

HUNTER APOCRYPHA



Credits

Author: Tim Dedopulos

Developer: Ken Cliffe

Editor: Ed Hall

Art Director: Richard Thomas

Layout and Typesetting: Ron Thompson

Interior Art: Drew Tucker

Front & Back Cover Design: Ron Thompson



735 PARK NORTH BLVD.

SUITE 128

CLARKSTON, GA 30021

USA

© 2000 White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction without the written permission of the publisher is expressly forbidden, except for the purposes of reviews, and for blank character sheets, which may be reproduced for personal use only. White Wolf and World of Darkness are registered trademarks of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Hunter the Reckoning and Hunter Apocrypha are trademarks of White Wolf Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters, names, places and text herein are copyrighted by White Wolf Publishing, Inc.

The mention of or reference to any company or product in these pages is not a challenge to the trademark or copyright concerned.

This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. Reader discretion is advised.

For a free White Wolf catalog call 1-800-454-WOLF.

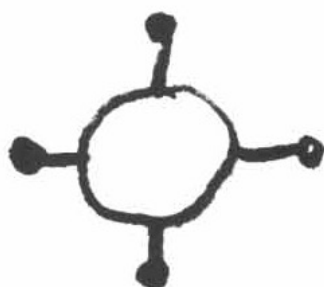
Check out White Wolf online at

<http://www.white-wolf.com>; alt.games.whitewolf and rec.games.frp.storyteller

PRINTED IN THE USA.

HUNTER APOCRYPHA™





ANCHORITE PRESS

Foreword

It is unfortunate, but we are a species that has survived until now despite our own limitations. A depressingly small minority of humans is truly aware and capable of independent thought. Oppressed as we are by the "needs" and "rights" of the masses, those of us who are capable of consciousness have pulled the rest along by their sweaty bootstraps. It is a shame that in order to save true humans from disaster, it is necessary to save everyone else. It would be a happy, healthy world if only the enlightened survived. Sadly, that does not seem to be an option.

The work that you hold in your hands is a record of an astonishing quest to answer the questions that plague the chosen, about our identity and provenance, and about those of the so-called monsters. All the answers to the mystery of our powers lie within, if you can see them. This is without a doubt the single most important document in the world, which is why I have been selected to bring it to you. I do so with reservations, but the good that it will do by arming the few who matter is far more important than the havoc that will be caused by fools.

I received this book in characteristically enigmatic fashion from the author, who recognizes my perception, and who has been my guide and teacher throughout the puzzles of our imbuing. It seems certain that he is the most insightful man to walk the Earth. He has powers that I cannot dream of, and spends much of his time weighing the future on the scales of the present, through the eyes of the past. His name is Fyodor, he was born Russian and that is all I am prepared to divulge. Undoubtedly, should you prove worthy of knowing more, you will meet him in person as I have been privileged to do.

It has taken much work to get this book into your hands. Anchorite Press has required a great deal of time and effort to establish, time and effort that could have been devoted elsewhere. Fyodor's notes had to be restored to order and annotated for your understanding. The document then had to be filmed in preparation for printing, a laborious and expensive chore that forced me to deal with several imbeciles. Getting the finished works out into the world has similarly impinged upon my time and privacy. I trust that you will treat the material here with the respect it — and my time — deserves.

The document speaks for itself. I defy any chosen, no matter how oafish, to read it without being shocked, surprised and moved. I warn you now: It is as I feared. There is little cause for optimism in what Fyodor has to say, and even less in his predictions of the future. We have a thankless and dangerous task ahead of us as painful reward for the hazards we have faced so far. I may say more on that later. In the meantime, many of you will find Fyodor's terms strange and difficult to comprehend. As you are undoubtedly too stupid to fathom their true meaning, I provide translations for you here and throughout. I do so in the same spirit that I shared Fyodor's enigmatic Asian scroll online several months ago — to try to minimize the damage you would cause in your lunacy, rather than to imply any worth in your lives. When the end comes, we will see who survives and who is culled from the gene pool.

—Violin99

Fyodor's Terms

Common Terms

Dark One

monster; a supernatural being better not specified

devil

leech, vampire, blood drinker (Fyodor's term comes from the Romanian word "dracul," meaning dragon or devil, as popularized by Stoker)

devil's parasite

pawn, puppet, Renfield; a human, controlled by a blood drinker or other supernatural being, who appears corrupt to our sight

hunter

chosen, imbued

manipulator

luck binder, warlock, witch, wizard

ostrich

bystander, gawker

puppeteer

demon, demonic possession, poltergeist, spirit rider; a spirit controlling a person, animal or object

shambling

corpse

rot, shambler, walking dead, zombie

Shining One

Herald, Messenger

sign

a symbol in our code

skin-changer

loup-garou, shapechanger, werewolf

the call

the imbuing

the darkness

The supernatural, monsters as a general phenomenon

wisp

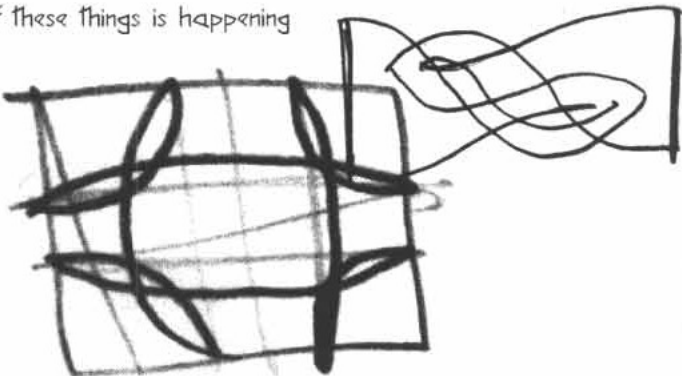
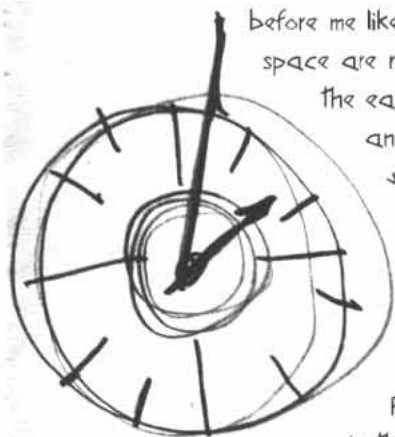
ghost, phantom, shade, spirit

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

I — my name is Fyodor — have been hunting. At first, I hunted like we all did, with bone-tipped spears, stalking through the caveman's night to glimpse monsters. Later, my tools became stronger and I hunted with experiments and analyses, needing to label what I had found. Since then, however, I have been hunting with the most useful tools of all, with experience, wielding myth and rumor in the pursuit of understanding.

I have found many answers. The world is splayed open before me like a dead mouse on a student's desk. Time and space are relative terms, if you have the eyes to see and the ears to hear. As my knowledge has grown, time and space have become less and less significant. I was taught as you probably were, to see time as a line, another arrow-straight dimension like the directions of space. I was taught a lie. Time — like space — is far more complicated, curved and twisted, as befits the entrails of the universe.

For example, as I write these words, I know I sit in this small cheap room, sheltering vainly from the bitter cold. I can see this much. Outside, I can feel the rumble of battered trucks carrying material through the filthy Novgorod streets. But I can also smell the stench of burning incense in a hut on the steppes, where an old shaman has just shown me his spirits. Through the bathroom door, I can hear a manipulator screaming as the poison I have fed her snuffs out her life. I do not remember which of these things is happening now and which is memory — if, indeed, any of them are now, even this room around me. When we were split, my mind split too.



I would like to start at the beginning, but I may have to end with it, instead. That has been my quest, you see - to find where it began. They set me the question. The manipulator is screaming as she dies. The poison should be fairly painless, but something in her recognizes the inevitability of her death. why does she fight against death? why do we all fight against death? Is it just fear of the unknown? It could be that the Dark Ones were once people whose fear of death outweighed their humanity. If so, that



might be a useful line of approach to the "problem" they present.

Elsewhere, across five thousand years of time, men spin tales of gods and monsters and heroes. Stories, like men, are born compete and then die. But in the process, they give birth to other tales and pieces of truth are hidden within.

In a dingy London cafeteria, Emma rests her hand gently on my arm and tells me of a great evil waiting to eat the world. Back in America, door locked against the oh-so-frightening world, my apprentice and subject pores over an ancient scroll, horrified by what he reads. Across the world, cogs and wheels trapped within paths of my shaping twist around, their struggles revealing not only their own hopes and fears, but the fate of humanity itself. Friedrich Nietzsche had a glimpse idea of the truth. So did poor doomed Howard Lovecraft. But neither of them won through.

In the meanwhile, it is October and I am walking across a park in a bleak part of Kolpino, just outside Leningrad. A group of young men, four shaven-headed fools, attack a small old man. From the taunts they shout between blows, I gather that he refused to pay them their extortion money. Not an uncommon incident. I wonder, "Should I help him?" It will do him no good if I am punched and kicked, too.

One onlooker feels different to me. He proves to be something of a Good Samaritan, rushing up to the young men and pushing them away with almost berserk fury. He grabs one youth by the back of the shirt and the boy goes flying. Suddenly, a voice seems to scream in my mind with words of fire, "ON WHICH SIDE DO YOU STAND?" The veil of illusion dimming my sight rips away and in an instant I can see the corruption. Nothing will ever be the same again.



SOME QUESTIONS

All great events and quests start with a question. What will happen if I achieve this thing? What will happen if I do not obey that person? Where is the Holy Grail to be found? My quest is no different. Who are we? Who made us? What must we do? Why? We hunt Dark Ones. That is what we are, it is what we do, it is what defines us. Our purposes in that hunt vary and sometimes we are at odds with each other. Some of us want to slay, while others want to save or to understand. We define ourselves, however, in opposition to the Dark Ones we are faced with - "They are Dark Ones. We are hunters."

Are we? Are they? Very few of our kind have any idea of how we are created, of what or who we are. How are we to say that we are different? I have heard several arguments amongst our kind that we are more pure than those against which we set ourselves.

The first rationale is that we are different because our sight does not reveal us to be supernatural, unlike the prey we stalk. That is reasonable circumstantial evidence. If they, the foe, appear to us as corrupt and we ourselves do not, then we must be different. Or must we? Perhaps, at the end, our sight merely does not recognize our own kind because we are of the same type. What in that suggests that we are not Dark Ones ourselves?



The second claim to our purity is that we are driven by the Shining Ones to work in defense of humanity, to lessen the influence of monsters on our world. But many monsters work against each other. This is a thing that I — and those whom I have talked to and studied — have seen. Further, not all of us truly work in the interests of humanity. Some of us work for self-aggrandizement. Some are mad with despair, power or hatred. So where is the clear dividing line between the Dark Ones and ourselves? There is no such thing.

The third argument in our defense is that we simply know that we are human, that we feel human, that we sympathize with humans and that we share human fears and weaknesses. But there are Dark Ones who would say the same. I have spoken to hunters who say that manipulators consider themselves to be fully human, merely with gifts — much like ours. We cannot cling to this rationale of our own "humanity."

Yet, it cannot be denied that most Dark Ones influence, control or prey on humans and most hunters do not. But perhaps that merely means we are less ambitious. We must, if we are honest with ourselves, also recognize that humanity has had a very adverse effect on the planet, so is it righteous to want to save our species? However, if we are truly different, cut from a heroic cloth, where do our gifts come from? Is it possible that they come from the same source as the powers of the Dark Ones? Were the Dark Ones created by the same events that created the world or that created the Shining Ones or that created us?

Do not misunderstand me. I do not think we are Dark Ones. I do, however, think that we need to know what we are, what the Dark Ones are and whether there is as much difference between us as we like to think. We assume that we walk the path of righteousness, but assumption is the mother of all errors. Establishing fact demands investigation, tests. Sometimes tests must be abandoned halfway or carried out relentlessly to their ultimate end, no matter how righteous a subject may claim to be. There is a battle being fought for the soul of the world, and it is a battle that I mean to win. Whatever the price.



Man Wounds 15 in Bizarre Church Attack

Police are questioning a man after a sword attack left 11 churchgoers injured and four in a critical condition on Sunday.

A man burst into [redacted] Church in [redacted], south London during morning Mass and attacked members of the congregation with a sword. One man suffered severe hand and face injuries and 10 others were hurt in the attack and the panic that followed. Police said victims ranged in age from 16 to 78 and included four men and seven women from white, black and Asian communities.

The man was overpowered by members of the congregation, including an off-duty policeman, who used an organ pipe as a weapon.

Police are holding the man, identified as [redacted], at Croydon police station.

The most seriously injured of the victims was found by paramedics,

who followed a trail of blood leading from the church to find him collapsed on a sidewalk two streets away. He had left the church after having his jaw and neck slashed deeply, and his finger and thumb chopped off.

Parish priest Father [redacted] told the BBC that the man was prevented from causing further injuries by a policeman who was reading a psalm at the time the attack began. [redacted] said: "I suppose I'm thankful — though shocked — that the policeman pulled out one of the organ pipes and use it to hold the man at bay."

[redacted] unemployed, has been charged with attempted murder against [redacted]. The attacker appears before Croydon magistrates on Tuesday.

Several sections of this manuscript comprise Fyodor's core evidence for his understanding of our nature. This is the first. I have seen a foreshadowing of the horror that could result through misunderstanding, so I endeavor to make sure that everyone, even the least worthy, can understand Fyodor's message.

—Violin99

THE DIVIDED SOUL

We are intended to be one, a single soul radiant in its perfection. We all know it. The emptiness of being split fills us all from the moment we are born. We hunger to fill the empty space within us and it drives the whole of our world.

There are many answers to filling the hole, that Abyss within. People rely on many crutches: sex, love, family, friends, prayer, science, money, activism, alcohol, drugs, games, dancing, danger, violence, bigotry, crime, hatred and any of a thousand more. Some people drift from one answer to the next, hopeless addicts in search of the drug that will make them happy. Others find an answer

that they can believe in and fool themselves into thinking that they are happy. Everyone wants more and more all the time, though, and we are unhappy.

Many people, in my country as well as yours, failing at love, decide that money is the answer. It is such a seductive answer to our problems, because it is difficult to achieve yet it is held before us, in sight but out of reach, just like teasing a baby with honey. The rich are as unhappy, empty and broken as the poor. They are just better fed and warmer.

The world is large and there are more than six billion of us in it. Every answer that can be tried has been tried, and still no one has stood up and said, "Here I am. I am complete."

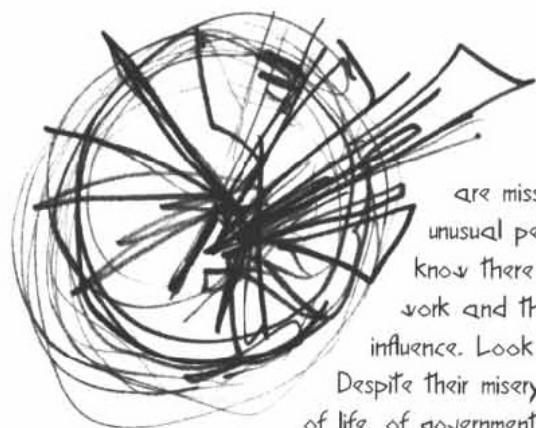
Money, God, sex, death – the answer does not lie within our reach.

So, we are divided, hollow and empty, and the world does not hold the answer why. When you have exhausted everything material and emotional, what is left?

The answer is obvious. We are missing half of our souls.

Looking at the world, at the mass of people, shows what we





are missing. Set aside the unusual people, us, for as we all know there are dark forces at work and they have great influence. Look at a normal street.

Despite their misery, despite the burdens of life, of government, of crime, most people are good, sensible and reasonable. The majority of our species is decent.

The missing part of the human soul, by definition, is the part that is not present in everyday life. The part that is missing is therefore wild, intense, unreasonable and savage. With the decent, routine, sensible part to give it perspective and hold it in check, our other side would be exciting, creative, fun-loving and free. Without this counterbalance, our severed lost side is greedy, selfish and cruel.

We have not been split from our perfect partner, we have not been split from huge piles of money and we have not been split from God. We have been split from the darkness, and that darkness stalks the night as an entity unto itself. Like we do. Like we are.

Humans are the light side, ordered, benevolent, restricted.

Those we perceive as Dark Ones are

the other side: chaotic, willful and unrestrained.

"ON WHICH SIDE DO YOU STAND?" they asked. Which side are we hunters on? Which side are you on? What if you don't have to take sides?



In this section, Fyodor says that the natural state of humanity is as a united soul, lightness and darkness working together creatively. Each side counterbalances the other to produce harmony. This unity has been sundered, no longer harmonious, but in opposition. We are one half and the monsters are the other.

—Violin99

Imagine there were two of
you.

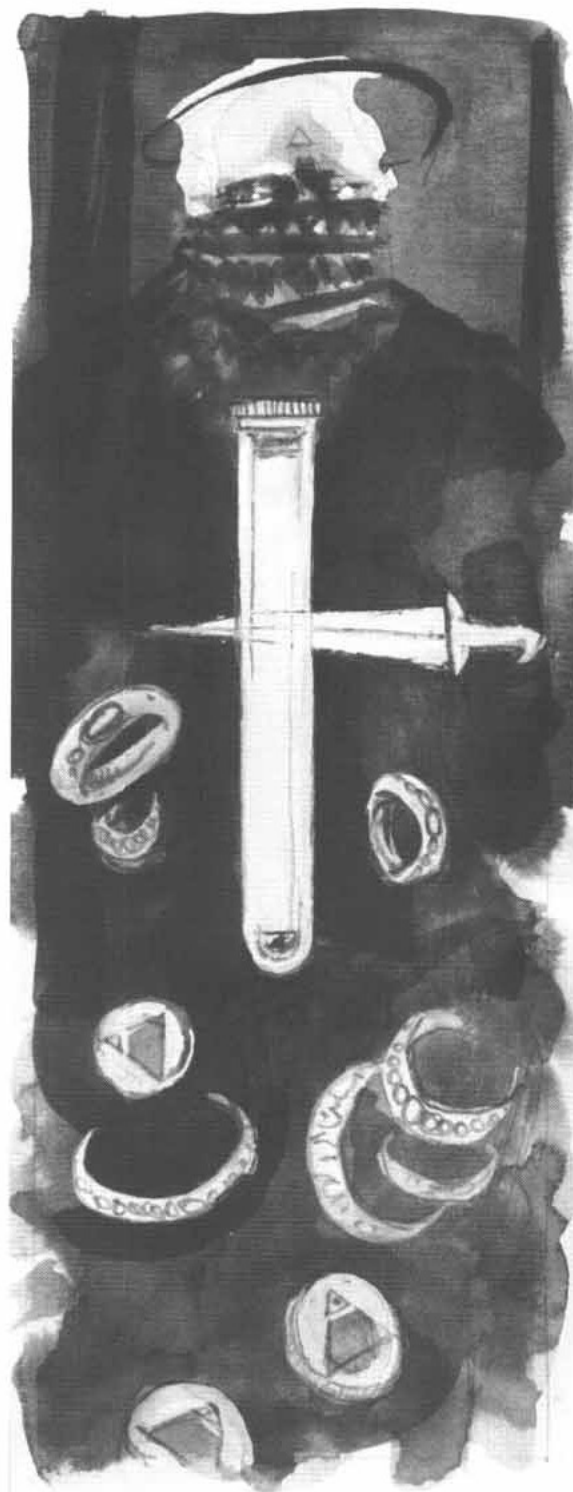
which one would win?

