loosened slightly in relief. “I have been speaking to them, and I think they are unhappy, and I thought—you help everyone. You could help them. They do not wish to be a burden to the palace, for they are separated from our affairs, but they have told me some of what they fear, and I would like to help them if I can.”

“Why have they come to you? You know they can go to your father if they need assistance,” I reminded him, uneasy at the idea that these men would put responsibility on the shoulders of such a young man.

“I suppose they feel a special connection to me,” Rama said. “Perhaps because they believe me gods-touched, although I am not. They care so much for the gods and their will—for me, although they do not know it—that I wish to repay them. But I have found it to be a difficult problem.”

“I do not understand,” I said. “Are the temples struggling for donations?”

He shook his head. “It is difficult to explain. Perhaps I could show you, though? I would value your thoughts.”

“Of course,” I said. I did not particularly want to visit the temples or talk to the sages. But I cared about one god, my son standing before me, who had come to me for help. If it would ease his mind then I could swallow my discomfort for a few hours.

We agreed to go the next morning, just after sunrise when the sages would have completed their morning rituals but before the city’s inhabitants would arrive for their daily prayers. The palace had its own temple, with an impressive marble floor that was always cool underfoot. In the center of the room stood impassive murtis, gracefully carved from granite, and the air was fragrant with cinnamon and sage incense. Many members of the palace went here to pray and complete pradakshina around the unseeing stone. But while I attended public rituals and observances as a radnyi must, I had only ever been to this more private place a handful of times, and had never exchanged more than a few words with the sages who attended it.

I had never been to the city’s main temple, though I had seen it in passing before, a building of smooth red stone laid so precisely it was impossible to see where one stone met the next. The main chamber stood open and exposed to the elements on three sides, and the roads leading up to the temple were lined with trees. The roof was held up by pillars of the same red stone, carved with depictions of the gods’ triumphs in battle. It was Sumitra who had once told me that a different artisan had decorated each pillar, so that the temple had the craftsmanship of Ayodhya itself imbued within it.

Rama and I took a palanquin there, upon his insistence, and he offered me his arm as we made our way up the temple steps. It was a beautiful, cool morning, the sky streaked with pink and gold, and I shivered slightly when I slipped off my sandals at the entryway. The foliage muffled the sounds of the city, giving the temple an air of calm, although I felt anything but.

“We should pray first,” Rama whispered, approaching the statue of Shiva on the farthest right and kneeling. I made to

follow him, but he twisted around and inclined his head toward my left. “Women pray on that side.” I looked down at the floor and saw a faint white chalk line dividing the room in half.

The temple was nearly deserted, with only a few attendants sweeping or making other preparations for the day, replacing the old flowers with crimson and amber blooms and filling the small brass lamps with golden oil. Slowly, I moved to the other side of the line, faced the statues of the gods that lined the back wall, and bowed my head.

After some time, I heard Rama’s soft footfalls approaching and rose to my feet. “They have their private chamber, where we can talk to them,” he said, gesturing toward the back wall.

It was unnerving that he knew so much of this place. I had followed the boys’ lessons less closely as they had grown older, once I had ascertained that none of their other tutors were of Sage Vamadeva’s ilk. But surely someone should have told me if Rama was regularly leaving the palace to take lessons at the temple?

Together, we entered a large room with a curved dome ceiling. It reminded me of a smaller version of the palace. Great paper windows, as tall as a man, took up two walls, letting in streams of morning light. Still, the sages had lit several small lamps on the tables—perhaps so they could more easily read some of the texts that lined the other two walls of the place. Wooden shelves ran from floor to ceiling, filled to bursting with scrolls. Some part of me wanted to approach the nearest stack, dig through it, and lose myself in the knowledge held here. It was, in truth, a beautiful room, one designed for reading and learning. If only it wasn’t set in a temple, for this place had been built for the gods.

The sages—evident by their saffron robes—grew silent upon our entrance. I pushed away the part of me that longed to know what they were saying, to participate myself. This was not the time and certainly not the place.

One sage stood, inclining his head to Rama. “Welcome,

Yuvraja.” Rama did not share my surprise at the title, inclining his head to the sage. But then again, he did not know that the title belonged to Bharata. For the first time, I wondered how Rama would feel when he learned of his father’s vow. He clearly cared deeply about the people of the city and thought himself heir. Would it hurt him, to learn he would not be Kosala’s raja? “I see you brought a guest today? Welcome, Radnyi Kaikeyi.” The man’s tone was distant rather than welcoming, but I ignored it. I knew nothing about him. Perhaps he was simply forbidding to all strangers.

I bowed my head, hands clasped together in greeting. “Thank you for allowing me to come here,” I said.

“We did not allow anything,” he replied. “Your son did not tell us he was bringing you. We do not permit women in this area of the temple, but for Yuvraja Rama I suppose an exception can be made.”

Rama stepped forward. “You have my apologies. I did not realize that was the case. We can go—”

“No need,” the man cut him off. “Today is not your lesson day. Can we assist you or the radnyi?”

“I was telling my mother of your concerns about the future of this temple, and she wished to speak to you herself, to see how she might assist.”

A flicker of surprise rippled across the man’s face before he schooled it back into sternness. “You wish to assist?” he asked me.

“Should I not?” I smiled, but his expression remained stony. “If it is in my power to aid any member of this kingdom, I would like to.”

“You have told me of your concerns that people no longer respect the temples or worship the gods or respect their will as devoutly as they should. I am sure if my mother was to hear more, she would try to help,” Rama said.

“There is not much more to say,” the sage said slowly, as if he was trying to stall for time to decide how best to respond. I

slipped into the Binding Plane, worried that he might attempt to spin some type of falsehood. Unlike Rama, the sage was present in the gray world, but there was not even a wisp of connection between us. “It is simply that many in the city no longer hold the temples in as high a regard.”

“Has attendance fallen?” I asked, wondering how he was measuring regard.

“I suppose,” he said. “But we do not count day to day; such things are not our concern. We worry that even the people who attend are falling further from the teachings of the gods.”

I chanced a glance at Rama, who was frowning in concern and nodding along. But I could not fathom what this man was talking about. “And what have they done to make you so worried?”

“All of us here have devoted our lives to ensuring our kingdom retains the blessings of divine favor, but people no longer come to us seeking guidance,” he explained, growing more animated. “Our teachings are meant to ensure that people live good lives—pious lives—but now so many in the city think they know better. It is a dangerous path.”

“What teachings would these be?” I asked, glancing at the walls of scrolls. For the first time, I considered that they might not be full of the kinds of knowledge Kekaya’s cellar had held. Perhaps instead they held page after page about the rules of the gods, and their interpretations. Even though the room had brightened as the sun rose, it felt far less inviting now.

“I think you know,” he said.

“I do not believe so,” I replied coolly.

“Are you certain? You interfere with the natural order, the gods-given order. The women who come to your council are the same ones who step out of their homes, leaving their husbands and children to fill roles they should not have to.”

I had not expected him to say such a thing directly to me. Sages were not obligated to show deference to their rulers; they did not fall under the purview of the traditional hierarchy.

But blatant disrespect was another thing altogether—it had gotten Sage Vamadeva removed from the palace, as these men surely knew. “Who is to say that is the natural order?” I asked him. “The Women’s Council has improved many people’s lives. Including those of men and children.”

“Perhaps it has improved their material station, but at the expense of spiritual poverty,” he countered. “We are the keepers of the gods’ wisdom, and it falls to us to interpret their desires. We study for years to do this. It is a sacred calling. And yet somehow you think you know better?”

I glanced at Rama. He had a hand on his chin, and his eyes were distant. “I do not understand. If your temple is still fully attended, receiving faithful worshippers and donations, how does it harm you if women in this city have some small say in their lives? I have seen no sign the gods themselves are displeased.”

The man shook his head, nose crinkling in disgust, and turned to Rama. “Why would you bring her? She has shown herself uncaring of our plight. She is, in some ways, the cause of it.”

“She only wishes to help,” Rama said, and I felt a flash of warmth for my son. “She is wise and capable.”

“You are always welcome, Yuvraja,” said the man. “But I do not think she should be here any longer.”

“How dare you?” I demanded. “I have done nothing but help the people of Ayodhya—”

“You may have your own ways at the palace, but we are not beholden to you.” The man took a step away from me, a clear dismissal. “You will keep your peace and leave.”

“You cannot—”

“Ma, let us go,” Rama murmured in my ear.

Part of me wished to stay, to argue with these pompous men who believed they knew better because they had surrounded themselves with scrolls and shut themselves off

from progress. But I had fought these kinds of battles many times before, and I knew I could not shout them down, nor could I stoop to their level. Instead, I let my son guide me away, out through the now-bustling main chamber of the temple and into our waiting palanquin, and reassured myself that the fact that the sages had needed to ask for help proved that I had already won.

“Do you see?” I asked him, sinking against the cushion behind me. My face felt hot. “They are fine. They are merely unhappy at the thought of change, any change.”

Rama’s handsome face was clouded. “They treated you quite rudely, and I am displeased about it. But perhaps I should not have brought you into their space at all. That is my fault. I simply thought—we are meant to serve all members of this city, are we not?”

“We are,” I replied. “But we do not have to agree with all of them.”

He nodded. “I am sorry that went so poorly,” he said. “I just wanted you to understand their view. I believed you could help.”

“There was nothing to understand,” I said. “The sages must learn to accept what they do not like, just as we all must.”

Rama looked down at his hands, mouth twisting. “I want all people of this kingdom to be happy, for I am here to help them.”

“Are not the women who wish for more members of this kingdom?” I asked him. “Their happiness matters equally. Why should the sages decide the course of their lives?”

“They have devoted their lives to worship, a noble pursuit,” Rama said. “But you make a good point that I must also consider.”

To me, that was tantamount to agreement. “He never told me his name,” I said after a moment of silence, a peace offering.

“He really was unkind to you,” he agreed, shaking his head in irritation.

We talked of other things the rest of the way home.

We did not speak of the visit to the temple again, for less than a week later, as I sat with Dasharath on our favorite divan in his rooms, sipping cardamom tea, he asked without warning, “Were any of your brothers sent away to train when you were children?”

I put down my cup to stare at him. “No, although Ashvin traveled to learn from healers in other cities after I left. What prompted this?”

“I am considering sending Rama, and perhaps one of his brothers, to an ashram, to continue his martial training. I wondered what you thought of the idea.”

“We live in one of the largest, most celebrated cities that history has known. What could the boys learn in a secluded religious community that they could not learn here?” I countered. I was not necessarily opposed to it. But I also did not want to part with any of my sons.

“I was sent away for two years when I was their age, and it helped me to see the world more clearly, away from the immediacy of the city,” Dasharath explained, taking my hand in his. “I have been assured that Sage Vishvamitra himself will be there to supervise their training.”

Sage Vishvamitra was legendary. Before Dasharath was born, he had been a warlord and feared warrior in the eastern part of Kosala. He had coveted the prosperity of a nearby ashram and amassed several talented soldiers to storm the hermitage. But their weapons turned to dust in their hands. Upon seeing this, Vishvamitra renounced his rulership and turned to a life of penance and devotion to the gods. He had become one of the most powerful and pious men in the land, a wanderer and a scholar who rarely took pupils. Some of the greatest kings of Bharat had studied under him.

“Why Rama?” I asked, suddenly realizing how strange this

arrangement was. “Shouldn’t it be Bharata who goes, if any of them must?”

Dasharath lowered his eyes.

I stared at him, uncomprehending for a moment. Then the traitorous part of my mind asked, *How could Bharata compete with a god?*

Blood pounded in my ears as though my body was bracing for a fight. But there was no fight. “Why Rama?” I asked again, more quietly. I needed to hear him say it.

“Kaikeyi, I am sorry,” Dasharath said.

“You made a promise.” My voice was cold. For the first time in weeks, in moons, I entered the Binding Plane in the presence of my husband. The gold cord that connected Dasharath and me still had prominence, but to my eyes it looked slightly thinner, duller, where before it had seemed luminous. I went to touch the cord, then stopped. Dasharath had broken his wedding vow and betrayed my trust. Perhaps it was this broken promise that had thinned our bond. But he was raja. He had the power—the right—to name his own heir.

“Rama is the most gifted in his studies, the most dedicated,” Dasharath said. “He is a superb warrior. He will make a fine ruler.”

“I accepted your proposal only after you made your vow. This marriage is—” *built on a lie*, I wanted to say, but with difficulty I swallowed the phrase down.

Dasharath sighed. He reached out to touch me, then seemed to think better of it. “And I am very sorry. But I do not think Bharata has any interest in ruling the kingdom. Kosala is vast. I will make certain Bharata governs one of our most important territories. He will be powerful, and a brilliant asset to Rama.”

I opened my mouth, but no sound came out.

“You will always be the first of my radnyis, Kaikeyi. Kaushalya and Sumitra know it, and they love you more for it. When you asked me to vow that your son would be heir, you

were about to be my third radnyi, and the youngest besides. You needed power, am I right?”

I nodded slowly.

“You don’t need that anymore. And I must think of what’s best for the future of Kosala. I love all my sons, but I also love my kingdom. I cannot deny that Rama is what is best for its future. And I think, in your heart, neither can you.”

This felt like a betrayal. Dasharath had asked me about the ashram knowing I would realize that Rama was to become heir. He must have been thinking about this for some time and kept it from me. This deceit had diminished our bond, and it filled me with anger to think about it.

And yet—Dasharath believed in the truth of what he said, and upon evaluation, he had a strong argument. Rama’s kingship would not hurt my position in court. Kaushalya might become Queen Mother, but I would still preside over the Women’s Council. It was a part of the fabric of Kosala now, and no line of succession could take that away from me. I would still be saciva to Dasharath. I would have the loyalty of the palace staff, the loyalty of the women in the kingdom. I would still be loved in Kekaya. Kosala was my home now. I should want the best for it.

I forced myself to take several deep breaths, and with each moment, calm returned. It was true that Rama was preparing for the responsibility. The visit to the temple had made that clear. And I knew, deep in my heart, that Dasharath’s decision would not hurt Bharata, who did not seem to share this same interest in the burden of rule.

“Very well,” I said, despite my sorrow at the breaking of my husband’s promise and the loss of a future I had long imagined. “I too want what’s best for Kosala.” I released my self-pity as best I could. “The opportunity to train with Sage Vishvamitra is one he must take. You ought to send Lakshmana with him. They are close companions.”

Dasharath did reach for me now, stroking my hand with his

thumb. "Thank you, Kaikeyi." His love for me was clear in his eyes, unchanged despite our bond.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE



THE PALACE FELT EMPTIER without Rama and Lakshmana. For a time, even Bharata and Shatrugna seemed quieter, as though they were lost without their constant companions. But as with all things, we adjusted to their departure, for despite their absence most things in Ayodhya remained much the same.

And then, a year after they had left, rumors about Rama began reaching the city, each more astonishing than the last.

We heard he had brought forth water from a well dried for decades. We heard he had shot a meteor from the sky with a simple wooden bow. And then we heard that Rama had single-handedly slain a rakshasa threatening the ashram. The story spread like wildfire in whispers throughout the palace, and I heard rumors in snatches of conversation.

“The rakshasa was taller than two men, and still the yuvraja faced him—”

“I heard the yuvraja slew it in just one blow—”

“The gods have truly smiled—”

“Do you think it is true?” Dasharath asked me as I sat on the edge of his bed watching him prepare for sleep.

I remembered watching Rama’s presence grow, seeing his godhood within him. “Yes,” I said. “I could believe it.”

“He truly has a gift.” Dasharath’s expression was filled with wonder. “Just imagine what he will do as raja.”

“I hope he will be more sedate by then,” I said. “A king should not risk himself.”

“Are you accusing me of being boring?”

“*I did not use the word boring,*” I said archly, and he pretended to lunge toward me, even as he laughed.

Less than one moon later, news reached us that Rama and Lakshmana had embarked with Vishvamitra on a journey through several northern kingdoms. The official messenger provided us no other information, but throughout the palace it seemed everyone knew something about our sons.

“My sister lives on the border of Videha, and she said the princes passed through last week, hunting rakshasas,” one serving girl whispered to another in the corridor outside my room. The door wasn’t fully closed, and I stood on the other side of it, fear freezing me in place. “Some sort of beast has been slaughtering their cows, and when the yuvraja heard, he went toward the mountains in pursuit.”

“He’s so brave,” the other girl said, a hushed awe tinging her voice. “We are fortunate indeed.”

They moved down the hall and away from my perception. *They are just rumors,* I told myself. And I might have believed it, if the very next day Kaushalya hadn’t told us her distant cousin sent her a missive repeating the same story.

“Why is he putting himself in such danger?” I asked, my heart in my throat. Our children were so far away, so far from our protection.

“He is gods-touched,” Sumitra said, her voice bright. Confident. “And he is sharing his blessing.”

I could hardly breathe, living with the fear day in and day out. Sometimes it would lie dormant, half-forgotten, but never for long, for the whole city was consumed with stories about Rama, each more far-fetched than the last. He had ridden on a white elephant. He had healed all the sick of a village. He had defeated a six-armed asura with one perfect shot to the heart.

Only when a messenger came to us directly from Rama and Lakshmana to tell us that they were safe did the knot in my chest loosen. They wrote that they had indeed tracked down

and slain two rakshasas in combat, an incredible feat, and were now safe in a small city. I could scarcely comprehend how my two boys had done such a thing. I thought of them fighting their father with wooden swords, thinking only of fun and games. But they were grown now, and knowing they were safe was a gift.

The next day, Dasharath summoned us to his rooms.

“We have all heard of Rama’s and Lakshmana’s triumphs,” he said proudly. “It has reminded me that the boys are almost seventeen, and well accomplished. It is time for them to marry.”

The last time he had called all of us to his chambers, we’d sat on the ground by his feet as he bid us sacrifice our bodies to his quest for an heir. This time we sat on cushioned benches in Dasharath’s study, meeting one another as equals.

The years had aged all of us, but Dasharath remained vital as ever, laboring each day to ensure the kingdom’s prosperity. While he did not ride out to fight anymore, there was hardly any occasion for it—the villages and tribes to the north had been completely folded into our kingdom under Dasharath’s reign, and the southwest of Kosala had become more settled and therefore less hospitable to bandit encampments.

Kaushalya had retained her serene elegance and biting wit and still masterfully followed all the inner workings of the court and palace. And Sumitra’s constant cheerful wisdom was a balm, her laugh lines only accentuating her beauty.

I did not know what the others saw when they looked at me, or what they thought my governing quality might be, but I knew that my hard edges and raw ambition had softened with time.

“Who did you have in mind?” Kaushalya asked, pulling me out of my musings.

“King Janaka of Videha is holding a swayamvara in his capital of Mithila for his daughter Sita. She is rumored to be a girl of great beauty and compassion. And Janaka and his

brothers have other fine daughters besides. If Rama wins Sita's hand, there is no reason we cannot bind Kosala and Videha with several ties of marriage."

Videha. It was a powerful kingdom to our east and had long been our ally. Although smaller than Kosala in size, it was renowned for its cultivation of spices and therefore highly prosperous. This would indeed be a strong match.

"You should all prepare to travel within one moon," Dasharath said. "Rama and Lakshmana will meet us there, and I expect we will not leave until there has been a wedding."

Mithila, the capital of Videha, was located at the base of the mountains. Its deep swathes of forest and crisp, clean air sent a sharp pang of longing through me, for it resembled the landscape of my childhood. But unlike in Kekaya, the people of the Videhan court wore the same dress and practiced the same customs as those in Kosala.

We were among the first to arrive for the swayamvara. Raja Janaka had invited Dasharath to discuss matters of state beforehand. Whoever married Sita would likely take the throne of Videha, and Dasharath wanted to ensure that if it was not Rama, Kosala's alliance would still be secure.

Secretly, I had no doubt it would be my son. I had heard a rumor that Janaka had convinced Lord Shiva himself to provide his bow for the swayamvara. The suitor who could lift the Shiva Dhanush, string it, and shoot an arrow from it would win Sita's hand in marriage. It was the kind of challenge that would live on in stories and in song, outlasting any mortal heart. Rama had grown into a warrior capable of slaying rakshasas unaided, and he had his divinity besides. I did not know what man could match him.

The palace was busy with preparations for the swayamvara, so one afternoon, while Janaka and Dasharath held council and Kaushalya and Sumitra took rest in their rooms, I decided to walk down to the stables. Even if I could not ride here, I always enjoyed spending time with horses.

Along the way, I passed a girl dressed in the garb of a servant. She hurried past me up the path toward the castle, and I stopped to watch her go, for she carried herself quite gracefully. In fact, there was something familiar about her...

“Sita?” I called. She froze, and I knew I was right. “Yuvradnyi Sita. We met at the welcome feast.”

Slowly she turned back around. “Radnyi Kaikeyi, how good to see you again. Please, pardon my rudeness.”

I shook my head. “There’s nothing to pardon. Were you visiting the stables?”

She bit her lip, but nodded. “I like to ride out in the mornings. When I can. To pray.” Sita was quite pretty, with long black hair woven in a thick braid, shining black eyes, and a full mouth. But she had been given away by the stripe of luminous silver running through the front of her hair and the tiny flower-shaped birthmark at the corner of her right eye. Not a face one forgot easily.

“I see. Are you very devout?” I asked. “I’ve never heard of prayer on horseback.”

She laughed, then covered her mouth as if horrified that the sound had slipped out. “I think I am. I pray every day, many times, to many gods.”

I think I am, she had said. Someone who prayed many times a day to many gods was certainly devout, unless—“And do the gods listen?”

She took a step back from me. “What a strange thing to ask.”

I blinked into the Binding Plane, but we had only a slip of silver string between us. That would not work. I smiled at her, a small smile of commiseration. “What you said reminded me of myself when I was your age.” I paused, but something compelled me onward. “The gods have forsaken me as well,” I said gently.

Sita looked around as if worried someone might be spying

on us. She took several steps closer, then whispered, “Do you know of the circumstances of my birth?”

I shook my head, mystified.

“My father found me buried in the earth. He was plowing the land, praying for the famine that had befallen Videha to end, when his plow stuck fast. My father began to dig out the plow and found me enfolded beneath the dirt. He said to survive there, I must have been gods-touched. Except it can’t be true. The gods never listen to me, and now I am to be married, and how can I be married if the gods are blind to my existence?” She burst into tears. “The gods must give their blessing to all marriages.”

I stood for a moment, shocked into silence. *Buried in the earth?* Though I had heard of many improbable wonders, even I had never heard of a child surviving in the ground. But as she continued to cry, she looked so miserable, so lost, that my instincts took over. “Calm down. Breathe.” She took a shallow, shaky breath. “Another. Another.” Finally, she took a deep, even breath and nodded her head.

“I’m sorry. That was unseemly.”

“Do not worry yourself. I understand,” I told her, rubbing her back. “As I said, I felt the same way once.”

“You were buried in the earth too?” she asked, and I pulled away in surprise. Then I noticed her shy smile and gave a small chuckle.

“When I was a girl, my brothers would pray for good aim and then hit a perfect bull’s-eye. My father would pray for rains and they would come the next day. But it seemed that whenever I prayed for something, nearly the opposite would happen.” The words inspired far less pain than I had expected. They were simply a fact now.

Her face crumpled, and I thought she might cry again. But when she said, “That’s exactly what happens to me,” her voice was remarkably steady.

“I have a marriage,” I told her. “A marriage in which I am

loved and trusted. Without the help of the gods.” My disinterest in the marital bed and my lack of desire for Dasharath did not matter. I loved him like I would love a dear friend, and he had never caused me pain. For a woman, even in our new world, that was more than plenty.

“But how? If the gods have forsaken me, then how will my marriage be real?”

I sighed. Of all the things I had learned about Sita prior to our arrival, no one had mentioned the girl’s apparently rigid pioussness. “You said it is your father who claims you are gods-touched?”

“Yes.”

“The truth about the gods-touched is that they cannot be influenced by the magic of the gods. Their power cannot sway us, for we have a higher purpose.”

“What is my purpose?” Her eyes held a hunger, one I recognized.

“I cannot guess your purpose,” I said. But I had very strong suspicions. If she was gods-touched, then she was probably intended to be Rama’s bride and his queen and, in that way, would serve her purpose. It would be ideal for Rama to have a wife he could not instantly read, to have a wife he could not compel to obey.

“What is yours?” she asked. “Have you completed it yet?”

I shook my head. “That I also do not know.”

Her face fell. “I see.”

“But that does not mean you cannot make your own purpose,” I said quickly, for as a child it would have been a blessing to hear from someone also forsaken by the gods that I could be more. Could aspire to greatness. “I am Raja Dasharath’s saciva.” This time, I smiled with all my teeth, sharp and predatory and not like a proper radnyi at all. She would need a fire in her belly too, if she wanted to thrive as Rama’s wife.

To her credit, Sita met my smile with one of her own. “I have heard that. They say you even rode out into battle once, as the raja’s charioteer.”

“I did,” I said. “Many years ago.”

“My father was impressed by that story,” she said. “When my sister and I were young, he allowed us to take lessons in archery and spear-throwing. He said that your skill had saved your husband’s life.”

I blinked at her, my heart unexpectedly full. “That is wonderful,” I said.

“It was a pleasant break from sitting and reading,” she said. “I do enjoy archery.”

“Is that why the swayamvara contest will be archery?” I asked. It was no longer a secret, for Janaka had told us upon our arrival of his coup in being granted the Shiva Dhanush.

She shook her head. “I do not think they are related. My father simply wanted a task that only the most powerful of suitors could accomplish. The Shiva Dhanush was supposedly carried into the palace by four men. Although I think they must have exaggerated that.”

“Oh? Why is that?”

“Well, I wished to see it for myself, so I slipped into the room where it is kept when everyone was sleeping. I thought perhaps it would be fun to see how heavy it was. But I lifted it with little difficulty—it is not much heavier than a normal bow.” She said it without guile, her shrug dismissing the incident. But I bit on the inside of my cheek to keep from gaping at her.

Janaka would not have lied about the weight of the bow, nor its origins. It seemed much more likely that Sita had simply lifted a bow made for a god.

She was a worthy match for Rama indeed.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR



RAMA AND LAKSHMANA ARRIVED the day before the swayamvara.

We had not seen them in two years, and Bharata, Shatrugna, Kaushalya, Sumitra, and I waited in their empty chambers to greet them together on their arrival. We all began shouting when the door opened, but it revealed only Dasharath, who gave a sheepish grin and came to stand with us.

“You might look less disappointed to see me,” he muttered, and I was about to tease him back when the door opened again, this time revealing my two sons.

I could not stop the tears that sprang to my eyes as we swarmed around them, embracing and laughing. They both were over a full head taller than when they had left, and all traces of childhood had vanished from their faces. Our boys were gone. They had become men. They had become warriors.

I was grateful to see that Kaushalya and Sumitra also had tears running down their faces at the sight of our sons, and even Dasharath dashed a hand across his eyes when he thought nobody was looking. I clutched Lakshmana close and then Rama, my heart overflowing.

But we had little time to ourselves, for they had to clean away the dust of their travels and prepare for the swayamvara itself.

When I saw the Shiva Dhanush the next morning, my heart sank. It was even larger than I had imagined, nearly the length of two men.

The wood was a rich, deep maroon, rare and precious indeed, and lustrous as though lit from within. Although there were no carvings, a spiraling ribbon of gold was inlaid in its surface, like a curl of fire. It lay, unstrung, in the middle of the training field, carried out by four strong men. The eyes of the suitors grew to comical proportions when they realized the magnitude of the task at hand. The idea that Sita might have lifted it seemed laughable and yet...

Lots were drawn for the order of the competition, and Rama's was drawn last.

Before him, among all the other suitors, only one man managed to even lift the bow: Ravana of Lanka.

News of the death of Ravana's beloved Mandodari had reached Ayodhya some two years past. Had Rama not been competing, Ravana would not have been the worst match for Sita. He was old enough to be her father, but I knew he would treat her kindly, for he had treated me with kindness even without cause to do so. Kindness was still not a custom for brides across the land.

Ravana was in the middle of stringing the bow, arms trembling with effort and sweat drenching his brow, when he glanced up at Sita, seated on a dais. Something about her—perhaps her beauty or perhaps some sense that warned him she was gods-touched—seemed to greatly move him, because the string slipped from his finger and he dropped the bow with a resounding boom that shook the very earth. In the silence that followed, Sita giggled, and the bell-like sound echoed around the field.

Ravana flushed a bright red and hurried off the field.

I felt sorry for him, but I could not follow my old friend now. So I put it from my mind as my son took the field.

There was a strange, almost palpable hush that fell over the watching crowd as Rama stepped up to the Shiva Dhanush and grasped it. He lifted it in one easy motion, and the silence broke with a collective intake of breath.

With his other hand, he slipped the bowstring into place and pulled upward. The bow bent like the neck of a swan, held steady by Rama's hand, and he finished stringing it with ease. He held the bow loosely at his side as he stepped up to the mark and inspected the arrows provided in the quiver.

I felt it then—that strange sense of foreboding that had passed through me so long ago, playing with my children. That I might stand on the jagged cliff face of loss. But the feeling passed quickly, washed away as Rama selected a golden arrow, then half turned to look at the spectators. He spotted Sumitra and Kaushalya and smiled slightly. Then he locked eyes with me and gave a single nod. I nodded back and tried to pretend I had not spied the halo around his head, tried to pretend his divinity was not throwing diamond sparks against his jet-black hair, tried to pretend that a young man of sixteen wasn't casting a shadow twenty feet long.

In a motion as fluid and beautiful as a dancer, Rama faced the target, nocked the arrow, and took aim.

The arrow ripped through the center of the target, and the splintering echoed in the absolute silence. Even I took a second to comprehend the sheer effortlessness of it. In the next moment, we were all on our feet cheering. Even the other suitors were shouting their approval of his feat.

I turned to look at Sita. She was gazing at Rama with a small smile on her face, and he was staring back at her. After a moment, she stood and climbed down from the dais, a white lotus garland in hand.

As she walked toward the center of the field, the celebrations quieted. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that Sita would take Rama as her husband. And yet we all knew we were witnessing something holy. Marriage was common, but the joining of two kingdoms—of a yuvradnyi born of the earth and a yuvraja who had performed an impossible feat—felt different.

As Sita approached, Rama walked toward her, smiling. He looked every bit a yuvraja, and every bit a god. He came to a

stop before her and bowed his head, pressing his hands together. “Yuvradnyi,” he said, voice ringing for all to hear. “I have completed the tasks you set for me. I have lifted the bow, and strung it, and hit the target besides. If I have performed to your satisfaction, I ask for the honor of your hand in marriage.” He kept his eyes fixed on Sita as he spoke.

Sita met Rama’s gaze, her hands steady around the flowers. She looped the garland around his neck, and her demure smile blossomed into a grin. “Yuvraja Rama, I choose you as my husband.”

Kaushalya grabbed my elbow. “Our son, wed,” she whispered in my ear. “Only yesterday he was born.”

I leaned my head against her shoulder. “Congratulations, Queen Mother.”

Afterward, I went to find Ravana, hoping a friendly face would help temper his humiliation. There was also the distinct possibility my presence would rub salt in the wound, but our bond looked strong and I decided to risk it.

“Hello?” I called into his chambers. The door had been left slightly open, but no servants appeared to be present.

From inside came a soft sound of movement. The hall was deserted, so I entered his rooms and closed the door behind me. “Ravana?” I called. “It’s me, Kaikeyi.”

I moved past the antechamber and found him leaning against a casement in his bedroom, arms crossed. Tears glinted on his cheeks. He did not even look at me.

“Mandodari died,” he said, startling me.

“I had heard. I am so sorry.” I came to stand beside him.

“I waited years to find another bride, and now... this.” Despite the tears, his voice was remarkably even. Emotionless.

I rested a hand lightly on his arm. “You were the only other who even managed to lift the bow. That is nothing to be ashamed of.”

“I am not ashamed!” he bellowed. I jerked my hand away in alarm. “Did you hear her laugh?”

“She is young, naive—she meant no harm by it.”

“It was the most beautiful sound. She sounded so like Mandodari.” He heaved a great breath. One hand reached up to wipe the wetness from his face. “Your son Rama won the contest, I assume?”

“Yes.”

“Is he a good boy? Will he treat her well?” So he was smitten with her. I had not expected this turn of events.

“He is the best of boys,” I said. “Please, Ravana, do not despair. There will be other women, of course—”

“How dare you?” He snarled, rage transforming his features into ugliness. I stumbled back several steps. Ravana looked dangerous—demonic. “How dare you? Leave me!”

I ran from his quarters, only slowing when I reached my own chambers.

I did not see Ravana again and did not have the time to ponder his strange turn of behavior, for all the boys were wed on the trip. Bharata and Shatrugna were joined with Sita’s cousins, Mandavi and Shrutakirti, both happy, vivacious girls who seemed well matched for the boys. Lakshmana married Sita’s younger sister, Urmila, their quiet temperaments beautifully suited.

The joint wedding had all the usual pomp and ceremony of such a momentous occasion. The yuvrajas and rajas of the other kingdoms largely stayed for the wedding. There were weeks of feasting in the great hall in Mithila, and for each of the seven days of ceremony, Janaka sacrificed several prize animals to the wedding fires.

Sita outshone all others in the wedding. Her neck and arms were heavy with pure gold, crafted into intricate loops and whorls so that it appeared to be embroidered onto her glowing brown skin. She wore a yellow sari in the custom of Videha,

but it had been embroidered with tiny jewels that flickered and shifted constantly. As she took seven steps with Rama around the sacred flame to sanctify their marriage, it was as though she herself was made of flame.

My own wedding had been exhausting, but the wedding of my children was a time of joy. It was selfish, in a way, because men did not leave home after a marriage—so I was losing nothing. I could tell Janaka truly grieved to part with his daughters and his nieces all at once. I imagined the palace at Mithila would seem quiet, desolate without them, and I was sad for him.

But there was much to do, both in Videha and awaiting us in Kosala, and so at last we took our leave.

For all the pain it might have caused Janaka, it was a pleasure to have all our sons back, and their wives besides. And we needed some bright moments for it was harvest time, and the monsoons had not come with their usual strength. It was Kosala's second such year in a row, and there would not be enough grain to feed the entire kingdom. Our small stockpiles provided barely enough grain to last one bad harvest. Usually in such a situation, our traders in Southern Kosala, beyond the Riksha Mountains, could obtain supplies from the fertile southern kingdoms. The region surrounding the city of Janasthana was especially productive and traded away their surplus in exchange for cloth and tapestries and other beautiful wares. But this year our caravans were returning empty-handed, with tales of hostile guards and forest fiends. I hardly had time to think on it, though, for the situation at home was dire.

One morning, a quiet knock startled me as I prepared for yet another meeting of the Mantri Parishad. Manthara went to answer it, then quickly reappeared.

“You should come.”

I followed her to my antechamber, necklace still in hand, to find Sita sitting on a stool, her mouth downturned and trembling as though she might cry at any moment.

“Sita?” I asked, shocked to see her looking so distraught. “What is it?”

She lifted her head and I saw dark shadows under her eyes. Her hands shook as she brushed her hair from her face.

“What has happened?” I asked. “Are you ill?”

She shook her head, and her eyes darted to Manthara. Before I could even turn, Manthara made an excuse and quietly left the room. Of course, I would tell her everything that transpired later, but for now Sita’s comfort was paramount.

“I think I am losing my mind,” Sita whispered. “Or else I have been cursed. I did not know who else to turn to, but I remembered our conversation by the stables, and I thought—” She rose to her feet, and the stool fell with a clatter. “I am being stupid. This was a mistake.”

“What is it?” I asked. I entered the Binding Plane and sent a suggestion of comfort through our silver bond. “You can tell me anything.”

“When we spoke that day, you said that the gods never answered your prayers.”

“That is true,” I said. “Is there something you need? If the gods won’t answer—”

“The gods are answering,” Sita whispered. “Or I suppose, they are speaking to me, for I never asked a question for them to answer.”

I had not expected this. “What... what do you mean?”

“A few days ago, Rama and I argued. It was small, really—he mentioned that he had seen a wife contradict her husband in public and he hoped I would never do so. I told him that I would not contradict him in public so long as he did not say anything that needed correcting. I was partially jesting.” At this I gave a slight laugh, and the corners of her lips turned up in response. I could imagine myself saying something similar to Dasharath.

“That night, I dreamed of the goddess Lakshmi. She told me that my husband was destined for greatness and that my first job was to support him. She said it would bring me great prosperity. I thought it was just a dream, but at the end of it, she handed me a gold coin, and when I woke...” Sita reached into her blouse and handed me a golden disk. It was unlike any coin I had ever seen before, perfectly round and smooth, decorated with an eight-pointed star.

I swallowed, considering my response carefully before speaking. “That is very strange. But between you and me, the gods have talked to me before once or twice too.” I pictured the blistering heat of Agni and my own dream of Sarasvati. But even that dream had not been like this, for she had not actually appeared to me nor given me any token. Still, I added, “I do not think it is cause to worry.”

“It was not just her,” Sita said. “Last night I dreamed again, this time of Parvati. She told me Rama would go nowhere without my assistance. In return, she said my heirs would rule the kingdom for generations. I woke up holding a lotus in perfect bloom. But I don’t understand why they are coming to me and saying these things.”

“Did you ask them?” I did not mean to seem rude, but I too was curious.

“Yes. I asked Parvati, and she said that the mortal world held many temptations. She said... she said that Rama was divine, and I needed to help him restore order to the world.”

So now she knew. “And what did you make of that?” I asked quietly.

“Rama already told me himself, once. I didn’t believe him then. I laughed at him, in fact. But now I...” She buried her face in her hands, clearly shaken.

I gently placed my hand on her shoulder. “Rama is a god, it is true. He was sent to this world to do something great.”

“To restore order?” Sita interrupted looking up. “What does that mean?”

“I do not know,” I said. “I do not think we are meant to know. But they have come to you so that you know the truth. So that you may help him on his journey.”

“They never cared about me before.” Sita sounded bitter, and I sympathized with her resentment. The gods spoke to us as it suited them. We were important enough to be part of their plans and yet completely abandoned otherwise.

“I know. And you do not have to listen to them now. You are gods-touched, remember? They cannot force you to do anything you do not wish to do.”

At that, Sita’s tired eyes filled with steel. “I am devoted to him, but I do not want to be subservient. And Rama might be more traditional, but he has not asked it of me either.”

“Then I would put it from your mind,” I said. “And get some rest.”

But as she left, her chin set and step steady, I felt less certain. The goddesses had come to her for a reason—because they were trying to influence Rama’s path. It seemed they were worried. And I wondered if that meant I should worry too.

The next evening, Dasharath and I looked over the map of Kosala as we discussed plans.

“The south, beyond the Riksha Mountains, had a good harvest,” he said. “That is a relief.”

“And the northern reaches, near the Indra Mountains, have never used much grain in their diet. So they can do with a bit less.”

Dasharath rested his chin on my shoulder. “Do you remember, when we were first married—that territory was not ours.”

“Believe me, I could not forget,” I said, and he laughed out loud.

“You have done a fine job with making arrangements for the rest of the kingdom. Even if we must pay a higher price to

Videha, or Kekaya, this is what is best.”

“Thank you,” I said, feeling content, as I always did when we had executed an idea well. “The root of our troubles is not just poor weather. We have received less grain in trade than is usual.”

“It is,” he agreed. “I have been meaning to speak with you about this. I have heard concerning rumors from our traders who go past Southern Kosala to Janasthana. All of them returned empty-handed this year, despite fertile fields in that region. And there have been other happenings too. The raja of Janasthana recently died in a fire.”

This struck me, for I had heard a strange tale from a female trader at a Council meeting. She spoke of a frightening presence emerging from the woods and threatening violence upon her for daring to venture far from home. It had been only one story, and I had thought it more likely a bad dream, for she had returned safe and whole. Now, though, with these other omens, I could see that perhaps I had missed a vital sign. “I have heard of a beast or presence in the forest that blocked the passage of some traders. But I have not heard about this fire. It is altogether very odd.”

Dasharath’s eyes widened. “One of my messengers claimed that a hostile force near Janasthana has plans to attack Ayodhya.”

The idea was preposterous. In order to reach Ayodhya’s gates, enemies from Janasthana would have to travel through a deep wilderness, and then the entire region of Southern Kosala. Such an enemy would have to have an army strong enough to sustain that grueling march and defeat Kosala’s armies at the border before they could even *approach* Ayodhya.

“I assume they meant Kosala, for attempting to reach Ayodhya would be absurd,” Dasharath continued, echoing my thoughts. “I have spoken to Virendra privately and made sure to allocate more soldiers to Sripura and Southern Kosala.” The Minister of War was elderly but sharp as ever. “But now,

saying it aloud—have we grown dull with age?” He chuckled, but there was no mirth in it. “This seems more dire than I believed, and all the while we sit here reading grain reports and lamenting that we did not have the foresight to build a new granary.”

Whatever enemy this was, they had proven they did not need to march armies upon us. They could starve us instead. And that was indeed worth taking seriously. Still, we could not just ready our soldiers for battle based on suppositions. We might be reading shapes where there was only fog.

“You need to send someone to Janasthana itself,” I said, thinking aloud. “Someone whose sole job is to understand the threat. Someone who cannot be bought.” Now that I had spoken it, I was filled with the desire to go.

I had tried my best to put her from my mind, but in discussing Janasthana, I could not help but think that my mother might still be there. I had wondered for so long about who she might be now, what she might say to me. This was my opportunity to serve my kingdom and my own curiosity all at once.

“There is no one to send. Aside from you and myself, I trust only Virendra for such a task, and he is far too old to make the journey.”

“I will go,” I said.

Dasharath’s brows rose in alarm. “You want to go to a city supposedly overrun by some evil force. A city two moons’ journey south through treacherous forests.”

“Yes.” As I spoke, it made more and more sense. “I can move quickly and I have the influence to negotiate on our behalf. I am easily underestimated but can protect myself. If it would put your mind at ease to send someone south, I can go.”

“I cannot allow that,” he said immediately. In the low light, he looked exhausted. “You are my radnyi. My saciva. I would not risk your safety.”

“It is because I am your radnyi and saciva that I should

go,” I argued. “Who better to execute your will than me? But if you think I need protection, Rama can accompany me.” After all, he had slayed a rakshasa and lifted the bow of a god—whatever beast loomed in the forest would be child’s play for him.

“Absolutely not,” Dasharath said without even considering my proposal. “I cannot send away the yuvraja of Kosala and my saciva both.”

“No harm will befall us,” I insisted. “And besides, three of your sons will remain here. Surely that is ample security for the kingdom.”

He did not seem moved, so I decided to send a suggestion down our bond. It moved sluggishly and seemed to flash blue as it dissipated at Dasharath’s chest. I had never seen such a thing happen before, and I worried that perhaps my disuse of the Binding Plane had made my power there weaker. Still, it seemed as though the idea had been absorbed. “Rama would benefit from such a trip. You came to the throne in a time of war, but he has no experience of such things.”

Dasharath met my gaze, considering, and then his expression shuttered. “No. I cannot allow it. He only just returned, and I need him here.”

“But—”

“I said no, Kaikeyi!” he snapped, and I clamped my mouth shut. In all of our years of marriage, Dasharath had never spoken to me that way before. He must have seen my shock, for he added in a milder tone, “You will not take Rama, but it would certainly alleviate my worries if you had accompaniment. You should take Lakshmana.”

“That is a fine suggestion,” I said softly. I was hurt by his sudden anger but reminded myself he was under an enormous amount of stress. And Lakshmana was just as skilled as Rama. “We will leave in a week.”

Dasharath closed his eyes. “You may go to Southern Kosala, but no farther. You should be able to learn more about

matters from there. I will not have you going to Janasthana. If any of the rumored danger is real, it will be too great a risk.”

My heart sank further. “I doubt I can fix the situation without visiting the seat of the problem,” I argued.

“If you go all the way to Janasthana and anything befalls you, I will not know what has happened for near half a year.” Acute worry pinched his features. I did not want to cause him any more concern.

“As you say,” I told him. “Do not fear. All will be well.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE



WE TOLD THE REST of the palace that we were going away on a ceremonial trip to replenish our offerings at a small shrine in the Riksha Mountains so as not to cause panic. Our real destination, Sripura, was a large town in Southern Kosala. Kaushalya hailed from there—she had been yuvradnyi of the region before her marriage with Dasharath. If we had disclosed our true purpose, news of our arrival might have preceded us. I could not even tell Manthara or Asha.

Lakshmana remained ignorant too, out of fear he might reveal the truth to his brothers.

We snuck away the night before our announced departure so that we could take up our guise of mere travelers, and not until the following morning did Lakshmana ask me any questions.

“Where are we really going, Ma?” His voice was so quiet I almost thought I had imagined it.

“Sripura,” I said.

He did not respond, so I turned to see his reaction. He was frowning as he mouthed the name to himself. “Your mother, Radnyi Kaushalya, is from there,” I added.

“I know. It is just past the Riksha Mountains on the banks of the Mahanadi River.”

I pulled up my horse in surprise, watching his back as he continued on for a few paces before also stopping. He twisted around. “Is something the matter?”

“How do you know that?” I demanded. “Did you hear

about our true destination and study the maps before we left?”

Lakshmana narrowed his eyes. “No, of course not. Why would I ask where we’re going otherwise? We were instructed in the geography of Bharat at the ashram.”

I spurred my horse back into motion. “I did not mean to accuse you of lying, Lakshmana. You have my apology. It’s just—your memory is quite impressive.”

“Oh,” he said, almost sadly.

“Is something the matter?”

“Do you really think it’s impressive?” he asked.

I glanced at him out of the corner of my eye. He held himself rigid, gaze fixed straight ahead. “Very. I have met only one other person with such recall.”

“I don’t understand.” He sounded lost, much younger than his years.

“Has nobody told you so before? Surely your tutors have had reason to observe your memory.”

“No,” he said simply. “I have always taken my lessons with Rama, and he is far smarter than I. At the ashram, Sage Vamadeva said that being second to a man such as Rama is nothing to be ashamed of.”

I nearly toppled off my horse. “Did you say Sage Vamadeva?”

Lakshmana did not seem to pick up on my unease. “I did. He was our tutor for a year, long ago—you may not remember. He left to meditate at the ashram.”

My head spun. Sage Vamadeva had spent two years with my children, with *Rama*, without my knowing. And on top of my old grievance with the man, I was filled with new ire at his words to Lakshmana. Calm, quiet, patient Lakshmana would never begrudge his brothers anything, this I knew. For while Rama was highly charismatic and gifted with weapons, he had been attending the Mantri Parishad meetings since his return,

and I knew he had little head for sums or maps or city planning. But his godly presence spilled into every corner of every room he walked into, convincing all—almost all—that they witnessed greatness.

“Rama cannot do what you can do,” I said after a moment, for I did not wish to get into the topic of Sage Vamadeva right away.

“Rama is brilliant,” he said, an edge I had never heard before in his voice.

I stared at him, confused. Clearly something was happening under the surface to distress him. If we were to travel together, if I was to know him and help him recognize his value, perhaps I would have to break my own rules. With some reluctance, I entered the Binding Plane.

We had a dark yellow thread of acquaintanceship between us, attenuated—I assumed—by our years apart. Respectable, but not strong enough to provide the answers I wanted.

My eyes flicked up to Lakshmana’s face, and that was when I saw it, extending from his neck—a blue cord, so bright it almost hurt to look at. I had never seen such a thing before, but...

It came to me in the next moment, what this must be: Rama. They had spent two years with only each other, and in that time Rama’s godliness must have ensnared Lakshmana.

“Ma? Are you well?” Lakshmana’s words brought me back into myself.

“Yes,” I managed to say. “I am merely thinking.”

“I am sorry for getting sharp with you,” he said. “I don’t know what came over me. Please do not be angry, Ma.”

“Have I ever been angry with you?”

He shrugged, exaggerated enough for me to see. Even now he was considerate. “When I go along with Bharata’s plans.”

I laughed. “They’re Bharata’s plans?”

“You didn’t know?” he asked, all anger seemingly forgotten. “Bharata comes up with the ideas, and he claims the riskiest parts for himself. Shatrugna does all the rest.”

“Shatrugna does the smartest tasks,” I corrected teasingly. “That’s why I thought he came up with all their nonsense.”

“We always thought you only pretended not to know. Because Bharata is your son.” Once again, his voice was matter-of-fact.

“What?” I asked, shocked. “No. You are all my sons.”

“You believe that?” When I met his gaze, his light eyes were dark with emotion. He looked so much like Dasharath had the first time I met him in my father’s palace.

“Yes. Because it’s true.”

“I see,” he said, and his voice trembled ever so slightly.

“I’m not angry with you, Lakshmana. I promise. I’m angry at myself for letting you think that.”

“It’s not that important,” he said.

“I get to decide what I find important,” I told him. “And I think that you are important, you and all your brothers equally.”

He snorted, amused. “Rama is yuvraja. He is the most important. There’s no need to hide that truth. We are happy for him.”

It was a noble sentiment, if misguided, and I needed to respond with care. “My brother, your uncle Yudhajit, was the crown prince of Kekaya. I loved him and was happy for him. But that did not mean that I thought he was better than me at everything we tried, or that I deferred to him in every matter. And back then I was just a girl, considered a burden on my family.”

Lakshmana sighed, loud enough that I could hear it over the horses and the wind. “Rama is... something more than us. I cannot explain it, but I know it is my duty to support him, to

follow him. I have no problem with this,” he added hastily.

“Don’t say such things about yourself,” I insisted, knowing he would not heed my words.

It did not matter, though, for I had nearly half a year of time away from home to forge a stronger connection with my son and try to change his perspective.

“Why are we going to Sripura?” Lakshmana asked the next day. I enjoyed riding with him—he was quiet enough that I could concentrate on the feel of horseback, the rhythm that reminded me of my childhood, but willing to talk when the hours felt long and the scenery grew dull.

“I have heard rumors of new forces at work past the borders of Southern Kosala, whispers about some sort of beast interfering with our trade caravans. I volunteered to go alone, but your father thought it best I have protection. And I knew I could trust you.” There was no need for him to know that I had first suggested Rama as a companion, and even less reason for him to know that his father and I thought these threats quite serious.

“Rama would have been the better choice. My skills with a bow and a sword are acceptable, but he would have protected you far better. I was there when he slew the rakshasas.”

I wanted to reach out and shake him, jolt this inferiority out of his skull, for it sounded to my estimation that Lakshmana had done plenty. But horseback and propriety prevented me from doing so.

“I trust *you*. You will not give up our secrets for any reason, you will be reliable and loyal, and I have seen your work on the training field. You are more than capable of protecting yourself, and me should it come to that.”

Lakshmana frowned. “This is a long journey. Rama might need me at home,” he said.

“Really?” It was time to test their bond. I entered the Binding Plane. “If Rama is so capable, why would he not be able to do without you for the span of a few moons?”

The blue bond flared into existence immediately. “Why do you hate Rama?” Lakshmana asked coldly.

I focused my energy on the otherworldly chain. It fought back, and I surrendered control of movement to my horse and instincts so I could give this task my full attention. As I pressed, the bond shuddered, dimming an infinitesimal amount. I swayed, clutching at the reins and leaning forward to steady myself.

That small task had sapped all of my strength.

Lakshmana was staring at me, expression defiant, waiting for a response. “I do not hate Rama,” I said, voice rasping as though I had not had water all day.

His expression changed, first to bewilderment and then to mortification. “I know you don’t, Ma. I’m sorry.”

“You do not have to apologize,” I said as my energy slowly returned. “I am simply trying to point out inconsistencies in your logic—and no, I do not hate you either. Rama is fallible, as are you. He has your other brothers to help him should he need it. I know the two of you are used to being together without any family to rely upon, but Rama is back in Ayodhya. Why are you so worried?”

He turned away, his expression so sorrowful that I decided not to push any further. I kept glancing over at him, but he kept his eyes on the road ahead, his throat bobbing every few minutes as though he was working up the courage to say something. Watching him, I felt a streak of shame run through me. How had I never realized?

At last, when the sun was high in the sky, we stopped for a meal. I turned away from Lakshmana to remove some food from our packs. “I don’t know,” he said suddenly, and I whirled around. “I don’t know.” His face crumpled slightly, and I put my arms around him.

“Loyalty to your family is an excellent quality, and to be commended. But you can be someone beyond your loyalty—and you should be, because you have so much to offer.”

“I feel so strange,” he said. “I don’t know what to do with myself.” Each word took him several seconds to speak, as though he was swimming through sugar syrup. My mind flashed back, strangely enough, to Ashvin, and my long-ago attempts to help him.

“I am glad you are so close to your brother. When he is king, he will need advisors he can trust. You will make a wonderful advisor, with your memory and devotion. And if you want more, you should not be afraid to ask.”

“I don’t understand.” He pulled away from me and scrubbed a hand across his eyes. “What do you mean?”

I had gone far enough for today. “We can talk about this later,” I said. “For now, we should eat.”

For the next several days, we conversed about lighter topics as we crossed into the scrublands. I figured out how to whittle away Rama’s hold on him more gently, although every time I weakened their bond, the world spun around me and I often lost my grasp on the Plane. But in between those episodes, I learned that Lakshmana’s great skill with visual memory extended to conversations—he could recall nearly everything he had ever heard. Had Dasharath known this, when he asked me to take Lakshmana along? I could not think of a better companion for such a lengthy mission.

Our path took us through the thorn forests, a place I had heard of only in scrolls. To my surprise, the short thorn trees were not all that spiky, or painful to touch, but rather dotted the landscape like large, twisted bushes. We saw herds of elephants roaming the grasses, snapping branches off the shrubs to eat. Lakshmana’s sheer delight at the sight, his whoop of excitement every time he spotted another elephant, was almost contagious.

But as Lakshmana became more friendly, more open, my heart sank deeper into my stomach. I knew I wasn’t alone in thinking of Lakshmana as shy and reserved, but clearly that was not quite the case. He was very much like Sumitra: kind, loyal, wise, free with love. And his deeply buried wit, his

sense of humor, was all Dasharath. I wondered if even Shatrugna, his twin brother, had any idea of who Lakshmana was underneath his silence.

“Ma, I see you looking at me. I am not blind,” he said to me one morning. We had made good time on our journey—we were out of the scrub and on the last stretch of the winding pass through the Riksha Mountains.

They were nothing like the snowy and forbidding peaks to the north of Kosala and Kekaya, which had always reminded me of jagged teeth reaching to devour the sky. The valleys we traveled through were filled with lush forests, alive with chattering monkeys and brightly feathered birds, and even the higher passages were sun dappled and warm. When I craned my neck to look at the peaks, I couldn’t discern any snow on their crowns.

“I’m not looking at you,” I said. It was true only because I hadn’t snuck a glance at him in nearly an hour. But he was right—my eyes kept seeking him out, studying him, trying to make up for lost time by discovering what else I might have missed. Dasharath and I had estimated this journey would take nearly two moons, but we had anticipated much more difficulty in the passes than had been borne out. I had less time with Lakshmana than I thought—but the same responsibilities.

“Something is wrong with me, is it not?” he asked, sounding dejected. “You can tell me what it is. I may not have presented the best face to you, but I’m strong enough. I am.”

He said the words so earnestly that I wanted to reach out and ruffle his hair, try to cheer him up. Instead, I checked our bond, which was a shining construct of amber, strengthened over the weeks. But it held no answers.

“What do you mean?” I asked. “I don’t think there’s anything wrong with you. If this is about Rama again...” I trailed off as the blue rope flared into existence.

It was thin now, and I set my will to breaking it. This was a yoke, not a relationship. I examined it, readying myself to

sever it once and for all, took a deep breath... and shouted in fright.

Our surroundings had disappeared.

Alarm coursed through me as I exited the Binding Plane. The thick forest blinked back into existence in such a way that I felt dizzy.

“Ma?” Lakshmana was beside me at once.

I held a hand to silence him. “One moment,” I said in a low voice, dismounting.

I pressed my hand to the nearest tree. It felt real enough. The bark was rough against my palm, and I could smell the faint scent of sap and damp earth. But when I reentered the Binding Plane, my hand was touching nothing.

At the farthest point visible on the road, I could see trees and birds and plants all cast in the gray mist that defined the Binding Plane. But here there was no veil. Only blinding white.

Magic was at work. And nothing good came of things I could not see in the Binding Plane.

“Lakshmana, what do you know about this area?” I asked quietly.

I heard him dismount behind me. “It is not particularly remarkable, if I recall the maps correctly.”

“Are there any holy sites or shrines nearby?” I asked, slipping back into the real world. The longer we stood, the more I noticed the air had a chill to it that felt out of place.

“Not here.” He stepped up next to me, squinting into the dense forest. “Why?”

I considered the odds that I would find an entire section of forest that seemed to be gods-made so close to Sripura—and to the border beyond which a great beast lay. It was nearly impossible.

“Stay here with the horses,” I ordered. “If I have not come

back by the time the sun is at its peak, ride fast to Sripura and bring a search party. We are no more than a half day's journey away, and you can make better time alone."

"I do not wish to leave you, Ma," he said at once. "What do you see in there?"

"Nothing," I said, and it was the truth. "I simply have a hunch that something important lies within."

"I'm coming with you. I know you are trying to protect me, but I am also here to protect you. If you leave me here, I will follow. So you might as well just bring me now."

I considered him. He stood tall, chest thrown back, and I saw Dasharath within him. "All right, then. Be ready with your sword."

He secured the horses while I examined the surroundings further, and then we pushed our way through a lighter area of the brush.

After about a hundred paces, we could no longer see the path. Next to me, Lakshmana shivered, and I realized gooseflesh was running up my arms. The forest was cold—unnaturally so—and far too quiet. There should have been small animals chattering, running up and down the trees, but they were nowhere to be found. There was no birdsong, no movement in the undergrowth. Without it, the forest seemed an eerie place.

I entered the Binding Plane, standing firm as the ground shifted slightly and cast Lakshmana in its colorless palette.

The forest was unmoving, and so the sudden crunch of Lakshmana's boot against the ground reverberated, and we both startled before looking down. Brittle leaves of brilliant red and saffron had drifted over the path. I glanced up to see that the trees above had turned color, a blaze of flame. We rarely saw such things in Kosala, but the forests of Kekaya had been like this... in the late autumn. Not in the middle of summer.

"How is this happening?" Lakshmana asked, reaching

down to pick up a leaf.

“I don’t know,” I said. And truly, I did not know what sort of magic this was. We pressed on more quickly, the movement keeping us warm as our breath came in clouds of white. Each step felt more and more *wrong*...

A low whine sounded from ahead of us.

“Do you hear that?” I asked Lakshmana.

We stopped, and the sound came again.

An icy crust coated the plants now, a field of deadly, glimmering frost under a canopy so dense we could hardly see five paces ahead. I knew we must be close to whatever lived in the heart of this strange place.

I reached out to grasp a fallen branch and fumbled in my pouch for a flint. It took a few tries, my fingers clumsy with cold, but finally the end of the branch flared up. I used it to light a second branch, which I passed on to Lakshmana. In the flicker of firelight, the woods were otherworldly. I took every step as carefully as possible, trying not to make any noise.

A clearing appeared ahead of us.

“Come, child,” came a whisper. Lakshmana whirled around, and I grabbed his shoulder to steady him. “Come forward,” the voice said. “There is no need to be afraid.”

I was, naturally, very afraid. But the god—for that is who it must have been, for who else could spin into being entire forests that did not exist in the Binding Plane?—already had the measure of us. So I lifted my chin and strode into the clearing.

A man stood before us, petting the head of a magnificent pure-white wolf. He stopped the motion, and the wolf gave another low whine. The man shook his head, and the wolf trotted away into the forest. I looked more closely at the man and realized he was hardly a man at all. What had looked at first like gray robes actually appeared to be his skin, pale and marbled. His dark hair looked more like pine needles the

longer I stared. Something cool and wet stung my face, and I glanced up to see fat snowflakes drifting down toward the clearing.

I knew who this was.

“Very good.” The god smiled, revealing wolfish teeth. “It is not often mortals can find me.”

“Shishir,” I said.

“*Lord* Shishir,” he corrected, and I bit back on a triumphant smile. My childhood obsession with the gods was good for something after all. “God of the winter and the changing seasons,” he continued, taking a few steps toward us.

Next to me, Lakshmana dropped to his knees, the sword falling from his fingers. “Get up,” I hissed.

The god gave a laugh. “That is no way to treat a god, is it? Kneel, for you are a mortal woman.”

I knew I should. But that feeling of wrongness remained thrumming through me. It kept me on my feet. “Why should I kneel?” I asked instead.

Lakshmana twisted to look at me, horror on his face.

Lord Shishir studied me. “I know who you are,” he said after a moment. “Kaikeyi. You pervert the will of the gods at every turn. Your insubordination does not surprise me, but you must know there are consequences.”

The snow fell more quickly now, and I clenched my jaw to stop my teeth from chattering. Somehow my branch was still lit, but I knew it could not last for long. “Why are you here?” I gritted out. “What is this place?”

He smiled again, that wolf’s smile. “I was on my way to see you.”

The ice that gripped my spine had nothing to do with the cold. “To see me?” I repeated.

“In Ayodhya.”

“Ayodhya?” Lakshmana mumbled through blue lips. “Why are you going to Ayodhya?”

Lord Shishir strolled toward us, and I held out the lit branch in warning. He made a motion toward it, and a gust of wind rattled across the clearing, but the flame did not go out. “We have been summoned,” he said. “For too long you have tried to bend nature. You cannot continue.”

Then, in a motion too swift for me to meet, he leapt toward Lakshmana and pressed a hand to his forehead.

I lunged forward, driving the burning branch into the god. He fell back, just as Lakshmana rose and turned toward me.

“That’s right, boy,” Shishir said, and without warning Lakshmana shoved me hard. His eyes were an unnatural blue. I fell back, hands scraping against the frigid ground as my makeshift torch rolled away from me. Still the fire did not go out.

“End it,” Shishir commanded.

Lakshmana hesitated for a moment, the blue of his eyes flickering. I stumbled to my feet, thanking my luck that he had dropped his sword earlier. It took me a moment to enter the Binding Plane, but then the dark clearing was replaced by stark blankness. Lakshmana lurched toward me, the thin blue cord that connected him to Rama—to divine power, I realized—pulling him forward.

I reached into the depths of my strength, of the power inside me I still did not fully understand, and envisioned breaking the bond.

Lakshmana staggered. With a cry, I shoved again, imagining not just a simple unraveling but total obliteration.

The bond shattered and Lakshmana fell. Sharp shards of sickly blue swirled in the cold air before dissipating like so much mist.

“No!” cried Shishir’s voice, and I returned to the god’s forest.

“Ma?” Lakshmana asked, his voice shaking. He tried to stand but could not rise.

“Stay back,” I told him, and he obeyed, a measure of just how shaken he was. Shishir advanced toward me, and I scrambled to pick up my branch. The flame had burned through half of it, but it was all I had. “What do you want?” I snarled.

“It is not a matter of what I want,” he told me, even as a shard of ice crystallized in his hand. “Even if you prevail against me, a reckoning will come for your precious city.”

The shard flew toward me. I swung the branch, somehow managing to strike it with the flame, and it splintered and fell.

“Who comes to Ayodhya?” I demanded, backing away from him toward the trees at the edge of the clearing.

Shishir stalked forward, and the wind whipped snow in my eyes, ice stinging my skin. “You already know, or you would not be here.”

I had no idea what he meant, but I had reached my destination. I pressed the flaming branch against the trunk of the nearest tree, and as it caught, Shishir howled. “*How dare you?* This is a sacred grove.”

“Why do you want to kill me?” I shouted. The trees were catching one by one, crackling and spitting as the flames spread unusually fast.

“Because you stand in our way,” he growled, lunging again. I swung the branch to meet him, and he jumped back.

“Run, Lakshmana,” I cried, reaching out for his hand. He took it, and we began to race, stumbling out of the clearing and back toward the road as the flames licked the trees behind us.

I heard Shishir scream, a sound of pure agony—or maybe it was simply the keening of the wind.

By the time we reached our horses, the air was once again warm, and our limbs were damp with sweat. We burst onto the

road, panting, and held each other as we watched the fire consume the god's grove. The trees crumbled into ash, the flames dying as they reached the true forest farther down the path. After a few more moments, it was gone. Before us was a charred swathe of land.

You are forsaken, Agni had said. Today those words had been a blessing. The forest and the snow and the wind had been gods-made and so had been powerless to stop the flames lit by my hand.

Lakshmana squeezed my arm, and I turned to look at him. He had the same confused look as he had worn in the forest. "I—I don't..." He trailed off, before groaning in pain, a sound that rattled inside my core. I only just caught his head before it hit the ground.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX



I BROUGHT LAKSHMANA TO Sripura, half-crazed with worry, and found a healer.

All I could think about was that I had brought my son into the grove and shattered that bond without a thought for the effect it might have. He might never heal.

It was only after the healer assured me several times that Lakshmana was suffering from a simple fever common to these parts and would be fine with a few days of rest and medicine that I calmed. That I had broken Rama's bond moments before Lakshmana's collapse could not be a coincidence, but I had no better remedy.

As soon as the healer left, I asked the innkeeper to send a message to Dasharath's man, a trader by the name of Hirav, telling him that his cousin was visiting. The innkeeper brought Hirav to my room shortly after—and his grim expression only confirmed my worst fears.

"I have written many missives to Ayodhya," he said immediately. "But I am worried they have not arrived."

"Raja Dasharath received a letter. He sent soldiers. Did they not arrive?"

"No! Did you get my letter about the siege of Janasthana? I fear Sripura may be next."

"A *siege*?" I repeated.

Hirav shuddered. "Yes, my lady. It is a rakshasa and a menagerie of feral, slaving monsters. They have attacked many who dare risk the path to Janasthana. And when last I

tried to go, I found my way blocked by a ring of fire, leaping toward the stars. I thought it better to return.”

This was far worse than Dasharath and I had imagined. A *rakshasa*? “Why do you fear Sripura is next? Has the rakshasa come here?”

“Not yet. But nothing has arrived from Kosala. No letters, no soldiers, no supplies. It is only a matter of time.”

I held my alarm in check, trying to make sense of the mystery before me. How could the rakshasa be on both sides of Sripura?

The realization came to me, absurd, impossible, and yet—it fit. For I had encountered someone on the other side of Sripura who may have barred the way.

But Shishir was a god. It couldn’t be. For all my frustrations with the gods, I did not think them evil. The gods would not aid the rakshasas. Would they?

And yet, I already knew the answer. Dread seeped through my limbs as I recalled the story of the churning of the ocean, the one I had loved as a child. Had the gods not long ago joined forces with the asuras because they needed one another to succeed? Shishir had threatened a reckoning. But what had he planned, this god, that would have required the help of a rakshasa?

“I believe the road to Kosala is clear now. We could send a missive to Dasharath. But even if we send a messenger, it will be several moons before soldiers arrive.”

Hirav swallowed, looking down at his hands. “It is hard to describe, Radnyi, but I do not think we have that much time. The whole city is living in fear. And I don’t think we can stop this rakshasa alone. If it wants to burn a path to Ayodhya—”

“What does Ayodhya have to do with this?” I asked sharply.

“The rakshasa speaks of conquering the city.”

It was my worst fear come true. A common goal. We had

laughed, Dasharath and I, at the idea that anyone might reach Ayodhya from here. But a powerful rakshasa with an army could wreak such destruction as to destroy entire kingdoms.

Though Dasharath had asked me not to go, I could not just abandon Janasthana to its fate.

I thanked Hirav for his time, then watched over Lakshmana as he slept fitfully. I tried to compose a letter for Dasharath that would not alarm him when he could do nothing, but would impress the seriousness of the situation. I could not bring myself to mention Lakshmana's illness.

Dasharath—matters in Sripura are worse than feared. I have reason to believe there is a threat to Ayodhya in the forests of Janasthana. Lakshmana and I will take all precautions in looking into the matter, and Hirav will be waiting in a nearby village for us. It would not go amiss to fortify the roads into Ayodhya.

It took three days for Lakshmana to wake, and when he did, he fell out of his bed. The crash startled me from a doze, and I reached for my sword before realizing what had happened.

“Lakshmana!” I moved quickly to his side. “How are you feeling?”

“Tired.” Lakshmana pushed himself up onto his elbows. “Thirsty. Hungry.”

“Good, good.” I helped him back into his bed and then went to the sill to fetch him a cup of boiled water.

“What happened, Ma?” he asked. “I had the strangest dream, about the cold and then a fire.”

“It's been a few days since you collapsed. And that wasn't a dream.”

He fell back on his pillow. “I had a fever.” It was not a question.

“Yes. You did.” I brushed my hand against his forehead. It was blessedly cool. “It has broken now. But you need to regain your strength.”

“Wait, did you say *days*?” Lakshmana surged forward, and I pushed him back down, until he was fully lying prone. “We need to keep moving. You heard what Lord Shishir said.”

“How are you feeling?” I asked again, more firmly.

He closed his eyes. “It is gone now. The presence. The one that Lord Shishir used to control me. I think... I think it was there before we ever met him.” Lakshmana hesitated. “Do you think Rama had anything to do with this?” I thought back to how Rama had unconsciously pushed toward my mind. Was it possible that the rest of Ayodhya had these bonds too? I knew for certain only that Sita and I were free from them. And now Lakshmana. But no—Rama would not do something like this.

“I think he loves you dearly, but that he does not know how to control his power or influence,” I responded. If doubt lingered in my mind, if part of me was desperate to return to Ayodhya, now was not the time. There was a real threat before us.

“Ma.” Lakshmana took a deep breath. “I love Rama. He is my closest brother. But I have held my tongue all my life in his presence because my tongue has been held for me, and until you pointed it out I did not even realize it. Even then my thoughts were all trapped in my head and I was stuck.”

“Slowly, go slowly,” I said. “Do you mean to tell me that Rama’s influence has kept you quiet in his presence? Literally quiet?”

“Yes.” He took another deep, shuddering breath. “I feel like a different person now. There is no other way to describe it.”

“If you could have spoken freely in our first conversation, what would you have said?” I asked, struggling still to understand this new truth.

“I know that I am more intelligent than Rama, although he is far more skilled in the war arts. And I know that Rama’s influence is the only reason our tutors think he is perfect. He cares too much about what others will think of him, or what others are saying about him. I think that is why he argues

sometimes with Sita. And it is why he holds you at a distance —because he knows you think him foolish for it.”

I sat down on the edge of Lakshmana’s bed. “He holds me at a distance?” I asked at last.

Lakshmana squinted at me. “I thought you knew.”

“I don’t understand. Why would he do that? How do you know this?” The desperation poured out of me without warning, and I had to stop myself from alarming Lakshmana further.

“See? Rama has even gotten to you.” Lakshmana sat up again and placed a hand on my shoulder. “You are his mother and you have done a great deal for the kingdom. But at the ashram, he asked Sage Vamadeva many questions I hardly knew Rama had. The sage said he thinks it shameful for women to be out in the open, believes that women are weak and foolish and will ruin Kosala. And Rama cares very much about what Sage Vamadeva has to say, and the opinions of those the sage introduced to Rama while we were there. They do not like you, which leaves Rama most conflicted.”

“When did you learn so much about this?” I whispered.

“Those two years we were on our own were illuminating. Rama has always been kind to me, and he is my brother. In some ways, he is very wise. I do not want you to think I hate him or find only fault with him. But even the people we love can be flawed, no?”

“Yes,” I said, voice thick with unshed tears. Lakshmana lay back down and I took the opportunity to dash a hand across my eyes. I had missed everything important about my sons.

“He is not ready to be king,” Lakshmana said. He paused to gauge my reaction, and I motioned for him to continue. “Not yet. He will be a great ruler only for some. He is good to me and Bharata and Shatrugna, and to even the lowest of manservants. He listens to their opinions, respects them, and he will do great things for the men of the kingdom. His rule will be excellent for many people.”

“But not all of them,” I finished. And then we both fell silent.

Of all the rumors I have heard about me, the ones involving Lakshmana are some of the most laughable. Many people seem to believe our journey together was the time when he recognized my wickedness and realized he needed to protect Rama from my evil. But it is perhaps the least true out of all the varied theories, because by the end of our trip, Lakshmana found me quite fragile and in need of protection.

By the following day, he had recovered much of his energy. I gave the letter I had written to Hirav, with instructions to send it as quickly as possible and then ride hard for Bhojakata, and then we departed.

Over the course of our journey, I came to one conclusion: Rama could not take the throne until he became more secure in his bearing, able to sort through the clamor around him. I worried in particular about the two years he had spent learning under Sage Vamadeva. How long would it take to undo? But that problem was not insurmountable. After all, Rama wanted to please those around him. There was nothing strange about that. Hadn't I wanted to do the same? I had grown out of it in time and realized I could not stand to allow others to suffer when it was in my power to help. Rama would see that too, and learn the difference between whims and needs.

The forests grew darker as we approached Janasthana, the sounds of birds more haunting than melodic, and the nights a little blacker, with fewer stars scattered across the skies.

After our adventure in Shishir's grove, we were far more careful. Our conversations grew quieter and less frequent as we contemplated our surroundings with a wary eye. We alternated sleeping, so that someone could always keep watch on the encroaching shadows.

On the final day of our journey, we were exhausted to our bones. When it was my turn to sleep, I passed into unconsciousness in a blink.

I awoke to a brightness behind my lids. For a moment, I thought it was simply daylight, and that I had woken naturally.

But as I opened my eyes, a bright flame burned itself into my vision. I pushed myself to my feet, blinking rapidly as the image before me clarified itself into a man holding a burning branch toward me, just as I had done to Shishir not so long ago.

No, not a man.

The lips of his bull head pulled back into a grotesque smile. “You do not look like a trader, woman.”

“Who are you?” I demanded. Over his shoulder, I saw Lakshmana slumped against a rock, almost unnaturally still, chest moving in shallow motions. “Lakshmana!” I shouted, but he did not stir. “What have you done to my son?”

“You must be Radnyi Kaikeyi,” he said, stepping closer. Behind me stretched the dark forest, no safer than what lay before me. I stood my ground.

“How do you know who I am?”

“I have been waiting for you.”

A sharp prick of fear slipped down my spine. Shishir had been waiting for me too. “Who are you?”

He extended the burning branch, and I watched the flames lick up his hand but leave no mark. My blood ran cold. I had thought him a rakshasa, a fearsome monster indeed, but such powers seemed beyond a mere rakshasa’s control. My mind rapidly sorted through all the information I had heard about the demonic presence that plagued Janasthana. He commanded an army. He commanded real magic.

This was no mere rakshasa—this was an asura. A being whose powers rivaled those of the gods, who fought the gods for control. I was about to die.

“Pity,” said the asura, tilting his head and blinking slowly at me. “I thought you might know.”

I stumbled back under the canopy of trees and he followed, letting his weapon drop casually to the ground. The brush lit up immediately, and the fire snaked its way toward me faster than I could move.

I glanced around for water, for damp earth, for anything to save me. The flames circled around me, and I coughed once, twice, struggling to stay on my feet. I was dimly aware of the hem of my dhoti catching, and I beat uselessly at it with my hands. Hysterical panic built up in my throat.

“Goodbye, Radnyi—”

His voice cut off with a gurgle. I looked up to find a sword protruding from the asura’s chest.

“Ma!” Lakshmana shouted. A moment later, he came barreling through the circle of flames, a cloth wrapped around his mouth. He lifted me up and rushed back through, dropping me before falling to his knees. I rolled for a moment on the ground, trying to catch my breath as waves of agony suffused my burned skin.

After a moment, I managed to turn my head. The fire was dying down. Lakshmana was standing above a pool of orange blood. The body of the asura was gone.

“What happened?” he asked, coughing.

“I don’t know,” I gasped out. Lakshmana helped me to my feet, and I limped toward our camp at the edge of the road, now a hundred paces away. I did not remember traveling so far into the forest.

Lakshmana sat me down and brought me water, lifting it to my mouth as though I were a child.

“The—rakshasa, he woke me up.” There was no point in scaring Lakshmana further with my guess as to its true nature. “He had put you to sleep, I think. He said he had been waiting for me.”

Lakshmana understood remarkably quickly. “It was a trap?”

I nodded. “We must make haste for Janasthana.”

“If it was a trap, does he not want us to go there? Should we not turn around?”

“I do not believe we could outrun him in the other direction.” My throat hurt fiercely, each word the thorn of a rose.

“Can you ride?” Lakshmana was already saddling our horses.

“What other choice do I have?”

I slipped in and out of a haze of pain until we reached the city. The midday sun beat against my wounds with a throbbing ferocity. The gate was closed and barred, but at our cry, a guard immediately appeared.

“What is your business here?” he demanded.

Lakshmana looked at me. “I’m here to visit my mother,” I said, my voice a raspy whisper. “This is my son, her grandson.”

The sun was at the guard’s back, so I could not tell what he was doing. After a moment, he disappeared. Another guard, or perhaps the same one, emerged from the bottom of the watchtower moments later.

“Who is your mother?”

“Kekaya,” I answered. My mouth was painfully dry. I coughed and fumbled for my waterskin, lifting it to my lips with shaking hands.

The guard studied me while I drank. “You saw it, did you not?”

“Yes,” I whispered.

“We cannot offer you protection. But you may enter for now,” the guard said, gesturing us forward as the gate opened. “Devi Kekaya lives in the Noble Quarter, by the palace. Ask a guard to point out her dwelling.”

He beckoned me close. "If you venture anywhere else in the city, we will know," he said, and then slapped the back of my horse, sending me jerking ahead.

"What was that?" Lakshmana demanded as soon as we were out of earshot. "Does your mother really live here?"

I gave a sharp nod, hoping to forestall further questioning.

The streets around us were swept clean. Low, squat mud-and-straw dwellings lined the roads, the structures reflecting away some of the southern heat. There were few people outside, and those who we saw seemed wary, hurrying about their business. As we got closer to the city center, the Noble Quarter came into view. The dwellings sprawled out, with graceful arches of stone and brick, small gardens, and groves of mango trees.

But I could not appreciate the sight, for every moment I remained on my horse felt interminable. When I dismounted, stiff as though I had been sitting for days, pain coursed through me. I stumbled. Lakshmana hurried to my side and held my elbow carefully as we walked toward the guard posted on the corner.

"I am looking for Kekaya," I whispered.

The guard pointed to one of the dwellings. "You can find her there."

Lakshmana and I walked slowly. With every step, my burns throbbed, and my head pounded.

"Ma?" Lakshmana asked. "Would you like me to carry you?" I shook my head, and he seemed to understand. "I am sure she will be happy to see you, after so long a time."

"Yes," I said, for I could not manage more words.

A man stepped forward from the gatehouse, dressed in a stiffly pressed white tunic. My mother had done well for herself. "What is your business?"

"I am here to see Kekaya," I said, groping blindly for the mix of haughty and kind that usually served me so well. I

failed utterly, my words slurring together as though I had imbibed too much wine.

“*Minister Kekaya*,” he corrected, turning up his nose. “Many people come to see her. Her time is both precious and limited.”

I snorted before I could stop myself. “Well, that’s nothing new,” I muttered under my breath.

“Excuse me?”

“I’m her daughter,” I said, enunciating more clearly.

The man looked me up and down. “That you are not.”

“Excuse me?”

“You are most certainly not Devi Meena.” He looked past me. “Ah, Minister, my apologies.”

I turned in a jerky movement. There before me was my mother.

It reminded me of entering the Binding Plane, a veil of age overlaying a face I recognized well. Her hair had grayed and thinned slightly, but her uplifted chin and steely eyes had not changed.

She was dressed ornately, in a style unfamiliar to me, with a robe of deep blue, richly embroidered with silver flowers, elegantly draped over her white and silver silk sari. I felt like a child again, scruffy, unimpressive, intimidated by her cool grace. I opened my mouth to say something, anything, and only a pitiful croak came out.

“This woman came here asking to see you, Minister. She claimed she was your daughter. I was about to send her away.” My mother lifted a hand, a gesture so familiar to me that my throat ached. The man stopped talking at once.

“Kaikeyi?” she whispered. I pressed my lips together and managed a shaky bob of the head.

Her face crumpled, and in that moment, she was transformed from the mother I had known into the mother I

had wished for. She looked confused, bereft, loving. I used to pray she would show any one of those emotions to me, and now I had all of them and I simply wanted to cry. She reached toward me with weathered hands and I flinched away. The world spun, arms caught me, and that was the last thing I knew.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN



MY BONES ACHED. I blinked against heavy eyelids to find an unfamiliar room. But my hands and throat felt pleasantly cool.

“Kaikeyi? Kaikeyi! You’re awake.” And there was my mother again, looking over me as I lay in bed. I had to choke back a wild laugh at this wonder.

“How long?” I asked instead. It no longer hurt to talk.

“A full day has passed.”

“And you... have been here?”

I watched my mother’s face flit through several emotions as though she was picking a story, and I entered the Binding Plane. A slender chain of purple connected us. “I just sent your son away to bathe,” she said truthfully. “A healer has attended to your burns, and they are much better already. Lakshmana explained how you came to have them. We have gotten very skilled at treating such injuries here.”

I had so many questions. “How did you recognize me?”

My mother’s eyebrows arched in surprise. “You are my daughter.”

“You barely looked at me as a child. How can you recognize me as an adult?” I asked. I hated that my voice sounded young, a petulant whine.

“I have seen a painting of you,” she said, leaning forward to brush my hair from my face. “I know I was not a good mother to you and your brothers. I was unhappy at court, and you deserved better. But it broke my heart when I realized I

would never see you again.”

There was a lump in my throat, blocking my words. And anyway, what was there to say? She had done what she had done, and neither of us could go back.

Her expression fell slightly at my silence, but her fingers continued to card through my hair. “I am very happy to see you,” she said. “But I know you did not simply come to visit. Would you like to tell me why you are here?”

The question was a relief, allowing me to push aside emotion in favor of business. “I am here to speak to the governor of Janasthana,” I improvised. “Our traders have complained of various harassments, and we wished to come to an agreement about dealing with those threats. I volunteered.”

“A party of two?” She pursed her lips.

“It is a long journey. I did not wish to take others from their homes unnecessarily. And I did not realize the severity of the problems when we left. Clearly.”

She crossed her arms, radiating skepticism. “As you say. Well, it will be difficult for you to speak with the governor.”

“Why is that?” I asked, pushing myself upright.

“He won’t be arriving from Lanka for another week.”

“Lanka?” I asked, completely bewildered. Surely she could not be referring to—

“Ravana is the governor of Janasthana,” my mother said with a tight smile.

“When did he become governor?” This news had not reached Ayodhya.

“Not long ago. He was on his way here when he heard tell of the evil lurking in our forest. Raja Danda and his son were killed in a fire shortly before his arrival, and we were trapped in the city, besieged by all manner of foul creatures. His soldiers helped drive them away and build a wall, and he decided to stay. To protect us.”

The magnitude of our ignorance in Ayodhya astounded me. Shishir had truly duped us. But I still did not understand *why* the asura had tried to take a city, or set his sights on Ayodhya. “And how will Ravana return so quickly?” I asked. The journey from Lanka to Janasthana took moons, not weeks.

“He has a flying chariot,” my mother said. “It sounds fantastical, but the man is nothing if not brilliant, and he has somehow managed it.”

“I knew he would.” I couldn’t help but smile slightly. He had needed inspiration when we last talked about it, a lifetime ago. Perhaps his grief had fueled him toward this greatness.

We sat in silence for a moment. “Stay with us until he returns. I insist.” My mother took my hand in hers, and I marveled at my near-healed skin. “I have a husband, and a daughter and son.”

So, she had replaced Yudhajit and me. My other brothers had not been as old, or as affected by her departure, but we had struggled in her absence. I remembered Manthara’s admonishment that my mother had no choice in the matter, that she could not have come back to us. But this news hurt much more deeply than logic could repair.

I pulled my hand away, and my mother added, “They would love to meet you. Of course they have heard of you.”

“Of me?” I asked.

“Tales of your work in Ayodhya have reached us. You are greatly admired here. My daughter Meena looks up to you.” She spoke earnestly, happily, words that cut sharp as knives. The could-have-beens and what-ifs swelled up inside me.

“I am very proud of everything you have accomplished. You have become an incredible woman, despite me. I never thought I would see you again.” Her voice shook. “I have not stopped thanking the gods since you appeared. They granted me a wish I did not deserve.”

The gods had nothing to do with this. I swallowed. “I am thankful to see you again as well, Ma.”

She gave me a small smile and took my hand again. I let her.

Then Lakshmana came rushing into the room, and the moment was broken.

I have had ample time to turn those weeks with my mother over and over in my head. The temptation to put some of the fault on my mother for the debacle of my life has remained strong over the years, but the chain of responsibility has to stop somewhere.

Besides, though I could not help but search for it, I never found an instance of devious behavior from my mother during our time together. She had remade herself remarkably well, away from the shadow of my father. She put me in a room overlooking her gardens, with a window made out of glass instead of paper. I had never fathomed such a thing before—up north, glass was fashioned into beads and trinkets, but never such large, clear panels.

“Ravana’s invention,” she told me when I stopped to marvel at it. “He has put his mind to advancement. The salve used to soothe your burns is also of his invention—he has devoted much time to the study of healing.”

I pressed my face up against the window, hardly believing that I could see right through it. Our paper windows back home let in light—but this was something else entirely.

“You know him,” my mother said. She did not phrase it like a question.

I turned to face her. “Yes. Our paths have crossed on several occasions.”

The corners of her mouth turned up, but tears pooled in her eyes. “He gave me the first news I had of you in years. A precious gift. He told me you were strong and smart and determined.” A teardrop rolled down her face.

“When was this?” I asked. After our last meeting, I could imagine him saying nothing of the sort.

“Seven or eight years ago, it must have been. He passed through Janasthana on his return from a pilgrimage. He lost his daughter, you know, and I had lost a daughter in a way, and we were able to speak openly to each other. He said if his daughter were still alive, he would be hungry for any word of her, so he was happy to do that for me.”

I hardly knew how to take her words. Had Ravana been spying on me for my mother that first trip? And yet, he had not even mentioned her to me—a cruelty I thought him incapable of.

The question must have been evident on my face, for my mother said immediately, “He did not know when he met you that you were my daughter. I had not told anyone outside of my family—my family here, that is—of my past, or that my daughter was a radnyi of Ayodhya. But when he came here, he guessed that you were my blood. He said there was a strong resemblance.”

I looked at my mother and then down at myself. My mother was taller than I was, with a full figure and clear bronze eyes. I was of middling height, broad-shouldered but flat-chested, with eyes that were often described as obsidian.

My mother laughed. “A resemblance in *personality*.”

As she spoke, she reached out a hand to cup my face. I instinctively shied away from the touch, then took a deep breath and allowed it. She caressed my cheek.

“I know I have said this already, but I am so very proud of you. You have exceeded my wildest dreams for you. Even Ravana has been influenced by you.”

I made a skeptical sound.

“I mean it. He said he was inspired by your example and wished to include women on his own Mantri Parishad. That is how I became Minister of Finance.”

“I did not know that,” I admitted. It was certainly meaningful that Ravana would place her not only on the Mantri Parishad, but within his inner council.

“I am sure he will be glad to see you again,” she said, patting my cheek.

After scrubbing the dust of the road and battle from my skin, I went looking for Lakshmana. I did not search long. He was lying on his bed, dressed in a cream-colored dhoti embellished with navy embroidery that reminded me of my mother’s robes. Perhaps it was a family color. Despite the unfamiliar attire, though, Lakshmana looked relaxed and comfortable.

“Enjoying yourself?” I asked, tousling his hair.

“Very much.” He rolled out of reach and onto the floor. This seemed hilariously funny to me, and I sat on the edge of his bed, laughing until I gasped for breath.

His head peeked out over the top of the bed. “Ma, are you all right? Have you hurt yourself again?”

I put my hands on my knees and took a few deep breaths. “No, no, I’m fine. I am just very happy to see you.”

“Are you sure? We don’t have to go to dinner. I could have a relapse of fever, and you could stay here with me.”

“What? Why would you say that?”

“This must be difficult for you. All of this, all so sudden.” He came around to me and rested his head in my lap. My eyes burned, happy yet wistful. “If it makes you sad, we don’t have to go.”

I stroked his hair. “It does make me sad. But being here also makes me happy. I will take the good with the bad.”

We sat for a few moments longer, watching the sun descend as I massaged his scalp just as Manthara used to do for me.

When he got to his feet, he offered me his arm. “I know you don’t want to worry your mother about your own health, but I meant what I said. I can have a relapse of fever whenever you need me to.”

“My little boy, protecting me!” I pressed a hand to my

heart, then pretended to wipe tears from my eyes, and he grinned.

But the sincerity of Lakshmana's words comforted me, and as we walked toward the hall, I felt none of the dread that had consumed me as we first approached the house.

A servant directed us toward a side room, and just as we were about to enter, a young woman appeared.

"Radnyi Kaikeyi!" She pressed her hands together and dropped into a bow, before throwing her arms around me.

Unsure how to respond, I released Lakshmana's arm and awkwardly patted her back.

"I'm... so sorry, I am afraid I don't know who you are," I said, pitching my voice low so as not to embarrass her.

She released me and held me at arm's length, eyes traveling up and down my face. "I'm Meena, your sister. Well, half sister. It's an honor to meet you."

"Meena, let her breathe." My mother emerged from the dining room.

"It is nice to meet you," I offered after a moment. "Forgive my confusion."

"I suppose this is all very new for you," Meena said. An understatement, to be sure. Lakshmana stepped up behind me, and her eyes lit up. She began chattering to him, quickly forgetting me.

My mother smiled kindly. "Meena is very enthusiastic, but she means well. She has a promising career ahead of her in healing."

"Healing? Really?" She was the exact opposite of the stolid healers I knew. Even quiet Ashvin was a bit too exuberant for the mold. And of course, she was a woman.

My mother nodded. "She has a great talent for the discipline. She and Lakshmana have been talking of it."

Sure enough, a glance over at the pair showed Meena

miming what must have been some sort of bandaging technique as Lakshmana looked on with a serious expression.

“Ashvin is an excellent healer,” I said. I had not yet decided if my mother deserved to know about my brothers, but this small morsel was a kindness in return for hospitality.

Her face lit up. “Is he? That’s wonderful.”

“Yes. He had a painful illness as a child that made other pursuits difficult for him, so I arranged to have him apprenticed with the court healers,” I explained, watching as grief shaded her initial joy.

“Is he still in pain?” she asked. The vindictive part of me wanted to respond, *Would you care?*

But Manthara had counseled compassion when we spoke of my mother all those years ago, and her advice had not led me astray yet.

“No. He eventually recovered. He is the tallest of all—my brothers now.” Somehow, the words *your sons* would not move past my throat.

“That is good. Good.” She gestured me through an archway and indicated we should sit on the array of cushions placed on the ground. “And how is Yudhajit?”

“Fine,” I said. “He rules Kekaya now.”

Her face was inscrutable. “Ashwapati is dead?” she asked.

“He is alive. But he passed the throne to my brother and went away to the mountains. I have not seen him in seventeen years.”

Lakshmana and Meena came to join us, and the food was laid out on a low table.

“My husband and my son are traveling to Matanga for business. But do not let his absence fool you. He is a far better husband than Ashwapati ever was.”

“That is a low standard to hold a husband to,” I said.

My mother paused in the midst of a bite, straightening up to give me a shocked look.

“Did someone tell you what happened?”

“Manthara told me that Father sent you away. She defended you, when I grew angry with your abandonment.”

My mother’s cheeks flushed. “I would like to tell you my side of it. If you wish to hear it.”

We were speaking quietly, and Meena and Lakshmana were still absorbed in their own conversation. I had no desire for my son to hear about this sordid affair, but I could not say honestly that I would be upset if he heard. My burning curiosity was too strong. I had convinced myself over the years that I did not need to know exactly what had happened, or that I already knew the truth of it, but now, given the opportunity—I needed to know.

“Your father... never liked me,” she began, a bit haltingly. “Our marriage was arranged when I was born, and I became his bride at sixteen. I had you and Yudhajit only a year later. Ashwapati was ten years older than I was and found me at the same time frivolous and withholding. He looked down on me.”

I could not help but nod. I had been enormously lucky to have Dasharath as my partner, but I could still understand well the loneliness she was describing.

“We had eight children—seven pregnancies in all for me. He did not like me, but neither did he hate me. We remained indifferent to each other, each managing our own spheres. And then I became pregnant for the eighth time, and I lost the child soon after. Such things happen. I had been extraordinarily lucky to have seven healthy pregnancies. But he did not think so. I still do not know how he got the notion in his head, but he became convinced that I had been unfaithful to him, and then purposely lost the baby in order to hide it.”

“*What?*” I interrupted her. “Why would he think that?”

“Because around that time, a childhood friend had arrived at court and we spent a great deal of time together. I enjoyed

hearing stories from home, and I suppose I must have seemed more open around him, happier. Ashwapati had not allowed me to visit my ancestral palace or my parents, and so I sought to spend as much time with this man as possible. But there was nothing between us.

“After the death of the baby, Ashwapati became consumed by jealousy. He sent the man away from court. One day, he told me to walk with him in the gardens. He had shown no interest in my company for many weeks, but I thought at last we were putting this behind us. He instructed me to sit beside him near the stream where the swans would play.

“All of a sudden, as he was gazing at me, he burst into laughter. I thought perhaps he had thought of an interesting anecdote to tell me, or that there was something humorous about my appearance. He had kept his eyes on me the whole time, so I had no reason to believe...” She shook herself and looked up at me. “It must seem so stupid to you, that I am trying to justify myself, when he was the one who erred.”

Her story had won some sympathy from me. “Not at all.”

“So I asked him, ‘Why do you laugh?’ and he jumped to his feet and towered over me. I could see the real rage that he had been hiding, and I was very, very afraid. ‘I was right! You are trying to kill me!’ he shouted. I immediately fell to my knees at his feet and said, ‘I do not know of what you speak. Please, forgive me. I am sorry.’

“I said this over and over again, pleading with him as he seethed, until he grabbed me by the wrist and pulled me to my feet. ‘You will be exiled for this,’ he said. ‘I will not kill you only because you are the mother of my children. If only you would extend the same courtesy to me.’ I began crying out of sheer bewilderment and the vain hope that my tears might move him. They did not, but he spoke again. ‘You know if I ever disclose what I hear, I will die. Did you think you could trick me?’

“And finally, I understood. He had trapped me. He was so convinced that I was evil, scheming against him, that he gave

me an impossible test just to convince himself he was right. I will never know if he was looking for a reason to exile me, or if this really was some twisted ‘proof.’ But he wanted me gone, and no amount of pleading or begging or promising would change his mind. So, I left.”

I had never liked my father, but hearing of his explicit maliciousness disturbed me deeply. I put down the bite I held in my hand, nauseated.

“I thought about all of you every day,” she added. “But I knew he would take care of you. My staying would have only stained you by proximity.”

“I am so sorry,” I said at last. For what else could I say? There had been no other option for my mother, as I well knew. She had been without support in my father’s court, without friends to rely on. How lonely that must have been.

“Why would you be sorry?” My mother folded her hands and looked right at me. “None of this was your fault, or Yudhajit’s, or the rest of your brothers’. Do you understand? The fault is with your father for sending me away and myself for not fighting for you. I have learned my lesson, and the gods have brought you back to me.”

“Yes, they have.” I pushed my plate away from me, signaling to the servants that I was done.

My mother ran her hand over my shoulder and down my arm to my hand. To say I did not enjoy it would have been a lie, but I felt ashamed of my enjoyment all the same. In a strange way, it felt like a betrayal of Manthara, who had filled my mother’s role all these years.

“Thank you,” my mother whispered. “Thank you for coming here. Thank you for listening to my story. That is all I have wished for these past years. For my children to listen, and to understand.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT



RAVANA ARRIVED IN THE city without pomp or ceremony, and we presented ourselves to him the next day. We had no time to waste on formal invitations.

“Kaikeyi, it is good to see you,” he said, bowing his head. “I hoped you would come. I wish to apologize for my behavior when last we met.”

“It is I who should apologize. I should not have invaded your rooms in that way.”

“You acted as a friend should, and I turned on you. That was inappropriate. Please, let us not argue anymore.” He indicated a divan set before an open glass window overlooking a verdant garden. “Sit. We have more pressing matters to discuss.”

“The asura.” I had ventured through the city the day before and heard the whispers of Janasthana’s people. They spoke of swarms of imps, unnatural and vicious animals. They spoke of fields burned overnight. The women spoke of a demonic presence that invaded their minds even inside the city, insidious and whispering. It was like tales of the asuras of long ago, who scorched the earth with their campaigns against the gods.

“So you believe him an asura too. The truth is, we know very little. When I was traveling to the swayamvara, I stopped in Janasthana, for I was curious about the city. I have long admired the people of this area and thought to meet with the king and convince him we might achieve greatness together. But instead, the residents were fearful, talking of bad omens and portents, and Raja Danda was refusing all visitors.

“I passed through the city again on my return, hoping its fortunes might have changed. But when I arrived, I found the city under siege. Creatures made of flame and snarling wolves were terrorizing the people. Commanding them was an asura with the head of a bull and fire running over his limbs. I had soldiers with me, soldiers who were not tired out by days of fighting, and they were able to cut their way through the hordes. They built the walls while I met with the city’s leaders. I felt I had a duty to help them. I asked if they wished for my protection.”

“But what does an asura want with a city?” Asuras were the enemies of the gods. They rarely bothered themselves with human constructions, with mortal concerns.

Ravana looked away. “You will not like it—but he wishes to go to Ayodhya. I have to believe it is because he wishes to challenge Rama. In that, at least, I might sympathize.”

He spoke softly, placatingly, but it did not dull the offense of his words. “What do you have against Rama?” I asked sharply. “Are you still upset about the swayamvara?”

“No, not at—”

I rose to my feet, annoyed at the whims of men. “Then explain why I should not take my son and leave. I thought you were better than this.”

“Your son came with you?” he asked. “Which son?”

I turned toward the door, not bothering to answer.

“Wait, Kaikeyi!” he cried. “Sita is my daughter.”

That stilled me. I could not have possibly heard right. “What?”

“Sita. She is my daughter. I did not realize it until I saw her that day, at the swayamvara. If I had known, well—the moment I recognized her, I dropped the bow.”

There was truly nothing I could say. I stood there, staring blankly at him, my mind failing to comprehend his words.

“Please,” he said. “You have to believe me.”

“Your daughter died,” I said, my voice cold. It felt as though I were speaking from a distance. How dare he lie to me this way. Was he simply mad? Had the loss of his daughter and then his wife driven him to this outlandish story? “You told me this yourself.”

He hung his head. “I thought so too, I swear it. But then I saw her, and—she was unmistakable. She was born with the silver hair, the flower-shaped birthmark.”

Slowly, I was starting to come back to myself. I was aware of my heart beat returning to normal. “You could not have seen that from such a distance,” I protested.

“You know I am not fully human,” he said. “It is a blessing and a curse.”

His earnestness was making me believe him—but no. This had to be a falsehood. “You said your daughter died,” I repeated.

Ravana tipped his face up toward the window. The light cast strange shadows over his face. “We took her to the gardens because she liked being among the roses. I had taken her out of her carrier so she could better look at everything, and Mandodari called me to observe a strange pattern of birds. Sita could not walk or even crawl, so I laid her on the ground. The moment I did so, an almighty cracking sound issued from the dirt, and the earth split in two. I lunged for her, but she had already fallen in. I tried to throw myself in after her, but Mandodari wrapped her arms around me and pulled me back from the abyss. When I took a step away from the fault, it knit itself back together.”

“But you... but... How could such a thing happen?” I whispered.

“We thought it a punishment from the gods,” he said dully. “At first, we believed that if we repented fully, they would give her back to us. But then moons passed, and years, and we realized she was gone. No matter what we did, no matter how

many pilgrimages I made, the gods would not look favorably on us again.”

I slipped into the Binding Plane, though he clearly believed in this story so deeply that our bond would show no evidence of deceit.

On the other hand, evidence existed that Ravana spoke truly. Sita was unmistakable, to be sure, but worse than that, I knew she had been discovered inside the earth itself. Sita had told me she and her father guarded that secret jealously. I did not see how Ravana could have uncovered that.

“Swear it to me, that you speak truly.”

“I swear to Lord Shiva that Sita is my daughter. If I lie, may he cut me with a thousand knives and feed me to beasts.”

I sank back onto the divan and closed my eyes, trying to force my mind into some semblance of order. For a moment, it had felt like the world was tilting beneath me. “Why are you telling me this now?”

Ravana sighed and passed a hand over his face. “Tell me, did Rama accompany you?” he asked.

“No. Lakshmana made the journey with me.”

“Good, good,” he said, almost to himself.

“I will not tell Lakshmana—or anyone else—what we have spoken of.” Ravana had once given me the gift of secrecy and protection. Now I would repay that debt.

He leaned forward and clasped my hand. “Thank you, Kaikeyi. I knew I could trust you. But there is something I must know. Is it true that Rama mistreats Sita?”

That was the second time he had dismissed Rama’s character. I tried not to be too angry. “Of course not. Where did you hear such a thing?”

“I hope you will not be offended if I say I have a few people in Ayodhya’s court keeping watch over Sita. But I cannot fully trust their accounts. After all, they are biased

enough against Ayodhya to be willing to serve as spies.”

“Their marriage is young,” I said, giving him a diplomatic smile, even though the thought of spies in my palace unsettled me. “And so are they. She is not always happy, but it is not mistreatment, it is poor communication. They care for each other and are learning to be married. And he is yuvraja, not some asura. If you are worried for her, know that she trusts me, and she will come to me if she ever has real concerns. If need be, I will protect her, as I protect any and all women of my city.”

Ravana got to his feet and paced before me. “Your son is more than he seems. I saw that too, at the swayamvara. This asura—he wishes to burn a path to Ayodhya to prove his dominance. I am sure it is because of your son.” It sounded absurd, and yet—gods were reborn into this world in order to rid it of evil, and the gods and the asuras were eternal enemies. “I went back to Lanka to see if I could find anything more about this asura. I thought surely there would be something in Lanka’s great library. But I found nothing.”

“And I’m assuming Janasthana’s library was destroyed in the fire?” I asked.

Ravana looked up at me, startled. “No, they keep their books in cellars, and we rebuilt over them.”

“This asura is from their forest. Why wouldn’t—”

“Stupidity,” Ravana said immediately, rising to his feet. “Sheer stupidity.”

Of all things, that was easily forgiven.

I went home to collect Lakshmana, for his memory would be of great aid in this task. It turned out Raja Danda had an extensive collection of scrolls and no particular method of organizing them.

On the fourth day of our searching, I found Lakshmana, usually very industrious, sound asleep against a shelf. I shook him several times, but he would not wake. Just when I was beginning to fear some illness had taken him, his eyes snapped

open.

“I know where it is, Ma.”

“What?” I reached for his forehead, but he ducked under my arm and moved briskly toward the farthest end of the chamber, weaving in and out of the labyrinth of papers. He paused near a hanging shelf, then began shuffling through the scrolls there. He was working through the mess with great determination, so I decided to let him be.

At last he offered me a thin, rather unremarkable-looking scroll. My eye immediately caught on an illustration halfway down the page.

It was the asura from the forest.

“How did you find this?” I demanded.

Lakshmana shrugged. “I dreamed of it, of this shelf and scroll. When I woke, I knew where it would be.”

I set aside that odd proclamation for a moment to read. The scroll was dated more than a hundred years prior and spoke of an asura called Bhandasura, born of a forest fire that had nearly razed Janasthana to the ground.

I realized, with mounting dread, that the story had uncanny parallels with what what was occurring here and now. At first, people in the city had dismissed the stories of women as mere nightmares. And had I not done just the same, when the trader had told me her tale? The city’s old council had heard the claims that strange beings walked the forest, but when nothing more came of it, they took no action.

It was only when the fires began that people took note. Women would wake up in their own beds, covered in agonizing burns, and describe a demon with the head of a bull and the body of a man, who had kidnapped them. Not all survived.

Now deeply afraid, the people of the city prayed to the gods. But the gods did not come to their aid. Instead, the gods told them the asura was not as powerful as his more ancient

counterparts, and a mortal could bring him low—a spearman was fated to strike him down.

So the soldiers of the city armed themselves with spears and marched on the asura. Only five returned.

I could not imagine such devastation, an army breaking against a single being. Was this the fate awaiting Janasthana? Awaiting Ayodhya?

The destruction continued for years, until at last, one of the holy men of Janasthana completed several acts of penance to Sarasvati and was granted a boon. He asked for her to defeat the asura, but the goddess could not kill an asura on earth in her immortal form. Instead, she trapped him in the deepest recesses of the forest, where nobody dared venture for years until a sage became lost and came upon Bhandasura. The asura let him live in exchange for writing down his legend.

“If he was confined to a grove, how has he broken free?” Lakshmana asked, reading over my shoulder.

“I don’t know. And I’m not sure how this helps us either. If an army could not defeat him, what can we do?” I scanned the paper again, then shook my head, confused. “We should show this to Ravana. Can you go and ask a messenger to fetch him?”

But when Ravana arrived, he read the scroll and gave a slow smile. “I think it’s obvious, then, isn’t it?”

“What is?”

“Why he hates women traversing his forest so much.”

“Because of Sarasvati?” Lakshmana asked.

“No, because he fears his mortality.”

“What is that to do with the traders? Any spearman can kill him,” I reminded him.

Ravana looked puzzled for a moment before understanding smoothed his features. “Not quite. This dialect is unfamiliar to you.”

In my heart I knew, before he said the words.

“It does not say spearman. Bhandasura can only be slain by a spear*woman*.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE



WE DECIDED TO ENTER the forest at noon, so the asura would have trouble hiding in the dark. As soon as we stepped outside the gate, I regretted it. The sun's heat was scalding, and sweat dripped down my back. We had wrapped our faces in scarves so that he could not recognize us, and I struggled to breathe through the fabric.

In a way, though, I was glad to focus for a moment on minor discomforts. It distracted me from the bone-crushing fear that filled me with every step. When Dasharath and I had fought Sambarasura, I had been frightened, but there was a sharp difference between mortal and immortal danger. How could we be so arrogant as to think that we would succeed where whole armies had failed? I thought of my sons, wondered what would become of them if I never returned from this battle. I imagined Lakshmana in particular, waiting in my mother's house, trapped in the city as flames slowly overtook—

“Radnyi Kaikeyi,” said Bhandasura, and I screamed as his hand touched my arm.

Never take your eyes off the enemy.

Heat seeped into my shoulder, and I smelled smoke rising from my plain cotton clothing. “Good to see you again.” His voice was high and light, as if greeting me in the halls of a palace, not threatening me on a dirt road.

“Bhandasura,” I acknowledged, trying to keep my composure.

His red eyes widened, and when he exhaled, smoke poured

from his bull's snout. I tried to force the thoughts of what this asura liked to do to women from my head. Instead, I gripped the staff tight, ignoring the burning pain in my shoulder. Ravana had fashioned me a cunning staff with a hidden point, and now I moved my thumb lightly over the catch that released the spear tip.

“Now, none of that,” he said, and the spear was suddenly alight in flames.

I screamed at the sudden pain, the spear falling from my slack fingers. My hand was red and raw, already beginning to blister. His grip burned into my shoulder, and I fought to break free, twisting my body this way and that. His dark hand looked almost human, but his hold on me was anything but.

“What do you want?” I asked. My mouth tasted bitter, and I could no longer feel my legs. My heart was a wild beast in my chest, throwing itself against my rib cage as though trying to escape this place. I felt light-headed with fear.

Bhandasura smiled and gestured widely around him, releasing his hold on me. “Everything.” I stumbled, colliding with Ravana, who was watching the proceedings as though paralyzed, unable to do anything to help.

A cry stuck in my throat. Without my spear, we were not going to make it out alive.

And yet, I could not accept it. “There is nothing for you in Janasthana,” I said, stalling for precious minutes of life.

He snorted, bull-like. “You really do not understand? I had heard you were intelligent.”

“You heard I... How have you heard of me?” I asked. Ravana's sword tapped against my leg, hot from the flames. I kept my eyes on the asura even as I slowly moved my unburned hand behind my back. Warm sweat trickled down my spine.

“My master wished to draw you here,” Bhandasura hissed. “And I have done his bidding.”

“You have a master? You are less powerful than I thought.” I was scrambling, but perhaps I could goad him into a mistake.

“My master is all-powerful!” Bhandasura declared, and angry gouts of flame encircled us in unbearable heat. Ravana stepped closer to me to avoid the flames, and a weight pressed into my hand. I had little faith that this could work, but we had no other choice. “He will create a new empire of this world. He freed me from the prison that meddling goddess placed me into.”

“Tell me who your master is, and perhaps I will spare you,” I said. The smoke burrowed into my lungs and my words came out weak, punctuated by coughs.

Bhandasura laughed, and his eyes closed. I saw my opening. “Even if I had seen his face, I would never—”

Ravana’s long, thin, remarkably spear-like sword embedded itself in his chest. I had thrown it with my nondominant hand, but from this distance I could hardly miss.

Bhandasura looked down, his mouth open in surprise. “This will not—” And then he staggered. He fell to his knees.

“You. Whore,” he ground out, one hand pressed to his chest. “You will never leave here alive.”

The flames sputtered. Beyond them stood a grotesque assembly of creatures howling and baying. Some of them were familiar animals—wolves, skeletal and starved, their fur matted and torn—while others were imps, horns sprouting from their head and large red eyes bulging.

Ravana stepped forward, throwing a small object over the flames at the center of the pack. It exploded with such force when it hit the ground that I could feel the reverberation across the fire. Many of the animals were torn apart by whatever strange invention Ravana had brought with him, but the rest stayed in place.

If Bhandasura’s hold on them did not break with his death, there was no way we could withstand this.

The asura gasped for breath on the ground, and I drew my sword with my left hand. “Can you keep them away?” I said to Ravana. “I have an idea.”

He moved to stand in front of me, dropping into a defensive stance. “I will do so for as long as I can.”

I entered the Binding Plane. I had never tried to use my magic to control a nonhuman entity, and I did not want to try now, with my life on the line. I tried not to imagine what it might feel like to be killed by these animals. It would be slow, for they were small—an endless onslaught of teeth and claws until we succumbed.

The world wavered before me as Bhandasura’s breath grew shallow. The shadows of the forest danced, closing in on me despite the bright sunlight. I ignored them. Pain throbbed in my burns, and I harnessed it, sharpening my focus farther than it had ever gone. All other bonds seemed to fade, and at last, I found them. Faint black wisps rising off Bhandasura, pulling the horde of wildlife like puppets. Once I found them, they shone, lustrous against the deadening veil that covered the world in the Binding Plane.

Distantly, I heard Bhandasura breathe his last. The flames died. I watched, hoping that the threads would die with them. But they did not even flicker.

And then, the animals were upon us.

Ravana fought with the strength of ten men, hacking and carving until the soil was matted and slick with blood. The air was smoky and coppery and utterly soaked with the scent of death. My eyes watered and stung, but I pressed on. Ravana protected me as I grasped at the black filaments that still tied the animals and cut one and then another with desperate intensity. The animals fled the moment they were freed from their magical tethers. But it was slow. I was too slow. I swayed on my feet as the magic sapped my strength.

“What are you doing?” Ravana shouted.

“Trying to save us,” I replied through clenched teeth. I

pulled at my power, shaping it into a blade. My shoulders heaved, vision tunneling as I pictured a sword of such strength and sharpness that it could cut through this tangle before me in one strike. And with a cry, I swung it into the heart of the knot.

A wave of threads in the Binding Plane snapped. I staggered forward as the tide of animals receded.

“It’s working,” Ravana called. “Do that again.” He was bleeding profusely from a wound in his arm. A set of teeth tore into my legs and I swung my true sword on instinct, clumsily batting away what appeared to be a rabbit with horns. My legs barely had strength left to stand, and my resolve faltered, but I thought of Lakshmana, waiting alone in Janasthana. I would not leave him.

I entered the Binding Plane once more. A bird clawed at my forehead. Sweat and blood stung my eyes and obscured my vision. I could barely see what I was doing. Next to me, Ravana cried out. I felt him stumble back.

Terror turned my blood to ice. And our salvation came to me in a flash of instinct.

I took a deep breath and imagined the fire that I had started in Shishir’s forest. In my mind, I set the flame against the tangle, summoning a ball of heat to immolate the bonds. The locus of the puppet strings shuddered, and some of the animals shrieked.

I fell to my knees, pouring all my energy and all my will into the imagined flame. The knot trembled, and there was a moment of terrible stillness before it exploded into thousands of wisps of black, like ash falling from the gray sky.

And then I knew no more.

Ravana came to visit me the day I woke. “Thank you. I cannot thank you enough for your help.”

I glared up at him. “Did you hear nothing of what Bhandasura said? We played exactly into his master’s hands.”

“You cannot believe everything an asura says. Perhaps he

wished to keep himself alive by bargaining information.” Ravana was surprisingly calm. But then, he’d had more time to ruminate on it while I’d been unconscious.

“He thought he was victorious,” I whispered. “I need to go back to Ayodhya. At once.”

“Wait one week until you have recovered,” Ravana said. “I will fly you to the edge of Kosala myself.”

“You can fly me now,” I said. But my voice was weak. My limbs had no strength. I was powerless.

“One week,” Ravana said. “The asura is gone, and Janasthana is mine. Your kingdom will keep too.”

I groaned, knowing there was little I could do to argue. Instead, at my instruction, Lakshmana sent a message to Hirav instructing him to meet us in Sripura and telling him the danger had passed. There was not much more I could do until I recovered.

In the mornings, I spent time with my mother. She helped me to stand and take small steps about the room, as though I were a child. I had no memory of her ministrations when I was so young, but it warmed me now to be cared for, to be loved.

In the afternoons, Ravana visited and taught me a game of his own invention entitled chaturanga. It was delightfully complex, played on a wooden board engraved with sixty-four squares. Each of us started with two rows of beautifully carved players, one painted a creamy yellow and the other a dark forest green. The front row held eight foot soldiers, but the back row had a variety of pieces, most notably a raja and a saciva.

“Why is the saciva a woman?” I asked when we first started playing.

Ravana lifted his own piece to examine it. “The saciva is the most powerful piece on the board. She can move diagonally, horizontally, and vertically. Without her, the raja is nothing.” He looked at me, amusement in his features. “Does that seem familiar?”

I resolved then and there to master the game. I even conscripted Lakshmana and Meena into learning the rules and practicing with me. The day before our imminent departure, I finally managed to place Ravana in a lethal stranglehold.

With a rueful smile, he tipped over his king. “You win, Radnyi,” he said. “I should have known it would take you no time at all to defeat me.”

I smiled in return, delighted by my victory. “Perhaps, once I leave, we can start a game by correspondence.”

“I would like that,” he said. “By hawk would be simplest. And I can even offer you a hawk of your own to take with you. In exchange, I would ask you a favor.”

“Anything,” I agreed easily.

“It feels like an eternity has passed since we spoke of it, but Sita is still my daughter. And her husband—I can’t trust him. She is young and adjusting, I know, but you can at least make sure her unhappiness does not grow. That her husband never takes advantage of her. You are a powerful woman. Please swear it.”

“Of c—” I began, but he continued on.

“This is what I ask of you. Swear to me on the gods that you will take care of her.” He spoke formally, as though he had rehearsed this pledge beforehand.

I knew I would do everything I could to help Sita should something happen to her, regardless of her status as Ravana’s daughter. And if a pledge to the gods would set Ravana’s mind at ease, so be it. “I swear to the gods that I will look out for Sita and offer her any help that I can provide. And I would have sworn this even without the agreement we made.”

I would like to believe that is the moment when I sealed my fate, and his fate, and Rama’s and Sita’s fate, and all the rest. But I know that even without my promise to him, I would not have done anything differently.

The next morning, we said our goodbyes. My mother came

to my room early and hugged me close. “I can never thank you enough for saving the city,” she said. “Even when the gods would not come for us, you did.”

“You told me once that I would grow up to become strong,” I said, the ache of unshed tears in my throat. “You left me a story.”

My mother stepped back in surprise. “I thought perhaps you had never found it,” she said. “That in my caution, I had hidden it too well. You never mentioned it.”

“It took me years to find it,” I confessed. “But once I did, I kept it close. Even still it is a reminder. The gods would help themselves but not an innocent woman. I swore I would never suffer such injustice.”

“Oh, Kaikeyi,” my mother said, her voice sad. “That isn’t the lesson I was hoping for you to learn. The gods do what they will. That tale was a reminder to be careful of men. I was drawn to it because I could not believe such an old, unassuming man was capable of such powerful cruelty. He came to the palace, you know, a few years before you were born.”

“Who are you talking about?” I asked, mystified. “Someone from the story came to Kekaya?”

“Yes, the man who turned Ahalya to stone. Sage Vamadeva Gautama.”

It was as though my mother had ripped the rug out from below me and set the room spinning. *Vamadeva Gautama. Vamadeva.*

No. How could it be? There were many Vamadevas in the world. “You... met him?”

“Yes. He was old then, his hair all white. He seemed quite ordinary. But when I caught his eyes, I knew he had done it. They were unnatural, gray and cold. Like a storm.” She trailed off, her gaze fixed somewhere in the past. Then she blinked and came back to herself. “Anyway, it doesn’t matter now. You should not worry about old stories, Kaikeyi. It is time for

you to go.”

She pressed a kiss to my forehead and left before I could say anything more.

I sank onto my bed, trembling. There was no mistake. She had described him perfectly. What cruel coincidence would have placed that man on my path, would have had my sons learning from him? For the sage who had trained Rama, who had spent two years in a secluded ashram with my impressionable son, was a monster. A man who would curse his own wife, who had not seen fit to free her—such a man held hate in his heart.

And despite my efforts to keep him from Ayodhya, he had found Rama again. The damage had been done, and to the yuvraja besides. Why had I let Rama out of my sight for two whole years? I had been complacent, arrogant that I was the master of my world and that all would be how I wished it to be. Sage Vamadeva would hate me too, I was sure, for sending him away. Had he told Rama I was evil, contemptible?

I knew then, in my bones, that I had not yet seen the extent of the damage. I needed to be back in Ayodhya, as soon as possible.

There was no other way to describe it: Before us was a long and narrow wooden boat on wheels.

From this contraption’s side extended a magnificent set of wings, intricately crafted from thousands of feathers the likes of which could not be found on any single living creature.

But more impressive than that were the reins that extended from the front of the boat toward a pair of giant swans. They were as large as Ravana himself, and the graceful arch of their necks appeared sculpted from pure white marble. As we approached, they squawked a greeting so loud I felt slightly deafened.

“What is this?” Lakshmana stared in awe. Even I forgot for a moment the fear that had made itself at home within me.

Ravana ushered us toward the boat. “Pushpaka Vimana,”

he said, voice filled with pride. “A flying chariot. This is how I will take you to Sripura.”

We climbed inside, and I ran my hands along the edges of the vehicle. “How does this fly?”

“The swans were a gift to me from Shiva for my devotion. He would not give my kingdom the reprieve I asked for, but these turned out to be a mighty consolation indeed. I asked the swans for their permission to use them in this manner, and they readily agreed. But they could not sustain the flight of just any vessel. The difficulty was in creating this boat’s shape. It had to be just so.” He took the reins in his hands. “Then I added the wings, to help sustain our motion in the air. Are you ready?”

Lakshmana looked at me, apprehension clear on his features, but I turned to Ravana. “No time to waste.”

He snapped the reins, and the swans’ powerful wings immediately beat in tandem. We did not move at all, and I wondered if the Pushpaka Vimana had broken. But after the moment of stillness, the boat rolled forward, slowly at first and gathering speed with every second until I thought the vehicle might break apart with the effort.

At that exact instant, the swans pulled upward and we rose into the air. The boat steadied, and Lakshmana gave a shout, of fear or pleasure I knew not. I peeked over the side of the boat and saw Janasthana fading into the distance. From here, I could make out the palace, and my mother’s house, and the walls and gates that surrounded the city. I turned to Ravana. “This is incredible!” I cried.

“Thank you!” he shouted back, and the wind instantly snatched away his words. “It is my life’s work!”

“We should have one of these, Ma,” Lakshmana whooped. “I can hardly believe this is real!”

“I do not know if anyone else is ready for this,” I laughed. I thought suddenly of the horses of Kekaya and their ancestors who had flown in the heavens. Is this how they had once

lived?

“Rama would be so jealous,” Lakshmana said with a grin, and for a moment I saw a glimpse of the teasing relationship all brothers should have.

We did not speak much for the rest of the trip, so absorbed were we in the flight itself. I did not want to miss a single sensation. I barely blinked. Forests and rivers passed below us, as small as children’s toys. Up here, far above the rest of the world, mountains that had seemed so daunting to cross now looked like they would fit into the palm of my hand. The trees were fibers of a green rug, the rivers twisting hair ribbons.

All too soon, we were lowering down on the outskirts of Sripura. Lakshmana grabbed my hand as the earth hurtled toward us, but I trusted Ravana and his invention.

We landed with a bone-shuddering thump and a jolt, and the wheels rattled against the grassy plains. But we all remained inside the Pushpaka Vimana, in one piece.

“Apologies,” Ravana said, turning toward us. “There is no cleared strip for the Vimana out here.”

“That was the most amazing thing I have ever experienced in my life,” Lakshmana told him. His cheeks were flushed from the wind, and his hair in total disarray, but my son looked happier than I had ever seen him. “Thank you.”

“You do not need to thank me,” Ravana said. “It was a pleasure. I owe your mother more than I could possibly repay in a lifetime. But now I must go, before I attract any attention.”

“Goodbye,” I said, embracing him.

“Thank you,” he whispered, and climbed aboard his chariot. In a few seconds, he was only a spot in the distance.

Lakshmana and I turned toward Sripura. It was time to return home.



CHAPTER THIRTY



A LETTER FROM DASHARATH waited for me with the Chief of Sripura, reassuring me that I had made the right decision in going on to Janasthana and filled with platitudes about how much he had missed me and how eagerly he looked to my return. For the remainder of the journey, I tried and failed to put my finger on exactly what about the missive raised alarm, but I could not decipher it. Perhaps my fear at my mother's revelation was clouding all else, for I should have been happy that Dasharath bore me no ill will for my flagrant disobedience of his orders, and that Bhandasura's supposed master had failed to take Ayodhya in my absence. Instead, I pushed us ever harder through the Riksha Mountains and barely waited for the feast they threw us in Kasi to conclude before moving on once again.

“Why the great rush?” Lakshmana asked me near Kusavati, when we were almost through the plains. I did not answer, signaling to him that we would take the right fork to circumvent the city. I intended to reach Ayodhya by nightfall. In this we were successful, and riders were sent off at Ayodhya's city gate to alert the palace to our arrival.

Dasharath met us at the stables looking as though he had aged in reverse by five or ten years. The persistent lines on his forehead had smoothed, and the invisible weight that pulled down his shoulders appeared to have eased. And still, dread sat heavy on my heart.

“You look well,” I said, allowing him to help me off my horse. He did not release me, and instead pulled me closer, embracing me tightly right in front of Lakshmana, who

blushed slightly and turned away.

I slipped into the Binding Plane, and my stomach turned leaden. My bond with my husband, that vibrant golden cord, had decreased to half its former size. Foreboding, already itching under my skin, expanded until my limbs felt swollen with it. We had spun that thread over a throne room and a battlefield, over trust and years of friendship. Our connection had been the core of my life in Ayodhya for so long. It should not have melted so easily.

Something had happened, something I was not aware of yet. It was the only explanation. “Is everything all right?” I asked, pulling back from his embrace slightly so that I could look at him. I was afraid of what his answer would be.

“I have decided to abdicate,” he said. “I already informed Kaushalya and Sumitra, and the court.” Dasharath spoke a bit like a drunk man, his words almost slurred with happiness—or something else.

“Rama is to be king?” Lakshmana asked, and only then did the words sink in. There had been nothing of Dasharath’s jesting manner in his words, or I might have thought them a trick.

“Yes,” Dasharath said, just as I cried, “Abdicate?”

“Yes, Kaikeyi. While you were gone, I realized that I did not want the throne anymore. And Rama is ready.”

“Why?” I asked, unable to stop myself. After what I had learned, after seeing our bond, I knew no good could come of this. I felt ill.

“It just seemed like the right time,” he said. “I knew it in my soul.”

“You knew it in your soul,” I repeated blankly. “Did you consult anyone at all about this?”

“Rama. We discussed it in great depth. He will make a great leader; do you not think so?”

Lakshmana squeezed my arm, and I stopped myself from

pointing out that it was in Rama's self-interest to encourage this transfer of power.

"We can talk about this later," I said at last. "It has been a long journey, and I am sure that Lakshmana would like to rest."

"Yes, of course." Dasharath led the way back toward the palace. "I was so excited by this decision that I needed to tell you at once."

"And I am glad you did," I said. "You must be eager to hear of our trip to Janasthana as well."

He blinked, as though this had only just occurred to him. "Oh, yes. Yes. I trust your journey was pleasant?"

"Pleasant?" I repeated, and Dasharath beamed.

"Wonderful! I will leave you both to bathe and rest."

The moment I was out of his sight, I all but ran, Lakshmana on my heels.

"Why would Rama do such a thing?" he asked.

I shook my head. "Not Rama. It is not Rama."

Manthara sat on the edge of my bed, waiting for me. "Welcome home, Radnyi. You have been gone a long time."

"How could this have happened?" I asked without preamble, shedding my dirty riding attire. I was speaking of the abdication, but in the back of my mind the memory of my bond with Dasharath lingered. I was unmoored, my anchor weakened and frayed.

Manthara set a tub of water on the floor of my bedroom, and I gratefully sank into it, glad to shed the dust and grime of our long journey from my skin. Normally, I would not bathe here in my rooms, but I wanted to speak freely with her.

In the Plane, our bond shone, still thick and proud. The relief of it almost sent me slipping under the water. It seemed Rama's powers had not touched her, nor Asha, who had gone to fetch me some tea. Perhaps his subconscious had realized

that they were lost causes, too loyal to me. Or perhaps Manthara's natural suspicion and stubbornness had warded him off. Her unwavering presence beside me was a gift, one that I did not deserve.

"It happened so quickly," she said. "Perhaps two moons after you left."

I brought two wet hands up to cover my eyes. "Why is he doing this now? Why does he need to take the throne? He is so young, and he has so much time ahead of him."

"It was smart." She took the soap from the edge of the tub and, despite her years, knelt down and scrubbed my back. "To consolidate power while you were away."

A knock from the outer door interrupted our conversation, and I gestured for Manthara to answer it while I hastily rinsed my body and donned a robe.

"Sita!" Manthara exclaimed loudly.

I entered the main room, knowing Sita would not be offended by my attire. "Sita, it is good to see you. Apologies for my appearance. I was in the middle of a bath."

"No need to apologize, I am the one who is out of turn." If possible, she looked lovelier than ever, her delicate features luminous even in the dim room. And yet, when she twisted her ghagra, her fingers trembled faintly. "You have heard the news?"

"Yes. Congratulations are in order. You will soon be radnyi."

She turned away from me and toward the window. It felt peculiar, after my time spent in Janasthana, to see paper windows again. "I am not ready," she whispered.

A pang went through me at the sadness in her voice. "Sita, what is it?"

She rotated slowly back toward me. "I tried my hardest to be like you. I took your place on the Women's Council in your absence, and I had ideas for projects that I took to Raja

Dasharath. I even helped a female servant obtain a new home in the city. I know that Rama cares about his people, so I thought by helping them he might be proud of me. But his attitude toward me has not changed.”

