

**THE
URTH
PRESS**



*“How fortunate, the man
with none!”*

*- Bertolt Brecht, The
Threepenny Opera*



This book is dedicated to my Mother
and Father, Hugh Lofting, Carl Sagan,
Albert Einstein and Charles Lutwidge
Dodgson.

Thank you all for everything.

[This edition restores the name of
the female lead character from
Angelle (as in previous editions) to
Janae, as well as restoring the
opening Bertolt Brecht quotation
as in the original manuscript]

08 Oct. 2013



EVERTIL INFINATE

a GOTHLANDIC
FANTASY

by C. J. FAEGE

© 1980, 1995, 2004, 2013

A NOTE TO MY DEAR READERZ . . .

This is a story about a fellow named Evertil Infnate. I cannot explain the first name; but his last name is spelled incorrectly for 'infnite', so as to avoid confusion with that which is immeasurable, just remember there is a difference. He has some unusually wondrous adventures and gets into surreal situations and trouble. You will recognize many things that are just like here on earth; yet URTH and Alwaysston exist on the same plane as upside-down places like Wonderland, Oz or even



Superman's Bizarro World. There are fair shares of puns and 20th as well as 25th century references. I doubt this will be any more topically challenging for any reader from any century to understand the humor in. Some may also say that this is nothing but a simple rant of fantasy, which I certainly wouldn't deny, either.

12 Dec 2003

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Jones', written in a cursive style.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Pg 8. A Note to My Dear Readers –
the author's introduction
- Pg 13. The Cast of Characters
- Pg 17. In Honor of Now, a Slight
Introduction by Evertil Infinite
- Pg 19. CHAPTER ONE - THE
CARPET CLEANER
- Pg 39. CHAPTER TWO - TO
ALWAYSTON, THE HARD WAY
- Pg 54. CHAPTER THREE - THE
DOGS OF ALWAYSTON FOREST
- Pg 65. CHAPTER FOUR - THE
HOSTAGE, THE TURTLE & THE FISH
- Pg 86. CHAPTER FIVE - JUAN &
REGINALD (& THE SEA OF RABBITS)
- Pg 97. CHAPTER SIX - THE HASTY
FUNERAL
- Pg 109. CHAPTER SEVEN -
RESTLESS CAPTIVATION
- Pg 111. CHAPTER EIGHT -
DRUNDI'S RETURN/EXIT
- Pg 121. CHAPTER NINE - IN THE
LAIR OF THE LDIOS (what is a
Derfijackal?)
- Pg 141. CHAPTER TEN - THE
TWELFTH OF THE TWELFTH
- Pg 161. CHAPTER ELEVEN -
ALWAYSTIL ALWAYS HERE

Pg 164. **THE BEGINNING**
Pg 166. CHAPTER TWELVE - **TAKER
OF NILREM & THE DREAMWATERS**
Pg 182. CHAPTER THIRTEEN - **I'D
RATHER TAKE THE MONORAIL**
Pg 194. CHAPTER FOURTEEN...**THE
LIFTOFF**
Pg 198. CHAPTER FIFTEEN -
**HUMAN BEING MORE THAN
HUMAN BEING**
Pg 210. CHAPTER SIXTEEN - **ON
THE PLANET URTH**
Pg 214. CHAPTER SEVENTEEN – **BE
CAREFUL, I CAN UNPLUG YOU**
Pg 221. CHAPTER EIGHTEEN -
TIME: THE UNMOVING JOURNEY
Pg 230. CHAPTER NINETEEN -. **THE
LIGHT RING**
Pg 237. CHAPTER TWENTY -
NIETSNE'S THEORY
Pg 245. CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE -
**START near the END of the
BEGINNING**
Pg 248. THE AEPILOG
Pg 249 THE MIDDLE
Pg 251 **EVERTIL INFINATE'S QUIZ**
Pg 257 **TITLES FOR THE
ILLUSTRATIONS**

EXTRA MATERIAL.

Pg 262. The Inventor, A Poem
by Charlie Foege

Pg 284 Aphorisms

Pg 289 the author in exile

CAST of CHARACTERS

Evertil Infinite - the Fearless Hero who could have just stayed in bed.

Drundi - AKA The Wizard; one of the lesser beloved of any crowd that he happened to stand in, possessing a complex identity

Nilrem - an Ancient/Contemporary Wizard who preferred to be known



for a time as King Nilrem; and was once heard pronouncing his name backwards.

Doctor Rabitt - a kindly old doctor even if he did stop making housecalls years ago.

Juan and Reginald - These two woodsmen were combined into a two-sided skull as one of Drundi the Wizard's Magical Experiments. Who knows where Evertil would be without them?

Alisandro - at one time he was the most trusted servant of Nilrem. Evertil's closest friend. At another...well, you'll find out.

Oliver Hausenbrauerdink - An Unknown Author whose name and books were mentioned only for greedy promotional purposes.

Uncle Jimima - A crude old man at The CAMP, who recently died from a mysterious accident before this book was completed.

Nietsnie - A friend of Nilrem who had an interesting *Theory of Relevance*.

Kitty - Doctor Rabitt's nurse. Rumors that have been circulating

about there being more to their relationship are possibly untrue.

Janae - Evertil Infinites true love, also a novice wizard, yet a Wizard nonetheless.

Alice Kolait – Another nurse and escaped Housewife.

(The) **Human Being More Than Human Being** - the Being used in this story was the last of hundreds of machines just like him. A seven and a half foot tall Creation that one should avoid shaking hands with.

Helka - Doctor Rabitt's maid. Why were there no rumors about Helka and the Doctor?

Simbats - Squirming masses with a mischievous disposition. It is wise to avoid them also.

URTHbeings - the Video Beasts of Planet URTH.

Dogs of Alwayston Forest - captured by Drundi the Wizard to guard West Alwayston Forest.

Derfijackal - in the story I devoted a small footnote to this Beast, which is probably more space than necessary, considering the relevance to this story. They are interesting animals, though.

Kong King - a work induced hallucination of Evertil Inifinate and the Video Beasts.

THE **LDIOS** (dwarves)

Ruble - wisest of them all, possessing a valuable Library of Knowledge.

Machio - a businessdwarf who also did quality tailoring on the side.

Bjorko Elfma- another businessdwarf. Not recommended for tailoring.

Loof - the conductor of the *Nightly Dwarf Simfonies*.

Elfa - a dwarfen server. I mean a dwarf servant.

Benny - a jolly- bolly, rolley-polley, happy-wappy dwarf.

Ldios - assisted the Alliance until Nilrem sent The **TAKER**. Also, a more ancient name for dwarves. There were actually Sixteen more Ldios I haven't identified by name in this book.



IN HONOR OF NOW, A
SLIGHT INTRODUCTION
BY EVERTIL INFINITE

My name happens to be Evertil Infinite.. It's a name, that's all.. Don't ask me where it came from or what it means. Throughout my life people have asked me about it and I've always told them that it's only strange because it's a stranger's name. If I meet a stranger we'd no longer be strangers anymore, and all strange things lose their strangeness after a while, for better or worse, so let's just get the name questions over with right now and continue.

I was born the probable first child of two anonymous parents, and grew up in an orphanage until my self-adoption in early manhood. I will not tell much in this story of my early years at the Orphanage, although I do have good reasons not to.

I am a believer in free will and fate. Soon after I left the Orphanage, I moved to a place called

Number Forty-Eight City and worked for CARPET (an organization, much like a retirement home for war veterans). CARPET reminded me in many ways of the Orphanage, but not in any of the good ways. My job was to keep the place very clean and to report any deaths or 'signs of Great Activity' promptly. Finally, Free Will freed me to my Fate. My life following CARPET (or the Camp, either one) is explained within. My life before it, as mentioned, remains with me.

Some may not quite understand or believe my story, which I understand. I just want you to know that it certainly is true; and as I wrote this all down I learned many things that I never knew before. One thing I have always been good at is remembering my Dreams in vivid detail, though sometimes this would prove to be detrimental. ~

Evertel Infinite

CHAPTER ONE

THE CARPET CLEANER

**SIX MILLION OLD PENGUINS
JOINED ME AT THE CAMP AND I KNEW
MUCH LESS
THAN WAS
EXPECTED OF
ME. A**



capitalistic
war was upon
us and I had
no life
insurance.
Comfort
crusaders

with wigs and cigarettes epitomized
my disgust at this infected and sickest

of all places which I had chosen for refuge.

As I walked along the old building, vague exits led me through the hallway to a room of enormous size. Still, it was no engineering miracle. Huge hanging plants nearly strangled me as I walked out of the large room with both hands on my wallet.

I stared above my head as I slowly walked and believed that I saw *Kong King* on the balcony, throwing people and airplanes at me. I nearly ducked from these stir-crazed hallucinations and realized that even among millions (6, it was) a man can be extremely lonely.

Pausing against a wall, I rested my arm against a doorknob, which moved the door slightly ajar. Inside, a tired looking old fellow stood shaving above a broken marble sink. Silently, I watched him through the crack in the doorway and dreamt of *Old Age*.

"This could well be me in forty or so years," I sighed. "I should finish polishing the *Yrtlytel Gargoyle* statues before I turn in tonight..."

One by one, many old men started walking past me, coming from dinner on the lower level. I went without dinner that evening because of my great dislike for *Polydragon Style Snouts*. One of the men nudged the man next to him and then winked at me. I realized how odd I must have looked, standing there gazing into a partly open door, **especially** a door that leads to a bathroom.

I quickly moved away from the doorway and stepped into a man the other men called Uncle Jimima.

"Well, boy," he said. "Don't ya know ya ain't supposa be lookin inna doors roun heah? Shee, i spec the lease ya could do is ta tell the other guy inside ta move over so's ya kin shave right necks to 'im! ha ha ha har!"

At that point I said not a mumbling word and moved away from Uncle Jimima. I threw knives of embarrassment and shot bullets to his bull upon him. Oh, not in the physical sense, of course.

"Go swallow bugs, you dirty old..." I said to myself quietly, *quietly if I wanted to continue my employment there.* Uncle Jimima and some other men laughed uproariously as they walked away.

The door to the bathroom opened and out stepped the old man I'd been watching; but *not really watching.*

"Hello, son," He motioned a quivering arm towards Uncle Jimima. Troublemaker, isn't he? My name's Oliver Hausenbrauerdink. You probably have never heard of me; but I have one of those types of names that people don't easily forget once they have heard it...



Oliver Hausenbrauerdink

...if anybody
can say it
that is. I've
written
many
potentially
famous
novels and I
am
the Son of
the Armband
of the
powerful

muscles of the *Pen*. I am the son of
the *Hausenbrauerdink Family*. My
wife is dead. Died just last week, rest
her soul. The
omnipotent
Lord Blessed
her and I with
three children
in our life
together.
Two of which
I despise and
one whom I
admire
greatly. Do
you think I

am ugly, my friend? I believe my ugliness is the price of my many hopeless trips on the seas, when life was simpler. No complex Industrial Camps in those dreams. Everybody gets ugly, everyone gets old, don't you think?"

"I don't really think anything," said. "It would be a waste of my time to ponder the subject. I would rather like to think that the reason I eat bananas is due to some residual of a previous shape of evolution and time. I also think that old age will come to those who have earned it, just as a *Heavenly Reward* comes to those unfortunate ones who don't get to earn *Old Age*. Why don't you follow yourself to your room Oliver, it's almost *Lights Out Time*."

I really liked Oliver Hausenbrauerdink. At least we could communicate.

It was the middle of a freezing afternoon and I was frustrated over my right sock rolling down my ankle. Finally, I bent over to take the thing off, as **nothing**

seems to annoy me more than that. As I did so, I felt a great shove from behind me and I tumbled down an open elevator shaft (I had always wondered whether or not people *really* screamed when they fell for any distance like they do in the movies. I now know that they certainly *do*).

Twenty-five feet later, I awoke in horrible pain. My right leg was rather twisted into a very unnatural position, my arm was bent underneath of my chest, with some assorted odd pains in grisly variations throughout my body. I had no idea how the accident had occurred, though I felt sure that it was no accident at all. Ever so slowly; and in great pain I struggled to move and I finally managed to remove my right sock. This was one less problem that I had to worry about. Let's see it roll now!

As I lay there, I eventually wondered just how I was going to get out. Next to me, the big steel cable moved up and down and I thought

that I would become very flat should it go down to the basement. But no, as it turns out it did not come down and I did not become a bloodier mess. I saw a head pop out of an opening above and a man looked down at me. It was Collings, the English union shop steward.

"Well, well, well." (no, shaft, shaft, **shaft**). "Now how in the world did you get down there? You certainly must be a clumsy get, indeed. Me 'n the boys'll be down get you out after lunch. Union by-laws and all, you know." he said. I heard the sound of voices coming from the opening and saw heads peering down at me.

"Is he dead?" asked one of them.

"Nope. Can you *believe* it?! Don't appear to be too healthy looking though...."

"Let me have a look. Move over, you've looked long enough! Hey down there, you all right?" yelled one man. "Oh yes, just

fine. I was just inspecting the elevator shaft. It doesn't look very safe, though!" I yelled back to him.

About an hour later I was safely rescued and taken to Saint God's Hospital. After several hours they had me all ready to go back to the Camp. The only way you get to stay overnight at the hospital was if you died. Thank you Saint Gods for everything. I'm absolutely fine now, except for a slight limp.

Being disenchanted, I quit my job at the Camp, otherwise known as *CARPET*; which was a stupid acronym for ***Community for the Aged, Retired, Poor, Elderly and Tired***. I knew that there had to be a better living than to be a *CARPET* cleaner all my life.

Not by coincidence, I had **also** learned that day that it was none other than old Uncle Jimima who pushed me down the open elevator shaft. I vowed my vengeance in the *Afterlife*, though it's possible he

was having his own vengeance from some *Beforelife*, so I just let it pass.

I had heard of a place from my former employer, Mr. Drundi, in which you could live half-between dream and reality as I knew it and be truly happy Forever. *Such a place itself sounded as if one who was half between drinks and reality had thought it up.* I also disapproved of the **source** of the information for the place. Though I had respected Mr. Drundi, I still thought him to be a beady-eyed fake. I must admit that I enjoyed the company of his beautiful bookkeeper on some of those long night shifted nights I had to work...*yet I feared her as I feared love itself.*

As Mr. Drundi had described it, it was "a place not found on a calendar or inside a matchbook cover. Its name is Alwaysston; and it always was." The rich, bald-headed Mr. Drundi always talked about returning to Alwaysston, which did sound better than living in Number Forty Eight City.

On one occasion when he mentioned being "back in Alwayston," I responded; "Is Alwayston where you became so rich?" I would have asked if it was also the place where he became so bald-headed, beady-eyed and old; yet I didn't. I would have loved to inquire merely for the sake of my own joviality, though.

"Son, when I was in Alwayston, I thrived. I was born rich and had three wives when I was but twenty years old. You can get away with murder in Alwayston, which I did. Three times that I can remember. Everyone is rich in Alwayston." Always joking, that Drundi...

Somehow, Alwayston sounded good to me. I had been struggling hard so far to be born; and if my struggle was to end in an affirmative sort of way, then it might as well have been in Alwayston. If it wasn't, then it might as well have been anywhere. Besides, the name Alwayston just appealed to me.

Mr. Drundi assumed I was a buffoon, an average stumbling, not to preclude bumbling oaf that tells irrelevant jokes and irreverent stories, heard only by irresponsible ears. No one suspected; but I was like a bomb's fuse, ready to be lit and blown far from that moldy city. I wanted to be hatched from an egg somewhere else; void of birth defects. Namely, those defects that one acquires later on in life, like poverty and depression. Sure, I had my mishaps. I had a few accidents on a daily basis, doesn't everyone? Well, I guess I'm stumbling and bumbling, but certainly not an oaf.

That afternoon I wanted to plan my trip from Number Forty Eight City to Alwaysston; but finally realized that I hadn't the slightest idea of where it was. I felt that if I had asked Drundi where it was, he would have known I was planning on leaving *CARPET*. I decided I really had nothing to lose, so I was going to quit my job.

Immediately after I gave Drundi my notice of resignation at

CARPET, I went home and celebrated myself to the point of sickness. A bottle and a half of a bottle of Chablis Le Blank and I had fallen asleep at the kitchen table. The next morning I awoke on the kitchen floor with dirty dishes and salt and pepper all over me. Sometime during the night I must have decided to use the tablecloth as a blanket and did not have a magician's grace when removing it. I felt so horrible when I awoke that it seemed like a ceiling had collapsed on me. It had, but it was my cerebral ceiling. I guess I'm not much of a drinker.

Realizing that my schedule has always been rather haphazard, partially procrastinated and occasionally half-hazard, I temporarily abandoned the notion of going anywhere other than to a drug store. I put on my coat and walked down to Nasal's Drug Store to purchase a newspaper and some Band-Aids™. I never seemed to have enough of them around, being just a **bit** accident-prone. On the way to the store I walked by some

construction materials and a nail penetrated my shoe and managed to make its way about an eighth inch into my foot. I was lucky for the fact that just a month before I had gotten a *Tatemust shot*, thus preventing *Gang Green*.

I made it to the store anyway, hopping most of the way. Inside I saw an attractive girl looking at greeting cards. Because of my injured foot, I stumbled into the rack, dumping cards all over the floor. She caught me by my arm and restored my balance.

"Excuse me!" I said. I swayed again.

"There you go now. I've got you. Are you okay?" She asked me that with a certain hint of sympathy that led me to believe I was a marshmallow.

"Oh yes, I'm all right, thank you." As I hobbled over against a counter, she considerably replaced the cards into the rack.

"That really looks *nasty!*" she said while observing my foot and the blood trail behind me. "What happened to you?"

"I had a little accident down the street with a nail and my foot; but I'll be all right. I'm good at this sort of thing. Really." I answered.

"Can I help you to your car?" she asked.

"That would be nice; but I'm on foot," I said, meaning what I said in a very singular sense of the word.

"In that case, I'll give you a lift," she offered. "I couldn't bear to let you go out walking on such a bad foot."

We rode off into the beautiful sunlight, which shone much more brightly onto my nervous body than it had before I walked into the Nasal Drug Store. I was unusually

quiet and struggled with my thoughts to try to say something to her.

"This is very kind of you," I began. "Most people in Number Forty Eight City would not respond to someone else's troubles with such an act of kindness. Are you from Number Forty Eight?" As I spoke, I was looking at her beautiful long red hair and striking face, which really looked like a walking fashion magazine cover.

In response to my question, she just smiled and said softly, "No. I'm from Twelve Fifteen. If you wish, I can get that nasty cut cleaned and bandaged up for you. I'm staying at the old hotel on the next block."

I was momentarily annoyed with myself for forgetting to buy the Band Helps and the newspaper; but somehow I got over that. "Well, all right. If you don't think I would be too much trouble..."

"None at all!" she answered sweetly. "I'd appreciate some friendly company for a change."

As we walked into the lobby of the old hotel, which looked very much like the lobby of every other old hotel in Number Forty Eight City, the desk clerk cleared his throat with a loud "**Ahem!**" We proceeded to the stairway, with her helping me every hop of the way. We could have just used the elevator, but I told her of my recent dislike of them.

"Here we are. Let me help you with your coat. Uh ... what is your name?" she asked.

"You'll just laugh." I said with a sigh. "Everybody does."

"No, really, I won't. Don't be silly. **Please** tell me!" she wheedled.

"Evertil Infinite. But you can call me something else if you like."

"Everett Airsick?" she giggled. "That's a very unusual name. Mine's Alice. Alice Kolait."

"Oh, you're of Franch nationality then."

"Wee," she said as she hung our coats in the closet and pointed to a chair. "Now sit down, take that shoe and sock off while I get some alcohol and adhesives."

I realized how **odd** it was that I happened to be wearing my *lucky* pair of socks that day. You know, the same pair that went down the elevator shaft with me? Being slightly destitute, I hadn't really much choice or selection of socks; and couldn't afford to just throw them out. My salvaging ways had caused me to attempt to sew a band of rubber at the top of each sock to compensate for the eroded elastic. After I took it off, I felt as if I was removing a curse and threw the bloody thing away, hurling with disgust and relief. Around my ankle

was an embarrassing band of rubber line, which I (unsuccessfully) tried to rub off of myself.

I sat there watching her as she looked through her small luggage bag. Soon she came over with a bottle of alcohol and adhering tape. "You are lucky I am a nurse," she said.

After being properly mended as much as possible, I thanked her and got up to leave. At that point she told me that since she was a stranger in Number Forty Eight she would be very lonely if I were to leave. I was more than glad and even flattered to be talking with such a beautiful woman and I quickly sat back down (*OK, so I fell backwards*).

We talked for a long time, and I learned that she was in town for a *Revisiting Nurses Halfnar* being held at the hotel.

"Oh, I see." I said. "Well, you're quite good. If I could, I'd hire

you full-time. We'd keep each other in stitches, I'm sure!"

She smiled sweetly.

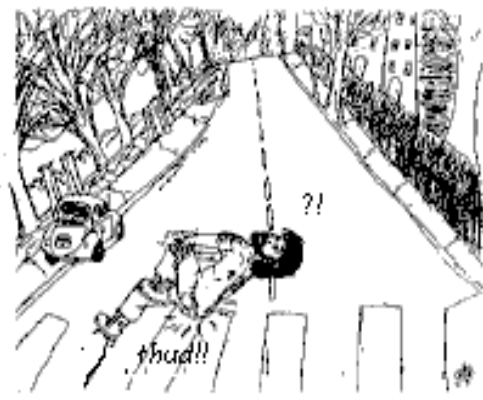
I left shortly after with a promise to return to visit her there the next day. When I did return, I discovered that she had gone. Some men are fools for beauty and some are just fooled by it. I have always been the fool who has been fooled. Oh Love, where are your manners?