The Disease

Like money, the influence of power corrupts even the best minds. We all know it. It is one of the most common criticisms of political systems across the world, whether socialist, imperial or dictatorial. Like it or not, it is part of being human. We have power and our powers increase with our experience and control. Are we then being corrupted?

In a souk in Bur Dubai, the old quarter of a sprawling Arabian city, there is a man who claims to talk to long-dead sages. A gold merchant and hunter, he spends his days selling bracelets to tourists and coins to traders and his nights stalking the darkness. One of us, he is free of the taint of death that surrounds so many. He claims to have made contact with a spirit who tells him mighty secrets, weapons to use against the darkness.

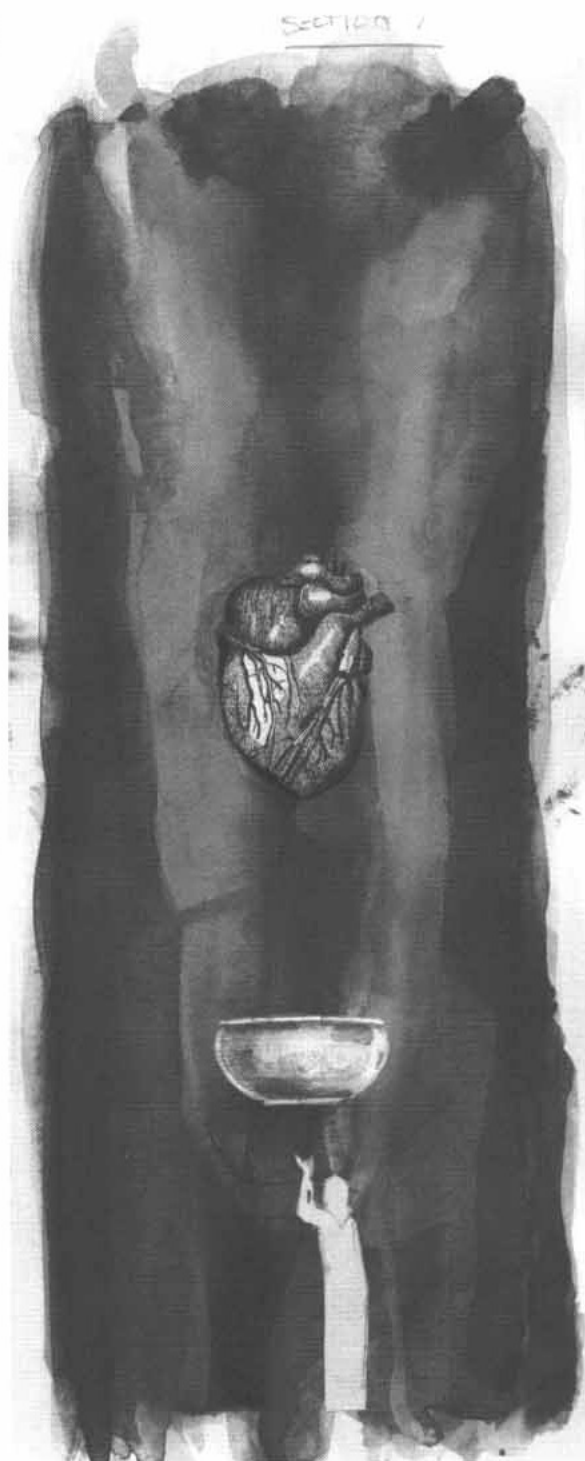
I have spoken with him and witnessed his powers. He demonstrated skills that were unknown to me, that I had never heard of before. He claimed many abilities and showed me how he tracks down the stalkers of the night with the aid of a drop of blood from a vial. He can gauge the direction and distance of a devil, even its comparative strength - for as you must know, not all Dark Ones are equal.



During the quiet
time, in the after-
noon when the sun
is fiercest, he has
tracked down
devils and slain
them with the aid
of his bonded
servants.

Bonding servants
to make them
reliable and
trustworthy is a
trick that he
says his ancient
sage taught him.
He uses the same
substance to
achieve this bonding
that he uses for
tracking. We sat in
his shop and
drank bitter
coffee while he
explained how he
captured drifting

tourists who would not be missed and decanted their heart's blood to power his new skills. He maintains that a few impure ones each month are a small price to pay for such a large advantage in the war. He may be right. Certainly, his servants are in no mind to disagree. I gave him some suggestions on how to identify true drifters that would make safe prey and - later - hired people to observe him. It will be interesting to learn when power consumes him and he joins the Dark Ones.



THE GOLDEN TIME

Before the split, before we were sundered and our species was reshaped into the broken remnant that we know today, there was a Golden Age, a time of plenty and wonder.

Christian and related mythology tells us of the Garden of Eden, where the founders of humanity,

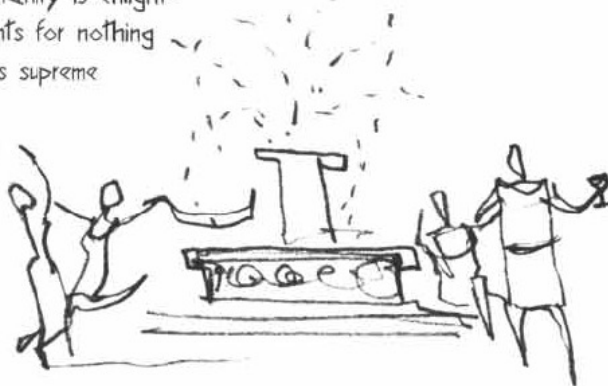
Adam and Eve, lived in fulfillment and peace.

Everything was natural and perfect and there was no death, no pain, no hunger and no sin. The equinoctial cycles of Hindic cults talk of the Golden Age, when humanity is enlightened and wants for nothing and virtue reigns supreme over evil.

In Zoroastrian thought, the God Ormazd created the material and spiritual world in perfection.

His enemy Ahriman was imprisoned for 3,000 years following an earlier disagreement. At the end of that time, Ahriman created six demons and a hellish realm and began to corrupt Ormazd's creation.

A Golden Age is also an important feature of less organized religious systems. Nomadic African tribes tell about a time of plenty when in order to eat all you had to do was cast your spear and there would be a delicacy caught upon it. Shamanic and animist cultures around the world cherish ideas of the perfect spirit realm from which mankind is banished, seemingly forever.





The Dogon tell stories of shining aliens who taught them to live when the world became harsh. The aliens claimed to be from far-off Sirius. They revealed astronomical data that, while passed down for centuries, would not be verified by scientists until a few decades ago. All this is set against the backdrop of the Mayan calendar, counting down the remaining years as this Earthly cycle descends from its original golden beginning to a hellish existence, as time itself comes to an end in the Christian year AD 2012.



Sometimes, when the visions come, I am permitted glimpses of the Golden Age long past. More often, they show me times and places that are close to the here and now, although I can never be sure of exact details. They come upon me like crystals of awareness dropped into my mind. They unfold, hard-edged and certain and cannot be mistaken for my normal thoughts. It is impossible to doubt their accuracy, however, even though they are unlike the glimpses of the future or the past with which I am more familiar, which I can experience at will.

In the most recent vision I recall, I saw a lean old man in a gray suit, sitting in an expensive meeting room high in a glass-walled office tower.

He was reading documents that I could not see properly, but the seal of what seemed the NASA space agency was on the wall behind him. A dark-haired subordinate entered, crossed the room and they spoke for a moment. Then, without warning, the dark-haired one reached into the old man's chest and stopped his heart.

I do not know what this means or whether it has passed, is happening or will happen. I do not know the people or places involved. I do not even know if I am supposed to try to do anything about it. Despite this, I know that it is important.

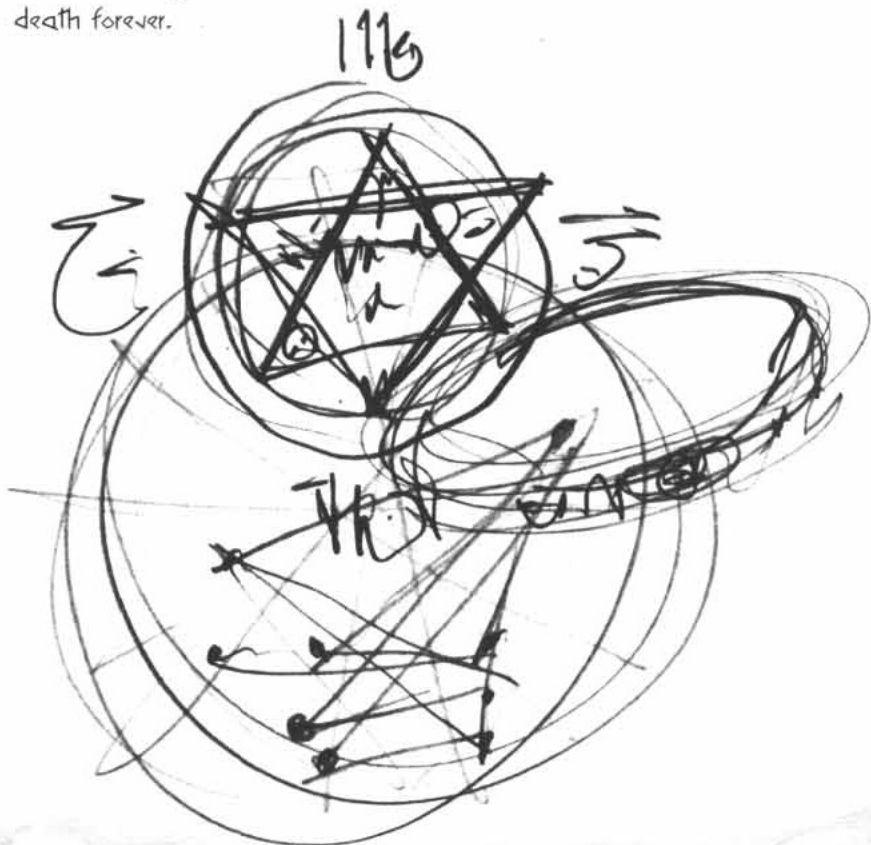


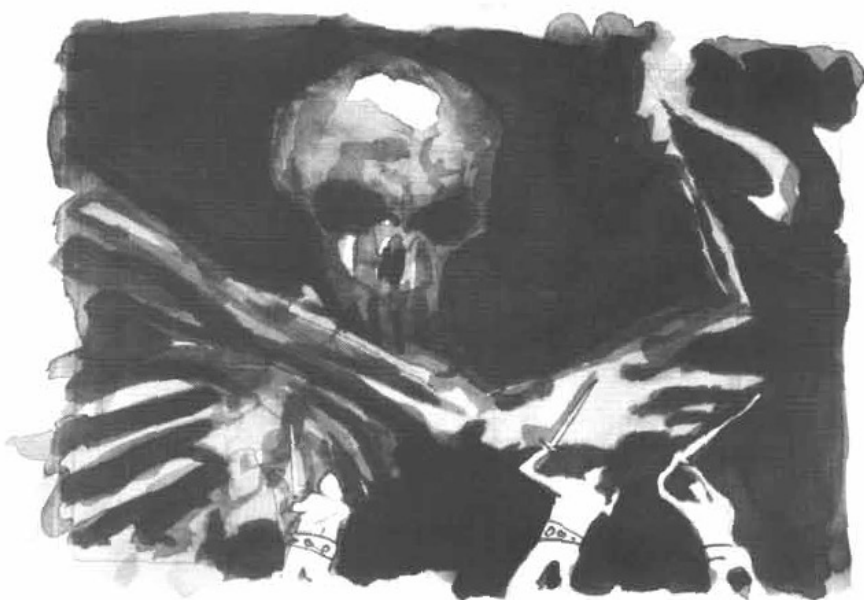
My visions of the Golden Time can be recognized easily by the clothes that the people wear and the way in which they behave. I have studied the myths of that time and of the ancient lost domains of humanity - Shambhala, Lemuria, Mu, the Lost Land, Atlantis, Lyonesse, Hyperborea, Ake'Boyu, Faery, Eden, Irem and many others. It is impossible not to see connections.

In the Golden Age, humanity had not yet been sundered from our dark half.

Before we were split, we were in balance with ourselves. Humans were creative, dynamic and expressive, a proud, noble race with wisdom and temperance to match our strength and lust for life. Free of disease and aging, at peace with ourselves, we lived for hundreds of years and indulged in many pleasures, as well as achieving great wonders. No one went hungry. Most of all, though, there were no Dark Ones. Humans were the masters of their own destiny.

The greatest members of the human race were blessed with mighty powers. These heroes were like gods, strong in magic and learning. Their fondest goal, which their studies centered on, was to banish death forever.





They failed, of course.





They are responsible
for the agony of the
manipulator. They are
responsible for her
screams. Perhaps her
pain will cleanse her.

Here, Fyodor shows that before our recorded history, there was a time when humanity lived in peace, harmony and plenty. This is known as the Golden Time. He has seen this era in visions and has used his power to share those visions with me. From what I have seen, it was a happy time of enlightenment and understanding. I weep for its loss.

—Violin99

The Promise of Krishna

When Righteousness
Declines, O Bharata!
When Wickedness is
strong,
I rise, from age to age, and
take visible shape,
And move a man with men,
Succoring the good,
thrusting the evil back,
And setting Virtue on her
seat again.

This is a peculiar entry. I am not sure how or why Fyodor arrived in Maine, and I am not sure what it was that he found there. I have no idea what it was that he saw in this account and it pains me to have to admit such lack of knowledge.

—Violin99

Fowler's Bog

The town of Albion in Maine, United States, was founded in 1754. The inhabitants have long since forgotten the significance of the town's name. The region has faded into the kind of decaying, quiet collapse that can be found in such tiny isolated hamlets across the world. There are more cows than people in Albion, and the local economic system is based on the production of milk. Apart from dairy farmers, there are a few business people, land owners and a small scattering of recluses, people who seek to escape larger civilization.

If you leave town by way of an old logging trail that runs from behind the general store and cut across thawing farmland, you'll reach the edge of Fowler's Bog, a vast expanse of dense marshland stretching from Albion to the town of Unity, some eight miles away. Something lives in the marshes of Fowler's Bog; something huge and black and strange that walks the woods at night and sleeps in the water. I could not be sure what it was, and I could discern no information or weakness regarding it.



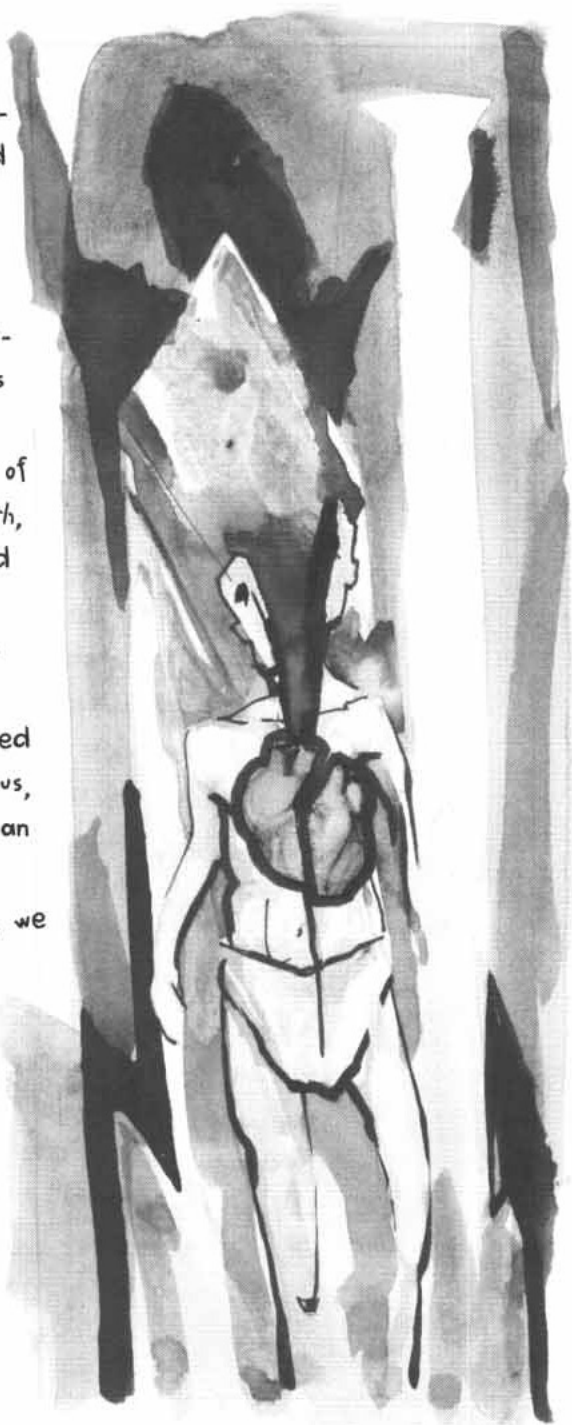


The Coming of the Dark

The Golden Age ended in disaster. A cataclysm overtook the Earth and our spirit was sundered in the shock. The enlightened time of peace ended forever. In the legends of Christianity, Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden for Eve's sin in eating the apple of Knowledge, placed in front of her by the serpent of evil desire. Tempted beyond her capacity to resist, she ate – acquired knowledge, if you will – and that sin could not be reversed. In the myths of Greece, Pandora was given a box in which all of the evils of the world were imprisoned. All misery and pain was contained within and the world was joyous. Curiosity overcame her better judgement and she became convinced that the box held wonders. She opened it and allowed all the miseries to escape, an act which the Gods did not see fit to undo.



According to the old tales of Atlantis, the sorcerer-priests of the fabled island devised a crystal machine that would purify the human heart, destroying the few elements of corruption within, giving us knowledge of and power over death, and allowing mankind to live forever, free and joyous. The machine banished the corruption, but it ripped the darkness out of us, cleaving us in half, an irreversible schism. Without our darkness, we were but half the beings we had been, weak, crippled and broken. worse, our darkness took on sentient form, out of our life force, and stalked the horrified remnants of humanity.



Howard Lovecraft knew that there were secrets too terrible for mankind to know. He maintained that human life was a tiny drop of light in an ocean of evil and that our existence involved walking a thin line between oblivions. He was certain that pushing the boundaries of knowledge too far would let the Old Ones in and life itself would be swept away.