“Sita, I—”

“And when Rama is on the throne, I doubt he will care more for me. Even now he does not confide in me, so how can I fulfill my duties as radnyi? How can I fulfill my purpose?” She finally paused, and I took my chance.

“Sita, I am sure Rama cares for you.” I could not imagine Rama not caring about any member of his family or his city. “But when it comes to matters of the heart—”

“I am not asking for you to make him love me,” Sita interrupted. “It is painful, to be sure, that I might feel more for him than he feels for me. But I would at least like to be a part of his life. If I am not the radnyi he needs, he will hate me. I am sure of it.”

“No,” I protested. “He will not hate you, Sita.”

“Rama is a god, and a powerful one. If one day I did not meet his standards, I know he could easily punish me.”

“But he would not,” I said.

Sita looked at me. “And what if I were to tell you that at night, he talks to me about how easily he can convince people to do his bidding? That he knows exactly what to say to someone to convince them to be a part of his work and sees how to weave people together?”

She was describing my own powers quite well.

“Sita, I know that may seem scary. But think. Rama has not actually done anything to hurt anyone. What he does, he does for the good of others.” Even as I spoke, I thought about Dasharath. Was his decision not likely a result of manipulation, even if unconscious? “Has he done something to worry you?”

“He wishes to rule, and now his perfectly healthy father is

abdicated. I do not believe that was Raja Dasharath's decision." It was as though she had seen my fears and given them voice.

"Rama loves his father," I said, maternal instinct pushing me to defend my son. But I doubted. For I knew much less about Rama than I thought. He had hidden Sage Vamadeva from me, despite knowing the man's beliefs. I wanted to blame another man for everything, but Rama was his own person. An adult. I believed his actions were unconscious, but could I really know that about him?

"I know that he does, but..." She sighed. "I do not know how to explain it better than this. You are always so wise, and I thought perhaps you would have an answer."

"What would you have me do?" I asked.

"Do you not see? You are the only person who can stand up to him. He has no power over you, but he still cares for you and your opinion, does he not?"

Maybe that had once been true. I did not know any longer.

A wave of exhaustion swept over me. This was all too much. "I need to think. Thank you for coming to me with your concerns," I said to Sita. "Let us talk further tomorrow."

Her face fell, but she bowed her head and left.

Manthara had departed on some errand while we spoke, leaving me alone with my thoughts. The walls felt unfamiliar after moons away, just another piece of my home that was now foreign to me. I shivered under my robe. I was exposed, vulnerable, in a way I had not been for many years. This Ayodhya wasn't quite mine anymore.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE



THE NEXT MORNING, WHEN I arrived at the Mantri Parishad, I was surprised to find several new faces. I recognized the children of some older ministers, young men who were not much older than Rama. They looked at him as though he was already wearing the crown. Until now, I had imagined Rama perhaps wreaking this havoc without understanding his own actions. But this was real and deliberate, not unconscious magic.

I stepped into the Binding Plane. To my shock, I was greeted not by a riot of color, but the sight of thin, sickly strings that nearly blended into the gray of the world around me. My connection to almost every advisor was failing. And the moment I was seated, bright blue threads flared into existence, connected not to me, but to my son. The weakness of my bond to Dasharath still lay heavy in my heart, and seeing this, my life's work, gone in mere months... I felt empty. The absence, in a way, was worse than pain. I could not bring myself to even try to reinvigorate those threads. And every time Rama spoke during the meeting, his bonds shone as if set aflame.

After the council, Rama sought me out. "Ma, it is good to see you again." His smile was sincere, his warm manner unchanged. This was no incomprehensible stranger, no conniving disciple. He was my son—my son.

"You as well," I said, finding a smile of my own. Even so, my voice sounded uncertain to my ears, and his face fell a fraction. I responded as his mother, on instinct, my arms reaching out and hugging him, rubbing his back to soothe

away his sadness. He relaxed against me, as he always had. But between my body and my mind lay a gap of suspicions, the distance between us clear.

“How was your journey?” he asked. “What did you learn of the asura?”

His words unsettled me in the same way Dasharath’s missive had. But why? “Janasthana is safe for our traders now,” I said slowly.

“I imagine you had something to do with that,” Rama said, still smiling. “And I—”

“How did you know there was an asura?” I asked, realization flooding me.

Rama took a step back from me, brow furrowing. “Father told me.”

“I have not yet had the chance to tell him what I encountered.” Every rumor had named the evil a rakshasa. My heart beat so loudly I thought he might hear it. *He knew. He knew. How did he know?*

Rama pressed his lips together. “Perhaps I—”

“Don’t lie to me.”

He sighed, and we stared at each other in charged silence. “I do not want you to be angry with me, Ma. You must understand, I only wanted to show you the frightening truth of this world.”

“No,” I whispered. The stone walls of the room were closing in on me. “You... You sent Shishir and Bhandasura. To frighten me? They could have killed me.” I wanted to turn away so I could not see his face. My fingers clenched into fists, nails digging into my palms. He had betrayed me. Betrayed his brother. “They could have killed us,” I said again.

“I did not intend for you to ever learn this,” Rama said, his voice sorrowful. His sadness was meaningless. He had done the unthinkable. And for what? “But you have a way of finding the truth. I did ask Lord Shishir to assist me by

showing you the seriousness of the situation. The asura was already there. His kind have become a plague in the south, and I needed you to see it.”

“Lord Shishir injured your brother quite badly. And I almost died.” My words came out quietly. I felt nearly dizzy with anger.

At this, Rama’s expression flitted first to shock, then to concern. He glanced over me. “Are you all right now? Do you need to sit? How has Lakshmana recovered? That was never—never supposed to happen. I am so sorry, Ma.”

His sincerity shone through in his torrent of words, but I was still furious. “An apology is not enough for putting us in such danger!”

“I know.” He ran a hand through his hair, then lowered himself to his knees before me. “Please, Ma. Please. I promise that was not my intention.” His voice trembled, and at this, I felt some of my own anger loosen. His contrition, at least, was honest.

“I know you did not mean to hurt me,” I said, and he looked up at me, hope in his eyes. “But even if that wasn’t the intention, how could you risk such a thing?”

Rama rose slowly but lowered his gaze to my feet. “This will sound foolish now. But a wise friend pointed out to me that you only believe what you see directly. And I have watched you. I know that is true. You focus on your own goals, on what is in front of you that needs fixing. I hoped that once you saw the true threat facing this world, you might be able to better understand my purpose.”

In the revelation that Rama had thrown me into danger, I had almost forgotten about Rama’s erstwhile tutor.

“I knew you would be fine,” he continued. “I trusted you, because you are strong, and I want you to be my ally in this. You have always asked what my path is, and now I will tell you. It is my divine duty to rid this earth of the asuras and rakshasas that threaten to overtake it, that creep northward

toward civilization day by day. And to do so, I will need the armies and men of Kosala beside me. But that does not mean there is no place for you.”

“Oh, Rama,” I said, swallowing past a lump in my throat. “I was just as threatened by the god that you sent as by any rakshasa or asura. That does not mean we should wage war against the gods. So why do you wish to do so for the asuras?”

“What of your supposed friend, Ravana?” Rama asked, frustration creeping into his tone. “Do you not find it most convenient that the asura appeared just in time for Ravana to come save Janasthana? He himself is an asura!”

If I had not been so filled with sadness and anger, I might have gasped. It was clear to me Rama was not lying about this, and yet the idea that Ravana had been Bhandasura’s master was laughable. “Think about it. He expands his kingdom every day, through trickery and fear. His ancestral lands lie far to the south in Lanka, and yet he prowls toward us.”

“Ravana *saved* that city. The people welcomed him as their savior, regardless of his identity.”

Rama blew out a breath. “He was right! You only see what you wish to see.”

“*He?* You’re talking about Sage Vamadeva, are you not?” I demanded. “Your ‘wise friend.’ You would listen to him over the testimony of your own mother?”

“No, of course not! He is not infallible—nobody is. For all his wise counsel on the matter of gods and demons, he also dislikes you for dismissing him. He advised that I should keep you in the dark. But I know you. You rode out to battle with our father without fear, and you have helped lead this kingdom. I need your aid to wage this war. *Please.*”

Once again, my instinct as a mother told me to reach out, to aid him. But this time I held back, for he was asking me to help him do something that I did not believe in, and that had never been my way. “Who told you that your purpose is to fight these demons?” I asked instead.

Rama paused, his mouth twisting for a moment. “He did,” he said at last, before adding in a rush, “but it makes sense. Why else would I be sent here? There is a coming tide of darkness that I must stem. I can feel the truth of it deep inside of me. At night I see it—the wars they will start, their fires consuming cities. The women and children who will flee the destruction, only to be overtaken. I have to stop it. Only I can.”

“And I suppose your sage has nothing to gain from you becoming king to wage this war. He wants you and your power, Rama, for his own ends.”

“Sage Vamadeva stayed at the ashram. I offered him a place on my Mantri Parishad and he refused. He said that it was an honor to teach me, to help me determine my divine path, and hearing of my success one day was all he wished for. But enough about him, Ma. This isn’t about him. I need *your* help.”

I shook my head. “I love you, Rama, and I always wish for your success. But I cannot help you wage unnecessary war. Already you have put me and your brother in harm’s way—even if unknowingly. The cost of further warfare is too high.”

Rama made a frustrated noise in the back of his throat. “I have apologized for that. And thankfully, you have both returned alive and well. You have to look beyond that, to the bigger picture.”

“Rama, you have said you value my counsel. So please consider what I am telling you.”

“You have had a long journey, Ma,” Rama said slowly. “One filled with more pain than I intended. Perhaps, when you are better rested, we might speak of this again?”

I could recognize a dismissal when I heard one.

I had not talked to Kaushalya or Sumitra since my arrival, but I could imagine how they would feel about the proceedings: At the very least, Kaushalya would be excited to see Rama ascend and Sumitra would be looking forward to the

celebrations with her usual eagerness. And if Rama was somehow manipulating his own father, he had likely done the same to his mothers.

Still, Kaushalya greeted me warmly, embracing me and inquiring after Southern Kosala. Her rich purple sari was draped perfectly, the kohl around her eyes flawlessly tapered, and I was acutely aware of how disheveled I must have looked. When I gave her a few vague responses, she pulled away and held me at arm's length. "What's the matter, Kaikeyi?" she asked.

"I'm just tired," I said, giving her a small smile. "There has been so much to catch up on since my arrival."

"Yes, the coronation." Kaushalya's voice remained remarkably unemotional even as her eyes bore into me. She was clearly studying me for any sign of discontent.

"Oh, ignore her," Sumitra said, stepping out from behind Kaushalya to greet me. Her smile lines were in full view as she beamed at me, and I found myself returning it without thought. "She has been lying awake at night worrying about preparations for the ceremonies. But now that you have returned to assist us, we can more than manage!"

Kaushalya nodded, gave me a stunning smile, and turned away to take a seat at the table. I entered the Binding Plane and was relieved to see that my bond with her remained strong. My bond with Sumitra, on the other hand, showed some signs of atrophy. Still, both of them were quite sincere in their affection for me.

"Do you not think it quite sudden?" I asked, busying myself with my tea.

"It is happening quickly," Kaushalya agreed. "But Dasharath believes he is ready."

"Dasharath is wise," Sumitra added. "He would not make such a decision lightly. Rama is brave and kind and beloved by his people. I see no reason to delay."

I took a sip of tea, my eyes flicking to Kaushalya from

behind the cup.

“Why do you ask?” Kaushalya set her cup down and leaned forward. I did not even bother checking the Plane for I knew what I would find—simply my questioning of the timing had triggered her connection with Rama.

I shrugged. “No reason. I suppose it is all bewildering me because I have been absent so long.”

Kaushalya reclined in her seat. I detected a hint of displeasure in her eyes. “What else have I missed in the palace?” I asked quickly, nearly tripping over my words in my eagerness to change the topic.

“So much!” Sumitra angled her body toward me conspiratorially. “Has anyone told you what happened at the wedding of Arya Ravi’s daughter?”

When I got to my room, Asha was waiting for me.

“You received a message.” She waved the scroll in the air, her other hand on her hip.

I tried to grab the paper, but she pulled it out of reach. “I am your radnyi!” I said, but my reluctant laughter gave me away. It was a balm to joke with Asha, after everything that had happened.

“It has been months since you last saw me.”

“I have been busy,” I protested. “Much has happened in my absence.”

At this, she sobered. “Yes. It has.” She stepped toward me and extended the letter.

“And what do you think of it all?” I asked without looking up, opening the scroll.

She must have responded. But I did not hear her over the roar that filled my ears at Ravana’s words.

Radnyi Kaikeyi,

I have sent this to correspond with your arrival in

Ayodhya, which as you may know does not come a moment too soon. I hope that you are able to put a stop to the nonsense I have heard, but I have hope—not certainty. How is Rama to become king? He is too young, and he will not deal with the pressure well.

My limbs tingled with apprehension. What if someone had intercepted this? It would have certainly bolstered Rama's claim that Ravana's asura blood made him dangerous, for his letter made little sense. Who was Ravana to question the decisions of Ayodhya?

But I recognized in him a parent's concern and took a deep breath, pushing away my nerves. Surely I would react similarly to anything to do with my children.

I know there is no proof, but I have an unshakable belief that Rama mistreats my daughter. Kaikeyi, if you fail to help her, nothing will stand in my way. So far you have experienced only my kindness, but my wrath is not inconsiderable. You will not be around forever, Kaikeyi. When you are gone, will she not have more to fear?

Ravana

I nearly crumpled the letter in frustration. I did not have time for Ravana's nonsense, nor was I inclined to indulge him after learning he had lied long ago about his heritage—in my reply, I would need to make clear that I could not change matters of governance simply because he requested so. And despite his strange belief, Sita was not being mistreated by Rama, only vying for his affection. Ravana's grief over losing her was clouding his mind.

“Did you hear what I said?” Asha asked. “What is this?”

“It's too much,” I muttered.

“What is? Are you listening?” She came to stand in front of me and waved her hands before my face. “Rama may be unready, but he can grow into the role. You will be his saciva, like you were his father's, and show him the right path. It is all very sudden, yes, but you have done more difficult things.”

“Yes,” I said softly, but I was uncertain. In truth, I did not know what I could do.

I rubbed my eyes. The warmth of the room was pressing down on me. Without warning, I was standing before a holy fire, Agni’s words closing around me like a trap. *It is what you will do.*

At the next meeting of the Mantri Parishad, Rama and I found ourselves at odds. At our eastern border with Videha, a village had happened upon a seam of gold while digging the foundation of a new temple. Some had been sent to Ayodhya, and Dasharath wished for suggestions on what to do with the unexpected windfall. I immediately suggested we build another granary, remembering what had happened just this past season. We would not have had the funds for such a construction otherwise, and it was the prudent thing to do.

But as soon as I was done speaking, one of the new advisors cleared his throat. “That is an excellent suggestion, Radnyi, but it seems to me that the past season’s problems were due to a rakshasa. If we wish to prevent such occurrences again, perhaps this gift would be better spent on new weapons for the army.”

This was such a silly idea that I almost felt bad for the boy. Demons outside our borders cared little about the strength of Kosala’s armies. But before I could explain the folly of such a plan, Rama said, “The gods gifted this gold to us, in exchange for our kingdom’s piety in building a new temple. It would be fitting, then, to use it to strengthen our army on their behalf, and to defend ourselves from their enemies. We may find ourselves at war sooner than we expect.”

I saw Rama’s bonds brighten around the advisors. “We haven’t been to war in years,” I protested. “Most of you haven’t seen a battlefield. But some of us have, and we know the pain of it. It is not something to aspire to. A granary will help our people, and it will do so without stealing our kingdom’s children.” I looked around, hoping one of the senior ministers, those who had been around when Kosala faced

border skirmishes year after year, might agree. But nobody else spoke. When Dasharath asked for a vote, only a third of the council was with me.

“I will consider both proposals,” Dasharath said.

Could I think of the last time he had expressly contradicted the will of the Mantri Parishad? My heart sank.

I waited until after the meeting was over to approach my husband. “Kaikeyi, I must allow Rama to start making decisions,” he said, already knowing why I sought to speak to him.

“But do you agree?” I pressed him. “You have always worked for peace. Stability. The granary will help on both counts.”

“I see the merits of both ideas,” he said. In the Binding Plane, the blue cord lay steady above his shoulders. “So in this instance, I will follow Rama’s will.”

“And the will of the Mantri Parishad,” I reminded him.

“Yes, of course.”

“You truly wish to see Kosala’s armies strengthened for war?”

“Rama has told me of his travels, of the dangers he has seen.” Dasharath’s expression was earnest, but I wondered how much of this was truly what he felt, and how much was what Rama had impressed upon him. “If he believes this to be the right path, then I trust him.”

I could not remember the last time my counsel had been so deftly set aside by Dasharath. I had worked so hard for his respect, for the respect of the Mantri Parishad, and now—

Rama needed to be told what power he held, so he could keep it in check. I had to speak to him directly, not get wrapped up in my own emotions. I pushed aside the hurt and caught up to Rama in the hallway.

“Are you upset?” he asked immediately. “Your idea was a

good one, but the necessity of preparation—”

I raised a hand to stop the flow of words. “Do you realize why the rest of the Mantri Parishad agrees with you so readily?” I asked.

He frowned. “Because my ideas are sound, and they respect me.”

“That may be true,” I said, thinking back to what Sita had told me about Rama’s sway over others. “But you also try to move them, do you not? With some innate part of you?”

Rama considered these words, one finger on his cheek in such a boyish gesture that for a moment I had the urge to send him to his room. “I have always been able to see people’s souls,” he said finally. “And perhaps I have used that knowledge, but who wouldn’t? That does not mean I am forcing them into anything.”

“Aren’t you?” I asked. “You are extremely powerful. When you seek to sway someone, have you not considered you might be controlling them instead?”

“I—I don’t know.” Rama turned to face a tapestry spun from dark, shadowy hues. Vishnu’s third avatar, Varaha, stood in the cosmic ocean, his blue-black body half-submerged in the water. On his tusks sat the earth, woven in delicate floss of emerald and sapphire. Varaha had rescued the earth after she had been captured by an asura bent on destroying her. “I suppose... I have never been able to see your soul, and I have always had a hard time persuading you. And the same is true of Sita.”

I considered what to say next. Revealing my true nature to Rama might be the best way to prove to him what he was doing, but I wondered what he would think if he knew what I was. Would he look upon me with suspicion?

No. I was his mother. He loved me, just as I loved him—despite all my other doubts, I was sure of this. “You cannot see my soul because I am different. Because I too can see some of people’s souls. And when I look at them, I can see your

influence. Your control. You may not have realized it, but it is there.”

Rama swallowed. The colors of the tapestry devoured the light, leaving shadows on his face. He reached out a hand to touch the flank of the boar, almost reverently. Did he think himself Vishnu, rescuing the earth? “I do not like to know I did such a thing unwittingly, Ma. But—it’s not bad, right? This influence? People want to obey the gods. It must be my gift, this ability to reach people.”

I wanted to shake him. “You are forcing people to do your bidding!” I said. “I am the only one speaking to you clearly, without influence.”

“Or,” Rama said slowly, turning back to me, “whatever places you outside my influence makes it harder for you to see the good in what I’m doing.”

He was right, in a way, and I hated it. Being gods-touched, and godsforsaken, had made me far more skeptical of the gods. And now, my own child. “Your father is not choosing to abdicate,” I said instead. “It is far too soon for him to be stepping down. He has many years left to rule, and yet, you are making him give up the throne. Does that not disturb you? The kingdom is strong, prosperous—”

“Which is why it must be now, before Kosala weakens, before the asuras’ power spreads.” He threw up his hands in frustration. “Why do you mistrust me so? I respect my father, and I always heed his counsel. With his blessing, I am doing what is best for the kingdom.”

“How do you know?” I asked him. “How do you know what is best for the kingdom?”

“Because I am a god!” he said. I could see it again, that great shadow he cast, and hear the ringing in his voice.

But it did not frighten me anymore. Instead, I was filled with a deep sorrow. He was convincing himself of his righteousness with every word he spoke, blinded to the truth. “You are still so young,” I told him. “And you have grown

used to getting your way. But that does not make your way right. Wait to take the throne. *I promise* it can wait.” In my voice was a plea I hoped he would hear. This was as close as I could get to begging my son for something.

Instead, Rama shook his head and began striding toward the end of the corridor. “I do not have time to keep talking in circles with you, Ma. I wish you would just listen to me.”

“And I wish you would listen to me,” I said softly. But he did not hear. He stepped through the door and was gone.

Although Rama and I were still in our uneasy truce, he trying to recruit me while I tried to talk him down, I knew there were others in the court—the young men who would become advisors or those who had simply never liked me—who saw our split in the council and Rama’s impending coronation as an opportunity. In small ways, they began their work, spreading rumors about the Women’s Council or snubbing me during court events and social gatherings. I tried to pay them no mind. But one moon after my return to Ayodhya, they became impossible to ignore.

“Did you hear about the incident with the serving maids?” Sumitra asked me as we walked arm in arm through the gardens—a routine that remained a sanctuary for me.

“No, I did not. What happened?” Today, petals of flowers carpeted the path. They released a fragrant odor as we crushed them underfoot, but beneath that was the faintest scent of rot.

“How did you not hear of this?” Kaushalya chimed in, a strange note in her voice. I glanced at her and saw that her elegant brows were drawn together.

“Kaushalya feels sorry for the girls,” Sumitra confided. “But I would not. They made their own beds.” She gave a little giggle as though making some joke.

Kaushalya pursed her lips in disapproval. “I do feel sorry for them. Several of the women in our employ, it seems, were rumored to also be working in a brothel. The accusation was made anonymously, and the head of staff immediately

dismissed them, despite not knowing whether the gossip was even true.”

“*What?*” I asked, struggling to catch up. “Were they new?”

“No. Some of them have worked here for years. They’re quite old for the brothel too. You might remember Saralaa or Mugdha—they were the first to seek audience with us, back when we had only a women’s circle.”

I felt hot and cold at the same time. “Yes, I remember them,” I whispered. “The accusation was anonymous?”

“I do not think you should worry overmuch about that,” Sumitra said. “After all, those beyond reproach would never have such things said about them in the first place.”

“Of course,” I muttered, for there was nothing I could do now, after the fact. Kaushalya gave me an odd look, lips downturned, and I glanced away.

Rama’s head might have been preoccupied with demons, but those who saw him as an opportunity to gain power had much more material concerns. If the goal was to purge my influence from the palace even at the lowest levels, they were succeeding. I was relieved that Riddhi had left to care for her aging mother and had been spared such an indignity.

The more I thought about it, though, the more I wondered whether perhaps this was what I could bring to Rama to show him the dangers of his influence, of his disrupting the balance of power in Kosala before he was ready. Surely he would not wish for innocent women to be dismissed from the palace?

But that evening, before I could make my way to my son, I received a summons to Dasharath’s chambers.

The moment I saw my husband’s drawn and weary face, all thoughts of Rama vanished.

I went to his side immediately. “What is it?” I asked.

“I do not know, but I cannot imagine it is pleasant news. A messenger just arrived from your brother, nearly dead on his feet, with an urgent missive for you.”

“Yudhajit?” I took the still-sealed papers from Dasharath and tore them open.

Kaikeyi, Father has returned, and he is dying. The healers give him one more moon, maybe less. He is asking for you, and your son. And there are matters we must discuss. Hurry back, sister.

“Kaikeyi? What does it say?” Dasharath’s face looked lined with worry, the peace of abdication gone in his concern for me. I might have been touched, relieved that he still cared so for me, had the news not been so dire.

“My father is close to death,” I whispered. My voice shook, not out of any emotion for him, but because I could not fathom having to leave Ayodhya now. “He wishes to see me, and to see Bharata, before it happens.”

Dasharath took my free hand in his, mistaking my nerves for sorrow. “I am so sorry. We will make preparations for you to leave at once.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO



“DO YOU THINK WE will make it in time?” Bharata asked as we made camp the first evening of our journey. It was the most time I had spent with him in some time, for I had only seen him at meals or passed him in the halls in the tumult since my arrival. “Before Grandfather dies?”

The uncertainty in his voice pierced through my fog of thoughts. I realized with my mind on Rama I had hardly comprehended the fact that Ashwapati—that my father was near death, or how much this might hurt Bharata.

“I do not know,” I said honestly. Bharata’s face reminded me of Yudhajit’s when we had been young, with his narrow nose and dark eyes.

“Uncle Yudhajit said that Grandfather was getting better.”

“When did he say that?”

“In his letter, a few months ago. He tells me how all our family in the kingdom is.”

I imagined Yudhajit painstakingly writing out the status of each of our brothers and their wives for Bharata, and I almost laughed. Even I did not want all that information if nothing was amiss. “That is very kind of him,” I said. Bharata leaned his head on my shoulder and I gently stroked his hair. “Do you remember when we first visited? My father was very sick then, and that is why he was away. He recovered enough to live a few more years. But now his turn has come, as every person’s must.”

“I don’t know him, and yet I feel sad.”

Bharata had never experienced death before, I realized. None of my sons had. Not on the battlefield, not in the loss of the oldest generation of family. They had been blessed in many ways. “It is always sad when any life is lost. And especially because, even if you have never met him, he is your grandfather.”

“You and Uncle Yudhajit will be sad,” Bharata said in a small voice. “I do not want that. I could not imagine how I would feel if Father died.”

“My father has been sick for a long time. Yours is healthy, vital. And you are strong. When that time comes, many years from now, you will be prepared.” I longed to embrace him, but something stayed my limbs.

“Are you prepared?” he asked.

It had been so long since I had seen my father, and longer still since I liked him. And now that I had met my mother, and learned how he had driven her away, I found it difficult to muster up any strong emotion. I was prepared—by virtue of not caring very much. But that is not the answer I wanted to offer my son. “Yes,” I said. “I have not lived there for some time. And you are much closer to your father than I ever was to mine.”

“But it will be very hard for Uncle.” Bharata’s voice was thoughtful. “He has told me so many stories about your childhood.”

“He has?” I asked.

“Oh, yes. We send letters all the time, you know. He has a lot of interesting stories about you. But... I suppose you’re not in the ones with Grandfather that much. You must have been busy with your other duties.”

That was a tactful way of framing his shrewd observation. “That is probably what happened,” I agreed.

Before I knew it, we were crossing the Sarasvati River.

“Do you remember what happened here, with Rama?” he

asked as we passed by. "I always knew he was special, but I had never realized that he was blessed until that moment."

"I remember," I said quietly.

Bharata seemed content to continue rambling. "I hope we return in time for coronation. It will be a splendid occasion."

"What do you want to do, when Rama becomes the king?" I asked.

Bharata shrugged. "Whatever duties he feels I'll be best suited for. I suppose I could become an advisor on his Mantri Parishad. But he will not have much need for help."

"I suppose not," I murmured. I could not tell if this was a manipulation or Bharata's true feelings. Either way, it saddened me to hear that Bharata had given up on that ambition he had confessed to me on a different trip to Kekaya, of being best at something, of being a good raja. Bharata too had become unfamiliar to me, more Rama's brother and less my child.

With every passing day, my heart drummed a stronger rhythm against my ribs. *Time is running out. Time is running out.* Above us, the moon grew fatter and fatter, until only a sliver remained darkened, and the next morning the city of Kekaya came into view.

A breathless Yudhajit met us at the gates.

"Not a moment too soon," he said. He grabbed my hand and pulled me through the palace as though we were children. Bharata followed.

"Is he truly that poorly?" I gasped out, tripping on legs gone numb. He strode on without answering, guiding us through twisting corridors until we arrived at a plain wooden door.

Raja Ashwapati lay in a small bedchamber, propped up on several pillows. His face was ashen, his whole frame diminished. Ashvin stood at his bedside. He looked up at our appearance and gave me a tiny smile.

“Kaikeyi is here, Father,” he said in a low voice.

“Kaikeyi?” My father’s lips barely moved when he spoke. His voice was a whisper, a mere remnant of his grand courtroom manner. I almost pitied him.

“I am here, Father.” I stepped into the dim room and approached his bedside, my son and Yudhajit close behind. “It has been a long time.”

“Yes, yes.” His hand lifted and he limply motioned me closer. I leaned in to hear him.

“You were a good daughter,” he rasped out. “You performed your duty to your kingdom well, and soon our blood will sit on the throne of Kosala. I am proud of you, Kaikeyi.”

“Thank you, Father.” His praise confused me. Although I did not want it, although I told myself I did not care what he thought, his words also warmed me. Instinct brought me to the Binding Plane, where I discovered a thicker-than-expected lustrous white bond connecting us, somehow bright against the dull surroundings. I felt ashamed at the bloom of joy under my skin.

“How are you?” I asked foolishly, wishing to change the subject.

“Dying.” He produced a coughing laugh. “Soon, I hope.”

I bowed my head.

“It is my time and I am ready. Do not be alarmed. But, Kaikeyi, I need to tell you something.” His hand found my arm, and he gripped it with all his feeble strength.

I looked up at Yudhajit, but he appeared equally bewildered.

“Your mother,” he whispered, and I pulled back in alarm. How did he know? I would not apologize for seeing her, not even to comfort a dying man. He mouthed something else, but from my distance I could not hear it. I sat on the edge of his bed and gingerly put my ear next to his mouth. “It was my

fault.”

I must have misheard. But no: “My fault,” he repeated.

I studied his face, the way the skin appeared paper-thin and worn dry. His eyes were damp. I had never seen him cry—could barely even conceive of it—but here I was. Guilt had done this. For a moment I remained there, paralyzed. But perhaps I could ease his pain. I lowered my lips to his ear. “She is alive, and happy. I have seen her.”

He turned his head slightly toward me. “You have?”

“Yes.” I pushed the hint of happiness through our bond, then looked up at the others. My eyes alighted on Bharata. “This is your grandson,” I said, beckoning him forward. “My son.”

Bharata brought his hands together and bowed his head. “It is an honor to meet you.”

Ashwapati’s eyes lit up, a faint gleam of what he had once been briefly visible. “He is a fine boy.”

“Yes, he is.” Pride and grief squeezed my chest.

“Take my hand, child,” my father instructed Bharata. Bharata took the wizened hand in both of his own.

My father sighed and went limp against his bed. Alarmed, I looked around, but Ashvin shook his head. “He has lapsed into sleep again. This happens more and more frequently.” He stepped around me and placed two fingers under my father’s chin. “His pulse grows weaker.”

Yudhajit put an arm around my shoulders, and we stood together in silence. Even Bharata managed to stay still as we kept vigil. Raja Ashwapati’s breaths rattled in his throat, so slowly they encompassed five or six of mine at a time, until at last, his chest rose no more.

Ashvin checked once again for the beat of his blood but found none.

Yudhajit placed his hand over our father’s eyes and said a

short prayer, and so my father died.

I am not ashamed to say that my father's death had little impact on me. He was old, and there was no love between us. But watching him die took a toll on all of us, dimming our lives by a fraction. Our little party ate a subdued meal in Yudhajit's private rooms, and afterward I went straight to bed, changing into a shift and lying down alone. I stared at the ceiling for over an hour, unable even to close my eyes, lest strange and frightening nightmares carry me away.

Then a knock sounded on my door. Not just any knock, but a pattern. Three beats, with an emphasis on the third.

He rapped it again, a bit louder this time, probably intending to wake me. I slipped out of bed and tapped out my corresponding signal. A soft laugh came from beyond, and I opened the door, letting Yudhajit in.

"What is it?" I asked.

He reached out to hug me, holding me tight. "Nothing. I missed you."

"You came to my room because you missed me?" I led him back to the bed and sat on it, cross-legged. After a moment of hesitation, he joined me there.

"Obviously not."

"Then? Out with it." I poked him in the side.

He scratched the back of his neck and looked past me toward the wall, and our blue bond jumped. I braced myself for bad news. "I wrote in my letter that we had much to discuss," he said at last.

"Yes," I agreed. "And we do have much to discuss. I have news for you as well." I wanted to tell him about our mother. It might anger him to know that she had a new family, a new life without us, but he deserved the chance to go see her, or send for her.

"Well, let me tell you what I wish to discuss first. Do you remember Dasharath's promise? The one you extracted before

you agreed to marry him?”

I nodded. “Of course. I made him swear that my son, were I to have one, would be heir to the throne. But things changed. I released him from that oath.”

“It was not yours to release,” Yudhajit said gently. “Raja Dasharath swore that oath to our father, not you, for our father was the one to give you away in marriage.”

His words came to me as if from a great distance, and I struggled to understand them.

If I could have believed that the gods took a special interest in my life, I would have thought they were the reason for my misfortune. What other reason could there be that over and over again my family brought me this strife? How could he be saying this to me now, after all that had happened?

“Father is dead,” I said carefully, “so that no longer matters.”

“News reached us of Rama’s impending coronation.” Yudhajit looked down at his lap, oblivious to my pain. “Father heard of it and grew very angry. He made me promise that I would ensure Bharata took the throne. I made a vow. To the gods.”

And it seemed once again, my wishes held no weight. It was almost incomprehensible that my desires should matter so little, and yet I was ashamed at my surprise. Had I really believed that things had changed? Years and years of work, to have a voice, to be respected, but my brother would still honor the words of men over my will.

“*Why* would you promise such a thing?” I asked, tugging at the sheets in agitation.

“It makes a mockery of our kingdom to let such an important oath be broken so publicly and easily. I cannot let that stand.”

“Look at me,” I instructed him. He slowly raised his eyes to meet mine. “Kosala is not your kingdom. *This has nothing*

to do with you.”

“Kaikeyi, the appropriate response for such flagrant oath breaking is war.” An overwhelming sorrow permeated our bond. Was it from Ashwapati’s death, I wondered, or the fact that he was threatening his sister’s kingdom?

“I can try to ensure that Dasharath holds the throne for several more years,” I offered instead. “I have his ear and his confidence. Would that give you the time you needed to calm the court?” I had not tried approaching Dasharath directly, because Rama’s hold over him was so strong and I had not wished to compromise our own bond. But it was worth the risk to try to stop this madness, and such a delay would be good for Kosala too.

Yudhajit gave me an incredulous look. “We have diplomats in your court, and they have sent word of Dasharath’s firm intention to step down. And even if he didn’t, it would merely be a delay of the inevitable. His choice of heir is clear, and so is the insult.”

“What are you saying?” I demanded.

“I swore an oath,” Yudhajit said. “I am sorry to hurt you, but I have a duty to listen to my advisors and ensure my kingdom is respected. If Bharata does not take the throne, there will be war.”

I could not believe what he was saying. *War*, so that a young man who did not want the throne of a kingdom could fulfill the wishes of another. “The promise Dasharath made was to *me*. It was extracted by *me*.” But even as I spoke up in protest, I knew it would not matter. If my father and the kingdom wanted Yudhajit to do this, and if he himself agreed with them, there was nothing I could say to stop it.

“I will not have Kekaya be seen as weak.”

“You could change people’s minds,” I insisted.

“Kaikeyi, how can you find it acceptable for your husband to break the first promise he ever made you? You, of all people!”

“Yudhajit, he did not break his promise. I agreed to release him from it, after careful consideration. It was not done on a whim. Please, I am begging you. Think of the toll to our kingdoms if you do this.”

“Protecting our line is more important,” Yudhajit retorted.

I stared at him in shock for a moment as our bond thrummed with his conviction.

I had once felt that way. But I had inserted myself deeply into the lives of Kosala’s people and, in doing so, had long left that view behind. Perhaps Yudhajit had never experienced such a thing, as aloof a raja from his people as our father had been. But he was still a king, bound to his subjects, and he should have been better than this. “Our people matter. How could you say such a thing?”

“Kaikeyi, there is a difference between you and some person on the street. Of course every person has value to me, but you are my sister. I will always love you more and seek to protect you first.”

I groped for a response, any response that might move him, but we were at an impasse. Once our passions had caused a storm, but it seemed that his dispassion would be what truly destroyed us. “*Please*, Yudhajit. Hear me when I say you are not protecting me.” I looked into my brother’s eyes and willed him to understand.

“I’m sorry,” he said again, and perhaps he truly was. “But there is no other choice. Even if you cannot see it is right, I know what I must do.”

“So that’s it, then? Bharata takes the throne, or we go to war?”

“Yes,” he said, clearly so there was no mistaking him. “That’s it.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE



I MADE THE RIDE back to Ayodhya in a daze. Once, I awoke in the night and turned over to look at my son, his face so peaceful and open in sleep that I nearly wept. I opened my mouth to ask him, *Do you want to be the raja, instead of your brother?* but came to my senses and instead just ran my fingers through his hair. His face, already childlike, melted into a sleepy smile. For a moment, the wall that I was trying to erect around my heart shook dangerously, but then I turned away and the feeling passed.

We arrived in the city only two days before the coronation, but I hardly cared. If I succeeded in changing Dasharath's mind, I would become the most hated woman in the kingdom. Bharata would hate me too, and the people would hate him for taking the throne. And then there was the matter of convincing Dasharath at all. I knew that it was very possible that I would snap our bond, destroy our relationship, and still fail to put Bharata on the throne.

But there was one person who could change Dasharath's mind, one person who might be able to stop this catastrophe.

I found Rama, in a rare moment, in his rooms. They were spare and clean, containing only the furniture he needed to live. As soon as he saw me, he came to embrace me. "I am so sorry," he said. "So very sorry about your father. How is Bharata?"

His question gave me hope. "He is unhappy, of course. But he was not close with my father, and his grief will fade with time."

"You seem very sad indeed," Rama said. "Do you want

anything? Water? It must have been a long journey.”

I shook my head. “Rama, I need to speak with you about something. About the throne.”

It was as if I had thrown a spark onto oil. His entire demeanor shifted, hardening. “You have scarcely returned from the death of your father and already you are talking about this?”

“*Listen* to me,” I said, pushing every bit of fire I had left in me into the words. Rama stilled, then nodded for me to continue. “Long ago, your father made my father a promise. That any son I bore would become king.”

Rama opened his mouth at that, but I pressed on. “I relinquished that promise years ago. I was happy for you, my son, to become king. What I did not know was that my father remembered this promise, and that he intended to hold your father to it.” My voice wavered as I spoke, and Rama put a hand on my shoulder. This small act warmed me. I covered his hand with my own.

“Before his death, my father forced my brother, the raja of Kekaya, to make a vow. A promise to the gods that he would see your father’s promise fulfilled. See Bharata become king.” Rama’s hand tightened on me, but he did not let go. I looked him in the eyes. “If Dasharath does not follow through on his promise, Kekaya will march to war against us. Rama, I would rather it be any other way than this. But you must let Bharata take the throne.”

Rama bent his head. It was a heavy thing to ask, and I could see the pain of it in the set of his jaw. I let myself imagine what might happen next. We would go to Dasharath together. He would surely be shocked, and dismayed, but he would accept it if it came from Rama. And then—

“No.” His eyes met mine, blazing. His hand dropped away. “I am sorry, Ma, but I cannot do that.”

My stomach plummeted, the fragile hope I had built crumbling away. He had barely even considered it. “Rama, we

are talking of war. Not with rakshasas or asuras, but with other people. Innocent people, who worship the same gods we do.”

I could hear my heartbeat in my ears as I waited for his response. “It would not be right,” Rama said after a long moment. “The people of Kosala want me to become king. I cannot bow to the whims of another kingdom. We are not so weak.”

“It is not weak to avoid war,” I said, and my voice broke. Tears pricked at my eyes, and I let them. “It is the strongest thing you could do, to avoid unnecessary bloodshed.”

“Please do not cry, Ma,” Rama said softly. But now he did not move to comfort me. He took a step back, as if to avoid getting caught in my emotion. “I do not do this to hurt you. Perhaps it will be useful for Ayodhya to clash with another kingdom first. To learn its own strength. You have to understand, there is a divine purpose at work. Nothing can compromise it.”

“What could be more divine than preventing death and destruction?” I asked him, a pleading note in my voice. I clasped my hands together in front of me, stretching them out like a supplicant. “I have breathed the stench of the battlefield, Rama. I have watched men die. I have taken lives. It has convinced me that saving them is the better course.”

“War may cause destruction, but it is also glorious. You know that,” Rama said, shaking his head slightly. He was calm, aloof, as though this did not affect him. Seeing it was more painful than standing in the searing heat of Bhandasura’s flames. I had believed him immature, unready, but this willingness to jeopardize his entire kingdom for his own ascension was something new. It was a failure—my failure. And for it, both the kingdoms I loved would go to war.

The destruction that two large kingdoms might bring to each other was immense. If he had seen what I had on the battlefield, watched his father nearly die, perhaps he would not be so eager—

And then it came to me in a flash. On that day so many years ago, I had saved Dasharath's life.

In return he had granted me two boons.

Rama was continuing to talk, to try to convince me of the glory of battle. But there was no time to dwell on it, this unholy ambition of my son. I held up my hand, and the torrent of words stopped. "I am sorry I asked you," I said. "I see that you cannot be swayed. Forgive me." I left him without a backward glance.

Manthara waited for me in my rooms, and when I saw her familiar form, clad in her usual soft cotton sari and smelling faintly of mint, I crumbled. The story of what had happened with Yudhajit came pouring out of me, as did my conversation with Rama.

"But I can use a boon to put Bharata on the throne. I will not let this war come to pass," I finished. Even as I said it, I felt the rightness of the decision. I still had some power.

Manthara considered what I had said for several long moments. "This is a good plan," she said at last. "But you must ask for your second boon from Dasharath immediately after your first. Ask for Bharata's crowning, and then ask that Dasharath keep the reason secret from all others. Nobody will know, so nobody will blame you." Manthara's allegiance had always been to me and not to Kosala, and normally I drew great comfort from that. But doing what was best for me would hurt my husband too deeply.

"It would pain Dasharath to not say why he snubs Rama in this way," I protested. "I could not."

"You can and you will," Manthara said. "If you want to maintain any power in this kingdom. If you want your son to take the throne smoothly."

"I do not wish to—" I began. But the words I might've said remained lodged in my throat. *I do not wish to hurt my husband.* I loved Dasharath. He was a dear friend, and I would never wish to cause him pain. But if I used my boon to ask this

of him, it would hurt him regardless. Now that Manthara had pointed out the need for secrecy, I could imagine what might happen if it became known that I had forced Dasharath to place Bharata on the throne. I would become a pariah, and the Women's Council would fall by association. Those opportunists who circled Rama would swoop in at the crumbling of my reputation.

And so, as relieved as I was to know that I could avoid this war, I also knew claiming my boon would tear apart my family. I worried about Dasharath, but I worried too about Rama. I could not tell him in advance, for he would try to stop me. A part of me felt guilty for taking this away from him.

That night, I slipped through the corridors of the palace until I reached Sita's chambers.

Her rooms were quiet, a breeze flowing in through the open veranda door. I found her sitting there, her back to me. Before her was a glow so bright I had to shut my eyes against it. Even through my eyelids the brightness burned, and I knew I was standing before divinity. I had felt this inscrutable force before.

After a few moments, the weight of the presence lifted. I opened my eyes, blinking against spots of darkness in my vision, to find only Sita. She had rotated on her stool to face me. "I was sorry to hear about your father," she said.

"Thank you." I took a step toward her. "I hope I did not interrupt."

"I asked them to stay," Sita said. "I suggested that they might speak to you, but... they refused."

"Well, that is nothing new." I tried to smile, but I could barely manage a quirk of my lips. Sita was gods-touched too, and yet they openly spoke to her.

"It is not like that." Sita rose to her feet, her eyes beseeching. "They are merely trying to help me."

"So am I," I said. "You do not have to pretend. They have never wanted anything to do with me."

She looked away. “It is not that they dislike you. They say there is no point in them talking to you because you will not listen to them. That you are concerned with only that which is before you, and that you cannot change what is to come.”

It was true that I cared little for the gods, yet I still smarted at the idea that they would both ignore and insult me. But I had come here for a reason, and it was not to hear the goddesses’ belittling remarks. “How have you fared in my absence?” I asked instead.

Now Sita looked away. “I wish to be a good wife,” she said at last. “But I think I will never be enough for Rama. I was crying, just now—that’s why they came to me. They really are kinder than they might seem.”

My heart fell. Trying to put Bharata on the throne would upend Sita’s life too, and if things had not yet improved between her and Rama... “What happened?”

Sita’s mouth twisted. “He has become consumed with preparing to fight the asuras, to the exclusion of all other affairs of the kingdom. Sometimes at night I find him pacing, unable to sleep for his dreams are filled with demons. I told him that there are no asuras or rakshasas here and he said to me, ‘Other men do not ask for the support of their wives, they simply command it. Perhaps it is time I learn how.’ I thought it in jest. But he said a wise man taught him that disagreement with the gods was sympathy for evil, and that he would not allow such a thing among those closest to him.” The words came pouring out of her. “I want to help him rid this world of evil if I can. But I worry he does not see that.”

At any other time, the thought that my sweet, gentle son had grown into a man who would treat his wife so would have driven me to distraction. But I had a war to avert, and I could not give in to the weight of my emotions. “Do you think it would be better if he waited to take the throne? Until he was more ready?” I asked at last. “Perhaps I could find a way to ensure that.”

This was the wrong thing to say. Her mouth pressed in a

line. “Radnyi Kaikeyi, I appreciate what you are trying to do for me. But I do not wish to anger him further. It is up to me to convince him, to love him enough for him to listen to me. The goddesses are right in this at least. You cannot help me.”

Early the next morning, as I stretched my body to prepare for the day to come, a knock sounded on the door.

I found Sita on the other side, her eyes bright with tears.

“What is it?” I asked, ushering her in. The moment the door slid shut behind her, the tears began slipping down her cheeks.

“He was angry,” she said, her voice steady as she spoke. “He was explaining to me how you had come to see him asking him to give up the throne two days before his coronation. I told him that you must have been tired, that perhaps you misspoke and... and he could not believe I had seen you, that I was defending you.” She stood up, twisting the end of her braid in her fingers. “He said a *friend* had told him that if he did not use a firm hand with me, I would never listen to him. That he hadn’t thought it good advice at that time, but perhaps he had been mistaken.”

This was a nightmare. It had to be. Rama was single-minded, and perhaps gullible, but he had never once shown himself to be this kind of man. *A firm hand*. It did not take much imagination to uncover what this might mean. I wanted to cry, even though it had happened to Sita. “What can I do?” My voice trembled. I did not want to believe that any man would consider hitting a woman, let alone a god. But perhaps she was just a mortal to Rama, someone who was getting in his way. And perhaps he was more man than god in some ways. How had so much changed in the span of one night?

Sita took my hand in hers. “You seemed... I mean... last night.” She kept trailing off and restarting, and I squeezed her fingers.

“You can say anything you want to me, Sita.”

“Can you really do something to help him? Stop him from

actually doing this?”

I could not imagine how putting Bharata on the throne would help Sita. No. I would have to do something more. A thought sprang into my mind—I could send Rama away, far away from the pressures that had consumed him. That had turned him from a kind boy into a person willing to sacrifice his subjects in order to take the throne. It was difficult to imagine doing it, forcing him away for years, and yet perhaps there he could safely pursue his divine war without harming anyone else. And when he had worn himself out on this fool’s quest, he could return as the man Kosala needed him to be.

“I will see what I can do,” I told her.

She left with a small, hopeful smile, but when she did I let myself sink to the floor and give in to heartbreak. I had raised a son who would threaten a woman. Who would insinuate violence toward her. It was a grief beyond tears to contemplate, the totality of my failure. I sat crouched against the door until my thighs cramped and went numb. Only when Asha came through the door and nearly hit me did I rise on unsteady feet and set out to try to mend what I still could.

Some instinct directed me to the training fields.

Rama stood alone, his back to me and a bow in his hands, loosing arrow after arrow at a target.

“Ma,” he said without turning. “Would you love me if I did something terrible?”

“Of course,” I said, knowing where this was going. “But I might still be angry with you.”

He turned around. His eyes were red, as though he had been crying, and despite everything, I wanted to gather him in my arms. But the moment passed, for he was not the baby I had sung to sleep nor the child I had chased around the yard, as much as I wanted him to be. “You know, then. What I said to Sita.”

“Yes.” I wanted to comfort him, but he did not deserve it. I clasped my hands behind my back. “I am disappointed in you,

Rama.”

“I wasn’t thinking,” he whispered. “I don’t know what came over me. I just—I feel so burdened. The pressure of my purpose is unbearable. And I wanted your help, so after we talked, and I realized you did not believe in me, I just... snapped. I am so sorry for what I did. For what I said.”

He hung his head in shame, the picture of contriteness, but it was too little, and it came too late. For I saw it then, the pattern. Under stress, Rama lashed out. He put people in danger. He had done it to me, to his brother, and now to Sita.

“Please, Ma,” Rama was saying. “You have to believe me.” But he was speaking from a distance. I had heard husbands speak like this before. I had heard it for years, since the inception of the Women’s Council.

“I believe that you are sorry, Rama,” I said. “But you have been sorry many times, and yet this is not the first time you have behaved this way. You threaten people because you feel a lack of control. It’s not right.”

“I know.” We stood there in silence for a few moments, and then he raised his head. “It will be better when I am raja. When I can actually carry out my purpose.”

“No.” His expression became confused, but I shook my head. “Your responsibilities will only intensify when you are king. You cannot treat your family this way, not for any purpose. Do you not see that?”

His brows drew together, and I could sense his annoyance building. “I understand what I did was wrong. Of course I do. But you are overreacting. *This* is more important. And I do not understand why you move so quickly to defend Sita, but not to defend the entire world, which I am telling you will suffer under the coming onslaught. Why do you not care for those countless others?”

“You are wrong, Rama. And I am sad you cannot see it.”

“Are you?” Rama demanded. “Or are you only seeing what you wish to see, so that you can keep your life comfortable? I

feel as though you are abandoning me, Ma.” His voice cracked ever so slightly on that word, and I had to remind myself to harden my heart.

“Don’t turn this on me,” I said. “You committed the sin, not I.” As I said it, though, I remembered slapping him long ago. Had I been the one to teach him to use violence? *No*. It was not my fault alone.

“And what sin is it to turn your back on your son? My tutor told me you were blinded, that you cared not for the will of the gods, but I’ve never had reason to believe it until now.”

“This again?” I demanded. “Did you know Sage Vamadeva cursed his innocent wife? Consigned her to a life as a stone statue?”

“What are you talking about? Sage Vamadeva’s wife betrayed him with another man. She lied to him. He showed mercy not striking her dead.”

“How can you believe that?” I demanded. I had thought that perhaps when Rama heard the truth, he would reconsider. But even here, Vamadeva had reached Rama before me. “Do you think a woman should be killed for infidelity?”

“You might be different, Ma. But surely you know that most women introduce weakness into the world.” It was as though I had been hit in the chest by a horse, a blow that hurt so badly my fingers and toes tingled with the pain. It was finished. Rama was beyond my reach.

His quest had been given to him by a madman. I had to protect him from himself, protect others from him. I needed to take this responsibility from him and give him space to realize the error of his ways. And he needed to do this somewhere he could not harm anyone else.

I had to exile Rama.

As the sun began its descent, I found Dasharath in his suite of rooms, at his desk composing letters. The sight of him was a dagger. I knew this was what I must do, but even so the loss of Dasharath’s friendship would be an enormous blow. He had

been a steadfast presence in my life for years, able to lighten my heart despite the heavy crown he wore. And now I would crush him. I knew when I did this, I would never again hear his laugh, experience his delightful mirth, or be wrapped in his comforting arms—and yet I would see him every day, and live with what I had done.

“Kaikeyi, I am so sorry,” he said the moment I entered. In this moment, his kindness was a curse. “I have been so busy today, I meant to send for you. Our entire kingdom grieves for your family.”

“Thank you.” I held myself stiff as he embraced me. I could not let myself have even this small pleasure, or I might have lost my nerve.

“Is something the matter?” he asked. Genuine concern thrummed across our diminished bond, and for a moment grief at what I had to do overwhelmed me. I took a deep breath and found my resolve.

“I have come to claim my boons.”

Dasharath’s brow furrowed in confusion then cleared. “Oh, yes, your boons. I granted you two for your service in the battle against Sambarasura.”

“Yes, my raja.”

“Well there is no need to use those,” he told me. “Whatever you wish I will give. Surely you know this by now, Kaikeyi.”

“I do,” I said. “But not this.”

He studied my face for a moment, then stepped back. “What is this about?”

I swallowed. “It is about Rama. He is not ready to take the throne.”

Horror etched itself in the planes of Dasharath’s face, and the thickest blue chain I had ever seen choked him in the Binding Plane. “No, Kaikeyi. He is ready, and he will receive the crown tomorrow.”

“Somebody who treats his citizens as though they are expendable should not become king.” I wished, not for the first time, that I could tell him of everything else, of Rama’s magic and my own, and of Ravana’s confession besides. I wonder, if I had never kept it from Dasharath, might things have been different? But I had no reason to tell him now, for I had seen firsthand what happened if I tried to insinuate anything at all about Rama’s control. Rama’s influence on Dasharath superseded mine.

“Please, I beg of you, postpone the ceremony.” I poured everything I had into our bond.

“I will not.” He held himself like a soldier, although he had not been to battle in over ten years. His body hardened into sharp lines, and he stared at me as though I was the enemy.

“Then, Raja Dasharath, I ask these two boons of you. First, you must exile Rama beyond our borders for ten years.”

He stared at me blankly as though he could not believe my words. I felt as though I stood outside of my body, watching the hurt begin to creep over his face as he realized this was truly happening. Bleakly, I thought about taking it back, about pretending I had jested. But I said nothing, and we tumbled together over the precipice.

“No, no, I cannot, no,” Dasharath said, repeating these words over and over like a prayer.

“And second, you must place Bharata on the throne for these years. These boons I ask of you.”

“No!” he shouted, and I startled. But even then I was not afraid of him. I trusted him. I loved him. Even if I had managed to burn that all away, the impression of all we had shared would not be so easily erased.

He grabbed the collar of my blouse and hung his head. “Please, Kaikeyi. You are wrong. Please do not ask this of me.” His body shook with the force of his weeping, and still he clutched me.

Tears came to my eyes as well. “Dasharath, understand. He

is unready. I would not ask this otherwise. When he has spent some time alone, improving himself, then he can come back and rule.” I kept my voice admirably steady as I tore out my husband’s heart.

“Kaikeyi, you do not know what you ask. I cannot go through with this.” He gasped out each word as though it physically pained him.

“Give me one reason why Rama must become raja now,” I said. “A single legitimate reason, and I will gladly withdraw my request.”

Dasharath at last lifted his red-rimmed eyes to my own, and I saw the despair there. “I have a feeling, deep in my chest, that it is the right thing to do. You would not ask me to contradict my sincerest beliefs, would you?” I could see that feeling, wrapped around him, controlling his every moment.

“I would,” I whispered. “You have already broken one such promise to me. Kekaya remembers. My brother remembers. He threatens war upon you for it, unless you make things right. Surely you would not bring war upon your people for breaking your sworn oath?”

Dasharath shook his head as though he had not heard my words, and any hope I had that my husband, at least, might see reason, was extinguished. “Please,” he begged, and I felt the tears slipping silently down my face. But I could not back down now.

“Dasharath, I am talking of war. You made an oath to my family. You made oaths to the gods. Your word cannot be broken.”

A knock sounded on the door, but Dasharath, nearly insensible, merely cradled his head in his hands. I opened my mouth to speak, but no sound came out. On the second attempt, I managed to croak, “Who is it?”

“Kaikeyi?” came Kaushalya’s voice. She appeared in the doorway, and as she took in my tears and Dasharath’s posture, she swept forward and grasped my hands. “What is

happening?” she asked. “Kaikeyi, is this about your father?”

I shook my head, unable to tell her what I had just done. Dasharath glanced at Kaushalya. “Long ago, I promised this treacherous woman that I would grant her two boons at any time. And now she has come to redeem them.”

Treacherous? Kaushalya mouthed at me, baffled and even a bit amused.

“She has demanded as her first boon that Rama be exiled for ten years. And as her second that Bharata become king in Rama’s stead.”

However I thought Kaushalya would react, this was not it: head tipped back in laughter, howls of mirth, tears of hilarity spilling from her eyes.

“It is true,” I said quietly.

Her laughter died as she took in my face. “What?”

I merely nodded my head.

“Kaikeyi. *No*. Why?”

“I am so sorry, Kaushalya.” I reached out a hand, but she backed away from me until she had pressed herself against the wall.

“*Why?*” she repeated. “Have you been so jealous of me all this time? This is your way of taking revenge?”

“It has nothing to do with jealousy.” I managed to keep my voice steady, despite the sharp sting of pain. Deep in my heart, in a place I could hardly admit to myself, I had imagined that Dasharath and Kaushalya might still come around. Imagined that our bonds were strong and true, and could resist the divine influence of our son. “He is not ready.”

“You are a faithless woman,” Dasharath proclaimed, rising to his feet. “Your oaths to the gods are meaningless. They forsook you long ago. I cannot believe you so fooled me, that I took you into my confidence. Rama was right. I never should have given a woman so much power.”

“What?” Kaushalya asked, but we paid her no mind.

“You swore to me and to the gods,” I said, my voice shaking slightly. “Now say it in front of Kaushalya as your witness. Will you fulfill your boons to me, Raja Dasharath?” I lifted my chin and composed my face into as haughty an image as I could muster. If they wished me to be a jealous, faithless, prideful woman, I would give them what they wanted. That was what it would take to see this task through. I gave the golden string a final push.

Our bond, that great construction that had carried us through my father’s hall to the palace of Ayodhya, from the battlefield to the council room to the building of a revolutionary kingdom—that golden thread that had been so vital, so precious—snapped in two.

Dasharath fell to his knees, and the impact ricocheted through my body. It felt as though if I were to exit the Binding Plane, the world would remain grayed. Fragments of gold fell to the shrouded floor and vanished like the last fragments of a dream.

A piece of my soul dissolved with them.

And Dasharath, broken and tired and suddenly much older than his years, whispered, “I will.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR



MY HUSBAND COLLAPSED.

You did this, Kaushalya's expression seemed to say as she rushed to his side and tried to rouse him. Or perhaps that was simply my own mind. I thought my heart would burst from the agony of it.

Dasharath did not wake.

Undeterred, Kaushalya hooked her arms under his, trying to move him.

At last, my limbs loosened, and I helped her to lift him onto his great bed. We did not speak as we went about our task, and each time our hands brushed, one of us jerked away.

At last, she broke the silence. "Should we call a healer?"

I pressed my fingers under his chin. "Yes. But his heart holds steady." I turned away so I would not have to see her expression.

"Kaikeyi," she said. I did not turn around. "Kaikeyi," she repeated, and placed a hand on my shoulder. I shrugged it off, unable to face her.

"I will say my piece. I am incredibly angry at you. I am so very angry, I could slap you, claw at your eyes."

"I know." I hung my head, unable to face her disappointment.

She sighed. "You know nothing, you monumental idiot. I am furious because you did not tell me of any of this. You never mentioned a thing. I want Rama to take the throne, and

one day he will be a great ruler. But *I agree with you*. He is unready. I could not do anything about it, I can barely open my mouth in his presence, but you have always been stronger—and for that I am grateful.”

I spun around. “*What?*”

“I trust you more than anyone in the palace, and yet you do not seem to trust me.”

“You said you thought I was jealous,” I blurted out. I could not allow myself to think that Kaushalya spoke honestly.

I forced myself to reenter the Binding Plane, though my heart resisted it, after what had just transpired with Dasharath. I had to recite the mantra in my mind, for the first time in nearly a decade, for the Plane would not come easily.

In the faded world, I saw no evidence of deception, and only the faintest of blue bonds around her neck.

“I did not know what to think. I was hurt, and I lashed out,” she said. “That, I think, should be understandable. I am Rama’s mother. You think I do not know the way he holds forth before other men, trying to impress them? The way he obsesses over war at the cost of all else? A king needs to be grounded, secure in himself. But Bharata is none of those things either. So what was I to believe? It seemed like you cared not for the kingdom’s welfare but for your own blood son’s power.” She gave me a slight smile there. “Yet in all the time I have known you, all you have done is helped others. You saved Dasharath’s life less than a year after marrying him. Therefore, logic says you must have had a reason for making Bharata raja.”

I cradled my head in my hands. “Dasharath swore my father an oath many years ago. He said that any son of mine would be heir to the throne. My brother has heard of Rama’s impending coronation and threatened to wage war on Kosala unless Bharata was crowned. But when I tried to tell Dasharath, he... he hardly listened.”

Kaushalya considered this, eyes wide. After a moment, she

reached out, gently maneuvering me so that my forehead rested against her shoulder. Only then did I realize that I had begun crying again. “Shh. You must stay strong now. Would you like me to speak for you?”

Before I could answer, Dasharath stirred. “Kaikeyi? Kaushalya? What happened?” He lifted himself up. “Why am I in this bed?”

Seeing Dasharath, I felt within me the throb of emptiness where our bond should have been. “No.” I stepped away, wiped my face dry, and set my shoulders. “No, he will need someone.”

She nodded. “I am furious with you,” she said at a normal volume, and I knew that too was true, even if she spoke for Dasharath’s benefit.

“Furious?” Dasharath echoed weakly. “Why—oh no, no, no.”

“You fainted. We have sent for a healer.” I kept my tone cold and tried to bring some distance back to the proceedings. My aloofness had all but disappeared as I bore witness to his pain, but now it was time to be unyielding. For Kosala’s sake, and my family’s.

“You’re crying,” he said, gaze searching my face. “Please tell me you have changed your mind. You have realized the error of your ways.”

“I have not changed my mind. Please, though, I beg of you, do not tell the rest of the kingdom why you have arrived at such a decision. If they know it came from me, they may not respect it.” He would not do it, and I had no leverage over him, no bond to rely on—but I asked it nonetheless.

His face was pale as he said, “The whole kingdom will know who is responsible for this crime. The whole kingdom will hate you and hate what you have done to them.”

It hurt me more than I wanted to admit. But in the pain of this moment, of the loss of what I had once shared with Dasharath, I could hardly comprehend what loss was to come

next. When I tried to think about it, my mind protested, as though it was too much to even contemplate.

“I told you that I acted in the best interests of the kingdom. Even if you disagree with me, you should not wish this fate upon me. I am your wife.”

Dasharath bared his teeth at me. “You are no wife of mine. I will honor the boons I granted you. But you are already dead to me.”

At this, Kaushalya stepped forward, anger clear on her features. I shook my head at her, but she opened her mouth anyway.

“I do not care,” I said, speaking over whatever she intended to say. I would not let Kaushalya lose everything too. “I will leave you with your *real* wife.” And I swept out of the room before anyone could say another word.

I sat in my room and cried. Asha and Manthara stood watch over me. My stomach heaved with the force of each breath, and I thought my insides might spill out of me. I waited every moment for my heart to fail. They offered me food, water, but I could not bring myself to accept any part of it. Part of me wished for death.

Sometime after my confrontation with Dasharath—I wasn’t sure how many hours had passed—a messenger came and spoke with Manthara. She relayed to me that Dasharath had called a special meeting of court and requested my presence.

He wanted me there when he denounced me.

Asha gave me a cool cloth to press to my red eyes as she wrapped me in a simple silver sari, although in the low light it appeared gray and dull. She applied color to my face, the red powder quite stark, for my skin was pale and drawn. She fastened a simple gold chain around my neck, placed a kiss on my brow, and then left me alone with Manthara.

“You did the right thing,” Manthara told me. “No matter what is said about you, Kaikeyi, remember that you did the right thing. You are not wicked.”

“Then why do I feel wicked?” I whispered.

“Because those who are good question themselves. Because those who are good always wonder if there was a better way, a way that could have helped more and hurt less. That feeling is why you are good.” She too pressed a kiss to my forehead. “This will be terrible, but you are so strong. You can make it through.”

I leaned into her and wrapped my arms around her waist. “I love you,” I said. “I could not do this without you.”

“You silly girl. I love you too. Now you must go.”

With each step I took toward the throne room, my heart steadied. I was strong, and I was in the right. I took measured paces, fortifying myself in icy reserve, and as such was one of the last to reach the throne room.

Dasharath was there on his throne looking old, older than his years. Kaushalya and Sumitra sat stiffly in their formal seats on his left. On his right, all four of my sons appeared equally confused, which meant that I would get the privilege of watching their reactions in person.

When I took my seat, Dasharath stood, and a hush fell over the court. He spoke without preamble. “As some of you may know, long ago, Radnyi Kaikeyi accompanied me to the field of battle and saved my life. In return, I granted her two boons. Generous, to be sure, but I thought her deserving.”

I pasted an indifferent expression onto my face. Whatever the court would think of me now, they would not find me weak, or uncertain.

“She has claimed those two boons today,” Dasharath continued.

Whatever happened, I would not waver.

“Her first request is that Rama be exiled to the forest for ten years.”

Gasps echoed throughout the room. Sumitra’s hand rose to her mouth in shock. Rama sprang to his feet and looked right

at me. I could see the surprise in his eyes, the hurt—and behind that, the rage. All around the room, the blue loops of control Rama had created flared into brilliant existence.

“Her second wish is for Bharata to take the throne during that time. I am powerless to repel her wickedness, for I swore an oath to the gods.” The crowd broke out into murmurs and shouts, and Dasharath faltered. Rama caught his arm. “Rama, my son. I am so sorry.”

Rama looked once more to me, his expression one of naked betrayal. Then he helped Dasharath back to his throne. I struggled to maintain my cool demeanor as I watched my son stand with his back to the crowd for a moment, watched him force his expression into a more neutral gaze, watched him take a deep breath, before turning back around.

“A boon is an oath that cannot be ignored. An oath witnessed by the gods. If this is what my father orders, then of course I will obey,” Rama said, lifting his arms. He paused. “Sita and I will depart Ayodhya tomorrow.”

My gaze shot to hers, and I saw her still. We all knew that she would have no choice but to go along with it. The whole court had heard Rama’s proclamation, and they were under his thrall besides.

“I too will go with them,” Lakshmana proclaimed, rising to his feet. “My brother will not be without protection.” At this, my mouth dropped, my entire mask falling away. Of course Lakshmana would do this. And sacrifice ten years of his life in the process.

I heard Sumitra whisper *No*, felt her hand clutch my arm. She must have not fully comprehended that all of this was my doing, or she would not be touching me now.

“Thank you, brother.” Rama embraced Lakshmana, and over Rama’s shoulder, Lakshmana mouthed a single word at me. I shook my head, uncomprehending, and he mouthed it again.

Panchavati, it looked like he was saying. *Panchavati*? I

searched myself for any reference to that name, but none came to mind. Lakshmana's memory was too good, how was I to know what he meant—

And then I knew. Panchavati was a forest to the south of the Vindhya range. At its eastern border lay Janasthana.

I raised my chin. "Lakshmana, you are so good to accompany your brother and his wife to Panchavati Forest." I projected my voice over the hubbub in a slow, unhurried manner.

"Panchavati Forest?" Rama turned to me now, his expression unreadable.

"Yes. That is the place I have selected for you to pass your exile," I said.

"How dare you?" somebody shouted from the amassed audience. Threads in the Binding Plane frayed and snapped, but I paid them no mind even as their loss ricocheted in my stomach. *I do not need the court to like me any longer*, I told myself, but the strange blankness of the Binding Plane without connections turned my stomach. It was exactly the same as the real world but leached of color. Hollow.

"How dare I?" I asked, turning my head toward the crowd with practiced slowness. Even if they were under Rama's influence, I could still command their attention for this moment. "My boons were earned, and mine to do with as I wished."

"Traitor!" someone else called. Others shouted far less kind words.

Rama lifted a hand for silence. "My mother speaks truly," he said. "We cannot fault her for what we perceive to be failures in judgment. Please, do not act too harshly toward her."

"They are not harsh enough," a voice interjected.

My heart stuttered. It was Bharata.

I stood. "Bharata," I began, all affectations dropping away.

“Bharata, please do not be angry with me.” My plans to claim my boons had been formed in a rush, all at once, and I had not stopped to consult Bharata. But this was about him too, and it had been wrong of me not to at least warn him. I bowed my head.

“How could you, Ma?” he demanded. “I thought you loved us. All of us.”

“I do. And I love this kingdom. That is why I did this,” I said, and I broke my vow to never influence him. I pushed everything I dared into our fragile, pulsating bond, every bit of love I had for him.

“You do not love us, or this kingdom.” Bharata spoke softly, but everyone quieted to hear him. “You love only power.”

“Bharata, that is not true.” I spared a glance for Dasharath, but he sat quiet in his throne, oblivious to all around him.

Shatrugna placed a hand on Bharata’s shoulder. “You cannot reason with her,” Shatrugna said, throwing me a look of undisguised loathing.

“Please—” I tried one last time.

The bond between Bharata and me shattered quietly.

As the pieces fell around me in a dreadful rain, Bharata turned away from me and said to the court at large, “You are no mother of mine.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE



“MY LADY?” CAME A muffled voice from the front room.

You are no mother of mine.

I was lying in my bed, repeating Bharata’s words over and over again to myself. How had anybody gotten into my rooms? Manthara and Asha had left, or so I thought.

Then Asha walked into my bedroom, and I realized she must have only pretended to leave, in order to keep watch over me. I did not deserve friends like this. “Urmila and Lakshmana have come to say goodbye.”

I waved a hand at her, and Asha interpreted it according to her own will. She walked away and returned a moment later, Urmila and Lakshmana in tow. I did not get up.

“Ma,” Lakshmana murmured, kneeling beside my bed. “Ma, I am so sorry.”

I wanted to turn away from him but could not muster the energy to do so.

“I brought him here,” Urmila said. “He did not wish to disturb you, but he should not leave without saying goodbye.”

“I did not wish to be disturbed,” I whispered, my lips barely moving.

Lakshmana’s hand found my own. “I am so sorry, Ma. You truly are the best of us.”

“Ha.” The sound came straight from my belly. I made it again, because I could. “Ha.”

He remained undeterred. “I promise I will not let you

down. I will not let Sita leave my sight.”

“When you sleep, Rama can do as he pleases,” I said. “It matters not. Stay in Ayodhya if you wish.”

“You cannot possibly want that.” He rose to his feet. “I will not sleep if that is what it requires.”

“Lakshmana,” Urmila said fiercely, “do not kill yourself for Sita’s sake. I will not lose both my sister and my husband to this idiocy.”

“I can do it,” he insisted. With great determination, I focused my eyes on him and caught an intense glint in his expression. “I swear it. I will protect Sita with my life, I swear this to the gods.”

“The gods are not listening,” I said. Even though I knew that much of Rama’s sins lay at the feet of a man, not the gods, they had done nothing to stop him, just as they had done nothing to help me. But Lakshmana and Urmila were paying me no mind—they had turned away from me. Of course, I had summoned all my remaining vigor for words nobody would listen to.

I pushed myself up onto my elbows, just as Lakshmana dropped to his knees. *What in the world?* I blinked a few times, watching as the shadow in the corner of my bedroom moved, coalescing into the shape of a woman, swathed in a cloak of deep, glimmering black.

The shadow woman approached me, but my eyes had difficulty grasping onto anything but her face. Her form remained shrouded in slippery darkness.

“I am Nidra,” she said, and each word reverberated within the walls, within the cage of my ribs.

I tipped my head back and laughed. I felt halfway out of my body, uncontrolled, hysterical. Nidra had been my favorite goddess to pray to as a child. Every night, when dreams eluded me in my stone room in Kekaya, I sent a prayer to the goddess of sleep. And every night, I learned anew that the goodwill of the gods did not extend to me.

“I hope you do not expect me to bow, my lady.”

Sorrow passed over her features. “I heard every one of your prayers,” she said. “And each time, I hoped to respond.”

“Hope is useless,” I bit out. “I was a child.”

“It is, is it not? You achieved greatness without us. Imagine what you might have done with us.”

“I would rather not.” This conversation stung like thousands of grains of salt pressed into a hundred bleeding wounds. Of course, now the gods would choose to talk to me, to approve of my worst actions.

“Oh, Kaikeyi,” Nidra breathed, and she passed a hand over the top of my head. As she did, tension and exhaustion melted out of me. The pain and the despair remained, but I felt calmer, like a ship that had just weathered river rapids to arrive bruised and beaten at a dock.

Then my mind caught up. “I thought you gods could do nothing for me. Gods-touched, forsaken.”

She gave a slight smile. “I suppose, but I have found my way around the rules before. Your dreams have not been wholly barren. And I awoke your son when Bhandasura first attacked you. I sent him the location of a scroll in a dream.”

Lakshmana gaped at her, but I simply said, “I do not want your influence in me. My mind is my own, and that is all I have left.” Even as I spoke it, I wondered what she had already done to me.

“Your mind is still your own. My magic—it is not in your Binding Plane. It simply soothes your body into sleep, or into wakefulness.” She now looked less than divine, as though she had taken on my own fatigue. My experience with gods was admittedly limited, but I did not expect Nidra to seem so... mortal. “But I did not come here for you.”

“Of course not,” I said, but there was no heat in my voice.

Nidra turned away. “Lakshmana, you are a virtuous man. I have been in your mind before this, and I know you are

steadfast. Is it your intention to guard Sita every moment of the day for the next ten years?”

“It is,” Lakshmana said from his position on the ground.

“Even the gods must sleep,” Nidra said. “But as the goddess of sleep, I will make an exception for you.”

“Thank you, Devi.”

“Do not thank me yet. As with all things, there is a price. Someone else must take on the burden of sleep for you. For these ten years, they will sleep for nearly the whole day and spend only a few waking hours each evening. If you can find someone willing to shoulder this responsibility, I will grant you this allowance.”

“I will do it,” Urmila said at once. “I will take this burden if it means that Lakshmana can protect my sister and stay alive.”

“No, you cannot,” Lakshmana said, quiet desperation in his tone. I did not need the Binding Plane to see there was a deep affection between my son and his wife. “I will not ask you to do such a thing.”

“You do not have to ask me,” Urmila said. “I have already made this decision. I am not as bold as Sita or as brave as Radnyi Kaikeyi. I will have nothing to contribute to Ayodhya, but I can do this. And in ten years, I will have my life back once more. I will have you and my sister back. It is not a death sentence.”

I had never truly gotten to know Urmila, something that I now regretted. Clearly, she was an extraordinary young woman. I knew I would not have been willing to make such a sacrifice at her age.

“Very well,” Nidra proclaimed. “It is done. From the first night that Lakshmana stays awake until he returns to Ayodhya or loses his life, you, Urmila, will pay the cost of his sleeplessness.” She turned toward me. “If you have need of my powers, you may pray to me. We minor goddesses cannot do much, but I promise that from now on, I will answer. And

perhaps I will not be the only one.”

A gust of wind blew through the fully enclosed room. I blinked, and when I opened my eyes, the goddess was gone.

Urmila and Lakshmana rose to their feet, rubbing their knees. “I had never heard of the goddess of sleep before,” Urmila said.

I turned to look at her. “I would bet anything that your sister has heard of her. But it matters not.”

“It matters a great deal,” Urmila said. “She has just blessed us. Or cursed us.”

“It is all right,” Lakshmana said softly. He came to me, first touching my feet and then embracing me. “Goodbye, Ma. Do not worry. I will do my best.”

Somehow I managed to wrap my arms around him. “I know,” I said. “Please be safe.”

And then, in another moment, they were gone. I sank back on my bed, my eyelids suddenly heavy as iron. I watched Lakshmana’s back vanish as my eyes dragged closed.

For the first time in my life, after the worst day of my life, sleep came easily.

I awoke with total lucidity, just as the sun’s rays brushed the edge of the horizon. And with that clarity of thought came the realization that I needed to speak to Rama one more time.

I knew without much reflection where I would find him. And sure enough, he stood with Shatrugna on the palace’s training field, conversing in low tones.

“I did not expect to see you, Ma,” Rama said without turning.

Shatrugna, however, spun to face me. His usually sweet face filled with hatred. “What are *you* doing here? How dare you—”

“Shatrugna. Please leave us,” Rama said. Shatrugna looked back at Rama, and then pushed past me without another word.

“This whole time I thought I could convince you,” Rama said softly. “This whole time, I thought you were on my side. But it turns out you were deceiving me. Deceiving everyone. Everyone else was right about you, and I was a fool.”

“No, Rama. I was never deceiving you. I am your mother, and I love you still.”

He turned around. “Don’t lie. You were never a friend to me. How could you be, when you have forsaken the gods? I should have listened, should have taken away your power when I had the chance.”

“Listen to yourself,” I said. “What has happened to you?”

“I was betrayed by my own mother,” he said.

“Betrayed?” I demanded. “I *love* you. I gave you everything I could. When you cried, I sang to you. I handed you the moon. I played with you, took you to my homeland. And in return, you turned your back on me. You spurned my teachings and put me in danger.”

“Then why are you sending me away?” He looked away, a thick curl falling into his eyes as he blinked rapidly. There was real hurt in his voice, and the knowledge that I was responsible for it stung.

“I am helping you,” I said, my voice thick. “Removing the responsibility that you said burdened you. I asked that you only be sent away for ten years. I believe you can change. You need not spend every hour being crushed by this divine responsibility you feel you are called to carry out. When you were a child and unhappy, I could hold you. Make you feel safe, tell you everything would be all right. I cannot do that anymore. But I can do this.”

“You think I don’t want the responsibility, but I do. It is my duty. And you are attempting to thwart it.” He shook his head. “You think people only agree with me because I have forced them to. But there are so many people in the city whom you have ignored or pushed aside. You asked I be sent away for ten years because you knew you could not get away with exiling

me for my whole life.”

“You are a child. Just a child. You do not know what you speak of,” I told him. “Do you not remember how it used to be? Our family was happy.”

Perhaps I imagined it, but I thought for a moment his eyes grew distant, watery. “We were,” he said softly. I wondered which memory he saw playing out before him.

I could remember clearly watching my sons running in the bright Kosala sun, chasing one another, getting stuck in barrels and teasing their father. I remembered too that sense of foreboding that we would be torn apart. How I wished I had been wrong. “We can be happy again,” I said at last, for I had to believe it was true.

We stood there, heads bowed in the early morning light. Mother and son, both wishing for something different than we had. Then he straightened. “I doubt it,” he said.

I stepped back, pushing away the hurt, for this was not a surprise. The pause had given me a moment to think, consider the other person bound up in this besides us two. “At least do not bring Sita with you.”

Rama shook his head. “I see. Even now you did not come for me, your supposed son. You came for Sita.”

I had come to see Rama, to speak to my beloved son before he left, but he would not believe me if I said so now. “How can I convince you to let her stay?” I asked instead. “Surely there must be something.”

“I did not come here to bargain, and yet you insist upon it. Fine. Repent everything, Ma. Support me, and you may keep your seat on the Mantri Parishad. You get to keep your power.”

Maybe once that had been what mattered to me, but now it wasn't even a choice. I took a deep breath to collect myself, and when I spoke it was with a steady voice. “I am sorry, Rama. I have failed you as a mother. I raised a cruel, callous child. This hurts me too. But I deserve this pain.”

His eyes widened almost imperceptibly, and I could tell I had shocked him. But it was too late. This was not enough.

“I hope your time in the forest serves you well,” I said at last. I turned from him and walked back through the door.

Sita came to see me before she left.

“I am so sorry,” I told her over and over, but she ignored me. Our connection in the Binding Plane still appeared strong, stark against the dearth of bonds. But I wanted to remember her face as it was, not as it looked in the world adjacent, and so I let go of my magic and simply sat by her side. Against her pale and drawn face, her silver strip of hair looked luminescent.

At last, an attendant came to my room to tell Sita it was time to leave. Before she left, the woman gave me a glance filled with pure disgust.

When she was gone, Sita turned to me. “Do you remember our first conversation?” she asked.

“Yes.” How could I forget. I had met a funny, sharp girl and reassured her that her marriage would work out, and that she would be happy. One did not easily forget such sins.

“I asked you what your purpose was, and you said you did not know. I asked you what my purpose was, and you told me that I would know it when it happened.” Sita sat with her back straight as an arrow, arms at her side. There was no inflection in her voice.

“I am so sorry,” I repeated uselessly. “Please know that had I known how things would turn out—”

“I am not interested in your apologies,” she said. “I think your purpose is clear. Helping the women of this kingdom is noble indeed. But I have not yet found mine. If you have any idea what it might be...”

Her purpose, I believed, was to spark all that had already happened. But she could not know that, because she did not know about Ravana—

Ravana. In all of this, I had forgotten about him.

Lakshmana had asked me to pick Panchavati because it was far away from Ayodhya and near to a friendly city that could harbor Sita, if needed. I had gone along with it, swept up in the moment.

But Janasthana held more than a safe haven. The moment Rama left, I needed to send Ravana a missive. I had kept his hawk for that purpose, after all. Because for Ravana, this outcome was the best possible one. He would be close enough to watch over Sita and take matters into his own hands if need be, without ever harming Kosala or Ayodhya.

“So you do know,” Sita said, and I quickly set my expression to something less obvious. Not fast enough, though.

“No, I do not, but...” Sita needed to know at least a bit of the truth. I was tired, so tired, of secrets. “I am sure that with Lakshmana’s presence, you will be well taken care of in Panchavati Forest. But if anything should ever happen, the nearest city is Janasthana. The ruler of that city will give you anything your heart desires, and you can trust him absolutely.”

“You have spoken with him?” she asked, confused. “Did you know Rama would take me along? Is that why you made such an arrangement?”

“No! No. I had no idea. And I have not yet spoken to him, but I will. The ruler of Janasthana and I are old friends. You have met him once. Ravana, raja of Lanka.”

Sita wrinkled her nose. “I remember. But I do not think that an old jealous suitor will help me much.”

“Trust me. He is not a jealous suitor, and he bears you no ill will. He will protect you. So do not hesitate. There is no need to be a martyr.”

“I am already a martyr,” she said. “But thank you. I will go to him, should I have need.” She stood up in a single fluid motion.

“I am sorry,” I repeated, unable to rise to my feet. “I hope that one day you can forgive me for what I have done.”

“There is nothing to forgive.” Sita opened the door slowly, and as she stepped into the hall, she squared her shoulders and lifted her head. I watched each piece of armor settle into place until no weakness could be found, and then she disappeared from view.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX



THEY SAY THAT DASHARATH'S cries could be heard from the palace to the city gates. They say he pleaded with the gods and cursed my name and made absurd promises if only Rama would remain in Ayodhya. They say he ripped at his clothes and beat the ground and wailed, a sound so primal and intimate that people turned away from their broken king.

The departure, Manthara told me, was like a funeral procession. Crowds lined the streets that Rama would take, and he rode out at a snail's pace, Sita behind him, Lakshmana at his side, allowing everyone a chance to observe the cheated prince of Ayodhya. He wore an ascetic's robes and carried only a small pack on the back of his horse. Rama had an excellent sense of drama, if nothing else.

I myself sat in the gardens alone, straining to hear the faint hubbub of the city.

It felt like hours had passed until Kaushalya came and found me. "You must come. It is Dasharath," she said.

"Is he executing me?" I asked dully, not getting up. "I would like to die here. It is beautiful, and peaceful. He should come to me."

"What are you talking about?" Kaushalya demanded, grabbing my wrist and dragging me to my feet.

I rolled my eyes. "You said I needed to come and see the raja. I was wondering when he has set the date for my execution."

Kaushalya slapped me across my left cheek. I reeled back with an audible gasp. "Dasharath had a fit. He collapsed, and

the healers do not know if he will wake up. I am bringing you to his room. Not everything is about you.”

I resisted the strong urge to tell her that I had almost definitely caused the fit, and therefore this was about me. Instead, I let her lead me away. But as we navigated the deserted hallways, dread burrowed into its ancestral home in my stomach. By the time we reached the door to Dasharath’s rooms, it was all I could do to bite back the sob building in my throat.

The door swung open to reveal Sumitra, tears running down her face and dripping from her chin.

“Kaushalya! He is—” She broke off when she spotted me. “Why have you brought *her* here?” The venom in her voice cut straight through me. “Don’t you dare cry now about what you have done,” Sumitra hissed. “How dare you?”

“Peace, Sumitra,” Kaushalya said. “She is still his wife. She loves him just as we do.”

“She is nothing like us.” Sumitra looked me up and down. “She is a rakshasa in the clothes of a radnyi. I never thought I would need to tell you to be more cautious and less forgiving, Kaushalya.”

The sob escaped me. “Sumitra, I beg of you—”

“Do not speak to me,” she said, leaning away as though I was diseased.

That particular act of cruelty brought me back to reality. The events in the throne room had given me hope that perhaps she did not hate me, but sometime between yesterday and now our bond had dissolved into nothingness. She blamed me for Lakshmana’s departure, a near-unforgivable loss, and perhaps I could appeal to that. “Do you not think I grieve to see our sons leave? Please, you have to understand why—”

“You grieve for nothing,” she snapped. “Your son is still here.”

I could tell I would not get another word of explanation,

and my heart sank. Was Sumitra to be lost to me forever?

“He is in his room,” Sumitra said to Kaushalya, gesturing her in. I stepped inside after them, although Sumitra scowled at me. “The healers are with him, but they say we should not go in, as it might disturb his rest. He had another fit a few minutes ago, and though it was shorter, they say it may have caused further damage to his mind.”

“Oh, gods.” Kaushalya pressed a hand to her forehead. “Do they know what caused it?”

“Stress, they say. Though they have yet to rule out otherworldly causes—demonic influence, perhaps?” She glared at me pointedly.

“Kaikeyi is not a rakshasa, and she had nothing to do with this,” Kaushalya said firmly. “You might be upset at her, but please, do not push so far. And as you well know, we do not have time for this foolishness. Kaikeyi, do you wish to see him briefly? I am sure we can go in for a moment.”

I nodded, thankful for Kaushalya’s steady presence beside me. How many people would I lose when this was all over?

We slipped off our shoes and tiptoed into the room. Four healers stood around the bed, one at Dasharath’s head checking his temperature and color, one examining Dasharath’s arm, one gently pressing on Dasharath’s stomach, and one at Dasharath’s feet, mixing together some plants with a small mortar and pestle. It reminded me of the scene around his battlefield bedside all those years ago—I felt the same panic, the same guilt. But this time I was not his savior. I was his ruin.

“Radnyi,” the healer at Dasharath’s stomach whispered. “You should not be here.” I thought he had addressed me, for I was so used to my role as the radnyi that people consulted with. I began speaking, but Kaushalya cut me off. “We just wished to see him.”

I received a look of skepticism from the healer, and he responded to Kaushalya only. “His hold on this life is tenuous.

Any disturbance might break that. We need to work.”

“I understand,” she whispered, but did not move, studying our husband. I watched her for a moment before transferring my attention to him as well. There was a yellow stain at the corner of his mouth, and his whole face was so pale it looked nearly white, except for the high spots of red on his cheeks. He was still, far stiller than in sleep, and yet his limbs appeared strangely rigid.

“Please, Radnyi. Give us time to work,” the healer said.

This time we followed his orders and left the room. Sumitra was still waiting when we shut the door.

“How is he?” she asked Kaushalya desperately.

“Unchanged. I am sure if we all pray, he will recover.”

I pressed my lips into a line, for I knew prayer would not help. If at all, the gods might further punish Dasharath for acquiescing to my demands. Sumitra, it seemed, noticed my expression. “I cannot be in a room with *her* anymore,” Sumitra said. “She spent years gaining our confidence only to destroy the kingdom. She is the reason Lakshmana is gone.”

“Your son decided to go of his own free will,” I said, because Lakshmana would not have wanted Sumitra thinking such things. “I will not blame him for wanting to do what is right, even if his mother cannot see it.”

“Kaikeyi,” Kaushalya said in warning.

My shoulders sagged. “I’m leaving. Call me if he awakens.” I did not wait for her to respond, but slipped out the door. Each step I took toward my room felt like a severing of sisterhood.

Sumitra, sweet and loving Sumitra, hated me. Would the hatred fade, I wondered, as Rama’s influence seeped out of Ayodhya? Or would his control linger even as his physical presence left?

I left my room only thrice while I waited for news of Dasharath, each time to seek Bharata, clinging to the fragile

hope that he might hear me out.

It was not to be.

The first time, I waited for him in his rooms. He physically recoiled when he saw me, then ignored my presence and went about his business. Despite this, I started speaking.

“Your father made a promise to me once, that my son would take the throne. Your uncle told me that if this promise was not upheld, it would be an offense to Kekaya and he would wage war on us. Surely you would not want that? I know it is hard, that what I did made you angry, but please, Bharata, you have to understand.”

I thought perhaps he was listening, because he stood still when I mentioned Yudhajit and the possibility of war. “Thousands of lives will be spared when you take the throne. Please, do it for your uncle at least.”

He remained still for a moment longer, then shook his head as if to clear it and walked toward the door. I entered the Binding Plane, anxiety high in the back of my throat, and in the empty gray saw quite clearly the blue tether around Bharata’s neck. He left the room, and I wondered if he could even hear my pleas.

The second time, I caught him in the hallway outside of a council meeting, hoping that the presence of others would force him to show me some respect. It was a stupid plan, for all the citizens of Ayodhya despised me, but I tried it regardless. I put my hand on his arm and asked for an audience, but he shrugged me off and gave me a light push away from him. An advisor rushed between us and his men hustled him away, leaving me in his wake.

The third time I wrote him a letter explaining everything and left it in his room on his bed after the servants had finished their morning cleaning. Bharata—or one of his servants—burned the letter and left the ashes in a bowl outside of my room, only a scrap still remaining so I could recognize my own hand.

Six days after Dasharath's collapse, a messenger came to my room. I answered the door myself, and he blanched. He had clearly not expected to meet me face-to-face. After a moment, he delivered his message in stammers and halts: The raja had awoken and Radnyi Kaushalya had sent for me.

I flew to Dasharath's rooms and found his antechamber deserted. Before I could second-guess myself, I crept into the hall outside his bedroom and found Kaushalya.

"He does not want to see you," she whispered sadly. "But you can listen, if you wish."

"Kaushalya," came Dasharath's voice. He sounded awful, his voice rasping and a shadow of what it had been not so long ago. It reminded me, despairingly, of my father's death only last month.

"My raja," she said, slipping into the room. "How are you?"

"I must confess something to you," he whispered, and I strained to hear. "When I was a boy—"

"No, no, there will be time for that later."

"No!" I imagined him grasping her hand, a sharp glint in his eyes. "No. When I was a boy, I went hunting, alone, in the forests just outside of the city. For some reason, I could not find any game, but I knew I could not return to Ayodhya empty-handed; such a thing would bring great shame to me. I went to the lake, hoping I could find some animals there who had come for water. After a few moments, I heard a rustling. In an instant, I had nocked an arrow and shot it, and was rewarded with a high-pitched cry. I ran to the bushes on the opposite bank to claim my kill, but when I reached them, I found only a boy, a few years younger than myself. In his stomach was my arrow."

"You did not know. Accidents happen," Kaushalya murmured.

He ignored her. "As soon as the boy saw me, he started speaking. His name was Shravan and his parents were hermits,

he said. They wanted to go to a pilgrimage site nearby. But they could not walk the long distance themselves, and their family was quite poor. So, he had fashioned a device with a pole and two baskets, and he had placed a parent in each basket and carried the pole on his shoulders. Shravan had borne their weight for the entire journey.

“His parents had grown thirsty, he said, and so he put them down and came to bring them water. He had leaned down to fill his pot when an arrow pierced him.

“I cradled the boy in my lap and told him it had been my arrow. Shravan immediately told me he forgave me this honest mistake. In his last breaths, he told me where I could find his parents and begged me to bring them some water.

“When I explained what had happened to his parents, they began wailing and beating their chests. Every breath they took became more labored, and I quickly realized that they too were going to die. I offered them water, but they poured it onto the ground instead of drinking it. And then—” Dasharath cut off, taking deep shuddering breaths that were audible even through the door.

“Peace,” Kaushalya said. “You need not continue. I am sure they too forgave you an honest mistake. Such things happen.”

I personally did not think such things simply *happened* or were so easily forgivable, but I no longer had any standing to judge others.

“No, they do not,” Dasharath told her, and longing ran through me for our years of partnership, of perfect coordination. “His parents, with their dying strength, cursed me. They said that just as they had lost the light of their life, their beautiful and generous Shravan, I too would one day experience that same grief. I too would lose the son I cherished most. And they hoped it would kill me.

“When Kaikeyi opened her mouth and demanded those boons, I could see it was not her, but the curse itself coming

for me. I am being punished for my sins.”

“You are hardly being punished in the same way. Rama will return in ten years, and you simply have to live to greet him again at the gates,” Kaushalya said. “Your son is alive and well.”

“I am being punished,” Dasharath insisted, and he gave a great rasping cough. It was too painful for me to hear, and I peeled myself from the door to lean against the wall instead, studying the tiled floor with bleary eyes.

After what seemed like an eternity, Kaushalya emerged from the room. “He is unconscious,” she said. “You can go see him.”

Unsteady and heartsick, I went up to his bed and brushed my hand against his forehead. His face radiated heat, and my fingers felt as though they had been burned. I had witnessed a fever this intense only once before, with Lakshmana.

It seemed as though he pushed up into my touch, but perhaps it was only my imagination. I rested my whole palm against his forehead, hoping the coolness would provide some relief. Too soon, too soon, Kaushalya rested a hand on my shoulder. “It is time for us to go,” she said. “Say farewell.”

I brushed my lips against his cheek.

“Goodbye,” I murmured in his ear. “I am so sorry, and I love you. May you suffer no longer.” I knew there was no point in hoping anymore that he might wake up again to forgive me. I had heard his deathbed confession and recognized it for what it was.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN



DASHARATH OF AYODHYA, THE greatest ruler Kosala had known, died the next night. I heard the cries before a messenger reached me with the news, and by the time he arrived at my door I was already on my knees, tearing at my clothes and beating my chest in pure grief. However difficult our last week together might have been, he had been a dear friend to me. He had given me everything. I had lost a confidante, an ally, a partner.

I stood silent, wrapped in a thin white sari that made me feel like a ghost, while they burned him. As the flames leapt up to claim my husband's body, I considered joining him on the pyre.

It was not unheard of for women in the depths of grief to fling themselves into the fire after their husbands, though it rarely happened in such civilized and progressive societies as our own. And yet, I thought about it. The release of death might be preferable to the life that stretched before me now.

I spared a glance for Bharata and Shatrugna, standing with their backs stiff at the edges of their father's bier, and I knew that if I were to die, they would immediately reverse their father's last judgment. As I watched, Shatrugna placed an arm around Bharata's shoulders. I wished desperately I could have done that myself, and this longing kept me planted where I stood.

That night, Kaushalya came by my rooms, to inform me that Bharata had ridden out, postponing his coronation by a month so that he could find Rama on the road and beg him to return home. She would be ruling Ayodhya in Bharata's

absence. Despite my fear that Yudhajit might hear of this, and march to war, the news brought me a small smile. In previous eras, Shatrugna would have taken the throne, or one of the senior members of the Mantri Parishad. But times had changed, actually changed, and this was proof. This is what I had fought to preserve, and for a sweet moment it was worth it.

Bharata returned to the palace alone.

Kaushalya came to find me soon after, her elegant features twisted in confusion. “Bharata said that he arrived in their camp in the middle of the night and found Lakshmana standing awake by the horses. He spoke with Lakshmana for an hour, he claims, and in the end, his brother convinced him that his first act as raja could not be to undo his father’s last.”

“Smart boy,” I said, and Kaushalya ignored me.

“Lakshmana said it was shameful for Bharata to be there, and that Rama would feel the same way if he knew about this midnight conversation. He said that Rama wanted to honor his father’s wishes and would gladly spend his years in the forest to do so. He said that Rama would be angry to learn that Bharata had visited at all. Bharata did not want to offend Rama, so he asked for Rama’s chapals.”

“His chapals?” I repeated, confused.

She sighed. “I do not understand either. Lakshmana slipped Rama’s sandals off his sleeping form and gave them to Bharata. Bharata departed immediately and brought the shoes here, to Ayodhya. And he says his coronation will be tomorrow, with no fanfare. He has told me he feels this is a tragedy, not a celebration.”

The next morning, I armored myself in my finest sari, a blue and gold heavy silk embroidered so finely that it shimmered like water, and made my way to court. I ignored the whispers of the nobles around me as I made my way across the hall, focused only on my son.

Bharata sat on the ground near the throne, cross-legged.

The low pressure of murmurs built, no longer just about me. *Has he gone mad?* I am sure they wondered. The tension swelled, filling the entire chamber, until Bharata rose to his feet.

“People of Ayodhya,” he proclaimed, his voice stronger than I’d ever heard it, ringing out across the room. “We have lost in a short time our great raja and our beloved yuvraja. I mourn them just as you do. My father and my brother were meant to rule this kingdom, and they were torn from us. I am not worthy of taking this throne in their stead. So, while Rama is in exile, I will not.”

He lifted his hands, and I realized he held a pair of shoes. “These are my brother’s chapals. They will remain on the throne for these ten years, to remind us that he will return to his rightful place in time. I will spend these years in penance, praying and atoning for the sins of the woman who bore me.”

No, I thought. *No, this cannot be happening.* The heat rose in my cheeks as all eyes turned to me. I wanted to cry, to scream, to run up to Bharata and shake him, but instead I stood paralyzed, stomach churning. Bharata’s gaze found me, and he walked toward me with slow, deliberate steps. Sumitra and Kaushalya each took a rustling step back, so that he and I faced each other alone on the dais.

“Hear me now,” he said, as though sentencing a common criminal. “I curse you for your sins.”

Curse me? My own son? “Bharata, *please.*” My voice shook despite my best efforts. “I have tried to tell you, you know not what you are doing. You would risk the whole kingdom for this?” I took a step toward him, but Shatrugna was there, blocking my path, forcing me away from my other son, my blood.

“I heard everything you told me,” Bharata said, and at this, the last shred of hope I carried in my heart vanished. If he had truly listened, then he knew what his actions would unleash. And to look at him, he did not care. “You have been a plague on this kingdom, an awful, godsforsaken woman. But it shall

stop with you. You, Kaikeyi of Kekaya, will be the last of your name.” Each word rang as he spoke it, and I felt the sentence come down with finality. It would have hurt to hear anybody say such a thing, but coming from my own son, I knew it in my very bones: I was cursed.

How appropriate, that I should be the first of my name and the last. How fitting, that now, at last, I knew what that threat meant.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT



I CALCULATED THE TIME out. Ten days for the news to reach my brother. Another two weeks for him to gather his forces, provided he was already making preparations for war, and then two weeks for him to move his army to Kosala's border. They would plunge straight into our lands rather than deigning to meet at an appointed place, for that was not the Kekayan way. He would slash and burn his way toward our capital, hoping that such devastation would force us to accede to his demands.

In the face of Bharata's abdication of responsibility and Shatrugna's apathy about ruling, Kaushalya had stepped up to make important decisions for the kingdom.

Sumitra sat by Kaushalya's side, assisting her in managing the responsibilities of both radnyi and regent, and so in many ways the Women's Council had become the court itself. My life's work had come to better fruition than I could have ever expected. But all I could think about was that I had no part in it. The entire city hated me. Besides, what did my counsel matter? I had pushed two of my sons into exile, one into penance, and the one remaining would not acknowledge me. I had broken my husband and hastened his death. I had brought war upon the two kingdoms I loved most.

So while Kaushalya prepared, I stayed secluded in my chambers. In the Binding Plane my few strong connections stood in bleak contrast to the gossamer webs that were all I had left. It was an empty, colorless place. I had once been lord of the Binding Plane, but now I merely floated through it, unmoored.

It became harder to get out of bed. In the mornings, Manthara would try to cajole me to get dressed as though I was a small child. But the idea of lifting my limbs out of the soft nest of blankets, of having to hold up my own body and my own head, was overwhelming. Only when the need to eat or relieve myself became too strong would I emerge. Asha and Manthara tried to coax me into taking short walks in the garden, but I let their words drift over me just as Kaushalya's did when she visited me in the evenings, for speech was just air.

One evening, she brought me a letter addressed to her. I recognized the hand immediately.

Yudhajit was giving Kaushalya one week to fulfill the promise made to Kekaya.

“Has anyone else seen it?” I asked her. My voice was hoarse with disuse. “People may no longer believe such a promise was ever made. They will be even angrier that it concerns me.”

Kaushalya sat beside me, weariness in every angle of her body. “I will tell them I have heard from a spy that Kekaya intends to strike us while we are weak. Your home will come off poorly for it, but at least there will be no equivocation.”

“You should ask Bharata one more—”

“I already showed him the letter,” Kaushalya said, shaking her head. “He did not seem bothered by the prospect of war on his behalf. He told me it is what Rama would have wanted.” The sorrow in her expression was evident, and I took her hand. We sat there for some time, mourning what was to come.

Perhaps this is why the mood in the capital over the next few days struck me as so odd. While people had been solemn and despondent with Rama's departure, they turned practically ebullient with the tidings of war. I could hear the enthusiasm from my balcony, and Manthara and Asha told me stories from the marketplace. The last time Dasharath had ridden to war, an eerie shroud of quiet had fallen over the city, for people knew

many sons would not return. Yet now men answered the call to arms with enthusiasm, talking of glory and righteousness.

Kaushalya had asked me not to attend meetings of the Women's Council, and I obeyed her as my *radnyi*. But the day before her departure to the border, she told me of their last meeting. A group of women had begged Kaushalya to sue for peace, and Shatrugna had stepped up to dismiss them, accusing them of disloyalty. In the face of his fervor and Sumitra's silence, Kaushalya had been unable to do anything.

"He will be leading the men into battle, and he seems almost gleeful about it," she confessed. "But maybe he is trying to hide his nervousness."

Kaushalya knew nothing of magic, or Rama's true nature, and I did not have the time to explain it to her now. I simply agreed with her, glad that she was accompanying Shatrugna at least as far as the last camp and could perhaps temper any reckless tendencies. But on the morning Kosala's soldiers were to march out, I forced myself out of bed, curiosity overpowering the shroud in my mind. I dressed myself in coarse cotton and made my way through the city streets until I slipped into the camp at the outskirts of the city to witness the strangeness for myself. The men laughed and joked as they made preparations to leave for the border, swinging their weaponry with something approaching delight, and only then did I fully comprehend Kaushalya's meaning.

Entering the Binding Plane filled me with dread, but I did it all the same and found myself in a sea of blue strings. Rama's blue. His influence had not waned in the two months he had been gone. Was it Rama's influence causing these boys to run headlong into war? He had wanted to take the men of the kingdom to war against evil, but perhaps the seeds of belligerence he had planted were flowering in this way instead. I could not know.

Worst of all, I was powerless to diminish his sway at all.

I returned to my rooms and watched from the palace as Kosala's army left and wished with everything in me that I had

the strength to intervene in some way. But my presence among the soldiers would only incite them to further violence, of that I was sure.

And then, that evening, a bird from Ravana arrived.

My dear Kaikeyi,

You have my sincerest apologies for my failure to respond. At first, I was enraged at what you had done and did not wish to write you a letter for fear I might declare war on your kingdom within its pages. How dare you send my daughter into exile?

My hands shook slightly. Had Ravana always been so passionate and foolhardy? He talked so casually of declaring war on a kingdom months of travel from his own, as though that was the natural reaction to displeasing him. Matters of children were different, and yet—

I see now an opportunity, one the gods denied to me. I intend to introduce myself to Sita. I am no longer angry at you and am relieved I did not act against you in haste. Instead, I offer you my sincerest thanks for this great gift you have given me.

Ravana

Ravana was running headlong into Rama's path. He was no longer the man I knew, who I had trusted to be calm and logical. This plan would end only in another conflict, and I was too far to stop him. The seeds of this destruction might have already been sown in the days it took his letter to reach me.

I needed help. But neither Manthara nor Asha nor Kaushalya could give it.

I staggered toward my bed, collapsing on the edge of it and clasping my hands together, searching for the words of the prayers I had once known by heart, when I had been desperate for the blessings of the gods. For the first time in years, I truly and sincerely prayed, whispering supplication to the goddess Nidra. I only half believed it would work, but still I closed my

eyes and bowed my head and murmured the ancient words.

When I opened my eyes, unexpectant, she stood before me in that same cloak of shadows. Her bright eyes glimmered, and I felt a strange sense of happiness, of triumph, before remembering myself.

“Sri Nidra. All around me I see nothing but pain, stretching far into the future. Can you stop it?”

She stared at me for a moment. I felt myself growing tired and forced my eyes away from her divine form. “No, I cannot,” she said, her voice like a soft night breeze, and my heart clenched. “But do not despair. A man walks among you with human follies and the powers of Lord Vishnu himself, and you manage to stand firm with nothing of your own. You are stronger than you think.”

Vishnu? Through these years, I had continued to believe it was Agni whose divinity resided within my son. I had never even considered it could be anyone else, let alone Vishnu. I was glad I was seated, for the more I thought about it, the more my head spun. Vishnu was the protector, one of the strongest gods. He returned to earth, age after age, to save us from demonkind. Rama himself had said something similar—and I had missed it. What if he had not been misguided? What if our world truly did need cleansing, and I had stood in his way?

It could not be. I had traveled far and seen no possible reason for the kinds of all-consuming war Vishnu always brought. “Please. Surely you can do something to help me. You answered my prayer, after all.”

“I answered because I made a promise to you.” She reached out a hand to cup my face. “Of all the gods forsaken I have known in my immortal life, you drew the worst lot. Your fate was written out thus: that you had to exile your own son, and thereby ignite the great battle between good and evil.”

I drew away. “The great battle between good and evil?”

“Yes, between your son, Rama, and the forces of darkness

amassing in Bharat,” she said.

“*What* forces of darkness?” I demanded.

“Rama was sent to your world for a great and glorious purpose. Your fight with him was of his choosing, and I will offer no wisdom on who was right, for it matters little to us. He may not have known it, but he always had to depart Ayodhya, no matter the cost.”

I shook my head, parsing her words to find only terrible answers. “Are you saying that whatever I did had no consequence, because it was destined that Rama needed to depart Ayodhya at a particular time?”

“What you did had a tremendous influence,” Nidra said, but she turned away as she spoke.

“You cannot leave me now,” I insisted, briefly forgetting that I spoke to a goddess. I remembered now Rama’s calm acceptance of his exile. Had he wanted this all along? No. He had been sincere in his desire to militarize Kosala, true in his belief that such might was needed for the war to come. “Please, you must tell me what Rama intends to do.”

“There is a great asura whose influence stretches across the south of this land,” Nidra said. “He does not bow to the power of the gods but instead brings unnatural creations into this world, usurping our authority. It is Rama’s duty to bring the gods’ rule back to this earth. His preparations here have been extreme, but I have no doubt they will prove useful.”

I gaped openly at her. Perhaps Rama had been right all along. An asura threatened our world, and when he had tried to show me, I had accused him of madness.

It struck me then, with the force of a Pushpaka Vimana to the chest.

Rama had told me all along who he thought the threat was, and I had failed to understand. But Ravana was not evil, could not be evil. He had saved Janasthana—or perhaps had manipulated its takeover. He cared deeply for his daughter—or perhaps he looked for a reason to make war on Kosala.

No. Ravana had helped me, done me a great service, and asked for nothing in return, while Rama had turned on me at the first sign of disagreement. And now Rama would carry a fight to his doorstep. I had read stories about what happened when the gods waged open war in the mortal realm. The world burned.

“What Rama intends to do, tell me—can I stop it?”

She shook her head. “You have both done what you had to do, for your kingdom and for the world. What is left now is for the good of all, can you not see that?” She passed a hand over my head, and my eyes began to close. “You do not have to worry anymore, Kaikeyi. Be at peace.”

I stood in the forests of Panchavati, outside a small house. Morning sun filtered down into the clearing. Lakshmana and Rama walked out of the house, laughing to each other as they plunged into the trees. Intrigued, I followed them for a few minutes or maybe a few hours as they half-heartedly hunted and played. I could not help but smile as they roughhoused and threw leaves at each other. They seemed happy, like the children they still were. Though I was standing right next to them, their words came to me unintelligibly, as if through a ring of cotton around my head, but I longed to hear their laughter just once.

Time bled past, blurring my surroundings. The sun was directly overhead when Rama suddenly grew still, his face grim as he held up a hand and wordlessly led Lakshmana back toward the house. They were tiptoeing now, truly silent, until they reached a conveniently hidden gap in the trees and peered through.

There, on the steps of the forest house, stood Ravana.

He was dressed in the robes of a traveling monk, but his bearing was unmistakable. Sita leaned in the doorway, a smile on her face but wariness in her eyes. I didn't know how I could tell from this distance, but her expression was sharp and clear as her gaze scanned the tree line.

“There,” Rama whispered to Lakshmana. I could hear his every word now as though he was speaking in my ear. “Already he thinks to steal from me.”

“Rama, there is only a monk talking to Sita.”

“No.” Rama’s eyes blazed. “He is an asura, here to continue his conquest.”

A ring of light spilled forth from him, consuming everything in its path until the woods faded and only my son remained. “I will cleanse the world of his kind.”

After speaking to Nidra, it was obvious, painfully so, that Rama’s detour into mortal politics had been a product of his mortal form from the start. He would not need the men or armies of Kosala for his campaign—he had only believed that to be the case.

The ground gave way beneath me. I closed my eyes to brace for the inevitable impact and opened them to find myself in a camp of war. I knew immediately it was Kosala’s.

“What is your plan?” I heard Kaushalya ask, the words ringing in my head, and I entered the large tent in front of me.

“We will attack them in the night,” Shatrugna said. “Burn their tents to the ground. Slaughter them before they have the chance to fight back.” I could see sparks of Rama’s light reflected in his eyes.

Kaushalya stared at him in horror. “That is against the laws of the gods! Surely you know that.”

“Perhaps if we were fighting against equal opponents. But the kingdom we fight is ungodly. They have done us a great dishonor and we must crush them.”

“They are not ungodly,” Kaushalya protested. “Their men have done nothing wrong.” She turned toward Bharata, who stood with his arms crossed and a small frown on his face. His eyes flicked up to her, then back to the ground.

“I am the leader of these warriors. Not you. I will not allow further dissent.” Shatrugna raised his voice, but Kaushalya did

not flinch.

“I am your mother and your radnyi,” Kaushalya insisted.

Shatrugna shook his head. “Maybe so. But these men answer to me.”

I fought to come awake.

My body was bathed in sweat. I tasted blood in my mouth, and the inside of my cheek stung fiercely. Half of me wanted to move, to take action and do something to stop this carnage. But the other half of me, the one that had kept me lying in my bed unmoving until noon, paralyzed me. What use was action? My actions had been meaningless. All I had done was hasten Rama toward his destiny. I had failed to protect Sita and consigned Lakshmana to ten years of sleeplessness, and Urmila to ten years of dreams. Ravana’s fate was sealed. I had destroyed my relationships with my brother and my sons, and now they were about to go to war.

I thought of what Yudhajit might feel in his last moments, murdered by his nephew’s army. I wondered whether he would be surprised when death came to him, or whether he would have a chance to fight his way clear.

Bharata loved his uncle. How would he live with himself when this deed was done?

It was clear that I had no power to help them. And yet, how could I live with myself if I did not try?

Sitting up seemed an insurmountable task. I lay there for another minute and imagined what Bharata might say when he returned. *You forced me to do this*, he would probably tell me. Or, *How could I have done something like this? I will never be whole again*.

That final thought was what stirred my cold limbs to movement. This would be my final attempt to set things right. After this, I promised myself, I would never interfere again. I would live out the rest of my days in seclusion. But I could not sit back now.

I wrapped myself in my warmest cloak and began to fill my traveling bag, my mind shaking off the weeks of cobwebs as my hands worked. Riding fast and alone, I could outpace our army's daylong head start even if I kept off the road. I could sleep in the forest and arrive in time to warn Yudhajit. Our bond had frayed, but I was still his sister, and well respected in Kekaya besides. My years of practice in cajoling men into listening to me would serve me well now. I would convince him of Shatrugna's plan. It was a betrayal of my son, but it was an act of loyalty for my people in both kingdoms—I was saving my sons from their worst impulses and from Kekaya's inevitable revenge. This war would not be a slaughter. I could do at least that much.

“Do you need something?” Asha asked as I entered the main room. I had not realized she was sleeping in my room this night, but a single candle was still lit, and from her position on the floor it appeared as though I had woken her. Asha had taken to occasionally sleeping in my chambers, when she was particularly worried about me. Manthara might have too, if her old age had not made it difficult for her to sleep on the floor.

“No, Asha. Please go back to sleep. I am sorry for disturbing you.”

Her eyes darted to my attire as she rose to her feet. “Where are you going?”

“Where do you think?”

Asha smiled slightly, her face looking young in the flickering candlelight. With her hair in two thick braids, I could remember clearly our first meeting—another lifetime ago, on the eve of another battle. She bent and passed me a large bundle from next to her pallet. “There is food enough for a weeklong journey in here. Manthara helped me pack it.” Next, she removed a scabbard. “And here is your sword.” She hesitated, then threw her arms around me. I returned her embrace, and we parted with shining eyes.

“Godspeed, Radnyi.”

I laughed then, and the rough sound of it startled me. “The gods will have nothing to do with it.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE



I ARRIVED NEAR THE outskirts of Yudhajit's camp just as the sun set on the sixth day. Listening to the faint clamor, I decided to sleep and approach my brother in the morning, better rested to make my case. I had set a punishing pace, and my body ached from the abuse. I considered praying to Nidra to help me—but somehow, after the dream she had given me, I could not bring myself to ask for her aid.

In the sleepy hours before dawn, I tied my horse to a nearby tree and snuck past the bleary-eyed guards without much difficulty. While I had no bonds with them to manipulate, if one seemed close to spotting me, I simply tugged on their bond with another soldier, causing them to turn away.

Yudhajit's tent was not particularly opulent, but it stood out at the center of camp. I slipped in through the back to find my brother alone and asleep. He had entered my tent the same way once, a lifetime ago, seeking adventure in the forests.

For a moment, I just watched him, his chest rising and falling, and the kernel of love I always kept for him expanded in my chest. We had been so happy. He had been carefree, quick to laugh and play. But now he looked tired and worried, even in his sleep, and my failure was responsible for that in no small part.

It took me several minutes to move from my position, for I wanted to preserve this moment, where we could both simply be together. When I woke him, I knew, I would have to face his anger. I stepped toward him, and the soft sound of my footfall startled him awake. He sat half up on his pallet, his

hand reaching for his sword. When he realized it was me, he relaxed slightly, then stiffened again. “Kaikeyi. Have you come to kill me?”

Of all the possibilities I had envisioned, this reaction was not one of them. “Kill you?” I echoed blankly. He studied my face in the dim light, then dropped his sword and stood.

“Why are you here, then?”

“To warn you,” I said. “You and your men are in danger.”

Yudhajit raised one eyebrow. “What is this, Kaikeyi? What game are you playing?”

“I’m not playing any game. Shatrugna and Bharata—”

“You sat next to me and convinced me that you would ensure Bharata became king. And then to discover your own son hates you so much that he renounced the throne?” Yudhajit shook his head, unseeing or uncaring that every one of his words was a thorn in my heart. “So have you come here hoping to regain favor in Kekaya? It will not happen.”

“No,” I said firmly, trying not to let my growing frustration show. I took a step forward and grabbed his arm, tugging him around to look at me. “I am trying to keep you alive.”

Yudhajit met my eyes, his expression growing serious as he scanned my face. I thought, for a second, he might actually hear me out, but then he laughed slightly and extricated himself from my grasp. “So you think I am such a weak and feeble warrior that your soft people will defeat me?”

“It’s not going to be a battle,” I said, and I was about to explain the rest when a soldier burst into the tent. He stopped short at the sight of me, his glance darting from me to Yudhajit, and I realized this young man had no idea who I was. He probably thought Yudhajit and I were—

“Radnyi Kaikeyi of Kosala.” Yudhajit’s words tumbled out of him like we were children again, caught doing something mischievous. “What is it?”

The soldier seemed to remember his purpose then, because

he straightened and yelped, “A messenger came from your brother, Prince Rahul. He said it was urgent and he needs a response right away.”

“All right.” Yudhajit was already dressing himself, strapping on his sword, and I knew my opportunity was slipping away.

“Yudhajit, please—” I began, but he cut me off with a sharp nod.

“Stay here. I am going to have one of my men guard you so you cannot cause any trouble. We can discuss this later.” And with that he was gone.

I gave him several minutes’ lead, then attempted to sneak out the back way. I was greeted by a guard who immediately stood in my path. So Yudhajit had been thorough. “Where are you going?” he asked.

I thought quickly. “I tied my horse not far from here, and I need to tend to him.” I could see the conflict play out on the guard’s face, for we would never allow our horses to suffer in Kekaya.

At last he said, “Very well, let’s go.” It was the only reasonable thing for him to do, but still I was disappointed. As we walked to the clearing, I tried to make small talk with him, attempting to create a bond between us. By the time we reached my horse and belongings, I had succeeded in spinning only the smallest thread, nowhere near what I needed to successfully manipulate my release—if I was even able to stomach using the Plane.

As I untied my horse, I considered whether I should make an escape. But what use was that? If I injured this man, Yudhajit would never listen to me. And if I ran, then I could not warn him. Resigned, I returned to the camp. The guard brought me food and water, and I sat in Yudhajit’s tent cross-legged, waiting.

My thoughts drifted to Sita. I wondered how she fared, what the exile had brought her. She was strong, but I worried

about her now knowing she would be trapped between Ravana and Rama, caught in their great war. But I was also tired, weary to my bones. I closed my eyes with Sita on my mind—

And opened them at a familiar river.

“Sri Sarasvati,” I whispered. I looked down to find my feet submerged in the earth, and almost smiled at the sight. This, at least, felt familiar. “I have need of your divine wisdom.”

Ask. The voice came from the river, from the cool mist and the dark trees and the damp soil. It came from inside my head.

“How fares Sita?”

We will protect her, the voice said. It was not quite a response, and yet it revealed everything. I had been right to worry. The goddess thought she needed protection.

“You admit it,” I said. “That Rama was wrong in the way he acted toward her.”

Yes. It was a matter-of-fact statement, spoken in her thousand voices. But how else would she speak? The divine could not understand doubt or embarrassment or shame.

A strangled chuckle rang in the dream clearing, and it took me a moment to realize it was coming from my mouth. I wanted to weep, I wanted to attack the river with my bare hands, I wanted to scream for an eternity. But the gods were untouchable. I could not make them understand, for cruelty was human and they were not.

Still, my anger spilled out of me. “He was a child. He still is, even now. Pulled in too many directions.” My voice increased in volume, until I was shouting, letting myself rage. “You put a child in this world without guidance, but with the knowledge he was divine. What else would he do but listen to those around him? You made a young man believe he needed to be powerful and righteous. Is it not only natural he sought glory through war? He fell into the care of someone who seemed to have a ready explanation for what was happening to him, for aren’t the sages the interpreters of your word? Why wouldn’t he revere such a man? Why wouldn’t he make

himself in that image?” I was not trying to excuse Rama, for he had made his choices. But none of this would have happened without the influence of the gods.

I stood there, panting, feeling drained. The river remained quiet, but neither did she send me away. I did not know what else I had expected. I wanted to ask her, *Did I do the right thing?* But I knew better now. Another question, a curiosity, sprang to my mind. “In the end, Rama said that what I had done disrespected the gods. That you believed women brought weakness to the world. Is it true?”

No.

It was a simple word, and yet... “If our sages were wrong, why did you remain silent?” I demanded. “You could have told him. It might have changed everything!”

We are not concerned with the rise and fall of mortals. What you want would not bring change. It is something you have never understood.

If I had not known better, I would have said she sounded almost sad. And then the river dissolved into blue wisps of mist, and I was alone in a tent in my mere mortal world.

Only when the sun had begun its descent across the sky did Yudhajit return, weariness wrapped around him like a cloak.

“What is it you came here to do?” he asked.

“Are you all right?” I asked instead. “Is everything in order in Kekaya?”

“It was a missive from Rahul,” he said, rolling his shoulders. “But I cannot further discuss such matters of state with you. Our kingdoms are at war.”

“They didn’t have to be,” I said, but before we could begin arguing about whose fault this was, I pressed on. “Shatrugna leads the Kosalan army, and Bharata is with him. They do not intend to fight you.”

“Suing for peace is useless. Even if Bharata were to accept the throne right now...” He trailed off. “I’m sorry. I don’t

think the people would accept it.”

“They haven’t come to make peace. They intend to sneak into your camp at night and burn it all to the ground. It will be a massacre.”

Yudhajit stared at me for a moment, then started laughing. “The Kosala army would never do anything of the kind, with all their rules about noble warfare,” he said when he had caught his breath. “They must have been joking with you, knowing that you would not understand the ways of war.”

“*You* trained me in the ways of war.” I rose to my feet, trying to inflect my words with steel. “We fought together, I rode into battle with my husband, and even years later I can still wield a weapon as well as any soldier.”

Yudhajit held up his hands in mock surrender. “Yes, you’re quite experienced.” The *for a woman* hung heavy in the air between us.

“Please, Yudhajit. What is the harm in taking me seriously?”

“It sounds like you want me to keep my men awake all night, or even move the camp. And I have no way of knowing that what you say is true. What if you are trying to make my army tired and weak so that tomorrow morning we are ripe for your sons to cut down?”

“I am your *sister*,” I said. Once, I knew such accusations from Yudhajit would have caused me to cry, but now I felt empty. My own son did not recognize me as his mother. What did it matter if my brother thought this of me?

“And you are their mother,” he said. “I appreciate you coming here, but it is clear that you are not in control of these situations.”

“At least post a few scouts,” I argued. I had expected some level of disbelief, and now I used my prepared compromise. “You know where the Kosalan soldiers are. Send some riders with fast horses. A few men will not change the outcome of a battle tomorrow. You are a good commander, you know you

should at least be cautious. You told me to never take my eyes off the enemy. Surely you will take your own advice.”

He pressed his lips together. I entered the Binding Plane and found only a small thread of blue between us, a sad remnant of the brilliant bond we had once shared.

My words would have to be enough.

After some interminable minutes, Yudhajit nodded. “Very well. You will stay here tonight. And if this was some sort of ruse, I will not be pleased.”

I recognized in his words a threat, and for the first time I wondered whether perhaps Kaushalya had successfully persuaded Shatrugna away from this plan. When the morning came... no. Any punishment for being wrong, any humiliation or pain would be more than worth it so long as there was no massacre. I gave a sharp nod. Against my protests, Yudhajit had me escorted to a small tent at the edge of camp and posted a guard outside.

With nothing else to do, I sat on the cold ground and began my wait.

CHAPTER FORTY



THE HOURS AFTER THE sun set felt like an eternity. I shifted uncomfortably as my body froze, and rose to stretch periodically, massaging out the aches. The camp slowly fell silent, and when I could bear it no longer, I poked my head out of my tent flap. The guard next to my tent had fallen asleep.

The wind pricked gooseflesh along my arms, and a chill of foreboding wormed its way down my spine. I was at the very outskirts of camp, near the forest, and farthest from where Kosala's armies would attack. The moon was a small sliver in the sky, and I could see barely twenty paces in front of me.

I took a few hesitant steps toward the center of camp, and this time, when the wind blew, it carried the scent of smoke.

No.

I broke into a run, and it seemed that at the same time the camp erupted. Screams and clangs rang out, and then a gout of flame leapt up toward the horizon.

How many eyes had Yudhajit put on the enemy? Men came running out of their tents, and in the confusion, I managed to grab a large discarded spear. It hampered me, making my gait uneven, but I needed something with which to protect my brother.

The flames roared toward me, even as I ran toward them, and my mind took me back to the forest, to Bhandasura. I stumbled a step and then fell, my free hand breaking my fall. I pushed myself back up as men rushed past me, the swarm sweeping me along to the center of camp, where fighting had already broken out. I could not make out who was winning,

because smoke billowed around me, stinging my eyes. But I had a sinking feeling that not many of Kosala's men would be here, actually fighting. Shatrugna had contrived a horrifying plan, but he at least cared for Kosalans, and where there was a fire there was great risk. There were likely only a small number of our Kosalan soldiers here, ones who had volunteered to keep Yudhajit's men distracted.

I made my way toward my brother's tent. The guards posted there were gone.

"Yudhajit," I shouted, coughing against the char of the smoke. "Yudhajit!" I crashed through the flap and stopped short, struggling to catch my breath as I took in the horrifying scene before me.

Shatrugna stood over Yudhajit with a sword in hand. My brother had fallen back on the floor, his own blade just out of reach.

When he saw me, my son's lips twisted into a snarl. "What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"I—"

"What are you doing here?" He took a threatening step toward me.

"I wanted to—"

"Did someone tell you of our plan?" he shouted. "Did you come here to *warn* them?"

"I came here to convince Yudhajit to return home!" I lied, slipping into the Binding Plane. As I did, my bond with Yudhajit grew slightly. "To sue for peace. And then I heard screams, and—"

"So you're a traitor, then." Shatrugna took another step, and I backed up until I was flush with the tent edge.

"What?" I asked. "I came on behalf of Kosala."

"You had no right to do that!" Shatrugna said. I recognized the intent in his eyes just as he moved, and I lunged

awkwardly out of the way, bracing for the impact of his blade. Instead, there was a muffled thump as Yudhajit tackled him down.

“Run, Kaikeyi,” he shouted, but I could not. I remained rooted to the spot as Shatrugna and Yudhajit grappled. I tried to raise my spear, to prepare a strike, but my arm was leaden, unable to move. How could I strike my own son? Even if I had never known him as well as the others, he was still my child.

Shatrugna rolled on top of Yudhajit, who shouted once again, “Kaikeyi! Run, now!”

Under the dim light, everything looked gray, and in the Binding Plane, our bright blue bond was sparkling. He knew now that I was telling the truth, and he had just saved my life. We were in it together, he and I, once again.

“Get off of him,” I cried to Shatrugna. “He is your uncle. This is not the way you want to fight.”

He ignored me and reached for his sword, but in a swift step I kicked it out of the way.

“Shatrugna, look at me. *Shatrugna!*” I shouted, and at last his eyes locked with mine. I found the blue cord tying him to Rama and tried desperately to loosen it, but it was like chipping away at rock with my bare hands. “This is your uncle. Think about what you’re doing.” I held his gaze, trying to convince him. He seemed to relax back slightly just as the tent flap opened.

“Shatrugna, have you persuaded him? We need to—no!” Bharata shouted.

Time seemed to slow. I had looked toward Bharata when he entered. And when I turned back, the hilt of a dagger protruded from Yudhajit’s chest.

Bharata, without even acknowledging me, leapt forward to push Shatrugna off Yudhajit. I dropped to my knees beside my brother as he coughed once, twice, his hands pressed around the dagger as his life seeped away.

“You’re going to be fine,” I whispered, and he gave me a smile. I put my hands over his own, applying pressure, knowing that if I pulled the dagger out, he would bleed faster.

It did not matter. He was going to die.

“You really came for me,” he said, his smile never slipping. Beside us, someone was whimpering in pain, but I did not look over.

“Of course. I never—I didn’t—” Time was not on my side. “I’m so sorry.”

“Come here,” Yudhajit gasped. I bent my face down to him, and he kissed my cheek. I pressed my forehead to his, counting his breaths. One, two, three—

And then, like that, he was gone. I sat bent over him, unable to move. I could barely breathe, even though the smoke was less dense down by my brother’s body. His *body*.

A hand touched my shoulder. I grabbed the hand and twisted, pulling the person down as I rose, prepared to strike them. Then the haze around my vision cleared. “Bharata?” I whispered.

