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Lazy Lagoon: What I Learn as a Person, Teacher, and Student through Writing

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Before: What I Know and Want to Learn

For this project, I am going to employ a graphic organizer like methodology used in classrooms across the country and that I learned in my Reading class. It is a KWL chart. I am going to write a before journal stating what I know and want to learn regarding the issues to be addressed in my book, and then I am going to write an After Journal Reflection stating what I learned from the project.

So, I know, before even starting this book, that it is important to teach creative writing to students because it gives them a voice; it allows them to view issues from a personal perspective and gain a voice on real life issues. I did a project on Creative Writing in my English 408 class where I learned that an educational researcher named Tompkins believes that creative writing helps students “search for identity, learn to read and write, explore the values and functions of writing, foster imagination and self expression, give them an outlet to express opinion, and to entertain and enjoy reading and writing.” It gives students a better understanding of why we write beyond practical reasons and remembering information. So, before beginning this project, I know it will help me teach creative writing and this will be valuable to my future students.

Secondly, I know a great deal about the fall of the Cyberculture Empire from my Literature 360 class in which I wrote a paper on this topic, as well as McDonaldization,

which I learned from my Sociology and Technology classes at EMU. I know that right now people are “mcdonaldized, they want things fast and now. People are lazy and take quantity and speed over quality. Because of the need for speed, and the loss of personalization through emails and other technologies, we are separated from people, have less real life interactions, and thus, we seem to value speed and progress more than human relationships. As a result, many believe this accounts for the high rates of depression found in our cyberculture culture.

Also, I know from my Earth Science classes that lagoons are stagnant bodies of water. So, I was able to formulate the title of my novel, *Lazy Lagoon*, from a combination of my knowledge from both humanities at Science classes. I also possess knowledge about geologic formations and fossil records such as kimberlites and trace fossils, information which I plan to use for metaphors or deal with in my novel. I also learned about how we are depleting resources, and about past mass extinctions in my science classes, so my book will be a collaboration of educational, cultural, and scientific/environmental issues. It will be a reflection of my education at Eastern Michigan University.

Before writing this novel, my main purpose is to express my ideas and feelings in a creative work, to explore the writing process and learn how to better teach this process, to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of myself as a teacher, writer, and editor; to work on improving all of these aspects of my life. I want to learn how to use creative writing to value my multicultural students and teach ESL students to write; I began some research on this in my English 408 class. I want to discover what part of the writing process will give them voice in a new language, understand the world and how they view

it, and see the changes we should make. I also want to learn how writing can change me, and how I can use it to change my students, as well as tie in grammar lessons, figurative language lessons, etc.

This project is important to me as a person because I love to write, and it is one of my life goals to write a novel. This process is important to me as a student because I think I will learn a lot about my strengths and weaknesses. Finally, this project is important to me as a teacher because it will allow me to see what and how I learned from creative writing, and use this when teaching my future students the writing process. I will also be able to show them examples of my writing to model the writing process and show them that anybody can write.

January 8, 2006

Today was the first day that I began to work on my honors thesis project. As I went to write it, I had no idea how much research I would need to do. I needed to research other cultures and the Fall of Rome. So, after writing the first page and a half, I had to head over to the library and check out books. Most of today was spent reading books, and taking notes.

January 15, 2006

This past week I did not write a single page in my novel. I spent all of my time researching. I had no idea that doing research for this book was going to be so overwhelming. There are so many books on cultures, and they are all so huge! There are

also a million articles on each of the cultures on the Internet. This week I mostly spent evaluating sources, deciding which ones I want to use.

January 22, 2006

Once again, I have gone another week without writing a single page. Well, at least in my novel. I wrote plenty of notes. On top of reading the books for my three lit classes, I spent all of my “free” time this week reading books about the cultures I am going to write about in my novel and taking notes on them.

January 29, 2006

This week I finished the first chapter of my book. I introduced the characters and gave brief background on their various cultures. I learned a lot about different cultures, and it was very rewarding to finally do something I enjoy: write!

February 5, 2006

I told my advisor, Dr. Abby Coykendall, that in order to connect my book to both my major and minor I wanted to address some environmental and animal rights issues on my book. She gave me an article to read called, “Lives of Animals,” by J.M. Coetzee. As I read it, I made some connections to my anti war literature class. We have to do a final project in that class; I think I might use that article to help me with the project. Also, I wrote Chapter Two of my novel! What a productive week!

February 12, 2006

I looked up some articles and books this week connecting the way we treat animals to war. I found a book called, *Eternal Treblinka*, by Charles Patterson. It compares the way we treat animals in slaughterhouses to the way we treated Jews in the Holocaust. I think that would be a great antiwar lit project, so I ordered the book. I also came upon a lot of articles promoting vegan diets, and connecting environmental issues to eating animals and agriculture. It's pretty interesting. I didn't get a lot of work on my book done this week. I mostly researched vegan articles and war/animal connections. Honestly, I was a little bit *Lazy Lagooned* out this week.

February 19,2006

I found a book called, *The China Study*, when I was browsing around in Borders today. It talks a lot about how a whole foods vegan diet is the healthiest diet on the planet. I thought it seemed like it was really connected to the articles I had been reading, and I was really becoming interested in veganism. So, I bought the book. I read it most of the week. I didn't really write much, not at all actually, until tonight. I wrote five pages in my novel. I felt pretty accomplished. At least more than last week.

February 26, 2006

So, I've been working in the ICARD office this year. One part of the job is a GIS intern. My boss for that is really into politics. I was looking up intellectual warfare for my book one day, and she saw, and started telling me about all these crazy conspiracies. MK Ultra. Operation Paperclip. Pat Robertson. Using high frequency sound waves to brainwash kids. Flu vaccines. I don't know if I believe it, but it's pretty fascinating and I

think I'm going to use some of this in my book. I wrote a lot this week. 20 pages!

Written, not typed!

March 5, 2006

My boss has got me very excited about all these crazy political theories. She is also writing a book. She let me read most of it, and said that most of these stories were widespread, and the ideas didn't have a patent any more than the idea that money doesn't buy happiness. So, I can use some of these government conspiracy ideas in my book. I spent most of this week looking up articles related to government conspiracies. I didn't take notes or anything, just absorbed information.

March 12, 2006

I got *Eternal Treblinka* in the mail sometime last week, and I have been reading it like crazy! Between work and my other classes, I haven't had as much time to read it as I would like. But, I hope to have it finished by sometime next week! It is very inspiring, and it is beginning to make me want to become vegan! I didn't write much this week, when I didn't have work or school work I mostly read the Patterson book.

March 19, 2006

I finished reading, *Eternal Treblinka* on March 17. That book changed my life. I decided that day that I wanted to become Vegan. Between all the articles arguing environmental reasons, *The China Study* arguing health reasons, and this book arguing humane reasons, I think it is a sign that I should become Vegan. I think that now that I know all of this information, it is my social responsibility to practice this diet. I didn't

work much on my book this week. I've been researching vegan recipes, eating, etc. It is so fascinating. I've been thinking about giving up on my book. I have so much other homework; why did I decide to write a book? Well, I guess I wouldn't have been led to being vegan, so that's a good thing, at least.

March 26, 2006

I think it's my responsibility to spread the vegan message. I think fate operates with a plan in mind. So, I have to write this book so I can spread the veganism message! To help save the environment (if it's published, it better be on recycled paper)! I was very motivated this week and wrote 15 pages!

April 2, 2006

I have about four chapters done in my book now, and now that I have a new purpose, an important message to spread, I am more motivated than ever to write it! I wrote ten pages this week, but I went to visit my cousin at State this weekend, so I didn't have any weekend time to work on this or regular homework.

April 9, 2006

This week I was pretty tired and I didn't get a lot of writing done on my honors thesis project. I was busy working for money, and working on other papers and projects and assignments for my regular classes. I did manage to squeeze in five pages, talk to my

boss about CIA mind control and type quite a bit of it; I was too tired to write much though. My brain was dead.

April 16, 2006

I found out last week that I got a job as a Camp Counselor in California. I don't think I'll have a lot of free time to work on my book out there. I heard student teaching was a very busy semester, so I doubt I'll have much time to work on it then. Maybe I should just give up. I didn't have any time to work on my book this week. Too much other homework.

April 23, 2006

Although I didn't get much work done on my book this week, (I wrote 4 pages), I decided that I'm not going to give up on it. I've put too much work into it, I want to spread my message, and I've never been one to give up. Even if I don't finish it in time to graduate with Honors, I owe it to myself to try, plus, at this point, it is more than an honor's thesis project. It has become a personal project that I want to complete for my own reasons. It is not grade motivated.

April 30, 2006

Between moving home, and finishing up classes, I wrote nothing and did nothing for my Honors Thesis project. But I have almost two months before I leave for California and the project isn't due until December. I can do it!

May 7, 2006

I was going to work a lot on my thesis project this week, but, I was exhausted and my brain needed a little break. I also needed to find a job, so I could make some money before leaving for California. I rested and found a job. Next week, though, I aim to be highly productive.

May 14, 2006

This week, I finished through Chapter 5! I wrote, and I felt like it was a beautiful process. There have been times during this project where writing felt like a chore, but this week, it once again, felt like a relaxing and beautiful, fun thing to do; I felt like an artist again!

May 21, 2006

I worked a lot this week, and the weather was sort of decent, so I didn't get as much done as I'd like. I wrote 6 and a half pages, and experimented with some vegan recipes. I made my first batch of vegan cookies; they were delicious!

May 28, 2006

I wrote like crazy this week! Fifteen pages! And then, I caught up a little bit and typed ten pages! The typing is going to be the really difficult part once I get this thing finished; I'm going to be so sick of it! And, the final editing! Editing 25 page papers is hard

enough, but 100 page novels! I am beginning to see what the life of an author is really like, I think. I still want to be one, though!

September 3, 2006

The month of June the weather started to get nice, and people wanted to spend time with me before I left for California, so after May 28 I did no work on my project. Then, because I was afraid of losing it, and didn't think I'd have much time to work on it anyways, I didn't take the book with me to California. I got back August 28, and since then, I have been getting ready to student teach. So, besides reviewing the story, because I forgot where I was in the plot, how far the characters had grown, etc., I didn't do much.

September 10, 2006

This last week was so crazy starting student teaching that I got nothing done! However, TC West has a block schedule, so during my prep period I think I am going to start working on my project. I am too tired to write when I get home, but I can work on lesson plans then. We'll see how this goes. I don't think I'll finish in time, though; it seems impossible.

September 17, 2006

This week I have been writing during my prep hour. It's been working wonderfully! My brain is totally turned on in the afternoon, and I've had no writer's block. At this rate, I'll have no problem finishing this book in time! Typing it is going to be the issue.

September 24, 2006

Once again, writing my book during prep has been a wonderful idea. I worked quite a bit on it last Sunday as well. I have one chapter left! It feels so good!

October 1, 2006

If I'm going to finish my project in time, I think I'm going to need to work on my book during lunch as well as prep. I started typing it at home, but I am way behind in typing. We'll see how this works out.

October 8, 2006

I've been getting a lot of typing done during lunch. And, some during prep. I've also started to have more time to work on my project at home, because the student teaching experience is becoming less overwhelming. I am having less work to do for that. I've

also been doing some editing and working on grammar, which has been helping me teach grammar to my students.

October 15, 2006

I finished writing my novel today! I felt such a relief. Now, I just have to type it.

October 22, 2006

Typing is no fun!

October 29, 2006

I have one Chapter left to type. I am pretty sure I can get it done this week.

November 5, 2006

I finished typing my final draft. I am going downstate to print it this weekend, and then I can do the finally editing.

After: What I Learned

I am so glad I decided to write a novel for my Honors Thesis project. It was a lot of work, and a lot more time consuming than would have been a 25 page research paper, but it changed my life; I don't think a research paper could do that. This project has changed my life in that I learned so much about myself, both personally and academically, and I am now a vegan; this book changed my life views and how I view my role and place in the world.

As I had expected, this assignment improved my understanding of the writing process so that I can help teach and show students that anyone can be a writer. I have various drafts and can show them the editing process; they will know nothing is or has to be perfect the first or even second, third, or fourth time. I also have brainstorming

techniques to share with them, and know the importance of reflecting on writing and making it collaborative; I probably wouldn't have done this in the classroom if I hadn't completed this project.

This book also taught me how to appreciate the little things in life and “not sweat the small stuff.” I learned I am a person, and I am more than what I do; so I took time off and did not work on my book at all when I spent the summer in California. I allowed myself a complete vacation from school. Writing *Lazy Lagoon*, also helped me organize my thoughts, generate ideas, reach more abstract levels of thinking, and learn what things in life I think are important.

Besides a great deal of personal growth, writing generated personal possible research questions including, how can I make learning more authentic? Meaningful? Useful? How can I make assessment better and more accurate? High pressure vs. low pressure testing? And how do I make more real world connections to what is going on in the classroom? Also, writing helps find gaps in our own thinking and understanding, and it helps us develop attitudes towards subjects. As I read and wrote, I saw different sides to the issues I was addressing, and I was able to link ideas and concepts together. I also was able to share my thoughts and ideas and clearly express myself.

I was surprised how much of my life and me came out in the story. Especially when I read it to family members. When I discovered that various situations in the story resembled real life, or characters resembled family members, or me I was able to sit back and evaluate my own life and learn about my self, and my own individual character flaws. Writing this book really strengthened my own understanding of myself and the world I live in. There were times when I was working on it where I wanted to quit and

wondered if it was worth writing it; now, I know that it was more than worth it and I am so glad I never quit the project!

I also saw that writing can help us reach goals, stick to values and beliefs, and helps solve our own problems. By writing about veganism, it helps me stick to my vegan diet. By writing about how we should slow down and enjoy life, it helps me take time to relax. Finally, by making characters juggle some of the same problems I have, it helped me solve my problems and rethink my life. I didn't realize writing could be so powerful, and so much of what I experienced was pure accident. I mean, I originally wanted to write about environmental and animal rights themes, but the article Professor Coykendall gave me led me to a new passion, veganism, and she changed my life by introducing me to the work of Coetzee.

I was also able to see some mechanical issues I needed to address. I came upon some grammatical difficulties when writing this novel, and that helped me to discover, mostly in the editing process, that I need to work on my grammar. This helped prepare me to teach grammar in my student teaching experience, and field questions generated by my students. It also showed me that when teaching the writing process, I could give mini grammar lessons when teaching the editing process, and also see and assess where my students' real grammar difficulties lie.

This project has been the most profound learning experience of my life. I have learned about myself as a person, student and educator. What learning could be more authentic or meaningful?

Chapter One In Which We Are Introduced to Madame Cleito

Atlantis. Most will tell you it is mere legend, its existence no more likely than that of Ghosts. But, what if ghosts do exist? How would we know, since we can not see them any more than we can see our own faces without some sort of mirror. And, nonetheless, we know our own faces exist. Perhaps there really are ghosts and we only need to find the right “mirror” in order to see them. In the past, it could easily have been said, The Earth revolves around the sun; today, most would tell you this statement is as false as fool’s gold. There were times when most folks would have told you that Babylon is no more than a myth, the Earth is flat, and that it is a good, no, grand idea to treat those caught ill with leeches. Why, if someone could possibly believe that leeches would do anything good for you, why not believe in ghosts? Or, Atlantis for that matter? Unless, of course, you can PROVE they don’t exist.

Atlantis. The very word carries with it a deep and endless sense of mystery. Just because we can’t find it doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. It is quite possibly hiding deep within the sands of time, waiting only for the right wind to blow its cover and reveal it to the world. It is quite easy to hide in the ocean. The coelacanth fooled many people into thinking it was extinct. But, there was only one Atlantis, so it can’t be thought extinct. There are no fossils. It either exists or it doesn’t. Why, at this very moment, it could be seated on the vast ocean floor, flittering in great splendor waiting to be discovered. Or,

perhaps it has subducted underneath the Mid Atlantic Trench to hide for all eternity, laughing at all those who seek it out.

Atlantis. Why does its existence matter do you ask? Why it matters for the mere reason that if you can not believe in Atlantis, you will find it hard to believe in this story, for it is in that very great and most legendary city that this story takes root, and it originates by the way of Babette Cleito's memory.

*

Babette Cleito was born over 11,000 years ago. When Babette was a young girl, Atlantis was blossoming, unfolding with an aroma more glorious than that of any flower, for its scent was one of hard work, achievement, peace, and success, a scent, which engulfed the city in a swirl of nobility, wealth and prosperity. Love and beauty embraced the island, and it was quite an enchanting place, harboring a great abundance of herbs, fruits, nuts, and animals, including elephants. Oh, how Babette loved the elephants! And, how she loved to bathe in the hot and cold springs which speckled the land, and for some time, Atlantis was perhaps the happiest grandest place on Earth.

Slowly though, a plague crept upon the island. A plague of power and greed, of corruption and laziness. Zeus, who had blessed the island with so much of its greatness, became very angry with how the Atlanteans were behaving. How do you think an artist would feel if he were to see a group of spectators ripping his work of art apart? His art that he had labored over for endless hours. Well, Zeus decided that he had no choice but to save Atlantis, before its inhabitants ruined it. Tore it apart. It was created in greatness, and so it should end, but he couldn't bring himself to destroy the island, he loved it so. No, Zeus decided that it would suit best to preserve this now lost, city in the Ocean.

After all, Poseidon ruled over Atlantis, and he was the god of the sea; it seemed only right to place this “temple,” Atlantis had come to be, in the vast ocean, the domain of its ruler. So, with the authority of a government official, Zeus conferred with his fellow gods, unanimously, they decided to sink Atlantis deep within the crystal waters of the Atlantic. So, they threw thunderbolts from the sky and called upon tsunamis, earthquakes and tidal waves. In what seemed a great fleeting moment, Atlantis was sunk deep within the folds of reality. It’s people, too, were consumed by the sea. After all, Zeus didn’t want them corrupting the rest of the world. Most became sea foam, but those people who were good and uncorrupt, transformed into the most awe-inspiring creatures of the deep blue; they became sea horses, sea stars, dolphins, and fish of the most tropical colors and luminous qualities.

In fact, if it had not been for one lone survivor, the entire memory of this island would have faded. Without this survivor, there would be no legend of Atlantis, no sunken city. Even the people on neighboring continents during its time would have lost all recollection of this island, and it would have been as though it never existed, in either imagination or in reality. Sure, it likely would have lingered within the dreams of some of the traders and merchants of the time, but they would have acknowledged it as nothing more than a dream; they would not have even equated it with the realness of mermaid hallucinations; this “dream” of Atlantis would have been so airy and fleeting that the mind would not be able to catch it long enough to recognize it in the way that it does an hallucination.

Yet, Atlantis escaped this dreamy fate by way of one prosperer. Who is this one survivor might you ask? And, just how did she manage to evade any sort of destruction

or transformation? Well, in the early days of Atlantis, Poseidon fell deeply and truly in love with one of its inhabitants. Yes, he became deeply entranced and admiring of Babette Cleito, and with her he fathered five sets of twins who became the island's rulers. So, moments before Zeus sunk the city, his heart still clasping on to Babette Cleito's, Poseidon pleaded with Zeus to save Babette.

Poseidon was granted this request, but as it was the god's wish to end all ties with the Atlanteans, Poseidon was forbidden to see his love after the rescue. So, in an effort to obey Zeus, the young lover saved Babette, and then, in his chariot of horses, swept her off to Egypt in order to abandon her. However, before he left her he did two things. First, Poseidon took Cleito to Forgetful Spring, where he had her drink its fresh invigorating water, so that she would remember nothing of himself or Atlantis. Second, he made her an inheritress of a fleet of diamond mines, and diamonds were the ornaments of Africa. And then, he left her. He left her before he realized he had not taken her to Forgetful Springs, but instead, to the Fountain of Youth, which contrary to popular belief, is not in Florida. So, not only was she going to remember everything, she was going to live to tell the tale, FOREVER.

Chapterette A The Tale Begins

I am the oldest living person upon the entire Earth. However, you would never be able to tell by looking at me. Upon observing my smooth, radiant, wrinkle-free skin you would never guess I have witnessed the construction of all Seven Wonders of the World. If you were to catch sight of my sunshine hair glittering without a speck of gray, you would not believe I have lived through the rise and fall of Rome. My agile body would

cause you to doubt I had once been friends with Queen Cleopatra, Plato and Aristotle. And, with my gleaming white teeth you would never guess I have witnessed the sinking of Atlantis.

As I pressed my small delicate fingers against the old weathered Egyptian pyramid, my wrinkles lay hidden within the past, and I myself barely believe that I am older than this pyramid, this great monument, which has endured through the sands of time, without any fountain of youth. Yes, this pyramid, in all its grandeur, will become my boarding school, and it will help me save the world, I decided.

Having witnessed so much history firsthand, I have come to learn a great deal about destruction. After all, I have seen Atlantis sink, Rome fall, and many battles both won and lost. I have become a careful observer of the world, and after careful examination of our present day cyberculture empire, I can easily foresee its oncoming destruction. The people of the Earth have become imprisoned in a hyperreality of sorts, and the Poseidon Boarding School for Girls will be my way to return people to reality and relieve them of their laziness and lack of self knowledge. But first, I will have to recruit my students and staff.

*

India. The land of the Taj Majahl. A land glistening with diamonds aplenty, an exotic land that brings to mind elephants and waterfalls, a land that can almost make one smell the aroma of glorious spices. Alas, this is also a land of environmental degradation and extreme poverty. A land of overpopulation. A land in which Jasmine Advani grew up. She knew of nothing else and no other way of life, besides that which she had known

since childhood. Yet, that, in short time, would cease to be the case; that would soon change.

*

Chapterette B Jasmine Advani

If you ask me, Kerala is the most magnificent place in the world. A land engulfed by the Arabian Sea, it's delicate pristine waters of the tropical Malabar Coast so lovely, the eye is grateful to catch sight of it. Imagine, if you will, luminous lagoons aglisten with the most glorious and splendid hues of blue and green, their waters canopied by coconut trees that smell so sweet you feel that you yourself may at any moment collapse, transformed into pure and natural sugar. Oh, it just makes your taste buds crave a heaping bowl of kulfi, the very richest and nuttiest ice cream in the entire world over.

The mynah bird, Kali, and the red-rumped monkey, Tallie, wander through your bungalow, your treasured, beloved pets, who are so very dear to your heart. Camels and elephants wander freely, often in your very own backyard, so that you feel almost as if you somehow know them. At dawn, you will often see the dance of Kathakali (I myself have been learning this art form). Butterflies flow through your hair laughing upon each strand as softly as the wind, and you come home from schooling each day to eat sadhya on green banana leaves.

Kerala is a land of gazelles, monsoons, flamingoes, turtles, pythons, crocodiles, tigers, sea shells (I make millions of necklaces from these sea sent delights), a land of banana trees, coffee plantations, snake boat races, Malayali Dravidians, the language of Malayalam, the beautiful backwaters, and air so warm and pleasant, it is like being

permawrapped in a safety blanket. My Mata and Pita raised me in kind Kerala, and I do not want to leave it, ever!

Yet, I fear that on account of my Pita's miraculous ability to grow something out of nothing, to run a decent coconut plantation, and poach Bengal tigers (for he is a bounty hunter), which once caused me great joy, will be the very cause of my tears; for happiness and sorrow often blossom from the same seed. It was because I always had so much to eat that my stomach has grown to an enormous and incredible size.

I had known that my parents were quite unfond of my weight, but I was sorely surprised to return home from school one day to hear some, what I figured probably pretentious, prude prattling to my parents, "At Poseidon's Boarding School for Girls Jasmine will certainly slim down and blossom into the beautiful and exotic flower that she is. We place great stress on physical education and health at our school." How much more scripted could you sound!

I shivered, in spite of it being nearly one hundred degrees that day, of the thought of being sent to a boarding school. And, I knew the notion shattered my dear Mata and pita's hearts, as well, but while they had tried countless methods to help me lose weight, I just seemed to grow and grow. Like the coconut plantation. Up a dress size at least every month. They considered my weight unhealthy, and truly, they wanted what was best for me and my health. What was best for the family. I mean, if I did not slim down, I would never attract a husband of a decent descent or demeanor.

I dreaded the thought of leaving my darling home and family. But, I could not possibly resist what were so obviously the wishes of my parents. Besides, Shantam Nirvanam, priority to experience over thought. The experience would be good for me.

And, if I lost weight, perhaps, my peers would cease the relentless taunting and teasing; I didn't want to face that any more, or fail another diet. I couldn't bare the thought. I could improve my self identity and the Advani family image. Thus, I had no choice but to consent to go when they asked my opinion.

Chapterette C Princess Amira Majeed

My father, the Arabian King, welcomed the mysterious stranger into our palace, and my mother, the Queen, took no haste in offering her coffee, as well as the most comfortable seat in the drawing room. Taking heed to mind my manners, I of course, offered her water, a fan, and food.

The mysterious stranger accepted the coffee. She was really a lovely lady, her skin a delicious caramel, her lips a ravishing red, contrasted by the pearliest teeth I have ever seen and chocolate brown eyes more inviting than any cup of cocoa I have ever devoured. Her hair was long and shiny, glistening not so blindingly as the sun, but softly like beautiful stars on a clear night. Her smile and face were kind, but I was not sure if I liked her.

I assumed she had to be a somewhat important guest for my mother, the Queen, wore her most precious silk abayah ,complete with beautiful beadwork, accompanied by a lovely array of silver jewelry, asparkle with embellishments of stones and corals, a full symphony of adornments. If this lady was of no importance, my mother surely wouldn't have chosen her most exquisite and elaborate ensemble for the evening.

I sat quietly in the corner chair, a look of feigned boredom sweeping my face until the stranger began to introduce herself, and it was then that a wrinkle of curiosity began

to expose itself on my forehead, unable to keep hidden. “My name is Headmistress Cleito. I would like to begin by saying that Poseidon Boarding School would be highly honored to be given the privilege of having Amira added to its pupil population. We offer excellent instruction in calligraphy as well as a class covering the teachings of the Quran. Amira will also be exposed to girls coming from all over the world, which will heighten her cultural awareness, making her a valuable asset for any family, or husband even. It is a very selective school, and it could quite possibly be a once in a lifetime opportunity for Princess Amira.”

My father glanced at me and read in my eyes that I did not wish to go to this school; I tried to cover these feelings.

“I feel it would be a useful learning experience which she might enjoy if only she would try it,” my father stated.

“You know what is best for me,” I replied as we exchanged quick glances.

“It is an all girls school, correct?” my father inquired.

I had made the mistake of falling in love with a simple market boy, and someone had made the situation known to my father. Oh, how in love I am! It pains me to go even a day without seeing my love, and I can hardly spend a second without having at least a thought of him fleet through my mind. Yet, I was destined to have desperation and despair linger within my heart for, I, through negotiations made by my father, have been promised to wed a man I do not even know, and even more surely do not love.

“So, you shall go my Amira?”

“As you wish,” I responded. My father looked upon me tenderly. It was my duty to please him so I had no choice but to respect his desires. My mother did not believe for

a second that I wanted to go but my father seemed satisfied with my response. He was happy to put distance between me and the market boy.

Chapterette D The Twins As Related by Headmistress Cleito

Bambi and Valentina Colangeli were twins. Not only were they twins, but geniuses as well, each possessing an astounding IQ of 218. Their brilliant minds were capable of any sort of thinking. Quantum mechanics? These concepts posed to them the same difficulty staying in the lines posed to a first grader when attempting a grand coloring feat. Astrophysics? They understood the principles with the ease of which a chocoholic downs a rich and moist frosting laden cake. Architectural engineering? They could design the San Francisco Bridge in their sleep. Philosophical thinking? They mastered ideas of metaphysics before they could tie their shoes. Basketball? They created plays, which brought defenders to their knees.

How they become blessed with such sparkling minds, however, quite bamboozles me, for Mr. and Mrs. Colangeli are perhaps the simplest minds I have ever met. And, being the oldest human being on the face of the planet, I have met an almost immeasurable number of ridiculously unintelligent people.

Mr. Colangeli was an apt and respected fisherman and Mrs. Colangeli, a housewife. While they proved to be loving parents, they failed to nurture their daughters' brilliant minds, and planned on marrying them off, thinking nothing of their education, of cultivating their assets. I, however, would not stand idly by and allow this vast surplus of intelligence to go to waste, like some forgotten fruitcake leftover from the holiday

season! No, I would place these minds in an environment conducive for them to grow and prosper.

Yet, to the parents, I said nothing of this, but only, “The Poseidon Boarding School will groom your daughters into very eligible, desirable wives and will no doubt increase the number of suitors they will attract.” Not that these girls would need any help in finding husbands. Besides being brilliant, they were beseechingly beautiful and charming.

Mr. and Mrs. Colangeli, despite seeming unable to grasp the opportunities their daughters would find at my school, bought my selling stance, hook, line and sinker. Their daughters would be attending my school. Bambi and Valentina said very little throughout my visit, but I think they were excited to leave their feeble-minded folks. It was evident the two loved their parents, but they seemed very bored. Nothing a little intellectual stimulation couldn't take care of, I didn't doubt.

*

Perhaps Bambi and Valentina were Mr. Sheva's true daughters. For, he was a genius if there ever was one. Israel possesses a technologically advanced economy, with much of their high technology equipment being owed to the inventive mind of Mr. Sheva. But, his daughter Analise! Oh, she was simpler than Mrs. Colangeli, and she was simpler than Mr. Colangeli.

