

**Stalking Volume 2:
The Bridge of Reason
by
John Axelson**

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Smashwords Edition

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Chapter 1

The Elements of Delusion

The day after rising to the ceiling of my bedroom dawned warm and dry, and my mood was positively expectant as I drove to see Bonnie in West Vancouver.

Arriving a few minutes earlier than our agreed upon time, I sat in the upstairs living room until she finished putting on her morning face. Minutes later, she appeared from her bedroom at the far end of a hall, and I stood to meet her at the mid-house stairway. Before I had taken two steps, she cocked her head coyly fixing her gaze on the sofa behind me.

"Shit," I whispered under my breath; I returned to fluff the green accent pillow I had used to cushion my back.

Without further comment, as was her way after making a point, we left the house for our upscale bakery on Marine Drive. Seven minutes later, we entered the multi-terraced open room through wide wooden doors, where Brandi's bubbly greeting always entertained us.

We had toast and tea over an encompassing conversation about the similarities between my personal development lessons—the role-playing that had actually been real—and Carlos Castaneda's meticulously chronicled encounters with the sorcerer, don Juan Matus. Categorically, my faux apprenticeship had more in common with his than I realized, but at an introductory level primarily focused on revealing specific behavioral flaws. She said that there were many allegorical tales in don Juan's lessons that applied directly to me, as well, but these were for another time.

For now, I needed to appreciate that the world had confused me with social practices and political policies that did not stand up to logical scrutiny. This could not have happened, she said, had I been aware of my true essence of conscious energy, or spirit: mankind had lost touch with our source, thereby isolating us from knowledge otherwise available to us, and from which we would clearly see the ruse.

Over second cups of tea, she asked me to review the essence of the lessons she had subjected me to under false pretenses, but not as a test: I could better organize and integrate what she had told me into new intellectual relationships as we moved into my first formal day of lessons in clarity.

Under her casual guidance, this review included how she had surreptitiously presented me with an overview of reasoning versus logic, when she talked about her screenplay characters seeing their world in terms of the underlying nature of events. Many people could not help but argue on behalf of the reason for their actions, because self-interest blinded them to its logical essence. Individually, this focus on "self" explained why seeing events clearly was a difficult process to master, and it became almost impossible when our institutions used it to create a mass manipulation of our reasoning. Their goal was to create an apparently consistent, therefore equally reasonable confusion they can direct.

Because I was inside this manipulation, the first step she had taken to free me from its grasp was to make me aware of how I contributed to my confusion. In this way, I would set aside some of the influences of "self" and eventually create enough clarity to allow me to peek through the fog of my way of thinking. She said this was a breath-taking view from which nothing would ever be the same, because it created a pathway that would relentlessly usher me toward a massive assumption. She said I was almost there, but I needed to see how a continuity developed—any continuity would do, but she thought communications was my best bet.

In this regard, the heart of the matter was that while words reflect our thoughts, they are also events that program how we think, therefore what we will do. This happens at the level of unconscious assumptions, because we are unaware of the effects of maintaining the continuity of any perception. In fact, we are unaware that we even have continuities that feed a master view of such importance that to shatter it is to irrevocably alter one's life. Enigmatically, she said her ultimate goal was to shatter my master continuity, but only after she had taught me how to

assemble a new continuity, otherwise I would be an unreasonable man adrift in a world of reason. Equally puzzling, she said she wasn't really teaching me how to reassemble a new life; she was making me ready for Spirit to do this.

She then had me acknowledge that, after only a few lessons, I was seeing things more clearly than usual, and experiencing unexpected insights. She had followed this lesson by having me mimic a screenplay character's efforts to gather energy enough to focus outside of the perceptions the average person had available to them, but did not use. Gathering energy, she emphasized again, is based on not behaving poorly, because this always created circumstances I would later have to deal with.

As I practiced energy management, precise speech, and following through on what I said, I also began to recognize other people's incomplete and/or misleading ways. This was the point at which she had me purposefully focus on the words people used, and guided me to assess them for their underlying beliefs—the essence of their statements. This essence was evident after I discarded the manipulations and convolutions pandemic to common conversations. She called this rehearsing our self-image, attributed the idea don Juan, and said I'd see how this is a precise observation soon enough.

Back to the review, in a relatively short time I had come to see how others secretly designed their personal and professional deceits, just as I had failed to grasp how my incomplete thoughts led to incomplete sentences that gutted my implied commitments. That was my rule.

At this point, I told Bonnie that I was beginning to see the design of her teaching methods, and she asked me to explain what I meant. I said that through her preliminary procedures, and then our crisp exchanges, I had come to think of the word "assumptions" in three terms: our version of them had evolved to include experience-based, ever-broadening concepts that increasingly moved the depth of our conversations further away from anything I was used to.

She said this was an inevitable development, as I lessened the elements of confusion in my thinking, and the knowledge that lay ahead of me could only be grasped by way of larger assumptions.

Categorizing these levels of understanding, I said we form unconscious assumptions directly through experiences we never have to assess for validity, because they are ever-present for everyone: these are the root assumptions of reality, such as gravity. We also form opinion-based assumptions through the building of beliefs that evolve as circumstances warrant. This is our Reason, and sharing reasoned assumptions requires that people agree on basic interpretations of events in a moment that may change. For example, the government is doing a good job, but the Chicago Cubs baseball team sucks—or vice-versa.