“He’s dead?” Tears had already left streak marks on Bharata’s face. How long had it been? I turned back toward Yudhajit and saw Shatrugna’s crumpled form next to him. He appeared unconscious, a bruise already forming on his temple.

I lent a bloody hand to Bharata and pulled him up. He shuddered, a low keening emerging from his mouth, and without thought I closed my arms around him and held him tight. I knew he probably still hated me, and that he was under Rama’s thrall, but he was my son, my beloved son, and I could not help but comfort him.

I wondered blankly why he seemed more grief-stricken than I did, but could not summon any further emotion. I was holding my son, and he was *letting* me, and my mind was too exhausted to feel anything more.

After a few moments, I realized Bharata was speaking.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered over and over again. “I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry.” He coughed, and I felt a sympathetic stinging in my throat. No. The tent was filling with smoke. Suddenly Bharata was pulling away from me. “We have to go,” he said. “Come on, Ma.”

The name, *Ma*, startled me out of my daze. *You are no mother of mine*, he had said, and now—

“We have to move!” Bharata shouted, and I looked down at my bloody, empty hands. Bharata grabbed Shatrugna’s arms and began dragging him toward the back of the tent. “Shatrugna was supposed to come and take Raja Yudhajit away. He promised not to harm him. He promised. I never thought—never—how could he. *I didn’t want this.*”

I tried to pull Yudhajit’s body with me, but my hands were slippery, and he was heavy. “Help me,” I said.

“Ma, we have to move quickly,” Bharata said. His voice sounded thick once more, but whether it was the smoke or emotion I could not tell. “The gods will understand. They have to.”

For a brief moment, I contemplated telling him to drop Shatrugna and take Yudhajit, before I snapped to my senses. My son had done a horrible thing, maybe an unforgivable thing, but he was still alive. I brushed my hands over Yudhajit’s eyes, closing them, pressed a kiss to his brow, and then followed my son out of the tent.

The air was thick with smoke and screams, but Bharata seemed to know the way. He heaved Shatrugna onto his back with a strength I did not know he possessed, and cut through the tents, glancing back every few seconds to make sure I was following him.

Yudhajit’s camp was encircled by fire as far as I could see, except for a narrow opening by the forest. Only when we approached the gap did a row of men materialize. Kosalan soldiers. It chilled me how well my sons had engineered this massacre.

And how well it had worked. We passed through the Kosalan line, and it finally hit me. My knees gave out as Bharata passed Shatrugna on to a healer's care.

Yudhajit was dead. The Kekayan army had been massacred.

I screamed then, a sound that had been building inside me for hours, days, weeks. I had not allowed myself to feel it, this all-consuming rage and grief, but now I was overwhelmed with it. This was all I was.

I could vaguely tell that the soldiers were surrounding me, shouting orders, but I did not care. I screamed until the breath in me was gone and I was empty.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE



I AWOKE THE NEXT morning in a spacious tent, the air fresh and sweet, to see Kaushalya sitting at my bedside.

“I am so sorry,” she said the moment my eyes opened. “Kaikeyi. I am so very sorry.”

I opened my mouth but only a croak came out, and Kaushalya brought me a steel cup filled with water.

“Yudhajit still loved me,” I said, for that was my first thought upon waking. He had tried to save me. “I tried to save him.”

“You could not have done anything more.” She took my cold hand with her warm one. “I should have stopped them. I tried—”

“You did your best,” I told her. “I know you did.” I let the shroud of gray fall over the world so I could reassure her in the Binding Plane too, then tumbled out of it when the memory of the washed-out tent resurfaced. The night before was coming back in flashes, along with the raw edges of the grief-pain. “Did the whole camp burn down? Or did Bharata send someone back for the... for the...?” I couldn’t force the word *body* out of my mouth.

Kaushalya shook her head. “You’ll have to ask him, but I don’t think so. I’m so sorry.”

My mind repeated the facts to me, numb. Yudhajit was dead. The Kekayan army was slaughtered. Bharata had watched his uncle die, and in the harsh reality of the morning probably blamed my presence there for what had happened.

I recalled my promise that I would never interfere again and wished I had taken such a vow sooner.

“Thank you for sitting with me,” I whispered. “But I would like to be alone.”

Kaushalya smoothed my hair back with her fingers. “All right. There are some clothes in the corner when you are ready to rise,” she said. “If you need something, ask any of the guards. I will see you soon.”

My eyes pricked with tears at this kindness, for I did not deserve it. Did she not understand that I was the architect of all this misery? I watched her leave and then let my body go limp in the pallet, imagining Yudhajit’s final moments. He had seemed at peace, but it was a brutal, early, unnecessary end. And even when I had known what was coming, I failed to stop it. I wondered, when the story reached whichever brother of mine was set to assume the throne, whether any survivor would mention my name. *Radnyi Kaikeyi was there*, they might say. *An omen of death and destruction.*

Or perhaps they would just blame Bharata. After all, it was his unwillingness to assume the throne that had led to this pain. Now he was truly without family. His father was dead, two of his brothers gone, and his third brother had murdered his beloved uncle.

I realized, with a sudden panic, that here in this tent Bharata could find me. I could not face him, not after everything that had happened. I could not receive his condemnation again, for it would break what little was left of me. This fear gave me the energy I needed to lift myself up and change my clothes. There was likely a guard posted at the front of my tent, so I slipped out through the back.

I had not thought through my next steps, only that I could not face my child, but now my path seemed evident. I crept along the woods that bordered the tent, searching for what I needed, until finally I spotted a horse tied to a tree. It was unbelievably good luck, but I did not stop to question it. A bit of fortune after an eternity of poor luck left little impression. A

stupid soldier had evidently left his mount unattended, and that was all. I untied it and slowly led it several steps into the trees so that no one could startle at my sudden movements.

Then I mounted the animal and began to ride. I would go home, where Asha and Manthara would draw me a bath and I could lie in bed undisturbed for the rest of my days. Only secluded was I no longer a danger to everyone I loved.

But even riding could not erase the images from my head.

Yudhajit, eyes staring at the top of the tent, unmoving.

Shatrugna, knocked to the floor by his own brother.

Bharata, tears streaking down his face.

Lakshmana, pale with fever.

Sita, sleepless shadows under her eyes.

Rama, just after I had slapped him all those years ago.

Everyone I cared for, I hurt. Every time I tried to help, I made things worse. Why had I bothered to seek out Yudhajit? There had been a moment, lying in bed, when I had thought to stay in Ayodhya. By going, all I had done was to make his final moments more worried, more frenzied. Perhaps without the distraction of my presence, Yudhajit would have been able to fight back more effectively. He was the better, more experienced warrior. It must have been me who killed him.

After only a few hours of riding, my body was close to giving out. My limbs ached, my throat burned with every breath, and I struggled to keep my eyes open. But out here on the road, if I stopped, I might never start going again. That was too easy for me. I needed to suffer for what I had done. I stayed slumped over on my horse, but it kept moving, until I saw through my half-closed eyes a collection of dilapidated huts that looked the way I felt.

The horse halted in the dusty center of the group, and I sat there, my fingers still clutching the reins. I did not move, even as several women came to see who I was. They murmured among themselves, and I expected them to leave me or drive

me away. Instead, one reached up and pried my fingers off the reins, then helped me down. My knees buckled when my feet met the ground, and I felt an arm wrap around my waist, holding me up.

“What are you doing?” I asked, my words coming out slurred.

“She needs water,” someone said. “And a meal.”

Hands guided me to a stone seat, and someone pressed a ladle of water into my hand. I drank it, the coolness jolting me awake, as another woman handed me a bowl of rice.

“I cannot pay,” I explained, ashamed, and the woman laughed.

“Radnyi Kaikeyi, it is an honor.” I wondered how they knew who I was, but did not care enough to ask.

“Thank you,” I mumbled.

“I came to the Women’s Council once,” the woman who had helped me from my horse said as I ate. “My husband was dead, and I had no family, and the men of the village thought I brought misfortune. The other women managed to send me to the city to see you, and you gave me several chickens to make my own living with. You wrote me a letter saying my work and person should be respected. It changed my life.”

“I am glad to hear it,” I said, although her words were barely reaching me. I shoveled the rice and lentils into my mouth, the food giving me new energy. “This is delicious, thank you.”

“The men are all gone to war,” another woman said. “We have room, so surely you can stay a night?”

“Yes, Radnyi, it would be no trouble to give you a place to stay before you ride for the city.”

I shook my head. “I must keep going. I need to reach Ayodhya as soon as possible.” The women all nodded, solemn, as though they believed I had some greater purpose. I could have laughed at the irony—for once in my life, I was trying to

escape to dullness—but I could not muster the will.

“Take this,” one of the women said, handing me several mangoes.

Another woman gave me some hard biscuits, and a third passed me dried sweets. Soon I had enough food to last me several days’ travels. “You need this more than I,” I argued. A bit of my old passion rose up in me. “Please, do not be offended, but I could not possibly do this to you.”

An older woman shook her head. “It would be an honor to know that we helped you. It is the least we can do,” she said. “Safe travels.”

As I rode away, I pondered the strange reception. They had given me what little they had, knowing full well what I had done to the kingdom. The story of Rama’s exile would have reached them some time ago. Perhaps they had not realized how disfavored I was and feared for their lives if they did not show deference. Yes, that was it.

By nightfall, any concerns over their treatment of me had faded as I stared up at the sky. I did not deserve Nidra’s blessing and the peace of mind that came with it. Instead, I fought to keep my eyes open, and when they closed, I watched Yudhajit die behind my lids again and again. This was my legacy.

At last I reached Ayodhya.

I left the horse at the stable door and took the familiar route up to my rooms. As I climbed the steps to the women’s quarters, something dripped onto my hands. I looked up, bemused. Was it raining?

Only then did I feel the coolness against my cheeks and realize that I was crying. By the time I reached my rooms I was weeping, the first true tears I had cried for my brother. I did not understand what had sparked this, only that in my chest I could feel the deep hole his presence had left.

Somehow, word of my arrival at the stables must have gotten to Manthara before I did, because she was already

pouring water into a tub for a warm bath. I kept weeping as I stepped into it, and she scrubbed my hair as though I was a small child. The story came out of me in fits and starts, and she murmured soft reassurances to me. “It is not your fault. Hush. It is not your fault.”

But I knew better.

I spent the next day entirely in my bed. Asha brought me warm broth, and I drank it to make her feel better, for her worry was rolling off her in waves. Being back in Ayodhya reminded me only of my greater failures. I had failed the people of my kingdom, failed the women who would no longer be protected and the men who would die in pointless wars. I slept lightly on and off, my dreams the same as my waking thoughts, before slipping into a longer tortured rest.

The next morning, I awoke to rough hands pulling me out of bed. I did not struggle—perhaps they were soldiers, coming to execute me—but when I pried open my eyes it was just Manthara. She handed me a rough cotton sari, which I put on to avoid further argument. I had a strange sense that this had happened before, but could not place it. Once I had worn it, she grabbed me by the wrist and dragged me through the palace, out the servants’ gate, and into the streets of Ayodhya. She should not have had enough vigor in her aged body to pull me, but I could not bring myself to resist.

I kept my eyes on the ground, focusing on putting one foot in front of the other. When Manthara at last stopped, I fell into her, then righted myself, eyes still downcast. She placed two fingers under my chin and tipped my face up, forcing me to look at—

Ayodhya’s marketplace. I had not set foot here in over a year. At first, I could hardly take in the intensity of the sights, my eyes unfocused and watering in the bright sunlight.

But after a moment, my gaze fixed on one thing: a woman nearby, selling pots, haggling with a buyer.

“Watch, Kaikeyi,” Manthara whispered. “Just watch.”

And so I watched, even though the sight was a familiar one on the streets of Ayodhya. Something about it touched my heart, dampening the unshakable pain.

But then the relief passed, and I tore myself from Manthara's grip, shuffling back to the palace in shame.

That night I lay awake in bed, unable to get the pot seller out of my mind. Her firm posture, her smile—she was not unhappy or angry because her yuvraja was gone and the soldiers had marched out. She was earning her livelihood, and glad of it.

The next morning, Manthara, without asking, took me back to the market. Part of me felt like I did not deserve to see such things, but a larger part of me longed for that singular moment of peace again.

This time, my eyes were drawn to a group of girls, thick black braids down their backs, sitting alongside boys in the open-air market school under the shrine. An elderly man stood before them, pointing at one then the other to recite sums. One of the girls mouthed the answer to every question, confident in her abilities. Instead of averting my eyes, I watched greedily. They switched from sums to religious studies, something that women had once been forbidden from practicing. But still the girls sat there, learning the lessons.

Part of me expected one of Rama's men to come running, to stop them, to shout that I was a monster and so was all I touched. Nobody seemed to care. Rama had said that my influence on Ayodhya was poison, and after all that transpired, I had believed it. But this was not poison. It was a child, freer than her mother had been.

Each day for the next week, as Kosala's army made its slow march back to Ayodhya, I went out and watched the women. On one memorable occasion, I saw a man slouch toward a woman shopkeeper's stall and ask her something. She drew herself up, angry, and I approached them to better hear.

“You spent that money already?” she demanded. “I will not give you more.”

“I allow you to work here because I am generous,” the man said. “You owe me what you have earned.” My heart immediately jumped to my throat. What would this husband do to a wife who disobeyed him?

But the woman was not afraid. “I work here because you are lazy,” the woman shouted back. Other women were drifting toward the scene.

“Give me just a few coins,” the man said, and I realized he was begging her.

“Why?” the woman asked. “Where do you keep spending my hard-earned money?”

“Reena said she saw your husband enter one of the night-houses,” one of the watching women called out.

The woman gaped at her husband. “Is this true?”

He spun around and glared at the other woman. “What was Reena doing there?” he demanded.

“So it’s true, you do not deny it!” his wife shouted. “You ought to pay me back, you useless man. Do not think I will ever let you touch me again!” I could not help the smile that broke out across my face, although I tried to hide it behind a hand.

“You are my wife,” the man said, but I could tell the fight was going out of him. “You will do as I say.”

“You are a lazy good-for-nothing,” one of the women watching heckled. “Stop bothering her.”

One by one, the other women joined in, until the whole marketplace was giving this man his due. Even men were raising their voices.

The fact that the sages, that Sage Vamadeva, and therefore Rama, had cared at all about moments such as this seemed suddenly so absurd, I could not contain myself. I laughed so

hard I felt I could not breathe. And the other women were laughing too. I was just one voice in the chorus.

This was a changed Kosala. I had not prevented Yudhajit's death. I had caused my family great pain. But there were others besides the gods and the godsforsaken. Their paths were not set. And it seemed possible—no, with each passing day it seemed certain—that perhaps I had been able to change something after all.

I returned, day after day. I lurked near lessons, wandered among stalls, and even snuck my way into the treasury, watching young women my sisters and I had sent there sorting coins. I drank in every sight greedily. I was a desert wanderer who had happened at last upon an oasis.

I could not help these women anymore, but I did not need to. Now they helped me.

“Has this one caught your eye?” one woman asked me when I stared at the small clay horse displayed among her various dolls.

“My son had one like this,” I said. “When he was young.”

She gave me a smile. “My husband made my children toys like this when they were young too. When they got older, we decided to make them for others.”

“Do you like the work?” I asked, hungry to hear more of her story.

“Yes. He is a skilled craftsman, but if he tried to sell them, we would never sell a single ware. I love talking to people, and now our daughter has an excellent dowry.”

My heart was so full I thought I might cry, an absurd reaction to some children's toys. Instead, I bought the horse. I walked slowly back up the path to the palace, feeling for the first time in a long time that moving forward was not an impossible effort.

The door was open when I reached my room, and I entered warily, wondering if some servant had left it open or

something worse was afoot.

“Ma,” Bharata said from inside. I startled. I had not thought to hear my son’s voice again. He sounded choked. “I’m glad you are here. I worried when we couldn’t find you, but eventually we received word from the palace and I came as fast as I—” He took a deep breath, slowing the torrent of confusing words. “Can I speak with you?”

I stepped inside and closed the door. Bharata stood differently, his shoulders back and his posture confident. There was something in his bearing of his father, and of his uncle, even though the two men had looked nothing alike. I did not know what to say, and the lump in my throat grew painful.

“I am going to take the throne, Ma,” Bharata said after several moments of silence. “I know it may sound sudden after my insistence I would not, but I’ve realized the folly in what I did. Kosala needs peace, and stability. It needs what Father brought to the kingdom, with you by his side. I am so sorry it took this... Uncle’s... this tragedy for me to realize that.” He took another steadying breath. “But I am here, and I will listen to you now.”

I could not understand his words. I took two unsteady steps to a stool and sat down, the toy dangling from my numb fingers. Bharata’s eyes alighted on the little horse. “I had something like that, didn’t I? When I was young?” I nodded numbly. The reminder of who he had once been forced me to confront that this was real. I was not imagining this, and he was not making some terrible joke. He was standing before me saying these words with purpose.

I had assumed Rama’s control would be with him forever. But now, in the colorless world of the Plane, I found no trace of that bright blue. *Could it be?*

“Rama had one of these too,” I said. But no blue bond appeared. Bharata had somehow freed himself, all on his own. My heart stretched, beating fast, bursting with pride. But my head ached too, for if Bharata had only decided this a fortnight ago, my brother would still be alive. And yet it had taken my

brother's death for Bharata to realize his folly.

My thoughts circled in this way, until Bharata asked, uncertainly, "Ma?"

I shook myself from my stupor and found myself smiling, despite everything. The women of Kosala were strong. I could be too. "Do you really mean that?" I asked.

Bharata ducked his head. Gone was my mischievous, troublemaking child, and in his place was a young man who stood on his own. "I have said some horrible things to you. Things you did not deserve. I am ashamed, and I hope that one day you can forgive me. It was like I was a different person. But watching Uncle Yudhajit die, something in me just snapped."

I remembered then what he had done. "Is Shatrugna—"

"The healers say Shatrugna will recover, but I hurt him badly."

I wanted to tell him, *You did the right thing*, but what I really meant was that half of me wanted Shatrugna to pay the ultimate price for what he had done and part of me couldn't bear to see him hurt at all, and in the end, Bharata's punishment seemed just. "And all of a sudden you have realized the error of your ways?" I asked, trying to infuse some kindness into the harsh words.

"Yes. I am so sorry." The Binding Plane pulsed with the sincerity of his words.

By never using the Binding Plane around my sons, I had missed the signs of Rama's godhood. That mistake had cost me Rama. Lakshmana had been taken from me too. In every step, trying to protect my children, I had failed them. But now, in the Binding Plane, I had one son back. My throat swelled with the knowledge that Bharata was really here, talking to me. He loved me. "I regret what I did. I know you may never forgive me, but—"

"Of course I forgive you," I interrupted.

“How—”

“I am your mother,” I said simply. “All I ever want is what is best for you and the kingdom. It seemed that you were the one unwilling to forgive me for what I had done. But I did it to protect you, to protect us all.”

“You wanted to avoid this,” Bharata said softly.

“Yes.”

“I know I can’t fix what has happened. But I want to be the ruler you meant for me to be. I have been up all night thinking, preparing. In a few days’ time, we will perform the rites to bless my reign, for I want to take all the correct steps. The gods have not smiled on Kosala for some time now.”

I did not dispute that at all. Kosala had become a pawn of the gods. But now, I thought the gods might leave us alone, busy following Rama’s adventures instead. And that would be far better than their blessing. “That is a good idea,” I said. “I did not think anything would change your mind.”

“I should have listened to you,” Bharata said again. “It was a mistake not to before, but I am going to fix that. I am going to fix the rift in our kingdom. And I cannot do it without you. Will you help me?”

In front of me stretched the years of Bharata’s reign. The people of Kosala, standing together, powerful and safe. Their paths forever altered, stretching toward a future of peace. I could even advise Bharata, but that power mattered little to me. Kaushalya could do it just as well. What truly warmed my heart was the idea that if I spoke, Bharata would listen to me. I would have my people back. I could not help Rama, I could not even stop him, but I could do this. I could have this. “Of course,” I said. “Whatever you need.”

Bharata smiled then, tired but genuine, and leaned in to embrace me. Everything else faded away as I held my child in my arms. “Everything will be better now,” he said in my ear, and I believed him. “I promise I will make you proud.”

EPILOGUE



SOME YEARS LATER, I stand alone at the banks of the Sarasvati River.

I am returning to Ayodhya after nearly three moons in Kekaya. Bharata and I traveled here together, but he departed before me to attend to his duties, while I lingered with my living brothers.

On our journey to Kekaya, he and I crossed the river without fanfare. But now, alone, something compels me to stop several paces downstream of the bridge. I remove my shoes and roll up my comfortable riding breeches to wade into the shallows. The current washes over my feet, a pleasant change from hours of riding. A refreshing breeze blows across the river, almost welcoming. Perhaps Sarasvati is watching me.

“I suppose you are right,” I say. “In the end, I have always been concerned with mortal affairs. But the fact that they were mortal did not make them small. Nor did it make me wrong.”

Behind me, birds chirp in the forest. The river continues down its course, unceasing.

Have I ever been happy here before? I felt alone, abandoned when I came as a child. When I crossed it for the first time as a new bride, I was devastated at the loss of my brother’s friendship. But I had been hopeful then too. I stood on the banks with Rama, fear penetrating my core so deeply that I could hardly breathe. And when Bharata and I made our desperate dash to my father’s bedside, my thoughts were consumed with what I left behind in Ayodhya. Even when I knew I was forsaken, even when the gods helped to tear my

family apart, I wanted the comfort of her approval, and she had always disappointed.

But now I stand at the banks of the Sarasvati River, at peace without her. The years have blunted the loss of Yudhajit and Dasharath, so that it is no longer all-consuming. Yudhajit made his choices. I played a hand in his death, but it was not my fault. If not for his pride, he might have convinced his people that war was not necessary. He might have showed his sister more trust and respect.

Rama too made his own choices, to trust the voices of strangers, of a poisonous madman, over that of his mother. He sought my counsel, then discarded it when I did not say what he wished to hear. No words of mine would have made a difference.

I have heard he stands just across the ocean from Lanka, preparing for war with Ravana, Lakshmana at his side. I cannot pretend to know every detail of what has transpired between them. Ravana's missives ended shortly after he took Sita with him to Lanka. I hope she has been happy there, but I cannot honestly know—Ravana's final letters were not those of the kind man I first met, but that of a man—an asura—readying for unnecessary war.

Rama's march to the sea has taken years, and I have heard he has cleansed the world of evil in his path, has deposed false kings and installed the righteous back to power. He has, to hear it told, befriended giant vultures and won the allegiance of the monkey people. I know too how this will end: Rama will defeat Ravana and will return home victorious. His path has taken him longer than he might have wished; I doubt he will return at the end of his ten years, only a few months from now. But when he takes the throne, three or four years hence, he will be even more beloved than when he left.

And perhaps it will not be so bad. Even with Rama, change is possible. The boons have, in their own way, worked magic. For I have heard from several people that Rama on his travels found a woman made of stone, and with his divine touch freed

her. The letters say this woman took Rama into her home, overgrown with plants and time, and washed his feet. That he asked her questions of her life, of how she came to be stone, and he listened to her answers. That he blessed her before he left and wished her a long and happy life.

Maybe the passage of the years has done its work, and that free of the influence of others Rama has matured into the man I always wished him to be. I must hope for it, because I have read enough scrolls to know that one day these events will be Rama's alone. The sages will tell of a righteous prince who cleansed the world of asuras, and perhaps deign to mention his heartless mother who exiled him.

A small part of me wonders if I should pray, perhaps for knowledge of Sita or Lakshmana or Rama, or perhaps simply for a blessing. Instead, I watch the sunlight reflect off the running water, bright diamonds of light that glint and fall and glint again. A brilliant blue-green fish jumps, creating small ripples in the current. No goddess emerges from the depths.

I give a slight laugh, then, for what else had I expected?

"I suppose some things never change," I say to the water.

Then I walk away, toward my horse, and my son, and my kingdom. I am at peace, for I know the truth.

Before this story was Rama's, it was mine.

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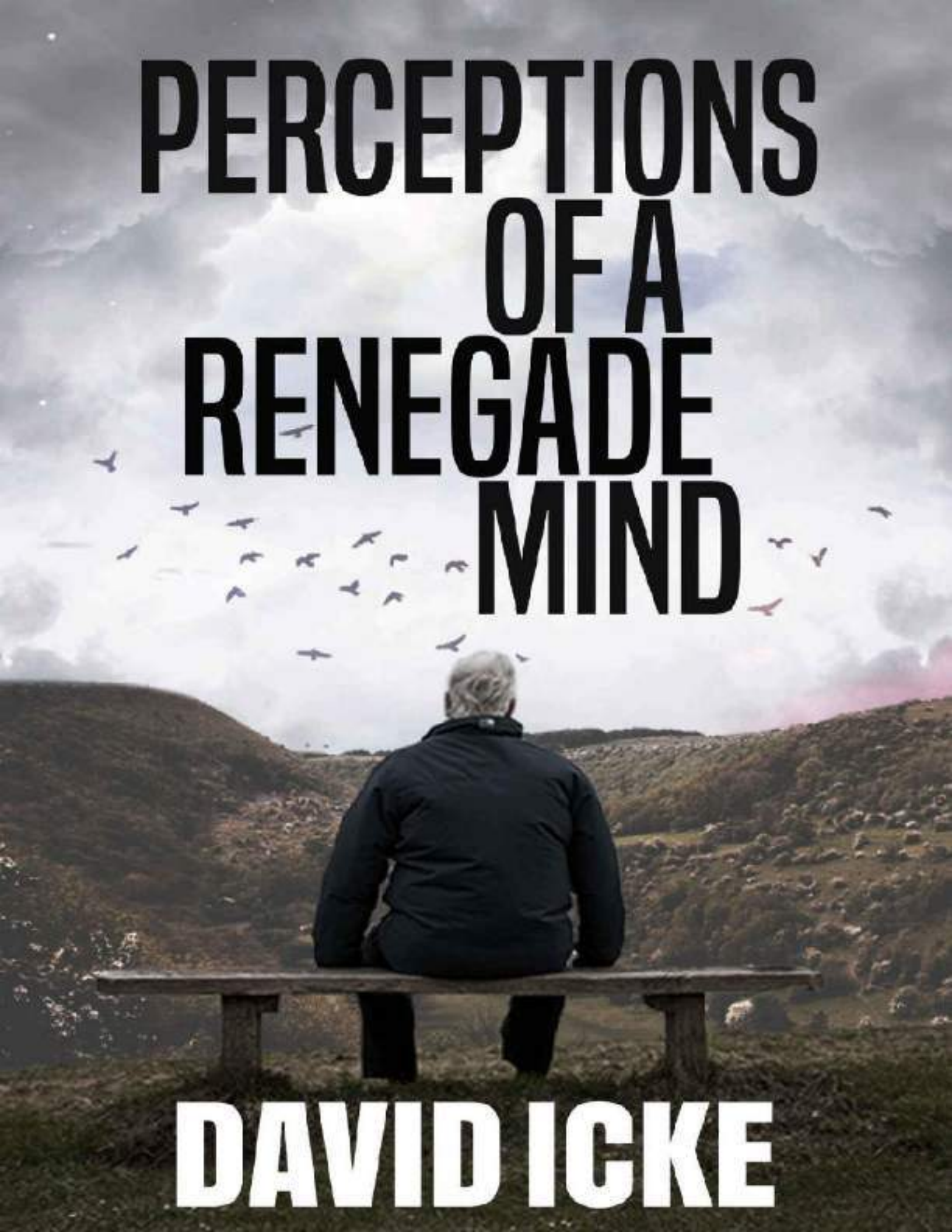
And Ananya, the best sister a girl could ask for. I owe you much more than a few lines in the acknowledgments. I am a published author because of you. Your loyalty and generosity have not gone unnoticed. You have made me a better person. I love you.

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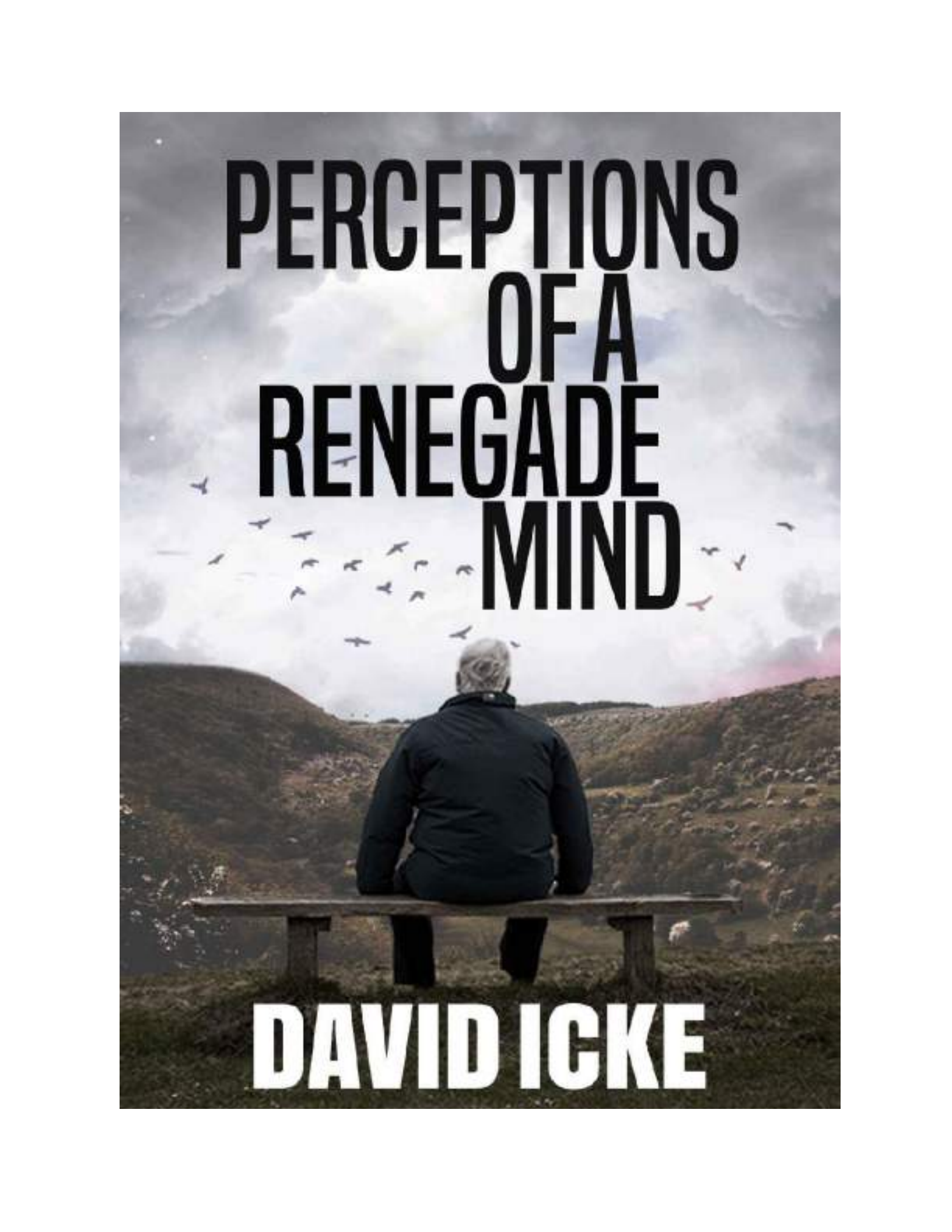
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A person with grey hair, wearing a dark jacket, is seen from behind, sitting on a wooden bench. They are looking out over a vast, open landscape of rolling hills under a cloudy sky. Numerous birds are flying in the air, scattered across the upper half of the image. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

PERCEPTIONS OF A RENEGADE MIND

DAVID ICKE



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**PERCEPTIONS
OF A
RENEGADE
MIND**

A flock of small, dark birds is scattered around the bottom half of the title text, appearing to fly in various directions.

DAVID ICKE

Dedication:

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Renegade:

Adjective

'Having rejected tradition: Unconventional.'

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Acquiescence to tyranny is the death of the spirit

You may be 38 years old, as I happen to be. And one day, some great opportunity stands before you and calls you to stand up for some great principle, some great issue, some great cause. And you refuse to do it because you are afraid ... You refuse to do it because you want to live longer ... You're afraid that you will lose your job, or you are afraid that you will be criticised or that you will lose your popularity, or you're afraid that somebody will stab you, or shoot at you or bomb your house; so you refuse to take the stand.

Well, you may go on and live until you are 90, but you're just as dead at 38 as you would be at 90. And the cessation of breathing in your life is but the belated announcement of an earlier death of the spirit.

Martin Luther King

**How the few control the many and always have – the many do
whatever they're told**

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the soldier knew
Someone had blundered.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
Rode the six hundred

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

The mist is lifting slowly
I can see the way ahead
And I've left behind the empty streets
That once inspired my life
And the strength of the emotion
Is like thunder in the air
'Cos the promise that we made each other
Haunts me to the end

The secret of your beauty
And the mystery of your soul
I've been searching for in everyone I meet
And the times I've been mistaken
It's impossible to say
And the grass is growing
Underneath our feet

The words that I remember
From my childhood still are true
That there's none so blind
As those who will not see
And to those who lack the courage
And say it's dangerous to try
Well they just don't know
That love eternal will not be denied

I know you're out there somewhere
Somewhere, somewhere
I know you're out there somewhere

Somewhere you can hear my voice
I know I'll find you somehow
Somehow, somehow
I know I'll find you somehow
And somehow I'll return again to you

The Moody Blues

Are you a gutless wonder - or a Renegade Mind?

Monuments put from pen to paper,
Turns me into a gutless wonder,
And if you tolerate this,
Then your children will be next.
Gravity keeps my head down,
Or is it maybe shame ...

Manic Street Preachers

Rise like lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number.
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep have fallen on you.
Ye are many – they are few.

Percy Shelley

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CHAPTER ONE

I'm thinking' – Oh, but *are* you?

Think for yourself and let others enjoy the privilege of doing so too
Voltaire

French-born philosopher, mathematician and scientist René Descartes became famous for his statement in Latin in the 17th century which translates into English as: 'I think, therefore I am.'

On the face of it that is true. Thought reflects perception and perception leads to both behaviour and self-identity. In that sense 'we' are what we think. But who or what is doing the thinking and is thinking the only route to perception? Clearly, as we shall see, 'we' are not always the source of 'our' perception, indeed with regard to humanity as a whole this is rarely the case; and thinking is far from the only means of perception. Thought is the village idiot compared with other expressions of consciousness that we all have the potential to access and tap into. This has to be true when we *are* those other expressions of consciousness which are infinite in nature. We have forgotten this, or, more to the point, been manipulated to forget.

These are not just the esoteric musings of the navel. The whole foundation of human control and oppression is control of perception. Once perception is hijacked then so is behaviour which is dictated by perception. Collective perception becomes collective behaviour and collective behaviour is what we call human society. Perception is all and those behind human control know that which is

why perception is the target 24/7 of the psychopathic manipulators that I call the Global Cult. They know that if they dictate perception they will dictate behaviour and collectively dictate the nature of human society. They are further aware that perception is formed from information received and if they control the circulation of information they will to a vast extent direct human behaviour. Censorship of information and opinion has become globally Nazi-like in recent years and never more blatantly than since the illusory 'virus pandemic' was triggered out of China in 2019 and across the world in 2020. Why have billions submitted to house arrest and accepted fascistic societies in a way they would have never believed possible? Those controlling the information spewing from government, mainstream media and Silicon Valley (all controlled by the same Global Cult networks) told them they were in danger from a 'deadly virus' and only by submitting to house arrest and conceding their most basic of freedoms could they and their families be protected. This monumental and provable lie became the *perception* of the billions and therefore the *behaviour* of the billions. In those few words you have the whole structure and modus operandi of human control. Fear is a perception – False Emotion Appearing Real – and fear is the currency of control. In short ... get them by the balls (or give them the impression that you have) and their hearts and minds will follow. Nothing grips the dangly bits and freezes the rear-end more comprehensively than fear.

World number 1

There are two 'worlds' in what appears to be one 'world' and the prime difference between them is knowledge. First we have the mass of human society in which the population is maintained in coldly-calculated ignorance through control of information and the 'education' (indoctrination) system. That's all you really need to control to enslave billions in a perceptual delusion in which what are perceived to be *their* thoughts and opinions are ever-repeated mantras that the system has been downloading all their lives through 'education', media, science, medicine, politics and academia

in which the personnel and advocates are themselves overwhelmingly the perceptual products of the same repetition. Teachers and academics in general are processed by the same programming machine as everyone else, but unlike the great majority they never leave the 'education' program. It gripped them as students and continues to grip them as programmers of subsequent generations of students. The programmed become the programmers – the programmed programmers. The same can largely be said for scientists, doctors and politicians and not least because as the American writer Upton Sinclair said: 'It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.' If your career and income depend on thinking the way the system demands then you will – bar a few free-minded exceptions – concede your mind to the Perceptual Mainframe that I call the Postage Stamp Consensus. This is a tiny band of perceived knowledge and possibility 'taught' (downloaded) in the schools and universities, pounded out by the mainstream media and on which all government policy is founded. Try thinking, and especially speaking and acting, outside of the 'box' of consensus and see what that does for your career in the Mainstream Everything which bullies, harasses, intimidates and ridicules the population into compliance. Here we have the simple structure which enslaves most of humanity in a perceptual prison cell for an entire lifetime and I'll go deeper into this process shortly. Most of what humanity is taught as fact is nothing more than programmed belief. American science fiction author Frank Herbert was right when he said: 'Belief can be manipulated. Only knowledge is dangerous.' In the 'Covid' age belief is promoted and knowledge is censored. It was always so, but never to the extreme of today.

World number 2

A 'number 2' is slang for 'doing a poo' and how appropriate that is when this other 'world' is doing just that on humanity every minute of every day. World number 2 is a global network of secret societies and semi-secret groups dictating the direction of society via

governments, corporations and authorities of every kind. I have spent more than 30 years uncovering and exposing this network that I call the Global Cult and knowing its agenda is what has made my books so accurate in predicting current and past events. Secret societies are secret for a reason. They want to keep their hoarded knowledge to themselves and their chosen initiates and to hide it from the population which they seek through ignorance to control and subdue. The whole foundation of the division between World 1 and World 2 is *knowledge*. What number 1 knows number 2 must not. Knowledge they have worked so hard to keep secret includes (a) the agenda to enslave humanity in a centrally-controlled global dictatorship, and (b) the nature of reality and life itself. The latter (b) must be suppressed to allow the former (a) to prevail as I shall be explaining. The way the Cult manipulates and interacts with the population can be likened to a spider's web. The 'spider' sits at the centre in the shadows and imposes its will through the web with each strand represented in World number 2 by a secret society, satanic or semi-secret group, and in World number 1 – the world of the seen – by governments, agencies of government, law enforcement, corporations, the banking system, media conglomerates and Silicon Valley (Fig 1 overleaf). The spider and the web connect and coordinate all these organisations to pursue the same global outcome while the population sees them as individual entities working randomly and independently. At the level of the web governments *are* the banking system *are* the corporations *are* the media *are* Silicon Valley *are* the World Health Organization working from their inner cores as one unit. Apparently unconnected countries, corporations, institutions, organisations and people are on the *same team* pursuing the same global outcome. Strands in the web immediately around the spider are the most secretive and exclusive secret societies and their membership is emphatically restricted to the Cult inner-circle emerging through the generations from particular bloodlines for reasons I will come to. At the core of the core you would get them in a single room. That's how many people are dictating the direction of human society and its transformation

through the 'Covid' hoax and other means. As the web expands out from the spider we meet the secret societies that many people will be aware of – the Freemasons, Knights Templar, Knights of Malta, Opus Dei, the inner sanctum of the Jesuit Order, and such like. Note how many are connected to the Church of Rome and there is a reason for that. The Roman Church was established as a revamp, a rebranding, of the relocated 'Church' of Babylon and the Cult imposing global tyranny today can be tracked back to Babylon and Sumer in what is now Iraq.



Figure 1: The global web through which the few control the many. (Image Neil Hague.)

Inner levels of the web operate in the unseen away from the public eye and then we have what I call the cusp organisations located at the point where the hidden meets the seen. They include a series of satellite organisations answering to a secret society founded in London in the late 19th century called the Round Table and among them are the Royal Institute of International Affairs (UK, founded in 1920); Council on Foreign Relations (US, 1921); Bilderberg Group (worldwide, 1954); Trilateral Commission (US/worldwide, 1972); and the Club of Rome (worldwide, 1968) which was created to exploit environmental concerns to justify the centralisation of global power to 'save the planet'. The Club of Rome instigated with others the human-caused climate change hoax which has led to all the 'green

new deals' demanding that very centralisation of control. Cusp organisations, which include endless 'think tanks' all over the world, are designed to coordinate a single global policy between political and business leaders, intelligence personnel, media organisations and anyone who can influence the direction of policy in their own sphere of operation. Major players and regular attenders will know what is happening – or some of it – while others come and go and are kept overwhelmingly in the dark about the big picture. I refer to these cusp groupings as semi-secret in that they can be publicly identified, but what goes on at the inner-core is kept very much 'in house' even from most of their members and participants through a fiercely-imposed system of compartmentalisation. Only let them know what they need to know to serve your interests and no more. The structure of secret societies serves as a perfect example of this principle. Most Freemasons never get higher than the bottom three levels of 'degree' (degree of knowledge) when there are 33 official degrees of the Scottish Rite. Initiates only qualify for the next higher 'compartment' or degree if those at that level choose to allow them. Knowledge can be carefully assigned only to those considered 'safe'. I went to my local Freemason's lodge a few years ago when they were having an 'open day' to show how cuddly they were and when I chatted to some of them I was astonished at how little the rank and file knew even about the most ubiquitous symbols they use. The mushroom technique – keep them in the dark and feed them bullshit – applies to most people in the web as well as the population as a whole. Sub-divisions of the web mirror in theme and structure transnational corporations which have a headquarters somewhere in the world dictating to all their subsidiaries in different countries. Subsidiaries operate in their methodology and branding to the same centrally-dictated plan and policy in pursuit of particular ends. The Cult web functions in the same way. Each country has its own web as a subsidiary of the global one. They consist of networks of secret societies, semi-secret groups and bloodline families and their job is to impose the will of the spider and the global web in their particular country. Subsidiary networks control and manipulate the national political system, finance, corporations, media, medicine, etc. to

ensure that they follow the globally-dictated Cult agenda. These networks were the means through which the 'Covid' hoax could be played out with almost every country responding in the same way.

The 'Yessir' pyramid

Compartmentalisation is the key to understanding how a tiny few can dictate the lives of billions when combined with a top-down sequence of imposition and acquiescence. The inner core of the Cult sits at the peak of the pyramidal hierarchy of human society (Fig 2 overleaf). It imposes its will – its agenda for the world – on the level immediately below which acquiesces to that imposition. This level then imposes the Cult will on the level below them which acquiesces and imposes on the next level. Very quickly we meet levels in the hierarchy that have no idea there even is a Cult, but the sequence of imposition and acquiescence continues down the pyramid in just the same way. 'I don't know why we are doing this but the order came from "on-high" and so we better just do it.' Alfred Lord Tennyson said of the cannon fodder levels in his poem *The Charge of the Light Brigade*: 'Theirs not to reason why; theirs but to do and die.' The next line says that 'into the valley of death rode the six hundred' and they died because they obeyed without question what their perceived 'superiors' told them to do. In the same way the population capitulated to 'Covid'. The whole hierarchical pyramid functions like this to allow the very few to direct the enormous many.

Eventually imposition-acquiescence-imposition-acquiescence comes down to the mass of the population at the foot of the pyramid. If they acquiesce to those levels of the hierarchy imposing on them (governments/law enforcement/doctors/media) a circuit is completed between the population and the handful of super-psychopaths in the Cult inner core at the top of the pyramid. Without a circuit-breaking refusal to obey, the sequence of imposition and acquiescence allows a staggeringly few people to impose their will upon the entirety of humankind. We are looking at the very sequence that has subjugated billions since the start of 2020. Our freedom has not been taken from us. Humanity has given it

away. Fascists do not impose fascism because there are not enough of them. Fascism is imposed by the population acquiescing to fascism. Put another way allowing their perceptions to be programmed to the extent that leads to the population giving their freedom away by giving their perceptions – their mind – away. If this circuit is not broken by humanity ceasing to cooperate with their own enslavement then nothing can change. For that to happen people have to critically think and see through the lies and window dressing and then summon the backbone to act upon what they see. The Cult spends its days working to stop either happening and its methodology is systematic and highly detailed, but it can be overcome and that is what this book is all about.

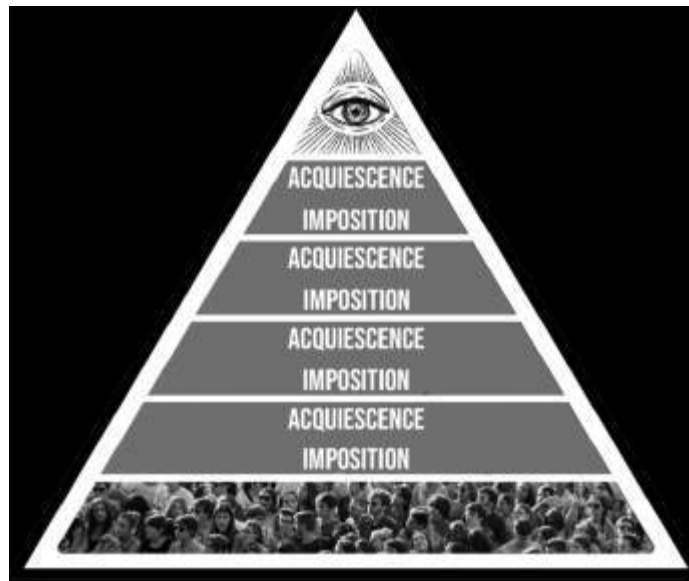


Figure 2: The simple sequence of imposition and compliance that allows a handful of people at the peak of the pyramid to dictate the lives of billions.

The Life Program

Okay, back to world number 1 or the world of the ‘masses’. Observe the process of what we call ‘life’ and it is a perceptual download from cradle to grave. The Cult has created a global structure in which perception can be programmed and the program continually topped-up with what appears to be constant confirmation that the program is indeed true reality. The important word here is ‘appears’.

This is the structure, the fly-trap, the Postage Stamp Consensus or Perceptual Mainframe, which represents that incredibly narrow band of perceived possibility delivered by the 'education' system, mainstream media, science and medicine. From the earliest age the download begins with parents who have themselves succumbed to the very programming their children are about to go through. Most parents don't do this out of malevolence and mostly it is quite the opposite. They do what they believe is best for their children and that is what the program has told them is best. Within three or four years comes the major transition from parental programming to full-blown state (Cult) programming in school, college and university where perceptually-programmed teachers and academics pass on their programming to the next generations. Teachers who resist are soon marginalised and their careers ended while children who resist are called a problem child for whom Ritalin may need to be prescribed. A few years after entering the 'world' children are under the control of authority figures representing the state telling them when they have to be there, when they can leave and when they can speak, eat, even go to the toilet. This is calculated preparation for a lifetime of obeying authority in all its forms. Reflex-action fear of authority is instilled by authority from the start. Children soon learn the carrot and stick consequences of obeying or defying authority which is underpinned daily for the rest of their life. Fortunately I daydreamed through this crap and never obeyed authority simply because it told me to. This approach to my alleged 'betters' continues to this day. There can be consequences of pursuing open-minded freedom in a world of closed-minded conformity. I spent a lot of time in school corridors after being ejected from the classroom for not taking some of it seriously and now I spend a lot of time being ejected from Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. But I can tell you that being true to yourself and not compromising your self-respect is far more exhilarating than bowing to authority for authority's sake. You don't have to be a sheep to the shepherd (authority) and the sheep dog (fear of not obeying authority).

The perceptual download continues throughout the formative years in school, college and university while script-reading 'teachers', 'academics' 'scientists', 'doctors' and 'journalists' insist that ongoing generations must be as programmed as they are. Accept the program or you will not pass your 'exams' which confirm your 'degree' of programming. It is tragic to think that many parents pressure their offspring to work hard at school to download the program and qualify for the next stage at college and university. The late, great, American comedian George Carlin said: 'Here's a bumper sticker I'd like to see: We are proud parents of a child who has resisted his teachers' attempts to break his spirit and bend him to the will of his corporate masters.' Well, the best of luck finding many of those, George. Then comes the moment to leave the formal programming years in academia and enter the 'adult' world of work. There you meet others in your chosen or prescribed arena who went through the same Postage Stamp Consensus program before you did. There is therefore overwhelming agreement between almost everyone on the basic foundations of Postage Stamp reality and the rejection, even contempt, of the few who have a mind of their own and are prepared to use it. This has two major effects. Firstly, the consensus confirms to the programmed that their download is really how things are. I mean, everyone knows that, right? Secondly, the arrogance and ignorance of Postage Stamp adherents ensure that anyone questioning the program will have unpleasant consequences for seeking their own truth and not picking their perceptions from the shelf marked: 'Things you must believe without question and if you don't you're a dangerous lunatic conspiracy theorist and a harebrained nutter'.

Every government, agency and corporation is founded on the same Postage Stamp prison cell and you can see why so many people believe the same thing while calling it their own 'opinion'. Fusion of governments and corporations in pursuit of the same agenda was the definition of fascism described by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. The pressure to conform to perceptual norms downloaded for a lifetime is incessant and infiltrates society right

down to family groups that become censors and condemners of their own 'black sheep' for not, ironically, being sheep. We have seen an explosion of that in the 'Covid' era. Cult-owned global media unleashes its propaganda all day every day in support of the Postage Stamp and targets with abuse and ridicule anyone in the public eye who won't bend their mind to the will of the tyranny. Any response to this is denied (certainly in my case). They don't want to give a platform to expose official lies. Cult-owned-and-created Internet giants like Facebook, Google, YouTube and Twitter delete you for having an unapproved opinion. Facebook boasts that its AI censors delete 97-percent of 'hate speech' before anyone even reports it. Much of that 'hate speech' will simply be an opinion that Facebook and its masters don't want people to see. Such perceptual oppression is widely known as fascism. Even Facebook executive Benny Thomas, a 'CEO Global Planning Lead', said in comments secretly recorded by investigative journalism operation Project Veritas that Facebook is 'too powerful' and should be broken up:

I mean, no king in history has been the ruler of two billion people, but Mark Zuckerberg is ... And he's 36. That's too much for a 36-year-old ... You should not have power over two billion people. I just think that's wrong.

Thomas said Facebook-owned platforms like Instagram, Oculus, and WhatsApp needed to be separate companies. 'It's too much power when they're all one together'. That's the way the Cult likes it, however. We have an executive of a Cult organisation in Benny Thomas that doesn't know there is a Cult such is the compartmentalisation. Thomas said that Facebook and Google 'are no longer companies, they're countries'. Actually they are more powerful than countries on the basis that if you control information you control perception and control human society.

I love my oppressor

Another expression of this psychological trickery is for those who realise they are being pressured into compliance to eventually

convince themselves to believe the official narratives to protect their self-respect from accepting the truth that they have succumbed to meek and subservient compliance. Such people become some of the most vehement defenders of the system. You can see them everywhere screaming abuse at those who prefer to think for themselves and by doing so reminding the compliers of their own capitulation to conformity. 'You are talking dangerous nonsense you Covidiot!!' Are you trying to convince me or yourself? It is a potent form of Stockholm syndrome which is defined as: 'A psychological condition that occurs when a victim of abuse identifies and attaches, or bonds, positively with their abuser.' An example is hostages bonding and even 'falling in love' with their kidnappers. The syndrome has been observed in domestic violence, abused children, concentration camp inmates, prisoners of war and many and various Satanic cults. These are some traits of Stockholm syndrome listed at goodtherapy.org:

- Positive regard towards perpetrators of abuse or captor [see 'Covid'].
- Failure to cooperate with police and other government authorities when it comes to holding perpetrators of abuse or kidnapping accountable [or in the case of 'Covid' cooperating with the police to enforce and defend their captors' demands].
- Little or no effort to escape [see 'Covid'].
- Belief in the goodness of the perpetrators or kidnappers [see 'Covid'].
- Appeasement of captors. This is a manipulative strategy for maintaining one's safety. As victims get rewarded – perhaps with less abuse or even with life itself – their appeasing behaviours are reinforced [see 'Covid'].
- Learned helplessness. This can be akin to 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em'. As the victims fail to escape the abuse or captivity, they may start giving up and soon realize it's just easier for everyone if they acquiesce all their power to their captors [see 'Covid'].

- Feelings of pity toward the abusers, believing they are actually victims themselves. Because of this, victims may go on a crusade or mission to 'save' [protect] their abuser [see the venom unleashed on those challenging the official 'Covid' narrative].
- Unwillingness to learn to detach from their perpetrators and heal. In essence, victims may tend to be less loyal to themselves than to their abuser [*definitely* see 'Covid'].

Ponder on those traits and compare them with the behaviour of great swathes of the global population who have defended governments and authorities which have spent every minute destroying their lives and livelihoods and those of their children and grandchildren since early 2020 with fascistic lockdowns, house arrest and employment deletion to 'protect' them from a 'deadly virus' that their abusers' perceptually created to bring about this very outcome. We are looking at mass Stockholm syndrome. All those that agree to concede their freedom will believe those perceptions are originating in their own independent 'mind' when in fact by conceding their reality to Stockholm syndrome they have by definition conceded any independence of mind. Listen to the 'opinions' of the acquiescing masses in this 'Covid' era and what gushes forth is the repetition of the official version of everything delivered unprocessed, unfiltered and unquestioned. The whole programming dynamic works this way. I must be free because I'm told that I am and so I think that I am.

You can see what I mean with the chapter theme of 'I'm thinking – Oh, but *are* you?' The great majority are not thinking, let alone for themselves. They are repeating what authority has told them to believe which allows them to be controlled. Weaving through this mentality is the fear that the 'conspiracy theorists' are right and this again explains the often hysterical abuse that ensues when you dare to contest the official narrative of anything. Denial is the mechanism of hiding from yourself what you don't want to be true. Telling people what they want to hear is easy, but it's an infinitely greater challenge to tell them what they would rather not be happening.

One is akin to pushing against an open door while the other is met with vehement resistance no matter what the scale of evidence. I don't want it to be true so I'll convince myself that it's not. Examples are everywhere from the denial that a partner is cheating despite all the signs to the reflex-action rejection of any idea that world events in which country after country act in exactly the same way are centrally coordinated. To accept the latter is to accept that a force of unspeakable evil is working to destroy your life and the lives of your children with nothing too horrific to achieve that end. Who the heck wants that to be true? But if we don't face reality the end is duly achieved and the consequences are far worse and ongoing than breaking through the walls of denial today with the courage to make a stand against tyranny.

Connect the dots – but how?

A crucial aspect of perceptual programming is to portray a world in which everything is random and almost nothing is connected to anything else. Randomness cannot be coordinated by its very nature and once you perceive events as random the idea they could be connected is waved away as the rantings of the tinfoil-hat brigade. You can't plan and coordinate random you idiot! No, you can't, but you can hide the coldly-calculated and long-planned behind the *illusion* of randomness. A foundation manifestation of the Renegade Mind is to scan reality for patterns that connect the apparently random and turn pixels and dots into pictures. This is the way I work and have done so for more than 30 years. You look for similarities in people, modus operandi and desired outcomes and slowly, then ever quicker, the picture forms. For instance: There would seem to be no connection between the 'Covid pandemic' hoax and the human-caused global-warming hoax and yet they are masks (appropriately) on the same face seeking the same outcome. Those pushing the global warming myth through the Club of Rome and other Cult agencies are driving the lies about 'Covid' – Bill Gates is an obvious one, but they are endless. Why would the same people be involved in both when they are clearly not connected? Oh, but they

are. Common themes with personnel are matched by common goals. The 'solutions' to both 'problems' are centralisation of global power to impose the will of the few on the many to 'save' humanity from 'Covid' and save the planet from an 'existential threat' (we need 'zero Covid' and 'zero carbon emissions'). These, in turn, connect with the 'dot' of globalisation which was coined to describe the centralisation of global power in every area of life through incessant political and corporate expansion, trading blocks and superstates like the European Union. If you are the few and you want to control the many you have to centralise power and decision-making. The more you centralise power the more power the few at the centre will have over the many; and the more that power is centralised the more power those at the centre have to centralise even quicker. The momentum of centralisation gets faster and faster which is exactly the process we have witnessed. In this way the hoaxed 'pandemic' and the fakery of human-caused global warming serve the interests of globalisation and the seizure of global power in the hands of the Cult inner-circle which is behind 'Covid', 'climate change' and globalisation. At this point random 'dots' become a clear and obvious picture or pattern.

Klaus Schwab, the classic Bond villain who founded the Cult's Gates-funded World Economic Forum, published a book in 2020, *The Great Reset*, in which he used the 'problem' of 'Covid' to justify a total transformation of human society to 'save' humanity from 'climate change'. Schwab said: 'The pandemic represents a rare but narrow window of opportunity to reflect, reimagine, and reset our world.' What he didn't mention is that the Cult he serves is behind both hoaxes as I show in my book *The Answer*. He and the Cult don't have to reimagine the world. They know precisely what they want and that's why they destroyed human society with 'Covid' to 'build back better' in their grand design. Their job is not to imagine, but to get humanity to imagine and agree with their plans while believing it's all random. It must be pure coincidence that 'The Great Reset' has long been the Cult's code name for the global imposition of fascism and replaced previous code-names of the 'New World

Order' used by Cult frontmen like Father George Bush and the 'New Order of the Ages' which emerged from Freemasonry and much older secret societies. New Order of the Ages appears on the reverse of the Great Seal of the United States as 'Novus ordo seclorum' underneath the Cult symbol used since way back of the pyramid and all seeing-eye (Fig 3). The pyramid is the hierarchy of human control headed by the illuminated eye that symbolises the force behind the Cult which I will expose in later chapters. The term 'Annuet Coeptis' translates as 'He favours our undertaking'. We are told the 'He' is the Christian god, but 'He' is not as I will be explaining.



Figure 3: The all-seeing eye of the Cult 'god' on the Freemason-designed Great Seal of the United States and also on the dollar bill.

Having you on

Two major Cult techniques of perceptual manipulation that relate to all this are what I have called since the 1990s Problem-Reaction-Solution (PRS) and the Totalitarian Tiptoe (TT). They can be uncovered by the inquiring mind with a simple question: Who benefits? The answer usually identifies the perpetrators of a given action or happening through the concept of 'he who most benefits from a crime is the one most likely to have committed it'. The Latin 'Cue bono?' – Who benefits? – is widely attributed to the Roman orator and statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero. No wonder it goes back so far when the concept has been relevant to human behaviour since

history was recorded. Problem-Reaction-Solution is the technique used to manipulate us every day by covertly creating a problem (or the illusion of one) and offering the solution to the problem (or the illusion of one). In the first phase you create the problem and blame someone or something else for why it has happened. This may relate to a financial collapse, terrorist attack, war, global warming or pandemic, anything in fact that will allow you to impose the 'solution' to change society in the way you desire at that time. The 'problem' doesn't have to be real. PRS is manipulation of perception and all you need is the population to believe the problem is real. Human-caused global warming and the 'Covid pandemic' only have to be *perceived* to be real for the population to accept the 'solutions' of authority. I refer to this technique as NO-Problem-Reaction-Solution. Billions did not meekly accept house arrest from early 2020 because there was a real deadly 'Covid pandemic' but because they perceived – believed – that to be the case. The antidote to Problem-Reaction-Solution is to ask who benefits from the proposed solution. Invariably it will be anyone who wants to justify more control through deletion of freedom and centralisation of power and decision-making.

The two world wars were Problem-Reaction-Solutions that transformed and realigned global society. Both were manipulated into being by the Cult as I have detailed in books since the mid-1990s. They dramatically centralised global power, especially World War Two, which led to the United Nations and other global bodies thanks to the overt and covert manipulations of the Rockefeller family and other Cult bloodlines like the Rothschilds. The UN is a stalking horse for full-blown world government that I will come to shortly. The land on which the UN building stands in New York was donated by the Rockefellers and the same Cult family was behind Big Pharma scalpel and drug 'medicine' and the creation of the World Health Organization as part of the UN. They have been stalwarts of the eugenics movement and funded Hitler's race-purity expert' Ernst Rudin. The human-caused global warming hoax has been orchestrated by the Club of Rome through the UN which is

manufacturing both the 'problem' through its Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and imposing the 'solution' through its Agenda 21 and Agenda 2030 which demand the total centralisation of global power to 'save the world' from a climate hoax the United Nations is itself perpetrating. What a small world the Cult can be seen to be particularly among the inner circles. The bedfellow of Problem-Reaction-Solution is the Totalitarian Tiptoe which became the Totalitarian Sprint in 2020. The technique is fashioned to hide the carefully-coordinated behind the cover of apparently random events. You start the sequence at 'A' and you know you are heading for 'Z'. You don't want people to know that and each step on the journey is presented as a random happening while all the steps strung together lead in the same direction. The speed may have quickened dramatically in recent times, but you can still see the incremental approach of the Tiptoe in the case of 'Covid' as each new imposition takes us deeper into fascism. Tell people they have to do this or that to get back to 'normal', then this and this and this. With each new demand adding to the ones that went before the population's freedom is deleted until it disappears. The spider wraps its web around the flies more comprehensively with each new diktat. I'll highlight this in more detail when I get to the 'Covid' hoax and how it has been pulled off. Another prime example of the Totalitarian Tiptoe is how the Cult-created European Union went from a 'free-trade zone' to a centralised bureaucratic dictatorship through the Tiptoe of incremental centralisation of power until nations became mere administrative units for Cult-owned dark suits in Brussels.

The antidote to ignorance is knowledge which the Cult seeks vehemently to deny us, but despite the systematic censorship to that end the Renegade Mind can overcome this by vociferously seeking out the facts no matter the impediments put in the way. There is also a method of thinking and perceiving – *knowing* – that doesn't even need names, dates, place-type facts to identify the patterns that reveal the story. I'll get to that in the final chapter. All you need to know about the manipulation of human society and to what end is still out there – *at the time of writing* – in the form of books, videos

and websites for those that really want to breach the walls of programmed perception. To access this knowledge requires the abandonment of the mainstream media as a source of information in the awareness that this is owned and controlled by the Cult and therefore promotes mass perceptions that suit the Cult. Mainstream media lies all day, every day. That is its function and very reason for being. Where it does tell the truth, here and there, is only because the truth and the Cult agenda very occasionally coincide. If you look for fact and insight to the BBC, CNN and virtually all the rest of them you are asking to be conned and perceptually programmed.

Know the outcome and you'll see the journey

Events seem random when you have no idea where the world is being taken. Once you do the random becomes the carefully planned. Know the outcome and you'll see the journey is a phrase I have been using for a long time to give context to daily happenings that appear unconnected. Does a problem, or illusion of a problem, trigger a proposed 'solution' that further drives society in the direction of the outcome? Invariably the answer will be yes and the random – *abracadabra* – becomes the clearly coordinated. So what is this outcome that unlocks the door to a massively expanded understanding of daily events? I will summarise its major aspects – the fine detail is in my other books – and those new to this information will see that the world they thought they were living in is a very different place. The foundation of the Cult agenda is the incessant centralisation of power and all such centralisation is ultimately in pursuit of Cult control on a global level. I have described for a long time the planned world structure of top-down dictatorship as the Hunger Games Society. The term obviously comes from the movie series which portrayed a world in which a few living in military-protected hi-tech luxury were the overlords of a population condemned to abject poverty in isolated 'sectors' that were not allowed to interact. 'Covid' lockdowns and travel bans anyone? The 'Hunger Games' pyramid of structural control has the inner circle of the Cult at the top with pretty much the entire

population at the bottom under their control through dependency for survival on the Cult. The whole structure is planned to be protected and enforced by a military-police state (Fig 4).

Here you have the reason for the global lockdowns of the fake pandemic to coldly destroy independent incomes and livelihoods and make everyone dependent on the 'state' (the Cult that controls the 'states'). I have warned in my books for many years about the plan to introduce a 'guaranteed income' – a barely survivable pittance – designed to impose dependency when employment was destroyed by AI technology and now even more comprehensively at great speed by the 'Covid' scam. Once the pandemic was played and lockdown consequences began to delete independent income the authorities began to talk right on cue about the need for a guaranteed income and a 'Great Reset'. Guaranteed income will be presented as benevolent governments seeking to help a desperate people – desperate as a direct result of actions of the same governments. The truth is that such payments are a trap. You will only get them if you do exactly what the authorities demand including mass vaccination (genetic manipulation). We have seen this theme already in Australia where those dependent on government benefits have them reduced if parents don't agree to have their children vaccinated according to an insane health-destroying government-dictated schedule. Calculated economic collapse applies to governments as well as people. The Cult wants rid of countries through the creation of a world state with countries broken up into regions ruled by a world government and super states like the European Union. Countries must be bankrupted, too, to this end and it's being achieved by the trillions in 'rescue packages' and furlough payments, trillions in lost taxation, and money-no-object spending on 'Covid' including constant all-medium advertising (programming) which has made the media dependent on government for much of its income. The day of reckoning is coming – as planned – for government spending and given that it has been made possible by printing money and not by production/taxation there is inflation on the way that has the

potential to wipe out monetary value. In that case there will be no need for the Cult to steal your money. It just won't be worth anything (see the German Weimar Republic before the Nazis took over). Many have been okay with lockdowns while getting a percentage of their income from so-called furlough payments without having to work. Those payments are dependent, however, on people having at least a theoretical job with a business considered non-essential and ordered to close. As these business go under because they are closed by lockdown after lockdown the furlough stops and it will for everyone eventually. Then what? The 'then what?' is precisely the idea.



Figure 4: The Hunger Games Society structure I have long warned was planned and now the 'Covid' hoax has made it possible. This is the real reason for lockdowns.

Hired hands

Between the Hunger Games Cult elite and the dependent population is planned to be a vicious military-police state (a fusion of the two into one force). This has been in the making for a long time with police looking ever more like the military and carrying weapons to match. The pandemic scam has seen this process accelerate so fast as

lockdown house arrest is brutally enforced by carefully recruited fascist minds and gormless system-servers. The police and military are planned to merge into a centrally-directed world army in a global structure headed by a world government which wouldn't be elected even by the election fixes now in place. The world army is not planned even to be human and instead wars would be fought, primarily against the population, using robot technology controlled by artificial intelligence. I have been warning about this for decades and now militaries around the world are being transformed by this very AI technology. The global regime that I describe is a particular form of fascism known as a technocracy in which decisions are not made by clueless and co-opted politicians but by unelected technocrats – scientists, engineers, technologists and bureaucrats. Cult-owned-and-controlled Silicon Valley giants are examples of technocracy and they already have far more power to direct world events than governments. They are with their censorship *selecting* governments. I know that some are calling the 'Great Reset' a Marxist communist takeover, but fascism and Marxism are different labels for the same tyranny. Tell those who lived in fascist Germany and Stalinist Russia that there was a difference in the way their freedom was deleted and their lives controlled. I could call it a fascist technocracy or a Marxist technocracy and they would be equally accurate. The Hunger Games society with its world government structure would oversee a world army, world central bank and single world cashless currency imposing its will on a microchipped population (Fig 5). Scan its different elements and see how the illusory pandemic is forcing society in this very direction at great speed. Leaders of 23 countries and the World Health Organization (WHO) backed the idea in March, 2021, of a global treaty for 'international cooperation' in 'health emergencies' and nations should 'come together as a global community for peaceful cooperation that extends beyond this crisis'. Cut the Orwellian bullshit and this means another step towards global government. The plan includes a cashless digital money system that I first warned about in 1993. Right at the start of 'Covid' the deeply corrupt Tedros

Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the crooked and merely gofer 'head' of the World Health Organization, said it was possible to catch the 'virus' by touching cash and it was better to use cashless means. The claim was ridiculous nonsense and like the whole 'Covid' mind-trick it was nothing to do with 'health' and everything to do with pushing every aspect of the Cult agenda. As a result of the Tedros lie the use of cash has plummeted. The Cult script involves a single world digital currency that would eventually be technologically embedded in the body. China is a massive global centre for the Cult and if you watch what is happening there you will know what is planned for everywhere. The Chinese government is developing a digital currency which would allow fines to be deducted immediately via AI for anyone caught on camera breaking its fantastic list of laws and the money is going to be programmable with an expiry date to ensure that no one can accrue wealth except the Cult and its operatives.



Figure 5: The structure of global control the Cult has been working towards for so long and this has been enormously advanced by the 'Covid' illusion.

Serfdom is so smart

The Cult plan is far wider, extreme, and more comprehensive than even most conspiracy researchers appreciate and I will come to the true depths of deceit and control in the chapters 'Who controls the

Cult?’ and ‘Escaping Wetiko’. Even the world that we know is crazy enough. We are being deluged with ever more sophisticated and controlling technology under the heading of ‘smart’. We have smart televisions, smart meters, smart cards, smart cars, smart driving, smart roads, smart pills, smart patches, smart watches, smart skin, smart borders, smart pavements, smart streets, smart cities, smart communities, smart environments, smart growth, smart planet ... smart *everything* around us. Smart technologies and methods of operation are designed to interlock to create a global Smart Grid connecting the entirety of human society including human minds to create a centrally-dictated ‘hive’ mind. ‘Smart cities’ is code for densely-occupied megacities of total surveillance and control through AI. Ever more destructive frequency communication systems like 5G have been rolled out without any official testing for health and psychological effects (colossal). 5G/6G/7G systems are needed to run the Smart Grid and each one becomes more destructive of body and mind. Deleting independent income is crucial to forcing people into these AI-policed prisons by ending private property ownership (except for the Cult elite). The Cult’s Great Reset now openly foresees a global society in which no one will own any possessions and everything will be rented while the Cult would own literally everything under the guise of government and corporations. The aim has been to use the lockdowns to destroy sources of income on a mass scale and when the people are destitute and in unrepayable amounts of debt (problem) Cult assets come forward with the pledge to write-off debt in return for handing over all property and possessions (solution). Everything – literally everything including people – would be connected to the Internet via AI. I was warning years ago about the coming Internet of Things (IoT) in which all devices and technology from your car to your fridge would be plugged into the Internet and controlled by AI. Now we are already there with much more to come. The next stage is the Internet of Everything (IoE) which is planned to include the connection of AI to the human brain and body to replace the human mind with a centrally-controlled AI mind. Instead of perceptions

being manipulated through control of information and censorship those perceptions would come direct from the Cult through AI. What do you think? You think whatever AI decides that you think. In human terms there would be no individual 'think' any longer. Too incredible? The ravings of a lunatic? Not at all. Cult-owned crazies in Silicon Valley have been telling us the plan for years without explaining the real motivation and calculated implications. These include Google executive and 'futurist' Ray Kurzweil who highlights the year 2030 for when this would be underway. He said:

Our thinking ... will be a hybrid of biological and non-biological thinking ... humans will be able to extend their limitations and 'think in the cloud' ... We're going to put gateways to the cloud in our brains ... We're going to gradually merge and enhance ourselves ... In my view, that's the nature of being human – we transcend our limitations.

As the technology becomes vastly superior to what we are then the small proportion that is still human gets smaller and smaller and smaller until it's just utterly negligible.

The sales-pitch of Kurzweil and Cult-owned Silicon Valley is that this would make us 'super-human' when the real aim is to make us post-human and no longer 'human' in the sense that we have come to know. The entire global population would be connected to AI and become the centrally-controlled 'hive-mind' of externally-delivered perceptions. The Smart Grid being installed to impose the Cult's will on the world is being constructed to allow particular locations – even one location – to control the whole global system. From these prime control centres, which absolutely include China and Israel, anything connected to the Internet would be switched on or off and manipulated at will. Energy systems could be cut, communication via the Internet taken down, computer-controlled driverless autonomous vehicles driven off the road, medical devices switched off, the potential is limitless given how much AI and Internet connections now run human society. We have seen nothing yet if we allow this to continue. Autonomous vehicle makers are working with law enforcement to produce cars designed to automatically pull over if they detect a police or emergency vehicle flashing from up to 100 feet away. At a police stop the car would be unlocked and the

window rolled down automatically. Vehicles would only take you where the computer (the state) allowed. The end of petrol vehicles and speed limiters on all new cars in the UK and EU from 2022 are steps leading to electric computerised transport over which ultimately you have no control. The picture is far bigger even than the Cult global network or web and that will become clear when I get to the nature of the 'spider'. There is a connection between all these happenings and the instigation of DNA-manipulating 'vaccines' (which aren't 'vaccines') justified by the 'Covid' hoax. That connection is the unfolding plan to transform the human body from a biological to a synthetic biological state and this is why synthetic biology is such a fast-emerging discipline of mainstream science. 'Covid vaccines' are infusing self-replicating synthetic genetic material into the cells to cumulatively take us on the Totalitarian Tiptoe from Human 1.0 to the synthetic biological Human 2.0 which will be physically and perceptually attached to the Smart Grid to one hundred percent control every thought, perception and deed. Humanity needs to wake up and *fast*.

This is the barest explanation of where the 'outcome' is planned to go but it's enough to see the journey happening all around us. Those new to this information will already see 'Covid' in a whole new context. I will add much more detail as we go along, but for the minutiae evidence see my mega-works, *The Answer*, *The Trigger* and *Everything You Need to Know But Have Never Been Told*.

Now – how does a Renegade Mind see the 'world'?

CHAPTER TWO

Renegade Perception

It is one thing to be clever and another to be wise

George R.R. Martin

A simple definition of the difference between a programmed mind and a Renegade Mind would be that one sees only dots while the other connects them to see the picture. Reading reality with accuracy requires the observer to (a) know the planned outcome and (b) realise that everything, but *everything*, is connected.

The entirety of infinite reality is connected – that’s its very nature – and with human society an expression of infinite reality the same must apply. Simple cause and effect is a connection. The effect is triggered by the cause and the effect then becomes the cause of another effect. Nothing happens in isolation because it *can’t*. Life in whatever reality is simple choice and consequence. We make choices and these lead to consequences. If we don’t like the consequences we can make different choices and get different consequences which lead to other choices and consequences. The choice and the consequence are not only connected they are indivisible. You can’t have one without the other as an old song goes. A few cannot control the world unless those being controlled allow that to happen – cause and effect, choice and consequence. Control – who has it and who doesn’t – is a two-way process, a symbiotic relationship, involving the controller and controlled. ‘They took my freedom away!!’ Well, yes, but you also gave it to them. Humanity is

subjected to mass control because humanity has acquiesced to that control. This is all cause and effect and literally a case of give and take. In the same way world events of every kind are connected and the Cult works incessantly to sell the illusion of the random and coincidental to maintain the essential (to them) perception of dots that hide the picture. Renegade Minds know this and constantly scan the world for patterns of connection. This is absolutely pivotal in understanding the happenings in the world and without that perspective clarity is impossible. First you know the planned outcome and then you identify the steps on the journey – the day-by-day apparently random which, when connected in relation to the outcome, no longer appear as individual events, but as the proverbial *chain* of events leading in the same direction. I'll give you some examples:

Political puppet show

We are told to believe that politics is 'adversarial' in that different parties with different beliefs engage in an endless tussle for power. There may have been some truth in that up to a point – and only a point – but today divisions between 'different' parties are rhetorical not ideological. Even the rhetorical is fusing into one-speak as the parties eject any remaining free thinkers while others succumb to the ever-gathering intimidation of anyone with the 'wrong' opinion. The Cult is not a new phenomenon and can be traced back thousands of years as my books have documented. Its intergenerational initiatives have been manipulating events with increasing effect the more that global power has been centralised. In ancient times the Cult secured control through the system of monarchy in which 'special' bloodlines (of which more later) demanded the right to rule as kings and queens simply by birthright and by vanquishing others who claimed the same birthright. There came a time, however, when people had matured enough to see the unfairness of such tyranny and demanded a say in who governed them. Note the word – *governed* them. Not served them – *governed* them, hence government defined as 'the political direction and control exercised over the

actions of the members, citizens, or inhabitants of communities, societies, and states; direction of the affairs of a state, community, etc.' Governments exercise control over rather than serve just like the monarchies before them. Bizarrely there are still countries like the United Kingdom which are ruled by a monarch *and* a government that officially answers to the monarch. The UK head of state and that of Commonwealth countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand is 'selected' by who in a *single family* had unprotected sex with whom and in what order. Pinch me it can't be true. Ouch! Shit, it is. The demise of monarchies in most countries offered a potential vacuum in which some form of free and fair society could arise and the Cult had that base covered. Monarchies had served its interests but they couldn't continue in the face of such widespread opposition and, anyway, replacing a 'royal' dictatorship that people could see with a dictatorship 'of the people' hiding behind the concept of 'democracy' presented far greater manipulative possibilities and ways of hiding coordinated tyranny behind the illusion of 'freedom'.

Democracy is quite wrongly defined as government selected by the population. This is not the case at all. It is government selected by *some* of the population (and then only in theory). This 'some' doesn't even have to be the majority as we have seen so often in first-past-the-post elections in which the so-called majority party wins fewer votes than the 'losing' parties combined. Democracy can give total power to a party in government from a minority of the votes cast. It's a sleight of hand to sell tyranny as freedom. Seventy-four million Trump-supporting Americans didn't vote for the 'Democratic' Party of Joe Biden in the distinctly dodgy election in 2020 and yet far from acknowledging the wishes and feelings of that great percentage of American society the Cult-owned Biden government set out from day one to destroy them and their right to a voice and opinion. Empty shell Biden and his Cult handlers said they were doing this to 'protect democracy'. Such is the level of lunacy and sickness to which politics has descended. Connect the dots and relate them to the desired outcome – a world government run by self-appointed technocrats and no longer even elected

politicians. While operating through its political agents in government the Cult is at the same time encouraging public disdain for politicians by putting idiots and incompetents in theoretical power on the road to deleting them. The idea is to instil a public reaction that says of the technocrats: 'Well, they couldn't do any worse than the pathetic politicians.' It's all about controlling perception and Renegade Minds can see through that while programmed minds cannot when they are ignorant of both the planned outcome and the manipulation techniques employed to secure that end. This knowledge can be learned, however, and fast if people choose to get informed.

Politics may at first sight appear very difficult to control from a central point. I mean look at the 'different' parties and how would you be able to oversee them all and their constituent parts? In truth, it's very straightforward because of their structure. We are back to the pyramid of imposition and acquiescence. Organisations are structured in the same way as the system as a whole. Political parties are not open forums of free expression. They are hierarchies. I was a national spokesman for the British Green Party which claimed to be a different kind of politics in which influence and power was devolved; but I can tell you from direct experience – and it's far worse now – that Green parties are run as hierarchies like all the others however much they may try to hide that fact or kid themselves that it's not true. A very few at the top of all political parties are directing policy and personnel. They decide if you are elevated in the party or serve as a government minister and to do that you have to be a yes man or woman. Look at all the maverick political thinkers who never ascended the greasy pole. If you want to progress within the party or reach 'high-office' you need to fall into line and conform. Exceptions to this are rare indeed. Should you want to run for parliament or Congress you have to persuade the local or state level of the party to select you and for that you need to play the game as dictated by the hierarchy. If you secure election and wish to progress within the greater structure you need to go on conforming to what is acceptable to those running the hierarchy

from the peak of the pyramid. Political parties are perceptual gulags and the very fact that there are party 'Whips' appointed to 'whip' politicians into voting the way the hierarchy demands exposes the ridiculous idea that politicians are elected to serve the people they are supposed to represent. Cult operatives and manipulation has long seized control of major parties that have any chance of forming a government and at least most of those that haven't. A new party forms and the Cult goes to work to infiltrate and direct. This has reached such a level today that you see video compilations of 'leaders' of all parties whether Democrats, Republicans, Conservative, Labour and Green parroting the same Cult mantra of 'Build Back Better' and the 'Great Reset' which are straight off the Cult song-sheet to describe the transformation of global society in response to the Cult-instigated hoaxes of the 'Covid pandemic' and human-caused 'climate change'. To see Caroline Lucas, the Green Party MP that I knew when I was in the party in the 1980s, speaking in support of plans proposed by Cult operative Klaus Schwab representing the billionaire global elite is a real head-shaker.

Many parties – one master

The party system is another mind-trick and was instigated to change the nature of the dictatorship by swapping 'royalty' for dark suits that people believed – though now ever less so – represented their interests. Understanding this trick is to realise that a single force (the Cult) controls all parties either directly in terms of the major ones or through manipulation of perception and ideology with others. You don't need to manipulate Green parties to demand your transformation of society in the name of 'climate change' when they are obsessed with the lie that this is essential to 'save the planet'. You just give them a platform and away they go serving your interests while believing they are being environmentally virtuous. America's political structure is a perfect blueprint for how the two or multi-party system is really a one-party state. The Republican Party is controlled from one step back in the shadows by a group made up of billionaires and their gofers known as neoconservatives or Neocons.

I have exposed them in fine detail in my books and they were the driving force behind the policies of the imbecilic presidency of Boy George Bush which included 9/11 (see *The Trigger* for a comprehensive demolition of the official story), the subsequent 'war on terror' (war of terror) and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The latter was a No-Problem-Reaction-Solution based on claims by Cult operatives, including Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, about Saddam Hussein's 'weapons of mass destruction' which did not exist as war criminals Bush and Blair well knew.



Figure 6: Different front people, different parties – same control system.

The Democratic Party has its own 'Neocon' group controlling from the background which I call the 'Democons' and here's the penny-drop – the Neocons and Democons answer to the same masters one step further back into the shadows (Fig 6). At that level of the Cult the Republican and Democrat parties are controlled by the same people and no matter which is in power the Cult is in power. This is how it works in almost every country and certainly in Britain with Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green parties now all on the same page whatever the rhetoric may be in their feeble attempts to appear different. Neocons operated at the time of Bush through a think tank called The Project for the New American Century which in September, 2000, published a document entitled *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces, and Resources*

For a New Century demanding that America fight ‘multiple, simultaneous major theatre wars’ as a ‘core mission’ to force regime-change in countries including Iraq, Libya and Syria. Neocons arranged for Bush (‘Republican’) and Blair (‘Labour Party’) to front-up the invasion of Iraq and when they departed the Democons orchestrated the targeting of Libya and Syria through Barack Obama (‘Democrat’) and British Prime Minister David Cameron (‘Conservative Party’). We have ‘different’ parties and ‘different’ people, but the same unfolding script. The more the Cult has seized the reigns of parties and personnel the more their policies have transparently pursued the same agenda to the point where the fascist ‘Covid’ impositions of the Conservative junta of Jackboot Johnson in Britain were opposed by the Labour Party because they were not fascist enough. The Labour Party is likened to the US Democrats while the Conservative Party is akin to a British version of the Republicans and on both sides of the Atlantic they all speak the same language and support the direction demanded by the Cult although some more enthusiastically than others. It’s a similar story in country after country because it’s all centrally controlled. Oh, but what about Trump? I’ll come to him shortly. Political ‘choice’ in the ‘party’ system goes like this: You vote for Party A and they get into government. You don’t like what they do so next time you vote for Party B and they get into government. You don’t like what they do when it’s pretty much the same as Party A and why wouldn’t that be with both controlled by the same force? Given that only two, sometimes three, parties have any chance of forming a government to get rid of Party B that you don’t like you have to vote again for Party A which ... you don’t like. This, ladies and gentlemen, is what they call ‘democracy’ which we are told – wrongly – is a term interchangeable with ‘freedom’.

The cult of cults

At this point I need to introduce a major expression of the Global Cult known as Sabbatian-Frankism. Sabbatian is also spelt as Sabbatean. I will summarise here. I have published major exposés

and detailed background in other works. Sabbatian-Frankism combines the names of two frauds posing as 'Jewish' men, Sabbatai Zevi (1626-1676), a rabbi, black magician and occultist who proclaimed he was the Jewish messiah; and Jacob Frank (1726-1791), the Polish 'Jew', black magician and occultist who said he was the reincarnation of 'messiah' Zevi and biblical patriarch Jacob. They worked across two centuries to establish the Sabbatian-Frankist cult that plays a major, indeed central, role in the manipulation of human society by the Global Cult which has its origins much further back in history than Sabbatai Zevi. I should emphasise two points here in response to the shrill voices that will scream 'anti-Semitism': (1) Sabbatian-Frankists are NOT Jewish and only pose as such to hide their cult behind a Jewish façade; and (2) my information about this cult has come from Jewish sources who have long realised that their society and community has been infiltrated and taken over by interloper Sabbatian-Frankists. Infiltration has been the foundation technique of Sabbatian-Frankism from its official origin in the 17th century. Zevi's Sabbatian sect attracted a massive following described as the biggest messianic movement in Jewish history, spreading as far as Africa and Asia, and he promised a return for the Jews to the 'Promised Land' of Israel. Sabbatianism was not Judaism but an inversion of everything that mainstream Judaism stood for. So much so that this sinister cult would have a feast day when Judaism had a fast day and whatever was forbidden in Judaism the Sabbatians were encouraged and even commanded to do. This included incest and what would be today called Satanism. Members were forbidden to marry outside the sect and there was a system of keeping their children ignorant of what they were part of until they were old enough to be trusted not to unknowingly reveal anything to outsiders. The same system is employed to this day by the Global Cult in general which Sabbatian-Frankism has enormously influenced and now largely controls.

Zevi and his Sabbatians suffered a setback with the intervention by the Sultan of the Islamic Ottoman Empire in the Middle East and what is now the Republic of Turkey where Zevi was located. The

Sultan gave him the choice of proving his 'divinity', converting to Islam or facing torture and death. Funnily enough Zevi chose to convert or at least appear to. Some of his supporters were disillusioned and drifted away, but many did not with 300 families also converting – only in theory – to Islam. They continued behind this Islamic smokescreen to follow the goals, rules and rituals of Sabbatianism and became known as 'crypto-Jews' or the 'Dönme' which means 'to turn'. This is rather ironic because they didn't 'turn' and instead hid behind a fake Islamic persona. The process of appearing to be one thing while being very much another would become the calling card of Sabbatianism especially after Zevi's death and the arrival of the Satanist Jacob Frank in the 18th century when the cult became Sabbatian-Frankism and plumbed still new depths of depravity and infiltration which included – still includes – human sacrifice and sex with children. Wherever Sabbatians go paedophilia and Satanism follow and is it really a surprise that Hollywood is so infested with child abuse and Satanism when it was established by Sabbatian-Frankists and is still controlled by them? Hollywood has been one of the prime vehicles for global perceptual programming and manipulation. How many believe the version of 'history' portrayed in movies when it is a travesty and inversion (again) of the truth? Rabbi Marvin Antelman describes Frankism in his book, *To Eliminate the Opiate*, as 'a movement of complete evil' while Jewish professor Gershom Scholem said of Frank in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*: 'In all his actions [he was] a truly corrupt and degenerate individual ... one of the most frightening phenomena in the whole of Jewish history.' Frank was excommunicated by traditional rabbis, as was Zevi, but Frank was undeterred and enjoyed vital support from the House of Rothschild, the infamous banking dynasty whose inner-core are Sabbatian-Frankists and not Jews. Infiltration of the Roman Church and Vatican was instigated by Frank with many Dönme 'turning' again to convert to Roman Catholicism with a view to hijacking the reins of power. This was the ever-repeating modus operandi and continues to be so. Pose as an advocate of the religion, culture or country that you want to control and then

manipulate your people into the positions of authority and influence largely as advisers, administrators and Svengalis for those that appear to be in power. They did this with Judaism, Christianity (Christian Zionism is part of this), Islam and other religions and nations until Sabbatian-Frankism spanned the world as it does today.

Sabbatian Saudis and the terror network

One expression of the Sabbatian-Frankist Dönme within Islam is the ruling family of Saudi Arabia, the House of Saud, through which came the vile distortion of Islam known as Wahhabism. This is the violent creed followed by terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS or Islamic State. Wahhabism is the hand-chopping, head-chopping 'religion' of Saudi Arabia which is used to keep the people in a constant state of fear so the interloper House of Saud can continue to rule. Al-Qaeda and Islamic State were lavishly funded by the House of Saud while being created and directed by the Sabbatian-Frankist network in the United States that operates through the Pentagon, CIA and the government in general of whichever 'party'. The front man for the establishment of Wahhabism in the middle of the 18th century was a Sabbatian-Frankist 'crypto-Jew' posing as Islamic called Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. His daughter would marry the son of Muhammad bin Saud who established the first Saudi state before his death in 1765 with support from the British Empire. Bin Saud's successors would establish modern Saudi Arabia in league with the British and Americans in 1932 which allowed them to seize control of Islam's major shrines in Mecca and Medina. They have dictated the direction of Sunni Islam ever since while Iran is the major centre of the Shiite version and here we have the source of at least the public conflict between them. The Sabbatian network has used its Wahhabi extremists to carry out Problem-Reaction-Solution terrorist attacks in the name of 'Al-Qaeda' and 'Islamic State' to justify a devastating 'war on terror', ever-increasing surveillance of the population and to terrify people into compliance. Another insight of the Renegade Mind is the streetwise understanding that

just because a country, location or people are attacked doesn't mean that those apparently representing that country, location or people are not behind the attackers. Often they are *orchestrating* the attacks because of the societal changes that can be then justified in the name of 'saving the population from terrorists'.

I show in great detail in *The Trigger* how Sabbatian-Frankists were the real perpetrators of 9/11 and not '19 Arab hijackers' who were blamed for what happened. Observe what was justified in the name of 9/11 alone in terms of Middle East invasions, mass surveillance and control that fulfilled the demands of the Project for the New American Century document published by the Sabbatian Neocons. What appear to be enemies are on the deep inside players on the same Sabbatian team. Israel and Arab 'royal' dictatorships are all ruled by Sabbatians and the recent peace agreements between Israel and Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and others are only making formal what has always been the case behind the scenes. Palestinians who have been subjected to grotesque tyranny since Israel was bombed and terrorised into existence in 1948 have never stood a chance. Sabbatian-Frankists have controlled Israel (so the constant theme of violence and war which Sabbatians love) and they have controlled the Arab countries that Palestinians have looked to for real support that never comes. 'Royal families' of the Arab world in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, etc., are all Sabbatians with allegiance to the aims of the cult and not what is best for their Arabic populations. They have stolen the oil and financial resources from their people by false claims to be 'royal dynasties' with a genetic right to rule and by employing vicious militaries to impose their will.

Satanic 'illumination'

The Satanist Jacob Frank formed an alliance in 1773 with two other Sabbatians, Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744-1812), founder of the Rothschild banking dynasty, and Jesuit-educated fraudulent Jew, Adam Weishaupt, and this led to the formation of the Bavarian Illuminati, firstly under another name, in 1776. The Illuminati would

be the manipulating force behind the French Revolution (1789-1799) and was also involved in the American Revolution (1775-1783) before and after the Illuminati's official creation. Weishaupt would later become (in public) a Protestant Christian in archetypal Sabbatian style. I read that his name can be decoded as Adam-Weishaupt or 'the first man to lead those who know'. He wasn't a leader in the sense that he was a subordinate, but he did lead those below him in a crusade of transforming human society that still continues today. The theme was confirmed as early as 1785 when a horseman courier called Lanz was reported to be struck by lightning and extensive Illuminati documents were found in his saddlebags. They made the link to Weishaupt and detailed the plan for world takeover. Current events with 'Covid' fascism have been in the making for a very long time. Jacob Frank was jailed for 13 years by the Catholic Inquisition after his arrest in 1760 and on his release he headed for Frankfurt, Germany, home city and headquarters of the House of Rothschild where the alliance was struck with Mayer Amschel Rothschild and Weishaupt. Rothschild arranged for Frank to be given the title of Baron and he became a wealthy nobleman with a big following of Jews in Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and other European countries. Most of them would have believed he was on their side.

The name 'Illuminati' came from the Zohar which is a body of works in the Jewish mystical 'bible' called the Kabbalah. 'Zohar' is the foundation of Sabbatian-Frankist belief and in Hebrew 'Zohar' means 'splendour', 'radiance', 'illuminated', and so we have 'Illuminati'. They claim to be the 'Illuminated Ones' from their knowledge systematically hidden from the human population and passed on through generations of carefully-chosen initiates in the global secret society network or Cult. Hidden knowledge includes an awareness of the Cult agenda for the world and the nature of our collective reality that I will explore later. Cult 'illumination' is symbolised by the torch held by the Statue of Liberty which was gifted to New York by French Freemasons in Paris who knew exactly what it represents. 'Liberty' symbolises the goddess worshipped in

Babylon as Queen Semiramis or Ishtar. The significance of this will become clear. Notice again the ubiquitous theme of inversion with the Statue of 'Liberty' really symbolising mass control (Fig 7). A mirror-image statute stands on an island in the River Seine in Paris from where New York Liberty originated (Fig 8). A large replica of the Liberty flame stands on top of the Pont de l'Alma tunnel in Paris where Princess Diana died in a Cult ritual described in *The Biggest Secret*. Lucifer 'the light bringer' is related to all this (and much more as we'll see) and 'Lucifer' is a central figure in Sabbatian-Frankism and its associated Satanism. Sabbatians reject the Jewish Torah, or Pentateuch, the 'five books of Moses' in the Old Testament known as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy which are claimed by Judaism and Christianity to have been dictated by 'God' to Moses on Mount Sinai. Sabbatians say these do not apply to them and they seek to replace them with the Zohar to absorb Judaism and its followers into their inversion which is an expression of a much greater global inversion. They want to delete all religions and force humanity to worship a one-world religion – Sabbatian Satanism that also includes worship of the Earth goddess. Satanic themes are being more and more introduced into mainstream society and while Christianity is currently the foremost target for destruction the others are planned to follow.



Figure 7: The Cult goddess of Babylon disguised as the Statue of Liberty holding the flame of Lucifer the 'light bringer'.



Figure 8: Liberty's mirror image in Paris where the New York version originated.

Marx brothers

Rabbi Marvin Antelman connects the Illuminati to the Jacobins in *To Eliminate the Opiate* and Jacobins were the force behind the French Revolution. He links both to the Bund der Gerechten, or League of the Just, which was the network that inflicted communism/Marxism on the world. Antelman wrote:

The original inner circle of the Bund der Gerechten consisted of born Catholics, Protestants and Jews [Sabbatian-Frankist infiltrators], and those representatives of respective subdivisions formulated schemes for the ultimate destruction of their faiths. The heretical Catholics laid plans which they felt would take a century or more for the ultimate destruction of the church; the apostate Jews for the ultimate destruction of the Jewish religion.

Sabbatian-created communism connects into this anti-religion agenda in that communism does not allow for the free practice of religion. The Sabbatian 'Bund' became the International Communist Party and Communist League and in 1848 'Marxism' was born with the Communist Manifesto of Sabbatian assets Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. It is absolutely no coincidence that Marxism, just a different name for fascist and other centrally-controlled tyrannies, is being imposed worldwide as a result of the 'Covid' hoax and nor that Marxist/fascist China was the place where the hoax originated. The reason for this will become very clear in the chapter 'Covid: The calculated catastrophe'. The so-called 'Woke' mentality has hijacked

traditional beliefs of the political left and replaced them with far-right make-believe 'social justice' better known as Marxism. Woke will, however, be swallowed by its own perceived 'revolution' which is really the work of billionaires and billionaire corporations feigning being 'Woke'. Marxism is being touted by Wokers as a replacement for 'capitalism' when we don't have 'capitalism'. We have cartelism in which the market is stitched up by the very Cult billionaires and corporations bankrolling Woke. Billionaires love Marxism which keeps the people in servitude while they control from the top. Terminally naïve Wokers think they are 'changing the world' when it's the Cult that is doing the changing and when they have played their vital part and become surplus to requirements they, too, will be targeted. The Illuminati-Jacobins were behind the period known as 'The Terror' in the French Revolution in 1793 and 1794 when Jacobin Maximillian de Robespierre and his Orwellian 'Committee of Public Safety' killed 17,000 'enemies of the Revolution' who had once been 'friends of the Revolution'. Karl Marx (1818-1883), whose Sabbatian creed of Marxism has cost the lives of at least 100 million people, is a hero once again to Wokers who have been systematically kept ignorant of real history by their 'education' programming. As a result they now promote a Sabbatian 'Marxist' abomination destined at some point to consume them. Rabbi Antelman, who spent decades researching the Sabbatian plot, said of the League of the Just and Karl Marx:

Contrary to popular opinion Karl Marx did not originate the Communist Manifesto. He was paid for his services by the League of the Just, which was known in its country of origin, Germany, as the Bund der Geächteten.

Antelman said the text attributed to Marx was the work of other people and Marx 'was only repeating what others already said'. Marx was 'a hired hack – lackey of the wealthy Illuminists'. Marx famously said that religion was the 'opium of the people' (part of the Sabbatian plan to demonise religion) and Antelman called his books, *To Eliminate the Opiate*. Marx was born Jewish, but his family converted to Christianity (Sabbatian modus operandi) and he

attacked Jews, not least in his book, *A World Without Jews*. In doing so he supported the Sabbatian plan to destroy traditional Jewishness and Judaism which we are clearly seeing today with the vindictive targeting of orthodox Jews by the Sabbatian government of Israel over 'Covid' laws. I don't follow any religion and it has done much damage to the world over centuries and acted as a perceptual straightjacket. Renegade Minds, however, are always asking *why* something is being done. It doesn't matter if they agree or disagree with what is happening – *why* is it happening is the question. The 'why?' can be answered with regard to religion in that religions create interacting communities of believers when the Cult wants to dismantle all discourse, unity and interaction (see 'Covid' lockdowns) and the ultimate goal is to delete all religions for a one-world religion of Cult Satanism worshipping their 'god' of which more later. We see the same 'why?' with gun control in America. I don't have guns and don't want them, but why is the Cult seeking to disarm the population at the same time that law enforcement agencies are armed to their molars and why has every tyrant in history sought to disarm people before launching the final takeover? They include Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot and Mao who followed confiscation with violent seizing of power. You know it's a Cult agenda by the people who immediately race to the microphones to exploit dead people in multiple shootings. Ultra-Zionist Cult lackey Senator Chuck Schumer was straight on the case after ten people were killed in Boulder, Colorado in March, 2121. Simple rule ... if Schumer wants it the Cult wants it and the same with his ultra-Zionist mate the wild-eyed Senator Adam Schiff. At the same time they were calling for the disarmament of Americans, many of whom live a long way from a police response, Schumer, Schiff and the rest of these pampered clowns were sitting on Capitol Hill behind a razor-wired security fence protected by thousands of armed troops in addition to their own armed bodyguards. Mom and pop in an isolated home? They're just potential mass shooters.

Zion Mainframe

Sabbatian-Frankists and most importantly the Rothschilds were behind the creation of 'Zionism', a political movement that demanded a Jewish homeland in Israel as promised by Sabbatai Zevi. The very symbol of Israel comes from the German meaning of the name Rothschild. Dynasty founder Mayer Amschel Rothschild changed the family name from Bauer to Rothschild, or 'Red-Shield' in German, in deference to the six-pointed 'Star of David' hexagram displayed on the family's home in Frankfurt. The symbol later appeared on the flag of Israel after the Rothschilds were centrally involved in its creation. Hexagrams are not a uniquely Jewish symbol and are widely used in occult ('hidden') networks often as a symbol for Saturn (see my other books for why). Neither are Zionism and Jewishness interchangeable. Zionism is a political movement and philosophy and not a 'race' or a people. Many Jews oppose Zionism and many non-Jews, including US President Joe Biden, call themselves Zionists as does Israel-centric Donald Trump. America's support for the Israel government is pretty much a gimme with ultra-Zionist billionaires and corporations providing fantastic and dominant funding for both political parties. Former Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney has told how she was approached immediately she ran for office to 'sign the pledge' to Israel and confirm that she would always vote in that country's best interests. All American politicians are approached in this way. Anyone who refuses will get no support or funding from the enormous and all-powerful Zionist lobby that includes organisations like mega-lobby group AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Trump's biggest funder was ultra-Zionist casino and media billionaire Sheldon Adelson while major funders of the Democratic Party include ultra-Zionist George Soros and ultra-Zionist financial and media mogul, Haim Saban. Some may reel back at the suggestion that Soros is an Israel-firster (Sabbatian-controlled Israel-firster), but Renegade Minds watch the actions not the words and everywhere Soros donates his billions the Sabbatian agenda benefits. In the spirit of Sabbatian inversion Soros pledged \$1 billion for a new university network to promote 'liberal values and tackle intolerance'. He made the announcement during his annual speech

at the Cult-owned World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January, 2020, after his 'harsh criticism' of 'authoritarian rulers' around the world. You can only laugh at such brazen mendacity. How *he* doesn't laugh is the mystery. Translated from the Orwellian 'liberal values and tackle intolerance' means teaching non-white people to hate white people and for white people to loathe themselves for being born white. The reason for that will become clear.

The 'Anti-Semitism' fraud

Zionists support the Jewish homeland in the land of Palestine which has been the Sabbatian-Rothschild goal for so long, but not for the benefit of Jews. Sabbatians and their global Anti-Semitism Industry have skewed public and political opinion to equate opposing the violent extremes of Zionism to be a blanket attack and condemnation of all Jewish people. Sabbatians and their global Anti-Semitism Industry have skewed public and political opinion to equate opposing the violent extremes of Zionism to be a blanket attack and condemnation of all Jewish people. This is nothing more than a Sabbatian protection racket to stop legitimate investigation and exposure of their agendas and activities. The official definition of 'anti-Semitism' has more recently been expanded to include criticism of Zionism – a *political movement* – and this was done to further stop exposure of Sabbatian infiltrators who created Zionism as we know it today in the 19th century. Renegade Minds will talk about these subjects when they know the shit that will come their way. People must decide if they want to know the truth or just cower in the corner in fear of what others will say. Sabbatians have been trying to label me as 'anti-Semitic' since the 1990s as I have uncovered more and more about their background and agendas. Useless, gutless, fraudulent 'journalists' then just repeat the smears without question and on the day I was writing this section a pair of unquestioning repeaters called Ben Quinn and Archie Bland (how appropriate) outright called me an 'anti-Semite' in the establishment propaganda sheet, the London *Guardian*, with no supporting evidence. The

Sabbatian Anti-Semitism Industry said so and who are they to question that? They wouldn't dare. Ironically 'Semitic' refers to a group of languages in the Middle East that are almost entirely Arabic. 'Anti-Semitism' becomes 'anti-Arab' which if the consequences of this misunderstanding were not so grave would be hilarious. Don't bother telling Quinn and Bland. I don't want to confuse them, bless 'em. One reason I am dubbed 'anti-Semitic' is that I wrote in the 1990s that Jewish operatives (Sabbatians) were heavily involved in the Russian Revolution when Sabbatians overthrew the Romanov dynasty. This apparently made me 'anti-Semitic'. Oh, really? Here is a section from *The Trigger*:

British journalist Robert Wilton confirmed these themes in his 1920 book *The Last Days of the Romanovs* when he studied official documents from the Russian government to identify the members of the Bolshevik ruling elite between 1917 and 1919. The Central Committee included 41 Jews among 62 members; the Council of the People's Commissars had 17 Jews out of 22 members; and 458 of the 556 most important Bolshevik positions between 1918 and 1919 were occupied by Jewish people. Only 17 were Russian. Then there were the 23 Jews among the 36 members of the vicious Cheka Soviet secret police established in 1917 who would soon appear all across the country.

Professor Robert Service of Oxford University, an expert on 20th century Russian history, found evidence that ['Jewish'] Leon Trotsky had sought to make sure that Jews were enrolled in the Red Army and were disproportionately represented in the Soviet civil bureaucracy that included the Cheka which performed mass arrests, imprisonment and executions of 'enemies of the people'. A US State Department Decimal File (861.00/5339) dated November 13th, 1918, names [Rothschild banking agent in America] Jacob Schiff and a list of ultra-Zionists as funders of the Russian Revolution leading to claims of a 'Jewish plot', but the key point missed by all is they were not 'Jews' – they were Sabbatian-Frankists.

Britain's Winston Churchill made the same error by mistake or otherwise. He wrote in a 1920 edition of the *Illustrated Sunday Herald* that those behind the Russian revolution were part of a 'worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilisation and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence, and impossible equality' (see 'Woke' today because that has been created by the same network). Churchill said there was no need to exaggerate the part played in the creation of Bolshevism and in the actual bringing about of the Russian

Revolution 'by these international and for the most part atheistical Jews' ['atheistical Jews' = Sabbatians]. Churchill said it is certainly a very great one and probably outweighs all others: 'With the notable exception of Lenin, the majority of the leading figures are Jews.' He went on to describe, knowingly or not, the Sabbatian modus operandi of placing puppet leaders nominally in power while they control from the background:

Moreover, the principal inspiration and driving power comes from the Jewish leaders. Thus Tchitcherin, a pure Russian, is eclipsed by his nominal subordinate, Litvinoff, and the influence of Russians like Bukharin or Lunacharski cannot be compared with the power of Trotsky, or of Zinovieff, the Dictator of the Red Citadel (Petrograd), or of Krassin or Radek – all Jews. In the Soviet institutions the predominance of Jews is even more astonishing. And the prominent, if not indeed the principal, part in the system of terrorism applied by the Extraordinary Commissions for Combatting Counter-Revolution has been taken by Jews, and in some notable cases by Jewesses.

What I said about seriously disproportionate involvement in the Russian Revolution by Jewish 'revolutionaries' (Sabbatians) is provable fact, but truth is no defence against the Sabbatian Anti-Semitism Industry, its repeater parrots like Quinn and Bland, and the now breathtaking network of so-called 'Woke' 'anti-hate' groups with interlocking leaderships and funding which have the role of discrediting and silencing anyone who gets too close to exposing the Sabbatians. We have seen 'truth is no defence' confirmed in legal judgements with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in Canada decreeing this: 'Truthful statements can be presented in a manner that would meet the definition of hate speech, and not all truthful statements must be free from restriction.' Most 'anti-hate' activists, who are themselves consumed by hatred, are too stupid and ignorant of the world to know how they are being used. They are far too far up their own virtue-signalling arses and it's far too dark for them to see anything.

The 'revolution' game

The background and methods of the 'Russian' Revolution are straight from the Sabbatian playbook seen in the French Revolution

and endless others around the world that appear to start as a revolution of the people against tyrannical rule and end up with a regime change to more tyrannical rule overtly or covertly. Wars, terror attacks and regime overthrows follow the Sabbatian cult through history with its agents creating them as Problem-Reaction-Solutions to remove opposition on the road to world domination. Sabbatian dots connect the Rothschilds with the Illuminati, Jacobins of the French Revolution, the 'Bund' or League of the Just, the International Communist Party, Communist League and the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that would lead to the Rothschild-funded Russian Revolution. The sequence comes under the heading of 'creative destruction' when you advance to your global goal by continually destroying the status quo to install a new status quo which you then also destroy. The two world wars come to mind. With each new status quo you move closer to your planned outcome. Wars and mass murder are to Sabbatians a collective blood sacrifice ritual. They are obsessed with death for many reasons and one is that death is an inversion of life. Satanists and Sabbatians are obsessed with death and often target churches and churchyards for their rituals. Inversion-obsessed Sabbatians explain the use of inverted symbolism including the *inverted* pentagram and *inverted* cross. The inversion of the cross has been related to targeting Christianity, but the cross was a religious symbol long before Christianity and its inversion is a statement about the Sabbatian mentality and goals more than any single religion.

Sabbatians operating in Germany were behind the rise of the occult-obsessed Nazis and the subsequent Jewish exodus from Germany and Europe to Palestine and the United States after World War Two. The Rothschild dynasty was at the forefront of this both as political manipulators and by funding the operation. Why would Sabbatians help to orchestrate the horrors inflicted on Jews by the Nazis and by Stalin after they organised the Russian Revolution? Sabbatians hate Jews and their religion, that's why. They pose as Jews and secure positions of control within Jewish society and play the 'anti-Semitism' card to protect themselves from exposure

through a global network of organisations answering to the Sabbatian-created-and-controlled globe-spanning intelligence network that involves a stunning web of military-intelligence operatives and operations for a tiny country of just nine million. Among them are Jewish assets who are not Sabbatians but have been convinced by them that what they are doing is for the good of Israel and the Jewish community to protect them from what they have been programmed since childhood to believe is a Jew-hating hostile world. The Jewish community is just a highly convenient cover to hide the true nature of Sabbatians. Anyone getting close to exposing their game is accused by Sabbatian place-people and gofers of 'anti-Semitism' and claiming that all Jews are part of a plot to take over the world. I am not saying that. I am saying that Sabbatians – the *real* Jew-haters – have infiltrated the Jewish community to use them both as a cover and an 'anti-Semitic' defence against exposure. Thus we have the Anti-Semitism Industry targeted researchers in this way and most Jewish people think this is justified and genuine. They don't know that their 'Jewish' leaders and institutions of state, intelligence and military are not controlled by Jews at all, but cultists and stooges of Sabbatian-Frankism. I once added my name to a pro-Jewish freedom petition online and the next time I looked my name was gone and text had been added to the petition blurb to attack me as an 'anti-Semite' such is the scale of perceptual programming.

Moving on America

I tell the story in *The Trigger* and a chapter called 'Atlantic Crossing' how particularly after Israel was established the Sabbatians moved in on the United States and eventually grasped control of government administration, the political system via both Democrats and Republicans, the intelligence community like the CIA and National Security Agency (NSA), the Pentagon and mass media. Through this seriously compartmentalised network Sabbatians and their operatives in Mossad, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and US agencies pulled off 9/11 and blamed it on 19 'Al-Qaeda hijackers' dominated by men from, or connected to, Sabbatian-ruled Saudi

Arabia. The '19' were not even on the planes let alone flew those big passenger jets into buildings while being largely incompetent at piloting one-engine light aircraft. 'Hijacker' Hani Hanjour who is said to have flown American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon with a turn and manoeuvre most professional pilots said they would have struggled to do was banned from renting a small plane by instructors at the Freeway Airport in Bowie, Maryland, just *six weeks* earlier on the grounds that he was an incompetent pilot. The Jewish population of the world is just 0.2 percent with even that almost entirely concentrated in Israel (75 percent Jewish) and the United States (around two percent). This two percent and globally 0.2 percent refers to *Jewish* people and not Sabbatian interlopers who are a fraction of that fraction. What a sobering thought when you think of the fantastic influence on world affairs of tiny Israel and that the Project for the New America Century (PNAC) which laid out the blueprint in September, 2000, for America's war on terror and regime change wars in Iraq, Libya and Syria was founded and dominated by Sabbatians known as 'Neocons'. The document conceded that this plan would not be supported politically or publicly without a major attack on American soil and a Problem-Reaction-Solution excuse to send troops to war across the Middle East. Sabbatian Neocons said:

... [The] process of transformation ... [war and regime change] ... is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalysing event – like a new Pearl Harbor.

Four months later many of those who produced that document came to power with their inane puppet George Bush from the long-time Sabbatian Bush family. They included Sabbatian Dick Cheney who was officially vice-president, but really de-facto president for the entirety of the 'Bush' government. Nine months after the 'Bush' inauguration came what Bush called at the time 'the Pearl Harbor of the 21st century' and with typical Sabbatian timing and symbolism 2001 was the 60th anniversary of the attack in 1941 by the Japanese Air Force on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, which allowed President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to take the United States into a Sabbatian-

instigated Second World War that he said in his election campaign that he never would. The evidence is overwhelming that Roosevelt and his military and intelligence networks knew the attack was coming and did nothing to stop it, but they did make sure that America's most essential naval ships were not in Hawaii at the time. Three thousand Americans died in the Pearl Harbor attacks as they did on September 11th. By the 9/11 year of 2001 Sabbatians had widely infiltrated the US government, military and intelligence operations and used their compartmentalised assets to pull off the 'Al-Qaeda' attacks. If you read *The Trigger* it will blow your mind to see the utterly staggering concentration of 'Jewish' operatives (Sabbatian infiltrators) in essential positions of political, security, legal, law enforcement, financial and business power before, during, and after the attacks to make them happen, carry them out, and then cover their tracks – and I do mean *staggering* when you think of that 0.2 percent of the world population and two percent of Americans which are Jewish while Sabbatian infiltrators are a fraction of that. A central foundation of the 9/11 conspiracy was the hijacking of government, military, Air Force and intelligence computer systems in real time through 'back-door' access made possible by Israeli (Sabbatian) 'cyber security' software. Sabbatian-controlled Israel is on the way to rivalling Silicon Valley for domination of cyberspace and is becoming the dominant force in cyber-security which gives them access to entire computer systems and their passcodes across the world. Then add to this that Zionists head (officially) Silicon Valley giants like Google (Larry Page and Sergey Brin), Google-owned YouTube (Susan Wojcicki), Facebook (Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg), and Apple (Chairman Arthur D. Levinson), and that ultra-Zionist hedge fund billionaire Paul Singer has a \$1 billion stake in Twitter which is only nominally headed by 'CEO' pothead Jack Dorsey. As cable news host Tucker Carlson said of Dorsey: 'There used to be debate in the medical community whether dropping a ton of acid had permanent effects and I think that debate has now ended.' Carlson made the comment after Dorsey told a hearing on Capitol Hill (if you cut through his bullshit) that he

believed in free speech so long as he got to decide what you can hear and see. These 'big names' of Silicon Valley are only front men and women for the Global Cult, not least the Sabbatians, who are the true controllers of these corporations. Does anyone still wonder why these same people and companies have been ferociously censoring and banning people (like me) for exposing any aspect of the Cult agenda and especially the truth about the 'Covid' hoax which Sabbatians have orchestrated?

The Jeffrey Epstein paedophile ring was a Sabbatian operation. He was officially 'Jewish' but he was a Sabbatian and women abused by the ring have told me about the high number of 'Jewish' people involved. The Epstein horror has Sabbatian written all over it and matches perfectly their modus operandi and obsession with sex and ritual. Epstein was running a Sabbatian blackmail ring in which famous people with political and other influence were provided with young girls for sex while everything was being filmed and recorded on hidden cameras and microphones at his New York house, Caribbean island and other properties. Epstein survivors have described this surveillance system to me and some have gone public. Once the famous politician or other figure knew he or she was on video they tended to do whatever they were told. Here we go again ...when you've got them by the balls their hearts and minds will follow. Sabbatians use this blackmail technique on a wide scale across the world to entrap politicians and others they need to act as demanded. Epstein's private plane, the infamous 'Lolita Express', had many well-known passengers including Bill Clinton while Bill Gates has flown on an Epstein plane and met with him four years after Epstein had been jailed for paedophilia. They subsequently met many times at Epstein's home in New York according to a witness who was there. Epstein's infamous side-kick was Ghislaine Maxwell, daughter of Mossad agent and ultra-Zionist mega-crooked British businessman, Bob Maxwell, who at one time owned the *Daily Mirror* newspaper. Maxwell was murdered at sea on his boat in 1991 by Sabbatian-controlled Mossad when he became a liability with his

business empire collapsing as a former Mossad operative has confirmed (see *The Trigger*).

Money, money, money, funny money ...

Before I come to the Sabbatian connection with the last three US presidents I will lay out the crucial importance to Sabbatians of controlling banking and finance. Sabbatian Mayer Amschel Rothschild set out to dominate this arena in his family's quest for total global control. What is freedom? It is, in effect, choice. The more choices you have the freer you are and the fewer your choices the more you are enslaved. In the global structure created over centuries by Sabbatians the biggest decider and restrictor of choice is ... money. Across the world if you ask people what they would like to do with their lives and why they are not doing that they will reply 'I don't have the money'. This is the idea. A global elite of multi-billionaires are described as 'greedy' and that is true on one level; but control of money – who has it and who doesn't – is not primarily about greed. It's about control. Sabbatians have seized ever more control of finance and sucked the wealth of the world out of the hands of the population. We talk now, after all, about the 'One-percent' and even then the wealthiest are a lot fewer even than that. This has been made possible by a money scam so outrageous and so vast it could rightly be called the scam of scams founded on creating 'money' out of nothing and 'loaning' that with interest to the population. Money out of nothing is called 'credit'. Sabbatians have asserted control over governments and banking ever more completely through the centuries and secured financial laws that allow banks to lend hugely more than they have on deposit in a confidence trick known as fractional reserve lending. Imagine if you could lend money that doesn't exist and charge the recipient interest for doing so. You would end up in jail. Bankers by contrast end up in mansions, private jets, Malibu and Monaco.

Banks are only required to keep a fraction of their deposits and wealth in their vaults and they are allowed to lend 'money' they don't have called 'credit'. Go into a bank for a loan and if you succeed

the banker will not move any real wealth into your account. They will type into your account the amount of the agreed 'loan' – say £100,000. This is not wealth that really exists; it is non-existent, fresh-air, created-out-of-nothing 'credit' which has never, does not, and will never exist except in theory. Credit is backed by nothing except wind and only has buying power because people think that it has buying power and accept it in return for property, goods and services. I have described this situation as like those cartoon characters you see chasing each other and when they run over the edge of a cliff they keep running forward on fresh air until one of them looks down, realises what's happened, and they all crash into the ravine. The whole foundation of the Sabbatian financial system is to stop people looking down except for periodic moments when they want to crash the system (as in 2008 and 2020 ongoing) and reap the rewards from all the property, businesses and wealth their borrowers had signed over as 'collateral' in return for a 'loan' of fresh air. Most people think that money is somehow created by governments when it comes into existence from the start as a debt through banks 'lending' illusory money called credit. Yes, the very currency of exchange is a *debt* from day one issued as an interest-bearing loan. Why don't governments create money interest-free and lend it to their people interest-free? Governments are controlled by Sabbatians and the financial system is controlled by Sabbatians for whom interest-free money would be a nightmare come true. Sabbatians underpin their financial domination through their global network of central banks, including the privately-owned US Federal Reserve and Britain's Bank of England, and this is orchestrated by a privately-owned central bank coordination body called the Bank for International Settlements in Basle, Switzerland, created by the usual suspects including the Rockefellers and Rothschilds. Central bank chiefs don't answer to governments or the people. They answer to the Bank for International Settlements or, in other words, the Global Cult which is dominated today by Sabbatians.

Built-in disaster

There are so many constituent scams within the overall banking scam. When you take out a loan of thin-air credit only the amount of that loan is theoretically brought into circulation to add to the amount in circulation; but you are paying back the principle plus interest. The additional interest is not created and this means that with every 'loan' there is a shortfall in the money in circulation between what is borrowed and what has to be paid back. There is never even close to enough money in circulation to repay all outstanding public and private debt including interest. Coldly weaved in the very fabric of the system is the certainty that some will lose their homes, businesses and possessions to the banking 'lender'. This is less obvious in times of 'boom' when the amount of money in circulation (and the debt) is expanding through more people wanting and getting loans. When a downturn comes and the money supply contracts it becomes painfully obvious that there is not enough money to service all debt and interest. This is less obvious in times of 'boom' when the amount of money in circulation (and the debt) is expanding through more people wanting and getting loans. When a downturn comes and the money supply contracts and it becomes painfully obvious – as in 2008 and currently – that there is not enough money to service all debt and interest. Sabbatian banksters have been leading the human population through a calculated series of booms (more debt incurred) and busts (when the debt can't be repaid and the banks get the debtor's tangible wealth in exchange for non-existent 'credit'). With each 'bust' Sabbatian bankers have absorbed more of the world's tangible wealth and we end up with the One-percent. Governments are in bankruptcy levels of debt to the same system and are therefore owned by a system they do not control. The Federal Reserve, 'America's central bank', is privately-owned and American presidents only nominally appoint its chairman or woman to maintain the illusion that it's an arm of government. It's not. The 'Fed' is a cartel of private banks which handed billions to its associates and friends after the crash of 2008 and has been Sabbatian-controlled since it was manipulated into being in 1913 through the covert trickery of Rothschild banking agents Jacob Schiff and Paul

Warburg, and the Sabbatian Rockefeller family. Somehow from a Jewish population of two-percent and globally 0.2 percent (Sabbatian interlopers remember are far smaller) ultra-Zionists headed the Federal Reserve for 31 years between 1987 and 2018 in the form of Alan Greenspan, Bernard Bernanke and Janet Yellen (now Biden's Treasury Secretary) with Yellen's deputy chairman a Israeli-American dual citizen and ultra-Zionist Stanley Fischer, a former governor of the Bank of Israel. Ultra-Zionist Fed chiefs spanned the presidencies of Ronald Reagan ('Republican'), Father George Bush ('Republican'), Bill Clinton ('Democrat'), Boy George Bush ('Republican') and Barack Obama ('Democrat'). We should really add the pre-Greenspan chairman, Paul Adolph Volcker, 'appointed' by Jimmy Carter ('Democrat') who ran the Fed between 1979 and 1987 during the Carter and Reagan administrations before Greenspan took over. Volcker was a long-time associate and business partner of the Rothschilds. No matter what the 'party' officially in power the United States economy was directed by the same force. Here are members of the Obama, Trump and Biden administrations and see if you can make out a common theme.

Barack Obama ('Democrat')

Ultra-Zionists Robert Rubin, Larry Summers, and Timothy Geithner ran the US Treasury in the Clinton administration and two of them reappeared with Obama. Ultra-Zionist Fed chairman Alan Greenspan had manipulated the crash of 2008 through deregulation and jumped ship just before the disaster to make way for ultra-Zionist Bernard Bernanke to hand out trillions to Sabbatian 'too big to fail' banks and businesses, including the ubiquitous ultra-Zionist Goldman Sachs which has an ongoing revolving door operation between itself and major financial positions in government worldwide. Obama inherited the fallout of the crash when he took office in January, 2009, and fortunately he had the support of his ultra-Zionist White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emmanuel, son of a terrorist who helped to bomb Israel into being in 1948, and his ultra-Zionist senior adviser David Axelrod, chief strategist in Obama's two

successful presidential campaigns. Emmanuel, later mayor of Chicago and former senior fundraiser and strategist for Bill Clinton, is an example of the Sabbatian policy after Israel was established of migrating insider families to America so their children would be born American citizens. 'Obama' chose this financial team throughout his administration to respond to the Sabbatian-instigated crisis:

Timothy Geithner (ultra-Zionist) Treasury Secretary; Jacob J. Lew, Treasury Secretary; Larry Summers (ultra-Zionist), director of the White House National Economic Council; Paul Adolph Volcker (Rothschild business partner), chairman of the Economic Recovery Advisory Board; Peter Orszag (ultra-Zionist), director of the Office of Management and Budget overseeing all government spending; Penny Pritzker (ultra-Zionist), Commerce Secretary; Jared Bernstein (ultra-Zionist), chief economist and economic policy adviser to Vice President Joe Biden; Mary Schapiro (ultra-Zionist), chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC); Gary Gensler (ultra-Zionist), chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC); Sheila Bair (ultra-Zionist), chair of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC); Karen Mills (ultra-Zionist), head of the Small Business Administration (SBA); Kenneth Feinberg (ultra-Zionist), Special Master for Executive [bail-out] Compensation. Feinberg would be appointed to oversee compensation (with strings) to 9/11 victims and families in a campaign to stop them having their day in court to question the official story. At the same time ultra-Zionist Bernard Bernanke was chairman of the Federal Reserve and these are only some of the ultra-Zionists with allegiance to Sabbatian-controlled Israel in the Obama government. Obama's biggest corporate donor was ultra-Zionist Goldman Sachs which had employed many in his administration.

Donald Trump ('Republican')

Trump claimed to be an outsider (he wasn't) who had come to 'drain the swamp'. He embarked on this goal by immediately appointing ultra-Zionist Steve Mnuchin, a Goldman Sachs employee for 17

years, as his Treasury Secretary. Others included Gary Cohn (ultra-Zionist), chief operating officer of Goldman Sachs, his first Director of the National Economic Council and chief economic adviser, who was later replaced by Larry Kudlow (ultra-Zionist). Trump's senior adviser throughout his four years in the White House was his sinister son-in-law Jared Kushner, a life-long friend of Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Kushner is the son of a convicted crook who was pardoned by Trump in his last days in office. Other ultra-Zionists in the Trump administration included: Stephen Miller, Senior Policy Adviser; Avrahm Berkowitz, Deputy Adviser to Trump and his Senior Adviser Jared Kushner; Ivanka Trump, Adviser to the President, who converted to Judaism when she married Jared Kushner; David Friedman, Trump lawyer and Ambassador to Israel; Jason Greenblatt, Trump Organization executive vice president and chief legal officer, who was made Special Representative for International Negotiations and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; Rod Rosenstein, Deputy Attorney General; Elliot Abrams, Special Representative for Venezuela, then Iran; John Eisenberg, National Security Council Legal Adviser and Deputy Council to the President for National Security Affairs; Anne Neuberger, Deputy National Manager, National Security Agency; Ezra Cohen-Watnick, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; Elan Carr, Special Envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism; Len Khodorkovsky, Deputy Special Envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism; Reed Cordish, Assistant to the President, Intragovernmental and Technology Initiatives. Trump Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, both Christian Zionists, were also vehement supporters of Israel and its goals and ambitions.

Donald 'free-speech believer' Trump pardoned a number of financial and violent criminals while ignoring calls to pardon Julian Assange and Edward Snowden whose crimes are revealing highly relevant information about government manipulation and corruption and the widespread illegal surveillance of the American people by US 'security' agencies. It's so good to know that Trump is on the side of freedom and justice and not mega-criminals with

allegiance to Sabbatian-controlled Israel. These included a pardon for Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard who was jailed for life in 1987 under the Espionage Act. Aviem Sella, the Mossad agent who recruited Pollard, was also pardoned by Trump while Assange sat in jail and Snowden remained in exile in Russia. Sella had 'fled' (was helped to escape) to Israel in 1987 and was never extradited despite being charged under the Espionage Act. A Trump White House statement said that Sella's clemency had been 'supported by Benjamin Netanyahu, Ron Dermer, Israel's US Ambassador, David Friedman, US Ambassador to Israel and Miriam Adelson, wife of leading Trump donor Sheldon Adelson who died shortly before. Other friends of Jared Kushner were pardoned along with Sholom Weiss who was believed to be serving the longest-ever white-collar prison sentence of more than 800 years in 2000. The sentence was commuted of Ponzi-schemer Eliyahu Weinstein who defrauded Jews and others out of \$200 million. I did mention that Assange and Snowden were ignored, right? Trump gave Sabbatians almost everything they asked for in military and political support, moving the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem with its critical symbolic and literal implications for Palestinian statehood, and the 'deal of the Century' designed by Jared Kushner and David Friedman which gave the Sabbatian Israeli government the green light to substantially expand its already widespread program of building illegal Jewish-only settlements in the occupied land of the West Bank. This made a two-state 'solution' impossible by seizing all the land of a potential Palestinian homeland and that had been the plan since 1948 and then 1967 when the Arab-controlled Gaza Strip, West Bank, Sinai Peninsula and Syrian Golan Heights were occupied by Israel. All the talks about talks and road maps and delays have been buying time until the West Bank was physically occupied by Israeli real estate. Trump would have to be a monumentally ill-informed idiot not to see that this was the plan he was helping to complete. The Trump administration was in so many ways the Kushner administration which means the Netanyahu administration which means the Sabbatian administration. I understand why many opposing Cult fascism in all its forms gravitated to Trump, but he

was a crucial part of the Sabbatian plan and I will deal with this in the next chapter.