Mr. Sheva had always been disappointed that his daughter was not brighter and did not possess a greater interest in science. For, he so longed to share his passions with her! It was not as if he could share his passions with his wife; the woman cared only of cooking and cleaning and that horrid thing called gossip! Why the two ever married,

remains to this day quite the unsolved mystery. But, Analise did not show interest in cooking or cleaning, any more than she did for science.

Chapterette E Analise Sheva

My mother makes the best barckas, phyllo turnovers filled with spinach, cheese, and potato. But, she only makes them when we are having company. And, they usually like them so much that there are none leftover. I ask mother to make them all the time, but she tells me I should just learn to make them myself. But, I do not have time to learn to cook, for I would very much like to become a great ballerina and dance for the Israel National Ballet Company.

I must work to pay for my dance lessons, and I must work to keep them a secret. For, neither of my parents would approve. My father believes that only science is important, and my mother thinks housekeeping is all that matters. So, I pretend to be terribly inept at both, so that I will be free to dance. If only my father knew of my activities in animal rights and biology (Israel has banned dissection of animals in schools, and it is my goal to make this a worldwide policy), and if only my mother knew that I work as a housekeeper to pay for my ballet lessons. They think me very dumb, when really, I am not all that dumb. I am at least not the paint drying on the wall that they believe me to be!

Yet, because they consider me a failure, one sleepy day, when some woman from some Poseidon Boarding School for Girls, Headmistress Cleito, came to eat barckas, when she said, "She will take an abundant number of courses in science, as well as cooking and cleaning," my parents were sold in a matter of seconds on the idea of me

going away to this school. I must admit, I was sold as well; the school offered ballet class.

*

Nobody could possibly measure up to Kimi, for she is by far the most beautiful, intelligent, and talented girl on the face of the Earth, and if anybody were to question this, why, how dare they? Well, this is at least the thoughts of Mr. and Mrs. Koizumi. They practically worship their daughter and give her anything and everything her little heart desires.

Mr. Koizumi, a well off man, is a prominent member of the Keiretsu, a closely knit group of manufacturers, suppliers and distributors. He is a, "Diet Typhoon," not a member of the diet, although he has close ties with them, but a distributor of artificial diet foods, diet pops, and artificial sweeteners. He is well versed in English; most of his consumers are Americans. Thus, he is a very busy man and has little time to spend with his little Kimi. No, he just gives her everything she wants to make up for his frequent absences.

Chapterette F Kimi Koizumi

Dear Diary,

I know that I am spoiled. I am given everything I "want." Any car that strikes my fancy, all the clothes, trips and hairstyles a girl could dream of. People are constantly telling me how jealous they are of me, how lucky I am. But, what do they know! None of it makes me happy. It would make me happy to see my father more than once a month, to not have to look at his picture sometimes just to remember what he looks like.

It would make me happy to have a mother who actually likes me and wants to spend time with me, rather than just have her “gallivanting” off with her “friends” and other various “social elites.” Tea with the Emperor and Empress. They barely know your name, but surely are more important than time with your own flesh and blood. I often think, would I give up one of my convertibles to have been raised by my parents rather than 13 different governesses? Maybe I shouldn’t have been such a brat. Yes, I think I can honestly say I’d rather have my parents’ time and love than trips to Tahiti and shopping sprees to good ol’ Pree. They say I am the lucky one! No, they are! Those who know their parents and can say they feel loved, are the true lucky ones! If I am “spoiled” it is from lack of love and role model, not from excessive gifts. Oh, Dear diary, I do wonder, why did they even have me? Was it an accident? So, yesterday when this Headmistress Cleito of a new boarding school came to my house to ask me to come to the school, I begged my mother to let me go. Maybe this headmistress would care about me. My mother, of course, consented. She doesn’t care what I do.

Love,

Kimi

Chapterette G Ginger Montgomery

Matthew Montgomery. He is one of the most renowned plastic surgeons in all of California, but he has always come up short when it comes to fatherhood. My mother died during childbirth and knowing nothing about children himself, he invited my Aunt (or I guess I should say hired her) to come raise me so that he wouldn’t have to. He spent

as little as time as possible with me and practically devoted himself entirely to his work, so that he could relieve himself of the living reminder of his late wife, my mother, who no one has ever told me anything about. I have never seen a picture, even. In fact, the only other relative I have ever met is my Aunt Angela, and she won't tell me anything about anything. Not that I would believe her if she did, for I think she's kind of fruity loopy. It's like I'm living in some secret little world.

And, while my father shuns social relationships, I adore them. I mean, I have to have people to talk to somewhere. I am very popular in school, and I possess a plethora of friends. Also, it could quite easily be said that I was the beauty of my high school. I have long golden locks which bounce into natural curls on just the right days, I am tall and slender, and I one day desire to become a model and singer. I can also surf like a pro, and I am nice to most people I meet. My father is the black cloud in my sunny life.

So, anyways, one day this Headmistress Cleito, from a Poseidon Boarding School, came to my house and asked me and my father what we thought of my attending her school. Well, she could not have come at a better time. My Aunt had finally got some guy to propose to her, and my father had no idea what to do with me. Plus, my boyfriend has just broken up with me, and how humiliating! I am a dumper, not a dumpee.

I looked at Headmistress contemplatively for a minute, after she asked. I had been waiting my whole life to be free from my father, the man who was supposed to love me, but instead, seemed to hate me and look at me everyday, his eyes seeming to say, "I blame you for your mother's death." I thought about throwing a tantrum and resisting going to the school, just to get back at him a little for that. Plus, it would guarantee at

least a new skirt. But, I didn't. This was my chance to escape my black cloud, my tortuous existence. That was reward enough. Who needs a new skirt? Although, Bloomingdale's did have this really cute red one they just got in...anyways, I consented. "Alright. Sign me up." It was like what I would imagine signing up for the military would be like. Signing papers. Giving up skirts.

Chapterette H Mia Raza

Raza

Land of the Pure

Is from where I Hail

A Muslim A Daughter

Pakistani Jail

A Granddaughter too

All in the same House

Much Love for you

Patriarchal Society

Subservient me

My freedom a prisoner

Held by the clergy

My cousin murdered

For want of divorce

Ok to beat your wife

Kill them if they don't like it

Honor killings-there's no honor in that
Hudood Laws send women to jail
So when Headmistress Cleito "kidnapped me"
I went willingly
Happily
So I could be me

Mia

Chapterette I LeeLee Brown

All my life I have been drawn to the sea. But, that seems only natural, having spent most of my childhood in Bondi Beach and the Whistundays, my mom a deep-sea pearl diver, my father a sort of modern-day pirate. So entranced by the ocean, I became, that it unfolded to be an inseverable part of my life, my existence bound up in it, and there was no alternate path but to become a marine biologist. At least, that is how I see it.

I presently work for the Australian Institute of Marine Science, and I can think of nothing more fulfilling. Everyday is an awe inspiring adventure into the deep blue Sea, where I study the relationship between water quality and the health of coral reef ecosystems, as well as the status and trends of the health of the Great Barrier Reef.

So, I am sure you can see precisely why, when Madame Cleito of the Poseidon Boarding School for Girls came to ask if I would take a leave at my job for two years and teach biology at her school, I didn't even have to hesitate before refusing her. I am very passionate about my work and I have no desire to enter other fields.

She persisted and tried to persuade me, by explaining that youthful girls needed to learn about the environment and that my influence would be astronomical (yes, she used the word astronomical) and she droned on and on, and I continued to reject her offers.

Then, out of the blue, like a great white shark forming purely out of water molecules, she offered to make an incredible donation to my research institute, if I consented to teach at her school. I could not possibly stand between my work and those funds; they truly were astronomical! So, before I knew it, I was filling out paperwork to be a science teacher.

Chapterette J Koko Mahama

I have spent the entirety of my life in Ghana, wearing the ntama, rising at 6 to eat my millet porridge and drink my milo, eating one's man thousand fish (a fish so small one man could eat a thousand) for dinner, ground nut paste for lunch.

I grew up in a world of few phones, a world of pah-pah's, mah-mee's, nah-nah's, a homogenous world. I found my life satisfying and desired little else than what I had. Until it was offered to me.

A woman came to me one day and offered me education. Money. Lots of money. Travel expenses, a chance to see the world. All I had to do was teach gardening, cooking, and things of that nature at her boarding school. I accepted the offer.

Chapterette K Li Ming Zhaoxing

It was like any other Saturday. I put on my jeans and my favorite yellow blouse. I kissed my husband and my one son, Cong goodbye, and then left our small apartment to

head to the market to purchase some fresh foods and return home to cook breakfast.

Every Saturday morning, my parents and my husband's parents, come for breakfast.

I had decided to make matuan filled with dousha, as well as a basi. I would also make tea, egg, congee, pickled vegetables, and mantou. We would have leftover breakfast foods for a week. Yet, although it was not a normal day at the market, the normalness of the Saturday began to shrivel away when a strange woman in the street stopped me. I did not know her in the least I am sure, but she certainly seemed to know me. Well, at least my name and occupation.

"Mrs. Zhaoxing! Wait!" This strange woman wearing sunglasses three times the size of her head waved from behind a bushel of bananas, gesturing that I make my way over to her.

I thought of ignoring her, but that would be rude, and some foreign curiosity drew me in much the same way a whirlpool draws in a fish. There was no resisting her pleas. "Mam, may I help you?" I asked as I made my way closer to her.

"Yes, in more ways than you could imagine, Mrs. Zhaoxing," she replied. "May I perhaps buy you a cup of coffee or assist you in your shopping as I present you with my request?"

"Well, I have not time for coffee really, but I am never one to turn down company as I shop."

So, I shopped for fresh fruits and vegetables, while this woman, whose name it became made apparent to me was Babette Cleito, began to tell me about her boarding school. And, how a woman such as myself, knowledgeable of five languages, of world governments and histories as well as religions, would be an indispensable asset at her

school, oh and if only I would come teach at her school for just one year, she could arrange for the Chinese government to allow me a second child. Cong would have a brother! A sister!

The idea of being allowed a second child stirred within me a great excitement, unleashed my innermost desire, yet I remained calm and reluctant. “I am not sure,” I replied, “that my husband would allow me to leave for a year. I have familial responsibilities. And, I would miss my son. I mean, my mother could look after him, but he is only two, and I would hate to miss even a year of his childhood...”

“I would give you four day weekends, pay for your flights home, and double whatever salary you are being paid in your present school system, triple it if you wish.....Discuss it with your family at breakfast and then give me a call.” Madame Cleito handed me a card with her phone number on it, and then whisked away as quickly and mysteriously as she had appeared.

As this woman had suggested, I brought up the job offer at breakfast. To my great surprise, the idea was well accepted. “Four day vacations! You’ll be able to spend MORE time with Cong!” the mother of Tang, my husband, exclaimed.

“And, I shall get to watch him three days a week!” my mother rejoiced.

My husband put his hand gently upon my arm. “Twice or even triple the salary? Really?” His eyes sparkled happily.

I guess there was no reason not to join the faculty of the Poseidon Boarding School for Girls. I called Madame Cleito that evening and accepted her job offer. I hoped I was making the right choice.

Chapterette L Isabel Martinez

Chemistry. Physics. Math. You name it, if it has equations, I love it. In his day, my father was a brilliant chemist. In my life, I see footprints in the sand on the beaches of Playa del Carmen, and if I only follow them, I will come to something great, like the ocean itself. I will fulfill my father's work.

For now, I conduct research for Universities and teach EduSat classes, until I can get the funds to complete my father's last great project. A project he spent half his life on. A project I only have the notes to. A project that can change the world. But, I must keep it a secret, this project, until it is finished, and because it must remain a secret, I will have to fund it on my own. I will not allow anyone else to take credit for my father's work. Ever.

Every night I walk along the shore and collect the most beautiful sea shells, and then I make two necklaces. One for me and one for my mother. I have never met my mother, to be honest, I don't really even know what happened to her. When I was little, my father told me that she was a mermaid, and she watched over us from the ocean. My padre told me that if I made her a necklace and let it float out to sea, she would catch it and know that I loved her, just as I must know that she loves me. When I was little, every night I would hope to maybe catch a glimpse of her, but I have never seen a mermaid. I know the idea is silly and made up now that I am older, but I still make the necklaces, and I guess a part of me still hopes to catch sight of that "mermaid." Or that I'll just stumble across someone who will tell me what happened to her. Papa never would. He always insisted vehemently, almost, that she was a mermaid. Even after I

grew up. After I married. Even after I divorced. Mi Madre was a mermaid and I should listen to her voice.

There was one summer night when I thought I heard my mother singing. I went down to the beach later than usual. A dark veil already hovered about the sky, and the moon glowing and the stars twinkling, their light softly blanketing the Earth, kissing the sand, and dancing playfully upon the ocean waves, which rolled in slowly and quietly that night, whispering as if to allow me to hear my mother's voice. The beach was abandoned, and it seemed enchanted that night, a private playground, captured by wonder, the tide low and murmuring, and the ebb and flow of the sea magically stealing my seashell necklace so that she would be unable to find it, and she would have to come to see me.

And, so she sang to me. Her voice sweet and lulling, scenting the air with tenderness, making one feel "sparkly" and alive. But alas, it was not my mother. No, just a woman strolling along the beach. Erasing the footprints I wanted to follow. But, as it turns out, she was a very wealthy woman who owned a boarding school, and she offered me an incredible sum of money, if only I would come work as one of her teachers. I may not have discovered anything out about my mother that night. But, I at least had found a job, which would supply me with enough money to finish my father's work, to uphold his legacy. At least try anyways.

Chapterette M Madame Francesca Pompadour

I'm not really sure what it is about France that I like so much. The cafes. The cheese. The wine. The art. Whatever it is, I am not sure, but something inside of my

heart has always tugged at me has always drawn me to France, the way that a painter draws color to a palette. And, it is in France that I met Madame Francesca Pompadour. And, in the last 1,000 years or so, she has grown to become one of my closest friends, my best friend actually.

She was born a vineyard heiress, and that is how I came to meet her. As a younger girl, I was touring her father's Rhone winery on one of my first trips to France. The usual guide was taken ill that day, and thus, Francesca was made to take over the duty. Well, during the tour we realized we had a great deal of fun together, and that evening we caroused the town of Avignon.

We had such a splendid time that we remained in contact with each other and traveled all over Paris together. We rode boats on the Rhone, went to Paris, Italy and Switzerland. And, this Francesca became the second friend I disclosed my immortality to, as well as my second friend that I gave immortality to (for I had saved a perfume sized bottle of water from the Fountain of Youth, which, if you care to know, has long since dried up. I believe its spot to presently be occupied with quick sand). There are some friends you just want to have forever.

And, being as Madame Pompadour is my best friend in all of the world and I hers, she did not even have to think twice to consent to be my Assistant Headmistress.

Chapter Two The War

Deep within the Brazilian jungle, the Amazon rainforest as it is known to many, there exists a community of animals, hidden to the so called civilized world by fringes of

emerald palms, gurgling and crystal clear rivers, and acres and acres and acres of surrounding jungle. In this community, it was common to see macaws, parrots, alligators, swans, penguins, and sweet hibiscus flowers sweeping the forest with a scent of pure delight, nor was it uncommon to see snakes, owls, toucans, and pink Boto Rosa dolphins. You couldn't miss the jaguars and pumas, parasites and monkeys, butterflies, healing plants, as well as fruits looming and hovering about such as avocados, coconuts, oranges, bananas, guavas, pineapples and mangoes; oh, the forest bloomed with a most delicious aroma! Perhaps, the most rare and absurd notion was to behold the sight of a human. Why, it was in fact, almost unheard of.

Humans, a species so ever-present in so much of the world, practically did not even exist, at least to the animals, to whom they were almost a myth in this enclosed, almost secret haven off land. Here, towering trees surrounded the animals, and it seemed as if a deeply tinted atmosphere engulfed them so as they could barely see out, and nothing could see in. And the animals quite enjoyed this secret, especially in that they never were exposed to humans. For, while they, for so many years, were not even sure that these creatures ever existed, they had heard nothing but horrible legends of this animal, of this human specie, and these human stories struck piercing fear into all of their hearts. The vulgar humans were said to mass murder trees, poison rivers, and shoot animals for their fur. Why, what could you possibly do with fur? You could not eat it, and the humans did not need it for shelter or warmth. No, they seemed instead to wear it as a means of disguise, as if they wanted to escape their humanness!

And, worst of all, they could not even talk to these humans, try to wiggle reason into them, for they spoke a language of deceit, a false language separated from reality and

which separated humans from nature, who were without the ability to communicate with the rest of the animal kingdom, their fellow earthkind. Only possessing merely meaningless symbols, the humans neglect to say what they mean or to speak with their hearts. They use language not to communicate, but instead, to create a separate, “happy” world in which they can escape reality and truth. Or so, the animals believed, at least.

What came to baffle so many of the animals most was that while they had never come face to face with humans, and for the most part only knew of these beings from what was brought to them in tall tales, was the credibility of the stories, for so much of what they considered make believe was in fact confirmed when humans one day, without warning, flooded into their homeland, their separate yet still very real world.

The first day the eight humans came, it had been raining, and a wet silence lulled all about the forest, the only sound it seems being the pit pat of the rain, a soothing music, a treat for the ears of all the animals. About high sun on this particular and recent day the melody of the rain was broken, shattered even, with voices that they had never heard before, unprecedented noises. These humans brought forth the most terrible and unnatural noises they had ever heard, and yet, with great wonder, they were all drawn to this clankorous human spectacle.

Leading the precession were two men, or rather three, but the third was a prisoner, was being dragged against his will, so it would be most unfair to say he was in any way leading. And, clasping on to the prisoner’s left arm was Mr. Sheva, a well polished and muscular man who wore a suit and tie in midst of a steaming jungle, as well as donning sunglasses despite the gloominess of the day, in which only trace amounts of sunlight even attempted to elude the clouds. On the right of the prisoner was Mr. Koizumi, with

his sinewy hands painfully gripping into the prisoner's biceps, who effortlessly dragged the prisoner, a self proclaimed exercise addict, sporting sweats, sweatbands and running shoes. In the hand he was not using to clutch his captive, was a protein shake..

As Plato was no kid, but an old man, the mannappers pleaded with Plato, the name of he was who mannapped. "Now, come to your senses. If only you give us the equation we will set you free," Mr. Sheva desperately announced. He was a successful man, but had not contributed to the scientific world in a while. The pressure to succeed and do something new was indeed upon him. But, he didn't like to talk about this. Or the divorce his wife had been requesting, these requests being much of the reason he had done little for the scientific community of late. Mr. Sheva, in his attempts to sugarcoat his life, and tread the waves of depth in order to swim above the surface, didn't like to speak of these unhappy tidings. He didn't like or want to face anything disagreeable. Any problem that existed he'd prefer to pretend didn't exist.

Mr. Koizumi contributed to the fruitless persuading. "This will be good for society, you will be helping us progress. Don't think of yourself. You need to think of others." And, it was as if dollar signs flashed within Mr. Koizumi's eyes, taking the place of his pupils.

Plato said nothing. A distant look merely swept sullenly over his face, seemingly separating him from the group he was with. "You know, this would make a great meeting place for our group," Mr. Montgomery, a small man who sort of seemed to tail behind piped in. "We could be a sort of secret society."

"Yes," Sir Advani agreed. "We could cut a clearing nearby and hold our meetings in the cave. We will have to come every week to feed and water Plato

anyways. And, I don't intend for my plane to become entangled in a part of the forest canopy as it most nearly did today. I hope we didn't do any damage to my aircraft when we leveled those trees."

The animals gasped, but without an air of disbelief.

"Yes," chimed in Mrs. Colangeli. "We," she added turning to look endearingly at her husband, "have actually at times over a glass of fine wine discussed calling ourselves, The Great Remade World."

"Yes, that shall be our name," King Majeed consented. He always liked to appear to decide things and to make all ideas seem as if they were his own.

The peaceful Plato put up little of a fight, and said even less as the clan dragged him into what would become not only his new home, but the "secret society's" new meeting place, the inside of a wet cave. "How wonderful this would be for cave diving," Mrs. Colangeli had remarked. Within this vast dwelling were many tunnels, and some distance in the back a "room" was chosen by King Majeed, or so it was said, near one of the back tunnels in which to hold their clandestine meetings. Plato, on the other hand, was, after having both his wrists chained together, chained to a stalagmite. A stalagmite which was not far off from becoming a column, as it was almost joined with a stalactite. Here, in this cold, dreary domicile, Plato was abandoned, the mannapers left with the intent to return in a week.

Plato preferred being near the front of the cave, for in this locale he could see the waterfall which cascaded directly in front of his new dwelling, its waters glistening forth with a splendor that surpassed the most glorious diamonds, joining in a starlight glimmering dance with the sunlight and moonlight, whichever happened to be out to

play, and flowing down into a brilliant turquoise pool of water frequented by pink dolphins and fish of the brightest, feistiest and most breathtaking colors. And, sometimes flamingos would come to bathe, their soft pink feathers glowing even in the daylight, but what Plato most appreciated, was his freedom from any sort of shadows. The most disturbing thing to Plato, however, was that, being he was in a wet cave, he was immersed to his belly button in water, and he could only be grateful that its temperature was warm.

The first few days the animals did little but gawk at this strange human, and avoid him as best they could. Yet, after a day or two, it was decided that there was no need to fear him, for although they most definitely did not like the other humans, they thought that perhaps this one they could. Yes, they would approach this man, the animals decided. But, how would they endeavor to do so? Why, they would decide this by first holding a meeting.

Taking charge of the meeting was Jolly, the whimsical, comical, endearing golden bellied capuchin monkey and Solomon, the wise and gentle hearted Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, who in many ways, was much like the King of the Jungle. It is mere myth that the mightier animals are the Kings; they more often take on the role of enforcers for animals like Solomon, well, unless they get hungry.

“So,” Solomon asked, “does anyone have any ideas as to how to go about approaching this human?” He glanced quickly at Mariah the Macaw, Pete the Parrot, and Tommy the Toucan, but they rarely had any ideas of their own to contribute and largely went along with what everybody else decided. His glance also swiftly breezed pass Nectar, the half ruby, half topaz hummingbird, not that she wouldn’t have anything to

say, but because he had a gigantic crush on her, a crush perhaps several times the size of his own body, and Solomon feared that if he let his eyes settle on her for too long it would only make his feelings obvious; though in truth, they already were.

“Well, I think we should take him something to eat, like some palm nuts,” Chubs, the white lipped peccary hog offered. He loved palm nuts.

“That’s a good idea. And, we could also take him some fresh tree water,” Dorothy, the Magellanic Penguin offered.

“Whatev,” the wattled Jacana simply said, “Whatever.” She never really cared about anything that was going on. She only cared about walking on water.

“Well, I think we should just let him be. Humans only bring trouble,” huffed Bushy, the crab eating raccoon.

The tree toed-sloth’s and pygmy marmosets seemed to agree with Bushy. They always did. He was kind of their ring leader.

The jaguars and pumas yawned. They would ultimately agree with whatever plan Solomon came up with and Gigi, the Giant Anteater, had her snout in the ground searching for a snack.

Then there was the alligators, iguanas, geckos and anacondas, swans, butterflies, doves and pelicans. They all seemed to think that it was a fairly good idea to talk to the human. They were curious, and they decided that if he gave any trouble, the anaconda and alligator could easily put an end to him and his antics.

Normally quiet at meetings, Helen the Hare and the lovely pink Hibiscus, Lily (yes, she had been named after a flower of another sort), spoke up and made a valid point. They did not speak often so when they did, everybody listened. Attentively. And, it was

much the same in this case. All eyes turned to them. Proceedingly, they explained the sense it would make to send only one or two members of the group to welcome the man. This way, he would not be overwhelmed. “Yes, take him some palm nuts,” and report back to the group what they discover of the prisoner and his nature.

So being as they were the ones most interested in the human, a unanimous vote sent Solomon and Jolly on the first trek forth to the cave with its recent addition of the foreign specie, and like explorers set out to cross oceans and hike through great canyons, they were equipped with water and food. A rush of excitement, exhilarating farewells, and warm embraces sent them off.

Solomon and Jolly made a quiet voyage, saying nothing, only their eyes engaged in indeliberate conversation, their hearts filled with wonder and curiosity. A pinch of fear seeped into their veins, spreading throughout their bodies, kindled with a fire of bravery and commitment to their word, and to a promise not only made to their fellow jungle inhabitants, but to a remote and distant figment of life—a figment they could not pin point or describe—such was a presence they felt they needed to tend to; and the way to do this was to unravel the mystery of the alien left in their cave.

As the owl and the monkey emerged through the waterfall, the man looked up his head and caught their eyes with his, like a young child catching butterflies with an indelible net. They seemed trapped in his gaze, from this they could not break free or move even, as in this same instant it dispenses them of all fear and anxiety. Their trip now brought to them a state of warmth and comfort, like a visit to a dear grandmother who for all the years they have ever been conscious.

“Good afternoon fellow creatures of Earth.” These words burst forth from Plato’s lips with the warmth and naturalness of sunbeams, and in his words, Jolly and Solomon desired to bathe, in much the same manner as they longed to lie and soak in the rays of the sun.

“My name is Plato,” the prisoner added. “May I have the good fortune to learn your fine names?” he requested.

Still somewhat paralyzed by Plato’s gaze, the perplexed owl summoned forth from his small but mighty breast, “My name is Solomon.” The name whistled through his beak and resonated about the cave. “This is my friend Jolly,” and his little wing gestured towards the monkey Jolly. Also, shy around strangers, he could only manage to give a goofy nod of recognition in a nervous yet deeply friendly display.

“Why, I am honored to meet you both, and I hope you will tell me a great deal about yourselves,” Plato genuinely responded.

“Of course, and we hope also to learn of you and how you came to be imprisoned in this cave, as do all my friends and neighbors,” Solomon revealed.

“Why, I’d be most happy to tell you all.”

“You wouldn’t mind if I brought all my friends and neighbors from this jungle into the cave to hear your story? Might you be overwhelmed?” asked Solomon.

“I would be delighted to have such company.”

“Well, we shall go, go, go gather them and bring them forth!” Jolly sputtered, dancing in extreme excitement.

As the good friends Jolly and Solomon scurried off to collect the others, a sudden thought struck them simultaneously: They had always been under the impression that

animals and humans could not make comprehensible conversations, at least in the form on verbal language, as the humans spoke a false and unnatural language of deceit, produced and enforced by mythical “images” of beauty and truth. So, as they left the cave they were puzzled as to how they had managed to communicate with and understand Plato. They were, in fact dumbfounded, for indeed this was to them a mystery.

Chapterette A The Tale Continues

An undeniably stately and powerful man is Julius Caesar, his body sculpted with muscles that seemed to jump right out of a myth, as if Hercules himself had given him his robust arms just for the purpose of this duel with his enemy, Pompey. Luckily for the Great Caesar, Pompey, although quick with his sword, began poorly in his duel with Caesar.

The first strike came in unison, the swords roaring and beckoning for all of Egypt to listen. The next thunderous clang, however, was brought about by Julius, his sinewy muscles rippled as they sent Pompey’s arm swinging back, almost making him lose grip of his sword. Through some miracle unbeknownst perhaps even to himself, his grip ripened, and he remained upon his feet despite his back lurching in such a way, it was almost certain he would topple.

The clashing and clanging of swords continued for quite some time, and my siblings and I watched as our guardian, Pompey, delivered fast, clever and strong blows only to be returned by faster, more clever and more thunderous ones, until at long last, or maybe at short last would be more appropriate, his sword was stripped from his hand and his body sank mercilessly to the ground, withering like a dying petunia. At this moment

Julius Caesar brought about his untimely, or perhaps right on time, end. I could not help but be dismayed that, throughout the entirety of the duel, I secretly rooted for Caesar, Oh Great Caesar.

*

This disturbing dream both perplexed and baffled me. For why had I, Babette Cleito, dreamt that I was Cleopatra bearing witness to the undoing of my guardian? Was it because Cleopatra was a woman who had possessed power and I was about to tread upon the same path as had just occurred in this dream upon the eve of the first day of school? For, it would be undeniable that as Headmistress I would be permitted and expected to maintain a certain degree of power as a duty to the school. Would I act against my desire is to instill the majority of the power to my students? I wanted mostly only to serve as a coordinator and balancer. Yet, how I would do this and at the same time, uphold the principles of the school and meet its goals? This would be perhaps the greatest challenge I have ever faced. Though I have lived a very long time, in its entirety, never had I held or wanted a position of power of any sort. And here I was, this dilemma set before me, ready to be eaten on a plate of fine china.

Chapterette B Analise Sheva in Distress

I pleaded to have a different room. Groveled. Begged. But, Headmistress Cleito refused and gave no reason for her disclination to reason with me. I already hated her! The tyrant wouldn't budge. How could she do this to me? How could she make me share a bunk bed with a girl from Palestine? I hadn't met her yet, but I knew that she

already hated me and if she was going to hate me, why, I most certainly wasn't going to like her! No, I would hate her right back.

Reluctantly, as I was given no choice in the matter, I began the task of moving into my room, tidying up and organizing my belongings, and of course, claiming the top bunk, when out of nowhere she came, spreading herself like a great forest burning fire, into MY room. Mia Raza. She stood before me, her lips steady and unrevealing. She wasn't a bad looking girl, but in fact, rather pretty, and truth be told, she looked as though she would be nice. If I didn't know better I'd say she seemed like she'd be fun and pleasant that we could be friends. I knew better. I knew she hated me, and if she thought for a second that I was going to say hi or introduce myself, well, she could forget it! Why, she probably just finished dissecting a poor innocent frog or maybe even a lamb!