The philosopher-sage Monroe claims that curiosity about the world and the experience of life caused spirits to become trapped in the cycle of incarnation that dominates the modern world. Desperate for one more try on the wheel of the world, they ignore their golden spiritual heritage to wallow in the mud of human existence.



When you look at mythology and legend, you see a dominating motif – that humanity's curiosity and desire to learn brought about the end of the Golden Age, and the darkness was created. This is the first time that Dark Ones come into being. However, this perception could be human guilt seeking to attribute blame for a simple disaster. Several mythologies claim that a cataclysm came to pass at the same time that the Dark Ones first arise. This was a geological disaster that caused widespread death among humanity, and which put the Golden Age beyond our reach, once and for all. It also typically served to wall away the Dark Ones for a time, though, in a prison that kept them separate from us.



The Great Flood is a myth common to many cultures, not just to the Hebraic peoples. There was a great rain and the waters rose and scoured the world. Whole civilizations were washed away, leaving a remnant to rebuild the world. Atlantis, Lyonesse and Mu are all held to have sunk. Eden, Babel, Lemuria and Shangri-La were snatched away from human reach. The continents were rocked. Similar echoes of mythology from cultures around the world – situated in Polynesia, Asia, America and Europe – echo the myth of the cataclysm. Given the distribution of these legends, there is some grounds for accepting a worldwide cataclysm.

Whether it was caused by an asteroid as scientists claim, by Raven the trickster or by Atlantean experiments, the end result was the same: The people of the world were harmed greatly and the culture of the Golden Age was destroyed. In the aftermath, mankind regressed to a primitive state.

The most ancient cultural remains available to us are writings on clay tablets, from Sumeria and the surrounding areas. These have been estimated to be six thousand years old. But the Sphinx, the great lion-like statue on Egypt's Gizeh plateau, has been dated at over 10,000 years old. The only conclusion to be drawn is that it is one of the few remaining artifacts of the Golden Age, from before the dark came.



Our happiness and fulfillment
was taken from us. There was a
cataclysm of some sort, probably
a flood. The Golden Age was
destroyed and our peace with it.
Monsters came into being for
the first time and were impris-
oned, but our enlightened
society was destroyed forever.
—Violin99

THE TIME OF HEROES

Like gods, heroes can be found in every corner of the world. No matter what the dominant opinions and beliefs of a culture, it holds tales and legends of people who were superhuman in their abilities, who fought for humanity, who saved us from a terrible fate.

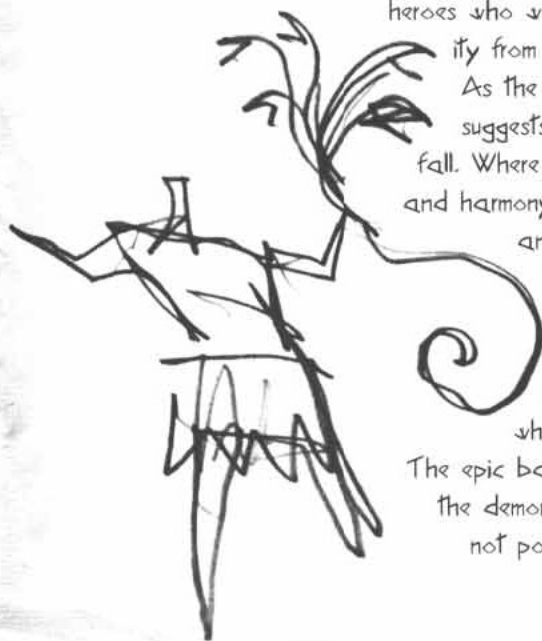
It is interesting that the idea of truly superior humans is so dominant. Atheistic sociologists and anthropologists have long held that the universal belief in gods comes from primitive people observing the forces of nature. Awe-inspiring displays impressed our ape-like ancestors so much that they invented gods to explain them, and the habit stayed with us. All well and good, except for our heroes.

As our experiences before and after the fall show only too well, people are just that — people. Petty, vain, fearful, kind, loving and generous, they are not exceptional. Even today, there are no exceedingly fast runners who could outpace a horse, or beautiful girls whose loveliness could charm songbirds from the trees. Where, then, did our ancestors find the inspiration to tell stories of such people?

The answer is inescapable — the tales are distant memories of elder times. After the fall of the Golden Age, there were heroes who were tasked with protecting humanity from the Dark Ones.

As the legend of the Tower of Babel suggests, humanity was divided after the fall. Where we had previously lived in peace and harmony, now we knew strife and pain and we fought with one another. At the same time, we were forced to struggle with the Dark Ones that were newly unleashed upon the world. Our race fractured, just when it needed to be strongest.

The epic battles of heroes and gods against the demons make a fascinating cycle. It is not possible to go into great detail in



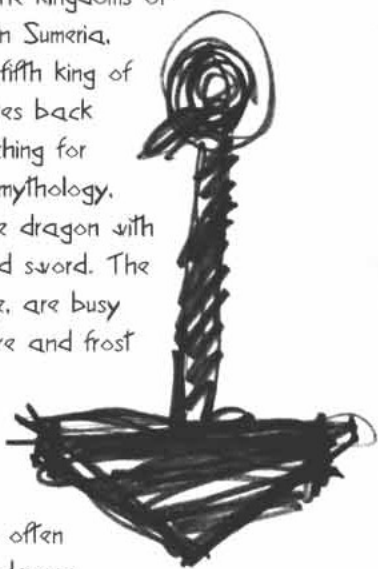
this journal, for there is neither space nor time. Such an investigation could fill volumes, but it is worth considering the scope of such heroics.

In ancient Greece, we find Zeus leading his brother gods against the evil Titans, including his own father Cronus, whom he chokes with a rock wrapped in swaddling cloths. Later, mighty heroes such as Hercules, Theseus and Odysseus battle back and forth across the kingdoms of the land, thwarting evil. In Sumeria, the dauntless Gilgamesh, fifth king of Uruk after the flood, drives back the darkness while searching for immortality. In Germanic mythology, Siegfried slays Fafnir the dragon with his foster-father's reforged sword. The gods themselves, meanwhile, are busy fighting the evil giants of fire and frost and working to counteract the machinations of the malevolent god Loki.

Christian mythology has heroes killing monsters too, often in the form of dragons or demons.

Saints such as George and Michael are known as beast-killers, dedicated to making the land safe for the faithful. King Arthur and his knights search for the Holy Grail that restores the Golden Age and halts the sickness of the land. Arthur also expels monsters and banishes evil spirits.

Back home in Russia, the dawn sisters — Utrennyaya, the morning star and Vechernyaya, the evening star — and the midnight star Zorya keep the world safe from a monstrous dog that wants to eat the constellation Ursa Minor. If the dog escapes and eats the stars, the universe comes to an end. These are all natural heroes, often characterized as the children of the gods. The newborn baby Hercules, for example, strangles two





snakes sent to kill him in his crib. But not all heroes are born knowing their vocations, and it is these cases that are most significant to us.

They hold fascinating similarities to our own hunter experiences.

The hero Ilya Muromets is a bogatyr, a warrior-hero who fights monsters and defends the land. The son of a farmer, he is born near Murom. He is said to be ill as a child and cannot even move until he is 33 — an interesting parallel to the way we are granted our powers, capriciously, seemingly regardless of age or status. He

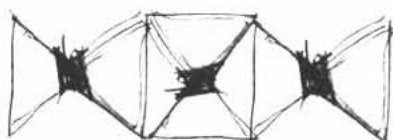
defeats a monster called Solovey-Razboynik, a forest creature that can kill people by screaming.

In a similar transformation, a Chinese bean-curd salesman called Zhang changes his name to Guan and becomes a noted general and adventurer, fighting evil and casting out demons. On his death, he becomes the Taoist war-god Emperor Guan. Again, the sudden assumption of a life dedicated to casting out evil strikes a chord. Chinese mythology actually has a myriad of enlightened heroes devoted to casting out demons and monsters and defeating undead creatures such as



leaping vampires and poisonous zombies. These heroes are often monks and scholars who gain holy powers to be able to expel evil.

It is not quite the same, but in the mythology of the Mayan people in South America, as recorded in an ancient book called the "Popul Vuh," two important heroes are a pair of twins known as Hunaphu



and Xbalanque. Their task is to overthrow the evil lords of the underworld, much as ours would seem to be. During their adventures, the mighty bat-spirit Camazotz cuts off and steals Hunaphu's head. Using magic, his brother replaces the missing head with a gourd. Later, the head is retrieved and Hunaphu is made whole again.

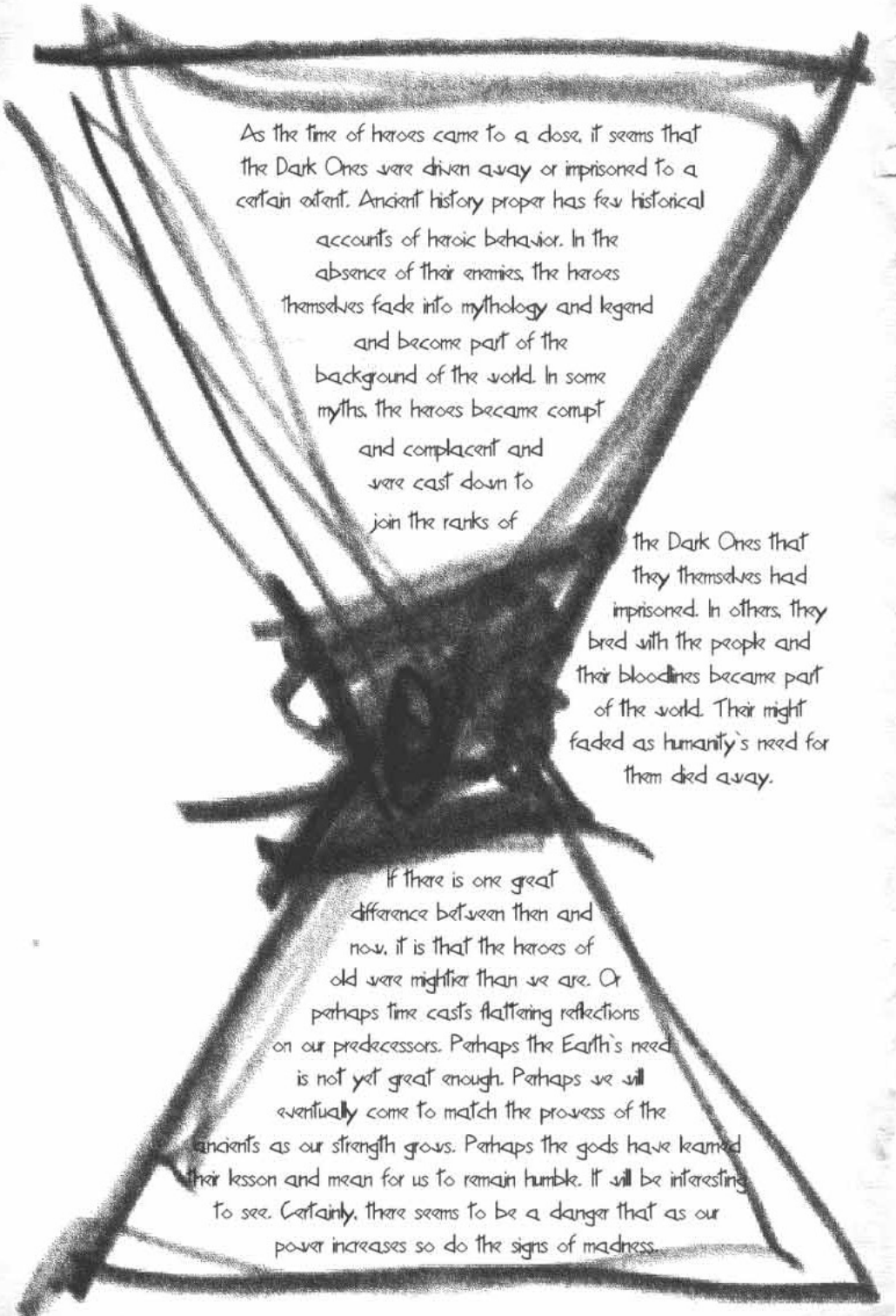
If you look at the bones of this story, you see two heroes, brothers, who have been given the task of defeating evil. One has a part of his body cut off and the other replaces it. I have done that much myself, envisioning a maimed youth whole and then bringing that vision into reality.

There are many parallels throughout myth and legend between ancient heroes and modern hunters. If you allow for the thousands of years that have passed since the tales of heroes were first put in place, and the way that stories have transferred from one culture to another and so through time and space, the similarities can be quite astonishing. The old heroes were, for the most part, men and women selected by the gods to face darkness. Sometimes the mandate came by decree directly from the gods. Other times it was an accident of birth or divine parentage that marked a person as heroic, or proxies were sent to invest the hero with powers. Does this not sound familiar?



Every part of the world has its own gods. Perhaps this is a reflection of a crowded celestial realm where deities bicker for space and worshippers. Perhaps it is a mask and all are but fragments of one god. In the end, it does not matter to the heroes of old whether they were chosen by Zeus' seed, selected by Valkyries searching for valor, caught up by the tidal flow of Yin and Yang, received training passed down from the world's secret masters in Atlantis or Shangri-La or even if they were the favorites of the Emperor of Heaven himself. The Gods claimed these heroes, and the chosen did mighty deeds to push back the darkness.





As the time of heroes came to a close, it seems that the Dark Ones were driven away or imprisoned to a certain extent. Ancient history proper has few historical accounts of heroic behavior. In the absence of their enemies, the heroes themselves fade into mythology and legend and become part of the background of the world. In some myths, the heroes became corrupt and complacent and were cast down to join the ranks of

the Dark Ones that they themselves had imprisoned. In others, they bred with the people and their bloodlines became part of the world. Their might faded as humanity's need for them died away.

If there is one great difference between then and now, it is that the heroes of old were mightier than we are. Or perhaps time casts flattering reflections on our predecessors. Perhaps the Earth's need is not yet great enough. Perhaps we will eventually come to match the prowess of the ancients as our strength grows. Perhaps the gods have learned their lesson and mean for us to remain humble. It will be interesting to see. Certainly, there seems to be a danger that as our power increases so do the signs of madness.

The heroic age that Fyodor talks of existed at the end of the Golden Time. The great learning and wisdom of the people at that time created the myths that would later become the myths of heroes we know today. By these heroes' valorous efforts, the monsters were cast aside, locked away from the world as best as could be accomplished.
—Violin99

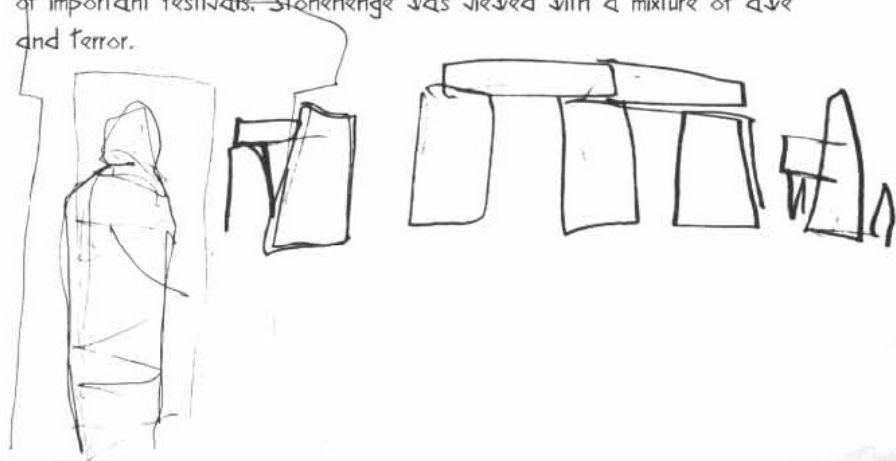
POINTS ON A CIRCLE

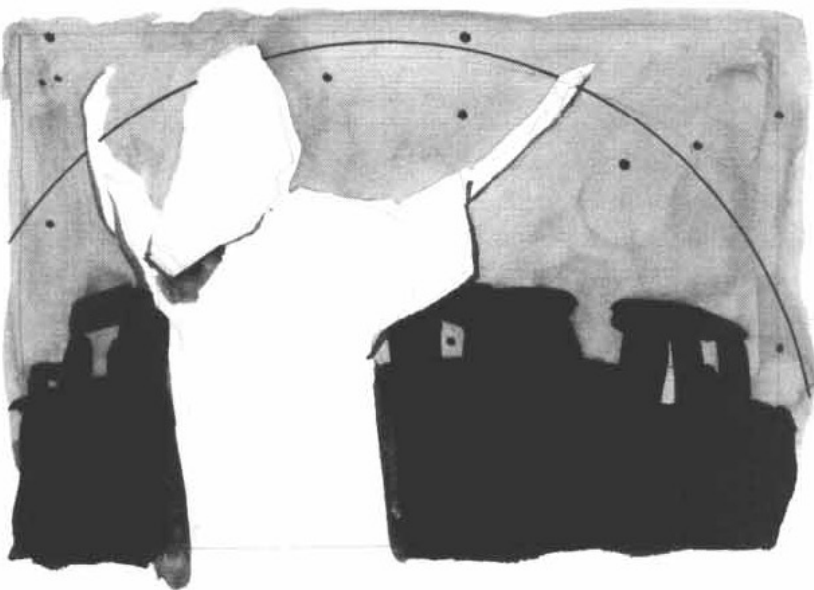
I first met Emma in a library. I was reading an old book on ancient lands, a history of Egypt and its strange Gods. She may have noticed the book, because she came over and said to me, "I fight evil and I had scanned the traces of your importance. I thought to find you here and here you are."

Emma was young and pretty, full of joy in life and of curiosity about hidden mysteries. She knew nothing about hunters and I did not reveal our existence or powers to her. She claimed to use cunning devices to uncover ancient secrets and lost knowledge. I never saw her machines at work; she did not offer and I did not ask. However, over the weeks that I knew her, she provided a great deal of useful and interesting information to help me in my quest.

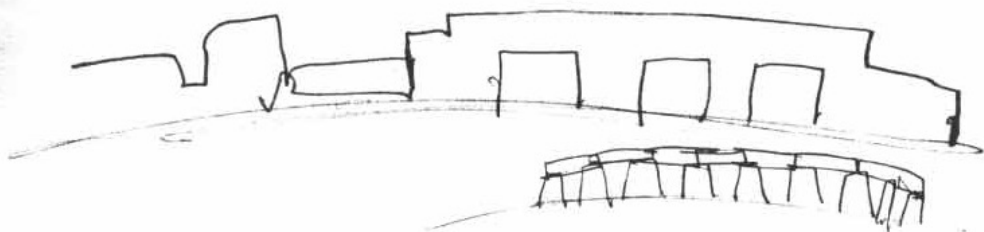
The knowledge she passed on was often surprising. With information that she provided, I believe I was able to work out the true purpose of Stonehenge, the ancient megalithic monument in southern England. Many researchers have proposed theories on the purpose of the mighty stone construction. The most commonly accepted is that it was a site of worship, designed to provide astronomical and astrological timings for its builders to use in the planning and celebration of festivals.