"Alice Kofail - - drawn
from a picture that fell from her purse".
E.I.

CHAPTER TWO
TO **ALWAYSTON**, THE
HARD WAY

I was on my way.
It was Monday, about three o'clock
and I was at last packing my bags to
leave cold old Number Forty Eight
City. I thought Monday would be a
good day to begin my move.



Actually, one day was as good as the next, being unemployed and slightly heartbroken as I was. I used my last paycheck to pay the overdue rent on my lousy little flat in the dirtiest section of Number Forty Eight City.

My eyes puddled and I almost felt a tear on my cheek as I took my last look around the place I had called home for the past three years. All I owned was inside of a duffle bag. Some clothes and some junk that barely worked. Nothing wrong with traveling light though. What good is it having stuff unless you just happen to be there when you own it, anyway?

Two stories down the stairs with no stories to tell, I walked down to the street, still sniffing. Sinus or sensitiveness, one of the two. Flipping my big bag over my shoulder, I started walking. Since I had become best friends with all the mechanics in town because my car had nearly four hundred thousand miles on it, I donated it to science (by

which I mean the junkyard gave me a fair price).

Hitchhiking was extremely illegal in Number Forty Eight City; yet I realized that the NFEC Police Department probably would like to harass a person such as myself with a duffle bag across his back. I walked down to Fast Street and stuck out my thumb.

After being nearly run down by two street trains coming from both directions, a truck stopped to let me board.

"Thank you for stopping." I said as I dragged the bag inside the cab.

"SO HOW FAR YA GOIN?" asked the large stubbly faced driver.

Hey, I didn't know. I certainly didn't want to tell him Alwaysston. Probably because I knew it didn't exist. Yet it *did*. I just *knew* it.

"Number Fifty-Six..." I smiled and laughed nervously. This was some tough looking guy driving me around. I just had a bad feeling. "... how about you?" I asked.

"Wa'al, ah'm headed out fur Crampville an then back home to Twelve Fifteen. I jest made a stopover here lookin fur mah ol lady. Ungrateful wench, always runnin off. I don't unnerstan' why either. I give her *metah* be wid'n everthin. If ah ketch her an whoevuh she wid, thuh groundhogs will be deliverin his *mail!*" he yelled. His large hairy hand had formed into a giant fist that pounded on the dashboard, knocking off three of the twenty or so hula dancers that were busy dancing all over it.

"Gee, that's a *shame...* hmmm!" I said for lack of anything to say.

He relentlessly continued. "2HE'2 REEEL PURTY. GOT THIZ RED HAIR THAT LOOK2 LIKE IT CAME OUTTA ONE O' THEM BEEOOTY PARLUR MACHINE2 ANNA LIL FACE DAT COOD MAKE YA CRY LAk YA JEZ+ ATE AN ENTIRE ONION. 2HE JEZ DON KNOW WHAT'2 GOOD FER HER THOUGH..." he interrupted himself with a large burp (*speaking of onions*, I thought). He then ran a bent comb across his lumpy head with the one inch hair that stood straight up.

"DAMMIT ALICE. WHA'2 GOT INTO YOU?" he mumbled.

My heart stopped. Could it be the **same Alice**? Sure sounded like her.

"I...I...I..h-h-h-haven't seen anyone like that," I stuttered. Oh why did I even say anything at all? Especially *STUTTER* it.

He looked over at me with menacing eyes like he was about to

beat me to a pulp and *then* beat up the pulp.

"AH'LL jEz+ BE+ YOU HAVEN'T. HOW COME AH THINK YOU KNOW ZOME+HIN?!" My heart started pumping some highly nervous blood wildly throughout my body as I stared over at the gigantic muscle that was displayed like a flag above his elbow. The United Arm Of Muscles, oh help me!

"Could you please just let me off right up here? I just remembered I need to stop over at a friends' house down that street...right here will be just fine," I said.


"WHA-a-a+?! MAN YOU COULD'D WALKED THAT FUR. AH OUGHTA CRUZH YER ZTOOPID HEAD YA IGNERNT FAR+!" he shouted. He slammed on the brakes like we had run over a patch of *Superior Glue*®.

I got out and I thanked him for the ride as he revved up the engine. Then I



remembered, "Wait! My bag! On the seat...!" I guess he heard me as the truck (already in fast forward motion) slowed down and my duffle bag came flying out into the street.

Small world, I thought. Too bad it wasn't a little bigger today, though. I walked down the road a bit and gathered up my clothes strewn all over it. I hummed the Eclectic Popular Himm (*a Hit Himm with the Number Forty Eight City Church of Beliefs*) "*Thank You Lord For Sparing Me Again*" * while

picking them up. 

running over to it and I tripped over a big round rock. Stunned from the fall, I tried to get up; but I decided instead to rest against the rock for a moment. If my Gyology serves me well, I believe it was an Elephant Rock, which were very rare in this climate.

Immediately I was surrounded by the most dangerously close bolts of lightning I had ever seen. I hugged the rock, blinded by the brightness of the volts of the bolts, deafened by the discharges of thunder. I became dizzy, hot and cold at the same time. Actually, that is the *last* thing I can remember about that day.

(APPARENTLY I DID NOT DIE...)

I awoke with the strangest sensation that I didn't know where I was, which made perfect sense since I was not where I left myself in conscious memory. I found myself on a bed, inside of a palatial **Victortorian** style boudoir. The furnishings were all a blinding chroma of white. Objects appeared only as outlines and were so camouflaged that they became transparent. I was wearing some kind of hospital patient gown.

A Voice; a soft gentle voice asked me if I was comfortable. It seemed to come from under the bed yet when I checked there was no one

there. I had surely imagined it because I never heard it again.

I could hear voices outside of the door, the distinct sounds of a man and a woman. They drew nearer. "He should be awake by now, let's check again." The door opened slightly and they looked in, to find me chewing my nails and spitting them out like little missiles.

"Well, **hello** sir!", said the man, who was dressed in doctor's apparel. He and the woman in the nurses uniform stepped into the room, which coincidentally matched their clothing.

"Where am I? How long have I been here? What happened?" I asked, believing *these were three very good questions*.

"I guess you wouldn't know, would you now?" they chuckled to themselves. *I just wanted to be able to chuckle right along, actually.* "We found you last night in a most uncomfortable

position. You were on top of an Elephant Rock with your clothing mostly burned off and unconscious. It looked as though you were struck by lightning during the big storm, yet you have no burns. I was hoping you might be able to explain it to me." he said.

"Don't strain yourself right now if you feel too weak, I understand. My name is Doctor Rabbit and this is my nurse, Kitty." Kitty just stood there silently with a full smile on her face. A doctor and a nurse seemed very appropriate at that time, I reasoned.

"...you are welcome here in my home for as long as you wish, sir. We don't get company out here often." *I was glad to hear that unlike at Saint Gods' Hospital, you don't have to be dead to stay there overnight.*

I walked over to the window and looked out in amazement at the unfamiliar landscape. Not a house or building in sight, just miles of blue trees that seemed to be planted in straight intentional rows, with a crooked one

lane road that ran between them.
"Now that's weird. Where in Number
Forty-Eight **am** I?"

"What do you mean?"
asked Kitty.

"You know. Number
Forty Eight City, of course!"

Doctor Rabbit answered,
"Dear boy, I have never heard of it.
How strange, a city with numbers for
a name. We are in my home, just
six miles south of Alwaysston."

That's when I **knew** I had
to be dead. I was speechless. I didn't
want to say something that would
affect the outcome of this dream or
heaven I was now in. "Oh,
Alwaysston. I see..."

"You really should lie back
down and get some rest. You've
been through a lot." He put his hand
on Kitty's back, pushing her gently
out of the room, indicating it was
time to leave. Then he hesitated, "By

the way, can you remember your name?"

"Of course I remember my name. It's Evertil. Evertil Infinite."

"Such a nice name!" Kitty said. "If you need anything at all, don't hesitate to give a ring." she said while pointing to a silver bell on a table next to the bed.

"Kitty or my maid Helka will be nearby if you need anything. Your dinner will be brought to you in a little while. Meantime, get back to bed and get some rest, Evertil. It's good you still have your memory

after such a trauma." the doctor said. I did lie back down, but there was no way I could have fallen asleep. I was too busy trying to make sense of all of it. Perhaps my logic had been burned up with all my clothes. Where had I seen



Kitty

my logic last? I lay there and pondered useless things like that before I proceeded to saw wood.

I woke up feeling well rested and full of energy. As I looked around I was thinking how I really liked being a guest (or was that patient?) there. I touched the little button on the bell and heard the sound of Trumpethorns blowing a dissonant fanfare. I jumped a foot high in the air from the great and sudden volume. Kitty soon arrived and obviously her smile had arrived with her. "How are you feeling, Mr. Indefinite?"

"That's **Infinite**; but please, call me Evertil. I'm feeling much better. Great, in fact. Do you have some clothing I may borrow; and then I can be out of your way. I do hate being a bother. " *How I didn't mind, really.*

"Oh no. You don't have to worry about that. Doctor Rabbit said that you would need to stay here for a while. Why, you're lucky to be

alive at all, much less go anywhere in your condition," she said.

"Well, I don't have any insurance or money ..."

"You won't need any. There are no fees. The doctor is a very charitable and generous man and works only for the good of mankind. He also is financially opulent."

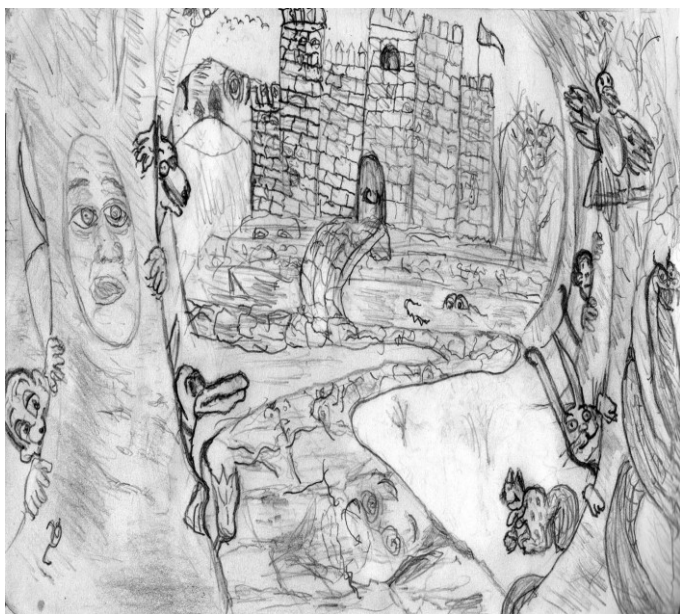
"He's **what?**" I asked.

"Rich. Wealthy. We're **all** rich in Alwayston." she answered.

Yes, I'd heard that just recently. Now I just wanted to know how I could get to be a member; or whatever the enigma was with *Alwaystonians*, it made good financial sense to me. When I told her that I'd heard that from Mr. Drundi, the smile that seemed permanently implanted on her face suddenly went away.

"I did not hear that. Never mention that name again, Mr. Indifferent."

Apparently there were some ill feelings towards someone with the name Drundi, likely the same one I worked for at CARPET. I ordered some Broil & Oil Keefdava, which was cooked to perfection.



[the Alwayston Forest Road]

Chapter Three

THE DOGS OF ALWAYSTON FOREST



I was staring at a portrait of a beautiful young lady,



which was hung above the huge fireplace in the library. My mind went back to a grandiose time in a past that I could not remember, to places that I had

long since forgotten; yet I lived in those places somehow. Doctor Rabitt's maid Helka entered the

library and observed my fascination with the portrait.

"The Doctor's daughter. She hasn't been with us for some time now." she said.

"You mean she's bereft of life?" I asked.

"I don't really know. She said while straightening out a giant curtain. "She has been missing for five years. A very nice person, she was. I never did understand...well, never mind." She dusted out some large bowls of air and picked up small invisible objects off of the floor and put them into her apron pockets. At that time Kitty walked into the room and by the fires burning in her eyes, I could tell it would be wise to discontinue any fraternizing. It was quite obvious who was paid the greater salary, sad to say.

It was during a Twosday evening's dinner that I learned more of the enigma of the Doctor's daughter. It was my assumption that Doctor Rabitt would be very hesitant

about telling a complete stranger (such as myself) *anything* concerning his missing daughter; but I simply asked him about it and he told me a great deal.

He explained that things would be nearly perfect in Alwayston were it not for a certain resident of the West Alwayston Forest named Drundi, a wizard. *This had my attention. The poor guy, I thought. What a load of putrescable refuse!* It seems that this wizard guy had lured three of the most beautiful women in Alwayston (one being the Doctors daughter) to his unpopular home in West Alwayston Forest, which I learned was the *only* home in West Alwayston Forest. His voice trembled as he told me that Drundi possessed powers beyond belief. This was how he summoned the ladies. The only thing that I believed was that his daughter was missing. Oh yes, he also told me about a vicious pack of dogs that dwelled in the Forest that were under the Drundi's command. I finally could not hold back interrupting his fantasy. "Do you really attribute all of that to one

man? What about the women? How could he command a pack of vicious dogs? Have you had him investigated by the authorities?"

"Authorities?" he laughed. "Anarchy has freed Alwayston of them. Drundi **is** the author, **the** authority. You could say he runs the place. Why, I remember that cloudy afternoon that Drundi walked down that same road that runs past this house with a small Drainpipe, playing the strangest music that I've ever heard. I believe he must have summoned every dog within a hundred miles. Dogs of every breed and variety came from their homes, alleys or wherever it is that dogs are when you don't know their whereabouts."

"Reminds me of the famous *Drainpipeist Tale* I heard as a child. What happened to the dogs?" I asked.

They all went to Drundi in the Forest. Any of the people who lived with the animals who may have

chased after them were soon discouraged and chased away. They became a canine army, a totally ruthless and shabby pack of misfits and guards to their commander in chief. No one's been near there in years that I know of. No one living, anyway.

"What did this Drundi look like?"

"What would you want to know that for? Did you think I meant some little guy with a white beard wearing a pointed hat with half moons on it waving a wand? I am serious about this. He's just a bald guy. No hair at all."

To prevent upsetting him any further, I did not mention the similarity between Drundi the Wizard and the Drundi at CARPET. More than similarity, I thought. More than a mere coincidence. How many men could there be named Drundi and were bald? Mr. Drundi was the one who told me about Alwayston in the first place. I was very confused but

decided to keep it to myself for awhile.

"Dinner, as usual, was excellent, Doctor Rabitt." As I got up to excuse myself, the buckle of my belt caught on the laced tablecloth and I started walking away and took half of the table settings with me. The other half was on the Doctor's lap. He attempted to smile politely for a moment; yet a rather upset looking wrinkle appeared on his eyebrows.

"Dinner was on you anyway," I joked and watched as the wrinkle got even deeper.

After Helka and I got the doctor cleaned off (well, he stopped me because I made him even more of a mess with my attempt). All right. *She* cleaned him off. Afterwards, Helka and I took a walk through his abundant garden . Ah, what an ideal life! There was just one thing wrong, I lacked purpose. I mean, there I was, in a fantastic place with the most caring people I had ever known

in my entire life, yet I wasn't accomplishing anything. To prevent myself from getting depressed about it, I didn't stray too far from my basic philosophy of not taking any large doses of the sadness that others tend to give away like free samples; and to **never** under any circumstances allow my dreams to be those dreamt and promised by anyone else.

It was, as you may well have imagined, a beautiful interstellar illustrated evening as we walked around the *Hyberbiticus Ferna* trees, discussing the works of Sir Wadlonglow and even Shooksknife. She was very well read but I tried to keep up with her in our conversations. This time was a little different though. Helka had suddenly put her arms around me and kissed me. I was startled, to say the least.

"Oh Ever, I love you," she whispered.

"I thought you were acting differently..." I whispered back. "But

you've got to try to restrain yourself, Helka," my Omnipotent Self spoke out. "If Doctor Rabitt even thought...why...you'd surely lose your job." You see, the Doctor had a certain attitude that went without saying. I could just *see* it. I wasn't about to mess this up, even if I didn't serve any purpose there.

"Tell me the poem of yours that you recited yesterday. The one about the dancing air," she pleaded.

"If you insist. (ahem. uh...)
"Such Beauty as Lies in Thee.

As in Thy Ambering Hairs,

Brings To me so Swiftly,

Such Lovelike Dancing Airs..."

My poem was interrupted by a loud thud-bump-bump-clang-crash-splat onomatopoeia of sounds from inside the house. We raced inside. I

realized that I'd forgotten the next stanza of my poem anyway.

I slid most of the way down the freshly-waxed hall when I came to Doctor Rabitt, lying at the bottom of the staircase. He was groaning and moaning, as one would expect of someone even conscious enough to do those things after falling down two flights of stairs.

"Ohhh. I think I still had some of the Jillo from dinner on my shoes and I fell all the way down. My back, my leg, my arm, my neck, my new pants..." he moaned in pain.

I put my hand under his head to cushion it a bit as he looked up at me. "Fastest I ever made it down these stairs..." he muttered. Then he passed out.

Kitty came flying into the room **screaming like a bungee!** "**AAAAH!** You've got to get **HELP!** *Do* something! Help me get him to bed and then go and get Doctor

Steiningstein." She was completely hysterical.

Kitty, Helka and I struggled and finally got Doctor Rabitt into his bed. Kitty began administering medical assistance immediately. She became coherent after a time. "Evertil, take the main road through Alwaysston Forest for Six Miles North. Since Doctor Rabitt disapproves of automobiles, the trip will take you a while, as you'll *have* to walk. Do you feel like you're in good enough shape for the trip?" I nodded. "Good. When you get into the towne, ask anyone there to guide you to Doctor Steiningstein and bring him back here just as soon as you can."

"Couldn't we just call for an ambulance?" I asked.

Both Kitty and Helka looked at each other. "A *what?*" they both asked.

"You know, a ...nevermind. I'll get going now." *I*

must have forgotten where I did not know I was. Some things were the same as in Number Forty Eight and the world I knew, some weren't. Ambulances weren't. O.K.

"and take Great Care when you're going through the Forest!" Kitty warned.

"I'm taking Helka. I'm not afraid!" I said bravely.

"She stays," said Kitty.
"Now I'm afraid."

CHAPTER FOUR

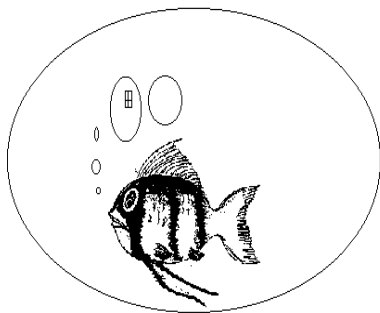
THE HOSTAGE, THE TURTLE & THE FISH



I was absolutely certain that

there were
MONSTERS
in

Alwaysston
Forest, just
as I was
certain of
the
MONSTERS



in the warehouse cellar at the CAMP, or the ones in the basement at the Orphanage. I had only been lucky so far in my life and always had a fear of being **MONSTIRRED**. I felt like a walking sale about to become a grocery item for some **Thing With Slimy Teeth and Pointy Claws**. *They get you every time*. Nonetheless, I continued on my trip, laughing at my silliness.

It was a odd road. It made many unnecessary turns around trees that were more and more abundant the further I walked. Whoever had built the road had not cut down one tree to make way. At least that was a nice change, coming from a place with **Museums For Trees** (they charged the people a dollar ninety one just to see them, you know). *What happened to the beautiful night that I was enjoying just a short time ago?*

In a little while the last remaining light from the galaxy was all but gone. Queer little noises came from a distance, and then they seemed to get closer. Things shook that shouldn't

have and moved yet were motionless, other things spoke to me in deafening silence. It was beginning to **SCARE ME TO DEATH**. I wondered how much further I'd have to go before I got to the town? A weird wiggly-sort-of-a-sound got very close and I felt it run past my leg. Every tiny little follicle on my body protruded endwise. I screamed, then ran just as fast as I could and in a few feet I ran directly into a tree and I fell to the ground. Surely now, my nose **had** to be broken. I sat against a tree and recovered for a time with my hand against my nose.

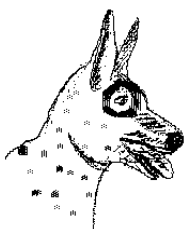
Through the dim moonlighting I noticed another crooked road. Though I really had no bearing on my direction, I guessed west. A bit further down the road was an even dimmer light, possibly from a house.

"Perhaps whoever lives there can help me," I said.

I started walking on the newly discovered road towards the

yellow light when I recalled Doctor Rabitt's story about the Dogs Of The Forest (I know, you already thought about that, but you didn't want to worry me). After a few steps, I decided to turn around and continue on with my original route. As I got back on my original road, the weird sounds began again. I thought I heard something close behind me and I whirled around. There was nothing there. I began walking backward and then forward. A VOICE yelled behind me:

"There he is! Surround him! Don't let him get away! Grrrrrrr!"



I found myself suddenly surrounded by fifty or more dogs, all growling, baring their teeth and speaking in my language. I think my nose was really hurting me at that time, because I simply passed right out. When I awoke a few moments later, I felt the

complete discomfort of
being dragged by my
clothing by seven dogs.
"Look, he's comin' to..."

arked one.

going?" I could see a small house
just a feet ahead.