Chapterette C Mia Raza is Surrounded

As I was lugging my suitcase in to my room, I stopped frozen in my tracks. I caught sight of an Indian girl moving into the room across the hall from me! She didn't see me and I let loose a sigh of relief as I swashed the sweat from my brow, and made my grand entrance in to my room, excited to meet my roommate, that is, until I actually saw her.

My roommate was from Israel! An Indian girl across the hall was bad enough, but a girl from Israel as a roommate! I dropped my suitcase onto my feet and crushed my big toe, but I was too upset to let free a cry or yelp, even one of the uncontrollable sorts, even one of pain. She looked at me with eyes that screamed, "I hate you!!!" Well, if she was going to hate me I was going to hate her. I'd never done anything to her.

So, to try and escape from the awkward silence I began to make my bed on the bottom bunk. I may be sleeping beneath her, but I most certainly was NOT beneath her. And, she better make no mistake about that.

*

I am a lobster. Not a crab. I hate it when people mistake me for a crab or even when they call me “crabby.” Lobsters not only taste better than crabs, we are altogether just better. More handsome, smarter, and way better looking. Why, we look nothing alike. I mean, seriously, I am a messenger for the Sea god, Triton. Triton, the god who carries a colony of shell fish on his shoulders, blows a conch shell trumpet and carried a trident which he uses to give the seas their shores and control the waters. I mean, a crab could not possibly be a messenger for him! It’s simply wouldn’t suit. Not to mention, the worst tap dancing lobster could easily out tap dance the best tap dancing crab, humph!

“My lobster messenger!” Oh, that’s Triton calling me now. He forgets my name sometimes. “I need this message delivered now! My gosh, you are slow! I should have hired a crab because by golly, they are faster and ever so much better tap dancers!”

Chapter Three Cutting Back

Deep within the Tahitian jungle a gathering (one of the weekly sorts) was held, each member of the group sat on a bean bag they had brought and they sat in a circle around a lantern for their meetings were ALWAYS at night. On Fridays. This group called themselves, LOKAL, Lovers of Knowledge and Light, for they believed it was

these things which they loved above just about anything, and it was to uphold these values that they took time out of their busy lives to meet every Friday.

“Do you really think we should go ahead with the trial? We’ve already lost two men, and I am forced to hide from even my own daughter. Why, in light of this tail I’ve sprouted I can’t even leave this river!” Marcella Martinez murmured, much like the river which contained her, a river that spindled through the rainforest, effortlessly weaving a beyond intricate and breathtaking design spun by the hands of nature.

To which Babette Cleito responded, “Some things are worth the risk. Besides, if we don’t stop them, who will?”

“Well, if we’re going to stop them we need to start designing our next move. Even if we win the case we still won’t put an end to their doings, no only a hamper, why, we might even come face to face with them,” Mr. Raza uttered, his voice sadly plagued with a sound of defeat, his passion for what he thought was right completely milking of the passions of those around him.

“Oh, I know this hasn’t been a smooth undertaking, but come on people. We are the good guys. The world is on our side. Do you think their unnatural technologies will be of any use to them?” Koko encouraged.

“She’s right,” Mr. Brown chimed in. “In my pirating days I didn’t get treasure from every ship I had to plunder, and if I’d have given up hope, I’d probably still be trapped in the Bermuda Triangle.”

“I don’t see how being good and on the side of nature will help us. I see it only as a reason not to give up, if you can call it a reason,” Francesca contributed, her voice drenched in a hidden melancholy drizzled with regret, but regret of what?

Chapterette A The Tale Proceeds with Cleito

My nerves were drenched in a screaming sparking fire that a wave of horrendous heat entrenched upon my body and caused my hands to quiver and my left eye to twitch, a sensation known to reliably draw itself forth upon all occasions in which I felt nervous or uneasy. I had never had a first day of school, not even as a child.

Of course, Mrs. Brown would be teaching Biology, Mrs. Mahama would be teaching Skills for Self Sufficiency/Back to Nature, Mrs. Zhaoxing would be instructing World Government, Religion and History, as well as small group foreign language instruction. Mrs. Martinez taught math, chemistry and Physics, leaving me and my Assistant Headmistress, Madame Pompadour. I guess she would teach art and music, and I would teach Language Arts and a Life Lessons class...I wanted to do a lot of motivational speaking...and also, we would have to roam the school and maintain order, so I would teach classes in the afternoon, and she would teach in the morning...Oh, why hadn't I made a lesson plan?!"

Chapterette B Jasmine's First Impression

"Hurry up or you're going to make us late," my roommate, Kimi, pleaded. It was the first day of classes, and we had been instructed to meet in the throne room first thing for breakfast. Also, we were going to get our schedules and some sort of welcome speech from Madame Cleito.

I was running a little behind, because I was in a bit of a tight spot. Literally. I couldn't get any of my jeans to zip up. Before I left Kerala my Mata had wanted to give

me a proper send off and so she had prepared all of my favorite dishes; who knows how long it'd be before she'd be able to make them for me again? And so, because I 'd spent the last week devouring sweets and fats, my stomach now protruded past its normal size and my clothes simply were too small, and I'm not talking after the holidays hard to squeeze into, I'm talking beyond air reducing; I could not squeeze into my jeans any more than I could squeeze toothpaste out of an empty tube.

“Why didn't you pack some clothes that fit?” Kimi wondered.

“I didn't know they didn't,” I shot back as I tried to refrain my tears from bursting out of my eyes and sliding down my cheeks. Because I had been eating such profuse portions, I had been afraid to even try on my fitting and form showish clothes, and had whiled away the last seven days wearing only loose fitting dresses of the color black.

“Well, why don't you just wear a skirt or something. I'm starving!” Kimi tapped her foot. For safety or bonding or something, we had been made aware of a school policy which required roommates to accompany each other to breakfast and as a sort of partnership, we were responsible for making sure we were BOTH on time and therefore, that we ourselves were never tardy. Or, we would get no breakfast. And, apparently it seemed, Kimi was very hungry.

“Very well,” I consented. Really, I hadn't any other choice, unless I wanted to go to breakfast in my underwear, and truthfully, that was the very last thing I wanted to do. So, I trudged over to my closet, the weight of my embarrassment almost greater than that of my body. My chubby arm extended itself to take down a powder pink skirt (it'd match my white blouse) and I quickly braced myself before forcing my pudgy body into the long flowing silk masterpiece made by my Mata. “Alright, I'm ready,” I cringed, not

really in the mood for breakfast. What I really wanted was to jump on the elliptical machine.

“Finally!” Kimi grabbed my hand and pulled me out of the room, down the hallway, and we embarked upon some sort of flight down through corridors until coming upon the throne room, or was it a ballroom? No matter. Anyways, I was panting a little, okay a lot, sweating even, but Kimi, like a graceful swan stood before me, without even a hair moved out of place. “I need food!” she chirped. What I needed was to reapply some deodorant.

Headmistress Cleito welcomed us at the door. “Welcome girls. Please go in and take a seat. Good morning.” She was cheerful and smiling. Madame Pompadour, however, if anything, only seemed to smirk as she handed both me and Kimi our class schedules.

“I feel like I’m at church.” Kimi almost seemed to giggle as she swirled me into the ballroom, excitedly. “What classes do you have?” she asked. Kimi was of a bouncy personality, for a lack of any other word to quite capture her essence, and in conjunction with this, being around her produced endorphins similar to jumping on a trampoline. She seemed the most happy and alive of anyone I’d ever met as everything seemed to excite her. I was glad that she was my roommate; she had this energy which seemed to wash over you and take you in, like waves taking you out to sea, making even the sleepest moments wake up and turn into lively ones.

I began to open my schedule, when I was stopped by the grandeur of the throne room. Stunning. Breathtaking. Wow. Kimi looked at me, great joy overtaking her eyes and she let out a little squeal. A smile overtook my face. I had never seen anything like

it. Well, not in real life anyways. I'd seen similar scenes on TV, but it was so much better real. I mean, I would actually get to enjoy it, and it was REAL.

A grand table with a vibrant silk red tablecloth supported lovely wine glasses filled with morning juices, splendid and fine crystal china, and quite possibly every breakfast food every imagined, and foods that weren't even breakfast foods. The chairs were plush, and silk, and the grandest chandelier in all the world hovered above our meal. A podium lay center stage at the front of the room, and in a buzzing whirl of meshed together moments I soon found myself between Kimi and some girl named Ginger, half listening to Madame Cleito deliver a speech, half absorbed by my plate of pancakes, chocolate muffin, brownie, Bavarian crème doughnut, banana and orange juice. It all looked so delicious. I had to restrain myself from taking the cheesecake, steaks, pizza, chocolate truffles, and wide array of cakes. I am so indecisive and there were so many choices, I wanted some of everything! And now!

“Girls, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all upon your first day at Poseidon’s Boarding School for Girls. I hope you have all settled in comfortably and while you eat breakfast, I am going to tell you a little about the school’s mission.”

“Today we all presently live in a McDonaldized cyberculture world. Our technologies have made us lazy; we want things fast and now, instant gratification, and we no longer know how to do things for ourselves. We have become a consumer society, as and a result, we have sacrificed self-knowledge; we try to instead buy or consume the image that we would like to make ourselves, the media produced image.”

“This way of thinking is of course a recipe for insecurity; it is difficult to fulfill the images projected in media and advertising, especially in America. At this school we

will learn about ourselves, grasp onto self knowledge and become confident and secure young women.”

“The mass media controls people, because they control what we know. To free ourselves we must learn for ourselves by ourselves. We will not allow any television watching at this school, that will not be a source of information for us. No, we will read instead, and explore the outdoors.”

“As you are all probably aware, corporations control the media and as a result they control what we think. In turn, we accept their images and knowledge; they manipulate us so they can make a buck, and in the process come to limit our choices and freedoms. Instead of only having images, we will achieve GENUINE knowledge at this school and we will learn to act and think for ourselves.

“Girls, you can own yourself and only you can sell the rights to it; your self-esteem. We will be self-sufficient here; we will grow our own food and make our own clothes. We will not be consumers. In our cyberworld today, nothing is genuine, even our foods, breasts, and bodies are fake. Well, girls, we will be different here. Why buy Tommy when we can make our own clothes? Our materialist economy, especially in American media, makes us believe things to make money, such as we need to wear these jeans to snag a man, etc. We pay \$120 for jeans that cost fifty cents to make. Why buy images and ideas when we can think on our own?

“The media, government, and even your parents superimpose their ideas upon you, and you internalize these ideas as your own, making you sometimes experience guilt for having your own different ideas. We think of this as our conscience, our ideas of what is of value and importance, and if we don't follow this way of behaving we feel

guilty. We internalize these ideas and we think it is our own “will,” our own mind or conscience, when really it is that of society or your parents; you merely internalize these ideas and codes of behavior and think it’s your own will. Think, why are you here today? Are you going to school because you want to or because you should? Because your parents told you to? Your conscience is controlling you for your parents and society, and they can exert this on you because they have the power. If you refuse to follow the inscriptions of your conscience, society can make you an outcast, parents can take away privileges. Because they give you things, you in essence, give them this power. Information technology helps us this way. We will learn to break free of this ideology at our school. We will shed this skin of dependence and allow our minds to blossom, we will transform into self-reliant individuals.

“At this school we will live in our own realities and we will need trust, truth telling, and self control. We will also keep our bodies as fit as our minds. We will eat healthily and exercise regularly; we will have no obese students here.”

When Madame Cleito said this last statement, I felt as though her eyes were glued completely and directly upon me. Somehow, though, I was not offended in the way I normally would have been by having such a comment directed toward me. It’s not my fault that I am fat. Well, actually it is. But, I was relaxed since I believed the school would help me conquer my obesity. I did, anyways, until my chocolate muffin puffed up and asked me vehemently, “Are you just going to sit here and let her talk to you like that?” The muffins breath smelt sweet and chocolatey. I knew it would taste of a sugary bliss.

“Like what?”

“Like you are some obese pastry eating laze,” my doughnut contributed, looking at my doughbutt, his voice spilling upon me a force as large as its calorie content.

“Well, I don’t really see what I could say to her in my defense,” I replied. “And, I am fat. She’s going to help me.”

“Then why in the name of double fudge brownies is she feeding you doughnuts, pancakes, and muffins?” my banana joined in. “Not too mention me, a fruit high on the glycemic index.”

“I am going crazy,” I sighed.

“Yeah, crazy with that maple syrup,” my half eaten pancake seemingly triumphed. “I am drowning here.”

“Seriously, you’ve put enough sugar in me. Why are you eating? I am full,” my stomach growled.

Just as I was beginning to think that my food was brinking upon making some sort of sense equal to their combined fat grams, Madame Cleito added, “So, you can say goodbye to all the junk food you are eating for breakfast this morning. Think of this as sort of a Last Breakfast of Laziness and Unhealthiness; we will have a fresh, healthy start tomorrow.” And, I gobbled up all my food just to shut them up.

*

Petie Panda had always been a pretty good looking bear. Great eyes. Good teeth. A smile that hit the lady pandas with the effect of a tranquillizer gun. He was also smart and witty and he exuded a charm which tackled anyone within ten feet of him with the powerfulness of a linebacker; there was no escape from anyone in his path, and this is why most people liked him. Petie, however, had convinced himself that his looks were

his most valuable asset, and that is why, when he put on a few pounds during his final year at Great Panda Academy (a very stressful year), he desperately looked for ways to drop the weight as quickly as possible.

He tried *bearly* eating, but that normally ended in sabotage and took from him all his energy and a large portion of his charm (good thing he had more than enough of that to go around). Diet sodas and foods only seemed to make him hungrier, and the more diet sap soda and lite bamboo he ate, the fatter he got.

Petie Panda knew also that exercise was key in any weight loss program, so he joined an aerobics class with Adrenaline, the peacock, one of the most reputable and expensive aerobic instructors in all of China. For strength training Petie started lifting rocks and large fallen tree branches. He also waded against the currents of rivers as an added form of resistance training. In the end, he worked out for nearly four hours a day, which always made him hungrier and lustfully craving of sweets. Why, he had dreams about maple dipped bamboo shoots. Needless to say, Petie just grew and grew. If they had Sumo pandas, it would have been thought he was in training.

One day on his way home from aerobics, more than just a little distraught, his eyes glued to the ground, Petie felt himself run into a silky, sinewy body, and when he looked up, he saw, unbelievably, a unicorn. Rubbing his eyes, he took in the spectacle quicker than he took in his Slim Magic diet pills (which cost a fortune by the way). The unicorn was pure magnificance; a horse with a coat of fur so white and beautiful, it was nearly invisible, darting purple eyes, golden hooves, and a horn which glowed, kind of like, Petie thought, one of those glitter frosted ice sickle lights that were becoming so popular on the Christmas trees of Christians these days.

“Why are you watching the ground instead of where you are going?” the unicorn asked, not even a trace of any type of emotion whatsoever revealed in her voice.

“Oh, I am terribly sorry,” Petie replied, his once buoyant and bouncy personality now sunk, much like his eyes. “I am just feeling a little down today, and I guess my eyes followed suit.”

“Oh, well I hope things look up for you. Anyways, I was wondering, being as you are a Panda yourself, if you could help me find the joyous Panda. Fun loving and very social, always laughing and in possession of a charm for which he is known miles around. His name is Petie Panda. Do you think you could help me find him?” the unicorn inquired, seeming to already know the answer.

“I am Petie Panda,” he replied, coming close to choking on the very words he only half believed.

“Well, no offense, but there must be another Petie Panda. You do not seem happy and full of life, but very sad. And, it is rumored Petie possessed a plethora of pals. So, why are you here *alone* in the woods?”

“Well, I’ve been dieting, so I haven’t had much time for friends, what with working out and all. And, the diet foods have left me so tired and drained and hungry, that is hard to be the lively bear I used to be.” I am pretty sure I am the only Petie Panda.”

“Oh, silly bear,” the unicorn sighed. “No diet is worth trading your life for.”

“I know. I know. I just wanted to lose it all very quickly and then go back to my normal life.”

“Never stop living your life, especially for a diet, as life is much too short.

Besides, that is not how dieting works; it takes time to lose weight. How much have you lost since you started?”

“Actually,” Petie cringed, almost unable to bring the dreadful words to life he had to admit, “I have gained 17 pounds since I started dieting. I don’t know how; I’ve switched to lite bamboo and diet sap soda and I’m taking Slim Magic pills and exercising nearly four hours a day.”

“Why, no wonder you haven’t lost weight. You shouldn’t exceed ninety minutes of working out; it will only make you crave junk food, and 85% of losing weight is what you eat. Diet foods only make you hungrier. Plus, you should enjoy your exercise and the food you eat. So, silly bear, cut back on the exercise, nix the diet foods, and start eating whole grains, vegetables, especially spinach, broccoli and tomatoes, and fruits like grapes, blueberries, apples, and oranges. And, instead of soda, drink water and green tea. Fish is also good for you, if you have no qualms about eating a fellow member of the Earth Community.”

“Trust me, I am a nutritionist for all the fairies, water nymphs, lovely sea fairies, centaurs and naiads. Most importantly, don’t sacrifice time with your friends, family or give up having fun; you need to live your life dear panda, you need to live you....” The words faded and in the same instant, so did the unicorn, into THIN air, and thin, at the advice of the unicorn, Petie eventually became, not overnight, but in time....all in good time....and he enjoyed his life again...and he cared about the fun times he had...not about how much he weighed on November 15 six years ago...he was healthy...and he enjoyed the voyage...

Chapterette C The Thoughts and Ideas of Bambi

My sister Valentina is so clueless. All she cares about is learning (for the sake of learning; we are genius', like we need to fret about this), the earth, helping people, and things of that nature. But, does she care about her looks or clothes? Not for a second. I'm embarrassed to call her my sister. I mean, would it kill her to wear a stitch of makeup? You would think a twin would have more consideration.

I put a lot of work into my wardrobe. I only wear top designer brands and the latest fashions, and I always do my hair and makeup. But, because Valentina's my twin, the whole world gets to see what I'd look like if I didn't own a tube of lipstick (or even chapstick for that matter), a brush or clothes bought someplace besides my grandmother's garage sale (and I'm talking of clothes that weren't even stylish in grandma's day; no, these clothes her grandma bought for her for Christmas and birthdays, that even she didn't want to wear). Even though we're natural beauties, , Valentina gets in the way of looking "naturally flawless," you know, "perfect." Because of her, people are made aware that I have flaws. It's so much easier to manipulate people to get what you want when they are oblivious to your imperfections, no matter how minute and practically nonexistent they might be. Just think of Hitler and how he feigned being vegetarian. Manipulation, once coupled with pretended "perfection" makes being a genius pure child's play.

Not to mention that the richest guys want the most beautiful girls, much in the same way that they want the showiest cars. The more unwise these potential husbands are to my many flaws, the more likely I'll find a rich and gorgeous husband. Trying to get

Valentina to come to her senses, however, has been a great deal of work. A couple weeks before leaving for boarding school we went to a beach party, and I practically groveled at her feet to persuade her to look normal for a change. Girls with my brains and looks do NOT grovel.

“Valentina!” I implored “How do you ever expect to get guys to talk to you wearing that?” She was wearing a one piece with one of those hideous attached skirts and it was a vomit like-shade of green, not to mention old, so old that little balls of fabric were beginning to make themselves apparent.

“I thought guys were supposed to like you for your personality,” my sister scoffed.

That was perhaps one of the funniest things I have ever heard. But, in my desperate effort to persuade her, I played along with her silly notions. “Of course. But, after they are attracted to you, so that they actually come talk to you and get to know your personality, lovely sister.”

“Why are you giving me this advice anyway?” she wondered. “If I recall correctly, I’ve had more boyfriends than you.”

“Oh, Valentina!” I giggled. “You see, that there is your very dilemma. It is not how many boyfriends you have that matters, but the number of guys you date and how much they buy you; without a doubt, I greatly exceed you in both those categories. I mean, don’t you want boys to buy you expensive jewelry?”

“I date boys for who they are and how they treat me, not for what they have to give me,” Valentina hissed. “If a guy doesn’t have depth beyond his wallet, he won’t make me happy.”

Once again, one of the funniest things I've ever heard. Money ALWAYS makes me happy.

*

Katie Kangaroo had spent all of her life in a zoo. In her youth, her mind was mostly fixated on escaping back to the wild, where she could be free. After several failed attempts she spent most of her time with the other caged kangaroos, working on her jumping.

Lately though, she'd become undeniably fascinated by the people who came to the zoo; perhaps it could even be said they were like caged animals to her, only they were free and mobile. The first human she showed any particular interest for was a young girl wearing a jersey and bouncing a basketball with such skill that she was able to dribble it between her legs and then spin it atop her fingertips.

The zookeeper had put a ball in the kangaroo play area, and Katie soon began to practice. Why, she got so good that eventually she could dribble it between her legs, behind her back, spin it, not just on her paw tips, but with the tips of her tail as well. But, alas, the zookeeper didn't like this and took her ball away. He thought she'd take visitors away from the killer whale show.

Katie went back to jumping for a few days, but was soon distracted by another human, this time a little boy playing the flute. He came alone; it was a slow day in the zoo, in fact. So, Katie stared at the boy and lured him in. When he got close enough to the fence, Katie snatched his flute before he could realize what had happened, put it in her pouch, and then hopped away.

With practice, Katie soon became quite an accomplished flutist. No, she did not play Chopin or Mozart, but natural, wild animal music, which painted the tapestry held within her beautiful kangaroo heart, and it was music of such loveliness that it outright exceeded anything which Chopin could ever dream to compose. The zookeeper did not approve of one of his kangaroo's causing such commotion, and he took Katie's flute away, just as he had done with the basketball.

For a few days Katie went back to jumping with the other Kangaroos, playing hop scotch and such, when her eyes fell upon a gorgeous French woman wearing a beret. At once Katie desired to get a beret. "The other Kangaroos will be jealous of me and admire me more if I get one of those extra-fur-on-the-head things," Katie thought to herself. "They will think I am special."

Katie tried to employ the method she had used on the little boy, of drawing him in with her eyes, followed by a quick snatch and hop. But, this scheme did not work on the woman, and at the end of the day, the sad kangaroo was left beret-less. Oh, how would she get a beret?

Each day Katie searches and scours the people of the zoo, to try and find one wearing a beret. Though her time is completely consumed with this activity, as far as anyone has heard, she's still beret less. But, oh, no doubt, she will stay glued to the fence, she will keep looking, and Katie will live her life as a statue, something only to be looked at, even more so than if people were to look at her as she jumped and played. Going against her nature for false approval would while away her years.

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Chapterette D The Diary of Valentina Colangeli

Dear Diary,

Today was my first day at Poseidon Boarding School for Girls. Mrs. Zhaoxing teaches my first hour class; World History. Our first section is the Seven Wonders of the World. We will be learning about a different wonder each day for the entire week.

It is not that I have never heard about the Seven Wonders of the World (I just have never given much thought to them), but to learn about them, oh, it is fascinating! We began discussing the pyramids of Egypt, Giza in particular. This seemed to me fitting since our school is in a pyramid in Egypt.

It took 100,000 laborers and twenty years to build the Royal Tombs! I read that in Peru pyramids were palaces, not places to worship as once believed. The rulers of the palaces came to great power; when these rulers died their palace turned into a tomb, burying the ruler and his family, and his successor had to build a new palace.

I don't know a great deal about Egyptian pyramids. How are they different from the ones in Peru? Do they have the same purpose? Did the Peruvians know the Egyptians? If not, how'd they both know to build pyramids? This mystery of the world plagues my mind like a case of puppy love.

Well, I must be going. It's almost time for dinner. Until next time, diary.

Love,
Valentina
Xoxoxoxoxo

*

They think that I am a monster. They think that I am unreal. No, I am just a plesiosaurus deprived of extinction, somewhat like the coelacanth.

I am not quite sure why plesiosaurs of the loch's emerald world did not go extinct; we went extinct everywhere else, but for some reason, a few of us still reside here in Scotland.

For the most part we try to keep a low profile; I mean, wouldn't you if every time you showed your face you were referred to as the "loch ness monster"? Well, we are not monsters, but plesiosaurs. How can there be a "the" in our title, when there is in fact six of us chilling here in the loch?

We are no legend. We are as real as the Pyramid at Giza. We should have gone extinct, but heck, it might take us another 20 years.

Chapterette E Ginger Eats Breakfast

I think I've mentioned earlier that I want to be a model. I think I have a very promising future in this field. I am gorgeous; that is just a fact. My hair is divine, my bone structure is excellent, I have a perfect, pouty pucker, eyes that draw you in, and I am no shorty; I stand a strong 5 foot ten inches. Do you know what else I am that models need to be? Thin.

Most people assume that I am naturally thin, blessed with a high metabolism, for such is what I want them to think. What I don't want is for anyone to know is that I was fat as a child. I struggled to lose weight, and for many years, exercised excessively or limited my calorie intake to around 350 a day. Recently, as a result of disastrous sweet cravings (I denied myself sugar for soooooooo long,) I became almost fixated on

cheesecake and cookies, and now, to help maintain my figure, I have begun to purge my body of calories. And, when I have the power to control my eating I will have fasting days. I'd fast everyday if I could. But then, I'd die.

So, imagine my horror, when upon my first day at my new school, the breakfast consisted of a promenade of sweet foods. I wanted to run away to lock myself in my room and cry. But, instead I ate six or seven platefuls of food. I ate after I was full and until I felt devastatingly sick. I just couldn't stop; it was like chain eating. I had to go to the bathroom right away, and I had to hurry to brush my teeth before class started. I was so mad at whoever provided all of that food! Nobody understands. I am so alone.

*

My name is Hilary Hippo, and I have always wanted to dance, to be a graceful ballerina. Oh, to do Pilates, to wear a pink tutu and those cute little ballerina shoes, just gliding upon the stage like a swan, the other dancers would be my chariot, and as I am performing I am leading ,beautiful and glorious, intoxicating the audience into a state of awe.

This has been a tough feat, to say the least. For starters, I am the only hippo in the entirety of the Nile River who has any desire to be a ballerina. Or for that matter, even to watch a ballet. Secondly, I have no clue where I would ever find a tutu or ballet slippers. Thirdly, not only do I have no one to teach me ballet, but most crushing of all, I have not even a pinch of grace or coordination.

The other hippos all told me to spend my time on some other ambition, such as learning to rumble swim the Nile. A popular sport of the day, rumble swim is when hippos race down the Nile, floating and turning all at once. We do belly flops on the

water, causing a raucous of waves. Some hippos progressively create splashes along the way, which causes quite the rumble. If we get really into the game, sometimes we shake the earth with our girth, all to see who gets to the finish line the fastest.

Why follow the crowd? I am as free thinking as Pinthous and determined to become a great ballerina. In the manner of Phaethon, who rebelled against his father and took his sky-borne chariot, I rebelled against my father and quit the rumbling team to take up dance. Oh yes, I would become the most famous hippo ballerina the whole world over!

Flaming pink feathers are not hard to find, so I easily scouted out a few flamingoes and invited them to be in my dance troupe. Then, I made tutus out of palm leaves and ballet slippers out of clay, putting some of the flamingos feathers on them to make them pink. They were sort of ugly costumes, but nonetheless, although nobody else could tell, they were tutus and ballet slippers!

Next on the agenda was to find a ballet instructor. I figured between having someone teach me to be graceful and the flamingoes rubbing their grace off on me, in no time I'd be a flourishing agile and famous ballerina!

None of the animals we found knew ballet, but luckily for me we soon discovered a human tribe, who, we soon came to know, danced what I assumed was the dance of ballet around a fire each and every night! Gasping in awe, the flamingoes and I observed and attempted to mimic them. The dance really didn't take as much grace as I expected. We merely had to fly about and have fun.

One night, the humans and their dance overtook my thought and emotions, and I stampeded in and tried to join them; I guess I got a little cocky. Well, instead of happily

welcoming me into their dance, the humans tried to push me into their fire! And they did! Luckily, we were close to the river, and I managed to scurry into it.

Wow, that fire was hot! I tumbled, tossed, and turned with desperation, when suddenly I became aware that I wasn't the only hippo tossing and turning down the river. Suddenly, a wave of exhilaration overtook me. I was in a rumble race! With all my might and strength I spun down the river, and before I knew what was happening I was being declared the winner! I'd never felt the same sense of accomplishment before in my life.

I guess that sometimes instead of a swan-driven chariot it's better to hop on a river-run hippo. I thought I'd be a great ballerina, but really I'm a great rumble swimmer. As for ballet, I'm not really sure what it is. Hippos are made to stomp, not to tip toe!

Chapterette E Koko's Hurdles

I have been training rigorously this year for the summer Olympics. Last time I got cut in the Final round because of a tenth of a second. I tied with a girl named Lucia. We had a most interesting conversation later that night, at dinner.

"The 200 meter hurdles. One of the most exhilarating experiences on earth. Kills you how much a tenth of a second counts, though. Eh, Koko?"

"Yes, a little part of me definitely died today," I admitted. Then, a thought struck me much the same way that light slashes through darkness. "Lucia Colangeli, you say your name is? Are you sure you're of Ghana?" I gave a little laugh.

“Actually, no. But, just between you and me dear,” and she struck me a cold and paralyzing glare such that I KNEW she meant business, and such that I suddenly became a little afraid of her, “I am an Italian citizen, I am very fast, but my team in Italy, not so fast as your team from Ghana.”