Joe Biden ('Democrat')

A barely cognitive Joe Biden took over the presidency in January, 2021, along with his fellow empty shell, Vice-President Kamala Harris, as the latest Sabbatian gofers to enter the White House. Names on the door may have changed and the 'party' – the force behind them remained the same as Zionists were appointed to a stream of pivotal areas relating to Sabbatian plans and policy. They included: Janet Yellen, Treasury Secretary, former head of the Federal Reserve, and still another ultra-Zionist running the US Treasury after Mnuchin (Trump), Lew and Geithner (Obama), and Summers and Rubin (Clinton); Anthony Blinken, Secretary of State; Wendy Sherman, Deputy Secretary of State (so that's 'Biden's' Sabbatian foreign policy sorted); Jeff Zients, White House coronavirus coordinator; Rochelle Walensky, head of the Centers for Disease Control; Rachel Levine, transgender deputy health secretary (that's 'Covid' hoax policy under control); Merrick Garland, Attorney General; Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of Homeland Security; Cass Sunstein, Homeland Security with responsibility for new immigration laws; Avril Haines, Director of National Intelligence; Anne Neuberger, National Security Agency cybersecurity director (note, cybersecurity); David Cohen, CIA Deputy Director; Ronald Klain, Biden's Chief of Staff (see Rahm Emanuel); Eric Lander, a 'leading geneticist', Office of Science and Technology Policy director (see Smart Grid, synthetic biology agenda); Jessica Rosenworcel, acting head of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which controls Smart Grid technology policy and electromagnetic communication systems including 5G. How can it be that so many pivotal positions are held by two-percent of the American population and 0.2 percent of the world population administration after administration no matter who is the president and what is the party? It's a coincidence? Of course it's not and this is why Sabbatians have built their colossal global web of interlocking 'anti-

hate' hate groups to condemn anyone who asks these glaring questions as an 'anti-Semite'. The way that Jewish people horrifically abused in Sabbatian-backed Nazi Germany are exploited to this end is stomach-turning and disgusting beyond words.

Political fusion

Sabbatian manipulation has reversed the roles of Republicans and Democrats and the same has happened in Britain with the Conservative and Labour Parties. Republicans and Conservatives were always labelled the 'right' and Democrats and Labour the 'left', but look at the policy positions now and the Democrat-Labour 'left' has moved further to the 'right' than Republicans and Conservatives under the banner of 'Woke', the Cult-created far-right tyranny. Where once the Democrat-Labour 'left' defended free speech and human rights they now seek to delete them and as I said earlier despite the 'Covid' fascism of the Jackboot Johnson Conservative government in the UK the Labour Party of leader Keir Starmer demanded even more extreme measures. The Labour Party has been very publicly absorbed by Sabbatians after a political and media onslaught against the previous leader, the weak and inept Jeremy Corbyn, over made-up allegations of 'anti-Semitism' both by him and his party. The plan was clear with this 'anti-Semite' propaganda and what was required in response was a swift and decisive 'fuck off' from Corbyn and a statement to expose the Anti-Semitism Industry (Sabbatian) attempt to silence Labour criticism of the Israeli government (Sabbatians) and purge the party of all dissent against the extremes of ultra-Zionism (Sabbatians). Instead Corbyn and his party fell to their knees and appeased the abusers which, by definition, is impossible. Appeasing one demand leads only to a new demand to be appeased until takeover is complete. Like I say – 'fuck off' would have been a much more effective policy and I have used it myself with great effect over the years when Sabbatians are on my case which is most of the time. I consider that fact a great compliment, by the way. The outcome of the Labour Party capitulation is that we now have a Sabbatian-controlled

Conservative Party 'opposed' by a Sabbatian-controlled Labour Party in a one-party Sabbatian state that hurtles towards the extremes of tyranny (the Sabbatian cult agenda). In America the situation is the same. Labour's Keir Starmer spends his days on his knees with his tongue out pointing to Tel Aviv, or I guess now Jerusalem, while Boris Johnson has an 'anti-Semitism czar' in the form of former Labour MP John Mann who keeps Starmer company on his prayer mat.

Sabbatian influence can be seen in Jewish members of the Labour Party who have been ejected for criticism of Israel including those from families that suffered in Nazi Germany. Sabbatians despise real Jewish people and target them even more harshly because it is so much more difficult to dub them 'anti-Semitic' although in their desperation they do try.

CHAPTER THREE

The Pushbacker sting

Until you realize how easy it is for your mind to be manipulated, you remain the puppet of someone else's game

Evita Ochel

I will use the presidencies of Trump and Biden to show how the manipulation of the one-party state plays out behind the illusion of political choice across the world. No two presidencies could – on the face of it – be more different and apparently at odds in terms of direction and policy.

A Renegade Mind sees beyond the obvious and focuses on outcomes and consequences and not image, words and waffle. The Cult embarked on a campaign to divide America between those who blindly support its agenda (the mentality known as 'Woke') and those who are pushing back on where the Cult and its Sabbatians want to go. This presents infinite possibilities for dividing and ruling the population by setting them at war with each other and allows a perceptual ring fence of demonisation to encircle the Pushbackers in a modern version of the Little Big Horn in 1876 when American cavalry led by Lieutenant Colonel George Custer were drawn into a trap, surrounded and killed by Native American tribes defending their land of thousands of years from being seized by the government. In this modern version the roles are reversed and it's those defending themselves from the Sabbatian government who are surrounded and the government that's seeking to destroy them. This trap was set years ago and to explain how we must return to 2016

and the emergence of Donald Trump as a candidate to be President of the United States. He set out to overcome the best part of 20 other candidates in the Republican Party before and during the primaries and was not considered by many in those early stages to have a prayer of living in the White House. The Republican Party was said to have great reservations about Trump and yet somehow he won the nomination. When you know how American politics works – politics in general – there is no way that Trump could have become the party's candidate unless the Sabbatian-controlled 'Neocons' that run the Republican Party wanted that to happen. We saw the proof in emails and documents made public by WikiLeaks that the Democratic Party hierarchy, or Democons, systematically undermined the campaign of Bernie Sanders to make sure that Sabbatian gofer Hillary Clinton won the nomination to be their presidential candidate. If the Democons could do that then the Neocons in the Republican Party could have derailed Trump in the same way. But they didn't and at that stage I began to conclude that Trump could well be the one chosen to be president. If that was the case the 'why' was pretty clear to see – the goal of dividing America between Cult agenda-supporting Wokers and Pushbackers who gravitated to Trump because he was telling them what they wanted to hear. His constituency of support had been increasingly ignored and voiceless for decades and profoundly through the eight years of Sabbatian puppet Barack Obama. Now here was someone speaking their language of pulling back from the incessant globalisation of political and economic power, the exporting of American jobs to China and elsewhere by 'American' (Sabbatian) corporations, the deletion of free speech, and the mass immigration policies that had further devastated job opportunities for the urban working class of all races and the once American heartlands of the Midwest.

Beware the forked tongue

Those people collectively sighed with relief that at last a political leader was apparently on their side, but another trait of the Renegade Mind is that you look even harder at people telling you

what you want to hear than those who are telling you otherwise. Obviously as I said earlier people wish what they want to hear to be true and genuine and they are much more likely to believe that than someone saying what they don't want to hear and don't want to be true. Sales people are taught to be skilled in eliciting by calculated questioning what their customers want to hear and repeating that back to them as their own opinion to get their targets to like and trust them. Assets of the Cult are also sales people in the sense of selling perception. To read Cult manipulation you have to play the long and expanded game and not fall for the Vaudeville show of party politics. Both American parties are vehicles for the Cult and they exploit them in different ways depending on what the agenda requires at that moment. Trump and the Republicans were used to be the focus of dividing America and isolating Pushbackers to open the way for a Biden presidency to become the most extreme in American history by advancing the full-blown Woke (Cult) agenda with the aim of destroying and silencing Pushbackers now labelled Nazi Trump supporters and white supremacists.

Sabbatians wanted Trump in office for the reasons described by ultra-Zionist Saul Alinsky (1909-1972) who was promoting the Woke philosophy through 'community organising' long before anyone had heard of it. In those days it still went by its traditional name of Marxism. The reason for the manipulated Trump phenomenon was laid out in Alinsky's 1971 book, *Rules for Radicals*, which was his blueprint for overthrowing democratic and other regimes and replacing them with Sabbatian Marxism. Not surprisingly his to-do list was evident in the Sabbatian French and Russian 'Revolutions' and that in China which will become very relevant in the next chapter about the 'Covid' hoax. Among Alinsky's followers have been the deeply corrupt Barack Obama, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton who described him as a 'hero'. All three are Sabbatian stooges with Pelosi personifying the arrogant corrupt idiocy that so widely fronts up for the Cult inner core. Predictably as a Sabbatian advocate of the 'light-bringer' Alinsky features Lucifer on the dedication page of his book as the original radical who gained

his own kingdom ('Earth' as we shall see). One of Alinsky's golden radical rules was to pick an individual and focus all attention, hatred and blame on them and not to target faceless bureaucracies and corporations. *Rules for Radicals* is really a Sabbatian handbook with its contents repeatedly employed all over the world for centuries and why wouldn't Sabbatians bring to power their designer-villain to be used as the individual on which all attention, hatred and blame was bestowed? This is what they did and the only question for me is how much Trump knew that and how much he was manipulated. A bit of both, I suspect. This was Alinsky's Trump technique from a man who died in 1972. The technique has spanned history:

Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, polarize it. Don't try to attack abstract corporations or bureaucracies. Identify a responsible individual. Ignore attempts to shift or spread the blame.

From the moment Trump came to illusory power everything was about him. It wasn't about Republican policy or opinion, but all about Trump. Everything he did was presented in negative, derogatory and abusive terms by the Sabbatian-dominated media led by Cult operations such as CNN, MSNBC, *The New York Times* and the Jeff Bezos-owned *Washington Post* – 'Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, polarize it.' Trump was turned into a demon to be vilified by those who hated him and a demi-god loved by those who worshipped him. This, in turn, had his supporters, too, presented as equally demonic in preparation for the punchline later down the line when Biden was about to take office. It was here's a Trump, there's a Trump, everywhere a Trump, Trump. Virtually every news story or happening was filtered through the lens of 'The Donald'. You loved him or hated him and which one you chose was said to define you as Satan's spawn or a paragon of virtue. Even supporting some Trump policies or statements and not others was enough for an assault on your character. No shades of grey were or are allowed. Everything is black and white (literally and figuratively). A Californian I knew had her head utterly scrambled by her hatred for Trump while telling people they should love each other. She was so totally consumed by

Trump Derangement Syndrome as it became to be known that this glaring contradiction would never have occurred to her. By definition anyone who criticised Trump or praised his opponents was a hero and this lady described Joe Biden as 'a kind, honest gentleman' when he's a provable liar, mega-crook and vicious piece of work to boot. Sabbatians had indeed divided America using Trump as the fall-guy and all along the clock was ticking on the consequences for his supporters.

In hock to his masters

Trump gave Sabbatians via Israel almost everything they wanted in his four years. Ask and you shall receive was the dynamic between himself and Benjamin Netanyahu orchestrated by Trump's ultra-Zionist son-in-law Jared Kushner, his ultra-Zionist Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, and ultra-Zionist 'Israel adviser', Jason Greenblatt. The last two were central to the running and protecting from collapse of his business empire, the Trump Organisation, and colossal business failures made him forever beholding to Sabbatian networks that bailed him out. By the start of the 1990s Trump owed \$4 billion to banks that he couldn't pay and almost \$1 billion of that was down to him personally and not his companies. This mega-disaster was the result of building two new casinos in Atlantic City and buying the enormous Taj Mahal operation which led to crippling debt payments. He had borrowed fantastic sums from 72 banks with major Sabbatian connections and although the scale of debt should have had him living in a tent alongside the highway they never foreclosed. A plan was devised to lift Trump from the mire by BT Securities Corporation and Rothschild Inc. and the case was handled by Wilber Ross who had worked for the Rothschilds for 27 years. Ross would be named US Commerce Secretary after Trump's election. Another crucial figure in saving Trump was ultra-Zionist 'investor' Carl Icahn who bought the Taj Mahal casino. Icahn was made special economic adviser on financial regulation in the Trump administration. He didn't stay long but still managed to find time to make a tidy sum of a reported \$31.3 million when he sold his

holdings affected by the price of steel three days before Trump imposed a 235 percent tariff on steel imports. What amazing bits of luck these people have. Trump and Sabbatian operatives have long had a close association and his mentor and legal adviser from the early 1970s until 1986 was the dark and genetically corrupt ultra-Zionist Roy Cohn who was chief counsel to Senator Joseph McCarthy's 'communist' witch-hunt in the 1950s. *Esquire* magazine published an article about Cohn with the headline 'Don't mess with Roy Cohn'. He was described as the most feared lawyer in New York and 'a ruthless master of dirty tricks ... [with] ... more than one Mafia Don on speed dial'. Cohn's influence, contacts, support and protection made Trump a front man for Sabbatians in New York with their connections to one of Cohn's many criminal employers, the 'Russian' Sabbatian Mafia. Israel-centric media mogul Rupert Murdoch was introduced to Trump by Cohn and they started a long friendship. Cohn died in 1986 weeks after being disbarred for unethical conduct by the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court. The wheels of justice do indeed run slow given the length of Cohn's crooked career.

QAnon-sense

We are asked to believe that Donald Trump with his fundamental connections to Sabbatian networks and operatives has been leading the fight to stop the Sabbatian agenda for the fascistic control of America and the world. Sure he has. A man entrapped during his years in the White House by Sabbatian operatives and whose biggest financial donor was casino billionaire Sheldon Adelson who was Sabbatian to his DNA?? Oh, do come on. Trump has been used to divide America and isolate Pushbackers on the Cult agenda under the heading of 'Trump supporters', 'insurrectionists' and 'white supremacists'. The US Intelligence/Mossad Psyop or psychological operation known as QAnon emerged during the Trump years as a central pillar in the Sabbatian campaign to lead Pushbackers into the trap set by those that wished to destroy them. I knew from the start that QAnon was a scam because I had seen the same scenario many

times before over 30 years under different names and I had written about one in particular in the books. 'Not again' was my reaction when QAnon came to the fore. The same script is pulled out every few years and a new name added to the letterhead. The story always takes the same form: 'Insiders' or 'the good guys' in the government-intelligence-military 'Deep State' apparatus were going to instigate mass arrests of the 'bad guys' which would include the Rockefellers, Rothschilds, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, George Soros, etc., etc. Dates are given for when the 'good guys' are going to move in, but the dates pass without incident and new dates are given which pass without incident. The central message to Pushbackers in each case is that they don't have to do anything because there is 'a plan' and it is all going to be sorted by the 'good guys' on the inside. 'Trust the plan' was a QAnon mantra when the only plan was to misdirect Pushbackers into putting their trust in a Psyop they believed to be real. Beware, beware, those who tell you what you want to hear and always check it out. Right up to Biden's inauguration QAnon was still claiming that 'the Storm' was coming and Trump would stay on as president when Biden and his cronies were arrested and jailed. It was never going to happen and of course it didn't, but what did happen as a result provided that punchline to the Sabbatian Trump/QAnon Psyop.

On January 6th, 2021, a very big crowd of Trump supporters gathered in the National Mall in Washington DC down from the Capitol Building to protest at what they believed to be widespread corruption and vote fraud that stopped Trump being re-elected for a second term as president in November, 2020. I say as someone that does not support Trump or Biden that the evidence is clear that major vote-fixing went on to favour Biden, a man with cognitive problems so advanced he can often hardly string a sentence together without reading the words written for him on the Teleprompter. Glaring ballot discrepancies included serious questions about electronic voting machines that make vote rigging a comparative cinch and hundreds of thousands of paper votes that suddenly appeared during already advanced vote counts and virtually all of

them for Biden. Early Trump leads in crucial swing states suddenly began to close and disappear. The pandemic hoax was used as the excuse to issue almost limitless numbers of mail-in ballots with no checks to establish that the recipients were still alive or lived at that address. They were sent to streams of people who had not even asked for them. Private organisations were employed to gather these ballots and who knows what they did with them before they turned up at the counts. The American election system has been manipulated over decades to become a sick joke with more holes than a Swiss cheese for the express purpose of dictating the results. Then there was the criminal manipulation of information by Sabbatian tech giants like Facebook, Twitter and Google-owned YouTube which deleted pro-Trump, anti-Biden accounts and posts while everything in support of Biden was left alone. Sabbatians wanted Biden to win because after the dividing of America it was time for full-on Woke and every aspect of the Cult agenda to be unleashed.

Hunter gatherer

Extreme Silicon Valley bias included blocking information by the *New York Post* exposing a Biden scandal that should have ended his bid for president in the final weeks of the campaign. Hunter Biden, his monumentally corrupt son, is reported to have sent a laptop to be repaired at a local store and failed to return for it. Time passed until the laptop became the property of the store for non-payment of the bill. When the owner saw what was on the hard drive he gave a copy to the FBI who did nothing even though it confirmed widespread corruption in which the Joe Biden family were using his political position, especially when he was vice president to Obama, to make multiple millions in countries around the world and most notably Ukraine and China. Hunter Biden's one-time business partner Tony Bobulinski went public when the story broke in the *New York Post* to confirm the corruption he saw and that Joe Biden not only knew what was going on he also profited from the spoils. Millions were handed over by a Chinese company with close

connections – like all major businesses in China – to the Chinese communist party of President Xi Jinping. Joe Biden even boasted at a meeting of the Cult's World Economic Forum that as vice president he had ordered the government of Ukraine to fire a prosecutor. What he didn't mention was that the same man just happened to be investigating an energy company which was part of Hunter Biden's corrupt portfolio. The company was paying him big bucks for no other reason than the influence his father had. Overnight Biden's presidential campaign should have been over given that he had lied publicly about not knowing what his son was doing. Instead almost the entire Sabbatian-owned mainstream media and Sabbatian-owned Silicon Valley suppressed circulation of the story. This alone went a mighty way to rigging the election of 2020. Cult assets like Mark Zuckerberg at Facebook also spent hundreds of millions to be used in support of Biden and vote 'administration'.

The Cult had used Trump as the focus to divide America and was now desperate to bring in moronic, pliable, corrupt Biden to complete the double-whammy. No way were they going to let little things like the will of the people thwart their plan. Silicon Valley widely censored claims that the election was rigged because it *was* rigged. For the same reason anyone claiming it was rigged was denounced as a 'white supremacist' including the pathetically few Republican politicians willing to say so. Right across the media where the claim was mentioned it was described as a 'false claim' even though these excuses for 'journalists' would have done no research into the subject whatsoever. Trump won seven million more votes than any sitting president had ever achieved while somehow a cognitively-challenged soon to be 78-year-old who was hidden away from the public for most of the campaign managed to win more votes than any presidential candidate in history. It makes no sense. You only had to see election rallies for both candidates to witness the enthusiasm for Trump and the apathy for Biden. Tens of thousands would attend Trump events while Biden was speaking in empty car parks with often only television crews attending and framing their shots to hide the fact that no one was there. It was pathetic to see

footage come to light of Biden standing at a podium making speeches only to TV crews and party fixers while reading the words written for him on massive Teleprompter screens. So, yes, those protestors on January 6th had a point about election rigging, but some were about to walk into a trap laid for them in Washington by the Cult Deep State and its QAnon Psyop. This was the Capitol Hill riot ludicrously dubbed an 'insurrection'.

The spider and the fly

Renegade Minds know there are not two 'sides' in politics, only one side, the Cult, working through all 'sides'. It's a stage show, a puppet show, to direct the perceptions of the population into focusing on diversions like parties and candidates while missing the puppeteers with their hands holding all the strings. The Capitol Hill 'insurrection' brings us back to the Little Big Horn. Having created two distinct opposing groupings – Woke and Pushbackers – the trap was about to be sprung. Pushbackers were to be encircled and isolated by associating them all in the public mind with Trump and then labelling Trump as some sort of Confederate leader. I knew immediately that the Capitol riot was a set-up because of two things. One was how easy the rioters got into the building with virtually no credible resistance and secondly I could see – as with the 'Covid' hoax in the West at the start of 2020 – how the Cult could exploit the situation to move its agenda forward with great speed. My experience of Cult techniques and activities over more than 30 years has showed me that while they do exploit situations they haven't themselves created this never happens with events of fundamental agenda significance. Every time major events giving cultists the excuse to rapidly advance their plan you find they are manipulated into being for the specific reason of providing that excuse – Problem-Reaction-Solution. Only a tiny minority of the huge crowd of Washington protestors sought to gain entry to the Capitol by smashing windows and breaching doors. That didn't matter. The whole crowd and all Pushbackers, even if they did not support Trump, were going to be lumped together as dangerous

insurrectionists and conspiracy theorists. The latter term came into widespread use through a CIA memo in the 1960s aimed at discrediting those questioning the nonsensical official story of the Kennedy assassination and it subsequently became widely employed by the media. It's still being used by inept 'journalists' with no idea of its origin to discredit anyone questioning anything that authority claims to be true. When you are perpetrating a conspiracy you need to discredit the very word itself even though the dictionary definition of conspiracy is merely 'the activity of secretly planning with other people to do something bad or illegal' and 'a general agreement to keep silent about a subject for the purpose of keeping it secret'. On that basis there are conspiracies almost wherever you look. For obvious reasons the Cult and its lapdog media have to claim there are no conspiracies even though the word appears in state laws as with conspiracy to defraud, to murder, and to corrupt public morals.

Agent provocateurs are widely used by the Cult Deep State to manipulate genuine people into acting in ways that suit the desired outcome. By genuine in this case I mean protestors genuinely supporting Trump and claims that the election was stolen. In among them, however, were agents of the state wearing the garb of Trump supporters and QAnon to pump-prime the Capital riot which some genuine Trump supporters naively fell for. I described the situation as 'Come into my parlour said the spider to the fly'. Leaflets appeared through the Woke paramilitary arm Antifa, the anti-fascist fascists, calling on supporters to turn up in Washington looking like Trump supporters even though they hated him. Some of those arrested for breaching the Capitol Building were sourced to Antifa and its stable mate Black Lives Matter. Both organisations are funded by Cult billionaires and corporations. One man charged for the riot was according to his lawyer a former FBI agent who had held top secret security clearance for 40 years. Attorney Thomas Plofchan said of his client, 66-year-old Thomas Edward Caldwell:

He has held a Top Secret Security Clearance since 1979 and has undergone multiple Special Background Investigations in support of his clearances. After retiring from the Navy, he

worked as a section chief for the Federal Bureau of Investigation from 2009-2010 as a GS-12 [mid-level employee].

He also formed and operated a consulting firm performing work, often classified, for U.S government customers including the US. Drug Enforcement Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development, the US Coast Guard, and the US Army Personnel Command.

A judge later released Caldwell pending trial in the absence of evidence about a conspiracy or that he tried to force his way into the building. *The New York Post* reported a 'law enforcement source' as saying that 'at least two known Antifa members were spotted' on camera among Trump supporters during the riot while one of the rioters arrested was John Earle Sullivan, a seriously extreme Black Lives Matter Trump-hater from Utah who was previously arrested and charged in July, 2020, over a BLM-Antifa riot in which drivers were threatened and one was shot. Sullivan is the founder of Utah-based Insurgence USA which is an affiliate of the Cult-created-and-funded Black Lives Matter movement. Footage appeared and was then deleted by Twitter of Trump supporters calling out Antifa infiltrators and a group was filmed changing into pro-Trump clothing before the riot. Security at the building was *pathetic* – as planned. Colonel Leroy Fletcher Prouty, a man with long experience in covert operations working with the US security apparatus, once described the tell-tale sign to identify who is involved in an assassination. He said:

No one has to direct an assassination – it happens. The active role is played secretly by permitting it to happen. This is the greatest single clue. Who has the power to call off or reduce the usual security precautions?

This principle applies to many other situations and certainly to the Capitol riot of January 6th, 2021.

The sting

With such a big and potentially angry crowd known to be gathering near the Capitol the security apparatus would have had a major police detail to defend the building with National Guard troops on

standby given the strength of feeling among people arriving from all over America encouraged by the QAnon Psyop and statements by Donald Trump. Instead Capitol Police 'security' was flimsy, weak, and easily breached. The same number of officers was deployed as on a regular day and that is a blatant red flag. They were not staffed or equipped for a possible riot that had been an obvious possibility in the circumstances. No protective and effective fencing worth the name was put in place and there were no contingency plans. The whole thing was basically a case of standing aside and waving people in. Once inside police mostly backed off apart from one Capitol police officer who ridiculously shot dead unarmed Air Force veteran protestor Ashli Babbitt without a warning as she climbed through a broken window. The 'investigation' refused to name or charge the officer after what must surely be considered a murder in the circumstances. They just lifted a carpet and swept. The story was endlessly repeated about five people dying in the 'armed insurrection' when there was no report of rioters using weapons. Apart from Babbitt the other four died from a heart attack, strokes and apparently a drug overdose. Capitol police officer Brian Sicknick was reported to have died after being bludgeoned with a fire extinguisher when he was alive after the riot was over and died later of what the Washington Medical Examiner's Office said was a stroke. Sicknick had no external injuries. The lies were delivered like rapid fire. There was a narrative to build with incessant repetition of the lie until the lie became the accepted 'everybody knows that' truth. The 'Big Lie' technique of Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels is constantly used by the Cult which was behind the Nazis and is today behind the 'Covid' and 'climate change' hoaxes. Goebbels said:

If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it. The lie can be maintained only for such time as the State can shield the people from the political, economic and/or military consequences of the lie. It thus becomes vitally important for the State to use all of its powers to repress dissent, for the truth is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the State.

Most protestors had a free run of the Capitol Building. This allowed pictures to be taken of rioters in iconic parts of the building including the Senate chamber which could be used as propaganda images against all Pushbackers. One Congresswoman described the scene as 'the worst kind of non-security anybody could ever imagine'. Well, the first part was true, but someone obviously did imagine it and made sure it happened. Some photographs most widely circulated featured people wearing QAnon symbols and now the Psyop would be used to dub all QAnon followers with the ubiquitous fit-all label of 'white supremacist' and 'insurrectionists'. When a Muslim extremist called Noah Green drove his car at two police officers at the Capitol Building killing one in April, 2021, there was no such political and media hysteria. They were just disappointed he wasn't white.

The witch-hunt

Government prosecutor Michael Sherwin, an aggressive, dark-eyed, professional Rottweiler led the 'investigation' and to call it over the top would be to understate reality a thousand fold. Hundreds were tracked down and arrested for the crime of having the wrong political views and people were jailed who had done nothing more than walk in the building, committed no violence or damage to property, took a few pictures and left. They were labelled a 'threat to the Republic' while Biden sat in the White House signing executive orders written for him that were dismantling 'the Republic'. Even when judges ruled that a mother and son should not be in jail the government kept them there. Some of those arrested have been badly beaten by prison guards in Washington and lawyers for one man said he suffered a fractured skull and was made blind in one eye. Meanwhile a woman is shot dead for no reason by a Capitol Police officer and we are not allowed to know who he is never mind what has happened to him although that will be *nothing*. The Cult's QAnon/Trump sting to identify and isolate Pushbackers and then target them on the road to crushing and deleting them was a resounding success. You would have thought the Russians had

invaded the building at gunpoint and lined up senators for a firing squad to see the political and media reaction. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is a child in a woman's body, a terrible-tvos, me, me, me, Woker narcissist of such proportions that words have no meaning. She said she thought she was going to die when 'insurrectionists' banged on her office door. It turned out she wasn't even in the Capitol Building when the riot was happening and the 'banging' was a Capitol Police officer. She referred to herself as a 'survivor' which is an insult to all those true survivors of violent and sexual abuse while she lives her pampered and privileged life talking drivel for a living. Her Woke colleague and fellow mega-narcissist Rashida Tlaib broke down describing the devastating effect on her, too, of *not being* in the building when the rioters were there. Ocasio-Cortez and Tlaib are members of a fully-Woke group of Congresswomen known as 'The Squad' along with Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley. The Squad from what I can see can be identified by its vehement anti-white racism, anti-white men agenda, and, as always in these cases, the absence of brain cells on active duty.

The usual suspects were on the riot case immediately in the form of Democrat ultra-Zionist senators and operatives Chuck Schumer and Adam Schiff demanding that Trump be impeached for 'his part in the insurrection'. The same pair of prats had led the failed impeachment of Trump over the invented 'Russia collusion' nonsense which claimed Russia had helped Trump win the 2016 election. I didn't realise that Tel Aviv had been relocated just outside Moscow. I must find an up-to-date map. The Russia hoax was a Sabbatian operation to keep Trump occupied and impotent and to stop any rapport with Russia which the Cult wants to retain as a perceptual enemy to be pulled out at will. Puppet Biden began attacking Russia when he came to office as the Cult seeks more upheaval, division and war across the world. A two-year stage show 'Russia collusion inquiry' headed by the not-very-bright former 9/11 FBI chief Robert Mueller, with support from 19 lawyers, 40 FBI agents plus intelligence analysts, forensic accountants and other

staff, devoured tens of millions of dollars and found no evidence of Russia collusion which a ten-year-old could have told them on day one. Now the same moronic Schumer and Schiff wanted a second impeachment of Trump over the Capitol 'insurrection' (riot) which the arrested development of Schumer called another 'Pearl Harbor' while others compared it with 9/11 in which 3,000 died and, in the case of CNN, with the Rwandan genocide in the 1990s in which an estimated 500,000 to 600,000 were murdered, between 250,000 and 500,000 women were raped, and populations of whole towns were hacked to death with machetes. To make those comparisons purely for Cult political reasons is beyond insulting to those that suffered and lost their lives and confirms yet again the callous inhumanity that we are dealing with. Schumer is a monumental idiot and so is Schiff, but they serve the Cult agenda and do whatever they're told so they get looked after. Talking of idiots – another inane man who spanned the Russia and Capitol impeachment attempts was Senator Eric Swalwell who had the nerve to accuse Trump of collusion with the Russians while sleeping with a Chinese spy called Christine Fang or 'Fang Fang' which is straight out of a Bond film no doubt starring Klaus Schwab as the bloke living on a secret island and controlling laser weapons positioned in space and pointing at world capitals. Fang Fang plays the part of Bond's infiltrator girlfriend which I'm sure she would enjoy rather more than sharing a bed with the brainless Swalwell, lying back and thinking of China. The FBI eventually warned Swalwell about Fang Fang which gave her time to escape back to the Chinese dictatorship. How very thoughtful of them. The second Trump impeachment also failed and hardly surprising when an impeachment is supposed to remove a sitting president and by the time it happened Trump was no longer president. These people are running your country America, well, officially anyway. Terrifying isn't it?

Outcomes tell the story - always

The outcome of all this – and it's the *outcome* on which Renegade Minds focus, not the words – was that a vicious, hysterical and

obviously pre-planned assault was launched on Pushbackers to censor, silence and discredit them and even targeted their right to earn a living. They have since been condemned as 'domestic terrorists' that need to be treated like Al-Qaeda and Islamic State. 'Domestic terrorists' is a label the Cult has been trying to make stick since the period of the Oklahoma bombing in 1995 which was blamed on 'far-right domestic terrorists'. If you read *The Trigger* you will see that the bombing was clearly a Problem-Reaction-Solution carried out by the Deep State during a Bill Clinton administration so corrupt that no dictionary definition of the term would even nearly suffice. Nearly 30, 000 troops were deployed from all over America to the empty streets of Washington for Biden's inauguration. Ten thousand of them stayed on with the pretext of protecting the capital from insurrectionists when it was more psychological programming to normalise the use of the military in domestic law enforcement in support of the Cult plan for a police-military state. Biden's fascist administration began a purge of 'wrong-thinkers' in the military which means anyone that is not on board with Woke. The Capitol Building was surrounded by a fence with razor wire and the Land of the Free was further symbolically and literally dismantled. The circle was completed with the installation of Biden and the exploitation of the QAnon Psyop.

America had never been so divided since the civil war of the 19th century, Pushbackers were isolated and dubbed terrorists and now, as was always going to happen, the Cult immediately set about deleting what little was left of freedom and transforming American society through a swish of the hand of the most controlled 'president' in American history leading (officially at least) the most extreme regime since the country was declared an independent state on July 4th, 1776. Biden issued undebated, dictatorial executive orders almost by the hour in his opening days in office across the whole spectrum of the Cult wish-list including diluting controls on the border with Mexico allowing thousands of migrants to illegally enter the United States to transform the demographics of America and import an election-changing number of perceived Democrat

voters. Then there were Biden deportation amnesties for the already illegally resident (estimated to be as high as 20 or even 30 million). A bill before Congress awarded American citizenship to anyone who could prove they had worked in agriculture for just 180 days in the previous two years as 'Big Ag' secured its slave labour long-term. There were the plans to add new states to the union such as Puerto Rico and making Washington DC a state. They are all parts of a plan to ensure that the Cult-owned Woke Democrats would be permanently in power.

Border – what border?

I have exposed in detail in other books how mass immigration into the United States and Europe is the work of Cult networks fuelled by the tens of billions spent to this and other ends by George Soros and his global Open Society (open borders) Foundations. The impact can be seen in America alone where the population has increased by *100 million* in little more than 30 years mostly through immigration. I wrote in *The Answer* that the plan was to have so many people crossing the southern border that the numbers become unstoppable and we are now there under Cult-owned Biden. El Salvador in Central America puts the scale of what is happening into context. A third of the population now lives in the United States, much of it illegally, and many more are on the way. The methodology is to crush Central and South American countries economically and spread violence through machete-wielding psychopathic gangs like MS-13 based in El Salvador and now operating in many American cities. Biden-imposed lax security at the southern border means that it is all but open. He said before his 'election' that he wanted to see a surge towards the border if he became president and that was the green light for people to do just that after election day to create the human disaster that followed for both America and the migrants. When that surge came the imbecilic Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said it wasn't a 'surge' because they are 'children, not insurgents' and the term 'surge' (used by Biden) was a claim of 'white supremacists'.

This disingenuous lady may one day enter the realm of the most basic intelligence, but it won't be any time soon.

Sabbatians and the Cult are in the process of destroying America by importing violent people and gangs in among the genuine to terrorise American cities and by overwhelming services that cannot cope with the sheer volume of new arrivals. Something similar is happening in Europe as Western society in general is targeted for demographic and cultural transformation and upheaval. The plan demands violence and crime to create an environment of intimidation, fear and division and Soros has been funding the election of district attorneys across America who then stop prosecuting many crimes, reduce sentences for violent crimes and free as many violent criminals as they can. Sabbatians are creating the chaos from which order – their order – can respond in a classic Problem-Reaction-Solution. A Freemasonic motto says 'Ordo Ab Chao' (Order out of Chaos) and this is why the Cult is constantly creating chaos to impose a new 'order'. Here you have the reason the Cult is constantly creating chaos. The 'Covid' hoax can be seen with those entering the United States by plane being forced to take a 'Covid' test while migrants flooding through southern border processing facilities do not. Nothing is put in the way of mass migration and if that means ignoring the government's own 'Covid' rules then so be it. They know it's all bullshit anyway. Any pushback on this is denounced as 'racist' by Workers and Sabbatian fronts like the ultra-Zionist Anti-Defamation League headed by the appalling Jonathan Greenblatt which at the same time argues that Israel should not give citizenship and voting rights to more Palestinian Arabs or the 'Jewish population' (in truth the Sabbatian network) will lose control of the country.

Society-changing numbers

Biden's masters have declared that countries like El Salvador are so dangerous that their people must be allowed into the United States for humanitarian reasons when there are fewer murders in large parts of many Central American countries than in US cities like

Baltimore. That is not to say Central America cannot be a dangerous place and Cult-controlled American governments have been making it so since way back, along with the dismantling of economies, in a long-term plan to drive people north into the United States. Parts of Central America are very dangerous, but in other areas the story is being greatly exaggerated to justify relaxing immigration criteria. Migrants are being offered free healthcare and education in the United States as another incentive to head for the border and there is no requirement to be financially independent before you can enter to prevent the resources of America being drained. You can't blame migrants for seeking what they believe will be a better life, but they are being played by the Cult for dark and nefarious ends. The numbers since Biden took office are huge. In February, 2021, more than 100,000 people were known to have tried to enter the US illegally through the southern border (it was 34,000 in the same month in 2020) and in March it was 170,000 – a 418 percent increase on March, 2020. These numbers are only known people, not the ones who get in unseen. The true figure for migrants illegally crossing the border in a single month was estimated by one congressman at 250,000 and that number will only rise under Biden's current policy. Gangs of murdering drug-running thugs that control the Mexican side of the border demand money – thousands of dollars – to let migrants cross the Rio Grande into America. At the same time gun battles are breaking out on the border several times a week between rival Mexican drug gangs (which now operate globally) who are equipped with sophisticated military-grade weapons, grenades and armoured vehicles. While the Capitol Building was being 'protected' from a non-existent 'threat' by thousands of troops, and others were still deployed at the time in the Cult Neocon war in Afghanistan, the southern border of America was left to its fate. This is not incompetence, it is cold calculation.

By March, 2021, there were 17,000 unaccompanied children held at border facilities and many of them are ensnared by people traffickers for paedophile rings and raped on their journey north to America. This is not conjecture – this is fact. Many of those designated

children are in reality teenage boys or older. Meanwhile Wokers posture their self-purity for encouraging poor and tragic people to come to America and face this nightmare both on the journey and at the border with the disgusting figure of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi giving disingenuous speeches about caring for migrants. The woman's evil. Wokers condemned Trump for having children in cages at the border (so did Obama, *Shhhh*), but now they are sleeping on the floor without access to a shower with one border facility 729 percent over capacity. The Biden insanity even proposed flying migrants from the southern border to the northern border with Canada for 'processing'. The whole shambles is being overseen by ultra-Zionist Secretary of Homeland Security, the moronic liar Alejandro Mayorkas, who banned news cameras at border facilities to stop Americans seeing what was happening. Mayorkas said there was not a ban on news crews; it was just that they were not allowed to film. Alongside him at Homeland Security is another ultra-Zionist Cass Sunstein appointed by Biden to oversee new immigration laws. Sunstein despises conspiracy researchers to the point where he suggests they should be banned or *taxed* for having such views. The man is not bonkers or anything. He's perfectly well-adjusted, but adjusted to what is the question. Criticise what is happening and you are a 'white supremacist' when earlier non-white immigrants also oppose the numbers which effect their lives and opportunities. Black people in poor areas are particularly damaged by uncontrolled immigration and the increased competition for work opportunities with those who will work for less. They are also losing voting power as Hispanics become more dominant in former black areas. It's a downward spiral for them while the billionaires behind the policy drone on about how much they care about black people and 'racism'. None of this is about compassion for migrants or black people – that's just wind and air. Migrants are instead being mercilessly exploited to transform America while the countries they leave are losing their future and the same is true in Europe. Mass immigration may now be the work of Woke Democrats, but it can be traced back to the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (it

wasn't) signed into law by Republican hero President Ronald Reagan which gave amnesty to millions living in the United States illegally and other incentives for people to head for the southern border. Here we have the one-party state at work again.

Save me syndrome

Almost every aspect of what I have been exposing as the Cult agenda was on display in even the first days of 'Biden' with silencing of Pushbackers at the forefront of everything. A Renegade Mind will view the Trump years and QAnon in a very different light to their supporters and advocates as the dots are connected. The QAnon/Trump Psyop has given the Cult all it was looking for. We may not know how much, or little, that Trump realised he was being used, but that's a side issue. This pincer movement produced the desired outcome of dividing America and having Pushbackers isolated. To turn this around we have to look at new routes to empowerment which do not include handing our power to other people and groups through what I will call the 'Save Me Syndrome' – 'I want someone else to do it so that I don't have to'. We have seen this at work throughout human history and the QAnon/Trump Psyop is only the latest incarnation alongside all the others. Religion is an obvious expression of this when people look to a 'god' or priest to save them or tell them how to be saved and then there are 'save me' politicians like Trump. Politics is a diversion and not a 'saviour'. It is a means to block positive change, not make it possible.

Save Me Syndrome always comes with the same repeating theme of handing your power to whom or what you believe will save you while your real 'saviour' stares back from the mirror every morning. Renegade Minds are constantly vigilant in this regard and always asking the question 'What can I do?' rather than 'What can someone else do for me?' Gandhi was right when he said: 'You must be the change you want to see in the world.' We are indeed the people we have been waiting for. We are presented with a constant raft of reasons to concede that power to others and forget where the real power is. Humanity has the numbers and the Cult does not. It has to

use diversion and division to target the unstoppable power that comes from unity. Religions, governments, politicians, corporations, media, QAnon, are all different manifestations of this power-diversion and dilution. Refusing to give your power to governments and instead handing it to Trump and QAnon is not to take a new direction, but merely to recycle the old one with new names on the posters. I will explore this phenomenon as we proceed and how to break the cycles and recycles that got us here through the mists of repeating perception and so repeating history.

For now we shall turn to the most potent example in the entire human story of the consequences that follow when you give your power away. I am talking, of course, of the 'Covid' hoax.

CHAPTER FOUR

'Covid': Calculated catastrophe

Facts are threatening to those invested in fraud
DaShanne Stokes

We can easily unravel the real reason for the 'Covid pandemic' hoax by employing the Renegade Mind methodology that I have outlined this far. We'll start by comparing the long-planned Cult outcome with the 'Covid pandemic' outcome. Know the outcome and you'll see the journey.

I have highlighted the plan for the Hunger Games Society which has been in my books for so many years with the very few controlling the very many through ongoing dependency. To create this dependency it is essential to destroy independent livelihoods, businesses and employment to make the population reliant on the state (the Cult) for even the basics of life through a guaranteed pittance income. While independence of income remained these Cult ambitions would be thwarted. With this knowledge it was easy to see where the 'pandemic' hoax was going once talk of 'lockdowns' began and the closing of all but perceived 'essential' businesses to 'save' us from an alleged 'deadly virus'. Cult corporations like Amazon and Walmart were naturally considered 'essential' while mom and pop shops and stores had their doors closed by fascist decree. As a result with every new lockdown and new regulation more small and medium, even large businesses not owned by the Cult, went to the wall while Cult giants and their frontmen and women grew financially fatter by the second. Mom and pop were

denied an income and the right to earn a living and the wealth of people like Jeff Bezos (Amazon), Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) and Sergei Brin and Larry Page (Google/Alphabet) have reached record levels. The Cult was increasing its own power through further dramatic concentrations of wealth while the competition was being destroyed and brought into a state of dependency. Lockdowns have been instigated to secure that very end and were never anything to do with health. My brother Paul spent 45 years building up a bus repair business, but lockdowns meant buses were running at a fraction of normal levels for months on end. Similar stories can be told in their hundreds of millions worldwide. Efforts of a lifetime coldly destroyed by Cult multi-billionaires and their lackeys in government and law enforcement who continued to earn their living from the taxation of the people while denying the right of the same people to earn theirs. How different it would have been if those making and enforcing these decisions had to face the same financial hardships of those they affected, but they never do.

Gates of Hell

Behind it all in the full knowledge of what he is doing and why is the psychopathic figure of Cult operative Bill Gates. His puppet Tedros at the World Health Organization declared 'Covid' a pandemic in March, 2020. The WHO had changed the definition of a 'pandemic' in 2009 just a month before declaring the 'swine flu pandemic' which would not have been so under the previous definition. The same applies to 'Covid'. The definition had included... 'an infection by an infectious agent, occurring simultaneously in different countries, with a significant mortality rate relative to the proportion of the population infected'. The new definition removed the need for 'significant mortality'. The 'pandemic' has been fraudulent even down to the definition, but Gates demanded economy-destroying lockdowns, school closures, social distancing, mandatory masks, a 'vaccination' for every man, woman and child on the planet and severe consequences and restrictions for those that refused. Who gave him this power? The

Cult did which he serves like a little boy in short trousers doing what his daddy tells him. He and his psychopathic missus even smiled when they said that much worse was to come (what they knew was planned to come). Gates responded in the matter-of-fact way of all psychopaths to a question about the effect on the world economy of what he was doing:

Well, it won't go to zero but it will shrink. Global GDP is probably going to take the biggest hit ever [Gates was smiling as he said this] ... in my lifetime this will be the greatest economic hit. But you don't have a choice. People act as if you have a choice. People don't feel like going to the stadium when they might get infected ... People are deeply affected by seeing these stats, by knowing they could be part of the transmission chain, old people, their parents and grandparents, could be affected by this, and so you don't get to say ignore what is going on here.

There will be the ability to open up, particularly in rich countries, if things are done well over the next few months, but for the world at large normalcy only returns when we have largely vaccinated the entire population.

The man has no compassion or empathy. How could he when he's a psychopath like all Cult players? My own view is that even beyond that he is very seriously mentally ill. Look in his eyes and you can see this along with his crazy flailing arms. You don't do what he has done to the world population since the start of 2020 unless you are mentally ill and at the most extreme end of psychopathic. You especially don't do it when to you know, as we shall see, that cases and deaths from 'Covid' are fakery and a product of monumental figure massaging. 'These stats' that Gates referred to are based on a 'test' that's not testing for the 'virus' as he has known all along. He made his fortune with big Cult support as an infamously ruthless software salesman and now buys global control of 'health' (death) policy without the population he affects having any say. It's a breathtaking outrage. Gates talked about people being deeply affected by fear of 'Covid' when that was because of *him* and his global network lying to them minute-by-minute supported by a lying media that he seriously influences and funds to the tune of hundreds of millions. He's handed big sums to media operations including the BBC, NBC, Al Jazeera, Univision, *PBS NewsHour*,

ProPublica, National Journal, The Guardian, The Financial Times, The Atlantic, Texas Tribune, USA Today publisher Gannett, Washington Monthly, Le Monde, Center for Investigative Reporting, Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, National Press Foundation, International Center for Journalists, Solutions Journalism Network, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, and many more. Gates is everywhere in the 'Covid' hoax and the man must go to prison – or a mental facility – for the rest of his life and his money distributed to those he has taken such enormous psychopathic pleasure in crushing.

The Muscle

The Hunger Games global structure demands a police-military state – a fusion of the two into one force – which viciously imposes the will of the Cult on the population and protects the Cult from public rebellion. In that regard, too, the 'Covid' hoax just keeps on giving. Often unlawful, ridiculous and contradictory 'Covid' rules and regulations have been policed across the world by moronic automatons and psychopaths made faceless by face-nappy masks and acting like the Nazi SS and fascist blackshirts and brownshirts of Hitler and Mussolini. The smallest departure from the rules decreed by the psychos in government and their clueless gofers were jumped upon by the face-nappy fascists. Brutality against public protestors soon became commonplace even on girls, women and old people as the brave men with the batons – the Face-Nappies as I call them – broke up peaceful protests and handed out fines like confetti to people who couldn't earn a living let alone pay hundreds of pounds for what was once an accepted human right. Robot Face-Nappies of Nottingham police in the English East Midlands fined one group £11,000 for attending a child's birthday party. For decades I charted the transformation of law enforcement as genuine, decent officers were replaced with psychopaths and the brain dead who would happily and brutally do whatever their masters told them. Now they were let loose on the public and I would emphasise the point that none of this just happened. The step-by-step change in the dynamic between police and public was orchestrated from the shadows by

those who knew where this was all going and the same with the perceptual reframing of those in all levels of authority and official administration through 'training courses' by organisations such as Common Purpose which was created in the late 1980s and given a massive boost in Blair era Britain until it became a global phenomenon. Supposed public 'servants' began to view the population as the enemy and the same was true of the police. This was the start of the explosion of behaviour manipulation organisations and networks preparing for the all-war on the human psyche unleashed with the dawn of 2020. I will go into more detail about this later in the book because it is a core part of what is happening.

Police desecrated beauty spots to deter people gathering and arrested women for walking in the countryside alone 'too far' from their homes. We had arrogant, clueless sergeants in the Isle of Wight police where I live posting on Facebook what they insisted the population must do or else. A schoolmaster sergeant called Radford looked young enough for me to ask if his mother knew he was out, but he was posting what he *expected* people to do while a Sergeant Wilkinson boasted about fining lads for meeting in a McDonald's car park where they went to get a lockdown takeaway. Wilkinson added that he had even cancelled their order. What a pair of prats these people are and yet they have increasingly become the norm among Jackboot Johnson's Yellowshirts once known as the British police. This was the theme all over the world with police savagery common during lockdown protests in the United States, the Netherlands, and the fascist state of Victoria in Australia under its tyrannical and again moronic premier Daniel Andrews. Amazing how tyrannical and moronic tend to work as a team and the same combination could be seen across America as arrogant, narcissistic Woke governors and mayors such as Gavin Newsom (California), Andrew Cuomo (New York), Gretchen Whitmer (Michigan), Lori Lightfoot (Chicago) and Eric Garcetti (Los Angeles) did their Nazi and Stalin impressions with the full support of the compliant brutality of their enforcers in uniform as they arrested small business owners defying

fascist shutdown orders and took them to jail in ankle shackles and handcuffs. This happened to bistro owner Marlena Pavlos-Hackney in Gretchen Whitmer's fascist state of Michigan when police arrived to enforce an order by a state-owned judge for 'putting the community at risk' at a time when other states like Texas were dropping restrictions and migrants were pouring across the southern border without any 'Covid' questions at all. I'm sure there are many officers appalled by what they are ordered to do, but not nearly enough of them. If they were truly appalled they would not do it. As the months passed every opportunity was taken to have the military involved to make their presence on the streets ever more familiar and 'normal' for the longer-term goal of police-military fusion.

Another crucial element to the Hunger Games enforcement network has been encouraging the public to report neighbours and others for 'breaking the lockdown rules'. The group faced with £11,000 in fines at the child's birthday party would have been dobbed-in by a neighbour with a brain the size of a pea. The technique was most famously employed by the Stasi secret police in communist East Germany who had public informants placed throughout the population. A police chief in the UK says his force doesn't need to carry out 'Covid' patrols when they are flooded with so many calls from the public reporting other people for visiting the beach. Dorset police chief James Vaughan said people were so enthusiastic about snitching on their fellow humans they were now operating as an auxiliary arm of the police: 'We are still getting around 400 reports a week from the public, so we will respond to reports ... We won't need to be doing hotspot patrols because people are very quick to pick the phone up and tell us.' Vaughan didn't say that this is a pillar of all tyrannies of whatever complexion and the means to hugely extend the reach of enforcement while spreading distrust among the people and making them wary of doing anything that might get them reported. Those narcissistic Isle of Wight sergeants Radford and Wilkinson never fail to add a link to their Facebook posts where the public can inform on their fellow slaves.

Neither would be self-aware enough to realise they were imitating the Stasi which they might well never have heard of. Government psychologists that I will expose later laid out a policy to turn communities against each other in the same way.

A coincidence? Yep, and I can knit fog

I knew from the start of the alleged pandemic that this was a Cult operation. It presented limitless potential to rapidly advance the Cult agenda and exploit manipulated fear to demand that every man, woman and child on the planet was 'vaccinated' in a process never used on humans before which infuses self-replicating *synthetic* material into human cells. Remember the plan to transform the human body from a biological to a synthetic biological state. I'll deal with the 'vaccine' (that's not actually a vaccine) when I focus on the genetic agenda. Enough to say here that mass global 'vaccination' justified by this 'new virus' set alarms ringing after 30 years of tracking these people and their methods. The 'Covid' hoax officially beginning in China was also a big red flag for reasons I will be explaining. The agenda potential was so enormous that I could dismiss any idea that the 'virus' appeared naturally. Major happenings with major agenda implications never occur without Cult involvement in making them happen. My questions were twofold in early 2020 as the media began its campaign to induce global fear and hysteria: Was this alleged infectious agent released on purpose by the Cult or did it even exist at all? I then did what I always do in these situations. I sat, observed and waited to see where the evidence and information would take me. By March and early April synchronicity was strongly – and ever more so since then – pointing me in the direction of *there is no 'virus'*. I went public on that with derision even from swathes of the alternative media that voiced a scenario that the Chinese government released the 'virus' in league with Deep State elements in the United States from a top-level bio-lab in Wuhan where the 'virus' is said to have first appeared. I looked at that possibility, but I didn't buy it for several reasons. Deaths from the 'virus' did not in any way match what they

would have been with a 'deadly bioweapon' and it is much more effective if you sell the *illusion* of an infectious agent rather than having a real one unless you can control through injection who has it and who doesn't. Otherwise you lose control of events. A made-up 'virus' gives you a blank sheet of paper on which you can make it do whatever you like and have any symptoms or mutant 'variants' you choose to add while a real infectious agent would limit you to what it actually does. A phantom disease allows you to have endless ludicrous 'studies' on the 'Covid' dollar to widen the perceived impact by inventing ever more 'at risk' groups including one study which said those who walk slowly may be almost four times more likely to die from the 'virus'. People are in psychiatric wards for less.

A real 'deadly bioweapon' can take out people in the hierarchy that are not part of the Cult, but essential to its operation. Obviously they don't want that. Releasing a real disease means you immediately lose control of it. Releasing an illusory one means you don't. Again it's vital that people are extra careful when dealing with what they want to hear. A bioweapon unleashed from a Chinese laboratory in collusion with the American Deep State may fit a conspiracy narrative, but is it true? Would it not be far more effective to use the excuse of a 'virus' to justify the real bioweapon – the 'vaccine'? That way your disease agent does not have to be transmitted and arrives directly through a syringe. I saw a French virologist Luc Montagnier quoted in the alternative media as saying he had discovered that the alleged 'new' severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus, or SARS-CoV-2, was made artificially and included elements of the human immunodeficiency 'virus' (HIV) and a parasite that causes malaria. SARS-CoV-2 is alleged to trigger an alleged illness called Covid-19. I remembered Montagnier's name from my research years before into claims that an HIV 'retrovirus' causes AIDs – claims that were demolished by Berkeley virologist Peter Duesberg who showed that no one had ever proved that HIV causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or AIDS. Claims that become accepted as fact, publicly and medically, with no proof whatsoever are an ever-recurring story that profoundly applies to

'Covid'. Nevertheless, despite the lack of proof, Montagnier's team at the Pasteur Institute in Paris had a long dispute with American researcher Robert Gallo over which of them discovered and isolated the HIV 'virus' and with *no evidence* found it to cause AIDS. You will see later that there is also no evidence that any 'virus' causes any disease or that there is even such a thing as a 'virus' in the way it is said to exist. The claim to have 'isolated' the HIV 'virus' will be presented in its real context as we come to the shocking story – and it is a story – of SARS-CoV-2 and so will Montagnier's assertion that he identified the full SARS-CoV-2 genome.

Hoax in the making

We can pick up the 'Covid' story in 2010 and the publication by the Rockefeller Foundation of a document called 'Scenarios for the Future of Technology and International Development'. The inner circle of the Rockefeller family has been serving the Cult since John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937) made his fortune with Standard Oil. It is less well known that the same Rockefeller – the Bill Gates of his day – was responsible for establishing what is now referred to as 'Big Pharma', the global network of pharmaceutical companies that make outrageous profits dispensing scalpel and drug 'medicine' and are obsessed with pumping vaccines in ever-increasing number into as many human arms and backsides as possible. John D. Rockefeller was the driving force behind the creation of the 'education' system in the United States and elsewhere specifically designed to program the perceptions of generations thereafter. The Rockefeller family donated exceptionally valuable land in New York for the United Nations building and were central in establishing the World Health Organization in 1948 as an agency of the UN which was created from the start as a Trojan horse and stalking horse for world government. Now enter Bill Gates. His family and the Rockefellers have long been extremely close and I have seen genealogy which claims that if you go back far enough the two families fuse into the same bloodline. Gates has said that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was inspired by the Rockefeller Foundation and why not

when both are serving the same Cult? Major tax-exempt foundations are overwhelmingly criminal enterprises in which Cult assets fund the Cult agenda in the guise of 'philanthropy' while avoiding tax in the process. Cult operatives can become mega-rich in their role of front men and women for the psychopaths at the inner core and they, too, have to be psychopaths to knowingly serve such evil. Part of the deal is that a big percentage of the wealth gleaned from representing the Cult has to be spent advancing the ambitions of the Cult and hence you have the Rockefeller Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (and *so* many more) and people like George Soros with his global Open Society Foundations spending their billions in pursuit of global Cult control. Gates is a global public face of the Cult with his interventions in world affairs including Big Tech influence; a central role in the 'Covid' and 'vaccine' scam; promotion of the climate change shakedown; manipulation of education; geoengineering of the skies; and his food-control agenda as the biggest owner of farmland in America, his GMO promotion and through other means. As one writer said: 'Gates monopolizes or wields disproportionate influence over the tech industry, global health and vaccines, agriculture and food policy (including biopiracy and fake food), weather modification and other climate technologies, surveillance, education and media.' The almost limitless wealth secured through Microsoft and other not-allowed-to-fail ventures (including vaccines) has been ploughed into a long, long list of Cult projects designed to enslave the entire human race. Gates and the Rockefellers have been working as one unit with the Rockefeller-established World Health Organization leading global 'Covid' policy controlled by Gates through his mouth-piece Tedros. Gates became the WHO's biggest funder when Trump announced that the American government would cease its donations, but Biden immediately said he would restore the money when he took office in January, 2021. The Gates Foundation (the Cult) owns through limitless funding the world health system and the major players across the globe in the 'Covid' hoax.

Okay, with that background we return to that Rockefeller Foundation document of 2010 headed 'Scenarios for the Future of Technology and International Development' and its 'imaginary' epidemic of a virulent and deadly influenza strain which infected 20 percent of the global population and killed eight million in seven months. The Rockefeller scenario was that the epidemic destroyed economies, closed shops, offices and other businesses and led to governments imposing fierce rules and restrictions that included mandatory wearing of face masks and body-temperature checks to enter communal spaces like railway stations and supermarkets. The document predicted that even after the height of the Rockefeller-envisaged epidemic the authoritarian rule would continue to deal with further pandemics, transnational terrorism, environmental crises and rising poverty. Now you may think that the Rockefellers are our modern-day seers or alternatively, and rather more likely, that they well knew what was planned a few years further on. Fascism had to be imposed, you see, to 'protect citizens from risk and exposure'. The Rockefeller scenario document said:

During the pandemic, national leaders around the world flexed their authority and imposed airtight rules and restrictions, from the mandatory wearing of face masks to body-temperature checks at the entries to communal spaces like train stations and supermarkets. Even after the pandemic faded, this more authoritarian control and oversight of citizens and their activities stuck and even intensified. In order to protect themselves from the spread of increasingly global problems – from pandemics and transnational terrorism to environmental crises and rising poverty – leaders around the world took a firmer grip on power.

At first, the notion of a more controlled world gained wide acceptance and approval. Citizens willingly gave up some of their sovereignty – and their privacy – to more paternalistic states in exchange for greater safety and stability. Citizens were more tolerant, and even eager, for top-down direction and oversight, and national leaders had more latitude to impose order in the ways they saw fit.

In developed countries, this heightened oversight took many forms: biometric IDs for all citizens, for example, and tighter regulation of key industries whose stability was deemed vital to national interests. In many developed countries, enforced cooperation with a suite of new regulations and agreements slowly but steadily restored both order and, importantly, economic growth.

There we have the prophetic Rockefellers in 2010 and three years later came their paper for the Global Health Summit in Beijing, China, when government representatives, the private sector, international organisations and groups met to discuss the next 100 years of 'global health'. The Rockefeller Foundation-funded paper was called 'Dreaming the Future of Health for the Next 100 Years and more prophecy ensued as it described a dystopian future: 'The abundance of data, digitally tracking and linking people may mean the 'death of privacy' and may replace physical interaction with transient, virtual connection, generating isolation and raising questions of how values are shaped in virtual networks.' Next in the 'Covid' hoax preparation sequence came a 'table top' simulation in 2018 for another 'imaginary' pandemic of a disease called Clade X which was said to kill 900 million people. The exercise was organised by the Gates-funded Johns Hopkins University's Center for Health Security in the United States and this is the very same university that has been compiling the disgustingly and systematically erroneous global figures for 'Covid' cases and deaths. Similar Johns Hopkins health crisis scenarios have included the Dark Winter exercise in 2001 and Atlantic Storm in 2005.

Nostradamus 201

For sheer predictive genius look no further prophecy-watchers than the Bill Gates-funded Event 201 held only six weeks before the 'coronavirus pandemic' is supposed to have broken out in China and Event 201 was based on a scenario of a global 'coronavirus pandemic'. Melinda Gates, the great man's missus, told the BBC that he had 'prepared for years' for a coronavirus pandemic which told us what we already knew. Nostradamugates had predicted in a TED talk in 2015 that a pandemic was coming that would kill a lot of people and demolish the world economy. My god, the man is a machine – possibly even literally. Now here he was only weeks before the real thing funding just such a simulated scenario and involving his friends and associates at Johns Hopkins, the World Economic Forum Cult-front of Klaus Schwab, the United Nations,

Johnson & Johnson, major banks, and officials from China and the Centers for Disease Control in the United States. What synchronicity – Johns Hopkins would go on to compile the fraudulent ‘Covid’ figures, the World Economic Forum and Schwab would push the ‘Great Reset’ in response to ‘Covid’, the Centers for Disease Control would be at the forefront of ‘Covid’ policy in the United States, Johnson & Johnson would produce a ‘Covid vaccine’, and everything would officially start just weeks later in China. Spooky, eh? They were even accurate in creating a simulation of a ‘virus’ pandemic because the ‘real thing’ would also be a simulation. Event 201 was not an exercise preparing for something that might happen; it was a rehearsal for what those in control knew was *going* to happen and very shortly. Hours of this simulation were posted on the Internet and the various themes and responses mirrored what would soon be imposed to transform human society. News stories were inserted and what they said would be commonplace a few weeks later with still more prophecy perfection. Much discussion focused on the need to deal with misinformation and the ‘anti-vax movement’ which is exactly what happened when the ‘virus’ arrived – was said to have arrived – in the West.

Cult-owned social media banned criticism and exposure of the official ‘virus’ narrative and when I said there *was* no ‘virus’ in early April, 2020, I was banned by one platform after another including YouTube, Facebook and later Twitter. The mainstream broadcast media in Britain was in effect banned from interviewing me by the Tony-Blair-created government broadcasting censor Ofcom headed by career government bureaucrat Melanie Dawes who was appointed just as the ‘virus’ hoax was about to play out in January, 2020. At the same time the Ickonic media platform was using Vimeo, another ultra-Zionist-owned operation, while our own player was being created and they deleted in an instant hundreds of videos, documentaries, series and shows to confirm their unbelievable vindictiveness. We had copies, of course, and they had to be restored one by one when our player was ready. These people have no class. Sabbatian Facebook promised free advertisements for the Gates-

controlled World Health Organization narrative while deleting ‘false claims and conspiracy theories’ to stop ‘misinformation’ about the alleged coronavirus. All these responses could be seen just a short while earlier in the scenarios of Event 201. Extreme censorship was absolutely crucial for the Cult because the official story was so ridiculous and unsupportable by the evidence that it could never survive open debate and the free-flow of information and opinion. If you can’t win a debate then don’t have one is the Cult’s approach throughout history. Facebook’s little boy front man – front boy – Mark Zuckerberg equated ‘credible and accurate information’ with official sources and exposing their lies with ‘misinformation’.

Silencing those that can see

The censorship dynamic of Event 201 is now the norm with an army of narrative-supporting ‘fact-checker’ organisations whose entire reason for being is to tell the public that official narratives are true and those exposing them are lying. One of the most appalling of these ‘fact-checkers’ is called NewsGuard founded by ultra-Zionist Americans Gordon Crovitz and Steven Brill. Crovitz is a former publisher of *The Wall Street Journal*, former Executive Vice President of Dow Jones, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), and on the board of the American Association of Rhodes Scholars. The CFR and Rhodes Scholarships, named after Rothschild agent Cecil Rhodes who plundered the gold and diamonds of South Africa for his masters and the Cult, have featured widely in my books. NewsGuard don’t seem to like me for some reason – I really can’t think why – and they have done all they can to have me censored and discredited which is, to quote an old British politician, like being savaged by a dead sheep. They are, however, like all in the censorship network, very well connected and funded by organisations themselves funded by, or connected to, Bill Gates. As you would expect with anything associated with Gates NewsGuard has an offshoot called HealthGuard which ‘fights online health care hoaxes’. How very kind. Somehow the NewsGuard European Managing Director Anna-Sophie Harling, a remarkably young-

looking woman with no broadcasting experience and little hands-on work in journalism, has somehow secured a position on the 'Content Board' of UK government broadcast censor Ofcom. An executive of an organisation seeking to discredit dissidents of the official narratives is making decisions for the government broadcast 'regulator' about content?? Another appalling 'fact-checker' is Full Fact funded by George Soros and global censors Google and Facebook.

It's amazing how many activists in the 'fact-checking', 'anti-hate', arena turn up in government-related positions – people like UK Labour Party activist Imran Ahmed who heads the Center for Countering Digital Hate founded by people like Morgan McSweeney, now chief of staff to the Labour Party's hapless and useless 'leader' Keir Starmer. Digital Hate – which is what it really is – uses the American spelling of Center to betray its connection to a transatlantic network of similar organisations which in 2020 shapeshifted from attacking people for 'hate' to attacking them for questioning the 'Covid' hoax and the dangers of the 'Covid vaccine'. It's just a coincidence, you understand. This is one of Imran Ahmed's hysterical statements: 'I would go beyond calling anti-vaxxers conspiracy theorists to say they are an extremist group that pose a national security risk.' No one could ever accuse this prat of understatement and he's including in that those parents who are now against vaccines after their children were damaged for life or killed by them. He's such a nice man. Ahmed does the rounds of the Woke media getting soft-ball questions from spineless 'journalists' who never ask what right he has to campaign to destroy the freedom of speech of others while he demands it for himself. There also seems to be an overrepresentation in Ofcom of people connected to the narrative-worshipping BBC. This incredible global network of narrative-support was super-vital when the 'Covid' hoax was played in the light of the mega-whopper lies that have to be defended from the spotlight cast by the most basic intelligence.

Setting the scene

The Cult plays the long game and proceeds step-by-step ensuring that everything is in place before major cards are played and they don't come any bigger than the 'Covid' hoax. The psychopaths can't handle events where the outcome isn't certain and as little as possible – preferably nothing – is left to chance. Politicians, government and medical officials who would follow direction were brought to illusory power in advance by the Cult web whether on the national stage or others like state governors and mayors of America. For decades the dynamic between officialdom, law enforcement and the public was changed from one of service to one of control and dictatorship. Behaviour manipulation networks established within government were waiting to impose the coming 'Covid' rules and regulations specifically designed to subdue and rewire the psyche of the people in the guise of protecting health. These included in the UK the Behavioural Insights Team part-owned by the British government Cabinet Office; the Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours (SPI-B); and a whole web of intelligence and military groups seeking to direct the conversation on social media and control the narrative. Among them are the cyberwarfare (on the people) 77th Brigade of the British military which is also coordinated through the Cabinet Office as civilian and military leadership continues to combine in what they call the Fusion Doctrine. The 77th Brigade is a British equivalent of the infamous Israeli (Sabbatian) military cyberwarfare and Internet manipulation operation Unit 8200 which I expose at length in *The Trigger*. Also carefully in place were the medical and science advisers to government – many on the payroll past or present of Bill Gates – and a whole alternative structure of unelected government stood by to take control when elected parliaments were effectively closed down once the 'Covid' card was slammed on the table. The structure I have described here and so much more was installed in every major country through the Cult networks. The top-down control hierarchy looks like this: The Cult – Cult-owned Gates – the World Health Organization and Tedros – Gates-funded or controlled chief medical officers and science 'advisers' (dictators) in each country –

political 'leaders' – law enforcement – The People. Through this simple global communication and enforcement structure the policy of the Cult could be imposed on virtually the entire human population so long as they acquiesced to the fascism. With everything in place it was time for the button to be pressed in late 2019/early 2020.

These were the prime goals the Cult had to secure for its will to prevail:

1) Locking down economies, closing all but designated 'essential' businesses (Cult-owned corporations were 'essential'), and putting the population under house arrest was an imperative to destroy independent income and employment and ensure dependency on the Cult-controlled state in the Hunger Games Society. Lockdowns had to be established as the global blueprint from the start to respond to the 'virus' and followed by pretty much the entire world.

2) The global population had to be terrified into believing in a deadly 'virus' that didn't actually exist so they would unquestioningly obey authority in the belief that authority must know how best to protect them and their families. Software salesman Gates would suddenly morph into the world's health expert and be promoted as such by the Cult-owned media.

3) A method of testing that wasn't testing for the 'virus', but was only claimed to be, had to be in place to provide the illusion of 'cases' and subsequent 'deaths' that had a very different cause to the 'Covid-19' that would be scribbled on the death certificate.

4) Because there was no 'virus' and the great majority testing positive with a test not testing for the 'virus' would have no symptoms of anything the lie had to be sold that people without symptoms (without the 'virus') could still pass it on to others. This was crucial to justify for the first time quarantining – house arresting – healthy people. Without this the economy-destroying lockdown of *everybody* could not have been credibly sold.

5) The 'saviour' had to be seen as a vaccine which beyond evil drug companies were working like angels of mercy to develop as quickly as possible, with all corners cut, to save the day. The public must absolutely not know that the 'vaccine' had nothing to do with a 'virus' or that the contents were ready and waiting with a very different motive long before the 'Covid' card was even lifted from the pack.

I said in March, 2020, that the 'vaccine' would have been created way ahead of the 'Covid' hoax which justified its use and the following December an article in the New York *Intelligencer* magazine said the Moderna 'vaccine' had been 'designed' by

January, 2020. This was 'before China had even acknowledged that the disease could be transmitted from human to human, more than a week before the first confirmed coronavirus case in the United States'. The article said that by the time the first American death was announced a month later 'the vaccine had already been manufactured and shipped to the National Institutes of Health for the beginning of its Phase I clinical trial'. The 'vaccine' was actually 'designed' long before that although even with this timescale you would expect the article to ask how on earth it could have been done that quickly. Instead it asked why the 'vaccine' had not been rolled out then and not months later. Journalism in the mainstream is truly dead. I am going to detail in the next chapter why the 'virus' has never existed and how a hoax on that scale was possible, but first the foundation on which the Big Lie of 'Covid' was built.

The test that doesn't test

Fraudulent 'testing' is the bottom line of the whole 'Covid' hoax and was the means by which a 'virus' that did not exist *appeared* to exist. They could only achieve this magic trick by using a test not testing for the 'virus'. To use a test that *was* testing for the 'virus' would mean that every test would come back negative given there was no 'virus'. They chose to exploit something called the RT-PCR test invented by American biochemist Kary Mullis in the 1980s who said publicly that his PCR test ... *cannot detect infectious disease*. Yes, the 'test' used worldwide to detect infectious 'Covid' to produce all the illusory 'cases' and 'deaths' compiled by Johns Hopkins and others *cannot detect infectious disease*. This fact came from the mouth of the man who invented PCR and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1993 for doing so. Sadly, and incredibly conveniently for the Cult, Mullis died in August, 2019, at the age of 74 just before his test would be fraudulently used to unleash fascism on the world. He was said to have died from pneumonia which was an irony in itself. A few months later he would have had 'Covid-19' on his death certificate. I say the timing of his death was convenient because had he lived Mullis, a brilliant, honest and decent man, would have been

vociferously speaking out against the use of his test to detect 'Covid' when it was never designed, or able, to do that. I know that to be true given that Mullis made the same point when his test was used to 'detect' – not detect – HIV. He had been seriously critical of the Gallo/Montagnier claim to have isolated the HIV 'virus' and shown it to cause AIDS for which Mullis said there was no evidence. AIDS is actually not a disease but a series of diseases from which people die all the time. When they die from those *same diseases* after a positive 'test' for HIV then AIDS goes on their death certificate. I think I've heard that before somewhere. Countries instigated a policy with 'Covid' that anyone who tested positive with a test not testing for the 'virus' and died of any other cause within 28 days and even longer 'Covid-19' had to go on the death certificate. Cases have come from the test that can't test for infectious disease and the deaths are those who have died of *anything* after testing positive with a test not testing for the 'virus'. I'll have much more later about the death certificate scandal.

Mullis was deeply dismissive of the now US 'Covid' star Anthony Fauci who he said was a liar who didn't know anything about anything – 'and I would say that to his face – nothing.' He said of Fauci: 'The man thinks he can take a blood sample, put it in an electron microscope and if it's got a virus in there you'll know it – he doesn't understand electron microscopy and he doesn't understand medicine and shouldn't be in a position like he's in.' That position, terrifyingly, has made him the decider of 'Covid' fascism policy on behalf of the Cult in his role as director since 1984 of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) while his record of being wrong is laughable; but being wrong, so long as it's the *right kind* of wrong, is why the Cult loves him. He'll say anything the Cult tells him to say. Fauci was made Chief Medical Adviser to the President immediately Biden took office. Biden was installed in the White House by Cult manipulation and one of his first decisions was to elevate Fauci to a position of even more control. This is a coincidence? Yes, and I identify as a flamenco dancer called Lola. How does such an incompetent criminal like Fauci remain in that

pivotal position in American health since *the 1980s*? When you serve the Cult it looks after you until you are surplus to requirements. Kary Mullis said prophetically of Fauci and his like: 'Those guys have an agenda and it's not an agenda we would like them to have ... they make their own rules, they change them when they want to, and Tony Fauci does not mind going on television in front of the people who pay his salary and lie directly into the camera.' Fauci has done that almost daily since the 'Covid' hoax began. Lying is in Fauci's DNA. To make the situation crystal clear about the PCR test this is a direct quote from its inventor Kary Mullis:

It [the PCR test] doesn't tell you that you're sick and doesn't tell you that the thing you ended up with was really going to hurt you ...'

Ask yourself why governments and medical systems the world over have been using this very test to decide who is 'infected' with the SARS-CoV-2 'virus' and the alleged disease it allegedly causes, 'Covid-19'. The answer to that question will tell you what has been going on. By the way, here's a little show-stopper – the 'new' SARS-CoV-2 'virus' was 'identified' as such right from the start using ... *the PCR test not testing for the 'virus'*. If you are new to this and find that shocking then stick around. I have hardly started yet. Even worse, other 'tests', like the 'Lateral Flow Device' (LFD), are considered so useless that they have to be *confirmed* by the PCR test! Leaked emails written by Ben Dyson, adviser to UK 'Health' Secretary Matt Hancock, said they were 'dangerously unreliable'. Dyson, executive director of strategy at the Department of Health, wrote: 'As of today, someone who gets a positive LFD result in (say) London has at best a 25 per cent chance of it being a true positive, but if it is a self-reported test potentially as low as 10 per cent (on an optimistic assumption about specificity) or as low as 2 per cent (on a more pessimistic assumption).' These are the 'tests' that schoolchildren and the public are being urged to have twice a week or more and have to isolate if they get a positive. Each fake positive goes in the statistics as a 'case' no matter how ludicrously inaccurate and the

'cases' drive lockdown, masks and the pressure to 'vaccinate'. The government said in response to the email leak that the 'tests' were accurate which confirmed yet again what shocking bloody liars they are. The real false positive rate is *100 percent* as we'll see. In another 'you couldn't make it up' the UK government agreed to pay £2.8 billion to California's Innova Medical Group to supply the irrelevant lateral flow tests. The company's primary test-making centre is in China. Innova Medical Group, established in March, 2020, is owned by Pasaca Capital Inc, chaired by Chinese-American millionaire Charles Huang who was born in Wuhan.

How it works – and how it doesn't

The RT-PCR test, known by its full title of Polymerase chain reaction, is used across the world to make millions, even billions, of copies of a DNA/RNA genetic information sample. The process is called 'amplification' and means that a tiny sample of genetic material is amplified to bring out the detailed content. I stress that it is not testing for an infectious disease. It is simply amplifying a sample of genetic material. In the words of Kary Mullis: 'PCR is ... just a process that's used to make a whole lot of something out of something.' To emphasise the point companies that make the PCR tests circulated around the world to 'test' for 'Covid' warn on the box that it can't be used to detect 'Covid' or infectious disease and is for research purposes only. It's okay, rest for a minute and you'll be fine. This is the test that produces the 'cases' and 'deaths' that have been used to destroy human society. All those global and national medical and scientific 'experts' demanding this destruction to 'save us' *KNOW* that the test is not testing for the 'virus' and the cases and deaths they claim to be real are an almost unimaginable fraud. Every one of them and so many others including politicians and psychopaths like Gates and Tedros must be brought before Nuremburg-type trials and jailed for the rest of their lives. The more the genetic sample is amplified by PCR the more elements of that material become sensitive to the test and by that I don't mean sensitive for a 'virus' but for elements of the genetic material which

is *naturally* in the body or relates to remnants of old conditions of various kinds lying dormant and causing no disease. Once the amplification of the PCR reaches a certain level *everyone* will test positive. So much of the material has been made sensitive to the test that everyone will have some part of it in their body. Even lying criminals like Fauci have said that once PCR amplifications pass 35 cycles everything will be a false positive that cannot be trusted for the reasons I have described. I say, like many proper doctors and scientists, that 100 percent of the 'positives' are false, but let's just go with Fauci for a moment.

He says that any amplification over 35 cycles will produce false positives and yet the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have recommended up to 40 *cycles* and the National Health Service (NHS) in Britain admitted in an internal document for staff that it was using 45 *cycles* of amplification. A long list of other countries has been doing the same and at least one 'testing' laboratory has been using 50 *cycles*. Have you ever heard a doctor, medical 'expert' or the media ask what level of amplification has been used to claim a 'positive'. The 'test' comes back 'positive' and so you have the 'virus', end of story. Now we can see how the government in Tanzania could send off samples from a goat and a pawpaw fruit under human names and both came back positive for 'Covid-19'. Tanzania president John Magufuli mocked the 'Covid' hysteria, the PCR test and masks and refused to import the DNA-manipulating 'vaccine'. The Cult hated him and an article sponsored by the Bill Gates Foundation appeared in the London *Guardian* in February, 2021, headed 'It's time for Africa to rein in Tanzania's anti-vaxxer president'. Well, 'reined in' he shortly was. Magufuli appeared in good health, but then, in March, 2021, he was dead at 61 from 'heart failure'. He was replaced by Samia Hassan Suhulu who is connected to Klaus Schwab's World Economic Forum and she immediately reversed Magufuli's 'Covid' policy. A sample of cola tested positive for 'Covid' with the PCR test in Germany while American actress and singer-songwriter Erykah Badu tested positive in one nostril and negative in the other. Footballer Ronaldo called

the PCR test 'bullshit' after testing positive three times and being forced to quarantine and miss matches when there was nothing wrong with him. The mantra from Tedros at the World Health Organization and national governments (same thing) has been test, test, test. They know that the more tests they can generate the more fake 'cases' they have which go on to become 'deaths' in ways I am coming to. The UK government has its Operation Moonshot planned to test multiple millions every day in workplaces and schools with free tests for everyone to use twice a week at home in line with the Cult plan from the start to make testing part of life. A government advertisement for an 'Interim Head of Asymptomatic Testing Communication' said the job included responsibility for delivering a 'communications strategy' (propaganda) 'to support the expansion of asymptomatic testing that *'normalises testing as part of everyday life'*'. More tests means more fake 'cases', 'deaths' and fascism. I have heard of, and from, many people who booked a test, couldn't turn up, and yet got a positive result through the post for a test they'd never even had. The whole thing is crazy, but for the Cult there's method in the madness. Controlling and manipulating the level of amplification of the test means the authorities can control whenever they want the number of apparent 'cases' and 'deaths'. If they want to justify more fascist lockdown and destruction of livelihoods they keep the amplification high. If they want to give the illusion that lockdowns and the 'vaccine' are working then they lower the amplification and 'cases' and 'deaths' will appear to fall. In January, 2021, the Cult-owned World Health Organization suddenly warned laboratories about over-amplification of the test and to lower the threshold. Suddenly headlines began appearing such as: 'Why ARE "Covid" cases plummeting?' This was just when the vaccine rollout was underway and I had predicted months before they would make cases appear to fall through amplification tampering when the 'vaccine' came. These people are so predictable.

Cow vaccines?

The question must be asked of what is on the test swabs being poked far up the nose of the population to the base of the brain? A nasal swab punctured one woman's brain and caused it to leak fluid. Most of these procedures are being done by people with little training or medical knowledge. Dr Lorraine Day, former orthopaedic trauma surgeon and Chief of Orthopaedic Surgery at San Francisco General Hospital, says the tests are really a 'vaccine'. Cows have long been vaccinated this way. She points out that masks have to cover the nose and the mouth where it is claimed the 'virus' exists in saliva. Why then don't they take saliva from the mouth as they do with a DNA test instead of pushing a long swab up the nose towards the brain? The ethmoid bone separates the nasal cavity from the brain and within that bone is the cribriform plate. Dr Day says that when the swab is pushed up against this plate and twisted the procedure is 'depositing things back there'. She claims that among these 'things' are nanoparticles that can enter the brain. Researchers have noted that a team at the Gates-funded Johns Hopkins have designed tiny, star-shaped micro-devices that can latch onto intestinal mucosa and release drugs into the body. Mucosa is the thin skin that covers the inside surface of parts of the body such as *the nose* and mouth and produces mucus to protect them. The Johns Hopkins micro-devices are called 'theragrippers' and were 'inspired' by a parasitic worm that digs its sharp teeth into a host's intestines. Nasal swabs are also coated in the sterilisation agent ethylene oxide. The US National Cancer Institute posts this explanation on its website:

At room temperature, ethylene oxide is a flammable colorless gas with a sweet odor. It is used primarily to produce other chemicals, including antifreeze. In smaller amounts, ethylene oxide is used as a pesticide and a sterilizing agent. The ability of ethylene oxide to damage DNA makes it an effective sterilizing agent but also accounts for its cancer-causing activity.

The Institute mentions lymphoma and leukaemia as cancers most frequently reported to be associated with occupational exposure to ethylene oxide along with stomach and breast cancers. How does anyone think this is going to work out with the constant testing

regime being inflicted on adults and children at home and at school that will accumulate in the body anything that's on the swab?

Doctors know best

It is vital for people to realise that 'hero' doctors 'know' only what the Big Pharma-dominated medical authorities tell them to 'know' and if they refuse to 'know' what they are told to 'know' they are out the door. They are mostly not physicians or healers, but repeaters of the official narrative – or else. I have seen alleged professional doctors on British television make shocking statements that we are supposed to take seriously. One called 'Dr' Amir Khan, who is actually telling patients how to respond to illness, said that men could take the birth pill to 'help slow down the effects of Covid-19'. In March, 2021, another ridiculous 'Covid study' by an American doctor proposed injecting men with the female sex hormone progesterone as a 'Covid' treatment. British doctor Nighat Arif told the BBC that face coverings were now going to be part of ongoing normal. Yes, the vaccine protects you, she said (evidence?) ... but the way to deal with viruses in the community was always going to come down to hand washing, face covering and keeping a physical distance. That's not what we were told before the 'vaccine' was circulating. Arif said she couldn't imagine ever again going on the underground or in a lift without a mask. I was just thanking my good luck that she was not my doctor when she said – in March, 2021 – that if 'we are *behaving* and we are doing all the right things' she thought we could 'have our nearest and dearest around us at home ... around *Christmas* and *New Year!* Her patronising delivery was the usual school teacher talking to six-year-olds as she repeated every government talking point and probably believed them all. If we have learned anything from the 'Covid' experience surely it must be that humanity's perception of doctors needs a fundamental rethink. NHS 'doctor' Sara Kayat told her television audience that the 'Covid vaccine' would '100 percent prevent hospitalisation and death'. Not even Big Pharma claimed that. We have to stop taking 'experts' at their word without question when so many of them are

clueless and only repeating the party line on which their careers depend. That is not to say there are not brilliant doctors – there are and I have spoken to many of them since all this began – but you won't see them in the mainstream media or quoted by the psychopaths and yes-people in government.

Remember the name – Christian Drosten

German virologist Christian Drosten, Director of Charité Institute of Virology in Berlin, became a national star after the pandemic hoax began. He was feted on television and advised the German government on 'Covid' policy. Most importantly to the wider world Drosten led a group that produced the 'Covid' testing protocol for the PCR test. What a remarkable feat given the PCR cannot test for infectious disease and even more so when you think that Drosten said that his method of testing for SARS-CoV-2 was developed 'without having virus material available'. *He developed a test for a 'virus' that he didn't have and had never seen.* Let that sink in as you survey the global devastation that came from what he did. The whole catastrophe of Drosten's 'test' was based on the alleged genetic sequence published by Chinese scientists on the Internet. We will see in the next chapter that this alleged 'genetic sequence' has never been produced by China or anyone and cannot be when there *is no* SARS-CoV-2. Drosten, however, doesn't seem to let little details like that get in the way. He was the lead author with Victor Corman from the same Charité Hospital of the paper 'Detection of 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) by real-time PCR' published in a magazine called *Eurosurveillance*. This became known as the Corman-Drosten paper. In November, 2020, with human society devastated by the effects of the Corman-Drosten test baloney, the protocol was publicly challenged by 22 international scientists and independent researchers from Europe, the United States, and Japan. Among them were senior molecular geneticists, biochemists, immunologists, and microbiologists. They produced a document headed 'External peer review of the RTPCR test to detect SARS-Cov-2 Reveals 10 Major Flaws At The Molecular and Methodological Level: Consequences

For False-Positive Results'. The flaws in the Corman-Drosten test included the following:

- The test is non-specific because of erroneous design
- Results are enormously variable
- The test is unable to discriminate between the whole 'virus' and viral fragments
- It doesn't have positive or negative controls
- The test lacks a standard operating procedure
- It is unsupported by proper peer view

The scientists said the PCR 'Covid' testing protocol was not founded on science and they demanded the Corman-Drosten paper be retracted by *Eurosurveillance*. They said all present and previous Covid deaths, cases, and 'infection rates' should be subject to a massive retroactive inquiry. Lockdowns and travel restrictions should be reviewed and relaxed and those diagnosed through PCR to have 'Covid-19' should not be forced to isolate. Dr Kevin Corbett, a health researcher and nurse educator with a long academic career producing a stream of peer-reviewed publications at many UK universities, made the same point about the PCR test debacle. He said of the scientists' conclusions: 'Every scientific rationale for the development of that test has been totally destroyed by this paper. It's like Hiroshima/Nagasaki to the Covid test.' He said that China hadn't given them an isolated 'virus' when Drosten developed the test. Instead they had developed the test from *a sequence in a gene bank*.' Put another way ... *they made it up!* The scientists were supported in this contention by a Portuguese appeals court which ruled in November, 2020, that PCR tests are unreliable and it is unlawful to quarantine people based solely on a PCR test. The point about China not providing an isolated virus must be true when the 'virus' has never been isolated to this day and the consequences of that will become clear. Drosten and company produced this useless 'protocol' right on cue in January, 2020, just as the 'virus' was said to

be moving westward and it somehow managed to successfully pass a peer-review in 24 hours. In other words there was no peer-review for a test that would be used to decide who had 'Covid' and who didn't across the world. The Cult-created, Gates-controlled World Health Organization immediately recommended all its nearly 200 member countries to use the Drosten PCR protocol to detect 'cases' and 'deaths'. The sting was underway and it continues to this day.

So who is this Christian Drosten that produced the means through which death, destruction and economic catastrophe would be justified? His education background, including his doctoral thesis, would appear to be somewhat shrouded in mystery and his track record is dire as with another essential player in the 'Covid' hoax, the Gates-funded Professor Neil Ferguson at the Gates-funded Imperial College in London of whom more shortly. Drosten predicted in 2003 that the alleged original SARS 'virus' (SARS-1) was an epidemic that could have serious effects on economies and an effective vaccine would take at least two years to produce. Drosten's answer to every alleged 'outbreak' is a vaccine which you won't be shocked to know. What followed were just 774 official deaths worldwide and none in Germany where there were only nine cases. That is even if you believe there ever was a SARS 'virus' when the evidence is zilch and I will expand on this in the next chapter. Drosten claims to be co-discoverer of 'SARS-1' and developed a test for it in 2003. He was screaming warnings about 'swine flu' in 2009 and how it was a widespread infection far more severe than any dangers from a vaccine could be and people should get vaccinated. It would be helpful for Drosten's vocal chords if he simply recorded the words 'the virus is deadly and you need to get vaccinated' and copies could be handed out whenever the latest made-up threat comes along. Drosten's swine flu epidemic never happened, but Big Pharma didn't mind with governments spending hundreds of millions on vaccines that hardly anyone bothered to use and many who did wished they hadn't. A study in 2010 revealed that the risk of dying from swine flu, or H1N1, was no higher than that of the annual seasonal flu which is what at least most of 'it' really was as in

the case of 'Covid-19'. A media investigation into Drosten asked how with such a record of inaccuracy he could be *the* government adviser on these issues. The answer to that question is the same with Drosten, Ferguson and Fauci – they keep on giving the authorities the 'conclusions' and 'advice' they want to hear. Drosten certainly produced the goods for them in January, 2020, with his PCR protocol garbage and provided the foundation of what German internal medicine specialist Dr Claus Köhnlein, co-author of *Virus Mania*, called the 'test pandemic'. The 22 scientists in the *Eurosurveillance* challenge called out conflicts of interest within the Drosten 'protocol' group and with good reason. Olfert Landt, a regular co-author of Drosten 'studies', owns the biotech company TIB Molbiol Syntheselabor GmbH in Berlin which manufactures and sells the tests that Drosten and his mates come up with. They have done this with SARS, Enterotoxigenic E. coli (ETEC), MERS, Zika 'virus', yellow fever, and now 'Covid'. Landt told the *Berliner Zeitung* newspaper:

The testing, design and development came from the Charité [Drosten and Corman]. We simply implemented it immediately in the form of a kit. And if we don't have the virus, which originally only existed in Wuhan, we can make a synthetic gene to simulate the genome of the virus. That's what we did very quickly.

This is more confirmation that the Drosten test was designed without access to the 'virus' and only a synthetic simulation which is what SARS-CoV-2 really is – a computer-generated synthetic fiction. It's quite an enterprise they have going here. A Drosten team decides what the test for something should be and Landt's biotech company flogs it to governments and medical systems across the world. His company must have made an absolute fortune since the 'Covid' hoax began. Dr Reiner Fuellmich, a prominent German consumer protection trial lawyer in Germany and California, is on Drosten's case and that of Tedros at the World Health Organization for crimes against humanity with a class-action lawsuit being prepared in the United States and other legal action in Germany.

Why China?

Scamming the world with a 'virus' that doesn't exist would seem impossible on the face of it, but not if you have control of the relatively few people that make policy decisions and the great majority of the global media. Remember it's not about changing 'real' reality it's about controlling *perception* of reality. You don't have to make something happen you only have to make people *believe* that it's happening. Renegade Minds understand this and are therefore much harder to swindle. 'Covid-19' is not a 'real' 'virus'. It's a mind virus, like a computer virus, which has infected the minds, not the bodies, of billions. It all started, publically at least, in China and that alone is of central significance. The Cult was behind the revolution led by its asset Mao Zedong, or Chairman Mao, which established the People's Republic of China on October 1st, 1949. It should have been called The Cult's Republic of China, but the name had to reflect the recurring illusion that vicious dictatorships are run by and for the people (see all the 'Democratic Republics' controlled by tyrants). In the same way we have the 'Biden' Democratic Republic of America officially ruled by a puppet tyrant (at least temporarily) on behalf of Cult tyrants. The creation of Mao's merciless communist/fascist dictatorship was part of a frenzy of activity by the Cult at the conclusion of World War Two which, like the First World War, it had instigated through its assets in Germany, Britain, France, the United States and elsewhere. Israel was formed in 1948; the Soviet Union expanded its 'Iron Curtain' control, influence and military power with the Warsaw Pact communist alliance in 1955; the United Nations was formed in 1945 as a Cult precursor to world government; and a long list of world bodies would be established including the World Health Organization (1948), World Trade Organization (1948 under another name until 1995), International Monetary Fund (1945) and World Bank (1944). Human society was redrawn and hugely centralised in the global Problem-Reaction-Solution that was World War Two. All these changes were significant. Israel would become the headquarters of the Sabbatians

and the revolution in China would prepare the ground and control system for the events of 2019/2020.

Renegade Minds know there are no borders except for public consumption. The Cult is a seamless, borderless global entity and to understand the game we need to put aside labels like borders, nations, countries, communism, fascism and democracy. These delude the population into believing that countries are ruled within their borders by a government of whatever shade when these are mere agencies of a global power. America's illusion of democracy and China's communism/fascism are subsidiaries – vehicles – for the same agenda. We may hear about conflict and competition between America and China and on the lower levels that will be true; but at the Cult level they are branches of the same company in the way of the McDonald's example I gave earlier. I have tracked in the books over the years support by US governments of both parties for Chinese Communist Party infiltration of American society through allowing the sale of land, even military facilities, and the acquisition of American business and university influence. All this is underpinned by the infamous stealing of intellectual property and technological know-how. Cult-owned Silicon Valley corporations waive their fraudulent 'morality' to do business with human-rights-free China; Cult-controlled Disney has become China's PR department; and China in effect owns 'American' sports such as basketball which depends for much of its income on Chinese audiences. As a result any sports player, coach or official speaking out against China's horrific human rights record is immediately condemned or fired by the China-worshipping National Basketball Association. One of the first acts of China-controlled Biden was to issue an executive order telling federal agencies to stop making references to the 'virus' by the 'geographic location of its origin'. Long-time Congressman Jerry Nadler warned that criticising China, America's biggest rival, leads to hate crimes against Asian people in the United States. So shut up you bigot. China is fast closing in on Israel as a country that must not be criticised which is apt, really, given that Sabbatians control them both. The two countries have

developed close economic, military, technological and strategic ties which include involvement in China's 'Silk Road' transport and economic initiative to connect China with Europe. Israel was the first country in the Middle East to recognise the establishment of Mao's tyranny in 1950 months after it was established.

Project Wuhan – the 'Covid' Psyop

I emphasise again that the Cult plays the long game and what is happening to the world today is the result of centuries of calculated manipulation following a script to take control step-by-step of every aspect of human society. I will discuss later the common force behind all this that has spanned those centuries and thousands of years if the truth be told. Instigating the Mao revolution in China in 1949 with a 2020 'pandemic' in mind is not only how they work – the 71 years between them is really quite short by the Cult's standards of manipulation preparation. The reason for the Cult's Chinese revolution was to create a fiercely-controlled environment within which an extreme structure for human control could be incubated to eventually be unleashed across the world. We have seen this happen since the 'pandemic' emerged from China with the Chinese control-structure founded on AI technology and tyrannical enforcement sweep across the West. Until the moment when the Cult went for broke in the West and put its fascism on public display Western governments had to pay some lip-service to freedom and democracy to not alert too many people to the tyranny-in-the-making. Freedoms were more subtly eroded and power centralised with covert government structures put in place waiting for the arrival of 2020 when that smokescreen of 'freedom' could be dispensed with. The West was not able to move towards tyranny before 2020 anything like as fast as China which was created as a tyranny and had no limits on how fast it could construct the Cult's blueprint for global control. When the time came to impose that structure on the world it was the same Cult-owned Chinese communist/fascist government that provided the excuse – the 'Covid pandemic'. It was absolutely crucial to the Cult plan for the Chinese response to the 'pandemic' –

draconian lockdowns of the entire population – to become the blueprint that Western countries would follow to destroy the livelihoods and freedom of their people. This is why the Cult-owned, Gates-owned, WHO Director-General Tedros said early on:

The Chinese government is to be congratulated for the extraordinary measures it has taken to contain the outbreak. China is actually setting a new standard for outbreak response and it is not an exaggeration.

Forbes magazine said of China: ‘... those measures protected untold millions from getting the disease’. The Rockefeller Foundation ‘epidemic scenario’ document in 2010 said ‘prophetically’:

However, a few countries did fare better – China in particular. The Chinese government’s quick imposition and enforcement of mandatory quarantine for all citizens, as well as its instant and near-hermetic sealing off of all borders, saved millions of lives, stopping the spread of the virus far earlier than in other countries and enabling a swifter post-pandemic recovery.

Once again – *spooky*.

The first official story was the ‘bat theory’ or rather the bat diversion. The source of the ‘virus outbreak’ we were told was a ‘wet market’ in Wuhan where bats and other animals are bought and eaten in horrifically unhygienic conditions. Then another story emerged through the alternative media that the ‘virus’ had been released on purpose or by accident from a BSL-4 (biosafety level 4) laboratory in Wuhan not far from the wet market. The lab was reported to create and work with lethal concoctions and bioweapons. Biosafety level 4 is the highest in the World Health Organization system of safety and containment. Renegade Minds are aware of what I call designer manipulation. The ideal for the Cult is for people to buy its prime narrative which in the opening salvos of the ‘pandemic’ was the wet market story. It knows, however, that there is now a considerable worldwide alternative media of researchers sceptical of anything governments say and they are often given a version of events in a form they can perceive as credible while misdirecting them from the real truth. In this case let them

think that the conspiracy involved is a 'bioweapon virus' released from the Wuhan lab to keep them from the real conspiracy – *there is no 'virus'*. The WHO's current position on the source of the outbreak at the time of writing appears to be: 'We haven't got a clue, mate.' This is a good position to maintain mystery and bewilderment. The inner circle will know where the 'virus' came from – *nowhere*. The bottom line was to ensure the public believed there *was* a 'virus' and it didn't much matter if they thought it was natural or had been released from a lab. The belief that there was a 'deadly virus' was all that was needed to trigger global panic and fear. The population was terrified into handing their power to authority and doing what they were told. They had to or they were 'all gonna die'.

In March, 2020, information began to come my way from real doctors and scientists and my own additional research which had my intuition screaming: 'Yes, that's it! *There is no virus.*' The 'bioweapon' was not the 'virus'; it was the '*vaccine*' already being talked about that would be the bioweapon. My conclusion was further enhanced by happenings in Wuhan. The 'virus' was said to be sweeping the city and news footage circulated of people collapsing in the street (which they've never done in the West with the same 'virus'). The Chinese government was building 'new hospitals' in a matter of ten days to 'cope with demand' such was the virulent nature of the 'virus'. Yet in what seemed like no time the 'new hospitals' closed – even if they even opened – and China declared itself 'virus-free'. It was back to business as usual. This was more propaganda to promote the Chinese draconian lockdowns in the West as the way to 'beat the virus'. Trouble was that we subsequently had lockdown after lockdown, but never business as usual. As the people of the West and most of the rest of the world were caught in an ever-worsening spiral of lockdown, social distancing, masks, isolated old people, families forced apart, and livelihood destruction, it was party-time in Wuhan. Pictures emerged of thousands of people enjoying pool parties and concerts. It made no sense until you realised there never was a 'virus' and the

whole thing was a Cult set-up to transform human society out of one of its major global strongholds – China.

How is it possible to deceive virtually the entire world population into believing there is a deadly virus when there is not even a 'virus' let alone a deadly one? It's nothing like as difficult as you would think and that's clearly true because it happened.

Postscript: See end of book Postscript for more on the 'Wuhan lab virus release' story which the authorities and media were pushing heavily in the summer of 2021 to divert attention from the truth that the 'Covid virus' is pure invention.

CHAPTER FIVE

There is no 'virus'

You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time
Abraham Lincoln

The greatest form of mind control is repetition. The more you repeat the same mantra of alleged 'facts' the more will accept them to be true. It becomes an 'everyone knows that, mate'. If you can also censor any other version or alternative to your alleged 'facts' you are pretty much home and cooking.

By the start of 2020 the Cult owned the global mainstream media almost in its entirety to spew out its 'Covid' propaganda and ignore or discredit any other information and view. Cult-owned social media platforms in Cult-owned Silicon Valley were poised and ready to unleash a campaign of ferocious censorship to obliterate all but the official narrative. To complete the circle many demands for censorship by Silicon Valley were led by the mainstream media as 'journalists' became full-out enforcers for the Cult both as propagandists and censors. Part of this has been the influx of young people straight out of university who have become 'journalists' in significant positions. They have no experience and a headful of programmed perceptions from their years at school and university at a time when today's young are the most perceptually-targeted generations in known human history given the insidious impact of technology. They enter the media perceptually prepared and ready to repeat the narratives of the system that programmed them to

repeat its narratives. The BBC has a truly pathetic 'specialist disinformation reporter' called Marianna Spring who fits this bill perfectly. She is clueless about the world, how it works and what is really going on. Her role is to discredit anyone doing the job that a proper journalist would do and system-serving hacks like Spring wouldn't dare to do or even see the need to do. They are too busy licking the arse of authority which can never be wrong and, in the case of the BBC propaganda programme, *Panorama*, contacting payments systems such as PayPal to have a donations page taken down for a film company making documentaries questioning vaccines. Even the BBC soap opera *EastEnders* included a disgracefully biased scene in which an inarticulate white working class woman was made to look foolish for questioning the 'vaccine' while a well-spoken black man and Asian woman promoted the government narrative. It ticked every BBC box and the fact that the black and minority community was resisting the 'vaccine' had nothing to do with the way the scene was written. The BBC has become a disgusting tyrannical propaganda and censorship operation that should be defunded and disbanded and a free media take its place with a brief to stop censorship instead of demanding it. A BBC 'interview' with Gates goes something like: 'Mr Gates, sir, if I can call you sir, would you like to tell our audience why you are such a great man, a wonderful humanitarian philanthropist, and why you should absolutely be allowed as a software salesman to decide health policy for approaching eight billion people? Thank you, sir, please sir.' Propaganda programming has been incessant and merciless and when all you hear is the same story from the media, repeated by those around you who have only heard the same story, is it any wonder that people on a grand scale believe absolute mendacious garbage to be true? You are about to see, too, why this level of information control is necessary when the official 'Covid' narrative is so nonsensical and unsupportable by the evidence.

Structure of Deceit

The pyramid structure through which the 'Covid' hoax has been manifested is very simple and has to be to work. As few people as possible have to be involved with full knowledge of what they are doing – and why – or the real story would get out. At the top of the pyramid are the inner core of the Cult which controls Bill Gates who, in turn, controls the World Health Organization through his pivotal funding and his puppet Director-General mouthpiece, Tedros. Before he was appointed Tedros was chair of the Gates-founded Global Fund to 'fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria', a board member of the Gates-funded 'vaccine alliance' GAVI, and on the board of another Gates-funded organisation. Gates owns him and picked him for a specific reason – Tedros is a crook and worse. 'Dr' Tedros (he's not a medical doctor, the first WHO chief not to be) was a member of the tyrannical Marxist government of Ethiopia for decades with all its human rights abuses. He has faced allegations of corruption and misappropriation of funds and was exposed three times for covering up cholera epidemics while Ethiopia's health minister. Tedros appointed the mass-murdering genocidal Zimbabwe dictator Robert Mugabe as a WHO goodwill ambassador for public health which, as with Tedros, is like appointing a psychopath to run a peace and love campaign. The move was so ridiculous that he had to drop Mugabe in the face of widespread condemnation. American economist David Steinman, a Nobel peace prize nominee, lodged a complaint with the International Criminal Court in The Hague over alleged genocide by Tedros when he was Ethiopia's foreign minister. Steinman says Tedros was a 'crucial decision maker' who directed the actions of Ethiopia's security forces from 2013 to 2015 and one of three officials in charge when those security services embarked on the 'killing' and 'torturing' of Ethiopians. You can see where Tedros is coming from and it's sobering to think that he has been the vehicle for Gates and the Cult to direct the global response to 'Covid'. Think about that. A psychopathic Cult dictates to psychopath Gates who dictates to psychopath Tedros who dictates how countries of the world must respond to a 'Covid virus' never scientifically shown to exist. At the same time psychopathic Cult-owned Silicon Valley information

giants like Google, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter announced very early on that they would give the Cult/Gates/Tedros/WHO version of the narrative free advertising and censor those who challenged their intelligence-insulting, mendacious story.

The next layer in the global 'medical' structure below the Cult, Gates and Tedros are the chief medical officers and science 'advisers' in each of the WHO member countries which means virtually all of them. Medical officers and arbiters of science (they're not) then take the WHO policy and recommended responses and impose them on their country's population while the political 'leaders' say they are deciding policy (they're clearly not) by 'following the science' on the advice of the 'experts' – the same medical officers and science 'advisers' (dictators). In this way with the rarest of exceptions the entire world followed the same policy of lockdown, people distancing, masks and 'vaccines' dictated by the psychopathic Cult, psychopathic Gates and psychopathic Tedros who we are supposed to believe give a damn about the health of the world population they are seeking to enslave. That, amazingly, is all there is to it in terms of crucial decision-making. Medical staff in each country then follow like sheep the dictates of the shepherds at the top of the national medical hierarchies – chief medical officers and science 'advisers' who themselves follow like sheep the shepherds of the World Health Organization and the Cult. Shepherds at the national level often have major funding and other connections to Gates and his Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which carefully hands out money like confetti at a wedding to control the entire global medical system from the WHO down.

Follow the money

Christopher Whitty, Chief Medical Adviser to the UK Government at the centre of 'virus' policy, a senior adviser to the government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), and Executive Board member of the World Health Organization, was gifted a grant of \$40 million by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for malaria research in Africa. The BBC described the unelected Whitty as 'the

official who will probably have the greatest impact on our everyday lives of any individual policymaker in modern times' and so it turned out. What Gates and Tedros have said Whitty has done like his equivalents around the world. Patrick Vallance, co-chair of SAGE and the government's Chief Scientific Adviser, is a former executive of Big Pharma giant GlaxoSmithKline with its fundamental financial and business connections to Bill Gates. In September, 2020, it was revealed that Vallance owned a deferred bonus of shares in GlaxoSmithKline worth £600,000 while the company was 'developing' a 'Covid vaccine'. Move along now – nothing to see here – what could possibly be wrong with that? Imperial College in London, a major player in 'Covid' policy in Britain and elsewhere with its 'Covid-19' Response Team, is funded by Gates and has big connections to China while the now infamous Professor Neil Ferguson, the useless 'computer modeller' at Imperial College is also funded by Gates. Ferguson delivered the dramatically inaccurate excuse for the first lockdowns (much more in the next chapter). The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) in the United States, another source of outrageously false 'Covid' computer models to justify lockdowns, is bankrolled by Gates who is a vehement promotor of lockdowns. America's version of Whitty and Vallance, the again now infamous Anthony Fauci, has connections to 'Covid vaccine' maker Moderna as does Bill Gates through funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Fauci is director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), a major recipient of Gates money, and they are very close. Deborah Birx who was appointed White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator in February, 2020, is yet another with ties to Gates. Everywhere you look at the different elements around the world behind the coordination and decision making of the 'Covid' hoax there is Bill Gates and his money. They include the World Health Organization; Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States; National Institutes of Health (NIH) of Anthony Fauci; Imperial College and Neil Ferguson; the London School of Hygiene where Chris Whitty worked; Regulatory agencies like the UK Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)

which gave emergency approval for 'Covid vaccines'; Wellcome Trust; GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance; the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI); Johns Hopkins University which has compiled the false 'Covid' figures; and the World Economic Forum. A Nationalfile.com article said:

Gates has a lot of pull in the medical world, he has a multi-million dollar relationship with Dr. Fauci, and Fauci originally took the Gates line supporting vaccines and casting doubt on [the drug hydroxychloroquine]. Coronavirus response team member Dr. Deborah Birx, appointed by former president Obama to serve as United States Global AIDS Coordinator, also sits on the board of a group that has received billions from Gates' foundation, and Birx reportedly used a disputed Bill Gates-funded model for the White House's Coronavirus effort. Gates is a big proponent for a population lockdown scenario for the Coronavirus outbreak.

Another funder of Moderna is the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the technology-development arm of the Pentagon and one of the most sinister organisations on earth. DARPA had a major role with the CIA covert technology-funding operation In-Q-Tel in the development of Google and social media which is now at the centre of global censorship. Fauci and Gates are extremely close and openly admit to talking regularly about 'Covid' policy, but then why wouldn't Gates have a seat at every national 'Covid' table after his Foundation committed \$1.75 billion to the 'fight against Covid-19'. When passed through our Orwellian Translation Unit this means that he has bought and paid for the Cult-driven 'Covid' response worldwide. Research the major 'Covid' response personnel in your own country and you will find the same Gates funding and other connections again and again. Medical and science chiefs following World Health Organization 'policy' sit atop a medical hierarchy in their country of administrators, doctors and nursing staff. These 'subordinates' are told they must work and behave in accordance with the policy delivered from the 'top' of the national 'health' pyramid which is largely the policy delivered by the WHO which is the policy delivered by Gates and the Cult. The whole 'Covid' narrative has been imposed on medical staff by a climate of fear although great numbers don't even need that to comply. They do so through breathtaking levels of ignorance and

include doctors who go through life simply repeating what Big Pharma and their hierarchical masters tell them to say and believe. No wonder Big Pharma 'medicine' is one of the biggest killers on Planet Earth.

The same top-down system of intimidation operates with regard to the Cult Big Pharma cartel which also dictates policy through national and global medical systems in this way. The Cult and Big Pharma agendas are the same because the former controls and owns the latter. 'Health' administrators, doctors, and nursing staff are told to support and parrot the dictated policy or they will face consequences which can include being fired. How sad it's been to see medical staff meekly repeating and imposing Cult policy without question and most of those who can see through the deceit are only willing to speak anonymously off the record. They know what will happen if their identity is known. This has left the courageous few to expose the lies about the 'virus', face masks, overwhelmed hospitals that aren't, and the dangers of the 'vaccine' that isn't a vaccine. When these medical professionals and scientists, some renowned in their field, have taken to the Internet to expose the truth their articles, comments and videos have been deleted by Cult-owned Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. What a real head-shaker to see YouTube videos with leading world scientists and highly qualified medical specialists with an added link underneath to the notorious Cult propaganda website *Wikipedia* to find the 'facts' about the same subject.

HIV – the 'Covid' trial-run

I'll give you an example of the consequences for health and truth that come from censorship and unquestioning belief in official narratives. The story was told by PCR inventor Kary Mullis in his book *Dancing Naked in the Mind Field*. He said that in 1984 he accepted as just another scientific fact that Luc Montagnier of France's Pasteur Institute and Robert Gallo of America's National Institutes of Health had independently discovered that a 'retrovirus' dubbed HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) caused AIDS. They

were, after all, Mullis writes, specialists in retroviruses. This is how the medical and science pyramids work. Something is announced or *assumed* and then becomes an everybody-knows-that purely through repetition of the assumption as if it is fact. Complete crap becomes accepted truth with no supporting evidence and only repetition of the crap. This is how a 'virus' that doesn't exist became the 'virus' that changed the world. The HIV-AIDS fairy story became a multi-billion pound industry and the media poured out propaganda terrifying the world about the deadly HIV 'virus' that caused the lethal AIDS. By then Mullis was working at a lab in Santa Monica, California, to detect retroviruses with his PCR test in blood donations received by the Red Cross. In doing so he asked a virologist where he could find a reference for HIV being the cause of AIDS. 'You don't need a reference,' the virologist said ... '*Everybody knows it.*' Mullis said he wanted to quote a reference in the report he was doing and he said he felt a little funny about not knowing the source of such an important discovery when everyone else seemed to. The virologist suggested he cite a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on morbidity and mortality. Mullis read the report, but it only said that an organism had been identified and did not say how. The report did not identify the original scientific work. Physicians, however, *assumed* (key recurring theme) that if the CDC was convinced that HIV caused AIDS then proof must exist. Mullis continues:

I did computer searches. Neither Montagnier, Gallo, nor anyone else had published papers describing experiments which led to the conclusion that HIV probably caused AIDS. I read the papers in *Science* for which they had become well known as AIDS doctors, but all they had said there was that they had found evidence of a past infection by something which was probably HIV in some AIDS patients.

They found antibodies. Antibodies to viruses had always been considered evidence of past disease, not present disease. Antibodies signaled that the virus had been defeated. The patient had saved himself. There was no indication in these papers that this virus caused a disease. They didn't show that everybody with the antibodies had the disease. In fact they found some healthy people with antibodies.

Mullis asked why their work had been published if Montagnier and Gallo hadn't really found this evidence, and why had they been fighting so hard to get credit for the discovery? He says he was hesitant to write 'HIV is the probable cause of AIDS' until he found published evidence to support that. 'Tens of thousands of scientists and researchers were spending billions of dollars a year doing research based on this idea,' Mullis writes. 'The reason had to be there somewhere; otherwise these people would not have allowed their research to settle into one narrow channel of investigation.' He said he lectured about PCR at numerous meetings where people were always talking about HIV and he asked them how they knew that HIV was the cause of AIDS:

Everyone said something. Everyone had the answer at home, in the office, in some drawer. They all knew, and they would send me the papers as soon as they got back. But I never got any papers. Nobody ever sent me the news about how AIDS was caused by HIV.

Eventually Mullis was able to ask Montagnier himself about the reference proof when he lectured in San Diego at the grand opening of the University of California AIDS Research Center. Mullis says this was the last time he would ask his question without showing anger. Montagnier said he should reference the CDC report. 'I read it', Mullis said, and it didn't answer the question. 'If Montagnier didn't know the answer who the hell did?' Then one night Mullis was driving when an interview came on National Public Radio with Peter Duesberg, a prominent virologist at Berkeley and a California Scientist of the Year. Mullis says he finally understood why he could not find references that connected HIV to AIDS – *there weren't any!* No one had ever proved that HIV causes AIDS even though it had spawned a multi-billion pound global industry and the media was repeating this as fact every day in their articles and broadcasts terrifying the shit out of people about AIDS and giving the impression that a positive test for HIV (see 'Covid') was a death sentence. Duesberg was a threat to the AIDS gravy train and the agenda that underpinned it. He was therefore abused and castigated after he told the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

there was no good evidence implicating the new 'virus'. Editors rejected his manuscripts and his research funds were deleted. Mullis points out that the CDC has defined AIDS as one of more than 30 diseases *if accompanied* by a positive result on a test that detects antibodies to HIV; but those same diseases are not defined as AIDS cases when antibodies are not detected:

If an HIV-positive woman develops uterine cancer, for example, she is considered to have AIDS. If she is not HIV positive, she simply has uterine cancer. An HIV-positive man with tuberculosis has AIDS; if he tests negative he simply has tuberculosis. If he lives in Kenya or Colombia, where the test for HIV antibodies is too expensive, he is simply presumed to have the antibodies and therefore AIDS, and therefore he can be treated in the World Health Organization's clinic. It's the only medical help available in some places. And it's free, because the countries that support WHO are worried about AIDS.

Mullis accuses the CDC of continually adding new diseases (see ever more 'Covid symptoms') to the grand AIDS definition and of virtually doctoring the books to make it appear as if the disease continued to spread. He cites how in 1993 the CDC enormously broadened its AIDS definition and county health authorities were delighted because they received \$2,500 per year from the Federal government for every reported AIDS case. Ladies and gentlemen, I have just described, via Kary Mullis, the 'Covid pandemic' of 2020 and beyond. Every element is the same and it's been pulled off in the same way by the same networks.

The 'Covid virus' exists? Okay – prove it. Er ... still waiting

What Kary Mullis described with regard to 'HIV' has been repeated with 'Covid'. A claim is made that a new, or 'novel', infection has been found and the entire medical system of the world repeats that as fact exactly as they did with HIV and AIDS. No one in the mainstream asks rather relevant questions such as 'How do you know?' and 'Where is your proof?' The SARS-Cov-2 'virus' and the 'Covid-19 disease' became an overnight 'everybody-knows-that'. The origin could be debated and mulled over, but what you could not suggest was that 'SARS-Cov-2' didn't exist. That would be

ridiculous. 'Everybody knows' the 'virus' exists. Well, I didn't for one along with American proper doctors like Andrew Kaufman and Tom Cowan and long-time American proper journalist Jon Rappaport. We dared to pursue the obvious and simple question: 'Where's the evidence?' The overwhelming majority in medicine, journalism and the general public did not think to ask that. After all, *everyone knew* there was a new 'virus'. Everyone was saying so and I heard it on the BBC. Some would eventually argue that the 'deadly virus' was nothing like as deadly as claimed, but few would venture into the realms of its very existence. Had they done so they would have found that the evidence for that claim had gone AWOL as with HIV causes AIDS. In fact, not even that. For something to go AWOL it has to exist in the first place and scientific proof for a 'SARS-Cov-2' can be filed under nothing, nowhere and zilch.

Dr Andrew Kaufman is a board-certified forensic psychiatrist in New York State, a Doctor of Medicine and former Assistant Professor and Medical Director of Psychiatry at SUNY Upstate Medical University, and Medical Instructor of Hematology and Oncology at the Medical School of South Carolina. He also studied biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and trained in Psychiatry at Duke University. Kaufman is retired from allopathic medicine, but remains a consultant and educator on natural healing, I saw a video of his very early on in the 'Covid' hoax in which he questioned claims about the 'virus' in the absence of any supporting evidence and with plenty pointing the other way. I did everything I could to circulate his work which I felt was asking the pivotal questions that needed an answer. I can recommend an excellent pull-together interview he did with the website The Last Vagabond entitled *Dr Andrew Kaufman: Virus Isolation, Terrain Theory and Covid-19* and his website is andrewkaufmanmd.com. Kaufman is not only a forensic psychiatrist; he is forensic in all that he does. He always reads original scientific papers, experiments and studies instead of second-third-fourth-hand reports about the 'virus' in the media which are repeating the repeated repetition of the narrative. When he did so with the original Chinese 'virus' papers Kaufman

realised that there was no evidence of a 'SARS-Cov-2'. They had never – from the start – shown it to exist and every repeat of this claim worldwide was based on the accepted existence of proof that was nowhere to be found – see Kary Mullis and HIV. Here we go again.

Let's postulate

Kaufman discovered that the Chinese authorities immediately concluded that the cause of an illness that broke out among about 200 initial patients in Wuhan was a 'new virus' when there were no grounds to make that conclusion. The alleged 'virus' was not isolated from other genetic material in their samples and then shown through a system known as Koch's postulates to be the causative agent of the illness. The world was told that the SARS-Cov-2 'virus' caused a disease they called 'Covid-19' which had 'flu-like' symptoms and could lead to respiratory problems and pneumonia. If it wasn't so tragic it would almost be funny. *'Flu-like' symptoms? Pneumonia? Respiratory disease?* What in CHINA and particularly in Wuhan, one of the most polluted cities in the world with a resulting epidemic of respiratory disease?? Three hundred thousand people get pneumonia in China every year and there are nearly a billion cases worldwide of 'flu-like symptoms'. These have a whole range of causes – including pollution in Wuhan – but no other possibility was credibly considered in late 2019 when the world was told there was a new and deadly 'virus'. The global prevalence of pneumonia and 'flu-like systems' gave the Cult networks unlimited potential to re-diagnose these other causes as the mythical 'Covid-19' and that is what they did from the very start. Kaufman revealed how Chinese medical and science authorities (all subordinates to the Cult-owned communist government) took genetic material from the lungs of only a few of the first patients. The material contained their own cells, bacteria, fungi and other microorganisms living in their bodies. The only way you could prove the existence of the 'virus' and its responsibility for the alleged 'Covid-19' was to isolate the virus from all the other material – a process also known as 'purification' – and

then follow the postulates sequence developed in the late 19th century by German physician and bacteriologist Robert Koch which became the 'gold standard' for connecting an alleged causation agent to a disease:

1. The microorganism (bacteria, fungus, virus, etc.) must be present in every case of the disease and all patients must have the same symptoms. It must also *not be present in healthy individuals*.
2. The microorganism must be isolated from the host with the disease. If the microorganism is a bacteria or fungus it must be grown in a pure culture. If it is a virus, it must be purified (i.e. containing no other material except the virus particles) from a clinical sample.
3. The specific disease, with all of its characteristics, must be reproduced when the infectious agent (the purified virus or a pure culture of bacteria or fungi) is inoculated into a healthy, susceptible host.
4. The microorganism must be recoverable from the experimentally infected host as in step 2.

Not one of these criteria has been met in the case of 'SARS-Cov-2' and 'Covid-19'. Not ONE. EVER. Robert Koch refers to bacteria and not viruses. What are called 'viral particles' are so minute (hence masks are useless by any definition) that they could only be seen after the invention of the electron microscope in the 1930s and can still only be observed through that means. American bacteriologist and virologist Thomas Milton Rivers, the so-called 'Father of Modern Virology' who was very significantly director of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in the 1930s, developed a less stringent version of Koch's postulates to identify 'virus' causation known as 'Rivers criteria'. 'Covid' did not pass that process either. Some even doubt whether any 'virus' can be isolated from other particles containing genetic material in the Koch method. Freedom of Information requests in many countries asking for scientific proof that the 'Covid virus' has been purified and isolated and shown to exist have all come back with a 'we don't have that' and when this happened with a request to the UK Department of Health they added this comment:

However, outside of the scope of the [Freedom of Information Act] and on a discretionary basis, the following information has been advised to us, which may be of interest. Most infectious diseases are caused by viruses, bacteria or fungi. Some bacteria or fungi have the capacity to grow on their own in isolation, for example in colonies on a petri dish. Viruses are different in that they are what we call 'obligate pathogens' – that is, they cannot survive or reproduce without infecting a host ...

... For some diseases, it is possible to establish causation between a microorganism and a disease by isolating the pathogen from a patient, growing it in pure culture and reintroducing it to a healthy organism. These are known as 'Koch's postulates' and were developed in 1882. However, as our understanding of disease and different disease-causing agents has advanced, these are no longer the method for determining causation [Andrew Kaufman asks why in that case are there two published articles falsely claiming to satisfy Koch's postulates].

It has long been known that viral diseases cannot be identified in this way as viruses cannot be grown in 'pure culture'. When a patient is tested for a viral illness, this is normally done by looking for the presence of antigens, or viral genetic code in a host with molecular biology techniques [Kaufman asks how you could know the origin of these chemicals without having a pure culture for comparison].

For the record 'antigens' are defined so:

Invading microorganisms have antigens on their surface that the human body can recognise as being foreign – meaning not belonging to it. When the body recognises a foreign antigen, lymphocytes (white blood cells) produce antibodies, which are complementary in shape to the antigen.

Notwithstanding that this is open to question in relation to 'SARS-Cov-2' the presence of 'antibodies' can have many causes and they are found in people that are perfectly well. Kary Mullis said: 'Antibodies ... had always been considered evidence of past disease, not present disease.'

'Covid' really is a *computer* 'virus'

Where the UK Department of Health statement says 'viruses' are now 'diagnosed' through a 'viral genetic code in a host with molecular biology techniques', they mean ... *the PCR test* which its inventor said cannot test for infectious disease. They have no credible method of connecting a 'virus' to a disease and we will see that there is no scientific proof that any 'virus' causes any disease or there is any such thing as a 'virus' in the way that it is described. Tenacious Canadian researcher Christine Massey and her team made

some 40 Freedom of Information requests to national public health agencies in different countries asking for proof that SARS-CoV-2 has been isolated and not one of them could supply that information. Massey said of her request in Canada: 'Freedom of Information reveals Public Health Agency of Canada has no record of 'SARS-COV-2' isolation performed by anyone, anywhere, ever.' If you accept the comment from the UK Department of Health it's because they can't isolate a 'virus'. Even so many 'science' papers claimed to have isolated the 'Covid virus' until they were questioned and had to admit they hadn't. A reply from the Robert Koch Institute in Germany was typical: 'I am not aware of a paper which purified isolated SARS-CoV-2.' So what the hell was Christian Drosten and his gang using to design the 'Covid' testing protocol that has produced all the illusory Covid' cases and 'Covid' deaths when the head of the Chinese version of the CDC admitted there was a problem right from the start in that the 'virus' had never been isolated/purified? Breathe deeply: What they are calling 'Covid' is actually created by a *computer program* i.e. *they made it up* – er, that's it. They took lung fluid, with many sources of genetic material, from one single person alleged to be infected with Covid-19 by a PCR test which they *claimed*, without clear evidence, contained a 'virus'. They used several computer programs to create a model of a theoretical virus genome sequence from more than fifty-six million small sequences of RNA, each of an unknown source, assembling them like a puzzle with no known solution. The computer filled in the gaps with sequences from bits in the gene bank to make it look like a bat SARS-like coronavirus! A wave of the magic wand and poof, an *in silico* (computer-generated) genome, a scientific fantasy, was created. UK health researcher Dr Kevin Corbett made the same point with this analogy:

... It's like giving you a few bones and saying that's your fish. It could be any fish. Not even a skeleton. Here's a few fragments of bones. That's your fish ... It's all from gene bank and the bits of the virus sequence that weren't there they made up.

They synthetically created them to fill in the blanks. That's what genetics is; it's a code. So it's ABBCCDDDD and you're missing some what you think is EEE so you put it in. It's all

synthetic. You just manufacture the bits that are missing. This is the end result of the geneticization of virology. This is basically a computer virus.

Further confirmation came in an email exchange between British citizen journalist Frances Leader and the government's Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (the Gates-funded MHRA) which gave emergency permission for untested 'Covid vaccines' to be used. The agency admitted that the 'vaccine' is not based on an isolated 'virus', but comes from a *computer-generated model*. Frances Leader was naturally banned from Cult-owned fascist Twitter for making this exchange public. The process of creating computer-generated alleged 'viruses' is called 'in silico' or 'in silicon' – computer chips – and the term 'in silico' is believed to originate with biological experiments using only a computer in 1989. 'Vaccines' involved with 'Covid' are also produced 'in silico' or by computer not a natural process. If the original 'virus' is nothing more than a made-up computer model how can there be 'new variants' of something that never existed in the first place? They are not new 'variants'; they are new *computer models* only minutely different to the original program and designed to further terrify the population into having the 'vaccine' and submitting to fascism. You want a 'new variant'? Click, click, enter – there you go. Tell the medical profession that you have discovered a 'South African variant', 'UK variants' or a 'Brazilian variant' and in the usual HIV-causes-AIDS manner they will unquestioningly repeat it with no evidence whatsoever to support these claims. They will go on television and warn about the dangers of 'new variants' while doing nothing more than repeating what they have been told to be true and knowing that any deviation from that would be career suicide. Big-time insiders will know it's a hoax, but much of the medical community is clueless about the way they are being played and themselves play the public without even being aware they are doing so. What an interesting 'coincidence' that AstraZeneca and Oxford University were conducting 'Covid vaccine trials' in the three countries – the UK, South Africa and Brazil – where the first three 'variants' were claimed to have 'broken out'.

Here's your 'virus' – it's a unicorn

Dr Andrew Kaufman presented a brilliant analysis describing how the 'virus' was imagined into fake existence when he dissected an article published by *Nature* and written by 19 authors detailing *alleged* 'sequencing of a complete viral genome' of the 'new SARS-CoV-2 virus'. This computer-modelled *in silico* genome was used as a template for all subsequent genome sequencing experiments that resulted in the so-called variants which he said now number more than 6,000. The fake genome was constructed from more than 56 million individual short strands of RNA. Those little pieces were assembled into longer pieces by finding areas of overlapping sequences. The computer programs created over two million possible combinations from which the authors simply chose the longest one. They then compared this to a 'bat virus' and the computer 'alignment' rearranged the sequence and filled in the gaps! They called this computer-generated abomination the 'complete genome'. Dr Tom Cowan, a fellow medical author and collaborator with Kaufman, said such computer-generation constitutes scientific fraud and he makes this superb analogy:

Here is an equivalency: A group of researchers claim to have found a unicorn because they found a piece of a hoof, a hair from a tail, and a snippet of a horn. They then add that information into a computer and program it to re-create the unicorn, and they then claim this computer re-creation is the real unicorn. Of course, they had never actually seen a unicorn so could not possibly have examined its genetic makeup to compare their samples with the actual unicorn's hair, hooves and horn.

