

Golden City
By Alan Holman

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*It brings to mind the realm we're on;
it's not the Universe you know.
Creation is an external reaction to the esoteric thoughts
and feelings from
within all ensouled beings.
All studies conclude:
Seize life!*

*Don't waste your brain so vast and deep,
you know not what you've got.
Have you examined what is within, and explored for yourself?
-- gave it a second thought?*

*Explore the depths of mine
I'll take you on a voyage great
past countrysides I see at night
in times I'm not awake.*

*You'll be the master of your life,
you'll overcome your strife,
when we take stands
by leaving lands
built by "God's" hands
- Poet*

BEFORE THE NOVEL

Reflections by Alan Holman

On a hot summer day, I sat in a corner of a room of the west-side Saskatoon house which brought the look and feel of poverty to a neighborhood of otherwise reasonably affluent households ... well, two other poor households were on either side of our house, but ours still stuck-out as the one where, on some Halloweens, some parents would walk their costumed kids right past us. We always had more than enough candy left over.

I was 19 years old in the summer of 2000; that was the summer when I begun a year-long journey of writing the first draft of this novel. But the version of Golden City which I ended up completing after a year of daily and nightly writing, was an utter piece of crap, utter shit.

This draft aims to be better.

I ended up deleting a lot of plot lines and characters that were in the first draft. But mostly, what was deleted from the first draft was a lot of shit and bad grammar.

If you end up not enjoying what you read in this draft, please be aware that I've written other things that are way better.

The word "brilliance" is often used to describe my writings – but mostly other stories. People don't often read this story ... or, they haven't ... until now! ... hopefully.

PROLOGUE

At age 19, in the year 2000, I stood in the hallway in the back of a coffee-shop wherein at one of the tables in the seating area of the coffee-shop, I had just enjoyed speed-drinking a six-shot espresso across a table from my old pal Jay Baron ... who was still a friend in those days. When I was 19, I figured that since Jay had written an approximation of me in his novel called *The Jackals*, that if I ever wrote a novel that is a fictional revivification of any time in my life, I am justified in writing the real names of the people who were my friends at that point in my life, and I totally have every right to imagine fictional interactions between myself and those individuals, and include those scenes in said novel(s).

A guy left the washroom, and I was right about to go into it when I noticed that the man's T-shirt had a picture of an Azimuthal Equidistant Projection Map on it. I had to ask the guy, "I'm sorry if this sounds insulting, but does your shirt – by any chance – indicate that you believe that the ..."

"... world is flat?" Said the individual, interrupting me.

I nodded.

"In fact, I do believe that the Earth is Flat," said the tall man. "Are you going to laugh at me?" he asked while looking down on me.

I shook my head, “Oh, hell no. I'm honored to meet someone like you. I have a story to share with you. Can you wait for me to use the washroom so I can tell it?”

“Sure,” said the guy.

I pointed at my friend Jay Baron, and said, “That's my friend Jay. Please sit with him, I'll tell this story to him too.”

“Only if it has to do with the Earth being flat,” the guy said.

“Yup, it does,” I nodded enthusiastically, and then I rushed into the washroom, did my business, washed my hands, dried them, and rejoined Jay and the older tall guy at the table; they were already in conversation.

Jay looked at me and said, “Alan, why did you send a strange guy who believes the Earth is flat to our table? We came here to discuss the creation of a new web-site called Flaming Horse Studios, not for interactions with loopy conspiracy theorists.”

The tall older guy laughed and said to Jay, “Your friend Alan said he has a story to tell both of us.”

“That I do,” I said, sitting down at the table.

“Okay,” Jay said.

I begun my story, saying: “Back in the year 1986, I was five, and it was the summer before I was going to enter Kindergarten, here in good old Saskatoon Saskatchewan, Canada.

My nights were spent on my bunk on a trundle bed. My older brother Darren was probably six at the time, and my younger sister Diane was probably four at the time; both had their own bunks on that trundle bed too. So before going to bed one night, I looked out the window, and I saw a glowing green guy run across the back-yard. The back door of the house happened to be in our bedroom, for some reason, so I put on my sweatpants and shoes, and I went out the door, and I soon caught up to the glowing green guy in our neighbor Gary's back yard. The glowing green guy noticed me, and he stopped in his tracks, and he looked down on me. Upon closer inspection, the guy had reptile like features, and double-layered eye-lids and those kind of slit eyes that humans just don't have. He said, with an intrigued look on his face, "Why aren't you scared of me?"

"Although I'm only five years old," I said, "My brother Darren has a friend who shows us movies with monsters like you all the time."

"Do you think I'm a monster?" asked the reptile man who had some kind of technologically advanced backpack on, with equipment kind of like what the Ghostbusters carry, but different, attached to it.

"Whether or not you're a monster depends on your behavior," I said honestly.

The lizard guy smiled at me, pointed at me, and said, "I've found the star."

I furrowed my eyebrows and said, “What?”

“You fit the profile. You're a five year old Alan Holman, aren't you?”

I took a step back, and my voice trembled a bit, when I asked, “How did you know my name?”

“As the story of School Day Blues goes,” the Reptilian said, “last year, when you were four, you believed what your brother Darren said, when he told you that you're on a globe.”

“What's School Day Blues?” I asked. “I think I'm going to like school, actually.”

“School Day Blues,” the Reptilian said, “Is the show that has starred you since your birth. You're a point of interest, so you're watched by cameras that exist in a metaphysical interspace, that record your experiences of this realm. By the time you're six, the theme song, and the rules you must follow, will have fully downloaded to your head.”

He turned around, walked without running, but he was three times as fast as the fastest runner in the world – yet he was walking – and very quickly he was quite far away.

I walked home, thinking, “I'm on a show ... so ... I'm a point of interest for an audience ... so ... I should figure out how shows are written in this world; there's probably similarities.”

When I got home, I opened the door, and I told my brother and sister barely any of that story. I wondered why Darren telling me about the globe was such an important part of

the story. But then, by age six, when the download was complete, I knew why ... but one of the rules was that I wasn't supposed to initiate the first conversation I ever have about it ... and then I meet this guy in a coffee-shop.”

“Interesting story,” the Flat Earther said. “But it's only a story. Yeah I believe that the Earth is Flat, but I do not believe in reptilians ... or that some random guy I met in a coffee-shop is the star of the show.”

The Flat Earther smirked.

Alan continued the story: “Believe it or not, I experienced another time-line where and when the Earth exploded, back in nineteen eighty-six.”

The Flat Earther eyed Alan suspiciously, and tried to bury himself deeper inside his upturned jacket collar.

Alan continued with, “Of course, I was only five years old back then. Wouldn't be here today if me and my brother and sister hadn't been flung into space and picked up by Gremlin Fleet's flagship.”

“That was lucky,” he said. “Now, when you were in space, did you see a sphere Earth or a flat Earth?”

Alan smiled an innocent/playful smile. “Of course, I saw a flat Earth, expansive, with more continents than what we're told. There was a local sun, and another local sun over the part with the other continents. Anyway, none of us had permission to time travel back then. We could have got into a shit-load of trouble you know, when the Gremlin Fleet ship

slipped back a couple of hours and destroyed the Bad Guy ship before it toasted our asses.”

“That’s very interesting,” the man said with a strained whisper.

Alan smiled, impressed. Alan pulled a rose out of his jacket pocket, and he placed it down on the table, and Alan said to the man: “Give this rose to the woman you love most. You’re ready for her.”

CHAPTER 1

Many many years before the delightfully intelligent sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* hit the airwaves, I was a fast runner.

By was, I mean am. Just kidding – I need exercise. But I am getting some Yoga lately; however, I don’t get as much exercise as I used to.

I’m twenty-eight now, but by the time I’m thirty, I perhaps want to be a vegetarian. And by “perhaps,” I mean only if I can get everything that’s essential; because otherwise eating meat is important. Yeah, meat’s acidic and the males in my family are prone to cancer which can’t survive in an alkaline (non-acidic) environment, but ... well, I don’t know. The idea of being a vegetarian bodybuilder is an idea ... just an idea.

As I write this, I’m a person who spends a lot of time on *Facebook*, a site which didn’t exist at the time when this novel takes place.

Anyway, I was a fast runner back in high school. I actually raced in the city finals for track and field one year.

It was weird to look into the bleachers and see a lot of people from my school, some of whom who were cheering my name. The thing that was weird about seeing so many people cheering my name was the fact that I was a punching bag throughout elementary school. I literally got beat up more than a thousand times in elementary school, and that's rounding down.

I think they hated me because I'm beautiful ... or because I'm smarter than them. Is it rude to say I'm smarter than them if I'm saying it in a novel that I'm writing? I mean, none of them ever wrote a novel ... that I know about. And authors are generally regarded as smart people, whether they deserve that accolade or not.

I'm smart at the things I know a lot about, and dumber than a sack of bricks at the things I don't know anything about – but aren't we all?

That previous sentence is a really good quote ... but I think a better way of saying it is this:

Around the time when I finished writing the first draft of this novel *Golden City*, I realized that there is an intellectual difference between people who've written a book and people who haven't, regardless of the subject matter of their material.

That intellectual difference is an expansion of awareness, a greater focus on the things which matter to you in your world.

But it puts a chasm between you and the people who haven't earned that expansion. It was then when I realized that that's why in certain subjects universities make their students write short books called their "thesis." The process of writing and editing their books puts their intellects literally a degree above people who haven't written and edited their own books on their subject matter.

The more books you write, the more your conscious awareness expands, regardless of the subject matter of your material.

After Golden City, I wrote Brian's Path and Banana Chan.

Giving verisimilitude to fictional worlds helps you to expand your awareness of what's possible in the real world. Keeping a story interesting requires elevation, and elevation requires expansion of the parameters of the story. And expansion of the parameters of the story requires expansion of the parameters of what you can conceive. And if you can conceive it, the blinders are off, because now you can perceive it too! So the constant study, on a wide variety of subjects, which is required in order to write a good fiction, also expands your awareness!

As the characters face the challenges that come along with learning more about their own world, the author learns more about his or her world, and the readers expand their own horizons as well.

Banana Chan and *Brian's Path* are serials of television scripts, and the books are compilations of those scripts. *Banana Chan* is a 36 episode long story, and *Brian's Path* is a 12 episode long story. While writing both of those serials at the same time, I was constantly researching many different topics. And most of the times (aside for when it conflicted with the main creative goals of the writing) when I'd learn something that contradicted a detail in a scene, I would edit that detail and make the appropriate adjustments to continuity throughout the whole series. Sometimes editing a scene resulted in needing to cut out hundreds of pages for continuity purposes. I did that.

Cutting out lots of pages always posed a challenge that was fun to tackle. I had to make the story make sense again. I had a better grasp on the skeletal structure of the story. I saw new and exciting things emerge.

But most importantly, I learned the value of being specific. Tangents can throw characters off of their paths, just like tangents can throw people off of their paths. To give a dramatic example: If you have goals in your life, and if you spend any time on anything that is contrary to your goals, you might not achieve your goals before you die. One tangent leads to another tangent leads to another tangent.

You realize that there are degrees of knowledge, degrees of wisdom, and degrees of intellect. And each degree is a plateau. And each plateau is a paradigm shift. And there are so many plateaus up above that plateau which you find yourself on

when you've written that first book, but university only brings its brightest students to the "first book plateau." And sadly, that first book is usually very similar to the first book of many other people who graduated from classes on the establishment's version of their subject matter. And then people settle with that degree/plateau, and spend time in jobs for the rest of their natural lives in which very few of them pursue higher plateaus, higher degrees.

Anyway, back to the story about running.

I was running in the city finals one time in high school, and I was enjoying the support of people from my school, some of which were the bullies back in elementary school, so that was nice; regardless, I disappointed my supporters. Although I was a talented runner, my shoe fell off and I stopped.

I was doing good in the race before my shoe fell off. I was doing so good that one could say I was doing prodigious. Yes, I like that word.

I was doing prodigious in that race. So prodigious in fact that I actually might have won that race if my shoe hadn't have flown off.

I didn't know that I was allowed to keep running shoeless; it just wasn't obvious to me at that moment. I thought that my shoe flying off disqualified me. So I stopped running, sat down, and watched the rest of the race from the track. My coach and supporters were disappointed, but I wasn't embarrassed.