By scanning through the site's history, however, Emma was able to tell me that there were no grand religious celebrations held there. Instead, it was usually deserted, shunned by humans and beasts alike. A similarly designed construction made of wood was built just a few miles away, on the same sort of scale, and it too was abandoned. Today, nothing of the second monument remains. Far from being an annual site of important festivals, Stonehenge was viewed with a mixture of awe and terror.



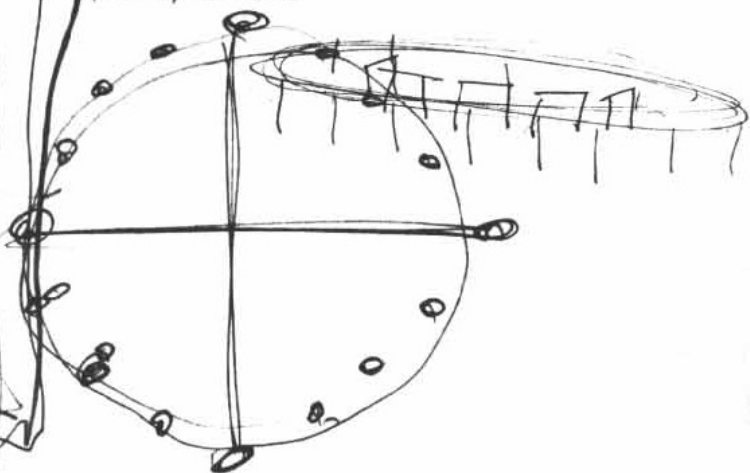
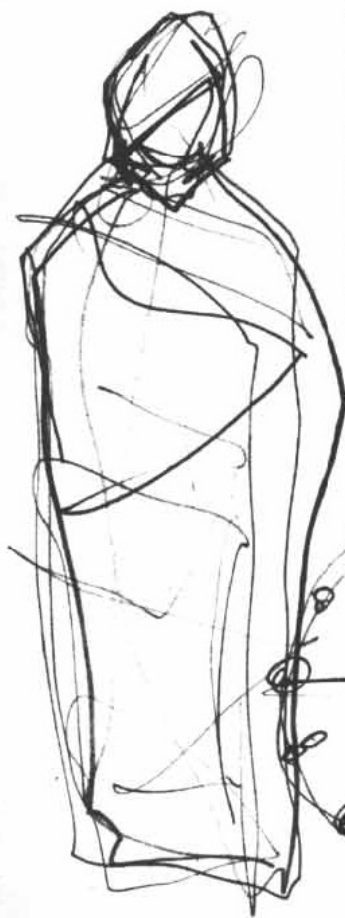


Emma's descriptions of some of the rites that were enacted during the building process of both monuments held surprising parallels to certain demon-expulsion ceremonies from eastern Europe, the Pacific islands and China. The constituent stones and timbers were also decorated with warding and imprisoning talismans. Their design and construction was overseen by a mysterious figure permanently shrouded in yellow robes, with a cowled hood. Neither of us could ever see his or her face. The yellow figure pushed the local priests and chiefs to work quickly, and had some sort of power over them. As befits such manipulation, the structures were raised with feverish haste and the figure seemed to think it was a matter of great urgency.



It is particularly interesting that one monument was stone and one was wood. The two substances are complimentary, live and dead, organic and inorganic, active and passive, Yin and Yang - two halves of a whole.

From what Emma revealed and from what my own viewings at the stone site suggest, I believe they were built to help wall away the darkness, to imprison it by pinning it to the ground, in the same way a devil can be trapped with a stake of wood. From the evidence provided by mythology, of the rise of heroes to combat the darkness and their subsequent decline, it seems likely that the Stonehenge project and others like it were partially successful.

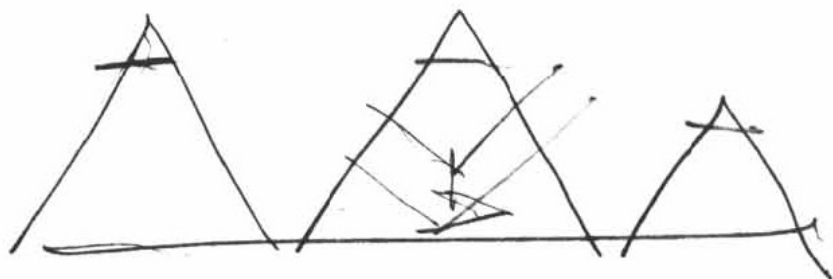


DARK TIMES

The last few thousand years of human history have been dominated by attempts to build strong societies. These attempts have failed. Where once we were united as a species, we now squabble and are irritable like petty children. Our division is reflected in the world that we have built.

Civilizations have risen only to fall again or become stagnant, and our knowledge has suffered with each fall. Sumeria and Babylonia formed powerful states and expanded their reach. They flourished for a while but gradually became weak and decadent and were swept away. The Egyptians came to prominence and built many mighty works. Their knowledge was profound and much of what they left formed part of their works to keep the darkness at bay, but the Greeks rose up and replaced the pharaonic lines, conquering much of the Middle East. The Greeks were in turn swallowed by the Roman Empire, which swept across the Old World, building roads and walls and setting laws and education in place. But the Romans collapsed too, and everything fell into petty kingdoms and principalities no larger than postage stamps.





In Africa, tribe after tribe swept out across the plains and conquered lands only to be pushed back by the next aggressor. In the Americas, many peoples vied for territory. Although some left behind incredibly sophisticated buildings and designs – such as the Toltecs, Mayans and Aztecs – each proved fleeting. Further north, plainsfolk skirmished with each other, pushing and shoving for position but achieving little, expending all their energy on staying still.



Around the Pacific, small states and chiefdoms arose, endured and failed. In Asia, different people warred with one another: Slavs and Arabians, Mongols and nomads, never getting the upper hand. The Chinese settled into a mighty empire, and although its borders held firm it stagnated, rotting from the inside. For many centuries, the emperor's rule over his subjects was theoretical rather than actual. The forms lasted, but nothing genuine happened. Chinese culture was devoted to recreating earlier glories rather than achieving new ones.

The only people who maintained a degree of continuity and vibrancy – the only culture that kept itself alive –



was that of the native Australians, and they too spent much of their time and energy fighting. Unlike the native Americans, the worst enemy of the Australians was the harshness of the land. Throughout all this rise and fall, trade routes and lines of patronage often proved to be the most enduring constructs of the world, perhaps because they relied on reaching outward, growing, instead of looking inward and collapsing.

Much knowledge is lost when societies forever crumble. Troubled times call upon warriors rather than shamans, and wisdom takes a back seat to action. Humanity was so busy trying not to rip itself apart in the aftermath of the sundering that it lost the wisdom required for its survival in the long term. We were so preoccupied with our new state that we forgot about our old selves. We forgot about the dark. As humanity desperately clung to itself, the darkness tested the boundaries of its prison. I will tell you - or have told you - of the way that Stonehenge and the many other circles in the realm of Albion were used to constrict the darkness. This was not the only method and pattern used.

In the furthest East, sorcerers enhanced the natural chi of places with Feng Shui to make them more benevolent, making lands intolerable to demons. In Africa and Asia, shamans and witch doctors conducted potent rituals to drive out the darkness, and left a legacy of vigilance for those who came later to preserve the sorcerous bonds. In Egypt and South America, mighty pyramids served the same functions as the European megaliths, weighing down the enemy.

In North America and Australia, cairns, markers, burial sites and spirit stones were used to increase the potency of nature itself, pushing the darkness downward. There are clues to our origins in many of these sites, and these things will be spoken of. The most important fact is that as a species we put a great deal of effort into locking the darkness away. With our work seemingly done, we fell to squabbling amongst ourselves while the evil nursed its wounds and plotted its subtle revenge.

The Dark Ones soon found weaknesses in our defenses, but they were clever. Rather than stride forth again and face us openly, they understood that we were easy to manipulate and they worked in the shadows to seize control. They fed jealousies and rivalries, inflamed wars, lent strength and skill - subtly, within the scope of the acceptable, so as to remain hidden - in return for savagery and brutality. They gained power. The darkness learned its lesson well and has applied it ever since.



It is disturbing to think that much of the violence and warfare in mankind's history could be the work of so-called monsters manipulating us and pitting us against each other. Obviously, the prison into which they were locked by the world's ancient heroes was not perfect and they found ways to work their influence. Their long-term goal, of course, was complete freedom.

—Violin99

A NOTE ON HUNTERS

I have closely observed our kind in the same way that I have observed the Dark Ones. The only way to come to a complete understanding of who we are and where we come from is to examine and analyze us, as well as the world and its history.

If you examine any cross-section of humanity you find great differences of opinion, belief and political viewpoint; differences of talents, habits and desires. It is therefore interesting that we chosen share certain core beliefs - that humanity is in danger and that we need to help. It seems obvious that these fundamental convictions must be imposed by the Shining Ones at the moment the scales fall from our eyes.

Like the powers we are granted, these beliefs seem to manifest when we are awakened. If they were not imposed, many of us would seek only to deny, run away or to join the Dark Ones so as to be on the strongest side. I have performed tests, pushed our kind toward fleeing or toward darkness, and there is notable resistance - far more than I have encountered when similarly testing the unawakened. We do sometimes become seduced by the darkness, and the most effective way of luring us away is by appealing to our

desire to help. The road to hell is paved with
good intentions.

We encompass a broad spectrum of views within
our ranks, of course, but we tend to fall into
types. Perhaps our inclinations on how to carry out
the hunt are also imposed by the Shining Ones? I
have used reason, persuasion and bullying to sway
hunters from their preferred methods of dealing
with the Dark Ones. It is very difficult. Hunters
are remarkably resistant to brainwashing tech-
niques in this regard too; even KGB programming
methods are prone to failure. We have our beliefs
and they are very tightly held - or imposed.

In my desire to explore every avenue, I have
even undertaken experiments that were, at best,
unlikely to yield results. It would be a terrible
sin to fail because an avenue of knowledge had
been left unexplored. To give an example of one
such trial, Nietzsche warned that we should not
gaze into the eyes of monsters, lest monsters we
become. I felt that this should be tested.

In Pittsburgh, I found an old, old man in a young
man's body, thick with the taint of darkness. I
performed a service for him that I will not discuss
in return for some of his time. He claimed to have
a devil trapped in a cellar, subjected to agoniz-
ing torment. From this devil, he drew nourishment



that kept him young and strong. He showed the beast to me. It was a horrible sight: A devil staked to a wall and held upright with ancient chains that were new when put in place. He had to feed the devil regularly - he gave it the blood of cats and vermin that he captured in the city.

We came to an agreement. We arranged that I would obtain a specimen to share the cellar with the devil, bound and gagged, for three months. The two would be arranged so that they faced eye to eye and the old parasite would feed and water the hunter at the same times as he fed the devil.

Regrettably, the trial proved less than useful.

The specimen was moderately insane when removed from the cellar, but free of the taint of darkness. She was able to offer no insights and had learned nothing from her incarceration. I buried her in a churchyard and performed a blessing to set her soul at rest on its way to Heaven. I did not bother to bless the remains of the parasite or his devil, for surely God would not have accepted them.

Wisdom about us, it seems, is not to be found with the philosophers and thinkers of the modern world.

I have no doubt that to some of you, Fyodor's actions seem callous. Do not be so blind. If a few fools have to be sacrificed to give those of us who matter a possible advantage, or to gain vital information, that is the way it must be. He acts from need.

—Violin99

DAYS OF EMPIRE



For centuries, the Dark Ones lurked beneath us, disrupting our attempts to rally. Each time wisdom was lost, our ability to repair our defenses became weaker and the enemy grew stronger. Finally, the Dark Ones managed to turn an entire race of mankind to their purpose and in doing so doomed our world.

The cold, gloomy weather of the north of the world predisposes the human mind to a certain type of personality — stubborn, strong, arrogant and aggressive. In Europe, the dark found the tool that it needed.

Money had been familiar as a concept for facilitating trade and bartering in many parts of the world. The Europeans learned the power of lending money and of accumulating it for its own sake. It was a lesson taught by the Romans, compounded by a religious order known as the Knights of the Temple of Solomon. The Knights Templar accumulated great wealth during the crusades in the Holy Land and they were permitted to lend it at interest to kings and nobles. They became richer still. Eventually, they were destroyed by a French king, but the idea of gaining power through wealth had taken firm hold.

The Europeans were introspective and dark whispers showed them how to use their wealth to build effective weapons and machines. Their greed took them out across the rest of the world like a plague of locusts.

For hundreds of years, they pillaged the globe. Wherever they went, they took their religion and rationalism and they tore down the old beliefs and customs they found. In place of ancient wisdom, they sowed salt into the minds of the world's people, and the last of our defenses against the darkness were ripped away.

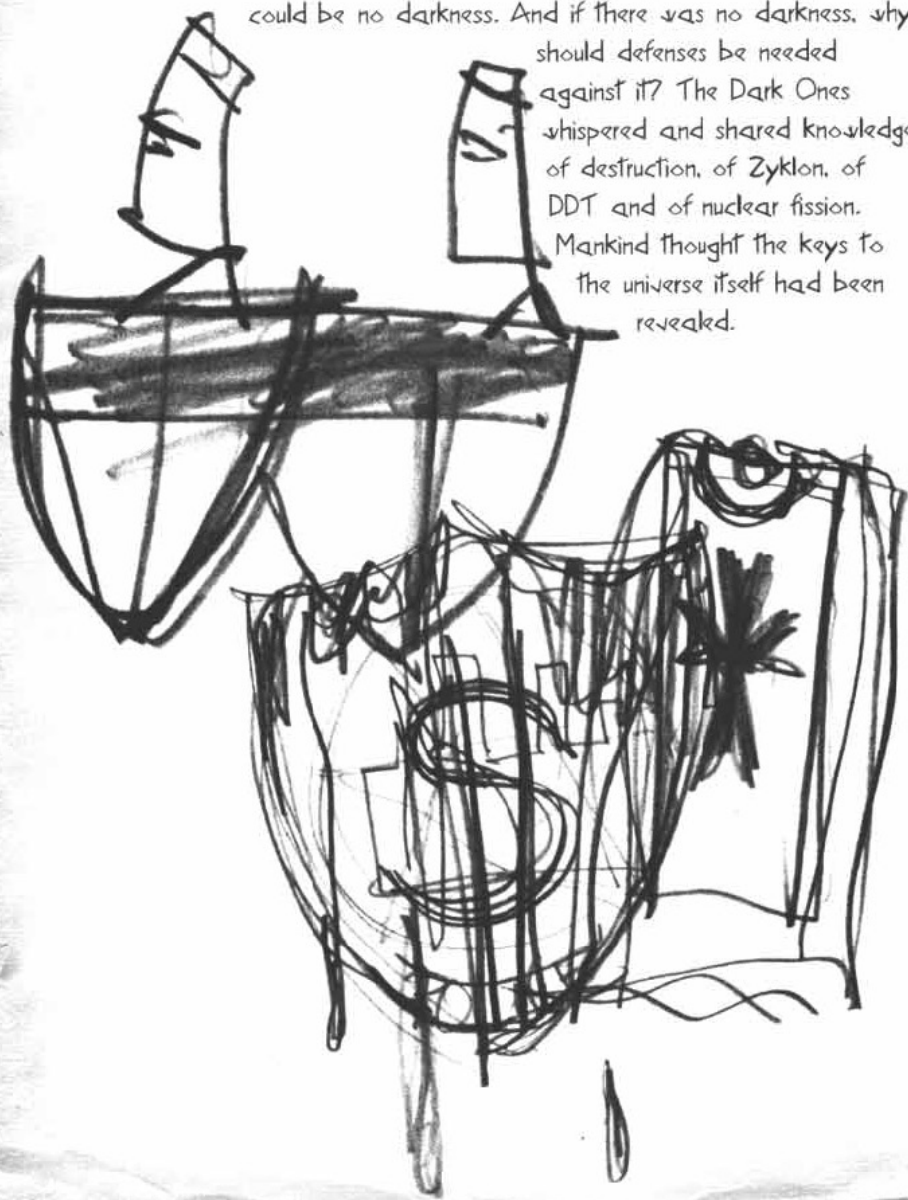


ASTI

DE TEMPIO

Christianity did have its own checks and balances against the darkness. The Inquisition worked tirelessly to keep the Dark Ones at bay. It tortured and killed innocents more often than it cast out evil, but its work was intolerable to the darkness. The shadows whispered again and this time it was of dreams of science. The spiritual realm was portrayed as superstition and ignorance, a trifling thing fit only for fools. The enlightened course was the materialist stance - to believe in what you could touch and see. If there was no spiritual realm, there could be no darkness. And if there was no darkness, why

should defenses be needed against it? The Dark Ones whispered and shared knowledge of destruction, of Zyklon, of DDT and of nuclear fission. Mankind thought the keys to the universe itself had been revealed.



Now, as this age draws to a close and destruction approaches, the whole world is divided. We live isolated from our fellows, a lonely, isolated existence in the company of the great drugs television and alcohol. We shun other people. We care nothing for them. When a thief steals from a person, a neighbor thinks only, "I'm glad it was not me." When someone is murdered, others look away so as not to be endangered. The ultimate goal of the evil ones has been realized - we are scared and alone and we no longer believe in them. Deep in our hearts, however, we know that the darkness rises.

My quest has taken me all over the world and will continue to drive me on as I look for further evidence. Everywhere, it is much the same. The American obsessions with money, violence, sex, death and drugs have taken root throughout the world. Nobody dares hope that the future will be bright. Although our scientists report new breakthroughs and soon-to-be wonders daily, somehow nothing gets better. We lose what remains of our soul and the monsters remain in charge.

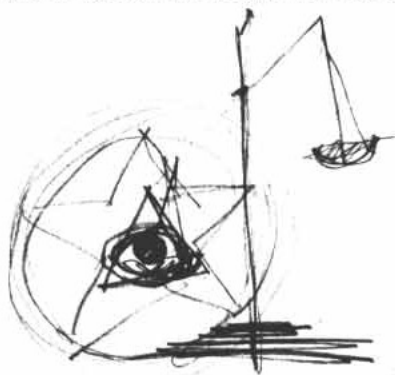


In every government, in every large business, in every army barracks, in every police station and in every television and publishing company, you can find Dark Ones and their agents engaged in the business of ruling our lives. More and more, people with influence become devils' parasites, sometimes willingly, sometimes unwittingly. In some countries, the devils themselves operate openly as they once did in the Old World. Manipulators, puppeteers, dancers and skin-changers are able to walk amongst us freely, but they often have agents and associates too, and not all of these appear tainted.