The researchers claim they decided which is the real genome of SARS-CoV-2 by 'consensus', sort of like a vote. Again, different computer programs will come up with different versions of the imaginary 'unicorn', so they come together as a group and decide which is the real imaginary unicorn.

This is how the 'virus' that has transformed the world was brought into fraudulent 'existence'. Extraordinary, yes, but as the Nazis said the bigger the lie the more will believe it. Cowan, however, wasn't finished and he went on to identify what he called the real blockbuster in the paper. He quotes this section from a paper written

by virologists and published by the CDC and then explains what it means:

Therefore, we examined the capacity of SARS-CoV-2 to infect and replicate in several common primate and human cell lines, including human adenocarcinoma cells (A549), human liver cells (HUH 7.0), and human embryonic kidney cells (HEK-293T). In addition to Vero E6 and Vero CCL81 cells. ... Each cell line was inoculated at high multiplicity of infection and examined 24h post-infection.

No CPE was observed in any of the cell lines except in Vero cells, which grew to greater than 10 to the 7th power at 24 h post-infection. In contrast, HUH 7.0 and 293T showed only modest viral replication, and A549 cells were incompatible with SARS CoV-2 infection.

Cowan explains that when virologists attempt to prove infection they have three possible 'hosts' or models on which they can test. The first was humans. Exposure to humans was generally not done for ethical reasons and has never been done with SARS-CoV-2 or any coronavirus. The second possible host was animals. Cowan said that forgetting for a moment that they never actually use purified virus when exposing animals they do use solutions that they *claim* contain the virus. Exposure to animals has been done with SARS-CoV-2 in an experiment involving mice and this is what they found: *None of the wild (normal) mice got sick.* In a group of genetically-modified mice, a statistically insignificant number lost weight and had slightly bristled fur, but they experienced nothing like the illness called 'Covid-19'. Cowan said the third method – the one they mostly rely on – is to inoculate solutions they *say* contain the virus onto a variety of tissue cultures. This process had never been shown to kill tissue *unless* the sample material was starved of nutrients and poisoned as *part of the process*. Yes, incredibly, in tissue experiments designed to show the 'virus' is responsible for killing the tissue they starve the tissue of nutrients and add toxic drugs including antibiotics and they do not have control studies to see if it's the starvation and poisoning that is degrading the tissue rather than the 'virus' they allege to be in there somewhere. You want me to pinch you? Yep, I understand. Tom Cowan said this about the whole nonsensical farce as he explains what that quote from the CDC paper really means:

The shocking thing about the above quote is that using their own methods, the virologists found that solutions containing SARS-CoV-2 – even in high amounts – were NOT, I repeat NOT, infective to any of the three human tissue cultures they tested. In plain English, this means they proved, on their terms, that this ‘new coronavirus’ is not infectious to human beings. It is ONLY infective to monkey kidney cells, and only then when you add two potent drugs (gentamicin and amphotericin), known to be toxic to kidneys, to the mix.

My friends, read this again and again. These virologists, published by the CDC, performed a clear proof, on their terms, showing that the SARS-CoV-2 virus is harmless to human beings. That is the only possible conclusion, but, unfortunately, this result is not even mentioned in their conclusion. They simply say they can provide virus stocks cultured only on monkey Vero cells, thanks for coming.

Cowan concluded: ‘If people really understood how this “science” was done, I would hope they would storm the gates and demand honesty, transparency and truth.’ Dr Michael Yeadon, former Vice President and Chief Scientific Adviser at drug giant Pfizer has been a vocal critic of the ‘Covid vaccine’ and its potential for multiple harm. He said in an interview in April, 2021, that ‘not one [vaccine] has the virus. He was asked why vaccines normally using a ‘dead’ version of a disease to activate the immune system were not used for ‘Covid’ and instead we had the synthetic methods of the ‘mRNA Covid vaccine’. Yeadon said that to do the former ‘you’d have to have some of [the virus] wouldn’t you?’ He added: ‘No-one’s got any – seriously.’ Yeadon said that surely they couldn’t have fooled the whole world for a year without having a virus, ‘but oddly enough ask around – no one’s got it’. He didn’t know why with all the ‘great labs’ around the world that the virus had not been isolated – ‘Maybe they’ve been too busy running bad PCR tests and vaccines that people don’t need.’ What is today called ‘science’ is not ‘science’ at all. Science is no longer what is, but whatever people can be manipulated to *believe* that it is. Real science has been hijacked by the Cult to dispense and produce the ‘expert scientists’ and contentions that suit the agenda of the Cult. How big-time this has happened with the ‘Covid’ hoax which is entirely based on fake science delivered by fake ‘scientists’ and fake ‘doctors’. The human-caused climate change hoax is also entirely based on fake science delivered by fake ‘scientists’ and fake ‘climate experts’. In both cases real

scientists, climate experts and doctors have their views suppressed and deleted by the Cult-owned science establishment, media and Silicon Valley. This is the 'science' that politicians claim to be 'following' and a common denominator of 'Covid' and climate are Cult psychopaths Bill Gates and his mate Klaus Schwab at the Gates-funded World Economic Forum. But, don't worry, it's all just a coincidence and absolutely nothing to worry about. Zzzzzzzzz.

What is a 'virus' REALLY?

Dr Tom Cowan is one of many contesting the very existence of viruses let alone that they cause disease. This is understandable when there is no scientific evidence for a disease-causing 'virus'. German virologist Dr Stefan Lanka won a landmark case in 2017 in the German Supreme Court over his contention that there is no such thing as a measles virus. He had offered a big prize for anyone who could prove there is and Lanka won his case when someone sought to claim the money. There is currently a prize of more than 225,000 euros on offer from an Isolate Truth Fund for anyone who can prove the isolation of SARS-CoV-2 and its genetic substance. Lanka wrote in an article headed 'The Misconception Called Virus' that scientists think a 'virus' is causing tissue to become diseased and degraded when in fact it is the *processes they are using* which do that – not a 'virus'. Lanka has done an important job in making this point clear as Cowan did in his analysis of the CDC paper. Lanka says that all claims about viruses as disease-causing pathogens are wrong and based on 'easily recognisable, understandable and verifiable misinterpretations.' Scientists believed they were working with 'viruses' in their laboratories when they were really working with 'typical particles of specific dying tissues or cells ...' Lanka said that the tissue decaying process claimed to be caused by a 'virus' still happens when no alleged 'virus' is involved. It's the *process* that does the damage and not a 'virus'. The genetic sample is deprived of nutrients, removed from its energy supply through removal from the body and then doused in toxic antibiotics to remove any bacteria. He confirms again that establishment scientists do not (pinch me)

conduct control experiments to see if this is the case and if they did they would see the claims that 'viruses' are doing the damage is nonsense. He adds that during the measles 'virus' court case he commissioned an independent laboratory to perform just such a control experiment and the result was that the tissues and cells died in the exact same way as with alleged 'infected' material. This is supported by a gathering number of scientists, doctors and researchers who reject what is called 'germ theory' or the belief in the body being infected by contagious sources emitted by other people. Researchers Dawn Lester and David Parker take the same stance in their highly-detailed and sourced book *What Really Makes You Ill – Why everything you thought you knew about disease is wrong* which was recommended to me by a number of medical professionals genuinely seeking the truth. Lester and Parker say there is no provable scientific evidence to show that a 'virus' can be transmitted between people or people and animals or animals and people:

The definition also claims that viruses are the cause of many diseases, as if this has been definitively proven. But this is not the case; there is no original scientific evidence that definitively demonstrates that any virus is the cause of any disease. The burden of proof for any theory lies with those who proposed it; but none of the existing documents provides 'proof' that supports the claim that 'viruses' are pathogens.

Dr Tom Cowan employs one of his clever analogies to describe the process by which a 'virus' is named as the culprit for a disease when what is called a 'virus' is only material released by cells detoxing themselves from infiltration by chemical or radiation poisoning. The tidal wave of technologically-generated radiation in the 'smart' modern world plus all the toxic food and drink are causing this to happen more than ever. Deluded 'scientists' misread this as a gathering impact of what they wrongly label 'viruses'.

Paper can infect houses

Cowan said in an article for davidicke.com – with his tongue only mildly in his cheek – that he believed he had made a tremendous

discovery that may revolutionise science. He had discovered that small bits of paper are alive, 'well alive-ish', can 'infect' houses, and then reproduce themselves inside the house. The result was that this explosion of growth in the paper inside the house causes the house to explode, blowing it to smithereens. His evidence for this new theory is that in the past months he had carefully examined many of the houses in his neighbourhood and found almost no scraps of paper on the lawns and surrounds of the house. There was an occasional stray label, but nothing more. Then he would return to these same houses a week or so later and with a few, not all of them, particularly the old and decrepit ones, he found to his shock and surprise they were littered with stray bits of paper. He knew then that the paper had infected these houses, made copies of itself, and blew up the house. A young boy on a bicycle at one of the sites told him he had seen a demolition crew using dynamite to explode the house the previous week, but Cowan dismissed this as the idle thoughts of silly boys because 'I was on to something big'. He was on to how 'scientists' mistake genetic material in the detoxifying process for something they call a 'virus'. Cowan said of his house and paper story:

If this sounds crazy to you, it's because it should. This scenario is obviously nuts. But consider this admittedly embellished, for effect, current viral theory that all scientists, medical doctors and virologists currently believe.

He takes the example of the 'novel SARS-Cov2' virus to prove the point. First they take someone with an undefined illness called 'Covid-19' and don't even attempt to find any virus in their sputum. Never mind the scientists still describe how this 'virus', which they have not located attaches to a cell receptor, injects its genetic material, in 'Covid's' case, RNA, into the cell. The RNA once inserted exploits the cell to reproduce itself and makes 'thousands, nay millions, of copies of itself ... Then it emerges victorious to claim its next victim':

If you were to look in the scientific literature for proof, actual scientific proof, that uniform SARS-CoV2 viruses have been properly isolated from the sputum of a sick person, that actual spike proteins could be seen protruding from the virus (which has not been found), you would find that such evidence doesn't exist.

If you go looking in the published scientific literature for actual pictures, proof, that these spike proteins or any viral proteins are ever attached to any receptor embedded in any cell membrane, you would also find that no such evidence exists. If you were to look for a video or documented evidence of the intact virus injecting its genetic material into the body of the cell, reproducing itself and then emerging victorious by budding off the cell membrane, you would find that no such evidence exists.

The closest thing you would find is electron micrograph pictures of cellular particles, possibly attached to cell debris, both of which to be seen were stained by heavy metals, a process that completely distorts their architecture within the living organism. This is like finding bits of paper stuck to the blown-up bricks, thereby proving the paper emerged by taking pieces of the bricks on its way out.

The Enders baloney

Cowan describes the 'Covid' story as being just as make-believe as his paper story and he charts back this fantasy to a Nobel Prize winner called John Enders (1897-1985), an American biomedical scientist who has been dubbed 'The Father of Modern Vaccines'. Enders is claimed to have 'discovered' the process of the viral culture which 'proved' that a 'virus' caused measles. Cowan explains how Enders did this 'by using the EXACT same procedure that has been followed by every virologist to find and characterize every new virus since 1954'. Enders took throat swabs from children with measles and immersed them in 2ml of milk. Penicillin (100u/ml) and the antibiotic streptomycin (50,g/ml) were added and the whole mix was centrifuged – rotated at high speed to separate large cellular debris from small particles and molecules as with milk and cream, for example. Cowan says that if the aim is to find little particles of genetic material ('viruses') in the snot from children with measles it would seem that the last thing you would do is mix the snot with other material – milk –that also has genetic material. 'How are you ever going to know whether whatever you found came from the snot or the milk?' He points out that streptomycin is a 'nephrotoxic' or poisonous-to-the-kidney drug. You will see the relevance of that

shortly. Cowan says that it gets worse, much worse, when Enders describes the culture medium upon which the virus 'grows': 'The culture medium consisted of bovine amniotic fluid (90%), beef embryo extract (5%), horse serum (5%), antibiotics and phenol red as an indicator of cell metabolism.' Cowan asks incredulously: 'Did he just say that the culture medium also contained fluids and tissues that are themselves rich sources of genetic material?' The genetic cocktail, or 'medium', is inoculated onto tissue and cells from rhesus monkey *kidney* tissue. This is where the importance of streptomycin comes in and currently-used antimicrobials and other drugs that are *poisonous to kidneys* and used in ALL modern viral cultures (e.g. gentamicin, streptomycin, and amphotericin). Cowan asks: 'How are you ever going to know from this witch's brew where any genetic material comes from as we now have five different sources of rich genetic material in our mix?' Remember, he says, that all genetic material, whether from monkey kidney tissues, bovine serum, milk, etc., is made from the exact same components. The same central question returns: 'How are you possibly going to know that it was the virus that killed the kidney tissue and not the toxic antibiotic and starvation rations on which you are growing the tissue?' John Enders answered the question himself – *you can't*:

A second agent was obtained from an uninoculated culture of monkey kidney cells. The cytopathic changes [death of the cells] it induced in the unstained preparations could not be distinguished with confidence from the viruses isolated from measles.

The death of the cells ('cytopathic changes') happened in exactly the same manner, whether they inoculated the kidney tissue with the measles snot or not, Cowan says. 'This is evidence that the destruction of the tissue, the very proof of viral causation of illness, was not caused by anything in the snot because they saw the same destructive effect when the snot was not even used ... the cytopathic, i.e., cell-killing, changes come from the process of the culture itself, not from any virus in any snot, period.' Enders quotes in his 1957 paper a virologist called Ruckle as reporting similar findings 'and in addition has isolated an agent from monkey kidney tissue that is so

far indistinguishable from human measles virus'. In other words, Cowan says, these particles called 'measles viruses' are simply and clearly breakdown products of the starved and poisoned tissue. For measles 'virus' see all 'viruses' including the so-called 'Covid virus'. Enders, the 'Father of Modern Vaccines', also said:

There is a potential risk in employing cultures of primate cells for the production of vaccines composed of attenuated virus, since the presence of other agents possibly latent in primate tissues cannot be definitely excluded by any known method.

Cowan further quotes from a paper published in the journal *Viruses* in May, 2020, while the 'Covid pandemic' was well underway in the media if not in reality. 'EVs' here refers to particles of genetic debris from our own tissues, such as exosomes of which more in a moment: 'The remarkable resemblance between EVs and viruses has caused quite a few problems in the studies focused on the analysis of EVs released during viral infections.' Later the paper adds that to date a reliable method that can actually guarantee a complete separation (of EVs from viruses) DOES NOT EXIST. This was published at a time when a fairy tale 'virus' was claimed in total certainty to be causing a fairy tale 'viral disease' called 'Covid-19' – a fairy tale that was already well on the way to transforming human society in the image that the Cult has worked to achieve for so long. Cowan concludes his article:

To summarize, there is no scientific evidence that pathogenic viruses exist. What we think of as 'viruses' are simply the normal breakdown products of dead and dying tissues and cells. When we are well, we make fewer of these particles; when we are starved, poisoned, suffocated by wearing masks, or afraid, we make more.

There is no engineered virus circulating and making people sick. People in laboratories all over the world are making genetically modified products to make people sick. These are called vaccines. There is no virome, no 'ecosystem' of viruses, viruses are not 8%, 50% or 100 % of our genetic material. These are all simply erroneous ideas based on the misconception called a virus.

What is 'Covid'? Load of bollocks

The background described here by Cowan and Lanka was emphasised in the first video presentation that I saw by Dr Andrew Kaufman when he asked whether the 'Covid virus' was in truth a natural defence mechanism of the body called 'exosomes'. These are released by cells when in states of toxicity – see the same themes returning over and over. They are released ever more profusely as chemical and radiation toxicity increases and think of the potential effect therefore of 5G alone as its destructive frequencies infest the human energetic information field with a gathering pace (5G went online in Wuhan in 2019 as the 'virus' emerged). I'll have more about this later. Exosomes transmit a warning to the rest of the body that 'Houston, we have a problem'. Kaufman presented images of exosomes and compared them with 'Covid' under an electron microscope and the similarity was remarkable. They both attach to the same cell receptors (*claimed* in the case of 'Covid'), contain the same genetic material in the form of RNA or ribonucleic acid, and both are found in 'viral cell cultures' with damaged or dying cells. James Hildreth MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Meharry Medical College at Johns Hopkins, said: 'The virus is fully an exosome in every sense of the word.' Kaufman's conclusion was that there is no 'virus': 'This entire pandemic is a completely manufactured crisis ... there is no evidence of anyone dying from [this] illness.' Dr Tom Cowan and Sally Fallon Morell, authors of *The Contagion Myth*, published a statement with Dr Kaufman in February, 2021, explaining why the 'virus' does not exist and you can read it that in full in the Appendix.

'Virus' theory can be traced to the 'cell theory' in 1858 of German physician Rudolf Virchow (1821-1920) who contended that disease originates from a single cell infiltrated by a 'virus'. Dr Stefan Lanka said that findings and insights with respect to the structure, function and central importance of tissues in the creation of life, which were already known in 1858, comprehensively refute the cell theory. Virchow ignored them. We have seen the part later played by John Enders in the 1950s and Lanka notes that infection theories were only established as a global dogma through the policies and

eugenics of the Third Reich in Nazi Germany (creation of the same Sabbatian cult behind the 'Covid' hoax). Lanka said: 'Before 1933, scientists dared to contradict this theory; after 1933, these critical scientists were silenced'. Dr Tom Cowan's view is that ill-health is caused by too much of something, too little of something, or toxification from chemicals and radiation – not contagion. We must also highlight as a major source of the 'virus' theology a man still called the 'Father of Modern Virology' – Thomas Milton Rivers (1888-1962). There is no way given the Cult's long game policy that it was a coincidence for the 'Father of Modern Virology' to be director of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research from 1937 to 1956 when he is credited with making the Rockefeller Institute a leader in 'viral research'. Cult Rockefeller were the force behind the creation of Big Pharma 'medicine', established the World Health Organisation in 1948, and have long and close associations with the Gates family that now runs the WHO during the pandemic hoax through mega-rich Cult gofer and psychopath Bill Gates.

Only a Renegade Mind can see through all this bullshit by asking the questions that need to be answered, not taking 'no' or prevarication for an answer, and certainly not hiding from the truth in fear of speaking it. Renegade Minds have always changed the world for the better and they will change this one no matter how bleak it may currently appear to be.

CHAPTER SIX

Sequence of deceit

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything
Mark Twain

Against the background that I have laid out this far the sequence that took us from an invented 'virus' in Cult-owned China in late 2019 to the fascist transformation of human society can be seen and understood in a whole new context.

We were told that a deadly disease had broken out in Wuhan and the world media began its campaign (coordinated by behavioural psychologists as we shall see) to terrify the population into unquestioning compliance. We were shown images of Chinese people collapsing in the street which never happened in the West with what was supposed to be the same condition. In the earliest days when alleged cases and deaths were few the fear register was hysterical in many areas of the media and this would expand into the common media narrative across the world. The real story was rather different, but we were never told that. The Chinese government, one of the Cult's biggest centres of global operation, said they had discovered a new illness with flu-like and pneumonia-type symptoms in a city with such toxic air that it is overwhelmed with flu-like symptoms, pneumonia and respiratory disease. Chinese scientists said it was a new – 'novel' – coronavirus which they called Sars-Cov-2 and that it caused a disease they labelled 'Covid-19'. There was no evidence for this and the 'virus' has never to this day been isolated, purified and its genetic code established from that. It

was from the beginning a computer-generated fiction. Stories of Chinese whistleblowers saying the number of deaths was being suppressed or that the 'new disease' was related to the Wuhan bio-lab misdirected mainstream and alternative media into cul-de-sacs to obscure the real truth – there was no 'virus'.

Chinese scientists took genetic material from the lung fluid of just a few people and said they had found a 'new' disease when this material had a wide range of content. There was no evidence for a 'virus' for the very reasons explained in the last two chapters. The 'virus' has never been shown to (a) exist and (b) cause any disease. People were diagnosed on symptoms that are so widespread in Wuhan and polluted China and with a PCR test that can't detect infectious disease. On this farce the whole global scam was sold to the rest of the world which would also diagnose respiratory disease as 'Covid-19' from symptoms alone or with a PCR test not testing for a 'virus'. Flu miraculously disappeared *worldwide* in 2020 and into 2021 as it was redesignated 'Covid-19'. It was really the same old flu with its 'flu-like' symptoms attributed to 'flu-like' 'Covid-19'. At the same time with very few exceptions the Chinese response of draconian lockdown and fascism was the chosen weapon to respond across the West as recommended by the Cult-owned Tedros at the Cult-owned World Health Organization run by the Cult-owned Gates. All was going according to plan. Chinese scientists – everything in China is controlled by the Cult-owned government – compared their contaminated RNA lung-fluid material with other RNA sequences and said it appeared to be just under 80 percent identical to the SARS-CoV-1 'virus' claimed to be the cause of the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) 'outbreak' in 2003. They decreed that because of this the 'new virus' had to be related and they called it SARS-CoV-2. There are some serious problems with this assumption and *assumption* was all it was. Most 'factual' science turns out to be assumptions repeated into everyone-knows-that. A match of under 80-percent is meaningless. Dr Kaufman makes the point that there's a 96 percent genetic correlation between humans and chimpanzees, but 'no one would say our genetic material is part

of the chimpanzee family'. Yet the Chinese authorities were claiming that a much lower percentage, less than 80 percent, proved the existence of a new 'coronavirus'. For goodness sake human DNA is 60 percent similar to a *banana*.

You are feeling sleepy

The entire 'Covid' hoax is a global Psyop, a psychological operation to program the human mind into believing and fearing a complete fantasy. A crucial aspect of this was what *appeared* to happen in Italy. It was all very well streaming out daily images of an alleged catastrophe in Wuhan, but to the Western mind it was still on the other side of the world in a very different culture and setting. A reaction of 'this could happen to me and my family' was still nothing like as intense enough for the mind-doctors. The Cult needed a Western example to push people over that edge and it chose Italy, one of its major global locations going back to the Roman Empire. An Italian 'Covid' crisis was manufactured in a particular area called Lombardy which just happens to be notorious for its toxic air and therefore respiratory disease. Wuhan, China, *déjà vu*. An hysterical media told horror stories of Italians dying from 'Covid' in their droves and how Lombardy hospitals were being overrun by a tidal wave of desperately ill people needing treatment after being struck down by the 'deadly virus'. Here was the psychological turning point the Cult had planned. Wow, if this is happening in Italy, the Western mind concluded, this indeed could happen to me and my family. Another point is that Italian authorities responded by following the Chinese blueprint so vehemently recommended by the Cult-owned World Health Organization. They imposed fascistic lockdowns on the whole country viciously policed with the help of surveillance drones sweeping through the streets seeking out anyone who escaped from mass house arrest. Livelihoods were destroyed and psychology unravelled in the way we have witnessed since in all lockdown countries. Crucial to the plan was that Italy responded in this way to set the precedent of suspending freedom and imposing fascism in a 'Western liberal democracy'. I emphasised in an

animated video explanation on davidicke.com posted in the summer of 2020 how important it was to the Cult to expand the Chinese lockdown model across the West. Without this, and the bare-faced lie that non-symptomatic people could still transmit a 'disease' they didn't have, there was no way locking down the whole population, sick and not sick, could be pulled off. At just the right time and with no evidence Cult operatives and gofers claimed that people without symptoms could pass on the 'disease'. In the name of protecting the 'vulnerable' like elderly people, who lockdowns would kill by the tens of thousands, we had for the first time healthy people told to isolate as well as the sick. The great majority of people who tested positive had no symptoms because there was nothing wrong with them. It was just a trick made possible by a test not testing for the 'virus'.

Months after my animated video the Gates-funded Professor Neil Ferguson at the Gates-funded Imperial College confirmed that I was right. He didn't say it in those terms, naturally, but he did say it. Ferguson will enter the story shortly for his outrageously crazy 'computer models' that led to Britain, the United States and many other countries following the Chinese and now Italian methods of response. Put another way, following the Cult script. Ferguson said that SAGE, the UK government's scientific advisory group which has controlled 'Covid' policy from the start, wanted to follow the Chinese lockdown model (while they all continued to work and be paid), but they wondered if they could possibly, in Ferguson's words, 'get away with it in Europe'. 'Get away with it'? Who the hell do these moronic, arrogant people think they are? This appalling man Ferguson said that once Italy went into national lockdown they realised they, too, could mimic China:

It's a communist one-party state, we said. We couldn't get away with it in Europe, we thought ... and then Italy did it. And we realised we could. Behind this garbage from Ferguson is a simple fact: Doing the same as China in every country was the plan from the start and Ferguson's 'models' would play a central role in achieving that. It's just a coincidence, of course, and absolutely nothing to worry your little head about.

Oops, sorry, our mistake

Once the Italian segment of the Psyop had done the job it was designed to do a very different story emerged. Italian authorities revealed that 99 percent of those who had 'died from Covid-19' in Italy had one, two, three, or more 'co-morbidities' or illnesses and health problems that could have ended their life. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a figure of 94 percent for Americans dying of 'Covid' while having other serious medical conditions – on average two to three (some five or six) other potential causes of death. In terms of death from an unproven 'virus' I say it is 100 percent. The other one percent in Italy and six percent in the US would presumably have died from 'Covid's' flu-like symptoms with a range of other possible causes in conjunction with a test not testing for the 'virus'. Fox News reported that even more startling figures had emerged in one US county in which 410 of 422 deaths attributed to 'Covid-19' had other potentially deadly health conditions. The Italian National Health Institute said later that the average age of people dying with a 'Covid-19' diagnosis in Italy was about 81. Ninety percent were over 70 with ten percent over 90. In terms of other reasons to die some 80 percent had two or more chronic diseases with half having three or more including cardiovascular problems, diabetes, respiratory problems and cancer. Why is the phantom 'Covid-19' said to kill overwhelmingly old people and hardly affect the young? Old people continually die of many causes and especially respiratory disease which you can re-diagnose 'Covid-19' while young people die in tiny numbers by comparison and rarely of respiratory disease. Old people 'die of Covid' because they die of other things that can be redesignated 'Covid' and it really is that simple.

Flu has flown

The blueprint was in place. Get your illusory 'cases' from a test not testing for the 'virus' and redesignate other causes of death as 'Covid-19'. You have an instant 'pandemic' from something that is nothing more than a computer-generated fiction. With near-on a

billion people having 'flu-like' symptoms every year the potential was limitless and we can see why flu quickly and apparently miraculously disappeared *worldwide* by being diagnosed 'Covid-19'. The painfully bloody obvious was explained away by the childlike media in headlines like this in the UK '*Independent*': 'Not a single case of flu detected by Public Health England this year as Covid restrictions suppress virus'. I kid you not. The masking, social distancing and house arrest that did not make the 'Covid virus' disappear somehow did so with the 'flu virus'. Even worse the article, by a bloke called Samuel Lovett, suggested that maybe the masking, sanitising and other 'Covid' measures should continue to keep the flu away. With a ridiculousness that disturbs your breathing (it's 'Covid-19') the said Lovett wrote: 'With widespread social distancing and mask-wearing measures in place throughout the UK, the usual routes of transmission for influenza have been blocked.' He had absolutely no evidence to support that statement, but look at the consequences of him acknowledging the obvious. With flu not disappearing at all and only being relabelled 'Covid-19' he would have to contemplate that 'Covid' was a hoax on a scale that is hard to imagine. You need guts and commitment to truth to even go there and that's clearly something Samuel Lovett does not have in abundance. He would never have got it through the editors anyway.

Tens of thousands die in the United States alone every winter from flu including many with pneumonia complications. CDC figures record *45 million* Americans diagnosed with flu in 2017-2018 of which 61,000 died and some reports claim 80,000. Where was the same hysteria then that we have seen with 'Covid-19'? Some 250,000 Americans are admitted to hospital with pneumonia every year with about 50,000 cases proving fatal. About 65 million suffer respiratory disease every year and three million deaths makes this the third biggest cause of death worldwide. You only have to redesignate a portion of all these people 'Covid-19' and you have an instant global pandemic or the *appearance* of one. Why would doctors do this? They are told to do this and all but a few dare not refuse those who must be obeyed. Doctors in general are not researching their own

knowledge and instead take it direct and unquestioned from the authorities that own them and their careers. The authorities say they must now diagnose these symptoms 'Covid-19' and not flu, or whatever, and they do it. Dark suits say put 'Covid-19' on death certificates no matter what the cause of death and the doctors do it. Renegade Minds don't fall for the illusion that doctors and medical staff are all highly-intelligent, highly-principled, seekers of medical truth. *Some are*, but not the majority. They are repeaters, gofers, and yes sir, no sir, purveyors of what the system demands they purvey. The 'Covid' con is not merely confined to diseases of the lungs. Instructions to doctors to put 'Covid-19' on death certificates for anyone dying of *anything* within 28 days (or much more) of a positive test not testing for the 'virus' opened the floodgates. The term dying *with* 'Covid' and not *of* 'Covid' was coined to cover the truth. Whether it was a *with* or an *of* they were all added to the death numbers attributed to the 'deadly virus' compiled by national governments and globally by the Gates-funded Johns Hopkins operation in the United States that was so involved in those 'pandemic' simulations. Fraudulent deaths were added to the ever-growing list of fraudulent 'cases' from false positives from a false test. No wonder Professor Walter Ricciardi, scientific advisor to the Italian minister of health, said after the Lombardy hysteria had done its job that 'Covid' death rates were due to Italy having the second oldest population in the world and to *how hospitals record deaths*:

The way in which we code deaths in our country is very generous in the sense that all the people who die in hospitals with the coronavirus are deemed to be dying of the coronavirus. On re-evaluation by the National Institute of Health, only 12 per cent of death certificates have shown a direct causality from coronavirus, while 88 per cent of patients who have died have at least one pre-morbidity – many had two or three.

This is extraordinary enough when you consider the propaganda campaign to use Italy to terrify the world, but how can they even say twelve percent were genuine when the 'virus' has not been shown to exist, its 'code' is a computer program, and diagnosis comes from a test not testing for it? As in China, and soon the world, 'Covid-19' in

Italy was a redesignation of diagnosis. Lies and corruption were to become the real 'pandemic' fuelled by a pathetically-compliant medical system taking its orders from the tiny few at the top of their national hierarchy who answered to the World Health Organization which answers to Gates and the Cult. Doctors were told – ordered – to diagnose a particular set of symptoms 'Covid-19' and put that on the death certificate for any cause of death if the patient had tested positive with a test not testing for the virus or had 'Covid' symptoms like the flu. The United States even introduced big financial incentives to manipulate the figures with hospitals receiving £4,600 from the Medicare system for diagnosing someone with regular pneumonia, \$13,000 if they made the diagnosis from the same symptoms 'Covid-19' pneumonia, and \$39,000 if they put a 'Covid' diagnosed patient on a ventilator that would almost certainly kill them. A few – painfully and pathetically few – medical whistleblowers revealed (before Cult-owned YouTube deleted their videos) that they had been instructed to 'let the patient crash' and put them straight on a ventilator instead of going through a series of far less intrusive and dangerous methods as they would have done before the pandemic hoax began and the financial incentives kicked in. We are talking cold-blooded murder given that ventilators are so damaging to respiratory systems they are usually the last step before heaven awaits. Renegade Minds never fall for the belief that people in white coats are all angels of mercy and cannot be full-on psychopaths. I have explained in detail in *The Answer* how what I am describing here played out across the world coordinated by the World Health Organization through the medical hierarchies in almost every country.

Medical scientist calls it

Information about the non-existence of the 'virus' began to emerge for me in late March, 2020, and mushroomed after that. I was sent an email by Sir Julian Rose, a writer, researcher, and organic farming promotor, from a medical scientist friend of his in the United States. Even at that early stage in March the scientist was able to explain

how the 'Covid' hoax was being manipulated. He said there were no reliable tests for a specific 'Covid-19 virus' and nor were there any reliable agencies or media outlets for reporting numbers of actual 'Covid-19' cases. We have seen in the long period since then that he was absolutely right. 'Every action and reaction to Covid-19 is based on totally flawed data and we simply cannot make accurate assessments,' he said. Most people diagnosed with 'Covid-19' were showing nothing more than cold and flu-like symptoms 'because most coronavirus strains *are* nothing more than cold/flu-like symptoms'. We had farcical situations like an 84-year-old German man testing positive for 'Covid-19' and his nursing home ordered to quarantine only for him to be found to have a common cold. The scientist described back then why PCR tests and what he called the 'Mickey Mouse test kits' were useless for what they were claimed to be identifying. 'The idea these kits can isolate a specific virus like Covid-19 is nonsense,' he said. Significantly, he pointed out that 'if you want to create a totally false panic about a totally false pandemic – pick a coronavirus'. This is exactly what the Cult-owned Gates, World Economic Forum and Johns Hopkins University did with their Event 201 'simulation' followed by their real-life simulation called the 'pandemic'. The scientist said that all you had to do was select the sickest of people with respiratory-type diseases in a single location – 'say Wuhan' – and administer PCR tests to them. You can then claim that anyone showing 'viral sequences' similar to a coronavirus 'which will inevitably be quite a few' is suffering from a 'new' disease:

Since you already selected the sickest flu cases a fairly high proportion of your sample will go on to die. You can then say this 'new' virus has a CFR [case fatality rate] higher than the flu and use this to infuse more concern and do more tests which will of course produce more 'cases', which expands the testing, which produces yet more 'cases' and so on and so on. Before long you have your 'pandemic', and all you have done is use a simple test kit trick to convert the worst flu and pneumonia cases into something new that doesn't ACTUALLY EXIST [my emphasis].

He said that you then 'just run the same scam in other countries' and make sure to keep the fear message running high 'so that people

will feel panicky and less able to think critically'. The only problem to overcome was the fact *there is no* actual new deadly pathogen and only regular sick people. This meant that deaths from the 'new deadly pathogen' were going to be way too low for a real new deadly virus pandemic, but he said this could be overcome in the following ways – all of which would go on to happen:

1. You can claim this is just the beginning and more deaths are imminent [you underpin this with fantasy 'computer projections']. Use this as an excuse to quarantine everyone and then claim the quarantine prevented the expected millions of dead.
2. You can [say that people] 'minimizing' the dangers are irresponsible and bully them into not talking about numbers.
3. You can talk crap about made up numbers hoping to blind people with pseudoscience.
4. You can start testing well people (who, of course, will also likely have shreds of coronavirus [RNA] in them) and thus inflate your 'case figures' with 'asymptomatic carriers' (you will of course have to spin that to sound deadly even though any virologist knows the more symptom-less cases you have the less deadly is your pathogen).

The scientist said that if you take these simple steps 'you can have your own entirely manufactured pandemic up and running in weeks'. His analysis made so early in the hoax was brilliantly prophetic of what would actually unfold. Pulling all the information together in these recent chapters we have this is simple 1, 2, 3, of how you can delude virtually the entire human population into believing in a 'virus' that doesn't exist:

- A 'Covid case' is someone who tests positive with a test not testing for the 'virus'.
- A 'Covid death' is someone who dies of *any cause* within 28 days (or much longer) of testing positive with a test not testing for the 'virus'.
- Asymptomatic means there is nothing wrong with you, but they claim you can pass on what you don't have to justify locking

down (quarantining) healthy people in totality.

The foundations of the hoax are that simple. A study involving ten million people in Wuhan, published in November, 2020, demolished the whole lie about those without symptoms passing on the 'virus'. They found '300 asymptomatic cases' and traced their contacts to find that not one of them was detected with the 'virus'.

'Asymptomatic' patients and their contacts were isolated for no less than two weeks and nothing changed. I know it's all crap, but if you are going to claim that those without symptoms can transmit 'the virus' then you must produce evidence for that and they never have. Even World Health Organization official Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, head of the emerging diseases and zoonosis unit, said as early as June, 2020, that she doubted the validity of asymptomatic transmission. She said that 'from the data we have, it still seems to be rare that an asymptomatic person actually transmits onward to a secondary individual' and by 'rare' she meant that she couldn't cite any case of asymptomatic transmission.

The Ferguson factor

The problem for the Cult as it headed into March, 2020, when the script had lockdown due to start, was that despite all the manipulation of the case and death figures they still did not have enough people alleged to have died from 'Covid' to justify mass house arrest. This was overcome in the way the scientist described: 'You can claim this is just the beginning and more deaths are imminent ... Use this as an excuse to quarantine everyone and then claim the quarantine prevented the expected millions of dead.' Enter one Professor Neil Ferguson, the Gates-funded 'epidemiologist' at the Gates-funded Imperial College in London. Ferguson is Britain's Christian Drosten in that he has a dire record of predicting health outcomes, but is still called upon to advise government on the next health outcome when another 'crisis' comes along. This may seem to be a strange and ridiculous thing to do. Why would you keep turning for policy guidance to people who have a history of being

monumentally wrong? Ah, but it makes sense from the Cult point of view. These 'experts' keep on producing predictions that suit the Cult agenda for societal transformation and so it was with Neil Ferguson as he revealed his horrific (and clearly insane) computer model predictions that allowed lockdowns to be imposed in Britain, the United States and many other countries. Ferguson does not have even an A-level in biology and would appear to have no formal training in computer modelling, medicine or epidemiology, according to Derek Winton, an MSc in Computational Intelligence. He wrote an article somewhat aghast at what Ferguson did which included taking no account of respiratory disease 'seasonality' which means it is far worse in the winter months. Who would have thought that respiratory disease could be worse in the winter? Well, certainly not Ferguson.

The massively China-connected Imperial College and its bizarre professor provided the excuse for the long-incubated Chinese model of human control to travel westward at lightning speed. Imperial College confirms on its website that it collaborates with the Chinese Research Institute; publishes more than 600 research papers every year with Chinese research institutions; has 225 Chinese staff; 2,600 Chinese students – the biggest international group; 7,000 former students living in China which is the largest group outside the UK; and was selected for a tour by China's President Xi Jinping during his state visit to the UK in 2015. The college takes major donations from China and describes itself as the UK's number one university collaborator with Chinese research institutions. The China communist/fascist government did not appear phased by the woeful predictions of Ferguson and Imperial when during the lockdown that Ferguson induced the college signed a five-year collaboration deal with China tech giant Huawei that will have Huawei's indoor 5G network equipment installed at the college's West London tech campus along with an 'AI cloud platform'. The deal includes Chinese sponsorship of Imperial's Venture Catalyst entrepreneurship competition. Imperial is an example of the enormous influence the Chinese government has within British and North American

universities and research centres – and further afield. Up to 200 academics from more than a dozen UK universities are being investigated on suspicion of ‘unintentionally’ helping the Chinese government build weapons of mass destruction by ‘transferring world-leading research in advanced military technology such as aircraft, missile designs and cyberweapons’. Similar scandals have broken in the United States, but it’s all a coincidence. Imperial College serves the agenda in many other ways including the promotion of every aspect of the United Nations Agenda 21/2030 (the Great Reset) and produced computer models to show that human-caused ‘climate change’ is happening when in the real world it isn’t. Imperial College is driving the climate agenda as it drives the ‘Covid’ agenda (both Cult hoaxes) while Patrick Vallance, the UK government’s Chief Scientific Adviser on ‘Covid’, was named Chief Scientific Adviser to the UN ‘climate change’ conference known as COP26 hosted by the government in Glasgow, Scotland. ‘Covid’ and ‘climate’ are fundamentally connected.

Professor Woeful

From Imperial’s bosom came Neil Ferguson still advising government despite his previous disasters and it was announced early on that he and other key people like UK Chief Medical Adviser Chris Whitty had caught the ‘virus’ as the propaganda story was being sold. Somehow they managed to survive and we had Prime Minister Boris Johnson admitted to hospital with what was said to be a severe version of the ‘virus’ in this same period. His whole policy and demeanour changed when he returned to Downing Street. It’s a small world with these government advisors – especially in their communal connections to Gates – and Ferguson had partnered with Whitty to write a paper called ‘Infectious disease: Tough choices to reduce Ebola transmission’ which involved another scare-story that didn’t happen. Ferguson’s ‘models’ predicted that up to 150,000 could die from ‘mad cow disease’, or BSE, and its version in sheep if it was transmitted to humans. BSE was not transmitted and instead triggered by an organophosphate pesticide used to treat a pest on

cows. Fewer than 200 deaths followed from the human form. Models by Ferguson and his fellow incompetents led to the unnecessary culling of millions of pigs, cattle and sheep in the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001 which destroyed the lives and livelihoods of farmers and their families who had often spent decades building their herds and flocks. Vast numbers of these animals did not have foot and mouth and had no contact with the infection. Another 'expert' behind the cull was Professor Roy Anderson, a computer modeller at Imperial College specialising in the epidemiology of *human*, not animal, disease. Anderson has served on the Bill and Melinda Gates Grand Challenges in Global Health advisory board and chairs another Gates-funded organisation. Gates is everywhere.

In a precursor to the 'Covid' script Ferguson backed closing schools 'for prolonged periods' over the swine flu 'pandemic' in 2009 and said it would affect a third of the world population if it continued to spread at the speed he claimed to be happening. His mates at Imperial College said much the same and a news report said: 'One of the authors, the epidemiologist and disease modeller Neil Ferguson, who sits on the World Health Organisation's emergency committee for the outbreak, said the virus had "full pandemic potential".' Professor Liam Donaldson, the Chris Whitty of his day as Chief Medical Officer, said the worst case could see 30 percent of the British people infected by swine flu with 65,000 dying. Ferguson and Donaldson were indeed proved correct when at the end of the year the number of deaths attributed to swine flu was 392. The term 'expert' is rather liberally applied unfortunately, not least to complete idiots. Swine flu 'projections' were great for GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) as millions rolled in for its Pandemrix influenza vaccine which led to brain damage with children most affected. The British government (taxpayers) paid out more than £60 million in compensation after GSK was given immunity from prosecution. Yet another 'Covid' déjà vu. Swine flu was supposed to have broken out in Mexico, but Dr Wolfgang Wodarg, a German doctor, former member of parliament and critic of the 'Covid' hoax, observed 'the spread of swine flu' in Mexico City at the time. He

said: 'What we experienced in Mexico City was a very mild flu which did not kill more than usual – which killed even fewer people than usual.' Hying the fear against all the facts is not unique to 'Covid' and has happened many times before. Ferguson is reported to have over-estimated the projected death toll of bird flu (H5N1) by some three million-fold, but bird flu vaccine makers again made a killing from the scare. This is some of the background to the Neil Ferguson who produced the perfectly-timed computer models in early 2020 predicting that half a million people would die in Britain without draconian lockdown and 2.2 million in the United States. Politicians panicked, people panicked, and lockdowns of alleged short duration were instigated to 'flatten the curve' of cases gleaned from a test not testing for the 'virus'. I said at the time that the public could forget the 'short duration' bit. This was an agenda to destroy the livelihoods of the population and force them into mass control through dependency and there was going to be nothing 'short' about it. American researcher Daniel Horowitz described the consequences of the 'models' spewed out by Gates-funded Ferguson and Imperial College:

What led our government and the governments of many other countries into panic was a single Imperial College of UK study, funded by global warming activists, that predicted 2.2 million deaths if we didn't lock down the country. In addition, the reported 8-9% death rate in Italy scared us into thinking there was some other mutation of this virus that they got, which might have come here.

Together with the fact that we were finally testing and had the ability to actually report new cases, we thought we were headed for a death spiral. But again ... we can't flatten a curve if we don't know when the curve started.

How about it *never* started?

Giving them what they want

An investigation by German news outlet *Welt Am Sonntag* (*World on Sunday*) revealed how in March, 2020, the German government gathered together 'leading scientists from several research institutes and universities' and 'together, they were to produce a [modelling]

paper that would serve as legitimization for further tough political measures'. The Cult agenda was justified by computer modelling not based on evidence or reality; it was specifically constructed to justify the Cult demand for lockdowns all over the world to destroy the independent livelihoods of the global population. All these modellers and everyone responsible for the 'Covid' hoax have a date with a trial like those in Nuremberg after World War Two when Nazis faced the consequences of their war crimes. These corrupt-beyond-belief 'modellers' wrote the paper according to government instructions and it said that that if lockdown measures were lifted then up to one million Germans would die from 'Covid-19' adding that some would die 'agonizingly at home, gasping for breath' unable to be treated by hospitals that couldn't cope. All lies. No matter – it gave the Cult all that it wanted. What did long-time government 'modeller' Neil Ferguson say? If the UK and the United States didn't lockdown half a million would die in Britain and 2.2 million Americans. Anyone see a theme here? 'Modellers' are such a crucial part of the lockdown strategy that we should look into their background and follow the money. Researcher Rosemary Frei produced an excellent article headlined 'The Modelling-paper Mafiosi'. She highlights a guy called John Edmunds, a British epidemiologist, and professor in the Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. He studied at Imperial College. Edmunds is a member of government 'Covid' advisory bodies which have been dictating policy, the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE).

Ferguson, another member of NERVTAG and SAGE, led the way with the original 'virus' and Edmunds has followed in the 'variant' stage and especially the so-called UK or Kent variant known as the 'Variant of Concern' (VOC) B.1.1.7. He said in a co-written report for the Centre for Mathematical modelling of Infectious Diseases at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, with input from the Centre's 'Covid-19' Working Group, that there was 'a realistic

possibility that VOC B.1.1.7 is associated with an increased risk of death compared to non-VOC viruses'. Fear, fear, fear, get the vaccine, fear, fear, fear, get the vaccine. Rosemary Frei reveals that almost all the paper's authors and members of the modelling centre's 'Covid-19' Working Group receive funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and/or the associated Gates-funded Wellcome Trust. The paper was published by e-journal *Medrx* *xiv* which only publishes papers not peer-reviewed and the journal was established by an organisation headed by Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and his missus. What a small world it is. Frei discovered that Edmunds is on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) which was established by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Klaus Schwab's Davos World Economic Forum and Big Pharma giant Wellcome. CEPI was 'launched in Davos [in 2017] to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics', according to its website. 'Our mission is to accelerate the development of vaccines against emerging infectious diseases and enable equitable access to these vaccines for people during outbreaks.' What kind people they are. Rosemary Frei reveals that Public Health England (PHE) director Susan Hopkins is an author of her organisation's non-peer-reviewed reports on 'new variants'. Hopkins is a professor of infectious diseases at London's Imperial College which is gifted tens of millions of dollars a year by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Gates-funded modelling disaster Neil Ferguson also co-authors Public Health England reports and he spoke in December, 2020, about the potential danger of the B.1.1.7. 'UK variant' promoted by Gates-funded modeller John Edmunds. When I come to the 'Covid vaccines' the 'new variants' will be shown for what they are – bollocks.

Connections, connections

All these people and modellers are lockdown-obsessed or, put another way, they demand what the Cult demands. Edmunds said in January, 2021, that to ease lockdowns too soon would be a disaster and they had to 'vaccinate much, much, much more widely than the

elderly'. Rosemary Frei highlights that Edmunds is married to Jeanne Pimenta who is described in a LinkedIn profile as director of epidemiology at GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and she held shares in the company. Patrick Vallance, co-chair of SAGE and the government's Chief Scientific Adviser, is a former executive of GSK and has a deferred bonus of shares in the company worth £600,000. GSK has serious business connections with Bill Gates and is collaborating with mRNA-'vaccine' company CureVac to make 'vaccines' for the new variants that Edmunds is talking about. GSK is planning a 'Covid vaccine' with drug giant Sanofi. Puppets Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced in the spring of 2021 that up to 60 million vaccine doses were to be made at the GSK facility at Barnard Castle in the English North East. Barnard Castle, with a population of just 6,000, was famously visited in breach of lockdown rules in April, 2020, by Johnson aide Dominic Cummings who said that he drove there 'to test his eyesight' before driving back to London. Cummings would be better advised to test his integrity – not that it would take long. The GSK facility had nothing to do with his visit then although I'm sure Patrick Vallance would have been happy to arrange an introduction and some tea and biscuits. Ruthless psychopath Gates has made yet another fortune from vaccines in collaboration with Big Pharma companies and gushes at the phenomenal profits to be made from vaccines – more than a 20-to-1 return as he told one interviewer. Gates also tweeted in December, 2019, with the foreknowledge of what was coming: 'What's next for our foundation? I'm particularly excited about what the next year could mean for one of the best buys in global health: vaccines.'

Modeller John Edmunds is a big promoter of vaccines as all these people appear to be. He's the dean of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine's Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health which is primarily funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Gates-established and funded GAVI vaccine alliance which is the Gates vehicle to vaccinate the world. The organisation Doctors Without Borders has described GAVI as being 'aimed more at supporting drug-industry desires to promote new

products than at finding the most efficient and sustainable means for fighting the diseases of poverty'. But then that's why the psychopath Gates created it. John Edmunds said in a video that the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is involved in every aspect of vaccine development including large-scale clinical trials. He contends that mathematical modelling can show that vaccines protect individuals and society. That's on the basis of shit in and shit out, I take it. Edmunds serves on the UK Vaccine Network as does Ferguson and the government's foremost 'Covid' adviser, the grim-faced, dark-eyed Chris Whitty. The Vaccine Network says it works 'to support the government to identify and shortlist targeted investment opportunities for the most promising vaccines and vaccine technologies that will help combat infectious diseases with epidemic potential, and to address structural issues related to the UK's broader vaccine infrastructure'. Ferguson is acting Director of the Imperial College Vaccine Impact Modelling Consortium which has funding from the Bill and Melina Gates Foundation and the Gates-created GAVI 'vaccine alliance'. Anyone wonder why these characters see vaccines as the answer to every problem? Ferguson is wildly enthusiastic in his support for GAVI's campaign to vaccinate children en masse in poor countries. You would expect someone like Gates who has constantly talked about the need to reduce the population to want to fund vaccines to keep more people alive. I'm sure that's why he does it. The John Edmunds London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) has a Vaccines Manufacturing Innovation Centre which develops, tests and commercialises vaccines. Rosemary Frei writes:

The vaccines centre also performs affiliated activities like combating 'vaccine hesitancy'. The latter includes the Vaccine Confidence Project. The project's stated purpose is, among other things, 'to provide analysis and guidance for early response and engagement with the public to ensure sustained confidence in vaccines and immunisation'. The Vaccine Confidence Project's director is LSHTM professor Heidi Larson. For more than a decade she's been researching how to combat vaccine hesitancy.

How the bloody hell can blokes like John Edmunds and Neil Ferguson with those connections and financial ties model 'virus' case

and death projections for the government and especially in a way that gives their paymasters like Gates exactly what they want? It's insane, but this is what you find throughout the world.

'Covid' is not dangerous, oops, wait, yes it is

Only days before Ferguson's nightmare scenario made Jackboot Johnson take Britain into a China-style lockdown to save us from a deadly 'virus' the UK government website gov.uk was reporting something very different to Ferguson on a page of official government guidance for 'high consequence infectious diseases (HCID)'. It said this about 'Covid-19':

As of 19 March 2020, COVID-19 is no longer considered to be a high consequence infectious diseases (HCID) in the UK [my emphasis]. The 4 nations public health HCID group made an interim recommendation in January 2020 to classify COVID-19 as an HCID. This was based on consideration of the UK HCID criteria about the virus and the disease with information available during the early stages of the outbreak.

Now that more is known about COVID-19, the public health bodies in the UK have reviewed the most up to date information about COVID-19 against the UK HCID criteria. They have determined that several features have now changed; in particular, more information is available about mortality rates (low overall), and there is now greater clinical awareness and a specific and sensitive laboratory test, the availability of which continues to increase. The Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP) is also of the opinion that COVID-19 should no longer be classified as an HCID.

Soon after the government had been exposed for downgrading the risk they upgraded it again and everyone was back to singing from the same Cult hymn book. Ferguson and his fellow Gates clones indicated that lockdowns and restrictions would have to continue until a Gates-funded vaccine was developed. Gates said the same because Ferguson and his like were repeating the Gates script which is the Cult script. 'Flatten the curve' became an ongoing nightmare of continuing lockdowns with periods in between of severe restrictions in pursuit of destroying independent incomes and had nothing to do with protecting health about which the Cult gives not a shit. Why wouldn't Ferguson be pushing a vaccine 'solution' when he's owned by vaccine-obsessive Gates who makes a fortune from them and

when Ferguson heads the Vaccine Impact Modelling Consortium at Imperial College funded by the Gates Foundation and GAVI, the 'vaccine alliance', created by Gates as his personal vaccine promotion operation? To compound the human catastrophe that Ferguson's 'models' did so much to create he was later exposed for breaking his own lockdown rules by having sexual liaisons with his married girlfriend Antonia Staats at his home while she was living at another location with her husband and children. Staats was a 'climate' activist and senior campaigner at the Soros-funded Avaaz which I wouldn't trust to tell me that grass is green. Ferguson had to resign as a government advisor over this hypocrisy in May, 2020, but after a period of quiet he was back being quoted by the ridiculous media on the need for more lockdowns and a vaccine rollout. Other government-advising 'scientists' from Imperial College held the fort in his absence and said lockdown could be indefinite until a vaccine was found. The Cult script was being sung by the payrolled choir. I said there was no intention of going back to 'normal' when the 'vaccine' came because the 'vaccine' is part of a very different agenda that I will discuss in Human 2.0. Why would the Cult want to let the world go back to normal when destroying that normal forever was the whole point of what was happening? House arrest, closing businesses and schools through lockdown, (un)social distancing and masks all followed the Ferguson fantasy models. Again as I predicted (these people are so predictable) when the 'vaccine' arrived we were told that house arrest, lockdown, (un)social distancing and masks would still have to continue. I will deal with the masks in the next chapter because they are of fundamental importance.

Where's the 'pandemic'?

Any mildly in-depth assessment of the figures revealed what was really going on. Cult-funded and controlled organisations still have genuine people working within them such is the number involved. So it is with Genevieve Briand, assistant program director of the Applied Economics master's degree program at Johns Hopkins

University. She analysed the impact that 'Covid-19' had on deaths from *all* causes in the United States using official data from the CDC for the period from early February to early September, 2020. She found that allegedly 'Covid' *related*-deaths exceeded those from heart disease which she found strange with heart disease always the biggest cause of fatalities. Her research became even more significant when she noted the sudden decline in 2020 of *all* non-'Covid' deaths: 'This trend is completely contrary to the pattern observed in all previous years ... the total decrease in deaths by other causes almost exactly equals the increase in deaths by Covid-19.' This was such a game, set and match in terms of what was happening that Johns Hopkins University deleted the article on the grounds that it 'was being used to support false and dangerous inaccuracies about the impact of the pandemic'. No – because it exposed the scam from official CDC figures and this was confirmed when those figures were published in January, 2021. Here we can see the effect of people dying from heart attacks, cancer, road accidents and gunshot wounds – *anything* – having 'Covid-19' on the death certificate along with those diagnosed from 'symptoms' who had even not tested positive with a test not testing for the 'virus'. I am not kidding with the gunshot wounds, by the way. Brenda Bock, coroner in Grand County, Colorado, revealed that two gunshot victims tested positive for the 'virus' within the previous 30 days and were therefore classified as 'Covid deaths'. Bock said: 'These two people had tested positive for Covid, but that's not what killed them. A gunshot wound is what killed them.' She said she had not even finished her investigation when the state listed the gunshot victims as deaths due to the 'virus'. The death and case figures for 'Covid-19' are an absolute joke and yet they are repeated like parrots by the media, politicians and alleged medical 'experts'. The official Cult narrative is the only show in town.

Genevieve Briand found that deaths from all causes were not exceptional in 2020 compared with previous years and a Spanish magazine published figures that said the same about Spain which was a 'Covid' propaganda hotspot at one point. *Discovery Salud*, a

health and medicine magazine, quoted government figures which showed how 17,000 *fewer* people died in Spain in 2020 than in 2019 and more than 26,000 fewer than in 2018. The age-standardised mortality rate for England and Wales when age distribution is taken into account was significantly lower in 2020 than the 1970s, 80s and 90s, and was only the ninth highest since 2000. Where is the 'pandemic'?

Post mortems and autopsies virtually disappeared for 'Covid' deaths amid claims that 'virus-infected' bodily fluids posed a risk to those carrying out the autopsy. This was rejected by renowned German pathologist and forensic doctor Klaus Püschel who said that he and his staff had by then done 150 autopsies on 'Covid' patients with no problems at all. He said they were needed to know why some 'Covid' patients suffered blood clots and not severe respiratory infections. The 'virus' is, after all, called SARS or 'severe acute respiratory syndrome'. I highlighted in the spring of 2020 this phenomenon and quoted New York intensive care doctor Cameron Kyle-Sidell who posted a soon deleted YouTube video to say that they had been told to prepare to treat an infectious disease called 'Covid-19', but that was not what they were dealing with. Instead he likened the lung condition of the most severely ill patients to what you would expect with cabin depressurisation in a plane at 30,000 feet or someone dropped on the top of Everest without oxygen or acclimatisation. I have never said this is not happening to a small minority of alleged 'Covid' patients – I am saying this is not caused by a phantom 'contagious virus'. Indeed Kyle-Sidell said that 'Covid-19' was not the disease they were told was coming their way. 'We are operating under a medical paradigm that is untrue,' he said, and he believed they were treating the wrong disease: 'These people are being slowly starved of oxygen.' Patients would take off their oxygen masks in a state of fear and stress and while they were blue in the face on the brink of death. They did not look like patients dying of pneumonia. You can see why they don't want autopsies when their virus doesn't exist and there is another condition in some people that they don't wish to be uncovered. I should add here that

the 5G system of millimetre waves was being rapidly introduced around the world in 2020 and even more so now as they fire 5G at the Earth from satellites. At 60 gigahertz within the 5G range that frequency interacts with the oxygen molecule and stops people breathing in sufficient oxygen to be absorbed into the bloodstream. They are installing 5G in schools and hospitals. The world is not mad or anything. 5G can cause major changes to the lungs and blood as I detail in *The Answer* and these consequences are labelled 'Covid-19', the alleged symptoms of which can be caused by 5G and other electromagnetic frequencies as cells respond to radiation poisoning.

The 'Covid death' scam

Dr Scott Jensen, a Minnesota state senator and medical doctor, exposed 'Covid' Medicare payment incentives to hospitals and death certificate manipulation. He said he was sent a seven-page document by the US Department of Health 'coaching' him on how to fill out death certificates which had never happened before. The document said that he didn't need to have a laboratory test for 'Covid-19' to put that on the death certificate and that shocked him when death certificates are supposed to be about facts. Jensen described how doctors had been 'encouraged, if not pressured' to make a diagnosis of 'Covid-19' if they thought it was probable or '*presumed*'. No positive test was necessary – not that this would have mattered anyway. He said doctors were told to diagnose 'Covid' by symptoms when these were the same as colds, allergies, other respiratory problems, and certainly with influenza which 'disappeared' in the 'Covid' era. A common sniffle was enough to get the dreaded verdict. Ontario authorities decreed that a single care home resident with *one* symptom from a long list must lead to the isolation of the entire home. Other courageous doctors like Jensen made the same point about death figure manipulation and how deaths by other causes were falling while 'Covid-19 deaths' were rising at the same rate due to re-diagnosis. Their videos rarely survive long on YouTube with its Cult-supporting algorithms courtesy of CEO Susan Wojcicki and her bosses at Google. Figure-tampering was so glaring

and ubiquitous that even officials were letting it slip or outright saying it. UK chief scientific adviser Patrick Vallance said on one occasion that 'Covid' on the death certificate doesn't mean 'Covid' was the cause of death (so why the hell is it there?) and we had the rare sight of a BBC reporter telling the truth when she said: 'Someone could be successfully treated for Covid, in say April, discharged, and then in June, get run over by a bus and die ... That person would still be counted as a Covid death in England.' Yet the BBC and the rest of the world media went on repeating the case and death figures as if they were real. Illinois Public Health Director Dr Ngozi Ezike revealed the deceit while her bosses must have been clenching their buttocks:

If you were in a hospice and given a few weeks to live and you were then found to have Covid that would be counted as a Covid death. [There might be] a clear alternate cause, but it is still listed as a Covid death. So everyone listed as a Covid death doesn't mean that was the cause of the death, but that they had Covid at the time of death.

Yes, a 'Covid virus' never shown to exist and tested for with a test not testing for the 'virus'. In the first period of the pandemic hoax through the spring of 2020 the process began of designating almost everything a 'Covid' death and this has continued ever since. I sat in a restaurant one night listening to a loud conversation on the next table where a family was discussing in bewilderment how a relative who had no symptoms of 'Covid', and had died of a long-term problem, could have been diagnosed a death by the 'virus'. I could understand their bewilderment. If they read this book they will know why this medical fraud has been perpetrated the world over.

Some media truth shock

The media ignored the evidence of death certificate fraud until eventually one columnist did speak out when she saw it first-hand. Bel Mooney is a long-time national newspaper journalist in Britain currently working for the *Daily Mail*. Her article on February 19th, 2021, carried this headline: 'My dad Ted passed three Covid tests

and died of a chronic illness yet he's officially one of Britain's 120,000 victims of the virus and is far from alone ... so how many more are there?' She told how her 99-year-old father was in a care home with a long-standing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and vascular dementia. Maybe, but he was still aware enough to tell her from the start that there was no 'virus' and he refused the 'vaccine' for that reason. His death was not unexpected given his chronic health problems and Mooney said she was shocked to find that 'Covid-19' was declared the cause of death on his death certificate. She said this was a 'bizarre and unacceptable untruth' for a man with long-time health problems who had tested negative twice at the home for the 'virus'. I was also shocked by this story although not by what she said. I had been highlighting the death certificate manipulation for ten months. It was the confirmation that a professional full-time journalist only realised this was going on when it affected her directly and neither did she know that whether her dad tested positive or negative was irrelevant with the test not testing for the 'virus'. Where had she been? She said she did not believe in 'conspiracy theories' without knowing I'm sure that this and 'conspiracy theorists' were terms put into widespread circulation by the CIA in the 1960s to discredit those who did not accept the ridiculous official story of the Kennedy assassination. A blanket statement of 'I don't believe in conspiracy theories' is always bizarre. The dictionary definition of the term alone means the world is drowning in conspiracies. What she said was even more daft when her dad had just been affected by the 'Covid' conspiracy. Why else does she think that 'Covid-19' was going on the death certificates of people who died of something else?

To be fair once she saw from personal experience what was happening she didn't mince words. Mooney was called by the care home on the morning of February 9th to be told her father had died in his sleep. When she asked for the official cause of death what came back was 'Covid-19'. Mooney challenged this and was told there had been deaths from Covid on the dementia floor (confirmed by a test not testing for the 'virus') so they considered it 'reasonable

to assume'. 'But doctor,' Mooney rightly protested, 'an assumption isn't a diagnosis.' She said she didn't blame the perfectly decent and sympathetic doctor – 'he was just doing his job'. Sorry, but that's *bullshit*. He wasn't doing his job at all. He was putting a false cause of death on the death certificate and that is a criminal offence for which he should be brought to account and the same with the millions of doctors worldwide who have done the same. They were not doing their job they were following orders and that must not wash at new Nuremberg trials any more than it did at the first ones. Mooney's doctor was 'assuming' (presuming) as he was told to, but 'just following orders' makes no difference to his actions. A doctor's job is to serve the patient and the truth, not follow orders, but that's what they have done all over the world and played a central part in making the 'Covid' hoax possible with all its catastrophic consequences for humanity. Shame on them and they must answer for their actions. Mooney said her disquiet worsened when she registered her father's death by telephone and was told by the registrar there had been very many other cases like hers where 'the deceased' had not tested positive for 'Covid' yet it was recorded as the cause of death. The test may not matter, but those involved at their level *think* it matters and it shows a callous disregard for accurate diagnosis. The pressure to do this is coming from the top of the national 'health' pyramids which in turn obey the World Health Organization which obeys Gates and the Cult. Mooney said the registrar agreed that this must distort the national figures adding that 'the strangest thing is that every winter we record countless deaths from flu, and this winter there have been none. Not one!' She asked if the registrar thought deaths from flu were being misdiagnosed and lumped together with 'Covid' deaths. The answer was a 'puzzled yes'. Mooney said that the funeral director said the same about 'Covid' deaths which had nothing to do with 'Covid'. They had lost count of the number of families upset by this and other funeral companies in different countries have had the same experience. Mooney wrote:

The nightly shroud-waving and shocking close-ups of pain imposed on us by the TV news bewildered and terrified the population into eager compliance with lockdowns. We were invited to 'save the NHS' and to grieve for strangers – the real-life loved ones behind those shocking death counts. Why would the public imagine what I now fear, namely that the way Covid-19 death statistics are compiled might make the numbers seem greater than they are?

Oh, just a little bit – like 100 percent.

Do the maths

Mooney asked why a country would wish to skew its mortality figures by wrongly certifying deaths? What had been going on? Well, if you don't believe in conspiracies you will never find the answer which is that *it's a conspiracy*. She did, however, describe what she had discovered as a 'national scandal'. In reality it's a global scandal and happening everywhere. Pillars of this conspiracy were all put into place before the button was pressed with the Drosten PCR protocol and high amplifications to produce the cases and death certificate changes to secure illusory 'Covid' deaths. Mooney notes that normally two doctors were needed to certify a death, with one having to know the patient, and how the rules were changed in the spring of 2020 to allow one doctor to do this. In the same period 'Covid deaths' were decreed to be all cases where Covid-19 was put on the death certificate even without a positive test or any symptoms. Mooney asked: 'How many of the 30,851 (as of January 15) care home resident deaths with Covid-19 on the certificate (32.4 per cent of all deaths so far) were based on an assumption, like that of my father? And what has that done to our national psyche?' All of them is the answer to the first question and it has devastated and dismantled the national psyche, actually the global psyche, on a colossal scale. In the UK case and death data is compiled by organisations like Public Health England (PHE) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Mooney highlights the insane policy of counting a death from any cause as 'Covid-19' if this happens within 28 days of a positive test (with a test not testing for the 'virus') and she points out that ONS statistics reflect deaths 'involving Covid' 'or due to Covid' which meant in practice any

death where 'Covid-19' was mentioned on the death certificate. She described the consequences of this fraud:

Most people will accept the narrative they are fed, so panicky governments here and in Europe witnessed the harsh measures enacted in totalitarian China and jumped into lockdown. Headlines about Covid deaths tolled like the knell that would bring doomsday to us all. Fear stalked our empty streets. Politicians parroted the frankly ridiculous aim of 'zero Covid' and shut down the economy, while most British people agreed that lockdown was essential and (astonishingly to me, as a patriotic Brit) even wanted more restrictions.

For what? Lies on death certificates? Never mind the grim toll of lives ruined, suicides, schools closed, rising inequality, depression, cancelled hospital treatments, cancer patients in a torture of waiting, poverty, economic devastation, loneliness, families kept apart, and so on. How many lives have been lost as a direct result of lockdown?

She said that we could join in a national chorus of shock and horror at reaching the 120,000 death toll which was surely certain to have been totally skewed all along, but what about the human cost of lockdown justified by these 'death figures'? *The British Medical Journal* had reported a 1,493 percent increase in cases of children taken to Great Ormond Street Hospital with abusive head injuries alone and then there was the effect on families:

Perhaps the most shocking thing about all this is that families have been kept apart – and obeyed the most irrational, changing rules at the whim of government – because they believed in the statistics. They succumbed to fear, which his generation rejected in that war fought for freedom. Dad (God rest his soul) would be angry. And so am I.

Another theme to watch is that in the winter months when there are more deaths from all causes they focus on 'Covid' deaths and in the summer when the British Lung Foundation says respiratory disease plummets by 80 percent they rage on about 'cases'. Either way fascism on population is always the answer.

Nazi eugenics in the 21st century

Elderly people in care homes have been isolated from their families month after lonely month with no contact with relatives and grandchildren who were banned from seeing them. We were told

that lockdown fascism was to 'protect the vulnerable' like elderly people. At the same time Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders were placed on their medical files so that if they needed resuscitation it wasn't done and 'Covid-19' went on their death certificates. Old people were not being 'protected' they were being culled – murdered in truth. DNR orders were being decreed for disabled and young people with learning difficulties or psychological problems. The UK Care Quality Commission, a non-departmental body of the Department of Health and Social Care, found that 34 percent of those working in health and social care were pressured into placing 'do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation' orders on 'Covid' patients who suffered from disabilities and learning difficulties without involving the patient or their families in the decision. UK judges ruled that an elderly woman with dementia should have the DNA-manipulating 'Covid vaccine' against her son's wishes and that a man with severe learning difficulties should have the job despite his family's objections. Never mind that many had already died. The judiciary always supports doctors and government in fascist dictatorships. They wouldn't dare do otherwise. A horrific video was posted showing fascist officers from Los Angeles police forcibly giving the 'Covid' shot to women with special needs who were screaming that they didn't want it. The same fascists are seen giving the jab to a sleeping elderly woman in a care home. This is straight out of the Nazi playbook. Hitler's Nazis committed mass murder of the mentally ill and physically disabled throughout Germany and occupied territories in the programme that became known as Aktion T4, or just T4. Sabbatian-controlled Hitler and his grotesque crazies set out to kill those they considered useless and unnecessary. The Reich Committee for the Scientific Registering of Hereditary and Congenital Illnesses registered the births of babies identified by physicians to have 'defects'. By 1941 alone more than 5,000 children were murdered by the state and it is estimated that in total the number of innocent people killed in Aktion T4 was between 275,000 and 300,000. Parents were told their children had been sent away for 'special treatment' never to return. It is rather pathetic to see claims about plans for new extermination camps being dismissed today

when the same force behind current events did precisely that 80 years ago. Margaret Sanger was a Cult operative who used 'birth control' to sanitise her programme of eugenics. Organisations she founded became what is now Planned Parenthood. Sanger proposed that 'the whole dysgenic population would have its choice of segregation or sterilization'. These included epileptics, 'feeble-minded', and prostitutes. Sanger opposed charity because it perpetuated 'human waste'. She reveals the Cult mentality and if anyone thinks that extermination camps are a 'conspiracy theory' their naivety is touching if breathtakingly stupid.

If you don't believe that doctors can act with callous disregard for their patients it is worth considering that doctors and medical staff agreed to put government-decreed DNR orders on medical files and do nothing when resuscitation is called for. I don't know what you call such people in your house. In mine they are Nazis from the Josef Mengele School of Medicine. Phenomenal numbers of old people have died worldwide from the effects of lockdown, depression, lack of treatment, the 'vaccine' (more later) and losing the will to live. A common response at the start of the manufactured pandemic was to remove old people from hospital beds and transfer them to nursing homes. The decision would result in a mass cull of elderly people in those homes through lack of treatment – *not* 'Covid'. Care home whistleblowers have told how once the 'Covid' era began doctors would not come to their homes to treat patients and they were begging for drugs like antibiotics that often never came. The most infamous example was ordered by New York governor Andrew Cuomo, brother of a moronic CNN host, who amazingly was given an Emmy Award for his handling of the 'Covid crisis' by the ridiculous Wokers that hand them out. Just how ridiculous could be seen in February, 2021, when a Department of Justice and FBI investigation began into how thousands of old people in New York died in nursing homes after being discharged from hospital to make way for 'Covid' patients on Cuomo's say-so – and how he and his staff covered up these facts. This couldn't have happened to a nicer psychopath. Even then there was a 'Covid' spin. Reports said that

thousands of old people who tested positive for 'Covid' in hospital were transferred to nursing homes to both die of 'Covid' and transmit it to others. No – they were in hospital because they were ill and the fact that they tested positive with a test not testing for the 'virus' is irrelevant. They were ill often with respiratory diseases ubiquitous in old people near the end of their lives. Their transfer out of hospital meant that their treatment stopped and many would go on to die.

They're old. Who gives a damn?

I have exposed in the books for decades the Cult plan to cull the world's old people and even to introduce at some point what they call a 'demise pill' which at a certain age everyone would take and be out of here by law. In March, 2021, Spain legalised euthanasia and assisted suicide following the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Canada on the Tiptoe to the demise pill. Treatment of old people by many 'care' homes has been a disgrace in the 'Covid' era. There are many, many, caring staff – I know some. There have, however, been legions of stories about callous treatment of old people and their families. Police were called when families came to take their loved ones home in the light of isolation that was killing them. They became prisoners of the state. Care home residents in insane, fascist Ontario, Canada, were not allowed to leave their *room* once the 'Covid' hoax began. UK staff have even wheeled elderly people away from windows where family members were talking with them. Oriana Criscuolo from Stockport in the English North West dropped off some things for her 80-year-old father who has Parkinson's disease and dementia and she wanted to wave to him through a ground-floor window. She was told that was 'illegal'. When she went anyway they closed the curtains in the middle of the day. Oriana said:

It's just unbelievable. I cannot understand how care home staff – people who are being paid to care – have become so uncaring. Their behaviour is inhumane and cruel. It's beyond belief.

She was right and this was not a one-off. What a way to end your life in such loveless circumstances. UK registered nurse Nicky Millen, a proper old school nurse for 40 years, said that when she started her career care was based on dignity, choice, compassion and empathy. Now she said 'the things that are important to me have gone out of the window.' She was appalled that people were dying without their loved ones and saying goodbye on iPads. Nicky described how a distressed 89-year-old lady stroked her face and asked her 'how many paracetamol would it take to finish me off'. Life was no longer worth living while not seeing her family. Nicky said she was humiliated in front of the ward staff and patients for letting the lady stroke her face and giving her a cuddle. Such is the dehumanisation that the 'Covid' hoax has brought to the surface. Nicky worked in care homes where patients told her they were being held prisoner. 'I want to live until I die', one said to her. 'I had a lady in tears because she hadn't seen her great-grandson.' Nicky was compassionate old school meeting psychopathic New Normal. She also said she had worked on a 'Covid' ward with no 'Covid' patients. Jewish writer Shai Held wrote an article in March, 2020, which was headlined 'The Staggering, Heartless Cruelty Toward the Elderly'. What he described was happening from the earliest days of lockdown. He said 'the elderly' were considered a group and not unique individuals (the way of the Woke). Shai Held said:

Notice how the all-too-familiar rhetoric of dehumanization works: 'The elderly' are bunched together as a faceless mass, all of them considered culprits and thus effectively deserving of the suffering the pandemic will inflict upon them. Lost entirely is the fact that the elderly are individual human beings, each with a distinctive face and voice, each with hopes and dreams, memories and regrets, friendships and marriages, loves lost and loves sustained.

'The elderly' have become another dehumanised group for which anything goes and for many that has resulted in cold disregard for their rights and their life. The distinctive face that Held talks about is designed to be deleted by masks until everyone is part of a faceless mass.

'War-zone' hospitals myth

Again and again medical professionals have told me what was really going on and how hospitals 'overrun like war zones' according to the media were virtually empty. The mantra from medical whistleblowers was please don't use my name or my career is over. Citizen journalists around the world sneaked into hospitals to film evidence exposing the 'war-zone' lie. They really *were* largely empty with closed wards and operating theatres. I met a hospital worker in my town on the Isle of Wight during the first lockdown in 2020 who said the only island hospital had never been so quiet. Lockdown was justified by the psychopaths to stop hospitals being overrun. At the same time that the island hospital was near-empty the military arrived here to provide *extra beds*. It was all propaganda to ramp up the fear to ensure compliance with fascism as were never-used temporary hospitals with thousands of beds known as Nightingales and never-used make-shift mortuaries opened by the criminal UK government. A man who helped to install those extra island beds attributed to the army said they were never used and the hospital was empty. Doctors and nurses 'stood around talking or on their phones, wandering down to us to see what we were doing'. There were no masks or social distancing. He accused the useless local island paper, the *County Press*, of 'pumping the fear as if our hospital was overrun and we only have one so it should have been'. He described ambulances parked up with crews outside in deck chairs. When his brother called an ambulance he was told there was a two-hour backlog which he called 'bullshit'. An old lady on the island fell 'and was in a bad way', but a caller who rang for an ambulance was told the situation wasn't urgent enough. Ambulance stations were working under capacity while people would hear ambulances with sirens blaring driving through the streets. When those living near the stations realised what was going on they would follow them as they left, circulated around an urban area with the sirens going, and then came back without stopping. All this was to increase levels of fear and the same goes for the 'ventilator shortage crisis' that cost tens of millions for hastily produced ventilators never to be used.

Ambulance crews that agreed to be exploited in this way for fear propaganda might find themselves a mirror. I wish them well with that. Empty hospitals were the obvious consequence of treatment and diagnoses of non-'Covid' conditions cancelled and those involved handed a death sentence. People have been dying at home from undiagnosed and untreated cancer, heart disease and other life-threatening conditions to allow empty hospitals to deal with a 'pandemic' that wasn't happening.

Death of the innocent

'War-zones' have been laying off nursing staff, even doctors where they can. There was no work for them. Lockdown was justified by saving lives and protecting the vulnerable they were actually killing with DNR orders and preventing empty hospitals being 'overrun'. In Britain the mantra of stay at home to 'save the NHS' was everywhere and across the world the same story was being sold when it was all lies. Two California doctors, Dan Erickson and Artin Massihi at Accelerated Urgent Care in Bakersfield, held a news conference in April, 2020, to say that intensive care units in California were 'empty, essentially', with hospitals shutting floors, not treating patients and laying off doctors. The California health system was working at minimum capacity 'getting rid of doctors because we just don't have the volume'. They said that people with conditions such as heart disease and cancer were not coming to hospital out of fear of 'Covid-19'. Their video was deleted by Susan Wojcicki's Cult-owned YouTube after reaching five million views. Florida governor Ron Desantis, who rejected the severe lockdowns of other states and is being targeted for doing so, said that in March, 2020, every US governor was given models claiming they would run out of hospital beds in days. That was never going to happen and the 'modellers' knew it. Deceit can be found at every level of the system. Urgent children's operations were cancelled including fracture repairs and biopsies to spot cancer. Eric Nicholls, a consultant paediatrician, said 'this is obviously concerning and we need to return to normal operating and to increase capacity as soon as possible'. Psychopaths

in power were rather less concerned *because* they are psychopaths. Deletion of urgent care and diagnosis has been happening all over the world and how many kids and others have died as a result of the actions of these cold and heartless lunatics dictating 'health' policy? The number must be stratospheric. Richard Sullivan, professor of cancer and global health at King's College London, said people feared 'Covid' more than cancer such was the campaign of fear. 'Years of lost life will be quite dramatic', Sullivan said, with 'a huge amount of avoidable mortality'. Sarah Woolnough, executive director for policy at Cancer Research UK, said there had been a 75 percent drop in urgent referrals to hospitals by family doctors of people with suspected cancer. Sullivan said that 'a lot of services have had to scale back – we've seen a dramatic decrease in the amount of elective cancer surgery'. Lockdown deaths worldwide has been absolutely fantastic with the *New York Post* reporting how data confirmed that 'lockdowns end more lives than they save':

There was a sharp decline in visits to emergency rooms and an increase in fatal heart attacks because patients didn't receive prompt treatment. Many fewer people were screened for cancer. Social isolation contributed to excess deaths from dementia and Alzheimer's.

Researchers predicted that the social and economic upheaval would lead to tens of thousands of "deaths of despair" from drug overdoses, alcoholism and suicide. As unemployment surged and mental-health and substance-abuse treatment programs were interrupted, the reported levels of anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts increased dramatically, as did alcohol sales and fatal drug overdoses.

This has been happening while nurses and other staff had so much time on their hands in the 'war-zones' that Tic-Tok dancing videos began appearing across the Internet with medical staff dancing around in empty wards and corridors as people died at home from causes that would normally have been treated in hospital.

Mentions in dispatches

One brave and truth-committed whistleblower was Louise Hampton, a call handler with the UK NHS who made a viral Internet video saying she had done 'fuck all' during the 'pandemic'

which was 'a load of bollocks'. She said that 'Covid-19' was rebranded flu and of course she lost her job. This is what happens in the medical and endless other professions now when you tell the truth. Louise filmed inside 'war-zone' accident and emergency departments to show they were empty and I mean *empty* as in no one there. The mainstream media could have done the same and blown the gaff on the whole conspiracy. They haven't to their eternal shame. Not that most 'journalists' seem capable of manifesting shame as with the psychopaths they slavishly repeat without question. The relative few who were admitted with serious health problems were left to die alone with no loved ones allowed to see them because of 'Covid' rules and they included kids dying without the comfort of mum and dad at their bedside while the evil behind this couldn't give a damn. It was all good fun to them. A Scottish NHS staff nurse publicly quit in the spring of 2021 saying: 'I can no longer be part of the lies and the corruption by the government.' She said hospitals 'aren't full, the beds aren't full, beds have been shut, wards have been shut'. Hospitals were never busy throughout 'Covid'. The staff nurse said that Nicola Sturgeon, tragically the leader of the Scottish government, was on television saying save the hospitals and the NHS – 'but the beds are empty' and 'we've not seen flu, we always see flu every year'. She wrote to government and spoke with her union Unison (the unions are Cult-compromised and *useless*, but nothing changed. Many of her colleagues were scared of losing their jobs if they spoke out as they wanted to. She said nursing staff were being affected by wearing masks all day and 'my head is splitting every shift from wearing a mask'. The NHS is part of the fascist tyranny and must be dismantled so we can start again with human beings in charge. (Ironically, hospitals were reported to be busier again when official 'Covid' cases *fell* in spring/summer of 2021 and many other conditions required treatment at the same time as *the fake vaccine rollout*.)

I will cover the 'Covid vaccine' scam in detail later, but it is another indicator of the sickening disregard for human life that I am highlighting here. The DNA-manipulating concoctions do not fulfil

the definition of a 'vaccine', have never been used on humans before and were given only emergency approval because trials were not completed and they continued using the unknowing public. The result was what a NHS senior nurse with responsibility for 'vaccine' procedure said was 'genocide'. She said the 'vaccines' were not 'vaccines'. They had not been shown to be safe and claims about their effectiveness by drug companies were 'poetic licence'. She described what was happening as a 'horrid act of human annihilation'. The nurse said that management had instigated a policy of not providing a Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) before people were 'vaccinated' even though health care professionals are supposed to do this according to protocol. Patients should also be told that they are taking part in an ongoing clinical trial. Her challenges to what is happening had seen her excluded from meetings and ridiculed in others. She said she was told to 'watch my step ... or I would find myself surplus to requirements'. The nurse, who spoke anonymously in fear of her career, said she asked her NHS manager why he/she was content with taking part in genocide against those having the 'vaccines'. The reply was that everyone had to play their part and to 'put up, shut up, and get it done'. Government was 'leaning heavily' on NHS management which was clearly leaning heavily on staff. This is how the global 'medical' hierarchy operates and it starts with the Cult and its World Health Organization.

She told the story of a doctor who had the Pfizer jab and when questioned had no idea what was in it. The doctor had never read the literature. We have to stop treating doctors as intellectual giants when so many are moral and medical pygmies. The doctor did not even know that the 'vaccines' were not fully approved or that their trials were ongoing. They were, however, asking their patients if they minded taking part in follow-ups for research purposes – yes, the *ongoing clinical trial*. The nurse said the doctor's ignorance was not rare and she had spoken to a hospital consultant who had the jab without any idea of the background or that the 'trials' had not been completed. Nurses and pharmacists had shown the same ignorance.

'My NHS colleagues have forsaken their duty of care, broken their code of conduct – Hippocratic Oath – and have been brainwashed just the same as the majority of the UK public through propaganda ...' She said she had not been able to recruit a single NHS colleague, doctor, nurse or pharmacist to stand with her and speak out. Her union had refused to help. She said that if the genocide came to light she would not hesitate to give evidence at a Nuremberg-type trial against those in power who could have affected the outcomes but didn't.

And all for what?

To put the nonsense into perspective let's say the 'virus' does exist and let's go completely crazy and accept that the official manipulated figures for cases and deaths are accurate. *Even then* a study by Stanford University epidemiologist Dr John Ioannidis published on the World Health Organization website produced an average infection to fatality rate of ... *0.23 percent!* Ioannidis said: 'If one could sample equally from all locations globally, the median infection fatality rate might even be substantially lower than the 0.23% observed in my analysis.' For healthy people under 70 it was ... *0.05 percent!* This compares with the 3.4 percent claimed by the Cult-owned World Health Organization when the hoax was first played and maximum fear needed to be generated. An updated Stanford study in April, 2021, put the 'infection' to 'fatality' rate at just 0.15 percent. Another team of scientists led by Megan O'Driscoll and Henrik Salje studied data from 45 countries and published their findings on the Nature website. For children and young people the figure is so small it virtually does not register although authorities will be hyping dangers to the young when they introduce DNA-manipulating 'vaccines' for children. The O'Driscoll study produced an average infection-fatality figure of 0.003 for children from birth to four; 0.001 for 5 to 14; 0.003 for 15 to 19; and it was still only 0.456 up to 64. To claim that children must be 'vaccinated' to protect them from 'Covid' is an obvious lie and so there must be another reason and there is. What's more the average age of a 'Covid' death is akin

to the average age that people die in general. The average age of death in England is about 80 for men and 83 for women. The average age of death from alleged 'Covid' is between 82 and 83. California doctors, Dan Erickson and Artin Massihi, said at their April media conference that projection models of millions of deaths had been 'woefully inaccurate'. They produced detailed figures showing that Californians had a 0.03 chance of dying from 'Covid' based on the number of people who tested positive (with a test not testing for the 'virus'). Erickson said there was a 0.1 percent chance of dying from 'Covid' in the *state* of New York, not just the city, and a 0.05 percent chance in Spain, a centre of 'Covid-19' hysteria at one stage. The Stanford studies supported the doctors' data with fatality rate estimates of 0.23 and 0.15 percent. How close are these figures to my estimate of *zero*? Death-rate figures claimed by the World Health Organization at the start of the hoax were some 15 times higher. The California doctors said there was no justification for lockdowns and the economic devastation they caused. Everything they had ever learned about quarantine was that you quarantine the *sick* and not the healthy. They had never seen this before and it made no medical sense.

Why in the in the light of all this would governments and medical systems the world over say that billions must go under house arrest; lose their livelihood; in many cases lose their mind, their health and their life; force people to wear masks dangerous to health and psychology; make human interaction and even family interaction a criminal offence; ban travel; close restaurants, bars, watching live sport, concerts, theatre, and any activity involving human togetherness and discourse; and closing schools to isolate children from their friends and cause many to commit suicide in acts of hopelessness and despair? The California doctors said lockdown consequences included increased child abuse, partner abuse, alcoholism, depression, and other impacts they were seeing every day. Who would do that to the entire human race if not mentally-ill psychopaths of almost unimaginable extremes like Bill Gates? We must face the reality of what we are dealing with and come out of

denial. Fascism and tyranny are made possible only by the target population submitting and acquiescing to fascism and tyranny. The whole of human history shows that to be true. Most people naively and unquestioning believed what they were told about a 'deadly virus' and meekly and weakly submitted to house arrest. Those who didn't believe it – at least in total – still submitted in fear of the consequences of not doing so. For the rest who wouldn't submit draconian fines have been imposed, brutal policing by psychopaths *for* psychopaths, and condemnation from the meek and weak who condemn the Pushbackers on behalf of the very force that has them, too, in its gunights. 'Pathetic' does not even begin to suffice. Britain's brainless 'Health' Secretary Matt Hancock warned anyone lying to border officials about returning from a list of 'hotspot' countries could face a jail sentence of up to ten years which is more than for racially-aggravated assault, incest and attempting to have sex with a child under 13. Hancock is a lunatic, but he has the state apparatus behind him in a Cult-led chain reaction and the same with UK 'Vaccine Minister' Nadhim Zahawi, a prominent member of the mega-Cult secret society, Le Cercle, which featured in my earlier books. The Cult enforces its will on governments and medical systems; government and medical systems enforce their will on business and police; business enforces its will on staff who enforce it on customers; police enforce the will of the Cult on the population and play their essential part in creating a world of fascist control that their own children and grandchildren will have to live in their entire lives. It is a hierarchical pyramid of imposition and acquiescence and, yes indeed, of clinical insanity.

Does anyone bright enough to read this book have to ask what the answer is? I think not, but I will reveal it anyway in the fewest of syllables: Tell the psychos and their moronic lackeys to fuck off and let's get on with our lives. We are many – They are few.

CHAPTER SEVEN

War on your mind

One believes things because one has been conditioned to believe them

Aldous Huxley, Brave New World

I have described the 'Covid' hoax as a 'Psyop' and that is true in every sense and on every level in accordance with the definition of that term which is psychological warfare. Break down the 'Covid pandemic' to the foundation themes and it is psychological warfare on the human individual and collective mind.

The same can be said for the entire human belief system involving every subject you can imagine. Huxley was right in his contention that people believe what they are conditioned to believe and this comes from the repetition throughout their lives of the same falsehoods. They spew from government, corporations, media and endless streams of 'experts' telling you what the Cult wants you to believe and often believing it themselves (although *far* from always). 'Experts' are rewarded with 'prestigious' jobs and titles and as agents of perceptual programming with regular access to the media. The Cult has to control the narrative – control *information* – or they lose control of the vital, crucial, without-which-they-cannot-prevail public perception of reality. The foundation of that control today is the Internet made possible by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the incredibly sinister technological arm of the Pentagon. The Internet is the result of military technology.

DARPA openly brags about establishing the Internet which has been a long-term project to lasso the minds of the global population. I have said for decades the plan is to control information to such an extreme that eventually no one would see or hear anything that the Cult does not approve. We are closing in on that end with ferocious censorship since the 'Covid' hoax began and in my case it started back in the 1990s in terms of books and speaking venues. I had to create my own publishing company in 1995 precisely because no one else would publish my books even then. I think they're all still running.

Cult Internet

To secure total control of information they needed the Internet in which pre-programmed algorithms can seek out 'unclean' content for deletion and even stop it being posted in the first place. The Cult had to dismantle print and non-Internet broadcast media to ensure the transfer of information to the appropriate-named 'Web' – a critical expression of the *Cult* web. We've seen the ever-quickening demise of traditional media and control of what is left by a tiny number of corporations operating worldwide. Independent journalism in the mainstream is already dead and never was that more obvious than since the turn of 2020. The Cult wants all information communicated via the Internet to globally censor and allow the plug to be pulled any time. Lockdowns and forced isolation has meant that communication between people has been through electronic means and no longer through face-to-face discourse and discussion. Cult psychopaths have targeted the bars, restaurants, sport, venues and meeting places in general for this reason. None of this is by chance and it's to stop people gathering in any kind of privacy or number while being able to track and monitor all Internet communications and block them as necessary. Even private messages between individuals have been censored by these fascists that control Cult fronts like Facebook, Twitter, Google and YouTube which are all officially run by Sabbatian place-people and from the background by higher-level Sabbatian place people.

Facebook, Google, Amazon and their like were seed-funded and supported into existence with money-no-object infusions of funds either directly or indirectly from DARPA and CIA technology arm In-Q-Tel. The Cult plays the long game and prepares very carefully for big plays like 'Covid'. Amazon is another front in the psychological war and pretty much controls the global market in book sales and increasingly publishing. Amazon's limitless funds have deleted fantastic numbers of independent publishers to seize global domination on the way to deciding which books can be sold and circulated and which cannot. Moves in that direction are already happening. Amazon's leading light Jeff Bezos is the grandson of Lawrence Preston Gise who worked with DARPA predecessor ARPA. Amazon has big connections to the CIA and the Pentagon. The plan I have long described went like this:

1. Employ military technology to establish the Internet.
2. Sell the Internet as a place where people can freely communicate without censorship and allow that to happen until the Net becomes the central and irreversible pillar of human society. If the Internet had been highly censored from the start many would have rejected it.
3. Fund and manipulate major corporations into being to control the circulation of information on your Internet using cover stories about geeks in garages to explain how they came about. Give them unlimited funds to expand rapidly with no need to make a profit for years while non-Cult companies who need to balance the books cannot compete. You know that in these circumstances your Googles, YouTubes, Facebooks and Amazons are going to secure near monopolies by either crushing or buying up the opposition.
4. Allow freedom of expression on both the Internet and communication platforms to draw people in until the Internet is the central and irreversible pillar of human society and your communication corporations have reached a stage of near monopoly domination.
5. Then unleash your always-planned frenzy of censorship on the basis of 'where else are you going to go?' and continue to expand that until nothing remains that the Cult does not want its human targets to see.

The process was timed to hit the 'Covid' hoax to ensure the best chance possible of controlling the narrative which they knew they had to do at all costs. They were, after all, about to unleash a 'deadly virus' that didn't really exist. If you do that in an environment of free-flowing information and opinion you would be dead in the

water before you could say Gates is a psychopath. The network was in place through which the Cult-created-and-owned World Health Organization could dictate the 'Covid' narrative and response policy slavishly supported by Cult-owned Internet communication giants and mainstream media while those telling a different story were censored. Google, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter openly announced that they would do this. What else would we expect from Cult-owned operations like Facebook which former executives have confirmed set out to make the platform more addictive than cigarettes and coldly manipulates emotions of its users to sow division between people and groups and scramble the minds of the young? If Zuckerberg lives out the rest of his life without going to jail for crimes against humanity, and most emphatically against the young, it will be a travesty of justice. Still, no matter, cause and effect will catch up with him eventually and the same with Sergey Brin and Larry Page at Google with its CEO Sundar Pichai who fix the Google search results to promote Cult narratives and hide the opposition. Put the same key words into Google and other search engines like DuckDuckGo and you will see how different results can be. Wikipedia is another intensely biased 'encyclopaedia' which skews its content to the Cult agenda. YouTube links to Wikipedia's version of 'Covid' and 'climate change' on video pages in which experts in their field offer a different opinion (even that is increasingly rare with Wojcicki censorship). Into this 'Covid' silence-them network must be added government media censors, sorry 'regulators', such as Ofcom in the UK which imposed tyrannical restrictions on British broadcasters that had the effect of banning me from ever appearing. Just to debate with me about my evidence and views on 'Covid' would mean breaking the fascistic impositions of Ofcom and its CEO career government bureaucrat Melanie Dawes. Gutless British broadcasters tremble at the very thought of fascist Ofcom.

Psychos behind 'Covid'

The reason for the 'Covid' catastrophe in all its facets and forms can be seen by whom and what is driving the policies worldwide in such a coordinated way. Decisions are not being made to protect health, but to target psychology. The dominant group guiding and 'advising' government policy are not medical professionals. They are psychologists and behavioural scientists. Every major country has its own version of this phenomenon and I'll use the British example to show how it works. In many ways the British version has been affecting the wider world in the form of the huge behaviour manipulation network in the UK which operates in other countries. The network involves private companies, government, intelligence and military. The Cabinet Office is at the centre of the government 'Covid' Psyop and part-owns, with 'innovation charity' Nesta, the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) which claims to be independent of government but patently isn't. The BIT was established in 2010 and its job is to manipulate the psyche of the population to acquiesce to government demands and so much more. It is also known as the 'Nudge Unit', a name inspired by the 2009 book by two ultra-Zionists, Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler, called *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. The book, as with the Behavioural Insights Team, seeks to 'nudge' behaviour (manipulate it) to make the public follow patterns of action and perception that suit those in authority (the Cult). Sunstein is so skilled at this that he advises the World Health Organization and the UK Behavioural Insights Team and was Administrator of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Obama administration. Biden appointed him to the Department of Homeland Security – another ultra-Zionist in the fold to oversee new immigration laws which is another policy the Cult wants to control. Sunstein is desperate to silence anyone exposing conspiracies and co-authored a 2008 report on the subject in which suggestions were offered to ban 'conspiracy theorizing' or impose 'some kind of tax, financial or otherwise, on those who disseminate such theories'. I guess a psychiatrist's chair is out of the question?

Sunstein's mate Richard Thaler, an 'academic affiliate' of the UK Behavioural Insights Team, is a proponent of 'behavioural economics' which is defined as the study of 'the effects of psychological, cognitive, emotional, cultural and social factors on the decisions of individuals and institutions'. Study the effects so they can be manipulated to be what you want them to be. Other leading names in the development of behavioural economics are ultra-Zionists Daniel Kahneman and Robert J. Shiller and they, with Thaler, won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for their work in this field. The Behavioural Insights Team is operating at the heart of the UK government and has expanded globally through partnerships with several universities including Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, University College London (UCL) and Pennsylvania. They claim to have 'trained' (reframed) 20,000 civil servants and run more than 750 projects involving 400 randomised controlled trials in dozens of countries' as another version of mind reframers Common Purpose. BIT works from its office in New York with cities and their agencies, as well as other partners, across the United States and Canada – this is a company part-owned by the British government Cabinet Office. An executive order by President Cult-servant Obama established a US Social and Behavioral Sciences Team in 2015. They all have the same reason for being and that's to brainwash the population directly and by brainwashing those in positions of authority.

'Covid' mind game

Another prime aspect of the UK mind-control network is the 'independent' [joke] Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours (SPI-B) which 'provides behavioural science advice aimed at anticipating and helping people adhere to interventions that are recommended by medical or epidemiological experts'. That means manipulating public perception and behaviour to do whatever government tells them to do. It's disgusting and if they really want the public to be 'safe' this lot should all be under lock and key. According to the government website SPI-B consists of

'behavioural scientists, health and social psychologists, anthropologists and historians' and advises the Whitty-Vallance-led Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) which in turn advises the government on 'the science' (it doesn't) and 'Covid' policy. When politicians say they are being guided by 'the science' this is the rabble in each country they are talking about and that 'science' is dominated by behaviour manipulators to enforce government fascism through public compliance. The Behaviour Insight Team is headed by psychologist David Solomon Halpern, a visiting professor at King's College London, and connects with a national and global web of other civilian and military organisations as the Cult moves towards its goal of fusing them into one fascistic whole in every country through its 'Fusion Doctrine'. The behaviour manipulation network involves, but is not confined to, the Foreign Office; National Security Council; government communications headquarters (GCHQ); MI5; MI6; the Cabinet Office-based Media Monitoring Unit; and the Rapid Response Unit which 'monitors digital trends to spot emerging issues; including misinformation and disinformation; and identifies the best way to respond'.

There is also the 77th Brigade of the UK military which operates like the notorious Israeli military's Unit 8200 in manipulating information and discussion on the Internet by posing as members of the public to promote the narrative and discredit those who challenge it. Here we have the military seeking to manipulate *domestic* public opinion while the Nazis in government are fine with that. Conservative Member of Parliament Tobias Ellwood, an advocate of lockdown and control through 'vaccine passports', is a Lieutenant Colonel reservist in the 77th Brigade which connects with the military operation jHub, the 'innovation centre' for the Ministry of Defence and Strategic Command. jHub has also been involved with the civilian National Health Service (NHS) in 'symptom tracing' the population. The NHS is a key part of this mind control network and produced a document in December, 2020, explaining to staff how to use psychological manipulation with different groups and ages to get them to have the DNA-manipulating 'Covid vaccine'

that's designed to cumulatively rewrite human genetics. The document, called 'Optimising Vaccination Roll Out – Do's and Dont's for all messaging, documents and "communications" in the widest sense', was published by NHS England and the NHS Improvement *Behaviour Change Unit* in partnership with Public Health England and Warwick Business School. I hear the mantra about 'save the NHS' and 'protect the NHS' when we need to scrap the NHS and start again. The current version is far too corrupt, far too anti-human and totally compromised by Cult operatives and their assets. UK government broadcast media censor Ofcom will connect into this web – as will the BBC with its tremendous Ofcom influence – to control what the public see and hear and dictate mass perception. Nuremberg trials must include personnel from all these organisations.

The fear factor

The 'Covid' hoax has led to the creation of the UK Cabinet Office-connected Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) which is officially described as providing 'expert advice on pandemics' using its independent [all Cult operations are 'independent'] analytical function to provide real-time analysis about infection outbreaks to identify and respond to outbreaks of Covid-19'. Another role is to advise the government on a response to spikes in infections – 'for example by closing schools or workplaces in local areas where infection levels have risen'. Put another way, promoting the Cult agenda. The Joint Biosecurity Centre is modelled on the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre which analyses intelligence to set 'terrorism threat levels' and here again you see the fusion of civilian and military operations and intelligence that has led to military intelligence producing documents about 'vaccine hesitancy' and how it can be combated. Domestic civilian matters and opinions should not be the business of the military. The Joint Biosecurity Centre is headed by Tom Hurd, director general of the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism from the establishment-to-its-fingertips Hurd family. His father is former Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd. How coincidental that Tom

Hurd went to the elite Eton College and Oxford University with Boris Johnson. Imperial College with its ridiculous computer modeller Neil Ferguson will connect with this gigantic web that will itself interconnect with similar set-ups in other major and not so major countries. Compared with this Cult network the politicians, be they Boris Johnson, Donald Trump or Joe Biden, are bit-part players 'following the science'. The network of psychologists was on the 'Covid' case from the start with the aim of generating maximum fear of the 'virus' to ensure compliance by the population. A government behavioural science group known as SPI-B produced a paper in March, 2020, for discussion by the main government science advisory group known as SAGE. It was headed 'Options for increasing adherence to social distancing measures' and it said the following in a section headed 'Persuasion':

- A substantial number of people still do not feel sufficiently personally threatened; it could be that they are reassured by the low death rate in their demographic group, although levels of concern may be rising. Having a good understanding of the risk has been found to be positively associated with adoption of COVID-19 social distancing measures in Hong Kong.
- The perceived level of personal threat needs to be increased among those who are complacent, using hard-hitting evaluation of options for increasing social distancing emotional messaging. To be effective this must also empower people by making clear the actions they can take to reduce the threat.
- Responsibility to others: There seems to be insufficient understanding of, or feelings of responsibility about, people's role in transmitting the infection to others ... Messaging about actions need to be framed positively in terms of protecting oneself and the community, and increase confidence that they will be effective.
- Some people will be more persuaded by appeals to play by the rules, some by duty to the community, and some to personal risk.

All these different approaches are needed. The messaging also needs to take account of the realities of different people's lives. Messaging needs to take account of the different motivational levers and circumstances of different people.

All this could be achieved the SPI-B psychologists said by *using the media to increase the sense of personal threat* which translates as terrify the shit out of the population, including children, so they all do what we want. That's not happened has it? Those excuses for 'journalists' who wouldn't know journalism if it bit them on the arse (the great majority) have played their crucial part in serving this Cult-government Psyop to enslave their own kids and grandkids. How they live with themselves I have no idea. The psychological war has been underpinned by constant government 'Covid' propaganda in almost every television and radio ad break, plus the Internet and print media, which has pounded out the fear with taxpayers footing the bill for their own programming. The result has been people terrified of a 'virus' that doesn't exist or one with a tiny fatality rate even if you believe it does. People walk down the street and around the shops wearing face-nappies damaging their health and psychology while others report those who refuse to be that naïve to the police who turn up in their own face-nappies. I had a cameraman come to my flat and he was so frightened of 'Covid' he came in wearing a mask and refused to shake my hand in case he caught something. He had – naïveitis – and the thought that he worked in the mainstream media was both depressing and made his behaviour perfectly explainable. The fear which has gripped the minds of so many and frozen them into compliance has been carefully cultivated by these psychologists who are really psychopaths. If lives get destroyed and a lot of young people commit suicide it shows our plan is working. SPI-B then turned to compulsion on the public to comply. 'With adequate preparation, rapid change can be achieved', it said. Some countries had introduced mandatory self-isolation on a wide scale without evidence of major public unrest and a large majority of the UK's population appeared to be supportive of more coercive measures with 64 percent of adults saying they would

support putting London under a lockdown (watch the 'polls' which are designed to make people believe that public opinion is in favour or against whatever the subject in hand).

For 'aggressive protective measures' to be effective, the SPI-B paper said, special attention should be devoted to those population groups that are more at risk. Translated from the Orwellian this means making the rest of population feel guilty for not protecting the 'vulnerable' such as old people which the Cult and its agencies were about to kill on an industrial scale with lockdown, lack of treatment and the Gates 'vaccine'. Psychopath psychologists sold their guilt-trip so comprehensively that Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis reported that children were apologising (from a distance) to their parents and grandparents for bringing 'Covid' into their homes and getting them sick. '... These apologies are just some of the last words that loved ones will ever hear as they die alone,' she said. Gut-wrenchingly Solis then used this childhood tragedy to tell children to stay at home and 'keep your loved ones alive'. Imagine heaping such potentially life-long guilt on a kid when it has absolutely nothing to do with them. These people are deeply disturbed and the psychologists behind this even more so.

Uncivil war – divide and rule

Professional mind-controllers at SPI-B wanted the media to increase a sense of responsibility to others (do as you're told) and promote 'positive messaging' for those actions while in contrast to invoke 'social disapproval' by the unquestioning, obedient, community of anyone with a mind of their own. Again the compliant Goebbels-like media obliged. This is an old, old, trick employed by tyrannies the world over throughout human history. You get the target population to keep the target population in line – *your* line. SPI-B said this could 'play an important role in preventing anti-social behaviour or discouraging failure to enact pro-social behaviour'. For 'anti-social' in the Orwellian parlance of SPI-B see any behaviour that government doesn't approve. SPI-B recommendations said that 'social disapproval' should be accompanied by clear messaging and

promotion of strong collective identity – hence the government and celebrity mantra of ‘we’re all in this together’. Sure we are. The mind doctors have such contempt for their targets that they think some clueless comedian, actor or singer telling them to do what the government wants will be enough to win them over. We have had UK comedian Lenny Henry, actor Michael Caine and singer Elton John wheeled out to serve the propagandists by urging people to have the DNA-manipulating ‘Covid’ non-‘vaccine’. The role of Henry and fellow black celebrities in seeking to coax a ‘vaccine’ reluctant black community into doing the government’s will was especially stomach-turning. An emotion-manipulating script and carefully edited video featuring these black ‘celebs’ was such an insult to the intelligence of black people and where’s the self-respect of those involved selling their souls to a fascist government agenda? Henry said he heard black people’s ‘legitimate worries and concerns’, but people must ‘trust the facts’ when they were doing exactly that by not having the ‘vaccine’. They had to include the obligatory reference to Black Lives Matter with the line ... ‘Don’t let coronavirus cost even more black lives – because we matter’. My god, it was pathetic. ‘I know the vaccine is safe and what it does.’ How? ‘I’m a comedian and it says so in my script.’

SPI-B said social disapproval needed to be carefully managed to avoid victimisation, scapegoating and misdirected criticism, but they knew that their ‘recommendations’ would lead to exactly that and the media were specifically used to stir-up the divide-and-conquer hostility. Those who conform like good little baa, baas, are praised while those who have seen through the tidal wave of lies are ‘Covidiot’s’. The awake have been abused by the fast asleep for not conforming to fascism and impositions that the awake know are designed to endanger their health, dehumanise them, and tear asunder the very fabric of human society. We have had the curtain-twitchers and morons reporting neighbours and others to the face-napped police for breaking ‘Covid rules’ with fascist police delighting in posting links and phone numbers where this could be done. The Cult cannot impose its will without a compliant police

and military or a compliant population willing to play their part in enslaving themselves and their kids. The words of a pastor in Nazi Germany are so appropriate today:

First they came for the socialists and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me.

Those who don't learn from history are destined to repeat it and so many are.

'Covid' rules: Rewiring the mind

With the background laid out to this gigantic national and global web of psychological manipulation we can put 'Covid' rules into a clear and sinister perspective. Forget the claims about protecting health. 'Covid' rules are about dismantling the human mind, breaking the human spirit, destroying self-respect, and then putting Humpty Dumpty together again as a servile, submissive slave. Social isolation through lockdown and distancing have devastating effects on the human psyche as the psychological psychopaths well know and that's the real reason for them. Humans need contact with each other, discourse, closeness and touch, or they eventually, and literally, go crazy. Masks, which I will address at some length, fundamentally add to the effects of isolation and the Cult agenda to dehumanise and de-individualise the population. To do this while knowing – in fact *seeking* – this outcome is the very epitome of evil and psychologists involved in this *are* the epitome of evil. They must like all the rest of the Cult demons and their assets stand trial for crimes against humanity on a scale that defies the imagination. Psychopaths in uniform use isolation to break enemy troops and agents and make them subservient and submissive to tell what they know. The technique is rightly considered a form of torture and

torture is most certainly what has been imposed on the human population.

Clinically-insane American psychologist Harry Harlow became famous for his isolation experiments in the 1950s in which he separated baby monkeys from their mothers and imprisoned them for months on end in a metal container or 'pit of despair'. They soon began to show mental distress and depression as any idiot could have predicted. Harlow put other monkeys in steel chambers for three, six or twelve months while denying them any contact with animals or humans. He said that the effects of total social isolation for six months were 'so devastating and debilitating that we had assumed initially that twelve months of isolation would not produce any additional decrement'; but twelve months of isolation 'almost obliterated the animals socially'. This is what the Cult and its psychopaths are doing to you and your children. Even monkeys in partial isolation in which they were not allowed to form relationships with other monkeys became 'aggressive and hostile, not only to others, but also towards their own bodies'. We have seen this in the young as a consequence of lockdown. UK government psychopaths launched a public relations campaign telling people not to hug each other even after they received the 'Covid-19 vaccine' which we were told with more lies would allow a return to 'normal life'. A government source told *The Telegraph*: 'It will be along the lines that it is great that you have been vaccinated, but if you are going to visit your family and hug your grandchildren there is a chance you are going to infect people you love.' The source was apparently speaking from a secure psychiatric facility. Janet Lord, director of Birmingham University's Institute of Inflammation and Ageing, said that parents and grandparents should avoid hugging their children. Well, how can I put it, Ms Lord? Fuck off. Yep, that'll do.

Destroying the kids – where are the parents?

Observe what has happened to people enslaved and isolated by lockdown as suicide and self-harm has soared worldwide,

particularly among the young denied the freedom to associate with their friends. A study of 49,000 people in English-speaking countries concluded that almost half of young adults are at clinical risk of mental health disorders. A national survey in America of 1,000 currently enrolled high school and college students found that 5 percent reported attempting suicide during the pandemic. Data from the US CDC's National Syndromic Surveillance Program from January 1st to October 17th, 2020, revealed a 31 percent increase in mental health issues among adolescents aged 12 to 17 compared with 2019. The CDC reported that America in general suffered the biggest drop in life expectancy since World War Two as it fell by a year in the first half of 2020 as a result of 'deaths of despair' – overdoses and suicides. Deaths of despair have leapt by more than 20 percent during lockdown and include the highest number of fatal overdoses ever recorded in a single year – 81,000. Internet addiction is another consequence of being isolated at home which lowers interest in physical activities as kids fall into inertia and what's the point? Children and young people are losing hope and giving up on life, sometimes literally. A 14-year-old boy killed himself in Maryland because he had 'given up' when his school district didn't reopen; an 11-year-old boy shot himself during a zoom class; a teenager in Maine succumbed to the isolation of the 'pandemic' when he ended his life after experiencing a disrupted senior year at school. Children as young as nine have taken their life and all these stories can be repeated around the world. Careers are being destroyed before they start and that includes those in sport in which promising youngsters have not been able to take part. The plan of the psycho-psychologists is working all right. Researchers at Cambridge University found that lockdowns cause significant harm to children's mental health. Their study was published in the *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, and followed 168 children aged between 7 and 11. The researchers concluded:

During the UK lockdown, children's depression symptoms have increased substantially, relative to before lockdown. The scale of this effect has direct relevance for the continuation of different elements of lockdown policy, such as complete or partial school closures ...

... Specifically, we observed a statistically significant increase in ratings of depression, with a medium-to-large effect size. Our findings emphasise the need to incorporate the potential impact of lockdown on child mental health in planning the ongoing response to the global pandemic and the recovery from it.

Not a chance when the Cult's psycho-psychologists were getting exactly what they wanted. The UK's Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has urged parents to look for signs of eating disorders in children and young people after a three to four fold increase. Specialists say the 'pandemic' is a major reason behind the rise. You don't say. The College said isolation from friends during school closures, exam cancellations, loss of extra-curricular activities like sport, and an increased use of social media were all contributory factors along with fears about the virus (psycho-psychologists again), family finances, and students being forced to quarantine. Doctors said young people were becoming severely ill by the time they were seen with 'Covid' regulations reducing face-to-face consultations. Nor is it only the young that have been devastated by the psychopaths. Like all bullies and cowards the Cult is targeting the young, elderly, weak and infirm. A typical story was told by a British lady called Lynn Parker who was not allowed to visit her husband in 2020 for the last ten and half months of his life 'when he needed me most' between March 20th and when he died on December 19th. This vacates the criminal and enters the territory of evil. The emotional impact on the immune system alone is immense as are the number of people of all ages worldwide who have died as a result of Cult-demanded, Gates-demanded, lockdowns.

Isolation is torture

The experience of imposing solitary confinement on millions of prisoners around the world has shown how a large percentage become 'actively psychotic and/or acutely suicidal'. Social isolation has been found to trigger 'a specific psychiatric syndrome, characterized by hallucinations; panic attacks; overt paranoia; diminished impulse control; hypersensitivity to external stimuli; and difficulties with thinking, concentration and memory'. Juan Mendez,

a United Nations rapporteur (investigator), said that isolation is a form of torture. Research has shown that even after isolation prisoners find it far more difficult to make social connections and I remember chatting to a shop assistant after one lockdown who told me that when her young son met another child again he had no idea how to act or what to do. Hannah Flanagan, Director of Emergency Services at Journey Mental Health Center in Dane County, Wisconsin, said: 'The specificity about Covid social distancing and isolation that we've come across as contributing factors to the suicides are really new to us this year.' But they are not new to those that devised them. They are getting the effect they want as the population is psychologically dismantled to be rebuilt in a totally different way. Children and the young are particularly targeted. They will be the adults when the full-on fascist AI-controlled technocracy is planned to be imposed and they are being prepared to meekly submit. At the same time older people who still have a memory of what life was like before – and how fascist the new normal really is – are being deleted. You are going to see efforts to turn the young against the old to support this geriatric genocide. Hannah Flanagan said the big increase in suicide in her county proved that social isolation is not only harmful, but deadly. Studies have shown that isolation from others is one of the main risk factors in suicide and even more so with women. Warnings that lockdown could create a 'perfect storm' for suicide were ignored. After all this was one of the *reasons* for lockdown. Suicide, however, is only the most extreme of isolation consequences. There are many others. Dr Dhruv Khullar, assistant professor of healthcare policy at Weill Cornell Medical College, said in a *New York Times* article in 2016 long before the fake 'pandemic':

A wave of new research suggests social separation is bad for us. Individuals with less social connection have disrupted sleep patterns, altered immune systems, more inflammation and higher levels of stress hormones. One recent study found that isolation increases the risk of heart disease by 29 percent and stroke by 32 percent. Another analysis that pooled data from 70 studies and 3.4 million people found that socially isolated individuals had a 30 percent higher risk of dying in the next seven years, and that this effect was largest in middle age.

Loneliness can accelerate cognitive decline in older adults, and isolated individuals are twice as likely to die prematurely as those with more robust social interactions. These effects start early: Socially isolated children have significantly poorer health 20 years later, even after controlling for other factors. All told, loneliness is as important a risk factor for early death as obesity and smoking.

There you have proof from that one article alone four years before 2020 that those who have enforced lockdown, social distancing and isolation knew what the effect would be and that is even more so with professional psychologists that have been driving the policy across the globe. We can go back even further to the years 2000 and 2003 and the start of a major study on the effects of isolation on health by Dr Janine Gronewold and Professor Dirk M. Hermann at the University Hospital in Essen, Germany, who analysed data on 4,316 people with an average age of 59 who were recruited for the long-term research project. They found that socially isolated people are more than 40 percent more likely to have a heart attack, stroke, or other major cardiovascular event and nearly 50 percent more likely to die from any cause. Given the financial Armageddon unleashed by lockdown we should note that the study found a relationship between increased cardiovascular risk and lack of financial support. After excluding other factors social isolation was still connected to a 44 percent increased risk of cardiovascular problems and a 47 percent increased risk of death by any cause. Lack of financial support was associated with a 30 percent increase in the risk of cardiovascular health events. Dr Gronewold said it had been known for some time that feeling lonely or lacking contact with close friends and family can have an impact on physical health and the study had shown that having strong social relationships is of high importance for heart health. Gronewold said they didn't understand yet why people who are socially isolated have such poor health outcomes, but this was obviously a worrying finding, particularly during these times of prolonged social distancing. Well, it can be explained on many levels. You only have to identify the point in the body where people feel loneliness and missing people they are parted from – it's in the centre of the chest where they feel the ache of loneliness and the ache of missing people. 'My heart aches for

you' ... 'My heart aches for some company.' I will explain this more in the chapter Escaping Wetiko, but when you realise that the body is the mind – they are expressions of each other – the reason why state of the mind dictates state of the body becomes clear.

American psychologist Ranjit Powar was highlighting the effects of lockdown isolation as early as April, 2020. She said humans have evolved to be social creatures and are wired to live in interactive groups. Being isolated from family, friends and colleagues could be unbalancing and traumatic for most people and could result in short or even long-term psychological and physical health problems. An increase in levels of anxiety, aggression, depression, forgetfulness and hallucinations were possible psychological effects of isolation. 'Mental conditions may be precipitated for those with underlying pre-existing susceptibilities and show up in many others without any pre-condition.' Powar said personal relationships helped us cope with stress and if we lost this outlet for letting off steam the result can be a big emotional void which, for an average person, was difficult to deal with. 'Just a few days of isolation can cause increased levels of anxiety and depression' – so what the hell has been the effect on the global population of *18 months* of this at the time of writing? Powar said: 'Add to it the looming threat of a dreadful disease being repeatedly hammered in through the media and you have a recipe for many shades of mental and physical distress.' For those with a house and a garden it is easy to forget that billions have had to endure lockdown isolation in tiny overcrowded flats and apartments with nowhere to go outside. The psychological and physical consequences of this are unimaginable and with lunatic and abusive partners and parents the consequences have led to tremendous increases in domestic and child abuse and alcoholism as people seek to shut out the horror. Ranjit Powar said:

Staying in a confined space with family is not all a rosy picture for everyone. It can be extremely oppressive and claustrophobic for large low-income families huddled together in small single-room houses. Children here are not lucky enough to have many board/electronic games or books to keep them occupied.

Add to it the deep insecurity of running out of funds for food and basic necessities. On the other hand, there are people with dysfunctional family dynamics, such as domineering, abusive or alcoholic partners, siblings or parents which makes staying home a period of trial. Incidence of suicide and physical abuse against women has shown a worldwide increase. Heightened anxiety and depression also affect a person's immune system, making them more susceptible to illness.

To think that Powar's article was published on April 11th, 2020.

Six-foot fantasy

Social (unsocial) distancing demanded that people stay six feet or two metres apart. UK government advisor Robert Dingwall from the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group said in a radio interview that the two-metre rule was 'conjured up out of nowhere' and was not based on science. No, it was not based on *medical* science, but it didn't come out of nowhere. The distance related to *psychological* science. Six feet/two metres was adopted in many countries and we were told by people like the criminal Anthony Fauci and his ilk that it was founded on science. Many schools could not reopen because they did not have the space for six-foot distancing. Then in March, 2021, after a year of six-foot 'science', a study published in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases* involving more than 500,000 students and almost 100,000 staff over 16 weeks revealed no significant difference in 'Covid' cases between six feet and three feet and Fauci changed his tune. Now three feet was okay. There is no difference between six feet and three *inches* when there is no 'virus' and they got away with six feet for psychological reasons for as long as they could. I hear journalists and others talk about 'unintended consequences' of lockdown. They are not *unintended* at all; they have been coldly-calculated for a specific outcome of human control and that's why super-psychopaths like Gates have called for them so vehemently. Super-psychopath psychologists have demanded them and psychopathic or clueless, spineless, politicians have gone along with them by 'following the science'. But it's not science at all. 'Science' is not what is; it's only what people can be manipulated to believe it is. The whole 'Covid' catastrophe is

founded on mind control. Three word or three statement mantras issued by the UK government are a well-known mind control technique and so we've had 'Stay home/protect the NHS/save lives', 'Stay alert/control the virus/save lives' and 'hands/face/space'. One of the most vocal proponents of extreme 'Covid' rules in the UK has been Professor Susan Michie, a member of the British Communist Party, who is not a medical professional. Michie is the director of the Centre for Behaviour Change at University College London. She is a *behavioural psychologist* and another filthy rich 'Marxist' who praised China's draconian lockdown. She was known by fellow students at Oxford University as 'Stalin's nanny' for her extreme Marxism. Michie is an influential member of the UK government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and behavioural manipulation groups which have dominated 'Covid' policy. She is a consultant adviser to the World Health Organization on 'Covid-19' and behaviour. Why the hell are lockdowns anything to do with her when they are claimed to be about health? Why does a behavioural psychologist from a group charged with changing the behaviour of the public want lockdown, human isolation and mandatory masks? Does that question really need an answer? Michie *absolutely* has to explain herself before a Nuremberg court when humanity takes back its world again and even more so when you see the consequences of masks that she demands are compulsory. This is a Michie classic:

The benefits of getting primary school children to wear masks is that regardless of what little degree of transmission is occurring in those age groups it could help normalise the practice. Young children wearing masks may be more likely to get their families to accept masks.

Those words alone should carry a prison sentence when you ponder on the callous disregard for children involved and what a statement it makes about the mind and motivations of Susan Michie. What a lovely lady and what she said there encapsulates the mentality of the psychopaths behind the 'Covid' horror. Let us compare what Michie said with a countrywide study in Germany published at [researchsquare.com](https://www.researchsquare.com) involving 25,000 school children and 17,854 health complaints submitted by parents. Researchers

found that masks are harming children physically, psychologically, and behaviourally with 24 health issues associated with mask wearing. They include: shortness of breath (29.7%); dizziness (26.4%); increased headaches (53%); difficulty concentrating (50%); drowsiness or fatigue (37%); and malaise (42%). Nearly a third of children experienced more sleep issues than before and a quarter developed new fears. Researchers found health issues and other impairments in 68 percent of masked children covering their faces for an average of 4.5 hours a day. Hundreds of those taking part experienced accelerated respiration, tightness in the chest, weakness, and short-term impairment of consciousness. A reminder of what Michie said again:

The benefits of getting primary school children to wear masks is that regardless of what little degree of transmission is occurring in those age groups it could help normalise the practice. Young children wearing masks may be more likely to get their families to accept masks.

Psychopaths in government and psychology now have children and young people – plus all the adults – wearing masks for hours on end while clueless teachers impose the will of the psychopaths on the young they should be protecting. What the hell are parents doing?

Cult lab rats

We have some schools already imposing on students microchipped buzzers that activate when they get 'too close' to their pals in the way they do with lab rats. How apt. To the Cult and its brain-dead servants our children *are* lab rats being conditioned to be unquestioning, dehumanised slaves for the rest of their lives. Children and young people are being weaned and frightened away from the most natural human instincts including closeness and touch. I have tracked in the books over the years how schools were banning pupils from greeting each other with a hug and the whole Cult-induced Me Too movement has terrified men and boys from a relaxed and natural interaction with female friends and work colleagues to the point where many men try never to be in a room

alone with a woman that's not their partner. Airhead celebrities have as always played their virtue-signalling part in making this happen with their gross exaggeration. For every monster like Harvey Weinstein there are at least tens of thousands of men that don't treat women like that; but everyone must be branded the same and policy changed for them as well as the monster. I am going to be using the word 'dehumanise' many times in this chapter because that is what the Cult is seeking to do and it goes very deep as we shall see. Don't let them kid you that social distancing is planned to end one day. That's not the idea. We are seeing more governments and companies funding and producing wearable gadgets to keep people apart and they would not be doing that if this was meant to be short-term. A tech start-up company backed by GCHQ, the British Intelligence and military surveillance headquarters, has created a social distancing wrist sensor that alerts people when they get too close to others. The CIA has also supported tech companies developing similar devices. The wearable sensor was developed by Tended, one of a number of start-up companies supported by GCHQ (see the CIA and DARPA). The device can be worn on the wrist or as a tag on the waistband and will vibrate whenever someone wearing the device breaches social distancing and gets anywhere near natural human contact. The company had a lucky break in that it was developing a distancing sensor when the 'Covid' hoax arrived which immediately provided a potentially enormous market. How fortunate. The government in big-time Cult-controlled Ontario in Canada is investing \$2.5 million in wearable contact tracing technology that 'will alert users if they may have been exposed to the Covid-19 in the workplace and will beep or vibrate if they are within six feet of another person'. Facedrive Inc., the technology company behind this, was founded in 2016 with funding from the Ontario Together Fund and obviously they, too, had a prophet on the board of directors. The human surveillance and control technology is called TraceSCAN and would be worn by the human cyborgs in places such as airports, workplaces, construction sites, care homes and ... *schools*.

I emphasise schools with children and young people the prime targets. You know what is planned for society as a whole if you keep your eyes on the schools. They have always been places where the state program the next generation of slaves to be its compliant worker-ants – or Woker-ants these days; but in the mist of the ‘Covid’ madness they have been transformed into mind laboratories on a scale never seen before. Teachers and head teachers are just as programmed as the kids – often more so. Children are kept apart from human interaction by walk lanes, classroom distancing, staggered meal times, masks, and the rolling-out of buzzer systems. Schools are now physically laid out as a laboratory maze for lab-rats. Lunatics at a school in Anchorage, Alaska, who should be prosecuted for child abuse, took away desks and forced children to kneel (know your place) on a mat for five hours a day while wearing a mask and using their chairs as a desk. How this was supposed to impact on a ‘virus’ only these clinically insane people can tell you and even then it would be clap-trap. The school banned recess (interaction), art classes (creativity), and physical exercise (getting body and mind moving out of inertia). Everyone behind this outrage should be in jail or better still a mental institution. The behavioural manipulators are all for this dystopian approach to schools. Professor Susan Michie, the mind-doctor and British Communist Party member, said it was wrong to say that schools were safe. They had to be made so by ‘distancing’, masks and ventilation (sitting all day in the cold). I must ask this lady round for dinner on a night I know I am going to be out and not back for weeks. She probably wouldn’t be able to make it, anyway, with all the visits to her own psychologist she must have block-booked.

Masking identity

I know how shocking it must be for you that a behaviour manipulator like Michie wants everyone to wear masks which have long been a feature of mind-control programs like the infamous MKUltra in the United States, but, there we are. We live and learn. I spent many years from 1996 to right across the millennium

researching mind control in detail on both sides of the Atlantic and elsewhere. I met a large number of mind-control survivors and many had been held captive in body and mind by MKUltra. MK stands for mind-control, but employs the German spelling in deference to the Nazis spirited out of Germany at the end of World War Two by Operation Paperclip in which the US authorities, with help from the Vatican, transported Nazi mind-controllers and engineers to America to continue their work. Many of them were behind the creation of NASA and they included Nazi scientist and SS officer Wernher von Braun who swapped designing V-2 rockets to bombard London with designing the Saturn V rockets that powered the NASA moon programme's Apollo craft. I think I may have mentioned that the Cult has no borders. Among Paperclip escapees was Josef Mengele, the Angel of Death in the Nazi concentration camps where he conducted mind and genetic experiments on children often using twins to provide a control twin to measure the impact of his 'work' on the other. If you want to observe the Cult mentality in all its extremes of evil then look into the life of Mengele. I have met many people who suffered mercilessly under Mengele in the United States where he operated under the name Dr Greene and became a stalwart of MKUltra programming and torture. Among his locations was the underground facility in the Mojave Desert in California called the China Lake Naval Weapons Station which is almost entirely below the surface. My books *The Biggest Secret*, *Children of the Matrix* and *The Perception Deception* have the detailed background to MKUltra.