I don't get embarrassed easily; if I did, I wouldn't be writing myself as the main character of this novel.

Also, the fact that I can run fast is of absolutely no importance to the story of this novel. It's just something I included to tell chicks I'm a prime physical specimen ... which I am, regardless of whether or not I tell them that or anything.

On the morning of January 2nd, 2000 – the first Sunday of the new millennium – I took a good long look at myself in the mirror.

I had an anti-climactic final night of 1999, and a pointless first day of 2000. Then I noticed something as I looked in the mirror: I had a unibrow. My eyebrow was way too thick, and it went all across the top of my face. So I got the shaver. I wanted to destroy the segment in the middle. But I went too far on one side. So when I tried to even it out, I went too far on the other side. So when I tried to even it out, I went too far on the other side, but by then I looked like a freak, and I was crying because it was irreversible. So I cut off my entire unibrow, thus destroying the framework of my face.

I had no fucking eyebrows.

Mr. Kammermeyer was a friend at the time. He was a school counselor. He told me that he'd only heard of one other guy who had removed his eyebrows. Except, that guy didn't shave them off; he plucked them out one-by-one, and used them to form letters on a table. He spelled out the word "Fuck" on a table, using his eyebrows to make the letters.

When Mr. Kammermeyer told me that story about the guy who plucked out his eyebrows and spelled the word “Fuck” on a table, it didn’t help. But when he told me the point of the story, it did help. The point of the story was that only one person in a billion does shit like that. The “fuck” guy ended up being some awesome businessman, a big success. Likewise, I was unique.

But anyway: I had no eyebrows.

sigh

But enough of this. Let’s talk about the underlying mythos behind the story of this novel.

There’s an elaborate mythos that provides backdrop for some of the events that will occur when the plot is in full swing.

Here, without further ado, is the mythos:

When God created creation, and there was nothing in it – just a quantum vacuum full of universal scalar waves, of electrostatic energy, with infinite creative potential, manifested as a Great White Void -- He needed to fill that void with something, so He made Gremlins. They were the first species in the entire universe.

God gave them the ability to create fiction which they’d fill their TV sets with.

So they’d watch TV, and they’d reproduce; it was Eden.

Gremlin Asteroid is where Eden was located. The first five Gremlins were named Gremlin. The Gremlin who is the current King of the Universe is the fifth of his species – they have very long life spans.

Three years into the existence of the universe, there were five thousand horny little Gremlins, and Smith was a common surname.

But originally, there were two pairs of Gremlins. There was the couple who gave birth to King of the Universe Gremlin, and the couple who they played Dungeons & Dragons with.

King of the Universe Gremlin – the fifth Gremlin – actually became the king on a day when he discovered a bloody knife in the kitchen, right next to his father's body. His mom entered, and did that whole crying spree that women tend to do, and little toddler Gremlin was like, "Uhh ... I just found this bloody knife here. I don't know where it came from."

So Gremlin was only three years old when he became King.

Although Gremlins were invented before eating was, they're able to eat anything, but originally Gremlins were discouraged from ingestion because their Asteroid was the only raw material in the universe. Then one day, a Gremlin named Gremlin (still a common name after the first five, but not mandatory), was released from a maximum security tickle pile because his discovery of digestion -- more specifically, his discovery that Gremlins poop gold -- more specifically, his

discovery that Gremlins poop more matter than they ate -- and that they can eat gold and poop more gold than they ate -- meant that their raw materials for building were no longer limited to the asteroid, and clippings of hair and nails.

By this time, according to the official story, the only contents of the universe were Gremlin Asteroid, and a Great White Void; discoverers of anything else were locked up for a very long time.

Gremlins can also breathe anything, and fly without wings. Wingless flight meant that their asteroid was rarely ever occupied because the Gremlins were playfully leaving their hair, nails, and poop, throughout the Great White Void.

Once upon a time, in the Great White Void, three year old King Gremlin found a time-bomb. He didn't know it was a time-bomb. He thought it had something to do with the TV, so he took it home, put it on top of his TV, and it exploded.

That Big Bang hurtled Gremlin Asteroid to a comfy corner of the universe it created -- a universe we call "the universe."

P.S. Half of the Gremlins are Bad Gremlins (It didn't start that way; that's just where the numbers settled.). King Gremlin's worst enemy is King Bad Gremlin.

"In his first two years of Grade School, Gremlin was a star athlete. These were times long ago, when the

Universe was new. His prowess on every field of athletic endeavor was envied by all. At age seven, Gremlin would single-handedly defeat squadrons of Bad Gremlins from rival Track and Feild teams. Needless to say, this youth's athletic endeavors, and feats of no mercy upon his school's sworn rivals -- the Bad Gremlins -- earned Gremlin many friends. Even when Gremlin was a child, he deserved truly his title King of the Universe. Could a little tyke handle that big responsibility?" – This Book, This Page.

At age twelve, Gremlin re-located his throne to the planet in the middle of the universe: Catland, a planet full of adorable little talking cats ... until representatives of all creatures in the universe formed a senate on Catland and filled the planet with large buildings full of embassies and government offices. They unanimously voted to rename the planet Gremlinland, but Gremlin liked cats, so he had a problem with that ... a problem he didn't know how to solve ... until the Bear Ambassador -- a cub named Peddy – boasted that his planet was bigger than Catland, and that his dad -- a bear named Panda -- won a Gold Medal in the universal Brickmason contest for filling Bearland with government buildings; thus, the Universal Senate relocated to a planet of talking bears who loved cuddling with their new room-mates. The fact that Peddy lied on all counts was moot because the Law of Attraction manifested a planetary

growth and a Gold Medal for Panda. Gremlinland was returned to the cats, and its name changed back to Catland. The government buildings were mostly renovated for other purposes, and Gremlin was so thankful to the cats for their patience that he got on the tube and asked politely that every Universal Citizen focus their positive vibes towards manifesting a Universal Law which causes Catland to always grow bigger than the biggest planet that any Universal Citizen discovers in the universe as the universe continues to expand, and that everything else in the universe shifts position to accommodate Catland's growth, whenever it grows. More people wanted it than didn't want it, so it manifested.

Bearland was re-named Gremlinland, and it was given to the Universal Senate under the condition that the senators and ambassadors become the bears' roommates, and cuddle with them.

King Gremlin has many sons, but Gremlin's heir -- the Chief Intelligence Officer of Gremlin Fleet, a mighty fleet of starships -- might never inherit the Kingdom of the Universe, because Gremlins never die of natural causes. Bad Gremlins are the only creatures who have ever killed any Gremlins, but the king is under high protection at war-time.

War-time is often ... but quick, because Gremlin's many armies win most battles against Bad Gremlin's armies. Gremlin's armies don't win all battles, but they've won all wars ... so far.

The Senate may be on Gremlinland, but Gremlin's official residence is still on Catland -- with his room-mate Peddy, and Peddy's wife Boobies.

Yes, Boobies is actually her name. And her sister's name is Tits. I internally debated about whether or not I should change their names for the sake of this book, but I ultimately decided that to change their names would betray the memory.

Anyway, Peddy Bear lived with his wife Boobies Bear, in a penthouse apartment, directly below a bin of Gold, on top of which exists Golden City.

Boobies' sister is Tits. Tits' husband is Panda, Peddy's father. The four bears met on a blind double-date, in 1969. Before that date, Peddy tried to fix his TV reception by putting two dishes together -- they were cups, and it didn't work. Frustrated, he used an EnlargeRay to make the dishes the circumference of thirty thousand galaxies. Despite the losses of many lives, his reception still wasn't fixed, partly because he never connected that antenna to his television.

Then, in a strange set of coincidences, Peddy invented a machine which can turn any object into a ghost just by shooting it, but it still didn't fix his reception, so he turned the dishes into ghosts ... then he had no idea where they went, so he gave up and subscribed to cable television.

Then, while walking with Boobies to buy their first television set, a strange comet passed through the ghosted

dishes, creating a time-warp to sixty-thousand years in the past...

You following any of this?

CHAPTER 2

JANUARY 3RD, 2000. 3:00 A.M.

When I began writing the first draft of this novel, I received verbal permission, from various individuals, to use their name and likeness in this book. Whether they remember or not, they did give me permission. Every single one of them gave me verbal permission – some didn't take me seriously and sometimes the question was randomly thrown into a conversation as if I wasn't serious about it, but regardless I do have permission to write about these people who were in my life at the time when this story occurred. Some of them, I don't. Whatever – fuck it. It's my life, so I'll write about the people I've met; if they don't like it, well, they probably won't find out anyway.

Plus, it's impossible for me to tell this story without using their names and likenesses. Well, it's not impossible. It's just that every time I experiment with changing a name, it just doesn't feel right in my heart. And would people buy a book that the author doesn't feel good about?

I am trying very hard to make sure that I don't offend anyone who is mentioned in this book. With that said, Jay Baron is one of those jerks who everyone loves partly because he's such a jerk.

When our story begins, Jay was, a thin sixteen year old blonde boy, with superior, model-like, facial bone-structure. He was dressed in all black, as he sat on his swivel chair, playing Joe Satriani riffs on his guitar, and staring at his computer screen. He had the look of a tortured artist.

He was also an actor in those days. We were in a few productions together, in our high school.

He was, and still is, one year younger than me. His birthday's the day before my sister Diane's birthday, and my friend Ryan's birthday ... the only Ryan I know who's a female ... is one day before Jay's birthday.

So anyway, Jay was, at the time, usually highly inspired musically. Computers can be used to synthesize orchestral musical instruments, and those orchestrations are saved as MIDI files, and Jay was a master MIDI composer. He was also addicted to playing his guitar. Jay must be a reincarnation of Mozart or Beethoven or Bach or Berlioz or Wagner, or one of

those dudes, because Jay was a compositional prodigy when he was a teenager. Jay, as a teenager, had composed some of the most brilliant pieces of symphonic music I've ever heard in my life. Jay's abilities easily compare to the greats, but his compositions were shared only with his friends and family because, to my knowledge, he was not related to any of the 13 Illuminati families.

And Jay was also a novelist.

Jay had a lot of talents. It's not unusual for a human to have a lot of talents. But Jay's high aptitude at each of his talents was unusual for a human ...

On that night, a mental block conspired to keep Jay uninspired to work on his pet-project: the new draft – the novel draft – of a story called *The Jackals*. *The Jackals* was a story which, as a final assignment in Mr. Phillips' Grade 10 English class the previous semester in E.D. Feehan Catholic High School, had earned for Jay high marks.

His mind had been wandering for at least an hour and a half. He was tired, almost ready to get back into the habit of sleeping at a reasonable hour, because the next semester of school was set to begin in just a few days.

But suddenly, a tall, broad-shouldered female Harlequin appeared before him; she was one of the characters from his

novel; she had long gold hair, and breasts any human male would die for. So anyway, the Harlequin looked at Jay and asked, in an alluring voice, "May I tempt you?"

"How?"

"Sell your soul."

"What for?"

"I can give you what you want."

"And what's that?" Jay asked, sardonically. I honestly don't even know what sardonically means, but I typed it because it seems like the right word to use here.

"The inspiration to finish your story."

"But I know the end."

"Exactly," she smiled. "You know how it ends, but you're not properly motivated to write everything which leads to that ending. I can give you all the inspiration you need to motivate you ... if you sell your soul."

Jay did not actually know how *The Jackals* would eventually end, so that's how he knew that the Harlequin was lying. So he said, "Be gone, spawn of..." But in mid-sentence, Jay awoke frightened, doused in a cold sweat, staring at his computer screen. Then an imaginary lance appeared in Jay's hand, prompting him to quit writing for now, and call it a night.

But the telephone rang.

He answered the phone quickly, and said, "Whoever's calling at three in the morning -- you're lucky you didn't wake up my mom or my sister."

The voice of his girlfriend Diane replied enthusiastically, "Jay, oops. Sorry about that, but did you see the Northern Lights?"

"I'm annoyed, Diane," Jay replied. "I'm going to bed."

"You said I could call late."

"Yeah, late; not early."

He hung up on her, and missed a skyful of amazing northern lights.

By the way, Diane's my sister. She had dated Jay for a short while that year. Then they became "just friends".

JANUARY TO MARCH, 2000.