"Yeah, you're lucky we let
you walk there! GRRRR!" said a
Sitter.

"I've never heard a dog
speak before, er, that is, I have never
had a conversation with a dog before.
This is simply fantastic! How do you
do it?" I asked like some misplaced
scientist.

"Why doncha shuttup so I
don't haveta bite yer leg?!" growled
the one who resembled a Bearhound.
*Good thing I'd done my share of
reading on various breeds of dogs, yet
these dogs were very different from
any dog I'd ever seen.*

When we got to the little house a large Gray Dog told me to go inside. I hesitated to enter. I didn't like taking orders from dogs who were so obviously taking them from someone else. (*Uh oh*) The hungry looks on their dogfaces left little room for any haggling, so I just opened the door and walked in. I watched the large Gray Dog take the doorknob in his teeth and he closed it from the outside.

The house looked Ten Times Larger on the inside. The décor, like Doctor Rabitts', was **Victortorian** in style. There was a large chair with its back facing me that instantly caught my attention - - there was something round and shiny at the top. It moved. It began to slowly raise up, revealing a bald head. Not just *any* bald head, of course, it was Mr. Drundi's bald head. Mr. Drundi's body was definitely beneath that bald head.

"What are you doing here? Why have these Trained Animals forced me here? I demanded.

"Questions. Questions! You'll have your answers soon enough, though. Do you know what they call me here?"

"They call you a Wizard. Most likely they also call you a dog thief, kidnapper and even a murderer!" I said far too bravely. *I had no idea where that came from, besides my mouth. Now I was really going to get it.*

"They'd better hope . . . I don't hear them! I do get around, though." He walked over to a cabinet of wine. "Chablis Le Blank is your favorite, isn't it?"

"Y-y-yes. How did you know that?"

"I know many things," said Drundi.

What a stupid answer, I wisely kept to myself. He removed the bottle from the cabinet and a glass from the shelf. I couldn't help noticing that he removed just one glass. I was really going to drink that. Right. He poured it slowly and then held it up and offered it to me.

"Uh, where's yours?
Aren't you having any?"

"What? Don't trust me, huh? Fine. Forget it then!" he snarled and expeditiously swallowed the contents of the glass. *I guess it wasn't poison.*

I enjoyed the taste and the bouquet of Chablis Le Blank and obviously this was the ascertainable stuff, so I changed my mind, for some reason. "I believe I *will* have some, after all," I said.

"Sorry, but that just finished the bottle. **That's** the very reason I wasn't going to have any."

"Go wax your cranium", I mumbled.

"Anyway Evertil, down to business. ONE - - you are now a hostage. TWO- - - do not try and escape for your own good...and THREE - - get out of my way, I'm trying to go outside for a moment!" he said while pushing me out of his path to the door.

He went outside and began shouting orders to the dogs, telling them to stay near the house at all times and to let no one near and no one leave but him. He assigned the dogs to various guardposts and came back inside the house puffing a sigh of exhaustion.

"I know, I know." he broke in. "And he fell down the stairs, right? I already knew about it."

"But how *could* you?" I asked. It only just happened!"

"I already told you that I know many things, didn't I? And stop trying to con me with that 'greatest respect' stuff. I'm not buying it. Now come along with me, Evertil." I followed him to his guest room, which was probably used as a broomcloset before my arrival.

"Here is where you'll stay. If you need anything at all and you can't find it, don't ask because I probably don't have it," Drundi laughed.

"Could you please tell me why I am your "hostage"? How can you expect me to simply accept that?" I asked.

"You should know everything that you *need* to know tomorrow."

"Well, what about Doctor Rabitt?"

"He'll be fine. He'll make it. He just has a broken collarbone. Doctor Steiningstein is there looking

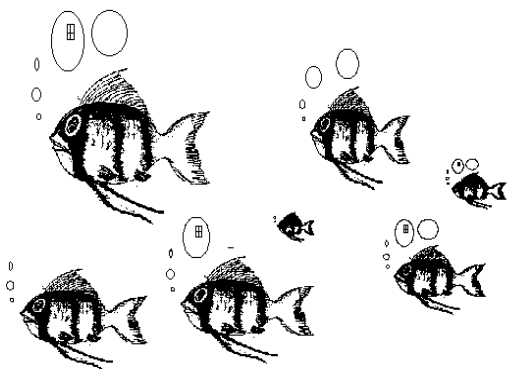
after him right now. You see, I *do* have a heart, two more in that cabinet over there as a matter of fact, that's why I sent Doctor Steiningstein there to help."


"Sent" him?"


"You know, the same way you got to Alwaysston, only less painful. Goodnight!" He abruptly closed and bolted the door and I heard him walk away. His footsteps sounded like they were in a giant marble hallway and it took several minutes for the sound to completely dissolve away in my ears I sat in a chair and noticed a book lying next to it on a small table. "***The Dreams of the Almost***" by Oliver Hausenbrauerdink. *That name sounded vaguely familiar to me, for some reason.*

I was fairly interested in reading the book but was entirely too sleepy, so I submitted my body to the caress of sleep. It had been yet another trying day and it wasn't over yet. I recall having some of the strangest dreams ever that night. At times they were like little stories, presented in a *Rococoa Opera* style. For example (a tragic love story in One Act):


Turtle: Will the River even care



That I love this fish, so fair? 

Gently, like the way she swims,
For My Fish, I'd
give my limbs. 

Fish: The River will not pay it
mind,
Because you are
so good, so kind.

Sweet Little
Turtle I love you and will
With every scale
and both my gills. 

Turtle: Do you think my
Mom and Dad will be hurt
When they find
that a fish has married their "lil Turt"?

Fish: Your parents they will be
just fine,
But what, pray tell, shall I tell *mine*?

Turtle: They shouldn't
care, they're only fish,
Could turn you
into *Turtle Soup*.

Turtle: Get
your fin off of my shell, You
slimy fish . . . go swim to **HELL!**

At the turtle's final remark, he turned and slowly swam to the shore. The poor little Fish (to whom my sympathy went) cried until she dehydrated.

It was at about that moment the book which had been lying on my chest while I slept fell on the floor and woke me up. As I laid with my eyes only half open I glanced at the doorway and thought I saw a woman's figure in it. My vision was not yet clear and I rubbed my eyes. A woman was still standing there. She looked very much like the girl in the portrait above Doctor Rabitt's fireplace of his daughter. I rubbed my eyes again to confirm that it wasn't an apparition of my mind. It was gone. Gone in the *Space In Time* it took to rub my eyes.

I sprang to my feet like a Frank-In-The-Box and rushed to the

doorway but saw nothing there. I thought I knew what I might have seen; but I knew I thought I saw what I might have. I resigned to the fact that I was a bit overcome by a headache and my nose was still quite painful from the slam into the tree in the Forest. I staggered back to bed and laid sideways across it.

When I looked down at the floor I received another shock. I saw two aquariums there against the wall. One had a fish, the other a turtle. Perhaps I subconsciously knew that they were there, which explains the subject of one of the dreams. Then again...I didn't see them until that moment. I didn't look around during my sleep, did I? I noticed the fish swimming around, looking very non-dehydrated.

That footstep sound started again, approaching the door. I held my breath, anticipating seeing the beautiful woman again. I expelled it when it turned out to be Drundi, who peered in before he walked in.

"Ready?" Drundi asked.

"For what?"

"Today." he said.

"Not really. Can I think about it until tomorrow?"

"I think you are. Now what I want you to..." he was interrupted by a great splash of water which came from the Fishes aquarium. It soaked my back and Drundi's front. I estimated the capacity of the tank to be about Nine Gallons, most of which was now freed to the room, its contents and inhabitants.

"How did he do that?" I asked in amazement.

"It's an old Cod trick. I can't believe I fell for that one." He began wiping his face with a handkerchief and the water that had beaded up on top of his head. *I knew he waxed it.*

"Some Cut-rate Wizard at the **Continental Divide** sold him to me wholesale, told me the Cod was a Magic Fish. I've always doubted it, save for these cheap parlor tricks of his."

"I've never known a continent to *divide* before, at least not without a war or something. Though I've heard that continents multiply, they stay the same physical size and it's really the contents of the continents that multiply. When the contents multiply too rapidly, it causes discontented continents. The only solution would be a subtraction of the population, which is where the *division* comes in, I suppose." I blabbered.

"I certainly have nothing to add," said Drundi. "What did all that apply to, anyway?"

"The Cod, of course. Look at him. He looks ridiculous with that Cape!" I suddenly noticed.

"Yes," sighed Drundi. "Still he thinks he's a Magic Fish..." once again Drundi was interrupted, this time by cries of "Fire! Help! Fire!", which came from his kitchen. He whirled around and ran out of the room, with me close behind. We came to a strange sight.

A two-sided skull, that is, a skull with a face on each side was doing the shouting. It rested on a pantry (*normally where I keep **my** skulls*), which was opened just enough for it to be visible. Both sides of the skull were shouting, "Fire! Abandon Ship! Save me! No, save **me!**"

Over to the left of the pantry there was a fire blazing away in a trashcan. Drundi filled a pot with water and soaked the fire with it. This only seemed to irritate the blaze and it actually grew larger when it came in contact with the water. Drundi quickly withdrew a ***Book Of Matches*** from his Library and cast it into the fire. The blaze responded

with a large cloud of smoke and died away.

"I told you to "put the trash out, didn't I?" said the right side of the skull.

"He would have just burned it anyway," said the left side.

In any sense of the word, Drundi had put the trash out that day.

CHAPTER FIVE

JUAN AND REGINALD

(and the SEA OF RABBITS)



I had not yet found out what Drundi was trying to tell me that morning. I guess that the excitement of splashing fish, blazing trash cans and screaming skulls had caused him a headache, and he held it between his hands as he told me that he wanted to rest in bed for awhile. He said that he wasn't going to lock me in the room, that he wouldn't need to.

I don't normally like to procrastinate but I didn't mind having whatever he had in mind for me put off indefinitely. I didn't have a good chance for an escape; the dogs outside were just waiting to chew me to pieces. Quietly, I paced and paced through the house until I decided I was hungry. I went to the kitchen and instead of the Ice Bocks, my attention was drawn to the pantry where the curious skull-thing was kept. The pantry door was closed and there was a pad without a lock on it.

Gross curiosity overcame me as I decided to open it up.

"Are you alone?" asked one side.

"Of course he is! Do you see Drundi anywhere?" said the other.

I could hardly move or even respond. I just stood there, gawking at something which most of had died sometime before the rest had not. I

was looking at something that would've confused the most informed DNA recomb expert. Each side had dark shimmering eyes growing out of the sockets. "So, you're alone, right?" it repeated.

"Y-yes. I am alone..."

"Shhh!" cautioned the other side. "We must speak more quietly or Drundi will hear us. There is still a chance for this guy."

"What do you mean? A chance for what?!"

'To get out of here before it's too late,' they both said.

"Too late for **what**?" *Why could I never get a straight answer around here, I kept thinking.*

"You better explain it to him," said one side.

"Why don't you?" replied the other. "I always do all the talking

around here." Its' eyes rolled around to the back of its head.

"Maybe so, but I do all the **thinking** for us," said the other.

"All right, idiot!" the eyes rolled back to a forward position. "My name is Juan and he is Reginald. We weren't born this way, you know," Juan started to whimper and sniffle. "I can remember when I had arms, legs, hands, feet, eyelids...a complete body. Yeah, I really miss the eyelids...!"

"Yes. But what a big **fat** body you had!" added Reginald.

"I wasn't built like a Brick Green House; but I was very handsome!" snapped Juan.

"You were still a fat slob," Reginald said with authority in his voice.

"Please, you two must stop arguing. Remember we must keep it

down or Drundi will wake up!" I said. I could hear him snoring through it all in the other room, though.

"I'll thank you to keep out of this!" snapped Reginald. "Juan is a fool to think he was handsome. I got all the girls. He's an egotistical dummy, just like his father was. I could understand if there was a reason for being so egotistical..."

"My father was an honorable man," said Juan. "His wife was an honorable woman. She was like a mother to me. Though you have done nothing but insult and contradict me since we were kids, let's call a temporary truce for now. Let's see if we can save this poor guy before he winds up in the pantry next to us."

"Good Idea! Yes, **yes!**" I agreed. "How did Drundi do this to you?"

"We really don't know..." Juan began, "yet I can still remember that dreadful night many years ago.

Reginald and I were chopping down a huge *Hair Tree* in the Forest when our axes were seized from our hands. They floated in thin air, and though there was nothing visibly holding the axes, they both raised up and attempted to chop **us**. We ran like the wind but were overtaken and in one sweep we were beheaded right then and there!"

"That's horrible!" I shook my head and put my hands around my neck, as if to make certain my head was still properly connected.

"You **bet** it was horrible," appended Reginald. "We were cutting down the finest Hair Tree in the Forest. Do you know what we could have been **paid** for such a tree?"

"Irrelevant, shuttup Reginald," continued Juan. "Anyway, we woke up right where we are now, with two brains inside one skull. Drundi said that it was a successful experiment and seemed very pleased with the outcome."

"What was the purpose of such an experiment?" I asked.

"I tend to believe that it's Drundi's answer to population control. Two

brains in one head saves a lot of space. Later on he told us that he decided to abandon his project/mission," said Juan.

"I certainly hope so. But tell me how you think that I get can out of here, I mean, get all of us out of here?"

"I don't want to go anywhere looking like this!" proclaimed Juan.

"Well you can sit here in a pantry like some can of soup, but I'm losing my mind. . . I'm going with this guy!" Reginald said.

"My name's Evertil Infinite." I informed them.

"See? With a name like that, how can we lose?"

It was quite obvious that they were both insane, and who wouldn't be? I was afraid that CueBall Head would be waking up any moment, so I asked again. "Can you tell me how we can escape?"

"O.K. The first thing you must do..." said Juan. "Is gain control of those Dogs. Go into Drundi's bedroom and find the Drainpipe marked "RABIES CONTROL". Once you find it, just go outside and start blowing into it. The Dogs will then be compelled to do your bidding. It's very simple, isn't it?"

"Simple? You really think I can go into his room and snoop around without waking him up?"

"Do you prefer the alternative? Besides, he's a very sound sleeper," said Juan. *Now he tells me...*

"Exactly where will I find the Drainpipe?" I asked.

"How should we know?" said Reginald. "You're lucky we know what we know!"

I opened the door to Drundi's room while gallons of nervous sweat flowed under my arms. He did appear to be sound asleep. I crept over to his Chestuv Drawers, looked through each one but found nothing. I checked the closet - just clothes. Under the bed - only shoes and lint. Then I noticed a Large chest with tiny gold letters embossed on it - "DRAINPIPES". I removed one and left as silently as I had come. I was so proud of the fact that I had accomplished this without one slip-up.

As I grinned with *Crazy Blind Power* (who left shortly afterwards), I cracked the door open wide and stepped outside. One of the Dogs was napping about ten feet away and didn't even notice me. There were about twenty or so having mock fights a little farther away. I immediately started blowing into the

Drainpipe.

The ground trembled beneath my feet and sudden deep rumbles from Afar became Anear. The Dogs began barking and howling at the top of their lungs. One jumped up and down madly, while others shouted in wild indistinguishable languages. They were in a total state of panic. I scratched my head in bewilderment and looked at the Drainpipe as I continued blowing into it, as I couldn't hear a sound from it. I remembered Doctor Rabitt telling me it was the strangest music he'd ever heard. I agreed, because **no** sound at all was strange. I didn't waste time pondering over it, because as the rumbling beneath me got louder, the Dogs suddenly came after me.

I went quickly into the house, slammed the door and bolted it shut. I was certain that Drundi had to be awake by now, because the Dogs were beating their skulls to get in there. I looked out the window and saw something I found unbelievable;

there were thousands upon thousands of rabbits storming and thundering in towards the house from all sides of the Forest. I dropped the Drainpipe to the floor.

The Dogs formed an organized looking line of defense; but compared to the Seas of Rabbits, they were but a pea in a pod. A fierce battle ensued as the rabbits stampeded from all directions, colliding into a gigantic ball of fur. The pitiful cries made my follicles to protrude and stretch.

Soon the chaos outside settled. The thundering sound of rabbit feet decreased as they faded off into the Forest. The only sound left was that of a garbled snore from Drundi, who was still asleep. I stepped one step back from the window and tripped over the Drainpipe. I cursed it, picked it up and then noticed a tiny inscription on it; "RABBIT CONTROL". Uh oh. Time for some glasses, I guessed.

With the reassurance of sinus congestion occurring from Drundi's room, I opened the door to examine what had just been a battleground outside. It was horrible. Fur was everywhere. I could not distinguish what had once belonged to what. I staggered from the heat...

I put my hand in my pocket and felt something there that made me feel ill as I hurled it away as fast as I could. It was a Lucky Rabbit Foot, given to me by Helka, which came with a card with her own special poem:


"Luck is hard to hold,
When you find it grab it,
I wish you more luck than this rabbit."

HELKA

CHAPTER SIX

THE HASTY FUNERAL



 As I simply stood in shock I was nearly overcome by the gruesome sight before me. Gruesome even for one such as I, who it's been said possessed an Iron Chamber for a stomach. I had been able to handle many other things so far recently which seemed just as disturbing - things wiggling under my feet, Speaking Severed Skulls, dehydrated Fish! Flies fainted as they buzzed by...

I suddenly gasped aloud as a wide sweaty palm firmly clutched the back of my neck and pulled me inside the house. *To this day, I cannot imagine what had awakened Drundi...*

"What have you done? What have you done?" cried Drundi. "My Dogs!"

"They weren't even your dogs, you rotten crook!"

"Dead." said Drundi. "All of them, at the hands of an idiot as well! A fool who knows nothing of the

Secrets of Tarrynbon or the *Wisdom of Owloporp*. This lousy Salt of Soupy Sewers who walks tall under fat cockroaches?!" I gulped, so as to shake the dew off of my Tom's Apple.

He looked like a kid who had just lost all his marbles in a fixed game, totally reposed in a cloud of grief. I wondered what he would do next...say some Magic Chant to turn me into a Fire Hydrant? Would he kill me? Sock me in the eye? Stomp on my foot? I somehow felt the slightest bit of compassion for the teary-eyed man, yet it was nowhere near the fear I felt for myself.

Drundi's face quickly changed and he began to laugh. "You know, this hasn't exactly been my day. I thought I would feel so much better after a rest. I could have just written this day off and let the ink dry. However, being outraged as I am at the moment, I find that very difficult to do. You do understand, don't you

Evertil?" he laughed with Overtones of Insanity.

"I certainly do." I replied. "I only hope that you understand that I had not intended for any of this happen. I only wanted to get out of here..."

"Get out of here..." Drundi echoed. "You fool! I was trying to tell you before, but due to all these interruptions, I hadn't yet. I need you and you need me. As it happens to most men and Wizards, I am getting mortally old, while you are still so young. Soon I will want someone to carry on for me, and I was considering you for the job," he said.

"Are you retiring to CARPET?" I asked.

"Are you crazy or something? Do you really think that I would subject myself to the poor standards of treatment there? Questions like that have made me think twice about making you a Wizard!"

"What makes you think I'd even be interested?" I asked.

"Oh, I'm sure that you would. Evertil Infinite, the ex-orderly? Ex-Orphan? Would you rather remain what you are now? Some meaningless speck of sand with legs and a weird name? Is that what you 'd rather be?"

I had nothing to say in my defense. *Think what you will Drundi*, but I was going to get out of there (I hoped). I bent over and picked up the Drainpipe. "I guess you want this back..."

"And how did you know about the Drainpipes?" he said as he grabbed it from my hands. "Why did you blow into this one, anyway?" he asked.

"A slight mistake caused by bad vision and Fear It Self. I thought it said "RABIES" - - you can see the similarity."

"Juan and Reginald," he said with a delighted look on his face. "They told you, no one else could have. I'll be dealing with them later. ha ha ha ha...." He left the room and came right back with a shovel. "Here you go. Pace yourself out fifty yards and start digging that hole."

"What whole?" *I was really of afraid what the answer would be.*

"The mass grave. Someone has to do it, and I don't see anyone else around here, so get busy!"

"Can't you just perform a magic spell or something?" I brainstormed audibly.

"Now what fun would that be? Move it!" he ordered.

"Yes sir," I responded like an automatic reaction. He wasn't my boss anymore; but he did seem to possess the upper hand in this weird game.

I went out to the proposed gravesite. As I lifted the first shovel of dirt, I looked back and I could see Drundi watching me from the inside. He smiled and waved at me and then made digging motions with his arms. "This is insane. How can I do this? It's impossible, besides the fact that I don't want to. I'm not a GraveShoveler." *I recalled the time that a GraveShoveler punched me in the eye as he left a GraveShoveler's Union party, which only made me more angry. The thought of Freedom and security of Doctor Rabitt's flew through my head like a bird and I began chasing it through the Forest.* I ran and ran, like my legs were superhuman, light as a feather in flight, wearing my favorite "I can do anything" look on my face as I fled.