Bonnie snickered at this, because she had lived in Chicago, and hearing about the Cubs was as unavoidable as sugar. She added that reason-based assumptions are riddled with errors we manipulate into a continuity of thought, to avoid disturbing our self-image; we would get to that.

A Stalker's assumption, I next said, is something else entirely. These were deliberately sought, and taught, piece by irrefutable piece, and dealt with precise knowledge based on understanding the essences of the events that constructed them. These essences never change—they are pure understandings that effortlessly attach to other essences, as one discovers them. As such, sharing a Stalker's assumption with an apprentice about any topic could replace a book of instructions with a simple glance—as seemed to be their design. As far as I could tell, these assumptions were entirely about behavior.

Bonnie added that while behavior dealt with what the average person deemed reasonable under a circumstance, the stalker's point of view was devoid of reason: it was ultimately about

energy. Seemingly pleased with my review, Bonnie said, "Now that everything is fresh and condensed, and you've begun to arrange what you know so that it's at your finger tips, I'm going..."

"I have?" I joked... kind of.

"Never forget this: we cannot help but order information, or our lives for that matter, to suit the way we think."

"Locked in," I said, pointing to my temple.

"In this phase of your training, I'm going to help you reorder how you think, to build toward a Stalker's assumption in the same way we expanded the word entitlement into an assumption—not head on, but through application. That's how we learn anything worthwhile. Do you agree?"

"I do."

Bonnie sipped the last of her tea, patted her lips with a paper napkin, and put it under her cup. While she was reaching for her purse, I said, "I've got it this time."

"Thanks." She sat upright, and cupped her hands on the table. "We'll begin building this assumption with a simple overview of your potential cycle of physical life development this time around, and of everyone's eventual journey."

I made myself comfortable.

"In our native state, we are conscious energy that chooses everything about our path of development, because free will reigns supreme. But we are not all-knowing, so we have to learn the energy-based rules of whatever version of reality we're in, from those who have been there before us. This applies whether we are in our energetic dream state, or in a physical reality. So far?"

"So good."

She nodded. "Everything in physical reality is a manifestation of energy vibrating at what we perceive to be physical matter: our literal translations of events are actually metaphors for what we have created, and the lessons we need to learn. Hold that thought, as well. Your entire Identity, with a capital 'I'," she continued, "has chosen a cycle of physically based lessons. In this particular incarnation, you are the student learning on Phillip's behalf, and yours: he has designed a lesson-quest to which you agreed, but you could not know what it is while you were in it. This is no different from anyone else who comes here. More over... and this is the crux of the matter, the energy-essence that is Phillip vibrates extremely fast, because he has attained a high level of knowledge. Physical reality vibrates very slowly, which means his knowledge, in its purest form, cannot manifest with you consciously. Instead, you possess the physical translations of his knowledge—their metaphors being your senses, like intuition and conscience, which attach you to his knowledge of what is possible, and how things should be done."

"Still with you... but slipping."

"The goal in everyone's development is to learn what they need to know about traveling in any reality: in your energetic state, this is to use pure logic to navigate through other's environments and experiences while recognizing the sacredness of all things. In our physical state, this translates into learning how to assume total responsibility for our acts. This assessment is based on our ability to reason, until we have gathered the energy to transcend the need for reason, and we enter the realm of logical assessment. It follows that the goal of physically based incarnations is to increase our speed, by gaining knowledge, thereby learning how to translate our reasoned physical experiences into knowledge that applies in our energetic existence. In other words, this process takes us from mankind's reasoning, to spirit's pure logic, after passing through a number of steps."

"Still hanging on."

"The first of these steps is to recognize reason as a tool that uses beliefs as a guide, but you can't fully employ this recognition until you have energetically *seen*, or assessed a circumstance from outside the grasp of reason. As we just talked about, think of this experience as blazing a path to clarity that you will never forget, so my goal is to lead you to having this experience because this point of clarity cannot be reasoned, nor reasonably explained."

"Why not?"

"It employs your inner senses. In fact, the less reason you have in play the better you will be able to utilize these senses. This means we first need to cleanse your reasoning of polluting influences, so that you can recognize the path to understanding the logic of energy—of impeccable acts. Let's get going," said, ending her introduction.

"Simple overview..." I muttered as we stood to leave.

Bonnie tittered until we reached the cash register, where she formally said, "I will list the elements of the assumption we're after through the two cognitions as best I can. These are the reasoning..."

"As best you can?" I said, handing the waitress a twenty-dollar bill.

"Again, some of the elements don't translate while others may only appear to have a relevant conversion. As I was saying, the two cognitions are the reasoning of the average person, and the logic of a Stalker. Don't be concerned about memorizing the elements."

"Things will fall into place?" I interjected.

"Things are already in place; they're just not here. They're over there," she said, pointing imprecisely toward Stanley Park, across the inlet. "You have to cross the bridge of reason to understand what is awaiting everyone who makes that trek."

"Uh huh," I said, as the puzzled cashier handed me a fiver, three one dollar coins, two quarters, and a nickel. I put a dollar in the tip jar.

"So what's the assumption specifically about?"

"That's for you to discover, like you did with the entitlement lesson," she said, taking two quick steps to hold the door open for me, "but nice try."

"Thanks," I mumbled, passing by to the outside. "Where we going now?"

"We go big road to many square huts," she deadpanned.