It had taken two months for my eyebrows to return to a thickness that I was confident with. During January and February, I would sometimes wear a headband to school. And other times, I'd create badly-drawn eyebrows whenever I was lucky enough to find a drawing utensil that actually drew dark enough on human skin.

On Monday January 3rd, I visited my friend Jesse Doig shortly before midnight at CFCR, where I hung out with him during the early morning hours of Tuesday January 4th, as he hosted his comedy radio show.

I told Jesse that my eyebrows weren't Y2K compliant. That was all I needed to tell him; Jesse's cool. I believe I had a weird yellow and brown pattern above my eyes that night ... I

made it with markers or something. I remember the bus driver giving me a very odd look as I got on the bus to go downtown to hang out with Jesse that night.

During the time when I had no eyebrows, there were a lot of occasions when I would simply avoid looking at people's faces. My friend Kelly made me feel better when she paused a scene in *The Matrix* ... a scene for which Keanu Reeves obviously had to shave off his eyebrows. But the difference between Keanu Reeves shaving off his eyebrows for a scene in *The Matrix*, and me shaving off my eyebrows as a dumb and crazy mistake one morning was that Keanu Reeves did it for a cool movie, and he got paid millions of dollars. Know what I mean?

JUNE 2000.

I finished High School.

SEPTEMBER 3RD, 2000. 9:00 A.M

The blonde woman's face was flushed, her eyes were glazed-over. I was at home in her warm embrace. A gentle mist of perspiration -- hers and mine -- covered our entire bodies, as we trembled in ... lol, this part is probably making some of my friends uncomfortable, so I'll skip to the next part ...

SUDDENLY...

"AHHHHH!" Nineteen year-old Alan Holman (That's me!) screamed, jolting out of bed, because his mom removed the cardboard shade from over his bedroom window. Sudden sunlight burned his retinas.

"Time for church!" Alan's mother announced, "It's a special day!"

Angrily, Alan grit his teeth, and asked, "What's so special about it?"

"It's the twenty-second Sunday in ordinary time."

That reason wasn't special enough.

I stayed home.

(Oh, by the way, in this book, I veer whimsically between first-person, to second-person, or third-person, or whatever those perspectives are called. If you don't like that fact, then sell this book to someone who does.)

11:02 A.M.

In a shower, Alan stood, dripping -- skipping church ... because the Christian faith was edited together in 330AD, by a counsel of politicians.

"That woman from my dream," he thought, "She was from that video game!" And then he thought, "God she has nice tits."

OMG, let me tell you about her tits!

She had the perky kind that had obviously just sprouted a little while ago. The kind you notice in high school. Bountiful but not saggy AT ALL!

The phone rang.

switches perspectives

Alan turned off the shower, grabbed his clothes, and started to dress – even though he was dripping wet -- as he answered the phone.

He finished dressing, then bit his fingernails, while saying, "Hello?"

"Is Max there?" asked the stupid voice of an annoying brat named Matthew who later ended up borrowing two PlayStation video games from me, without my permission, because my brother Max took them to Matthew's house without asking me for my permission first. So anyway, Max left the games at Matthew's house, and Matthew broke both of them. One of them was a Digimon game that was on my to-do list; I still haven't even played it yet, but I was really looking forward to it a lot, so I was very disappointed when I learned that Matthew broke those CDs. Both those games aren't worth much now, but they cost me more than \$100 when I bought them. That's a lot of money, but my complaints fell on deaf ears, because Matthew's parents were going through a divorce, so therefore I was just some guy who was slighted by their son ... I was the least of their priorities. Regardless, it's still their

responsibility, and they still owe me either cash or replacements.

"No," Alan replied, "Max is at church."

"You're lying," the stupid kid replied.

BEEP.

"Hold on, stupid little kid," Alan said, "I've got a beep."

"Liar."

CLICK.

"Hello?" Alan asked.

"Hey Alan?" asked a middle-aged man's voice.

"Yup," Alan said. "That's me."

"Great," replied the man on the phone, "I'm from ISLAND INCORPORATED."

"U-huh?" Alan asked bored. "How did you ..."

Suddenly, Alan remembered something, got hyper, and interrupted himself with, "Oh, hey! Great to hear from you! So tell me -- how's Panda?"

"Well," the man replied, "Panda's fine, but he's off-topic."

"Good," Alan replied, "Does that mean you finished the project?"

"Sorta," the man replied. "The prototypes seem to work."

Surprised, Alan screamed, "Holy shit! Do you know what this means!?!"

"Yes," the man replied. "It means we can do that now."

"Prototype or not," Alan demanded, "Me wanty an Island Generator!"

"All in due time," the man replied. "First, you should be informed of some developments."

"What developments?"

"In addition to copying objects, our ISLAND GENERATORS also copy non-sentient life forms, such as bugs and small ..."

"Yeah," Alan interrupted, "Just give me one!!!"

"Just a sec," the man said. "Since the project was inspired by a science fiction story that you wrote when you were ten years old, we were wondering if we could get your permission to add a Doorway function to the machine."

"Doorway?" Alan replied, "Are those the things with the blank rooms?"

"Exactly," the man replied, "They'd be accessed with a button that says BLANK. Are you all right with us taking that liberty?"

"Sure, sure sure," Alan replied. "The more functionality, the better. You can even include a personalized greeting and instructional demo, for all I give a shit. Just get me the ISLAND GENERATOR!!!"

"Sure," the man replied. "But Alan, you must first understand that no one from allied fleets, including Gremlin Fleet, can know about this technology until the patent is ..."

"Just shut up," Alan interrupted, "And get me my toy!"

CLICK.

"Is Max there yet?" little Matthew's voice asked.

"NO!!!!!!!"

"Liar liar pants on fire."

BEEP.

CLICK.

"Hello? Alan here."

"Hey Alan!" said the happy voice of a super intelligent toddler.

"Hi Sunny!" said Alan. "What's up?"

"I'm depressed," replied Sunny, sounding almost like a cartoon character.

"Well," Alan replied, "Do this then: Go tell your GrandpaUncle Panda that Alan's putting you -- Sunny Bear -- in charge of ISLAND INCORPORATED."

"Okay," Sunny said. "Now I called because..."

Alan interrupted, "I'd usually listen to you, Sunny, but I'm happy, and I've gotta hang up before I do something stupid and irrational like putting a super-intelligent toddler like yourself in charge of ISLAND INCORPORATED."

CLICK.

SEPTEMBER 22ND, 2000. 9:32 P.M.

The phone rang as Alan entered the living-room.

"Hello?"

"Remember me?" asked a deep, friendly voice.

"Panda!" Alan shrieked. "Wow, it's been ages!"

"Have you forgotten about us?" Panda asked.

"No," Alan replied, "I consider returning every day, but I'm afraid of losing control, and wandering the universe without end -- without a home. The kind of nomad Gremlin described when he warned me to return with Earthbound intentions, or don't return at all."

Panda laughed. "That advice is out-dated. We have a school for that now."

"Huh?"

"Things have changed," Panda said. "Universal awareness is taught in a school."

"Progress?" Alan asked.

"Yeah, Panda laughed. "Progress."

Beep.

"Wait," Alan said. "I've got a call on the other line."

Click.

"Hello?" Alan asked.

"Why do I even bother?" Jay asked, sounding depressed. "THE JACKALS is a complete failure. I'm going to throw it in the trash."

"Jay," Alan said. "Don't throw it in the trash. It's good."

"No," Jay said. "It's not."

"THE JACKALS is your baby, your life's-work. It's your art!" Alan reasoned. "You're just going through a ... something. I suggest sleep. You'll think THE JACKALS is great in the morning."

"No," Jay said, "I won't. The entire manuscript so far sucks."

"This is so uncharacteristic of you, to call me like this, Jay" Alan said.

"I know," Jay said. "But you're a writer. Talk me out of throwing THE JACKALS away. The only thing which that manuscript has done: it's kept me from doing other things."

"Speaking of other things," Alan said, "I've got someone on the other line."

Click.

oo

Click.

"The other person hung up."

Then Jay said, "If you can prove to me, before Monday, that my manuscript is worth it, I won't throw it away."

Click.

Click.

"Hmm," Alan mused to himself, "THE JACKALS is pretty darn good. I think I feel a plan coming on." Alan farts.

"No, it was just a fart."

SEPTEMBER 23rd, 2000. 3:00 A.M.

Standing in a hallway, Alan set his bags before door number five ... an odd number for a penthouse suite.

A tear fell down his face. "Finally," he said, "I'm home."
Knock. Knock. Knock.

The door was opened by a panda bear named Panda Bear, who smiled warmly and said, "I've kept the place warm for you. Tits likes it nipply -- get it?"

"Yes," Alan replied with a smirk. "But while I'm here, it's plus twenty-four degrees Celsius during the day, and plus fourteen during the night. It is night. Get it?"

"Sure thing!"

By the way, a little note about Jay: he went bald in his early 20s. Scary, eh?

CHAPTER 3

I was five years old in 1986.

I'd play cars with my older brother Darren, and my little sister Diane, at the trundle bed ... until the earth exploded, and we were flung through space, and detected by Gremlinfleet's Flag Ship.

Their scientists calculated that we'd been flung faster than light speed. Organic bodies can't fly that fast in space without an almost gyroscopic rotation which we luckily ... uhh ... were doing.

So they beamed us into their starship, and because our speed made us travel back in time, they were able to intercept the warship before it destroyed Earth. So even though our trip to the starship was caused by the earth's destruction, we were still in space for some reason, even though we'd just saved the earth from its destruction. If this makes no sense, I basically explained how myself and my siblings inadvertently, and coincidentally, saved the Earth!

But in case you still don't follow, which is okay, here's a different explanation of that situation: Since the velocity at which myself and my siblings were flung through space, after Earth's explosion, was faster than light speed, we time-traveled (without a license) several minutes back in time. Then, we were picked up by a star-ship, which immediately located, and destroyed the weapon; thus saving the earth. They were very grateful to us because that weapon's next target would have been: A surprise attack on Star Base 1. That surprise attack was scheduled for the next week's assembly of the Universal Senate. But they probably would have died on the way there, though.

Anyway, after saving the earth, myself and my siblings, won an awesome prize in an awesome lottery... we won entire

buildings on Catland, and penthouse apartments in those buildings ... with cuddly animals as our room-mates!

But we figured our parents would worry, so we'd only return to Catland every night ... when our parents were already fast asleep!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23rd, 2000. 11:53 P.M.
THE BARON RESIDENCE.

Jay had no idea that Alan laid on Jay's roof, enjoyed the rainstorm, and waited for a half-hour to pass with no lights or sounds coming from inside the house. When time came to execute the task at hand, Alan leapt -- like a Jedi -- from the rooftop, and picked the backdoor's lock, nudged it open, crept into the house, removed his shoes (to track less mud), activated a flashlight, and began his search for Jay's manuscript THE JACKALS.

The house was dark, but Alan knew his way around.

A small canine fur-ball named Dude began humping Alan's leg, making excruciatingly high-pitched, throaty expressions of doggie-ecstasy, until Alan force-fed the mutt a cyanide pill that put Jay's dog to sleep ... without waking Jay up.

Killing a dog Jay loved as part of a plan to make Jay happy may seem stupid, but ... but ... well, you'll learn that he didn't actually kill an animal, but that will be explained later.

Yes, it looks like he killed a dog, but he wouldn't ... and besides, at least Alan was out and doing something.

Alan bumped into a wall in the kitchen, stopped, and listened as snores around him reassured him that the human inhabitants of the house -- Jay, Jay's mom, Jay's sister -- were all asleep.

To the right, he felt a refrigerator, and to the left was a bend -- a foyer. Bingo.

Alan opened the fridge, and a cupboard, got milk from the fridge, and a cup from the cupboard, then Alan treated himself to a cup of milk, finished it, put the cup in the sink, and the milk back into the fridge. Then, he stepped stealthily, to the refrigerator's left, into the dark foyer. Then he turned right, used the washroom, and although he'd usually flush, he didn't flush, because of the noise it'd make.

Then Alan saw Jay's computer in the room Alan liked to call Jay's studio.

Then Alan saw the manuscript; it was atop a big screen TV. But between Alan and the manuscript, one of Jay's friends -- a big, tough looking boy -- was sleeping, snoring on a fold-out bed.