“Well,” I asked, stupefied, “why on Earth do you run in the Ghana qualifier? Practice? To spy on the competition?” I joked.

“Actually,” Lucia’s eyes as serious as a heart attack, “to steal the competition. If you came to Italy you would not only make our team more competitive, but you would have a chance to beat the runners you lost to in the qualifier. A chance to be in the Olympics. Does it matter who you run for as long as you’re running?”

“But,” my voice resounded with utmost confusion, “I am not an Italian citizen. I am of Ghana. I can not run for Italy.”

“I can change that,” she said as simply and casually, as if we were exchanging cookie recipes. “Today you are Koko Mahama. Tomorrow, Adriana Pasconi, Isabella Vignudelli, Koko Palatino; that’s it, Koko Palatino. African mother. Italian father. Are you really going to let a tenth of a second keep you from the Olympics?” her cold hard eyes pleaded, her fist noiselessly slamming down upon the table.

I went to the Summer Olympics that year. As Koko Palatino. I won a bronze medal, but I won it for Italy, not Ghana, for Koko Palatino, not for Koko Mahama. Next time was going to be different. Four years later, as I surmounted the steps to the Olympic Qualifier station, I told myself, ‘You, Koko Mahama, are going to medal in the Olympics this year for Ghana as Koko Mahama!’

Just as these thoughts filled my head, my body aching with anxiety, I felt someone grab my arm and pull me down from my stairs. It was that HORRIBLE Lucia Colangeli. Her grip sent an icy shiver through my bones, and she looked more familiar than she should have, like, I had seen her since the last Olympics. I had given into her once, but not again. I would not. “Just where do you think you’re going? Not the Ghana 200 meter hurdle qualifier I hope?”

“Actually, that is exactly where I’m going.”

“That’s too bad. If you don’t run for Italy again, I am afraid a scandal will surface, and not only will your medal be taken from you and your country disgraced, you will be disqualified this year. But, that’s only if you don’t run for Italy this summer. You can’t be Koko Mahama and Koko Palantino at the same time can you? Besides, what is a country but a place, and what is a name but a title?”

The fourth place runner was from Ghana...I began to contemplate...Lucia, quite literally began to twist my arm...once again I could see that she met business....

*

Scientists are crazy, and if you ask me, they have too much time to play with. My parents have never even met, but yet, here I am. A transgenic monkey that glows in the dark. I don’t even know if my mom was a monkey or a jellyfish, same deal with my dad. But, how am I supposed to be a jellyfish and a monkey at the same time?

Before we know it, there will be transgenic zoos popping up everywhere. Horses with people, dolphins and parrots, penguins and seahorses, flowers and butterflies, zebras with giraffes, bees and pollen, lions with mice, bears with seals, hippos with birds (like they’d ever fly), polar bears with sea anemones, can you see where I’m going? Crickets

with trees for crying out loud! Why can't these crazy scientists just let us be ourselves and leave all the creating to nature? They are not only depreciating the value of other animal lives, but of human life as well.

*

Chapterette F An Attack on Babette

Babette Cleito is probably the person I like least, in perhaps even the history of the Earth. She is much too much driven; she does not care about the wants and needs of those around her because she assumes they are the same as hers. She is controlling and never thinks her actions through before she does them.

I bet her whole little school thing flops, like one of those fat guys thunderously crushing the water with their belly flop. She thinks I'm going to help her. But in that she is wrong. More wrong than Plato's cave concept. He thinks that 2-D shadows on the wall of a cave or mistaken for reality. Well, any holographic model will show you that he is wrong. These 2-D models are the reality and the 3-D is the illusion.

No, I don't really like Plato. He's always trying to do too many things at once. But, I really don't like Babette. No, I'll probably betray her. Well, if I can figure out how. I'll think of something I am sure.

Chapter Four The Trial

The Great Remade World was on trial at the Global Court, one more global than even the United Nations. The plaintiff was the organization LOKAL; the latter being a fairly new start up, but the former, although having existed under different names and holding different members, had been in existence for a long time. This organization seemed even more alive than its members, as though its practices were beyond the control of its advocates. And so, The Great Remade World was being sued for twenty billion dollars, not solely for the doings of its present members, but for those of its predecessors as well.

The Defense Attorney was a man named, Arthur Cutchings. The Prosecuting Attorney was no other than, Wingate Cutchings, his long-lost brother. Sort of. The two British-born gents went to Oxford together. Afterwards, they went onto Harvard Law School. After graduating from this prestigious Massachusetts University, Arthur decided to remain in America and practice corporate law. Wingate, however, migrated to Australia, where he passionately pursued environmental law at a non-profit firm.

The two men became almost as different as the balance of their bank accounts, and while they had no vile disputes or confrontations of any sort, they grew profoundly apart and hadn't spoken in nearly ten years. They had never imagined that they would be

going head to head against each other in what was nothing short of a HUGE, lawsuit. This caused great dismay amongst them. Arthur, although competitive by nature, loved his brother. Thinking that his kin could use a major win in order to advance his career and finally make some money, Arthur vowed to try his best to throw the case. Wingate, who also loved his brother, deemed that winning this case would guarantee Arthur a full partnership in his grand firm, as well as additional money (which he for some reason seemed to worship), so Wingate also decided to make his best effort to throw the case. They would have to be subtle about trying to lose, and this manipulation would indeed become the real trial.

The judge was Mario Linguini, an ex-Brazilian soccer player fluent in fifteen languages. He was trying to learn more, presently attempting the mastery of Hungarian; one can not be a judge of the Global Court without having a special tongue. Mario presided toweringly over his podium, gravel in hand. Arthur stood near a bench before Judge Linguini on the left and Wingate next to a bench to his right. In stadium-style seating to the Judge's far right sat jurors, one from each country in the world, each wearing translation devices so that those who could not speak English would be able to linguistically understand the trial.

Behind Arthur sat seven robots and five robots placed themselves before Wingate. The members of the plaintiff and the defense controlled the robots. LOKAL members were housed in one room, the Great Remade World Organization in another. From these rooms, they could watch and hear the trial on a movie screen and were able to maneuver metal representations of themselves with their robot remote controls. When their time

came to ascend the stand they were able to make their robot speak in a masked voice through its attached microphone.

After getting the ready-set-go nod from the judge, Arthur began the trial, saying, “My clients are members of the Great Remade World Society. It is their goal to remove all environmental laws presently in effect and to create an atmosphere regulator to produce oxygen and all the components of the atmosphere so that they do not have to worry about polluting our Earth. They want to remove rainforests in order to build a research center where they will attempt to build an artificial atmosphere, as well as artificial oil, water and foods. They also want to remove laws protecting endangered animals so that they may profit from their flesh and use them in experimentation.

They are also producing many harmful products such as fuel, and sweeteners in order to create a fake and artificial environment, so that we no longer need natural resources. Also, they’re trying to create a second planet similar to Earth in terms of atmosphere and other natural elements so they can continue to destroy our planet at their own liberty. They see lives and resources as dispensable, for they can always ‘make’ a new one....”

“Objection!” Wingate exclaimed. “Irrelevant information. The goals of the organization are not on trial; its actions are.”

“Objection sustained. Jury, please dismiss the previous statements,” the Judge directed.

The jury duly noted the request, but inside they laughed. What the judge was asking of them was nearly impossible. Someone would have to erase their memory for this to be possible. Even Linguini knew this. But, it was procedure.

“Good point,” Arthur continued. “Well, the mistakes of the Defense are numerous. No doubt, we will someday lose our natural resources through abuse, and they have taken it upon themselves to find alternatives. In order to fund their research they have given vaccines to millions of people, primarily in the form of the flu, which are both harmful and toxic. As a result of these vaccines, people suffer depression. Then, people buy depression pills from a company associated with my clients society, and they reap profits from this business. The vaccines also make its recipients vulnerable to high-frequency sound waves which gives the defense the capability to brainwash and exert mind control upon the injected victims. To be racist and specieist. To buy their products. Products such as sweeteners that they bribed the FDA to approve. Foods that make its eaters hungrier and fatter. Heck, we outlaw marijuana, but refined sugar, more lethal than heroin, and artificial sweetener, pure poison, they approve. Both trigger appetite and are addictive. Citizens purchase diet pills and diet foods by companies my clients have their pockets in, which only make its consumers hungrier, fatter, and far less healthy, almost destined to early death. Plagues them with diabetes, they sell diabetes treatment drugs and advertise in magazines they own.

They are also responsible for slaughterhouses. They use mind control to practice specieism, to make us think it’s ok to mistreat animals, crave meat (meat and dairy makes us fat and is linked to diabetes and heart disease. Raising livestock causes water pollution, top soil erosion, loss of forests, and is the greatest barrier to world hunger), and they also practice eugenics. Coupled with fast food restaurants they have their pockets in, they make you hungrier and fatter, so you buy their diet foods an depression pills.

Not only did they give Hitler the idea of eugenics, they also gave him money to fund it. They are responsible for the Holocaust. A little brainwashing and the vaccine victims forget all about Henry Ford's stance on the Jews. They create false memories. A little mind control, and it's okay to send soldiers to fight and invade for no reason. They even make some soldiers so violent, they want to go and fight.

They take money from the already suffering public schools to create Schools of Americas, where the most vaccine infected boys are sent to train to be ruthless warriors and soldiers so they can fight and kill. To this organization, a buck is worth more than a life. More than the environment. They manipulate, kill and alter the brain, alter the world. Do you know who created the CIA? Do you know why?

"Objection! Irrelevant!" Wingate exploded, puzzled by his brother's more than obvious attempt to throw the case. Why is he trying to lose? Wingate wondered. For my benefit?

Before Judge Linguini could give a ruling, Arthur protruded his case by nearly yelling and ever so thunderously was he nearly yelling, "To bring Nazi scientists to America! To learn about germ warfare and torture tactics! To learn about mind control and hypnosis so they could advance their pockets at the expense of others! They have caused numerous deaths and will continue to do so for their own profits! They, much as the government, should stay out of business! A few people should not have too much power, especially with wealth, for these components in combination makes any human dangerous!"

"But," Wingate objected, "is not their cause a good one? We are depleting our resources, and if unable to replete, we will have no choice but to go from a real to

artificial world and depend on science for our alternative.” Wingate struggled, but this time he lost the case. Not because of merits. He had been on top of his class at Harvard, but the case was almost predetermined. He wondered if Arthur had thrown the case, because he knew he had no chance and it was his only way of winning....

Chapter 5 Let the Games Begin

To be completely honest, one of the reasons I started Poseidon’s Boarding School for Girls was to take my mind off of things. What things do you ask? Well, mostly to distract myself from the fact that my fiancé’ had mysteriously disappeared. He left no note goodbye, or even a hint that he planned to leave. He was gone for months and I heard nothing until finally, one cool bone dry morning, Koko brought to my bedchamber a letter saying that it had been delivered by some sort of strange looking owl.

The letter came in the funniest looking envelope my eyes had ever beheld. Made completely of bark and on the outside, it had my name was carved into the bark, not written on. The letter itself was thin wood and it’s writing was also carved. It relayed:

My Love Babette,

I regret having left without any fore notice. The truth is, our relationship simply wasn’t working, being as you always have to have your way and all. Quite frankly, I tired of it and was too afraid to confront you; so, as I was in a weak state I ran away as a weak man would. I have now fallen in love with another woman, and I have

become a technology supporter. In fact, I always have been; I simply let you control me. If you had any sense you'd cease your fight against technology as well.

Sincerely Yours,

Plato

*

I had once been deeply in love with a man named Plato. Our love was innocent and pure, perhaps unmatched by any other hearts throughout the history of time. Greater and deeper were our feelings than even those of Pyramus and Thisbe. None other than the conniving Cleito brought about our ruin.

Babette had feigned the role of my friend, but when she decided that she wanted Plato for herself, she told me that Plato had died and then tricked me into marrying her fiancé! Only some years later did I discover what she had done, as her and Plato had eloped and almost vanished into the seeping core of the Earth. A mystery it still remains, however, is the means by which Cleito tricked Plato into loving her and leaving me. It must have been a spell, our love was so deep!

Who, I must ask, could blame me for sending Cleito a false letter when Plato wrote her? I feel this is nothing less than justified revenge. What's tear wrenching here is that the real letter pierced through the very innermost corners and far reaches of my heart, for this is what the pain-inflicting letter Plato wrote to Cleito REALLY said:

My true darling and beloved fiancé,

I cannot even begin to express how much I miss you; I would give anything to be near you right now. The Great Remade World Organization has kidnapped me, and I am currently imprisoned in a cave in the Brazilian rainforest. They refuse to release me, until I tell them the secret to creating an artificial atmosphere. I love you dearly.

Your fiancé,

Plato

Chapterette A Banana War

The Jungle animals soon learned of the Great Remade World Society's plans to create a new world, which would liberate them to destroy the Earth, and this would bring their end. The animals had long ago noted that the progress of humans is at the expense of the animals, as it brings only destruction. If Plato didn't help them, no one would, and the technology advocates would diminish the Earth. Mass slaughter and world genocide, would eventually creep into their jungle. Freeing Plato was their only choice.

By the suggestion of Ruby the Hummingbird, the animals donned themselves the World Liberators. (Solomon had finally asked her for a date and things were progressing rather steadily). They scurried right away at almost the dawn of Solomon's suggestion to free Plato, to make bamboo and spider web sling shots, guns, and they hurriedly collected bananas, pebbles, sharpened diamonds, and pine nuts for ammo. The bulk of the ammunition was bananas, as Jolly had gotten a tad carried away with his collection duties.

The Great Remade World Society seemed to come every other Thursday (the day the river gushed strongest, the sun smiled brightest, and the trees were the thirstiest). No difficulty met the animals when they predicted the arrival of the humans.. Prepared, they hid in bushes and the hollows of trees, armed with banana slingshots and bamboo guns.

The society arrived later than normal that day; only a few hours before the sky spurned a fiery palette of orange, yellow and red hues, signaling the sun's descent to rest and the moon's rise to its graveyard shift, enlisting the duties of gleaming and glowing. Leaders of an Italian mob, the Colangeli's had gotten tied up when some of their affairs ran amuck, and they were to blame for the society's tardiness. Mr. Montgomery also caused tardiness. One of his plastic surgeries had gone awry, and he had no choice but to conduct an emergency performance to "refix" one of his best patients.

Dwindling into the forest, these selfish beings made a thunderous spectacle. "You three must learn to be on time. You're lucky I waited; I do not wait for anybody. And of all days, on the day we will MAKE Plato TALK!" Mr. Sheva exclaimed, hinting at the force they planned to execute upon their unlucky prisoner. No sooner had these resounding words been uttered than the animals started up their attack.

Bombarded with air borne bananas, nicked by plunging pebbles and hit with flying pine nuts, the society members yelped in pain and huddled together in a circle. The jungle animals soon surrounded them, shooting ammo at them in such a way, it began to pound and plunge upon their bodies.

Too distracted by the pain inflicted upon their bodies, the humans failed to notice Solomon swoop in and steal the key to Plato's chains from out of King Majeed's pocket;

they had no time to realize it, either, as the animals chased them out of the jungle and forced them to hop into Mr. Koizumi's plane and retreat. As fast as they could.

Chapterette B Mia and Analise

It can be duly noted that the roommates Mia and Analise were at war nearly every second of their time enlisted at Poseidon. Before they even met, they hated each other, and each forced moment they spent together escalated this feelings with the force and speed of a shooting star, shuttling further and further into the abyss of detest. Through use of rumors and lies, the girls defiled each other's reputations more and more each day, attempting to make their dislike of the other contagious and widespread.

Their dislike reached an unfortunate climax at the school dance. The most handsome gentleman from the boys school to attend this Poseidon sponsored party was a young man named, Benjamin Shoane. Both Mia and Analise found themselves overdosed with smitten for him, and both girls began to make repeated requests to dance with him. Benjamin, being polite and well mannered, obliged to dance with them both, even though he really had his eye on Valentina, the girl most embracing of her naturalness. Yet, he made no mention of this to either Mia or Analise and proved to both that he was a good conversationist and dancing partner, making each girl fall even more in like with him.

Oblivious to the true dance of Benjamin's heart, both girls became convinced that he was swooning for them. Mia and Analise began vying for the poor boy, competing over who would dance with him as fiercely as two mountain lions fighting over a fallen

fawn. "Stay away from my Ben," Mia would snarl. Analise would reply with the rebuttal, "I saw him first. BACK OFF."

"He likes me."

"In your dreams. It's obvious he likes me. He's only dancing with you to be polite."

"Why on Earth would a boy that gorgeous like you? Look in the mirror."

"Look who's talking, Ms. My Nose is As Long As a Giraffe's Neck."

"At least my teeth aren't as crooked as a con man!"

Ben literally got in the middle of the quarrel. A heated game of tug of Ben began when Mia took hold of his left sleeve and Analise of his right. Before this tortuous competition could be broken up, Ben's sleeves were ripped mercilessly from off of his arms. Almost immediately after this episode, Cleito escorted the enemies to their rooms, where a fresh war ensued without delay.

Analise took no heed to throw her bunk bed from its position on top of Mia's. Immediately, the two girls set to rearrange the room so that Mia's belongings concentrated on one side and Analise's on the other. Analise ran a piece of tape down the middle of the room. "You stay on your own land!" she shouted.

"You keep to your territory and I'll keep to mine," Mia retorted.

"Well, I'll have to walk through your side to get to the door," Analise added.

"I'll have to walk to yours if it gets hot and I need to open the window," Mia replied.

"Never mind. I'll use the window as my door!" Analise announced defiantly.

"And I'll just use the door to go outside when I get hot!" Mia came back.

A few seconds later, an intermittence to the silence Analise wondered, “How will I turn the lights on and off? The switch is on your side.”

“I guess you’ll have to stumble about in the dark,” Mia smirked.

After another play of silence, Mia then intermitted, “What shall I do if I need to use the mirror? It is on your side.”

“I guess you’ll have to find another mirror or go down the all to the shower room,” Analise relayed, her voice venomous like the bite of a poison snake.

“I guess I will!” Mia shot back, aggravation exploding through her pores.

*

Mia and Analise continued with their war for days; planning little sneak attacks like Mia putting things in front of the doorway for Analise to trip over, as she left the light off, glazing the window with honey, or Analise turning up the room’s heat as high as it could go. Gradually, as this form of existence brought them to dual states of misery, they began to ease up on their battle tactics and cave in.

Mia soon tired of trucking down to the bathroom every time she was in need of a mirror, so she offered, “I’ll let you use my door if I can use your mirror.” Analise, utterly exhausted from always having to use the window, and twice exhausted from having to clean her sticky hands of honey, readily agreed to the proposal.

Soon, they learned to share their space; that their room was a far more peaceful and enjoyable land than when they fought over it.

Why, the two girls even began to talk and found they had common interests. “I love swimming too. I, too, have always been a strong supporter of animal rights. I miss

my friends. You had friends? My favorite color is also purple.” The list went on and they began to see each other more as a person rather than as an enemy.

Their bonding further increased when Babette assigned the two girls to mop and scrub the floors of the ENTIRE pyramid together. Such a daunting and undesirable job no doubt aligned the two in dislike of both mopping and Madame Cleito. “Really, it is her fault for making us room together. She can NOT punish us for not getting along,” Mia complained.

“That’s like punishing a cow for not wanting to eat a hamburger,” Analise chimed in. “Besides, it is definitely an extreme punishment. Mopping the entire pyramid in two days!”

“Yes, she is a tyrant.” Then in a hushed secretive voice she continued, “I heard she was a principal at a public school in America, and she worked her students so hard, three of them died. And she had to change her name, and that’s why she started this school out in the middle of nowhere.”

“No!” Analise gasped. She then whispered, “Well, I heard she was a CEO who embezzled money, stole from the workers checks, and tried to trick her way into getting the owners money; I think it was of a pro basketball team.”

“I heard her husband left her for not letting him eat meat.”

“I heard she sold her own daughter to some sultan to finance this school.”

On the second day, in midst of Analise making up rumors to pass the time, Madame Cleito stormed upon them like a tsunami, upon an unexpected coast. “Girls! My office! Now!” she belted, a deep huskiness entreating upon her voice.

Both girls knew this tone. It was the tone Cleito used ONLY when her anger exploded from within her more powerfully than a star upon its death. The wrath of her anger could destruct anything in its path, which is exactly where Mia and Analise found themselves to be. When they arrived to the office of their now horrifying headmistress, her eyes almost thrashed their beyond exhausted from mopping bodies into what had become known as the “victim” seats, the ones which laid sprawled before her desk.

“Girls!” she bitterly exclaimed. “I know what you have been doing behind my back when you are supposed to be mopping.”

“You do?” Analise’s voice quivered, suspecting Cleito had overheard their rumors.

“Well, what sort of Headmistress would I be if I didn’t notice my own students sneaking off to discover hidden passageways so they can covet Nefertiti’s treasure?”

“Nefertiti-what?” Mia outraged. “I have no idea what you’re talking about. Further more, you can’t make false accusations such as these.”

“You tow girls make false accusations against each other all the time, and then justify it to yourselves based on meritless hate. Besides, I have proof. Nefertiti was my good friend when I was alive, and her ghost now haunts the pyramid. She watches every move any of you girls make, including when you stole HER treasure,” Cleito explained matter of factly.

“Just so you girls know, Nefertiti was married to Akhenaten, and for many years, they were King and Queen of Egypt. Akhenatena City is between Thebes and Memphis. Akhenaten was a great Pharaoh who defied the Amun to create his one religion of one God. Nefertiti herself is beautiful beyond Diana. She loves cornbread more than any

woman I know.” This last statement perpetuated more as a reflection than any sort of useful knowledge. “A man named Thomas fell so in love with her that when assigned to create a sculpture of her, he omitted the left eye. So now, as a ghost, she can leave her left eye in spots separate from her wandering soul, so that she may be in two places at once. She is by far the best spy I have ever enlisted.”

“For punishment you two girls will be assigned separate yet comparable dungeons as your new bed chambers, and you will act as Nefertiti’s personal slaves until you return her treasure.”

“No!” both girls exclaimed at once. “We refuse to live by ourselves or be separated. Furthermore, we cannot return something we have not stolen.”

“It was me!” Mia suddenly burst. “I stole it. Analise had no idea.”

“No,” Analise interrupted. “She is taking the blame for me. I stole it.”

This continued on and on until, in an unexpected instant, much as the cashew flowers blossom, so did their friendship. A Queen dressed in royal threads of such beauty it put a glorious sunset to shame, appeared. This ghost, who no doubt was the acclaimed Nefertiti, relayed, “Perhaps, already you girls have found my treasure.”

From that moment on, bound by fear and a bond of common dislike, the girls became close friends, severed off their hatred and became almost inseparable, as though they had been sewn together to not allow for any gaps, disabling any drear emotion from seeping in.

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Having lived for thousands upon thousands of years, I have beared witnesses to multiple upon multiple events. I have taken surf vacations in Australia and Hawaii, made

friends with jellyfish, starfish, dolphins, and I have even taught penguins to surf. I often visit the deep submarine canyon where Atlantis sank; I talk to the ancient sea turtles and whales, as well as bioluminescent fish and other sea species that live for thousands of years, including the sea phoenix and an immortal mermaid, as well as millions of creatures undiscovered by the rest of human society. It is in the sea, in my past, that I am able to share my true self and have even semi-real relationships. Everybody else is gone too quick.

In the beginning, during biblical times, men lived for thousands of years. And, these men normally died from starving, from lack of knowledge, rather than illness. Eventually, humankind became smarter. They learned they could avoid illness by eating the right foods, dodge accidents, and to be cautious to not become infected with viruses or parasites. They learned about toxins and polluted air, and it became possible for them to avoid illness and live long healthy lives.

This same condition had existed on Atlantis, until a few power thirsty scientists and technologists brought about its ruin. Nobody in the world has ever again made the achievements the inhabitants of Atlantis had made, but, if not for greedy, power hungry people, our world today could be free of crime, poverty, war, and illness. Those in power, however, cared more about their pockets, and they made sure that illness, crime, war, and poverty would stay. They purposely spread plague, even poisoned innocent children with mercury. They caused plagues on purpose in efforts to keep their power and continue to make money off of drugs, weapons, and use their money to have power over those who have less. The Queen of the Amazons had brought her woman warriors to Atlantis once, to try and stop the evil scientists and leaders, but alas, our civilization

was too powerful for them and they were unsuccessful; nature had to lend a hand in destroying Atlantis, covered with the self demise implemented by those few greedy individuals.

At the feet of destruction, at the sunken island of Atlantis, not only lies loots of pirates treasures, but answers, solution, and lessons. Submarine canyons are host to vast treasures lost by pirates and even Aladdin. They are also host to scores of undersea life, undiscovered fish, creatures yet to enter even the dreams of humans, for they are beyond the capacity of human imagination, and in these vast spectaculars of cadencing bioluminescence, glittering and shouting swirls of color galloping here and there, lay the lost continent of Atlantis, for thousands of feet below the sea floor is where the myths, the legends and mysteries lie; it is a place of pure and natural life.

These Atlantis creatures know of life above the sea only through my stories; would these worlds ever collide? I doubt it; sharing a planet is very different from sharing a world, even a way of life. We might as well be from Mars. Money, power, and greed avoid this ocean world..

Sea creatures live for thousands upon thousands of years. They are not immortal, but citizens of this world do not use knowledge for power, there are no evil geniuses. I think humans were better off before we started getting smart.

I have been an astronomer, marine biologist in the Great Barrier Reef, an astronaut. I have even lived in a savage tribe. But, I have never been in a position of power, until now. Until becoming headmistress of Poseidon. And, despite my long life, I have never understood power, and its captivating evil. Until now.

Chapterette C Information Influenza or the Bud of the Spy

The mastermind of the Great Remade World Society was not any of its members. Someone had to fund their second atmosphere, their second world. And that someone was Pam Robeson, the same woman responsible for administering poisons through vaccines to unsuspecting and unwitting children. She wasn't a stupid lady. She knew that the Earth's resources were being depleted and she knew they could be largely salvaged if dairy and meat industries were replaced with whole plant diets. She also knew that this diet could potentially spell the end for pharmaceutical companies, as people would be healthier and need less and less of their drugs.

Pam caused the diseases and they "fixed" them. (She then misinformed the public through education and this led to a type of mind control of the human population). It was a beautiful, profitable relationship.

Yet, she was running out of farmable land. A second habitable world needed to be created. So, she drew together a team of influential, smart, and powerful men who she believed to be best for the job to not only follow orders, but have the knowledge and skills to create a second planet Earth. Pam lured them in with money and threats, so they came easily, seven fish all hooked on one worm.

Mr. Sheva came because the pharmaceutical companies paid him. Mr. Koizumi came, because if the world consumed less dairy and meat they would lose weight and stop buying his diet pills. The Colangeli's came for unlimited legal protection and money. Mr. Montgomery came, because a whole plant food diet would cut out nearly all of his clients who needed liposuction or acne treatment. Mr. Advani came because people would stop buying his coconut oil diet products if they were not fat, and King

Majeed came, because he had investments in several meat and dairy industries. He also knew that the success of his military was entirely dependent upon the ideologies which condoned both the way the meat and dairy companies treated animals and the ways in which people ate them. He also thought they might let him be King of the New World. It was great to be King of a country, but of a world!

The first thing Pam taught the Great Remade World Society was how to plant rumors. As with any modern political election the more rumors and defilement you cast upon your opponents, the better your chances of winning. For instance, their first task had been to plant the rumor that soy milk is bad, so that the Dairy Association wouldn't lose money and neither would the drug companies selling prescriptions for heart disease. The second thing Pam taught them was even more important than spreading rumors; spying. It would always give you an unfair advantage to spy, and it would equip you with your rumors. (They had to plant the rumor that soy is bad before the soy industry had a chance to tell people the truth). Spying could also give knowledge to make money; they could easily sell information to meat, diet, dairy, and pharmaceutical companies for a lofty price.

Part of being a good spy is being resourceful, and Pam very much is this. She knew of a man who had the knowledge to create a second atmosphere, and Pam used her knowledge much the way as Bambi used her genius; for her own profit; in this case, largely for money. Now, money is not bad. Neither is capitalism, but we need values and morals built into this system, and they are not. Bambi and Pam both lack these values and morals. They are far from being the only ones deficient; too bad a vitamin

supplement of morals and values could not be made the same way as one of calcium and magnesium one can be.

Rigorously, the CIA trained the members of the Great Remade World Society, considering how Pam pretty much controlled them as well. They soon learned of a group called, LOKAL. This group was created to help the environment as well as the Earth, and all of its members were vegans trying to spread and promote veganism. They were slowly gaining popularity.

Yet, while LOKAL was their biggest threat, two of its members had begun work on a chemical formula, which would allow for the creation of a second atmosphere. (If they could steal this idea they could use this not only to propagate their reputations, but also to eliminate LOKAL from gaining a good reputation with the people, and to create a second world to inhabit after they finished destroying the Earth). Before the project was completed, one of the men had gotten into a scuffle with the CIA and had disappeared. The other completed the formula on his own, and that is the why The Great Remade World Society kidnapped Plato.

Plato's intentions for the formula were pure. He intended only to use it after every possible attempt had been made to save the Earth. Also, when and if a new Earth was created, Plato didn't intend for people to make the same mistakes or destroy the second planet. On "his" planet, there would be no meat or dairy companies or unnecessary pollution; people would live more naturally. An admittance fee to the new planet would not be charged. He would not deny a life based on possession.