"Sorry, where *are* we going now?"

Coming along side me, she said, "A walk along the Denman Street shops, then into the park should work for us today. We'll see." Bonnie looped her arm through mine, looking up at the ragged edge of clouds creeping over the western horizon of Vancouver Island.

"Are you ready?" she said, looking my way.

"Go for it."

"All of this training is designed to make you ready to access true power. This power is knowledge of energy you cannot handle in any other way but impeccably, otherwise it might kill you. That wouldn't be helpful."

"I can see that."

"Handling power properly is not something that can be reasoned; it can only be understood after you understand who, what, and where you really are. Right now, you reason who you think you are, so we have to neuter your personality's influence and redefine yourself—what you are—according to energetic rules. Where you really are is what we will discuss today. Without these understandings, handling the knowledge of true power is akin to a child playing with matches in a dynamite factory." She took a deep breath.

"Just curious, why are you beginning with where I am?"

"You didn't notice that we began your formal lessons the moment you stood up from the couch—a lesson you reacted poorly to instead of embracing it as a monumental event."

"A monumental pillow?"

"Some people might think that the first formal lesson, on the first day of knowingly being taught Spirit's ways, was special."

"The lesson wasn't new." I shrugged. "I was pissed at myself because of that. Anyway," I said as the thought occurred to me, "yesterday you said my first lesson would be about how cheap I am?"

"I said it could be, and this is probably part of it: I don't get to choose what I teach—not the way you think I do. So you know," she exhaled, "I have to go through your lessons ahead of you, and one of my first was to assess the moment—every moment—to see what it tells me. This morning, your actions chose the lesson on knowing where you are."

"How do you figure that?"

"You were with a teacher of Universal knowledge, and you acted like you were in kindergarten." Squeezing my arm, she said, "Knowing where you also are entails understanding your overall conditioning to physical reality, and how you shaped your beliefs into a self-image from which you draw conclusions that you call your personality." She shifted her grip to my elbow as I mouthed, "Conditions, shape, conclude..." "yup—everything you said was in English." She looked at me quizzically.

"Your statement was complex," I said, confused that she didn't catch my meaning.

"Be that as it may, the essence of your comment was that you didn't grasp the relationship between handling power, and the elements you must understand so that it doesn't kill you. Instead of taking this seriously, you tried to disguise your ignorance in humor." She stopped short. "The essence of your obfuscation was an attempt to manipulate my view of your intelligence which, again, did not take into account where you really are; or who you really are, for that matter."

"With a teacher, and I'm a student, got it."

"This could be a very long day," she muttered. Then to me, "You must ask me questions as soon as they come to mind. I already know that you're a reasonable man," she said smiling.

"I suddenly have more questions," I said amiably, as Bonnie nudged us to one side to allow a mother with a double stroller room to pass by.

"Go ahead," she said, winking at the infants.

"You said, examine events through the reasoning of the average person, and through logic." We started walking again. "Are you saying reasoning isn't logical?"

She looked my way, staring vacantly.

"Really," I said, "One second the distinction is clear to me and the next... not so much."

"Reason is a tool through which you funnel beliefs that help you develop logic."

"Is logic the Stalker's cognition?"

"Logic is the beginning point for clearly accessing other senses—like *knowing*, *seeing*, and controlled dreaming." She paused, formulated an analogy, and said, "You were conformed to see this world as a solid, stable construction, when it is your perceptions that literally create this apparently seamless physical continuity from an intricate energy illusion. In the same way, you have shaped your beliefs into seamless assumptions from which you have drawn your conclusions about who you think you are. These conclusions are an intricate entanglement of

beliefs *about* you. They are not you; they represent how you feel about yourself, and how you want to be perceived by others.

"Is my personality an energetic flaw in a physical body?"

Shaking her head in mock frustration, Bonnie said, "You are ignorant; your beliefs are flawed, so acting them out with the best of intentions can wreak havoc." Seeing that I was having trouble making this distinction, she said, "Consciousness is not Spirit; it's a tool—a light that Spirit focuses in endless ways to experience and explore all that it can, because it can. In a similar way, your personality is a tool of self-exploration the elements of which you focus in particular ways to develop understandings that go beyond the need for those elements, and finally the tool itself."

"Elements such as being greedy, for example?"

"Yes—you focus on greed until it proves to be a bad idea, then the reasoning behind not being greedy becomes a logical conclusion. At this point, you've shed that aspect of your reason, and of your personality. Overall, your personality is that light of conscious awareness when you know yourself. Stalkers literally use their personality as a tool for more advanced development, no different than other's might use greed for the same purpose, or they can discard it entirely."

"Discard their personality?"

"Yes... we'll get to that."

"Uh huh, so I shape beliefs into conclusions about who I think I am?"

"Correct."

"What are they?"

"That's the point of stalking—to discover them."

"You can't just tell me—I mean do you know how Phillip put me together?"

"I already have told what you are like, but you had no reason to believe me. Now that spirit has introduced themselves directly to you, you do. Unfortunately it's still only a reason, so we have to make my claims undeniable convictions, and finally *knowing*."

"You've lost me."

"To have you understand the nature of the average person's confusion, and gain some semblance of clarity, we had to dissect the elements of confusion. Through practice, we separated you from them; practice is what made them undeniable and easily recognizable thereafter. In the same way, we have to dissect your self-image, and through practice render its elements moot. These elements are beliefs you hold about yourself, most of which are inaccurate... for now."