So Alan used his Jedi powers to grab the manuscript from across the room. And once the object of his objective was firmly in his grip, Alan tripped on an empty pop-can, and fell onto the fold-out bed, where he laid silently -- silently like a ninja -- beside the tough looking boy.

"What the fuck!" the tough looking boy sat up.

In the pitch dark room, Alan -- wearing dark clothes, still wet from the rain -- stuck to the floor and crawled, as quickly, and silently, into the foyer, then into the kitchen, put his shoes on, then ran out the door, and into the night -- with the manuscript!

Jay's big, tough-looking friend, activated a light, noticed the wet spot, and got paranoid.

MEANWHILE...

Panda's wife Tits greeted Panda, with a wild mating ritual, when he returned to Penthouse Five, from the grocery store. When they finally emptied the grocery bags, Panda realized, to his amusement, that the length and heat of the mating ritual had spoiled most of the groceries.

Then he looked at a tea-bag -- and at the shopping list -- and Panda realized that Alan's always preferred Distorted Brand Reali-Tea.

CHAPTER 4

Catland is the biggest planet in the Universe -- the size of several galaxies -- the exact same size as Gremlin Land, and it looks like a happy-face!

Catland has many Suns which orbit it. From the surface, it looks like just one Sun. One Catland day is equal to twenty-eight Earth days. One earth year is merely a Catland fortnight.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23rd, 2000. 5:46 P.M.
THE BARON RESIDENCE.

The weather outside was so chilly that Alan -- wearing a heavy backpack -- had two ears which began aching during the bike ride to Jay's place, and now that he stood, knocking on the backdoor, he could see his own frosty breath as it escaped from his mouth and nose.

The welcome sound of Jay coming up the stairs assured Alan that he'd soon be in the warm house.

The door opened, and standing in the doorway was Jay saying, "Hey! Alan! What brings you here?"

"I just happened to be near by," Alan said, knowing perfectly well that Jay could see through that lie; however, Jay had no idea how much Alan had pre-planned this visit. "Can I come in for a while? It's kind of chilly."

"Sure," Jay said. "I'll make some coffee."

"Thanks."

They walked down the stairs, and sat in the kitchen.

"So," Jay said. "What's up?"

"Well. I know I'm an uninvited guest, so I'll make my visit as quick as possible. There's a subject which I wish to discuss with you."

"Okay, fine," Jay said. "But make it quick, because I've got a friend from Dalmeny coming here soon, and we've got some plans. Evil plans for enslaving mankind."

"A tough looking, tall dude?" Alan asked.

"Yeah!" Jay said, amazed. "How'd you know?"

"Oh. I didn't know. It was just a good guess." Alan looked around the room. "Um, can I use your washroom?"

"Sure," Jay said. "And I'll put the coffee on."

Alan stood up, put his jacket and backpack down in the kitchen, then entered the foyer.

CLUMP.

"That backpack sounds heavy," Jay observed. "What you got in there?"

"A Sony Playstation," Alan lied. "Probably broke. I prefer Dreamcast anyway, even over the new PS2." Alan blanketed his leather jacket over the backpack, and entered the washroom, closed the door, pissed, flushed, washed his hands, then returned to the kitchen.

"Alan!" Jay said. "I'm actually glad you showed up ... uninvited as you are."

"Huh?" Alan asked, clearly confused.

"We're out of coffee!" Jay said. "My tall, tough looking friend, loves coffee! If you wouldn't have shown up, I wouldn't

have remembered that I always make coffee when you show up, and I wouldn't have known that we were out of coffee ... until after he shows up, which would be too late, because I'd never trust that guy alone in here. So stay here, please, watch the house because the lock on the door is broken, and play some video games, while I get some coffee from the corner store. Then we'll talk about whatever you came here to talk about, okay?"

"Perfect."

Alan went to the TV as Jay put on his shoes, walked up the stairs, and left.

As soon as the backdoor closed, Alan returned to the kitchen, took his jacket off of his bag, and removed a small dog-cage from the bag. Inside the cage was a carbon-copy of Jay's manuscript called THE JACKALS. He carried the manuscript to the TV where the original copy was still there awaiting him. He calmly slid the original copy into the nether-realm between the TV and the wall, and put the carbon copy of THE JACKALS into the exact position where the original copy had, just seconds ago, been festering.

Half the job was done.

The second part of his plan: he snuck into Jay's room, looked around, snuck into the laundry room, looked around, snuck into the room he calls "The Studio." Bingo! Dude was fast-asleep, beside the computer monitor, with his curled neck nuzzled against a scanner.

Alan put the real, sleeping Dude, into the cage with a thump, pushed a button, and a robot replica of Dude leapt -- full of vitality -- into the house.

Then Alan taped a "TTYL" note onto the backdoor, and escaped.

MEANWHILE...

Agnus, Alan's neighbor, found dog shit in her mailbox. There's a funny story behind that; it's not in this novel, though. But let's just say the bitch had it comin'.

MEANWHILE...

Jay's computer crashed.

MEANWHILE...

"Hmm," Panda mused over an item in a grocery bag. "The package says BLOWEYS: THE UNDERWEAR THAT DOESN'T EXPLODE."

"What else was on Alan's shopping list?" Asked Tits, Panda's wife.

"Good question," Panda replied. "Oh! He bought BOMB MILK!"

Panda drank some Bomb Milk, and exploded. But he's like a cartoon character, so he's okay!

... oh, and Bomb Milk is made by ACME!

CHAPTER 5

Catland remains an equal size to Gremlinland -- the largest planet in the known Universe -- by growing whenever a Universal Citizen discovers a larger planet. Gremlinland-Last, by the way, is the smallest planet in the known universe. As the universe expands, Universal Citizens discover new, larger Gremlinlands and new, smaller Gremlinland-Lasts -- then the old ones are re-named. And if the Universe were a straight line, Gremlinland -- the biggest planet to the Universal North -- would be in front, and Gremlinland Last -- the smallest planet to the Universal South -- would be in the back. But the Universe isn't a line ... so never-mind.

MONDAY. SEPTEMBER, 25th, 2000. 3:50 P.M.
THE BARON RESIDENCE.

From the stairs, Jay led Alan into the kitchen, where he showed Alan a broken robot-replicate of Dude. "Look at this," Jay said. "It's a robot! Dude was replaced with a robot that night when I thought he died!"

"You're kidding?" Alan acted.

"And these circuit boards are ... mushy," Jay said. "I don't understand this technology; it must be Japanese."

"But," Alan said. "I saw Dude playing around in your back-yard just now."

"Huh!?!!" Jay raced up the stairs, opened the back door, and saw the real Dude playing near Alan's bike, and exclaimed joyfully: "Dude's alive!"

MEANWHILE...

Panda entered Penthouse Five, with a box of groceries. He freed the groceries...
"Yay!" the groceries rejoiced, frolicking.
Soon, they were cooked.

JANUARY 14th, 2001. NEW YORK CITY.
AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE.

In an alternate universe, Alan throws a copy of the New York Times, into a garbage can, upon realizing that THE JACKALS is not good enough to make it onto the best-seller list. So -- with piece of mind -- he enters a limo, and says: "Panda. Return me to our home-universe."

CHAPTER 6

I am one of few Universal Citizens who are allowed to time-travel. As a time-traveler, I must take many precautions, such as I must be where I am not.

But more about me...

TUESDAY, OCTOBER THIRD, 2000. 2:00 P.M.

The top of Alan's floppy leather jacket overlapped the top of his khakis which overlapped the top of his shoes which overlapped the top of dog-shit that he'd overlapped the top of earlier, and was overlapping the top of it atop everything it overlapped everywhere.

Alan gently overlapped the top of the doorbell with the top of his finger.

A young skinny guy with very short blonde hair -- also known as Jay -- opened the door swiftly and aimed his wide-eyed coffee-hoarder gaze at Alan.

"Jay," Alan said, "Been on the Joe?"

"How'd you know?" Jay asked behind a fast, racing mind. "And why are you here, Alan? It's two, on a school day."

"Well, why are you here, Jay?"

"I live here. Why are you here?"

"Because you live here. I'd never end up here if I didn't have a friend who lived here. Anyway Jay, there was mail in

your box, so here it is." Alan handed envelopes to Jay, and asked, "May I come in?"

"Sure," Jay said. "But if you talk slow, I'll kill you."

In a second, Jay was down the steps, at a table, having just read all the mail; that's how fast he was.

Alan -- still walking down the stairs -- said: "For someone who called in sick, you sure don't look it. Why didn't you go to Heinze today?"

Completely ignoring Alan's question, Jay said, "Yay! The security pics are here!"

Startled, Alan sat down and said, "What?"

"Every time the motion sensor activates, a camera snaps a picture of the yard. So we get the pictures mailed to us, with time codes." Then, with accusing eyes, Jay asked, "Alan. Why are there pictures of you here on that night when my dog was replaced?"

Alan felt trapped. He looked up, then to the left, then he looked at Jay, and lied an obvious excuse: "Well, It's obviously a fake me."

Jay's immediate, angry reaction was to press his thumbs, extra hard against Alan's throat, while screaming, "Alan! You planted that dog here!"

If Alan could speak, he'd lie about not knowing what Jay was talking about. But getting choked, Alan couldn't speak.

And then, Jay uncharacteristically punched Alan in the gut, and Alan fell to the floor -- winded -- but gaspingly said: "I

BLANK button a second time. A circle of pure white light opened up in the wall. The circle was deep, three dimensional. Alan said, "Step into the circle."

Jay fell over.

"Or fall over."

OCTOBER 4th, 2000. 1:00 A.M.

In a school's hallway, Alan and Panda threw a chair -- upon which Jay was tied and gagged -- into a door marked 'First Day'.

Jay drew comfort from the fact that each of his classmates were also tied to chairs and gagged.

"Sentient brains come with Universal compatibility, connection to the energy which connects everyone and everything in the universe; basically, a UniNet connection," announced a talking female bear who sat at the desk in the front, "yet, on a lot of planets, cold-blooded species devise schemes to sever the connection for the warm-blooded species, thus I have the sometimes overbearing task of teaching you guys things to which most people in the universe are adept because indoctrination starts at birth, and sometimes pre-birth. "

TWENTY NINE MINUTES LATER ...

The students were no longer bound and gagged. The fuzzy teacher addressed Jay, "Jay. Have you been paying attention?"

"Yes," said the wide-eyed -- like a cat's first time in a car -- and drowsy -- like a cat who hadn't slept in a long time -- student, named Jay Baron, then he continued: "Yes, Mrs. Boobies."

"Then answer the question."

"Okay," Jay said, then recited: "Humans are borderline, just recently met the level of victimization required in order to be a high enough priority for Gremlin Fleet to dispatch ships to earth to stop the plot of the cold-blooded ones! But still, first official contact with humanity will not be made until the cold-blooded ones show that they intend to take their plot beyond a certain level. "

His first time out of the galaxy; and he was in a classroom ...

...of all the possible places where he could have ended up on a day when he called in sick.

MEANWHILE ...

OCTOBER 4TH, 2000. 1:29 A.M.

Eighteen year old Diane Holman -- who was Jay's girlfriend at the time, because this was before Jay met Katie

(who I don't think is mentioned anywhere in this story) -- returned to her penthouse apartment on Catland.

Penthouse Three.

When her lazy dog Cooler -- who was watching TV -- noticed Diane's entrance, he asked, "Get me a beer, hey?"

Diane shook her head, and smiled, "Good to see you too."

MEANWHILE ...

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

In Penthouse Five, Alan sipped insani-tea, arranged apples 'according to plan', and hallucinated colorful music, "My bear talks to me. Tells me what it see. What it want to be. "

Then, he removed a shoe, took another sip, and as the insani-tea kicked-in, his rants became less lucid. " She makin' me cry. She not tellin' me why. So I climb a rope-ladder to a star, and drill black holes in the Universe ... in my mind. Be kind."

After a short four hour pause of sitting, staring blankly at a wall, he sang: "Little anxious one, I've told you I love you/
Just to see a smile is thanks enough from you/ I'm wondering
what went wrong/ Why you turned your back to a friend / Just
to see you smile - at me/ Just to hear you laugh - for me/ This
is all I ask - from you/ Just to know you."

And tears formed under his eyelids.