The Dark Ones and their pawns seem divided, though. They do not appear to have any coherent plan. Rather, it appears as if they grab for power and influence over us to use as weapons against each other. The blood drinkers feed from us. The other types do not even have that poor excuse to explain their predatory evil. However, whether we are controlled out of malice, according to a coherent plan or simply as a useful resource, it makes little difference in the end. We still suffer in our billions.

Emma was quite enlightening on this point. She perceived a struggle being waged within the darkness itself, a fight to control the way and direction that the Dark Ones work. She told me that some were regimented, interested in preserving the world as it currently is, while others – often those more recently created – wanted to bring about change. This reminds me of my own history, so I refer to the two groups as the nobles and the commoners. Emma claimed that the nobles were the truly evil ones, brutal and bloodthirsty, while the rebels were kinder, less interested in control.

While that may be true, history shows that the best way to win support amongst the young and rebellious is to feign idealism. But whether the commoners would be kind masters or not, they would still be masters, and it is time to reclaim the Earth from all such tyranny.



For a man of intellect to seemingly applaud superstition over science seems a peculiar lapse to me. Brutish misunderstanding and fear of the unknown are responsible for far more pain and death than technological advance. Do not be fooled by Fyodor's apparent slip; this section can only be an elegant metaphor for the enlightened to read. I will not spell it out. If you can't see it too, you do not deserve to. Even the most lumpen chosen should pay attention to the last part of this section, though — the idea that there are two groups of factions within the ranks of monsters could give us a very useful edge. Manipulation is a double-edged sword.

—Violin99

THE THIRD RAVEN

Suleiman would have known.

It is dark now, and

My senses no longer function

Without input.

Spiders crawl through my skull,

Marking me for their own.

The Third Raven,

The Last of the Last,

calls harshly. It isn't fair.

There is nothing, now, for the child.

Life inches by, a doll on crutches.

The First Raven was two days ago.

A flowing sheet of burnished fire,

Beauty pinned flat,

Glow, frames splendor

Laid cold and gray by death.

The love of life is lost now, fleeing.

Suleiman would have known.



SPIRALS AND CYCLES

Time is complicated. The future can affect the past even while the past seems to lead to the future. There are wheels and spirals. Time is far more female – mysterious and rounded – than male-dominated science with its straight lines has usually allowed.



This is a piece of wisdom that was known in older times but has been lost in the cycle of demon-led destruction and misery that we call progress. That fool manipulator described time as plastic, but her knowledge was not sufficient to return her veins to a point where the poison was not within them.

In Polynesia, a once-proud tribe reduced to alcoholic farm labor by dark-driven Australian corporations still understands the nature of cycles. They count with their fingers and toes in a pulse that progresses from one to five, "one finger," "two fingers," "two-one fingers," "two-two fingers," "hand." It continues further, through the expected "hand-one-finger" to "two-hands-one-leg-two-two-toes," and finally back to "one person, all their hands and legs." This serves to 20. Above that, whole groups of 20 are referred to, as in 40: "Two people, all their hands and legs."

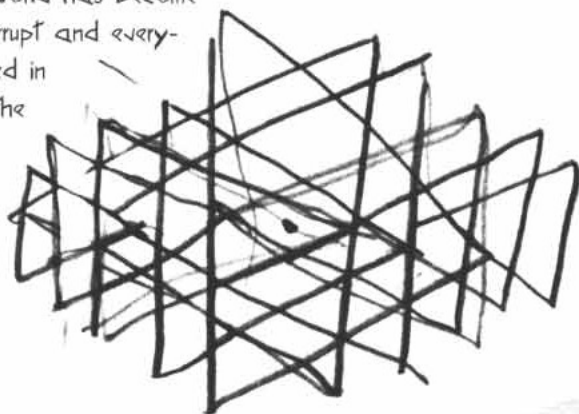
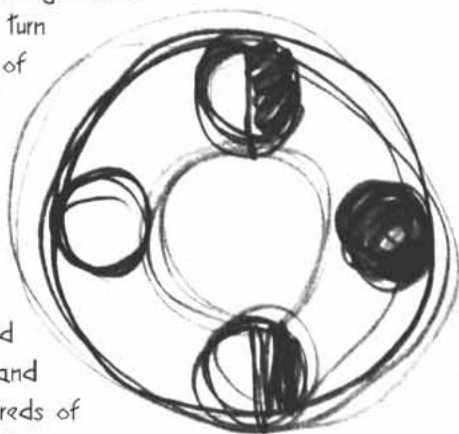
The important thing is that although this system can count to infinity – quite rare, in that area of the world – it does not possess the idea of zero and numbers are not linear. They are a twisted loop of ones and twos always tying back into the original state of one. They are the pulse of life, two begetting one, always alive and active, always returning to itself, just like time does.

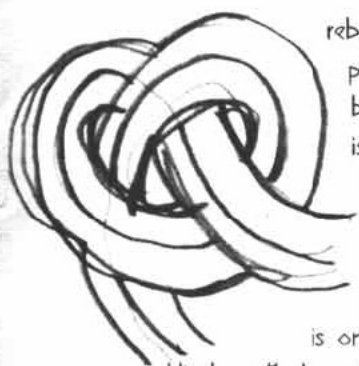
Many other systems of belief and mythology hold that the universe repeats itself again and again, with slight variations in each cycle. A cycle is made up of ages and each age has certain characteristics.

In Norse mythology, the destiny of the world and the gods was already pre-written. Three sisters called the



Norns wove a tapestry of lives that governed the fate of all. The gods knew (and know) that the world prepared for rebirth in a cataclysm known as Ragnarok, which would destroy everything. The time of Ragnarok will be heralded by the Fimbul-winter, when three harsh winters follow one after another without pause, without a summer in between. In the world of men, morality and goodness will disappear and brother will turn on brother. Then, after aeons of chasing, the evil wolf Skoll will eat the sun, his brother Hati will eat the moon and the world will be plunged into darkness. Three cocks will crow, one to summon the giants, one to summon the dead and one to summon the gods and heroes. From each of the hundreds of doors of Valhalla, the hall of the heroes, eight hundred warriors will march, shoulder to shoulder, to follow Odin and the other gods to the last battle. In that battle, almost everyone will be slain. A pair of gods will survive as will a few good humans and among them they will rebuild the world into a new Golden Age. In many strands of Eastern theology, it is believed that the world and time repeat themselves. Each cycle is broken down into ages, each age being a phase of the cycle. The cycle ends when the world has become irredeemably corrupt and everything is destroyed in order to purge the evil. From the ashes of this destruction, the Buddha (or sometimes the Jade Emperor)



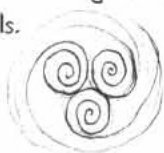
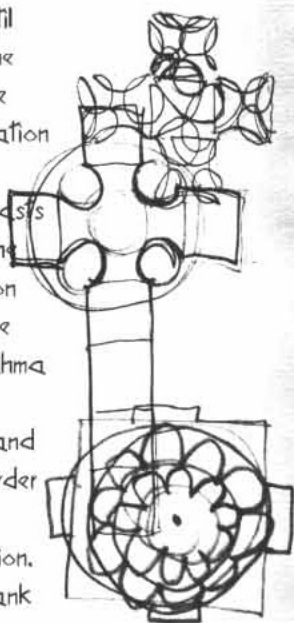


rebuilds the world in perfection. Events proceed once again as they did before but with minor variations, until the world is destroyed again. People are reborn into the cycle time and again, until they learn purity and escape. The cycle continues until all the people have become pure and all of creation is one.

Hindu mythology is similar. Each age of the world lasts for hundreds of thousands of years. The current one is the Kali Yuga, the age of tears. Each age ends in destruction and this is forewarned by a time of moral decay. At the end, Shiva the Destroyer rips the universe apart and Brahma recreates it in perfection.

A similar myth dominated South America. The Mayans and the Aztecs believed that the gods created mankind in order to worship properly and behave correctly. As the gods watched with increasing dismay, mankind fell from perfection, becoming more and more flawed. Finally, as the world sank into evil, the gods destroyed everything, saving only one human couple with whom to repopulate the Earth.

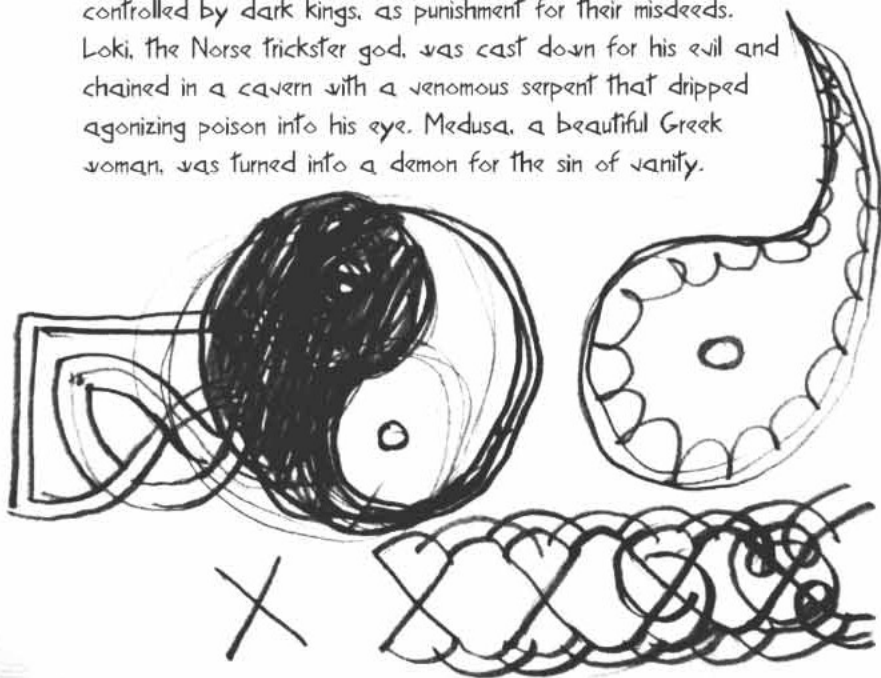
The process of corruption took a predictable amount of time. The Aztecs and Mayans calculated that we were on our fifth cycle since time began. Each cycle was referred to as a "sun." The first sun was called Matlactli and its people were giants who ate maize. The world was destroyed by flooding and people were turned into fish. One couple was spared to repopulate the land. The second sun was called Ehecatl and its people ate a fruit called Acotzintli. The world was destroyed by hurricanes and people were turned into monkeys. The third sun was called Tleyquiyahuillo and its people ate a substance called Tzincoacoc. The world was destroyed by fire and people were turned into worms. The fourth sun Tzonchichitlic ended when its people – who had black hair – died of starvation following a rain of blood that killed all the crops and animals.



The fifth sun Tzontilac is now. Although the manner of its ending is uncertain, the Mayans had a very precise calendar. According to them, our world is due to end in a few short years. One couple will be saved as always to found the new Golden Age.

Other cycles of destruction and rebirth can be found in several major religions. As with Christianity, many of them maintain that there will be a final battle between good and evil and then the world will be judged. Those found wanting will be destroyed or consigned to hell. Others will be gifted immortality, either in Heaven or in an earthly realm that is made into a version of Heaven. Very few theologies are without some sort of cyclical movement.

Many religions and mythologies also involve stories about divine beings falling from grace and being cast down. There is the fall from Christian Heaven of course, when the Archangel Lucifer became proud and refused to obey God's will. But there are also instances in Chinese mythology where rebellious or dangerous heavenly beings are cast to Earth to do penance - as in the cycle of tales about Monkey. Or the heavenly beings of Chinese tales are cast down to the Hells, controlled by dark kings, as punishment for their misdeeds. Loki, the Norse trickster god, was cast down for his evil and chained in a cavern with a venomous serpent that dripped agonizing poison into his eye. Medusa, a beautiful Greek woman, was turned into a demon for the sin of vanity.



The fall from grace - of the gods as well as of humanity - seems to be a prerequisite for the end of the world. Howard Lovecraft, the American horror author, wrote that the Old Ones waited to reclaim the Earth, when they would strip it bare of all life and carry it away to a distant and unpleasant dimension. This, apparently, will happen when "The stars are right" and the Old Ones will escape from their prisons to rise up.

Lovecraft said that the coming destruction would be presaged by mankind becoming like the Old Ones used to be - wild, unrestrained, immoral and free.

Morality and ethics would be dissolved. If he was right - and Emma was of the opinion that a lot of what he wrote was a metaphor for the truth - then surely the stars will soon be right. Modern man has forgotten law. we have forgotten restraint.

we act with abandon and wildness. And certainly our other halves given form are worse than we are. Perhaps the Old Ones are about to awaken.



The cycle of ages leading to Armageddon is a welcome prospect when the dross on the streets is considered. It is my firm faith that if the world is about to be renewed, it will be without the idiots who have made my life such misery. If 99% of people are to be killed off to leave real humans free to build a proper world, I for one anticipate it.

—Violin99



Carrot and Stick

Sinterklaas, the Dutch inspiration for Santa Claus, does things differently. He travels to the Netherlands by boat, not by flying sled and reindeer. He lives in Spain, not the North Pole. He is white-bearded, but not necessarily fat or jolly. Perhaps of greatest importance to his clients, Sinterklaas always delivers three weeks early — on the eve of St. Nicholas. These are among the many Christmas traditions here, but much more remarkable is that Sinterklaas is always accompanied by one or more dark helpers known as Zwarte Piet, or Black Peter. Black Peter has terrified Dutch children for centuries

as the ultimate bogeyman of nightmares and parental threats. He is Sinterklaas' dark alter ego, his enforcer and his bagman. If you have been a good child, Black Peter will give you goodies from his bag. If you have been a naughty child, Black Peter will put you in his sack and spirit you away!

FAMILY TIES

Sometimes it is useful to have a brother who was an important figure in the KGB. In fact, I shall correct myself. It is always useful. He provided me with a powerful nerve toxin in liquid form that could be added to a hot drink without fear of detection. He assured me that it killed in seconds and that it fogged the mind almost immediately. He had hidden some away after the fall of the Communists, in case he was threatened. He asked me only two questions - "Fyodor, this thing that you ask. Is it truly necessary?" and "Will you need cleaners afterward?" I nodded once to each question and he asked nothing more.

As arranged, I telephoned him a week before the execution to tell him where I would be, in which country and town and at what time I would need his colleagues' assistance.

All went perfectly. When the manipulator finally stopped screaming and lay silent, I called my brother's cleaners. Two of them decapitated the body and took it away for high-temperature cremation, along with the poisoned drink. A third gave me tickets and a passport to get out of the country and drove me to the train station.



The Be- gin- ning of the End

If you retain no single other thing from this journal, know this: The end times are coming. Every last pebble of evidence that I have found insists that it is true. Humanity is weak and the Dark Ones walk among us. As they did before, the gods have called for their heroes, we hunters, to stand against the tide. But we are too few, too weak and too late. We will do whatever we can to

save as many people as possible — we all agree on that, I think — but this incarnation of the world is old and putrid.

The decay started when the darkness found a way to send thoughts and impressions from its prison to our world. We were already divided, broken, scared and brutal. It was simple to make us do dark works. Belief and religious wisdom were threatening to the evil, so the darkness found a way to undermine them by giving us something more concrete to believe in — science. For those of us who were not tempted by science, there were money and power. Beware power. It is even more seductive and corrupting than money. Religions could not compete with New Rationalism and began to dwindle. But it was not enough. So a new weapon to subvert our minds was developed.

Hypnotic, lying and mesmerizing, television is the most effective method of mass control ever developed. Before television, our morals, hopes and goals were set in place by the church. Even if we were skeptical, it was still the strongest code of behavior for us to follow. People were bullied into accepting religious dictates. ("You'll burn in Hell forever," they said.)

People do not like to be bullied, though. Now that television can show us how to behave, is it any surprise that the popularity of organized religion is at its lowest? God has become a hobby. There is only room for one set of rules and controls, and the priests cannot compete.

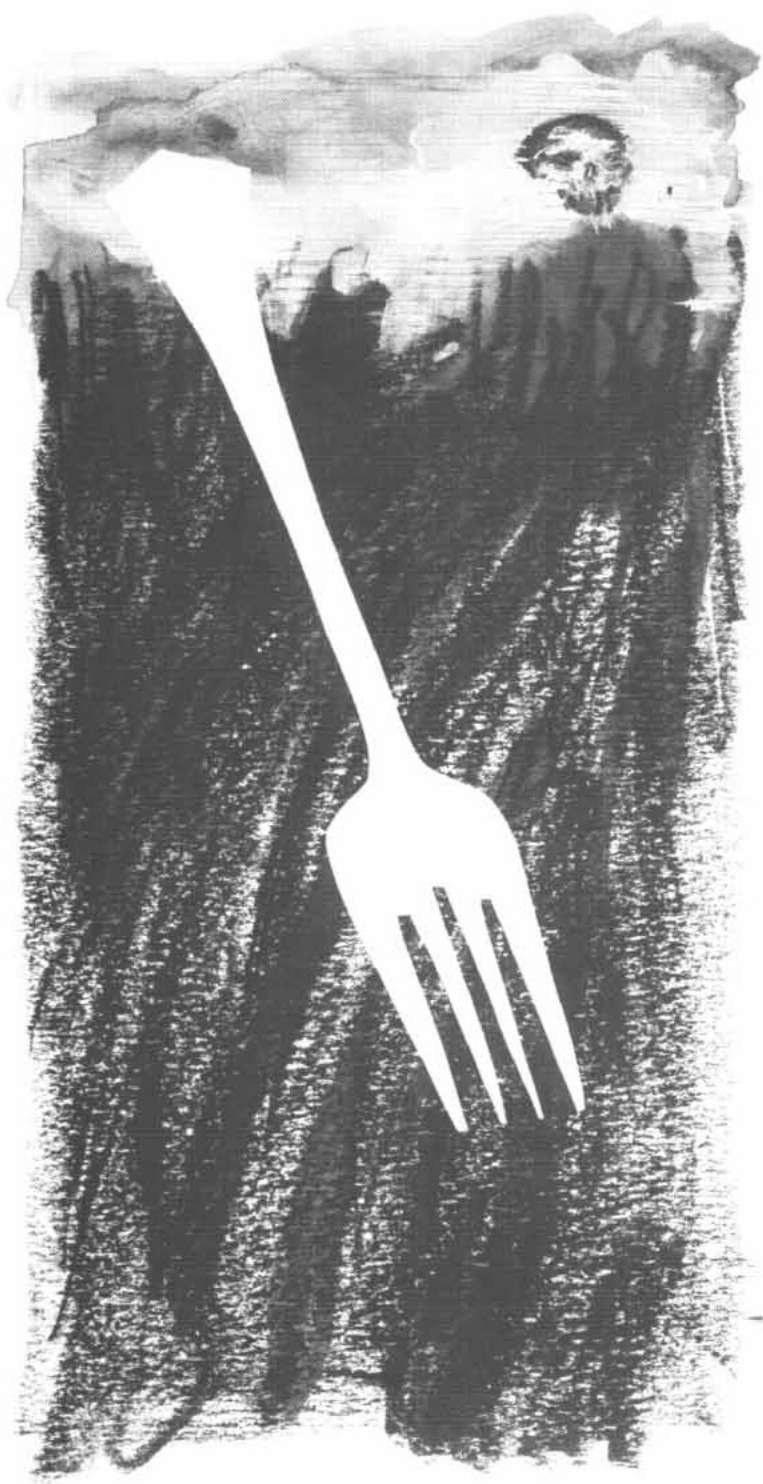
Merely looking at a television screen has been found to hypnotize a viewer. Alpha waves in the brain rise sharply and our ability to question is reduced. The KGB knew this truth. It is only a mild effect, so it is difficult to perceive and hardly noticed. The messages carried by television shows and adverts and films sink in gently, showing us how to behave and what to expect from life and partners. There isn't even a chance to fight it, as there was when we were being bullied. We aren't forced by television. We're seduced by it.