"So if I've got this right, my personality is a conclusion drawn from an entanglement of inaccurate beliefs?" Before she could reply, I said, "That explains why you're so big on teaching me essences."

"I am not teaching you essences; I am teaching you how to lose your reason, so that you can see them for yourself."

"Lose my mind is more like it."

"It amounts to the same thing," she said, as we reached the intersection of 14th Street and Bellevue. A red neon hand flashed that the traffic lights were about to change.

"For our purposes," she carried on, "the essential elements of all personalities are chosen before birth to suit particular challenges. We shape these proclivities through our interactions with the outside world, which we funnel through three mechanisms of self-perception; I literally mean your perception of self. We've talked about them."

"I remember that self-importance, self-indulgence, and self-absorption form our self-image, but I don't recall their characteristics."

"We'll cover those as they come up again. For now, know that they are the mechanisms through which you shape and express your views, and therefore from which you draw your conclusions about whom you think you are," she said as we began crossing the street. "Self-image is the singularly most formidable assumption of self-corroborating beliefs a human can have. Nevertheless, like all temporary beliefs, a self-image will eventually bring you to experiences that no longer bear out your views, and the image changes. Eventually, you don't need a self-image either—you will *know* yourself."

"An example of changing my image would be what?"

"You might be confronted with a dilemma you thought you were steadfast on, like the fight or flight response, and surprise yourself. Personal attributes need the same kind of dose of reality to be corroborated."

"Personal attributes such as?" I said, as Bonnie's nudge led us toward the park benches on the other side of the railway tracks, near the Ferry building.

"Such as you not realizing you are cheap, but we're taking care of that." She motioned the example aside. "The point is there comes a time in everyone's evolution when their beliefs have outlived their usefulness, as is their design. This is when a teacher..."

"Sorry... beliefs outlive their usefulness as what, again?" I said as we came to a bench. We sat down facing Burrard Inlet.

"Beliefs guide us toward knowledge through trial, error, and assessment; they have no substance of their own. They are directions to consider, and possibly explore by acting on them. Fighting for them is as stupid as defending north."

"Over what else?"

"Over any other idea; it's just a direction?" she said, raising her brow.

"Right, but we use magnetic north more."

"Do you want to kill me over it?"

It took me a moment to realize I had defended magnetic north, which created the turning point Bonnie wanted me to grasp: beliefs are only ideas until we bestow upon them the false substance of our self-image, then they become a cause as artificial as the self-image that created it.

"Point made," I said.

"Excellent—what is it?" she said, surprising me. Before I could respond, Bonnie said, "This isn't a test; it's to cement your gains, and add them to the assumption we're ultimately after."

Nodding, I said, "Beliefs guide us to and through our experiences so that we can examine, modify, discard, and essentially solidify convictions based on logic."

"Correct, then a teacher arrives to dismantle them all, beginning with your personality."

"Just so we're on the same page, essentially your lessons are about dismantling all of the elements; these are my beliefs, the assumptions and conclusions they formed, the personality I formed from these, and the mode by which I formed all of these things—reason?"

"You've got it."

"Leaving me with what?"

"Not with—without."

"Without what?"

"The continuity that makes you human... don't worry about it," she said, casually. "You'll understand when we get there."

Apparently editing her thoughts, she slowly said, "Dismantling our vision of ourselves is an excruciating process, but the reward is what don Juan called the single most important achievement in everyone's development." Looking into my eyes, she said, "It's called a Conditional Death. This is the moment in which you embrace, as your own knowledge, the concoction of beliefs and conditions upon which you constructed your personality, and dismiss them in their entirety. In that moment you are euphorically free—an essence upon which you have to replace the void with the disciplines that brought you to seeing what you are really like. Otherwise, the elastics of a lifetime of poor programming will draw you back to the person you once were. I think I mentioned this earlier."

"Is this what you called surrendering your self-image?"

"It is; I didn't want to use words that might scare you." She grinned.

"And losing the continuity that makes me human is calming?"

"I'm not perfect."

"What happens if I don't have one of those conditional things?"

"You need to stop focusing on the negative, as a reactive response to information that intimidates you," she said, shaking her head. "Without this event," she answered my question, "access to more advanced knowledge is blocked."

"Meaning I'm doomed to be stupid?"

"Meaning you're not responsible with what you think you know, so you're not ready for more," she grinned, "until you are."

"When would that be?"

"We demonstrated that moment first thing this morning: by condensing the elements of what you knew so far, you created an assumption that was more than the sum of its parts, because you're constructing the framework of essences."

"Like you did with the elements of entitlement?"

"Correct, and as you said essences easily and instantly attach to each other. So doing this now would make you ready to learn more of the unreasonable assumption we're after, because you are getting rid of reasoned information, and crushing the remainder into knowledge." She grinned. "Start with the idea that we are energy: if you think of the elements of your personality as a cone of focuses that are always interacting to appear to be consistent, it'll flow more easily."

And sure enough, it did. After a moment, I said, "From the tip of the cone; we are energy living by energetic rules. We condense this energy, and its rules, into physical translations. Moving down the cone, physical experience indoctrinates us to the affects of the first set of rules as assumptions we never have to consider. These include weight, distance, time, pain, and so on." I motioned the physical laws aside. "The second set of assumptions comes from interacting with people, and they infiltrate all of our personal experiences: we compartmentalize these experiences in the three cores of self-image, according to the personalities we have chosen. Collectively, the beliefs we form from embracing all of these assumptions design our experiences."