Shortly after the anti-soy campaign began, Madame Cleito learned of this group which was spying on her. She began some spying of her own, which allowed for her to

initiate the world trial. Although oblivious that this group was also responsible for Plato's kidnapping, she couldn't have liked them less. This was partly why she recruited its members' daughters to her school. "Keep your enemies close," was a motto she liked to follow. Funnily enough, they were all aware of who Cleito was when they agreed to send their daughters to her school. Cleito's Assistant Headmistress, Francesca, had already been recruited to work with them to be their inside spy and watch after their daughters. They also could have used their daughters to fight LOKAL, but this would be wrong.

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LOKAL had discovered the Great Remade World Society's headquarters in the midst of the Amazon rainforest (they had cleared over 150 acres for their purposes). This very headquarters was where they worked to engineer a second planet, figure out how they would transport people to this planet, where in space it would be located how much they would charge for transportation and admittance to the new world, as well as how the world would be run and to who and how the money would be administered. They also worked to ban new and existing environmental laws, as well as to promote anything they could that was bad for the environment, and at the same time, look like they were trying to help the environment. They came up with slogans like, Vegans Smell and Veganism: Do You Really Want to be that Gassy? They showed pictures of people outweighed by fruits and vegetables with lines that said, No Milk, No Bones, despite that science had proven that osteoporosis occurs at much lower rates in countries that consume low amounts of animal calcium. Furthermore, this mineral can be

found in nuts, soy milks, vegetables and whole grains, as well as readily available and affordable supplements.

Yet, the Great Remade World Society's propaganda received far greater acceptance than LOKAL's by the general public. LOKAL had the money to control the media and advertise. Which left the King Majeed's and Mr. Sheva's of the world to control the people's values, ones which devalue animals and imagination. The Great Remade World Society had the power to sue the media to make people into consumers of their products, and in a sense, of the Earth. By promoting thoughts and ideas people were used to and had been programmed to believe all their lives, they found their success, and also in that people were resistant to change. The media had conformed people into puppets of its images, and then these images defined and the body took over the mind, making people think less and desire and conform more. By thinking mechanically humans lose their desires to deal with the world in any way that has not been preconstructed. People have come to inhabit a virtual reality, in a cyberspace where people like Pam Robeson command the control pad.

Instead of looking to nature for health, people look to technology, the lazy way, rather than the natural, which is as simple as changing habits. People have become addicted to artificiality, things like sugars, foods, and relationships. We want nothing to do with the more natural, realer version of life. It doesn't taste as good. At least, we don't give it the opportunity to. Money takes the place of religions, morals, and ethics. Things like slaughterhouses bring money, and a new value system, one which values murder of not only animals and the Earth, but also of ourselves.

If LOKAL was going to have any chance at surviving and stopping the Great Remade World Society, they were going to have to take some action. So, the best tactic they decided, was to spy to discover their enemies fatal flaws. They learned that Mr. Sheva was vain. Mr. Koizumi was greedy, the Colangeli's plagued with envy, and King Majeed was unbelievably absorbed with power and its possession. Mr. Montgomery worried too much what others thought of him, and Mr. Advani was an absolute glutton.

With the limited funds LOKAL had (for Cleito's fortune was largely amassed into her school), LOKAL began to use their fatal flaws against them. The first instance occurred when the Great Remade World had discovered, through spying, that Marcella Martinez had written a proposed law which would strengthen penalties produced for by-kill during commercial fishing. They, of course, began to spread the rumor that by kill was minimal, that which occurred could not be avoided, etc.

LOKAL's counteract was to engage in a cyber-war where they utilized their computer knowledge to delete Mr. Koizumi's bank account. They sent letters threatening to sabotage his investments, stocks, and the sports teams he was betting on, if they didn't let Marcella's law pass. The Great Remade World Society loosened up immediately, and Marcella's bill became a law. Mr. Koizumi's greed had gotten the best of him. At least it was only one bank account.

Next on LOKAL's agenda was to pass a law which would require future doctors to take more nutritional classes. When the dairy industry started to step in, knowing this would be the beginning of their end, LOKAL sent Mr. Sheva a picture of a largely overweight, acne clad, crazy haired teen. They threatened to campaign this picture around the globe if Pam and her dairy friends did not back off of the nutrition bill. Mr.

Sheva and his cohorts complied, as this picture was of him (who only knows how LOKAL had gotten a copy, unless a certain daughter brought one to school with her). Narcissus was not as vain as Mr. Sheva. Releasing this photograph would have ruined him.

Nevertheless, since this bill affected so many powerful entities, including universities, doctors, pharmaceutical companies and politicians, and because so many people would lose money or the comforts of their routine lifestyle, despite the Great Remade World Society and the Dairy Industry willingly stepping aside, the bill was still rejected.

But, the battle, the fighting, and the war between LOKAL and TGRMS raged on.

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In the beginning, I was a planet of peace and equality. I was clean and pollution was yet to be created. At first, the humans ate only plants. My soils were rich and fertile, and I furnished my inhabitants with bountiful gifts of food. The animals themselves only ate plants; the lion did not hunt the gazelle, the bloods of zebras never shed upon the ground, leaving the lithosphere unstained. Yes, I was an untainted world of hunters and gatherers.

But, it did not take long for the humans to take up agriculture, and that is where my end began. They began to raise livestock, and the populations swarmed. They ate the livestock and fed them grains. Because they were eating so much land with their agriculture, animals had to begin to eat each other, and I became a world of cannibalism.

The humans made haste to deplete my soils, (there is no longer a cushion, and now, when they run, I feel their pain beating and wearing away at my body). They had to

seek out more land to farm and began to cut down trees; imagine someone cutting off your arms and then using them to kill others! The animals then began to excrete wastes and cause topsoil erosion; people all over the world began to starve, because those who eat meat will not give it up.

And, this is just where the pollution begins! Cars, oil, chemicals, the humans came nowhere near short of coming up with ideas to pollute me. My core is aching and dying; I am shriveling up like a raisin. Some homosapiens gave efforts to save me, but it was too late, and the mass majority was so used to their Earth destructing ways, that to make any major changes exceeded the capability or comprehension of their brains. The general consensus was that it would be far easier to clone me than save me. But, can't they see that they only get one planet Earth? The replacement won't be me; I'll still die. Do not my children love me as I love them?

Chapterette D Italian Envy

I, Koko Mahama, had three options. I had to either give in to Mrs. Colangeli and run for the Italian Olympic team, or refuse Mrs. Colangeli and not run at all (despite that I had trained so hard that I think my sweat could fill all the basins and gorges of the world, flood them even). My third option would be to somehow outwit this clever, yet evil woman, who brought great shivers of fear to my body and soul, causing me to long for sweaters on one hundred degree days.

“I mean, do you seriously think the world won't recognize you as Koko Palatino when you run as Koko Mahama? You don't think they won't make the connections?” Lucia pounded me over a cup of ice tea.

“Yes,” I replied, without hesitation. “I’ve grown a great deal and my hair is much shorter now. Sometimes, close friends have to look twice before they recognize me.”

My heart was pounding so hard, my whole body pulsed.

Lucia, who may as well have been Lucifer, gave a little laugh, which reminded me of a cackling witch. “Yes, but they do recognize you, and someone will, trust me.” Lucia pursed her lips as if the deal was final, as if I had already agreed.

If I didn’t speak now, it would be one of those forever hold your peace ordeals. I had to do or say something before I practically sold my soul to this woman. Suddenly, it struck me where I had seen this woman before, and that I EVEN knew who she was; I know her beyond my Olympic dealings with her. I know her because she is a part of the Great Remade World Society. I wonder if she knows that I am a member of LOKAL? I proceeded, “It baffles me how you go to such lengths to stack your team, when in reality, and you know your team will not gold medal.”

“Well, I suppose I am a tid bit envious,” she admitted, a note of posh snobbery strung high upon her vocal chords, echoing and resonating with a pitch of cockiness and self love, her eyes refusing to make contact with mine.

“Well, what is this secret?” she pressured, her eyes digging through my brain as though they were shovels, still avoiding direct contact with my own corona’s, as if they belonged to the fiery sun. I was afraid not to give her an answer, and the true answer at that.

“We consume only whole plant foods,” I indulged.

“Ha! What does that have to do with gold medals?” she pressed. “Most ridiculous thing I’ve ever heard.”

“An incredible deal, that’s what. It gives us unmatched energy and stamina.” She knew by the look in my eye, which her eyes now met, that I was veracious. My baby browns were no open market where one had to bargain for the truth. “You do not have time. Italy does not have time. Are you not envious of Ghana?” I lured.

“Yes,” she lowered her eyes. She was embarrassed and did not want to own up to her faults and shortcomings, but my honesty had somehow forced her to follow suit.

“But, I just have to make the best of my available options.” Her voice trailed softer and softer and softer, until the last word sounded as though she had lost her voice entirely, for the rest of time, perhaps.

“Well, if you ran for Ghana, you would have no reason for envy. Like you said, what is a country, but a place, and what is a name, but a title? Don’t you want that gold? To know you are the best?” I implored in a beseeching manner. “You could be Lulu Kufuor.”

Like a tiny Mid-Atlantic ridge, a contemplative look spread across her face, separating her thoughts and emotions, and then letting her heart spill out over her nose and eyes. She wanted to do it. “You’re doing this for Ghana?” she asked, attempting to determine if a catch lay in my intentions.

“Yes,” I lied. In nervous anticipation, my heart beated, worried that she was a walking lie detector of sorts. She seemed to bite my bait, and a sigh of relief blossomed within my soul.

“Here’s the deal,” she said. “As usual, I’ll run in the Ghana qualifier. However, this time I’ll actually try to win. If I make it, I’ll run for Ghana. If I get cut, you’ll run

for Italy.” Her eyes were fierce little mirrors, domineering; I felt like a car steering wheel.

“All right,” I replied. My face was stone serious, but my mind was consumed with sensations of devious snickers.

On the day of the qualifier, my skin laden with sweat, and not only because it was a humid 102 degrees outside, I had to pray not only that I would make the Olympic team, but that Lucia would as well. I was pretty confident in myself; but I feared that Lucia would not have a chance. She was a great deal older than the rest of us, although, she did not look or seem it. She had told me that although the rest of the Italian team was not vegan, she herself was, and perhaps this was the fountain of youth she had stumbled upon.

Yet, she also was not as adjusted to the heat as the rest of us were, and this year the competitors were faster than ever before, each one’s feet resounding with speed the way a Miss Universe’s smile does with beauty and grace. But, perhaps I shouldn’t have worried. I underestimated the power of envy and the way in which it drives you to do things, which normally would exceed your capacities. I guess how bad you want something can be a bigger factor than I gave it credit.

Never in my life have I seen someone run so hard, in such a manner that the person’s aura encompassed a certain viciousness, and encompassed a residue that permeated the message that nothing else in the universe mattered so much as winning, not even your own life.

And, I truly believe Lucia almost killed herself to qualify for the Olympic team. She finished first, right before me, and in almost the same nanosecond that she crossed

the finish line, she passed out. She had to be taken to the hospital, but she had made the team. And, although she had crossed the finish line first, it seemed evident to everyone that she had just barely made the team.

The first Olympic race happened much the same way. She finished first and I second, only this time, I exposed her and she was disqualified from the Olympic Games; she had lost all credibility and was simply dismissed as lying and jealous, when she attempted to claim that I had won the previous Olympics as Koko Palatino. Besides, Ms. Palatino had died in a car accident. It was impossible for me to be the same person and pure outrage that Lucia would make such an allegation against a deceased woman. Ghana will show the world we have made progress; we have cell phones now, we are an equal country of the world.

Chapterette E Valentina On the Statue of Zeus

Dear Diary,

The Summer Olympic Games come upon us once again. But, I cannot help but wonder if they should still be called the Olympic Games. In 393 b.c. all games were abolished permanently. PERMANENTLY. The OLYMPIC games were held in Olympia, and at the time of the games, all wars were stopped. Today, not only do acts of war proceed, acts of terrorism are committed.

The Statue of Zeus, the enormous gold and ivory statue, barely fit in its temple when the games first began to honor Zeus. The statue had Sphinx's and winged creatures as symbols of victory thrust upon it. Would our ancestors have started the games if they knew that bribed athletes, broken rules, political corruption and steroid use would

become the new symbols of victory? If they knew the games would become based upon commercialized values?

Caligula tried to transport the Statue of Zeus to Rome, but failed. Have we failed in the transport of ideals through time? Today, at the site of Olympia only the foundation of building remains. Perhaps, we have collapsed just like these columns.

The games are about values. They are about valuing and accepting and coexisting with other cultures. The Olympic games are symbolic of global peace. But, how do competing societies find peace? Perhaps our new statue of Zeus is the computer headquarters, one symbolic of cyber-wars, identity theft, and a vastly decreased workload.

What will the future find wondrous about our present day society? Poseidon? Or nothing? How can we compete in such a way that we push ourselves to the limits, but still honor, accept and value our competitor? What has gone awry? If we made a Statue of Zeus today, would we labor intensively or would we make it cheaply and quickly? Has our society become cheap and quick, or has the destruction of hard work in the past discouraged us from laboring in the same way as our ancestors did?

Chapterette F The Teachings of Cleito

There are many reasons I started my boarding school. To keep my mind off of Plato. As a way to combat the Great Remade World Society. But, also because I saw the Fall of Rome. When Atlantis sunk it was just one island. When Rome fell it was only a city. The cyber-culture empire is the entire planet. I'd rather not live to see the Fall of the Global Cyberculture Empire. But, if it happens, I will live to see it.

An empire cannot stand without a good foundation, and the strongest foundation in existence is education. In today's world, kids lack a well-rounded education, both in way of morals and values, as well as in the practice of hard work. Furthermore, they are expected to dumb down to average. Accelerated children are not challenged the way they should be. There lies a wall between a student's greatest potential and their education.

An influx of funds is spent on special education, despite that this population is the minority. No doubt this group has every right to a proper and equal education, but not at the expense of the rest of the students. If money is spent on special education for disabled students, an equal amount should be spent on the gifted and talented, as well as the medium and average students. We make fusses over disruptive children; this only gives them what they want. If they were ignored, more attention could be allotted to the students who desire to learn.

Schools should encourage healthy eating, rather than bombarding students with vending machines and junk food. Healthy lifestyles, habits, and good values should be taught; these lessons will be lifelong, whereas chemistry is often forgotten the second after the test is taken. I mean, it's easy to forget material simply read from a book if it is not practiced.

At Poseidon, a student could not possibly be lazy and successful. All students are challenged, made to think for themselves, and forced to work hard. But, although they will learn to work hard, they will also learn to enjoy life, beginning with a whole foods vegan diet. This diet will conquer obesity and disease, and my students will enjoy their lives more as a result; learning to enjoy life more is a goal of the school. What other

education could be more important? They don't like the diet any more than they like history, but, perhaps one day they will learn to savor and appreciate it.

Wouldn't they just cheat on the diet? you might ask. I don't give the girls the opportunity to cheat or fail. I quit eating animal products and refined sugar like I was quitting smoking. I was addicted to animal, and I got weak and failed; it took some time to kick the habit, and often I'd fail in the middle of the night.

These girls won't fail, and they will learn to like themselves better and have more fun. Eating the wrong foods makes our bodies artificial. This, coupled with the media, often makes us unhappy, and sometimes, consumed with our bodies. We try to fulfill images, but images are not real. We need to live our lives naturally and healthy and stop trying to fulfill images; we are people.

Also, because my school is not funded by the drug and dairy industries, my school can teach students the truth. These industries would cease to make money, as well as lose jobs, if America and the rest of the world adopted the diet we adopt at this school. So, they control the media and use them to misinform the public on what is truly healthy for them. We do not allow the media here.

I began by teaching my students to focus on their own positive qualities, rather than their negative ones. They need to believe in themselves and be CERTAIN they can do things. I teach them to stop comparing themselves to others, to find their potential, and have confidence about their abilities in order to achieve their goals. I teach the girls to forgive themselves for their faults, because no one is perfect. I teach them a way of thinking which turns negative ideas and situations into positive ones. What good does negative thinking do?

My next step is to decolonize my students minds. For so many of my students, colonization, modernization, technology, and money seem such a crucial part of their lives. They do not know that in many third world countries, the people do not want development. Not want development? you might ask. Who wouldn't want such a thing?

Let me ask you this: How could anybody not like cheesecake? Volleyball? Etc? Nobody actually likes tofu. Well, obviously some people like tofu and hate cheesecake. Development is not everybody's dream or desire, but rather the desire of certain countries who then try to push their dreams unto other countries; this threatens the very survival of these nations. Any animal or man outside of a market driven economy can see development as a threat to their culture, their lives and their world.

Every culture has their own definitions of truth, goodness, and justice, and just because the Eurocentric version is the most widespread and advertised does not mean it is the most right, and just because we construct our reality on these criteria does not mean they are the best criteria, just because we know them best.

Undeveloped countries often do not feel deprived; the western powers merely constructs them as being deprived and labels them thus. These non-western people often see themselves as living at one with nature and define what a good society is differently. They often see modern science as embodying violence, patriarchy and imperialism, because that is what western countries bring when they attempt to develop these countries.

Different things mean different things for different people. A herd of cows is food for one culture and used in ritual occasions for another. Science is not BAD; it's how it's used which can be good or bad. Just like with capitalism. People need to like

people and appreciate them for their differences, rather than trying to change them to be the same. Difference is the seed of life.

Even developed countries are different in their constructed realities; realities which only exist because they are taught. The U.S. is a country based on winning, whereas China is based on mutualism, and that is what is taught to the children. Overall, we in developed countries need to alter the way we perceive and act in the world. The media has colonized us; we need now to claim our independence and retreat from our consumerist status in our commodified culture.

We should not try to colonize or “technologize” underdeveloped countries; we should respect all different lifestyles as one isn’t better than another. Diversity can be good, mass alikeness can be bad. Science and technology have their perks, but they are also laden with negatives; third world countries don’t always see themselves as disadvantaged, but as having the advantages of not polluting and living with nature, not contributing to the mass destruction of Earth. They have the gift of patience and are not cursed with the desire to want everything fast, cheap and now. We should respect everyone’s differences and let them do their thing, instead of trying to push our ways of life upon them. Sometimes, instead of trying to melt everyone together in the same pot, we need to let the teas cook in the kettles and the beans boil in the pot, while the veggies fry in the pan.

Sometimes separated diversity is good. A peaceful culture does not want to mesh with a noisy one; it wants to stay apart on its own. An industrialized society has no place in a natural one, and we should accept and respect different lifestyles and live in a society that fits individuals; this fit is different for everyone.

To help my students learn what is right for them and to help them construct their own realities, not only requires one hour of independent study, but I have them make their own hypotheses and philosophies in order to learn about themselves and make connections as they explore literature, history, and other subjects studied at school. To maximize the effects of this assignment, the night before I went through all the image files in each of the girls brains to delete these preconceived notions and paradigms; in a sense, I performed a mild deprogramming.

I teach my students the importance of hard work. “Nobody should be given anything,” I lecture. “You will lose power if you get something for free. For example, affirmative action reaffirms that a group is not good, and then they not only lose respect, but this also gives the other groups excuses for their own failures while “others” are successful.

I held an exercise where we created an affirmative action of our own at the school. All the girls with blue eyes did not have to perform gardening or cleaning duties for one week. As a result, the brown and green-eyed girls began to resent, if not dislike, the blue-eyed girls. They talked bad about them, and if the blue eyed girls performed better on a test, the other girls would say, “Well, if they had to clean and garden they’d have had less time to study, and would have done worse than me.”

When this exception was lifted, at first the blue-eyed girls were made outcasts, but gradually they grew to be accepted and respected. If a blue eyed girl outperformed a brown eyed girl she’d say, “Well, she must have studied harder,” even if she hadn’t.

I taught students to experience life. At my school, there was no talking behind each other’s backs, makeup or rumors. There was no using people; a friend was valuable

in that they were a friend, not in what they could get you. Today kids are not being raised by their parents, but by the media. They are not always properly taught morals and values in their schools, and sometimes not even at home; they will be taught such things at my school, and they will accept no free handouts.

I also invite my students to help plan the curriculum. They have a say in what they learn and questions are always welcome.

*

Although I long for my husband, Tang, and my son, Cong, every night that I am away from China, I enjoy teaching at Poseidon, and Babette Cleito has beyond fulfilled her promises and soared past my expectations.

As a signing bonus Cleito bestowed upon my family a grand and lovely house, which proved far more pleasurable to inhabit than the teeny and rickety apartment in which we had previously dwelled. She stuck to her word about the four-day weekends, paid flights, and my doubled salary.

Not only this, but within two weeks of working at Poseidon, the Chinese Emperor sent me a letter saying that he owed Ms. Cleito a favor, and that I would be permitted to have a second child. Babette also created a college fund for Cong, and my future child, with enough money deposited to pay for perhaps even five educations! She says that by the time my children are in college it would be great luck for the amount to cover the education of both children fully.

What's more, I truly enjoyed teaching the girls at Poseidon. The work is both challenging and rewarding, and I learn something new every day. My favorite lessons

and assignments normally occur in Government class. In particular, I found that my, “Help the Earth Lesson,” was quite fun.

The assignment was for the girls to “invent” a product or law which would help the Earth or it’s inhabitants in some way. They would then decide if the product or law would be approved by the corporate and then government powers, as well as if this would vary by country.

“A pollution eater!” Princess Amira shrieked.

“A weight loss pill that works! Or calorie free chocolate chip cookies and ice cream,” Jasmine offered.

“A personal robot who performs makeovers, does hair and nails, and gives massages, duh,” Bambi coolly remarked.

“Well, what about a cure for the common cold?” Ginger wondered, looking about her for approving eyes.

The girls stopped quietly for a minute. “So simple, yet so perfect!” Kimi remarked.

The rest of the girls chimed in with their agreement. It would help people, make them rich and in their minds, it was realistic and could easily be applied to a real world situation.

We then explored if the cure would make it through corporate powers, as many corporations could lose money they were making from selling products related to cold relief. We considered how the cough medicine manufacturers would feel about this cure, as well as consider if these people might have ties to the government. Who would profit from this cure? Who would lose profits? We examined solar energy, stevia, and

sucralose. I mean, if not for profits, why would one ban a healthy sweetener alternative like stevia but pass sucralose? We also considered if it would pass in some countries, but not others and why we thought so. We did not think it would pass in the United States, but it'd do just fine in Mexico.

Chapterette G The Gossip

Girls often possess, among many other talents, a gift for gab, and this, coupled with a natural curiosity, predisposes them to be gossip filled vessels easier to burst than overfilled balloons. Thus, since the girls at Poseidon had already held a great wonder concerning where Madame Cleito came from and why she started the school, Mia and Analise's rumors became contagious, and its symptoms varied with each student.

"I heard she was a CEO who embezzled meat," Jasmine whispered to Amira at lunch.

"Well, I heard she started this school because her husband went pro in the NBA and she needed a place to lock him up; she was afraid he'd cheat," the Princess shot back, flushed with excitement.

"Are you talking about Cleito?" Bambi asked from across the table. She laughed, tossed back her hair and disclosed, "I heard the woman's own daughter paid the government to allow her to divorce her; she's now living with some family in Costa Rica."

"What are you guys talking about?" Kimi asked, perched next to Bambi.

"Cleito," Bambi replied.

By the time the conversation passed on to Valentina, Babette had stolen money from a bank and ran away to Egypt to hide from authorities under the guise of a headmaster, sold her daughter to a circus, and she never had a husband, which was obviously the reason she was such a strict, miserable old woman.

The girls soon displaced their dislike for each other, transferring this vile feeling upon Cleito, and in partaking in a common distaste for their headmistress, they began to bond and form strong friendships.

Cleito could not help but smile every time she heard a crazy rumor about herself. If only they knew the truth!

*

I have grappled over how to incorporate healthy competition into the school. We need to have competition with morals and values; capitalism today lacks this. We need motivation AND a value system as parents don't have time or wits to raise their children with these values these days; I want my students to be winners but also mutually help each other and accept differences. How do I get them to accept differences without having to gossip and form a common dislike over something else? Perhaps, I had gone about it all wrong.

*

God, family, community; what if the meaning of life is to live and experience these things? To exist, to create, give and love, rather than take and absorb, to think and not have others think for us, to be genuine rather than fake, to accept content over images

and then to die, but, what if you can't ? How can we experience God if we can't die?

Cleito has cursed me with this sad dilemma.

Chapterette H Dealing With the Hoop

Originally when planning the school wide basketball game, Babette had intended to pit the faculty against the students. But, after the rumor episode, she realized this when only foster their tendency to come together to defeat a common dislike, rather than finding a common need to come together, or a common interest.

When thinking about the Olympics, she realized that different countries were competing against each other; in her basketball game, Palestine and India would be on the same team, as would old and young. And, the sisters, Valentina and Bambi, would be on opposing teams. The girls would learn to bond together in the task of winning the game, work together to be creative and push each other to run harder, pass the ball to the open man, even if they're not your best friend, and still love the opponents at the end, because they are in the big picture on your team; at least, this is what she hoped.

The whistle blew, and the Colangeli twins were head on at tip off. Bambi tipped it to her side and her team raced in for a break away lay up, assist to Kimi, points to Koko. Then, suddenly Babette, referee in the striped suit, blows the whistle; Kimi and Francesca switch teams, and this continues, everyone playing with everyone else. And, after the numerous popped treys, give and go's, full court presses, and hook shots amidst a constant switching up of teams, the faculty and students at Poseidon all worked together to have fun with everyone; without their opponents they could not have a game, could not have such fun, without their teammates, who would they pass the ball to when they lost

their dribble, who would call out picks or warn them about traps? Without their opponents who would push them to run faster and play better and harder? Without a system of fouls and rules, what would work to prevent the players from being elbowed and injured, and what kind of fun would a violent game free of rules and regulations be?

Chapterette I The Zine

Of all the students in the school, Cleito elected me, Kimi Koizumi, to be editor of the school zine, a magazine with the purpose to counteract mass media owned by corporations. Of course, we have all heard of censorship at some point in our lives. However, what we haven't thought about is unknown censorship; the way corporations control the media to encourage them to "sell" them, the way that the media influences us to read what the corporations want us to read, the rest going unnoticed.

At Poseidon, where the media and the business world are excluded, this type of censorship does not exist, but it is opposite; in a sense. We are censored from exposure to corporate standpoints and materials. Thus, below is a sampling of articles produced in the aforementioned journalistic environment:

For Love or Money: The Time Old Question

By Princess Amira

It seems that in today's world, everyone is wrapped up in the buck. People base their self worth and success based on how much money they make; but can this really buy happiness? Does economic worth really outvalue self worth? Are not human relationships more important than material possessions?

Sure, life is a little easier if you don't have to worry about paying bills. But, what joy can you surmise if you have no one to share your life with? Great, you have a million gazillion dollars to spend all by yourself, and you can't tell if the friends you do have truly like you or your money.

And, if you're like most people, if you have a lot of money, you have to work a lot. Is it really worth missing out on life experiences? On family life and quality time with friends? People want the image of wealth and power; why do they want it? To make others jealous? Why would you want to do that? To make others like you? Do you really want to be liked and respected by how much money you make? To buy happiness? Wouldn't you be happier enjoying life more, working less, and having more free time to spend with family and friends and on hobbies you love?

We need to wake up and reexamine our values. We should dedicate our lives to other lives, rather than to pieces of paper and scraps of metal. We are worth more than our buying power.

We need to realize that we are more than an image. We buy cheap imitation clothing brands to make others think, what, that we are rich? I mean, who cares, as long as it look good? Do we really want to sacrifice our real lives for cheap imitation lives; I mean, who cares if we're truly happy, as long as it looks like we are and others believe that we are.

How I Met My "Husband"

By Jasmine

Online dating. We've all heard of it, but how many of us have actually tried it? It's for ugly people, or people without social skills, many assume. But, it's not true. It's simply a quick, easy way to try to find that fairy tale romance which may not even exist. We want the perfect relationship without ever having to really go out and work to find it. But, is it really all that about? I used to think so, but now, I can see the good side to internet romance.

I met my current boyfriend online. I began this relationship with the typical staple behavior; I lied my behind off. It made me feel great. When I talked to "Mike," I was beautiful, I felt truly and really. I told him I was beautiful, and even though I didn't believe this myself, the fact that he believed me made me feel that I really and truly was attractive. When we finally met, I thought he'd be mad that I didn't look like the doctored picture I had sent him, but, to my surprise, he said I was even more gorgeous than in the photo. Of course, this probably isn't how this situation normally works out; I merely lucked out.

Despite my positive experience, I still believe that social relations in cyberspace are unstable and come as fast as they go. You lose information, change information, and between the lies and the truth, you do not have a real relationship. This ended up happening to me and Mike. It was so different in person, we couldn't have a conversation. It was like, he wasn't the same person anymore.

People become illusions online; but sometimes, I wonder just how much realer the real things are compared to the illusions. Cyber is basically the word for pilot and can be applied to any self regulating system; so if you can create yourself online, why can't you create yourself in real life? How much different is virtual reality from actual reality these days besides an actual physical presence?