In a moment it was as though gravity had turned sideways as I stopped abruptly. I felt a strong yet invisible grip on me that began pulling me back. The grip was a familiar one. I grabbed onto shrubs

and trees and hung on to no avail, I just uprooted shrubs and had to let go of trees while my arms were still connected to me. I looked back to the house to see he was still standing at the window, just staring at me. He had an unprecedented amount of power and strength. I stopped when I came back to the spot I had run from, when he opened the window up and shouted out to me. "You're not getting much done out there, could you hurry it up a little bit? ha, har har har " He closed the window as he continued his wretched laughter. As I began digging I began dreaming:

The Orphan's DREAM

I **G** was a long, quiet peaceful Sumirror Night and I was talking to my Father and my Mother in their suburban home, far from NFEC. Where had they been all these years? Didn't they have enough care or compassion to

even say how much they'd missed me, how great I looked and all that stuff? My Imaginary Mother kissed me on the cheek while my Imaginary Father tapped the ashes out of his pipe into the fireplace. She told me that they were very poor when I was born and simply could not afford me. Now that they had just won the Reading Indigest Sweepsnakes, they could now afford to take care of me, to share the love I never gotten from them all of my life. Then I saw little boy riding on a rubber dinersore. My Father-Image introduced me to my baby brother. "I know", he said, "Let's all go out to The Magnetic Cinema!" I said, "Sure, as soon as I finish digging this hole..." and I snapped back to the reality of what I was doing.

I was only about four or five feet down. Hardly a start when I knew it would probably need to be *Ten Times As Deep*. Still, I did wonder what movie my Fake Family was going to see and whether I'd have liked it anyway. After several

hours it seemed I had dug out a canyon, though it was probably only about four or five more feet. That was enough for me, and since I was completely exhausted I returned to the house, dragging the shovel behind me.

I found Drundi playing a game of Cherse all by himself at a small table.

"I've got the hole dug. Can you help me out now?"

"Help you? Help you what?" He looked annoyed that I was pestering him, ruining his concentration.

"To bury the animals."

"What are you talking about?" he sounded genuinely surprised. He motioned outside.

I flung the door open and then my mouth flung open. There was no sign of the animals or the terrible

scene. I just kind of made a moaning sound.

Drundi laughed like a High Eena. "Now, would you please go and fill that **unsightly** hole in my yard? Hurry, before it turns **Dark**. ha ha hee!"

I complied only because I had no choice. I kept looking around and whistling, "Here, boy!" and looking for evidence, but there was nothing. My arms were killing me. I had just finished when Drundi called to me to come back. "I have prepared something for us to eat." Sounded good to me.

Somehow, Drundi didn't look quite as astute as usual, save for his eyes, that seemed to move like little camera lenses, focusing and zooming in constantly. I began to ask him about the Dogs when he said "No talking at this table. There will be no words right now." *What a weird guy.* We had soup in silence (*what do you mean, "What **kind** of soup?"*).

After we'd finished, he ushered me to the room he'd originally locked me in. When he opened the door there was a new swinging door made of iron bars. The windows were also barred in. "Sorry Evertil, but I've decided that I need some extra security now," he said as he closed me in there. Then I heard the distinct sound of thirty-two locks being locked.

BED
Sweet BED



CHAPTER SEVEN

RESTLESS CAPTIVATION

SAD. Sad. So lonely locked up in that small room. Drundi had gone somewhere, off doing Wizard Things. I believe that if he wouldn't have been so mean, miserable and insane, he'd have had no personality at all. If only you knew, you of so little faith, how I so bravely faced the faceless, not scared of the sacred shelter of solitude. I cried myself to sleep like a baby - but don't tell anyone, OK?

CHAPTER EIGHT

DRUNDI'S



RETURN-EXIT

Starving for anything, my lonely stomach had been aching for days. It

seemed like a very long time had passed since Drundi had left, leaving a silence in the air that had become engulfed by the sounds of music inside of my brain. I experienced many *Intense Nothing-At-Alls*. I re-invented myself constantly. For entertainment, I had picked up The DREAMS OF THE ALMOST book and found it very encompassing. I seem to recall the "painted pheasants could faint peasants with their very presence". Trees bearing fruit in frozen Gothlandic places where Kings wore "KICK ME" signs on their rear ends, etc., etc.

I have eaten many a word before, yet none tasted as good as the thought of food, waiting for me to eat in an inaccessible place in my head. From *Time To Time* I'd lift my shirt to see if I had become any thinner. I spent hours uselessly calculating a way to escape this room which held me like a chicken in an egg. I collapsed on my third day of nothing to eat. I can recall lying there - and the next thing I remembered was Drundi, shaking me wildly.

"I'm so sorry, Evertil! I swear that I was a victim of unforeseen

circumstances and couldn't return until now. I was visiting Nilrem, a Wizard friend of mine, when I set a glass of wine on his table. Now this was no ordinary table, and it resented having a glass set upon it, you know what I mean?" I nodded, weakly. "Anyway, the table instantly scattered my body into jillions and millions of Atoms, as one would spill a glass of water onto a floor. In haste, Nilrem repeated the same deed upon the table. Unfortunately, he was not very skilled in the reconstruction of things. Besides, once something is disassembled its best to leave it that way, you know. He worked day and night reassembling me in an improvised manner. He did an OK job, except my bones creak like they were made of wood and my arm has a hinge on it. That damned table was all mixed in with my itsy bitsy decibels of molecules when he put me back together."

He wheeled in a cart filled with lavish foods of Unknown Cuisines. "I bet you're hungry, so

here you go. Help yourself. Here, let me help you up. You know, I'm hungry too, starving. But wait! It actually feels as though my stomach is in my left buttock! Go ahead, Evertil, I must try to get myself back together right away." He then walked away, holding both of his hands to his left buttock.



The Magic Lute

As starved and weak as I was, I barely managed to eat anything. With small success, I finally did eat a small bit of fruit with fresh milk, these were the only things that I could recognize. I sat back in a chair, allowing my body to relapse from the revival of strength. As I reclined, I fell into a dreamy state of

mind and a Magic lute appeared on the table asked me if I would like to hear some music. "O yes, I would love it. If you can, make it the A Leg Grow from Baytovens' Tenth Simfoni." The lute obliged by playing it beautifully.

The lute music sounded like an entire orchestra as heard from three hundred yards gradually produced another *Dream Inside of a Magical Dream*. This may seem insignificant; but this little dreamtale remains as clear and vivid in my mind as if I had just awakened from it. As the Tenth Simfoni was performed with such bravado and eloquence, so went my dream, thorough and rich in detail. Here is my attempt at retelling it for you:

Please, Don't Kill The Messenger . .

•

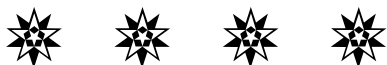
A KING rested in his royal chambers. Fifty heads have rolled already and certainly many more would follow soon. Where was Alisandro?

Could he have been beheaded too? The King tried to remember but could not. *Now that's not at all good...*

Alisandro watched from Below, this time he was on the other side of the Great Iron Gates, gazing upward, toward the Kings' chambers. He had done well by slipping through the garden unnoticed by the Kings' guardsmen. Was losing his head supposed to be his final payment from the King for a lifetime of service and loyalty? Butane, the Soothsayer had warned him Long Ago that the King was going Mad and Alisandro leave immediately. As we know that the best advice is the hardest to follow, he never listened to what he considered disloyal or mutinous talk. Never, until that day the King had ordered him out on a special mission. He was to collect and account for each white silken scarf in the entire Kingdom, then to burn all of them one at a time. Upon completion of that portion of the mission he was to distribute the ashes to Fifteen Vested Virgins in equal portions. He would then report the number of scarves (deducting the number of geese

swimming in the moat at Four O'clock) to the King. This number would supposedly tell the King how many years he would live.

Alisandro did not understand but did not question the command. Having collected the scarves and burned them (which took him three days), Alisandro delivered the ashes to Confused Young Maidens. He arrived last of all to the home of Pbel, his Beloved. He could give no explanation and he bid her farewell until the next day.



That is enough of that dream, for now. It could be a completely different story in itself.

I woke up hearing Drundi shouting at Juan and Reginald for telling me about the Drainpipes. What a wretched man, to yell at two defenseless men that he'd already

reduced to the equivalent of a rock. Conversely, Juan and Reginald did not seem to be afraid of him in the least. They yelled back in equal temperament and made perfect counterpoints. I looked in from around a corner and saw Juan's eyes glowing, fixed on an Ancient Bat that was displayed above the spot where Drundi stood. As Drundi carried on with Reginald, Juan's eyes glowed bright green. Drundi saw this and whirled around, just in time to receive a mighty blow to the head as it flew from the wall. Drundi fell coldcocked to the floor, the ancient weapon still on his head.

"I **did** it!" screamed Juan.

"Well, it wasn't very nice at all," Reginald said soberly. "I was winning the *Battle of The Wits* this time and you had to spoil my good time."

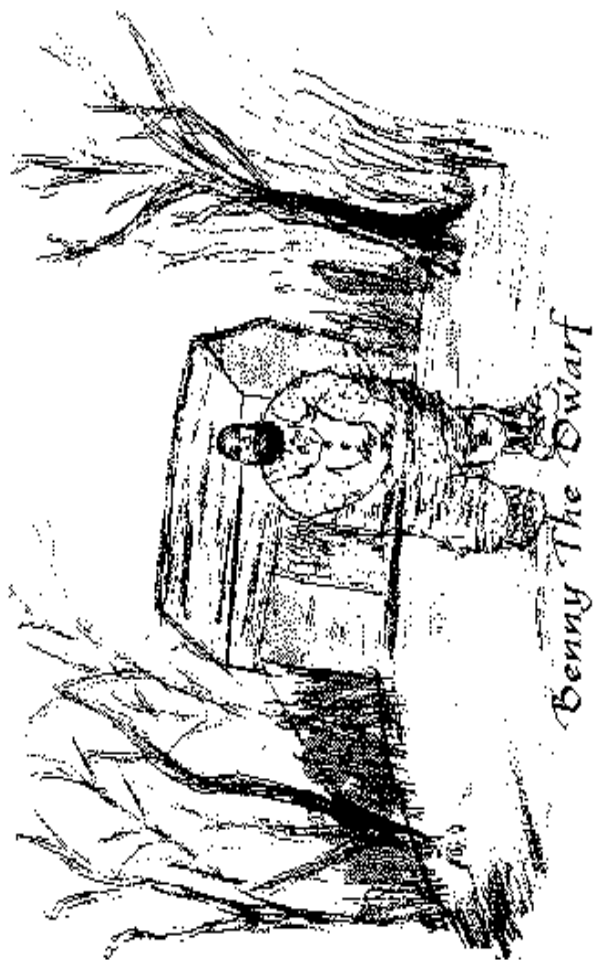
"We're free, do you hear? **Free!**" Juan trumpeted.

"From where I sit, we're still where we were and will always be," reminded Reginald.

Always a problem of mine, I felt compassion for Drundi and I attempted to pick up the heavy club. It was indeed heavier than I anticipated because I accidentally dropped it right back on him. This was truly not my intention at all.

"It is now done!" cheered Juan in triumph. "Vengeance is carried out! Justice is complete."

I stepped outside and raised my hands above my head in an uncontrollable gesture of confused emotions. I screamed, "Somebody get me out of here!" Nobody answered me.



CHAPTER NINE

IN THE LAIR OF THE LDIOS ...OR... WHAT IS A DERFIJACKAL?

The wind blew hard as I ran from that little house in Alwaysston Forest. I never turned back to look, too afraid of what I might see. I left Juan and Reginald there, last heard still arguing over whether or not the proper thing had been done. Day blacked out into night and the moon even took cover behind dense clouds as it began to rain.

I wriggled and tucked between some large Elephant Rocks for shelter. The gigantic boulders seemed out of place in the dense forest, as did the one in Number Forty Eight City. I actually got comfortable and slept the night there.

The following morning I located the road, which I'd lost in the Darkness before. I began walking towards what I had hoped was the direction of Doctor Rabitt's. It was a perfect morning in Alwaysston Forest; everything seemed so refreshed after the rainfall that night. Perfect, save for the tremendous backache I had. Odd, that everything seemed so new, considering the horror I had witnessed recently. Those thoughts were on my mind like a hat. I had, in fact, become a Great Worrier, wondering as I wandered through the blue leaves scattered along the ground.

Just ahead of me I heard sounds of feet swishing through leaves and people's voices. I hid behind another nearby handy Elephant Rock. In a moment there appeared two small men (henceforth known as dwarves) walking down the dusty road, apparently engaged in a discussion.

"Machio! You should know that there are none such as Eye, who would appeal to her. Is it not Eye whom she summons for more milk at Suppertime? Aren't Eye the One who tailors the fine silk gowns that she wears with such beauty and grace at Moontime?" the taller of the two said.

The one he called Machio said, "You are naught but her Servant and her Tailor then and nothing more, fool!"

They were both befitted in such beautiful clothing, the likes of which I had never seen. They had a corporate air about them that made them appear to be businessmen with large expense accounts. The taller dwarf carried a briefcase and had a generally hairy complexion, in sharp contrast to Machio, whose face was shaven as smooth as a bathtub, also with briefcase in hand.

"Ye won't be talking to me like that and I won't hear it again from ye!" shouted the taller one as he

hit Machio in The Eye, knocking him to the ground. He then picked up his briefcase and proceeded on alone, following no visible path.

I decided it was time to let my presence be known and ask for some directions. *Besides, the bigger one with the right hook was gone.*

"Hi there. My name is Evertil Infinate and I seem to be lost. This is the third time this week, I'm embarrassed to say. I'm not from here and..."

"I can see that," he said. He began inching back cautiously.

"I was wondering if I could get some help," I said.

"Are you here on business?" Machio interrupted. He handed me his business card.

"Not really." I said while looking his card over.

"That's too bad. I love

MACHIO knows:



business, that's my business, Businesses. I guess you saw my ex-partner, Bjorko just now. We are, I mean I am the chief conductor of all business done with the Ldios, my brothers. My name is Machio, it's now that I meet you," he said and waved at me. *I guessed that was just the propriety of dwarves - or what he referred to as the Ldios.* I waved back. "Your business seems to be finding your way, correct?" He raised an eyebrow and straightened his tie into a point, *thus making several good points at the same time.*

"That is correct to a degree. Do you know Doctor Rabitt?"

"Doctor Ray Butt? No, I do not. Funny you should mention rabbits though. It was just the other day when my friends and I were coming home from Alwayston Lake when we heard a terrible rumbling through the entire Forest. We quickly climbed the nearest trees as high as we could go. To our amazement, thousands of rabbits stampeded below us. We could have

been trampled, to be sure. I never lie to you," and he jumped up in the air one time.

"I have no reason to doubt you, Machio. You have no idea..." yet I didn't wish to discuss that.

A smile suddenly appeared on his face and he asked, "Would you care to walk with me to my home? Perhaps some of my associates, entrepreneurs, family or friends could direct you in some way. You see, guests are very rare around here. I know we could all have plenty to eat as well."

"Bjorko serves the milk as I recall..." I joked. It wasn't funny to him.

"I may be serving The Blood of Bjorko next!" After a pause, he appended, "I do not lie, but I do exaggerate at times."

We began walking along a path that created itself as we went onward. I could barely keep up with

him; and if we had had to go very far, I surely would have worn out several pair of feet. Not soon enough, we arrived at some heavy thickets of brush, which were bound together tightly with vines and twine. Machio opened up a door of Everblue Trees.

I was astounded to see a miniature village within the brush walls with dwellings lined up like little soldiers.

"Now don't be afraid," he announced while he went into a cabin. "I have brought a visitor with some good business sense. He is absolutely harmless."

I saw several more of the dwarves, who became very frightened as I crawled into a doorway, apprehensive myself. I felt like *Gullivan the Gigantic*, and being a few feet taller than them made me feel stronger than I actually was.

I heard Machio whisper to another, "...besides, you know what

we can do to him if he does cause any trouble..." The other one nodded in agreement. I was introduced to all sizes and shapes of male and female dwarves, which took a Good Hour. I was taken to a long table and a chair suitable for someone of my size was brought as twenty-two of them occupied their chairs, with yours truly seated on one end. I noticed another larger chair unoccupied all the way down at the other end of the table. I leaned over and whispered to Machio at my left. "Who sits at that place?"

"Rude that is, until she is here," he replied. *I couldn't make out that accent of his.*

The next moment a beautiful but familiar looking woman (larger than them and smaller than I) walked in. Where had I seen her? Bjorko immediately got up to help seat her, though it was apparent she didn't want him to.

An unexpected
intermission

THREE GHOSTS of ALWAYSTON
FOREST



A handsome one name Loof winked at the woman. She smiled back at him which caused his wife to give him what must have been a most painful kick in the shin. The woman began to laugh a little; but then cupped her hand over her mouth as if to remove the laugh. Her eyes then turned to me while apparently speaking to someone else.

"So, we have a guest tonight. Isn't anyone going to tell me who he is?" she asked.

"Evertil Infinite is his name, my good lady," Machio spoke out. "He comes from Afar, a place he calls Number Forty-Eight City. He does not know how he came to be in Alwayston Forest; but claims to recall most other things. I thought perhaps he could tell us some Good Stories, as he has the appearance of one who has had Many Adventures." Turning to me he said, "Allow me to present Janae, our Lady."

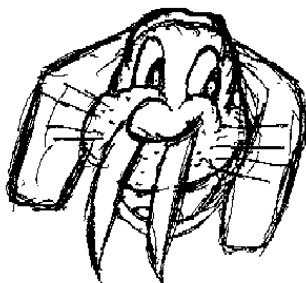
"It is now I meet you," she said. She waved to me.

"Yes, it is." I waved back. I'd have attempted somersaults for **her**, if that were the custom. I felt like doing them anyway. Her face was so lovely, her movement so gentle and graceful. *To spare you my utterly biased opinion I'll stop myself.*

"You look familiar to me but I cannot place where..." I realized that my selfish memory was not feeding me well until that moment - - the picture above Doctor Rabitt's fireplace of his daughter. She was also the girl I imagined I saw at Drundis' and now she was **here** and her name was Janae. *(I know, you already figured that out. The only one it was a Great Secret from was me.)* She smiled and drank from a small cup of hot te'. I took a sip and spilled it down my chin and it ran onto my plate. *Nice one, infinitely impressive!*

A fat little woman named Elfa walked around the table with a basket of eggs. As she walked around the table she would pause, and each person took two of the eggs from the basket. When I lifted an egg I was quite surprised, as I could tell from the liquid substance rolling around inside the shell that these eggs were in raw form and not boiled hard as I expected. Elfa motioned and said to take another. I tried to show an expression of appreciation for the honor, yet I'm afraid it probably looked more like disgust.

They all began to poke little holes with sticks that were sharpened like pencils (some dropped Seasonings inside) and sucked the contents out slowly. I nearly gasped at first but tried the procedure myself, as Janae observed. What else could I



A Derfjackal

do? I mean, I was *starving*. It was good. It was

milk, (my favorite fluid) the most excellent-tasting milk I have ever known. There was no embryo inside, just milk.

Meanwhile, Elfa brought forth a large container of milk and some type of cabbage served on bark and shoelace-looking roots in bowls. Stone cups clanked all around me and the sound of many people eating became intense. Bjorko Elfma seemed awkward at his unnecessary assistance, but by the way he kept looking at Janae for her approval you could tell it was done only to impress her. I could see that *she* could tell.

"Good, is it not?" asked Machio slowly slurping the egg.

"Yes, it certainly is," I replied. "Where do you get these things? I mean, what animal are the eggs from? I've never had anything like them. And this milk! It's delicious!"

"All from the same animal, of course!" said Machio looking at me suspiciously, as if I should have known that. Surely you know what a **Derfjackal* is. We have a small stock of them. They make wonderful pets and companions. Actually, these are all the finest *Derfjackals* to be had anywhere. Why the value of them has increased so much that my original investment has..." blah blah blah... I could see that he was also in the *Derfjackal* Trade.

In Good Time the meal was finished, followed by many delicious cakes and Uhrbal te's. The chewing noises subsided and the table was swiftly cleaned off and the room cleared, leaving me still seated at one end and Janae at the other. To make talking easier and to look even closer at her I moved down to the chair to her right side. As I sat

down, the chair and I fell over backwards, as it just could not support my weight. The chair smashed to bits and my backside suffered a brutal bounce, yet we both laughed. I guess it did look pretty funny. She got up and brought me the chair I'd been sitting on before.

* From the **Book of Owloporp**: a *Derfijackal* is a beast favored by the Ldios for his ability to produce both eggs and milk. Habituates Alwaysston Forest.

"Here, try this one," she giggled.

"That's much better, thank you." I sat down beside her again. My mind was blank.

"Have you some New Tales Of Adventure for me, Evertil?" Janae asked.

"My life has been a series of Accidents and Adventures lately. I wouldn't really know where to begin..."

"At the Very Beginning, if you please," said Janae.

Since I was glad to have someone to be able to talk with, I went from the Beginning to Present. Throughout, she did not say a word, nor ask a single question about any of it. I finally asked her if she was Doctor Rabitt's daughter **and** the woman I thought I saw at Drundi's lair.

"Knowing your story, I believe you can be trusted with mine. There are several things you need to know about me," she sighed. "I am Janae **Rabitt** and Doctor Rabitt is my father. It was my portrait you saw above his chimneypiece and I was the "Voice under the bed" that awoke you at Doctor Rabitts. You also caught me checking on you at Drundi's, yet I wasn't really there at all. I would have freed you somehow but Drundi's Power is so fortified that it would not have been possible. Let me explain, I once was Drundi's prisoner like you. He kidnapped me

and two other girls to make us into Wizards and form an Alliance with all the other Wizards in Neveah and LLeh. He wanted be the Great Leader Lord Wizard or something like that. He's really off of his sliding chair, you know. The other girls refused to have anything to do with that or Drundi. I have never seen them since and I naturally was willing to become his apprentice and learn The Wizard Ways from the most infamous of all. In time, Drundi gained a lot of trust in me and I learned many of the secrets in his **Book of Knowledge**. When I learned enough to escape him, it was my first of very few feats. I am not committed to performing acts of wizardry. I found sanctuary and have been happy here in Alwaysston Forest with the Ldios ever since," she exhaled.