"You're almost there: what holds all of these influences together to make our perceptions seamless?"

"I know the answer, but I'm not sure I can explain it because your goal is to have me transcend it: reason is the glue."

"Is it fair to say that your problem is with defining reason?"

"It is, sorry."

"Reason," Bonnie said academically, "is typically thought to be the capacity to comprehend events in a rational way. However, rationality is dependent upon how we view our experiences within familiar environments and conditions, and we initially have no choice but to adopt certain values until experiences customize our view." She paused to allow me to bring our previous conversations to bear.

I grunt-nodded, ready for more.

She carried on: "The process of customization is multi-layered. As we've discussed, our first assumptions about physical reality, such as weight and distance, are interpretations of psychological and energetic conditions that exist in our natural state. These root assumptions are literally forced upon our form, causing us to perceive physical reality in the way that we do, while our interactions with others create social assumptions that conform our behavior to suit our culture. Taken together, these influences form a consensus about not just what we see, but all of our perceptions in and to the world at large. Stalkers call this level of perception our inventory, and it includes all of the average person's experiences. For practical purposes, if you can perceive it or conceive of it, it belongs to your inventory." She paused again.

I nodded to signal that I intellectually understood my inventory included everything real and imagined.

"In a nutshell, the world has been incessantly described to us until we are capable of perceiving it as it has been described, then we color it to suit our beliefs."

"That makes perfect sense."

"This process creates an internal dialogue that maintains the description. This dialogue includes the person you think you are standing in the time and place you think you exist, believing the things you were told to believe, when all of these ideas are borrowed beliefs, and shared translations of our underlying reality." Nodding to herself, she said, "You have agreed with the root assumptions of a physical experience, such as the three dimensions and gravity. If you had not, you couldn't function. You'd probably be dead. Correct?"

"Yes."

"You have also agreed with the consensus assumptions of proper conduct. If you had not, you'd be in prison."

"Correct."

"These conformations create the apparent continuity of our existence: our perceptions literally assemble the world we know, but we need a way to get from point A to point B safely. Otherwise, we would all stare at the four-way stop sign and do nothing. Do you see how that would be?"

"I do."

"To simplify this circumstance, all of the intricate influences of perception we have discussed create your personally reasoned arena of *should*. These same influences apply to the other three drivers, but we all interpret circumstances uniquely, so we need a basis of agreement upon which to interact with others in a coherent way. Reason is our operating system. It's the way we assess our experiences as we navigate through our days. That said, as you know from your clarity lessons there is only the assumption of continuity: the process of reasoning is full of personal gaffs and gaps, but our self-image fills them." She took a thoughtful breath.

"Still with you," I said.

"The point you're struggling with is that reason is a tool—a transitional stage in our development, the same way that learning the alphabet is the forerunner to communicating in sentences. The next stage for everyone is learning how to see through the beliefs and illusions

that reason uses, foremost of which is to lose self as the focal point through which we see the world—losing that filter is to lose reason is to gain logic."

She took a breath. "Again, everyone's developmental quest is to see past their literal physical perceptions, recognize the metaphors that physicality represents, and untangle their beliefs to break the trance of their conformations. Doing this reveals the illusions they held about the world, and their place in it. This is true knowledge, and as knowledge increases speed it brings one closer to the pure perceptions of Spirit."

"Got it."

"Not yet: we have to deal with the first barrier you have to learning an unreasonable assumption—doubt."

Chapter 2

Enemies of Learning

"I don't doubt you: I know Spirit exists, so it's only logical that I believe everything you—and they say."

"Doubt is reasoned, so it is a barrier to comprehending what we're after, which is setting you up to experience the assumption directly. Blind acceptance is also reasoned, so it would stand in the way as well, would it not?" She paused.

"Other than I believe you, sure." I said.

"The most prevalent flaw in the average person's reasoning process is a ditch where they park their second-hand convictions, and call them logical conclusions. It happens like this," she said, holding up her hand to forestall my question. "Like most people, you change your ways one severe event at a time, while your ego and intellect combine to convince you that the original experience will cause you to avoid it again. This makes you feel safe, and you quickly ignore the potential of similar things happening by way of not assessing the contributing elements, or by molding them into rules you are convinced is knowledge. You subsequently demonstrate that this is a lie by not incorporating that knowledge into your way of living: you pay it the lip service of a belief, and not act on the conviction that your life might depend on your knowledge some day. So while your out-of-body experience provided you with a single conviction, you have yet to develop a new way of thinking from it, because doubt and suspicion are so much a part of you."

"They were earned."

"But not fully learned; you adapted to higher levels of danger in Lebanon so that, during the nightly Beirut car bombings, you didn't even bother to drop to the floor. Correct?"

"Being on the floor wouldn't have changed much if a car flew through the wall."

"So you metaphorically stood on the outside of the branch to get a better view of someone cutting it off, instead of applying your new knowledge to all circumstances?" She gathered her breath. "A minute ago, you took an hours-old incident—proof of Spirit's existence—which created a true conviction from which you claimed you believe everything I say. The problem with your claim is that, not an hour ago, you demonstrated it's a lie." Chuckling at my constipated look, she said, "You couldn't graciously accept a simple lesson." Miming fluffing a small pillow, Bonnie whispered, "Shit," under her breath. "How shallow is that comment on the conviction that you believe everything I say?"