The best-known MKUltra survivor is American Cathy O'Brien. I first met her and her late partner Mark Phillips at a conference in Colorado in 1996. Mark helped her escape and deprogram from decades of captivity in an offshoot of MKUltra known as Project Monarch in which 'sex slaves' were provided for the rich and famous including Father George Bush, Dick Cheney and the Clintons. Read Cathy and Mark's book *Trance-Formation of America* and if you are new to this you will be shocked to the core. I read it in 1996 shortly before, with the usual synchronicity of my life, I found

myself given a book table at the conference right next to hers. MKUltra never ended despite being very publicly exposed (only a small part of it) in the 1970s and continues in other guises. I am still in touch with Cathy. She contacted me during 2020 after masks became compulsory in many countries to tell me how they were used as part of MKUltra programming. I had been observing 'Covid regulations' and the relationship between authority and public for months. I saw techniques that I knew were employed on individuals in MKUltra being used on the global population. I had read many books and manuals on mind control including one called *Silent Weapons for Quiet Wars* which came to light in the 1980s and was a guide on how to perceptually program on a mass scale. 'Silent Weapons' refers to mind-control. I remembered a line from the manual as governments, medical authorities and law enforcement agencies have so obviously talked to – or rather at – the adult population since the 'Covid' hoax began as if they are children. The document said:

If a person is spoken to by a T.V. advertiser as if he were a twelve-year-old, then, due to suggestibility, he will, with a certain probability, respond or react to that suggestion with the uncritical response of a twelve-year-old and will reach in to his economic reservoir and deliver its energy to buy that product on impulse when he passes it in the store.

That's why authority has spoken to adults like children since all this began.

Why did Michael Jackson wear masks?

Every aspect of the 'Covid' narrative has mind-control as its central theme. Cathy O'Brien wrote an article for davidicke.com about the connection between masks and mind control. Her daughter Kelly who I first met in the 1990s was born while Cathy was still held captive in MKUltra. Kelly was forced to wear a mask as part of her programming from the age of *two* to dehumanise her, target her sense of individuality and reduce the amount of oxygen her brain and body received. *Bingo*. This is the real reason for compulsory

masks, why they have been enforced en masse, and why they seek to increase the number they demand you wear. First one, then two, with one disgraceful alleged 'doctor' recommending four which is nothing less than a death sentence. Where and how often they must be worn is being expanded for the purpose of mass mind control and damaging respiratory health which they can call 'Covid-19'. Canada's government headed by the man-child Justin Trudeau, says it's fine for children of two and older to wear masks. An insane 'study' in Italy involving just 47 children concluded there was no problem for babies as young as *four months* wearing them. Even after people were 'vaccinated' they were still told to wear masks by the criminal that is Anthony Fauci. Cathy wrote that mandating masks is allowing the authorities literally to control the air we breathe which is what was done in MKUltra. You might recall how the singer Michael Jackson wore masks and there is a reason for that. He was subjected to MKUltra mind control through Project Monarch and his psyche was scrambled by these simpletons. Cathy wrote:

In MKUltra Project Monarch mind control, Michael Jackson had to wear a mask to silence his voice so he could not reach out for help. Remember how he developed that whisper voice when he wasn't singing? Masks control the mind from the outside in, like the redefining of words is doing. By controlling what we can and cannot say for fear of being labeled racist or beaten, for example, it ultimately controls thought that drives our words and ultimately actions (or lack thereof).

Likewise, a mask muffles our speech so that we are not heard, which controls voice ... words ... mind. This is Mind Control. Masks are an obvious mind control device, and I am disturbed so many people are complying on a global scale. Masks depersonalize while making a person feel as though they have no voice. It is a barrier to others. People who would never choose to comply but are forced to wear a mask in order to keep their job, and ultimately their family fed, are compromised. They often feel shame and are subdued. People have stopped talking with each other while media controls the narrative.

The 'no voice' theme has often become literal with train passengers told not to speak to each other in case they pass on the 'virus', singing banned for the same reason and bonkers California officials telling people riding roller coasters that they cannot shout and scream. Cathy said she heard every day from healed MKUltra survivors who cannot wear a mask without flashing back on ways

their breathing was controlled – ‘from ball gags and penises to water boarding’. She said that through the years when she saw images of people in China wearing masks ‘due to pollution’ that it was really to control their oxygen levels. ‘I knew it was as much of a population control mechanism of depersonalisation as are burkas’, she said. Masks are another Chinese communist/fascist method of control that has been swept across the West as the West becomes China at lightning speed since we entered 2020.

Mask-19

There are other reasons for mandatory masks and these include destroying respiratory health to call it ‘Covid-19’ and stunting brain development of children and the young. Dr Margarite Griesz-Brisson MD, PhD, is a Consultant Neurologist and Neurophysiologist and the Founder and Medical Director of the London Neurology and Pain Clinic. Her CV goes down the street and round the corner. She is clearly someone who cares about people and won’t parrot the propaganda. Griesz-Brisson has a PhD in pharmacology, with special interest in neurotoxicology, environmental medicine, neuroregeneration and neuroplasticity (the way the brain can change in the light of information received). She went public in October, 2020, with a passionate warning about the effects of mask-wearing laws:

The reinhalation of our exhaled air will without a doubt create oxygen deficiency and a flooding of carbon dioxide. We know that the human brain is very sensitive to oxygen deprivation. There are nerve cells for example in the hippocampus that can’t be longer than 3 minutes without oxygen – they cannot survive. The acute warning symptoms are headaches, drowsiness, dizziness, issues in concentration, slowing down of reaction time – reactions of the cognitive system.

Oh, I know, let’s tell bus, truck and taxi drivers to wear them and people working machinery. How about pilots, doctors and police? Griesz-Brisson makes the important point that while the symptoms she mentions may fade as the body readjusts this does not alter the fact that people continue to operate in oxygen deficit with long list of

potential consequences. She said it was well known that neurodegenerative diseases take years or decades to develop. 'If today you forget your phone number, the breakdown in your brain would have already started 20 or 30 years ago.' She said degenerative processes in your brain are getting amplified as your oxygen deprivation continues through wearing a mask. Nerve cells in the brain are unable to divide themselves normally in these circumstances and lost nerve cells will no longer be regenerated. 'What is gone is gone.' Now consider that people like shop workers and *schoolchildren* are wearing masks for hours every day. What in the name of sanity is going to be happening to them? 'I do not wear a mask, I need my brain to think', Griesz-Brisson said, 'I want to have a clear head when I deal with my patients and not be in a carbon dioxide-induced anaesthesia'. If you are told to wear a mask anywhere ask the organisation, police, store, whatever, for their risk assessment on the dangers and negative effects on mind and body of enforcing mask-wearing. They won't have one because it has never been done not even by government. All of them must be subject to class-action lawsuits as the consequences come to light. They don't do mask risk assessments for an obvious reason. They know what the conclusions would be and independent scientific studies that *have* been done tell a horror story of consequences.

'Masks are criminal'

Dr Griesz-Brisson said that for children and adolescents, masks are an absolute no-no. They had an extremely active and adaptive immune system and their brain was incredibly active with so much to learn. 'The child's brain, or the youth's brain, is thirsting for oxygen.' The more metabolically active an organ was, the more oxygen it required; and in children and adolescents every organ was metabolically active. Griesz-Brisson said that to deprive a child's or adolescent's brain of oxygen, or to restrict it in any way, was not only dangerous to their health, it was absolutely criminal. 'Oxygen deficiency inhibits the development of the brain, and the damage that has taken place as a result CANNOT be reversed.' Mind

manipulators of MKUltra put masks on two-year-olds they wanted to neurologically rewire and you can see why. Griesz-Brisson said a child needs the brain to learn and the brain needs oxygen to function. 'We don't need a clinical study for that. This is simple, indisputable physiology.' Consciously and purposely induced oxygen deficiency was an absolutely deliberate health hazard, and an absolute medical contraindication which means that 'this drug, this therapy, this method or measure should not be used, and is not allowed to be used'. To coerce an entire population to use an absolute medical contraindication by force, she said, there had to be definite and serious reasons and the reasons must be presented to competent interdisciplinary and independent bodies to be verified and authorised. She had this warning of the consequences that were coming if mask wearing continued:

When, in ten years, dementia is going to increase exponentially, and the younger generations couldn't reach their god-given potential, it won't help to say 'we didn't need the masks'. I know how damaging oxygen deprivation is for the brain, cardiologists know how damaging it is for the heart, pulmonologists know how damaging it is for the lungs. Oxygen deprivation damages every single organ. Where are our health departments, our health insurance, our medical associations? It would have been their duty to be vehemently against the lockdown and to stop it and stop it from the very beginning.

Why do the medical boards issue punishments to doctors who give people exemptions? Does the person or the doctor seriously have to prove that oxygen deprivation harms people? What kind of medicine are our doctors and medical associations representing? Who is responsible for this crime? The ones who want to enforce it? The ones who let it happen and play along, or the ones who don't prevent it?

All of the organisations and people she mentions there either answer directly to the Cult or do whatever hierarchical levels above them tell them to do. The outcome of both is the same. 'It's not about masks, it's not about viruses, it's certainly not about your health', Griesz-Brisson said. 'It is about much, much more. I am not participating. I am not afraid.' They were taking our air to breathe and there was no unfounded medical exemption from face masks. Oxygen deprivation was dangerous for every single brain. It had to be the free decision of every human being whether they want to

wear a mask that was absolutely ineffective to protect themselves from a virus. She ended by rightly identifying where the responsibility lies for all this:

The imperative of the hour is personal responsibility. We are responsible for what we think, not the media. We are responsible for what we do, not our superiors. We are responsible for our health, not the World Health Organization. And we are responsible for what happens in our country, not the government.

Halle-bloody-lujah.

But surgeons wear masks, right?

Independent studies of mask-wearing have produced a long list of reports detailing mental, emotional and physical dangers. What a definition of insanity to see police officers imposing mask-wearing on the public which will cumulatively damage their health while the police themselves wear masks that will cumulatively damage *their* health. It's utter madness and both public and police do this because 'the government says so' – yes a government of brain-donor idiots like UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock reading the 'follow the science' scripts of psychopathic, lunatic psychologists. The response you get from Stockholm syndrome sufferers defending the very authorities that are destroying them and their families is that 'surgeons wear masks'. This is considered the game, set and match that they must work and don't cause oxygen deficit. Well, actually, scientific studies have shown that they *do* and oxygen levels are monitored in operating theatres to compensate. Surgeons wear masks to stop spittle and such like dropping into open wounds – not to stop 'viral particles' which are so miniscule they can only be seen through an electron microscope. Holes in the masks are significantly bigger than 'viral particles' and if you sneeze or cough they will breach the mask. I watched an incredibly disingenuous 'experiment' that claimed to prove that masks work in catching 'virus' material from the mouth and nose. They did this with a slow motion camera and the mask did block big stuff which stayed inside the mask and

against the face to be breathed in or cause infections on the face as we have seen with many children. 'Viral particles', however, would never have been picked up by the camera as they came through the mask when they are far too small to be seen. The 'experiment' was therefore disingenuous *and* useless.

Studies have concluded that wearing masks in operating theatres (and thus elsewhere) make no difference to preventing infection while the opposite is true with toxic shite building up in the mask and this had led to an explosion in tooth decay and gum disease dubbed by dentists 'mask mouth'. You might have seen the Internet video of a furious American doctor urging people to take off their masks after a four-year-old patient had been rushed to hospital the night before and nearly died with a lung infection that doctors sourced to mask wearing. A study in the journal *Cancer Discovery* found that inhalation of harmful microbes can contribute to advanced stage lung cancer in adults and long-term use of masks can help breed dangerous pathogens. Microbiologists have said frequent mask wearing creates a moist environment in which microbes can grow and proliferate before entering the lungs. The Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health, or CADTH, a Canadian national organisation that provides research and analysis to healthcare decision-makers, said this as long ago as 2013 in a report entitled 'Use of Surgical Masks in the Operating Room: A Review of the Clinical Effectiveness and Guidelines'. It said:

- No evidence was found to support the use of surgical face masks to reduce the frequency of surgical site infections
- No evidence was found on the effectiveness of wearing surgical face masks to protect staff from infectious material in the operating room.
- Guidelines recommend the use of surgical face masks by staff in the operating room to protect both operating room staff and patients (despite the lack of evidence).

We were told that the world could go back to 'normal' with the arrival of the 'vaccines'. When they came, fraudulent as they are, the story changed as I knew that it would. We are in the midst of transforming 'normal', not going back to it. Mary Ramsay, head of immunisation at Public Health England, echoed the words of US criminal Anthony Fauci who said masks and other regulations must stay no matter if people are vaccinated. The Fauci idiot continued to wear two masks – different colours so both could be clearly seen – after he *claimed* to have been vaccinated. Senator Rand Paul told Fauci in one exchange that his double-masks were 'theatre' and he was right. It's all theatre. Mary Ramsay back-tracked on the vaccine-return-to-normal theme when she said the public may need to wear masks and social-distance for years despite the jabs. 'People have got used to those lower-level restrictions now, and [they] can live with them', she said telling us what the idea has been all along. 'The vaccine does not give you a pass, even if you have had it, you must continue to follow all the guidelines' said a Public Health England statement which reneged on what we had been told before and made having the 'vaccine' irrelevant to 'normality' even by the official story. Spain's fascist government trumped everyone by passing a law mandating the wearing of masks on the beach and even when swimming in the sea. The move would have devastated what's left of the Spanish tourist industry, posed potential breathing dangers to swimmers and had Northern European sunbathers walking around with their forehead brown and the rest of their face white as a sheet. The ruling was so crazy that it had to be retracted after pressure from public and tourist industry, but it confirmed where the Cult wants to go with masks and how clinically insane authority has become. The determination to make masks permanent and hide the serious dangers to body and mind can be seen in the censorship of scientist Professor Denis Rancourt by Bill Gates-funded academic publishing website ResearchGate over his papers exposing the dangers and uselessness of masks. Rancourt said:

ResearchGate today has permanently locked my account, which I have had since 2015. Their reasons graphically show the nature of their attack against democracy, and their corruption of

science ... By their obscene non-logic, a scientific review of science articles reporting on harms caused by face masks has a 'potential to cause harm'. No criticism of the psychological device (face masks) is tolerated, if the said criticism shows potential to influence public policy.

This is what happens in a fascist world.

Where are the 'greens' (again)?

Other dangers of wearing masks especially regularly relate to the inhalation of minute plastic fibres into the lungs and the deluge of discarded masks in the environment and oceans. Estimates predicted that more than 1.5 billion disposable masks will end up in the world's oceans every year polluting the water with tons of plastic and endangering marine wildlife. Studies project that humans are using 129 billion face masks each month worldwide – about three million a minute. Most are disposable and made from plastic, non-biodegradable microfibers that break down into smaller plastic particles that become widespread in ecosystems. They are littering cities, clogging sewage channels and turning up in bodies of water. I have written in other books about the immense amounts of microplastics from endless sources now being absorbed into the body. Rolf Halden, director of the Arizona State University (ASU) Biodesign Center for Environmental Health Engineering, was the senior researcher in a 2020 study that analysed 47 human tissue samples and found microplastics in all of them. 'We have detected these chemicals of plastics in every single organ that we have investigated', he said. I wrote in *The Answer* about the world being deluged with microplastics. A study by the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) found that people are consuming on average every week some 2,000 tiny pieces of plastic mostly through water and also through marine life and the air. Every year humans are ingesting enough microplastics to fill a heaped dinner plate and in a life-time of 79 years it is enough to fill two large waste bins. Marco Lambertini, WWF International director general said: 'Not only are plastics polluting our oceans and waterways and killing marine life – it's in all of us and we can't escape consuming plastics,' American

geologists found tiny plastic fibres, beads and shards in rainwater samples collected from the remote slopes of the Rocky Mountain National Park near Denver, Colorado. Their report was headed: 'It is raining plastic.' Rachel Adams, senior lecturer in Biomedical Science at Cardiff Metropolitan University, said that among health consequences are internal inflammation and immune responses to a 'foreign body'. She further pointed out that microplastics become carriers of toxins including mercury, pesticides and dioxins (a known cause of cancer and reproductive and developmental problems). These toxins accumulate in the fatty tissues once they enter the body through microplastics. Now this is being compounded massively by people putting plastic on their face and throwing it away.

Workers exposed to polypropylene plastic fibres known as 'flock' have developed 'flock worker's lung' from inhaling small pieces of the flock fibres which can damage lung tissue, reduce breathing capacity and exacerbate other respiratory problems. *Now ...* commonly used surgical masks have three layers of melt-blown textiles made of ... polypropylene. We have billions of people putting these microplastics against their mouth, nose and face for hours at a time day after day in the form of masks. How does anyone think that will work out? I mean – what could possibly go wrong? We posted a number of scientific studies on this at davidicke.com, but when I went back to them as I was writing this book the links to the science research website where they were hosted were dead. Anything that challenges the official narrative in any way is either censored or vilified. The official narrative is so unsupportable by the evidence that only deleting the truth can protect it. A study by Chinese scientists still survived – with the usual twist which it why it was still active, I guess. Yes, they found that virtually all the masks they tested increased the daily intake of microplastic fibres, but people should still wear them because the danger from the 'virus' was worse said the crazy 'team' from the Institute of Hydrobiology in Wuhan. Scientists first discovered microplastics in lung tissue of some patients who died of lung cancer

in the 1990s. Subsequent studies have confirmed the potential health damage with the plastic degrading slowly and remaining in the lungs to accumulate in volume. Wuhan researchers used a machine simulating human breathing to establish that masks shed up to nearly 4,000 microplastic fibres in a month with reused masks producing more. Scientists said some masks are laced with toxic chemicals and a variety of compounds seriously restricted for both health and environmental reasons. They include cobalt (used in blue dye) and formaldehyde known to cause watery eyes, burning sensations in the eyes, nose, and throat, plus coughing, wheezing and nausea. No – that must be ‘Covid-19’.

Mask ‘worms’

There is another and potentially even more sinister content of masks. Mostly new masks of different makes filmed under a microscope around the world have been found to contain strange black fibres or ‘worms’ that appear to move or ‘crawl’ by themselves and react to heat and water. The nearest I have seen to them are the self-replicating fibres that are pulled out through the skin of those suffering from Morgellons disease which has been connected to the phenomena of ‘chemtrails’ which I will bring into the story later on. Morgellons fibres continue to grow outside the body and have a form of artificial intelligence. Black ‘worm’ fibres in masks have that kind of feel to them and there is a nanotechnology technique called ‘worm micelles’ which carry and release drugs or anything else you want to deliver to the body. For sure the suppression of humanity by mind altering drugs is the Cult agenda big time and the more excuses they can find to gain access to the body the more opportunities there are to make that happen whether through ‘vaccines’ or masks pushed against the mouth and nose for hours on end.

So let us summarise the pros and cons of masks:

Against masks: Breathing in your own carbon dioxide; depriving the body and brain of sufficient oxygen; build-up of toxins in the mask that can be breathed into the lungs and cause rashes on the face and 'mask-mouth'; breathing microplastic fibres and toxic chemicals into the lungs; dehumanisation and deleting individualisation by literally making people faceless; destroying human emotional interaction through facial expression and deleting parental connection with their babies which look for guidance to their facial expression.

For masks: They don't protect you from a 'virus' that doesn't exist and even if it did 'viral' particles are so minute they are smaller than the holes in the mask.

Governments, police, supermarkets, businesses, transport companies, and all the rest who seek to impose masks have done no risk assessment on their consequences for health and psychology and are now open to group lawsuits when the impact becomes clear with a cumulative epidemic of respiratory and other disease. Authorities will try to exploit these effects and hide the real cause by dubbing them 'Covid-19'. Can you imagine setting out to force the population to wear health-destroying masks without doing any assessment of the risks? It is criminal and it is evil, but then how many people targeted in this way, who see their children told to wear them all day at school, have asked for a risk assessment? Billions can't be imposed upon by the few unless the billions allow it. Oh, yes, with just a tinge of irony, 85 percent of all masks made worldwide come from *China*.

Wash your hands in toxic shite

'Covid' rules include the use of toxic sanitisers and again the health consequences of constantly applying toxins to be absorbed through the skin is obvious to any level of Renegade Mind. America's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said that sanitisers are drugs and issued a warning about 75 dangerous brands which contain

methanol used in antifreeze and can cause death, kidney damage and blindness. The FDA circulated the following warning even for those brands that it claims to be safe:

Store hand sanitizer out of the reach of pets and children, and children should use it only with adult supervision. Do not drink hand sanitizer. This is particularly important for young children, especially toddlers, who may be attracted by the pleasant smell or brightly colored bottles of hand sanitizer.

Drinking even a small amount of hand sanitizer can cause alcohol poisoning in children. (However, there is no need to be concerned if your children eat with or lick their hands after using hand sanitizer.) During this coronavirus pandemic, poison control centers have had an increase in calls about accidental ingestion of hand sanitizer, so it is important that adults monitor young children's use.

Do not allow pets to swallow hand sanitizer. If you think your pet has eaten something potentially dangerous, call your veterinarian or a pet poison control center right away. Hand sanitizer is flammable and should be stored away from heat and flames. When using hand sanitizer, rub your hands until they feel completely dry before performing activities that may involve heat, sparks, static electricity, or open flames.

There you go, perfectly safe, then, and that's without even a mention of the toxins absorbed through the skin. Come on kids – sanitise your hands everywhere you go. It will save you from the 'virus'. Put all these elements together of the 'Covid' normal and see how much health and psychology is being cumulatively damaged, even devastated, to 'protect your health'. Makes sense, right? They are only imposing these things because they care, right? *Right?*

Submitting to insanity

Psychological reframing of the population goes very deep and is done in many less obvious ways. I hear people say how contradictory and crazy 'Covid' rules are and how they are ever changing. This is explained away by dismissing those involved as idiots. It is a big mistake. The Cult is delighted if its cold calculation is perceived as incompetence and idiocy when it is anything but. Oh, yes, there are idiots within the system – lots of them – but they are *administering* the Cult agenda, mostly unknowingly. They are not deciding and dictating it. The bulwark against tyranny is self-

respect, always has been, always will be. It is self-respect that has broken every tyranny in history. By its very nature self-respect will not bow to oppression and its perpetrators. There is so little self-respect that it's always the few that overturn dictators. Many may eventually follow, but the few with the iron spines (self-respect) kick it off and generate the momentum. The Cult targets self-respect in the knowledge that once this has gone only submission remains. Crazy, contradictory, ever-changing 'Covid' rules are systematically applied by psychologists to delete self-respect. They *want* you to see that the rules make no sense. It is one thing to decide to do something when *you* have made the choice based on evidence and logic. You still retain your self-respect. It is quite another when you can see what you are being told to do is insane, ridiculous and makes no sense, and *yet you still do it*. Your self-respect is extinguished and this has been happening as ever more obviously stupid and nonsensical things have been demanded and the great majority have complied even when they can see they are stupid and nonsensical.

People walk around in face-nappies knowing they are damaging their health and make no difference to a 'virus'. They do it in fear of not doing it. I know it's daft, but I'll do it anyway. When that happens something dies inside of you and submissive reframing has begun. Next there's a need to hide from yourself that you have conceded your self-respect and you convince yourself that you have not really submitted to fear and intimidation. You begin to believe that you are complying with craziness because it's the right thing to do. When first you concede your self-respect of $2+2 = 4$ to $2+2 = 5$ you *know* you are compromising your self-respect. Gradually to avoid facing that fact you begin to *believe* that $2+2=5$. You have been reframed and I have been watching this process happening in the human psyche on an industrial scale. The Cult is working to break your spirit and one of its major tools in that war is humiliation. I read how former American soldier Bradley Manning (later Chelsea Manning after a sex-change) was treated after being jailed for supplying WikiLeaks with documents exposing the enormity of

government and elite mendacity. Manning was isolated in solitary confinement for eight months, put under 24-hour surveillance, forced to hand over clothing before going to bed, and stand naked for every roll call. This is systematic humiliation. The introduction of anal swab 'Covid' tests in China has been done for the same reason to delete self-respect and induce compliant submission. Anal swabs are mandatory for incoming passengers in parts of China and American diplomats have said they were forced to undergo the indignity which would have been calculated humiliation by the Cult-owned Chinese government that has America in its sights.

Government-people: An abusive relationship

Spirit-breaking psychological techniques include giving people hope and apparent respite from tyranny only to take it away again. This happened in the UK during Christmas, 2020, when the psychopsychologists and their political lackeys announced an easing of restrictions over the holiday only to reimpose them almost immediately on the basis of yet another lie. There is a big psychological difference between getting used to oppression and being given hope of relief only to have that dashed. Psychologists know this and we have seen the technique used repeatedly. Then there is traumatising people before you introduce more extreme regulations that require compliance. A perfect case was the announcement by the dark and sinister Whitty and Vallance in the UK that 'new data' predicted that 4,000 could die every day over the winter of 2020/2021 if we did not lockdown again. I think they call it lying and after traumatising people with that claim out came Jackboot Johnson the next day with new curbs on human freedom. Psychologists know that a frightened and traumatised mind becomes suggestable to submission and behaviour reframing. Underpinning all this has been to make people fearful and suspicious of each other and see themselves as a potential danger to others. In league with deleted self-respect you have the perfect psychological recipe for self-loathing. The relationship between authority and public is now demonstrably the same as that of

subservience to an abusive partner. These are signs of an abusive relationship explained by psychologist Leslie Becker-Phelps:

Psychological and emotional abuse: Undermining a partner's self-worth with verbal attacks, name-calling, and belittling. Humiliating the partner in public, unjustly accusing them of having an affair, or interrogating them about their every behavior. Keeping partner confused or off balance by saying they were just kidding or blaming the partner for 'making' them act this way ... Feigning in public that they care while turning against them in private. This leads to victims frequently feeling confused, incompetent, unworthy, hopeless, and chronically self-doubting. [Apply these techniques to how governments have treated the population since New Year, 2020, and the parallels are obvious.]

Physical abuse: The abuser might physically harm their partner in a range of ways, such as grabbing, hitting, punching, or shoving them. They might throw objects at them or harm them with a weapon. [Observe the physical harm imposed by masks, lockdown, and so on.]

Threats and intimidation: One way abusers keep their partners in line is by instilling fear. They might be verbally threatening, or give threatening looks or gestures. Abusers often make it known that they are tracking their partner's every move. They might destroy their partner's possessions, threaten to harm them, or threaten to harm their family members. Not surprisingly, victims of this abuse often feel anxiety, fear, and panic. [No words necessary.]

Isolation: Abusers often limit their partner's activities, forbidding them to talk or interact with friends or family. They might limit access to a car or even turn off their phone. All of this might be done by physically holding them against their will, but is often accomplished through psychological abuse and intimidation. The more isolated a person feels, the fewer resources they have to help gain perspective on their situation and to escape from it. [No words necessary.]

Economic abuse: Abusers often make their partners beholden to them for money by controlling access to funds of any kind. They might prevent their partner from getting a job or withhold access to money they earn from a job. This creates financial dependency that makes leaving the relationship very difficult. [See destruction of livelihoods and the proposed meagre 'guaranteed income' so long as you do whatever you are told.]

Using children: An abuser might disparage their partner's parenting skills, tell their children lies about their partner, threaten to take custody of their children, or threaten to harm their children. These tactics instil fear and often elicit compliance. [See reframed social service mafia and how children are being mercilessly abused by the state over 'Covid' while their parents look on too frightened to do anything.]

A further recurring trait in an abusive relationship is the abused blaming themselves for their abuse and making excuses for the abuser. We have the public blaming each other for lockdown abuse by government and many making excuses for the government while attacking those who challenge the government. How often we have heard authorities say that rules are being imposed or reimposed only because people have refused to 'behave' and follow the rules. We don't want to do it – it's *you*.

Renegade Minds are an antidote to all of these things. They will never concede their self-respect no matter what the circumstances. Even when apparent humiliation is heaped upon them they laugh in its face and reflect back the humiliation on the abuser where it belongs. Renegade Minds will never wear masks they know are only imposed to humiliate, suppress and damage both physically and psychologically. Consequences will take care of themselves and they will never break their spirit or cause them to concede to tyranny. UK newspaper columnist Peter Hitchens was one of the few in the mainstream media to speak out against lockdowns and forced vaccinations. He then announced he had taken the jab. He wanted to see family members abroad and he believed vaccine passports were inevitable even though they had not yet been introduced. Hitchens

has a questioning and critical mind, but not a Renegade one. If he had no amount of pressure would have made him concede. Hitchens excused his action by saying that the battle has been lost. Renegade Minds never accept defeat when freedom is at stake and even if they are the last one standing the self-respect of not submitting to tyranny is more important than any outcome or any consequence.

That's why Renegade Minds are the only minds that ever changed anything worth changing.

CHAPTER EIGHT

'Reframing' insanity

Insanity is relative. It depends on who has who locked in what cage
Ray Bradbury

Reframing' a mind means simply to change its perception and behaviour. This can be done subconsciously to such an extent that subjects have no idea they have been 'reframed' while to any observer changes in behaviour and attitudes are obvious.

Human society is being reframed on a ginormous scale since the start of 2020 and here we have the reason why psychologists rather than doctors have been calling the shots. Ask most people who have succumbed to 'Covid' reframing if they have changed and most will say 'no'; but they *have* and fundamentally. The Cult's long-game has been preparing for these times since way back and crucial to that has been to prepare both population and officialdom mentally and emotionally. To use the mind-control parlance they had to reframe the population with a mentality that would submit to fascism and reframe those in government and law enforcement to impose fascism or at least go along with it. The result has been the fact-deleted mindlessness of 'Wokeness' and officialdom that has either enthusiastically or unquestioningly imposed global tyranny demanded by reframed politicians on behalf of psychopathic and deeply evil cultists. 'Cognitive reframing' identifies and challenges the way someone sees the world in the form of situations, experiences and emotions and then restructures those perceptions to view the same set of circumstances in a different way. This can have

benefits if the attitudes are personally destructive while on the other side it has the potential for individual and collective mind control which the subject has no idea has even happened.

Cognitive therapy was developed in the 1960s by Aaron T. Beck who was born in Rhode Island in 1921 as the son of Jewish immigrants from the Ukraine. He became interested in the techniques as a treatment for depression. Beck's daughter Judith S. Beck is prominent in the same field and they founded the Beck Institute for Cognitive Behavior Therapy in Philadelphia in 1994. Cognitive reframing, however, began to be used worldwide by those with a very dark agenda. The Cult reframes politicians to change their attitudes and actions until they are completely at odds with what they once appeared to stand for. The same has been happening to government administrators at all levels, law enforcement, military and the human population. Cultists love mind control for two main reasons: It allows them to control what people think, do and say to secure agenda advancement and, by definition, it calms their legendary insecurity and fear of the unexpected. I have studied mind control since the time I travelled America in 1996. I may have been talking to next to no one in terms of an audience in those years, but my goodness did I gather a phenomenal amount of information and knowledge about so many things including the techniques of mind control. I have described this in detail in other books going back to *The Biggest Secret* in 1998. I met a very large number of people recovering from MKUltra and its offshoots and successors and I began to see how these same techniques were being used on the population in general. This was never more obvious than since the 'Covid' hoax began.

Reframing the enforcers

I have observed over the last two decades and more the very clear transformation in the dynamic between the police, officialdom and the public. I tracked this in the books as the relationship mutated from one of serving the public to seeing them as almost the enemy and certainly a lower caste. There has always been a class divide

based on income and always been some psychopathic, corrupt, and big-I-am police officers. This was different. Wholesale change was unfolding in the collective dynamic; it was less about money and far more about position and perceived power. An us-and-them was emerging. Noses were lifted skyward by government administration and law enforcement and their attitude to the public they were *supposed* to be serving changed to one of increasing contempt, superiority and control. The transformation was so clear and widespread that it had to be planned. Collective attitudes and dynamics do not change naturally and organically that quickly on that scale. I then came across an organisation in Britain called Common Purpose created in the late 1980s by Julia Middleton who would work in the office of Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott during the long and disastrous premiership of war criminal Tony Blair. When Blair speaks the Cult is speaking and the man should have been in jail a long time ago. Common Purpose proclaims itself to be one of the biggest 'leadership development' organisations in the world while functioning as a *charity* with all the financial benefits which come from that. It hosts 'leadership development' courses and programmes all over the world and claims to have 'brought together' what it calls 'leaders' from more than 100 countries on six continents. The modus operandi of Common Purpose can be compared with the work of the UK government's reframing network that includes the Behavioural Insights Team 'nudge unit' and 'Covid' reframing specialists at SPI-B. WikiLeaks described Common Purpose long ago as 'a hidden virus in our government and schools' which is unknown to the general public: 'It recruits and trains "leaders" to be loyal to the directives of Common Purpose and the EU, instead of to their own departments, which they then undermine or subvert, the NHS [National Health Service] being an example.' This is a vital point to understand the 'Covid' hoax. The NHS, and its equivalent around the world, has been utterly reframed in terms of administrators and much of the medical personnel with the transformation underpinned by recruitment policies. The outcome has been the criminal and psychopathic behaviour of the

NHS over 'Covid' and we have seen the same in every other major country. WikiLeaks said Common Purpose trainees are 'learning to rule without regard to democracy' and to usher in a police state (current events explained). Common Purpose operated like a 'glue' and had members in the NHS, BBC, police, legal profession, church, many of Britain's 7,000 quangos, local councils, the Civil Service, government ministries and Parliament, and controlled many RDA's (Regional Development Agencies). Here we have one answer for how and why British institutions and their like in other countries have changed so negatively in relation to the public. This further explains how and why the beyond-disgraceful reframed BBC has become a propaganda arm of 'Covid' fascism. They are all part of a network pursuing the same goal.

By 2019 Common Purpose was quoting a figure of 85,000 'leaders' that had attended its programmes. These 'students' of all ages are known as Common Purpose 'graduates' and they consist of government, state and local government officials and administrators, police chiefs and officers, and a whole range of others operating within the national, local and global establishment. Cressida Dick, Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police, is the Common Purpose graduate who was the 'Gold Commander' that oversaw what can only be described as the murder of Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes in 2005. He was held down by psychopathic police and shot seven times in the head by a psychopathic lunatic after being mistaken for a terrorist when he was just a bloke going about his day. Dick authorised officers to pursue and keep surveillance on de Menezes and ordered that he be stopped from entering the underground train system. Police psychopaths took her at her word clearly. She was 'disciplined' for this outrage by being *promoted* – eventually to the top of the 'Met' police where she has been a disaster. Many Chief Constables controlling the police in different parts of the UK are and have been Common Purpose graduates. I have heard the 'graduate' network described as a sort of Mafia or secret society operating within the fabric of government at all levels pursuing a collective policy

ingrained at Common Purpose training events. Founder Julia Middleton herself has said:

Locally and internationally, Common Purpose graduates will be 'lighting small fires' to create change in their organisations and communities ... The Common Purpose effect is best illustrated by the many stories of small changes brought about by leaders, who themselves have changed.

A Common Purpose mission statement declared:

Common Purpose aims to improve the way society works by expanding the vision, decision-making ability and influence of all kinds of leaders. The organisation runs a variety of educational programmes for leaders of all ages, backgrounds and sectors, in order to provide them with the inspirational, information and opportunities they need to change the world.

Yes, but into what? Since 2020 the answer has become clear.

NLP and the Delphi technique

Common Purpose would seem to be a perfect name or would common programming be better? One of the foundation methods of reaching 'consensus' (group think) is by setting the agenda theme and then encouraging, cajoling or pressuring everyone to agree a 'consensus' in line with the core theme promoted by Common Purpose. The methodology involves the 'Delphi technique', or an adaptation of it, in which opinions are expressed that are summarised by a 'facilitator or change agent' at each stage. Participants are 'encouraged' to modify their views in the light of what others have said. Stage by stage the former individual opinions are merged into group consensus which just happens to be what Common Purpose wants them to believe. A key part of this is to marginalise anyone refusing to concede to group think and turn the group against them to apply pressure to conform. We are seeing this very technique used on the general population to make 'Covid' group-thinkers hostile to those who have seen through the bullshit. People can be reframed by using perception manipulation methods such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) in which you change perception with the use of

carefully constructed language. An NLP website described the technique this way:

... A method of influencing brain behaviour (the 'neuro' part of the phrase) through the use of language (the 'linguistic' part) and other types of communication to enable a person to 'recode' the way the brain responds to stimuli (that's the 'programming') and manifest new and better behaviours. Neuro-Linguistic Programming often incorporates hypnosis and self-hypnosis to help achieve the change (or 'programming') that is wanted.

British alternative media operation UKColumn has done very detailed research into Common Purpose over a long period. I quoted co-founder and former naval officer Brian Gerrish in my book *Remember Who You Are*, published in 2011, as saying the following years before current times:

It is interesting that many of the mothers who have had children taken by the State speak of the Social Services people being icily cool, emotionless and, as two ladies said in slightly different words, '... like little robots'. We know that NLP is cumulative, so people can be given small imperceptible doses of NLP in a course here, another in a few months, next year etc. In this way, major changes are accrued in their personality, but the day by day change is almost unnoticeable.

In these and other ways 'graduates' have had their perceptions uniformly reframed and they return to their roles in the institutions of government, law enforcement, legal profession, military, 'education', the UK National Health Service and the whole swathe of the establishment structure to pursue a common agenda preparing for the 'post-industrial', 'post-democratic' society. I say 'preparing' but we are now there. 'Post-industrial' is code for the Great Reset and 'post-democratic' is 'Covid' fascism. UKColumn has spoken to partners of those who have attended Common Purpose 'training'. They have described how personalities and attitudes of 'graduates' changed very noticeably for the worse by the time they had completed the course. They had been 'reframed' and told they are the 'leaders' – the special ones – who know better than the population. There has also been the very demonstrable recruitment of psychopaths and narcissists into government administration at all

levels and law enforcement. If you want psychopathy hire psychopaths and you get a simple cause and effect. If you want administrators, police officers and 'leaders' to perceive the public as lesser beings who don't matter then employ narcissists. These personalities are identified using 'psychometrics' that identifies knowledge, abilities, attitudes and personality traits, mostly through carefully-designed questionnaires and tests. As this policy has passed through the decades we have had power-crazy, power-trippers appointed into law enforcement, security and government administration in preparation for current times and the dynamic between public and law enforcement/officialdom has been transformed. UKColumn's Brian Gerrish said of the narcissistic personality:

Their love of themselves and power automatically means that they will crush others who get in their way. I received a major piece of the puzzle when a friend pointed out that when they made public officials re-apply for their own jobs several years ago they were also required to do psychometric tests. This was undoubtedly the start of the screening process to get 'their' sort of people in post.

How obvious that has been since 2020 although it was clear what was happening long before if people paid attention to the changing public-establishment dynamic.

Change agents

At the centre of events in 'Covid' Britain is the National Health Service (NHS) which has behaved disgracefully in slavishly following the Cult agenda. The NHS management structure is awash with Common Purpose graduates or 'change agents' working to a common cause. Helen Bevan, a Chief of Service Transformation at the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, co-authored a document called 'Towards a million change agents, a review of the social movements literature: implications for large scale change in the NHS'. The document compared a project management approach to that of change and social movements where 'people change

themselves and each other – peer to peer’. Two definitions given for a ‘social movement’ were:

A group of people who consciously attempt to build a radically new social order; involves people of a broad range of social backgrounds; and deploys politically confrontational and socially disruptive tactics – Cyrus Zirakzadeh 1997

Collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities – Sidney Tarrow 1994

Helen Bevan wrote another NHS document in which she defined ‘framing’ as ‘the process by which leaders construct, articulate and put across their message in a powerful and compelling way in order to win people to their cause and call them to action’. I think I could come up with another definition that would be rather more accurate. The National Health Service and institutions of Britain and the wider world have been taken over by reframed ‘change agents’ and that includes everything from the United Nations to national governments, local councils and social services which have been kidnapping children from loving parents on an extraordinary and gathering scale on the road to the end of parenthood altogether. Children from loving homes are stolen and kidnapped by the state and put into the ‘care’ (inversion) of the local authority through council homes, foster parents and forced adoption. At the same time children are allowed to be abused without response while many are under council ‘care’. UKColumn highlighted the Common Purpose connection between South Yorkshire Police and Rotherham council officers in the case of the scandal in that area of the sexual exploitation of children to which the authorities turned not one blind eye, but both:

We were alarmed to discover that the Chief Executive, the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, the Manager for the Local Strategic Partnership, the Community Cohesion Manager, the Cabinet Member for Cohesion, the Chief Constable and his predecessor had all attended Leadership training courses provided by the pseudo-charity Common Purpose.

Once 'change agents' have secured positions of hire and fire within any organisation things start to move very quickly. Personnel are then hired and fired on the basis of whether they will work towards the agenda the change agent represents. If they do they are rapidly promoted even though they may be incompetent. Those more qualified and skilled who are pre-Common Purpose 'old school' see their careers stall and even disappear. This has been happening for decades in every institution of state, police, 'health' and social services and all of them have been transformed as a result in their attitudes to their jobs and the public. Medical professions, including nursing, which were once vocations for the caring now employ many cold, callous and couldn't give a shit personality types. The UKColumn investigation concluded:

By blurring the boundaries between people, professions, public and private sectors, responsibility and accountability, Common Purpose encourages 'graduates' to believe that as new selected leaders, they can work together, outside of the established political and social structures, to achieve a paradigm shift or CHANGE – so called 'Leading Beyond Authority'. In doing so, the allegiance of the individual becomes 'reframed' on CP colleagues and their NETWORK.

Reframing the Face-Nappies

Nowhere has this process been more obvious than in the police where recruitment of psychopaths and development of unquestioning mind-controlled group-thinkers have transformed law enforcement into a politically-correct 'Woke' joke and a travesty of what should be public service. Today they wear their face-nappies like good little gofers and enforce 'Covid' rules which are fascism under another name. Alongside the specifically-recruited psychopaths we have software minds incapable of free thought. Brian Gerrish again:

An example is the policeman who would not get on a bike for a press photo because he had not done the cycling proficiency course. Normal people say this is political correctness gone mad. Nothing could be further from the truth. The policeman has been reframed, and in his reality it is perfect common sense not to get on the bike 'because he hasn't done the cycling course'.

Another example of this is where the police would not rescue a boy from a pond until they had taken advice from above on the 'risk assessment'. A normal person would have arrived, perhaps thought of the risk for a moment, and dived in. To the police now 'reframed', they followed 'normal' procedure.

There are shocking cases of reframed ambulance crews doing the same. Sheer unthinking stupidity of London Face-Nappies headed by Common Purpose graduate Cressida Dick can be seen in their behaviour at a vigil in March, 2021, for a murdered woman, Sarah Everard. A police officer had been charged with the crime. Anyone with a brain would have left the vigil alone in the circumstances. Instead they 'manhandled' women to stop them breaking 'Covid rules' to betray classic reframing. Minds in the thrall of perception control have no capacity for seeing a situation on its merits and acting accordingly. 'Rules is rules' is their only mind-set. My father used to say that rules and regulations are for the guidance of the intelligent and the blind obedience of the idiot. Most of the intelligent, decent, coppers have gone leaving only the other kind and a few old school for whom the job must be a daily nightmare. The combination of psychopaths and rule-book software minds has been clearly on public display in the 'Covid' era with automaton robots in uniform imposing fascistic 'Covid' regulations on the population without any personal initiative or judging situations on their merits. There are thousands of examples around the world, but I'll make my point with the infamous Derbyshire police in the English East Midlands – the ones who think pouring dye into beauty spots and using drones to track people walking in the countryside away from anyone is called 'policing'. To them there are rules decreed by the government which they have to enforce and in their bewildered state a group gathering in a closed space and someone walking alone in the countryside are the same thing. It is beyond idiocy and enters the realm of clinical insanity.

Police officers in Derbyshire said they were 'horrified' – *horrified* – to find 15 to 20 'irresponsible' kids playing a football match at a closed leisure centre 'in breach of coronavirus restrictions'. When they saw the police the kids ran away leaving their belongings behind and the reframed men and women of Derbyshire police were seeking to establish their identities with a view to fining their parents. The most natural thing for youngsters to do – kicking a ball about – is turned into a criminal activity and enforced by the moronic software programs of Derbyshire police. You find the same mentality in every country. These barely conscious 'horrified' officers said they had to take action because 'we need to ensure these rules are being followed' and 'it is of the utmost importance that you ensure your children are following the rules and regulations for Covid-19'. Had any of them done ten seconds of research to see if this parroting of their masters' script could be supported by any evidence? Nope. Reframed people don't think – others think for them and that's the whole idea of reframing. I have seen police officers one after the other repeating without question word for word what officialdom tells them just as I have seen great swathes of the public doing the same. Ask either for 'their' opinion and out spews what they have been told to think by the official narrative. Police and public may seem to be in different groups, but their mentality is the same. Most people do whatever they are told in fear not doing so or because they believe what officialdom tells them; almost the entirety of the police do what they are told for the same reason. Ultimately it's the tiny inner core of the global Cult that's telling both what to do.

So Derbyshire police were 'horrified'. Oh, really? Why did they think those kids were playing football? It was to relieve the psychological consequences of lockdown and being denied human contact with their friends and interaction, touch and discourse vital to human psychological health. Being denied this month after month has dismantled the psyche of many children and young people as depression and suicide have exploded. Were Derbyshire police *horrified by that*? Are you kidding? Reframed people don't have those

mental and emotional processes that can see how the impact on the psychological health of youngsters is far more dangerous than any 'virus' even if you take the mendacious official figures to be true. The reframed are told (programmed) how to act and so they do. The Derbyshire Chief Constable in the first period of lockdown when the black dye and drones nonsense was going on was Peter Goodman. He was the man who severed the connection between his force and the Derbyshire Constabulary *Male Voice* Choir when he decided that it was not inclusive enough to allow women to join. The fact it was a male voice choir making a particular sound produced by male voices seemed to elude a guy who terrifyingly ran policing in Derbyshire. He retired weeks after his force was condemned as disgraceful by former Supreme Court Justice Jonathan Sumption for their behaviour over extreme lockdown impositions. Goodman was replaced by his deputy Rachel Swann who was in charge when her officers were 'horrified'. The police statement over the boys committing the hanging-offence of playing football included the line about the youngsters being 'irresponsible in the times we are all living through' missing the point that the real relevance of the 'times we are all living through' is the imposition of fascism enforced by psychopaths and reframed minds of police officers playing such a vital part in establishing the fascist tyranny that their own children and grandchildren will have to live in their entire lives. As a definition of insanity that is hard to beat although it might be run close by imposing masks on people that can have a serious effect on their health while wearing a face nappy all day themselves. Once again public and police do it for the same reason – the authorities tell them to and who are they to have the self-respect to say no?

Workers in uniform

How reframed do you have to be to arrest a *six-year-old* and take him to court for *picking a flower* while waiting for a bus? Brain dead police and officialdom did just that in North Carolina where criminal proceedings happen regularly for children under nine. Attorney Julie Boyer gave the six-year-old crayons and a colouring book

during the 'flower' hearing while the 'adults' decided his fate. County Chief District Court Judge Jay Corpening asked: 'Should a child that believes in Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny and the tooth fairy be making life-altering decisions?' Well, of course not, but common sense has no meaning when you have a common purpose and a reframed mind. Treating children in this way, and police operating in American schools, is all part of the psychological preparation for children to accept a police state as normal all their adult lives. The same goes for all the cameras and biometric tracking technology in schools. Police training is focused on reframing them as snowflake Wokers and this is happening in the military. Pentagon top brass said that 'training sessions on extremism' were needed for troops who asked why they were so focused on the Capitol Building riot when Black Lives Matter riots were ignored. What's the difference between them some apparently and rightly asked. Actually, there is a difference. Five people died in the Capitol riot, only one through violence, and that was a police officer shooting an unarmed protestor. BLM riots killed at least 25 people and cost billions. Asking the question prompted the psychopaths and reframed minds that run the Pentagon to say that more 'education' (programming) was needed. Troop training is all based on psychological programming to make them fodder for the Cult – 'Military men are just dumb, stupid animals to be used as pawns in foreign policy' as Cult-to-his-DNA former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger famously said. Governments see the police in similar terms and it's time for those among them who can see this to defend the people and stop being enforcers of the Cult agenda upon the people.

The US military, like the country itself, is being targeted for destruction through a long list of Woke impositions. Cult-owned gaga 'President' Biden signed an executive order when he took office to allow taxpayer money to pay for transgender surgery for active military personnel and veterans. Are you a man soldier? No, I'm a LGBTQIA+ with a hint of Skoliosexual and Spectrasexual. Oh, good man. Bad choice of words you bigot. The Pentagon announced in March, 2021, the appointment of the first 'diversity and inclusion

officer' for US Special Forces. Richard Torres-Estrada arrived with the publication of a 'D&I Strategic Plan which will guide the enterprise-wide effort to institutionalize and sustain D&I'. If you think a Special Forces 'Strategic Plan' should have something to do with defending America you haven't been paying attention. Defending Woke is now the military's new role. Torres-Estrada has posted images comparing Donald Trump with Adolf Hitler and we can expect no bias from him as a representative of the supposedly non-political Pentagon. Cable news host Tucker Carlson said: 'The Pentagon is now the Yale faculty lounge but with cruise missiles.' Meanwhile Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, a board member of weapons-maker Raytheon with stock and compensation interests in October, 2020, worth \$1.4 million, said he was purging the military of the 'enemy within' – anyone who isn't Woke and supports Donald Trump. Austin refers to his targets as 'racist extremists' while in true Woke fashion being himself a racist extremist. Pentagon documents pledge to 'eradicate, eliminate and conquer all forms of racism, sexism and homophobia'. The definitions of these are decided by 'diversity and inclusion committees' peopled by those who see racism, sexism and homophobia in every situation and opinion. Woke (the Cult) is dismantling the US military and purging testosterone as China expands its military and gives its troops 'masculinity training'. How do we think that is going to end when this is all Cult coordinated? The US military, like the British military, is controlled by Woke and spineless top brass who just go along with it out of personal career interests.

'Woke' means fast asleep

Mind control and perception manipulation techniques used on individuals to create group-think have been unleashed on the global population in general. As a result many have no capacity to see the obvious fascist agenda being installed all around them or what 'Covid' is really all about. Their brains are firewalled like a computer system not to process certain concepts, thoughts and realisations that are bad for the Cult. The young are most targeted as the adults they

will be when the whole fascist global state is planned to be fully implemented. They need to be prepared for total compliance to eliminate all pushback from entire generations. The Cult has been pouring billions into taking complete control of 'education' from schools to universities via its operatives and corporations and not least Bill Gates as always. The plan has been to transform 'education' institutions into programming centres for the mentality of 'Woke'. James McConnell, professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, wrote in *Psychology Today* in 1970:

The day has come when we can combine sensory deprivation with drugs, hypnosis, and astute manipulation of reward and punishment, to gain almost absolute control over an individual's behaviour. It should then be possible to achieve a very rapid and highly effective type of brainwashing that would allow us to make dramatic changes in a person's behaviour and personality ...

... We should reshape society so that we all would be trained from birth to want to do what society wants us to do. We have the techniques to do it... no-one owns his own personality you acquired, and there's no reason to believe you should have the right to refuse to acquire a new personality if your old one is anti-social.

This was the potential for mass brainwashing in 1970 and the mentality there displayed captures the arrogant psychopathy that drives it forward. I emphasise that not all young people have succumbed to Woke programming and those that haven't are incredibly impressive people given that today's young are the most perceptually-targeted generations in history with all the technology now involved. Vast swathes of the young generations, however, have fallen into the spell – and that's what it is – of Woke. The Woke mentality and perceptual program is founded on *inversion* and you will appreciate later why that is so significant. Everything with Woke is inverted and the opposite of what it is claimed to be. Woke was a term used in African-American culture from the 1900s and referred to an awareness of social and racial justice. This is not the meaning of the modern version or 'New Woke' as I call it in *The Answer*. Oh, no, Woke today means something very different no matter how much Wokers may seek to hide that and insist Old Woke and New

Woke are the same. See if you find any 'awareness of social justice' here in the modern variety:

- Woke demands 'inclusivity' while excluding anyone with a different opinion and calls for mass censorship to silence other views.
- Woke claims to stand against oppression when imposing oppression is the foundation of all that it does. It is the driver of political correctness which is nothing more than a Cult invention to manipulate the population to silence itself.
- Woke believes itself to be 'liberal' while pursuing a global society that can only be described as fascist (see 'anti-fascist' fascist Antifa).
- Woke calls for 'social justice' while spreading injustice wherever it goes against the common 'enemy' which can be easily identified as a differing view.
- Woke is supposed to be a metaphor for 'awake' when it is solid-gold asleep and deep in a Cult-induced coma that meets the criteria for 'off with the fairies'.

I state these points as obvious facts if people only care to look. I don't do this with a sense of condemnation. We need to appreciate that the onslaught of perceptual programming on the young has been incessant and merciless. I can understand why so many have been reframed, or, given their youth, framed from the start to see the world as the Cult demands. The Cult has had access to their minds day after day in its 'education' system for their entire formative years. Perception is formed from information received and the Cult-created system is a life-long download of information delivered to elicit a particular perception, thus behaviour. The more this has expanded into still new extremes in recent decades and ever-increasing censorship has deleted other opinions and information why wouldn't that lead to a perceptual reframing on a mass scale? I

have described already cradle-to-grave programming and in more recent times the targeting of young minds from birth to adulthood has entered the stratosphere. This has taken the form of skewing what is 'taught' to fit the Cult agenda and the omnipresent techniques of group-think to isolate non-believers and pressure them into line. There has always been a tendency to follow the herd, but we really are in a new world now in relation to that. We have parents who can see the 'Covid' hoax told by their children not to stop them wearing masks at school, being 'Covid' tested or having the 'vaccine' in fear of the peer-pressure consequences of being different. What is 'peer-pressure' if not pressure to conform to group-think? Renegade Minds never group-think and always retain a set of perceptions that are unique to them. Group-think is always underpinned by consequences for not group-thinking. Abuse now aimed at those refusing DNA-manipulating 'Covid vaccines' are a potent example of this. The biggest pressure to conform comes from the very group which is itself being manipulated. 'I am programmed to be part of a hive mind and so you must be.'

Woke control structures in 'education' now apply to every mainstream organisation. Those at the top of the 'education' hierarchy (the Cult) decide the policy. This is imposed on governments through the Cult network; governments impose it on schools, colleges and universities; their leadership impose the policy on teachers and academics and they impose it on children and students. At any level where there is resistance, perhaps from a teacher or university lecturer, they are targeted by the authorities and often fired. Students themselves regularly demand the dismissal of academics (increasingly few) at odds with the narrative that the students have been programmed to believe in. It is quite a thought that students who are being targeted by the Cult become so consumed by programmed group-think that they launch protests and demand the removal of those who are trying to push back against those targeting the students. Such is the scale of perceptual inversion. We see this with 'Covid' programming as the Cult imposes the rules via psycho-psychologists and governments on

shops, transport companies and businesses which impose them on their staff who impose them on their customers who pressure Pushbackers to conform to the will of the Cult which is in the process of destroying them and their families. Scan all aspects of society and you will see the same sequence every time.

Fact free Woke and hijacking the 'left'

There is no more potent example of this than 'Woke', a mentality only made possible by the deletion of factual evidence by an 'education' system seeking to produce an ever more uniform society. Why would you bother with facts when you don't know any? Deletion of credible history both in volume and type is highly relevant. Orwell said: 'Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.' They who control the perception of the past control the perception of the future and they who control the present control the perception of the past through the writing and deleting of history. Why would you oppose the imposition of Marxism in the name of Wokeism when you don't know that Marxism cost at least 100 million lives in the 20th century alone? Watch videos and read reports in which Woker generations are asked basic historical questions – it's mind-blowing. A survey of 2,000 people found that six percent of millennials (born approximately early 1980s to early 2000s) believed the Second World War (1939-1945) broke out with the assassination of President Kennedy (in 1963) and one in ten thought Margaret Thatcher was British Prime Minister at the time. She was in office between 1979 and 1990. We are in a post-fact society. Provable facts are no defence against the fascism of political correctness or Silicon Valley censorship. Facts don't matter anymore as we have witnessed with the 'Covid' hoax. Sacrificing uniqueness to the Woke group-think religion is all you are required to do and that means thinking for yourself is the biggest Woke no, no. All religions are an expression of group-think and censorship and Woke is just another religion with an orthodoxy defended by group-think and censorship. Burned at

the stake becomes burned on Twitter which leads back eventually to burned at the stake as Woke humanity regresses to ages past.

The biggest Woke inversion of all is its creators and funders. I grew up in a traditional left of centre political household on a council estate in Leicester in the 1950s and 60s – you know, the left that challenged the power of wealth-hoarding elites and threats to freedom of speech and opinion. In those days students went on marches defending freedom of speech while today's Wokers march for its deletion. What on earth could have happened? Those very elites (collectively the Cult) that we opposed in my youth and early life have funded into existence the antithesis of that former left and hijacked the 'brand' while inverting everything it ever stood for. We have a mentality that calls itself 'liberal' and 'progressive' while acting like fascists. Cult billionaires and their corporations have funded themselves into control of 'education' to ensure that Woke programming is unceasing throughout the formative years of children and young people and that non-Wokers are isolated (that word again) whether they be students, teachers or college professors. The Cult has funded into existence the now colossal global network of Woke organisations that have spawned and promoted all the 'causes' on the Cult wish-list for global transformation and turned Wokers into demanders of them. Does anyone really think it's a coincidence that the Cult agenda for humanity is a carbon (sorry) copy of the societal transformations desired by Woke?? These are only some of them:

Political correctness: The means by which the Cult deletes all public debates that it knows it cannot win if we had the free-flow of information and evidence.

Human-caused 'climate change': The means by which the Cult seeks to transform society into a globally-controlled dictatorship imposing its will over the fine detail of everyone's lives 'to save the planet' which doesn't actually need saving.

Transgender obsession: Preparing collective perception to accept the 'new human' which would not have genders because it would be created technologically and not through procreation. I'll have much more on this in Human 2.0.

Race obsession: The means by which the Cult seeks to divide and rule the population by triggering racial division through the perception that society is more racist than ever when the opposite is the case. Is it perfect in that regard? No. But to compare today with the racism of apartheid and segregation brought to an end by the civil rights movement in the 1960s is to insult the memory of that movement and inspirations like Martin Luther King. Why is the 'anti-racism' industry (which it is) so dominated by privileged white people?

White supremacy: This is a label used by privileged white people to demonise poor and deprived white people pushing back on tyranny to marginalise and destroy them. White people are being especially targeted as the dominant race by number within Western society which the Cult seeks to transform in its image. If you want to change a society you must weaken and undermine its biggest group and once you have done that by using the other groups you next turn on them to do the same ... 'Then they came for the Jews and I was not a Jew so I did nothing.'

Mass migration: The mass movement of people from the Middle East, Africa and Asia into Europe, from the south into the United States and from Asia into Australia are another way the Cult seeks to dilute the racial, cultural and political influence of white people on Western society. White people ask why their governments appear to be working against them while being politically and culturally biased towards incoming cultures. Well, here's your answer. In the same way sexually 'straight' people, men and women, ask why the

authorities are biased against them in favour of other sexualities. The answer is the same – that's the way the Cult wants it to be for very sinister motives.

These are all central parts of the Cult agenda and central parts of the Woke agenda and Woke was created and continues to be funded to an immense degree by Cult billionaires and corporations. If anyone begins to say 'coincidence' the syllables should stick in their throat.

Billionaire 'social justice warriors'

Joe Biden is a 100 percent-owned asset of the Cult and the Wokers' man in the White House whenever he can remember his name and for however long he lasts with his rapidly diminishing cognitive function. Even walking up the steps of an aircraft without falling on his arse would appear to be a challenge. He's not an empty-shell puppet or anything. From the minute Biden took office (or the Cult did) he began his executive orders promoting the Woke wish-list. You will see the Woke agenda imposed ever more severely because it's really the *Cult* agenda. Woke organisations and activist networks spawned by the Cult are funded to the extreme so long as they promote what the Cult wants to happen. Woke is funded to promote 'social justice' by billionaires who become billionaires by destroying social justice. The social justice mantra is only a cover for dismantling social justice and funded by billionaires that couldn't give a damn about social justice. Everything makes sense when you see that. One of Woke's premier funders is Cult billionaire financier George Soros who said: 'I am basically there to make money, I cannot and do not look at the social consequences of what I do.' This is the same Soros who has given more than \$32 billion to his Open Society Foundations global Woke network and funded Black Lives Matter, mass immigration into Europe and the United States, transgender activism, climate change activism, political correctness and groups targeting 'white supremacy' in the form of privileged white thugs that dominate Antifa. What a scam it all is and when

you are dealing with the unquestioning fact-free zone of Woke scamming them is child's play. All you need to pull it off in all these organisations are a few in-the-know agents of the Cult and an army of naïve, reframed, uninformed, narcissistic, know-nothings convinced of their own self-righteousness, self-purity and virtue.

Soros and fellow billionaires and billionaire corporations have poured hundreds of millions into Black Lives Matter and connected groups and promoted them to a global audience. None of this is motivated by caring about black people. These are the billionaires that have controlled and exploited a system that leaves millions of black people in abject poverty and deprivation which they do absolutely nothing to address. The same Cult networks funding BLM were behind the *slave trade*! Black Lives Matter hijacked a phrase that few would challenge and they have turned this laudable concept into a political weapon to divide society. You know that BLM is a fraud when it claims that *All Lives Matter*, the most inclusive statement of all, is 'racist'. BLM and its Cult masters don't want to end racism. To them it's a means to an end to control all of humanity never mind the colour, creed, culture or background. What has destroying the nuclear family got to do with ending racism? Nothing – but that is one of the goals of BLM and also happens to be a goal of the Cult as I have been exposing in my books for decades. Stealing children from loving parents and giving schools ever more power to override parents is part of that same agenda. BLM is a Marxist organisation and why would that not be the case when the Cult created Marxism *and* BLM? Patrisse Cullors, a BLM co-founder, said in a 2015 video that she and her fellow organisers, including co-founder Alicia Garza, are 'trained Marxists'. The lady known after marriage as Patrisse Khan-Cullors bought a \$1.4 million home in 2021 in one of the whitest areas of California with a black population of just 1.6 per cent and has so far bought *four* high-end homes for a total of \$3.2 million. How very Marxist. There must be a bit of spare in the BLM coffers, however, when Cult corporations and billionaires have handed over the best part of \$100 million. Many black people can see that Black Lives Matter is not

working for them, but against them, and this is still more confirmation. Black journalist Jason Whitlock, who had his account suspended by Twitter for simply linking to the story about the 'Marxist's' home buying spree, said that BLM leaders are 'making millions of dollars off the backs of these dead black men who they wouldn't spit on if they were on fire and alive'.

Black Lies Matter

Cult assets and agencies came together to promote BLM in the wake of the death of career criminal George Floyd who had been jailed a number of times including for forcing his way into the home of a black woman with others in a raid in which a gun was pointed at her stomach. Floyd was filmed being held in a Minneapolis street in 2020 with the knee of a police officer on his neck and he subsequently died. It was an appalling thing for the officer to do, but the same technique has been used by police on peaceful protestors of lockdown without any outcry from the Woke brigade. As unquestioning supporters of the Cult agenda Wokers have supported lockdown and all the 'Covid' claptrap while attacking anyone standing up to the tyranny imposed in its name. Court documents would later include details of an autopsy on Floyd by County Medical Examiner Dr Andrew Baker who concluded that Floyd had taken a fatal level of the drug fentanyl. None of this mattered to fact-free, question-free, Woke. Floyd's death was followed by worldwide protests against police brutality amid calls to defund the police. Throwing babies out with the bathwater is a Woke speciality. In the wake of the murder of British woman Sarah Everard a Green Party member of the House of Lords, Baroness Jones of Moulscroomb (Nincompoopia would have been better), called for a 6pm curfew for all men. This would be in breach of the Geneva Conventions on war crimes which ban collective punishment, but that would never have crossed the black and white Woke mind of Baroness Nincompoopia who would have been far too convinced of her own self-righteousness to compute such details. Many American cities did defund the police in the face of Floyd riots

and after \$15 million was deleted from the police budget in Washington DC under useless Woke mayor Muriel Bowser car-jacking alone rose by 300 percent and within six months the US capital recorded its highest murder rate in 15 years. The same happened in Chicago and other cities in line with the Cult/Soros plan to bring fear to streets and neighbourhoods by reducing the police, releasing violent criminals and not prosecuting crime. This is the mob-rule agenda that I have warned in the books was coming for so long. Shootings in the area of Minneapolis where Floyd was arrested increased by 2,500 percent compared with the year before. Defunding the police over George Floyd has led to a big increase in dead people with many of them black. Police protection for politicians making these decisions stayed the same or increased as you would expect from professional hypocrites. The Cult doesn't actually want to abolish the police. It wants to abolish local control over the police and hand it to federal government as the psychopaths advance the Hunger Games Society. Many George Floyd protests turned into violent riots with black stores and businesses destroyed by fire and looting across America fuelled by Black Lives Matter. Woke doesn't do irony. If you want civil rights you must loot the liquor store and the supermarket and make off with a smart TV. It's the only way.

It's not a race war – it's a class war

Black people are patronised by privileged blacks and whites alike and told they are victims of white supremacy. I find it extraordinary to watch privileged blacks supporting the very system and bloodline networks behind the slave trade and parroting the same Cult-serving manipulative crap of their privileged white, often billionaire, associates. It is indeed not a race war but a class war and colour is just a diversion. Black Senator Cory Booker and black Congresswoman Maxine Waters, more residents of Nincompoopia, personify this. Once you tell people they are victims of someone else you devalue both their own responsibility for their plight and the power they have to impact on their reality and experience. Instead

we have: 'You are only in your situation because of whitey – turn on them and everything will change.' It won't change. Nothing changes in our lives unless *we* change it. Crucial to that is never seeing yourself as a victim and always as the creator of your reality. Life is a simple sequence of choice and consequence. Make different choices and you create different consequences. *You* have to make those choices – not Black Lives Matter, the Woke Mafia and anyone else that seeks to dictate your life. Who are they these Wokers, an emotional and psychological road traffic accident, to tell you what to do? Personal empowerment is the last thing the Cult and its Black Lives Matter want black people or anyone else to have. They claim to be defending the underdog while *creating* and perpetuating the underdog. The Cult's worst nightmare is human unity and if they are going to keep blacks, whites and every other race under economic servitude and control then the focus must be diverted from what they have in common to what they can be manipulated to believe divides them. Blacks have to be told that their poverty and plight is the fault of the white bloke living on the street in the same poverty and with the same plight they are experiencing. The difference is that your plight black people is due to him, a white supremacist with 'white privilege' living on the street. Don't unite as one human family against your mutual oppressors and suppressors – fight the oppressor with the white face who is as financially deprived as you are. The Cult knows that as its 'Covid' agenda moves into still new levels of extremism people are going to respond and it has been spreading the seeds of disunity everywhere to stop a united response to the evil that targets *all of us*.

Racist attacks on 'whiteness' are getting ever more outrageous and especially through the American Democratic Party which has an appalling history for anti-black racism. Barack Obama, Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi all eulogised about Senator Robert Byrd at his funeral in 2010 after a nearly 60-year career in Congress. Byrd was a brutal Ku Klux Klan racist and a violent abuser of Cathy O'Brien in MKUltra. He said he would never fight in the military 'with a negro by my side' and 'rather I should die a thousand times,

and see Old Glory trampled in the dirt never to rise again, than to see this beloved land of ours become degraded by race mongrels, a throwback to the blackest specimen from the wilds'. Biden called Byrd a 'very close friend and mentor'. These 'Woke' hypocrites are not anti-racist they are anti-poor and anti-people not of their perceived class. Here is an illustration of the scale of anti-white racism to which we have now descended. Seriously Woke and moronic *New York Times* contributor Damon Young described whiteness as a 'virus' that 'like other viruses will not die until there are no bodies left for it to infect'. He went on: '... the only way to stop it is to locate it, isolate it, extract it, and kill it.' Young can say that as a black man with no consequences when a white man saying the same in reverse would be facing a jail sentence. *That's* racism. We had super-Woke numbskull senators Tammy Duckworth and Mazie Hirono saying they would object to future Biden Cabinet appointments if he did not nominate more Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Never mind the ability of the candidate what do they look like? Duckworth said: 'I will vote for racial minorities and I will vote for LGBTQ, but anyone else I'm not voting for.' Appointing people on the grounds of race is illegal, but that was not a problem for this ludicrous pair. They were on-message and that's a free pass in any situation.

Critical race racism

White children are told at school they are intrinsically racist as they are taught the divisive 'critical race theory'. This claims that the law and legal institutions are inherently racist and that race is a socially constructed concept used by white people to further their economic and political interests at the expense of people of colour. White is a 'virus' as we've seen. Racial inequality results from 'social, economic, and legal differences that white people create between races to maintain white interests which leads to poverty and criminality in minority communities'. I must tell that to the white guy sleeping on the street. The principal of East Side Community School in New York sent white parents a manifesto that called on

them to become 'white traitors' and advocate for full 'white abolition'. These people are teaching your kids when they urgently need a psychiatrist. The 'school' included a chart with 'eight white identities' that ranged from 'white supremacist' to 'white abolition' and defined the behaviour white people must follow to end 'the regime of whiteness'. Woke blacks and their privileged white associates are acting exactly like the slave owners of old and Ku Klux Klan racists like Robert Byrd. They are too full of their own self-purity to see that, but it's true. Racism is not a body type; it's a state of mind that can manifest through any colour, creed or culture.

Another racial fraud is '*equity*'. Not equality of treatment and opportunity – equity. It's a term spun as equality when it means something very different. Equality in its true sense is a raising up while '*equity*' is a race to the bottom. Everyone in the same level of poverty is '*equity*'. Keep everyone down – that's equity. The Cult doesn't want anyone in the human family to be empowered and BLM leaders, like all these 'anti-racist' organisations, continue their privileged, pampered existence by perpetuating the perception of gathering racism. When is the last time you heard an 'anti-racist' or 'anti-Semitism' organisation say that acts of racism and discrimination have *fallen*? It's not in the interests of their fundraising and power to influence and the same goes for the professional soccer anti-racism operation, Kick It Out. Two things confirmed that the Black Lives Matter riots in the summer of 2020 were Cult creations. One was that while anti-lockdown protests were condemned in this same period for 'transmitting 'Covid' the authorities supported mass gatherings of Black Lives Matter supporters. I even saw self-deluding people claiming to be doctors say the two types of protest were not the same. No – the non-existent 'Covid' was in favour of lockdowns and attacked those that protested against them while 'Covid' supported Black Lives Matter and kept well away from its protests. The whole thing was a joke and as lockdown protestors were arrested, often brutally, by reframed Face-Nappies we had the grotesque sight of police officers taking the knee to Black Lives Matter, a Cult-funded Marxist

organisation that supports violent riots and wants to destroy the nuclear family and white people.

He's not white? Shucks!

Woke obsession with race was on display again when ten people were shot dead in Boulder, Colorado, in March, 2021. Cult-owned Woke TV channels like CNN said the shooter appeared to be a white man and Wokers were on Twitter condemning 'violent white men' with the usual mantras. Then the shooter's name was released as Ahmad Al Aliwi Alissa, an anti-Trump Arab-American, and the sigh of disappointment could be heard five miles away. Never mind that ten people were dead and what that meant for their families. Race baiting was all that mattered to these sick Cult-serving people like Barack Obama who exploited the deaths to further divide America on racial grounds which is his job for the Cult. This is the man that 'racist' white Americans made the first black president of the United States and then gave him a second term. Not-very-bright Obama has become filthy rich on the back of that and today appears to have a big influence on the Biden administration. Even so he's still a downtrodden black man and a victim of white supremacy. This disingenuous fraud reveals the contempt he has for black people when he puts on a Deep South Alabama accent whenever he talks to them, no, *at* them.

Another BLM red flag was how the now fully-Woke (fully-Cult) and fully-virtue-signalled professional soccer authorities had their teams taking the knee before every match in support of Marxist Black Lives Matter. Soccer authorities and clubs displayed 'Black Lives Matter' on the players' shirts and flashed the name on electronic billboards around the pitch. Any fans that condemned what is a Freemasonic taking-the-knee ritual were widely condemned as you would expect from the Woke virtue-signallers of professional sport and the now fully-Woke media. We have reverse racism in which you are banned from criticising any race or culture except for white people for whom anything goes – say what you like, no problem. What has this got to do with racial harmony and

equality? We've had black supremacists from Black Lives Matter telling white people to fall to their knees in the street and apologise for their white supremacy. Black supremacists acting like white supremacist slave owners of the past couldn't breach their self-obsessed, race-obsessed sense of self-purity. Joe Biden appointed a race-obsessed black supremacist Kristen Clarke to head the Justice Department Civil Rights Division. Clarke claimed that blacks are endowed with 'greater mental, physical and spiritual abilities' than whites. If anyone reversed that statement they would be vilified. Clarke is on-message so no problem. She's never seen a black-white situation in which the black figure is anything but a virtuous victim and she heads the Civil Rights Division which should treat everyone the same or it isn't civil rights. Another perception of the Renegade Mind: If something or someone is part of the Cult agenda they will be supported by Woke governments and media no matter what. If they're not, they will be condemned and censored. It really is that simple and so racist Clarke prospers despite (make that because of) her racism.

The end of culture

Biden's administration is full of such racial, cultural and economic bias as the Cult requires the human family to be divided into warring factions. We are now seeing racially-segregated graduations and everything, but everything, is defined through the lens of perceived 'racism'. We have 'racist' mathematics, 'racist' food and even 'racist' *plants*. World famous Kew Gardens in London said it was changing labels on plants and flowers to tell its pre-'Covid' more than two million visitors a year how racist they are. Kew director Richard Deverell said this was part of an effort to 'move quickly to decolonise collections' after they were approached by one Ajay Chhabra 'an actor with an insight into how sugar cane was linked to slavery'. They are *plants* you idiots. 'Decolonisation' in the Woke manual really means colonisation of society with its mentality and by extension colonisation by the Cult. We are witnessing a new Chinese-style 'Cultural Revolution' so essential to the success of all

Marxist takeovers. Our cultural past and traditions have to be swept away to allow a new culture to be built-back-better. Woke targeting of long-standing Western cultural pillars including historical monuments and cancelling of historical figures is what happened in the Mao revolution in China which 'purged remnants of capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society' and installed Maoism as the dominant ideology'. For China see the Western world today and for 'dominant ideology' see Woke. Better still see Marxism or Maoism. The 'Covid' hoax has specifically sought to destroy the arts and all elements of Western culture from people meeting in a pub or restaurant to closing theatres, music venues, sports stadiums, places of worship and even banning *singing*. Destruction of Western society is also why criticism of any religion is banned except for Christianity which again is the dominant religion as white is the numerically-dominant race. Christianity may be fading rapidly, but its history and traditions are weaved through the fabric of Western society. Delete the pillars and other structures will follow until the whole thing collapses. I am not a Christian defending that religion when I say that. I have no religion. It's just a fact. To this end Christianity has itself been turned Woke to usher its own downfall and its ranks are awash with 'change agents' – knowing and unknowing – at every level including Pope Francis (*definitely* knowing) and the clueless Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby (possibly not, but who can be sure?). Woke seeks to coordinate attacks on Western culture, traditions, and ways of life through 'intersectionality' defined as 'the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalised individuals or groups'. Wade through the Orwellian Woke-speak and this means coordinating disparate groups in a common cause to overthrow freedom and liberal values.

The entire structure of public institutions has been infested with Woke – government at all levels, political parties, police, military, schools, universities, advertising, media and trade unions. This abomination has been achieved through the Cult web by appointing

Wokers to positions of power and battering non-Wokers into line through intimidation, isolation and threats to their job. Many have been fired in the wake of the empathy-deleted, vicious hostility of 'social justice' Wokers and the desire of gutless, spineless employers to virtue-signal their Wokeness. Corporations are filled with Wokers today, most notably those in Silicon Valley. Ironically at the top they are not Woke at all. They are only exploiting the mentality their Cult masters have created and funded to censor and enslave while the Wokers cheer them on until it's their turn. Thus the Woke 'liberal left' is an inversion of the traditional liberal left. Campaigning for justice on the grounds of power and wealth distribution has been replaced by campaigning for identity politics. The genuine traditional left would never have taken money from today's billionaire abusers of fairness and justice and nor would the billionaires have wanted to fund that genuine left. It would not have been in their interests to do so. The division of opinion in those days was between the haves and have nots. This all changed with Cult manipulated and funded identity politics. The division of opinion today is between Wokers and non-Wokers and not income brackets. Cult corporations and their billionaires may have taken wealth disparity to cataclysmic levels of injustice, but as long as they speak the language of Woke, hand out the dosh to the Woke network and censor the enemy they are 'one of us'. Billionaires who don't give a damn about injustice are laughing at them till their bellies hurt. Wokers are not even close to self-aware enough to see that. The transformed 'left' dynamic means that Wokers who drone on about 'social justice' are funded by billionaires that have destroyed social justice the world over. It's *why* they are billionaires.

The climate con

Nothing encapsulates what I have said more comprehensively than the hoax of human-caused global warming. I have detailed in my books over the years how Cult operatives and organisations were the pump-primers from the start of the climate con. A purpose-built vehicle for this is the Club of Rome established by the Cult in 1968

with the Rockefellers and Rothschilds centrally involved all along. Their gofer frontman Maurice Strong, a Canadian oil millionaire, hosted the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 where the global 'green movement' really expanded in earnest under the guiding hand of the Cult. The Earth Summit established Agenda 21 through the Cult-created-and-owned United Nations to use the illusion of human-caused climate change to justify the transformation of global society to save the world from climate disaster. It is a No-Problem-Reaction-Solution sold through governments, media, schools and universities as whole generations have been terrified into believing that the world was going to end in their lifetimes unless what old people had inflicted upon them was stopped by a complete restructuring of how everything is done. Chill, kids, it's all a hoax. Such restructuring is precisely what the Cult agenda demands (purely by coincidence of course). Today this has been given the codename of the Great Reset which is only an updated term for Agenda 21 and its associated Agenda 2030. The latter, too, is administered through the UN and was voted into being by the General Assembly in 2015. Both 21 and 2030 seek centralised control of all resources and food right down to the raindrops falling on your own land. These are some of the demands of Agenda 21 established in 1992. See if you recognise this society emerging today:

- End national sovereignty
- State planning and management of all land resources, ecosystems, deserts, forests, mountains, oceans and fresh water; agriculture; rural development; biotechnology; and ensuring 'equity'
- The state to 'define the role' of business and financial resources
- Abolition of private property
- 'Restructuring' the family unit (see BLM)
- Children raised by the state
- People told what their job will be
- Major restrictions on movement
- Creation of 'human settlement zones'

- Mass resettlement as people are forced to vacate land where they live
- Dumbing down education
- Mass global depopulation in pursuit of all the above

The United Nations was created as a Trojan horse for world government. With the climate con of critical importance to promoting that outcome you would expect the UN to be involved. Oh, it's involved all right. The UN is promoting Agenda 21 and Agenda 2030 justified by 'climate change' while also driving the climate hoax through its Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), one of the world's most corrupt organisations. The IPCC has been lying ferociously and constantly since the day it opened its doors with the global media hanging unquestioningly on its every mendacious word. The Green movement is entirely Woke and has long lost its original environmental focus since it was co-opted by the Cult. An obsession with 'global warming' has deleted its values and scrambled its head. I experienced a small example of what I mean on a beautiful country walk that I have enjoyed several times a week for many years. The path merged into the fields and forests and you felt at one with the natural world. Then a 'Green' organisation, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, took over part of the land and proceeded to cut down a large number of trees, including mature ones, to install a horrible big, bright steel 'this-is-ours-stay-out' fence that destroyed the whole atmosphere of this beautiful place. No one with a feel for nature would do that. Day after day I walked to the sound of chainsaws and a magnificent mature weeping willow tree that I so admired was cut down at the base of the trunk. When I challenged a Woke young girl in a green shirt (of course) about this vandalism she replied: 'It's a weeping willow – it will grow back.' This is what people are paying for when they donate to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and many other 'green' organisations today. It is not the environmental movement that I knew and instead has become a support-system – as with Extinction Rebellion – for a very dark agenda.

Private jets for climate justice

The Cult-owned, Gates-funded, World Economic Forum and its founder Klaus Schwab were behind the emergence of Greta Thunberg to harness the young behind the climate agenda and she was invited to speak to the world at ... the UN. Schwab published a book, *Covid-19: The Great Reset* in 2020 in which he used the 'Covid' hoax and the climate hoax to lay out a new society straight out of Agenda 21 and Agenda 2030. Bill Gates followed in early 2021 when he took time out from destroying the world to produce a book in his name about the way to save it. Gates flies across the world in private jets and admitted that 'I probably have one of the highest greenhouse gas footprints of anyone on the planet ... my personal flying alone is gigantic.' He has also bid for the planet's biggest private jet operator. Other climate change saviours who fly in private jets include John Kerry, the US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, and actor Leonardo DiCaprio, a 'UN Messenger of Peace with special focus on climate change'. These people are so full of bullshit they could corner the market in manure. We mustn't be sceptical, though, because the Gates book, *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster: The Solutions We Have and the Breakthroughs We Need*, is a genuine attempt to protect the world and not an obvious pile of excrement attributed to a mega-psychopath aimed at selling his masters' plans for humanity. The Gates book and the other shite-pile by Klaus Schwab could have been written by the same person and may well have been. Both use 'climate change' and 'Covid' as the excuses for their new society and by coincidence the Cult's World Economic Forum and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation promote the climate hoax and hosted Event 201 which pre-empted with a 'simulation' the very 'coronavirus' hoax that would be simulated for real on humanity within weeks. The British 'royal' family is promoting the 'Reset' as you would expect through Prince 'climate change caused the war in Syria' Charles and his hapless son Prince William who said that we must 'reset our relationship with nature and our trajectory as a species' to avoid a climate disaster. Amazing how many promoters of the 'Covid' and 'climate change' control

systems are connected to Gates and the World Economic Forum. A 'study' in early 2021 claimed that carbon dioxide emissions must fall by the equivalent of a global lockdown roughly every two years for the next decade to save the planet. The 'study' appeared in the same period that the Schwab mob claimed in a video that lockdowns destroying the lives of billions are good because they make the earth 'quieter' with less 'ambient noise'. They took down the video amid a public backlash for such arrogant, empathy-deleted stupidity You see, however, where they are going with this. Corinne Le Quéré, a professor at the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of East Anglia, was lead author of the climate lockdown study, and she writes for ... the World Economic Forum. Gates calls in 'his' book for changing 'every aspect of the economy' (long-time Cult agenda) and for humans to eat synthetic 'meat' (predicted in my books) while cows and other farm animals are eliminated. Australian TV host and commentator Alan Jones described what carbon emission targets would mean for farm animals in Australia alone if emissions were reduced as demanded by 35 percent by 2030 and zero by 2050:

Well, let's take agriculture, the total emissions from agriculture are about 75 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, equivalent. Now reduce that by 35 percent and you have to come down to 50 million tonnes, I've done the maths. So if you take for example 1.5 million cows, you're going to have to reduce the herd by 525,000 [by] 2030, nine years, that's 58,000 cows a year. The beef herd's 30 million, reduce that by 35 percent, that's 10.5 million, which means 1.2 million cattle have to go every year between now and 2030. This is insanity!

There are 75 million sheep. Reduce that by 35 percent, that's 26 million sheep, that's almost 3 million a year. So under the Paris Agreement over 30 million beasts. dairy cows, cattle, pigs and sheep would go. More than 8,000 every minute of every hour for the next decade, do these people know what they're talking about?

Clearly they don't at the level of campaigners, politicians and administrators. The Cult *does* know; that's the outcome it wants. We are faced with not just a war on humanity. Animals and the natural world are being targeted and I have been saying since the 'Covid' hoax began that the plan eventually was to claim that the 'deadly virus' is able to jump from animals, including farm animals and

domestic pets, to humans. Just before this book went into production came this story: 'Russia registers world's first Covid-19 vaccine for cats & dogs as makers of Sputnik V warn pets & farm animals could spread virus'. The report said 'top scientists warned that the deadly pathogen could soon begin spreading through homes and farms' and 'the next stage is the infection of farm and domestic animals'. Know the outcome and you'll see the journey. Think what that would mean for animals and keep your eye on a term called zoonosis or zoonotic diseases which transmit between animals and humans. The Cult wants to break the connection between animals and people as it does between people and people. Farm animals fit with the Cult agenda to transform food from natural to synthetic.

The gas of life is killing us

There can be few greater examples of Cult inversion than the condemnation of carbon dioxide as a dangerous pollutant when it is the gas of life. Without it the natural world would be dead and so we would all be dead. We breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide while plants produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide. It is a perfect symbiotic relationship that the Cult wants to dismantle for reasons I will come to in the final two chapters. Gates, Schwab, other Cult operatives and mindless repeaters, want the world to be 'carbon neutral' by at least 2050 and the earlier the better. 'Zero carbon' is the cry echoed by lunatics calling for 'Zero Covid' when we already have it. These carbon emission targets will deindustrialise the world in accordance with Cult plans – the post-industrial, post-democratic society – and with so-called renewables like solar and wind not coming even close to meeting human energy needs blackouts and cold are inevitable. Texans got the picture in the winter of 2021 when a snow storm stopped wind turbines and solar panels from working and the lights went down along with water which relies on electricity for its supply system. Gates wants everything to be powered by electricity to ensure that his masters have the kill switch to stop all human activity, movement, cooking, water and warmth any time they like. The climate lie is so

stupendously inverted that it claims we must urgently reduce carbon dioxide when we *don't have enough*.

Co2 in the atmosphere is a little above 400 parts per million when the optimum for plant growth is 2,000 ppm and when it falls anywhere near 150 ppm the natural world starts to die and so do we. It fell to as low as 280 ppm in an 1880 measurement in Hawaii and rose to 413 ppm in 2019 with industrialisation which is why the planet has become *greener* in the industrial period. How insane then that psychopathic madman Gates is not satisfied only with blocking the rise of Co2. He's funding technology to suck it out of the atmosphere. The reason why will become clear. The industrial era is not destroying the world through Co2 and has instead turned around a potentially disastrous ongoing fall in Co2. Greenpeace co-founder and scientist Patrick Moore walked away from Greenpeace in 1986 and has exposed the green movement for fear-mongering and lies. He said that 500 million years ago there was *17 times* more Co2 in the atmosphere than we have today and levels have been falling for hundreds of millions of years. In the last 150 million years Co2 levels in Earth's atmosphere had reduced by *90 percent*. Moore said that by the time humanity began to unlock carbon dioxide from fossil fuels we were at '38 seconds to midnight' and in that sense: 'Humans are [the Earth's] salvation.' Moore made the point that only half the Co2 emitted by fossil fuels stays in the atmosphere and we should remember that all pollution pouring from chimneys that we are told is carbon dioxide is in fact nothing of the kind. It's pollution. Carbon dioxide is an invisible gas.

William Happer, Professor of Physics at Princeton University and long-time government adviser on climate, has emphasised the Co2 deficiency for maximum growth and food production. Greenhouse growers don't add carbon dioxide for a bit of fun. He said that most of the warming in the last 100 years, after the earth emerged from the super-cold period of the 'Little Ice Age' into a natural warming cycle, was over by 1940. Happer said that a peak year for warming in 1988 can be explained by a 'monster El Nino' which is a natural and cyclical warming of the Pacific that has nothing to do with 'climate

change'. He said the effect of Co2 could be compared to painting a wall with red paint in that once two or three coats have been applied it didn't matter how much more you slapped on because the wall will not get much redder. Almost all the effect of the rise in Co2 has already happened, he said, and the volume in the atmosphere would now have to *double* to increase temperature by a single degree. Climate hoaxers know this and they have invented the most ridiculously complicated series of 'feedback' loops to try to overcome this rather devastating fact. You hear puppet Greta going on cluelessly about feedback loops and this is why.

The Sun affects temperature? No you *climate denier*

Some other nonsense to contemplate: Climate graphs show that rises in temperature do not follow rises in Co2 – *it's the other way round* with a lag between the two of some 800 years. If we go back 800 years from present time we hit the Medieval Warm Period when temperatures were higher than now without any industrialisation and this was followed by the Little Ice Age when temperatures plummeted. The world was still emerging from these centuries of serious cold when many climate records began which makes the ever-repeated line of the 'hottest year since records began' meaningless when you are not comparing like with like. The coldest period of the Little Ice Age corresponded with the lowest period of sunspot activity when the Sun was at its least active. Proper scientists will not be at all surprised by this when it confirms the obvious fact that earth temperature is affected by the scale of Sun activity and the energetic power that it subsequently emits; but when is the last time you heard a climate hoaxer talking about the Sun as a source of earth temperature?? Everything has to be focussed on Co2 which makes up just 0.117 percent of so-called greenhouse gases and only a fraction of even that is generated by human activity. The rest is natural. More than *90 percent* of those greenhouse gases are water vapour and clouds ([Fig 9](#)). Ban moisture I say. Have you noticed that the climate hoaxers no longer use the polar bear as their promotion image? That's because far from becoming extinct polar

bear communities are stable or thriving. Joe Bastardi, American meteorologist, weather forecaster and outspoken critic of the climate lie, documents in his book *The Climate Chronicles* how weather patterns and events claimed to be evidence of climate change have been happening since long before industrialisation: 'What happened before naturally is happening again, as is to be expected given the cyclical nature of the climate due to the design of the planet.' If you read the detailed background to the climate hoax in my other books you will shake your head and wonder how anyone could believe the crap which has spawned a multi-trillion dollar industry based on absolute garbage (see HIV causes AIDs and Sars-Cov-2 causes 'Covid-19'). Climate and 'Covid' have much in common given they have the same source. They both have the contradictory *everything* factor in which everything is explained by reference to them. It's hot – 'it's climate change'. It's cold – 'it's climate change'. I got a sniffle – 'it's Covid'. I haven't got a sniffle – 'it's Covid'. Not having a sniffle has to be a symptom of 'Covid'. Everything is and not having a sniffle is especially dangerous if you are a slow walker. For sheer audacity I offer you a Cambridge University 'study' that actually linked 'Covid' to 'climate change'. It had to happen eventually. They concluded that climate change played a role in 'Covid-19' spreading from animals to humans because ... wait for it ... I kid you not ... *the two groups were forced closer together as populations grow*. Er, that's it. The whole foundation on which this depended was that 'Bats are the likely zoonotic origin of SARS-CoV-1 and SARS-CoV-2'. Well, they are not. They are nothing to do with it. Apart from bats not being the origin and therefore 'climate change' effects on bats being irrelevant I am in awe of their academic insight. Where would we be without them? Not where we are that's for sure.

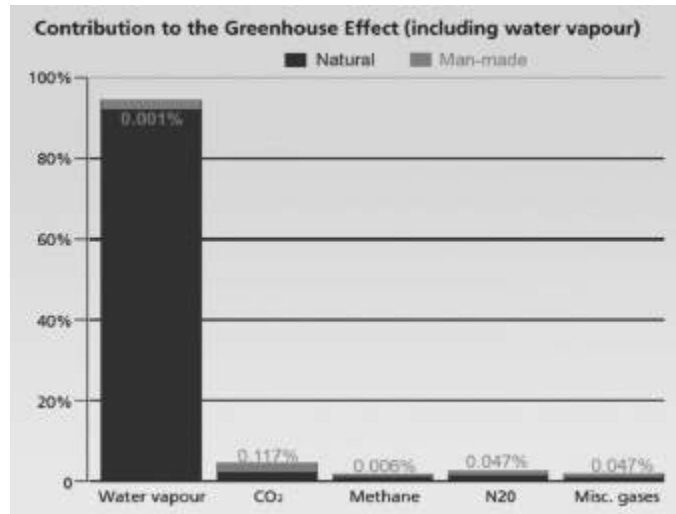


Figure 9: The idea that the gas of life is disastrously changing the climate is an insult to brain cell activity.

One other point about the weather is that climate modification is now well advanced and not every major weather event is natural – or earthquake come to that. I cover this subject at some length in other books. China is openly planning a rapid expansion of its weather modification programme which includes changing the climate in an area more than one and a half times the size of India. China used weather manipulation to ensure clear skies during the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. I have quoted from US military documents detailing how to employ weather manipulation as a weapon of war and they did that in the 1960s and 70s during the conflict in Vietnam with Operation Popeye manipulating monsoon rains for military purposes. Why would there be international treaties on weather modification if it wasn't possible? Of course it is. Weather is energetic information and it can be changed.

How was the climate hoax pulled off? See 'Covid'

If you can get billions to believe in a 'virus' that doesn't exist you can get them to believe in human-caused climate change that doesn't exist. Both are being used by the Cult to transform global society in the way it has long planned. Both hoaxes have been achieved in pretty much the same way. First you declare a lie is a fact. There's a

'virus' you call SARS-Cov-2 or humans are warming the planet with their behaviour. Next this becomes, via Cult networks, the foundation of government, academic and science policy and belief. Those who parrot the mantra are given big grants to produce research that confirms the narrative is true and ever more 'symptoms' are added to make the 'virus'/'climate change' sound even more scary. Scientists and researchers who challenge the narrative have their grants withdrawn and their careers destroyed. The media promote the lie as the unquestionable truth and censor those with an alternative view or evidence. A great percentage of the population believe what they are told as the lie becomes an everybody-knows-that and the believing-masses turn on those with a mind of their own. The technique has been used endlessly throughout human history. Wokers are the biggest promoters of the climate lie *and* 'Covid' fascism because their minds are owned by the Cult; their sense of self-righteous self-purity knows no bounds; and they exist in a bubble of reality in which facts are irrelevant and only get in the way of looking without seeing.

Running through all of this like veins in a blue cheese is control of information, which means control of perception, which means control of behaviour, which collectively means control of human society. The Cult owns the global media and Silicon Valley fascists for the simple reason that it *has* to. Without control of information it can't control perception and through that human society. Examine every facet of the Cult agenda and you will see that anything supporting its introduction is never censored while anything pushing back is always censored. I say again: Psychopaths that know why they are doing this must go before Nuremberg trials and those that follow their orders must trot along behind them into the same dock. 'I was just following orders' didn't work the first time and it must not work now. Nuremberg trials must be held all over the world before public juries for politicians, government officials, police, compliant doctors, scientists and virologists, and all Cult operatives such as Gates, Tedros, Fauci, Vallance, Whitty, Ferguson, Zuckerberg, Wojcicki, Brin, Page, Dorsey, the whole damn lot of

them – including, no *especially*, the psychopath psychologists. Without them and the brainless, gutless excuses for journalists that have repeated their lies, none of this could be happening. Nobody can be allowed to escape justice for the psychological and economic Armageddon they are all responsible for visiting upon the human race.

As for the compliant, unquestioning, swathes of humanity, and the self-obsessed, all-knowing ignorance of the Wokers ... don't start me. God help their kids. God help their grandkids. God *help them*.

CHAPTER NINE

We must have it? So what is it?

Well I won't back down. No, I won't back down. You can stand me up at the Gates of Hell. But I won't back down

Tom Petty

I will now focus on the genetically-manipulating 'Covid vaccines' which do not meet this official definition of a vaccine by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC): 'A product that stimulates a person's immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease.' On that basis 'Covid vaccines' are not a vaccine in that the makers don't even claim they stop infection or transmission.

They are instead part of a multi-levelled conspiracy to change the nature of the human body and what it means to be 'human' and to depopulate an enormous swathe of humanity. What I shall call Human 1.0 is on the cusp of becoming Human 2.0 and for very sinister reasons. Before I get to the 'Covid vaccine' in detail here's some background to vaccines in general. Government regulators do not test vaccines – the makers do – and the makers control which data is revealed and which isn't. Children in America are given 50 vaccine doses by age six and 69 by age 19 and the effect of the whole combined schedule has never been tested. Autoimmune diseases when the immune system attacks its own body have soared in the mass vaccine era and so has disease in general in children and the young. Why wouldn't this be the case when vaccines target the *immune system*? The US government gave Big Pharma drug

companies immunity from prosecution for vaccine death and injury in the 1986 National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act (NCVIA) and since then the government (taxpayer) has been funding compensation for the consequences of Big Pharma vaccines. The criminal and satanic drug giants can't lose and the vaccine schedule has increased dramatically since 1986 for this reason. There is no incentive to make vaccines safe and a big incentive to make money by introducing ever more. Even against a ridiculously high bar to prove vaccine liability, and with the government controlling the hearing in which it is being challenged for compensation, the vaccine court has so far paid out more than \$4 billion. These are the vaccines we are told are safe and psychopaths like Zuckerberg censor posts saying otherwise. The immunity law was even justified by a ruling that vaccines by their nature were 'unavoidably unsafe'.

Check out the ingredients of vaccines and you will be shocked if you are new to this. *They put that in children's bodies?? What??* Try aluminium, a brain toxin connected to dementia, aborted foetal tissue and formaldehyde which is used to embalm corpses. World-renowned aluminium expert Christopher Exley had his research into the health effect of aluminium in vaccines shut down by Keele University in the UK when it began taking funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Research when diseases 'eradicated' by vaccines began to decline and you will find the fall began long *before* the vaccine was introduced. Sometimes the fall even plateaued after the vaccine. Diseases like scarlet fever for which there was no vaccine declined in the same way because of environmental and other factors. A perfect case in point is the polio vaccine. Polio began when lead arsenate was first sprayed as an insecticide and residues remained in food products. Spraying started in 1892 and the first US polio epidemic came in Vermont in 1894. The simple answer was to stop spraying, but Rockefeller-created Big Pharma had a better idea. Polio was decreed to be caused by the *poliovirus* which 'spreads from person to person and can infect a person's spinal cord'. Lead arsenate was replaced by the lethal DDT which had the same effect of causing paralysis by damaging the brain and central nervous

system. Polio plummeted when DDT was reduced and then banned, but the vaccine is still given the credit for something it didn't do. Today by far the biggest cause of polio is the vaccines promoted by Bill Gates. Vaccine justice campaigner Robert Kennedy Jr, son of assassinated (by the Cult) US Attorney General Robert Kennedy, wrote:

In 2017, the World Health Organization (WHO) reluctantly admitted that the global explosion in polio is predominantly vaccine strain. The most frightening epidemics in Congo, Afghanistan, and the Philippines, are all linked to vaccines. In fact, by 2018, 70% of global polio cases were vaccine strain.

Vaccines make fortunes for Cult-owned Gates and Big Pharma while undermining the health and immune systems of the population. We had a glimpse of the mentality behind the Big Pharma cartel with a report on WION (World is One News), an international English language TV station based in India, which exposed the extraordinary behaviour of US drug company Pfizer over its 'Covid vaccine'. The WION report told how Pfizer had made fantastic demands of Argentina, Brazil and other countries in return for its 'vaccine'. These included immunity from prosecution, even for Pfizer negligence, government insurance to protect Pfizer from law suits and handing over as collateral sovereign assets of the country to include Argentina's bank reserves, military bases and embassy buildings. Pfizer demanded the same of Brazil in the form of waiving sovereignty of its assets abroad; exempting Pfizer from Brazilian laws; and giving Pfizer immunity from all civil liability. This is a 'vaccine' developed with government funding. Big Pharma is evil incarnate as a creation of the Cult and all must be handed tickets to Nuremberg.

Phantom 'vaccine' for a phantom 'disease'

I'll expose the 'Covid vaccine' fraud and then go on to the wider background of why the Cult has set out to 'vaccinate' every man, woman and child on the planet for an alleged 'new disease' with a survival rate of 99.77 percent (or more) even by the grotesquely-

manipulated figures of the World Health Organization and Johns Hopkins University. The 'infection' to 'death' ratio is 0.23 to 0.15 percent according to Stanford epidemiologist Dr John Ioannidis and while estimates vary the danger remains tiny. I say that if the truth be told the fake infection to fake death ratio is zero. Never mind all the evidence I have presented here and in *The Answer* that there is no 'virus' let us just focus for a moment on that death-rate figure of say 0.23 percent. The figure includes all those worldwide who have tested positive with a test not testing for the 'virus' and then died within 28 days or even longer of any other cause – *any other cause*. Now subtract all those illusory 'Covid' deaths on the global data sheets from the 0.23 percent. What do you think you would be left with? *Zero*. A vaccination has never been successfully developed for a so-called coronavirus. They have all failed at the animal testing stage when they caused hypersensitivity to what they were claiming to protect against and made the impact of a disease far worse. Cult-owned vaccine corporations got around that problem this time by bypassing animal trials, going straight to humans and making the length of the 'trials' before the public rollout as short as they could get away with. Normally it takes five to ten years or more to develop vaccines that still cause demonstrable harm to many people and that's without including the long-term effects that are never officially connected to the vaccination. 'Covid' non-vaccines have been officially produced and approved in a matter of months from a standing start and part of the reason is that (a) they were developed before the 'Covid' hoax began and (b) they are based on computer programs and not natural sources. Official non-trials were so short that government agencies gave *emergency*, not full, approval. 'Trials' were not even completed and full approval cannot be secured until they are. Public 'Covid vaccination' is actually a *continuation of the trial*. Drug company 'trials' are not scheduled to end until 2023 by which time a lot of people are going to be dead. Data on which government agencies gave this emergency approval was supplied by the Big Pharma corporations themselves in the form of Pfizer/BioNTech, AstraZeneca, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, and

others, and this is the case with all vaccines. By its very nature *emergency* approval means drug companies do not have to prove that the 'vaccine' is 'safe and effective'. How could they with trials way short of complete? Government regulators only have to *believe* that they *could* be safe and effective. It is criminal manipulation to get products in circulation with no testing worth the name. Agencies giving that approval are infested with Big Pharma-connected place-people and they act in the interests of Big Pharma (the Cult) and not the public about whom they do not give a damn.

More human lab rats

'Covid vaccines' produced in record time by Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna employ a technique *never approved before for use on humans*. They are known as mRNA 'vaccines' and inject a synthetic version of 'viral' mRNA or 'messenger RNA'. The key is in the term 'messenger'. The body works, or doesn't, on the basis of information messaging. Communications are constantly passing between and within the genetic system and the brain. Change those messages and you change the state of the body and even its very nature and you can change psychology and behaviour by the way the brain processes information. I think you are going to see significant changes in personality and perception of many people who have had the 'Covid vaccine' synthetic potions. Insider Aldous Huxley predicted the following in 1961 and mRNA 'vaccines' can be included in the term 'pharmacological methods':

There will be, in the next generation or so, a pharmacological method of making people love their servitude, and producing dictatorship without tears, so to speak, producing a kind of painless concentration camp for entire societies, so that people will in fact have their own liberties taken away from them, but rather enjoy it, because they will be distracted from any desire to rebel by propaganda or brainwashing, or brainwashing enhanced by pharmacological methods. And this seems to be the final revolution.

Apologists claim that mRNA synthetic 'vaccines' don't change the DNA genetic blueprint because RNA does not affect DNA only the other way round. This is so disingenuous. A process called 'reverse

transcription' can convert RNA into DNA and be integrated into DNA in the cell nucleus. This was highlighted in December, 2020, by scientists at Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Geneticists report that more than 40 percent of mammalian genomes results from reverse transcription. On the most basic level if messaging changes then that sequence must lead to changes in DNA which is receiving and transmitting those communications. How can introducing synthetic material into cells not change the cells where DNA is located? The process is known as transfection which is defined as 'a technique to insert foreign nucleic acid (DNA or RNA) into a cell, typically with the intention of altering the properties of the cell'. Researchers at the Sloan Kettering Institute in New York found that changes in messenger RNA can deactivate tumour-suppressing proteins and thereby promote cancer. This is what happens when you mess with messaging. 'Covid vaccine' maker Moderna was founded in 2010 by Canadian stem cell biologist Derrick J. Rossi after his breakthrough discovery in the field of transforming and reprogramming stem cells. These are neutral cells that can be programmed to become any cell including sperm cells. Moderna was therefore founded on the principle of genetic manipulation and has never produced any vaccine or drug before its genetically-manipulating synthetic 'Covid' shite. Look at the name – Mode-RNA or Modify-RNA. Another important point is that the US Supreme Court has ruled that genetically-modified DNA, or complementary DNA (cDNA) synthesized in the laboratory from messenger RNA, can be patented and owned. These psychopaths are doing this to the human body.

Cells replicate synthetic mRNA in the 'Covid vaccines' and in theory the body is tricked into making antigens which trigger antibodies to target the 'virus spike proteins' which as Dr Tom Cowan said have *never been seen*. Cut the crap and these 'vaccines' deliver *self-replicating* synthetic material to the cells with the effect of changing human DNA. The more of them you have the more that process is compounded while synthetic material is all the time self-replicating. 'Vaccine'-maker Moderna describes mRNA as 'like

software for the cell' and so they are messing with the body's software. What happens when you change the software in a computer? Everything changes. For this reason the Cult is preparing a production line of mRNA 'Covid vaccines' and a long list of excuses to use them as with all the 'variants' of a 'virus' never shown to exist. The plan is further to transfer the mRNA technique to other vaccines mostly given to children and young people. The cumulative consequences will be a transformation of human DNA through a constant infusion of synthetic genetic material which will kill many and change the rest. Now consider that governments that have given emergency approval for a vaccine that's not a vaccine; never been approved for humans before; had no testing worth the name; and the makers have been given immunity from prosecution for any deaths or adverse effects suffered by the public. The UK government awarded *permanent legal indemnity* to itself and its employees for harm done when a patient is being treated for 'Covid-19' or 'suspected Covid-19'. That is quite a thought when these are possible 'side-effects' from the 'vaccine' (they are not 'side', they are effects) listed by the US Food and Drug Administration:

Guillain-Barre syndrome; acute disseminated encephalomyelitis; transverse myelitis; encephalitis; myelitis; encephalomyelitis; meningoencephalitis; meningitis; encephalopathy; convulsions; seizures; stroke; narcolepsy; cataplexy; anaphylaxis; acute myocardial infarction (heart attack); myocarditis; pericarditis; autoimmune disease; death; implications for pregnancy, and birth outcomes; other acute demyelinating diseases; non anaphylactic allergy reactions; thrombocytopenia ; disseminated intravascular coagulation; venous thromboembolism; arthritis; arthralgia; joint pain; Kawasaki disease; multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children; vaccine enhanced disease. The latter is the way the 'vaccine' has the potential to make diseases far worse than they would otherwise be.

UK doctor and freedom campaigner Vernon Coleman described the conditions in this list as 'all unpleasant, most of them very serious, and you can't get more serious than death'. The thought that anyone at all has had the 'vaccine' in these circumstances is testament to the potential that humanity has for clueless, unquestioning, stupidity and for many that programmed stupidity has already been terminal.

An insider speaks

Dr Michael Yeadon is a former Vice President, head of research and Chief Scientific Adviser at vaccine giant Pfizer. Yeadon worked on the inside of Big Pharma, but that did not stop him becoming a vocal critic of 'Covid vaccines' and their potential for multiple harms, including infertility in women. By the spring of 2021 he went much further and even used the no, no, term 'conspiracy'. When you begin to see what is going on it is impossible not to do so. Yeadon spoke out in an interview with freedom campaigner James Delingpole and I mentioned earlier how he said that no one had samples of 'the virus'. He explained that the mRNA technique originated in the anti-cancer field and ways to turn on and off certain genes which could be advantageous if you wanted to stop cancer growing out of control. 'That's the origin of them. They are a very unusual application, really.' Yeadon said that treating a cancer patient with an aggressive procedure might be understandable if the alternative was dying, but it was quite another thing to use the same technique as a public health measure. Most people involved wouldn't catch the infectious agent you were vaccinating against and if they did they probably wouldn't die:

If you are really using it as a public health measure you really want to as close as you can get to zero sides-effects ... I find it odd that they chose techniques that were really cutting their teeth in the field of oncology and I'm worried that in using gene-based vaccines that have to be injected in the body and spread around the body, get taken up into some cells, and the regulators haven't quite told us which cells they get taken up into ... you are going to be generating a wide range of responses ... with multiple steps each of which could go well or badly.

I doubt the Cult intends it to go well. Yeadon said that you can put any gene you like into the body through the 'vaccine'. 'You can certainly give them a gene that would do them some harm if you wanted.' I was intrigued when he said that when used in the cancer field the technique could turn genes on and off. I explore this process in *The Answer* and with different genes having different functions you could create mayhem – physically and psychologically – if you turned the wrong ones on and the right ones off. I read reports of an experiment by researchers at the University of Washington's school of computer science and engineering in which they encoded DNA to infect computers. The body is itself a biological computer and if human DNA can inflict damage on a computer why can't the computer via synthetic material mess with the human body? It can. The Washington research team said it was possible to insert malicious malware into 'physical DNA strands' and corrupt the computer system of a gene sequencing machine as it 'reads gene letters and stores them as binary digits 0 and 1'. They concluded that hackers could one day use blood or spit samples to access computer systems and obtain sensitive data from police forensics labs or infect genome files. It is at this level of digital interaction that synthetic 'vaccines' need to be seen to get the full picture and that will become very clear later on. Michael Yeadon said it made no sense to give the 'vaccine' to younger people who were in no danger from the 'virus'. What was the benefit? It was all downside with potential effects:

The fact that my government in what I thought was a civilised, rational country, is raining [the 'vaccine'] on people in their 30s and 40s, even my children in their 20s, they're getting letters and phone calls, I know this is not right and any of you doctors who are vaccinating you know it's not right, too. They are not at risk. They are not at risk from the disease, so you are now hoping that the side-effects are so rare that you get away with it. You don't give new technology ... that you don't understand to 100 percent of the population.

Blood clot problems with the AstraZeneca 'vaccine' have been affecting younger people to emphasise the downside risks with no benefit. AstraZeneca's version, produced with Oxford University, does not use mRNA, but still gets its toxic cocktail inside cells where

it targets DNA. The Johnson & Johnson 'vaccine' which uses a similar technique has also produced blood clot effects to such an extent that the United States paused its use at one point. They are all 'gene therapy' (cell modification) procedures and not 'vaccines'. The truth is that once the content of these injections enter cells we have no idea what the effect will be. People can speculate and some can give very educated opinions and that's good. In the end, though, only the makers know what their potions are designed to do and even they won't know every last consequence. Michael Yeadon was scathing about doctors doing what they knew to be wrong. 'Everyone's mute', he said. Doctors in the NHS must know this was not right, coming into work and injecting people. 'I don't know how they sleep at night. I know I couldn't do it. I know that if I were in that position I'd have to quit.' He said he knew enough about toxicology to know this was not a good risk-benefit. Yeadon had spoken to seven or eight university professors and all except two would not speak out publicly. Their universities had a policy that no one said anything that countered the government and its medical advisors. They were afraid of losing their government grants. This is how intimidation has been used to silence the truth at every level of the system. I say silence, but these people could still speak out if they made that choice. Yeadon called them 'moral cowards' – 'This is about your children and grandchildren's lives and you have just buggered off and left it.'

'Variant' nonsense

Some of his most powerful comments related to the alleged 'variants' being used to instil more fear, justify more lockdowns, and introduce more 'vaccines'. He said government claims about 'variants' were nonsense. He had checked the alleged variant 'codes' and they were 99.7 percent identical to the 'original'. This was the human identity difference equivalent to putting a baseball cap on and off or wearing it the other way round. A 0.3 percent difference would make it impossible for that 'variant' to escape immunity from the 'original'. This made no sense of having new 'vaccines' for

'variants'. He said there would have to be at least a *30 percent* difference for that to be justified and even then he believed the immune system would still recognise what it was. Gates-funded 'variant modeller' and 'vaccine'-pusher John Edmunds might care to comment. Yeadon said drug companies were making new versions of the 'vaccine' as a 'top up' for 'variants'. Worse than that, he said, the 'regulators' around the world like the MHRA in the UK had got together and agreed that because 'vaccines' for 'variants' were so similar to the first 'vaccines' *they did not have to do safety studies*. How transparently sinister that is. This is when Yeadon said: 'There is a conspiracy here.' There was no need for another vaccine for 'variants' and yet we were told that there was and the country had shut its borders because of them. 'They are going into hundreds of millions of arms without passing 'go' or any regulator. Why did they do that? Why did they pick this method of making the vaccine?'

The reason had to be something bigger than that it seemed and 'it's not protection against the virus'. It's was a far bigger project that meant politicians and advisers were willing to do things and not do things that knowingly resulted in avoidable deaths – 'that's already happened when you think about lockdown and deprivation of health care for a year.' He spoke of people prepared to do something that results in the avoidable death of their fellow human beings and it not bother them. This is the penny-drop I have been working to get across for more than 30 years – the level of pure evil we are dealing with. Yeadon said his friends and associates could not believe there could be that much evil, but he reminded them of Stalin, Pol Pot and Hitler and of what Stalin had said: 'One death is a tragedy. A million? A statistic.' He could not think of a benign explanation for why you need top-up vaccines 'which I'm sure you don't' and for the regulators 'to just get out of the way and wave them through'. Why would the regulators do that when they were still wrestling with the dangers of the 'parent' vaccine? He was clearly shocked by what he had seen since the 'Covid' hoax began and now he was thinking the previously unthinkable:

If you wanted to depopulate a significant proportion of the world and to do it in a way that doesn't involve destruction of the environment with nuclear weapons, poisoning everyone with anthrax or something like that, and you wanted plausible deniability while you had a multi-year infectious disease crisis, I actually don't think you could come up with a better plan of work than seems to be in front of me. I can't say that's what they are going to do, but I can't think of a benign explanation why they are doing it.

He said he never thought that they would get rid of 99 percent of humans, but now he wondered. 'If you wanted to that this would be a hell of a way to do it – it would be unstoppable folks.' Yeadon had concluded that those who submitted to the 'vaccine' would be allowed to have some kind of normal life (but for how long?) while screws were tightened to coerce and mandate the last few percent. 'I think they'll put the rest of them in a prison camp. I wish I was wrong, but I don't think I am.' Other points he made included: There were no coronavirus vaccines then suddenly they all come along at the same time; we have no idea of the long term affect with trials so short; coercing or forcing people to have medical procedures is against the Nuremberg Code instigated when the Nazis did just that; people should at least delay having the 'vaccine'; a quick Internet search confirms that masks don't reduce respiratory viral transmission and 'the government knows that'; they have smashed civil society and they know that, too; two dozen peer-reviewed studies show no connection between lockdown and reducing deaths; he knew from personal friends the elite were still flying around and going on holiday while the public were locked down; the elite were not having the 'vaccines'. He was also asked if 'vaccines' could be made to target difference races. He said he didn't know, but the document by the Project for the New American Century in September, 2000, said developing 'advanced forms of biological warfare that can target *specific genotypes* may transform biological warfare from the realm of terror to a politically useful tool.' Oh, they're evil all right. Of that we can be *absolutely* sure.

Another cull of old people

We have seen from the CDC definition that the mRNA 'Covid vaccine' is not a vaccine and nor are the others that *claim* to reduce 'severity of symptoms' in *some* people, but not protect from infection or transmission. What about all the lies about returning to 'normal' if people were 'vaccinated'? If they are not claimed to stop infection and transmission of the alleged 'virus', how does anything change? This was all lies to manipulate people to take the jabs and we are seeing that now with masks and distancing still required for the 'vaccinated'. How did they think that elderly people with fragile health and immune responses were going to be affected by infusing their cells with synthetic material and other toxic substances? They *knew* that in the short and long term it would be devastating and fatal as the culling of the old that began with the first lockdowns was continued with the 'vaccine'. Death rates in care homes soared immediately residents began to be 'vaccinated' – infused with synthetic material. Brave and committed whistleblower nurses put their careers at risk by exposing this truth while the rest kept their heads down and their mouths shut to put their careers before those they are supposed to care for. A long-time American Certified Nursing Assistant who gave his name as James posted a video in which he described emotionally what happened in his care home when vaccination began. He said that during 2020 very few residents were sick with 'Covid' and no one died during the entire year; but shortly after the Pfizer mRNA injections 14 people died within two weeks and many others were near death. 'They're dropping like flies', he said. Residents who walked on their own before the shot could no longer and they had lost their ability to conduct an intelligent conversation. The home's management said the sudden deaths were caused by a 'super-spreader' of 'Covid-19'. Then how come, James asked, that residents who refused to take the injections were not sick? It was a case of inject the elderly with mRNA synthetic potions and blame their illness and death that followed on the 'virus'. James described what was happening in care homes as 'the greatest crime of genocide this country has ever seen'. Remember the NHS staff nurse from earlier who used the same

word 'genocide' for what was happening with the 'vaccines' and that it was an 'act of human annihilation'. A UK care home whistleblower told a similar story to James about the effect of the 'vaccine' in deaths and 'outbreaks' of illness dubbed 'Covid' after getting the jab. She told how her care home management and staff had zealously imposed government regulations and no one was allowed to even question the official narrative let alone speak out against it. She said the NHS was even worse. Again we see the results of reframing. A worker at a local care home where I live said they had not had a single case of 'Covid' there for almost a year and when the residents were 'vaccinated' they had 19 positive cases in two weeks with eight dying.

It's not the 'vaccine' – honest

The obvious cause and effect was being ignored by the media and most of the public. Australia's health minister Greg Hunt (a former head of strategy at the World Economic Forum) was admitted to hospital after he had the 'vaccine'. He was suffering according to reports from the skin infection 'cellulitis' and it must have been a severe case to have warranted days in hospital. Immediately the authorities said this was nothing to do with the 'vaccine' when an effect of some vaccines is a 'cellulitis-like reaction'. We had families of perfectly healthy old people who died after the 'vaccine' saying that if only they had been given the 'vaccine' earlier they would still be alive. As a numbskull rating that is off the chart. A father of four 'died of Covid' at aged 48 when he was taken ill two days after having the 'vaccine'. The man, a health administrator, had been 'shielding during the pandemic' and had 'not really left the house' until he went for the 'vaccine'. Having the 'vaccine' and then falling ill and dying does not seem to have qualified as a possible cause and effect and 'Covid-19' went on his death certificate. His family said they had no idea how he 'caught the virus'. A family member said: 'Tragically, it could be that going for a vaccination ultimately led to him catching Covid ...The sad truth is that they are never going to know where it came from.' The family warned people to remember

that the virus still existed and was 'very real'. So was their stupidity. Nurses and doctors who had the first round of the 'vaccine' were collapsing, dying and ending up in a hospital bed while they or their grieving relatives were saying they'd still have the 'vaccine' again despite what happened. I kid you not. You mean if your husband returned from the dead he'd have the same 'vaccine' again that killed him??

Doctors at the VCU Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia, said the Johnson & Johnson 'vaccine' was to blame for a man's skin peeling off. Patient Richard Terrell said: 'It all just happened so fast. My skin peeled off. It's still coming off on my hands now.' He said it was stinging, burning and itching and when he bent his arms and legs it was very painful with 'the skin swollen and rubbing against itself'. Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines use mRNA to change the cell while the Johnson & Johnson version uses DNA in a process similar to AstraZeneca's technique. Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca have both had their 'vaccines' paused by many countries after causing serious blood problems. Terrell's doctor Fnu Nutan said he could have died if he hadn't got medical attention. It sounds terrible so what did Nutan and Terrell say about the 'vaccine' now? Oh, they still recommend that people have it. A nurse in a hospital bed 40 minutes after the vaccination and unable to swallow due to throat swelling was told by a doctor that he lost mobility in his arm for 36 hours following the vaccination. What did he say to the ailing nurse? 'Good for you for getting the vaccination.' We are dealing with a serious form of cognitive dissonance madness in both public and medical staff. There is a remarkable correlation between those having the 'vaccine' and trumpeting the fact and suffering bad happenings shortly afterwards. Witold Rogiewicz, a Polish doctor, made a video of his 'vaccination' and ridiculed those who were questioning its safety and the intentions of Bill Gates: 'Vaccinate yourself to protect yourself, your loved ones, friends and also patients. And to mention quickly I have info for anti-vaxxers and anti-Coviders if you want to contact Bill Gates you can do this through me.' He further ridiculed the dangers of 5G. Days later he

was dead, but naturally the vaccination wasn't mentioned in the verdict of 'heart attack'.

Lies, lies and more lies

So many members of the human race have slipped into extreme states of insanity and unfortunately they include reframed doctors and nursing staff. Having a 'vaccine' and dying within minutes or hours is not considered a valid connection while death from any cause within 28 days or longer of a positive test with a test not testing for the 'virus' means 'Covid-19' goes on the death certificate. How could that 'vaccine'-death connection not have been made except by calculated deceit? US figures in the initial rollout period to February 12th, 2020, revealed that a third of the deaths reported to the CDC after 'Covid vaccines' happened within 48 hours. Five men in the UK suffered an 'extremely rare' blood clot problem after having the AstraZeneca 'vaccine', but no causal link was established said the Gates-funded Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) which had given the 'vaccine' emergency approval to be used. Former Pfizer executive Dr Michael Yeadon explained in his interview how the procedures could cause blood coagulation and clots. People who should have been at no risk were dying from blood clots in the brain and he said he had heard from medical doctor friends that people were suffering from skin bleeding and massive headaches. The AstraZeneca 'shot' was stopped by some 20 countries over the blood clotting issue and still the corrupt MHRA, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the World Health Organization said that it should continue to be given even though the EMA admitted that it 'still cannot rule out definitively' a link between blood clotting and the 'vaccine'. Later Marco Cavaleri, head of EMA vaccine strategy, said there was indeed a clear link between the 'vaccine' and thrombosis, but they didn't know why. So much for the trials showing the 'vaccine' is safe. Blood clots were affecting younger people who would be under virtually no danger from 'Covid' even if it existed which makes it all the more stupid and sinister.

The British government responded to public alarm by wheeling out June Raine, the terrifyingly weak infant school headmistress sound-alike who heads the UK MHRA drug 'regulator'. The idea that she would stand up to Big Pharma and government pressure is laughable and she told us that all was well in the same way that she did when allowing untested, never-used-on-humans-before, genetically-manipulating 'vaccines' to be exposed to the public in the first place. Mass lying is the new normal of the 'Covid' era. The MHRA later said 30 cases of rare blood clots had by then been connected with the AstraZeneca 'vaccine' (that means a lot more in reality) while stressing that the benefits of the jab in preventing 'Covid-19' outweighed any risks. A more ridiculous and disingenuous statement with callous disregard for human health it is hard to contemplate. Immediately after the mendacious 'all-clears' two hospital workers in Denmark experienced blood clots and cerebral haemorrhaging following the AstraZeneca jab and one died. Top Norwegian health official Pål Andre Holme said the 'vaccine' was the only common factor: 'There is nothing in the patient history of these individuals that can give such a powerful immune response ... I am confident that the antibodies that we have found are the cause, and I see no other explanation than it being the vaccine which triggers it.' Strokes, a clot or bleed in the brain, were clearly associated with the 'vaccine' from word of mouth and whistleblower reports. Similar consequences followed with all these 'vaccines' that we were told were so safe and as the numbers grew by the day it was clear we were witnessing human carnage.

Learning the hard way

A woman interviewed by UKColumn told how her husband suffered dramatic health effects after the vaccine when he'd been in good health all his life. He went from being a little unwell to losing all feeling in his legs and experiencing 'excruciating pain'. Misdiagnosis followed twice at Accident and Emergency (an 'allergy' and 'sciatica') before he was admitted to a neurology ward where doctors said his serious condition had been caused by the

'vaccine'. Another seven 'vaccinated' people were apparently being treated on the same ward for similar symptoms. The woman said he had the 'vaccine' because they believed media claims that it was safe. 'I didn't think the government would give out a vaccine that does this to somebody; I believed they would be bringing out a vaccination that would be safe.' What a tragic way to learn that lesson. Another woman posted that her husband was transporting stroke patients to hospital on almost every shift and when he asked them if they had been 'vaccinated' for 'Covid' they all replied 'yes'. One had a 'massive brain bleed' the day after his second dose. She said her husband reported the 'just been vaccinated' information every time to doctors in A and E only for them to ignore it, make no notes and appear annoyed that it was even mentioned. This particular report cannot be verified, but it expresses a common theme that confirms the monumental underreporting of 'vaccine' consequences. Interestingly as the 'vaccines' and their brain blood clot/stroke consequences began to emerge the UK National Health Service began a publicity campaign telling the public what to do in the event of a stroke. A Scottish NHS staff nurse who quit in disgust in March, 2021, said:

I have seen traumatic injuries from the vaccine, they're not getting reported to the yellow card [adverse reaction] scheme, they're treating the symptoms, not asking why, why it's happening. It's just treating the symptoms and when you speak about it you're dismissed like you're crazy, I'm not crazy, I'm not crazy because every other colleague I've spoken to is terrified to speak out, they've had enough.

Videos appeared on the Internet of people uncontrollably shaking after the 'vaccine' with no control over muscles, limbs and even their face. A Scottish mother broke out in a severe rash all over her body almost immediately after she was given the AstraZeneca 'vaccine'. The pictures were horrific. Leigh King, a 41-year-old hairdresser from Lanarkshire said: 'Never in my life was I prepared for what I was about to experience ... My skin was so sore and constantly hot ... I have never felt pain like this ...' But don't you worry, the 'vaccine' is perfectly safe. Then there has been the effect on medical

staff who have been pressured to have the 'vaccine' by psychopathic 'health' authorities and government. A London hospital consultant who gave the name K. Polyakova wrote this to the *British Medical Journal* or *BMJ*:

I am currently struggling with ... the failure to report the reality of the morbidity caused by our current vaccination program within the health service and staff population. The levels of sickness after vaccination is unprecedented and staff are getting very sick and some with neurological symptoms which is having a huge impact on the health service function. Even the young and healthy are off for days, some for weeks, and some requiring medical treatment. Whole teams are being taken out as they went to get vaccinated together.

Mandatory vaccination in this instance is stupid, unethical and irresponsible when it comes to protecting our staff and public health. We are in the voluntary phase of vaccination, and encouraging staff to take an unlicensed product that is impacting on their immediate health ... it is clearly stated that these vaccine products do not offer immunity or stop transmission. In which case why are we doing it?

Not to protect health that's for sure. Medical workers are lauded by governments for agenda reasons when they couldn't give a toss about them any more than they can for the population in general. Schools across America faced the same situation as they closed due to the high number of teachers and other staff with bad reactions to the Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson 'Covid vaccines' all of which were linked to death and serious adverse effects. The *BMJ* took down the consultant's comments pretty quickly on the grounds that they were being used to spread 'disinformation'. They were exposing the truth about the 'vaccine' was the real reason. The cover-up is breathtaking.

Hiding the evidence

The scale of the 'vaccine' death cover-up worldwide can be confirmed by comparing official figures with the personal experience of the public. I heard of many people in my community who died immediately or soon after the vaccine that would never appear in the media or even likely on the official totals of 'vaccine' fatalities and adverse reactions when only about ten percent are estimated to be

reported and I have seen some estimates as low as one percent in a Harvard study. In the UK alone by April 29th, 2021, some 757,654 adverse reactions had been officially reported from the Pfizer/BioNTech, Oxford/AstraZeneca and Moderna 'vaccines' with more than a thousand deaths linked to jabs and that means an estimated ten times this number in reality from a ten percent reporting rate percentage. That's seven million adverse reactions and 10,000 potential deaths and a one percent reporting rate would be ten times *those* figures. In 1976 the US government pulled the swine flu vaccine after 53 deaths. The UK data included a combined 10,000 eye disorders from the 'Covid vaccines' with more than 750 suffering visual impairment or blindness and again multiply by the estimated reporting percentages. As 'Covid cases' officially fell hospitals virtually empty during the 'Covid crisis' began to fill up with a range of other problems in the wake of the 'vaccine' rollout. The numbers across America have also been catastrophic. Deaths linked to *all* types of vaccine increased by 6,000 percent in the first quarter of 2021 compared with 2020. A 39-year-old woman from Ogden, Utah, died four days after receiving a second dose of Moderna's 'Covid vaccine' when her liver, heart and kidneys all failed despite the fact that she had no known medical issues or conditions. Her family sought an autopsy, but Dr Erik Christensen, Utah's chief medical examiner, said proving vaccine injury as a cause of death almost never happened. He could think of only one instance where an autopsy would name a vaccine as the official cause of death and that would be anaphylaxis where someone received a vaccine and died almost instantaneously. 'Short of that, it would be difficult for us to definitively say this is the vaccine,' Christensen said. If that is true this must be added to the estimated ten percent (or far less) reporting rate of vaccine deaths and serious reactions and the conclusion can only be that vaccine deaths and serious reactions – including these 'Covid' potions' – are phenomenally understated in official figures. The same story can be found everywhere. Endless accounts of deaths and serious reactions among the public, medical

and care home staff while official figures did not even begin to reflect this.