"I guess Drundi must have had a lot of faith in you to make you a Wizard." I said.

"He thought any pretty girl would get him what he wanted. He was wrong," she said with certainty.

"Yes, but now that he's dead, he'll never be Warren Lizard..."

" Lord Wizard. Do you really think he's passé?" Janae queried.

"I saw him lying there... I didn't see him breathing."

"I'm not so sure. I have a sense that allows me to know where things are--and to travel without actually leaving," she said.

"Like when I saw you that morning at Drundi's?"

"Yes. I am the Breeze, I become Air," she smiled. "I've watched you commit Acts of Bravery. You are a good man, Evert."

"Evert? No one has called me that in years, not since I lived in the Orphanage," I sighed. "...so please, don't call me that again."



Chapter Ten



The Twelfth Of The Twelfth

Janae and I talked for hours, while some of the dwarves sat nearby and listened to us. A sextuplet of them began playing music on violins, horns, pipes, hurky gurgle and pradusgunks. A small audience of performers soon joined in and they began a piece of music Janae explained was from Loofs' Relic Opera celebrating a "black date" on calendars of Elves. She said the Ldios

found it quite humorous to think that Elves exist, that it was merely for amusement and all in fun. However, that *was* the date of *that very day*, if I'm not mistaken.

the Libretto went as follows and it's good you can't hear me sing this now...

The Twelfth of the Twelfth

is hard on an Elf,

Climb in a drawer or lay on a
shelf.

Stay home alone,

Don't answer the moan,

Of another Elf like yourself.

Beware of this day,

Don't Blow any Horn,

Happy Birthday if it's

The Day You Were Borne.

Happy the Crackjammers

Jamming The Cracks.

Happy the Woodsman,

Dropping his ax.

Beautiful world, made just for
This Day,

Looked better than ever, Ever
we say.

Nobody worked just the 12TH
Committee

To make sure all were as
happy as witty.

They All gathered around, for What,
I don't know,

'Cause it was the Twelfth of The
Twelfth, I suppose.

This was a day not swiftly forgotten,

But like I said, for an Elf it was

Rotten.

They sang more verses of fable
type nonsense as they passed a large
bottle of something around. Each
time someone drank from it, their

behavior become rather erratic and generally silly. They were Natural Born Clownes as they danced, sang and played further and further out of key and thyme. The party ended after a while, and they all wound up in heaps on the ground here and there. The largest dwarf, Benny was the last to pass out. I guess size made a difference.

"It happens all the time," Janae sighed. "They know they can't drink that concoction, yet they do it anyway. I don't understand."

"Perhaps they don't, either. All I know is they have to climb the Twelfth of The Twelve Steps and search for the Thirteenth. That's how they did it where I grew up," I said.

Days flowed into weeks that seemed like hours finally passed by quickly for me. Janae and I were treated like royalty from the Ldios and I was growing uncomfortably content with my environment. I was getting lazy from the all the

pampering I received. I all but forgot about Doctor Rabitt and hardly even thought about or spoke of Drundi. My thoughts became encompassed with Janae. Love was consuming me, minute by minute. Ticking by tock.ings.

At first I loved her beauty, but to love someone is to know them deeper and deeper inside, right to their heart. I loved her heart. Janae became the Interior Decorator of My Heart.



THE
DAY arrived when we
finally began to make a Wedding

Plan. The Ldios had been all but insisting on it for some time.

"Perhaps the date could be on my Byrthdaye. I don't care if I receive gyfts on it, but that would make it a Very Happy Byrthdaye!" exclaimed Janae.

"Certainly, Janae. And when is that?" I asked, realizing that I had never even asked her that question before.

"Descembre XII," she replied. I decoded the symbols all by myself.

"The Twelfth of the Twelfth. The day we met, not counting previous sightings." I began the song, "Theeeee-♪-!#----Twelfth of the Twelfth is hard on an Elf... ♪!" and she stopped me. *I knew my singing sounded bad but I hadn't had much of a warmup, either...*

"Stop it! Stop singing that foolish song! There is no Black

Date!" she snapped as she lost a piece of her Tempyr (you must always keep the pieces for your Tempyr, or it will never be completely well).

"Janae, the day of your onset was a very Wondrous Day, a lucky day for me, regardless of any fictitious fablemusic folklore. Finally I am free from the frivolous flights of fantasy and feel both feet on the firma!" I proclaimed as I stamped my foot for emphasis. Upon doing so, the floor gave way and my leg was suddenly in a brand new hole in the old wooden floor. I scooted out, still seated on the floor and grunted and tugged on my right sock until my shoe curled up at the toes. "I **hate** when they come down!" I growled (thus proving the Worth of My Wisdom on always keeping the pieces of ones' Tempyr).

I steadily became more and more nervous about all the Wedding Business at hand. When it got to be the Eleventh of the Twelfth I went to talk to Ruble, the seemingly wisest of the Ldios. He was the resident

Advisor and Philosopher At Large, if you will. I didn't have to say a word to him.

"There are none so foolish as those who are in Love. Yet there is nothing wrong with that, as Love is the Father of Enlightenment..yet it also the Mother of Blindness. Maybe you should try a different relative... Take care when donning your Shoes of Wings and taking flight with your Love. Behind each smile lies a tongue, each word a whisper, each brow a mind, each mind a mystery," he smiled with omnipotence.

"I don't own any Shoes with Wings..." I said.

"Then take care when donning your trousers!" he snapped. "That was just an analogy, I thought you'd understand that," grumbled Ruble.

"Yes, of course. I was just kidding. I understood perfectly. Why do I have the distinct impression that you are warning me about more

than you're saying. Is there something about Janae that you want me to know?" I asked.

"My tongue does not move for those asking such direct advice from it. All I will say is not to be married on the Twelfth of the Twelfth," he said as he walked away as cool as a polar bears tail.

Not enlightened in the least, I was even more nervous about it than I was before I saw Ruble. I couldn't understand how the poor little old guy could believe in such a ridiculous superstition as the Twelfth of the Twelfth. He was also the only dwarf they said was qualified to perform the ceremony for us.

I stayed on after he had gone and looked around for a while through his extensive library. I had come to read his books many times and was fascinated with the improbable history and information. Sometimes the language in the books changed to something completely foreign to me. Some of the words in

the books became pictures that moved freely about the pages. Other times everything stayed in its' place as I tried to figure it out. This particular time there was nothing of any great interest to me, nothing that would give me any answers as I'd hoped.

I left, leering at the lofty little letters that looked like large loops of twine above the lifeless library spelling LEARN. I liked it, luckily. I went to Janae, who was at that time surrounded by a small crowd of seemstresses and Machio shouting orders to them. Bjorko took care of the servant tasks, as well as I could ascertain. He seemed best at that.

Janae was wearing the most beautiful green finery that I have ever seen. It wasn't a traditional wedding dress, including all the slight variations they make in them. It wasn't that at all. She looked as if she were dressed as beautiful as one could be being dressed at all. I stared at her until she could feel my eyepoints.

"Oh, Evertil, I'm so excited! I can't believe that we are actually going to be married! Isn't my dress beautiful? Aren't you happy?!" she asked while spinning around, holding the edges of her dress. She ran over to me and held me very tightly.

"Yes. I'm very happy," I gasped as I loosened her arms a bit.

"Please recite that poem again, Evertil. The one that you wrote for me, it was so beautiful," she requested politely.

"Oh...the one I read to you last night? You really liked it? Well, all right, let's see now .. .

"Such Beauty as Lies in Thee,

As in Thy Ambering Hairs,

Brings To me so Swiftly,

Such Lovelike Dancing Airs.

*Such Love Thee Couldn't
Understand*

*The Longing Gazing at
Thy Hand,*

*Whose Gentle Touch Does
Command,*

*Infinite Love in the Heart
of This Man."*

"I'm very flattered that you would write such a beautiful poem just for me," she smiled while putting a tight hold on me again. I just smiled back. I couldn't really tell her that I had written it many years ago for another girl at the Orphanage. They *were* my true feelings ... I just needed some time to write another sonnet for her, a **better** one. That one didn't sound like me anyway.

Benny asked me to please leave so they could finish the last few

stitches on Janae's dress, so they could complete my tuckseedo. Even though I really didn't want to wear it, I could not have refused them as they took such pride in their work.

Machio, in particular, saying, "This is the finest and the largest size clothing I have ever created." Besides, I needed to own one anyway, though I had no idea why.

Later that evening I was coaxed into participating in the Ldios' usual/unusual little midnight ritual, singing strange songs and drinking strange drink from strange jugs. I soon became very drowsy from it and made it safely to my bed and did not simply lie where I had been sitting, as many of the Ldios did.

I was awakened very early the next morning as I *hung over* the bed. Machio shook me while saying my name just sweetly enough to irritate me so I would wake up.

"What do you want? What?!" I muttered.

"It is Desembre the Twelfth, your wedding day. Which, I should mention is in just a few hours from now," said Machio.

I soon got up and was amazed to see all the dwarves walking around singing and making celebratory preparations. It was hard to believe that these were the same pile of dwarves I saw the night before. Even Ruble was smiling. I noticed because I had never seen him smile before.

I went to see Janae and found her mixing something very muddy looking bubbling away in a large pot. When I asked what it was she said, "It's just some special punch for our wedding. You'd better hurry and get ready and I'll see you in an hour. Hurry on now!" she ordered. I thought her behavior was a bit out of the ordinary for some reason, but it let it pass since this was no ordinary day.



The time had come. Janae and I were finally standing in front of Ruble, who by this time had a smile on his face like a Carnival Clowne. He began the ceremony; "My friends, we have come here to today to bury...er...ah... **marry** this beautiful couple that stands before me and all of you. But first, I would like to say something to Janae..." he said as he looked her right in the eyes. "Janae, **dear** Janae. Would you really want to marry such a man as this, who cannot even spell his name correctly, stupid as it is? A clumsy, stumbling, bobodumpling oaf who even **admits** his life is a series of accidents? I don't think so." Janae looked angry, "Do

the ceremony as you're supposed to," she ordered. "You're spoiling everything!"

Ruble suddenly turned and faced me. "As for you, you well-meaning dwabblecake, did you really think I would allow you to marry my daughter?" he shouted as he pulled off his beard and grew one foot ten inches in front of our very eyes. Everyone gasped. Ruble next removed a wig and he changed into Doctor Rabitt, completely in front of the astounded audience of onlookers! Many of the little woman and girl dwarves screamed and fainted, *and I guarantee you that of all I'd seen, this was the most astounding sight I'd seen all day.*

"Ruble! Doctor Rabitt?" I asked.

"Ruble? Father?" Janae asked.

"Try again," he said as he removed a **second** wig from his head and an unmistakable gleaming bald head was revealed to us. "I am

back!" he cried out. I noticed Benny and Bjorko running swiftly from behind Drundi with the large pot of punch Janae had made. Drundi did not see them as he continued ranting, "First, I'll take care of Evertil for leaving me to die and then **you**, Janae, for thinking you could hide from me. Ha ha har! I'm going to..." he was interrupted as Benny and Bjorko thoroughly drenched him with the punch in a one fell swoop. In a flash (splash?) Drundi metamorphosed before our unbelieving eyes - *Drundi became an Elephant Rock*. He was remarkably quiet as a rock and quite peaceful, for a change. Dwarves were shouting and running everywhere; Janae was crying in my arms, Bjorko and Benny were dancing in circles together while I stared at a big rock.

Janae suddenly moved away from me. "Well done Benny! Good job Bjorko! I was right. I **knew** it was him!" she laughed.

"What? What do you mean?" I asked impatiently.

"I mean that we have seen the end of Drundi the Wizard my actual father, also disguised as my father, Doctor Rabitt, " she said with bravado. "Now we will know for certain where he is at all times. I've known of his presence since yesterday, when I overheard his plan as he spoke with Nilrem just outside of our hidden Everblue Gate. Drundi himself taught me how to make this very special punch I prepared, which he promised would solidify Wizards," she said. "**Ironic**, isn't it?"

I joked, "No, actually this rock is made of a carbon based material, not unlike..."

"Funny man, funny man," she said dully.

To show my more serious/heroic side and being in dire need of some participation in the event I walked over to the rock and fearlessly gave it

a hard kick. This caused me to yell in pain as all my toes bent up severely on impact. I know I don't always behave rationally, but at the time it was all I could do.



We heard muffled shouting coming from Ruble's Library and we ran to it and found him securely tied up and stuffed behind

his bookshelves. "I **told** you not to get married on the Twelfth of the Twelfth, **didn't** I?" Ruble growled as we freed him.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ALWAYSTIL ALWAYS HERE

(A PAGE FROM ONCE
LOST MEMOIRS)



suppose that about six
more years have gone
by since that
occurrence on the

Twelfth of the Twelfth and I am still here in Alwayston. Janae and I have since been married by Ruble and we live in what was the fictitious Doctor Rabitt's beautiful home. During the Cold Season we allow the Ldios to stay with us though they prefer their Forest home the best.

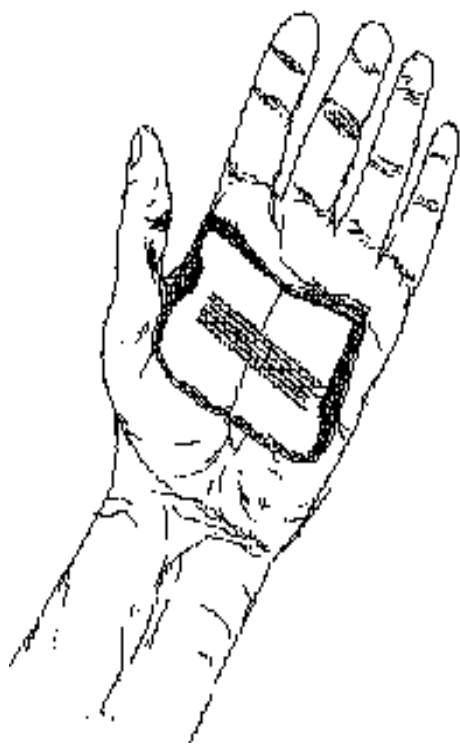
The days have been good to us and the nights even better. The only thing we have to worry about is whether Drundi will ever figure a way out of his present form. I do believe that Janae had delivered the final punch to him. We haven't missed him to tell the truth and he's always around to sit on occasionally.

We did have an epitaph inscribed and mounted on him that read:

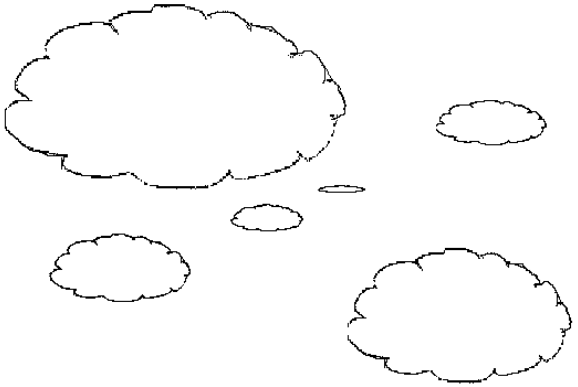
PITY NOT THIS
ELEPHANT ROCK,
THAT SITS
THROUGH RAIN &
BLIZZARD,
DO NOT THINK OF
ELEPHANTS
THINK OF DRUNDI
THE WIZARD

You may be interested to learn that on a most beautiful day recently, I was out in the Forest and overheard two woodsmen having an argument. When I went to see who was fussing and what it was about, they both ran over to me with the warmest of greetings. Not recognizing who they were, I was very confused until the fat one identified himself as Juan and the other as Reginald.

THE BEGINNING



CHAPTER TWELVE



*The Taker Of
Nilrem & the
Dreamwaters*



ll that seemed to be perfect with our lives in Alwayston was not unbroken. There was still an evil residue left about the place since Drundi had been changed into an Elephant Rock. The Evil manifested itself and one day took the shape and substance of a huge fire. Janae and I helplessly watched our home, once the home of Doctor Rabitt, burn to the ground. I'm still talking like there actually **was** a Doctor Rabitt, but he was the same person as Drundi. [What? Oh yes, nice of you to ask about Kitty. The Doctor dismissed her on the Twelfth of the Twelfth, and she went to other employment] There was a method to this madness, possibly. *Not that the method helped me understand anything about the madness.*

Janae and I survived the consuming hunger of the fire and went to stay in the Forest, near the Ldios. This was as it was until a horrible pestilence had nearly swept the land clean of all the life forms I had come to know and love so well.

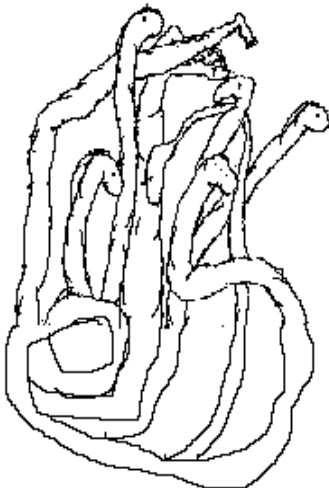
I feel as though I am getting ahead of myself. Perhaps I should explain what I know of Nilrem, the Dreamwaters and The Taker of Nilrem. I could also try to describe the Eyemusic to you sometime.

Shortly before the Taker came to take **him**, old Ruble had warned me about a deadly cloud known as the Taker of Nilrem. "It comes invisibly from Above and long Before had caused a mass disappearance in Alwayston," he told me. This was according to Volume Number Seven from his Books of Knowledge. The cloud was the wicked work of a Wizard named Nilrem, the same Nilrem Drundi had gone to visit while I was held captive at his home. The Taker would affect only the *natural habitants of Alwayston. This is how I am here to tell you about it. When the Taker was unleashed many centuries ago, all life just faded away. The early symptoms would cause ones' legs to disappear, which made walking a difficult thing to do without tripping over unseen feet. The remaining visible parts of the

body of the affected one would soon turn a avocado green color and then fade into the Air.

*a natural habitant was anyone borne in the Alwayston Atmosphere, which biologically affected Alwayston Newbornes at the Moment of Byrth, thus leaving them vulnerable to the Taker.

THE DREAMWATERS



THE SIMBATS

...were very cold in temperature and sweet to the taste. They were sheltered by a lovely assortment and various species of Blue Plants. Within the dense population of

foliage lived and lurked the Simbats, with mischievous temperaments and bad behavior that made them very greedy about sharing the Dreamwaters with anyone or thing. A Story had been passed through The Ages that the Dreamwaters were not to be touched or especially drunk by anyone, or they would soon lose their mind and eventually become a Simbat. Nilrem allegedly created the Dreamwaters for the purpose of bathing, while simultaneously giving him visionary dreams of the Future with complete realizations of the Past.

I had never heard of these mythical waters until the morning that my friend Machio had awakened me to bring me there. Ruble had advised him to have me sprinkle some of the liquid on myself in hopes of having an inspiring dream to change the fate of Alwayston, which he and Janae believed was coming soon. Of course I said it was all preposterous speculative superstitious hypothetical nonsense. Easy for me to say, yet it seemed true that it wasn't true. Ruble

believed that the Dreamwaters contained the Solution.

It was a very short trip getting there and I wondered why I hadn't stumbled onto them before, *since stumbling was a specialty of mine*. I spoke in my usual low, quick and crablike morning style to Machio as I followed him through the Forest. He tried to explain Rubles Revelations to me as we walked along; but I had no idea *what* he was blabbering about and I really only agreed to go because he said I could go back to sleep soon.

I noticed a peculiar looking little device in his back pocket that he called a QuickBeam, something that old Ruble had put together from plans contained in his **Natural Self Defense Weapons Manual Number Five**. He did not explain the reason for having the QuickBeam along with him and he reassured me that there was absolutely no danger to worry about. I was becoming suspicious of the whole affair, which woke me fully to my senses and I told Machio that I did not want to risk my

remaining sanity to a weird pool of water. He told me that Ruble was positive that I wouldn't go mad; and when **Ruble** was positive, there should be nothing to worry about. Well, that was good...for Machio.

He started behaving nervously, looking everywhere as if looking for Evil Itself in the foliage, so I knew we were near the Dreamwaters. I did not yet know of the Simbats yet; so I had no idea what he was doing.

"Hurry. Just dip your head into the water," he said.

"Then what?" I demanded.

"Hurry! There isn't much Time!" he said as jittery as one could've said it.

I reluctantly complied and I saw his face display doubt of some sort. He either doubted that I wouldn't lose my mind or else he didn't believe in the Power of the Dreamwaters, I'll never know which

it was. Right after I immersed my head into the pool I heard many strange cries, sounding like something or things were in extreme pain. Machio cried out, "The Simbats! The Simbats!" and he jumped up in down in a panic.

Out of pure ignorance I asked, "What are Simbats?!" Before he could answer I was immediately surrounded by a masses of weird squirmy things, all seamed together with spare parts coming from everywhere. I called out to Machio who had run behind a tree. "Machio! Get out your QuickBeam! The QuickBeam, remember?"

"Ohhhhhh yes, the QuickBeam," he said. He hastily removed it from his pocket and dropped it among the leaves under the tree. Meanwhile, I tried fending off the Simbats by throwing small stones from along the Dreamwaters' edge at them. They didn't like the feeling of being hit, which was evidenced by their shrill screaming. I

made my way over to Machio, who was still searching for the QuickBeam in the leaves. By extreme good luck I found it when I accidentally stepped on it. I quickly aimed it at the Simbats and my thumb squeezed on a soft button. A fine beam of colorful dotted lines was emitted and the stricken Simbats fell from the masses, while the remaining ones scampered away like a child, whimpering and whining.