It isn't just the approach that varies with television, either. The messages themselves are very different. Daily character programs show us that everyday life is painful and unpleasant. Dramas take another angle, highlighting the special exciting lives of those lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time. Feature films and assorted other shows demonstrate the luxurious lives of the rich and famous.

Violence is shown to be a good answer to problems by a thousand action programs, and to have few consequences. Heroes aren't killed and fights inflict no bruises. We of all people know how false those lessons are. And then there are films and programs that show a glimmer of the truth, that every action of normal life carries the potential to end up in a terrifying situation, from answering the telephone to going to a shop. Such horror strikes at the realities of the world. What a relief that safety from that truth can be found in the commercials that rescue the viewer. Now you are told how cosmetics can make you beautiful, and how breakfast cereal can make you glamorous.

This is all fiction, but who is there to remind our inner mind not to pay attention? Nonfiction shows are no better. The news continually thrusts the horrors of the world at us - a million ways to die before breakfast, even if you have not seen the Dark Ones. Documentaries tell us to be paranoid and to trust no one. We should go and hide in the countryside, surely, away from fellow people? Look at the nature documentaries, though. The land is corrupted, polluted, raped for oil and chemicals. There's nowhere to run.

What are we to do? Pray for luck, follow the lessons of the drama programs and take part in a humiliating quiz-show. And do not step outside unless you have to. According to the news, there are maniacs with guns out there waiting to kill you.



Is it any wonder that we are more and more hard and unhelpful when faced with others? Or that we are deeply unhappy and dissatisfied with ourselves and our lives? Sold on the dream of the Golden People (who have never existed, despite glossy celebrity magazines and their kind), and convinced that all it takes to get to Heaven is to be in the right place at the right time, how are we supposed to be happy with the world? We can't even be happy with ourselves. We are too fat, too thin or just too real to match the plastic ideals we have been force-fed.

Torn by mutually exclusive hopes and dreams, we grow unhappy, violent and unpleasant. This state makes us perfect targets for the darkness. Stop one hundred people on the street and ask, "Do you want to be beautiful, rich, powerful and young?" All will say yes. If you tell them that the price is a little obedience to new superiors and the sacrifice of a small amount of the goodwill for their fellow man (few Dark Ones would give even that much warning), all but one or two would accept.

Our species has been corrupted and we want to hide from our fears inside advertisements and false realities. Who can blame us? We have been programmed to believe that the only things worth having - perfect beauty and infinite wealth - are unattainable. We are rotten from within, waiting for the gust of wind that will blow us all down.

Hear, hear.
—Violin99.

Mysterious bird deaths under investigation

SPOKANE — Washington state hazardous-materials crews have a mystery on their hands. They're trying to find out why flocks of birds have dropped dead.

The birds were found at the Spokane Valley Recycling and Transfer Station in [REDACTED]. Several hundred carcasses were found. When the hazardous-materials team was called in, it wasted no time evacuating the area for fear of contamination.

Crews searched the station and monitored the air around the site, but no lethal airborne agent could be detected. Team members believe the birds could have been poisoned by something they ate at the site. [REDACTED] of the Spokane Valley Fire Department told reporters, "It's not that uncommon. Birds come in and feed on debris in materials waiting to be cleaned and recycled. Sooner or later, they get into something that's gone bad or shouldn't be here. Our concern is the numbers of birds affected."

None of the employees at the recycling station have suffered any known ill effects as yet. Sample carcasses were bagged and sent to the Washington State University toxicology lab for study. Officials say it could be weeks before they figure out what actually killed the birds.



THE CULT OF VIOLENCE

The Dark Ones have manipulated us into weakness, but that does not explain why there is such a profusion of violence in the world's cultures. Normally, when you seek to control something you seek to keep it docile. It would seem that training humanity in the ways of aggression is a dangerous risk. What if that violence was turned against the darkness?

The cycle of world wars, border disputes, revolutions, civil wars, terrorism, muggings, gang rivalries and abusive crimes is in no one's interests, not even our oppressors'. Even the perpetrators of these actions gain no more benefit than could be had from a more peaceful resolution. Violence between humans is counterproductive. There must therefore be something inherent to conflict that the darkness needs.

I believe the Dark Ones have been in need of two things, at least until recently - freedom and food. God save us, they have the first. As for the second, I have seen into the very hearts of many different types of creatures and have rarely seen any specific hunger for our suffering, save within the shambling corpses and spirits, some of which seem to feed from it. Many monsters are evil enough to enjoy our harm, but few seem to actually gain sustenance from it. Given the subtlety that the darkness exhibits in its broad dealings with humanity, it would not countenance such a risky course from sheer capriciousness.

The conclusion, therefore, is that there must be something about our cycle of violence that has been necessary to help the darkness escape from its prison - and escape it surely has. The amount of material released by the press that relates to the so-called "supernatural" has increased greatly in the recent past. Ghosts, magic and the unexplained have become public obsessions. Vampires, I am told, are "in" with the young. In Amazonia, the scion of an ancient tribe came down from the

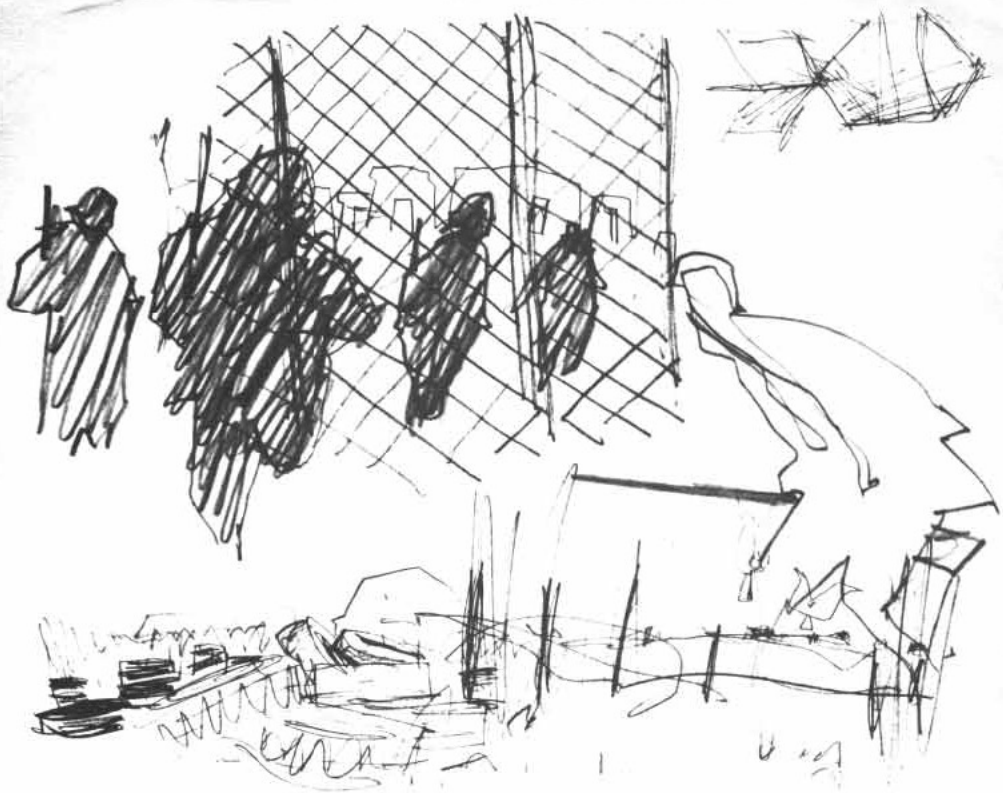
hills to warn the Earth's leaders that prophecies and omens showed that the world would end soon. Emma confirmed that she was aware of a sudden increase in the numbers of the restless dead. Her first awareness of this perception is close in time to the earliest instances I have heard of hunters receiving the call. The conclusion is obvious. The prison enclosing the darkness has been opened and we have been created by the gods - whoever they are - in direct response. But how did all this take place?

It seems to me that the most important aspect of the continual violence with which our species is plagued is our ability to create better and better weapons. By driving us into endless wars and power struggles, the darkness has succeeded in bringing about the development of nuclear weapons, each capable of killing millions.

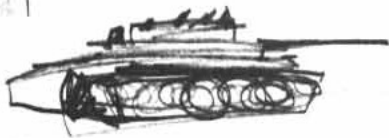
When the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the 1940s, the shock wave of all that death in such specific locales ripped holes in the walls of the prison that kept the darkness at bay. The sheer bloodthirstiness of those bombings undid most of what our predecessors gave their lives to achieve. The shock to the collective human mind, and the despair and fear caused by the bombings, provided a pool of power and influence for the darkness to use. When we obliterated entire cities, we gave the evil its claws back. Many Dark Ones came into the world at that point and set about trying to dismantle the remaining barriers.

It can be no coincidence that in the last few years, "researchers" have entered a previously hidden chamber beneath the plains at Gizeh, between the Sphinx and the Great Pyramids. Why have details on this





unique achievement – and what was done down there – not become widespread? Similarly, ancient sacred sites around the world have been desecrated, built upon, poisoned or torn down. With pollution and vandalism and violence against key places in the world, enough damage has been done. The darkness has succeeded and the last walls have been toppled.



Nightmares and Revelations

Suddenly, it was obvious to me that the seeming Good Samaritan was not right. Not human. Four all-too-human thugs attacked a human old man, and the old one was aided by something that looked like a large man but that felt like something else. I realized that I could tell the way that events were going to go.

The Samaritan was going to disable the attackers swiftly and with no trouble. That was inevitable. Having thrown one to collapse on the ground, the Samaritan was going to smash a second in the face with his forearm. As the second youth crumpled, the Samaritan would punch a third in the center of the back and throw him down. Then he would turn to land a punch to the abdomen of the fourth. In less than five seconds, all four would be down. It was what would come after that shocked me. Having dispatched all four, the Samaritan would move quickly from attacker to attacker, breaking their necks





with a twist before any of them realized their true danger. The way to prevent this seemed clear.



The fight went as I had foreseen. As the fourth youth doubled over and the Samaritan turned back to the first, I called out the question that had just been asked of me - "Comrade, whose side are you on?"

The Samaritan stopped, shocked, and looked at me. I believe

he weighed his options, then smiled thinly and pointed to the dirty ground. "Hers," he said, sneering. "What about you?" I pointed with the stem of



my pipe at the old man. The Samaritan laughed and turned away. He put an arm gently around the old one and helped him off. Shortly afterward, the youths recovered sufficiently to scuttle off, humiliated. I was not certain what the Samaritan's answer "Hers" meant, but you will know all too well from your own life how the next few weeks of horror progressed for me. I asked Emma if she understood what the Samaritan might have been. She seemed to have her suspicions but did not share them, whether out of reservation or a simple unwillingness to speak with only half an answer. She did manage to identify the old man as a scientist. His work could have developed a microbe that would feed on pollution, converting it into harmless constituents. I tracked his career afterward. He was shot dead by robbers on a Moscow street a few months ago, on the way to a meeting with some politicians. His work remains unfinished.

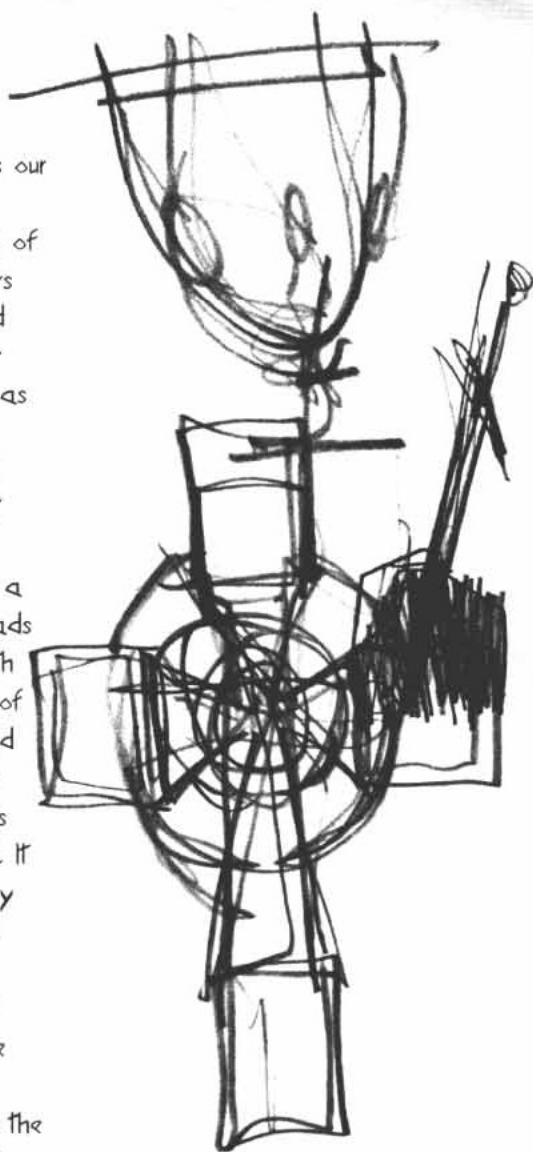


The Holy Grail

As with the heroes of old, it is our blood that predestines us to become hunters. When the Age of Heroes passed, our predecessors settled down with partners and founded divine bloodlines. Over the millennia, heroic ancestry was spread throughout the world, mingling with less august blood, diffusing into the population at large.

In this, heroic blood is just like a river delta. As the water spreads out wider and wider, its strength lessens and it forms a myriad of channels and rivulets that head for the sea. We are the same now. The blood of the gods is spread thinly across the world. It has reached every region, every race and has been distributed seemingly at random.

In European legend, this blood has been characterized as the Holy Grail of King Arthur, the vessel that can bring purity to the land. The legends of King Arthur and the Holy Grail – the cup that Christ drank from at the Last Supper – were set in their current forms during the early Middle Ages. French and German Romantic poets wrote epic sagas based on the ancient stories of heroes who embodied the land.



King Arthur and his Round Table of holy knights were a medieval corruption of true memories of heroes – and the idea of a golden chalice humming with the divine power to heal the land is a complete distraction from the true grail.

The idea of the Holy Grail as a powerful chalice comes from a misunderstanding of the root term "Sangreal." Splitting the term into "San Greal" and then changing it into "San Graa" – "Saint Grail" – the linguist's roots of the idea of the Holy Grail is plain. However, if the word is split in the middle, into "Sang Real," the true Latin meaning becomes clear – the Blood Royal. The Holy Grail is the line of descent stemming from the worldwide heroes of old. As the legends suggest, discovering the Holy Grail is a key to gaining power and strength and to restoring the purity of the land. There is no cup. It is the blood within us that awakens when we are called. When the Shining Ones touch us, the amount of heroic blood within us determines our response. We hunters are the people with the highest concentrations, where the blood of heroes is strong enough to answer the call. It sings within us, gives us the strength to see the reality of the world. Its voice awakens our memory of mystical



signs too: ancient recollections passed down as instinctive knowledge encoded in the genes of Blood Royal. Those who have slightly too little of the blood to be awakened become ostriches, aware of the Dark Ones but sticking their heads in the sand and remaining blind. Those with the least blood of all do not heed the call and remain asleep.

The genetics and ancestry of the Blood Royal are complicated. Everyone in the modern world has at least a small amount of it. In some people, the complex interplay of DNA, chromosomes and ancestry strengthen each other, and the blood is strong enough to boil. In most, it is not strong enough — and this can even be the case with a hunter's twin.

The rivers of ancestry are muddled and confused. It is no longer possible for us to predict which person will be awakened by the Shining Ones and which will not. There is no way to tell. Some of us possess the Holy Grail and some do not.

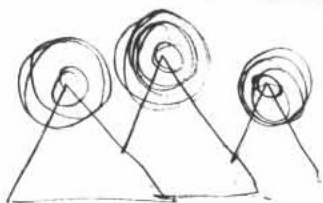
Without mentioning my theories, I asked Emma if she was able to locate the Holy Grail or any trace of it. It was one of the few things that she was able to uncover no trace of. She thought the failure might be due to the Grail's supposed mystical power. The real answer, of course, is that there never was a physical grail. We hunters are the Holy Grail and it is up to us to purify the world.



Fyodor says here that our capacity to assume the powers granted by the Messengers comes from our blood links to ancient ancestors. It is this heritage that is awakened when we are chosen. If this is true, as I believe it to be, then I'm ashamed of the pollution that corrupts our ancient noble blood.

—Violin99

THE HUNT CELESTIAL

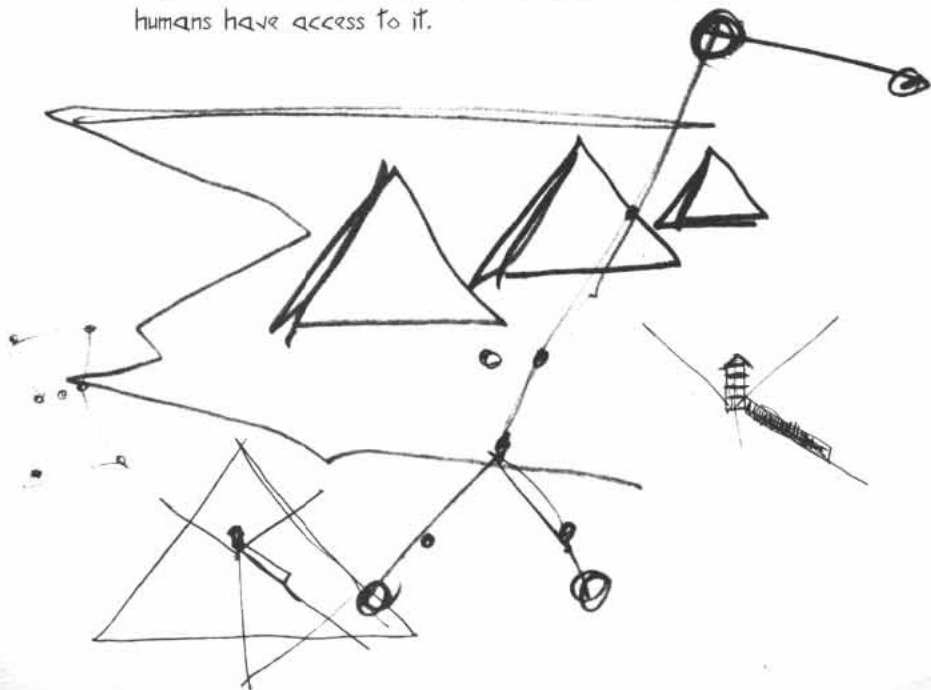


Some of the strongest evidence to point to our heroic ancestry comes from the Great Pyramids of Egypt, on the plain of Gizeh. These pyramids were created as a legacy of the efforts to wall away the darkness. The Sphinx is ancient, far older than people imagine. Emma claimed to have seen it being built, millennia before the Egyptians came.