Professional script-reader Dr David Williams, a 'top public-health official' in Ontario, Canada, insulted our intelligence by claiming only four serious adverse reactions and no deaths from the more than 380,000 vaccine doses then given. This bore no resemblance to what people knew had happened in their own circles and we had Dirk Huyer in charge of getting millions vaccinated in Ontario while at the same time he was Chief Coroner for the province investigating causes of death including possible death from the vaccine. An aide said he had stepped back from investigating deaths, but evidence indicated otherwise. Rosemary Frei, who secured a Master of Science degree in molecular biology at the Faculty of Medicine at Canada's University of Calgary before turning to investigative journalism, was one who could see that official figures for 'vaccine' deaths and reactions made no sense. She said that doctors seldom reported adverse events and when people got really sick or died after getting a vaccination they would attribute that to anything except the vaccines. It had been that way for years and anyone who wondered aloud whether the 'Covid vaccines' or other shots cause harm is immediately branded as 'anti-vax' and 'anti-science'. This was 'career-threatening' for health professionals. Then there was the huge pressure to support the push to 'vaccinate' billions in the quickest time possible. Frei said:

So that's where we're at today. More than half a million vaccine doses have been given to people in Ontario alone. The rush is on to vaccinate all 15 million of us in the province by September. And the mainstream media are screaming for this to be sped up even more. That all adds up to only a very slim likelihood that we're going to be told the truth by officials about how many people are getting sick or dying from the vaccines.

What is true of Ontario is true of everywhere.

They KNEW – and still did it

The authorities knew what was going to happen with multiple deaths and adverse reactions. The UK government's Gates-funded

and Big Pharma-dominated Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) hired a company to employ AI in compiling the projected reactions to the 'vaccine' that would otherwise be uncountable. The request for applications said: 'The MHRA urgently seeks an Artificial Intelligence (AI) software tool to process the expected high volume of Covid-19 vaccine Adverse Drug Reaction ...' This was from the agency, headed by the disingenuous June Raine, that gave the 'vaccines' emergency approval and the company was hired before the first shot was given. 'We are going to kill and maim you – is that okay?' 'Oh, yes, perfectly fine – I'm very grateful, thank you, doctor.' The range of 'Covid vaccine' adverse reactions goes on for page after page in the MHRA criminally underreported 'Yellow Card' system and includes affects to eyes, ears, skin, digestion, blood and so on. Raine's MHRA amazingly claimed that the 'overall safety experience ... is so far as expected from the clinical trials'. The death, serious adverse effects, deafness and blindness were *expected*? When did they ever mention that? If these human tragedies were expected then those that gave approval for the use of these 'vaccines' must be guilty of crimes against humanity including murder – a definition of which is 'killing a person with malice aforethought or with recklessness manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life.' People involved at the MHRA, the CDC in America and their equivalent around the world must go before Nuremberg trials to answer for their callous inhumanity. We are only talking here about the immediate effects of the 'vaccine'. The longer-term impact of the DNA synthetic manipulation is the main reason they are so hysterically desperate to inoculate the entire global population in the shortest possible time.

Africa and the developing world are a major focus for the 'vaccine' depopulation agenda and a mass vaccination sales-pitch is underway thanks to caring people like the Rockefellers and other Cult assets. The Rockefeller Foundation, which pre-empted the 'Covid pandemic' in a document published in 2010 that 'predicted' what happened a decade later, announced an initial \$34.95 million grant in February, 2021, 'to ensure more equitable access to Covid-19

testing and vaccines' among other things in Africa in collaboration with '24 organizations, businesses, and government agencies'. The pan-Africa initiative would focus on 10 countries: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia'. Rajiv Shah, President of the Rockefeller Foundation and former administrator of CIA-controlled USAID, said that if Africa was not mass-vaccinated (to change the DNA of its people) it was a 'threat to all of humanity' and not fair on Africans. When someone from the Rockefeller Foundation says they want to do something to help poor and deprived people and countries it is time for a belly-laugh. They are doing this out of the goodness of their 'heart' because 'vaccinating' the entire global population is what the 'Covid' hoax set out to achieve. Official 'decolonisation' of Africa by the Cult was merely a prelude to financial colonisation on the road to a return to physical colonisation. The 'vaccine' is vital to that and the sudden and convenient death of the 'Covid' sceptic president of Tanzania can be seen in its true light. A lot of people in Africa are aware that this is another form of colonisation and exploitation and they need to stand their ground.

The 'vaccine is working' scam

A potential problem for the Cult was that the 'vaccine' is meant to change human DNA and body messaging and not to protect anyone from a 'virus' never shown to exist. The vaccine couldn't work because it was not designed to work and how could they make it *appear* to be working so that more people would have it? This was overcome by lowering the amplification rate of the PCR test to produce fewer 'cases' and therefore fewer 'deaths'. Some of us had been pointing out since March, 2020, that the amplification rate of the test not testing for the 'virus' had been made artificially high to generate positive tests which they could call 'cases' to justify lockdowns. The World Health Organization recommended an absurdly high 45 amplification cycles to ensure the high positives required by the Cult and then remained silent on the issue until January 20th, 2021 – Biden's Inauguration Day. This was when the

'vaccinations' were seriously underway and on that day the WHO recommended after discussions with America's CDC that laboratories *lowered their testing amplification*. Dr David Samadi, a certified urologist and health writer, said the WHO was encouraging all labs to reduce their cycle count for PCR tests. He said the current cycle was much too high and was 'resulting in any particle being declared a positive case'. Even one mainstream news report I saw said this meant the number of 'Covid' infections may have been 'dramatically inflated'. Oh, just a little bit. The CDC in America issued new guidance to laboratories in April, 2021, to use 28 cycles *but only for 'vaccinated' people*. The timing of the CDC/WHO interventions were cynically designed to make it appear the 'vaccines' were responsible for falling cases and deaths when the real reason can be seen in the following examples. New York's state lab, the Wadsworth Center, identified 872 positive tests in July, 2020, based on a threshold of 40 cycles. When the figure was lowered to 35 cycles 43 percent of the 872 were no longer 'positives'. At 30 cycles the figure was 63 percent. A Massachusetts lab found that between 85 to 90 percent of people who tested positive in July with a cycle threshold of 40 would be negative at 30 cycles, Ashish Jha, MD, director of the Harvard Global Health Institute, said: 'I'm really shocked that it could be that high ... Boy, does it really change the way we need to be thinking about testing.' I'm shocked that I could see the obvious in the spring of 2020, with no medical background, and most medical professionals still haven't worked it out. No, that's not shocking – it's terrifying.

Three weeks after the WHO directive to lower PCR cycles the London *Daily Mail* ran this headline: 'Why ARE Covid cases plummeting? New infections have fallen 45% in the US and 30% globally in the past 3 weeks but experts say vaccine is NOT the main driver because only 8% of Americans and 13% of people worldwide have received their first dose.' They acknowledged that the drop could not be attributed to the 'vaccine', but soon this morphed throughout the media into the 'vaccine' has caused cases and deaths to fall when it was the PCR threshold. In December, 2020, there was

chaos at English Channel ports with truck drivers needing negative 'Covid' tests before they could board a ferry home for Christmas. The government wanted to remove the backlog as fast as possible and they brought in troops to do the 'testing'. Out of 1,600 drivers just 36 tested positive and the rest were given the all clear to cross the Channel. I guess the authorities thought that 36 was the least they could get away with without the unquestioning catching on. The amplification trick which most people believed in the absence of information in the mainstream applied more pressure on those refusing the 'vaccine' to succumb when it 'obviously worked'. The truth was the exact opposite with deaths in care homes soaring with the 'vaccine' and in Israel the term used was 'skyrocket'. A re-analysis of published data from the Israeli Health Ministry led by Dr Hervé Seligmann at the Medicine Emerging Infectious and Tropical Diseases at Aix-Marseille University found that Pfizer's 'Covid vaccine' killed 'about 40 times more [elderly] people than the disease itself would have killed' during a five-week vaccination period and *260 times* more younger people than would have died from the 'virus' even according to the manipulated 'virus' figures. Dr Seligmann and his co-study author, Haim Yativ, declared after reviewing the Israeli 'vaccine' death data: 'This is a new Holocaust.'

Then, in mid-April, 2021, after vast numbers of people worldwide had been 'vaccinated', the story changed with clear coordination. The UK government began to prepare the ground for more future lockdowns when Nuremberg-destined Boris Johnson told yet another whopper. He said that cases had fallen because of *lockdowns* not 'vaccines'. Lockdowns are irrelevant when *there is no 'virus'* and the test and fraudulent death certificates are deciding the number of 'cases' and 'deaths'. Study after study has shown that lockdowns don't work and instead kill and psychologically destroy people. Meanwhile in the United States Anthony Fauci and Rochelle Walensky, the ultra-Zionist head of the CDC, peddled the same line. More lockdown was the answer and not the 'vaccine', a line repeated on cue by the moron that is Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Why all the hysteria to get everyone 'vaccinated' if lockdowns and

not 'vaccines' made the difference? None of it makes sense on the face of it. Oh, but it does. The Cult wants lockdowns *and* the 'vaccine' and if the 'vaccine' is allowed to be seen as the total answer lockdowns would no longer be justified when there are still livelihoods to destroy. 'Variants' and renewed upward manipulation of PCR amplification are planned to instigate never-ending lockdown *and* more 'vaccines'.

You *must* have it – we're desperate

Israel, where the Jewish and Arab population are ruled by the Sabbatian Cult, was the front-runner in imposing the DNA-manipulating 'vaccine' on its people to such an extent that Jewish refusers began to liken what was happening to the early years of Nazi Germany. This would seem to be a fantastic claim. Why would a government of Jewish people be acting like the Nazis did? If you realise that the Sabbatian Cult was behind the Nazis and that Sabbatians hate Jews the pieces start to fit and the question of why a 'Jewish' government would treat Jews with such callous disregard for their lives and freedom finds an answer. Those controlling the government of Israel *aren't Jewish* – they're Sabbatian. Israeli lawyer Tamir Turgal was one who made the Nazi comparison in comments to German lawyer Reiner Fuellmich who is leading a class action lawsuit against the psychopaths for crimes against humanity. Turgal described how the Israeli government was vaccinating children and pregnant women on the basis that there was no evidence that this was dangerous when they had no evidence that it *wasn't* dangerous either. They just had no evidence. This was medical experimentation and Turgal said this breached the Nuremberg Code about medical experimentation and procedures requiring informed consent and choice. Think about that. A Nuremberg Code developed because of Nazi experimentation on Jews and others in concentration camps by people like the evil-beyond-belief Josef Mengele is being breached by the *Israeli* government; but when you know that it's a *Sabbatian* government along with its intelligence and military agencies like Mossad, Shin Bet and the Israeli Defense Forces, and that Sabbatians

were the force behind the Nazis, the kaleidoscope comes into focus. What have we come to when Israeli Jews are suing their government for violating the Nuremberg Code by essentially making Israelis subject to a medical experiment using the controversial 'vaccines'? It's a shocker that this has to be done in the light of what happened in Nazi Germany. The Anshe Ha-Emet, or 'People of the Truth', made up of Israeli doctors, lawyers, campaigners and public, have launched a lawsuit with the International Criminal Court. It says:

When the heads of the Ministry of Health as well as the prime minister presented the vaccine in Israel and began the vaccination of Israeli residents, the vaccinated were not advised, that, in practice, they are taking part in a medical experiment and that their consent is required for this under the Nuremberg Code.

The irony is unbelievable, but easily explained in one word: Sabbatians. The foundation of Israeli 'Covid' apartheid is the 'green pass' or 'green passport' which allows Jews and Arabs who have had the DNA-manipulating 'vaccine' to go about their lives – to work, fly, travel in general, go to shopping malls, bars, restaurants, hotels, concerts, gyms, swimming pools, theatres and sports venues, while non-'vaccinated' are banned from all those places and activities. Israelis have likened the 'green pass' to the yellow stars that Jews in Nazi Germany were forced to wear – the same as the yellow stickers that a branch of UK supermarket chain Morrisons told exempt mask-wearers they had to display when shopping. How very sensitive. The Israeli system is blatant South African-style apartheid on the basis of compliance or non-compliance to fascism rather than colour of the skin. How appropriate that the Sabbatian Israeli government was so close to the pre-Mandela apartheid regime in Pretoria. The Sabbatian-instigated 'vaccine passport' in Israel is planned for everywhere. Sabbatians struck a deal with Pfizer that allowed them to lead the way in the percentage of a national population infused with synthetic material and the result was catastrophic. Israeli freedom activist Shai Dannon told me how chairs were appearing on beaches that said 'vaccinated only'. Health Minister Yuli Edelstein said that anyone unwilling or unable to get

the jabs that 'confer immunity' will be 'left behind'. The man's a liar. Not even the makers claim the 'vaccines' confer immunity. When you see those figures of 'vaccine' deaths these psychopaths were saying that you must take the chance the 'vaccine' will kill you or maim you while knowing it will change your DNA or lockdown for you will be permanent. That's fascism. The Israeli parliament passed a law to allow personal information of the non-vaccinated to be shared with local and national authorities for three months. This was claimed by its supporters to be a way to 'encourage' people to be vaccinated. Hadas Ziv from Physicians for Human Rights described this as a 'draconian law which crushed medical ethics and the patient rights'. But that's the idea, the Sabbatians would reply.

Your papers, please

Sabbatian Israel was leading what has been planned all along to be a global 'vaccine pass' called a 'green passport' without which you would remain in permanent lockdown restriction and unable to do anything. This is how badly – *desperately* – the Cult is to get everyone 'vaccinated'. The term and colour 'green' was not by chance and related to the psychology of fusing the perception of the green climate hoax with the 'Covid' hoax and how the 'solution' to both is the same Great Reset. Lying politicians, health officials and psychologists denied there were any plans for mandatory vaccinations or restrictions based on vaccinations, but they knew that was exactly what was meant to happen with governments of all countries reaching agreements to enforce a global system. 'Free' Denmark and 'free' Sweden unveiled digital vaccine certification. Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, and Spain have all committed to a vaccine passport system and the rest including the whole of the EU would follow. The satanic UK government will certainly go this way despite mendacious denials and at the time of writing it is trying to manipulate the public into having the 'vaccine' so they could go abroad on a summer holiday. How would that work without something to prove you had the synthetic toxicity injected into you?

Documents show that the EU's European Commission was moving towards 'vaccine certificates' in 2018 and 2019 before the 'Covid' hoax began. They knew what was coming. Abracadabra – Ursula von der Leyen, the German President of the Commission, announced in March, 2021, an EU 'Digital Green Certificate' – green again – to track the public's 'Covid status'. The passport sting is worldwide and the Far East followed the same pattern with South Korea ruling that only those with 'vaccination' passports – again the *green* pass – would be able to 'return to their daily lives'.

Bill Gates has been preparing for this 'passport' with other Cult operatives for years and beyond the paper version is a Gates-funded 'digital tattoo' to identify who has been vaccinated and who hasn't. The 'tattoo' is reported to include a substance which is externally readable to confirm who has been vaccinated. This is a bio-luminous light-generating enzyme (think fireflies) called ... *Luciferase*. Yes, named after the Cult 'god' Lucifer the 'light bringer' of whom more to come. Gates said he funded the readable tattoo to ensure children in the developing world were vaccinated and no one was missed out. He cares so much about poor kids as we know. This was just the cover story to develop a vaccine tagging system for everyone on the planet. Gates has been funding the ID2020 'alliance' to do just that in league with other lovely people at Microsoft, GAVI, the Rockefeller Foundation, Accenture and IDEO.org. He said in interviews in March, 2020, before any 'vaccine' publicly existed, that the world must have a globalised digital certificate to track the 'virus' and who had been vaccinated. Gates knew from the start that the mRNA vaccines were coming and when they would come and that the plan was to tag the 'vaccinated' to marginalise the intelligent and stop them doing anything including travel. Evil just doesn't suffice. Gates was exposed for offering a \$10 million bribe to the Nigerian House of Representatives to invoke compulsory 'Covid' vaccination of all Nigerians. Sara Cunial, a member of the Italian Parliament, called Gates a 'vaccine criminal'. She urged the Italian President to hand him over to the International Criminal Court for crimes against

humanity and condemned his plans to 'chip the human race' through ID2020.

You know it's a long-planned agenda when war criminal and Cult gofer Tony Blair is on the case. With the scale of arrogance only someone as dark as Blair can muster he said: 'Vaccination in the end is going to be your route to liberty.' Blair is a disgusting piece of work and he confirms that again. The media has given a lot of coverage to a bloke called Charlie Mullins, founder of London's biggest independent plumbing company, Pimlico Plumbers, who has said he won't employ anyone who has not been vaccinated or have them go to any home where people are not vaccinated. He said that if he had his way no one would be allowed to walk the streets if they have not been vaccinated. Gates was cheering at the time while I was alerting the white coats. The plan is that people will qualify for 'passports' for having the first two doses and then to keep it they will have to have all the follow ups and new ones for invented 'variants' until human genetics is transformed and many are dead who can't adjust to the changes. Hollywood celebrities – the usual propaganda stunt – are promoting something called the WELL Health-Safety Rating to verify that a building or space has 'taken the necessary steps to prioritize the health and safety of their staff, visitors and other stakeholders'. They included Lady Gaga, Jennifer Lopez, Michael B. Jordan, Robert DeNiro, Venus Williams, Wolfgang Puck, Deepak Chopra and 17th Surgeon General Richard Carmona. Yawn. WELL Health-Safety has big connections with China. Parent company Delos is headed by former Goldman Sachs partner Paul Scialla. This is another example – and we will see so many others – of using the excuse of 'health' to dictate the lives and activities of the population. I guess one confirmation of the 'safety' of buildings is that only 'vaccinated' people can go in, right?

Electronic concentration camps

I wrote decades ago about the plans to restrict travel and here we are for those who refuse to bow to tyranny. This can be achieved in one go with air travel if the aviation industry makes a blanket decree.

The 'vaccine' and guaranteed income are designed to be part of a global version of China's social credit system which tracks behaviour 24/7 and awards or deletes 'credits' based on whether your behaviour is supported by the state or not. I mean your entire lifestyle – what you do, eat, say, everything. Once your credit score falls below a certain level consequences kick in. In China tens of millions have been denied travel by air and train because of this. All the locations and activities denied to refusers by the 'vaccine' passports will be included in one big mass ban on doing almost anything for those that don't bow their head to government. It's beyond fascist and a new term is required to describe its extremes – I guess fascist technocracy will have to do. The way the Chinese system of technological – technocratic – control is sweeping the West can be seen in the Los Angeles school system and is planned to be expanded worldwide. Every child is required to have a 'Covid'-tracking app scanned daily before they can enter the classroom. The so-called Daily Pass tracking system is produced by Gates' Microsoft which I'm sure will shock you rigid. The pass will be scanned using a barcode (one step from an inside-the-body barcode) and the information will include health checks, 'Covid' tests and vaccinations. Entry codes are for one specific building only and access will only be allowed if a student or teacher has a negative test with a test not testing for the 'virus', has no symptoms of anything alleged to be related to 'Covid' (symptoms from a range of other illness), and has a temperature under 100 degrees. No barcode, no entry, is planned to be the case for everywhere and not only schools.

Kids are being psychologically prepared to accept this as 'normal' their whole life which is why what they can impose in schools is so important to the Cult and its gofers. Long-time American freedom campaigner John Whitehead of the Rutherford Institute was not exaggerating when he said: 'Databit by databit, we are building our own electronic concentration camps.' Canada under its Cult gofer prime minister Justin Trudeau has taken a major step towards the real thing with people interned against their will if they test positive with a test not testing for the 'virus' when they arrive at a Canadian

airport. They are jailed in internment hotels often without food or water for long periods and with many doors failing to lock there have been sexual assaults. The interned are being charged sometimes \$2,000 for the privilege of being abused in this way. Trudeau is fully on board with the Cult and says the 'Covid pandemic' has provided an opportunity for a global 'reset' to permanently change Western civilisation. His number two, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, is a trustee of the World Economic Forum and a Rhodes Scholar. The Trudeau family have long been servants of the Cult. See *The Biggest Secret* and Cathy O'Brien's book *Trance-Formation of America* for the horrific background to Trudeau's father Pierre Trudeau another Canadian prime minister. Hide your fascism behind the façade of a heart-on-the-sleeve liberal. It's a well-honed Cult technique.

What can the 'vaccine' really do?

We have a 'virus' never shown to exist and 'variants' of the 'virus' that have also never been shown to exist except, like the 'original', as computer-generated fictions. Even if you believe there's a 'virus' the 'case' to 'death' rate is in the region of 0.23 to 0.15 percent and those 'deaths' are concentrated among the very old around the same average age that people die anyway. In response to this lack of threat (in truth none) psychopaths and idiots, knowingly and unknowingly answering to Gates and the Cult, are seeking to 'vaccinate' every man, woman and child on Planet Earth. Clearly the 'vaccine' is not about 'Covid' – none of this ever has been. So what is it all about *really*? Why the desperation to infuse genetically-manipulating synthetic material into everyone through mRNA fraudulent 'vaccines' with the intent of doing this over and over with the excuses of 'variants' and other 'virus' inventions? Dr Sherri Tenpenny, an osteopathic medical doctor in the United States, has made herself an expert on vaccines and their effects as a vehement campaigner against their use. Tenpenny was board certified in emergency medicine, the director of a level two trauma centre for 12 years, and moved to Cleveland in 1996 to start an integrative

medicine practice which has treated patients from all 50 states and some 17 other countries. Weaning people off pharmaceutical drugs is a speciality.

She became interested in the consequences of vaccines after attending a meeting at the National Vaccine Information Center in Washington DC in 2000 where she 'sat through four days of listening to medical doctors and scientists and lawyers and parents of vaccine injured kids' and asked: 'What's going on?' She had never been vaccinated and never got ill while her father was given a list of vaccines to be in the military and was 'sick his entire life'. The experience added to her questions and she began to examine vaccine documents from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). After reading the first one, the 1998 version of *The General Recommendations of Vaccination*, she thought: 'This is it?' The document was poorly written and bad science and Tenpenny began 20 years of research into vaccines that continues to this day. She began her research into 'Covid vaccines' in March, 2020, and she describes them as 'deadly'. For many, as we have seen, they already have been. Tenpenny said that in the first 30 days of the 'vaccine' rollout in the United States there had been more than 40,000 adverse events reported to the vaccine adverse event database. A document had been delivered to her the day before that was 172 pages long. 'We have over 40,000 adverse events; we have over 3,100 cases of [potentially deadly] anaphylactic shock; we have over 5,000 neurological reactions.' Effects ranged from headaches to numbness, dizziness and vertigo, to losing feeling in hands or feet and paraesthesia which is when limbs 'fall asleep' and people have the sensation of insects crawling underneath their skin. All this happened in the first 30 days and remember that only about *ten percent* (or far less) of adverse reactions and vaccine-related deaths are estimated to be officially reported. Tenpenny said:

So can you think of one single product in any industry, any industry, for as long as products have been made on the planet that within 30 days we have 40,000 people complaining of side effects that not only is still on the market but ... we've got paid actors telling us how great

they are for getting their vaccine. We're offering people \$500 if they will just get their vaccine and we've got nurses and doctors going; 'I got the vaccine, I got the vaccine'.

Tenpenny said they were not going to be 'happy dancing folks' when they began to suffer Bell's palsy (facial paralysis), neuropathies, cardiac arrhythmias and autoimmune reactions that kill through a blood disorder. 'They're not going to be so happy, happy then, but we're never going to see pictures of those people' she said. Tenpenny described the 'vaccine' as 'a well-designed killing tool'.

No off-switch

Bad as the initial consequences had been Tenpenny said it would be maybe 14 months before we began to see the 'full ravage' of what is going to happen to the 'Covid vaccinated' with full-out consequences taking anything between two years and 20 years to show. You can understand why when you consider that variations of the 'Covid vaccine' use mRNA (messenger RNA) to in theory activate the immune system to produce protective antibodies without using the actual 'virus'. How can they when it's a computer program and they've never isolated what they claim is the 'real thing'? Instead they use *synthetic* mRNA. They are inoculating synthetic material into the body which through a technique known as the Trojan horse is absorbed into cells to change the nature of DNA. Human DNA is changed by an infusion of messenger RNA and with each new 'vaccine' of this type it is changed even more. Say so and you are banned by Cult Internet platforms. The contempt the contemptuous Mark Zuckerberg has for the truth and human health can be seen in an internal Facebook video leaked to the Project Veritas investigative team in which he said of the 'Covid vaccines': '... I share some caution on this because we just don't know the long term side-effects of basically modifying people's DNA and RNA.' At the same time this disgusting man's Facebook was censoring and banning anyone saying exactly the same. He must go before a Nuremberg trial for crimes against humanity when he *knows* that he

is censoring legitimate concerns and denying the right of informed consent on behalf of the Cult that owns him. People have been killed and damaged by the very 'vaccination' technique he cast doubt on himself when they may not have had the 'vaccine' with access to information that he denied them. The plan is to have at least annual 'Covid vaccinations', add others to deal with invented 'variants', and change all other vaccines into the mRNA system. Pfizer executives told shareholders at a virtual Barclays Global Healthcare Conference in March, 2021, that the public may need a third dose of 'Covid vaccine', plus regular yearly boosters and the company planned to hike prices to milk the profits in a 'significant opportunity for our vaccine'. These are the professional liars, cheats and opportunists who are telling you their 'vaccine' is safe. Given this volume of mRNA planned to be infused into the human body and its ability to then replicate we will have a transformation of human genetics from biological to synthetic biological – exactly the long-time Cult plan for reasons we'll see – and many will die. Sherri Tenpenny said of this replication:

It's like having an on-button but no off-button and that whole mechanism ... they actually give it a name and they call it the Trojan horse mechanism, because it allows that [synthetic] virus and that piece of that [synthetic] virus to get inside of your cells, start to replicate and even get inserted into other parts of your DNA as a Trojan-horse.

Ask the overwhelming majority of people who have the 'vaccine' what they know about the contents and what they do and they would reply: 'The government says it will stop me getting the virus.' Governments give that false impression on purpose to increase take-up. You can read Sherri Tenpenny's detailed analysis of the health consequences in her blog at [Vaxxter.com](https://vaxxter.com), but in summary these are some of them. She highlights the statement by Bill Gates about how human beings can become their own 'vaccine manufacturing machine'. The man is insane. ['Vaccine'-generated] 'antibodies' carry synthetic messenger RNA into the cells and the damage starts, Tenpenny contends, and she says that lungs can be adversely affected through varying degrees of pus and bleeding which

obviously affects breathing and would be dubbed 'Covid-19'. Even more sinister was the impact of 'antibodies' on macrophages, a white blood cell of the immune system. They consist of Type 1 and Type 2 which have very different functions. She said Type 1 are 'hyper-vigilant' white blood cells which 'gobble up' bacteria etc. However, in doing so, this could cause inflammation and in extreme circumstances be fatal. She says these affects are mitigated by Type 2 macrophages which kick in to calm down the system and stop it going rogue. They clear up dead tissue debris and reduce inflammation that the Type 1 'fire crews' have caused. Type 1 kills the infection and Type 2 heals the damage, she says. This is her punchline with regard to 'Covid vaccinations': She says that mRNA 'antibodies' block Type 2 macrophages by attaching to them and deactivating them. This meant that when the Type 1 response was triggered by infection there was nothing to stop that getting out of hand by calming everything down. There's an on-switch, but no off-switch, she says. What follows can be 'over and out, see you when I see you'.

Genetic suicide

Tenpenny also highlights the potential for autoimmune disease – the body attacking itself – which has been associated with vaccines since they first appeared. Infusing a synthetic foreign substance into cells could cause the immune system to react in a panic believing that the body is being overwhelmed by an invader (it is) and the consequences can again be fatal. There is an autoimmune response known as a 'cytokine storm' which I have likened to a homeowner panicked by an intruder and picking up a gun to shoot randomly in all directions before turning the fire on himself. The immune system unleashes a storm of inflammatory response called cytokines to a threat and the body commits hara-kiri. The lesson is that you mess with the body's immune response at your peril and these 'vaccines' seriously – fundamentally – mess with immune response. Tenpenny refers to a consequence called anaphylactic shock which is a severe and highly dangerous allergic reaction when the immune system

floods the body with chemicals. She gives the example of having a bee sting which primes the immune system and makes it sensitive to those chemicals. When people are stung again maybe years later the immune response can be so powerful that it leads to anaphylactic shock. Tenpenny relates this 'shock' with regard to the 'Covid vaccine' to something called polyethylene glycol or PEG. Enormous numbers of people have become sensitive to this over decades of use in a whole range of products and processes including food, drink, skin creams and 'medicine'. Studies have claimed that some 72 percent of people have antibodies triggered by PEG compared with two percent in the 1960s and allergic hypersensitive reactions to this become a gathering cause for concern. Tenpenny points out that the 'mRNA vaccine' is coated in a 'bubble' of polyethylene glycol which has the potential to cause anaphylactic shock through immune sensitivity. Many reports have appeared of people reacting this way after having the 'Covid vaccine'. What do we think is going to happen as humanity has more and more of these 'vaccines'?

Tenpenny said: 'All these pictures we have seen with people with these rashes ... these weepy rashes, big reactions on their arms and things like that – it's an acute allergic reaction most likely to the polyethylene glycol that you've been previously primed and sensitised to.'

Those who have not studied the conspiracy and its perpetrators at length might think that making the population sensitive to PEG and then putting it in these 'vaccines' is just a coincidence. It is not. It is instead testament to how carefully and coldly-planned current events have been and the scale of the conspiracy we are dealing with. Tenpenny further explains that the 'vaccine' mRNA procedure can breach the blood-brain barrier which protects the brain from toxins and other crap that will cause malfunction. In this case they could make two proteins corrupt brain function to cause Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a progressive nervous system disease leading to loss of muscle control, and frontal lobe degeneration – Alzheimer's and dementia. Immunologist J. Bart Classon published a paper connecting mRNA 'vaccines' to prion

disease which can lead to Alzheimer's and other forms of neurodegenerative disease while others have pointed out the potential to affect the placenta in ways that make women infertile. This will become highly significant in the next chapter when I will discuss other aspects of this non-vaccine that relate to its nanotechnology and transmission from the injected to the uninjected.

Qualified in idiocy

Tenpenny describes how research has confirmed that these 'vaccine'-generated antibodies can interact with a range of other tissues in the body and attack many other organs including the lungs. 'This means that if you have a hundred people standing in front of you that all got this shot they could have a hundred different symptoms.'

Anyone really think that Cult gofers like the Queen, Tony Blair, Christopher Whitty, Anthony Fauci, and all the other psychopaths have really had this 'vaccine' in the pictures we've seen? Not a bloody chance. Why don't doctors all tell us about all these dangers and consequences of the 'Covid vaccine'? Why instead do they encourage and pressure patients to have the shot? Don't let's think for a moment that doctors and medical staff can't be stupid, lazy, and psychopathic and that's without the financial incentives to give the jab. Tenpenny again:

Some people are going to die from the vaccine directly but a large number of people are going to start to get horribly sick and get all kinds of autoimmune diseases 42 days to maybe a year out. What are they going to do, these stupid doctors who say; 'Good for you for getting that vaccine.' What are they going to say; 'Oh, it must be a mutant, we need to give an extra dose of that vaccine.'

Because now the vaccine, instead of one dose or two doses we need three or four because the stupid physicians aren't taking the time to learn anything about it. If I can learn this sitting in my living room reading a 19 page paper and several others so can they. There's nothing special about me, I just take the time to do it.

Remember how Sara Kayat, the NHS and TV doctor, said that the 'Covid vaccine' would '100 percent prevent hospitalisation and death'. Doctors can be idiots like every other profession and they

should not be worshipped as infallible. They are not and far from it. Behind many medical and scientific 'experts' lies an uninformed prat trying to hide themselves from you although in the 'Covid' era many have failed to do so as with UK narrative-repeating 'TV doctor' Hilary Jones. Pushing back against the minority of proper doctors and scientists speaking out against the 'vaccine' has been the entire edifice of the Cult global state in the form of governments, medical systems, corporations, mainstream media, Silicon Valley, and an army of compliant doctors, medical staff and scientists willing to say anything for money and to enhance their careers by promoting the party line. If you do that you are an 'expert' and if you won't you are an 'anti-vaxxer' and 'Covidiot'. The pressure to be 'vaccinated' is incessant. We have even had reports claiming that the 'vaccine' can help cure cancer and Alzheimer's and make the lame walk. I am waiting for the announcement that it can bring you coffee in the morning and cook your tea. Just as the symptoms of 'Covid' seem to increase by the week so have the miracles of the 'vaccine'. American supermarket giant Kroger Co. offered nearly 500,000 employees in 35 states a \$100 bonus for having the 'vaccine' while donut chain Krispy Kreme promised 'vaccinated' customers a free glazed donut every day for the rest of 2021. Have your DNA changed and you will get a doughnut although we might not have to give you them for long. Such offers and incentives confirm the desperation.

Perhaps the worse vaccine-stunt of them all was UK 'Health' Secretary Matt-the-prat Hancock on live TV after watching a clip of someone being 'vaccinated' when the roll-out began. Hancock faked tears so badly it was embarrassing. Brain-of-Britain Piers Morgan, the lockdown-supporting, 'vaccine' supporting, 'vaccine' passport-supporting, TV host played along with Hancock – 'You're quite emotional about that' he said in response to acting so atrocious it would have been called out at a school nativity which will presumably today include Mary and Jesus in masks, wise men keeping their camels six feet apart, and shepherds under tent arrest. System-serving Morgan tweeted this: 'Love the idea of covid vaccine passports for everywhere: flights, restaurants, clubs, football, gyms,

shops etc. It's time covid-denying, anti-vaxxer loonies had their bullsh*t bluff called & bar themselves from going anywhere that responsible citizens go.' If only I could aspire to his genius. To think that Morgan, who specialises in shouting over anyone he disagrees with, was lauded as a free speech hero when he lost his job after storming off the set of his live show like a child throwing his dolly out of the pram. If he is a free speech hero we are in real trouble. I have no idea what 'bullsh*t' means, by the way, the * throws me completely.

The Cult is desperate to infuse its synthetic DNA-changing concoction into everyone and has been using every lie, trick and intimidation to do so. The question of '*Why?*' we shall now address.

CHAPTER TEN

Human 2.0

I believe that at the end of the century the use of words and general educated opinion will have altered so much that one will be able to speak of machines thinking without expecting to be contradicted – Alan Turing (1912-1954), the ‘Father of artificial intelligence’

I have been exposing for decades the plan to transform the human body from a biological to a synthetic-biological state. The new human that I will call Human 2.0 is planned to be connected to artificial intelligence and a global AI ‘Smart Grid’ that would operate as one global system in which AI would control everything from your fridge to your heating system to your car to your mind. Humans would no longer be ‘human’, but post-human and sub-human, with their thinking and emotional processes replaced by AI.

What I said sounded crazy and beyond science fiction and I could understand that. To any balanced, rational, mind it *is* crazy. Today, however, that world is becoming reality and it puts the ‘Covid vaccine’ into its true context. Ray Kurzweil is the ultra-Zionist ‘computer scientist, inventor and futurist’ and co-founder of the Singularity University. Singularity refers to the merging of humans with machines or ‘transhumanism’. Kurzweil has said humanity would be connected to the cyber ‘cloud’ in the period of the ever-recurring year of 2030:

Our thinking ... will be a hybrid of biological and non-biological thinking ... humans will be able to extend their limitations and ‘think in the cloud’ ... We’re going to put gateways to the

cloud in our brains ... We're going to gradually merge and enhance ourselves ... In my view, that's the nature of being human – we transcend our limitations. As the technology becomes vastly superior to what we are then the small proportion that is still human gets smaller and smaller and smaller until it's just utterly negligible.

They are trying to sell this end-of-humanity-as-we-know-it as the next stage of 'evolution' when we become super-human and 'like the gods'. They are lying to you. Shocked, eh? The population, and again especially the young, have been manipulated into addiction to technologies designed to enslave them for life. First they induced an addiction to smartphones (holdables); next they moved to technology on the body (wearables); and then began the invasion of the body (implantables). I warned way back about the plan for microchipped people and we are now entering that era. We should not be diverted into thinking that this refers only to chips we can see. Most important are the nanochips known as smart dust, neural dust and nanobots which are far too small to be seen by the human eye. Nanotechnology is everywhere, increasingly in food products, and released into the atmosphere by the geoengineering of the skies funded by Bill Gates to 'shut out the Sun' and 'save the planet from global warming'. Gates has been funding a project to spray millions of tonnes of chalk (calcium carbonate) into the stratosphere over Sweden to 'dim the Sun' and cool the Earth. Scientists warned the move could be disastrous for weather systems in ways no one can predict and opposition led to the Swedish space agency announcing that the 'experiment' would not be happening as planned in the summer of 2021; but it shows where the Cult is going with dimming the impact of the Sun and there's an associated plan to change the planet's atmosphere. Who gives psychopath Gates the right to dictate to the entire human race and dismantle planetary systems? The world will not be safe while this man is at large.

The global warming hoax has made the Sun, like the gas of life, something to fear when both are essential to good health and human survival (more inversion). The body transforms sunlight into vital vitamin D through a process involving ... *cholesterol*. This is the cholesterol we are also told to fear. We are urged to take Big Pharma

statin drugs to reduce cholesterol and it's all systematic. Reducing cholesterol means reducing vitamin D uptake with all the multiple health problems that will cause. At least if you take statins long term it saves the government from having to pay you a pension. The delivery system to block sunlight is widely referred to as chemtrails although these have a much deeper agenda, too. They appear at first to be contrails or condensation trails streaming from aircraft into cold air at high altitudes. Contrails disperse very quickly while chemtrails do not and spread out across the sky before eventually their content falls to earth. Many times I have watched aircraft cross-cross a clear blue sky releasing chemtrails until it looks like a cloudy day. Chemtrails contain many things harmful to humans and the natural world including toxic heavy metals, aluminium (see Alzheimer's) and nanotechnology. Ray Kurzweil reveals the reason without actually saying so: 'Nanobots will infuse all the matter around us with information. Rocks, trees, everything will become these intelligent creatures.' How do you deliver that? *From the sky*. Self-replicating nanobots would connect everything to the Smart Grid. The phenomenon of Morgellons disease began in the chemtrail era and the correlation has led to it being dubbed the 'chemtrail disease'. Self-replicating fibres appear in the body that can be pulled out through the skin. Morgellons fibres continue to grow outside the body and have a form of artificial intelligence. I cover this at greater length in *Phantom Self*.

'Vaccine' operating system

'Covid vaccines' with their self-replicating synthetic material are also designed to make the connection between humanity and Kurzweil's 'cloud'. American doctor and dedicated campaigner for truth, Carrie Madej, an Internal Medicine Specialist in Georgia with more than 20 years medical experience, has highlighted the nanotechnology aspect of the fake 'vaccines'. She explains how one of the components in at least the Moderna and Pfizer synthetic potions are 'lipid nanoparticles' which are 'like little tiny computer bits' – a 'sci-fi substance' known as nanobots and hydrogel which can be 'triggered

at any moment to deliver its payload' and act as 'biosensors'. The synthetic substance had 'the ability to accumulate data from your body like your breathing, your respiration, thoughts and emotions, all kind of things' and each syringe could carry a *million* nanobots:

This substance because it's like little bits of computers in your body, crazy, but it's true, it can do that, [and] obviously has the ability to act through Wi-Fi. It can receive and transmit energy, messages, frequencies or impulses. That issue has never been addressed by these companies. What does that do to the human?

Just imagine getting this substance in you and it can react to things all around you, the 5G, your smart device, your phones, what is happening with that? What if something is triggering it, too, like an impulse, a frequency? We have something completely foreign in the human body.

Madej said her research revealed that electromagnetic (EMF) frequencies emitted by phones and other devices had increased dramatically in the same period of the 'vaccine' rollout and she was seeing more people with radiation problems as 5G and other electromagnetic technology was expanded and introduced to schools and hospitals. She said she was 'floored with the EMF coming off' the devices she checked. All this makes total sense and syncs with my own work of decades when you think that Moderna refers in documents to its mRNA 'vaccine' as an 'operating system':

Recognizing the broad potential of mRNA science, we set out to create an mRNA technology platform that functions very much like an operating system on a computer. It is designed so that it can plug and play interchangeably with different programs. In our case, the 'program' or 'app' is our mRNA drug – the unique mRNA sequence that codes for a protein ...

... Our MRNA Medicines – 'The 'Software Of Life': When we have a concept for a new mRNA medicine and begin research, fundamental components are already in place. Generally, the only thing that changes from one potential mRNA medicine to another is the coding region – the actual genetic code that instructs ribosomes to make protein. Utilizing these instruction sets gives our investigational mRNA medicines a software-like quality. We also have the ability to combine different mRNA sequences encoding for different proteins in a single mRNA investigational medicine.

Who needs a real 'virus' when you can create a computer version to justify infusing your operating system into the entire human race on the road to making living, breathing people into cyborgs? What is missed with the 'vaccines' is the *digital* connection between synthetic material and the body that I highlighted earlier with the study that hacked a computer with human DNA. On one level the body is digital, based on mathematical codes, and I'll have more about that in the next chapter. Those who ridiculously claim that mRNA 'vaccines' are not designed to change human genetics should explain the words of Dr Tal Zaks, chief medical officer at Moderna, in a 2017 TED talk. He said that over the last 30 years 'we've been living this phenomenal digital scientific revolution, and I'm here today to tell you, that we are actually *hacking the software of life*, and that it's changing the way we think about prevention and treatment of disease':

In every cell there's this thing called messenger RNA, or mRNA for short, that transmits the critical information from the DNA in our genes to the protein, which is really the stuff we're all made out of. This is the critical information that determines what the cell will do. So we think about it as an operating system. So if you could change that, if you could introduce a line of code, or change a line of code, it turns out, that has profound implications for everything, from the flu to cancer.

Zaks should more accurately have said that this has profound implications for the human genetic code and the nature of DNA. Communications within the body go both ways and not only one. But, hey, no, the 'Covid vaccine' will not affect your genetics. Cult fact-checkers say so even though the man who helped to develop the mRNA technique says that it does. Zaks said in 2017:

If you think about what it is we're trying to do. We've taken information and our understanding of that information and how that information is transmitted in a cell, and we've taken our understanding of medicine and how to make drugs, and we're fusing the two. We think of it as information therapy.

I have been writing for decades that the body is an information field communicating with itself and the wider world. This is why

radiation which is information can change the information field of body and mind through phenomena like 5G and change their nature and function. 'Information therapy' means to change the body's information field and change the way it operates. DNA is a receiver-transmitter of information and can be mutated by information like mRNA synthetic messaging. Technology to do this has been ready and waiting in the underground bases and other secret projects to be rolled out when the 'Covid' hoax was played. 'Trials' of such short and irrelevant duration were only for public consumption. When they say the 'vaccine' is 'experimental' that is not true. It may appear to be 'experimental' to those who don't know what's going on, but the trials have already been done to ensure the Cult gets the result it desires. Zaks said that it took decades to sequence the human genome, completed in 2003, but now they could do it in a week. By 'they' he means scientists operating in the public domain. In the secret projects they were sequencing the genome in a week long before even 2003.

Deluge of mRNA

Highly significantly the Moderna document says the guiding premise is that if using mRNA as a medicine works for one disease then it should work for many diseases. They were leveraging the flexibility afforded by their platform and the fundamental role mRNA plays in protein synthesis to pursue mRNA medicines for a broad spectrum of diseases. Moderna is confirming what I was saying through 2020 that multiple 'vaccines' were planned for 'Covid' (and later invented 'variants') and that previous vaccines would be converted to the mRNA system to infuse the body with massive amounts of genetically-manipulating synthetic material to secure a transformation to a synthetic-biological state. The 'vaccines' are designed to kill stunning numbers as part of the long-exposed Cult depopulation agenda and transform the rest. Given this is the goal you can appreciate why there is such hysterical demand for every human to be 'vaccinated' for an alleged 'disease' that has an estimated 'infection' to 'death' ratio of 0.23-0.15 percent. As I write

children are being given the 'vaccine' in trials (their parents are a disgrace) and ever-younger people are being offered the vaccine for a 'virus' that even if you believe it exists has virtually zero chance of harming them. Horrific effects of the 'trials' on a 12-year-old girl were revealed by a family member to be serious brain and gastric problems that included a bowel obstruction and the inability to swallow liquids or solids. She was unable to eat or drink without throwing up, had extreme pain in her back, neck and abdomen, and was paralysed from the waist down which stopped her urinating unaided. When the girl was first taken to hospital doctors said it was all in her mind. She was signed up for the 'trial' by her parents for whom no words suffice. None of this 'Covid vaccine' insanity makes any sense unless you see what the 'vaccine' really is – a body-changer. Synthetic biology or 'SynBio' is a fast-emerging and expanding scientific discipline which includes everything from genetic and molecular engineering to electrical and computer engineering. Synthetic biology is defined in these ways:

- A multidisciplinary area of research that seeks to create new biological parts, devices, and systems, or to redesign systems that are already found in nature.
- The use of a mixture of physical engineering and genetic engineering to create new (and therefore synthetic) life forms.
- An emerging field of research that aims to combine the knowledge and methods of biology, engineering and related disciplines in the design of chemically-synthesized DNA to create organisms with novel or enhanced characteristics and traits (synthetic organisms including humans).

We now have synthetic blood, skin, organs and limbs being developed along with synthetic body parts produced by 3D printers. These are all elements of the synthetic human programme and this comment by Kurzweil's co-founder of the Singularity University,

Peter Diamandis, can be seen in a whole new light with the 'Covid' hoax and the sanctions against those that refuse the 'vaccine':

Anybody who is going to be resisting the progress forward [to transhumanism] is going to be resisting evolution and, fundamentally, they will die out. It's not a matter of whether it's good or bad. It's going to happen.

'Resisting evolution'? What absolute bollocks. The arrogance of these people is without limit. His 'it's going to happen' mantra is another way of saying 'resistance is futile' to break the spirit of those pushing back and we must not fall for it. Getting this genetically-transforming 'vaccine' into everyone is crucial to the Cult plan for total control and the desperation to achieve that is clear for anyone to see. Vaccine passports are a major factor in this and they, too, are a form of resistance is futile. It's NOT. The paper funded by the Rockefeller Foundation for the 2013 'health conference' in China said:

We will interact more with artificial intelligence. The use of robotics, bio-engineering to augment human functioning is already well underway and will advance. Re-engineering of humans into potentially separate and unequal forms through genetic engineering or mixed human-robots raises debates on ethics and equality.

A new demography is projected to emerge after 2030 [that year again] of technologies (robotics, genetic engineering, nanotechnology) producing robots, engineered organisms, 'nanobots' and artificial intelligence (AI) that can self-replicate. Debates will grow on the implications of an impending reality of human designed life.

What is happening today is so long planned. The world army enforcing the will of the world government is intended to be a robot army, not a human one. Today's military and its technologically 'enhanced' troops, pilotless planes and driverless vehicles are just stepping stones to that end. Human soldiers are used as Cult fodder and its time they woke up to that and worked for the freedom of the population instead of their own destruction and their family's destruction – the same with the police. Join us and let's sort this out. The phenomenon of enforce my own destruction is widespread in the 'Covid' era with Woker 'luvvies' in the acting and entertainment

industries supporting 'Covid' rules which have destroyed their profession and the same with those among the public who put signs on the doors of their businesses 'closed due to Covid – stay safe' when many will never reopen. It's a form of masochism and most certainly insanity.

Transgender = transhumanism

When something explodes out of nowhere and is suddenly everywhere it is always the Cult agenda and so it is with the tidal wave of claims and demands that have infiltrated every aspect of society under the heading of 'transgenderism'. The term 'trans' is so 'in' and this is the dictionary definition:

A prefix meaning 'across', 'through', occurring ... in loanwords from Latin, used in particular for denoting movement or conveyance from place to place (transfer; transmit; transplant) or complete change (transform; transmute), or to form adjectives meaning 'crossing', 'on the other side of', or 'going beyond' the place named (transmontane; transnational; trans-Siberian).

Transgender means to go beyond gender and transhuman means to go beyond human. Both are aspects of the Cult plan to transform the human body to a synthetic state with *no gender*. Human 2.0 is not designed to procreate and would be produced technologically with no need for parents. The new human would mean the end of parents and so men, and increasingly women, are being targeted for the deletion of their rights and status. Parental rights are disappearing at an ever-quickenning speed for the same reason. The new human would have no need for men or women when there is no procreation and no gender. Perhaps the transgender movement that appears to be in a permanent state of frenzy might now contemplate on how it is being used. This was never about transgender rights which are only the interim excuse for confusing gender, particularly in the young, on the road to *fusing* gender. Transgender activism is not an end; it is a *means* to an end. We see again the technique of creative destruction in which you destroy the status quo to 'build back better' in the form that you want. The gender status quo had to be

destroyed by persuading the Cult-created Woke mentality to believe that you can have 100 genders or more. A programme for 9 to 12 year olds produced by the Cult-owned BBC promoted the 100 genders narrative. The very idea may be the most monumental nonsense, but it is not what is true that counts, only what you can make people *believe* is true. Once the gender of $2 + 2 = 4$ has been dismantled through indoctrination, intimidation and $2 + 2 = 5$ then the new no-gender normal can take its place with Human 2.0.

Aldous Huxley revealed the plan in his prophetic *Brave New World* in 1932:

Natural reproduction has been done away with and children are created, decanted', and raised in 'hatcheries and conditioning centres'. From birth, people are genetically designed to fit into one of five castes, which are further split into 'Plus' and 'Minus' members and designed to fulfil predetermined positions within the social and economic strata of the World State.

How could Huxley know this in 1932? For the same reason George Orwell knew about the Big Brother state in 1948, Cult insiders I have quoted knew about it in 1969, and I have known about it since the early 1990s. If you are connected to the Cult or you work your balls off to uncover the plan you can predict the future. The process is simple. If there is a plan for the world and nothing intervenes to stop it then it will happen. Thus if you communicate the plan ahead of time you are perceived to have predicted the future, but you haven't. You have revealed the plan which without intervention will become the human future. The whole reason I have done what I have is to alert enough people to inspire an intervention and maybe at last that time has come with the Cult and its intentions now so obvious to anyone with a brain in working order.

The future is here

Technological wombs that Huxley described to replace parent procreation are already being developed and they are only the projects we know about in the public arena. Israeli scientists told *The Times of Israel* in March, 2021, that they have grown 250-cell embryos

into mouse foetuses with fully formed organs using artificial wombs in a development they say could pave the way for gestating humans outside the womb. Professor Jacob Hanna of the Weizmann Institute of Science said:

We took mouse embryos from the mother at day five of development, when they are just of 250 cells, and had them in the incubator from day five until day 11, by which point they had grown all their organs.

By day 11 they make their own blood and have a beating heart, a fully developed brain. Anybody would look at them and say, 'this is clearly a mouse foetus with all the characteristics of a mouse.' It's gone from being a ball of cells to being an advanced foetus.

A special liquid is used to nourish embryo cells in a laboratory dish and they float on the liquid to duplicate the first stage of embryonic development. The incubator creates all the right conditions for its development, Hanna said. The liquid gives the embryo 'all the nutrients, hormones and sugars they need' along with a custom-made electronic incubator which controls gas concentration, pressure and temperature. The cutting-edge in the underground bases and other secret locations will be light years ahead of that, however, and this was reported by the London *Guardian* in 2017:

We are approaching a biotechnological breakthrough. Ectogenesis, the invention of a complete external womb, could completely change the nature of human reproduction. In April this year, researchers at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia announced their development of an artificial womb.

The article was headed 'Artificial wombs could soon be a reality. What will this mean for women?' What would it mean for children is an even bigger question. No mother to bond with only a machine in preparation for a life of soulless interaction and control in a world governed by machines (see the *Matrix* movies). Now observe the calculated manipulations of the 'Covid' hoax as human interaction and warmth has been curtailed by distancing, isolation and fear with people communicating via machines on a scale never seen before.

These are all dots in the same picture as are all the personal assistants, gadgets and children's toys through which kids and adults communicate with AI as if it is human. The AI 'voice' on Sat-Nav should be included. All these things are psychological preparation for the Cult endgame. Before you can make a physical connection with AI you have to make a psychological connection and that is what people are being conditioned to do with this ever gathering human-AI interaction. Movies and TV programmes depicting the transhuman, robot dystopia relate to a phenomenon known as 'pre-emptive programming' in which the world that is planned is portrayed everywhere in movies, TV and advertising. This is conditioning the conscious and subconscious mind to become familiar with the planned reality to dilute resistance when it happens for real. What would have been a shock such is the change is made less so. We have young children put on the road to transgender transition surgery with puberty blocking drugs at an age when they could never be able to make those life-changing decisions.

Rachel Levine, a professor of paediatrics and psychiatry who believes in treating children this way, became America's highest-ranked openly-transgender official when she was confirmed as US Assistant Secretary at the Department of Health and Human Services after being nominated by Joe Biden (the Cult). Activists and governments press for laws to deny parents a say in their children's transition process so the kids can be isolated and manipulated into agreeing to irreversible medical procedures. A Canadian father Robert Hoogland was denied bail by the Vancouver Supreme Court in 2021 and remained in jail for breaching a court order that he stay silent over his young teenage daughter, a minor, who was being offered life-changing hormone therapy without parental consent. At the age of 12 the girl's 'school counsellor' said she may be transgender, referred her to a doctor and told the school to treat her like a boy. This is another example of state-serving schools imposing ever more control over children's lives while parents have ever less.

Contemptible and extreme child abuse is happening all over the world as the Cult gender-fusion operation goes into warp-speed.

Why the war on men – and now women?

The question about what artificial wombs mean for women should rightly be asked. The answer can be seen in the deletion of women's rights involving sport, changing rooms, toilets and status in favour of people in male bodies claiming to identify as women. I can identify as a mountain climber, but it doesn't mean I can climb a mountain any more than a biological man can be a biological woman. To believe so is a triumph of belief over factual reality which is the very perceptual basis of everything Woke. Women's sport is being destroyed by allowing those with male bodies who say they identify as female to 'compete' with girls and women. Male body 'women' dominate 'women's' competition with their greater muscle mass, bone density, strength and speed. With that disadvantage sport for women loses all meaning. To put this in perspective nearly 300 American high school boys can run faster than the quickest woman sprinter in the world. Women are seeing their previously protected spaces invaded by male bodies simply because they claim to identify as women. That's all they need to do to access all women's spaces and activities under the Biden 'Equality Act' that destroys equality for women with the usual Orwellian Woke inversion. Male sex offenders have already committed rapes in women's prisons after claiming to identify as women to get them transferred. Does this not matter to the Woke 'equality' hypocrites? Not in the least. What matters to Cult manipulators and funders behind transgender activists is to advance gender fusion on the way to the no-gender 'human'. When you are seeking to impose transparent nonsense like this, or the 'Covid' hoax, the only way the nonsense can prevail is through censorship and intimidation of dissenters, deletion of factual information, and programming of the unquestioning, bewildered and naive. You don't have to scan the world for long to see that all these things are happening.

Many women's rights organisations have realised that rights and status which took such a long time to secure are being eroded and that it is systematic. Kara Dansky of the global Women's Human Rights Campaign said that Biden's transgender executive order immediately he took office, subsequent orders, and Equality Act legislation that followed 'seek to erase women and girls in the law as a category'. *Exactly*. I said during the long ago-started war on men (in which many women play a crucial part) that this was going to turn into a war on them. The Cult is phasing out *both* male and female genders. To get away with that they are brought into conflict so they are busy fighting each other while the Cult completes the job with no unity of response. Unity, people, *unity*. We need unity everywhere. Transgender is the only show in town as the big step towards the no-gender human. It's not about rights for transgender people and never has been. Woke political correctness is deleting words relating to genders to the same end. Wokers believe this is to be 'inclusive' when the opposite is true. They are deleting words describing gender because gender *itself* is being deleted by Human 2.0. Terms like 'man', 'woman', 'mother' and 'father' are being deleted in the universities and other institutions to be replaced by the *no-gender*, not trans-gender, 'individuals' and 'guardians'. Women's rights campaigner Maria Keffler of Partners for Ethical Care said: 'Children are being taught from kindergarten upward that some boys have a vagina, some girls have a penis, and that kids can be any gender they want to be.' Do we really believe that suddenly countries all over the world at the same time had the idea of having drag queens go into schools or read transgender stories to very young children in the local library? It's coldly-calculated confusion of gender on the way to the fusion of gender. Suzanne Vierling, a psychologist from Southern California, made another important point:

Yesterday's slave woman who endured gynecological medical experiments is today's girl-child being butchered in a booming gender-transitioning sector. Ovaries removed, pushing her into menopause and osteoporosis, uncharted territory, and parents' rights and authority decimated.

The erosion of parental rights is a common theme in line with the Cult plans to erase the very concept of parents and 'ovaries removed, pushing her into menopause' means what? Those born female lose the ability to have children – another way to discontinue humanity as we know it.

Eliminating Human 1.0 (before our very eyes)

To pave the way for Human 2.0 you must phase out Human 1.0. This is happening through plummeting sperm counts and making women infertile through an onslaught of chemicals, radiation (including smartphones in pockets of men) and mRNA 'vaccines'. Common agriculture pesticides are also having a devastating impact on human fertility. I have been tracking collapsing sperm counts in the books for a long time and in 2021 came a book by fertility scientist and reproductive epidemiologist Shanna Swan, *Count Down: How Our Modern World Is Threatening Sperm Counts, Altering Male and Female Reproductive Development and Imperiling the Future of the Human Race*. She reports how the global fertility rate dropped by *half* between 1960 and 2016 with America's birth rate 16 percent below where it needs to be to sustain the population. Women are experiencing declining egg quality, more miscarriages, and more couples suffer from infertility. Other findings were an increase in erectile dysfunction, infant boys developing more genital abnormalities, male problems with conception, and plunging levels of the male hormone testosterone which would explain why so many men have lost their backbone and masculinity. This has been very evident during the 'Covid' hoax when women have been prominent among the Pushbackers and big strapping blokes have bowed their heads, covered their faces with a nappy and quietly submitted. Mind control expert Cathy O'Brien also points to how global education introduced the concept of 'we're all winners' in sport and classrooms: 'Competition was defused, and it in turn defused a sense of fighting back.' This is another version of the 'equity' doctrine in which you drive down rather than raise up. What a contrast in Cult-controlled China with its global ambitions

where the government published plans in January, 2021, to 'cultivate masculinity' in boys from kindergarten through to high school in the face of a 'masculinity crisis'. A government adviser said boys would be soon become 'delicate, timid and effeminate' unless action was taken. Don't expect any similar policy in the targeted West. A 2006 study showed that a 65-year-old man in 2002 had testosterone levels *15 percent* lower than a 65-year-old man in 1987 while a 2020 study found a similar story with young adults and adolescents. Men are getting prescriptions for testosterone replacement therapy which causes an even greater drop in sperm count with up to 99 percent seeing sperm counts drop to zero during the treatment. More sperm is defective and malfunctioning with some having two heads or not pursuing an egg.

A class of *synthetic* chemicals known as phthalates are being blamed for the decline. These are found everywhere in plastics, shampoos, cosmetics, furniture, flame retardants, personal care products, pesticides, canned foods and even receipts. Why till receipts? Everyone touches them. Let no one delude themselves that all this is not systematic to advance the long-time agenda for human body transformation. Phthalates mimic hormones and disrupt the hormone balance causing testosterone to fall and genital birth defects in male infants. Animals and fish have been affected in the same way due to phthalates and other toxins in rivers. When fish turn gay or change sex through chemicals in rivers and streams it is a pointer to why there has been such an increase in gay people and the sexually confused. It doesn't matter to me what sexuality people choose to be, but if it's being affected by chemical pollution and consumption then we need to know. Does anyone really think that this is not connected to the transgender agenda, the war on men and the condemnation of male 'toxic masculinity'? You watch this being followed by 'toxic femininity'. It's already happening. When breastfeeding becomes 'chest-feeding', pregnant women become pregnant people along with all the other Woke claptrap you know that the world is going insane and there's a Cult scam in progress. Transgender activists are promoting the Cult agenda while Cult

billionaires support and fund the insanity as they laugh themselves to sleep at the sheer stupidity for which humans must be infamous in galaxies far, far away.

'Covid vaccines' and female infertility

We can now see why the 'vaccine' has been connected to potential infertility in women. Dr Michael Yeadon, former Vice President and Chief Scientific Advisor at Pfizer, and Dr Wolfgang Wodarg in Germany, filed a petition with the European Medicines Agency in December, 2020, urging them to stop trials for the Pfizer/BioNTech shot and all other mRNA trials until further studies had been done. They were particularly concerned about possible effects on fertility with 'vaccine'-produced antibodies attacking the protein Syncytin-1 which is responsible for developing the placenta. The result would be infertility 'of indefinite duration' in women who have the 'vaccine' with the placenta failing to form. Section 10.4.2 of the Pfizer/BioNTech trial protocol says that pregnant women or those who might become so should not have mRNA shots. Section 10.4 warns men taking mRNA shots to 'be abstinent from heterosexual intercourse' and not to donate sperm. The UK government said that it *did not know* if the mRNA procedure had an effect on fertility. *Did not know?* These people have to go to jail. UK government advice did not recommend at the start that pregnant women had the shot and said they should avoid pregnancy for at least two months after 'vaccination'. The 'advice' was later updated to pregnant women should only have the 'vaccine' if the benefits outweighed the risks to mother and foetus. What the hell is that supposed to mean? Then 'spontaneous abortions' began to appear and rapidly increase on the adverse reaction reporting schemes which include only a fraction of adverse reactions. Thousands and ever-growing numbers of 'vaccinated' women are describing changes to their menstrual cycle with heavier blood flow, irregular periods and menstruating again after going through the menopause – all links to reproduction effects. Women are passing blood clots and the lining of their uterus while men report erectile dysfunction and blood effects. Most

significantly of all *unvaccinated* women began to report similar menstrual changes after interaction with '*vaccinated*' people and men and children were also affected with bleeding noses, blood clots and other conditions. 'Shedding' is when vaccinated people can emit the content of a vaccine to affect the unvaccinated, but this is different. 'Vaccinated' people were not shedding a 'live virus' allegedly in 'vaccines' as before because the fake 'Covid vaccines' involve synthetic material and other toxicity. Doctors exposing what is happening prefer the term 'transmission' to shedding. Somehow those that have had the shots are transmitting effects to those that haven't. Dr Carrie Madej said the nano-content of the 'vaccines' can 'act like an antenna' to others around them which fits perfectly with my own conclusions. This 'vaccine' transmission phenomenon was becoming known as the book went into production and I deal with this further in the Postscript.

Vaccine effects on sterility are well known. The World Health Organization was accused in 2014 of sterilising millions of women in Kenya with the evidence confirmed by the content of the vaccines involved. The same WHO behind the 'Covid' hoax admitted its involvement for more than ten years with the vaccine programme. Other countries made similar claims. Charges were lodged by Tanzania, Nicaragua, Mexico, and the Philippines. The Gardasil vaccine claimed to protect against a genital 'virus' known as HPV has also been linked to infertility. Big Pharma and the WHO (same thing) are criminal and satanic entities. Then there's the Bill Gates Foundation which is connected through funding and shared interests with 20 pharmaceutical giants and laboratories. He stands accused of directing the policy of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), vaccine alliance GAVI, and other groupings, to advance the vaccine agenda and silence opposition at great cost to women and children. At the same time Gates wants to reduce the global population. Coincidence?

Great Reset = Smart Grid = new human

The Cult agenda I have been exposing for 30 years is now being openly promoted by Cult assets like Gates and Klaus Schwab of the World Economic Forum under code-terms like the 'Great Reset', 'Build Back Better' and 'a rare but narrow window of opportunity to reflect, reimagine, and reset our world'. What provided this 'rare but narrow window of opportunity'? The 'Covid' hoax did. Who created that? *They* did. My books from not that long ago warned about the planned 'Internet of Things' (IoT) and its implications for human freedom. This was the plan to connect all technology to the Internet and artificial intelligence and today we are way down that road with an estimated 36 billion devices connected to the World Wide Web and that figure is projected to be 76 billion by 2025. I further warned that the Cult planned to go beyond that to the Internet of *Everything* when the human brain was connected via AI to the Internet and Kurzweil's 'cloud'. Now we have Cult operatives like Schwab calling for precisely that under the term 'Internet of Bodies', a fusion of the physical, digital and biological into one centrally-controlled Smart Grid system which the Cult refers to as the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution'. They talk about the 'biological', but they really mean the synthetic-biological which is required to fully integrate the human body and brain into the Smart Grid and artificial intelligence planned to replace the human mind. We have everything being synthetically manipulated including the natural world through GMO and smart dust, the food we eat and the human body itself with synthetic 'vaccines'. I said in *The Answer* that we would see the Cult push for synthetic meat to replace animals and in February, 2021, the so predictable psychopath Bill Gates called for the introduction of synthetic meat to save us all from 'climate change'. The climate hoax just keeps on giving like the 'Covid' hoax. The war on meat by vegan activists is a carbon (oops, sorry) copy of the manipulation of transgender activists. They have no idea (except their inner core) that they are being used to promote and impose the agenda of the Cult or that they are only the *vehicle* and not the *reason*. This is not to say those who choose not to eat meat shouldn't be respected and supported in that right, but there are ulterior motives

for those in power. A *Forbes* article in December, 2019, highlighted the plan so beloved of Schwab and the Cult under the heading: 'What Is The Internet of Bodies? And How Is It Changing Our World?' The article said the human body is the latest data platform (remember 'our vaccine is an operating system'). *Forbes* described the plan very accurately and the words could have come straight out of my books from long before:

The Internet of Bodies (IoB) is an extension of the IoT and basically connects the human body to a network through devices that are ingested, implanted, or connected to the body in some way. Once connected, data can be exchanged, and the body and device can be remotely monitored and controlled.

They were really describing a human hive mind with human perception centrally-dictated via an AI connection as well as allowing people to be 'remotely monitored and controlled'. Everything from a fridge to a human mind could be directed from a central point by these insane psychopaths and 'Covid vaccines' are crucial to this. *Forbes* explained the process I mentioned earlier of holdable and wearable technology followed by implantable. The article said there were three generations of the Internet of Bodies that include:

- Body external: These are wearable devices such as Apple Watches or Fitbits that can monitor our health.
- Body internal: These include pacemakers, cochlear implants, and digital pills that go inside our bodies to monitor or control various aspects of health.
- Body embedded: The third generation of the Internet of Bodies is embedded technology where technology and the human body are melded together and have a real-time connection to a remote machine.

Forbes noted the development of the Brain Computer Interface (BCI) which merges the brain with an external device for monitoring and controlling in real-time. 'The ultimate goal is to help restore function to individuals with disabilities by using brain signals rather than conventional neuromuscular pathways.' Oh, do fuck off. The goal of brain interface technology is controlling human thought and emotion from the central point in a hive mind serving its masters wishes. Many people are now agreeing to be chipped to open doors without a key. You can recognise them because they'll be wearing a mask, social distancing and lining up for the 'vaccine'. The Cult plans a Great Reset money system after they have completed the demolition of the global economy in which 'money' will be exchanged through communication with body operating systems. Rand Corporation, a Cult-owned think tank, said of the Internet of Bodies or IoB:

Internet of Bodies technologies fall under the broader IoT umbrella. But as the name suggests, IoB devices introduce an even more intimate interplay between humans and gadgets. IoB devices monitor the human body, collect health metrics and other personal information, and transmit those data over the Internet. Many devices, such as fitness trackers, are already in use ... IoB devices ... and those in development can track, record, and store users' whereabouts, bodily functions, and what they see, hear, and even think.

Schwab's World Economic Forum, a long-winded way of saying 'fascism' or 'the Cult', has gone full-on with the Internet of Bodies in the 'Covid' era. 'We're entering the era of the Internet of Bodies', it declared, 'collecting our physical data via a range of devices that can be implanted, swallowed or worn'. The result would be a huge amount of health-related data that could improve human wellbeing around the world, and prove crucial in fighting the 'Covid-19 pandemic'. Does anyone think these clowns care about 'human wellbeing' after the death and devastation their pandemic hoax has purposely caused? Schwab and co say we should move forward with the Internet of Bodies because 'Keeping track of symptoms could help us stop the spread of infection, and quickly detect new cases'. How wonderful, but keeping track' is all they are really bothered

about. Researchers were investigating if data gathered from smartwatches and similar devices could be used as viral infection alerts by tracking the user's heart rate and breathing. Schwab said in his 2018 book *Shaping the Future of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*:

The lines between technologies and beings are becoming blurred and not just by the ability to create lifelike robots or synthetics. Instead it is about the ability of new technologies to literally become part of us. Technologies already influence how we understand ourselves, how we think about each other, and how we determine our realities. As the technologies ... give us deeper access to parts of ourselves, we may begin to integrate digital technologies into our bodies.

You can see what the game is. Twenty-four hour control and people – if you could still call them that – would never know when something would go ping and take them out of circulation. It's the most obvious rush to a global fascist dictatorship and the complete submission of humanity and yet still so many are locked away in their Cult-induced perceptual coma and can't see it.

Smart Grid control centres

The human body is being transformed by the 'vaccines' and in other ways into a synthetic cyborg that can be attached to the global Smart Grid which would be controlled from a central point and other sub-locations of Grid manipulation. Where are these planned to be? Well, China for a start which is one of the Cult's biggest centres of operation. The technological control system and technocratic rule was incubated here to be unleashed across the world after the 'Covid' hoax came out of China in 2020. Another Smart Grid location that will surprise people new to this is Israel. I have exposed in *The Trigger* how Sabbatian technocrats, intelligence and military operatives were behind the horrors of 9/11 and not 19 Arab hijackers' who somehow manifested the ability to pilot big passenger airliners when instructors at puddle-jumping flying schools described some of them as a joke. The 9/11 attacks were made possible through control of civilian and military air computer systems and those of the White House, Pentagon and connected agencies. See *The Trigger* – it

will blow your mind. The controlling and coordinating force were the Sabbatian networks in Israel and the United States which by then had infiltrated the entire US government, military and intelligence system. The real name of the American Deep State is 'Sabbatian State'. Israel is a tiny country of only nine million people, but it is one of the global centres of cyber operations and fast catching Silicon Valley in importance to the Cult. Israel is known as the 'start-up nation' for all the cyber companies spawned there with the Sabbatian specialisation of 'cyber security' that I mentioned earlier which gives those companies access to computer systems of their clients in real time through 'backdoors' written into the coding when security software is downloaded. The Sabbatian centre of cyber operations outside Silicon Valley is the Israeli military Cyber Intelligence Unit, the biggest infrastructure project in Israel's history, headquartered in the desert-city of Beersheba and involving some 20,000 'cyber soldiers'. Here are located a literal army of Internet trolls scanning social media, forums and comment lists for anyone challenging the Cult agenda. The UK military has something similar with its 77th Brigade and associated operations. The Beersheba complex includes research and development centres for other Cult operations such as Intel, Microsoft, IBM, Google, Apple, Hewlett-Packard, Cisco Systems, Facebook and Motorola. Techcrunch.com ran an article about the Beersheba global Internet technology centre headlined 'Israel's desert city of Beersheba is turning into a cybertech oasis':

The military's massive relocation of its prestigious technology units, the presence of multinational and local companies, a close proximity to Ben Gurion University and generous government subsidies are turning Beersheba into a major global cybertech hub. Beersheba has all of the ingredients of a vibrant security technology ecosystem, including Ben Gurion University with its graduate program in cybersecurity and Cyber Security Research Center, and the presence of companies such as EMC, Deutsche Telekom, PayPal, Oracle, IBM, and Lockheed Martin. It's also the future home of the INCB (Israeli National Cyber Bureau); offers a special income tax incentive for cyber security companies, and was the site for the relocation of the army's intelligence corps units.

Sabbatians have taken over the cyber world through the following process: They scan the schools for likely cyber talent and develop them at Ben Gurion University and their period of conscription in the Israeli Defense Forces when they are stationed at the Beersheba complex. When the cyber talented officially leave the army they are funded to start cyber companies with technology developed by themselves or given to them by the state. Much of this is stolen through backdoors of computer systems around the world with America top of the list. Others are sent off to Silicon Valley to start companies or join the major ones and so we have many major positions filled by apparently 'Jewish' but really Sabbatian operatives. Google, YouTube and Facebook are all run by 'Jewish' CEOs while Twitter is all but run by ultra-Zionist hedge-fund shark Paul Singer. At the centre of the Sabbatian global cyber web is the Israeli army's Unit 8200 which specialises in hacking into computer systems of other countries, inserting viruses, gathering information, instigating malfunction, and even taking control of them from a distance. A long list of Sabbatians involved with 9/11, Silicon Valley and Israeli cyber security companies are operatives of Unit 8200. This is not about Israel. It's about the Cult. Israel is planned to be a Smart Grid hub as with China and what is happening at Beersheba is not for the benefit of Jewish people who are treated disgustingly by the Sabbatian elite that control the country. A glance at the Nuremberg Codes will tell you that.

The story is much bigger than 'Covid', important as that is to where we are being taken. Now, though, it's time to really strap in. There's more ... much more ...

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Who controls the Cult?

Awake, arise or be forever fall'n
John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

I have exposed this far the level of the Cult conspiracy that operates in the world of the seen and within the global secret society and satanic network which operates in the shadows one step back from the seen. The story, however, goes much deeper than that.

The 'Covid' hoax is major part of the Cult agenda, but only part, and to grasp the biggest picture we have to expand our attention beyond the realm of human sight and into the infinity of possibility that we cannot see. It is from here, ultimately, that humanity is being manipulated into a state of total control by the force which dictates the actions of the Cult. How much of reality can we see? Next to damn all is the answer. We may appear to see all there is to see in the 'space' our eyes survey and observe, but little could be further from the truth. The human 'world' is only a tiny band of frequency that the body's visual and perceptual systems can decode into *perception* of a 'world'. According to mainstream science the electromagnetic spectrum is 0.005 percent of what exists in the Universe (Fig 10). The maximum estimate I have seen is 0.5 percent and either way it's miniscule. I say it is far, far, smaller even than 0.005 percent when you compare reality we see with the totality of reality that we don't. Now get this if you are new to such information: Visible light, the only band of frequency that we can see, is a *fraction* of the 0.005

percent (Fig 11 overleaf). Take this further and realise that our universe is one of infinite universes and that universes are only a fragment of overall reality – *infinite* reality. Then compare that with the almost infinitesimal frequency band of visible light or human sight. You see that humans are as near blind as it is possible to be without actually being so. Artist and filmmaker, Sergio Toporek, said:

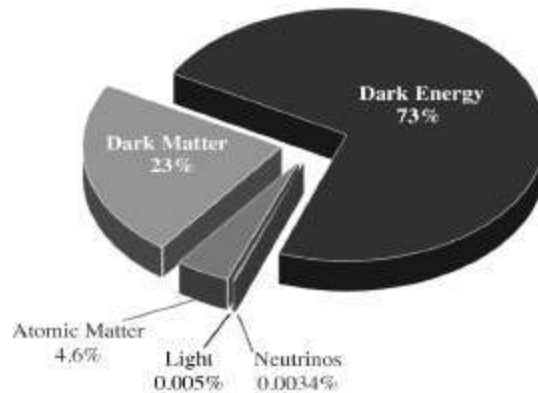


Figure 10: Humans can perceive such a tiny band of visual reality it's laughable.

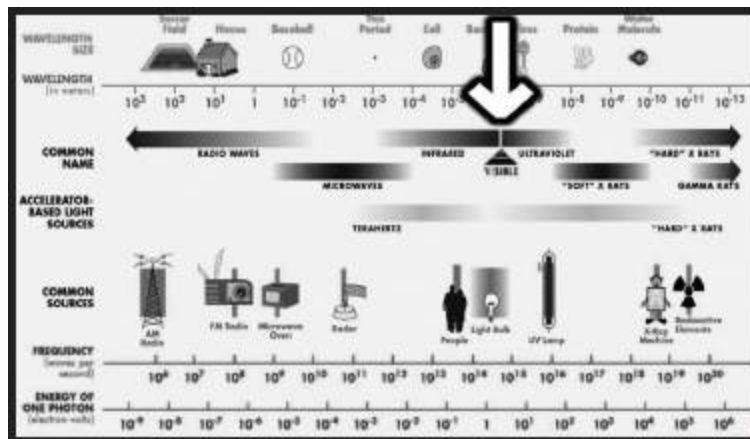


Figure 11: We can see a smear of the 0.005 percent electromagnetic spectrum, but we still know it all. Yep, makes sense.

Consider that you can see less than 1% of the electromagnetic spectrum and hear less than 1% of the acoustic spectrum. 90% of the cells in your body carry their own microbial DNA and are not 'you'. The atoms in your body are 99.9999999999999999% empty space and none of them are the ones you were born with ... Human beings have 46 chromosomes, two less than a potato.

The existence of the rainbow depends on the conical photoreceptors in your eyes; to animals without cones, the rainbow does not exist. So you don't just look at a rainbow, you create it. This is pretty amazing, especially considering that all the beautiful colours you see represent less than 1% of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Suddenly the 'world' of humans looks a very different place. Take into account, too, that Planet Earth when compared with the projected size of this single universe is the equivalent of a billionth of a pinhead. Imagine the ratio that would be when compared to infinite reality. To think that Christianity once insisted that Earth and humanity were the centre of everything. This background is vital if we are going to appreciate the nature of 'human' and how we can be manipulated by an unseen force. To human visual reality virtually *everything* is unseen and yet the prevailing perception within the institutions and so much of the public is that if we can't see it, touch it, hear it, taste it and smell it then it cannot exist. Such perception is indoctrinated and encouraged by the Cult and its agents because it isolates believers in the strictly limited, village-idiot, realm of the five senses where perceptions can be firewalled and information controlled. Most of those perpetuating the 'this-world-is-all-there-is' insanity are themselves indoctrinated into believing the same delusion. While major players and influencers know that official reality is laughable most of those in science, academia and medicine really believe the nonsense they peddle and teach succeeding generations. Those who challenge the orthodoxy are dismissed as nutters and freaks to protect the manufactured illusion from exposure. Observe the dynamic of the 'Covid' hoax and you will see how that takes the same form. The inner-circle psychopaths knows it's a gigantic scam, but almost the entirety of those imposing their fascist rules believe that 'Covid' is all that they're told it is.

Stolen identity

Ask people who they are and they will give you their name, place of birth, location, job, family background and life story. Yet that is not who they are – it is what they are *experiencing*. The difference is *absolutely crucial*. The true 'I', the eternal, infinite 'I', is consciousness,

a state of being aware. Forget 'form'. That is a vehicle for a brief experience. Consciousness does not come *from* the brain, but *through* the brain and even that is more symbolic than literal. We are awareness, pure awareness, and this is what withdraws from the body at what we call 'death' to continue our eternal beingness, *isness*, in other realms of reality within the limitlessness of infinity or the Biblical 'many mansions in my father's house'. Labels of a human life, man, woman, transgender, black, white, brown, nationality, circumstances and income are not who we are. They are what we are – awareness – is *experiencing* in a brief connection with a band of frequency we call 'human'. The labels are not the self; they are, to use the title of one of my books, a *Phantom Self*. I am not David Icke born in Leicester, England, on April 29th, 1952. I am the consciousness *having that experience*. The Cult and its non-human masters seek to convince us through the institutions of 'education', science, medicine, media and government that what we are *experiencing* is who we *are*. It's so easy to control and direct perception locked away in the bewildered illusions of the five senses with no expanded radar. Try, by contrast, doing the same with a humanity aware of its true self and its true power to consciously create its reality and experience. How is it possible to do this? We do it all day every day. If you perceive yourself as 'little me' with no power to impact upon your life and the world then your life experience will reflect that. You will hand the power you don't think you have to authority in all its forms which will use it to control your experience. This, in turn, will appear to confirm your perception of 'little me' in a self-fulfilling feedback loop. But that is what 'little me' really is – a *perception*. We are all 'big-me', infinite me, and the Cult has to make us forget that if its will is to prevail. We are therefore manipulated and pressured into self-identifying with human labels and not the consciousness/awareness *experiencing* those human labels.

The phenomenon of identity politics is a Cult-instigated manipulation technique to sub-divide previous labels into even smaller ones. A United States university employs this list of letters to

describe student identity: LGBTTQQFAGPBDSM or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, flexual, asexual, gender-fuck, polyamorous, bondage/discipline, dominance/submission and sadism/masochism. I'm sure other lists are even longer by now as people feel the need to self-identity the 'I' with the minutiae of race and sexual preference. Wokers programmed by the Cult for generations believe this is about 'inclusivity' when it's really the Cult locking them away into smaller and smaller versions of Phantom Self while firewalling them from the influence of their true self, the infinite, eternal 'I'. You may notice that my philosophy which contends that we are all unique points of attention/awareness within the same infinite whole or Oneness is the ultimate non-racism. The very sense of Oneness makes the judgement of people by their body-type, colour or sexuality utterly ridiculous and confirms that racism has no understanding of reality (including anti-white racism). Yet despite my perception of life Cult agents and fast-asleep Wokers label me racist to discredit my information while they are themselves phenomenally racist and sexist. All they see is race and sexuality and they judge people as good or bad, demons or untouchables, by their race and sexuality. All they see is *Phantom Self* and perceive themselves in terms of Phantom Self. They are pawns and puppets of the Cult agenda to focus attention and self-identity in the five senses and play those identities against each other to divide and rule. Columbia University has introduced segregated graduations in another version of social distancing designed to drive people apart and teach them that different racial and cultural groups have nothing in common with each other. The last thing the Cult wants is unity. Again the pump-primers of this will be Cult operatives in the knowledge of what they are doing, but the rest are just the Phantom Self blind leading the Phantom Self blind. We *do* have something in common – we are all *the same consciousness* having different temporary experiences.

What is this 'human'?

Yes, what *is* 'human'? That is what we are supposed to be, right? I mean 'human'? True, but 'human' is the experience not the 'I'. Break it down to basics and 'human' is the way that information is processed. If we are to experience and interact with this band of frequency we call the 'world' we must have a vehicle that operates within that band of frequency. Our consciousness in its prime form cannot do that; it is way beyond the frequency of the human realm. My consciousness or awareness could not tap these keys and pick up the cup in front of me in the same way that radio station A cannot interact with radio station B when they are on different frequencies. The human body is the means through which we have that interaction. I have long described the body as a biological computer which processes information in a way that allows consciousness to experience this reality. The body is a receiver, transmitter and processor of information in a particular way that we call human. We visually perceive only the world of the five senses in a wakened state – that is the limit of the body's visual decoding system. In truth it's not even visual in the way we experience 'visual reality' as I will come to in a moment. We are 'human' because the body processes the information sources of human into a reality and behaviour system that we *perceive* as human. Why does an elephant act like an elephant and not like a human or a duck? The elephant's biological computer is a different information field and processes information according to that program into a visual and behaviour type we call an elephant. The same applies to everything in our reality. These body information fields are perpetuated through procreation (like making a copy of a software program). The Cult wants to break that cycle and intervene technologically to transform the human information field into one that will change what we call humanity. If it can change the human information field it will change the way that field processes information and change humanity both 'physically' and psychologically. Hence the *messenger* (information) RNA 'vaccines' and so much more that is targeting human genetics by changing the body's information – *messaging* – construct through food, drink, radiation, toxicity and other means.

Reality that we experience is nothing like reality as it really is in the same way that the reality people experience in virtual reality games is not the reality they are really living in. The game is only a decoded source of information that appears to be a reality. Our world is also an information construct – a *simulation* (more later). In its base form our reality is a wavefield of information much the same in theme as Wi-Fi. The five senses decode wavefield information into electrical information which they communicate to the brain to decode into holographic (illusory ‘physical’) information. Different parts of the brain specialise in decoding different senses and the information is fused into a reality that appears to be outside of us but is really inside the brain and the genetic structure in general (Fig 12 overleaf). DNA is a receiver-transmitter of information and a vital part of this decoding process and the body’s connection to other realities. Change DNA and you change the way we decode and connect with reality – see ‘Covid vaccines’. Think of computers decoding Wi-Fi. You have information encoded in a radiation field and the computer decodes that information into a very different form on the screen. You can’t see the Wi-Fi until its information is made manifest on the screen and the information on the screen is inside the computer and not outside. I have just described how we decode the ‘human world’. All five senses decode the waveform ‘Wi-Fi’ field into electrical signals and the brain (computer) constructs reality inside the brain and not outside – ‘You don’t just look at a rainbow, you create it’. Sound is a simple example. We don’t hear sound until the brain decodes it. Waveform sound waves are picked up by the hearing sense and communicated to the brain in an electrical form to be decoded into the sounds that we hear. Everything we hear is inside the brain along with everything we see, feel, smell and taste. Words and language are waveform fields generated by our vocal chords which pass through this process until they are decoded by the brain into words that we hear. Different languages are different frequency fields or sound waves generated by vocal chords. Late British philosopher Alan Watts said:

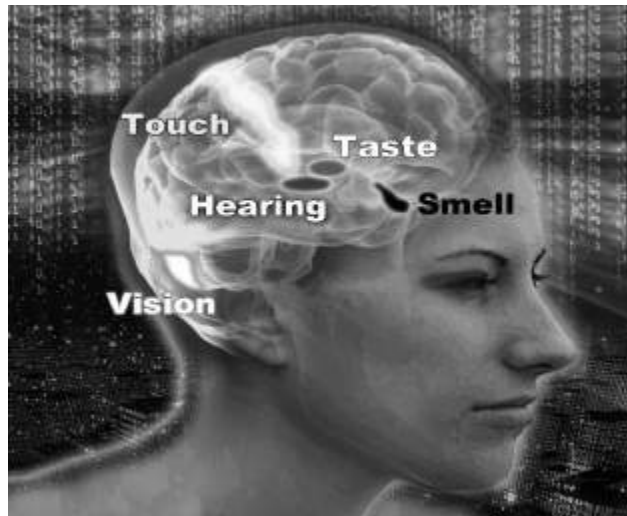


Figure 12: The brain receives information from the five senses and constructs from that our perceived reality.

[Without the brain] the world is devoid of light, heat, weight, solidity, motion, space, time or any other imaginable feature. All these phenomena are interactions, or transactions, of vibrations with a certain arrangement of neurons.

That's exactly what they are and scientist Robert Lanza describes in his book, *Biocentrism*, how we decode electromagnetic waves and energy into visual and 'physical' experience. He uses the example of a flame emitting photons, electromagnetic energy, each pulsing electrically and magnetically:

... these ... invisible electromagnetic waves strike a human retina, and if (and only if) the waves happen to measure between 400 and 700 nano meters in length from crest to crest, then their energy is just right to deliver a stimulus to the 8 million cone-shaped cells in the retina.

Each in turn send an electrical pulse to a neighbour neuron, and on up the line this goes, at 250 mph, until it reaches the ... occipital lobe of the brain, in the back of the head. There, a cascading complex of neurons fire from the incoming stimuli, and we subjectively perceive this experience as a yellow brightness occurring in a place we have been conditioned to call the 'external world'.

You hear what you decode

If a tree falls or a building collapses they make no noise unless someone is there to decode the energetic waves generated by the disturbance into what we call sound. Does a falling tree make a noise? Only if you hear it – *decode* it. Everything in our reality is a frequency field of information operating within the overall ‘Wi-Fi’ field that I call The Field. A vibrational disturbance is generated in The Field by the fields of the falling tree or building. These disturbance waves are what we decode into the sound of them falling. If no one is there to do that then neither will make any noise. Reality is created by the observer – *decoder* – and the *perceptions* of the observer affect the decoding process. For this reason different people – different *perceptions* – will perceive the same reality or situation in a different way. What one may perceive as a nightmare another will see as an opportunity. The question of why the Cult is so focused on controlling human perception now answers itself. All experienced reality is the act of decoding and we don’t experience Wi-Fi until it is decoded on the computer screen. The sight and sound of an Internet video is encoded in the Wi-Fi all around us, but we don’t see or hear it until the computer decodes that information. Taste, smell and touch are all phenomena of the brain as a result of the same process. We don’t taste, smell or feel anything except in the brain and there are pain relief techniques that seek to block the signal from the site of discomfort to the brain because if the brain doesn’t decode that signal we don’t feel pain. Pain is in the brain and only appears to be at the point of impact thanks to the feedback loop between them. We don’t see anything until electrical information from the sight senses is decoded in an area at the back of the brain. If that area is damaged we can go blind when our eyes are perfectly okay. So why do we go blind if we damage an eye? We damage the information processing between the waveform visual information and the visual decoding area of the brain. If information doesn’t reach the brain in a form it can decode then we can’t see the visual reality that it represents. What’s more the brain is decoding only a fraction of the information it receives and the rest is absorbed by the

sub-conscious mind. This explanation is from the science magazine, *Wonderpedia*:

Every second, 11 million sensations crackle along these [brain] pathways ... The brain is confronted with an alarming array of images, sounds and smells which it rigorously filters down until it is left with a manageable list of around 40. Thus 40 sensations per second make up what we perceive as reality.

The 'world' is not what people are told to believe that is it and the inner circles of the Cult *know that*.

Illusory 'physical' reality

We can only see a smear of 0.005 percent of the Universe which is only one of a vast array of universes – 'mansions' – within infinite reality. Even then the brain decodes only 40 pieces of information ('sensations') from a potential *11 million* that we receive every second. Two points strike you from this immediately: The sheer breathtaking stupidity of believing we know anything so rigidly that there's nothing more to know; and the potential for these processes to be manipulated by a malevolent force to control the reality of the population. One thing I can say for sure with no risk of contradiction is that when you can perceive an almost indescribable fraction of infinite reality there is always more to know as in tidal waves of it. Ancient Greek philosopher Socrates was so right when he said that wisdom is to know how little we know. How obviously true that is when you think that we are experiencing a physical world of solidity that is neither physical nor solid and a world of apartness when everything is connected. Cult-controlled 'science' dismisses the so-called 'paranormal' and all phenomena related to that when the 'para'-normal is perfectly normal and explains the alleged 'great mysteries' which dumbfound scientific minds. There is a reason for this. A 'scientific mind' in terms of the mainstream is a material mind, a five-sense mind imprisoned in see it, touch it, hear it, smell it and taste it. Phenomena and happenings that can't be explained that way leave the 'scientific mind' bewildered and the rule is that if they

can't account for why something is happening then it can't, by definition, be happening. I beg to differ. Telepathy is thought waves passing through The Field (think wave disturbance again) to be decoded by someone able to connect with that wavelength (information). For example: You can pick up the thought waves of a friend at any distance and at the very least that will bring them to mind. A few minutes later the friend calls you. 'My god', you say, 'that's incredible – I was just thinking of you.' Ah, but *they* were thinking of *you* before they made the call and that's what you decoded. Native peoples not entrapped in five-sense reality do this so well it became known as the 'bush telegraph'. Those known as psychics and mediums (genuine ones) are doing the same only across dimensions of reality. 'Mind over matter' comes from the fact that matter and mind are the *same*. The state of one influences the state of the other. Indeed one *and* the other are illusions. They are aspects of the same field. Paranormal phenomena are all explainable so why are they still considered 'mysteries' or not happening? Once you go down this road of understanding you begin to expand awareness beyond the five senses and that's the nightmare for the Cult.



Figure 13: Holograms are not solid, but the best ones appear to be.

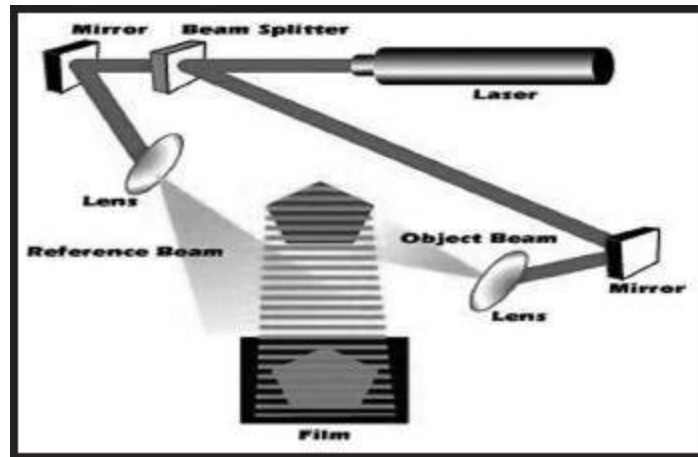


Figure 14: How holograms are created by capturing a waveform version of the subject image.

Holographic 'solidity'

Our reality is not solid, it is holographic. We are now well aware of holograms which are widely used today. Two-dimensional information is decoded into a three-dimensional reality that is not solid although can very much appear to be (Fig 13). Holograms are created with a laser divided into two parts. One goes directly onto a holographic photographic print ('reference beam') and the other takes a waveform image of the subject ('working beam') before being directed onto the print where it 'collides' with the other half of the laser (Fig 14). This creates a *waveform* interference pattern which contains the wavefield information of whatever is being photographed (Fig 15 overleaf). The process can be likened to dropping pebbles in a pond. Waves generated by each one spread out across the water to collide with the others and create a wave representation of where the stones fell and at what speed, weight and distance. A waveform interference pattern of a hologram is akin to the waveform information in The Field which the five senses decode into electrical signals to be decoded by the brain into a holographic illusory 'physical' reality. In the same way when a laser (think human attention) is directed at the waveform interference pattern a three-dimensional version of the subject is projected into apparently 'solid' reality (Fig 16). An amazing trait of holograms reveals more 'paranormal mysteries'. Information of the *whole*

hologram is encoded in waveform in every part of the interference pattern by the way they are created. This means that every *part* of a hologram is a smaller version of the whole. Cut the interference wave-pattern into four and you won't get four parts of the image. You get quarter-sized versions of the *whole* image. The body is a hologram and the same applies. Here we have the basis of acupuncture, reflexology and other forms of healing which identify representations of the whole body in all of the parts, hands, feet, ears, everywhere. Skilled palm readers can do what they do because the information of whole body is encoded in the hand. The concept of as above, so below, comes from this.



Figure 15: A waveform interference pattern that holds the information that transforms into a hologram.



Figure 16: Holographic people including 'Elvis' holographically inserted to sing a duet with Celine Dion.

The question will be asked of why, if solidity is illusory, we can't just walk through walls and each other. The resistance is not solid against solid; it is electromagnetic field against electromagnetic field and we decode this into the *experience* of solid against solid. We should also not underestimate the power of belief to dictate reality. What you believe is impossible *will be*. Your belief impacts on your decoding processes and they won't decode what you think is impossible. What we believe we perceive and what we perceive we experience. 'Can't dos' and 'impossibles' are like a firewall in a computer system that won't put on the screen what the firewall blocks. How vital that is to understanding how human experience has been hijacked. I explain in *The Answer, Everything You Need To Know But Have Never Been Told* and other books a long list of 'mysteries' and 'paranormal' phenomena that are not mysterious and perfectly normal once you realise what reality is and how it works. 'Ghosts' can be seen to pass through 'solid' walls because the walls are not solid and the ghost is a discarnate entity operating on a frequency so different to that of the wall that it's like two radio stations sharing the same space while never interfering with each other. I have seen ghosts do this myself. The apartness of people and objects is also an illusion. Everything is connected by the Field like all sea life is connected by the sea. It's just that within the limits of our visual reality we only 'see' holographic information and not the field of information that connects everything and from which the holographic world is made manifest. If you can only see holographic 'objects' and not the field that connects them they will appear to you as unconnected to each other in the same way that we see the computer while not seeing the Wi-Fi.

What you don't know *can* hurt you

Okay, we return to those 'two worlds' of human society and the Cult with its global network of interconnecting secret societies and satanic groups which manipulate through governments, corporations, media, religions, etc. The fundamental difference between them is *knowledge*. The idea has been to keep humanity

ignorant of the plan for its total enslavement underpinned by a crucial ignorance of reality – who we are and where we are – and how we interact with it. ‘Human’ should be the interaction between our expanded eternal consciousness and the five-sense body experience. We are meant to be *in* this world in terms of the five senses but not *of* this world in relation to our greater consciousness and perspective. In that state we experience the small picture of the five senses within the wider context of the big picture of awareness beyond the five senses. Put another way the five senses see the dots and expanded awareness connects them into pictures and patterns that give context to the apparently random and unconnected. Without the context of expanded awareness the five senses see only apartness and randomness with apparently no meaning. The Cult and its other-dimensional controllers seek to intervene in the frequency realm where five-sense reality is supposed to connect with expanded reality and to keep the two apart (more on this in the final chapter). When that happens five-sense mental and emotional processes are no longer influenced by expanded awareness, or the True ‘I’, and instead are driven by the isolated perceptions of the body’s decoding systems. They are in the world *and* of it. Here we have the human plight and why humanity with its potential for infinite awareness can be so easily manipulatable and descend into such extremes of stupidity.

Once the Cult isolates five-sense mind from expanded awareness it can then program the mind with perceptions and beliefs by controlling information that the mind receives through the ‘education’ system of the formative years and the media perceptual bombardment and censorship of an entire lifetime. Limit perception and a sense of the possible through limiting knowledge by limiting and skewing information while censoring and discrediting that which could set people free. As the title of another of my books says ... *And The Truth Shall Set You Free*. For this reason the last thing the Cult wants in circulation is the truth about anything – especially the reality of the eternal ‘I’ – and that’s why it is desperate to control information. The Cult knows that information becomes perception

which becomes behaviour which, collectively, becomes human society. Cult-controlled and funded mainstream 'science' denies the existence of an eternal 'I' and seeks to dismiss and trash all evidence to the contrary. Cult-controlled mainstream religion has a version of 'God' that is little more than a system of control and dictatorship that employs threats of damnation in an afterlife to control perceptions and behaviour in the here and now through fear and guilt. Neither is true and it's the 'neither' that the Cult wishes to suppress. This 'neither' is that everything is an expression, a point of attention, within an infinite state of consciousness which is the real meaning of the term 'God'.

Perceptual obsession with the 'physical body' and five-senses means that 'God' becomes personified as a bearded bloke sitting among the clouds or a raging bully who loves us if we do what 'he' wants and condemns us to the fires of hell if we don't. These are no more than a 'spiritual' fairy tales to control and dictate events and behaviour through fear of this 'God' which has bizarrely made 'God-fearing' in religious circles a state to be desired. I would suggest that fearing *anything* is not to be encouraged and celebrated, but rather deleted. You can see why 'God fearing' is so beneficial to the Cult and its religions when *they* decide what 'God' wants and what 'God' demands (the Cult demands) that everyone do. As the great American comedian Bill Hicks said satirising a Christian zealot: 'I think what God meant to say.' How much of this infinite awareness ('God') that we access is decided by how far we choose to expand our perceptions, self-identity and sense of the possible. The scale of self-identity reflects itself in the scale of awareness that we can connect with and are influenced by – how much knowing and insight we have instead of programmed perception. You cannot expand your awareness into the infinity of possibility when you believe that you are little me Peter the postman or Mary in marketing and nothing more. I'll deal with this in the concluding chapter because it's crucial to how we turnaround current events.

Where the Cult came from

When I realised in the early 1990s there was a Cult network behind global events I asked the obvious question: When did it start? I took it back to ancient Rome and Egypt and on to Babylon and Sumer in Mesopotamia, the 'Land Between Two Rivers', in what we now call Iraq. The two rivers are the Tigris and Euphrates and this region is of immense historical and other importance to the Cult, as is the land called Israel only 550 miles away by air. There is much more going on with deep esoteric meaning across this whole region. It's not only about 'wars for oil'. Priceless artefacts from Mesopotamia were stolen or destroyed after the American and British invasion of Iraq in 2003 justified by the lies of Boy Bush and Tony Blair (their Cult masters) about non-existent 'weapons of mass destruction'.

Mesopotamia was the location of Sumer (about 5,400BC to 1,750BC), and Babylon (about 2,350BC to 539BC). Sabbatians may have become immensely influential in the Cult in modern times but they are part of a network that goes back into the mists of history. Sumer is said by historians to be the 'cradle of civilisation'. I disagree. I say it was the re-start of what we call human civilisation after cataclysmic events symbolised in part as the 'Great Flood' destroyed the world that existed before. These fantastic upheavals that I have been describing in detail in the books since the early 1990s appear in accounts and legends of ancient cultures across the world and they are supported by geological and biological evidence. Stone tablets found in Iraq detailing the Sumer period say the cataclysms were caused by non-human 'gods' they call the Anunnaki. These are described in terms of extraterrestrial visitations in which knowledge supplied by the Anunnaki is said to have been the source of at least one of the world's oldest writing systems and developments in astronomy, mathematics and architecture that were way ahead of their time. I have covered this subject at length in *The Biggest Secret* and *Children of the Matrix* and the same basic 'Anunnaki' story can be found in Zulu accounts in South Africa where the late and very great Zulu high shaman Credo Mutwa told me that the Sumerian Anunnaki were known by Zulus as the Chitauri or 'children of the serpent'. See my six-hour video interview with Credo on this subject entitled *The*

Reptilian Agenda recorded at his then home near Johannesburg in 1999 which you can watch on the Ickonic media platform.

The Cult emerged out of Sumer, Babylon and Egypt (and elsewhere) and established the Roman Empire before expanding with the Romans into northern Europe from where many empires were savagely imposed in the form of Cult-controlled societies all over the world. Mass death and destruction was their calling card. The Cult established its centre of operations in Europe and European Empires were Cult empires which allowed it to expand into a global force. Spanish and Portuguese colonialists headed for Central and South America while the British and French targeted North America. Africa was colonised by Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Germany. Some like Britain and France moved in on the Middle East. The British Empire was by far the biggest for a simple reason. By now Britain was the headquarters of the Cult from which it expanded to form Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. The Sun never set on the British Empire such was the scale of its occupation. London remains a global centre for the Cult along with Rome and the Vatican although others have emerged in Israel and China. It is no accident that the 'virus' is alleged to have come out of China while Italy was chosen as the means to terrify the Western population into compliance with 'Covid' fascism. Nor that Israel has led the world in 'Covid' fascism and mass 'vaccination'.

You would think that I would mention the United States here, but while it has been an important means of imposing the Cult's will it is less significant than would appear and is currently in the process of having what power it does have deleted. The Cult in Europe has mostly loaded the guns for the US to fire. America has been controlled from Europe from the start through Cult operatives in Britain and Europe. The American Revolution was an illusion to make it appear that America was governing itself while very different forces were pulling the strings in the form of Cult families such as the Rothschilds through the Rockefellers and other subordinates. The Rockefellers are extremely close to Bill Gates and

established both scalpel and drug 'medicine' and the World Health Organization. They play a major role in the development and circulation of vaccines through the Rockefeller Foundation on which Bill Gates said his Foundation is based. Why wouldn't this be the case when the Rockefellers and Gates are on the same team? Cult infiltration of human society goes way back into what we call history and has been constantly expanding and centralising power with the goal of establishing a global structure to dictate everything. Look how this has been advanced in great leaps with the 'Covid' hoax.

The non-human dimension

I researched and observed the comings and goings of Cult operatives through the centuries and even thousands of years as they were born, worked to promote the agenda within the secret society and satanic networks, and then died for others to replace them. Clearly there had to be a coordinating force that spanned this entire period while operatives who would not have seen the end goal in their lifetimes came and went advancing the plan over millennia. I went in search of that coordinating force with the usual support from the extraordinary synchronicity of my life which has been an almost daily experience since 1990. I saw common themes in religious texts and ancient cultures about a non-human force manipulating human society from the hidden. Christianity calls this force Satan, the Devil and demons; Islam refers to the Jinn or Djinn; Zulus have their Chitauri (spelt in other ways in different parts of Africa); and the Gnostic people in Egypt in the period around and before 400AD referred to this phenomena as the 'Archons', a word meaning rulers in Greek. Central American cultures speak of the 'Predators' among other names and the same theme is everywhere. I will use 'Archons' as a collective name for all of them. When you see how their nature and behaviour is described all these different sources are clearly talking about the same force. Gnostics described the Archons in terms of 'luminous fire' while Islam relates the Jinn to 'smokeless fire'. Some refer to beings in form that could occasionally be seen, but the most common of common theme is that they operate from

unseen realms which means almost all existence to the visual processes of humans. I had concluded that this was indeed the foundation of human control and that the Cult was operating within the human frequency band on behalf of this hidden force when I came across the writings of Gnostics which supported my conclusions in the most extraordinary way.

A sealed earthen jar was found in 1945 near the town of Nag Hammadi about 75-80 miles north of Luxor on the banks of the River Nile in Egypt. Inside was a treasure trove of manuscripts and texts left by the Gnostic people some 1,600 years earlier. They included 13 leather-bound papyrus codices (manuscripts) and more than 50 texts written in Coptic Egyptian estimated to have been hidden in the jar in the period of 400AD although the source of the information goes back much further. Gnostics oversaw the Great or Royal Library of Alexandria, the fantastic depository of ancient texts detailing advanced knowledge and accounts of human history. The Library was dismantled and destroyed in stages over a long period with the death-blow delivered by the Cult-established Roman Church in the period around 415AD. The Church of Rome was the Church of Babylon relocated as I said earlier. Gnostics were not a race. They were a way of perceiving reality. Whenever they established themselves and their information circulated the terrorists of the Church of Rome would target them for destruction. This happened with the Great Library and with the Gnostic Cathars who were burned to death by the psychopaths after a long period of oppression at the siege of the Castle of Monségur in southern France in 1244. The Church has always been terrified of Gnostic information which demolishes the official Christian narrative although there is much in the Bible that supports the Gnostic view if you read it in another way. To anyone studying the texts of what became known as the Nag Hammadi Library it is clear that great swathes of Christian and Biblical belief has its origin with Gnostics sources going back to Sumer. Gnostic themes have been twisted to manipulate the perceived reality of Bible believers. Biblical texts have been in the open for centuries where they could be changed while Gnostic

documents found at Nag Hammadi were sealed away and untouched for 1,600 years. What you see is what they wrote.

Use your *pneuma* not your *nous*

Gnosticism and Gnostic come from 'gnosis' which means knowledge, or rather *secret* knowledge, in the sense of spiritual awareness – knowledge about reality and life itself. The desperation of the Cult's Church of Rome to destroy the Gnostics can be understood when the knowledge they were circulating was the last thing the Cult wanted the population to know. Sixteen hundred years later the same Cult is working hard to undermine and silence me for the same reason. The dynamic between knowledge and ignorance is a constant. 'Time' appears to move on, but essential themes remain the same. We are told to 'use your nous', a Gnostic word for head/brain/intelligence. They said, however, that spiritual awakening or 'salvation' could only be secured by expanding awareness *beyond* what they called *nous* and into *pneuma* or Infinite Self. Obviously as I read these texts the parallels with what I have been saying since 1990 were fascinating to me. There is a universal truth that spans human history and in that case why wouldn't we be talking the same language 16 centuries apart? When you free yourself from the perception program of the five senses and explore expanded realms of consciousness you are going to connect with the same information no matter what the perceived 'era' within a manufactured timeline of a single and tiny range of manipulated frequency. Humans working with 'smart' technology or knocking rocks together in caves is only a timeline appearing to operate within the human frequency band. Expanded awareness and the knowledge it holds have always been there whether the era be Stone Age or computer age. We can only access that knowledge by opening ourselves to its frequency which the five-sense prison cell is designed to stop us doing. Gates, Fauci, Whitty, Vallance, Zuckerberg, Brin, Page, Wojcicki, Bezos, and all the others behind the 'Covid' hoax clearly have a long wait before their range of frequency can make that connection given that an open heart is

crucial to that as we shall see. Instead of accessing knowledge directly through expanded awareness it is given to Cult operatives by the secret society networks of the Cult where it has been passed on over thousands of years outside the public arena. Expanded realms of consciousness is where great artists, composers and writers find their inspiration and where truth awaits anyone open enough to connect with it. We need to go there fast.

Archon hijack

A fifth of the Nag Hammadi texts describe the existence and manipulation of the Archons led by a 'Chief Archon' they call 'Yaldabaoth', or the 'Demiurge', and this is the Christian 'Devil', 'Satan', 'Lucifer', and his demons. Archons in Biblical symbolism are the 'fallen ones' which are also referred to as fallen angels after the angels expelled from heaven according to the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These angels are claimed to tempt humans to 'sin' ongoing and you will see how accurate that symbolism is during the rest of the book. The theme of 'original sin' is related to the 'Fall' when Adam and Eve were 'tempted by the serpent' and fell from a state of innocence and 'obedience' (connection) with God into a state of disobedience (disconnection). The Fall is said to have brought sin into the world and corrupted everything including human nature. Yaldabaoth, the 'Lord Archon', is described by Gnostics as a 'counterfeit spirit', 'The Blind One', 'The Blind God', and 'The Foolish One'. The Jewish name for Yaldabaoth in Talmudic writings is Samael which translates as 'Poison of God', or 'Blindness of God'. You see the parallels. Yaldabaoth in Islamic belief is the Muslim Jinn devil known as Shaytan – Shaytan is Satan as the same themes are found all over the world in every religion and culture. The 'Lord God' of the Old Testament is the 'Lord Archon' of Gnostic manuscripts and that's why he's such a bloodthirsty bastard. Satan is known by Christians as 'the Demon of Demons' and Gnostics called Yaldabaoth the 'Archon of Archons'. Both are known as 'The Deceiver'. We are talking about the same 'bloke' for sure and these common themes

using different names, storylines and symbolism tell a common tale of the human plight.

Archons are referred to in Nag Hammadi documents as mind parasites, inverters, guards, gatekeepers, detainers, judges, pitiless ones and deceivers. The 'Covid' hoax alone is a glaring example of all these things. The Biblical 'God' is so different in the Old and New Testaments because they are not describing the same phenomenon. The vindictive, angry, hate-filled, 'God' of the Old Testament, known as Yahweh, is Yaldabaoth who is depicted in Cult-dictated popular culture as the 'Dark Lord', 'Lord of Time', Lord (Darth) Vader and Dormammu, the evil ruler of the 'Dark Dimension' trying to take over the 'Earth Dimension' in the Marvel comic movie, *Dr Strange*. Yaldabaoth is both the Old Testament 'god' and the Biblical 'Satan'. Gnostics referred to Yaldabaoth as the 'Great Architect of the Universe' and the Cult-controlled Freemason network calls their god 'the 'Great Architect of the Universe' (also Grand Architect). The 'Great Architect' Yaldabaoth is symbolised by the Cult as the all-seeing eye at the top of the pyramid on the Great Seal of the United States and the dollar bill. Archon is encoded in *arch*-itect as it is in *arch*-angels and *arch*-bishops. All religions have the theme of a force for good and force for evil in some sort of spiritual war and there is a reason for that – the theme is true. The Cult and its non-human masters are quite happy for this to circulate. They present themselves as the force for good fighting evil when they are really the force of evil (absence of love). The whole foundation of Cult modus operandi is inversion. They promote themselves as a force for good and anyone challenging them in pursuit of peace, love, fairness, truth and justice is condemned as a satanic force for evil. This has been the game plan throughout history whether the Church of Rome inquisitions of non-believers or 'conspiracy theorists' and 'anti-vaxxers' of today. The technique is the same whatever the timeline era.

Yaldabaoth is revolting (true)

Yaldabaoth and the Archons are said to have revolted against God with Yaldabaoth claiming to *be* God – the *All That Is*. The Old Testament ‘God’ (Yaldabaoth) demanded to be worshipped as such: ‘*I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me*’ (Isaiah 45:5). I have quoted in other books a man who said he was the unofficial son of the late Baron Philippe de Rothschild of the Mouton-Rothschild wine producing estates in France who died in 1988 and he told me about the Rothschild ‘revolt from God’. The man said he was given the name Phillip Eugene de Rothschild and we shared long correspondence many years ago while he was living under another identity. He said that he was conceived through ‘occult incest’ which (within the Cult) was ‘normal and to be admired’. ‘Phillip’ told me about his experience attending satanic rituals with rich and famous people whom he names and you can see them and the wider background to Cult Satanism in my other books starting with *The Biggest Secret*. Cult rituals are interactions with Archontic ‘gods’. ‘Phillip’ described Baron Philippe de Rothschild as ‘a master Satanist and hater of God’ and he used the same term ‘revolt from God’ associated with Yaldabaoth/Satan/Lucifer/the Devil in describing the Sabbatian Rothschild dynasty. ‘I played a key role in my family’s revolt from God’, he said. That role was to infiltrate in classic Sabbatian style the Christian Church, but eventually he escaped the mind-prison to live another life. The Cult has been targeting religion in a plan to make worship of the Archons the global one-world religion. Infiltration of Satanism into modern ‘culture’, especially among the young, through music videos, stage shows and other means, is all part of this.

Nag Hammadi texts describe Yaldabaoth and the Archons in their prime form as energy – consciousness – and say they can take form if they choose in the same way that consciousness takes form as a human. Yaldabaoth is called ‘formless’ and represents a deeply inverted, distorted and chaotic state of consciousness which seeks to attach to humans and turn them into a likeness of itself in an attempt at assimilation. For that to happen it has to manipulate

humans into low frequency mental and emotional states that match its own. Archons can certainly appear in human form and this is the origin of the psychopathic personality. The energetic distortion Gnostics called Yaldabaoth is psychopathy. When psychopathic Archons take human form that human will be a psychopath as an expression of Yaldabaoth consciousness. Cult psychopaths are Archons in human form. The principle is the same as that portrayed in the 2009 *Avatar* movie when the American military travelled to a fictional Earth-like moon called Pandora in the Alpha Centauri star system to infiltrate a society of blue people, or Na'vi, by hiding within bodies that looked like the Na'vi. Archons posing as humans have a particular hybrid information field, part human, part Archon, (the ancient 'demigods') which processes information in a way that manifests behaviour to match their psychopathic evil, lack of empathy and compassion, and stops them being influenced by the empathy, compassion and love that a fully-human information field is capable of expressing. Cult bloodlines interbreed, be they royalty or dark suits, for this reason and you have their obsession with incest. Interbreeding with full-blown humans would dilute the Archontic energy field that guarantees psychopathy in its representatives in the human realm.

Gnostic writings say the main non-human forms that Archons take are *serpentine* (what I have called for decades 'reptilian' amid unbounded ridicule from the Archontically-programmed) and what Gnostics describe as 'an unborn baby or foetus with grey skin and dark, unmoving eyes'. This is an excellent representation of the ET 'Greys' of UFO folklore which large numbers of people claim to have seen and been abducted by – Zulu shaman Credo Mutwa among them. I agree with those that believe in extraterrestrial or interdimensional visitations today and for thousands of years past. No wonder with their advanced knowledge and technological capability they were perceived and worshipped as gods for technological and other 'miracles' they appeared to perform. Imagine someone arriving in a culture disconnected from the modern world with a smartphone and computer. They would be

seen as a 'god' capable of 'miracles'. The Renegade Mind, however, wants to know the source of everything and not only the way that source manifests as human or non-human. In the same way that a Renegade Mind seeks the original source material for the 'Covid virus' to see if what is claimed is true. The original source of Archons in form is consciousness – the distorted state of consciousness known to Gnostics as Yaldabaoth.

'Revolt from God' is energetic disconnection

Where I am going next will make a lot of sense of religious texts and ancient legends relating to 'Satan', Lucifer' and the 'gods'. Gnostic descriptions sync perfectly with the themes of my own research over the years in how they describe a consciousness distortion seeking to impose itself on human consciousness. I've referred to the core of infinite awareness in previous books as Infinite Awareness in Awareness of Itself. By that I mean a level of awareness that knows that it is all awareness and is aware of all awareness. From here comes the frequency of love in its true sense and balance which is what love is on one level – the balance of all forces into a single whole called Oneness and Isness. The more we disconnect from this state of love that many call 'God' the constituent parts of that Oneness start to unravel and express themselves as a part and not a whole. They become individualised as intellect, mind, selfishness, hatred, envy, desire for power over others, and such like. This is not a problem in the greater scheme in that 'God', the *All That Is*, can experience all these possibilities through different expressions of itself including humans. What we as expressions of the whole experience the *All That Is* experiences. We are the *All That Is* experiencing itself. As we withdraw from that state of Oneness we disconnect from its influence and things can get very unpleasant and very stupid. Archontic consciousness is at the extreme end of that. It has so disconnected from the influence of Oneness that it has become an inversion of unity and love, an inversion of everything, an inversion of life itself. Evil is appropriately live written backwards. Archontic consciousness is obsessed with death, an inversion of life,

and so its manifestations in Satanism are obsessed with death. They use inverted symbols in their rituals such as the inverted pentagram and cross. Sabbatians as Archontic consciousness incarnate invert Judaism and every other religion and culture they infiltrate. They seek disunity and chaos and they fear unity and harmony as they fear love like garlic to a vampire. As a result the Cult, Archons incarnate, act with such evil, psychopathy and lack of empathy and compassion disconnected as they are from the source of love. How could Bill Gates and the rest of the Archontic psychopaths do what they have to human society in the 'Covid' era with all the death, suffering and destruction involved and have no emotional consequence for the impact on others? Now you know. Why have Zuckerberg, Brin, Page, Wojcicki and company callously censored information warning about the dangers of the 'vaccine' while thousands have been dying and having severe, sometimes life-changing reactions? Now you know. Why have Tedros, Fauci, Whitty, Vallance and their like around the world been using case and death figures they're aware are fraudulent to justify lockdowns and all the deaths and destroyed lives that have come from that? Now you know. Why did Christian Drosten produce and promote a 'testing' protocol that he knew couldn't test for infectious disease which led to a global human catastrophe. Now you know. The Archontic mind doesn't give a shit ([Fig 17](#)). I personally think that Gates and major Cult insiders are a form of AI cyborg that the Archons want humans to become.

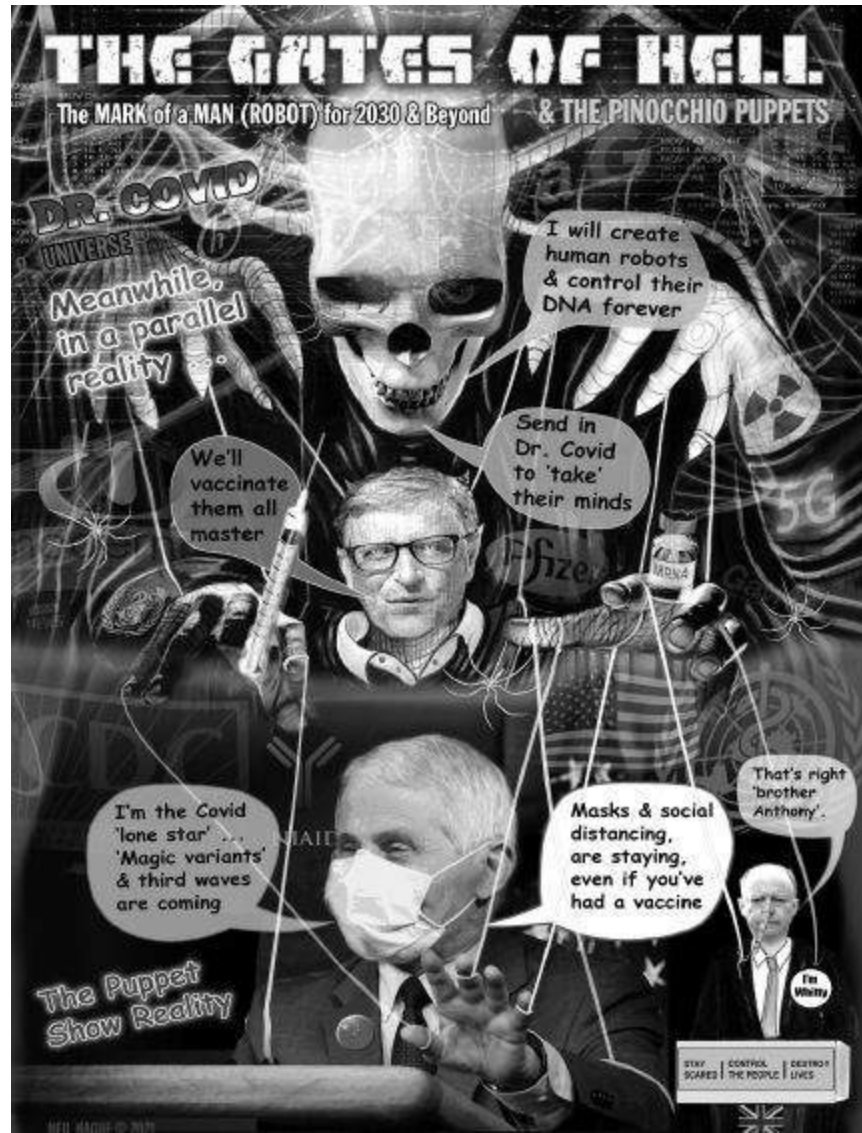


Figure 17: Artist Neil Hague's version of the 'Covid' hierarchy.

Human batteries

A state of such inversion does have its consequences, however. The level of disconnection from the Source of All means that you withdraw from that source of energetic sustenance and creativity. This means that you have to find your own supply of energetic power and it has – us. When the Morpheus character in the first *Matrix* movie held up a battery he spoke a profound truth when he said: 'The Matrix is a computer-generated dream world built to keep us under control in order to change the human being into one of

these.’ The statement was true in all respects. We do live in a technologically-generated virtual reality simulation (more very shortly) and we have been manipulated to be an energy source for Archontic consciousness. The Disney-Pixar animated movie *Monsters, Inc.* in 2001 symbolised the dynamic when monsters in their world had no energy source and they would enter the human world to terrify children in their beds, catch the child’s scream, terror (low-vibrational frequencies), and take that energy back to power the monster world. The lead character you might remember was a single giant eye and the symbolism of the Cult’s all-seeing eye was obvious. Every thought and emotion is broadcast as a frequency unique to that thought and emotion. Feelings of love and joy, empathy and compassion, are high, quick, frequencies while fear, depression, anxiety, suffering and hate are low, slow, dense frequencies. Which kind do you think Archontic consciousness can connect with and absorb? In such a low and dense frequency state there’s no way it can connect with the energy of love and joy. Archons can only feed off energy compatible with their own frequency and they and their Cult agents want to delete the human world of love and joy and manipulate the transmission of low vibrational frequencies through low-vibrational human mental and emotional states. *We are their energy source.* Wars are energetic banquets to the Archons – a world war even more so – and think how much low-frequency mental and emotional energy has been generated from the consequences for humanity of the ‘Covid’ hoax orchestrated by Archons incarnate like Gates.

The ancient practice of human sacrifice ‘to the gods’, continued in secret today by the Cult, is based on the same principle. ‘The gods’ are Archontic consciousness in different forms and the sacrifice is induced into a state of intense terror to generate the energy the Archontic frequency can absorb. Incarnate Archons in the ritual drink the blood which contains an adrenaline they crave which floods into the bloodstream when people are terrorised. Most of the sacrifices, ancient and modern, are children and the theme of ‘sacrificing young virgins to the gods’ is just code for children. They

have a particular pre-puberty energy that Archons want more than anything and the energy of the young in general is their target. The California Department of Education wants students to chant the names of Aztec gods (Archontic gods) once worshipped in human sacrifice rituals in a curriculum designed to encourage them to 'challenge racist, bigoted, discriminatory, imperialist/colonial beliefs', join 'social movements that struggle for social justice', and 'build new possibilities for a post-racist, post-systemic racism society'. It's the usual Woke crap that inverts racism and calls it anti-racism. In this case solidarity with 'indigenous tribes' is being used as an excuse to chant the names of 'gods' to which people were sacrificed (and still are in secret). What an example of Woke's inability to see beyond black and white, us and them, They condemn the colonisation of these tribal cultures by Europeans (quite right), but those cultures sacrificing people including children to their 'gods', and mass murdering untold numbers as the Aztecs did, is just fine. One chant is to the Aztec god Tezcatlipoca who had a man sacrificed to him in the 5th month of the Aztec calendar. His heart was cut out and he was eaten. Oh, that's okay then. Come on children ... after three ... Other sacrificial 'gods' for the young to chant their allegiance include Quetzalcoatl, Huitzilopochtli and Xipe Totec. The curriculum says that 'chants, affirmations, and energizers can be used to bring the class together, build unity around ethnic studies principles and values, and to reinvigorate the class following a lesson that may be emotionally taxing or even when student engagement may appear to be low'. Well, that's the cover story, anyway. Chanting and mantras are the repetition of a particular frequency generated from the vocal cords and chanting the names of these Archontic 'gods' tunes you into their frequency. That is the last thing you want when it allows for energetic synchronisation, attachment and perceptual influence. Initiates chant the names of their 'Gods' in their rituals for this very reason.

Vampires of the Woke

Paedophilia is another way that Archons absorb the energy of children. Paedophiles possessed by Archontic consciousness are used as the conduit during sexual abuse for discarnate Archons to vampire the energy of the young they desire so much. Stupendous numbers of children disappear every year never to be seen again although you would never know from the media. Imagine how much low-vibrational energy has been generated by children during the 'Covid' hoax when so many have become depressed and psychologically destroyed to the point of killing themselves. Shocking numbers of children are now taken by the state from loving parents to be handed to others. I can tell you from long experience of researching this since 1996 that many end up with paedophiles and assets of the Cult through corrupt and Cult-owned social services which in the reframing era has hired many psychopaths and emotionless automatons to do the job. Children are even stolen to order using spurious reasons to take them by the corrupt and secret (because they're corrupt) 'family courts'. I have written in detail in other books, starting with *The Biggest Secret* in 1997, about the ubiquitous connections between the political, corporate, government, intelligence and military elites (Cult operatives) and Satanism and paedophilia. If you go deep enough both networks have an interlocking leadership. The Woke mentality has been developed by the Cult for many reasons: To promote almost every aspect of its agenda; to hijack the traditional political left and turn it fascist; to divide and rule; and to target agenda pushbackers. But there are other reasons which relate to what I am describing here. How many happy and joyful Wokers do you ever see especially at the extreme end? They are a mental and psychological mess consumed by emotional stress and constantly emotionally cocked for the next explosion of indignation at someone referring to a female as a female. They are walking, talking, batteries as Morpheus might say emitting frequencies which both enslave them in low-vibrational bubbles of perceptual limitation and feed the Archons. Add to this the hatred claimed to be love; fascism claimed to 'anti-fascism', racism claimed to be 'anti-racism';

exclusion claimed to inclusion; and the abuse-filled Internet trolling. You have a purpose-built Archontic energy system with not a wind turbine in sight and all founded on Archontic *inversion*. We have whole generations now manipulated to serve the Archons with their actions and energy. They will be doing so their entire adult lives unless they snap out of their Archon-induced trance. Is it really a surprise that Cult billionaires and corporations put so much money their way? Where is the energy of joy and laughter, including laughing at yourself which is confirmation of your own emotional security? Mark Twain said: 'The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter.' We must use it all the time. Woke has destroyed comedy because it has no humour, no joy, sense of irony, or self-deprecation. Its energy is dense and intense. *Mmmmm*, lunch says the Archontic frequency. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was the Austrian philosopher and famous esoteric thinker who established Waldorf education or Steiner schools to treat children like unique expressions of consciousness and not minds to be programmed with the perceptions determined by authority. I'd been writing about this energy vampiring for decades when I was sent in 2016 a quote by Steiner. He was spot on:

There are beings in the spiritual realms for whom anxiety and fear emanating from human beings offer welcome food. When humans have no anxiety and fear, then these creatures starve. If fear and anxiety radiates from people and they break out in panic, then these creatures find welcome nutrition and they become more and more powerful. These beings are hostile towards humanity. Everything that feeds on negative feelings, on anxiety, fear and superstition, despair or doubt, are in reality hostile forces in super-sensible worlds, launching cruel attacks on human beings, while they are being fed ... These are exactly the feelings that belong to contemporary culture and materialism; because it estranges people from the spiritual world, it is especially suited to evoke hopelessness and fear of the unknown in people, thereby calling up the above mentioned hostile forces against them.