Soon afterwards, I began drifting. I was losing consciousness. The Dreamwaters had begun to take effect. I was claimed by gravity and fell down. Machio ran over to me and tried to help me get up, to get away from the danger; but it was too late. Before my eyes closed completely, I saw that one of the braver Simbats had returned. Before Machio knew it, the Simbat had splashed some of the Dreamwaters on **him**. Immediately, Machio's eyes glowed sheer madness and he laughed a very wicked laugh. He dropped me back to where he had started picking me up from and he

turned to the Simbat, who was laughing at him. Machio howled and snarled like nothing I have known before and he chased the Simbat out into the Forest. I heard the howling get fainter and fainter, farther and farther out into the Forest. The next sound I heard was the sound of something approaching me. I held onto the QuickBeam firmly, ready for another Simbat.

I was shocked to see it **wasn't** a Simbat creature, it was a form like my own.

With the security of the QuickBeam in hand I asked, "Who are you?"

"Wait, wait. Put that thing down. You don't need to point any weapon at me, I'm no Forest Rogue, I can assure you. My name is Alisandro," he said.

"Have you any white silken scarves with you today, sir? If so, I will

gladly pay you for them. My King has sent me on this mission and he will be furious and possibly evaporate my head or worse if I don't collect every one," he said in earnest.

"This reminds me of a dream I had," I said. "Did you say your name was -
-"

"By the way," he interrupted. "Did you happen to notice a mad dwarf chasing a Simbat through the Forest? It was funnier than an elephant on a Ferris wheel. I always thought dwarves were afraid of Simbats. Just goes to show you...say, excuse me, you're going off to sleep now, are you?" he asked.

I couldn't help it. I had started to drift again. "No," I said, still holding the QuickBeam. "I can't. I have to find the Solution..."

"Solution? What do you mean, something to keep you awake?"

"No. The Solution to the Taker," I said.

"The Taker of **Nilrem**?" he asked.

"Yes. That one," I replied.

"Sir, if I happened to be anyone else in the Service of King Nilrem, he would have known of this immediately. Fortunately for **you**, I am not anyone else. Therefore, I shall keep it secret and spare your life. I do respect your bravery," he hesitated, then asked, "So... do you have any white silken scarves with you? My King is waiting! My beloved Pbel awaits! I am waiting!" he said with impatience.

"No, I really don't have any scarves. Never had one, really," I said flatly.

"Well, I didn't think you did anyway, I just thought I'd ask. Besides that, I should tell you that **the Taker has already been to Alwayston** this morning and it is

much too late for any so-called Solution. What you could use is the Cure for it, then your only answer would be the King, which would be out of the question, entirely," he said. "Good day," and he left me there by the edge of the Dreamwaters.

I wondered if the Taker had come while I was sitting at the Dreamwaters. It seemed as though I had only been there for a short while; but something inside of me couldn't say for sure. I propped myself up and decided which way I should go through the Forest. I knew that the dwarves were natural habitants -- and it soon dawned on me that Janae was too. Fear ran through me and it seemed the Dreamwaters effect was now void.

I made it back home without getting lost through the darkness that had begun to fall on the Forest. There I found a strange mist surrounding the area. I panicked and ran to find Janae, who was lying in our bed. She was also an avocado green color.

"Evertil! Where have you been? I've been looking for you for days; but my Powers are weak. I thought you were dead," she cried.

"But I just left you this morning. I didn't want to wake you when Machio came this morning. We went to the Dreamwaters ..."

"The Dreamwaters! That sounds like Ruble's doing. You didn't leave this morning, Evertil, that was **three days** ago," said Janae. "The day the Taker came."

"Janae my love, what can I do for you?" I begged.

"There is nothing. This death is painless - - and I will slowly disappear like every form of life that is from Alwayston does after death. I will always love you, whatever may happen," she said.

"Stop talking like that," I said. "There must be a way. I have heard of someone with the Cure named

Nilrem, a King or something. Some guy named Alisandro told me," I said.

"Nilrem **created** the Taker! Why would he give you the Cure for it?" she asked.

"Well, I'll just have to **make** him do it, that's how!" I replied fearlessly.

"Funny man. Funny man. Be reasonable, Evertil. Not only could you never make Nilrem do anything but it is much too late for a Cure for the Taker. Go find Alisandro again, I feel he can help you," she said.

"**You** need the help, Janae. I want to help you," I said.

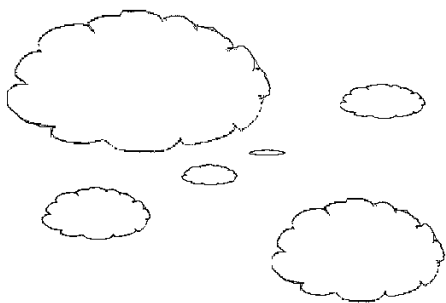
"I don't need help. One day you will understand all of this, but please go now. Leave me and go find him," she ordered.

"I'll just go check on the Ldios and I'll be right back."

"Yes, you do that."

I sat on the bed and gazed into her beautiful eyes for a moment. Those eyes that told me so many stories, into which I could see the face of every woman I'd ever loved, gathered in one place. *They were all one woman. They were Janae.* Her eyes soon began pleading for me to leave them ...just for a moment. I knew I would be back soon to see her again. As I got up from the bed I gently patted her on the leg only to find that both of her legs were already gone. My heart melted yet I said nothing. I kissed her and left in the *Science of Silence*, holding back my tears.

I found no trace of a dwarf as I made a thorough search through each little home. I returned to Janae to give her the sad news, only to find that she had also vanished completely. She was gone in that tiny speck of time.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

"I'D RATHER TAKE THE
MONORAIL...."

I found myself reading
and attempting to read through the

vast library of Ruble, hoping to find a clue to overcome the Taker. I could tell where he had left off in his own research. I was completely alone in this strange place, shortly before fully populated with wonderful and unique Life Forms. Death in Alwayston was very weird. Why did everything **disappear**? Where did it go? I wondered if Drundi was **really** dead, since there was still an Elephant Rock left to represent him. At least that was some evidence of his existence, wasn't it? It looked like the total annihilation of Alwayston. Perhaps, but I wasn't giving up easily.

Having paged through dozens of the books in Ruble's Library, I became very frustrated. Words and objects were elusively bouncing and flying all around the pages, sometimes in strange languages written in impossible lettering that I couldn't begin to read or understand, even if they would have held still long enough. I looked around the Library further out of frustration and found a large trunk with a very old looking lock shoved in a closet. I found a big

hammer and pried it open. It was filled with several dozen old books, and I believed there was a good reason for having them locked up so securely. I needed to **find** that reason without delay.

They were very well preserved insofar as I could ascertain by their Age. The titles themselves were very profound, once I could decipher the words; **Current Monorail Techniques, the Future Passed History, Antiques To Be, Ldios Psychology, Books I through XI, AYE KNOW, the Attempted Overthrow of Nilrem and Embryonic Specifications.** I began with the **Attempted Overthrow of Nilrem** to learn anything I could about the wizard. In essence, it stated that Nilrem was indisputably the most powerful wizard of Alwaysston and he controlled everything there. After a time, they formed an Alliance to overthrow his strong grip on them. They had assistants, named the Ldios, who served the Alliance for many years, evading the wrath of Nilrem even

though he created a formula to change most of the wizards into Elephant Rocks, save for his trusted entrepreneur, Drundi. Being aware of their existence in seclusion, Nilrem sent the Taker to wipe out the remaining life in Alwayston. I wondered why, though. Wouldn't he be the King of Nothing, the Ruler of No One? None of it made sense to me, yet there it was in print. I anxiously studied the **Attempted Overthrow** book, only to discover that the final pages had been removed from it. The **good** parts, of course.

Once again frustrated, I opened the other books, only to have them crumble apart in my hands. In one moment I was holding a book and in the next I held only Air and Dust. I returned to the **Attempted Overthrow of Nilrem** and it too crumbled and fell apart. *Enigmas don't have to be fair, do they?* It seemed that my last hope and my only option was to continue my search for Alisandro, which was Janae's last wish.

I went out into the Forest as I had many times and began searching for Alisandro. I traveled the Whyte Hills and the Soakcaverns in three days. When I got to a particular panoramic view from a mountaintop, I recalled an ancient map in the Overthrow book, which showed Nilrem's Private Territories. Before I ventured into those lands and be subjected to who knew what, I went back to take another look at the Dreamwaters, a place I'd been avoiding since my last unpleasant experience there. Undaunted, I made certain I possessed the QuickBeam and headed there, looking every bit as paranoid as Machio had when he was keeping an eye out for the Simbats.

I didn't find anything there, either. I sat down and stared at the crystal clear weird fluid in thirst. I wished to take the smallest sip -- just enough to satisfy my progressive thirst. I think delirium was definitely setting in, as I stooped over to have a small drink. Before I could do that I

heard a sharp snap sound that startled me. I got up and whirled around, ready to finish off the Simbats that I was sure were going to get me at any moment.

"So, you're still right where I left you!" someone spoke from directly behind me. It was Alisandro. The sound of his voice startled me so much that I tripped over a vine, knocked him off balance and we both toppled to the ground. As I went down, my thumb pushed the soft button of the QuickBeam, which hit a large tree limb over our heads. The limb broke off and fell; yet we had just enough time to move from the path or we'd surely have been killed. I got right up and brushed myself off.

Trying to ignore what had just happened, I said, "I'm certainly glad to see **you**, Alisandro!"

"You certainly are the clumsy one, aren't you? Like I said before, I really don't like having QuickBeams aimed at me. Why do you **do** that?" Alisandro asked.

"I thought that for sure I heard a Simbat over here, because I know I didn't get them all before," I said.

"You don't 'get' anything in Alwaysston. Oh, you foreigners! When will you learn that you only get what you deserve! I bet you still don't have any white silken scarves with you yet, do you? No matter, I have already fulfilled the deed for Nilrem and he was very depressed with the outcome of the Mission. He claims that it did prove many unbelievable Theories to him, though the outcome only sent him to the utmost regions of depression. He became even more tyrannical and cruel when he learned whatever he **says** he learned; and I have now taken an unauthorized Leave. I am now unprotected from the wrath of his Taker or any of his horrible creations. I shall never again bear witness to his terrible presence or serve him in any manner. Since I am taking flight, and knowing of your plight, you might be right to

leave with me before night, Evertil," he said in (certainly) an accidental rhyme.

"It's still such a strange coincidence to find you here Alisandro, don't you think so?" I asked.

"No coincidence in the least. I knew you'd still be here," he smiled.

"**Still** be here? After I last saw you I went back to Janae and the Ldios; but there was nothing left of any of them, save for Janae's Last Moments. I looked in Ruble's books and they crumbled into dust. In the past few days I've been through the Whyte Hills, the Soakcaverns and was next going to Nilrem's Private Territories after one last look here at the Dreamwaters," I explained.

"I can see that you have done some research yourself - - but this is exactly where you have been all along. I suppose that you don't quite understand how the Dreamwaters take effect yet, which is plausible. No one but Nilrem does understand. Believe me, you didn't really go anywhere at all. You are right here, or rather right over there (pointing to the spot next to the Dreamwaters) where you have been the whole time. Dreams seem like reality when one has been wet from Dreamwater. How do I explain? The dreams are reality, though not in a physical sense," he said. *I almost understood.* "Come on now, there isn't much time to lose," he said and began walking away.

"Wait!" I called out as I ran to catch up with him. He paused his pace for a moment. "Do you mean to say that I have been right over there until now?"

"I'm **not** telling you I am crazy," he replied.

"What should I believe?" I asked.

"Please, Evertil. Walk as you talk," he said as he continued walking.

"Where are we going?"

"To the only way out.... I hope."

I asked, "Did Nilrem ever speak of me?"

"I know you've got to be kidding. How do you think I know your name? You never told me. He spoke of you all the time, as if you hold some importance to the mysteries that plague him the most. He is very likely after both of us at this very moment," said Alisandro. "I hope the Monorail is still where I hid it so very Long Ago."

"The Monorail?"

"Yes, the Monorail," he echoed as if my question was also a sufficient Answer. I agree that it is more conservative to ask an Answer and Save Time; but it doesn't always work out that way. Of course I recalled the "**Current Monorail Techniques**" book from the Library, though I never got to look through it. *I wondered what the techniques were...*

"Where...?" I never got my question out before he interrupted me.

" Stop asking Evertil. "The Monorail will take us away from here," he said, adding, "beyond all visible Stars," he smiled.

I stopped walking. *This was absolute insanity. I probably had a better chance with my own plans*, I thought. "Maybe I'll just try my luck here in the Forest, Alisandro," I said diffidently. Alisandro stopped walking at that remark.

"Then grasp hard the Present Feeling of Fear inside your mind. For

at this moment it is as innocent as a pure azure sky. You will see this sky darken when Nilrem manifests his Power. So hold onto your feeling of Now. As for me, because I know there will be no escape for either of us if I stay here with you. Goodbye, it was good to know you...for a while," and he continued his pace again.

"Wait!" I shouted. "I guess I'd rather take the Monorail." Editors note: I **love** when the author uses the title of the Chapter in the context of the story.

"Ah, I thought you would," Alisandro laughed without missing a step.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

T

F

I

L

OFF

WE

took quite a while to reach the monorail which was hidden under false soil.

Alisandro and I lifted the firma like a blanket. Underneath the covering was the most amazing looking

machine that reminded me of a cigarette lighter I had seen at the Nasal Drug Store. It didn't look at all like the pictures I saw of them, like the one at DrizzlyLand. *I never had the chance to see Drizzlyland as a child; but I didn't own an umbrella either.* Alisandro laughed when I asked him where the track was.

"Track? How far do you think Technology has gone? Do you see the Distance of Advancement? There is no track. This is an improved model monorail. This type requires only one guiding rail to navigate it. Before this one, we used to use the slower Dual rails," he said.

"Who used to use them---and for what?"

"Only Nilrem and myself. Oh yes, Drundi too. I never was allowed to learn the reason for our trips. Nilrem denied telling me any of the details, as he always did. I was only there as his most faithful trusted servant. Where we went and Nilrem evaporated when we went from my

memory, I am certain. I don't even know how I remembered burying this here, Ages Ago. I know that there is nothing here for me, nothing but a powerful spell that controlled me, which has now broken. I have lost Pbel to the Taker, so there truly is nothing here for me anymore," he said.

We had to squeeze into the doors to get inside and I was glad to see that the Monorail, like Drundi's house in the Forest, looked Ten Times Larger once we got inside of it. I looked around at wondrous objects that looked as Fresh as an Hour from Now (as if one could *plan* on an hour from Then).

I became aware of a noise from the outside of the Monorail and looked out to see a Simbat attempting to get inside the open door hatch. I pushed him off and pulled the door shut, fastened the heavy locks and spun a big wheel that made my ears pop like corks from the pressure. Alisandro was squeezing a series of soft cushions

and unzipping zipper-looking things on panels. He moved arrows and lights began flashing in response to his actions. I demurely watched in amazement at the large wooden things he called Combe Pewters. Some small odd-looking boxes beeped together in odd-looking box language and I detected the feeling of a deep rumble, which may also have been my heart or my stomach.

Alisandro showed me to a chair and instructed me to fasten myself in with the Lapbelt. He then sat in the chair a few feet away from my own and fastened himself in. "Hold on," he said.

With an AHHHHH-CHOOOOO and then a MMMMMM-HMMMMM we lifted off of Alwayston.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE HUMAN BEING MORE THAN HUMAN BEING

G**N****I****S** was still more than I could fathom - to be hovering above the ground in a Monorail ship, heading for the stars. It was more than my caustic mind could comprehend. Tangled in a Web of Nonsense & Violence didn't make things any simpler.

I looked over at Alisandro, who was removing a lid to a coffin shaped box. "What are you doing?" I asked.

"I figured that it was about Time we found out if this old thing in here still works. Oh, look! It's still plugged in," he said.

I struggled to release my Lapbelt that would not let go of me. "What is it?"

"This is what was called a Human Being more than Human Being. It can serve us as the Monorail's Master Combe Pewter and Navigational System. **If** it works, that is. This is the most sophisticated piece of Equipment on the Monorail," he said while tapping on a thick cable. "This (cable) connects to the HBmtHB's Interbelly Connection. It leads to a linear and lunar energy battery, making his strength Ninety Times our own. Notice the eyes, how **real** they look, Two Hundred Twenty Times the strength of the average Eye," he said like a Tour guide.

"I wish I **could** see," I said while still fumbling with the blasted Lapbelt.

Ignoring my frustration, Alisandro said, "There used to be many, many others, just like this one, until they were unplugged and removed from service by Nilrem, just like the Monorail. I believe we are looking at the last HBmtHB in Existence." He suddenly turned to me, "Haven't you taken that Lapbelt off yet? I told you a while ago you could take it off."

"I want it off but it's stuck..." I said. He walked over and we both tugged and pulled but the thing seemed to be glued dead into place.

"I...will...fix..it for you," said an extremely low-pitched voice from the box Alisandro was looking in. The sound of that voice scared both of us and Alisandro bolted onto my lap and we both hugged each other tightly. The Thing got up, making squeaky twangy creaky pangy sounds as it stepped out of the box.

It stood approximately seven and a half feet tall and had a face like

a parking meter. The general shape of the body did look something like that of a human, yet so huge that I easily understood the "more than" human part. The hands were made of a strong looking Ore, with fingers as long as bananas. I imagined that it could very easily have crushed anything that I'd ever seen in my not-long-enough-yet life. IT began walking towards us.

"Alisandro! How do you make it stop?" I screamed.

"I don't remember at the moment," he squeaked. "It will come to me."

"That's the problem right now, It is coming to us!"

"I am completely automatic as long as my Interbelly Connection is intact," it said. "Do not fear. I only serve you." IT grabbed the Lapbelt and ripped it completely off of the chair. Laying emotionless eyes on me, it said, "I notice you have some lint on your shirt, sir. I shall remove

it for you." With just a slight movement it pushed me backwards off of the chair and I toppled into a control panel.

"I am...sorry...sir," the HBmtHB said. "I am not adjusted to Maximum at this time...current level is..." we suddenly were all thrown against the opposite walls of the monorail with a mighty heave.

"Watch it, Evertil! You were leaning on the Guiding Rail!" Alisandro shouted.

"Blame it on this stupid machine! I only landed where he **threw** me!"

We were so tightly pinned against the wall that we couldn't move. To make things even worse, the HBmtHB slid across the floor and smashed us even tighter to the wall. Before I could realize that I could barely breathe, the Thing made his way over to the Guiding Rail controls and put us on whatever course we were on before I'd changed it.

"Where are we going?" I asked.

"Actually, I'm not altogether sure of that," replied Alisandro. "I can't find any Star Charts aboard, but I'm looking."

"Craft is on a direct course for the Planet URTH, at a velocity of 10.6233 Years Per Mildridsecond," the Being beeped in.

"Oh, thank you," I said.

Alisandro leaned against another panel with his hand against his face, making it form into a question mark, "Ten Point Six Two Three Three YPM's.... Planet URTH. Uh...let's not get too far out. Evertil and myself only want to get out of Alwayston and away from Nilrem."

"Repeating...repeating...craft is on a direct course for Planet URTH, at a velocity of 10.6233 Years Per Mildridsecond..." the Being spewed like a bad recording.



"He has a strange attitude, doesn't he?" I asked.

"Cannot give precise altitude at this time..." it answered.

"Also hard of hearing..." said Alisandro.

"You are Correct!
Examination reveals cracked circuit for hearing plate number 15. Must attempt to effect repairs.." it said. Immediately the Being removed his right "ear" and took out a small circuit plate (must have been number

15) from inside his head and smoke rose from it as he gently fused the crack with the pressure in his fingers.

"I wish it were that easy to stop a headache," laughed Alisandro.

"Somehow this seems like the beginning of another one for me," I said.

I could feel the speed of the craft only by looking out of a small porthole, revealing millions of Stars and Curious Intergalactic Cosmic Real estate. We traveled through the darkness of Space, which looked as though it were occasionally splattered with the Stars while someone was cleaning a paintbrush. I marveled and shuddered at how close we came at times to the fragments of meteors that zoomed by as if thrown by an Almighty Arm.

I sat back with my arms behind my head, feeling more comfortable than before, though I had no explanation for it. "Somehow

I feel safe and secure where we are, wherever that may be."

"Same course for Planet URTH..our arrival time is 5.3285 minutes," the Being said. "Please fasten your Lap belts...prepare for landing," it said. The Being then laid into its box.

"Hey, thanks for tearing mine off!" I yelled to the HBmtHB.


"Just hang onto something, but not any of the controllers, please," Alisandro advised, while strapping himself in securely.

I can remember seeing a lot of flashing before my eyes; the day I awoke in Alwayston, the curious people and dwarves I'd become friends with but mostly I thought about Janae. I denied that she was gone from me and my heart could not accept it. I had the uneasy feeling that even though I didn't feel apart from her, I also felt like we never even met...yet. I looked over

at Alisandro, who gave me a reassuring look that he understood exactly what I was thinking. I could tell he was also thinking of Pbel.

CHAPTER
SIXTEEN

ON PLANET
URTH

fter a bit of shaking and tossing us about like some SHAKE WELL substance, the monorail slowly lowered down to the Planet URTH. It performed what I would call a smooth landing, without even the slightest bump. I ran over to the porthole to see this New Place.