Dear Diary,

I have decided to publish this entry in the school zine, so forgive that our conversation is not private. We have been discussing the wonders of the world, and today, the Colossus of Rhodes comes to mind. It was a glorious giant bronze statue of the sun god Helios. Chares built it in the early 200s b.c., near the harbor of Rhodes, a Greek Island in the Aegean Sea. It took him nearly twelve years to build this wonder. And, after 56 years it was destroyed. At least physically. But, it still exists in cyberspace. It still exists in history. It still exists in our minds. We remember it; we know of it. Isn't knowledge of something more important than actually being able to see and touch it? After all, you can not touch and see love, and it is surely a great wonderful thing.

Today, we create cheap, quick, easy versions of wonders. Our buildings and architectural "masterpieces" are constructed in large quantities, but they can hardly be of the quality of what took one man twelve years to build. I mean, doesn't a dinner requiring hours to make taste much better than fast food?

Like a shore less sea, so many people are lost in this cyber culture world kept from reality and truth, their realities flooded with falseness and images engulfing them like a tidal pool, swirling them around in a current of thoughts and ideas, which they cannot escape, swirling faster than they can process; thus, losing a quality of communication in the act of receiving a large quantity.

Love,

Valentina

Chapterette J Bermuda Triangle

Captain Brown, the swashbuckling pirate, took the girls of Poseidon on a field trip to the Bermuda Triangle, stopping at Bermuda, Puerto Rico and Florida to go on field trips. Famous for stealing huge numbers of ships and aircraft, it has become a mysterious and fearful spot, supposedly an area, which defies the law of physics and causes ships to become lost.

I, however, am aware of the methane hydrates, and I build my ships so that they may remain buoyant when other ships would be unable to do so. The girls were a little disappointed when I, Captain Brown, unpackaged this manufactured myth of the paranormal and extraterrestrial activity being responsible for the missing ships, but they

got the science lesson of a lifetime. Who ever knew that pirates could do more than clash swords and steal treasures, that we could practically manhandle physics? Baby's work if you ask me.

Chapter 6 Predicting the Fall

Plato knew that the Great Remade World Society had to be stopped before they completely destroyed the Earth, before toppling the cyber culture empire, erasing Earth in it's entirety, it's history, it's life forms, a total and complete fall into oblivion. He began to train the animals; Plato was not like a zookeeper who trains animals to be calm and peaceful, but more like a bitter army general, for he began to teach the animals to think of the technology group as an enemy which had to be stopped in any way possible.

Plato began at first by teaching the parrots and birds to sing in pitches which sent high and low frequency sound waves clad with subliminal messages which would reverse the society's warped ways of thinking. Next, this wise philosopher proceeded to teach all of the animals to bite and inject the Great Remade World Society's members with a special venom. The teeth of the animals were with a special venom anointed which would brainwash anyone they bit to hear the sound waves. Only the bitten ones could be brainwashed.

Photos of the society members, as well as pictures of their political and economic allies were shown to the animals. This knowledge made the animals experts at identifying their targets. The mermaids of the forest also learned to sing in their high-pitched voices with the purpose of sending "corrective" brain signals to the "enemy."

Plato emerged as the distinguished leader among the animals. Soon, he began to see himself more and more as an animal, and less and less as a human. Imprisonment

into nature led him to think, “If we don’t learn to adopt a herbivore diet, animal protein will run out like so many of the other resources we have been depleting. Then, who is to say humans won’t hunt and eat each other like they did on Easter Island? Socrates knew this all along; I recorded his ideas but never believed that humans should be vegans, as eating animals brings us disease, death, shortages of food, violence, even war. Possibly, cannibalism; this way of life has before, and history so often tends to repeat itself. Easter Island. Earth. Same place. Plus, I’ve come to believe in karma. Eating meat will eventually come back to harm you; eating blood enables you to shed it. The animals you kill will kill you inside out in form of disease, cannibalism or violence; eating animals makes you both sick and violent. This is where our vices begin, where our fakeness begins. Our fall begins. This makes us want to create artificial worlds, make our bodies unnatural. Instead of artificial diets and environments, we should work to improve what we have been given in natural ways, and prevent further harm.

“We see the world for us when we should see ourselves as part of the world; when we hurt it we hurt ourselves, when we make it artificial, we make ourselves artificial. But, because this self inflicted pain hides in animals and soil, we are blind to it, we have closed our eyes and can no longer see beyond the needs and wants of the flesh. We must learn to see the value in things and beings beyond their use.

Pleasures and desires of the flesh spawn evil and sin; to control the body and it’s desires breeds good and pure action, for these actions are the results of the soul. Let the soul, not the body, control the mind, for it is the mind that determines one’s actions and experiences, both for itself and others. I am finally coming out of the cave. The animals have freed me, not only from the cave, but from my misconceptions about the world,

from violence and disease. Now, I must free the rest of the world, beginning with those most imprisoned, the members of the Great Remade World Society. First, I must go to Cleito to enlist her aid; she has been free all along.

Chapterette A Regret of Babette

I am beginning to think that perhaps I have been wrong, both in my beliefs and my habit of imposing them upon other people. Very recently I have lost the two people dearest and closest to me, the two people I love most.

It all began when I drove Plato away. I pushed him too far. My diet, even my views I pushed upon him. In my defense, after giving him the gift of eternal life, I had to push my diet on him. Immortality doesn't protect you from disease; who wants their husband to spend eternity suffering under the wrath of heart disease, tumors, and cancers? This diet is the only way I know to reverse and prevent disease. Veganism is the only thing I know that can save the Earth, as well; if the Earth dies, where will I go? I'm incapable of death, I can't escape life.

Laziness is prevented by this diet, and it gives me more energy. I went from being a stagnant and unproductive lagoon, to a full throttle, charging, life-embracing river. Death and quick sand are often brought about by a lack of movement. An out of shape runner will fail if he tries to sprint, as will a lazy being who tries to suddenly become productive; this creates a lagoon, a place where any movement will cause a quicker death. Lagoons in this way almost reject life, and I wanted to embrace it, and in the realest of ways, because only the real things last.

Artificial things don't last; among these being relationships, diets, surgeries, etc. Most people don't want to hear it, because they are lagoons, too lazy to change their habits; they want the quick artificial fix; they want to jump out of quicksand, instead of experiencing real change.

I wanted a real relationship with Plato, one that would last forever. But, in giving him immortality and pushing my life upon him, perhaps I gave him a life transplant; I gave him my life, not his; his life became artificial and locked him in a lagoon that wasn't even his own. Rather than looking at the whole, I had become a reductionist and only looked at one part, had only looked at what was good for me. Envy of those around me who had friends infected me. Tired of false friendships and insecurities, I wholeheartedly plunged into my plot to find a husband and best friend; envy does not sleep, and I rejected rest until I found Plato and Francesca. Instead of letting them run their own course, however, I forced them into my river. By making their decisions and running their life for them, they became lagoons. I made them think my thoughts instead of letting them think their own; I became the deadliest quicksand, impossible to escape. Ironic, since, I, of all people, know that you can only be truly happy if you make decisions for yourself and not let others decide for you.

I thought I was giving Plato what he wanted, letting him run his own course. But, I was wrong and Francesca did not hesitate to slap this information in my face. I caught her conferring with King Majeed; I discovered she was working for them as a spy, and they were using this information to stop LOKAL and our efforts.

When I confronted her she spouted, "You think you know everything. You think you know what's best for everyone and the Earth. Well, maybe you're wrong! You

didn't know what was best for me, and you still don't! I sure don't want to be immortal! But, you didn't give me the choice; you took my mortality away from me!"

"I'm sorry!" I cried. "I wanted to be friends with you forever; I didn't want to lose you. I didn't know you didn't want to live forever! You of all people should know it's quality over quantity! How can you have a high quality life when you can't have real relationships with people because they're not going to live forever, only you are! How am I supposed to live a real life? I didn't know you didn't want to live forever! You never told me!"

"Like it mattered! I told you I loved Plato, and you stole him for yourself! You ruined my life and made me live without my true love FOREVER! You tricked me into marrying your fiancé' and he died! You did not give him eternal life! You doomed me to eternal life ALONE!"

"I thought you would find someone you truly loved!" I objected. "My fiancé' was to hold you over...oh that sounds terrible...."

"It was terrible! I truly loved Plato! And, you just disappeared. Vanished. After you eloped I had to search for you. Why did you do that? Couldn't you have at least written of your whereabouts?"

"Trust me, I truly loved you both. I'm sorry, but because Plato and I fell in love with each other, I somehow thought you couldn't TRULY love him, that there was someone more perfect for you, that he'd come along. I thought that everything would out since we were all living forever. I guess sometimes you don't get a happy ending. I was wrong. I thought I was right." Between floods of tears and gushing sobs, Babette took a deep gasp and continued, "I guess I was Americanized in that I thought I was right and

that my values were right. Just as many people think it's "right" to consume meat and dairy or industries develop third world countries; America's values are compliant with this. I guess I "colonized" you and Plato. I have learned that close minded thinking your values and ways of life as being the "right" way is as fatal as a heart attack. I'm sorry. I was selfish and egotistical and wrong!"

"Why, we were just talking about you!" Francesca stormed out of the room, just as Plato and his army of animals arrived.

Chapterette C Poseidon Ponderers

The Midterms of Cleito's Homeroom:

"Cleito teaches us that our friends are constantly co-creating our thoughts and identities; how much of our thoughts are our own? How much are society's, standards, and social expectations? How do I know this, and how do I stop this, how can I be myself?" ~Analise

"Cleito teaches us that you can only be happy if you make decisions for yourself and not let others (parents) decide for you. She also teaches us that we shouldn't do things for people if they are capable of doing it for themselves (Including thinking). Hmmm. I have been doing the thinking for my parents for ages." ~Bambi

"Cleito teaches us that we need to slow down and live our own lives for our true selves; she doesn't mean we can't have technologies in our lives, they just can't be in control of how we live them." ~Valentina

“Cleito teaches us that the world only gets one you. Be proud and don’t fake being something you’re not. Be happy with who you are. You won’t be happy being something you’re not, at least not after you stop lying to yourself. And, if you try to be something you’re not, you’ll kill your true self and who will you be? We don’t have to meet the images of society if we make our own images, we can’t let society make our lives artificial or change our values, our values are what is important, the way we use technology, interact with each other. Technology can be good, can be liberating, but technology isn’t always good, as you need to LIVE life, not pretend to live it. It’s ok to use artificialities for improvement, but not as a life replacement or to escape from reality.” ~Mia

“Cleito teaches us that there are times when diversity can be bad, such as is the case with zebra mussels in the Great Lakes. Humans are as parasitic to the jungle as zebra mussels are to the Great Lakes; why am I telling you this? Do democracy’s preserve diversity? We have a democracy at Poseidon. At least an illusion of one.” ~Kimi

“Cleito teaches us that to live is to take risks and not play it safe, to learn from experience. Technology has the ability to reduce risk essential to the full experience and to stunt existence. You must use some caution when you take risks; if the risk will likely prove fatal use good judgment and err to sacrifice your life to live one experience, by choosing experiences, you choose your life, don’t choose to end it. If you experience it you don’t have to wonder or pretend what it would or could be.

It's easier to talk online cuz you're not talking and you don't have to "be" you. It's easy to ride a virtual roller coaster because you don't have to have any guts-you don't really "experience" it. And, my friends, EXPERIENCE is the main ingredient of life. I would rather live a life where I am what I am not and experience what I cannot be. Cleito links depression with loss of social interaction, online shopping, dating, etc.-false high hopes equals a high let down.

Artificial can be good as long as it stops short of an existence or relationships. As long as you do something and be someone, as long as you think for yourself, for if you let others do and think for you, then how can you be yourself? Without experience life is a chocolate chip cookie without the chocolate chips, a sweater without a neck hole."

Jasmine

"Cleito teaches us to be ourselves; if you hate math sway, flee the field of accountancy, if you love piano and hate hockey, bypass the puck. One should never keep a person from the freedom of being themselves; let musicians play music and bees pollinate plants, let fish swim through the sea for as long as they want, do not keep them from being themselves.

Everyone should have the right to be themselves unless this keeps another creature from the same right/being...if you have to kill or enslave to live a happy life, your happiness needs to be redefined and your outlook changed for only in this manner can a world attempt to find peace, can an Earth chance to be a community. Look not at animals as your dinner other classes or races as subhumans or slaves, but rather as your kin and find heart to embrace it respect the lives of all. Who desires to toil 20 hours a

day for the said purpose of mass slaughter and imprisonment? Think beyond the masses. Perhaps, if people latched onto this lifestyle, eventually we could emerge from war, sins of the flesh and mind, and wander upon a lighter world of harmony and peace. Animals put here for our purposes-dangerous way of thinking, said the same thing about slaves.”

~Princess Amira

What grade would you give them?

*

If I could do it over I would. Thousand of years ago, I had been crying my eyes out to my Auntie, the great witchdoctor, about how I loved Plato, but he loved Francesca. She offered me a love spell to make him fall in love with me. I took it. I used it. I was young, and afraid of being alone and without love for all eternity. It was too much to bear. There is nothing more horrible I could have done to Plato and Francesca. They were so in love. I loved Plato, but he didn't love me. Until I made him. Now, I wish I hadn't. Our love was fake and artificial; I had wanted it then and now. It wasn't really love, only lust. Now, I didn't even love him. Our love wasn't real, never had been. Between two hearts, I stood, of two people I had loved, and I lost a real friendship in the process.

Chapterette D Valentina on Mausollos

Dear Diary,

Long ago, around 353 b.c. to be more precise, in the geographic confines of what is known today as southwestern Turkey, a tomb was built for a Persian King, who went by the name of Mausollos, and also for his wife, Artemisia. This tomb became a wonder of the world, due to its enormity; what skill Satyrus and Pythius had to design a white marble structure 135 feet high! I wonder if a mausoleum could be built for the planet Earth? We are presently destroying and killing it. How high would a tomb have to be to fit the world inside?

Yours Truly,

Valentina

Chapterette E Plato's Return

Under normal circumstances Madame Cleito would have run into Plato's arms, utilizing more speed than a sound wave, but his accompanying accruement of Amazon Animals startled her, and caused her a faint pause before lunging into her returned lovers arms. "Plato!" she gasped. But, almost as soon as she had entered into his embrace she retreated and wiped an embarrassed sweat from her brow, regretful of having forgot his letter of not acting aloof and unimpressed wit her former love's sudden return.

"Why, whatever is wrong, love?" Plato entreated, taken aback by his wife's sudden and instant decline of his companionship.

"Love! How dare youyou....you.....abandoning traitor!" Cleito burst with anger, her emotions exploded like the helium of a popping balloon, and her eyes radiated

a sadness more destructive to the heart of Plato than that of UV rays upon the atmosphere.

“Nonsense,” Plato defensively chuckled. “My loving and understanding wife, you must know that I was kidnapped by the Great Remade World Society. I did not leave of my own accord; I would never abandon the love of my life. How ridiculous a notion! Did you not get my letter? I sent Pete the parrot and he confirmed it had been delivered!”

“Well, I got a letter from you, but it was delivered by an owl and it you said that you had fallen in love with another woman, and you had converted to being a technology supporter! The very nerve! What, did your new lady dearest desert you? NOW you think you can just come running back! Is that it? Because I have moved on!” Cleito lied, tears protruding forth from her eyes with the magnitude of a great waterfall, the violent force of a gushing river.

“New lady lover! Preposterous!” Plato proclaimed. “In the pristine confines of a jungle, I have been held prisoner, and I am only now able to stand before you because the Amazon animals befriended me and freed me. Now, they have returned home with me so they may aid us in our quest to stop the society before they destroy the world...where will we go if the world is destroyed?...I swear the letter was altered...it said that I loved and missed you...there is no other woman for me in the world but you,” Plato said, brushing back Cleito’s hair beyond her ear every so gently, “You are my one true love, and not a moment passed when I did not long to be in your company.” The couple’s eyes intermingled.

“It’s true.” In unison Jolly and Pete stepped forward.

“I wrote the letter!” the monkey reported.

“And I delivered it. It spoke only of his love for you. Someone here must have altered it before coming into your hands,” Pete inferred.

“Yes, I believe you,” Cleito replied, thinking back to her recent confrontation with Francesca. This recollection also spurred her to say, “But, perhaps they are right, and we are wrong. Perhaps they should build a new Earth....I mean, after all, where will we go if this one is destroyed?”

“We must not let them destroy this Earth! We must save Gaia! Plus, they kept me prisoner. These people need to be stopped!” Plato near commanded.

That was all it took to convince Madame Cleito. She had lost Plato once, and she now found an overwhelming desire to please him now that he'd returned, especially since he might be all she had considering the argument she undertook with Francesca. She had no desire to be alone for eternity. Plato's presence renewed her faith in herself and her beliefs, as well as her plans to dissemble the Great Remade World Society. She would do everything in her power to make this happen. “Alright, troops! Gather around!” she shouted.

Chapterette F Sound wave Sabotage

High and low frequency sound waves. They had been used for brainwashing many hundreds of years. Used by the CIA. The government. Even Henry Ford used it to help Hitler brainwash his followers. Now, it was Plato's turn. His brainwash targets were the Great Remade World Society members.

The jungle army had been extensively trained in anointing their teeth with a chemical which, after they bit the society's members, would attack and alter their bloodstreams, so that they could hear sound waves nobody else could. These sound

waves would inject their minds with hypnotizing subliminal messages that would brainwash them to do and say whatever Plato wanted.

Perhaps more dangerous than Plato in this endeavor, was Cleito's sudden lust for power and complete control. Her brief loss of Plato had toppled her logic and reason into an incredible state of imbalance; she had felt helpless, alone and subject to the whims of insecurity; she now felt compelled to ensure herself that she would keep everything as they were or how she wanted them to be; Plato's return had revamped her sense of security and reignited her quest for power, renewed her faith that her life experiences granted her the knowledge of knowing what was best for the world. Like an all knowing goddess, she would enhance and promote Plato's attempts to right the wrongs of the society.

On a particularly steamy day, Mr. Sheva let his car window down. He felt something prick his neck, and thinking it a bothersome mosquito, he merely swatted it away. He never knew that a scorpion riding abreast a little hummingbird had bitten him, filling his vessels with a pitch positioning venom.

With disbelief, Mr. Montgomery stared at the woman who brought her pet monkey with her to discuss a new nose she most certainly did not need. "It will definitely enhance your appeal to men," he straight faced lied to the gorgeous woman which is why when the monkey came and bit his hand, he felt that he had deserved it for breathing a falsity in the hope of a few coins. He had no idea that Jolly had bit him to prepare him for brainwashing.

Mr. Colangeli was visiting Mrs. Colangeli at the prison, when the gang leaders parrot, who was visiting his former master, came and pecked them both. They found it

strange to see a pet visiting a person of their own accord, and that it had decided to peck them, but they were clueless about having been poisoned.

Oblivious to everything but his own reflection, so focused on staring into the mirror, Mr. Sheva didn't even notice Dorothy the penguin waddle in and bite his ankle, despite that it broke through several layers of the skin; since pain is beauty, I suppose it's possible he gained an immunity to the sensation.

Mr. Advani, who could always be easily distracted with food (which had made it easy to steal information from him when spying), hunting a hog for his diner, was dumbstruck when he found the hog he shot wearing a bullet proof jacket come "alive" and bite his face, shooting ounces of fluid into his blood flow. Busy counting money, Mr. Koizumi did not notice Solomon poke the back of his neck with a poisoned quill.

During a hungry quest to impress a foreign diplomat, King Majeed became very irked when the macaw he had bought as a present for the diplomat, attacked his face and pricked him everywhere, using its beak and talon-like claws. He was powerless to know as to why Mariah had done such a thing and was helpless to watch it when it then decided to fly away.

The victims were completely prepped for Plato's brainwashing procedure, once this poison had had time to settle into their bloodstreams, affect the chemistry of their brains, and alter the efficiency of their hearing capabilities. procedure. Using a highly evolved microphone equipped with the capacity to send sound waves sound waves of such high and low frequency that only those who Plato had poisoned could hear, this wronged man sent messages to all of the members of the Great Remade World Society.

Gilgamesh was the King of all the giraffes of the entire world. His rise to reign could largely be accounted to his being a giant, even among giraffes. Gilgamesh, a star spotted beast, stood at a towering seventy three feet and four and three quarters of an inch; he was definitely of giant status which also served him to propel to the status of Emperor over the all the giraffe's of the world; if he stood on a mountain he could on certain clear days, see all of his subjects; and this range of sight is, so far as I know, a great gift exclusive from the observation abilities of any other specie upon Earth without aid of aircraft.

Gilgamesh could have used his ability to see not only to build the Giraffe Kingdom, but to protect Earth and all her inhabitants. Instead, this handsome, living sky scraper, endowed with the power and wealth of the entire stock market and a beauty which likened him to a God, spit on his people to cause thunderous rain storms when they ate all of the good acacia leaves from off of the trees; he also showed his uncontrolled temper by releasing mammoth floods from his rear end upon the towns which did not shower him with jewels and treasures.

Gilgamesh was an arrogant type of fellow, a tyrant bred from his arrogance. He forced the other giraffes to build great stone buildings and statues in resemblance of him, and then neglected to even show his appreciation of their hard work by any effort or upkeep on these great architectural wonders. Each time one of his palaces, (and he demanded several), crumbled at the feet of neglect, his oppressed servants were given no choice but to erect yet another palace, a leisurely castle capable of housing a seventy five foot giraffe. He even possessed the audacity to command that an unwillingly girafess, a

petite young child of a mere thirteen feet in height, would marry him at the start of the upcoming harvest season.

Gilgamesh, unimpressed with complaints and concerns of the giraffes in his kingdom, found his first spout of trouble in a series of dreams, which showered states of perplex upon him. In each of these dreams the same young female giraffe recurred, and she repeatedly fell from the sky like a shooting star in order to squash him beneath the crushing waves of an ocean, sea or lake. And, this giraffess, at first smaller than him, like a merchant vessel, carried him through splashing waters, growing in size with each paddle, until she grew so large that she displaced the hydrologic body entirely, and her head hovered atop the clouds.

To make sense of these nightly hauntings, Gilgamesh traveled all the way to Madagascar to seek the wisdom of Bamboozla, the famed dream interpreter, a fairy penguin whose beak not only glowed, a bioluminescent genetic treasure, but also possessed a left wing which beheld a white patch in the shape of a star which let off a light adorned with silver sparkles and gold glitters, a light which contained itself in the shape of a river and streamed to the heavens whenever she attempted a prophecy.

Bambloozla, after firing off a fountain of white glistening light, informed Gilgamesh, in a manner which made interpreting dreams seem no larger a feat than translating Spanish into English, that the sky above soon would send his equal down upon the Earth in the embodiment of the girafess who had recently taken the starring role in his slumbers. The light from the flesh of the prophecy penguin foretold that Gilgamesh must befriend this creature and forego any jealous emotion he might experience, for otherwise, his end would be brought into existence. If he is able to

blossom a friendship, the girafess would help this tyrant to achieve an even greater greatness.

Gilgamesh left Bamboozla, returned home, and waited. And waited. He waited three months and had the jewels replaced on his crown twenty-seven, no twenty five times before his equal finally arrived. “It’s about time,” he scoffed at this creature that fell from the sky and plodded upon him as he was bathing in the great river.

“About time for what?” the lady giraffe wondered, hopping out the river and shaking herself dry in a manner similar to that of a drenched golden retriever. “Wow, that was some intense sky diving. Lost my binoculars. Could really use a blow dryer about now.”

“A blow what...” Gilgamesh halted in his speech and noticed something very peculiar about his catapulted comrade; she was wearing a dress, a willowy, wispy, brown to match the hue of her spots, dress. She seemed to emulate or think that she was human.

“I’m Enkida, and I hail from Phi Phi, Island, Thailand. What shall I call you?” the girafess inquired.

“Gilgamesh. King Gilgame....” He was interrupted with what was perceived to be a most pressing and urgent question.

“Are there any good restaurants around here? I could really go for some Mexican. A bean burrito sounds amazing right now.”

Amazing? A bean burrito? It was just food, and he was about to make a joke out of his new encounter when he remembered that he must befriend Enkida in order to achieve a greater greatness. “Well,” he stuttered, “...down in the village the humans have quite a variety of restaurants but...”

“Are there any taxis I could take there?”

“It is only three miles from here.”

“Three miles...you can't expect me to walk that far!”

Hid did actually, but refrained from saying so. “Well, you could float down the river on a log,” he suggested. “It'll take you straight to the village.

“No boats or ferries?”

“Nope.”

Enkida took no time to hop onto a log, and Gilgamesh was left to stand and float off into the distance. He had been waiting weeks and weeks for *this*? *This* was going to help him achieve greater greatness?

Truth be told, Enkida had been raised by humans; she grew up in a zoo. The Human Training Zoo attempted to teach it's various animals to be human, but had lost all of its funds. So, the zoo shot all of their animals out of planes into their natural habitats, unequipped to fend for themselves, to find food for themselves, unlearned in the laws of nature and devoid of skills necessary to survive without human aid and control.

When Gilgamesh discovered this to be the case, he realized that if Enkida was to help him find greater greatness, he must tame her to become an animal; what good would a wild human do him? He would create a true identity for her. So, he hurried to the human village to find her at a café sipping tea; a tea a human had left at the table, for Enkida had no money with which to pay. He knew he wouldn't be able to convince Enkida to come with him by telling her she wasn't human; she would never believe him, not even with the assistance of a mirror. Instead, Gilgamesh saw that he would have to coax this wily giraffe with food and luxury.

“You know, in the giraffe kingdom, we have much better food and tea, all for free.”

Within a month, Gilgamesh had turned Enkida into a giraffe, and she knew that she was one. He had also taught her, with the help of food (he send the parrots to fetch her fast food such as fried chicken and fat burgers), radios, video games, comments like, “This training will help your figure,” and silk sheets as bribery, to be a great warrioress, for how else would she help him achieve greater greatness? And, she had become a champion fighter.

Gilgamesh thought, “Greater greatness, why with her I could become a god. We could go defeat the monster, Humbaba, to show the gods who can’t even defeat this monster, that I am the strongest and most powerful force on the planet; I laugh in the face of fear and I will show them all how great I am, if they do not already know.”

So, one fall morning, Gilgamesh said to Enkida, “Let us go for a walk into the magic forest and see if we can not find some delicious fruit.”

As the two giraffes ventured forth into the jungle, Gilgamesh began to realize how proud he was of Enkida; she was the female version of himself. And, she could fight so well with her long neck and heavy head, not to mention, she was beautiful. “I have fallen in love with her!” The thought struck him as human arrows strike the skins of deer, but why wouldn’t he love her? She would help him achieve the status of a god, and she was perfectly fit to be a goddess; she walked, talked, and acted like him.

Hardly had Gilgamesh stumbled upon these romantic feelings did a veil of darkness engulf them, blasting into his consciousness the tiding of Humbaba’s presence. Humbaba was a monster far less appealing to the eye than even hideous can describe, her

face could ruin even Enkida's appetite. As the pair tread upon her, this monster, an octopus like creature, slugged towards them, making mushy squish squish and splat splat noises with her tentacles. Eighty mouths adorned this lump of squish, and they all let off piercing screeches. As a Tasmanian devil, Humbaba began to whirl around them in circles, and they could see nothing more than swirls of black color, shapeless and faceless.

Perhaps if this phantom-like being spoke even a word in common with him, Gilgamesh would have been able to reason with the beastess, would have somehow been able to plead for his and Enkida's life and by some lucky wave struck a chord of sympathy in the monster's heart, blasted through the hardened magma barrier which encompassed it.

But, they could not communicate. And, Gilgamesh did not want to die. So, when he saw one of Humbaba's tentacles reach out and coil around the terrified and speechless Enkida, he did not jump in its path. Enkida would not even have a chance to fight. And, neither would he. Instinctively, he fled, his last sight was a kicking and helpless Enkida being eaten by a swirling blackness. The last sounds he heard were the cries of a giraffe intermixed with the deafening cackles of Humbaba.

Regret and remorse washed over the pathetic excuse of a King. He had not saved his friend, the only creature he had ever loved besides himself, including his former unwilling bride to be. He would take Enkida over wealth, power, or status. But, even more than Enkida, he realized he desired his life, and one day, like Enkida, he would lose it. Nothing in the world scared him more. He was seized with a sudden thirst for immortality, and he vowed to himself that he would find it. So, he set out immediately,

without even packing supplies, to the mysterious forest of truth in order to find immortality, to gain the power to clutch onto and preserve his life for all of eternity.

He had not gone but a little ways into the forest, when he suddenly developed a Saharan dry throat; he lurched over and lowered his head into the galloping river of the wood, and with his swinging tongue, lapped up pounds of water, so much that his Saharan throat took on the nature of a heavily vegetated and lush, tropical rainforest. So absorbed was he by the act of drinking, that when a voice interrupted, "I guess you're pretty thirsty," he became so startled that his head whipped up and hit a tree, dropping a barrels worth of fruit into the water.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you." Gilgamesh reverted his eyes back from the tree to the river and his gaze beheld a beautiful mermaid.

"It's ok. I wasn't scared," he insisted. "My name is Gilgamesh, King of All Giraffes. In search of immortality. Who are you?"

"Marcella Martinez. Former human wife of Senor Martinez, mother of Isabella Martinez."

"Why a former human?" Gilgamesh wondered, a puzzled look radiating forth from his face.

"Well, I was born a mermaid," Isabella revealed. "But, on my eighteenth birthday I fell in love with a wonderful man and mothered a beautiful child. Alas, on my twenty first birthday, I had to choose between being a human or mermaid for the rest of my life....no going back..."

