



Van Damme

8

Seth and Ruby had been discussing the book they were supposed to be writing all day. They hadn't written anything down, they had just been talking about it. Seth was full of ideas but Ruby was feeling queasy and not in the least bit creative. The Divine Vessel was rolling in the swollen sea on her way to Osaka, and Ruby felt every movement in the pit of her stomach. If she had asked Captain Nemo he would have reassured her that the weather wasn't bad, just normal for that part of the crossing, but her mind was exaggerating every movement and combined with the stuffiness in the cabin (the air conditioning had been turned off on the captain's orders as he always felt the cold) she was in a mild panic. She had tried to open the windows but they had been glued shut by many layers of paint and she was only inside as she knew it was important to at least try and have a discussion with Seth about the work they had planned to do on board. She would have rather been on deck with the wind in her hair and the horizon to fix on, but instead she was watching it disappear and reappear through the window. Seth was talking to her.

'...and the crabs were the size of cows. You're not listening to me, Ruby.'

'I am, I am.'

'Well, you're not looking at me.'

'I'm looking at the sea. Would you say that this was a force four or five?'

'What are you talking about?' Seth stood up and looked out of the window. The sea was a deep blue and dotted all around were small white peaks, sometimes with a little spray coming from them caused by the light wind. Good sailing weather, thought Seth, and certainly not a force anything.

‘Do you want a cup of tea?’ he asked trying to divert her.

‘No, no, I’m feeling sick.’

Oh God, he thought, not more delays to writing of this book. The publisher would be expecting their first draft when they arrive in Auckland, they’d already put it off too long as it was. ‘Look let’s get back to the book.’

Ruby turned back to the window.

‘Please Ruby, just try a little harder.’

Ruby wiped her sweaty forehead and groaned. She knew that she had to get on with this book but she couldn’t do anything at the moment. The whole situation was becoming a little unbearable. She swallowed and stuck out her furry tongue. ‘Does my tongue look funny?’

Seth didn’t look up, he couldn’t stand too many more of her procrastinations. Ruby got up from the table and lay down on his bed. Perhaps if I just lie still here, I might feel better, she thought, and tried to ignore the swaying and occasional shuddering of the ship and closed her eyes. Seth made himself a cup of tea and decided to get on with the book by himself. He began to write.

Preface

As we enter the 31st century every inhabitant of earth and its colonies is aware of the event we now call ‘The Great Release’. It has become woven into children’s stories and is the bases for the philosophical and scientific understandings of the evolution of man. The Great Release triggered a chain of events that was to shape mankind’s destiny, reversing it out of the cul-de-sac down which it was headed, and redirecting it onto the freeway towards the bright future that we now inhabit.

He sipped his tea and stared at the snoozing Ruby beside him.

Little did the simple people who inhabited earth at the end of the twentieth century guess, as the events leading up to The Great Release were unfolding, what they were to be part of, and how their world was to be so completely changed. History talks of this period as an age when mankind stumbled around the planet in lumbering machines, unable to communicate to one another or to any of the rest of the animal kind. It was a period

of immense confusion and misunderstanding, the result of which, it has been analysed, would surely have been extinction. These people, scurrying about there pointless lives, were unaware that they were being watched by a far superior race from a galaxy far away, and that their futures were being worked out for them. They had proved themselves a failure, and it was decided that a helping hand was to be given, to turn their destinies around, for strangely earth's destiny was of importance to this distant race.

A catalyst was to be placed into the oceans of the world, something that would enable them to break through their confusion, and achieve their true potential. The catalyst would act slowly, individual by individual, gradually spreading around the coastlines of the world and then making its way into the interiors of their dark lands. Its influence would take hundreds of years to fully grip these slow deformed creatures, but once it had this new changed race were to become limitless in its potential, racing towards the future we all now enjoy. The catalyst that would do all this it was decided would be the now sacred twenty nine thousand plastic bath toys, made up of the yellow ducks, the blue turtles, the green frogs, and of course, the red beavers.

John scratched his stubbly chin and paused to turn the kettle on again.

Before The Release it is known that They sent one of their own to Earth to put their plan into action. Any plan that is to achieve a complete reversal in a planet's course is going to be a little complicated, and this one was no exception. It would require many people to act as unwitting cogs in the mechanism that would manufacture and release the great catalyst into the seas. However, the essential components required to make this catalyst work, and the actions required to make it happen were of a type that any inhabitant of earth at the time would find hard or impossible to understand. A human on Earth at the time might have guessed that it may have taken a team of chemists working night and day in a laboratory to come up with some chemical component that might bring about this kind of change to

mankind. Perhaps they might have thought about the factories that would need to be built to manufacture the huge quantities that would be required, and then perhaps imagined the instrumentation that would be required to plan its exact release. They would have thought about the meetings that might be needed to take place between the worlds so called leaders, the international agreements that would have to be signed, and the power that would be held by the country who had first discovered this miracle catalyst.

Not so sure about last paragraph, go back to it later, he thought, and got up to use the bathroom. He sat back down in front of the laptop, his nose red from squeezing a few spots in the bathroom mirror and continued.

The human imagining these things would have been wrong in every way. What humanity couldn't have known was of a science beyond his Earthly twentieth century science. For this race, from a far off galaxy, had in their possession a science that could look from the very earliest moments in time to the very ends of every universe that every existed. A science that was able to see the infinite number of potential outcomes of every action that might take place now, in the future or in the past. It is a science therefore that knows what the slightest intervention will result in. It is what we all know of today as Futuristics.