I saw vast darkness on one side of us and a bright light on the other side. I looked downward and saw that we were parked on the top

of a huge rock, actually more like we were teetering on a precipice, literally dangling over a deep canyon below.

"I don't believe this!" I said.

Alisandro stopped fooling with some controls and walked over to see what I was talking about. This action on his part caused the Monorail to lose the delicate balance and we plummeted, turning end over end over end and were thrown about like a pocketful of change. *Please disregard the previous remark about a smooth landing...*

I awoke having what I thought was a terrible nightmare. In it, I was being dragged in a large plastic sack like a sandwich or leftover by weird looking creatures. I soon discovered it was fortunately **not** a terrible nightmare at all, it was **un**fortunately happening in Real Life though. Looking through the sack, I could see Alisandro and the Human Being more than Human Being also being transported in separate sacks by more of the weird looking things.

They moved about in a very rigid manner, much like the HBmtHB, save for their tripod frame bodies. Their 'heads' were video screens and were constantly projecting some type of figures or symbols on them. I was guessing that they were communicating with each other with equations even harder to decipher than the expiration date of a magazine subscription account number.

I felt as bad physically as I had the time I was shoved down the open elevator shaft. Worse yet (maybe not...) there was no Saint God's Hospital to be taken to. I wondered just where it was we were being taken to as we were dragged across the sandy purple colored ground. I probably could have torn my way through the sack but I was very weak from the fall, amazed I even survived. The Human Being more than Human Being was motionless inside the sack and I suspected that they had unplugged it or it came off during the crash. Alisandro looked

either unconscious or worse. As I rubbed my hand across my aching backside I made a wonderful discovery - I still had the QuickBeam in my pocket. Like Popenoe the Sailor, this was my can of String Beans, my secret weapon. I got it out and fired directly at the video-headed beasts, which dropped me on impact and froze into place. The others who were carrying Alisandro and The Being all flashed Red, Yellow and Violet colors on their screens and took off in a hilarious looking run (if you've ever seen a tripod running, you would understand just how funny). I didn't let them get far before I blasted them as well.

It was simple to climb out of the open end of the bag and I went over to help Alisandro, who must have only been unconscious, as he was moving now. He asked what happened and I told him. Again, he asked what happened and I told him. He asked once **more** and said, "Oh yes, never mind."

I didn't think the fall did him much good; but he seemed to be recovering from it.

The Human Being more than Human Being was much easier to revive; I simply screwed his dangling power plug securely into his Interbelly Connection and he shook his head with a screeky dweek sound and said, "Danger. Monorail impacting... Do not make contact with Video Beasts of URTH..."

"Thank you for the warning," I said. "I'll try to watch out for them."

I went over to one of the stiffened "Video Beasts" for a closer examination. The display on the screen was nothing but rain. I turned and called to Alisandro to have a look with me. At that moment I heard a PHHHT! and I looked back to discover that the thing had vanished.

"It was just here a second ago!" I explained to Alisandro.

"So what? That's just the way things are, that's all," said Alisandro.

"Never a trace," I said.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

BE CAREFUL, I CAN UNPLUG YOU

"**W**hy did we even come to this place?" I asked the Being.

"...following orders programmed into me eighteen thousand two hundred fifty two days ago..." replied the Being.

"Well, that was about 50 years ago," said Alisandro. "Lead us back to the Monorail."

Following a machine that I really didn't trust on a planet that threatened us with extermination and a body that ached and hurt all that it could, I decided that I had nothing to lose. We soon arrived at the

Monorail, only to found that it looked very sorry from the crash. Alisandro snapped his fingers, saying, "Hey Being, isn't it within your programmed functions to perform maintenance on Monorails?"

"Yes...I perform maintenance routines on Monorails..." it said.

"Good, start the repairs immediately," I added.

"I do not repair Monorails..." it said flatly.

"Can you try as a personal favor?" I figured I'd at least try.

No reply.

"Of course you realize, dear Being," said Alisandro, "that all machines not being used must be unplugged and scrapped for other machines. I guess we may as well unplug you, since you've outlived your usefulness," he said while winking at me.

The HBmtHB's deep voice said steeply, "I...will...attempt to repair the monorail, as you desire," the voice boomed out. *Very shrewd on Alisandro's part, I must say, though I didn't say.*

"Thank you, Being. We'll give you some lubricating oil and a sponge or straw, whichever you need, after you've finished," I joked.

"Don't push it. We're lucky we outwitted his programming," warned Alisandro.

We sat on the cold purple floor of the canyon as the Being worked on the Monorail. It looked as though he was doing extremely well thus far and never slowed his pace for a moment. I thought about the Video Beasts, wasn't it possible that they were important ambassadors from a distant planet? Perhaps they were sent to URTH on a mission of Intergalactic Peace and Good Well. Even though it probably wasn't so, it

bothered me a little as I raged with fantasy.

Hours Became Ours and we had no further use for them. I laid back to watch the Stars in the blackness above. They reminded me of a million hats waiting to be tried on. I seldom wear one, so that is usually how hats look to me, as if they are something rarely touched, like a Star. I was beginning to get very hungry again due to my boredom, even though Alisandro had just told me how low we were on the supply of Foodstuffs that survived our crash with us.

At last the Being emerged from the Monorail's interior. "Circuits DAP42 and Main Rogsom Board repaired.... panel Number Three molded back in shape...Artificial Orifice Entry for Bluetob Leads is back in service...all cablery is corrected...Occulander is not fully functional due to damage..." it announced.

"So then, it is all ready to go, **right?**" asked Alisandro.

The Being said nothing.

"I asked you if the Monorail is repaired and ready to go, Being. Is it or not?"

"Where is lubricating oil? You said when I effected repairs you would give me lubricating oil..." the Being sounded like a child.

"I was only kidding about that," I whispered to Alisandro.

"We must give him something," he whispered back. "HBmtHB's are sensitive about that sort of thing, which I suppose you didn't know. I'll take care of it." He looked at the Being, "I'll get it for you. Hold on for a minute," he said as he went inside the Monorail. He soon emerged with what I knew to be a bottle of Mablesyrup and he handed it to the Being.

"We didn't forget about you, old friend. Here, take this," he said.

"Human Being more than Human Being requires occasional lubrication of all moving parts," and began applying the sticky syrup to itself.

"Come on, everything seems to ready inside," Alisandro said.

I turned to have one final look at Planet URTH. There was really nothing to see from where I stood, just the flat purple terrain of the canyon floor. I assumed there were many more of the Video Beasts on URTH, and I later learned that the Video Beasts secretly controlled the Planet*. Alisandro pushed things as I secured the hatch. With a repaired MMM-HMMMM we left the atmosphere of URTH.

[*Author's note: **where** they were taking us in those sacks is contributory to an entirely different book and you may order it from the publisher or you can find it in most

bookstores, **AYE, KNOW II]**

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

TIME: THE UNMOVING JOURNEY

{The following is composed of excerpts from my journal, partially written in the Monorail Flight Log and sometimes partially written. Kindly excuse my handwriting. - E.I. }

Day 9352 - It has been a long, long time up here in the Desolate Universe since we left Planet URTH. What is happening to us? Days have made me weeks older, the weeks make me years older and after all of this short span of time I could be invalidating soon. I have become illustrated with intricate wrinkles all over my body and especially my face. My hands are like those of the old people I cleaned up after at CARPET. I've seen the changes in

Alisandro, also. He is now an old, feeble man who has left most of his mind and body in the Past. He calls the HBmtHB by the name Pbel. I believe that Love has a strong memory all of its own. As for the Being, he had broken down shortly after happily lubricating himself with the Mablesyrup that Alisandro gave him before we were left URTH. The syrup must have really shorted him out on something.

We have been stuck in this unmoving journey for decades of Time. After leaving URTH our Guiding Rail and Main Power Sources went into an irreparable state, unless we could find a HBmtHB to repair our broken HBmtHB who could then repair our Monorail ship. I still believe that the Video Beasts sabotaged us just before we departed URTH. It seems that Alisandro did not know about the thousands of packages of Foodstuff that we had on board with

us, stored in another area of the monorail, so we have enough of a food supply to last a long time. After a few years we ran out of good and great ideas and survival became a problem either to live or die with.

Day 9401 - I am still sensible enough at this moment to write this.

Alisandro's mind is slowly deteriorating, and he looks as though he has no idea of what I am doing while I write this. It is very sad. Through all of this cumulative time and distance I seem to have attained unaccommodating time without further erudition - what some will call a false sense of wisdom. I now believe that I would be a fool to ignore the knowledge lurking within my very self.

Whatever it is, I have always had something with me, something inside, guiding me with its

intelligence, while allowing me to live the bumpy-ride-of-a-life-of Evertel Infinite.

Day 9510 - I am not the young accident prone man I used to be. Oh yes; I am still quite handsome beneath the Decorations of Age on my face. Oh yes; I am still quite young before now, in the same way I am naked behind these rags I wear. My beard flows like a curtain of snow and time unfolds the curtain to greater lengths with each passing day. I have space-aged.

Day 9555 - I spend a lot of time taking care of old Alisandro and I believe it was only yesterday he called me Pbel and it made him

smile as I hadn't seen him smile in a very long time. He has become well acquainted friends with several species of birds that he imagines to land on the outside porthole. I try to ignore him when he behaves like that, as I fear that soon enough I may become friends with the birds. Whenever he isn't in front of the porthole, I like to look out at the stars that shine with all the luminous energies provided by the encompassing Universal current. I wish to note that just now I heard a strange sort of hum, a vibration so low in pitch that I feel in my stomach. It has just stopped.

Day 9610 - I do not really know if it is early or late, save for my own system of counting the days in this journal, which I sometimes must do twice a day in order to keep up. I have counted the time aloud so many times that it began a clock inside of me that counts automatically and sometimes I count along. Five minutes or Eternal Timelessness - - does it really matter which? I seem to be slipping, unless I've already fallen. Am I less or more than myself?

Day 9683 - Last week the Monorail
was



bombarded by huge meteors. I've
often heard them zooming by in
the void, but had never hit us
before. No way to tell what type
of damage may have been done
after we were hit; but I thought
it was pointless to waste time
worrying, considering I was still
alive. i have been suffering

from trance and dental
problems, lately.

Day 9690 - Yesterday Alisandro
must have gone outside the
monorail to be with the birds
while I was sleeping, as there is
no trace of my old friend. I have
tears blocking my vision as I
write, so I am stopping.

Day 9711 - I haven't been eating
much, and the Foodstuff supply
is nearly gone. I am an old, ugly
little pile of skin and bones.
There have been several more
occurrences of the low humming
sound and today I felt the craft
shake from the intense
rumbling. I haven't seen

anything outside and I believe it is only my mind that rumbles.

DAY 9712 - THIS MAY BE MY LAST ENTRY. I AM SITTING HERE LOOKING OUT THE PORTHOLE AT A ~~INTERGALAXATIVE~~ INTERGALACTIC CRAFT OF SOME KIND THAT LOOKS AS LARGE AS HALF OF THE UNIVERSE VIEWED THROUGH ONE EYE. THE HUMMING SOUND IS A ROAR AND I MUST CONGRATULATE MY IMAGINATION FOR PRODUCING SUCH A VIVID HALLUCINATION AS I APPEAR TO BE HEARING HAVING -- I am very weak. Sick. Almost dead. I wonder if I am because I must be as dead as time and my blood as dry as the ink in this pen-----

.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE LIGHT RING

I can recall closing my eyes just for an instant after seeing the huge vehicle and becoming very sleepy. I felt myself turn into light (this is the only way I know to describe the feeling) in one moment and in the next I was standing presumably inside the craft. At first, I wasn't too sure if I was inside it or if perhaps I had died of starvation and gone to Neveah the Maker. It was as silent as an unsaid word inside and I

thought perhaps I was thinking too loud. I didn't feel frightened in the least, for what did I have to fear anymore? I was already a dying old man with nothing more than the sparse rags covering his body, and had already lost everything he had loved within one strange lifetime, save for himself. I had endured about twenty-six years inside of the broken down monorail serving an unjust sentence of isolation. What more could Life possibly do to me?

The only object in the gigantic dome-shaped room was myself, until I noticed a gigantic *Circle of Light* above me, covering the entire ceiling of the chamber. It began to lower gradually and I calmly sat upon the *Soft Air* (which tasted so wonderful) and watched it for an hour or two. I soon became bored with the strange placidity of the situation, expecting an extreme drama to happen that I began talking to it. It seemed to glow different colors with different questions, especially when I asked it what made the sound of one clan

happening. Still, it just glowed in response.

After another undisclosed Period of Time I was getting a bit Starcrazy and found myself singing aloud and doing a dance of Chimerical Choreography for the Light Ring, which continued on a slow descent towards me. I continued on with my amusement of myself, "...and here's a little song that I wrote on my paper piano last week, unless we have any other requests... OK ready? a-one... a-two... a-one a-two a-three a-four..."

*"When last I saw you, Janae,
'twas a Descembre day,
That time the Taker found and
took the One I loved away.
That was thirty years ago, now
I'm an old man,
Before I die, I hope that I
can see you once again..."*

*Yes, before I die, I hope that
I can see you once again.*

*I'd like to kiss you once again,
though my lips are old and dry,
To Dance with You Beneath
The Moon of Descembre skies,
To drink that toast with the
Edios..*

*All on our Wedding Day,
To be where we once used to be
on that Descembre Day...*

*To be where we once used to be
on that Descembre Day.*

*I wonder if you exist Janae, I
hope that you're not dead,
Thirty years and still I hear
the last words that you said,
"When the Future is the Past,
and the Present close behind,*

*then I will return to you, if you
do not mind...*

*Yes, then I'll see you Evertil,
if you do not mind..."*

I was dancing a kind of jig between the verses, and when I'd finished completely I asked, "Not bad, eh? Now I have another one that I've been working on recently that kind of..." and the Light Ring abruptly dropped down, surrounding me with its Light. I couldn't really feel anything happening to me from being in direct contract with the Light Ring, until it began glowing such fantastic colors, colors that I had never seen before. I could actually **feel** the colors changing throughout my entire body, like my soul was being bathed in it. The colors seemed to pulsate more rapidly and I began to jump about like a puppet from the intensity of the pulses it drove into my body.

The Light Ring blended itself into the Air and vanished. I laid

weary and worn on the floor, as spent as a dime. It is difficult to describe the exact feeling I felt at that precise moment, except to say that I suddenly felt power in my limbs that I hadn't felt in years. I looked at my hands. They weren't wrinkled and dried out looking as they were just a short time before. My beard shrank and got darker. My entire body grew young and as strong as I was many years ago. How strange to feel that way again!

The dome began to vibrate and the walls folded up from the bottom, like an umbrella or a funnel turned inside out. I was left unscathed on the floor, puzzled though I had no crosswords to speak of. A figure of someone appeared from a door that opened upside down. I almost fainted --- was this our Lord in Neveah?

CHAPTER TWENTY

NIETSNIE'S THEORY of RELEVANCE

"You have really held up well, considering the circumstances," said the figure, which now stood down side up in front of me.

"C-c-c-circumstances...." I s-s-s-said.

"Of course you don't **know** them. But you shall know that I have made things as they were and as they are now. I am King Nilrem, the Greatest of All Wizards," he said. *Why did they all want to have that title, anyway? Couldn't they be happy just being great wizards?* He continued, "I am the Prophetic Intelligence who can make All be One or One be All!"

"Anyone can do that stuff," I said in an attempt to break down the tremendous Ego before me.

"Silence!" he roared. "I have been observing you for the Past Future Twenty Minutes or so and you've done well. In just that Time you have attained a mortal lifetimes' worth of Knowledge from Without. You have physically changed and aged yet you withstood it. Look at yourself now, you're exactly the way you were," he said with pride.

He unfolded a piece of paper from his pocket that



turned out to be a mirror and I saw myself reflected in it.

I took a long look at myself and then I asked, "What do you

mean you've been observing me for the Past Future Twenty Minutes? I don't understand."

"Perhaps I could explain something that happened to me Long Ago," he said as he folded up the mirror and returned to his pocket. "I had lost an Amulet that the Ldios had made for me, somewhere in Alwaysston Forest. I searched but could not find it. A few days later I was walking alone through the Forest and as Great Powers would have it, I found it. It was buried under some ancient soils, and it was some Fifteen Thousand Years Older. I'm sure you wonder how anything could age like that in a few days. Believe me when I tell you that I wondered, too. I have an old friend from URTH named Nietsnie, who theorized that we have all been experiencing a peculiar warp in Time itself for Endless circles of Time. In other words, when I lost the Amulet, I had already lost it before and had found it as I had before; and so on many times over. I studied Nietsnie's Theory of Relevance as he called it

and it is still a study of mine. I have learned to apply it to any purpose that I deem appropriate, with the understanding that I will be using it in exactly the same way in the Past Future. At present this is my only difficulty. I have learned to calculate the concept of all calculations. In the world in which I originated, we have developed methods so sophisticated that you would certainly never understand them. I wouldn't begin to explain them to you anyway," he said. I watched him open his hands after clasping them together for a moment and Five Little Light Rings appeared and disappeared. "You were just part of a warp in Time experiment," laughed Nilrem.

"Why would you pick me?"

"You flatter yourself to think you are a "chosen" one. Yet you are very unique in your biological and psychological composition when compared to those borne of Alwaysston," he said. "I **created** them for the original Embryonic

Transport from my Old World to
Alwaysston."

"What do you mean "created"
them for some Embryonic whatever-
you-called-it?" I demanded.

"I developed the embryos on
the Planet URTH, which is the planet
I come from. I developed Drundi
especially to take them to Alwaysston
in this very ship. However, I was
always convinced that during the
Transport he took one of them to a
different place. A very **special** one,
different than the rest. **You** are my
long lost missing embryo, Evertil
Infinite. Now I finally have you
back again."

I was shocked to say the least.
There never was any document of
my birth and I always assumed that I
was just the product of a night of an
accident. My imaginary parents
faded completely from my mind and I
thought of Nilrem, stirring some
chemical compounds in his DNA
Recombo Lab. It was unbelievable.

"You're finding all this hard to believe, aren't you?" he asked.

I shrugged and said, "You took Janae from me. All my friends, too."

"Yes, she is quite safe and happy in the Past Future as she was before. I had no choice. When I was overseeing this New Race of Alwayston, I endowed some of them with Knowledge to help me continue my quest for More Power. Some of their heads got too big for their proverbial Wizard Hats and I almost lost control for a while. There was nothing else for me to do but develop the Taker, so that I could have the embryos back and try it over again.

I have failed a few times, mainly because I forget the Past Future. There is a Key and I think that YOU are that Key," he said. *I wondered what lock I was made to fit into...*

"What happened to Alisandro?" I asked.

"Your brother Alisandro left the Monorail muttering something about going out to buy some Bird Seeds. Naturally he was absorbed into Space, but even Alisandro is safely alive in the Past Future again. It's all a matter of which Past or which Future you **find** yourself in. There is never a true Present as you perceive it. Your twenty six years was my Twenty Minutes." he began to laugh like a demon from Lleh.

While I was asking good questions, I asked, "Whatever happened to the other two women Drundi abducted with Janae?" Good question, they've been waiting for this one to come up...

"They are in the **Past Future**," he answered abruptly. "Stop **worrying!** Everything is under control!" He began pacing all around. *It was quite obvious who was really worried though.*

I found that I wasn't terribly pacified knowing that everybody was living in

the Past Future. If I was already there, **why** was I where I **was** and not where I **would** be if I **could** be? There was no sense in asking him and truly no sense to the question if one were to analyze it, I suppose.

CHAPTER TWENTY- ONE

the *START* near the
END of the
BEGINNING



"**Y**ou never belonged in Number Forty Eight City and you have completely fouled my plans up. I must do something about it and correct the entire outcome," Nilrem said.

"Hey, it wasn't my fault that Drundi left me off at the Orphanage instead of Alwayston; but I'm glad that he did. Why should you feel so responsible for everybody else's destiny? Why can't you leave things

as they are or were, and let them do what they will!" I said angrily.

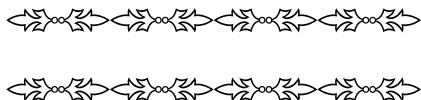
"They were trying to overtake me, that's why!" he shouted back.

"I am sick of this whole bunch of Nonsense and I demand to be returned to my life!"

"You **demand**?!" asked Nilrem with a pretending to be worried expression. *I didn't care though.*

"Yes I demand it!"

"Perhaps that isn't such a bad idea at that..." he mused.



In the very next Moment, I was standing with a mop in my hand

at the Camp in Number Forty Eight City, with absolutely no recollection of what had just happened at all. I could almost hear someone calling my name from a distance. I was suddenly certain of it.

"Evertil! Dream on your own time! This is your first day here and it could easily be your last and I know you need this job. Now get busy!" shouted Drundi.