"I didn't call you a liar," I said petulantly.

"My point is that you have not integrated your knowledge into a conviction. If you had, you would have believed me when I said there are no small things in the Stalker's world, that nothing

comes from nothing, and to stop any poor practice is to not neglect the power you wield. You didn't appreciate these things, because you filtered your neglect through your self-image."

"The true circumstance being that I was with a teacher... I know that now."

"But you don't: the true circumstance was that this lesson is very difficult to master, that my constant reminders should cause you to focus on what you're really doing, and where you really are at all times. The true circumstance was that these lessons are designed to enhance your energy by always doing the proper thing. Getting pissed at yourself, or anyone, is a waste of time, which fails to take into account that you will die. It is also a waste of energy, which fails to take into account that you need all you can earn to endure the training leading up to your Conditional Death, without which you can't go further than the average man's ego allows."

"But I really do believe you," I said stoically.

"You just think you do."

"How is thinking I believe you and believing you not the same thing?" I said, perplexed.

Exhaling a substantial puff of patience through her nostrils, she said, "Your claim is missing a decisive element." She cleared her throat. "As an average person, true conviction arrives as a consequence of feeling that your life is at stake. Without this, you are indulging your reasoning on what you deem to be critical beliefs, like sincerely concluding that you believe everything I say. Your claim is an off-shoot of the main event, and it is certainly reasonable, but like most people you do nothing much with it but make promises to yourself." She shrugged. "The missing word in your conclusion is that you *should* believe everything I say, because it would be unreasonable not to. This makes your sincerity a second-hand conviction reasoned through the aspect of your self-image that deals with the appearance of rationality. But our goal is to get you to cross that line."

"What put my survival at stake about spirit's existence?"

"You were nearly scared to death on the way up to the ceiling. Speaking of which," she said, as if I might argue the point, "you had a dream that provided you with the conviction to keep going with me, when it was not reasonable to do so, before you had your out-of-body experience—the wraith?"

"Right."

"From a life threatening situation," she said, "you gained the conviction that you were safe. Because it was delivered in the dream state, it also took away your fear of the unknown in general, and the unknowable in particular—that being Spirit." Bonnie leaned forward, stood, and stepped toward home.

I did the same.

"Another example occurred," she said, taking my arm, "after the first channel from Kha-lib. You had to decide whether I was crazy or that, according to Kha-lib, the world was crazy and I was actually one of the saner people in it. Correct?"

"Uh huh," I said, though we'd never discussed this.

"To do this, you had to deal with the apparent incongruity your reason created between my intellect and my foolish beliefs, until you had your out-of-body experience." We stepped off the grass onto Argyle Street.

"What difference did that make?"

"It was a definitive event that made my sanity a reasonable conclusion, because you had a new framework within which to view an otherwise unreasonable event. However, you did nothing more with that knowledge than you did with your extreme combat experiences." She gestured laconically. "You proselytized about the rules to others—facts that begged you to make

the next logical leap and employ them all of the time. Claiming that you believe everything I say, based on one conviction, is indulging your reason in the same way because you're really not sure that you're not nuts."

"What? I know what happened, and I didn't make it up."

"But you have yet to make the next logical leap."

"Which is?"

"Which is that you don't understand this world; you literally left it behind. Your continuity has taken a huge blow, and you're pretending otherwise."

"I hadn't thought about that."

"Precisely my point," she said tapping her temple. "You can't help but challenge some of my assertions when your reason hasn't accepted that it is inadequate for dealing with the way things really are. It's defending familiar turf—like the importance of magnetic north, because it has run into the first natural enemy of learning, fear."

"Of what?"

"No quest is ever what we thought it would be, and as you have amply demonstrated most people do not know how to learn. They memorize events like statistics, without assessing the underlying natures or connecting acts that would reveal the continuity of events. Instead, they claim their poignant encounters generated an encompassing conviction, then they roost on the fact of its occurrence with no real understanding of their role in it; they are surprised when it happens again."

"You've made your point about fear, but where does doubt come into it?"

"You have reasoned your fear of learning life-changing knowledge into doubt, which is a more socially acceptable response for a man." She grinned like the Mona Lisa. "The fact is, you must have doubts because you still rely on reason, while at the same time you secretly know that you can't trust it. So I'm not accusing you of insincerity when you say you believe me; I'm explaining how your sincerity is as cleverly contrived through your self-image as is your selective vision of your wonderful self. This is the difference between believing me and thinking that you do," she said as we separated to walk around her car. "To the returning emissaries, this difference would get them killed. It follows that they have to transcend reason, by leaving all of their beliefs behind; they have to *know*. That's their rule."

Leaning forward onto the roof, I circled an unformed point: "Most doctors say that out-of-body events are not indicative of the existence of life after death; that would be the realm of God. They say the experience is a hallucination created in a particular part of the brain, usually under traumatic conditions or drugs. I think they can even map the event electronically," I added as if this mattered.

"And?" she said, leaning comfortably across her side of the roof.

"Some religious doctors also believe this." I paused to better formulate my question, as Bonnie's head-tilt indicated I should.