Then he sang, "I feel had / I can't deny my feelings /
Just to get a hug - from you."

Then he cried for six hours, only getting up for
bathroom breaks, cups of coffee, and rubbing dark oil all over
his glistening, naked body, to swim in jelly.

Then he sang: "Little spoiled one."

Then he bathed in blue paint.

CHAPTER 7

OCTOBER 4TH, 2000. 2:00 A.M.

The night was crisp, like the dialogue in *Firefly*.

The dialogue in this novel could use some work – for example:

"I have good news -- that Spadjnon Razutek has been invented -- and bad news -- that Earth'll be destroyed on November twenty-fifth," Sunny's voice said to Alan, over the phone. "Which do you want first?"

"I'll take the good news first," was Alan's informed choice.

"Well," Sunny said, "Your idea about food with adjustable taste..."

"Yeah," Alan interrupted. "Spadjnon Razutek. Get me some."

(Yes, I know that there's a food with adjustable taste in *Harry Potter*, but I had the idea for Spadjnon Razutek way before Miss Rowling published her stuff. I can't prove it, but fuck you. And speaking of Miss Rowling: I envy her success. Lucky woman.)

"Sure thing, boss," replied Sunny.

"So," Alan asked, "what's the bad news?"

"Well," Sunny said. "My brother -- the boy Peddy named Me -- has found a vortex within the core of Planet Me-25553. It accidentally traveled him to a time where the ..."

"It time-traveled me?"

"Yeah, him."

"Oh...kay."

Sunny continued. "He saw the destruction of the earth on November 25th. It'll be hit by another weapons' test of yet another Bad-Gremlin weapon. But this time, the weapon is more powerful than anything before it. The side of good might not win a new war, if we're up against this weapon. So I've formed a strategy, which was okayed by Gremlin, and the ..."

"What's the strategy?" Alan asked, curious. "Can I do it? Me, and my siblings, saved the Universe last time, and I wanna continue our winning streak."

"Sure," Sunny said. "I don't wanna do it anyway, because it's dangerous."

"Well," Alan said, lying, "Danger is my middle name."

"No," Sunny said. "Your middle name is Stanley."

"Whatever," Alan said. "Tell me the strategy to save the Earth."

Sunny took a deep breath, then replied, "With a large version of your machine -- the so-called Island Generator -- we can copy the entire Universe, and trap the Bad Guys in the copy, thereby saving the universe from them forever!"

"Interesting," Alan said while yawning. "So you'll photocopy the universe?"

"Yup."

"Hey," Alan said, "Did you tape the series finale of ROSEANNE?"

"You're weird," Sunny said, hanging up.

"Bastard called me weird."

OCTOBER 4th, 2000. 3:12 A.M.

The planet Boushkay has large parking lots. Jay's jaw was dropped, as he gazed upon the splendor of the Universal Awareness School's parking lot. The parking lot was more interesting than the two moons which shone their light upon the parking lot.

Jay watched as a Motor Home literally appeared in the parking lot; it was huge.

Mrs. Boobies entered the Motor Home, then it disappeared.

Alan appeared in the driver's seat of a red convertible which also appeared.

Jay leapt into the car.

"So?" Alan asked. "Like first class?"

"Hell yeah," Jay said, as their location shifted to the nearest rubber-like space-highway.

Well, the G-highways looked like ... well, they didn't exactly look like rubber at all ... well, sort of ...

Technically speaking, the Gremlin Highways are pairs of plasma filaments that are used as carrier waves for people and vehicles and ... roadside stores.

OKAY, this is tough to explain.

Plasma is super-charged matter. It holds galaxies together and exists between galaxies. There are as many varieties of plasma as there are varieties of elements. Each element is a form of energy in its own right ... some way more than others. Some elements are used to conduct other elements ...

... fuck it. I'm just not qualified to explain the G-Highways. The G-Highways, or Gremlin Highways, are ... simply put ... highways in space.

I'll call them space-highways.

Jay and Alan were in a convertible, that Alan was driving, on a space-highway.

Like an excited child, Jay immediately ranted about his first day of school ... much to Alan's annoyance.

Jay announced, "There's synthetically inhabited planets, AND naturally inhabited planets!!"

"Yup." Alan kept driving.

"And holy shit!" Jay said, "The co-ordinate system!"

"Yup." Alan wanted to ditch Jay somewhere ... but where? His right hand twitched toward the CURRENT-button on the Island-brand Generator in his pocket.

Jay said, "I don't remember the formula exactly, but they can calculate co-ordinates for any point in the universe!!! And ships can get to any place, instantaneously, by using that formula in their engines!!! It's so cool!"

"Yeah." Alan said, bored ... wanting a beer ... alone.

Jay looked at Alan, and asked, "I'm curious. How long did you know about all this?"

Alan stopped the car at a hotel, and said, "I'm told that school gave you a pass for hotels. Well, here you are. You'll find this hotel to your liking. I'll pick you up for breakfast ... or I might not."

CHAPTER 8

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4th, 2000. 3:39 P.M.

At the exact moment when no one was watching, Alan appeared in Pierre Radisson Park.

"My home planet. Good old 7 Serpent Rope Avenue. Earth," said Alan. "Good old +51.51 degrees latitude, and +106.53 degrees longitude. Good old Saskatoon Saskatchewan, Canada. Good old Pierre Radisson Park."

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5th, 2000. 1:01 A.M.

"And, class," said Mrs. Boobies, "I'll leave it up to you to decide the destination of our field trip. Ask a burning question."

Jay had a very important question, so he put up his hand. Meanwhile, everyone else was writing questions on pieces of paper, lighting those pieces of paper on fire, and putting those fiery papers onto a pile of fiery papers on the teacher's desk.

Alan entered the room, and said, "Jay. I don't want you to be one of those people who gets so overwhelmed by the universe that he forgets about the important things in life -- like home, friends, family, love, stuff like that. I wouldn't let a friend be one of those assholes... like me."

"What are you talking about, Al?"

"You're coming home."

"What!? No! Wait!"

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3rd, 2000. 3:39 P.M.

Jay and Alan appeared in the middle of Pierre Radisson Park.

"We're Tuesday," said Alan. "After I put you in the thing."

"What was that thing?" Jay asked. "It was a scary white ... space."

Alan replied, "Well, never-mind. Just remember to not tell anyone that we time-traveled."

"Huh?" Jay asked. "I don't get it."

"Time travel, and the thing I put you in, aren't things which common universal citizens utilize on a day to day basis, and there's perfectly reasonable explanations for that. Just... I shouldn't be telling you this, but you're a friend, and I got you caught up in this. And since I happened to have time traveled with you, because it's one of the privileges which I have at my disposal, and since I happened to have put you through the Island Generator, since that's another thing at my disposal, I guess I'll have to explain them to you, but not yet."

"Island Generator?" Jay asked. "Is that what that white space was called? Why would it be called that?"

"Do you think the portal looks like an almond shape? "

Alan replied.

"What?"

"The important thing is that you go home now. I'll take you back to the Universe later. Enjoy earth while it's still here."

"WHILE IT'S STILL HERE!?"

"For more information, follow Serpent Rope Avenue to the information kiosk at the centre of the galaxy," Alan said, then disappeared.

CHAPTER 9

NOVEMBER 6th, 2000. 12:12 P.M.

In an expensive suit, and an inexpensive -- but still quite cool -- pair of sunglasses, Alan -- who had graduated already and wasn't taking any classes that semester -- strutted throughout E.D. Feehan High School, handing out invitations. Near the cafeteria, his pal Ed Mendez, asked, "Look at you in that awesome suit! Where'd you get it?"

Alan gave Ed an invitation.

"What's this?" Ed asked.

"4pm today -- hill at Pierre Radisson Park -- be there today."

"For what?"

"There might be doughnuts."

"Sweet."

"Are there any other kind?"

Alan slipped into the hall.

By the school library, the aristocratic blonde librarian, and the old wise, insightful counselor, noticed Alan's stylish suit, and asked in unison, "Have you become a pimp, or a drug dealer?"

"No," Alan replied.

"Or pray tell a famous actor?" asked the librarian.

"Soon," Alan replied. "All in due time. Pimping. Selling drugs. Acting. All in due time. But now, no. No, I'm just handing out these invitations. Invitations to an event in the park -- Pierre Radisson Park, today at 4pm. I'm gonna save some souls."

The librarian smiled approvingly, and said, "I have extra bibles if you need them for your event."

"Oh," Alan said. "When I said 'save some souls', I didn't mean ... but hmm... yeah, they can be put to a good use."

"The event's at 4pm, you say?" she asked. "A hilltop sermon?"

"Umm," Alan replied. "Well, yeah it's at four."

"I can bring them in a box. How many people do you expect will show up?"

"I'm estimating around fifty."

"Well," she smiled, "That's perfect, because I've got slightly more than fifty bibles in a box in the back room. They're all extras, and I can bring them to your event, and we can give them out for free."

"If you bring them," Alan said, "they'll be put to good use."

Alan turned around, and continued his stroll through the crowded hallway. Then he smiled, and chuckled, at the mental image of burning a box of bibles so that everyone who attends his event can be warm.

'Glad I graduated,' he thought, as his eyes drank in a boobylicious bounty of bodacious high school babes.

By the theater, teens shuffled around the vending machines, like leashed robots. That's where several big hoodlums accosted Alan; one of them was his pal who looked like Brad Pitt. "You look snazzy in that suit, Holman," said the guy I'll call Brad. "You're not horning in on my lucrative drug dealing industry, are you?"

Alan nodded at the pretty-boy drug dealer, and said, "If bible burning is your drug of choice, let's talk."

"But," Brad replied. "Catholic girls make the best snake handlers, if you know what I mean."

"No," Alan replied. "I don't, but there'll be doughnuts at the thing in the park."

"Doughnuts?" Asked Brad. "Now you've got my attention. What thing in the park, and do you need a weed supplier?"

"Umm...", Alan replied. "I'm kind of in a story right now, and people are reading it, and I don't want *sigh* those people to know that I used to hang out with you. I'm sorry. It's not that I'm ashamed of you or anything, Brad. You're a nice guy and all, but ... umm ... it's not you, it's me."

"What are you saying?"

"Your mom."

"What?"

“Sorry. I thought you said ‘What are you doing?’, but then I realized that you said ‘What are you saying?’ Sorry.”

“My mom says you sucked.”

“No she sucked ... literally.”

“I’ll bet, the bitch. Now do you want drugs or not?”

“I don’t do drugs,” said Alan, winking at the guy. “I’ll see you after the novel,” Alan replied ... then gave in, and participated in a complicated illegal transaction anyway.

Then, in the French Wing -- also known famously as the Corridor of Insanity -- Alan surprised his pals Carla, Becky, and Angel.

Carla was a smart, cynical, blonde girl, who usually wore jeans and tight sweaters. She also had thick glasses, pouting lips, and she'd usually weave her pony tail out the back of a baseball cap. Her girly charms are a trap, I tells ya, because she has kicked my ass, and she CAN and WILL kick my ass again. Like this one time, I had a wrestling match with her and she was stronger, and more athletic than me. I wonder if she hates me now that I've used the word buxom in this paragraph. Time will tell. (I wonder why she didn't invite me to her wedding to Joe. I know it's not because of my use of the word "buxom" here, as the "buxom" thing is just a myth that I'm making up here so that the situation makes at least a tiny bit of sense to me since she refuses to explain it. If anyone knows why she didn't invite me, e-mail me. This particular mystery hurts on many levels, and I'd appreciate an explanation. Thanks.)

Angelique was a small smiley happy peppy fun-fun bible thumper. When I first met her, she was a huge fan of Veggie Tales. I later learned that she enjoys playing hockey, and her personal belief system is a mix between Mennonite and Pentecostal. I've always felt extremely comfortable whenever I've been in her presence, as if I can trust her with secrets. So I'd love to cheer her on in one of her hockey games someday.

And Becky ... *she* was also there. I could spend a hundred pages describing *her* ... but I still wouldn't understand certain decisions *she's* made ... really really bratty decisions. For example, she's fourteen when this story takes place, and she was a reasonably nice girl at that time; but later on in life, when she was in her thirties, she was a woman with no conscience or empathy.

Other males were there – Luc, et cetera.