"Why did you choose to be a mermaid and leave your husband and child?" A murmur of disbelief escaped even the inconsiderate Gilgamesh, almost as discretely as

the air, which travels under those doors that are so close to the ground, they slide against the carpet when pushed open.

“Well,” she began, fighting back tears, “mermaids live to be around 3 or 4,000 years old, no matter what form they choose. Humans rarely live past 100 years. I loved my husband dearly, and I love my daughter with a great motherly love, but they would die after such a short time, and I would continue to live...it was the hardest choice I ever had to make, but I was so young, only 21; I was selfish...now, I would give my life for my daughter, and I wish that I had...now that I am older and wiser, I would trade 2000 years of life for even five minutes with my daughter...especially since...especially since all my friends and family...my entire mermaid kingdom...were destroyed by humans...they were polluting the sea, and when they used a chemical to try to clean it, instead of reversing the damage as they had intended, they poisoned all my loved ones, wiped out an entire ecosystem, and they didn’t even know it...”

“I am so sorry,” Gilgamesh condoled, unsure of how much sympathy he could feel for a mother who had abandoned her daughter, even though she now regretted it.

“Anyways,” added Marcella, pulling herself together, “if you are still interested in living forever, I can tell you where to find the fountain of youth. I wish I had known of it when I was twenty one.” She sighed. “Anyways, my friend, Babette, has drank from it, and she is immortal. But first, you must read from the forgotten stone tablet, housed in the cave from which the Dead Sea Scrolls were extracted...you must sign a contract that you will use your gift wisely, and understand all of its implications....”

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He read the stone tablet slowly five or six times. The stone was written in the universal language, a language which would be dead until the return to the stone age, when we would all once again speak a single and universal tongue, without any sort of Tower of Babel, through no efforts of any of the life on Earth. On his way to the caves, Gilgamesh had encountered centaurs, woodland nymphs, and phantoms. But, none of these entities came even close to rival the feeling of wonder which the universal language aroused in Gilgamesh's soul, for his mind could not even comprehend it; it was a language of spirit rather than intellect.

His awe was heightened further by the actual words inscribed upon the tablet, words which could not be read as much as they could be understood. For, after Gilgamesh's interaction with the stone, he came to understand that everybody was always rushing and hurrying instead of enjoying their time, taking things for granted instead of appreciating the little things, forgetting to enjoy life. Life, for most, had become a competition rather than an experience. He began to understand that the inhabitants of the world would enter into a state, himself included, in which they would live life almost too fast to enjoy it. This reminded Gilgamesh of an amusement park ride that makes you throw up. When you hurry, you never consume anything long enough to make it stay done, and there is more stuff than you can keep down; what's the hurry? We don't have to be as fast as the internet, we'll never win that race, just lose our quality in the attempt, just as Gilgamesh had with Humbaba.

The lonely giraffe began to understand that we shouldn't know everything; there'd be no mystery in life, and then what would be interesting? What wouldn't be dull? Too much of life would become tedious, with all things of the world, it is never

good to have too much of anything, even life. We see this in another perspective, overpopulation-the tablet foretold of this doomed stated, for who wants to compete for life, rather than just live it?

Gilgamesh began to see that life was not about power. Greed and self-love, such as he possessed, breeds only tumults of death, war and destruction. Even when he did not desire to do so, he had brought upon Enkida's death, and he loved her. Her life was worth more than power; power does not live on, nor can it prevent death. He realized that violence, in any form, especially war, is a fruitless act, since the resulting power will eventually transcend to another hand or realm; it merely produces a quick fix that fails to solve any real problems or make anything truly better. The Earth is not immortal, and when we fight with each other, we kill her. Humbaba was the war which killed Enkida, power and wealth are not worth the price we must pay for them; for the life of a planet or a loved one is too great a cost for any to endure, just as the taste of the beef burger is not worth the life of the forest we must destroy in order to be gluttons.

Life does not last forever, even if a body does. For, the most important things in of life, such as love and friendship, cannot embrace immortality, and neither can the Earth. Why be immortal if you have to live alone, which is pretty much not living at all? Or, what is immortality worth if you have no Earth to live on and sustain you?

Love, friendship, and compassion last forever, but they do not inhabit your body, rather, they take the form of spirits which will eventually leave the Earth. Why live on Earth forever when it is constantly being destroyed, when people are hurrying? Why bear witness to death and destruction ALONE, instead of passing onto the next stage of the spirit's journey, enjoying each step of your destined eternity? Why alter your course

for momentary comfort, for the mere sake of ensuring your life, when you can grasp a more enjoyable eternity merely by choosing the right actions and enjoying the life you have on Earth?

Immortality is too much earth life and it throws a soul off balance; we should thirst for life beyond earth; it will make us better people who perform better actions. We should try to make the Earth such a place that there is no reason for war, and that will be a far more fruitful fight, a more bountiful and everlasting battle. Instead of using his long neck to browse trees for leaves, Gilgamesh saw he should look out for the ants who could not foresee the oncoming storms; he should learn to stick his neck out for the common good and see the truth above, rather than exert force and power on those below. Instead of looking down on others, he should use what he sees to make things better for others and the Earth.

Gilgamesh had set out on a search for immortality, but instead, he learned to embrace his humanity and act upon it. He started off to return to his city in order to embrace what is and to share what he can see with those who can't, to stick his neck out for others when, being the giraffe that he was and having the ability to communicate at infrasound level, he heard Plato's messages to the Great Remade World Society.

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Next to his life sustaining artificial atmospheres, Plato's most intricate invention was undoubtedly his magnanimous microphone. Violating the red shift/sound wave law it produced boundless, pitchless waves, which never varied in volume, no matter how far or close one was to the sound wave. A being a million miles away from the microphone

heard sound waves of the exact same clarity, pitch and volume as would a being standing two feet from Plato.

Plato, of course, did not, on this occasion, want the entire global population to hear the messages he was going to transmit to his former kidnappers. His microphone, fortunately, possessed a plethora of different settings and other such lavish technologies. In this case, Plato set the microphones pitch at the frequency which the Great Remade World Society was programmed to hear, as a result of having been chemicalized by his jungle followers. No other humans on the planet would hear his secret messages; this Plato could be assured, as he himself had designed the chemical poison and was well versed on its audible properties.

This wise ancient scholar took great care in preparing the messages. He wanted to brainwash his enemies into persons of inherent good, and at the same time, take care not to make them his servants or alter any other aspect of their personalities or characteristics; he wanted the essence of these individuals to remain untouched. This idea was controversial in itself. How could one possibly change even a molecule of a persona without somehow impacting the core of their identity? Well, Plato was going to attempt such a feat, and in truth, the aftermath of not being able to put any of his subjects under any sort of microscope, disabled him to ever know if he really had success in protecting their essential beings and true natures; what is this anyways?

Yet, what more can one do but try? And, in this instance, Plato was sure his endeavor of washing these brains free of all ideas of replacing nature with artificialities, of taking things for granted and ignoring all possible implications of technological actions, and of cleansing these once thinking vessels of a preprogrammed preference to

all industrial and technological pursuits, felt it worth the risk. After all, Plato refused to believe that an artificial calmness was better than natural violence; he did not consider one better either. Was not plummaging the earth and tilling it's resources to extinction because of the knowledge that our dear Gaia can be replaced just as horrifying as the bloodshed of war? Both ultimately contribute to the demise of our planet, one merely stems from the brain, the other from physical prowess; is one stronger than the other? Who knows, it hardly matters, both are destructive and need to find their own demise BEFORE our planet does.

Plato's investment in this risk began by his taking a deep breath, as though he was making ready to blow forth a ginormous and storm laden, fiercely howling wind. And, when he couldn't possibly suck in any more air, Plato released in this hot and swirling mass of carbon dioxide the following words:

“The Earth was not made for you; you were made to take care of it and all of its life forms, extending from lions to soil particles, to water molecules even. This biosphere we inhabit is an interconnected biocommunity, and by building a new Earth, we selfishly leave the waters, the rocks, and all the life we fail to transport, behind. We have been killing our planet, the mother of all life, the world which has given us everything while expecting nothing in return. Instead of thanking Gaia, we use her to suit our needs. Technology, although not bad in itself, has the humongous potential for death and destruction if left unregulated; technology needs BALANCE. We must avoid being wasteful and not think of ourselves, but of our biocommunity, we must cut back and go on a technology diet. Our present diet is like setting a ticking time bomb off at the core of the planet. We must not kill others so that we can live in excessive luxury and fulfill

merely our own selfish desires at the expense of others lives. It is too large a price to pay.”

And, Plato thought this was sufficient. Not only would the members of the Great Remade World Society halt their attempts to create Earth 2, an artificial and inferior possibly short lived or unlivable clone, but our wise philosopher was also certain that this group would also begin to limit their consumption of the Earth and all of it’s resources.

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I felt a horrible plague of guilt take hold of my body, sending through it, quivers which launched upon me seizure attacks, seizures which could only be overtaken by taking on power. I had failed my great love, Plato. After leading him astray from Babette I had turned him into my puppet. I had even let him be kidnapped, and thrown false accusations upon his plate when he returned.

My heart vowed to make right with Plato the wrongs I had wrought upon him. In secret, so that it would be a surprise, I would further brainwash and take revenge upon the Great Remade World Society; oh yes, and I would do it purely, solely and entirely for my one and only true love!

And, I would begin my extensions of Plato’s Project with the selfish and always and forever power seeking King Majeed. You see, Plato’s sound waves seemed to have somehow only mildly affected him, either that or the injected potion had only partly entered into his bloodstream, failing to fully affecting his thoughts and emotions, for this man had at least some control over the way in which he used technology, or perhaps his brain was so drenched in his desire for power that shrunken porosity served to slow the poison from seeping fully into his thought processes.

Whatever the case, some barrier had prevented this ruler from being permeated with poison; his companies still used lavish amounts of nonrenewable fossil fuels, could afford solar powers but chose not to, and even used nuclear energy, it was as though his very aura radiated radioactive materials. So, Cleito decided to “brainwash” Majeed the old fashioned way, with bribery.

Babette was, among several things, a gifted computer hacker. Almost effortlessly, she used this medium to delete all of the King’s oil companies, all of it’s money and all of it’s stock. She fired all of it’s employees, etc., until it ceased to exist. She erased the money of this ever-polluting enterprise from the brains of all on the face of the Earth, until King Majeed and herself were the only two people in existence who were aware that Majeed’s Royal Oil Company ever even existed.

After this example of power, Cleito threatened to delete King Majeed. “I could easily replace you with a clone. If I wanted, I could even erase all memory of you from your own daughter’s brain; you’ll cease to exist and nobody will ever even know.”

The King had been crushed, his pride and ego stricken with a ferocious self-depreciating blow, and he was brought to grovel before Cleito’s delicate little feet. The power pores opened wide and took on an overbearing permeability, reluctantly ready to be filled with the wants and needs of one immortal and power-seeking woman. “I will do whatever you wish, but please I beseech you, do not replace me with a clone.”

“Quit using fossil fuels and quit eating any animal products. Shut down all of your farms and order your mining companies to use more environmentally friendly extracting methods. Basically, quit killing the Earth and solar power everything you

own; also, drive an electric powered car. Gaia is perhaps my only friend just now, and I will stop at nothing to protect her.”

King Majeed’s pleading and imploring eyes quickly conceived from Cleito’s cold, hard face that there would be no bargain or deal in this business transaction, Babette’s decision was beyond business and may as well have been written in stone.

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Chapter 7 The Second Tower of Babel

Chapterette A Aligning the Animals

Cleito saw that she could effortlessly weave the animals into her tapestry of revenge, a “masterpiece” she had begun for her dear and beloved philosopher husband, almost before she was even aware she had ignited it; unfortunately, this ignition would burn her quilt nearly as quickly as she patched it together; it’s beginning would cause its end.

Babette had always considered animals to be mistreated and under appreciated creatures whose intelligence and capacity for emotion far exceeded what they were given credit, which wasn’t much. (She refrained from eating them, in part, as a result of this opinion). She often pondered, Why were animals treated as inferior? What right had humans to use them for their own means? Wasn’t this way of thinking the very behavior that had allowed for the practice of slavery and which rationalized actions of war? What if animals were transported to a human level pedestal?

Plato had created a device, which allowed for any human to converse with any animal in their own language; this would make her ploy even easier to carry out. For, animals speak the true and universal language. If she could somehow manage to unify the entire world to speak this universal animal tongue (perhaps she'd call it Euro tongue) she could bring about the animals rise to power so that they were equal to humans, and bring about the end of, or at least place limits upon, overusing technology.

She would build a tower, the Tower of Babel II, only this time, it would succeed. The tower's purpose would be to bring the animals to human status, perhaps a little above, in order to enforce a unified language and bring authority to the animals; all the scientific, cultural and technological ongoings of the planet would have to pass through their advisory boards, and pass their centralized schema before being allowed entrance or implementation into the functions of the global world, to rid the groundless sense of superiority men practiced over animals, and realize no creature, color or person is any better than the others, merely a snob.

No place on Earth would be more technologized, smarter or of a different language than any other. Earth would be a city, not as Jerusalem is, but one made by man and animals, for the glory of man. A tower which lingered high above the third rock from the sun, above all evil and technologies lurking in its polluted air molecules, its non-arable soils, its deforested land. The tower would be built to make Babette, Plato and the animals free from the very forces of nature, which gave them life and transfer their wild wills to a forced peace. A hypertext of existence, if you will.

Blood rushed upon tides of excitement to blossom roses upon Babette's cheeks, for she felt she had stumbled upon brilliance, a panacea for inhumanity; divisions among

humans and creatures existed as a result from not being able to communicate. By dissembling the divisions between humans and animals, between classes and societies, Cleito, like a great herd of elephants encroaching upon a swarm of ants, would stampede that barrier, and make a unified global community, fully capable of cooperating, free to shed the shields of separation. Diversity would no longer be necessary, and boundaries would become limitless, for they no longer existed. The inhabitants of Earth would be completely free and possess complete power over themselves. Cleito could smell world peace the way one can smell freshly baked cookies when reminiscing over holidays, taste it the way one can taste the fresh blueberry bagel after just entering a bakery.

*

You would think that a witness to all of the fall's of the Earth would flashback to the second fall of man, before venturing upon it's re-creation. It would be but an artificial peace, an artificial return to innocence, built upon Babette's pride, a succulent, planet crushing pride.

In the name of defeating technology, Babette was in actuality, employing a hypertext to invent and create a global community. In trying to build a second Babel, it was evident that this empire would scarcely rise before it would fall, crumble, and shatter upon the very soil of which it was built. Babette, erring horribly in an attempt to get rid of technology, tried return to the Stone Age a few decades, perhaps even millenniums, too early, in an attempt to rise above the powers and words of the heavens and attain a universal language and peace. Desiring a simplicity before its time, like an uncooked cake, Cleito would work to create a tower destined only to fall and run amuck, making nothing but a sticky mess. Furthermore, animals are not human, and it is not yet the

universe's wish for us to coexist and communicate at such a level, the diversity timer is still ticking.

*

Determining where to build the tower was the only existing dilemma in Babette's mind, and this could be easily solved with an astrological reading from a famous witch doctor that she'd known and depended upon for years. In her mind, the whole plan was settled, and evolving with the contingency of making travel arrangements into the wild African terrains of which the witchdoctor dwelt.

Chapterette B Some Musings From Plato's Palate

I learned a lot of things living in the jungle, perhaps the most enlightening being that our fall from Eden began with gluttony. She birthed an eve of destruction by consuming an apple; humans now birth war, violence, and bloodshed by eating animals. To resist gluttony, I believe in my gut, is the closest way to create a world more like Eden and less like the fiery pits of Satan's flame broiled, pig sweating, smell of burning, lair.

We need to break the chains we wear by shedding our superiority; we need to dredge this concept from our brains, for it only brings evil. Instead of using this notion to justify sin, as we have done throughout history, whether to justify slavery or war, or to eat animals, we should use our knowledge to choose to live in a biocommunity where all members are equal.

Knowledge is a power, it can be used for good or destruction, and we are using it for evil. We should elevate to live in peace and harmony with all creatures of Earth, we should use knowledge to grow a symbiotic life between humans and nature, rather than

the disturbing existence we presently sow, one in which we are selfish and killing ourselves by killing our earth and its ecosystems, life and biodiversity.

Thou shall not kill should extends to all life; the Bible does not say, ‘thou shall not kill humans but feel free to murder everything else’, for when we have other means, eating animals is no longer survival, but murder...sure, the animals eat each other, but they have no other means or knowledge for survival; we do. And yet, the BIGGEST difference lies in that animals cannot destroy the planet, but humans CAN and ARE; we cause extinctions; we are the greatest catastrophe to ever plague the planet.

People did not eat animals in Eden or Atlantis, when it flourished. If we seek an Eden-like existence, we must resist violence and sin, against not only the world, its environment, and it’s animals, but also against each other. We need to sacrifice our appetite’s for lives of animals, our greed for their habitats. Every action we take should be for the promotion of life and peace; we will never stop justifying the bloodshed of war when we act as murderers every day, as animals, as well as of the earth.

Chapterette C Celestial Prophecy

Deep beneath a pyroclastic Kimberlite, below the pit of the Kwadui diamond mine, dwelled Queen Kalah and her savage followers of the tribe of Ziggurat. They lived an existence in tune to the doctrine most coinciding with the simplicity of nature, the heart beat of Tanzania pulsed their every action, and they only used animals when in need of transportation; they made way to mount the blue wildebeests, whose strength and sinewy muscles took hardly any heed of the fragile humans upon their backs, forced to pay attention to their riders only because they were being steered.

The pit beneath the diamond mine housed a glorious spring fed by Lake Victoria, a spring crystal clear and purified by the magic of Queen Kalah, so that its taste was the cleanest of all the world, a freshness which smelt of life and newness, crisp and energizing, invigorating life by both its aesthetic and quenching properties, for the Queen was a witchdoctor, and by the wave of her magical hand, a glorious pasture of grass, brooks, fruit trees and arrays of flowers more colors than found in even the most prismatic and glistening of rainbows, carpeted the pit. A large glowing diamond embedded in the roof served as their sun. So much energy flowed and ebbed through this underground world that none ever had need to sleep. Life remained buoyant and sparkling, almost impossible to submerge, the nights and days blended into the one, and old age was a concept the tribe remained unaware of.

Queen Kalah, who was the daughter of Queen Victoria, soul of the Lake, with her dewy eyes gushing full of fluidy dreams, memories and babbles of her dear watery mother, who had been eaten by a Nile perch, a clause in her contract of immortality, as Aquarius pours the waters of immortality into the Earth. This medicine woman put forth practices and efforts each day to restore and purify Lake Victoria, beginning this tedious and trying swim with the spring of Kwaduiland, of which she reigned. She was trying to heal the lake, as she healed the savages, but in her efforts to float above the deforestation, overpopulation, intrusive species and mining, she was drowning.

Upon the Queen, abreast this exotic healers bronze and glowing neck, upon an unbreakable diamond chalice, throbbed a luminescent love-pink diamond, burning so bright even the blind could not directly align their eyes with this illumined spectacle without being tumultuously blasted back up into the air. This diamond, larger than the

one worn by Princess Elizabeth, was the physical embodiment of Kalah's heart, and although it was quite large, she refused to let any wander, stumble, or even topple or tip toe toward its presence.

The Queen had put her heart off limits until she could restore the great Lake Victoria; the second largest freshwater lake in the world, and source of the White Nile. A plague of undeserved guilt entrenched her heart over the death of her life giver. By fixing this lake, the witchdoctor felt that if in some way this legacy could return, and she will be free to love again. The hope of bringing back her mother was the sole reason that she bared to live beneath the diamond mine; she kept it from further exploitation, no deeper operation or drilling would take place under her watch; these miners were assisting with the cold, gushing murder of her lake.

There was only one whom Queen Kalah had let even scratch the surface of the beating gem, which lay upon her bosom. Before her second creator's death, she had lived powerfully, a love which, if had not flowed smoothly, but would have erupted in a violent display of ash and silt, would have exploded the Earth. At such a time, she frequented the island of Atlantis. And here, at her favorite vacation spot, resided her best friend, whose daughter, Babette, she had been an Auntie to. Babette was still alive for she had treaded upon the dangerous waters of immortality, and whenever Babette needed her, she embraced her with open arms, and while she did not let this dear child into her heart, she allowed her to touch it.

*

I traversed south through Sudan and Kenya until finally I reached Tanzania, a land which housed Queen Kalah, a witchdoctor my mother had befriended when she

pulsed and vibrated in motion with the planet. I visit Auntie Kalah from time to time; she had given me a love potion with which to entrance and sway Plato, and now she would perform an astrological reading to tell me where to build the second Tower of Babel.

“My love!” she greeted me with a hug and said she already knew why I had come. “It is most admirable that you are trying to save the Earth from further destruction; how can I possibly refrain from helping?”

A chorus of her savage followers offered me fruits, but I declined; they had always caused a surge of fright to electrify my veins. “No, thanks,” I signaled. “Well, where should I build the tower?” I implored. I did not speak the language of the stars, so for this, although I had always found pride in my possession of self-reliance, in this situation I had to seek dear Auntie’s assistance.

While my reading of the celestial bodies, especially the alignment of Mars (ooh, the famous Mars effects) coupled with a strong stellar influence from the Aquarius constellation, and this you know breathes and froths with the tides of immortality, makes it as clear as the waters of Lake Victoria once were, that you must build your tower in Babylon.”

I looked up into the sky and gasped, for in this land, fifty miles south of Baghdad in the nation of Iraq, not too long ago, one of this land’s foreign leaders, a hallucinating Hussein, had started to build a city atop the ruins of this ancient Babylon, in blatant imitation of Nebuchadnezzar. An unforeseen invasion halted his progress of glorifying Iraq. I did not see this as a good sign, coupled with the fact that Babylon was a bit of a commute from school; I had no choice but to question, “Are you sure? There must be

some place in Egypt better suited for this endeavor. Is it possible the celestials are saying Babylon is where I should NOT build?"

No, my dear child. A starry scripture cannot be ignored. If you build in Babylon you will save the Earth, and a glittering waterfall of love will once against burst forth through my heart and be free to flow for the rest of eternity, introducing the Earth to pleasant floods of kinship and tidings of peace."

Auntie Kalah had always steered me in the right direction, so I saw no reason to take the reigns from her in this situation. The tower would begin construction before the descent of the next week reached its finale.

Chapterette D Rose Colored Glasses

The strangest thing happened on my way home from Tanzania. My peacock-led chariot, my unmagical flying carpet, had needed to stop and rest in order to replenish their evaporated basins with water and seeds; their insides had become nearly as dry as the windblown desert sand.

As we took heed to emerge with a blanket of slumber, which also beckoned the newly eutrophivating nutrient needy Nile, our bodily renewals were interrupted by the sudden appearance of a descending hot air balloon. This balloon was a new vision not only to my eyes and imagination, but even to my dreams, and as I gazed upon this lofty spectacle, I felt as though entering upon a dreamy state, the balloon itself was a deep, resplendent ruby red of silk, a silk so soft you could feel it from miles away; it was almost as if its extra softness took flight upon the world and made way to gently kiss your face, but alas, it was nothing more than a sensual allusion of sorts. This delectable

material then beheld not mere representations or illustrations of stars, but stars themselves, still glowing, willfully attaching themselves to the silk, perhaps its touch luring and lulling them into a great cindarellaish sleeping spell.

The basket itself was made of jewels; the most breathtaking collage of jewels ever assembled, and in their composition, they glistened with the beauty of the 1000 brightest Christmas trees ever to exist. Merely in letting your pupils encounter this display you were stunned into enchantment. Warnings whispered into your eyes that you should look away, but in the consequence of letting your gaze tread upon this blinding play of sparkle and glitters, delivers the same effect as if your retina was let to wander upon the direct path of the sun; you were already burned and there was no turning back.

To add to all this miraculity, the balloon was kept aloft by the workings of a billion butterflies, blowing into the massive balloon all the air they could scavenge, and the fluttering of their wings produced a crystal laden melody to be treasured by both the eyes and ears. The balloon, which seemed to gracefully hop in its descent, was also replete of the normal weights of bags of sand. Instead, the largest gems possessed by Gaia were tossed aside as if they were any ordinary rocks, and giant diamonds, rubies, opals, and sapphires were thrown out left and right, leaving behind footprints of magnamity, wealth, and luster loveliness.

What's more incredible, the conductor of this grand aviating, yet falling phenomenon was a sorcerer wizard, and he adorned one of those pointed blue star laden caps so stereotypical of the sorcerer image; his robe summoned awe in that it beated with a moving blaze of lights which passed effervescence, their prisms pulsing with such a shimmerplosion that they seemed to take on life and personality, even claimed

snobbiness in their natures if you ask me, shooting down the demeanor of my prideful peacocks, despite their glorious plumes of flowing, glossy feathers, water hues spilling forth and then yo-yoing back to their wings, colliding with a wash of sheer, shiny reflections of the dancing light bequeathed upon them by the yawning breath of the sun, plummeting into a deep hole, filling with sand.

To further the amazement the wizard had already orchestrated, he ensued his magic winged wand which flew away upon whim and possessed a most entrancing and luminescent glow, to transform the sky in to a spellbinding celestial performance. Blossoming forth beaming flowers of illuminating light to entreat upon the inside realm of the balloon, the wand release from within this vessel, an immensity of light, a brightness exceeding the sun, and it began to emit plasma, it's particles bound and shackled themselves to the atmosphere, and colliding with the ionosphere, they exploded with vibrations of red, green, blue and violet, a melody of colors which brushed forth from the artists palette, a conglomeration of hues sprawled across the sky, entreating a bejeweled brilliant aurora into the midst of the desert sands.

Undersea fireworks could never aspire to approach the degree of loveliness this show of lights created, showering upon the earth rainstorms of rainbows. A beautiful sight, yet instead of feeling privileged to bear witness to the extravaganza, a shiver of fear shook me and sprouted to encompass my entire being, freezing my body into a state of fright.

As the balloon wafted onto the sand, creating an overpowering scent of chocolate and roses, it suddenly, with an upheaval of speed, began to spin like a Tasmanian devil so that it's identity became indistinguishable;, finally though, slowing and settling into the

sand to spawn a fountain, crystals and diamond jewels riding upon the pure pristine waters calling forth glittering clouds as it splashed into the pool which contained the free spirited mermaid statue which bled gushes of water.

“Spot of tea?” The wizard offered as though he had transported his body from that balloon to my side through a black hole, instantly and without making any actual physical voyage.

Practically an ice sickle in the midst of an arid sun blistered desert, much too afraid to refuse, I accepted the tea and asked, “How did you do that?” my heart pounding ferociously in response to my bold inquiry.

“Oh, that’s simply a matter of manipulating subatomic and intergalactic particles,” the sorcerer answered, a smile creeping upon his lips, almost as if to take them by surprise and the labial skins, in accordance, reacted slowly, as if to upturn was an exercise they hadn’t performed in perhaps ages.

A brief introduction took place between me and the wizard, Gregory, before, almost as quickly, but less extravagantly than he had come, he disappeared into thin air, taking with him the aroma of roses and chocolate. But, before he left, he bestowed upon me a rare gift, a pair of rose-colored glasses which beseeched an aura of sophistication and intelligence. “Wear them,” he said, as he was evaporating.

*

Rose-colored glasses were a classic tool with which to craft cheery optimism, to replace foul darkness with pleasant light, a positive view. So, driven by inner curiosity to discover the true nature of how and if these glasses worked, Cleito decided to run a guinea pig trial on her first hour class.

“I have here,” Cleito began, “a pair of rose colored glasses, given to me by a sorcerer whom I met very briefly. I am going to describe a situation and then I shall pass the glasses around and you will all describe what you see.”

“You have recently put on weight, and almost as soon as you start to lose a few pounds, someone is trying to make you eat cheesecake.”

“I don’t like cheesecake, so I see myself sticking to my diet,” Jasmine reported.

“How could anyone possibly not like cheesecake? One made with tofu cream cheese, soy margarine, and egg replacer, of course,” Babette wondered to herself. This girl must be lying, she thought.

“I would eat a small slice, and go for an endorphin producing run afterwards to burn the extra calories and uplift my mood,” Princess Amira said.

“I see myself refusing the cheesecake because I have strong willpower,” Valentina described.

“I see myself overeating, but forgiving myself and starting fresh the next day,” Kimi announced.

All of the answers were different. “Your friend is lost and you must climb a rugged, freezing mountain to find her.” Babette provided a second scenario.

“I love the cold fresh air, so I see a chance to enjoy the outdoors and experience an adventure; I find my friend and she is safe,” Analise explains.

“I see an El Nino occurring and warmth encompassing the mountain. I am warm and I find my friend,” Ginger shared.

After several other scenarios were presented, and beyond discovering the true nature of the rose colored glasses, Babette developed insight that different things look

good to different people; technology and development look good to some but horrible to others, the same with cheesecake and vegan eating; a startling new concept for her.

Chapterette E Why Build Babel?

For years, the humans and their endocrine disrupting chemicals had destroyed hormone messages of plants and animals, making communication between these two entities nearly impossible. Throughout history, people became rich, making the planet poor, for from where else would their wealth be taken? Easy quick access makes them prone to overuse; they need to learn the limits of food and water. Instead of thinking of their entire planet when performing actions, they think of only their local communities and economics, using what is easily available instead of searching for alternative, healthier for the planet energy sources, their greed blinding them from what is best for Gaia.