"If religion has them believe in God," I said, getting a handle on my circuitous thinking, "and science has them dismiss experiences that point to His existence, is science or religion the second-hand conviction?"

Bonnie opened her door and sat inside her car.

I did the same, and we buckled up.

Taking a considered breath, she said, "They have mapped the position where the brain *interprets* a conscious event in physical terms... an event of consciousness is a better way of saying it." She began fishing through her cloth carryall for her keys. "The doctors who dismiss

out-of-body experiences as hallucinations are embracing beliefs that were entrenched during the arduous training they use to define themselves. If they believe in God, a concept they also have not experienced—or recognized as such—they are reasoning away evidence they don't agree with."

"What about patriotism?"

"What about ducks?"

"Sorry, would it be right to say that patriotism is entrenched during our arduous conformation process, and soldiers use it to define themselves?"

"It would correct to say that."

"Are you implying that all beliefs, at best, are second-hand convictions?"

"If they're missing the defining element of properly assessed experience, yes."

"Patriots experience their country."

"They do not; they embrace the *idea* of their country—they experience their culture. In fact, we are our culture, and as such we are the caretakers of values that may or may not still be in development. We are not our country, and you can't otherwise kill ideas by killing the people who hold them." Bonnie looked over her shoulder. "It's ludicrous that with the simple waving of a flag people will kill for an idea."

"Like I defended magnetic north without thinking."

"And there you have it—without thinking."

I looked behind us to see what was holding us up: a straggly stream of walkers clad in yellow T-shirts were passing behind us. Finally, I said, "So it's through the gaps that this awareness of self inserts into our reasoning that a religious doctor can explain away my experience without disrupting his religious beliefs?"

"Correct, which is no different than a soldier slaughtering people without tainting his idea of his country, even altruistically enhancing it."

"Why doesn't it taint his culture?"

"It does, but he's like the doctor; he doesn't want to see it." She took a deep breath and said, "Reason allows us to form all manner of ridiculous conclusions. Logically, you either have a source of an infinitely diverse universe, inherently designed with a purpose for all things, and the free will to choose the direction of this purpose, or you have a universe formed without a reason. In that case, your existence is a brief and pointless enslavement to chance. Most people live in-between, latching on to the flavor of the month."

"Baffling," I said, absently.

"More baffling is that reasonable people should see the ludicrousness of believing that billions of the smallest of particles in the universe could randomly get together to create a single molecule, and agree on what it should be, let alone create all of this."

"What would a Stalker say about the existence of God?"

"The unfathomable order of life that Stalkers perceive renders a chance creation inconceivable, but they would not try to define that creative power other than labeling what they know about its affects. They don't believe in a greater power, they *know* it exists."

"What kind of perceptions?"

"They can *see* the lines of energetic vitality everywhere, and that it is under relentless pressure is proof of a driving force of intention in the Universe. They also know this force is neither detrimental nor benevolent by nature; it responds according the nature of the energy present, so they choose their daily interactions carefully. When they deem it appropriate, they

tread boldly into the face of the unknown, because they have no beliefs to skew their behavior. The rules of energy—of spirit's impeccability—guide their actions. That is their rule."

"If this force is neutral, are you saying that Stalkers think God, or Intent by any name, doesn't give a shit?"

"The opposite: the force can be used by anyone in any way they wish, as a perpetual propellant of free will. What greater gift of love could there be?"

"Love?"

"To a Stalker, all of this," she waved her arm as best she could from behind the wheel, "defines beauty beyond description, intelligence beyond imagination, and cooperation so complex as to stagger their thoughts. Stalkers are humbled by the privilege of experiencing its energy directly. They revere all of this, just as the forces that created it must have to allow unfettered development."

"We must look pretty stupid to them."

"They have been us, and they don't waste energy on judging anything—not even the slightest comment about another's appearance or behavior crosses their mind, let alone slips from their lips. If it is the choice of others to waste their energy, or dismiss the miraculous evidence they are privileged to witness because it doesn't suit what they think they know, that's the path they have chosen for now." She checked over her shoulder, turned around, and started the car.

Slowly backing out of her driveway—there were still some stragglers nearby—she said, "I need your reason to make a small leap from what you could not help but think, when I raised points in specific ways: I was not expressing my personal opinion, I was discovering where you stood."

"Such as?" I said.

"You think I've slammed Americans for being warlike." She straightened the wheel and shifted the car into forward gear.

"You did, and they are," I said reflexively.

Driving carefully along the narrow street, she said, "I presented you with an outline of how an industrious, generous, and kind people, have been led into blindly participating in the destruction of their society, and by interfering with many others along the way. Their system has been corrupt for years, and the population duped, but they will come to see how this happened."

"Why not pick on Canada? I mean, you know that I know we're no better; we're just more polite about it."

"I'm not picking on anyone: your views are impaired by almost caring about Canada."

"Almost?"

"You literally aren't capable of caring about much other than yourself right now, but we're changing that."

"I have nothing against Americans."

"You also have nothing heartfelt to say for them, but you're familiar with their society, so you can see the points I'll be making from a safer distance than if I tripped over a patriotic thread left in your Canadian identity. What I say about America can be applied to most countries, to some degree."

"So how will they correct their situation?"