And there was also a girl named Robin there. Robin rarely spoke. And on the day when this story takes place, Robin was only there for a short bit near the start, and she disappeared into a classroom two seconds before I waved at everyone.

I waved at everyone.

"It's Alan!" Angel announced, with a wide smile ... probably drooling, because face it, I'm sexy.

"Great suit," Carla commented ... probably drooling, because face it, I'm sexy.

"Hey!" Becky mentioned, totally cool, calm, relaxed. And the fact that she seemed very unfazed by my absolute

sexyness does in fact make me quite sad on a very profound level, but I digest.

"I missed you people!" Alan said, then did a series of non-committal hug-like thingys.

"What brings you here?" Angel asked.

"Purple?" Alan replied.

"Where'd you get the suit?" Carla asked.

"Purple?" Alan replied.

Becky got hyper and did something else.

Alan removed his sunglasses ... slowly, seductively, then said, "purple?"

Carla got annoyed, and said, "We get it: Purple. Oy vay. Stop with the Purpling already!"

Alan stopped with the purpling, and he handed invitations to all three of them, and -- with a stunningly handsome gaze under lowered thin sexy eyebrows, said, "Whatever you do, please DO show up to the thing on the invitation cards."

"Uh-no, can't," Becky mentioned, "I've gotta practice for...anything."

"Please," Alan got down on his knees before Becky, opened a small box of candy, and insisted pitifully, "You must cancel everything."

"Now you're creeping me out," Becky replied.

"Bah." Alan stood up, turned around, began eating the candy, and said: "I don't care what *you* think." He actually did

care what *she* thought, but that was beside the point. He walked away.

They looked confused as he walked away.

"What do you suppose that was about?" Carla asked.

1:42 P.M.

Alan found Jay's house at the same place it had been since its placement at its location. He was focused on a specific goal.

Through the corner of the basement window, he saw people, and heard their chatter. So he hid behind a door, and he almost gave up.

Jay's mom opened the door, and...

...she said, "Hi Alan!

"Yo!"

"What are you doing here?" she asked.

"Is Jay around?"

"No," she said. "But he called. He said he's all right.

But what are you doing here?"

"I was looking for Jay," Alan said. "Did he say where he is?"

"He said he got a job at a convenience store near a highway," she said. "But Jay didn't say which highway, or which convenience store. He said that he's getting an apartment now, and he'll tell me where it is once he's settled."

"So," Alan asked, "He's gone?"

"Yeah," she said. "Jay's grown up and moved out."

"So," Alan said, "Aside for the student loan, he's also got the ... is he still going to school?"

"Probably," she said. "He missed today, though. But he'll probably be at Heinze tomorrow."

"Oh," Alan said, then lied, "Jay told me that I can borrow his manuscript for a story called THE JACKALS. He said that it's behind his TV."

"No," she said, with a stern voice. "You're lying, Alan."

"What?"

"He said no one can touch it, especially you. Go."

"Um," Alan said. "Um."

She looked angry.

"I AM here to pick it up," Alan said. "He said there's a copy behind the TV. If you check, you'll see I'm telling the truth."

She went into the house.

And in a few seconds, she returned with the manuscript, and she reluctantly gave it to Alan. Then she laughed, and said, "Now don't go selling it as your own."

Alan thanked her, then turned around, and began walking away ... while muttering things.

NOVEMBER 6th, 2000. 3:29 P.M. PIERRE RADISSON PARK.

Several feet above the fresh blanket of snow, Alan sat on a football goal-post, with his gaze set on the alley, and he wondered, 'What's taking them so long?'

Then, Alan smiled as a Greyhound bus arrived in the alley. He waved at the driver. The driver waved back.

3:34

In nippy weather, upon the bare hilltop, Alan waved at a U-Haul van. The van approached the hill.

3:39

On the hill, fifty chairs and a podium were set up ... in the cold, mid-afternoon wind. Alan looked at a line of twelve Greyhound busses in the alley, and smiled.

3:43

Alone on the hill, Alan sat on a chair, watching his own empty podium, and covering his frozen ears with his equally freezing hands.

3:45

Now, curled up in a frozen ball, on that chair on the hill, Alan felt a tap on his shoulder, so he stretched, turned around, and saw Carla, Becky, and Angel, standing before him. Just as he suspected, none of the guys showed up.

"Frozen?" Carla asked, condescending. "What is this, a wedding?"

"Yeah," Alan said, gazing creepily at Becky. "I mean no. Must guard chairs."

"From whom?" asked Becky.

"From anyone," Alan replied, standing, pointing at the chairs. "They're sitting ducks."

"I love ducks," replied Carla.

Becky quacked.

Angel laughed.

"So Alan," Angel said. "Why are we here?"

"Ah," Carla mused, "The ultimate question. Why is anyone here?"

"Because God put us here," Angel said matter of factly.

"God put everyone here, so we could have fun!" Angel danced around, and twirled strangely ... innocuously ... infectiously. In fact, within seconds, everyone began twirling ... and quacking. It was fun ...

... but it stopped when Carla asked, "Seriously, why are we here?"

"I'm going to show you something," Alan replied. "All three of you."

"Like what?" Asked Angel.

Then Alan smirked, and asked, "Ever seen twelve busses explode?"

"COOL!!!" they all shrieked.

"Although I'm amused by your reaction to my question," Alan said matter-of-factly, "And although I agree that it would be cool if all of those busses in the alley exploded. And although this is a novel, and I can get away with exploding them in a novel, that's not why we're here, and that's not the point of the chapter."

"And what IS the point of the chapter?" Becky asked.

"Yeah," said Angel.

"Carla," Alan said. "You tell them. You were in this scene in earlier drafts."

"Well," Carla said, "This is the first draft of the novel when you called me 'buxom' in my introductory paragraph, so remind me to kick your ass after the novel."

"Okay," Alan said. "But for now, all three of you, please wait until four." Alan suggested.

"I don't know," Becky said. "I kind of want to go home, and write or draw ...anything. Besides, I've never been in the hill scene in any previous drafts of this book."

Carla whispers to Becky that the purpose of the scene has nothing to do with the fact that Alan likes *her*.

She laughs, then says, "Okay, I'll stay!"

"Thanks, Carla," says Alan. "What did you tell *her*?"

"I lied to *her*."

Alan shook his head and sighed.

Becky gave Alan an odd, disapproving stare. *She* looked ready to leave.

"Alan," Carla asked, "Where is everyone?"

"I cut out the scenes where I invited them. Besides, in the earlier drafts of this novel, they were undeveloped characters anyway, so a bunch of generic people will show up this time instead."

"It just won't be the same without them," Carla said, shaking her head disapprovingly.

"How did you get the busses?" Becky asked. "Where do you expect to take people?"

Angel twirled.

"Uhh..." Alan said. "To TwirlyTown."

Carla laughed, and shook her head. "Not TwirlyTown. Bad Angel."

Angel laughed.

Then Becky asked, "How long will this take?"

Determined, Alan replied, "Please wait. I'll tell you during the presentation, and you'll have a choice about whether you wanna go or not. And it is free. And there will be food, prizes, and entertainment."

"That's a lie," Carla giggled.

"Is this a religious thing?" Becky asked.

Angel opened her eyes wide, and smiled, "Oh, that would be really nice!"

"No," Alan said. "And it's nothing to do with any of you, but I'm glad I could involve you in this story. Please take a seat. The show's about to get interesting. And before you get the wrong idea, the podium is a podium; it's not an altar. There's no fictional marriage, or sacrificing of anyone or anything ... although we will be burning bibles."

Angel vomited.

"Burning bibles FOR WARMTH!"

"That still doesn't make it okay," Angel said, shaking her head disapprovingly.

3:52 P.M.

Many local people were approaching the hill. A lot of them were curious about the busses. They were mostly people from the religious community. Now the reason for this is stupid, and difficult to explain properly. People are idiots, and especially ... no, if I say what I was going to say, it'd offend people. Whenever some dude in a suit hands out cards and talks about an event, it always turns out to be some dumb religious thing. People in this neighborhood have gotten used to that, and regardless of whether or not they believe in the religion, they usually show up at all the events anyway, because there's usually free food.

3:56 P.M.

The fifty chairs were filled with generic audience members, and people Alan had invited. A lot of people were also standing around, and watching the podium. News cameras had gathered also. A lot of curious people from the newspapers and radio stations were also in attendance. No one really had any good idea who Alan was, or what he was going to say, or what he was going to do with all of those busses.

Alan approached the podium, looked around, and was disappointed by the fact that Becky had left. And he was also disappointed by the lack of other specific individuals whom he had invited, so he looked into the microphone, and said to everyone who wondered why there were on the hill in the cold: "We'll begin in four minutes."

4:00 P.M.

The librarian arrived with the box of bibles. She approached Alan, and whispered, "When do you want me to begin handing them out?"

Alan looked at the people, and noticed that some of them were carrying hymnals, and some of them were wearing images of Jesus, and holding rosaries, crosses and bibles. Everyone seemed to think ... and I mean EVERYONE had the absolute

wrong idea about why they were there this afternoon on top of the hill. He looked down at the microphone, felt guilty, then smiled at the librarian and said, "Soon. I just have to say a few things first." The microphone picked up Alan's words, so people hushed each-other, and all other conversation ceased.

Alan said the following into the microphone while standing at the podium on that cold day: "I ... there was a time in my life when I might have burned bibles. I'm ashamed."

Someone screamed, "*Praise the Lord!*"

"I need a volunteer from the crowd," Alan said.

"Someone to hand out bibles ... to take them out of the hands of those who might burn them."

Someone pushed a little boy to step forward.

Carla looked confused, because in all the drafts of this novel, this was the first time when Alan hadn't burned the bibles already to see the look on everyone's faces.

Alan handed the big box of bibles to the little boy. "Can you carry them? Is this too heavy?"

"No, I can carry them all," said the boy, "I'm okay."

The audience applauded.

"Jesus carried a cross," Alan said. "But as he spread his word, the cross got lighter. So as Darius passes-out the bibles, his box of bibles will get lighter. Because the burden is knowing that you didn't try to spread the word."

The audience applauded.

Alan breaks out laughing. "I'm sorry. I couldn't keep a straight face."

The audience laughed. Alan gave them a strange look, and said, "But you supported me, because I'm trying to ... hmm..." Alan felt very guilty. "The reason I called you out here today had nothing to do with these bibles, so I'll get to the point."

The boy looked confused, looked at Alan and asked, "How did you know that my name is Darius?"

"Because this book has already been written, and it is a good book."

The audience applauded.

Alan handed an envelope to little Darius, and said, "Please open this envelope, and read what's inside."

Darius looked unsure of himself. Alan sat on the snow, crossed his legs, and gestured for Darius to approach the podium.

Darius said, "okay"

The audience applauded, in support of the boy.

Darius approached the podium slowly, scared of all two hundred people who focused on him. He shook with terror. He opened the envelope, and removed a paper from inside of it. He looked toward Alan for guidance or strength ... but Alan had vanished.

The paper was blank.

The busses exploded.

And at an undisclosed location, Alan laughed his ass off.

... but I was crying inside.

I was a mess of contradictions. I was trying to ... I don't know ... I was hoping to use my weird technology from space, and showmanship, et cetera, to do something impressive, and perhaps give her a bus-tour of some of the more interesting parts of the known-universe. I figured that I'd look like a stud if I was the tour-guide who pointed out the interesting stuff. But my plans were ill-conceived; and on top of that, I screwed up in a lot of little ways that day. I ended up looking like a deranged goof. My laughing was a weird reaction to an odd situation.

CHAPTER 10

NOVEMBER 6th, 2000. 4:02 P.M.

Little Darius ran swiftly, from the hill, crying, as all two hundred stunned audience members watched in secret pleasure and vocal distaste, as fire from the bus explosions in the alley spread to unsuspecting folks' backyard fences.

"That man scared me," Darius muttered, "but before he left, I got this toy from his pocket." Nine year-old Darius McCaib carried the device -- Alan's Island-brand Generator -- in the sleeve of his zipped-up jacket, as he ran farther away from Pierre Radisson Park.

4:07 P.M.

To Darius, the 'toy' looked like a 'ray-gun-type-thingy' as he sat in front of 7-11 to catch his breath, and to look over the device; its two buttons -- one that says 'current', and one that says 'blank'; its 'retrieve' switch, and its emitter.