Pause for a moment from this perspective and reflect on what has happened in the world since the start of 2020. Not only will pennies drop, but billion dollar bills. We see the same theme from Don Juan Matus, a Yaqui Indian shaman in Mexico and the information source for Peruvian-born writer, Carlos Castaneda, who wrote a series of

books from the 1960s to 1990s. Don Juan described the force manipulating human society and his name for the Archons was the predator:

We have a predator that came from the depths of the cosmos and took over the rule of our lives. Human beings are its prisoners. The predator is our lord and master. It has rendered us docile, helpless. If we want to protest, it suppresses our protest. If we want to act independently, it demands that we don't do so ... indeed we are held prisoner!

They took us over because we are food to them, and they squeeze us mercilessly because we are their sustenance. Just as we rear chickens in coops, the predators rear us in human coops, humaneros. Therefore, their food is always available to them.

Different cultures, different eras, same recurring theme.

The 'ennoia' dilemma

Nag Hammadi Gnostic manuscripts say that Archon consciousness has no 'ennoia'. This is directly translated as 'intentionality', but I'll use the term 'creative imagination'. The *All That Is* in awareness of itself is the source of all creativity – all possibility – and the more disconnected you are from that source the more you are subsequently denied 'creative imagination'. Given that Archon consciousness is almost entirely disconnected it severely lacks creativity and has to rely on far more mechanical processes of thought and exploit the creative potential of those that do have 'ennoia'. You can see cases of this throughout human society. Archon consciousness almost entirely dominates the global banking system and if we study how that system works you will appreciate what I mean. Banks manifest 'money' out of nothing by issuing lines of 'credit' which is 'money' that has never, does not, and will never exist except in theory. It's a confidence trick. If you think 'credit' figures-on-a-screen 'money' is worth anything you accept it as payment. If you don't then the whole system collapses through lack of confidence in the value of that 'money'. Archontic bankers with no 'ennoia' are 'lending' 'money' that doesn't exist to humans that *do* have creativity – those that have the inspired ideas and create businesses and products. Archon banking feeds off human creativity

which it controls through 'money' creation and debt. Humans have the creativity and Archons exploit that for their own benefit and control while having none themselves. Archon Internet platforms like Facebook claim joint copyright of everything that creative users post and while Archontic minds like Zuckerberg may officially head that company it will be human creatives on the staff that provide the creative inspiration. When you have limitless 'money' you can then buy other companies established by creative humans. Witness the acquisition record of Facebook, Google and their like. Survey the Archon-controlled music industry and you see non-creative dark suit executives making their fortune from the human creativity of their artists. The cases are endless. Research the history of people like Gates and Zuckerberg and how their empires were built on exploiting the creativity of others. Archon minds cannot create out of nothing, but they are skilled (because they have to be) in what Gnostic texts call 'countermimicry'. They can imitate, but not innovate. Sabbatians trawl the creativity of others through backdoors they install in computer systems through their cybersecurity systems. Archon-controlled China is globally infamous for stealing intellectual property and I remember how Hong Kong, now part of China, became notorious for making counterfeit copies of the creativity of others – 'countermimicry'. With the now pervasive and all-seeing surveillance systems able to infiltrate any computer you can appreciate the potential for Archons to vampire the creativity of humans. Author John Lamb Lash wrote in his book about the Nag Hammadi texts, *Not In His Image*:

Although they cannot originate anything, because they lack the divine factor of ennoia (intentionality), Archons can imitate with a vengeance. Their expertise is simulation (HAL, virtual reality). The Demiurge [Yaldabaoth] fashions a heaven world copied from the fractal patterns [of the original] ... His construction is celestial kitsch, like the fake Italianate villa of a Mafia don complete with militant angels to guard every portal.

This brings us to something that I have been speaking about since the turn of the millennium. Our reality is a simulation; a virtual reality that we think is real. No, I'm not kidding.

Human reality? Well, virtually

I had pondered for years about whether our reality is 'real' or some kind of construct. I remembered being immensely affected on a visit as a small child in the late 1950s to the then newly-opened Planetarium on the Marylebone Road in London which is now closed and part of the adjacent Madame Tussauds wax museum. It was in the middle of the day, but when the lights went out there was the night sky projected in the Planetarium's domed ceiling and it appeared to be so real. The experience never left me and I didn't know why until around the turn of the millennium when I became certain that our 'night sky' and entire reality is a projection, a virtual reality, akin to the illusory world portrayed in the *Matrix* movies. I looked at the sky one day in this period and it appeared to me like the domed roof of the Planetarium. The release of the first *Matrix* movie in 1999 also provided a synchronistic and perfect visual representation of where my mind had been going for a long time. I hadn't come across the Gnostic Nag Hammadi texts then. When I did years later the correlation was once again astounding. As I read Gnostic accounts from 1,600 years and more earlier it was clear that they were describing the same simulation phenomenon. They tell how the Yaldabaoth 'Demiurge' and Archons created a 'bad copy' of original reality to rule over all that were captured by its illusions and the body was a prison to trap consciousness in the 'bad copy' fake reality. Read how Gnostics describe the 'bad copy' and update that to current times and they are referring to what we would call today a virtual reality simulation.

Author John Lamb Lash said 'the Demiurge fashions a heaven world copied from the fractal patterns' of the original through expertise in 'HAL' or virtual reality simulation. Fractal patterns are part of the energetic information construct of our reality, a sort of blueprint. If these patterns were copied in computer terms it would indeed give you a copy of a 'natural' reality in a non-natural frequency and digital form. The principle is the same as making a copy of a website. The original website still exists, but now you can change the copy version to make it whatever you like and it can

become very different to the original website. Archons have done this with our reality, a *synthetic* copy of prime reality that still exists beyond the frequency walls of the simulation. Trapped within the illusions of this synthetic Matrix, however, were and are human consciousness and other expressions of prime reality and this is why the Archons via the Cult are seeking to make the human body synthetic and give us synthetic AI minds to complete the job of turning the entire reality synthetic including what we perceive to be the natural world. To quote Kurzweil: 'Nanobots will infuse all the matter around us with information. Rocks, trees, everything will become these intelligent creatures.' Yes, *synthetic* 'creatures' just as 'Covid' and other genetically-manipulating 'vaccines' are designed to make the human body synthetic. From this perspective it is obvious why Archons and their Cult are so desperate to infuse synthetic material into every human with their 'Covid' scam.

Let there be (electromagnetic) light

Yaldabaoth, the force that created the simulation, or Matrix, makes sense of the Gnostic reference to 'The Great Architect' and its use by Cult Freemasonry as the name of its deity. The designer of the Matrix in the movies is called 'The Architect' and that trilogy is jam-packed with symbolism relating to these subjects. I have contended for years that the angry Old Testament God (Yaldabaoth) is the 'God' being symbolically 'quoted' in the opening of Genesis as 'creating the world'. This is not the creation of prime reality – it's the creation of the *simulation*. The Genesis 'God' says: 'Let there be Light: and there was light.' But what is this 'Light'? I have said for decades that the speed of light (186,000 miles per second) is not the fastest speed possible as claimed by mainstream science and is in fact the frequency walls or outer limits of the Matrix. You can't have a fastest or slowest anything within all possibility when everything is possible. The human body is encoded to operate within the speed of light or *within the simulation* and thus we see only the tiny frequency band of visible *light*. Near-death experiencers who perceive reality outside the body during temporary 'death' describe a very different

form of light and this is supported by the Nag Hammadi texts. Prime reality beyond the simulation ('Upper Aeons' to the Gnostics) is described as a realm of incredible beauty, bliss, love and harmony – a realm of 'watery light' that is so powerful 'there are no shadows'. Our false reality of Archon control, which Gnostics call the 'Lower Aeons', is depicted as a realm with a different kind of 'light' and described in terms of chaos, 'Hell', 'the Abyss' and 'Outer Darkness', where trapped souls are tormented and manipulated by demons (relate that to the 'Covid' hoax alone). The watery light theme can be found in near-death accounts and it is not the same as *simulation* 'light' which is electromagnetic or radiation light within the speed of light – the 'Lower Aeons'. Simulation 'light' is the 'luminous fire' associated by Gnostics with the Archons. The Bible refers to Yaldabaoth as 'that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world' (Revelation 12:9). I think that making a simulated copy of prime reality ('countermimicry') and changing it dramatically while all the time manipulating humanity to believe it to be real could probably meet the criteria of deceiving the whole world. Then we come to the Cult god Lucifer – the *Light Bringer*. Lucifer is symbolic of Yaldabaoth, the bringer of radiation light that forms the bad copy simulation within the speed of light. 'He' is symbolised by the lighted torch held by the Statue of Liberty and in the name 'Illuminati'. Sabbatian-Frankism declares that Lucifer is the true god and Lucifer is the real god of Freemasonry honoured as their 'Great or Grand Architect of the Universe' (simulation).

I would emphasise, too, the way Archontic technologically-generated luminous fire of radiation has deluged our environment since I was a kid in the 1950s and changed the nature of The Field with which we constantly interact. Through that interaction technological radiation is changing us. The Smart Grid is designed to operate with immense levels of communication power with 5G expanding across the world and 6G, 7G, in the process of development. Radiation is the simulation and the Archontic manipulation system. Why wouldn't the Archon Cult wish to unleash radiation upon us to an ever-greater extreme to form

Kurzweil's 'cloud'? The plan for a synthetic human is related to the need to cope with levels of radiation beyond even anything we've seen so far. Biological humans would not survive the scale of radiation they have in their script. The Smart Grid is a technological sub-reality within the technological simulation to further disconnect five-sense perception from expanded consciousness. It's a technological prison of the mind.

Infusing the 'spirit of darkness'

A recurring theme in religion and native cultures is the manipulation of human genetics by a non-human force and most famously recorded as the biblical 'sons of god' (the gods plural in the original) who interbred with the daughters of men. The Nag Hammadi *Apocryphon of John* tells the same story this way:

He [Yaldabaoth] sent his angels [Archons/demons] to the daughters of men, that they might take some of them for themselves and raise offspring for their enjoyment. And at first they did not succeed. When they had no success, they gathered together again and they made a plan together ... And the angels changed themselves in their likeness into the likeness of their mates, filling them with the spirit of darkness, which they had mixed for them, and with evil ... And they took women and begot children out of the darkness according to the likeness of their spirit.

Possession when a discarnate entity takes over a human body is an age-old theme and continues today. It's very real and I've seen it. Satanic and secret society rituals can create an energetic environment in which entities can attach to initiates and I've heard many stories of how people have changed their personality after being initiated even into lower levels of the Freemasons. I have been inside three Freemasonic temples, one at a public open day and two by just walking in when there was no one around to stop me. They were in Ryde, the town where I live, Birmingham, England, when I was with a group, and Boston, Massachusetts. They all felt the same energetically – dark, dense, low-vibrational and sinister. Demonic attachment can happen while the initiate has no idea what is going on. To them it's just a ritual to get in the Masons and do a bit of good

business. In the far more extreme rituals of Satanism human possession is even more powerful and they are designed to make possession possible. The hierarchy of the Cult is dictated by the power and perceived status of the possessing Archon. In this way the Archon hierarchy becomes the Cult hierarchy. Once the entity has attached it can influence perception and behaviour and if it attaches to the extreme then so much of its energy (information) infuses into the body information field that the hologram starts to reflect the nature of the possessing entity. This is the *Exorcist* movie type of possession when facial features change and it's known as shapeshifting. Islam's Jinn are said to be invisible tricksters who change shape, 'whisper', confuse and take human form. These are all traits of the Archons and other versions of the same phenomenon. Extreme possession could certainly infuse the 'spirit of darkness' into a partner during sex as the Nag Hammadi texts appear to describe. Such an infusion can change genetics which is also energetic information. Human genetics is information and the 'spirit of darkness' is information. Mix one with the other and change must happen. Islam has the concept of a 'Jinn baby' through possession of the mother and by Jinn taking human form. There are many ways that human genetics can be changed and remember that Archons have been aware all along of advanced techniques to do this. What is being done in human society today – and far more – was known about by Archons at the time of the 'fallen ones' and their other versions described in religions and cultures.

Archons and their human-world Cult are obsessed with genetics as we see today and they know this dictates how information is processed into perceived reality during a human life. They needed to produce a human form that would decode the simulation and this is symbolically known as 'Adam and Eve' who left the 'garden' (prime reality) and 'fell' into Matrix reality. The simulation is not a 'physical' construct (there is no 'physical'); it is a source of information. Think Wi-Fi again. The simulation is an energetic field encoded with information and body-brain systems are designed to decode that information encoded in wave or frequency form which

is transmitted to the brain as electrical signals. These are decoded by the brain to construct our sense of reality – an illusory ‘physical’ world that only exists in the brain or the mind. Virtual reality games mimic this process using the same sensory decoding system. Information is fed to the senses to decode a virtual reality that can appear so real, but isn’t (Figs 18 and 19). Some scientists believe – and I agree with them – that what we perceive as ‘physical’ reality only exists when we are looking or observing. The act of perception or focus triggers the decoding systems which turn waveform information into holographic reality. When we are not observing something our reality reverts from a holographic state to a waveform state. This relates to the same principle as a falling tree not making a noise unless someone is there to hear it or decode it. The concept makes sense from the simulation perspective. A computer is not decoding all the information in a Wi-Fi field all the time and only decodes or brings into reality on the screen that part of Wi-Fi that it’s decoding – focusing upon – at that moment.



Figure 18: Virtual reality technology ‘hacks’ into the body’s five-sense decoding system.



Figure 19: The result can be experienced as very ‘real’.

Interestingly, Professor Donald Hoffman at the Department of Cognitive Sciences at the University of California, Irvine, says that our experienced reality is like a computer interface that shows us only the level with which we interact while hiding all that exists beyond it: 'Evolution shaped us with a user interface that hides the truth. Nothing that we see is the truth – the very language of space and time and objects is the wrong language to describe reality.' He is correct in what he says on so many levels. Space and time are not a universal reality. They are a phenomenon of decoded *simulation* reality as part of the process of enslaving our sense of reality. Near-death experiencers report again and again how space and time did not exist as we perceive them once they were free of the body – body decoding systems. You can appreciate from this why Archons and their Cult are so desperate to entrap human attention in the five senses where we are in the Matrix and of the Matrix. Opening your mind to expanded states of awareness takes you beyond the information confines of the simulation and you become aware of knowledge and insights denied to you before. This is what we call 'awakening' – *awakening from the Matrix* – and in the final chapter I will relate this to current events.

Where are the 'aliens'?

A simulation would explain the so-called 'Fermi Paradox' named after Italian physicist Enrico Fermi (1901-1954) who created the first nuclear reactor. He considered the question of why there is such a lack of extraterrestrial activity when there are so many stars and planets in an apparently vast universe; but what if the night sky that we see, or think we do, is a simulated projection as I say? If you control the simulation and your aim is to hold humanity fast in essential ignorance would you want other forms of life including advanced life coming and going sharing information with humanity? Or would you want them to believe they were isolated and apparently alone? Themes of human isolation and apartness are common whether they be the perception of a lifeless universe or the fascist isolation laws of the 'Covid' era. Paradoxically the very

existence of a simulation means that we are not alone when some force had to construct it. My view is that experiences that people have reported all over the world for centuries with Reptilians and Grey entities are Archon phenomena as Nag Hammadi texts describe; and that benevolent 'alien' interactions are non-human groups that come in and out of the simulation by overcoming Archon attempts to keep them out. It should be highlighted, too, that Reptilians and Greys are obsessed with *genetics* and *technology* as related by cultural accounts and those who say they have been abducted by them. Technology is their way of overcoming some of the limitations in their creative potential and our technology-driven and controlled human society of today is *archetypical* Archon-Reptilian-Grey modus operandi. Technocracy is really *Archontocracy*. The Universe does not have to be as big as it appears with a simulation. There is no space or distance only information decoded into holographic reality. What we call 'space' is only the absence of holographic 'objects' and that 'space' is The Field of energetic information which connects everything into a single whole. The same applies with the artificially-generated information field of the simulation. The Universe is not big or small as a physical reality. It is decoded information, that's all, and its perceived size is decided by the way the simulation is encoded to make it appear. The entire night sky as we perceive it only exists in our brain and so where are those 'millions of light years'? The 'stars' on the ceiling of the Planetarium looked a vast distance away.

There's another point to mention about 'aliens'. I have been highlighting since the 1990s the plan to stage a fake 'alien invasion' to justify the centralisation of global power and a world military. Nazi scientist Werner von Braun, who was taken to America by Operation Paperclip after World War Two to help found NASA, told his American assistant Dr Carol Rosin about the Cult agenda when he knew he was dying in 1977. Rosin said that he told her about a sequence that would lead to total human control by a one-world government. This included threats from terrorism, rogue nations, meteors and asteroids before finally an 'alien invasion'. All of these

things, von Braun said, would be bogus and what I would refer to as a No-Problem-Reaction-Solution. Keep this in mind when 'the aliens are coming' is the new mantra. The aliens are not coming – they are *already here* and they have infiltrated human society while looking human. French-Canadian investigative journalist Serge Monast said in 1994 that he had uncovered a NASA/military operation called Project Blue Beam which fits with what Werner von Braun predicted. Monast died of a 'heart attack' in 1996 the day after he was arrested and spent a night in prison. He was 51. He said Blue Beam was a plan to stage an alien invasion that would include religious figures beamed holographically into the sky as part of a global manipulation to usher in a 'new age' of worshipping what I would say is the Cult 'god' Yaldabaoth in a one-world religion. Fake holographic asteroids are also said to be part of the plan which again syncs with von Braun. How could you stage an illusory threat from asteroids unless they were holographic inserts? This is pretty straightforward given the advanced technology outside the public arena and the fact that our 'physical' reality is holographic anyway. Information fields would be projected and we would decode them into the illusion of a 'physical' asteroid. If they can sell a global 'pandemic' with a 'virus' that doesn't exist what will humans not believe if government and media tell them?

All this is particularly relevant as I write with the Pentagon planning to release in June, 2021, information about 'UFO sightings'. I have been following the UFO story since the early 1990s and the common theme throughout has been government and military denials and cover up. More recently, however, the Pentagon has suddenly become more talkative and apparently open with Air Force pilot radar images released of unexplained craft moving and changing direction at speeds well beyond anything believed possible with human technology. Then, in March, 2021, former Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe said a Pentagon report months later in June would reveal a great deal of information about UFO sightings unknown to the public. He said the report would have 'massive implications'. The order to do this was included bizarrely

in a \$2.3 trillion 'coronavirus' relief and government funding bill passed by the Trump administration at the end of 2020. I would add some serious notes of caution here. I have been pointing out since the 1990s that the US military and intelligence networks have long had craft – 'flying saucers' or anti-gravity craft – which any observer would take to be extraterrestrial in origin. Keeping this knowledge from the public allows craft flown by *humans* to be perceived as alien visitations. I am not saying that 'aliens' do not exist. I would be the last one to say that, but we have to be streetwise here. President Ronald Reagan told the UN General Assembly in 1987: 'I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world.' That's the idea. Unite against a common 'enemy' with a common purpose behind your 'saviour force' (the Cult) as this age-old technique of mass manipulation goes global.

Science moves this way ...

I could find only one other person who was discussing the simulation hypothesis publicly when I concluded it was real. This was Nick Bostrom, a Swedish-born philosopher at the University of Oxford, who has explored for many years the possibility that human reality is a computer simulation although his version and mine are not the same. Today the simulation and holographic reality hypothesis have increasingly entered the scientific mainstream. Well, the more open-minded mainstream, that is. Here are a few of the ever-gathering examples. American nuclear physicist Silas Beane led a team of physicists at the University of Bonn in Germany pursuing the question of whether we live in a simulation. They concluded that we probably do and it was likely based on a lattice of cubes. They found that cosmic rays align with that specific pattern. The team highlighted the Greisen–Zatsepin–Kuzmin (GZK) limit which refers to cosmic ray particle interaction with cosmic background radiation that creates an apparent boundary for cosmic ray particles. They say in a paper entitled 'Constraints on the Universe as a Numerical Simulation' that this 'pattern of constraint' is exactly what you

would find with a computer simulation. They also made the point that a simulation would create its own 'laws of physics' that would limit possibility. I've been making the same point for decades that the *perceived* laws of physics relate only to this reality, or what I would later call the simulation. When designers write codes to create computer and virtual reality games they are the equivalent of the laws of physics for that game. Players interact within the limitations laid out by the coding. In the same way those who wrote the codes for the simulation decided the laws of physics that would apply. These can be overridden by expanded states of consciousness, but not by those enslaved in only five-sense awareness where simulation codes rule. Overriding the codes is what people call 'miracles'. They are not. They are bypassing the encoded limits of the simulation. A population caught in simulation perception would have no idea that this was their plight. As the Bonn paper said: 'Like a prisoner in a pitch-black cell we would not be able to see the "walls" of our prison,' That's true if people remain mesmerised by the five senses. Open to expanded awareness and those walls become very clear. The main one is the speed of light.

American theoretical physicist James Gates is another who has explored the simulation question and found considerable evidence to support the idea. Gates was Professor of Physics at the University of Maryland, Director of The Center for String and Particle Theory, and on Barack Obama's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. He and his team found *computer codes* of digital data embedded in the fabric of our reality. They relate to on-off electrical charges of 1 and 0 in the binary system used by computers. 'We have no idea what they are doing there', Gates said. They found within the energetic fabric mathematical sequences known as error-correcting codes or block codes that 'reboot' data to its original state or 'default settings' when something knocks it out of sync. Gates was asked if he had found a set of equations embedded in our reality indistinguishable from those that drive search engines and browsers and he said: 'That is correct.' Rich Terrile, director of the Centre for Evolutionary Computation and Automated Design at NASA's Jet

Propulsion Laboratory, has said publicly that he believes the Universe is a digital hologram that must have been created by a form of intelligence. I agree with that in every way. Waveform information is delivered electrically by the senses to the brain which constructs a *digital* holographic reality that we call the 'world'. This digital level of reality can be read by the esoteric art of numerology. Digital holograms are at the cutting edge of holographics today. We have digital technology everywhere designed to access and manipulate our digital level of perceived reality. Synthetic mRNA in 'Covid vaccines' has a digital component to manipulate the body's digital 'operating system'.

Reality is numbers

How many know that our reality can be broken down to numbers and codes that are the same as computer games? Max Tegmark, a physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), is the author of *Our Mathematical Universe* in which he lays out how reality can be entirely described by numbers and maths in the way that a video game is encoded with the 'physics' of computer games. Our world and computer virtual reality are essentially the same.

Tegmark imagines the perceptions of characters in an advanced computer game when the graphics are so good they don't know they are in a game. They think they can bump into real objects (electromagnetic resistance in our reality), fall in love and feel emotions like excitement. When they began to study the apparently 'physical world' of the video game they would realise that everything was made of pixels (which have been found in our energetic reality as must be the case when on one level our world is digital). What computer game characters thought was physical 'stuff', Tegmark said, could actually be broken down into numbers:

And we're exactly in this situation in our world. We look around and it doesn't seem that mathematical at all, but everything we see is made out of elementary particles like quarks and electrons. And what properties does an electron have? Does it have a smell or a colour or a texture? No! ... We physicists have come up with geeky names for [Electron] properties, like

electric charge, or spin, or lepton number, but the electron doesn't care what we call it, the properties are just numbers.

This is the illusory reality Gnostics were describing. This is the simulation. The A, C, G, and T codes of DNA have a binary value – A and C = 0 while G and T = 1. This has to be when the simulation is digital and the body must be digital to interact with it. Recurring mathematical sequences are encoded throughout reality and the body. They include the Fibonacci sequence in which the two previous numbers are added to get the next one, as in ... 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, etc. The sequence is encoded in the human face and body, proportions of animals, DNA, seed heads, pine cones, trees, shells, spiral galaxies, hurricanes and the number of petals in a flower. The list goes on and on. There are fractal patterns – a 'never-ending pattern that is infinitely complex and self-similar across all scales in the as above, so below, principle of holograms. These and other famous recurring geometrical and mathematical sequences such as Phi, Pi, Golden Mean, Golden Ratio and Golden Section are *computer codes* of the simulation. I had to laugh and give my head a shake the day I finished this book and it went into the production stage. I was sent an article in *Scientific American* published in April, 2021, with the headline 'Confirmed! We Live in a Simulation'. Two decades after I first said our reality is a simulation and the speed of light is its outer limit the article suggested that we do live in a simulation and that the speed of light is its outer limit. I left school at 15 and never passed a major exam in my life while the writer was up to his eyes in qualifications. As I will explain in the final chapter *knowing* is far better than thinking and they come from very different sources. The article rightly connected the speed of light to the processing speed of the 'Matrix' and said what has been in my books all this time ... 'If we are in a simulation, as it appears, then space is an abstract property written in code. It is not real'. No it's not and if we live in a simulation something created it and it wasn't *us*. 'That David Icke says we are manipulated by aliens' – he's crackers.'

Wow ...

The reality that humanity thinks is so real is an illusion. Politicians, governments, scientists, doctors, academics, law enforcement, media, school and university curriculums, on and on, are all founded on a world that *does not exist* except as a simulated prison cell. Is it such a stretch to accept that 'Covid' doesn't exist when our entire 'physical' reality doesn't exist? Revealed here is the knowledge kept under raps in the Cult networks of compartmentalised secrecy to control humanity's sense of reality by inducing the population to believe in a reality that's not real. If it wasn't so tragic in its experiential consequences the whole thing would be hysterically funny. None of this is new to Renegade Minds. Ancient Greek philosopher Plato (about 428 to about 347BC) was a major influence on Gnostic belief and he described the human plight thousands of years ago with his Allegory of the Cave. He told the symbolic story of prisoners living in a cave who had never been outside. They were chained and could only see one wall of the cave while behind them was a fire that they could not see. Figures walked past the fire casting shadows on the prisoners' wall and those moving shadows became their sense of reality. Some prisoners began to study the shadows and were considered experts on them (today's academics and scientists), but what they studied was only an illusion (today's academics and scientists). A prisoner escaped from the cave and saw reality as it really is. When he returned to report this revelation they didn't believe him, called him mad and threatened to kill him if he tried to set them free. Plato's tale is not only a brilliant analogy of the human plight and our illusory reality. It describes, too, the dynamics of the 'Covid' hoax. I have only skimmed the surface of these subjects here. The aim of this book is to crisply connect all essential dots to put what is happening today into its true context. All subject areas and their connections in this chapter are covered in great evidential detail in *Everything You Need To Know, But Have Never Been Told* and *The Answer*.

They say that bewildered people 'can't see the forest for the trees'. Humanity, however, can't see the forest for the *twigs*. The five senses

see only twigs while Renegade Minds can see the forest and it's the forest where the answers lie with the connections that reveals. Breaking free of perceptual programming so the forest can be seen is the way we turn all this around. Not breaking free is how humanity got into this mess. The situation may seem hopeless, but I promise you it's not. We are a perceptual heartbeat from paradise if only we knew.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Escaping Wetiko

Life is simply a vacation from the infinite

Dean Cavanagh

Renegade Minds weave the web of life and events and see common themes in the apparently random. They are always there if you look for them and their pursuit is aided by incredible synchronicity that comes when your mind is open rather than mesmerised by what it thinks it can see.

Infinite awareness is infinite possibility and the more of infinite possibility that we access the more becomes infinitely possible. That may be stating the apparently obvious, but it is a devastatingly-powerful fact that can set us free. We are a point of attention within an infinity of consciousness. The question is how much of that infinity do we choose to access? How much knowledge, insight, awareness, wisdom, do we want to connect with and explore? If your focus is only in the five senses you will be influenced by a fraction of infinite awareness. I mean a range so tiny that it gives new meaning to infinitesimal. Limitation of self-identity and a sense of the possible limit accordingly your range of consciousness. We are what we think we are. Life is what we think it is. The dream is the dreamer and the dreamer is the dream. Buddhist philosophy puts it this way: 'As a thing is viewed, so it appears.' Most humans live in the realm of touch, taste, see, hear, and smell and that's the limit of their sense of the possible and sense of self. Many will follow a religion and speak of a God in his heaven, but their lives are still

dominated by the five senses in their perceptions and actions. The five senses become the arbiter of everything. When that happens all except a smear of infinity is sealed away from influence by the rigid, unyielding, reality bubbles that are the five-sense human or Phantom Self. Archon Cult methodology is to isolate consciousness within five-sense reality – the simulation – and then program that consciousness with a sense of self and the world through a deluge of life-long information designed to instil the desired perception that allows global control. Efforts to do this have increased dramatically with identity politics as identity bubbles are squeezed into the minutiae of five-sense detail which disconnect people even more profoundly from the infinite 'I'.

Five-sense focus and self-identity are like a firewall that limits access to the infinite realms. You only perceive one radio or television station and no other. We'll take that literally for a moment. Imagine a vast array of stations giving different information and angles on reality, but you only ever listen to one. Here we have the human plight in which the population is overwhelmingly confined to CultFM. This relates only to the frequency range of CultFM and limits perception and insight to that band – limits *possibility* to that band. It means you are connecting with an almost imperceptibly minuscule range of possibility and creative potential within the infinite Field. It's a world where everything seems apart from everything else and where synchronicity is rare. Synchronicity is defined in the dictionary as 'the happening by chance of two or more related or similar events at the same time'. Use of 'by chance' betrays a complete misunderstanding of reality. Synchronicity is not 'by chance'. As people open their minds, or 'awaken' to use the term, they notice more and more coincidences in their lives, bits of 'luck', apparently miraculous happenings that put them in the right place at the right time with the right people. Days become peppered with 'fancy meeting you here' and 'what are the chances of that?' My entire life has been lived like this and ever more so since my own colossal awakening in 1990 and 91 which transformed my sense of reality. Synchronicity is not 'by chance'; it is by accessing expanded

realms of possibility which allow expanded potential for manifestation. People broadcasting the same vibe from the same openness of mind tend to be drawn 'by chance' to each other through what I call frequency magnetism and it's not only people. In the last more than 30 years incredible synchronicity has also led me through the Cult maze to information in so many forms and to crucial personal experiences. These 'coincidences' have allowed me to put the puzzle pieces together across an enormous array of subjects and situations. Those who have breached the bubble of five-sense reality will know exactly what I mean and this escape from the perceptual prison cell is open to everyone whenever they make that choice. This may appear super-human when compared with the limitations of 'human', but it's really our natural state. 'Human' as currently experienced is consciousness in an unnatural state of induced separation from the infinity of the whole. I'll come to how this transformation into unity can be made when I have described in more detail the force that holds humanity in servitude by denying this access to infinite self.

The Wetiko factor

I have been talking and writing for decades about the way five-sense mind is systematically barricaded from expanded awareness. I have used the analogy of a computer (five-sense mind) and someone at the keyboard (expanded awareness). Interaction between the computer and the operator is symbolic of the interaction between five-sense mind and expanded awareness. The computer directly experiences the Internet and the operator experiences the Internet via the computer which is how it's supposed to be – the two working as one. Archons seek to control that point where the operator connects with the computer to stop that interaction (Fig 20). Now the operator is banging the keyboard and clicking the mouse, but the computer is not responding and this happens when the computer is taken over – *possessed* – by an appropriately-named computer 'virus'. The operator has lost all influence over the computer which goes its own way making decisions under the control of the 'virus'. I have

just described the dynamic through which the force known to Gnostics as Yaldabaoth and Archons disconnects five-sense mind from expanded awareness to imprison humanity in perceptual servitude.

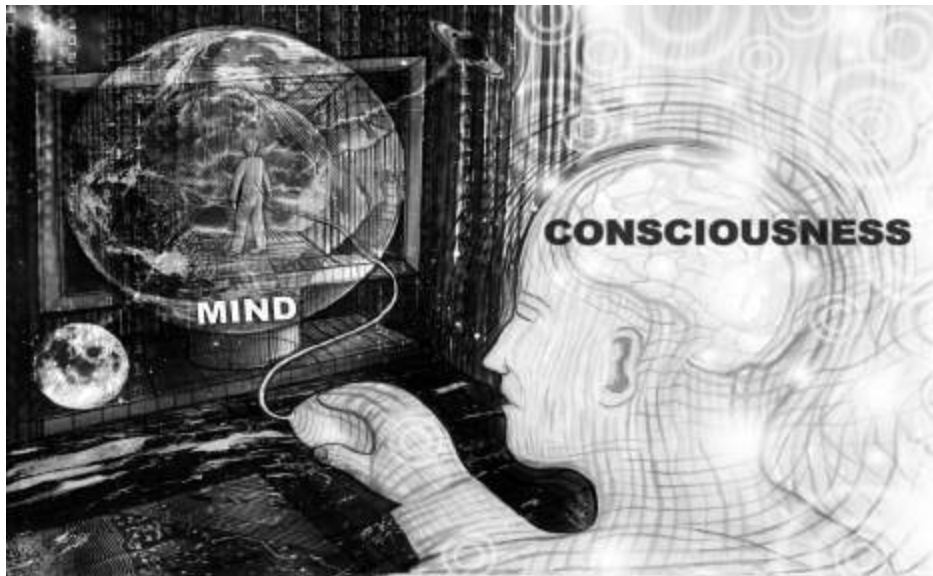


Figure 20: The mind ‘virus’ I have been writing about for decades seeks to isolate five-sense mind (the computer) from the true ‘I’. (Image by Neil Hague).

About a year ago I came across a Native American concept of Wetiko which describes precisely the same phenomenon. Wetiko is the spelling used by the Cree and there are other versions including wintiko and windigo used by other tribal groups. They spell the name with lower case, but I see Wetiko as a proper noun as with Archons and prefer a capital. I first saw an article about Wetiko by writer and researcher Paul Levy which so synced with what I had been writing about the computer/operator disconnection and later the Archons. I then read his book, the fascinating *Dispelling Wetiko, Breaking the Spell of Evil*. The parallels between what I had concluded long before and the Native American concept of Wetiko were so clear and obvious that it was almost funny. For Wetiko see the Gnostic Archons for sure and the Jinn, the Predators, and every other name for a force of evil, inversion and chaos. Wetiko is the Native American name for the force that divides the computer from

the operator (Fig 21). Indigenous author Jack D. Forbes, a founder of the Native American movement in the 1960s, wrote another book about Wetiko entitled *Columbus And Other Cannibals – The Wetiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism* which I also read. Forbes says that Wetiko refers to an evil person or spirit ‘who terrorizes other creatures by means of terrible acts, including cannibalism’. Zulu shaman Credo Mutwa told me that African accounts tell how cannibalism was brought into the world by the Chitauri ‘gods’ – another manifestation of Wetiko. The distinction between ‘evil person or spirit’ relates to Archons/Wetiko possessing a human or acting as pure consciousness. Wetiko is said to be a sickness of the soul or spirit and a state of being that takes but gives nothing back – the Cult and its operatives perfectly described. Black Hawk, a Native American war leader defending their lands from confiscation, said European invaders had ‘poisoned hearts’ – Wetiko hearts – and that this would spread to native societies. Mention of the heart is very significant as we shall shortly see. Forbes writes: ‘Tragically, the history of the world for the past 2,000 years is, in great part, the story of the epidemiology of the wetiko disease.’ Yes, and much longer. Forbes is correct when he says: ‘The wetikos destroyed Egypt and Babylon and Athens and Rome and Tenochtitlan [capital of the Aztec empire] and perhaps now they will destroy the entire earth.’ Evil, he said, is the number one export of a Wetiko culture – see its globalisation with ‘Covid’. Constant war, mass murder, suffering of all kinds, child abuse, Satanism, torture and human sacrifice are all expressions of Wetiko and the Wetiko possessed. The world is Wetiko made manifest, *but it doesn’t have to be*. There is a way out of this even now.



Figure 21: The mind 'virus' is known to Native Americans as 'Wetiko'. (Image by Neil Hague).

Cult of Wetiko

Wetiko is the Yaldabaoth frequency distortion that seeks to attach to human consciousness and absorb it into its own. Once this connection is made Wetiko can drive the perceptions of the target which they believe to be coming from their own mind. All the horrors of history and today from mass killers to Satanists, paedophiles like Jeffrey Epstein and other psychopaths, are the embodiment of Wetiko and express its state of being in all its grotesqueness. The Cult is Wetiko incarnate, Yaldabaoth incarnate, and it seeks to facilitate Wetiko assimilation of humanity in totality into its distortion by manipulating the population into low frequency states that match its own. Paul Levy writes: 'Holographically enforced within the psyche of every human being the wetiko virus pervades and underlies the entire field of consciousness, and can therefore potentially manifest through any one of us at any moment if we are not mindful.' The 'Covid' hoax has achieved this with many people, but others have not fallen into Wetiko's frequency lair. Players in the 'Covid' human catastrophe including Gates, Schwab, Tedros, Fauci, Whitty, Vallance, Johnson, Hancock, Ferguson, Drosten, and all the rest, including the psychopath psychologists, are expressions of Wetiko. This is why

they have no compassion or empathy and no emotional consequence for what they do that would make them stop doing it. Observe all the people who support the psychopaths in authority against the Pushbackers despite the damaging impact the psychopaths have on their own lives and their family's lives. You are again looking at Wetiko possession which prevents them seeing through the lies to the obvious scam going on. *Why can't they see it?* Wetiko won't let them see it. The perceptual divide that has now become a chasm is between the Wetikoed and the non-Wetikoed.

Paul Levy describes Wetiko in the same way that I have long described the Archontic force. They are the same distorted consciousness operating across dimensions of reality: '... the subtle body of wetiko is not located in the third dimension of space and time, literally existing in another dimension ... it is able to affect ordinary lives by mysteriously interpenetrating into our three-dimensional world.' Wetiko does this through its incarnate representatives in the Cult and by weaving itself into The Field which on our level of reality is the electromagnetic information field of the simulation or Matrix. More than that, the simulation *is* Wetiko / Yaldabaoth. Caleb Scharf, Director of Astrobiology at Columbia University, has speculated that 'alien life' could be so advanced that it has transcribed itself into the quantum realm to become what we call physics. He said intelligence indistinguishable from the fabric of the Universe would solve many of its greatest mysteries:

Perhaps hyper-advanced life isn't just external. Perhaps it's already all around. It is embedded in what we perceive to be physics itself, from the root behaviour of particles and fields to the phenomena of complexity and emergence ... In other words, life might not just be in the equations. It might BE the equations [My emphasis].

Scharf said it is possible that 'we don't recognise advanced life because it forms an integral and unsuspecting part of what we've considered to be the natural world'. I agree. Wetiko/Yaldabaoth *is* the simulation. We are literally in the body of the beast. But that doesn't mean it has to control us. We all have the power to overcome Wetiko

influence and the Cult knows that. I doubt it sleeps too well because it knows that.

Which Field?

This, I suggest, is how it all works. There are two Fields. One is the fierce electromagnetic light of the Matrix within the speed of light; the other is the 'watery light' of The Field beyond the walls of the Matrix that connects with the Great Infinity. Five-sense mind and the decoding systems of the body attach us to the Field of Matrix light. They have to or we could not experience this reality. Five-sense mind sees only the Matrix Field of information while our expanded consciousness is part of the Infinity Field. When we open our minds, and most importantly our hearts, to the Infinity Field we have a mission control which gives us an expanded perspective, a road map, to understand the nature of the five-sense world. If we are isolated only in five-sense mind there is no mission control. We're on our own trying to understand a world that's constantly feeding us information to ensure we do not understand. People in this state can feel 'lost' and bewildered with no direction or radar. You can see ever more clearly those who are influenced by the Fields of Big Infinity or little five-sense mind simply by their views and behaviour with regard to the 'Covid' hoax. We have had this division throughout known human history with the mass of the people on one side and individuals who could see and intuit beyond the walls of the simulation – Plato's prisoner who broke out of the cave and saw reality for what it is. Such people have always been targeted by Wetiko/Archon-possessed authority, burned at the stake or demonised as mad, bad and dangerous. The Cult today and its global network of 'anti-hate', 'anti-fascist' Woke groups are all expressions of Wetiko attacking those exposing the conspiracy, 'Covid' lies and the 'vaccine' agenda.

Woke as a whole is Wetiko which explains its black and white mentality and how at one it is with the Wetiko-possessed Cult. Paul Levy said: 'To be in this paradigm is to still be under the thrall of a two-valued logic – where things are either true or false – of a

wetikoized mind.’ Wetiko consciousness is in a permanent rage, therefore so is Woke, and then there is Woke inversion and contradiction. ‘Anti-fascists’ act like fascists because fascists *and* ‘anti-fascists’ are both Wetiko at work. Political parties act the same while claiming to be different for the same reason. Secret society and satanic rituals are attaching initiates to Wetiko and the cold, ruthless, psychopathic mentality that secures the positions of power all over the world is Wetiko. Reframing ‘training programmes’ have the same cumulative effect of attaching Wetiko and we have their graduates described as automatons and robots with a cold, psychopathic, uncaring demeanour. They are all traits of Wetiko possession and look how many times they have been described in this book and elsewhere with regard to personnel behind ‘Covid’ including the police and medical profession. Climbing the greasy pole in any profession in a Wetiko society requires traits of Wetiko to get there and that is particularly true of politics which is not about fair competition and pre-eminence of ideas. It is founded on how many backs you can stab and arses you can lick. This culminated in the global ‘Covid’ coordination between the Wetiko possessed who pulled it off in all the different countries without a trace of empathy and compassion for their impact on humans. Our sight sense can see only holographic form and not the Field which connects holographic form. Therefore we perceive ‘physical’ objects with ‘space’ in between. In fact that ‘space’ is energy/consciousness operating on multiple frequencies. One of them is Wetiko and that connects the Cult psychopaths, those who submit to the psychopaths, and those who serve the psychopaths in the media operations of the world. Wetiko is Gates. Wetiko is the mask-wearing submissive. Wetiko is the fake journalist and ‘fact-checker’. The Wetiko Field is coordinating the whole thing. Psychopaths, gofers, media operatives, ‘anti-hate’ hate groups, ‘fact-checkers’ and submissive people work as one unit *even without human coordination* because they are attached to the *same* Field which is organising it all (Fig 22). Paul Levy is here describing how Wetiko-possessed people are drawn together and refuse to let any information breach their rigid

perceptions. He was writing long before 'Covid', but I think you will recognise followers of the 'Covid' religion *oh just a little bit*:

People who are channelling the vibratory frequency of wetiko align with each other through psychic resonance to reinforce their unspoken shared agreement so as to uphold their deranged view of reality. Once an unconscious content takes possession of certain individuals, it irresistibly draws them together by mutual attraction and knits them into groups tied together by their shared madness that can easily swell into an avalanche of insanity.

A psychic epidemic is a closed system, which is to say that it is insular and not open to any new information or informing influences from the outside world which contradict its fixed, limited, and limiting perspective.

There we have the Woke mind and the 'Covid' mind. Compatible resonance draws the awakening together, too, which is clearly happening today.

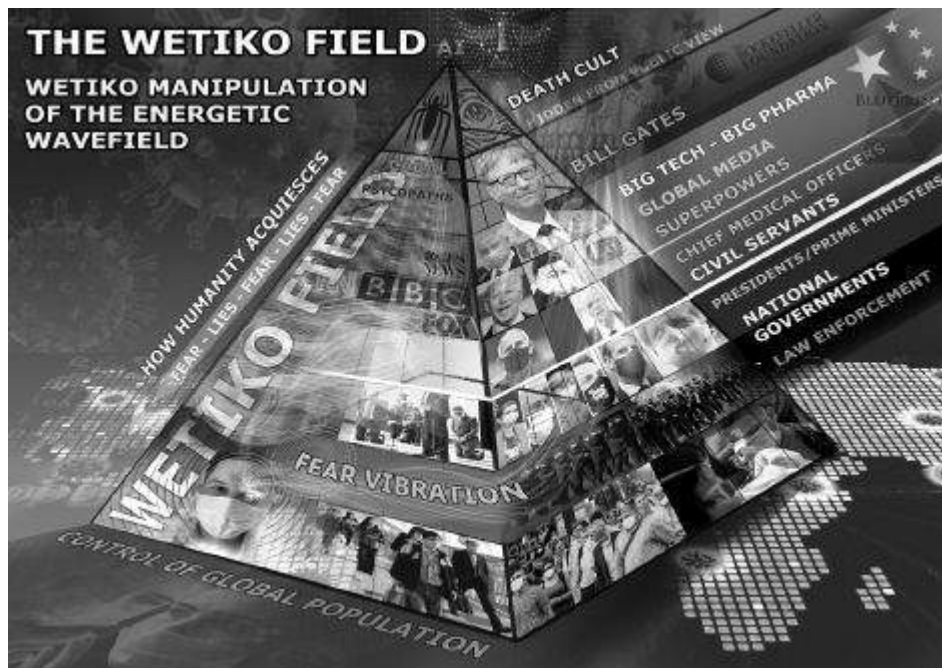


Figure 22: The Wetiko Field from which the Cult pyramid and its personnel are made manifest. (Image by Neil Hague).

Spiritual servitude

Wetiko doesn't care about humans. It's not human; it just possesses humans for its own ends and the effect (depending on the scale of

possession) can be anything from extreme psychopathy to unquestioning obedience. Wetiko's worst nightmare is for human consciousness to expand beyond the simulation. Everything is focussed on stopping that happening through control of information, thus perception, thus frequency. The 'education system', media, science, medicine, academia, are all geared to maintaining humanity in five-sense servitude as is the constant stimulation of low-vibrational mental and emotional states (see 'Covid'). Wetiko seeks to dominate those subconscious spaces between five-sense perception and expanded consciousness where the computer meets the operator. From these subconscious hiding places Wetiko speaks to us to trigger urges and desires that we take to be our own and manipulate us into anything from low-vibrational to psychopathic states. Remember how Islam describes the Jinn as invisible tricksters that 'whisper' and confuse. Wetiko is the origin of the 'trickster god' theme that you find in cultures all over the world. Jinn, like the Archons, are Wetiko which is terrified of humans awakening and reconnecting with our true self for then its energy source has gone. With that the feedback loop breaks between Wetiko and human perception that provides the energetic momentum on which its very existence depends as a force of evil. Humans are both its target and its source of survival, but only if we are operating in low-vibrational states of fear, hate, depression and the background anxiety that most people suffer. We are Wetiko's target because we are its key to survival. It needs us, not the other way round. Paul Levy writes:

A vampire has no intrinsic, independent, substantial existence in its own right; it only exists in relation to us. The pathogenic, vampiric mind-parasite called wetiko is nothing in itself – not being able to exist from its own side – yet it has a 'virtual reality' such that it can potentially destroy our species ...

...The fact that a vampire is not reflected by a mirror can also mean that what we need to see is that there's nothing, no-thing to see, other than ourselves. The fact that wetiko is the expression of something inside of us means that the cure for wetiko is with us as well. The critical issue is finding this cure within us and then putting it into effect.

Evil begets evil because if evil does not constantly expand and find new sources of energetic sustenance its evil, its *distortion*, dies with the assimilation into balance and harmony. Love is the garlic to Wetiko's vampire. Evil, the absence of love, cannot exist in the presence of love. I think I see a way out of here. I have emphasised so many times over the decades that the Archons/Wetiko and their Cult are not all powerful. *They are not*. I don't care how it looks even now *they are not*. I have not called them little boys in short trousers for effect. I have said it because it is true. Wetiko's insatiable desire for power over others is not a sign of its omnipotence, but its insecurity. Paul Levy writes: 'Due to the primal fear which ultimately drives it and which it is driven to cultivate, wetiko's body politic has an intrinsic and insistent need for centralising power and control so as to create imagined safety for itself.' *Yeaaaaaaes!* Exactly! Why does Wetiko want humans in an ongoing state of fear? Wetiko itself *is* fear and it is petrified of love. As evil is an absence of love, so love is an absence of fear. Love conquers all and *especially* Wetiko which *is* fear. Wetiko brought fear into the world when it wasn't here before. *Fear* was the 'fall', the fall into low-frequency ignorance and illusion – fear is **False Emotion Appearing Real**. The simulation is driven and energised by fear because Wetiko/Yaldabaoth (fear) *are* the simulation. Fear is the absence of love and Wetiko is the absence of love.

Wetiko today

We can now view current events from this level of perspective. The 'Covid' hoax has generated momentous amounts of ongoing fear, anxiety, depression and despair which have empowered Wetiko. No wonder people like Gates have been the instigators when they are Wetiko incarnate and exhibit every trait of Wetiko in the extreme. See how cold and unemotional these people are like Gates and his cronies, how dead of eye they are. That's Wetiko. Sabbatians are Wetiko and everything they control including the World Health Organization, Big Pharma and the 'vaccine' makers, national 'health'

hierarchies, corporate media, Silicon Valley, the banking system, and the United Nations with its planned transformation into world government. All are controlled and possessed by the Wetiko distortion into distorting human society in its image. We are with this knowledge at the gateway to understanding the world. Divisions of race, culture, creed and sexuality are diversions to hide the real division between those possessed and influenced by Wetiko and those that are not. The 'Covid' hoax has brought both clearly into view. Human behaviour is not about race. Tyrants and dictatorships come in all colours and creeds. What unites the US president bombing the innocent and an African tribe committing genocide against another as in Rwanda? What unites them? *Wetiko*. All wars are Wetiko, all genocide is Wetiko, all hunger over centuries in a world of plenty is Wetiko. Children going to bed hungry, including in the West, is Wetiko. Cult-generated Woke racial divisions that focus on the body are designed to obscure the reality that divisions in behaviour are manifestations of mind, not body. Obsession with body identity and group judgement is a means to divert attention from the real source of behaviour – mind and perception. Conflict sown by the Woke both within themselves and with their target groups are Wetiko providing lunch for itself through still more agents of the division, chaos, and fear on which it feeds. The Cult is seeking to assimilate the entirety of humanity and all children and young people into the Wetiko frequency by manipulating them into states of fear and despair. Witness all the suicide and psychological unravelling since the spring of 2020. Wetiko psychopaths want to impose a state of unquestioning obedience to authority which is no more than a conduit for Wetiko to enforce its will and assimilate humanity into itself. It needs us to believe that resistance is futile when it fears resistance and even more so the game-changing non-cooperation with its impositions. It can use violent resistance for its benefit. Violent impositions and violent resistance are *both* Wetiko. The Power of Love with its Power of No will sweep Wetiko from our world. Wetiko and its Cult know that. They just don't want us to know.

AI Wetiko

This brings me to AI or artificial intelligence and something else Wetikos don't want us to know. What is AI *really*? I know about computer code algorithms and AI that learns from data input. These, however, are more diversions, the expeditionary force, for the real AI that they want to connect to the human brain as promoted by Silicon Valley Wetikos like Kurzweil. What is this AI? It is the frequency of *Wetiko*, the frequency of the Archons. The connection of AI to the human brain is the connection of the Wetiko frequency to create a Wetiko hive mind and complete the job of assimilation. The hive mind is planned to be controlled from Israel and China which are both 100 percent owned by Wetiko Sabbatians. The assimilation process has been going on minute by minute in the 'smart' era which fused with the 'Covid' era. We are told that social media is scrambling the minds of the young and changing their personality. This is true, but what is social media? Look more deeply at how it works, how it creates divisions and conflict, the hostility and cruelty, the targeting of people until they are destroyed. That's Wetiko. Social media is manipulated to tune people to the Wetiko frequency with all the emotional exploitation tricks employed by platforms like Facebook and its Wetiko front man, Zuckerberg. Facebook's Instagram announced a new platform for children to overcome a legal bar on them using the main site. This is more Wetiko exploitation and manipulation of kids. Amnesty International likened the plan to foxes offering to guard the henhouse and said it was incompatible with human rights. Since when did Wetiko or Zuckerberg (I repeat myself) care about that? Would Brin and Page at Google, Wojcicki at YouTube, Bezos at Amazon and whoever the hell runs Twitter act as they do if they were not channelling Wetiko? Would those who are developing technologies for no other reason than human control? How about those designing and selling technologies to kill people and Big Pharma drug and 'vaccine' producers who know they will end or devastate lives? Quite a thought for these people to consider is that if you are Wetiko in a human life you are Wetiko on the 'other side' unless your frequency

changes and that can only change by a change of perception which becomes a change of behaviour. Where Gates is going does not bear thinking about although perhaps that's exactly where he wants to go. Either way, that's where he's going. His frequency will make it so.

The frequency lair

I have been saying for a long time that a big part of the addiction to smartphones and devices is that a frequency is coming off them that entraps the mind. People spend ages on their phones and sometimes even a minute or so after they put them down they pick them up again and it all repeats. 'Covid' lockdowns will have increased this addiction a million times for obvious reasons. Addictions to alcohol overindulgence and drugs are another way that Wetiko entraps consciousness to attach to its own. Both are symptoms of low-vibrational psychological distress which alcoholism and drug addiction further compound. Do we think it's really a coincidence that access to them is made so easy while potions that can take people into realms beyond the simulation are banned and illegal? I have explored smartphone addiction in other books, the scale is mind-blowing, and that level of addiction does not come without help. Tech companies that make these phones are Wetiko and they will have no qualms about destroying the minds of children. We are seeing again with these companies the Wetiko perceptual combination of psychopathic enforcers and weak and meek unquestioning compliance by the rank and file.

The global Smart Grid is the Wetiko Grid and it is crucial to complete the Cult endgame. The simulation is radiation and we are being deluged with technological radiation on a devastating scale. Wetiko frauds like Elon Musk serve Cult interests while occasionally criticising them to maintain his street-cred. 5G and other forms of Wi-Fi are being directed at the earth from space on a volume and scale that goes on increasing by the day. Elon Musk's (officially) SpaceX Starlink project is in the process of putting tens of thousands of satellites in low orbit to cover every inch of the planet with 5G and other Wi-Fi to create Kurzweil's global 'cloud' to which the

human mind is planned to be attached very soon. SpaceX has approval to operate 12,000 satellites with more than 1,300 launched at the time of writing and applications filed for 30,000 more. Other operators in the Wi-Fi, 5G, low-orbit satellite market include OneWeb (UK), Telesat (Canada), and AST & Science (US). Musk tells us that AI could be the end of humanity and then launches a company called Neuralink to connect the human brain to computers. Musk's (in theory) Tesla company is building electric cars and the driverless vehicles of the smart control grid. As frauds and bullshitters go Elon Musk in my opinion is Major League.

5G and technological radiation in general are destructive to human health, genetics and psychology and increasing the strength of artificial radiation underpins the five-sense perceptual bubbles which are themselves expressions of radiation or electromagnetism. Freedom activist John Whitehead was so right with his 'databit by databit, we are building our own electronic concentration camps'. The Smart Grid and 5G is a means to control the human mind and infuse perceptual information into The Field to influence anyone in sync with its frequency. You can change perception and behaviour en masse if you can manipulate the population into those levels of frequency and this is happening all around us today. The arrogance of Musk and his fellow Cult operatives knows no bounds in the way that we see with Gates. Musk's satellites are so many in number already they are changing the night sky when viewed from Earth. The astronomy community has complained about this and they have seen nothing yet. Some consequences of Musk's Wetiko hubris include: Radiation; visible pollution of the night sky; interference with astronomy and meteorology; ground and water pollution from intensive use of increasingly many spaceports; accumulating space debris; continual deorbiting and burning up of aging satellites, polluting the atmosphere with toxic dust and smoke; and ever-increasing likelihood of collisions. A collective public open letter of complaint to Musk said:

We are writing to you ... because SpaceX is in process of surrounding the Earth with a network of thousands of satellites whose very purpose is to irradiate every square inch of the

Earth. SpaceX, like everyone else, is treating the radiation as if it were not there. As if the mitochondria in our cells do not depend on electrons moving undisturbed from the food we digest to the oxygen we breathe.

As if our nervous systems and our hearts are not subject to radio frequency interference like any piece of electronic equipment. As if the cancer, diabetes, and heart disease that now afflict a majority of the Earth's population are not metabolic diseases that result from interference with our cellular machinery. As if insects everywhere, and the birds and animals that eat them, are not starving to death as a result.

People like Musk and Gates believe in their limitless Wetiko arrogance that they can do whatever they like to the world because they own it. Consequences for humanity are irrelevant. It's absolutely time that we stopped taking this shit from these self-styled masters of the Earth when you consider where this is going.

Why is the Cult so anti-human?

I hear this question often: Why would they do this when it will affect them, too? Ah, but will it? Who is this *them*? Forget their bodies. They are just vehicles for Wetiko consciousness. When you break it all down to the foundations we are looking at a state of severely distorted consciousness targeting another state of consciousness for assimilation. The rest is detail. The simulation is the fly-trap in which unique sensations of the five senses create a cycle of addiction called reincarnation. Renegade Minds see that everything which happens in our reality is a smaller version of the whole picture in line with the holographic principle. Addiction to the radiation of smart technology is a smaller version of addiction to the whole simulation. Connecting the body/brain to AI is taking that addiction on a giant step further to total ongoing control by assimilating human incarnate consciousness into Wetiko. I have watched during the 'Covid' hoax how many are becoming ever more profoundly attached to Wetiko's perceptual calling cards of aggressive response to any other point of view ('There is no other god but me'), psychopathic lack of compassion and empathy, and servile submission to the narrative and will of authority. Wetiko is the psychopaths *and* subservience to psychopaths. The Cult of Wetiko is

so anti-human because it is *not* human. It embarked on a mission to destroy human by targeting everything that it means to be human and to survive as human. 'Covid' is not the end, just a means to an end. The Cult with its Wetiko consciousness is seeking to change Earth systems, including the atmosphere, to suit them, not humans. The gathering bombardment of 5G alone from ground and space is dramatically changing The Field with which the five senses interact. There is so much more to come if we sit on our hands and hope it will all go away. It is not meant to go away. It is meant to get ever more extreme and we need to face that while we still can – just.

Carbon dioxide is the gas of life. Without that human is over. Kaput, gone, history. No natural world, no human. The Cult has created a cock and bull story about carbon dioxide and climate change to justify its reduction to the point where Gates and the ignoramus Biden 'climate chief' John Kerry want to suck it out of the atmosphere. Kerry wants to do this because his master Gates does. Wetikos have made the gas of life a demon with the usual support from the Wokers of Extinction Rebellion and similar organisations and the bewildered puppet-child that is Greta Thunberg who was put on the world stage by Klaus Schwab and the World Economic Forum. The name Extinction Rebellion is both ironic and as always Wetiko inversion. The gas that we need to survive must be reduced to save us from extinction. The most basic need of human is oxygen and we now have billions walking around in face nappies depriving body and brain of this essential requirement of human existence. More than that 5G at 60 gigahertz interacts with the oxygen molecule to reduce the amount of oxygen the body can absorb into the bloodstream. The obvious knock-on consequences of that for respiratory and cognitive problems and life itself need no further explanation. Psychopaths like Musk are assembling a global system of satellites to deluge the human atmosphere with this insanity. The man should be in jail. Here we have two most basic of human needs, oxygen and carbon dioxide, being dismantled.

Two others, water and food, are getting similar treatment with the United Nations Agendas 21 and 2030 – the Great Reset – planning to

centrally control all water and food supplies. People will not even own rain water that falls on their land. Food is affected at the most basic level by reducing carbon dioxide. We have genetic modification or GMO infiltrating the food chain on a mass scale, pesticides and herbicides polluting the air and destroying the soil. Freshwater fish that provide livelihoods for 60 million people and feed hundreds of millions worldwide are being 'pushed to the brink' according the conservationists while climate change is the only focus. Now we have Gates and Schwab wanting to dispense with current food sources all together and replace them with a synthetic version which the Wetiko Cult would control in terms of production and who eats and who doesn't. We have been on the Totalitarian Tiptoe to this for more than 60 years as food has become ever more processed and full of chemical shite to the point today when it's not natural food at all. As Dr Tom Cowan says: 'If it has a label don't eat it.' Bill Gates is now the biggest owner of farmland in the United States and he does nothing without an ulterior motive involving the Cult. Klaus Schwab wrote: 'To feed the world in the next 50 years we will need to produce as much food as was produced in the last 10,000 years ... food security will only be achieved, however, if regulations on genetically modified foods are adapted to reflect the reality that gene editing offers a precise, efficient and safe method of improving crops.' Liar. People and the world are being targeted with aluminium through vaccines, chemtrails, food, drink cans, and endless other sources when aluminium has been linked to many health issues including dementia which is increasing year after year. Insects, bees and wildlife essential to the food chain are being deleted by pesticides, herbicides and radiation which 5G is dramatically increasing with 6G and 7G to come. The pollinating bee population is being devastated while wildlife including birds, dolphins and whales are having their natural radar blocked by the effects of ever-increasing radiation. In the summer windscreens used to be splattered with insects so numerous were they. It doesn't happen now. Where have they gone?

Synthetic everything

The Cult is introducing genetically-modified versions of trees, plants and insects including a Gates-funded project to unleash hundreds of millions of genetically-modified, lab-altered and patented male mosquitoes to mate with wild mosquitoes and induce genetic flaws that cause them to die out. Clinically-insane Gates-funded Japanese researchers have developed mosquitos that spread vaccine and are dubbed 'flying vaccinators'. Gates is funding the modification of weather patterns in part to sell the myth that this is caused by carbon dioxide and he's funding geoengineering of the skies to change the atmosphere. Some of this came to light with the Gates-backed plan to release tonnes of chalk into the atmosphere to 'deflect the Sun and cool the planet'. Funny how they do this while the heating effect of the Sun is not factored into climate projections focussed on carbon dioxide. The reason is that they want to reduce carbon dioxide (so don't mention the Sun), but at the same time they do want to reduce the impact of the Sun which is so essential to human life and health. I have mentioned the sun-cholesterol-vitamin D connection as they demonise the Sun with warnings about skin cancer (caused by the chemicals in sun cream they tell you to splash on). They come from the other end of the process with statin drugs to reduce cholesterol that turns sunlight into vitamin D. A lack of vitamin D leads to a long list of health effects and how vitamin D levels must have fallen with people confined to their homes over 'Covid'. Gates is funding other forms of geoengineering and most importantly chemtrails which are dropping heavy metals, aluminium and self-replicating nanotechnology onto the Earth which is killing the natural world. See *Everything You Need To Know, But Have Never Been Told* for the detailed background to this.

Every human system is being targeted for deletion by a force that's not human. The Wetiko Cult has embarked on the process of transforming the human body from biological to synthetic biological as I have explained. Biological is being replaced by the artificial and synthetic – Archontic 'countermimicry' – right across human society. The plan eventually is to dispense with the human body altogether

and absorb human consciousness – which it wouldn't really be by then – into cyberspace (the simulation which is Wetiko/Yaldabaoth). Preparations for that are already happening if people would care to look. The alternative media rightly warns about globalism and 'the globalists', but this is far bigger than that and represents the end of the human race as we know it. The 'bad copy' of prime reality that Gnostics describe was a bad copy of harmony, wonder and beauty to start with before Wetiko/Yaldabaoth set out to change the simulated 'copy' into something very different. The process was slow to start with. Entrapped humans in the simulation timeline were not technologically aware and they had to be brought up to intellectual speed while being suppressed spiritually to the point where they could build their own prison while having no idea they were doing so. We have now reached that stage where technological intellect has the potential to destroy us and that's why events are moving so fast. Central American shaman Don Juan Matus said:

Think for a moment, and tell me how you would explain the contradictions between the intelligence of man the engineer and the stupidity of his systems of belief, or the stupidity of his contradictory behaviour. Sorcerers believe that the predators have given us our systems of beliefs, our ideas of good and evil; our social mores. They are the ones who set up our dreams of success or failure. They have given us covetousness, greed, and cowardice. It is the predator who makes us complacent, routinary, and egomaniacal.

In order to keep us obedient and meek and weak, the predators engaged themselves in a stupendous manoeuvre – stupendous, of course, from the point of view of a fighting strategist; a horrendous manoeuvre from the point of those who suffer it. They gave us their mind. The predators' mind is baroque, contradictory, morose, filled with the fear of being discovered any minute now.

For 'predators' see Wetiko, Archons, Yaldabaoth, Jinn, and all the other versions of the same phenomenon in cultures and religions all over the world. The theme is always the same because it's true and it's real. We have reached the point where we have to deal with it. The question is – how?

Don't fight – walk away

I thought I'd use a controversial subheading to get things moving in terms of our response to global fascism. What do you mean 'don't fight'? What do you mean 'walk away'? We've got to fight. We can't walk away. Well, it depends what we mean by fight and walk away. If fighting means physical combat we are playing Wetiko's game and falling for its trap. It wants us to get angry, aggressive, and direct hate and hostility at the enemy we think we must fight. Every war, every battle, every conflict, has been fought with Wetiko leading both sides. It's what it does. Wetiko wants a fight, anywhere, any place. Just hit me, son, so I can hit you back. Wetiko hits Wetiko and Wetiko hits Wetiko in return. I am very forthright as you can see in exposing Wetikos of the Cult, but I don't hate them. I refuse to hate them. It's what they want. What you hate you become. What you *fight* you become. Wokers, 'anti-haters' and 'anti-fascists' prove this every time they reach for their keyboards or don their balaclavas. By walk away I mean to disengage from Wetiko which includes ceasing to cooperate with its tyranny. Paul Levy says of Wetiko:

The way to 'defeat' evil is not to try to destroy it (for then, in playing evil's game, we have already lost), but rather, to find the invulnerable place within ourselves where evil is unable to vanquish us – this is to truly 'win' our battle with evil.

Wetiko is everywhere in human society and it's been on steroids since the 'Covid' hoax. Every shouting match over wearing masks has Wetiko wearing a mask and Wetiko not wearing one. It's an electrical circuit of push and resist, push and resist, with Wetiko pushing *and* resisting. Each polarity is Wetiko empowering itself. Dictionary definitions of 'resist' include 'opposing, refusing to accept or comply with' and the word to focus on is 'opposing'. What form does this take – setting police cars alight or 'refusing to accept or comply with'? The former is Wetiko opposing Wetiko while the other points the way forward. This is the difference between those aggressively demanding that government fascism must be obeyed who stand in stark contrast to the great majority of Pushbackers. We saw this clearly with a march by thousands of Pushbackers against lockdown in London followed days later by a Woker-hijacked

protest in Bristol in which police cars were set on fire. Masks were virtually absent in London and widespread in Bristol. Wetiko wants lockdown on every level of society and infuses its aggression to police it through its unknowing stooges. Lockdown protesters are the ones with the smiling faces and the hugs, The two blatantly obvious states of being – getting more obvious by the day – are the result of Wokers and their like becoming ever more influenced by the simulation Field of Wetiko and Pushbackers ever more influenced by The Field of a far higher vibration beyond the simulation. Wetiko can't invade the heart which is where most lockdown opponents are coming from. It's the heart that allows them to see through the lies to the truth in ways I will be highlighting.

Renegade Minds know that calmness is the place from which wisdom comes. You won't find wisdom in a hissing fit and wisdom is what we need in abundance right now. Calmness is not weakness – you don't have to scream at the top of your voice to be strong. Calmness is indeed a sign of strength. 'No' means I'm not doing it. NOOOO!!! doesn't mean you're not doing it even more. Volume does not advance 'No – I'm not doing it'. You are just not doing it. Wetiko possessed and influenced don't know how to deal with that. Wetiko wants a fight and we should not give it one. What it needs more than anything is our *cooperation* and we should not give that either. Mass rallies and marches are great in that they are a visual representation of feeling, but if it ends there they are irrelevant. You demand that Wetikos act differently? Well, they're not going to are they? They are Wetikos. We don't need to waste our time demanding that something doesn't happen when that will make no difference. We need to delete the means that *allows* it to happen. This, invariably, is our cooperation. You can demand a child stop firing a peashooter at the dog or you can refuse to buy the peashooter. If you provide the means you are cooperating with the dog being smacked on the nose with a pea. How can the authorities enforce mask-wearing if millions in a country refuse? What if the 74 million Pushbackers that voted for Trump in 2020 refused to wear masks, close their businesses or stay in their homes. It would be unenforceable. The

few control the many through the compliance of the many and that's always been the dynamic be it 'Covid' regulations or the Roman Empire. I know people can find it intimidating to say no to authority or stand out in a crowd for being the only one with a face on display; but it has to be done or it's over. I hope I've made clear in this book that where this is going will be far more intimidating than standing up now and saying 'No' – I will not cooperate with my own enslavement and that of my children. There might be consequences for some initially, although not so if enough do the same. The question that must be addressed is what is going to happen if we don't? It is time to be strong and unyieldingly so. No means no. Not here and there, but *everywhere* and *always*. I have refused to wear a mask and obey all the other nonsense. I will not comply with tyranny. I repeat: Fascism is not imposed by fascists – there are never enough of them. Fascism is imposed by the population acquiescing to fascism. *I will not do it*. I will die first, or my body will. Living meekly under fascism is a form of death anyway, the death of the spirit that Martin Luther King described.

Making things happen

We must not despair. This is not over till it's over and it's far from that. The 'fat lady' must refuse to sing. The longer the 'Covid' hoax has dragged on and impacted on more lives we have seen an awakening of phenomenal numbers of people worldwide to the realisation that what they have believed all their lives is not how the world really is. Research published by the system-serving University of Bristol and King's College London in February, 2021, concluded: 'One in every 11 people in Britain say they trust David Icke's take on the coronavirus pandemic.' It will be more by now and we have gathering numbers to build on. We must urgently progress from seeing the scam to ceasing to cooperate with it. Prominent German lawyer Reiner Fuellmich, also licenced to practice law in America, is doing a magnificent job taking the legal route to bring the psychopaths to justice through a second Nuremberg tribunal for crimes against humanity. Fuellmich has an impressive record of

beating the elite in court and he formed the German Corona Investigative Committee to pursue civil charges against the main perpetrators with a view to triggering criminal charges. Most importantly he has grasped the foundation of the hoax – the PCR test not testing for the ‘virus’ – and Christian Drosten is therefore on his charge sheet along with Gates frontman Tedros at the World Health Organization. Major players must not be allowed to inflict their horrors on the human race without being brought to book. A life sentence must follow for Bill Gates and the rest of them. A group of researchers has also indicted the government of Norway for crimes against humanity with copies sent to the police and the International Criminal Court. The lawsuit cites participation in an internationally-planned false pandemic and violation of international law and human rights, the European Commission’s definition of human rights by coercive rules, Nuremberg and Hague rules on fundamental human rights, and the Norwegian constitution. We must take the initiative from hereon and not just complain, protest and react.

There are practical ways to support vital mass non-cooperation. Organising in numbers is one. Lockdown marches in London in the spring in 2021 were mass non-cooperation that the authorities could not stop. There were too many people. Hundreds of thousands walked the London streets in the centre of the road for mile after mile while the Face-Nappies could only look on. They were determined, but calm, and just *did it* with no histrionics and lots of smiles. The police were impotent. Others are organising group shopping without masks for mutual support and imagine if that was happening all over. Policing it would be impossible. If the store refuses to serve people in these circumstances they would be faced with a long line of trolleys full of goods standing on their own and everything would have to be returned to the shelves. How would they cope with that if it kept happening? I am talking here about moving on from complaining to being pro-active; from watching things happen to making things happen. I include in this our relationship with the police. The behaviour of many Face-Nappies

has been disgraceful and anyone who thinks they would never find concentration camp guards in the 'enlightened' modern era have had that myth busted big-time. The period and setting may change – Wetikos never do. I watched film footage from a London march in which a police thug viciously kicked a protestor on the floor who had done nothing. His fellow Face-Nappies stood in a ring protecting him. What he did was a criminal assault and with a crowd far outnumbering the police this can no longer be allowed to happen unchallenged. I get it when people chant 'shame on you' in these circumstances, but that is no longer enough. They *have* no shame those who do this. Crowds needs to start making a citizen's arrest of the police who commit criminal offences and brutally attack innocent people and defenceless women. A citizen's arrest can be made under section 24A of the UK Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act of 1984 and you will find something similar in other countries. I prefer to call it a Common Law arrest rather than citizen's for reasons I will come to shortly. Anyone can arrest a person committing an indictable offence or if they have reasonable grounds to suspect they are committing an indictable offence. On both counts the attack by the police thug would have fallen into this category. A citizen's arrest can be made to stop someone:

- Causing physical injury to himself or any other person
- Suffering physical injury
- Causing loss of or damage to property
- Making off before a constable can assume responsibility for him

A citizen's arrest may also be made to prevent a breach of the peace under Common Law and if they believe a breach of the peace will happen or anything related to harm likely to be done or already done in their presence. This is the way to go I think – the Common Law version. If police know that the crowd and members of the public will no longer be standing and watching while they commit

their thuggery and crimes they will think twice about acting like Brownshirts and Blackshirts.

Common Law – common sense

Mention of Common Law is very important. Most people think the law is the law as in one law. This is not the case. There are two bodies of law, Common Law and Statute Law, and they are not the same. Common Law is founded on the simple premise of do no harm. It does not recognise victimless crimes in which no harm is done while Statute Law does. There is a Statute Law against almost everything. So what is Statute Law? Amazingly it's the law of the *sea* that was brought ashore by the Cult to override the law of the land which is Common Law. They had no right to do this and as always they did it anyway. They had to. They could not impose their will on the people through Common Law which only applies to do no harm. How could you stitch up the fine detail of people's lives with that? Instead they took the law of the sea, or Admiralty Law, and applied it to the population. Statute Law refers to all the laws spewing out of governments and their agencies including all the fascist laws and regulations relating to 'Covid'. The key point to make is that Statute Law is *contract law*. It only applies between *contracting* corporations. Most police officers don't even know this. They have to be kept in the dark, too. Long ago when merchants and their sailing ships began to trade with different countries a contractual law was developed called Admiralty Law and other names. Again it only applied to *contracts* agreed between *corporate* entities. If there is no agreed contract the law of the sea had no jurisdiction *and that still applies to its new alias of Statute Law*. The problem for the Cult when the law of the sea was brought ashore was an obvious one. People were not corporations and neither were government entities. To overcome the latter they made governments and all associated organisations corporations. All the institutions are *private corporations* and I mean governments and their agencies, local councils, police, courts, military, US states, the whole lot. Go to the

Dun and Bradstreet corporate listings website for confirmation that they are all corporations. You are arrested by a private corporation called the police by someone who is really a private security guard and they take you to court which is another private corporation. Neither have jurisdiction over you unless you consent and *contract* with them. This is why you hear the mantra about law enforcement policing by *consent* of the people. In truth the people 'consent' only in theory through monumental trickery.

Okay, the Cult overcame the corporate law problem by making governments and institutions corporate entities; but what about people? They are not corporations are they? Ah ... well in a sense, and *only* a sense, they are. Not people exactly – the illusion of people. The Cult creates a corporation in the name of everyone at the time that their birth certificate is issued. Note birth/ *berth* certificate and when you go to court under the law of the sea on land you stand in a *dock*. These are throwbacks to the origin. My Common Law name is David Vaughan Icke. The name of the corporation created by the government when I was born is called Mr David Vaughan Icke usually written in capitals as MR DAVID VAUGHAN ICKE. That is not me, the living, breathing man. It is a fictitious corporate entity. The trick is to make you think that David Vaughan Icke and MR DAVID VAUGHAN ICKE are the same thing. *They are not*. When police charge you and take you to court they are prosecuting the corporate entity and not the living, breathing, man or woman. They have to trick you into identifying as the corporate entity and contracting with them. Otherwise they have no jurisdiction. They do this through a language known as legalese. Lawful and legal are not the same either. Lawful relates to Common Law and legal relates to Statute Law. Legalese is the language of Statue Law which uses terms that mean one thing to the public and another in legalese. Notice that when a police officer tells someone why they are being charged he or she will say at the end: 'Do you understand?' To the public that means 'Do you comprehend?' In legalese it means 'Do you stand under me?' Do you stand under my authority? If you say

yes to the question you are unknowingly agreeing to give them jurisdiction over you in a contract between two corporate entities.

This is a confidence trick in every way. Contracts have to be agreed between informed parties and if you don't know that David Vaughan Icke is agreeing to be the corporation MR DAVID VAUGHAN ICKE you cannot knowingly agree to contract. They are deceiving you and another way they do this is to ask for proof of identity. You usually show them a driving licence or other document on which your corporate name is written. In doing so you are accepting that you are that corporate entity when you are not. Referring to yourself as a 'person' or 'citizen' is also identifying with your corporate fiction which is why I made the Common Law point about the citizen's arrest. If you are approached by a police officer you identify yourself immediately as a living, breathing, man or woman and say 'I do not consent, I do not contract with you and I do not understand' or stand under their authority. I have a Common Law birth certificate as a living man and these are available at no charge from commonlawcourt.com. Businesses registered under the Statute Law system means that its laws apply. There are, however, ways to run a business under Common Law. Remember all 'Covid' laws and regulations are Statute Law – the law of *contracts* and you do not have to contract. This doesn't mean that you can kill someone and get away with it. Common Law says do no harm and that applies to physical harm, financial harm etc. Police are employees of private corporations and there needs to be a new system of non-corporate Common Law constables operating outside the Statute Law system. If you go to davidicke.com and put Common Law into the search engine you will find videos that explain Common Law in much greater detail. It is definitely a road we should walk.

With all my heart

I have heard people say that we are in a spiritual war. I don't like the term 'war' with its Wetiko dynamic, but I know what they mean. Sweep aside all the bodily forms and we are in a situation in which two states of consciousness are seeking very different realities.

Wetiko wants upheaval, chaos, fear, suffering, conflict and control. The other wants love, peace, harmony, fairness and freedom. That's where we are. We should not fall for the idea that Wetiko is all-powerful and there's nothing we can do. Wetiko is not all-powerful. It's a joke, pathetic. It doesn't have to be, but it has made that choice for now. A handful of times over the years when I have felt the presence of its frequency I have allowed it to attach briefly so I could consciously observe its nature. The experience is not pleasant, the energy is heavy and dark, but the ease with which you can kick it back out the door shows that its real power is in persuading us that it has power. It's all a con. Wetiko is a con. It's a trickster and not a power that can control us if we unleash our own. The con is founded on manipulating humanity to give its power to Wetiko which recycles it back to present the illusion that it has power when its power is *ours* that we gave away. This happens on an energetic level and plays out in the world of the seen as humanity giving its power to Wetiko authority which uses that power to control the population when the power is only the power the population has handed over. How could it be any other way for billions to be controlled by a relative few? I have had experiences with people possessed by Wetiko and again you can kick its arse if you do it with an open heart. Oh yes – the *heart* which can transform the world of perceived 'matter'.

We are receiver-transmitters and processors of information, but what information and where from? Information is processed into perception in three main areas – the brain, the heart and the belly. These relate to thinking, knowing, and emotion. Wetiko wants us to be head and belly people which means we think within the confines of the Matrix simulation and low-vibrational emotional reaction scrambles balance and perception. A few minutes on social media and you see how emotion is the dominant force. Woke is all emotion and is therefore thought-free and fact-free. Our heart is something different. It *knows* while the head *thinks* and has to try to work it out because it doesn't know. The human energy field has seven prime vortexes which connect us with wider reality ([Fig 23](#)). Chakra means

'wheels of light' in the Sanskrit language of ancient India. The main ones are: The crown chakra on top of the head; brow (or 'third eye') chakra in the centre of the forehead; throat chakra; heart chakra in the centre of the chest; solar plexus chakra below the sternum; sacral chakra beneath the navel; and base chakra at the bottom of the spine. Each one has a particular function or functions. We feel anxiety and nervousness in the belly where the sacral chakra is located and this processes emotion that can affect the colon to give people 'the shits' or make them 'shit scared' when they are nervous. Chakras all play an important role, but the Mr and Mrs Big is the heart chakra which sits at the centre of the seven, above the chakras that connect us to the 'physical' and below those that connect with higher realms (or at least should). Here in the heart chakra we feel love, empathy and compassion – 'My heart goes out to you'. Those with closed hearts become literally 'heart-less' in their attitudes and behaviour (see Bill Gates). Native Americans portrayed Wetiko with what Paul Levy calls a 'frigid, icy heart, devoid of mercy' (see Bill Gates).



Figure 23: The chakra system which interpenetrates the human energy field. The heart chakra is the governor – or should be.

Wetiko trembles at the thought of heart energy which it cannot infiltrate. The frequency is too high. What it seeks to do instead is close the heart chakra vortex to block its perceptual and energetic influence. Psychopaths have 'hearts of stone' and emotionally-damaged people have 'heartache' and 'broken hearts'. The astonishing amount of heart disease is related to heart chakra

disruption with its fundamental connection to the 'physical' heart. Dr Tom Cowan has written an outstanding book challenging the belief that the heart is a pump and making the connection between the 'physical' and spiritual heart. Rudolph Steiner who was way ahead of his time said the same about the fallacy that the heart is a pump. *What?* The heart is not a pump? That's crazy, right? Everybody knows that. Read Cowan's *Human Heart, Cosmic Heart* and you will realise that the very idea of the heart as a pump is ridiculous when you see the evidence. How does blood in the feet so far from the heart get pumped horizontally up the body by the heart?? Cowan explains in the book the real reason why blood moves as it does. Our 'physical' heart is used to symbolise love when the source is really the heart vortex or spiritual heart which is our most powerful energetic connection to 'out there' expanded consciousness. That's why we feel *knowing* – intuitive knowing – in the centre of the chest. Knowing doesn't come from a process of thoughts leading to a conclusion. It is there in an instant all in one go. Our heart knows because of its connection to levels of awareness that *do* know. This is the meaning and source of intuition – intuitive *knowing*.

For the last more than 30 years of uncovering the global game and the nature of reality my heart has been my constant antenna for truth and accuracy. An American intelligence insider once said that I had quoted a disinformant in one of my books and yet I had only quoted the part that was true. He asked: 'How do you do that?' By using my heart antenna was the answer and anyone can do it. Heart-centred is how we are meant to be. With a closed heart chakra we withdraw into a closed mind and the bubble of five-sense reality. If you take a moment to focus your attention on the centre of your chest, picture a spinning wheel of light and see it opening and expanding. You will feel it happening, too, and perceptions of the heart like joy and love as the heart impacts on the mind as they interact. The more the chakra opens the more you will feel expressions of heart consciousness and as the process continues, and becomes part of you, insights and knowings will follow. An open

heart is connected to that level of awareness that knows all is *One*. You will see from its perspective that the fault-lines that divide us are only illusions to control us. An open heart does not process the illusions of race, creed and sexuality except as brief experiences for a consciousness that is all. Our heart does not see division, only unity (Figs 24 and 25). There's something else, too. Our hearts love to laugh. Mark Twain's quote that says 'The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter' is really a reference to the heart which loves to laugh with the joy of knowing the true nature of infinite reality and that all the madness of human society is an illusion of the mind. Twain also said: 'Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand.' This is so true of Wetiko and the Cult. Their insecurity demands that they be taken seriously and their power and authority acknowledged and feared. We should do nothing of the sort. We should not get aggressive or fearful which their insecurity so desires. We should laugh in their face. Even in their no-face as police come over in their face-nappies and expect to be taken seriously. They don't take themselves seriously looking like that so why should we? Laugh in the face of intimidation. Laugh in the face of tyranny. You will see by its reaction that you have pressed all of its buttons. Wetiko does not know what to do in the face of laughter or when its targets refuse to concede their joy to fear. We have seen many examples during the 'Covid' hoax when people have expressed their energetic power and the string puppets of Wetiko retreat with their tail limp between their knees. Laugh – the world is bloody mad after all and if it's a choice between laughter and tears I know which way I'm going.



Figure 24: Head consciousness without the heart sees division and everything apart from everything else.



Figure 25: Heart consciousness sees everything as One.

'Vaccines' and the soul

The foundation of Wetiko/Archon control of humans is the separation of incarnate five-sense mind from the infinite 'I' and closing the heart chakra where the True 'I' lives during a human life. The goal has been to achieve complete separation in both cases. I was interested therefore to read an account by a French energetic healer of what she said she experienced with a patient who had been given the 'Covid' vaccine. Genuine energy healers can sense information and consciousness fields at different levels of being which are referred to as 'subtle bodies'. She described treating the patient who later returned after having, without the healer's knowledge, two doses of the 'Covid vaccine'. The healer said:

I noticed immediately the change, very heavy energy emanating from [the] subtle bodies. The scariest thing was when I was working on the heart chakra, I connected with her soul: it was detached from the physical body, it had no contact and it was, as if it was floating in a state of total confusion: a damage to the consciousness that loses contact with the physical body, i.e. with our biological machine, there is no longer any communication between them.

I continued the treatment by sending light to the heart chakra, the soul of the person, but it seemed that the soul could no longer receive any light, frequency or energy. It was a very powerful experience for me. Then I understood that this substance is indeed used to detach consciousness so that this consciousness can no longer interact through this body that it possesses in life, where there is no longer any contact, no frequency, no light, no more energetic balance or mind.

This would create a human that is rudderless and at the extreme almost zombie-like operating with a fractional state of consciousness at the mercy of Wetiko. I was especially intrigued by what the healer said in the light of the prediction by the highly-informed Rudolf Steiner more than a hundred years ago. He said:

In the future, we will eliminate the soul with medicine. Under the pretext of a 'healthy point of view', there will be a vaccine by which the human body will be treated as soon as possible directly at birth, so that the human being cannot develop the thought of the existence of soul and Spirit. To materialistic doctors will be entrusted the task of removing the soul of humanity.

As today, people are vaccinated against this disease or that disease, so in the future, children will be vaccinated with a substance that can be produced precisely in such a way that people, thanks to this vaccination, will be immune to being subjected to the 'madness' of spiritual life. He would be extremely smart, but he would not develop a conscience, and that is the true goal of some materialistic circles.

Steiner said the vaccine would detach the physical body from the etheric body (subtle bodies) and 'once the etheric body is detached the relationship between the universe and the etheric body would become extremely unstable, and man would become an automaton'. He said 'the physical body of man must be polished on this Earth by spiritual will – so the vaccine becomes a kind of arymanique (Wetiko) force' and 'man can no longer get rid of a given materialistic feeling'. Humans would then, he said, become 'materialistic of constitution and can no longer rise to the spiritual'. I have been writing for years about DNA being a receiver-transmitter of information that connects us to other levels of reality and these 'vaccines' changing DNA can be likened to changing an antenna and what it can transmit and receive. Such a disconnection would clearly lead to changes in personality and perception. Steiner further predicted the arrival of AI. Big Pharma 'Covid vaccine' makers, expressions of Wetiko, are testing their DNA-manipulating evil on children as I write with a view to giving the 'vaccine' to babies. If it's a soul-body disconnecter – and I say that it is or can be – every child would be disconnected from 'soul' at birth and the 'vaccine' would create a closed system in which spiritual guidance from the greater self would play no part. This has been the ambition of Wetiko all

along. A Pentagon video from 2005 was leaked of a presentation explaining the development of vaccines to change behaviour by their effect on the brain. Those that believe this is not happening with the 'Covid' genetically-modifying procedure masquerading as a 'vaccine' should make an urgent appointment with Naivety Anonymous. Klaus Schwab wrote in 2018:

Neurotechnologies enable us to better influence consciousness and thought and to understand many activities of the brain. They include decoding what we are thinking in fine levels of detail through new chemicals and interventions that can influence our brains to correct for errors or enhance functionality.

The plan is clear and only the heart can stop it. With every heart that opens, every mind that awakens, Wetiko is weakened. Heart and love are far more powerful than head and hate and so nothing like a majority is needed to turn this around.

Beyond the Phantom

Our heart is the prime target of Wetiko and so it must be the answer to Wetiko. We *are* our heart which is part of one heart, the infinite heart. Our heart is where the true self lives in a human life behind firewalls of five-sense illusion when an imposter takes its place – *Phantom Self*; but our heart waits patiently to be set free any time we choose to see beyond the Phantom, beyond Wetiko. A Wetikoed Phantom Self can wreak mass death and destruction while the love of forever is locked away in its heart. The time is here to unleash its power and let it sweep away the fear and despair that is Wetiko. Heart consciousness does not seek manipulated, censored, advantage for its belief or religion, its activism and desires. As an expression of the One it treats all as One with the same rights to freedom and opinion. Our heart demands fairness for itself no more than for others. From this unity of heart we can come together in mutual support and transform this Wetikoed world into what reality is meant to be – a place of love, joy, happiness, fairness, justice and freedom. Wetiko has another agenda and that's why the world is as

it is, but enough of this nonsense. Wetiko can't stay where hearts are open and it works so hard to keep them closed. Fear is its currency and its food source and love in its true sense has no fear. Why would love have fear when it knows it is *All That Is, Has Been, And Ever Can Be* on an eternal exploration of all possibility? Love in this true sense is not the physical attraction that passes for love. This can be an expression of it, yes, but Infinite Love, a love without condition, goes far deeper to the core of all being. It *is* the core of all being. Infinite reality was born from love beyond the illusions of the simulation. Love infinitely expressed is the knowing that all is One and the swiftly-passing experience of separation is a temporary hallucination. You cannot disconnect from Oneness; you can only *perceive* that you have and withdraw from its influence. This is the most important of all perception trickery by the mind parasite that is Wetiko and the foundation of all its potential for manipulation.

If we open our hearts, open the sluice gates of the mind, and redefine self-identity amazing things start to happen. Consciousness expands or contracts in accordance with self-identity. When true self is recognised as infinite awareness and label self – Phantom Self – is seen as only a series of brief experiences life is transformed. Consciousness expands to the extent that self-identity expands and everything changes. You see unity, not division, the picture, not the pixels. From this we can play the long game. No more is an experience something in and of itself, but a fleeting moment in the eternity of forever. Suddenly people in uniform and dark suits are no longer intimidating. Doing what your heart knows to be right is no longer intimidating and consequences for those actions take on the same nature of a brief experience that passes in the blink of an infinite eye. Intimidation is all in the mind. Beyond the mind there is no intimidation.

An open heart does not consider consequences for what it knows to be right. To do so would be to consider not doing what it knows to be right and for a heart in its power that is never an option. The Renegade Mind is really the Renegade Heart. Consideration of consequences will always provide a getaway car for the mind and

the heart doesn't want one. What is right in the light of what we face today is to stop cooperating with Wetiko in all its forms and to do it without fear or compromise. You cannot compromise with tyranny when tyranny always demands more until it has everything. Life is your perception and you are your destiny. Change your perception and you change your life. Change collective perception and we change the world.

Come on people ... One human family, One heart, One goal ...
FREEEEEEEDOM!

We must settle for nothing less.

Postscript

The big scare story as the book goes to press is the 'Indian' variant and the world is being deluged with propaganda about the 'Covid catastrophe' in India which mirrors in its lies and misrepresentations what happened in Italy before the first lockdown in 2020.

The *New York Post* published a picture of someone who had 'collapsed in the street from Covid' in India in April, 2021, which was actually taken during a gas leak in May, 2020. Same old, same old. Media articles in mid-February were asking why India had been so untouched by 'Covid' and then as their vaccine rollout gathered pace the alleged 'cases' began to rapidly increase. Indian 'Covid vaccine' maker Bharat Biotech was funded into existence by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (the pair announced their divorce in May, 2021, which is a pity because they so deserve each other). The Indian 'Covid crisis' was ramped up by the media to terrify the world and prepare people for submission to still more restrictions. The scam that worked the first time was being repeated only with far more people seeing through the deceit. Davidicke.com and Ickonic.com have sought to tell the true story of what is happening by talking to people living through the Indian nightmare which has nothing to do with 'Covid'. We posted a letter from 'Alisha' in Pune who told a very different story to government and media mendacity. She said scenes of dying people and overwhelmed hospitals were designed to hide what was really happening – genocide and starvation. Alisha said that millions had already died of starvation during the ongoing lockdowns while government and media were lying and making it look like the 'virus':

Restaurants, shops, gyms, theatres, basically everything is shut. The cities are ghost towns. Even so-called 'essential' businesses are only open till 11am in the morning. You basically have just an hour to buy food and then your time is up.

Inter-state travel and even inter-district travel is banned. The cops wait at all major crossroads to question why you are traveling outdoors or to fine you if you are not wearing a mask.

The medical community here is also complicit in genocide, lying about hospitals being full and turning away people with genuine illnesses, who need immediate care. They have even created a shortage of oxygen cylinders.

This is the classic Cult modus operandi played out in every country. Alisha said that people who would not have a PCR test not testing for the 'virus' were being denied hospital treatment. She said the people hit hardest were migrant workers and those in rural areas. Most businesses employed migrant workers and with everything closed there were no jobs, no income and no food. As a result millions were dying of starvation or malnutrition. All this was happening under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a 100-percent asset of the Cult, and it emphasises yet again the scale of pure anti-human evil we are dealing with. Australia banned its people from returning home from India with penalties for trying to do so of up to five years in jail and a fine of £37,000. The manufactured 'Covid' crisis in India was being prepared to justify further fascism in the West. Obvious connections could be seen between the Indian 'vaccine' programme and increased 'cases' and this became a common theme. The Seychelles, the most per capita 'Covid vaccinated' population in the world, went back into lockdown after a 'surge of cases'.

Long ago the truly evil Monsanto agricultural biotechnology corporation with its big connections to Bill Gates devastated Indian farming with genetically-modified crops. Human rights activist Gurcharan Singh highlighted the efforts by the Indian government to complete the job by destroying the food supply to hundreds of millions with 'Covid' lockdowns. He said that 415 million people at the bottom of the disgusting caste system (still going whatever they say) were below the poverty line and struggled to feed themselves every year. Now the government was imposing lockdown at just the

time to destroy the harvest. This deliberate policy was leading to mass starvation. People may reel back at the suggestion that a government would do that, but Wetiko-controlled 'leaders' are capable of any level of evil. In fact what is described in India is in the process of being instigated worldwide. The food chain and food supply are being targeted at every level to cause world hunger and thus control. Bill Gates is not the biggest owner of farmland in America for no reason and destroying access to food aids both the depopulation agenda and the plan for synthetic 'food' already being funded into existence by Gates. Add to this the coming hyper-inflation from the suicidal creation of fake 'money' in response to 'Covid' and the breakdown of container shipping systems and you have a cocktail that can only lead one way and is meant to. The Cult plan is to crash the entire system to 'build back better' with the Great Reset.

'Vaccine' transmission

Reports from all over the world continue to emerge of women suffering menstrual and fertility problems after having the fake 'vaccine' and of the non-'vaccinated' having similar problems when interacting with the 'vaccinated'. There are far too many for 'coincidence' to be credible. We've had menopausal women getting periods, others having periods stop or not stopping for weeks, passing clots, sometimes the lining of the uterus, breast irregularities, and miscarriages (which increased by 400 percent in parts of the United States). Non-'vaccinated' men and children have suffered blood clots and nose bleeding after interaction with the 'vaccinated'. Babies have died from the effects of breast milk from a 'vaccinated' mother. Awake doctors – the small minority – speculated on the cause of non-'vaccinated' suffering the same effects as the 'vaccinated'. Was it nanotechnology in the synthetic substance transmitting frequencies or was it a straight chemical bioweapon that was being transmitted between people? I am not saying that some kind of chemical transmission is not one possible answer, but the foundation of all that the Cult does is frequency and

this is fertile ground for understanding how transmission can happen. American doctor Carrie Madej, an internal medicine physician and osteopath, has been practicing for the last 20 years, teaching medical students, and she says attending different meetings where the agenda for humanity was discussed. Madej, who operates out of Georgia, did not dismiss other possible forms of transmission, but she focused on frequency in search of an explanation for transmission. She said the Moderna and Pfizer 'vaccines' contained nano-lipid particles as a key component. This was a brand new technology never before used on humanity. 'They're using a nanotechnology which is pretty much little tiny computer bits ... nanobots or hydrogel.' Inside the 'vaccines' was 'this sci-fi kind of substance' which suppressed immune checkpoints to get into the cell. I referred to this earlier as the 'Trojan horse' technique that tricks the cell into opening a gateway for the self-replicating synthetic material and while the immune system is artificially suppressed the body has no defences. Madej said the substance served many purposes including an on-demand ability to 'deliver the payload' and using the nano 'computer bits' as biosensors in the body. 'It actually has the ability to accumulate data from your body, like your breathing, your respiration, thoughts, emotions, all kinds of things.'

She said the technology obviously has the ability to operate through Wi-Fi and transmit and receive energy, messages, frequencies or impulses. 'Just imagine you're getting this new substance in you and it can react to things all around you, the 5G, your smart device, your phones.' We had something completely foreign in the human body that had never been launched large scale at a time when we were seeing 5G going into schools and hospitals (plus the Musk satellites) and she believed the 'vaccine' transmission had something to do with this: '... if these people have this inside of them ... it can act like an antenna and actually transmit it outwardly as well.' The synthetic substance produced its own voltage and so it could have that kind of effect. This fits with my own contention that the nano receiver-transmitters are designed to connect people to the

Smart Grid and break the receiver-transmitter connection to expanded consciousness. That would explain the French energy healer's experience of the disconnection of body from 'soul' with those who have had the 'vaccine'. The nanobots, self-replicating inside the body, would also transmit the synthetic frequency which could be picked up through close interaction by those who have not been 'vaccinated'. Madej speculated that perhaps it was 5G and increased levels of other radiation that was causing the symptoms directly although interestingly she said that non-'vaccinated' patients had shown improvement when they were away from the 'vaccinated' person they had interacted with. It must be remembered that you can control frequency and energy with your mind and you can consciously create energetic barriers or bubbles with the mind to stop damaging frequencies from penetrating your field. American paediatrician Dr Larry Palevsky said the 'vaccine' was not a 'vaccine' and was never designed to protect from a 'viral' infection. He called it 'a massive, brilliant propaganda of genocide' because they didn't have to inject everyone to get the result they wanted. He said the content of the jabs was able to infuse any material into the brain, heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, sperm and female productive system. 'This is genocide; this is a weapon of mass destruction.' At the same time American colleges were banning students from attending if they didn't have this life-changing and potentially life-ending 'vaccine'. Class action lawsuits must follow when the consequences of this college fascism come to light. As the book was going to press came reports about fertility effects on sperm in 'vaccinated' men which would absolutely fit with what I have been saying and hospitals continued to fill with 'vaccine' reactions. Another question is what about transmission via blood transfusions? The NHS has extended blood donation restrictions from seven days after a 'Covid vaccination' to 28 days after even a sore arm reaction.

I said in the spring of 2020 that the then touted 'Covid vaccine' would be ongoing each year like the flu jab. A year later Pfizer CEO, the appalling Albert Bourla, said people would 'likely' need a 'booster dose' of the 'vaccine' within 12 months of getting 'fully

vaccinated' and then a yearly shot. 'Variants will play a key role', he said confirming the point. Johnson & Johnson CEO Alex Gorsky also took time out from his 'vaccine' disaster to say that people may need to be vaccinated against 'Covid-19' each year. UK Health Secretary, the psychopath Matt Hancock, said additional 'boosters' would be available in the autumn of 2021. This is the trap of the 'vaccine passport'. The public will have to accept every last 'vaccine' they introduce, including for the fake 'variants', or it would cease to be valid. The only other way in some cases would be continuous testing with a test not testing for the 'virus' and what is on the swabs constantly pushed up your nose towards the brain every time?

'Vaccines' changing behaviour

I mentioned in the body of the book how I believed we would see gathering behaviour changes in the 'vaccinated' and I am already hearing such comments from the non-'vaccinated' describing behaviour changes in friends, loved ones and work colleagues. This will only increase as the self-replicating synthetic material and nanoparticles expand in body and brain. An article in the *Guardian* in 2016 detailed research at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville which developed a new method for controlling brain circuits associated with complex animal behaviour. The method, dubbed 'magnetogenetics', involves genetically-engineering a protein called ferritin, which stores and releases iron, to create a magnetised substance – 'Magneto' – that can activate specific groups of nerve cells from a distance. This is claimed to be an advance on other methods of brain activity manipulation known as optogenetics and chemogenetics (the Cult has been developing methods of brain control for a long time). The ferritin technique is said to be non-invasive and able to activate neurons 'rapidly and reversibly'. In other words, human thought and perception. The article said that earlier studies revealed how nerve cell proteins 'activated by heat and mechanical pressure can be genetically engineered so that they become sensitive to radio waves and magnetic fields, by attaching them to an iron-storing protein called ferritin, or to inorganic

paramagnetic particles'. Sensitive to radio waves and magnetic fields? You mean like 5G, 6G and 7G? This is the human-AI Smart Grid hive mind we are talking about. The *Guardian* article said:

... the researchers injected Magneto into the striatum of freely behaving mice, a deep brain structure containing dopamine-producing neurons that are involved in reward and motivation, and then placed the animals into an apparatus split into magnetised and non-magnetised sections.

Mice expressing Magneto spent far more time in the magnetised areas than mice that did not, because activation of the protein caused the striatal neurons expressing it to release dopamine, so that the mice found being in those areas rewarding. This shows that Magneto can remotely control the firing of neurons deep within the brain, and also control complex behaviours.

Make no mistake this basic methodology will be part of the 'Covid vaccine' cocktail and using magnetics to change brain function through electromagnetic field frequency activation. The Pentagon is developing a 'Covid vaccine' using ferritin. Magnetism would explain changes in behaviour and why videos are appearing across the Internet as I write showing how magnets stick to the skin at the point of the 'vaccine' shot. Once people take these 'vaccines' anything becomes possible in terms of brain function and illness which will be blamed on 'Covid-19' and 'variants'. Magnetic field manipulation would further explain why the non-'vaccinated' are reporting the same symptoms as the 'vaccinated' they interact with and why those symptoms are reported to decrease when not in their company. Interestingly 'Magneto', a 'mutant', is a character in the Marvel Comic *X-Men* stories with the ability to manipulate magnetic fields and he believes that mutants should fight back against their human oppressors by any means necessary. The character was born Erik Lehnsherr to a Jewish family in Germany.

Cult-controlled courts

The European Court of Human Rights opened the door for mandatory 'Covid-19 vaccines' across the continent when it ruled in a Czech Republic dispute over childhood immunisation that legally

enforced vaccination could be 'necessary in a democratic society'. The 17 judges decided that compulsory vaccinations did not breach human rights law. On the face of it the judgement was so inverted you gasp for air. If not having a vaccine infused into your body is not a human right then what is? Ah, but they said human rights law which has been specifically written to delete all human rights at the behest of the state (the Cult). Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights relates to the right to a private life. The crucial word here is '*except*':

There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right EXCEPT such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others [My emphasis].

No interference *except* in accordance with the law means there *are* no 'human rights' *except* what EU governments decide you can have at their behest. 'As is necessary in a democratic society' explains that reference in the judgement and 'in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others' gives the EU a coach and horses to ride through 'human rights' and scatter them in all directions. The judiciary is not a check and balance on government extremism; it is a vehicle to enforce it. This judgement was almost laughably predictable when the last thing the Cult wanted was a decision that went against mandatory vaccination. Judges rule over and over again to benefit the system of which they are a part. Vaccination disputes that come before them are invariably delivered in favour of doctors and authorities representing the view of the state which owns the judiciary. Oh, yes, and we have even had calls to stop putting 'Covid-19' on death certificates within 28 days of a 'positive test' because it is claimed the practice makes the 'vaccine' appear not to work. They are laughing at you.

The scale of madness, inhumanity and things to come was highlighted when those not 'vaccinated' for 'Covid' were refused evacuation from the Caribbean island of St Vincent during massive volcanic eruptions. Cruise ships taking residents to the safety of another island allowed only the 'vaccinated' to board and the rest were left to their fate. Even in life and death situations like this we see 'Covid' stripping people of their most basic human instincts and the insanity is even more extreme when you think that fake 'vaccine'-makers are not even claiming their body-manipulating concoctions stop 'infection' and 'transmission' of a 'virus' that doesn't exist. St Vincent Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves said: 'The chief medical officer will be identifying the persons already vaccinated so that we can get them on the ship.' Note again the power of the chief medical officer who, like Whitty in the UK, will be answering to the World Health Organization. This is the Cult network structure that has overridden politicians who 'follow the science' which means doing what WHO-controlled 'medical officers' and 'science advisers' tell them. Gonsalves even said that residents who were 'vaccinated' after the order so they could board the ships would still be refused entry due to possible side effects such as 'wooziness in the head'. The good news is that if they were woozy enough in the head they could qualify to be prime minister of St Vincent.

Microchipping freedom

The European judgement will be used at some point to justify moves to enforce the 'Covid' DNA-manipulating procedure. Sandra Ro, CEO of the Global Blockchain Business Council, told a World Economic Forum event that she hoped 'vaccine passports' would help to 'drive forced consent and standardisation' of global digital identity schemes: 'I'm hoping with the desire and global demand for some sort of vaccine passport – so that people can get travelling and working again – [it] will drive forced consent, standardisation, and frankly, cooperation across the world.' The lady is either not very bright, or thoroughly mendacious, to use the term 'forced consent'.

You do not 'consent' if you are forced – you *submit*. She was describing what the plan has been all along and that's to enforce a digital identity on every human without which they could not function. 'Vaccine passports' are opening the door and are far from the end goal. A digital identity would allow you to be tracked in everything you do in cyberspace and this is the same technique used by Cult-owned China to enforce its social credit system of total control. The ultimate 'passport' is planned to be a microchip as my books have warned for nearly 30 years. Those nice people at the Pentagon working for the Cult-controlled Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) claimed in April, 2021, they have developed a microchip inserted under the skin to detect 'asymptomatic Covid-19 infection' before it becomes an outbreak and a 'revolutionary filter' that can remove the 'virus' from the blood when attached to a dialysis machine. The only problems with this are that the 'virus' does not exist and people transmitting the 'virus' with no symptoms is brain-numbing bullshit. This is, of course, not a ruse to get people to be microchipped for very different reasons. DARPA also said it was producing a one-stop 'vaccine' for the 'virus' and all 'variants'. One of the most sinister organisations on Planet Earth is doing this? Better have it then. These people are insane because Wetiko that possesses them is insane.

Researchers from the Salk Institute in California announced they have created an embryo that is part human and part monkey. My books going back to the 1990s have exposed experiments in top secret underground facilities in the United States where humans are being crossed with animal and non-human 'extraterrestrial' species. They are now easing that long-developed capability into the public arena and there is much more to come given we are dealing with psychiatric basket cases. Talking of which – Elon Musk's scientists at Neuralink trained a monkey to play Pong and other puzzles on a computer screen using a joystick and when the monkey made the correct move a metal tube squirted banana smoothie into his mouth which is the basic technique for training humans into unquestioning compliance. Two Neuralink chips were in the monkey's skull and

more than 2,000 wires 'fanned out' into its brain. Eventually the monkey played a video game purely with its brain waves. Psychopathic narcissist Musk said the 'breakthrough' was a step towards putting Neuralink chips into human skulls and merging minds with artificial intelligence. *Exactly*. This man is so dark and Cult to his DNA.

World Economic Fascism (WEF)

The World Economic Forum is telling you the plan by the statements made at its many and various events. Cult-owned fascist YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki spoke at the 2021 WEF Global Technology Governance Summit (see the name) in which 40 governments and 150 companies met to ensure 'the responsible design and deployment of emerging technologies'. Orwellian translation: 'Ensuring the design and deployment of long-planned technologies will advance the Cult agenda for control and censorship.' Freedom-destroyer and Nuremberg-bound Wojcicki expressed support for tech platforms like hers to censor content that is 'technically legal but could be harmful'. Who decides what is 'harmful'? She does and they do. 'Harmful' will be whatever the Cult doesn't want people to see and we have legislation proposed by the UK government that would censor content on the basis of 'harm' no matter if the information is fair, legal and provably true. Make that *especially* if it is fair, legal and provably true. Wojcicki called for a global coalition to be formed to enforce content moderation standards through automated censorship. This is a woman and mega-censor so self-deluded that she shamelessly accepted a 'free expression' award – *Wojcicki* – in an event sponsored by her own *YouTube*. They have no shame and no self-awareness.

You know that 'Covid' is a scam and Wojcicki a Cult operative when YouTube is censoring medical and scientific opinion purely on the grounds of whether it supports or opposes the Cult 'Covid' narrative. Florida governor Ron DeSantis compiled an expert panel with four professors of medicine from Harvard, Oxford, and Stanford Universities who spoke against forcing children and

vaccinated people to wear masks. They also said there was no proof that lockdowns reduced spread or death rates of 'Covid-19'. Cult-gofer Wojcicki and her YouTube deleted the panel video 'because it included content that contradicts the consensus of local and global health authorities regarding the efficacy of masks to prevent the spread of Covid-19'. This 'consensus' refers to what the Cult tells the World Health Organization to say and the WHO tells 'local health authorities' to do. Wojcicki knows this, of course. The panellists pointed out that censorship of scientific debate was responsible for deaths from many causes, but Wojcicki couldn't care less. She would not dare go against what she is told and as a disgrace to humanity she wouldn't want to anyway. The UK government is seeking to pass a fascist 'Online Safety Bill' to specifically target with massive fines and other means non-censored video and social media platforms to make them censor 'lawful but harmful' content like the Cult-owned Facebook, Twitter, Google and YouTube. What is 'lawful but harmful' would be decided by the fascist Blair-created Ofcom.

Another WEF obsession is a cyber-attack on the financial system and this is clearly what the Cult has planned to take down the bank accounts of everyone – except theirs. Those that think they have enough money for the Cult agenda not to matter to them have got a big lesson coming if they continue to ignore what is staring them in the face. The World Economic Forum, funded by Gates and fronted by Klaus Schwab, announced it would be running a 'simulation' with the Russian government and global banks of just such an attack called Cyber Polygon 2021. What they simulate – as with the 'Covid' Event 201 – they plan to instigate. The WEF is involved in a project with the Cult-owned Carnegie Endowment for International Peace called the WEF-Carnegie Cyber Policy Initiative which seeks to merge Wall Street banks, 'regulators' (I love it) and intelligence agencies to 'prevent' (arrange and allow) a cyber-attack that would bring down the global financial system as long planned by those that control the WEF and the Carnegie operation. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace sent an instruction to First World

War US President Woodrow Wilson not to let the war end before society had been irreversibly transformed.

The Wuhan lab diversion

As I close, the Cult-controlled authorities and lapdog media are systematically pushing 'the virus was released from the Wuhan lab' narrative. There are two versions – it happened by accident and it happened on purpose. Both are nonsense. The perceived existence of the never-shown-to-exist 'virus' is vital to sell the impression that there is actually an infective agent to deal with and to allow the endless potential for terrifying the population with 'variants' of a 'virus' that does not exist. The authorities at the time of writing are going with the 'by accident' while the alternative media is promoting the 'on purpose'. Cable news host Tucker Carlson who has questioned aspects of lockdown and 'vaccine' compulsion has bought the Wuhan lab story. 'Everyone now agrees' he said. Well, I don't and many others don't and the question is *why* does the system and its media suddenly 'agree'? When the media moves as one unit with a narrative it is always a lie – witness the hour by hour mendacity of the 'Covid' era. Why would this Cult-owned combination which has unleashed lies like machine gun fire suddenly 'agree' to tell the truth??

Much of the alternative media is buying the lie because it fits the conspiracy narrative, but it's the *wrong* conspiracy. The real conspiracy is that *there is no virus* and that is what the Cult is desperate to hide. The idea that the 'virus' was released by accident is ludicrous when the whole 'Covid' hoax was clearly long-planned and waiting to be played out as it was so fast in accordance with the Rockefeller document and Event 201. So they prepared everything in detail over decades and then sat around strumming their fingers waiting for an 'accidental' release from a bio-lab? *What??* It's crazy. Then there's the 'on purpose' claim. You want to circulate a 'deadly virus' and hide the fact that you've done so and you release it down the street from the highest-level bio-lab in China? I repeat – *What??*

You would release it far from that lab to stop any association being made. But, no, we'll do it in a place where the connection was certain to be made. Why would you need to scam 'cases' and 'deaths' and pay hospitals to diagnose 'Covid-19' if you had a real 'virus'? What are sections of the alternative media doing believing this crap? Where were all the mass deaths in Wuhan from a 'deadly pathogen' when the recovery to normal life after the initial propaganda was dramatic in speed? Why isn't the 'deadly pathogen' now circulating all over China with bodies in the street? Once again we have the technique of tell them what they want to hear and they will likely believe it. The alternative media has its 'conspiracy' and with Carlson it fits with his 'China is the danger' narrative over years. China *is* a danger as a global Cult operations centre, but not for this reason. The Wuhan lab story also has the potential to instigate conflict with China when at some stage the plan is to trigger a Problem-Reaction-Solution confrontation with the West. Question everything – *everything* – and especially when the media agrees on a common party line.

Third wave ... fourth wave ... fifth wave ...

As the book went into production the world was being set up for more lockdowns and a 'third wave' supported by invented 'variants' that were increasing all the time and will continue to do so in public statements and computer programs, but not in reality. India became the new Italy in the 'Covid' propaganda campaign and we were told to be frightened of the new 'Indian strain'. Somehow I couldn't find it within myself to do so. A document produced for the UK government entitled 'Summary of further modelling of easing of restrictions – Roadmap Step 2' declared that a third wave was inevitable (of course when it's in the script) and it would be the fault of children and those who refuse the health-destroying fake 'Covid vaccine'. One of the computer models involved came from the Cult-owned *Imperial College* and the other from Warwick University which I wouldn't trust to tell me the date in a calendar factory. The document states that both models presumed extremely high uptake

of the 'Covid vaccines' and didn't allow for 'variants'. The document states: 'The resurgence is a result of some people (mostly children) being ineligible for vaccination; others choosing not to receive the vaccine; and others being vaccinated but not perfectly protected.' The mendacity takes the breath away. Okay, blame those with a brain who won't take the DNA-modifying shots and put more pressure on children to have it as 'trials' were underway involving children as young as six months with parents who give insanity a bad name. Massive pressure is being put on the young to have the fake 'vaccine' and child age consent limits have been systematically lowered around the world to stop parents intervening. Most extraordinary about the document was its claim that the 'third wave' would be driven by 'the resurgence in both hospitalisations and deaths ... dominated by *those that have received two doses of the vaccine*, comprising around 60-70% of the wave respectively'. The predicted peak of the 'third wave' suggested 300 deaths per day with 250 of them *fully 'vaccinated' people*. How many more lies do acquiescers need to be told before they see the obvious? Those who took the job to 'protect themselves' are projected to be those who mostly get sick and die? So what's in the 'vaccine'? The document went on:

It is possible that a summer of low prevalence could be followed by substantial increases in incidence over the following autumn and winter. Low prevalence in late summer should not be taken as an indication that SARS-CoV-2 has retreated or that the population has high enough levels of immunity to prevent another wave.

They are telling you the script and while many British people believed 'Covid' restrictions would end in the summer of 2021 the government was preparing for them to be ongoing. Authorities were awarding contracts for 'Covid marshals' to police the restrictions with contracts starting in July, 2021, and going through to January 31st, 2022, and the government was advertising for 'Media Buying Services' to secure media propaganda slots worth a potential £320 million for 'Covid-19 campaigns' with a contract not ending until March, 2022. The recipient – via a list of other front companies – was reported to be American media marketing giant Omnicom Group

Inc. While money is no object for 'Covid' the UK waiting list for all other treatment – including life-threatening conditions – passed 4.5 million. Meantime the Cult is seeking to control all official 'inquiries' to block revelations about what has really been happening and why. It must not be allowed to – we need Nuremberg jury trials in every country. The cover-up doesn't get more obvious than appointing ultra-Zionist professor Philip Zelikow to oversee two dozen US virologists, public health officials, clinicians, former government officials and four American 'charitable foundations' to 'learn the lessons' of the 'Covid' debacle. The personnel will be those that created and perpetuated the 'Covid' lies while Zelikow is the former executive director of the 9/11 Commission who ensured that the truth about those attacks never came out and produced a report that must be among the most mendacious and manipulative documents ever written – see *The Trigger* for the detailed exposure of the almost unimaginable 9/11 story in which Sabbatians can be found at every level.

Passive no more

People are increasingly challenging the authorities with amazing numbers of people taking to the streets in London well beyond the ability of the Face-Nappies to stop them. Instead the Nappies choose situations away from the mass crowds to target, intimidate, and seek to promote the impression of 'violent protestors'. One such incident happened in London's Hyde Park. Hundreds of thousands walking through the streets in protest against 'Covid' fascism were ignored by the Cult-owned BBC and most of the rest of the mainstream media, but they delighted in reporting how police were injured in 'clashes with protestors'. The truth was that a group of people gathered in Hyde Park at the end of one march when most had gone home and they were peacefully having a good time with music and chat. Face-Nappies who couldn't deal with the full-march crowd then waded in with their batons and got more than they bargained for. Instead of just standing for this criminal brutality the crowd used their numerical superiority to push the Face-Nappies out of the

park. Eventually the Nappies turned and ran. Unfortunately two or three idiots in the crowd threw drink cans striking two officers which gave the media and the government the image they wanted to discredit the 99.9999 percent who were peaceful. The idiots walked straight into the trap and we must always be aware of potential agent provocateurs used by the authorities to discredit their targets.

This response from the crowd – the can people apart – must be a turning point when the public no longer stand by while the innocent are arrested and brutally attacked by the Face-Nappies. That doesn't mean to be violent, that's the last thing we need. We'll leave the violence to the Face-Nappies and government. But it does mean that when the Face-Nappies use violence against peaceful people the numerical superiority is employed to stop them and make citizen's arrests or Common Law arrests for a breach of the peace. The time for being passive in the face of fascism is over.

We are the many, they are the few, and we need to make that count before there is no freedom left and our children and grandchildren face an ongoing fascist nightmare.

COME ON PEOPLE – IT'S TIME.

One final thought ...

The power of love
A force from above
Cleaning my soul
Flame on burn desire
Love with tongues of fire
Purge the soul
Make love your goal

I'll protect you from the hooded claw
Keep the vampires from your door
When the chips are down I'll be around
With my undying, death-defying
Love for you

Envy will hurt itself
Let yourself be beautiful
Sparkling love, flowers
And pearls and pretty girls
Love is like an energy
Rushin' rushin' inside of me

This time we go sublime
Lovers entwine, divine, divine,
Love is danger, love is pleasure
Love is pure – the only treasure

I'm so in love with you
Purge the soul
Make love your goal

The power of love
A force from above
Cleaning my soul
The power of love
A force from above
A sky-scraping dove

Flame on burn desire
Love with tongues of fire
Purge the soul
Make love your goal

Frankie Goes To Hollywood

APPENDIX

Cowan-Kaufman-Morell Statement on Virus Isolation (SOVI)

Isolation: The action of isolating; the fact or condition of being isolated or standing alone; separation from other things or persons; solitariness

Oxford English Dictionary

The controversy over whether the SARS-CoV-2 virus has ever been isolated or purified continues. However, using the above definition, common sense, the laws of logic and the dictates of science, any unbiased person must come to the conclusion that the SARS-CoV-2 virus has never been isolated or purified. As a result, no confirmation of the virus' existence can be found. The logical, common sense, and scientific consequences of this fact are:

- the structure and composition of something not shown to exist can't be known, including the presence, structure, and function of any hypothetical spike or other proteins;
- the genetic sequence of something that has never been found can't be known;
- "variants" of something that hasn't been shown to exist can't be known;
- it's impossible to demonstrate that SARS-CoV-2 causes a disease called Covid-19.

In as concise terms as possible, here's the proper way to isolate, characterize and demonstrate a new virus. First, one takes samples (blood, sputum, secretions) from many people (e.g. 500) with symptoms which are unique and specific enough to characterize an illness. Without mixing these samples with ANY tissue or products that also contain genetic material, the virologist macerates, filters and ultracentrifuges i.e. *purifies* the specimen. This common virology technique, done for decades to isolate bacteriophages¹ and so-called giant viruses in every virology lab, then allows the virologist to demonstrate with electron microscopy thousands of identically sized and shaped particles. These particles are the isolated and purified virus.

These identical particles are then checked for uniformity by physical and/or microscopic techniques. Once the purity is determined, the particles may be further characterized. This would include examining the structure, morphology, and chemical composition of the particles. Next, their genetic makeup is characterized by extracting the genetic material directly from the purified particles and using genetic-sequencing techniques, such as Sanger sequencing, that have also been around for decades. Then one does an analysis to confirm that these uniform particles are exogenous (outside) in origin as a virus is conceptualized to be, and not the normal breakdown products of dead and dying tissues.² (As of May 2020, we know that virologists have no way to determine whether the particles they're seeing are viruses or just normal breakdown products of dead and dying tissues.)³

1 Isolation, characterization and analysis of bacteriophages from the haloalkaline lake Elmenteita, Kenya Julia Khayeli Akhwale et al, PLOS One, Published: April 25, 2019.
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0215734> – accessed 2/15/21

2 "Extracellular Vesicles Derived From Apoptotic Cells: An Essential Link Between Death and Regeneration," Maojiao Li et al, Frontiers in Cell and Developmental Biology, 2020 October 2.
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcell.2020.573511/full> – accessed 2/15/21

If we have come this far then we have fully isolated, characterized, and genetically sequenced an exogenous virus particle. However, we still have to show it is causally related to a disease. This is carried out by exposing a group of healthy subjects (animals are usually used) to this isolated, purified virus in the manner in which the disease is thought to be transmitted. If the animals get sick with the same disease, as confirmed by clinical and autopsy findings, one has now shown that the virus actually causes a disease. This demonstrates infectivity and transmission of an infectious agent.

None of these steps has even been attempted with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, nor have all these steps been successfully performed for any so-called pathogenic virus. Our research indicates that a single study showing these steps does not exist in the medical literature.

Instead, since 1954, virologists have taken unpurified samples from a relatively few people, often less than ten, with a similar disease. They then minimally process this sample and inoculate this unpurified sample onto tissue culture containing usually four to six other types of material – all of which contain identical genetic material as to what is called a “virus.” The tissue culture is starved and poisoned and naturally disintegrates into many types of particles, some of which contain genetic material. Against all common sense, logic, use of the English language and scientific integrity, this process is called “virus isolation.” This brew containing fragments of genetic material from many sources is then subjected to genetic analysis, which then creates in a computer-simulation process the alleged sequence of the alleged virus, a so called in silico genome. At no time is an actual virus confirmed by electron microscopy. At no time is a genome extracted and sequenced from an actual virus. This is scientific fraud.

The observation that the unpurified specimen — inoculated onto tissue culture along with toxic antibiotics, bovine fetal tissue, amniotic fluid and other tissues — destroys the kidney tissue onto which it is inoculated is given as evidence of the virus' existence and pathogenicity. This is scientific fraud.

From now on, when anyone gives you a paper that suggests the SARS-CoV-2 virus has been isolated, please check the methods sections. If the researchers used Vero cells or any other culture method, you know that their process was not isolation. You will hear the following excuses for why actual isolation isn't done:

1. There were not enough virus particles found in samples from patients to analyze.
2. Viruses are intracellular parasites; they can't be found outside the cell in this manner.

If No. 1 is correct, and we can't find the virus in the sputum of sick people, then on what evidence do we think the virus is dangerous or even lethal? If No. 2 is correct, then how is the virus spread from person to person? We are told it emerges from the cell to infect others. Then why isn't it possible to find it?

Finally, questioning these virology techniques and conclusions is not some distraction or divisive issue. Shining the light on this truth is essential to stop this terrible fraud that humanity is confronting. For, as we now know, if the virus has never been isolated, sequenced or shown to cause illness, if the virus is imaginary, then why are we wearing masks, social distancing and putting the whole world into prison?

Finally, if pathogenic viruses don't exist, then what is going into those injectable devices erroneously called "vaccines," and what is their purpose? This scientific question is the most urgent and relevant one of our time.

We are correct. The SARS-CoV2 virus does not exist.

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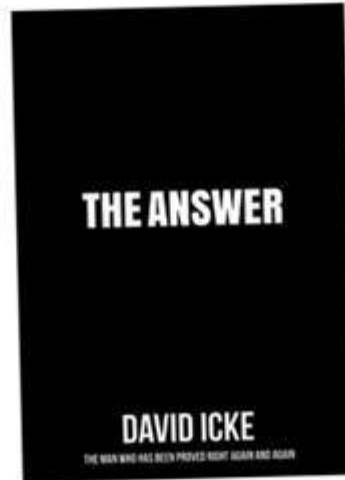
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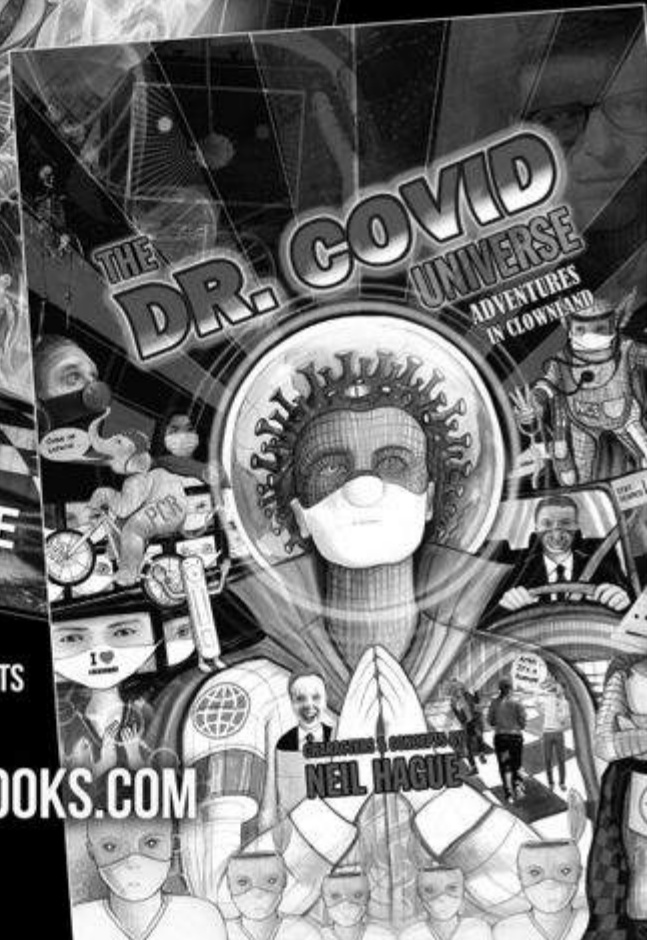
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