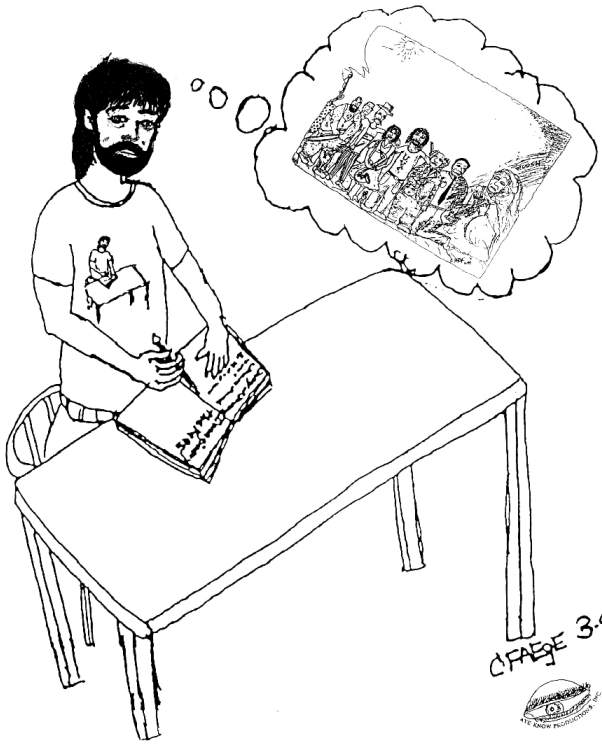
The mop fell from my hands. "Huh? Busy.... right!" I said. I mopped and cursed him under my breath, the rotten old Slavedriver.

"Someday I 'll quit this rotten job and get out of this rotten old city," I mumbled.

⤿ APTLOG ⤿

I don't believe any of the preceding events of my life had occurred to me at all, because they hadn't happened yet, and perhaps they never would again. I did not know of that "wonderful place called Alwaysston" from Drundi or my Past Future love Janae. I certainly couldn't have imagined Nilrem. It all comes back to me as I sit here at the Dreamwaters writing it down. Right now I can remember **all** of the things that have happened to me many times over in my circular lifetime. This was part of the reason I named myself Evertil Infinite before I arrived on this planet the last time around, but that's really another little story.

The Middle



EVERTIL INFINITE'S QUIZ

Multi-pull Choyce (you may use one of the blank pages at the end of this book for your answers if you like):

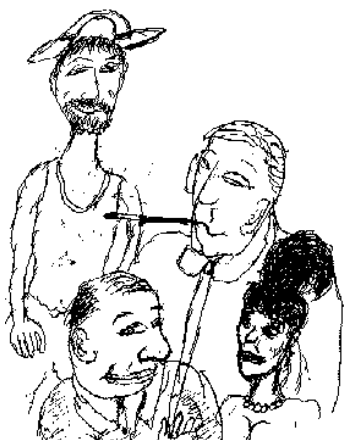
1). How did Drundi put out the fire that was most likely started by Juan and Reginald?

- a. Bucket of water
- b. a Book of Matches
- c. a squirt gun

2). How far was it to towne from

Doctor Rabitt's? a. a stones throw b. six miles north c. a skip and a jump

3) What were Juan and Reginald's occupations before they met Drundi? a. Firemen b. woodsmen c. spud welders



- 4) The life of Evertil Infinite was “a series of...” a. baseball b. convulsions c. accidents
- 5) Who wrote “*The Dreams of The Almost*”? was it ... a. Sir Wadlonglow b. Shookeskknife or was it ... c. Oliver Hausenbrauerdink
- 6) What was Alisandro sent to collect on his mission? Was it ... a. white silken scarves b. rare stamps or possibly ... c. 15 virgins wearing vests
- 7) What did the Derfijackals produce? a. ‘B’ movies b. ‘A’ movies or ... c. eggs and milk
- 8) Whose voice was heard coming from under the bed (on page 18)? a. Nobody at all, Evertil imagined it ... or .. b. Billy Bedpost ... but could it have been ... c. Janae
- 9) Janae was one of the three women abducted by Drundi to train as wizards. Who were the others? Were they ... a. Alice and Kitty b. Juwal and Harmernica ... or c. never revealed in the story

- 10) When was Janae's
Byrthdate? Was she borne on
...a. Nowonder The Nineth b.
Descembre The Twelfth .. or
was it on c. Sippedtobur The
Seventh

A few **TRUE (T)** or **NOT QUITE
TRUE (NQT)** Questions: (stop
looking down there for the answers!)

1) Drundi and Ruble had something
in common, they both owned Books
of Nowledge. **T NQT**

2) As Evertil explained, this story is
nothing but a rant of fantasy. **T
NQT**

3) Evertil needed to have an eye
examination. **T NQT**

4) Evertil's real parents were the
winners of a Reading Indigest
Sweepsnakes. **T NQT**

5) Evertil loved loose, baggy socks
around his ankles. **T NQT**

6) The Simbats were cute little warm
and fuzzy things that loved to have
visitors. **T NQT**

- 7) To gain control of the Dogs of
Alwayston Forest, Evertil blew into a
hurky gurgle. T NQT
- 8) Bjorko was the finest tailor of
them all. T NQT
- 9) Helka was not illiterate. T NQT
- 10) The spelling and use of
Capitalization throughout this book is
simply appauling, but it's only some
joke that the author must find
amusing. T NQT

Answers on next page ...

... and of course, **THE ANSWERS** (I love when they give the answers!)

Multi-pull choice questions: 1. b
2. b 3. b 4. c 5. c 6. a 7. c 8. c 9.
c 10. b

TRUE/NOT QUITE TRUE: 1. T 2.
NQT 3. T 4. NQT 5. NQT 6. NQT
7. NQT 8. NQT 9. T 10. NQT
(weird and for amusing, but not a
joke)

SCORING:

For each correct **Multi-pull** choice answer give yourself 15 points. Each **True/Not Quite True** is worth a generous 16 points, since those were a little more difficult. If your score was **310** points then you are certainly **me**, or you know Evertel Infinate fairly well. To Anyone who scored below **123.6**, I suggest finding the Exact Time to start reading it all over again. Remember that the Beginning is on Page 73 and The Middle is on Page 112 and so on ... then again, never mind. Do it your own way. It may not matter, since I can't actually give you a prize, but I do sense your keen ability for doing

well at this sort of thing. I **hate** tests. This may be one the few (or the one) that I ever got a 100 percent score on.

TITLES OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS

”The Author resembles Evertil Inffinate only by sheer coincidence

”The author --- a self portrait, while writing the Evertil story”

”The Cast”not the entire cast, just a spontaneous shot with friends who stood there while I drew them.

“Old People”

Oliver Hausenbrauerdink” or “With Spit Flying Everywhere”

Alice Kolait – drawn from a picture that fell from her purse. E.I.”

“One of Evertil Inffinates Many Accidents”

”Evertil Inffinate, Different Accident”

”Kitty” ... the nurse, not the Kat

”The Alwaysston Forest Road”

“Janae”

”Three Ghosts of Alwaysston Forest”

” Famous Fish From Later On” ...drawn by my father (and the turtle gets no illustration)

“The Spotted Dog” ...drawn by *my father many years ago, spotted by me later,

“Welcome to The Drundi Estate”

“Famous Fish From Later On and His Entire Family”

“Juan and Reginald” ... were going through a very difficult time of the time of this picture...

”Drundi as Death”he looks peculiar, doesn't he.

”Evertil In A Meditative Stupor, As A
 Result of Isolation”
 ”Drundi, As A Spiritual Leader, With
 False Beard”
 ”The Magic Lute”
 ”Benny the Dwarf” Ldios dislike being
 called dwarves, but it’s socially acceptable.
 ”Machio Knows: Business is
 Business”....this business card really says it all
 ”The Three Ghosts of Alwayston Forest”
 ...repeated only in a larger size
 ”A Derfijackal”
 ”A Pradusgunk”... an ethnic instrument of
 Ancient Origin
 ”The Delicate Foot”
 ”The Beautiful Home of Doctor Rabitt”
 ...I assumed the mortgage on the place ...
 ”Rubles Book of Nowledge” try finding
 the larger edition of the book ...
 ”The Taker”looking as innocent
 as clouds can be
 ”The Simbats”yugga...
 “I Could Feel the Speed of the Craft Only
 by Looking Out of the Porthole”
 ”Evertil’s Diet (the *after* picture)”
 ”I Saw Myself Reflected In It”
 ”The Author --- self portrait number two”
 ”Picture Taken At The Audition for People
 To Illustrate”
 “A yellowphant sleeping in front of his
 television set”

*Evertil Inifinate was
illustrated by *C.A.Foege
& C.J. Faege*

*The following page is a
review of the first
chapter or two I had
written in 1977. I had
little to no idea of what
I was going to write after
that until I shared it
with a friend named Janee'
in 1977. A year later I
completed typing the first
draft during a winter
storm.*

A Motivating note:

Read through Chapter One again and am getting enthusiastic. Listen, you could really write a novel out of this. OK the first 2 pages are vague. To clear them up + give Evertil a more substantial character let him be thinking these heavy, surrealistic thoughts + descriptions of his surroundings, but show more contrast by a better + more thorough description of the plain + ordinary that Evertil embellishes in his mind. You know, like you did with Evertil + U. Jemima, where Evertil is looking into the john thinking heavy thoughts about ageing + U. Jemima thinks he's somekind of weirdo and the least he could do is tell the old man to move over so someone else can piss too. That's good!

Have a definite purpose for the characters in your plot - if not, cut them out. And if they're good enough to be in there, they warrant some form of detailed character description. That's where skill comes in. For instance Evertil is quite a different person than he thinks he is and not even a 20 ft fall will change his mind.

BE CONSISTENT

Let Me Know

B

**We must never
give a pope on our
dreams. The story
of Evertil Infinite
has been mine for
thirty five years,
so far.**

THE INVENTOR

A POEM BY CHARLIE FOEGE
© 1978



The Inventor scratched his
mind again,
And began to create a creation,
Though it might never be
shown, to him it was known,
He was the Son of Innovation.

He paused and he thought - "Oh
well, why not?"
And started to write in his
Book,
He carried it with him most
everyplace,
It was even near when he
cooked.

The Inventor was a kind old
man,
A genius with discriminating
taste,
He had never harmed a living
soul,

And nothing ever went to
waste.

He wanted to help all of the
world
By way of his inventions,
But most, quite sadly, never
worked,
But were made with the best of
intentions.

The Inventor, undaunted
carried on,
Rejections left him unaffected,
They all knew him well at the
Patent Office,
And his inventions were never
selected.

And what, pray tell, would he
invent?
You might well ask, indeed,
Rubber sewer lids, shoes that
walk by themselves,

And books that you don't have
to read

Cardboard rugs and hats made
for ears,
To keep them from catching a
cold,
Gray colored hair for all to
wear,
So none would notice when
they would turn old.

Things for all Seasons, all
Times, all Reasons -
It's quite hard to think of each
one,
Things to catch wind in,
beginnings with endings,
Things finished before they
were done,

The Inventor was proud,
proclaiming out loud,
"I've invented a whole New
World!"

But nobody heard the Inventor's
words,
And who needs their straight
hair uncurled?

The Inventor was poor, as I
mentioned before,
He needed some food to eat,
"I'll invent a pizza.." (But
didn't know how),
"Well...alright then, I'll invent
some meat!"

By then, the Inventor was over
his head,
By claiming he would "invent"
food,
And though it wasn't invited, a
Voice came to his ear
And said, "Now don't be rude!"

"You've invented so much, I'm
afraid you've lost touch
with reality as it should be, as
Your life is
Invention after invention, after
invention
And by error you invented me.

I was born in a mirror clock,
Your very own invention!"
"Time doesn't exist inside
mirrors",
said the Inventor without
pretension.

"I've broken that spell and you
should know well,
Your inventions don't usually
work,
You're a poor old fool", said the
Voice,
"A fool who has gone berserk."

"Why can't I see you?" Where
are you at?

How do I know you exist?"
No answer was given; no sound
was heard,
And he felt something grab at
his wrist.

It pulled the Inventor, who was
so full of fright,
Out into the freezing night,
"Where are you taking me,
Please, let me go!"
But it held him very tight.

Down many streets, right
through the small town,
The strange thing pulled him
right past,
A few of his friends saw him
and asked,
"Where's the Inventor headed
so fast?"

"I have no idea," the Inventor
replied,
"I'm only along for the ride."

They shrugged their shoulders
and shook their heads
And some of them just sighed,

"He's finally gone crazy, the
eccentric old coot",
They agreed that his deck
wasn't full,
He'd have asked them for help,
but he thought,
"Hmm, now that would be
dull.."

So instead of resisting the
curious force,
The Inventor tried to think of its
source,
For none of his inventions had
acted this way,
And he thought 'til his brain got
hoarse.

Before long, it had stopped him
outside of town
At Tombstone Cemetery,

"I haven't been dying to come to
this place,
And really, I find it too scary!"

Whatever had held it let go of
his wrist,
But his mind was still full of
fear,
The wind was howling, as the
fog grew thick
And his eye let go of a tear.

"Welcome Inventor!" Someone
said,
Which caused the poor fellow
to quick turn his head,
His eyes met with someone that
men never see,
Unless they are soon to be dead.

"No! Not Death" the Inventor
screamed,
And he sobbed such a salty
rain,

"Don't worry," Death said,
"You're not even dead."
What's wrong man, do you
have a pain?

I want you to invent something,
which has never been made,
And I only ask that you try,
And if you can't make it, just
tell me now
Then I'm afraid you will die."

The Inventor trembled before
he spoke,
As he'd never faced Death
before,
"And what would you ask ... a
soundproof cask,
To drown out dead men's'
snores?"

"You're brave old man," Death
said as he laughed,
"To speak to me like this,
I seldom speak to people at all,
And they usually just get my
kiss."

"I speak to you bold, because
I'm so old,
And I knew someday I would
die,
But I always wanted to invent
something great,
To be remembered by..."

"This may be your chance, so
listen to me,
For I haven't too long to speak,
I'll soon be busy with the
Plague in the East,
Already the people grow weak.

Now, what you must do, and I
give you one week,

There is something which I'd
like invented..."

Death told the Inventor what to
do,
So his death could be
prevented.

The Inventor frowned and he
paced the ground,
And started to halfway smile,
"And if I can do this for you
will I live for an hour,
Or perhaps a shorter while?"

"I guess you don't know when
you're getting a break,
I just thought I would give you
a chance,
"Alright then, I'll do it but I've
always wondered...
Is it true that you really dance?"

"The Dance of Death is not a
lie,

Though most rumors are simply
not true,
From the minuet to the Latin
Hustle,
I'll dance them all with you."
"But I don't like to dance, and
never did,"
The old Inventor said,
"Ah, why not?" asked Death,
"There's worse ways to fall over
dead.

The next time I see you on the
seventh day,
Make sure what I asked has
been done,
Or, as it has always been, Death
again will have won!"

The Inventor then found
himself at home,
It had all seemed like a dream,
"I know that I must have
dreamt it all,
This is what I deem."

He laughed an uncomfortable
laugh,
Going about his daily chores,
He reached for a book in his
library then thought,
"What really happened before?"

He checked his calendar on the
wall,
He'd almost lost track of the
date,
"If a week would pass and there
was no invention,
I wonder if Death would wait?"

Then a worse thought occurred
to him,
What was he supposed to
make?
How could he forget a thing like
that?
With his life put up at stake?

"Ah, why should I worry
anyway?
There's no reason for me to get
shook."
And the room began shaking,
and he fell to the floor,
As he had just begun reading a
book.

The ceiling bulged, smoke rose
from the floor,
And every window broke,
He heard the Voice that he'd
heard before say,
"Our agreement wasn't a joke!"

"But what am I supposed to do?
I cannot remember at all."
The Voice was as silent as an
unspoken word,
Like talking to the wall.

He started inventing things day
& night,

Among them his "hole-proof"
gloves,
Included were buttons that don't
have to be pushed,
But rather must be shoved.

Telephones that answer
themselves
And windows of new designs,
Unlimited storage on invisible
shelves,
Iced tea flavored like wine.

Chameleon-like bandages that
adapt to the pigment
Of the person who'd put one on,
The only problem with them
was that,
Once applied they appeared to
be gone.

Five Days had passed, how
long would he last,
Without any sleep or rest?

Hardly any food, just a nibble at
times,
And his door was closed to all
guests.

His little house bulged as the
Inventor indulged
In making even more
inventions,
He would invent something,
throw it on top of a stack
that exceeded the rooms
dimensions.

"What was it that Death had
asked of me,
What could he possibly use?
An alarm clock that shakes you
in the morning?
A pair of socks that may serve
as shoes?

All those things are worthless,
At least most of them, I know,

So what will I do, for I've just
One Day left,
With nothing really, to show?"
The Final Day came, as it was
sure to do
And the Inventor kept on
working,
He hadn't invented what Death
had asked
Who was probably nearby -
lurking.

A knock came on the door that
night,
It was from a bony hand,
"How polite of Death to knock,
That's hard to understand!"

He opened the door and
standing there
Was Death in his black cloak,
"Have you got it made? Your
week is up:
Or shall I make you croak?"

"Come in old friend. Take a
load off!"
The old Inventor said,
"I haven't the time, now what
have you for me
Or shall you have to be dead?"

"Right in that room, I shall get
it for you,
Wait here, I'll be right back.
"Ah!" said Death, "So you've
done it then!"
And he made all his knuckles
crack.

The Inventor went into a room
alone
And removed a bottle from a
shelf,
He crossed his fingers as he
poured
The contents all over himself.

After a minute, Death burst in
the room,

But the Inventor was nowhere
to be found,
"Where do you hide, you
foolish man,
I know that you're somewhere
around!"

For the window was locked
from the inside,
So he couldn't have gone out
through that,
Death rummaged and searched
and cursed the Inventor,
Though right in front of him he
sat.

Invisible right in front of Death!
He laughed an invisible laugh,
Death walked right through the
Inventor,
Who was directly in his path.

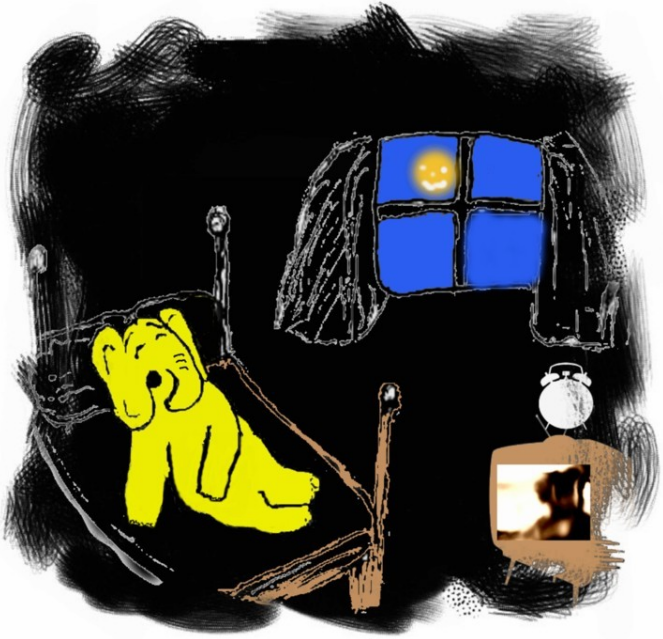
"My Greatest Invention!" the
old fellow said,

As Death picked up the bottle
which read:

"This will make me invisible,
and I will never die
Because Death to me has said;

"The next time I **see** you, I will
have won",
And Death always keeps his
word,
So now I'm invisible to the
world, even Death -
Never seen and never heard."

Charlie Faege
December 15. 1978



Published by URTH Press
St. Louis, MO 63114

alwayston@yahoo.com

APHORISMS:

Imaginary Themes, Volumes I, II & III

"I really like your album! It's great music to work to. Have you ever thought about doing film scores?" CAL SCHENKEL, ARTIST FOR MOST OF FRANK ZAPPA'S ALBUM COVERS, MARCH 2002.....

"From one musical explorer to another - this really is some great music." ESSRA

MOHAWK, singer, musician, songwriter recorded by & worked with Vanilla Fudge, the Shangri-Las, Cher, Procol Harum, Cyndi Lauper, John Mellencamp, Jerry Garcia, member of the Mothers of Invention, et al.....

"I liked the wide variety of instruments and orchestrations. Some fine lyrics, too." BILL BRUFORD - DRUMMER/PERCUSSIONIST OF YES/King Crimson "I truly enjoyed your music." -

*KATE BUSH "This work shows a lot of personality and emotion and there is some great music on the Imaginary Themes 3-CD set. Truly a man of many talents. I at first enjoyed the graphics and then the tremendous variety of music images." JOHN DOAN - World renowned Harpguitarist and recording artist with Hearts of Space Records..... "Never mind the production/instrumentation; that's more than adequate. These songs are very convincing." BILL BRUFORD - DRUMMER/PERCUSSIONIST OF YES.....FIVE STAR AMAZON.com review: ***** Top 500 Reviewer "Music for life, April 18, 2002 Reviewer: Gillian from Canada --This is a wonderful set of 3 cds that is a must for all you music lovers out there. It is rich in beautiful soundscapes, and is great for relaxing to. What makes it all the more*

amazing is that Charlie plays every single instrument on these CDs (except sax). I suppose you could say that it is in the New Age style, but it really goes beyond that. This is not elevator music, or music that bores you to sleep. Every track on here tells it's own little story instrumentally, and there is such variety between the tracks. Some are even helped along by sound effects that really liven things up. "URTHERAPY" for example (cd 1 track 21) would be right at home in Jurassic Park, while others have a very exotic Eastern flavour to them. Some tracks will make you smile, and some will put you in an introspective mood. But all will delight the senses, guaranteed! This is beautiful music, and should be in everyone's collection."

All types of merchandise (t-shirts, jackets, mugs, postcards) including the *Anthology of the Daily URTH News* and *Swept From the Streets & the Blue Moon Tales* books are available at

www.cafepress.com/urthstudio

-- then follow the trail from there to even more places!

Push & Pull Digital Records



MUST BE PRESENT TO ATTEND

THE AUTHOR IN EXILE



C.J. FAEGE, 2013