"The same way you will recover your sanity." Without further explanation, she said, "You also believe that I slammed both you and the media you represented for being irresponsible, which they often are in a crucial way, but editorial staff don't realize what they are doing

anymore than you did. They're inside the manipulations they unwittingly perpetuate. So you know, I think a free press is the life-breath of developing and sustaining cultures properly: we'll probably get into that later this week."

"I think you lead me to believe otherwise," I said.

"You did that. I never lied to you."

"Maybe not directly." I couldn't recall. "But you didn't tell me the whole truth either."

Chuckling, she said, "I couldn't have done that if I wanted to. You have to discover the truth from your own vantage point."

"There's more than one true point of view?"

"Personal perception does not assemble facts; it creates the assumptions we use to explore ideas until the teacher arrives. And their job is to guide students through all of their assumptions to a place from which they can see the truth. This place is unique to everyone, but what they see is uncompromising."

We stopped in the right lane for a red light, and a biker on a chopped Harley pulled alongside; the dual explosions of patently tuned exhaust forestalled conversation.

When the light changed, and the biker had eased his machine through successive rhythms of pulsating blasts ahead of us, Bonnie said, "To recap, for our purposes there are three barriers to the average person achieving clarity of mind. One of them is failing to understand that our true essence is energy and all that this implies, another is our incessant social conditioning, and the third is our self-image."

"I'm not clear on the practicality of knowing we're energy."

"You have seen human bodies die, so you might believe in death as some kind of finality, instead of the transition point your out-of-body experience demonstrated. It follows that without having this experience you might not believe this earth is primarily a school for personal development. Now that you know you don't die, you can embrace the idea that as far as mankind is concerned all of this is first and foremost a school. And like all schools, its purpose is to be transcended, just as the body is a temporary means for part of your consciousness to learn in this arena. With that understanding comes acceptance of abilities formerly unused—the abilities of seers and mystics by any name. And with that acceptance comes individual practices that gain knowledge in more efficient ways, and knowledge is speed."

"With you all the way on that."

"Good, now condense the poor affects of your social conditioning."

"It created biases, often to the point of me being unable to determine right from wrong."

"And self-image?"

"It causes me to interpret events through the limited vision of my self-interests, which pretty much demands that the world evolve around me. Overall," I said as the thought came to me, "reason screws us from the get-go."

"Your statement," Bonnie said formally, "does not recognize these apparent barriers as the tools this school uses to teach us how to transcend the influences of all illusions. Maybe a better way of saying it is that they create the human experience we are here to master."

"You're trying to have me transcend being human?" I joked.

Seriously, Bonnie said, "I'm teaching you how to integrate your earth-bound energy with Spirit, which includes losing the human form—that's a topic for another time. Otherwise, dealing with these barriers requires only the willingness to explore them. It's a choice—inevitable, but still a choice." She quickly glanced my way. "Question?"

"A while ago you said your job was to convince me to leave my idea of self out of my thinking, right?"

"Correct," she said, grimacing at my grammar.

"I can see why that is, but wouldn't convincing me of anything inherently be second-hand?"

"You're talking about words; I'm talking about leading you to having experiences that preclude the idea of self. Then you will *know*, and when you do you'll recognize the danger of sharing space with those who claim to have convictions."

Bonnie became more visibly alert as we reached the ramp. "Review our Saturday classes in your mind, and include your view of the source of the channels; it colors what you think. Hopefully, you can leave some of your reason behind before whatever lesson they're setting us up for begins."

Three lanes of traffic merged into one like a bumper car rally, and we began crossing the Lion's Gate Bridge.

Chapter 3

Saturday's Principal Players

I began my internal review by listing the cast of characters' attributes, as I perceived them, as if I would recognize their influences on what they had told me...

Kha-li's first utterance to me through Bonnie was, "We have been awaiting you," then to quell my skepticism, and address my partially formed questions, he said that nothing was what I thought it to be. He soon explained that all entities had to adopt a personality to speak with mankind, because we would otherwise identify poorly with the source of information, and thereby lose much of its meaning. Otherwise, a personality, as humankind knows it, is an aggregate of preferred traits and unresolved issues in our personal development. Spirit has no such issues. Even their male and female representations were preferences chosen for a given circumstance: the female principle, Kha-li explained in simply terms, is the originator of ideas, while the male principle is the power behind their manifestation. Because all entities at his level had command over both principles of power and application, they were neither male nor female. They were whole.

Communication with us was also a much broader concept than we realized. Tone, inflection, choice of words, and pacing were overt influences, but they (Spirit) also spoke to levels of consciousness of which we were unaware. These included our personal store of evolutionary (silent) knowledge, and what he called our cellular indoctrination—the literal programming of knowledge into our cells. He said that, because individuals are unique in their perceptions and programming, how one person viewed Kha-li's "personality" would not necessarily be how another interpreted the same 'event' of speaking with him. He said that, at his core, *he* was an ongoing event.

On Saturdays, Bonnie presented the Kha-li persona like a great grandfather/C.E.O. of a cosmic conglomerate that was exploratory in nature. He also oversaw massive events, but was rarely seen other than by emissaries whose reverence for him was contextually apparent, as opposed to declared in the teaching stories Bonnie channeled from them.

From these tales, one could envision Kha-li as the soothing voice in a frightened infant's mind, and the country doctor who attended to their growing pains by showing them for what they were. He was also the consummate teacher who never shared an answer that a student could deduce or experience. Overall, he seemed to be a ghost-like purveyor of purpose, whose very

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