Then a hot air balloon in the sky distracted him, so he dropped the device while screaming, "Cool!"

As the Generator hit the sidewalk, its CURRENT button depressed, opening a doorway to an exact copy of his current environment -- a copy of his exact location -- a copy in which everything had paused.

"Holy Dang!" Darius screamed, and ran away on instinct.

In a few seconds, the doorway closed ... and no one noticed.

MEANWHILE, ABOVE THE EARTH...

"Welcome aboard, Alan," said the woman who manned the teleporter console.

Alan -- laughing his ass off -- stepped down, off the platform, and said, "Thanks for finding me."

"Just following your orders, Fleet-Leader," replied the woman.

The words "Fleet Leader" sounded great to Alan's ears, but the ringing in his head didn't, so he answered it: "Hello?"

"It's me," came Panda's voice. "Is everything good?"

"Everything's perfect," Alan replied. "I'm onboard one of my Big Fuckin' Ships."

"Oh?" Panda said.

"Yup," Alan replied. "I was bored, so I blew up some busses. Not sure if I have any particular obligations, so I'll vacation ... maybe a few months."

"Have fun." Panda replied, then hung-up.

I only blew up the busses because, when I noticed that Becky left the hill, I was no longer interested in giving the tour! But I still had showmanship, so I was interested in showing the folks awesome explosions! Fire!

Regardless, the event was so weird and explosive that of course there'd be an investigation. That fact caused me to be so social phobic that I decided to take the vacation.

God, I still wish I weren't so clueless when it comes to figuring out what to do around that girl.

NOVEMBER 7th 2000. 1:15 A.M.

Panda entered Alan's quarters on the starship BFS Victory, and said "Surprise!"

Alan turned from the window's view of the flat, motionless Earth, and said, "Hey Panda!"

"So," Panda asked, "Is this your vacation?"

"Well," Alan said, turning back to the window, "Does your son still have that RV?"

"Yeah," Panda replied, joining Alan at the window, "Wanna borrow it?"

"Yeah," Alan said, "Its SpetrEngine is the most compact ever made. I wanna borrow a large car ... and I don't wanna bump into anything."

"I hear ya," replied Panda.

NOVEMBER 7TH, 2000. 1:17 A.M.

The silent hum of the starship made Alan happy ... until he ordered sour Insani-Tea from the food replicator, and was about to exchange happy for weird when he realized that his trusty Island-brand Generator was no longer on his person.

So, he made light of the situation by getting an I.G. file from an account on his replicator, and making a new I.G.

Then, he looked both ways and filled a plot-hole by time-traveling to September twenty-third, getting a copy of Jay's manuscript, time-traveling back, and writing a letter to Jay.

Forget the previous sentence.

Then Alan replicated a carton of Insani-Tea, and had fun.

And then he like totally did a babe in a dream he had that night.

ALAN'S JOURNAL

Dear Diary,

It would have been cool if I would have went about my presentation on the hill a little differently.

Introducing them to the G-Highways, and Golden City, would have been fun, but they might not be ready for universal life; however, paradigms CAN shift instantly, so it could have rocked. And maybe -- just maybe -- I'd be in every high school girl's sexy daydreams by now. Just kidding. haha.

Maybe next time.

See ya later, Diary.

CHAPTER 11

NOVEMBER 7th, 2000. 10:22 A.M.

Alan woke and shut the window-curtains quickly because the sunlight was intense, so he tapped an intercom panel above the food replicator, and yelled: "You fools are supposed to maintain a flight over the part of earth where it's NIGHT-TIME!"

"Night can and does become day," replied a female voice -- the voice of reason -- the voice of First Officer Daywon Keats.

"I'll have you know," Alan said in anger, "that you woke me up from a wonderful dream about a correlating, lubricated labia, and it was getting good!"

Keats' voice laughed, then said, "You're an idiot, and whoever put you in charge of a space fleet is also an idiot."

"True," said Alan.

"Peddy called," said Keats' annoyed voice. "He said the RV is parked in the park. He said you can use it for as long as you need it, because he's got another."

"Oh," Alan said, then snapped: "YOU'RE FIRED!"

"No," she mentioned, angrily. "I'm not."

"Good point," Alan surrendered.

NOVEMBER 7th, 2000. 11:01 A.M. PIERRE RADISSON PARK.

Alan stood in the wide open park. It was a park that he used to walk across, to go to school. A park where he and his sister Monika saw the end of a rainbow one time when they were small, and we still regret not digging for the pot of gold. It was a park where I got hit in the face with a metal bar and I still have a scar above my right eyebrow. By the way, I forgot to mention it, but I have a scar above my right eyebrow – it's small and barely noticeable, but it probably should have been in my character description. Come to think of it, I didn't really

add too much of a character description for myself. Whatever. A park where I saw a UFO one time, on my way to school, and when I got to school and drew a picture of it on the chalk board, they all looked at me like I was kooky. Fuckers. A park where in the year 2007 – or was it 2006? – myself and my brother Max saw a UFO while walking our cat Char. But this story takes place in 2000, so never mind that for now. And this scene takes place in a park where I stood many times throughout my life, and this particular time was fictional.

"Yo," Alan said, answering the ringing in his head.

"Hi!" replied Jay's voice. "Got my manuscript?"

"Yup." Alan replied. "I didn't want to risk it falling into the wrong hands."

"What wrong hands?" Jay asked. "I'm coming to get it."

"No use, Jay," Alan said. "Find me first. The chase begins."

"Why?" Jay asked, confused.

"Caught off guard?" Alan asked, chuckling.

Jay laughed, "You're joking, right?"

"In a universe of infinite possibility," Alan said, "I'm not."

"So you're serious?" Jay asked, not amused. "You're holding my own book hostage? Why?"

"Same reason I exploded the busses."

"What busses?!"

"No reason at all."

Click.

NOVEMBER 7th, 2000. 12:02 P.M. DARREN'S APARTMENT.

Alan's entrance into his twenty year-old brother Darren's apartment caught Darren -- and his friend Peddy Bear -- off guard. "Yo, yo yo," said Alan.

Peddy stood perfectly still, acting like a teddy bear. "Alan," Darren said, "don't you know to knock first?"

"I wish!" Alan replied with a sincere smile. Then Alan shook his head while watching as Peddy tried to hide behind something imaginary that he was holding in his hands. "Peddy," Alan said. "I need the key."

"Key?" Peddy asked, clueless.

"For the RV," Alan stated. "I need to de-ghost it."

"D'oh!" Peddy laughed. "I knew I forgot something. Duh. Think, think, think," Peddy said, levitating because of all the hot air in his head. "Is it my birthday?"

"Maybe," Alan said. "But I still need the RV key."

Peddy forced his fist into his ear then yanked the key out of his head, and said, "Found it!"

"Now clean the large chunks of earwax off of it."

NOVEMBER 7th, 2000. 12:39 P.M. PIERRE RADISSON PARK.

In the park, Alan waved the key in the air, and chanted the passcode: "Fluffy Fluffy Fluffy."

The RV de-ghosted, revealing itself as a massively multistory structure.

Alan hopped into the vehicle, and re-ghosted it.

In the recreational vehicle's entry-room, Alan complied with a doorman's request that all footwear -- including socks -- be removed onto a mat. He also placed his jacket in the closet, which was optional.

Then, after careful consideration of the displayed floor plans throughout the RV's museum of elevator designs, Alan entered an elevator that was based on a design from an elevator in an early twentieth century French mall, and Alan selected the sixteenth floor.

Within the minute, he exited the elevator, along with other passengers who shared his interest in the sixteenth floor. Some entered the pub on the left, but Alan entered another elevator -- the museum of elevators was on every floor.

This elevator had an operator. The operator asked, "Floor?"

"Sixteen, please."

"We're already on the sixteenth floor, you idiot."

Alan waved the key in front of the operator's face, and asked, "Why holds the keys now, tough guy?"

The operator smiled, saluted, and said, "Welcome aboard, Driver!"

The door closed.

The door opened.

"Thank you," Alan said, exiting the elevator.

Alan looked to his left, smiled, then walked to his right, and into the RV's WAL-MART.

NOVEMBER 7th, 2000. 12:52 P.M. WAL-MART.

"Who needs a ninety-foot phone cord?" A manic lady asked Alan, in WAL-MART's electronics' section.

"I don't give a damn," Alan replied. "If I want it, I can buy it."

The lady snorted, "It's stupid. It's too long."

"And they call you a Greeter?" Alan laughed, then held up the key, and said: "Now mind your own business, old bitch."

The lady raised her nose, turned around, and walked away, saying, "Well, I never."

Alan put a ninety-foot phone cord back on the shelf, and said, "Who needs a ninety-foot phone cord?"

NOVEMBER 7th, 2000. 1:02 P.M. DRIVER'S SEAT.

In the RV's top floor, Alan plopped his ass down on the driver's seat.

"Where do you want to go today?" asked the RV.

"Time travel me to ... umm ..."

"I require a time travel authorization code," replied the RV.

"***** ** ***** ** ***** ** ** ** ** , **

*****!" Alan said.

"Access granted," replied the RV. "Where and/or when do you want to go today?"

"I just want to relax in this awesome RV for a few weeks. No destination, really."

Within minutes, Alan was in a hot-tub on the third floor. (This is how I ride.)

CHAPTER 12

Most non-Gremlins don't care about the end of the universe because they'll be dead anyway, so why should they give a fuck? However, Gremlins -- who come to life every once in a while and rarely die -- have a famous, non-linear joke about the end of the universe: "Been there. Done that."

NOVEMBER 8th, 2000. 12:58 A.M.

In a novel that should win a lot of literary awards, Jay entered the golden door to the Fourth Day Classroom in the Universal Awareness School, also known as Decompression School

because Universal knowledge is programmed into every sentient brain; that's why learning, on certain topics, feels like decompression of information files that were already in your brain, like say if the brain were a hard drive, which it sorta is.

The teacher -- Mr. Dick Wor -- began speaking as Jay found a desk. Dick said, "Fourth Day is about Golden City. One of King Gremlin's earliest journal entries observes in detail that people value pretty, shiny things, over stinky, soft things. And he observed that value can only be assessed by sentient beings. Desperate for cuddly pals who could hold up their end of a conversation about value, Gremlin enhanced fuzzy-wuzzy critters of all shapes and sizes, by granting them sentience, in exchange for hugs. The cold-blooded ones borrowed the enhancement technology, and enhanced non-fuzzy animals with sentience, and manipulated the non-fuzzy animals to become gold miners who would extract just enough gold, from each world where sentience would occur without enhancement, so that gold would become a valuable, cherished, shiny currency, among all natural sentient societies. The gold could then be hoarded into Central Banks where they would print paper money to represent the gold. But that's where the scam begins, for you see ..."

"This is weird," said a student.

"You interrupted me," said Dick Wor, with angry brows. "Where was I? I have no clue where I left off."

Some students raised their hands.

"This should teach you to not interrupt me," Dick said, strangling a random student to death.

'What am I in the middle of?' Jay thought.

Dick continued: "Anyhoot, most early religions are animal-centered because some folks saw the fuzzy animals talking before the cold-blooded ones told the fuzzy ones that there were carnivals on other planets. The fuzzy ones went looking for the carnivals, while the non-fuzzy ones continued to be the slaves of the cold-blooded ones. So therefore, the fuzzy ones who could talk were shipped off by the cold-blooded ones so that they don't interfere with the developing non-fuzzy warm-blooded societies, who were to be manipulated, by the cold-blooded ones, into carting gold into ships. The fuzzy ones had such big hearts that they would have gotten in the way of the plot. When Gremlin learned of this scheme, he ordered that all the gold which the cold-blooded ones manipulated the fuzzy warm-blooded ones into mining was to be taken to Gremlin's moneybin on the planet Catland, and to cease and desist all mining operations in which the warm-blooded non-fuzzies were the slaves of the cold-blooded ones. Golden City was created in Gremlin's moneybin."

One student asked: "May I go to the washroom?"

"No." Dick Wor said, "Just pee your dress."

The guy exploded. Blood and guts -- and urine -- were everywhere.