All about the buck, and groomed to the lifestyle of the quick fix, in the same way they pollute their bodies and use pills for a quick fix, bring humans to face the prospect of self extinction, and in doing so, by ruining water and other essentials in their quest for luxury and to find new ways to enable laziness, make earthly existence more and more like death, the homosapiens also brought extinction and suffering upon all other life forms.

Humans, it is clear, care about profits and short-term solutions, they need to shift their values from power and money to justice and temperance. They should not sell pollution rights and profit off of pollution; they should change and put the environment before profit, to work with the environment, their mass supplier, instead of against it.

A portion of the humans became wealthy, and instead of trying to create a higher standard of living for the entire world, these earthly destroyers selfishly and wrongfully took all of the resources and wealth of the planet to themselves. The mass production of goods makes people dependent on specialists and unable to satisfy their own needs or to produce their own goods; they are disabled from the ability of self-help.

Not enough room on the planet, yet the humans breed billions of cattle for agriculture. Parents, who have no business having kids, perform acts that are thoughtless and unplanned which results in mass quantities of offspring; some parents then often ignore, abandon or abuse them, frequently making them so disadvantaged that they have less means to support them than our Earth does. The burgeoning exploding population of the planet. America refuses to pass LOKAL's laws to allow couples no more than two children apiece, as people outnumber its resources. And then, you find infants abandoned in the streets, parents unable to feed them.

Instead of consuming less, humans of industrialized countries wear extra large boots and back and forth spread their ecological footprints to touch mass portions of the Earth, depleting soil which is home to amoebas, ants, earthworms and fungi that purify water, fight disease and tackle pollution. The humans also take out biodiversity, land resources, as well as "secret" animals, holding numerous cures to diseases which have not yet been discovered by man.

The humans have insinuated disease into the clutches of the planet, laziness and dependency on technology spreads like a plague, it's wrath more widespread and it's destructiveness exceeding the plague at Aegina, a darkness hindered the Earth, restraining the people from seeing their folly, permeating laziness into the groundwater,

and the people drinking it and catching the ailment, so that hardly a soul could escape the clutches of this lazy lagoon, a state of wakened slumber.

The humans pat themselves on the back for their progress, but this progress is hardly more than virtual reality and is no doubt temporary, for they are merely taking out loans for the future to pay for today. Sadly, they will be unable to pay back most of these loans, and they selfishly steal happiness from their grandchildren; no wonder grandparents are notorious for lavishing their loved ones with gifts.

Now, it was time for the animals to turn the tables on the humans. After Cleito confiscated Plato's blow horn, they used sound waves audible to all humans and altered their signals and languages, stirring up a fathomless abyss of false messages, so that a stew of complications would ensue, further causing disputes among the already constantly fighting and violent beings. The animals, with a unified language, thanks to Plato, were able to utilize their now synchronized tongue to take power over the planet and its inhabitants. And the Tower of Babel would be their palace.

Chapterette F Cleito's Lazy Lessons

One of the reasons I began the Poseidon Boarding School was to fight laziness at the source, for it all begins in the schools. Things are progressing in public institutions, but some organizations still radiate the message that the only way to learn is to be taught. This merely creates lazy learners; why get knowledge for yourself when you can get it from the teacher?

It took educational researchers centuries to discover that all things are connected by thought, and thus, prior knowledge began to be understood. Still, not enough inquiry

and independent study projects are integrated into these curriculums, and they are all so thoroughly aligned that it gives students little choice to elect what they want to learn. There is such a wealth of information on the planet (one of our abundant valuable resources) that there should be no limit to what a student can learn. Guidelines, of course, are necessary, but rigid expectations crushes both the diversity of intellects, creating conformed and uniform learners, and it also creates trained laborers instead of investigators, inquirers. It leaves little room for learning for the self and abundant space for learning merely to achieve a letter grade.

I do not teach my students; I merely introduce them to ideas. For example, I tell my students that there is a difference between the natural global warming and the global warming caused by humans. They then research this and learn about the “idea” on their own, and they tell me and the class what was learned in a paper or presentation. I then take lead to fill in the blanks or clear up confusion, merely acting as a guide. Of course, group projects come into play, but they then learn as a team, and often from the angle of their own personal interests.

My school operates free of standardized tests; these do nothing but limit what and how a student can learn; there must exist other ways to find out if schools are doing their jobs. Multiple choice and matching questions are inadequate and unenjoyable tests of knowledge. Their only purpose is to prepare for those satanic exams.

Why teach memorization when you can teach independent thinking? Have students try to invent a real carbon eating machine or think of real ways to achieve global unity on environmental issues.

Chapterette G GROKAL

Being undoubtedly the greatest scientist on the planet, for all have heard of Dr. Sheva, my blueprint for the new world my society was going to build, was free of flaws. We had thought of everything.

The Great Remade World would have controlled ocean currents to help ensure proper nutrient dispersal and stable climate. I designed an Earth without plates; no earthquakes, volcanoes or any other sort of natural disaster will ever occur on our completely controlled environment.

If only that dreadful LOKAL group would cooperate. Not only does Plato refuse to reveal the secret to creating a second atmosphere, but this ridiculous group keeps trying to pass horrible laws, which put holds on industrialization, such as disposing tailings at sea, as well as population controls which would lessen the amount of people forced to overflow onto my world. The sooner the Earth runs out of its resources, the sooner its conditions will become unlivable; the inhabitants will have no choice but to pay their entrance fee to the Great Remade World Society; LOKAL is getting in the way of my profits.

I find especially irritating that swashbuckling Mr. Brown. My designs for the planet kept disappearing when I noticed his ship harbored in one of the lagoons upon the island of which we are headquartered. I had no choice but to erupt a volcano to cover and sink his then unattended ship. I haven't been missing any documents since.

I was going to patent a clone soldier to ensure my intellectual property, for it has become common practice to patent life forms, to be used to fight wars, when I had the

absolute strangest dream about a giraffe; it was so vivid, if it wouldn't be a direct one way ticket to an asylum, I'd say it was real, rather than a dream.

I was hunting cloned elephants in Africa when, by far the largest giraffe in history, an abominable giraffe, picked me up from behind and perched me atop an Acacia tree so that I could see his eyes. "I am Gilgamesh," he said. Before I could make any sort of response or interruption, he continued, "For a man who cares so deeply about money, I find it amusing you would desire to patent a clone," he spoke in a revered way.

"For a profit," I replied. Drrrrr.

"Hmmm. The world is already overpopulated, and you do not yet have the formula to a second life-sustaining atmosphere. Because populations grow at exploding rates, you'd think you'd want to buy yourself some time. Otherwise, the Earth, it's resources, and all of it's life, including you, may disappear before your planet is ever built. Besides, you know as well as I that ever since intellectual and biological warfare emerged, it has taken precedence over violent battles."

This giraffe sent to me by way of a crazy dream, really wasn't so crazy at all. He made perfect sense. Right away, I decided to help LOKAL pass some population growth laws. I guess that sometimes you have to work together, even if it's just to get out of the quicksand.

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It had officially been my job to steal Mr. Sheva's documents and designs regarding the Remade World, as well as any technologies relating to it's creation. Looting is a pirate's job, only now my treasure was the future of the planet Earth. My loot usually isn't so noble.

Some argue that environmental degradation led to the downfall of Rome. Farmers knew nothing about soil conservation, so they just kept on planting crops on the same soil, over and over, until it was deplete of nutrients and could no longer yield crops. This ultimately led to a great food shortage, and society began to fall apart. I wasn't going to sit idly by and let the same thing happen to the cyberculture empire. Oh no.

So, my rampades began. I frequented the society's headquarters and made numerous ventures to steal documents from their offices. I was working on hacking my way into their computer system, which had back up information on all of the documents, and perhaps, I had been stealing duplicate documents all along; I surely don't know. My raids were halted when a volcano erupted and sunk my ship, viscous lava cementing my floating home to the sea floor.

My efforts to save the Earth were paused, leaving me with moundfuls and sand heaps of time in which to think. The simplest, most obvious idea evolved within my brontosaurus brain while on this venture vacation. If I were to shut off their power, and burn the headquarters, all of the documents, both hard and soft, would be destroyed, as well as any work they had made towards the actual building of the clone planet. Certainly, they would have back up documents in secret locations spread across the globe, but this action would certainly be a setback and secure a great deal of added time in which to stop the Great Remade World Society completely.

However, one day as I was polishing up and placing the final touches on a new ship so that my plan could take flight, the head of a gigantic giraffe emerged from the depths of the trench near which my ship successfully neglected to sink, and, shaking his

ears free of salt and water, stuck out his tongue at me. He then said, “Mr. Brown, have you really thought this through?”

“Building a new ship? Of course.”

“No. Sabotaging the Great Remade World Society. If I were you, I’d reconsider. I mean, this planet is already dying. What would you do if something were to happen to her?”

“Die?” Mr. Brown half asked, half answered as the mammoth giraffe slowly emerged itself beneath the billowy waves, like a water god, Gilgamesh descended into the abyss of the sea.

*

“Plato,” Mr. Koizumi attacked, “you are being an impossible imbecile. Just hand over the atmospheric formula before I have to get serious.”

“Are you threatening me?” Plato implored. “Have you forgotten that you already kidnapped me?”

“Apparently that wasn’t enough. We are offering you a very fair price, so quit being stupid before we take more drastic measures. Measures beyond kidnapping, mind you.”

Mr. Koizumi’s ears were met with the deafening echo of dial tone. His phone had been disconnected. When he looked up, his eyes beheld that of a giant giraffe; it’s head poked in his office window, it’s hot breath enveloping his body with a sweltering, oniony rank.

“What on earth!” he cried, grabbing a towel to wipe the moist giraffe dew quickly collecting upon his skin.

“You need to be complimentary and polite with your enemy to get your way,” Gilgamesh urged. “You can’t just blame and criticize; it distances you from peace and compromise.”

Mr. Koizumi thought about how he conducted business as he shut his office window, startled and overtaken with fright and surprise, nipping the dear giraffe’s nose in the process, imposing upon the wise animal a window cut.

*

It is true that we are destroying ourselves and most of the animal life upon the planet; soon bacteria will be all that is left, if even this vital nitrogen fixer has chance to survive. And yes, I agree that we need to consider animals as equals, but in building the Tower of Babel II, they were elevating themselves to a superior status. Cleito got carried away, and instead of limiting power, she merely shifted it. Just because the animals had been oppressed did not mean they need extra power to make up for it. I merely intended to stop the negative actions being taken by the Great Remade World Society, not to punish them or ignite a power struggle.

So, because of my wife’s folly and the ensuing behavior of the animals, as a result from being given too much control, I would need to help the Great Remade World Society in an attempt to level the playing field. But, they weren’t making this easy for me.

I had decided to give them the atmospheric formula (after all, they might need to escape an animal rule), but every time I called to conduct negotiations, they were downright rude, and I couldn’t bring myself to help them.

Mr. Koizumi even hung up on me once. The next time he called, however, he was very polite and pleasant to work with. I finally consented and faxed the atmospheric formula to Mr. Sheva with the speed of an agile cheetah.

When I left that cave in that Amazon jungle, I finally saw the light and came to a real world of thought, rather than of senses. I could no longer be manipulated by Cleito or have a false consciousness about my state. I was freed from the chains of conformity, free to think for myself, to acquire knowledge and wisdom, to use my mind and do things for myself. I have come to see the truth and think beyond my own selfish wants, shed my superficial and false values that society rewards and encourages. My moral views were refreshed and revamped, and I could make real true choices uninhibited by the media, society, and people in power once again. I don't just know things, I can now see things; my state of dianoia has made objects of knowledge a reality, and I have figured out how to start to live my life; my life is no longer a shadow but has emerged into the dazzling sunlight.

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The two groups continued to spy on each other. They saw their enemies interacting with friends and family. They saw their enemies as people. Slowly, the Great Remade World Society began to like the LOKAL members and vice versa; they could no longer see each other as enemies, they liked each other too much. Through visions, dreams, or conversations with some giraffe named Gilgamesh, they began to see they could help each other.

“Well, I changed my mind when this giraffe told me...” Mr. Brown began.

“Giraffe! I had a dream about a giraffe!” Mr. Sheva interrupted Mr. Brown during a friendly round of golf, discussing how Mr. Sheva could create cleaner technologies and Mr. Brown could help him profit from them and reach the four corners of the world.

The war between the groups had suddenly come to an end; they learned they didn't have to be against each other and fused together like a star, mutualistically converging at the hooves of Gilgamesh. Like bees and a flower they would work together and balance technology and nature, enhancing the quality of each.

Chapterette H Behind the Scenes At Babel

As the physical tower of Babel was built, the animals began to weave their kingdom to encompass all four corners of the Earth. With Plato's invention, they had been able to adopt the human language and seeping into the outer pores of society, they slowly began to intermingle and attain power, acquiring a global domain.

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I have spent my whole life as Dorothy the Penguin, but I have not spent my entire life in the wild. For a brief period I was ripped from my family and locked up in a zoo. I was a circus slave, a prisoner. Finally, I was released into the wild when the zoo began to run short on funds. Sadly, however, I was transported not to my original community, but to some vast foreign land in which I had neither friends or family, or the coping skills for survival in the new and rugged environment.

If it had not been for Mariah Macaw, I would have died. So, perhaps you can understand that when I began to dream of human zoos and human food factories, it began

as a nightmare. At first, I was unsure if it was a dream; the humans in their cages being gawked at by crocodiles and lions, bringing their families to see the humans being tortured, taken from their homes, seemed all too cruel. The images of cows hooking people up to machines and milking humans before slaughtering them for their meat, for meat to make people sandwiches with, seemed disgusting and evil. Yet, it dawned on me that the humans had done these very things to the other creatures on the planet for great spans of time. Perhaps two wrongs don't make a right, but would a small lesson hurt? Yet, I did not want to think that animals could spawn devilish deeds the way humans could. I thought we had more compassion.

Yet, when I awoke from my dream, while I did not see factories or zoos, I saw Jolly leading the other animals to brainwash the humans and make them slaves, building the tower, sowing banana tree crops, toiling for the needs of the animals.

“At least they are brainwashed instead of being forced like cattle or horses to do undesirable work,” Jolly defended himself.

But, no creature is meant to be a slave. Animal or human. Tears welled up in my eyes. We were using power and knowledge no differently than the humans had; can not anybody rise above this struggle for power, dominance and bath of sin, or are we all trapped in a quicksand of selfish desires and the natures of laziness? Cannot even one specie rise above and make a global community in which past offenders are not punished and equality is established? This did not seem to be the trend; when the humans began to build the second earth we probably shouldn't have planted secret carbon emissions in the air, water and soil.

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My mother named me Jolly, because she wanted me to spread happiness. I had helped to free Plato when his own kind locked him up for their own selfish interests; I knew Plato was one of the only humans who could help keep the rest of his vile race from obliterating the Earth, the Earth of which I need in order to live. It is true I have become embittered against the human race over the years, but I never thought I would ever desire to punish them for all the damage they had done to the Earth, for the way they had treated their fellow creatures.

I never thought I would want the animal kingdom to take power and control over the Earth and dominate and enslave the humans. Until I was given the chance. Cleito opened the gate, the portal to animal power, and I pounced upon this opportunity as if it were the last banana in existence.

But of course, with the exception of making slaves out of the humans through brainwash, we animals would unite and use our power for good, and save the Earth. In this respect, at least, we would be better than the humans.

We could, however, never have rose to power without Babette. She had wanted to make animals equal to humans, yet to my chagrin and self-disappointment, nature expelled us to take siege of the opportunity to take over the world and therefore expel from the original plan of all creature unity, a binding together of species. We used Plato's device to brainwash Babette, the one person who tried to lead us to equality led us beyond, straight into the gates of superiority. We would have had great difficulty implementing our plans without her. And, if we hadn't brainwashed her, she never would have "decided" to help us build the Tower of Babel, never would have condoned

putting humans to our use and making slaves out of them, never would have appeared to Plato as the mad power hungry leader of an animal takeover.

Chapterette I Pharos Lighthouse

Dear Diary,

On the ancient island of Pharos in the harbor of Alexandria, Egypt, the Greek architect, Sostratus build the Pharos Lighthouse in 270 b.c.. It stood four hundred feet in height until Earthquakes toppled it in the fourteenth century. I'd do anything do build something that great. However, I'd want my eighth wonder of the world to be permanent. Like, a permanent sandcastle. Maybe a permanent sandcastle lighthouse.

Love,

Valentina

Chapter 8 Rise and Fall

LOKAL and the Great Remade World Society had merged into one unnamed group, working to preserve the Earth and maintain upon it a balance of technology and naturalness, while at the same time starting the construction of Earth II, a new and improved planet. They were also working to “unbrainwash” the Earth, so as to free humans from the animal spell and to create a coexistent equality of life.

This coming together never would have happened without Francesca. Being quite the chemist, she discovered an antidote for the chemical seeping through the brains of members of the Great Remade World Society and LOKAL ,and cured them so that beasts of nature no longer controlled their minds. This remedy was vital in reforming their group into one; while their brains were “away,” Babette had led the animals to take over the world. (They owned all the businesses, had human pets, did not destroy environments, prohibited creature cannibalism, mandated anti-technology logs and restricted clearing forests, burning fossil fuels and destructing habitats-punishable with a death sentence; humans were being sent to gas chambers for exploiting Earth’s resources left and right. They could no longer leave ecological footprints without “paying the price.” If they took life from the Earth, they were required to give their own in return. A little extreme.

It was now up to the reformed society to free humans from this brainwashing environment and strict consequential system.

Chapterette A Francesca and Plato

When Babette began to make the entire human population her slaves and began to float adrift her torrid, eroding, and over flooding river of power, I knew I had to do something to stop the insanity. So, I, with a spy's knowledge of the chemical the animals had used to inject the society members, as well as knowledge concerning the frequency of the sound waves used to brainwash the remaining population, I locked myself away in my Chemistry lab, dead set on creating a cure to stop the brainwashing, one that would wash a body of chemicals and free it from audible susceptibility. If I could spread the antidote to the world, all the humans would have escaped the animal brainwashing which presently seized them, they would think for themselves.

Alas, I found myself perplexed about how to make the antidote work against the sound waves; I needed Plato's expertise. Still a little angry with him for deserting me, because I always wear colors which express my mood, as I truly want to express myself (and this is how I squiggled out of wearing school uniforms in my youth), I wore black to show that I was sad.

My hand sweated profusely as I knocked on his bedroom door; what if he wouldn't help me? After all, he was married to Babette, and he had been the one who originally helped the animals brain wash the Great Remade World Society. I was worried he would think I was acting out of jealousy.

What a sigh of relief I took after explaining to him what I needed. "Yes, Babette has gotten carried away; I never intended for the animals to take over the world. We must stop them," Plato agreed, munching on a piece of jerky.

Well, as we toiled away, the formulas for the antidote weren't the only bits of chemistry taking place in that lab. Cleito was not present, and time had worn away at her spell, a river stream weathering and eroding the fool's gold from its pyrite home. Before I could count to three, I had changed into a yellow, red, and orange ensemble; sparks were flying with the fiery passion of the sun, and Plato and I were in love again. At last, our hearts had reunited. I had broken Cleito's spell. After all, artificialities only last so long.

Chapterette B Hanging Gardens of Babylon

Dear Diary,

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were built around 600 b.c. in Babylon near the modern day city of Baghdad. King Nebuchadnezzar had the gardens laid out upon a brick terrance and came to nearly four hundred square feet, lifting seventy five feet of above the ground. Slaves used the Euphrates to water the glorious trees, blossoming and aromatic flowers, and cozy shrubs to make the Queen happy.

Do people always use power to make others slave for them and do work to make themselves happy?

Love,

Valentina

Chapterette C The Eighth Wonder of the World

Dear Diary,

I thought I always had to have the answers, always had to be the smartest. But, I have finally conquered the fear of not living up to genius standards. I only have to live for me and by my standards. If the standards don't work for me, I'll make my own standards.

I thought I needed to create the eighth wonder of the world of something to prove I was "worthy" of being a genius. I felt that by creating permamounds, permanent sandcastles, somehow I'd never be washed away. But, nothing is permanent, and in the end, all that matters is that you are happy and enjoy your life.

Love,

Valentina

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Sammy, the 2 headed tortoise would always move his body away from the food he was eating, the second his second head saw second food; they wanted different things from life. Well, not everything has to be the same, not all heads have to think alike; they just need to learn together, or they'll both go hungry.

Chapterette D The Lazy Lazy Genius

I am Bambi Colangeli, a beautiful, socialite, genius; people should bow at my feet, and I should not have to work for anything. I mean, since I'm the most brilliant and most beautiful, everything should just be given to me, right?

Some genius' like Einstein and Mozart use their marvelous minds to make scientific discoveries or to create musical masterpieces for others to enjoy; I decided to use my brain for something only I could enjoy, after all, it was my genius, why share its benefits? I decided to use my intellect to make a potion to live forever, to be beautiful forever, and perhaps, to make me more beautiful, if that's even possible.

Imagine if Einstein had put all of his efforts into perfecting his features, looks, and sex appeal? He wouldn't have had that crazy beard and he probably would have had a lot more fun. He would have been out meeting people instead of toiling away working on science. I can definitely identify more with those evil genius' in movies who at least try to do something like rule the world, I mean, if you're smarter, you should rule, shouldn't you? I mean, isn't that why the human race rules the animals? Why shouldn't the smarter humans ruler the dumber humans; it's the same reason, the same logic?

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Madame Cleito's final exam was to make a hypothesis about why people are lazy; what would yours be? Perhaps, you might say that technology makes it easy to lose information, and because information is fast and easy it loses values; we come to focus on the present and devalue history. Focusing on the present makes us want things fast and now, we do not think of past or future consequences. Maybe you would conclude that digital text makes it easy for us to be lazy and satisfied because it provides quick and easy access to information. If we forget or ignore our history we will now know to look out for this, and we may grow to expect technology to do everything for us; we might forget how to do things without the aid of technology, which could prove fatal in the event of a major technological glitch. It is important that we do not lose track of our

history or forget the importance of hard work; technology can do a lot, but it can not do everything for us. It can't make smart choices for us; let me ask you this, if you were told eating from a microwave could harm you, would you stop using it? Has your answer changed? Quick and easy lacks permanence; can it also take years off of your life?

Chapterette E The Earth Clone

Instead of Earth 2, GROKAL had decided to name the cloned planet, Phoenix. For the phoenix is a mythological bird which can renew its own being out of its own ashes; out of one earth will come another, a corpse breeds new life, as a dying Gaia spawns a "clone" of sorts.

There, however, were advantages to this clone, in that human scientists had created it so they could control it. They could control everything from plate tectonics to the weather. They could summon rain at the press of a button, as well as perfectly control the temperatures of specific biomes to ensure they were always successful, productive and teeming with the appropriate amount of life.

What was unexpected, however, was the planted carbon emissions the animals had hidden, which would throw the perfect system off balance. Nor could they foresee universal influences bringing upon a technological failure, shutting off all of the currents so that, like a lazy lagoon, the infant planet sat still and did not move, and life processes became slow and lethargic. In a sense, the world began to die of "laziness." Too far from the sun to receive much light, and no artificial light as a result of the power failure, GROKAL was faced with great difficulty in trying to fix the planet. Alas, the amount of carbon reached a thresholded, and without light, nothing could grow and the new world

was broken. Phoenix had died and its inhabitants had no choice but to rush back to Earth, much the same way people rush inland during a flood. It was chaotic and not everyone survived. And, when they returned to Earth, they could no longer dominate as they once had, only coexist.

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At the same moment when Phoenix had risen into space, the Tower of Babel was erected. As most of the humans had left for Phoenix, the animals were free to rule the Earth. They unplugged and destroyed all human technologies with brute force; they became the superior beings, capable to enforce a more real and natural world, from the fall of the cyberculture rose the natureculture. Unfortunately, at the very same moment that power went off on Phoenix, an earthquake ravaged the Earth and the tower perplunketed and crumbled down to the level of the highest human skyscraper. The animals would never rule the Earth again, but they would not reform to their state of inferiority. Instead, they'd assume an equal status, compiling a peace gravitating, mutual coexistence. For, in the end, brute force and knowledge found a balance. The humans slowly began to bring back technologies upon their return from phoenix, but by looking at past mistakes, made greener choices and decisions.

Chapterette F Cleito's Reflections

Just as the humans of Earth learned they could not achieve an artificial Earth, and that they had to find a more balanced and thoughtful way of life in order to preserve their functioning Earth, I found I could not have an artificial love; Plato and I had grown apart and he had returned to his true love, Francesca.

I had learned that I am not always right, and that I cannot force everyone to see and believe the same things I do. Sometimes, there are people wiser than me. I also learned that our world does not have to be perfect, and that I am not. Through the lenses of the rose colored glasses were these things revealed to me. I learned to live the life that best fits me, for as long as that life respects all life and acknowledges the intrinsic value of all forms of life, what more can we do?

Everyone has different beliefs, so it is an impossible feat to even attempt to accumulate moral knowledge. What we can do is recognize the limits of human wisdom. There are so many views, beliefs, and ways, so much information, the best we can hope to achieve is balance and equality; a reverence for life and respect for the different ways people live it.

Chapterette G The Tale of A Man Named Bill

I died a few years ago and I recently came back to life. No, I did not die in the normal run of the mill way; it was a different sort of death. I cut myself off from friends, family, and only worked. Jobs can sustain life, but they cannot create it. I became very stressed out, broke out like a teenager, and work took over my being. I became a lawyer instead of a person, instead of Bill.

The experience of life is its quality. I thought about what I wanted to do instead of what I had done, where I wanted to go instead of where I'd been. I lived out the dreams of others (my father had wanted me to be a lawyer). I did not become myself, but who others wanted me to be. So, I was like a dream, a figment of the imagination; I wasn't real. Some quality.

The time I spend with others is routine, not experience. When I did engage in conversation, I had little to contribute as I had no experiences, no stories to tell; my life was as exciting as my activity of sitting at my desk all day, scouring over patents. I thought only to make others happy, not myself, took life for granted and ignored the little pleasures. I forgot to enjoy the moment or experience life, and rushed to get to a life I might never reach.

A person alone can not truly live, you need to be you and paint the aura of your being into the thoughts of others, leaving the aroma of your essence in a wafting air trail to change the lives of others; the world should know and feel that you exist, and this should bring from you smiles and laughter, at least occasionally. Hugs and high fives. A person who lives in a bubble and says not a thought from their heart and soul, can endeavor no such thing, can not prosper and live their life.

I had no feelings, no love, no friends. And, one day, it dawned on me that there'd always be more work getting in the way of my existence. And, what good was success if I had no one to share it with? I missed my sister's wedding, because I chose to work instead; because of this decision I became cut off from the only person in the world alive who loved me. This change made me smell the roses. See the beauty in the snow I hated shoveling from my car. I began to see that I never noticed things free and of nature, and they brought me greater joy than any paycheck or partnership ever could. Jobs don't define life. Living does.

Be happy with what you have where you have it, live in the here and now, not the future. Don't say, "I'll be happy when I move here or weigh this or get this; you'll never be happy this way. Just be grateful for the little things and what you have now. You

should still have goals, of course, but have faith that whatever path you end up on will be the right path for you. Appreciate every moment, and take “differences” as gifts.

We need to find an equilibrium and balance; we can't over depend on or overuse technology; we need to stop overpolluting and populating, stop overusing nature's resources, maybe not underuse either. Some technologies are good; it's all about balance and respect of diversity, leaving ways of life alone. Cultures die and with them a part of the Earth; we need a great reverence for nature.

We all need something to believe in, but we shouldn't force those beliefs on others. We don't need to change other people's way of life to live ours, we need to live our own lives with our own resources, wisely. Also, don't depend too much on other people or do too much for others. Think for yourself and let others do the same so that we each live our own life for ourselves.

Everybody has different wants and needs from life. And, different sorts of lives work for different people. Some people could be a lawyer and still live. But, I could not. I could not survive in this trade; for this way of living, I am less alive than if I were physically dead. I discovered you need to live life to make yourself happy, as long as you don't pressure people to get what you want or try to force others to change for you. If you don't take control of your life, someone or something will take control of it for you.

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I need to find a way to end my immortality. I longed for an answer. But there wasn't one. Perhaps, just maybe we are not intended to know everything. Maybe there is more than one right answer, more than one right way of doing things. Maybe I can only

guess, who knows. What's more, I learned that other people die and I can't bring them back. Nobody wants to live forever. The Earth CAN'T live forever. Even now it is dying, maybe the idea of a new world isn't such a bad idea. I guess for now I am just meant to live in the best way that makes me happy, while at the same time, embracing the rights and happiness of the Earth and it's inhabitants. I'll try to live my life in the best way I can guess is possible, but, maybe instead of worrying so much, I'll just live. Enjoy each moment. Especially those moments with those who you treasure.

The end

Yes, there is an information overload in the story. Too many characters; you probably wonder why some are even there. It's true. Some had no purpose or just got forgotten about. Some had no relevance to the story. So, I hope you read this novel the same way you would a webpage, navigate through the plot the same way you would the world wide web. I hope you skimmed and skipped parts and read what was relevant or important to you; you probably got pretty bored if you read all the repetitious parts, some passages said the same thing at length, maybe one had a more reliable source; I don't know. I hope you didn't try to make sense of everything; if you did you're probably pretty confused. There's so much information out there you can't expect to make sense of it all; you just got to take the messages and adjust them to work for you.