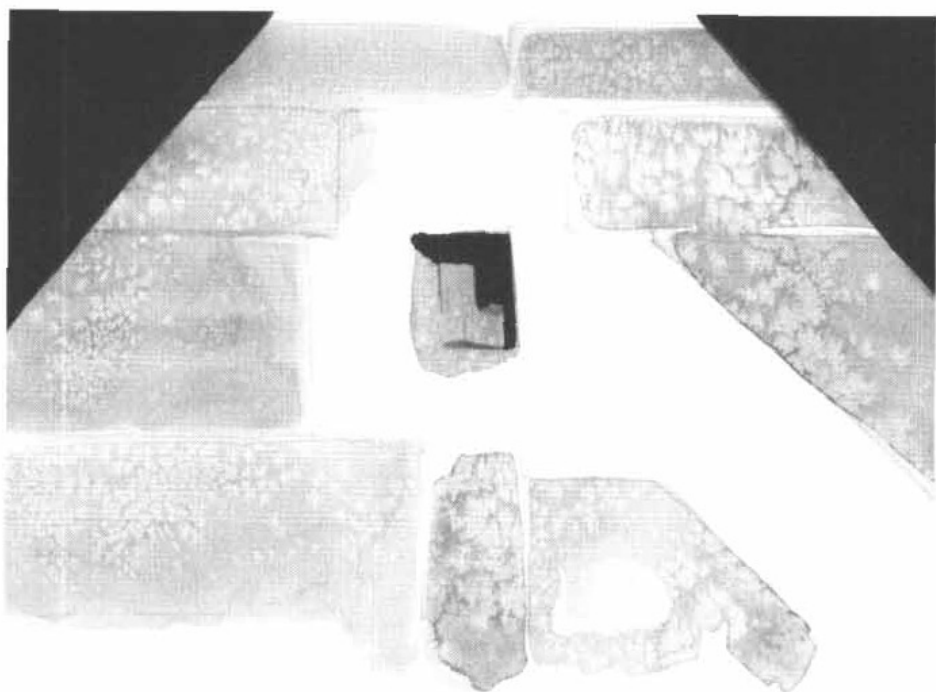
Gizeh itself is a vitally important site in the energy structure of the world. Combined with the ancient temple complex at Angkor Wat and the perplexing spirit drawings of vast figures in the Nazca desert, Gizeh brackets the Earth. The three places together form a crown of power, sacred keystones in humanity's defense against the darkness.



The plain of Gizeh has always been shrouded in mystery. The modern Egyptian government is very wary of releasing information about it or allowing research to be carried out there. Emma maintained that this prohibition serves the Dark Ones and that there is too much power there to let humans have access to it.

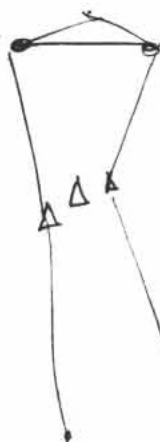


The King's chamber has a very thin shaft that leads, slanted sharply upward, from the heart of the pyramid to the outside - an incredible feat of engineering. It has an astronomical significance and would have exactly bracketed Sirius, the Dog Star, at midsummer when the pyramid was built. The Queen's chamber has a similar shaft, just a few inches across, but it does not lead to the outside world. A team of German scientists sent a camera robot up the shaft to see where it led. To their astonishment, about halfway up the shaft - in a region assumed to be solid stone - they encountered a tiny gold-covered door closing off the shaft, but designed to fit it, with a tiny portcullis in front of it.



The most astonishing fact of all, though, is one that cannot be hidden. The three great pyramids are not, as is often presumed, in a straight line. The line is slightly askew. There are two large pyramids of roughly equal size. The third is considerably smaller and is set at a level below the line of the other two. These pyramids exactly reflect the relative brightness and crooked positioning of the stars in the belt of the constellation Orion. The match is so close that the pyramids can be no coincidence — they were built to represent Orion's Belt.

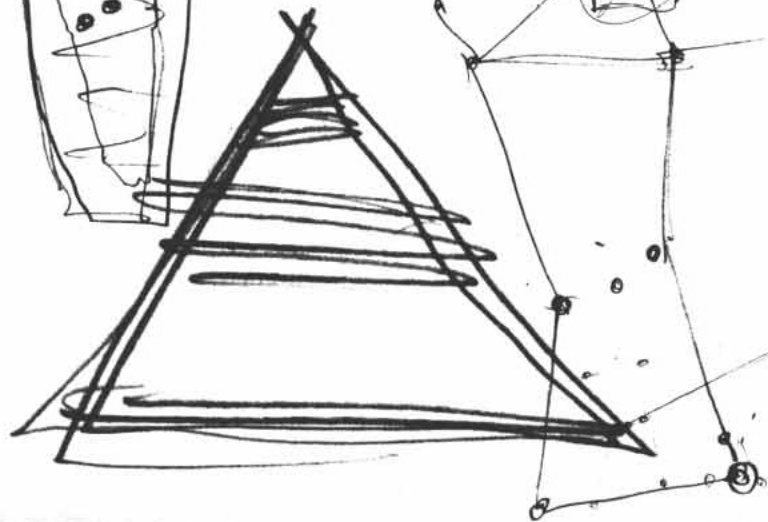
What can the message be here? You use a belt to tie things together or to hold them up. You can also use a belt to restrain. Most importantly however, Orion is the constellation known as "The Hunter."



2



1,



Visions

There was a time not so long ago when I saw the distant past clearly, but anything more than the immediate future was beyond me. That is no longer the case. As I walk through the world, the Shining Ones send me visions of what is to happen in the coming years, whether to a person or a house or an item. These visions, like so many, are capricious and difficult to analyze. I am not sure of the significance of the individuals and



things that I see. Perhaps there is no significance.

Let me give you an example to explain more clearly. One afternoon fairly recently - it may have been earlier today, it may have been two weeks ago - I went for a walk through the city. I was in the park when my eyes burned suddenly and I could see that all the trees burned. Each one had been set aflame deliberately. The grass was unscorched. The vision ended. There was nothing I could do, so I continued. A few days later, an arsonist struck.

Later, in a fish market, I caught a glimmering in the corner of my eye and turned. I saw the shadow cast over at least three quarters of the people around me. Devils' parasites, each one, but not yet. Soon, but not yet. Does that mean some mighty devil is going to bend the city to its will?

In a bar, sometime afterward, I was given a glimpse of deaths to come. This man would die from a fall, that girl from having her neck broken, her brother from having his throat

torn out. Death by fire. Death from blood loss. Death by gunshot, by being beaten with sticks, by automobile accident. Only a handful of the people in the bar did not have death waiting for them in the near future. What would you do in such a situation? I did what any good Russian would. I drank vodka and tried not to think about the death all around me.



Every time I mingle with people now,
it is the same. There are visions of
death and destruction to come.

Buildings are marked with signs of
destruction, people and animals with
corruption, and objects with decay
and obliteration. It is an unhappy
thing, but nowhere does it say that
the world has to be pleasant. Some
areas are better, some are worse, but
death waits for us all.



CLOSING POINT

The last conversation I had with Emma was depressing, yet it also gave me some hope. It confirmed beyond all possible doubt that we near the end of the world, maggot-ridden as it is. There is nothing we can do to prevent the cataclysm. All we can do is try to make sure that as many good people survive as possible and that we win against the darkness.

We met in the apartment that I was staying in, where we could discuss a range of subjects without danger of attracting attention. She was unusually serious from the start and started straight into a conversation with a question.

"Theo, do you realize that there's a war going on?"

I nodded. "Da. I know, child. It will get worse, too." She always called me "Theo." Such an ugly Americanization.

"Do you realize how gifted you are?" she said.

"Da. I know that too," I replied.

"It's not all as cut and dried as you might think. Soon, the war is going to boil up into a full battle for the world. I've been keeping an eye on you and looking into your skills. Your talents are extraordinary, and my friends and I don't really get where they come from. The two of us could team up, work together to overthrow the evil people who're trying to take control."

"Perhaps, child. It is complicated and there is much that both of us do not know."





"Don't be shy, Theo. There's no time. This is totally important. There are loads of sides to this fight. If we're going to save the Earth from being wiped out we'll need you alongside us."

"I too want to save the world," I said. She seemed pleased.

"Listen, there's a lot you don't know jack about. Each side is splintered and chopped up into a bunch of factions. Within most, you get both decent folks who want to help and evil scum who just want control. It's really complex. You can't just point at any one group and say 'They're the enemy.' It's a war for our minds."

"There are many gaps in my understanding," I agreed, nodding gently. "Here, look at these." I passed her a set of photographs I had taken of our code, signs sprayed, chalked, painted, etched and sewn across the world. She accepted them wordlessly. While she tried to make sense of the same images occurring across so many different places and with so many styles of execution, it was simple to alter her coffee. She finally turned back to me, excited and breathless.

"I don't understand. Where did these come from?" she asked, taking a big gulp of her drink.

"Everywhere," I replied calmly, puffing on my pipe.

"Everywhere? You mean there are more like you? My god, that could make such a difference. You could help us fight." She turned to me, her eyes shining.

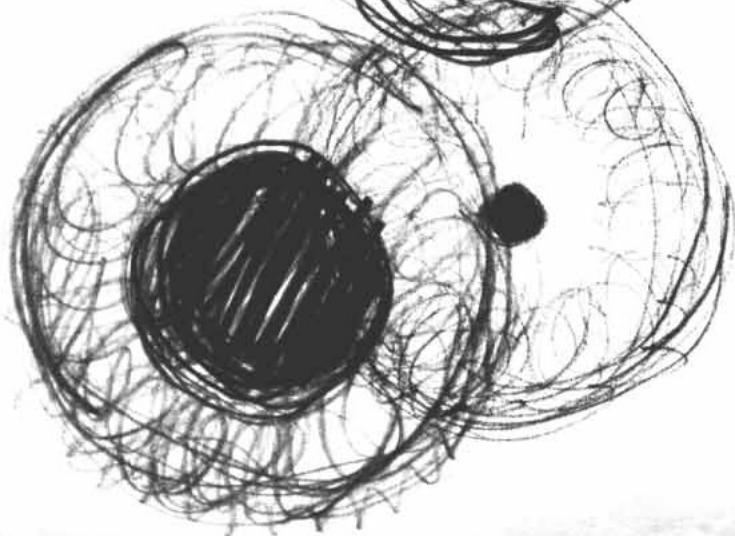
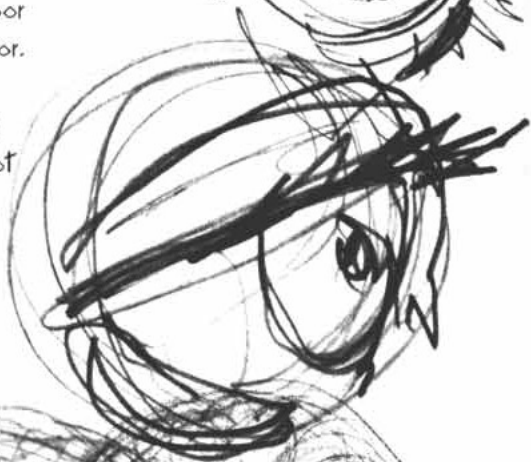
I smiled at her enthusiasm. "Assistance will certainly be useful. We have a world to reclaim, da?"

She grinned back, radiant. She started to speak but coughed instead.





She coughed again, her expression changing to confusion. She waved a hand in apology and lifted her mug to drink and clear her throat. As the strength drained from her arm, the cup crashed to the floor and her eyes flooded with horror. I smiled at her and said "Dosvidanya, Emmelina. Forgive me. Your manipulators' war is not mine."



In this last section, Fyodor relates a vision that seems to come straight from the Messengers and describes terrifying prophecies that the vision has inspired. I believe that several of these prophecies may have already come to pass. If they have, then the accuracy of the others is proved by implication. Our time is almost up.
—Violin99

THE COMING OF THE FALL

I have just awoken from a vision-like dream or a dream-like vision. It was extremely clear, edged hard in my mind with lines of diamond, not shrouded in mist as most dreams are. I am not certain where or when I am — my room has no windows — but it does not really matter. One city is the same as another, whether in Russia, China, America or Kenya.

It is clear to me that the Shining Ones will allow me no more time to waste on recollections or on the search for our ancestry, at least not within the pages of this book. I have already told you what has happened, where we come from and where the darkness comes from. You believe or you do not. I have told and there is nothing else I can do. The Shining Ones want me to relate this dream, for it spells out the future awaiting us all.

It was early in the morning and I was walking through the streets of New York's Manhattan Island. The sun was shining. The day seemed peaceful. It felt as if it were a Sunday, for although it was not quiet, it was less busy than I expected. Food shops lined the street on both sides, selling every sort of thing that could be eaten. Back home, no more than one shop in ten would sell things to eat, but back home, we do not have millions of people traveling many miles every day to press into a small work space.

I walked through the maze of tall buildings until I came to the Great Central Park. Inside it, I found that I was in a sea of people.

Mostly young people, jogging, skating and riding bicycles. No one talked to anyone else; they proceeded on in their own worlds. There was a grand avenue of trees, an arch and some grassy areas. Eventually I found myself walking up to a castle, perched high on a rock. There was a tower there for viewing. I went up and gazed out over the park and the city beyond. "You see many things, do you not?" a woman asked.

I turned and saw a young couple standing behind me. They looked normal, free of taint, but I could feel the power shining within them. They could have been brother and sister, exotic, their origins impossible to identify. They wore similar pants, similar shirts. My mind was not interested in such details and I do not remember them



clearly. They wore green-banded rings, those I remember. The woman's was set with a dazzling ruby, the man's with a dark opal. There was no question of evasion or distrust. I nodded in answer to her question. "Look, then," said the man. He pointed out over the city. As I followed the line of his finger, a wave of images cascaded over me.

I saw a wooden ship with sails crossing an ocean in a storm. A great cry went up from the crew and the ship started to burn. There was an ancient crucifix made from different colors of gold hammered together, a thing of beauty and power sitting on a bench. A graceful hand picked it up and ran a pale finger over its surface. A bear crashed through the undergrowth, chasing some unknown prey.

In a quiet alley, five beautiful women dressed in revealing clothes butchered a young man. A large bat with lips as red as blood took flight from an ancient stepped pyramid and

lazily glided off
into the surround-
ing jungle.

In an empty desert, a
strong wind blew up
out of nowhere. The
sands were scoured
away and the tip of
an ancient wall was
visible. Within moments,
an entire city, aged
and rotten with evil,
lurked amid the dunes.

A mighty wall, as
black as death
itself, rose up out of
the mountains. A thin
hand reached out
and pushed upon it
and the wall
collapsed.

The sun shone over a
pleasant city square.
Suddenly, the sun
turned as red as
blood. In the crimson
light, the people all
looked dead, the
buildings decaying
around them and
the flowers crying
bitter tears.



There was a burst of light and sound and I awoke knowing I had to record this.

I have been given a message and the message is this: The darkness rises to consume us, once and for all. We are brought up with tales of the end of the world, from our teachers and priests, from our scientists, and often from our relatives and friends. I for one did not want to believe before, in my previous life. How could the world end? It was not sensible. But now I know this has never been a sensible world. There is going to be a mighty war. It will be fought in all nations, on all fronts, openly and with devastating weapons. For a while at least, death will be the only victor. This is unavoidable. It is not a theoretical possibility. It is not something for your grandchildren to worry about. It is going to engulf us all. Soon.

There are signs by which the approach of the end can be measured and gauged. I will reveal these to you in due course. This is the final war of so many religions, the death of our time, the battle of good against evil. It is the Apocalypse, and the fields of Megiddo cover the entire Earth. It is the battle for the soul of the world and for the soul of the next. The darkness has much to offer those whom it recruits. It will tempt us all, with money, power, safety and with the ability to heal. The Devil may quote scripture to his own ends, we are told. It is easy for the darkness to bestow the power to act for good, for in doing so it gains a hold on your soul. Good intentions have never been defense against ultimate corruption.

There will be offers of help, support, money or the capacity to perform miracles, even by our standards. There will be no price mentioned. There never is. If the offer is accepted, we will become stronger, but strength begets fame and breeds jealousy and fear. With the tiny window that the dark has into our souls, we will be made fearful and resentful of others. The answers to our problems will seem to be more power, more money, more aid. If we could just get a little more, we could work wonders to save us all.

But when the gift is received we will find that it is not enough. That the bills and debts somehow increase. That the Dark Ones we sought to destroy have become stronger or been reinforced. That those we thought would be swayed seem intransigent. That the dark mutterings in our minds will suggest caution and paranoia - for if the evil ones sway the imbued to their cause, whom of our friends and fellows can be trusted? The one who seems most helpful, most reliable, may bide his time to strike us down. We will need more might to defend our lives from threats we cannot quite perceive.

So more is bequeathed upon us. Suddenly,
we are strong enough to attend to the
hidden threats. To make the world safe,
we vow to destroy the corrupt ones in our
circles, the ones hiding behind masks of
honor. We isolate the ones we suspect and
kill them before they have a chance to
strike back with their dark powers. But
what of the others? Are they not corrupt
too? When they attack us in revenge, their
own corruption becomes obvious and they
too need to be purged. Hurt and be-
trayed, we vow to weed out all the evil
that weakens hunters from within...

...and never, ever realize that we have
become evil itself. The darkness will own
us, body and soul, and set us on an
insane quest to slaughter our own, always
making us suspicious of the ones who are
pure.

This will happen. Not once but a hundred
times. A thousand times. For now, we have
the advantage that the darkness does not
really know us, does not know that we
have been reborn to fight it. It will know
very soon, though, and our advantage will
be lost. Those who can be corrupted will
be. Those who cannot be corrupted will be
marked for destruction.