"Anyhoot," Dick continued, "We live in a felinocentric universe -- cats in the barycentre. And that is because cats sustain the energy which connects us all. The energy which goes from the center of the universe, into the center of each galaxy – and from the centre of each galaxy, to each star – and from each star, to the heart of each living thing on each planet. That energy is what connects us to the UniNet, and it is that energy which the cats help to sustain. But back to Golden City: We'll be touring Golden City later in this course, so ... when you enter Golden City -- which is actually the width of the Darren Building -- that's the name of the building that Gremlin's moneybin, and Golden City, are on top of. Anyhoot, you shrink because Golden City is a megalopolis. Only certain people are ever allowed to enter Golden City. But this is boring. Bye."

Dick left.

The students left.

NOVEMBER 9TH, 2000 1:00 A.M.

Classroom Five in Universal Awareness School was made of paper maché ... not because I'm running out of ideas, but because it wasn't my idea in the first place.

Jay sat on a paper maché chair; it broke.

Dick entered.

Jay raised his hand.

"Yes, Jay." asked Dick.

"On the way in, I met a Trank. Weird..."

"Yes," Mr. Wor agreed. "Tranks are weird."

"Yeah, weird."

"Is that all?" Dick asked.

"Yes," Jay said.

A stone, in the back corner, raised his hand.

"Yes, Calico?" Dick asked.

The stone said, "It feels like five years ago, but it's not... you know?"

And Dick's response: "Get off the drugs. You're stoned."

Calico became water -- with googly eyes.

The class laughed.

Dick said, "Anyhoot, take out your papers and your pens. Clare Voyant -- you can hand in your finished assignment and go home."

A little orb with hands, handed in a paper, and left.

Dick said, "Anyhoot, today's assignment: Write a myth which fills in gaps with regards to your current knowledge of the universe. Those stories will be your personal myths. They will help you develop ways to handle things you don't yet understand, kind of like a hypothesis -- for they are your hypothomyths. Begin."

NOVEMBER 10th 2000. 1:00 A.M.

During a quick Catnap in the Universal Awareness School's hallway, Alan dreamt he saw a speck of dust morph into a beautiful woman; she morphed into an ugly cave-woman; she morphed into a single-celled organism; it vanished into a blinding flash of light.

Alan woke in a waterbed of cold sweat, craving more direction in his life, so he grabbed a universal compass from his pocket, and flipped its switch from 'DIRECTION' to 'PERSONAL DIRECTION.'

The compass told Alan to write this book.

NOVEMBER 11TH, 2000. 3:02 A.M.

A ROADSIDE PIZZA SHOP.

Jay spoke eagerly about Universal Awareness class, as Alan drank coffee and read a magazine, barely listening to Jay.

Jay shot an indignant glare across the table, to which Alan lied, "Ehrm, I'm listening."

Ticked off, Jay asked, "You REALLY didn't hear what I had to say, did you?"

"Erm," Alan guessed, "Guitar?"

"No," Jay replied, annoyed.

Alan said, "I'm sorry, but your words have not yet pieced my selectively-permeable layer of egotistical bullshit. I'm a self-centered prick who's good at losing friends because I'm not a

good listener to anyone else but myself." (This was never true about me. I purposely depressed myself by making people believe that it was true about me. I had a lot of issues. I felt I didn't deserve a lot of what I had, so I acted as if I deserved a lot more; it's complicated.)

"Hey," Alan interrupted himself. "That object is glimmering in a trippy way!"

Alan ran towards a happy object, danced with it, fell asleep, and forgot about Jay.

Jay left, or something ... I think.

NOVEMBER 12th, 2000. 3:00 A.M.

"Anyhoot, the three human siblings won their buildings in a lottery which was obviously rigged, but no one really minds since they saved the Universe; well, some people mind; I do, because well Alan's just a pointless self-serving, self-centered figurehead, in my opinion. Anyway, that's it for night eight," Dick said. "Any questions?"

No hands were raised.

"Good night then."

Everyone left.

NOVEMBER 13, 2000. 1:23 A.M.

Classroom nine was dark, silent, and structure-less, until Dick said, "I am what I am. Can I only be what I am? If I can only be what I am, and since I know that I am what I am, do I know myself as one that doesn't know what he is; if so, can I actually know that I am what I am?"

A student raised an appendage.

"Yes?" Dick asked.

"What are you babbling about?"

"The answer to all of those questions is a resounding 'no'," Dick replied. "Quit sitting on your ass-like-thingy, and enjoy the universe! Wake up to the fact that you're infinite consciousness, as are we all, and enjoy the infinite! Enjoy it a lot, or you'll get a bad mark! You'll be marked ... with Mark-O-Rama."

Mark-O-Rama raised his hand to ask to go to the John.
Prostitution is evil.

NOVEMBER 14, 2000 1:00 A.M.

Classroom ten took shape, manifesting according to the will of the students.

"Today, I'm judging you," Dick announced. "I'm pointing out your faults. And if any of you end up crying ... if any of you give a damn at all about what I think about you, or about what anyone else hears me say about you ... then you're

all a bunch of wimps and you don't deserve Universal Citizenship, and you fail this class."

NOVEMBER 15, 2000 1:00 A.M.

Classroom eleven was shaped in front of a live studio audience.

Dick entered, stared in the classroom's collective eye, then turned to his students, and said, "Time never begins, and it'll never end. What we perceive as beginnings and endings are infinite states of always which always exist as Universes within the Omni and Omegaverse mix and mesh and mash together constantly in different places and times. A Universe that's perceived as having an end, has an end, but the Omegaverse – an eternal pool of quanta, in which all universes bathe – does not. We constantly need to create new words for subdivisions of ... "

Dick's head exploded.

Some students vomited -- some students applauded.

Mrs. Boobies entered, and said, "Time is driven by 'the end'. Time is a magnet, attracted to 'the end'; it always moves forward, searching for 'the end'. But 'the end' doesn't exist."

The students shared an odd, confused expression, which abstractly resembled a busy signal.

Jay asked, "What are you talking about?"

"Just bullshit. Open your books to page ..."

"Why all the bullshit?" Jay asked.

"To solidify your foundation for the truth. Like a myth, I'm giving you the proper holes to fill. From holes to fulls, they say!"

CHAPTER 13

NOVEMBER 24th, 2000. 7:17 P.M.

Spacehighways are invisible to folks who aren't Universally Aware, just like how the portal on the top of the Pyramid in Egypt is hidden to folks who aren't members of the Illuminati ... just like that, but better.

Well, to be fair, it's like comparing apples and oranges. The spacehighways are highways which lead elsewhere in the

universe, whereas the portals on the Pyramids lead to a Nexus, a hallway filled with doors which lead not to everywhere in the universe as some people suggest, but in fact to different dimensions which exist in the same location in space. Apples and oranges.

Beside a spacehighway, Alan and Jay sat on the front steps of a near-earth convenience store, observing how earth hangs like a big flat beautiful roof above the streetlights.

Alan joked, "It's funny – NASA may be among the only people who know the truth about the Earth actually being flat, but what they don't know is: just under their noses is this invisible, ghosted highway."

"It's hilarious," Jay laughed. "They don't have a clue."

Then earth exploded.

Silence.

Sorrow.

"WHAT THE FUCK!!!" uttered Jay.

"SHIT!" shouted Alan. "That was today?"

A large spacecraft emerged from the earth's wreckage, and flew away.

"It's payback time," Alan said coolly (not fooly).

Sylvester Stallone appeared, and fooly coolly he said, "It's time to smackdown the punch!"

Yeah, it's corny, but fuck you – I don't see you writing a novel.

NOVEMBER 25th, 2000. 4:49 A.M.

As King Gremlin slept in an airless spot within the unparalleled money-bin above his penthouse, His Majesty had a nightmare.

He dreamt of a creature he'd never seen, which was impossible. The creature transmitted telepathic images of an endless, multi-dimensional, array of something he'd never seen, which was also impossible.

Gremlin had seen every possible aspect of every possible universe, yet he was being shown new complexities beyond his reach.

Gremlin knew everything, but he was witnessing something else.

And it scared him.

Even though the fear was unbearable, he didn't want the nightmare to end, because the undeniable fact that he'd never again see this nightmare frightened him more than the nightmare.

This is the perfect analogy for the one time when I had a nightmare in which I was exiled to a place where I'd never again hear her laugh. My hope to hear her laugh again literally keeps me alive. The human freedom to escape to hope is the most important human freedom.

DECEMBER 12TH, 2000 9:00 A.M.

And the new day dawned on Golden City, only to see it blasted to bits, by an unparalleled weapon of massive destructive force.

MEANWHILE...

The Universal Senate was assembled inside Star Base One as it floated majestically between planets Catland and Boushkay.

His Majesty King Gremlin of the Universe spoke to the assembly; he said, "Wabba wabba wabba."

His translator said, "Amazing destructive force was showered upon Golden City today, as Bad Guys destroyed our stash."

It was a major bummer.

Gremlin said, "Wabba wabba wabba."

His translator said, "A powerful weapon has penetrated the shields around Golden City. "

Senator Alan stood up and said: "I have a plan. We can shuffle good from evil, instead of sentient from non-sentient, with a minor adjustment to a secret device which my company Island Incorporated has developed. The full explanation is ..."

Gremlin interrupted, "Wabba wabba wabba."

His translator said, "I don't need an explanation. If you have a plan, quit talking about it, and go out there, and execute your plan against those non-sentient buggers!"

"Did you say they're non-sentient?"

"Wabba."

"Yes," the translator said. "The bad-guys are non-sentient, complicated robots, programmed by the Bad Gremlins to make weapons for use on the Good Gremlins. Didn't you remember that, Alan?"

"No," Alan realized. "Shit! Another plan foiled!"

"Wabba?"

"What plan is foiled?" the translator asks, sternly.

"We made a really big machine secretly," Alan confessed. "It can copy the entire Universe! And if the Bad Guys are non-sentient robots which are programmed by the Bad Gremlins, then that means that the earth is fucked, because... we already used it."

Gremlin screamed, "WABBA!"

The translator said, "You've just doubled the number of Bad Guys. If they find a way to bust out of your copy, we're fucked! Our fleets are outnumbered as it is!"

Alan ran away, in shame.

AND SO...

In the copy of the universe, Alan sat at the helm of the copied BFS Victory, and he noticed that the copied earth was safely placed within a dome on the huge continent called Oceania on the very large planet Catland. "But this can not be," Alan gasped. "The bad guys would have destroyed it." Then, Alan noticed a familiar octagonal, Bad Guy spacecraft, orbiting the

earth's moon. The Victory's onboard sensors indicated that the Bad Guys' spacecraft was filled with Bad Guys. But the Bad Guys in the spacecraft were not moving... no signs of life, and no signs of artificial life, were found onboard that Bad Guy ship.

AND SO...

Back at the non-copied Star Base One, in a further part of that same senate assembly, Alan re-entered the Chambers, and announced, "The Bad Guys are not acting independently. Someone in our Universe is remote-controlling them! If we knock the copied Bad Guys into space, from their ships, we can use the copied weapons to out-wit the dumb-asses with guns of their own construction!"

Alan led the battle-charge to victory.

December 12th was honored as the first Universal holiday. On that day, pyromaniac leprechauns light fireworks throughout the entire Universe. And all Universal Citizens rejoice, and eat cake.

The day is called Love Day, a celebration of the infinite.

ALAN'S JOURNAL

Dear Diary,

Hi. Today, I told Gremlin about the copy of the Universe. It's stupid to wait for patents because everyone should know about everything that's been invented, even if it's not patented yet, because you never know what'll be useful to whom and when it'll come in handy for whom to have what. Turns out Bad Guys are remote controlled by one of the Bad Gremlins, but whom? Regardless, the Bad Gremlins are weak.

Earth was teleporter-swapped back into the real Universe, put Earth on the Oceania continent on Catland, placed Earth in a dome, and the destroyed Golden City was replaced with the one from the Island version. I have no idea where my first Island Generator went, but it's probably in good hands.

All in a day's work.

I love all the people whom I've ever called "friend", without exception. They are my motivation to save the earth, and protect the universe, if I ever had a chance. Although I like to razz them sometimes and ruffle their feathers, my fact, my myth, and my religion – all wrapped into one – is that I unconditionally love everyone I've ever met. Infinite love is the only truth I am absolutely 100% sure of.

THE END