John turned to look at Ruby sleeping, she had a worry crease in her forehead.

Futuristics is an exact and complete science and it has long known that there is no such thing as luck, chance, coincidence or magic. But what it does know is that a combination of what might seem like coincidence and chance, fate and luck carefully orchestrated can bring the most extraordinary results, such as changing the course of mankind. Their science searches the infinite outcomes of coincidences for example, where things come together in a kind of magic, and then maps these magic moments and plan how they might be used to bring about desirable changes. From the moment you know the phone will ring then it does to the feeling you get round the roulette table which makes you bet on

number five and it comes up. Chance? Luck? Magic? Or is it just a few minor adjustments in the big plan, just pulling you into line or just making sure you win that hundred dollars so you go home and kiss your wife, so that next morning she brings you coffee in bed, so that...you get the idea.

This science can see the exact chains of events that are required to bring about these events, and can therefore with the slightest interventions set these chains in motion. This is exactly what was to happen on Earth at the end of the twentieth century. Their science had seen that the release of twenty nine thousand plastic bath toys at a specific point in the ocean at a specific time would act as the catalyst needed to bring about this extraordinary change in human fortune, and they made it their task to make it happen. To do this they sent one of their own down onto the surface of the Earth, and that individual chose to take the form of two humans, one man and one woman, Ivan and Heather Morison (authors note: do you think these are believable names?). To set this chain of events in motion this extraterrestrial couple were required to make a number of slight interventions that through their combined and untraceable (of course untraceable only to the mind untrained in this field of science) effects would result in the sciences predicted outcome.

The book you are about to read is the complete collection of accounts from the people that the couple made contact with during their work here on Earth to achieve The Great Release. The book was compiled in the early twenty first century when only the very first inklings were taking place in a few people's minds that perhaps something significant had taken place at the end of their last century. It was unknown at the time what this series of events actually meant, and what would be their intended final outcome. However it is still remarkable to this day that through the dim haze of his twenty first century intellect one man, a Norwegian librarian, fuelled by an overwhelming desire to retrieve a library book the alien couple had failed to return, was able to connect these events in his mind and compile this volume.

John sipped another cup of tea and passed wind. He turned round to see if he had disturbed Ruby but she still lay motionless on the bed, her brow furrowed.

What the Norwegian librarian had seen as he chased the couple was a series of extraordinary or unaccountable events happening in sequence across the globe, and had in some way connected the presence of two mysterious strangers. Of course, at the time the couples purpose and true identity remained a complete mystery to those they met, and to the Norwegian librarian, and before he could finally track them down they vanished.

The Norwegian librarian later went back and collected accounts and interviews from people that the couple had met, and combining them with his first hand accounts, put together this volume. Little did he know at the time, or would ever guess in his lifetime, quite what an instrumental role he was to play in the changing of human destiny, or of the fantastic tales that are told to children these days about the adventures of the poor Norwegian Librarian. He never did find the stolen library book. In the following accounts many things are left unexplained, for at the time they knew nothing of Futistics, and almost nothing is mentioned of the subsequent events and changes brought about by The Great Release. These pages are presented for their historical interest, as an account written at the time of the events leading up to the monumental act of The Great Release, and should be read with compassion and understanding for the writers many mistakes and misunderstandings. And of course safe in the knowledge that you were meant to read this, at this time and on this day.

Seth looked up from the laptop. It was already dark. His eyes felt sore from staring at the screen but he felt a deep sense of satisfaction at having written something at last. Ruby was still asleep on his bed, she looked concerned. 'I'm going to dinner,' Seth said softly, trying to wake her gently.

'Hmmm.'

‘Do you want any dinner?’

‘No,’ Ruby murmured.

‘You know I think it’s better if you eat something.’

‘I feel terrible.’

The ship was pitching now with only a gentle rolling, which meant that its movements were slower but more pronounced. Even Seth could feel a slight queasiness, but that might just be hunger. God, he wondered, what is she going to be like when we get out in the Pacific on the way to New Zealand. It’s bound to be worse than this. ‘Well, ok. See you soon,’ he whispered and he put his hand on her bare arm, it was sweaty, and went to the dining room.

When Ruby eventually woke Seth had returned from dinner and was asleep in her bed. All the cabin lights were still on. She leaned up on her elbows and looked over at him. On the bedside table was an empty bottle of red wine, the contents moving gently with each pitch and roll. She sat up looked at her watch. It was two twenty five a.m.

Arse, she thought. She hated waking up at night. She found the ship much more intimidating. She loathed the idea of them in the middle of the ocean, the waves all around and no way of getting off. Thank goodness they would be in Osaka tomorrow and on dry land. Swinging her legs over the edge of the bed she went round the cabin switching off the lights. It didn’t seem so dark though as it had other nights and she peered out of the windows. The lights on the deck were shining brightly and she could make out the waves all around. We must look strange, like a ghost ship, brightly lit up in the middle of the ocean, she thought and then added, not that there is anyone to see.

Seth stirred and let out a loud snore, before turning on his side. She looked at him a moment and felt a pang of guilt. Poor Seth. I really must try and write something tomorrow, but I feel so overcome with this sea sickness and whole being on a ship business. I never imagined that it would be like this. Maybe I’ll try and eat something, perhaps it will make me feel better. She slipped

out of the door quietly towards the officers lounge where she knew there was a fridge of food for the officers and passengers, plus a whole pile of DVD's, with a particularly good collection of Van Damme's, that might help her while the night away.