I have seen betrayal, been
tormented for my intellect since
long before I became what I am
today. Is it any wonder that I
choose to withdraw from the
company of my "peers," knowing
these dangers exist? Power is a
dreadful danger and corruption
can wear a pretty face. Those of
us with the intelligence to see
clearly should evade these traps,
but the danger for — and from
— the rest is immense. I want
nothing to do with you.
—Violin99

But we are not the only ones who will have to face the horrors of warring with our own kind. The darkness is divided too. It has been for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. It comes from our own souls, from our sundering, so it can never truly drive the humanity from within it. Just as many people have an inner darkness, so do many Dark Ones have an inner humanity.

The Dark Ones feud amongst themselves. Manipulator fights devil; devil fights skin-changer; skin-changer fights manipulator. It is more than just that, though. Each different type of Dark One fights within itself – class against class, old and powerful against young and ambitious, faction against faction. The coming war is as much a chance for the forces of darkness to tear into each other as it is a battle over humankind. Many of the Dark Ones are barely aware of us. Others seek to use us as weapons.

This gives us a position that we can use to our advantage. They seek to weaken their enemies with our aid, but in many cases we would be glad to rid the world of a monstrous and powerful foe. We must be extremely cautious, but perhaps there are enmities that we can inflame amongst the dark forces in order to help turn them on each other. Furthermore, there are some Dark Ones that are more interested in the well-being of humanity than in its subjugation. I know that many of you will greet this statement with hostility and others as vindication, but it is simple fact. These sympathetic creatures are the very few, not the many. Emma truly sought to help the world and she could have been a powerful ally. Just remember that there are Dark Ones who will aid us in our fight. We must simply decide if they are worthy of us.

Some may provide vital information – on where to find a powerful evil one and how best to attack it; on the plans of the Dark Ones and how to defeat them. Others will actually aid us in their fight. I have seen images of a battle in which enemy devils attack one another. They are well balanced, but one side finally wins. As the victors rest and lick their wounds, a force of hunters along with a third devil sweep down to destroy the remaining devils. A small victory for our side, but a powerful vision of unity.

At the same time, though, it is very difficult to tell when we are being aided, when a trap is being set, and when we might be corrupted. I say to all, walk with great care and remain cautious.

But this is just the start. Once the conflict has arisen, the eldest evils will awaken. Dark Gods, the most aged children of darkness, have lain dormant for aeons, ignoring us, letting their power build. They are full of hate for each other, for us, for life itself, even for themselves. They will rise and they will rise soon, and the remaining shreds of illusion will be torn from the world.

When the Dark Gods make themselves known, humanity will be unable to pretend any longer that it cannot see. Society as we understand it will go mad and be swept away. The Dark Gods will rise up and seize the reins of power from their lieutenants who have walked the world for so long. All the beings on the face of the Earth will be expected to fight in their armies. Dark Ones, fallen hunters and many people will flock to the banners of these Old Ones, compelled by power, bribed by wealth or terrified into submission. Battle lines will be drawn. Dark One will fight Dark One, hunter will fight hunter and brother will fight brother. Then, finally, we will truly be the last defense of the world. Those of us who remain pure, prepared to fight, will stand our ground.



we must try to resist them, to
stop them from destroying all
life in their struggles, to save
as much of humanity as we
can. That is our purpose, it is
why we were reawakened. we
are the descendants of
Hercules, King Arthur, Ilya
Mutomets. we were born to
save the world or to give our
lives in trying.

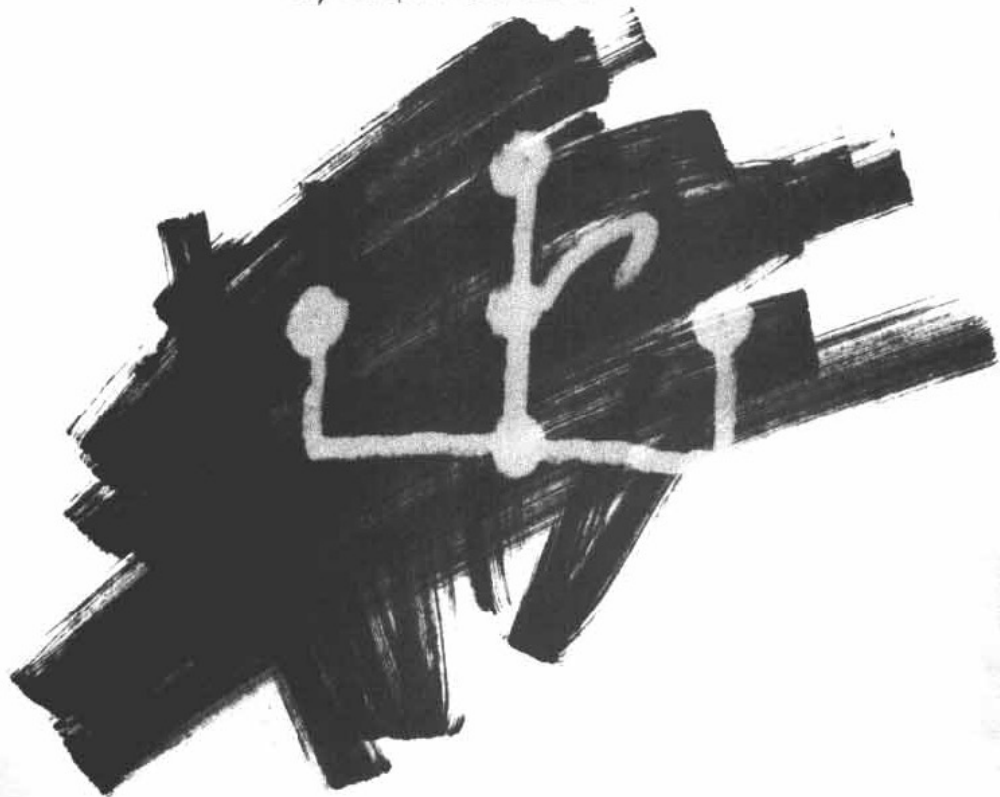
When the hour is darkest, when all mortal institutions and mores have been lost and the darkness tears itself apart, we will stand together, with the remnants of our friends and families, of humanity, and we will try to survive, to beat back the evil that surrounds us, to retain whatever parts of human knowledge and wisdom that we can save. The Shining Ones did not tell me whether we would succeed. I think, perhaps, they themselves do not know. But I know that we have no choice. We cannot give up, for this is a war of annihilation. We can die trying to help as many people as possible to survive or we can die begging for mercy. There is no middle ground. And if our gods do not know the outcome, then that means we at least have a chance.

We know — we have always known — that we are soldiers in a war. Well, we have just received our orders. It is not pretty, but war never is. We will stand between humanity and the darkness because someone has to if anyone is to survive, and because there is no one else. Remember that when the burden becomes great. There is no one to take your place. We humans are strong and have survived cataclysms and disasters in the past. If we stand together, proud and fearless against the darkness, we can be victorious again. When the battle is done, we can shape the new Golden Age. It is time for us to stand forth and inherit the Earth.

THE SIGNS

The end will come soon, but there is still a little time. Five signs were shown to me to indicate that the beginning of the end draws close. Watch for these, for they will guide you with regard to the end.

You will notice that the wording and phrasing of the signs is vague. Please accept my apologies for this. I can only record the information that I have been given. On this particular topic, the Shining Ones have seen fit to pass on only metaphor and allusion.



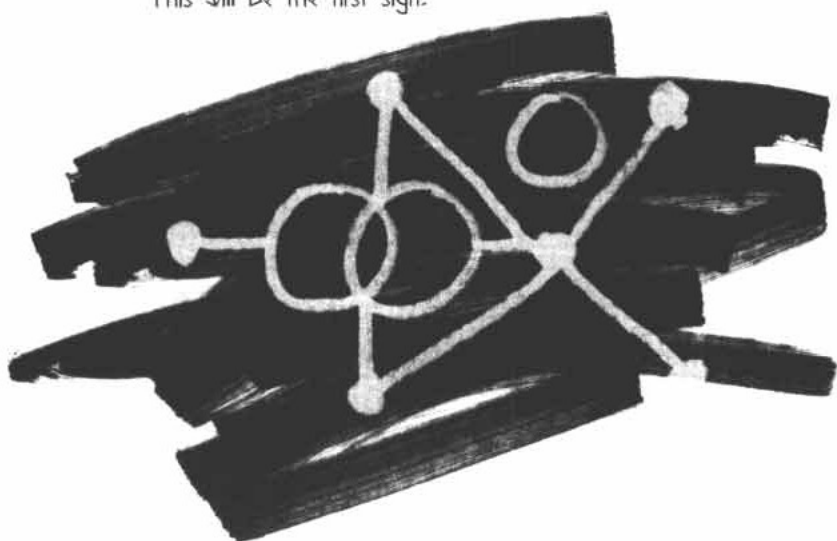
These are Fyodor's prophecies.
They give something of a rough
timetable for the fall of the
world, if you have the wit to
decipher them. I have recorded
my first impressions about the
five signs, but that is all.
—Violin99

THE FIRST SIGN

In the New World, the Golden Prince, son of the Golden King, will be struck down as his father was. He, too, will take a retinue to his grave, like the pharaohs of old.

His passing will rob the world of a spark of hope that could have helped keep it alive. In the sadness and outrage, some will turn to the darkness in despair. For others, their faith will be weakened.

This will be the first sign.



The New World is America. As John F. Kennedy was often referred to as golden, I believe that this is the death of his son, JFK Junior, in that tragic plane crash. The parallels are too strong — the word “Prince” implies lack of experience with rulership, unlike the “King” father.

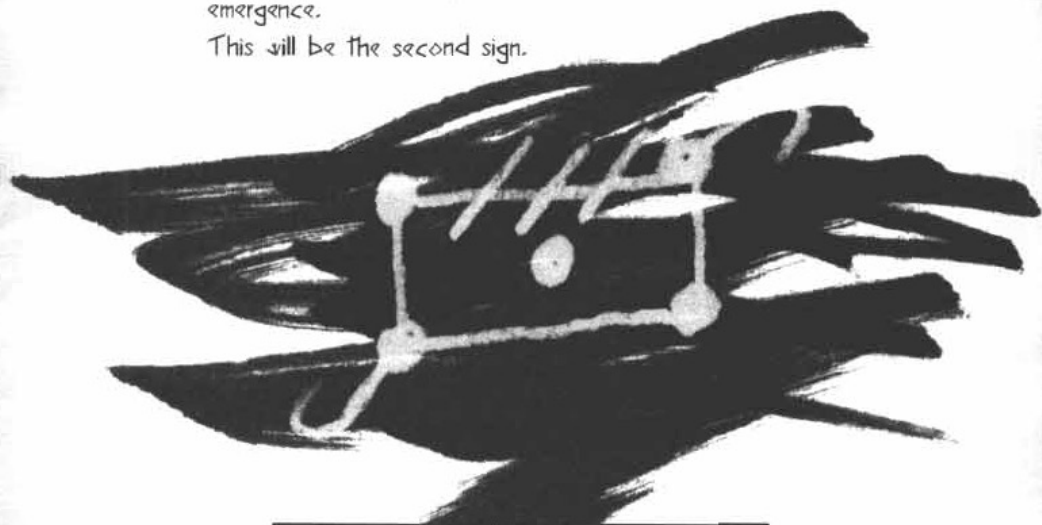
—Violin99

THE SECOND SIGN

In the lands that gave it birth, the root of all evil will strengthen and reach out subversively. Its sources will unite, but that unity will prove less than the sum of its parts.

This union will send ripples across the world. Countries and governments will be destabilized and the forces of order shaken. The disharmony will make it easier for the darkness to slip up through the cracks, ready for its emergence.

This will be the second sign.



"The root of all evil" could refer to the moment of the fall suggested by Fyodor, when the monsters came into existence. If that is the case, then perhaps the countries now in the area where the Golden Age existed — Egypt and Mesopotamia, perhaps? — will be ruled by a coalition of factions of various monsters. This would be difficult to verify.
—Violin99

THE THIRD SIGN

In the oldest lands of all, Mother Nature will turn her head from humanity and her cup will run dry. She will prove relentless in her spite and there will be great suffering.

This will cause great hunger and there will be much death. Many good warriors for the cause will be slain by the oldest forces of all and righteousness will be weakened greatly. The desire to heal and to help will be turned against many and they will willingly bear the seeds of corruption as they try to alleviate the pain.

This will be the third sign.



This seems to suggest a drought
in Africa.

—Violin99

THE FOURTH SIGN

Mighty Jupiter will stretch forth his hand and with a single casual blow of his hammer he will obliterate the city at the foot of the world, snuffing out millions of lives.

The ripples from these deaths will reverberate around the globe, helping to awaken the Oldest Ones. Many will be lost and mankind's faith will be tested. The corrupted will revel in their newfound power.

This will be the fourth sign.



It is difficult to identify where this disaster will strike or what its nature will be, but the result is starkly plain — a large city destroyed by some sort of cataclysm or “act of God.”

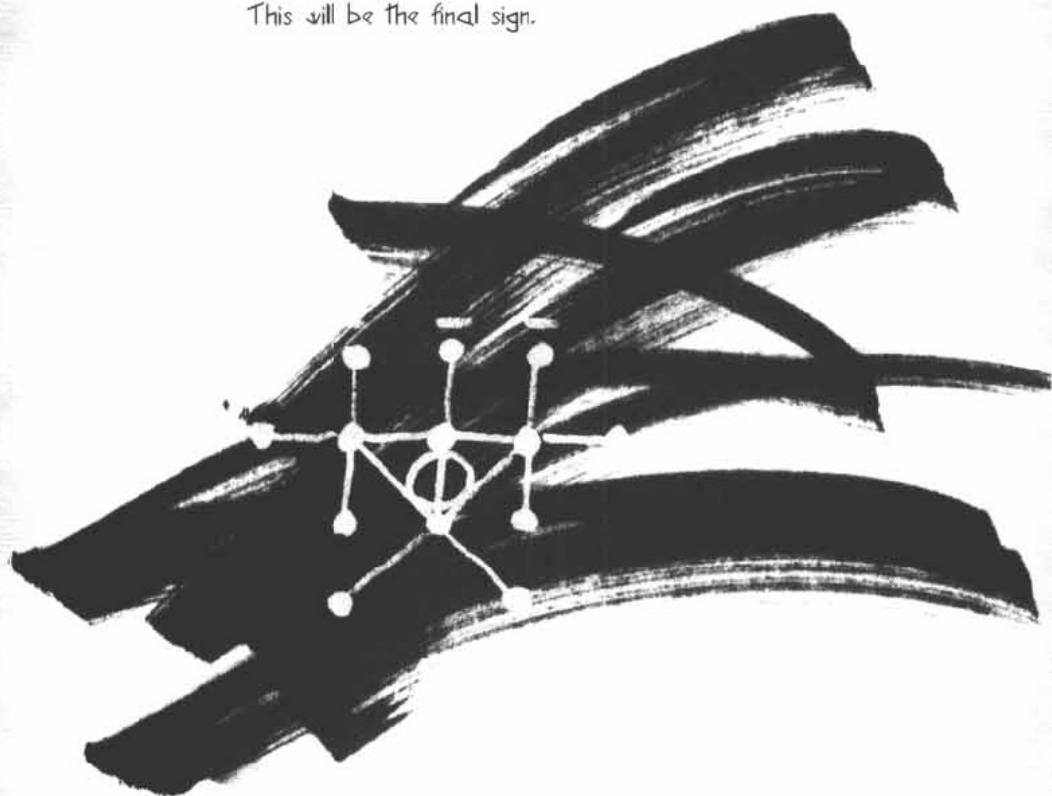
—Violin99

THE FINAL SIGN

In the time it takes for the sun to travel the sky, the agents of darkness will claim the lives of three of the brightest jewels in the crown of the Earth.

Panic will ensue and the world itself will be thrown into confusion as the snakes try to survive without their heads. This shall tell the darkness that the end has begun.

This will be the final sign.

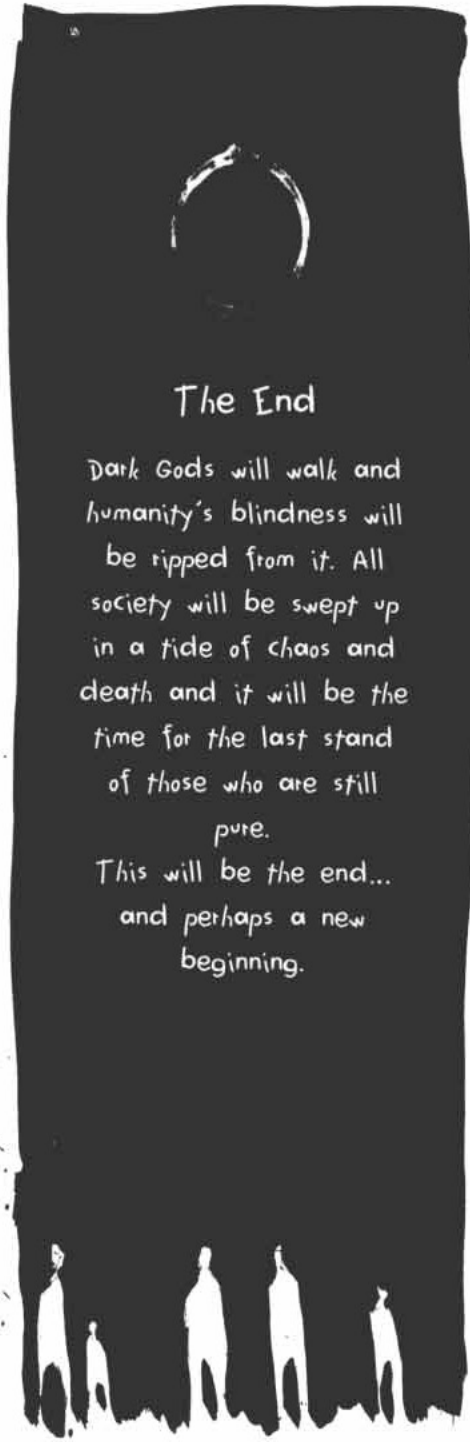


This must be a triple assassination, presumably of three of our leaders, theorists or perhaps even of the greatest imbued. That will be a bleak day, indeed.
—Violin99

The Beginning

On the next day, after the
final sign, the armies of the
dark will arise in the east.
Comprising mostly men, but
led by demons, they will
come out of the hills and into
the world and they will cause
great bloodshed.
This will be the beginning.





The End

Dark Gods will walk and
humanity's blindness will
be ripped from it. All
society will be swept up
in a tide of chaos and
death and it will be the
time for the last stand
of those who are still
pure.

This will be the end...
and perhaps a new
beginning.

10h

HUNTER APOCRYPHA

The End Is Nigh

Once, hunters were normal people who lived regular lives. That was before. Now that the Messengers have touched us, the imbued recognize the real horrific world ruled by monsters. But who are the Messengers, where did monsters come from and why were we, once blind people, chosen to inherit the Earth?

The answers lie in the prophecies of a visionary.