

## Urban Citizen

A tale of the supernatural set in 2275 AD

### Serene Life

I feel the cool wind blowing in my face as an overwhelming aroma of perfume is sucked into my nostrils, God the garden is beautiful. Everything so quiet, so reassuring. The stillness seeps out of the very earth. Each morning I am greeted by this welcoming committee of nature, what more could I want in my life. From the inside of the house I suddenly hear a female voice lazily drift into my consciousness gently chiding me for not having breakfast.

Dogon the family mandroid makes tracks in my direction. I know I must be good and go in. Dogon flashes a smile ushering me towards the entrance. Look I say to Dogon I have not forgotten that I need to eat. Time is going by and the Harmony and Renewal Council beckoned. At the table are the joys of my life my two beautiful sons now in young manhood, and Zara my soul mate, the centre of my being. We indulge in light conversation about what each of us will be doing that day. My beloved angel is by my side as I sit briefly at the table, taking in the scene in front of me. Andreas my oldest son now 25 is ready to begin his training to become a legal custodian. He has inherited my strength and determination to see justice done. Rico my youngest son aged 22 is the mirror opposite. He wants to dominate and control everybody. Rico has returned from the military space pilot academy almost finishing his 5 year training and now ready for his promotion.

Suddenly I am jolted out of my early morning reverie the dimension imager projects a worried face. Staring sadly, its eyes downcast. Then the goatee face opens its mouth ready to speak.

“Hi Adam are you okay brother? Not seen you around so I half guessed you might be at home with Zara? What do you have to say about all that eh ?”

I reply flippantly, “Ned you are so into trying to kidnap my life force, does that make you feel blue hot my man of good vibes.”

Then our thoughts connect as one ray of harmony. I know Ned is feeding me with his latest ideas which are becoming an overwhelming flood of rapid moving images which cause my body to respond shaking and rolling in its movements. I laugh out loud and Ned and his inner thoughts vanish into empty air. His last words ringing mercilessly in my brain, “get on over to the forum we have a new harmony drive to get underway.”

What challenges that lay ahead. I quickly left the home and boarded the travel pod which took me straight away to the harmony centre. I sent a thought echo mind to mind too Rico to warn him not to upset his mother as she did not deserve being at the receiving end of his bitchiness. I could hear him laughing loudly. He's such a naughty boy always testing the line trying to be a smart player. My attention now turns to the day ahead. The president of the council is due to attend our bi-annual review to check on the 3 year rolling programme of our citizen's peace and harmony education hypnos screen cast. Everybody bar a few dissenters has benefited from the 30 minutes a day coming together whether in small groups or individually as the situation warranted. We all practice the exercises which serve a purpose in keeping us all calm. It is just what is needed to drain away the stress from our elemental bodies, now a top priority to maintain harmony in our social contract we have made to each other. It is 30 minutes of pure bliss and all who willingly participate in the programme have confirmed how much they have gained by their active commitment. How lucky I am to be living in the 23<sup>rd</sup> century; it's a brilliant time to be alive. The planet is healing itself. I muse over the fact that there are less of us in the world. The frantic battle for survival is no more we all of us have our lives tuned to our paradise that keeps us, myself and family happy and healthy. What could possibly for goodness sake go wrong? In no time I hear the soft swish of the pod taxing towards the landing platform of the crystal fronted pyramid building, my stimulus my dream weaver, my purpose for living. The meeting today is scheduled to last 4 hours due to the importance of the review.

Two of the council wait patiently by the escalator smiling and I can merge telepathically registering the usual "great that your back" and "did your quality time go well with the family." I reply with my usual carefree tone that well it was just as I would expect such a break to be. Gregory who I have known for 20 years mirrors my excitement as he shares our vision of expanding the communities group feel good for another 3 years.

Silently all three of us await the escalator which then conveys us to the chamber for the meeting. The other member of the council Paulus has been with our in group for 6 months contributing little to our planning and implementation. He stood by the council chamber door. His face expressionless, not revealing a thing. Both he and myself went back a long way. Yet he was indifferent but not hostile to our community's greater plan to implement further harmony programmes for the community's benefit. I was unsure as to why he was there and his purpose. Still the President felt he had something positive still to offer. What that was, I had no idea. We have arrived at the chamber. Various officials from the centre I see in deep conversation accompany other council members into the chamber from the entrance. No matter I know the other eight will agree. Paulus gestures me to sit down. I do so wondering what's on his mind. Sighing I register his concerns. "Look I am uncertain if the theme will work the way it's intended. Personally there is a limit on how far we can interfere in our citizens' lives regarding reactivating deep level feel - good. Leave our people be. That's why I will vote for an amendment."

I look at him steadily before replying trying to fuse with Paulus's thoughts. I feel his resistance to me, a door of steel barring my way. Again I attempt a mind fusion, again he denies me. For such a usually mild man I am surprised how quickly he turns on me. "Look I

don't want a massive fall out with you over this. In previous centuries we would have raised our voices, and one of us would have stormed out of the room. So brother citizen let us both just close our eyes and let our inner screen fall silent, and await the answer."

"Okay Paulus that's reasonable and fair. We have a few minutes before the meeting starts to meditate on this dilemma, before we are inspired and with patience await the reply."

I turn my attention within eyes closed clear my mind in expectation of my higher self so that the right choice to follow will pop up in my mind screen. A new sound echoes inside me, 'Thank you my brother I knew you would understand.' Before I can respond back I feel Gregory's light touch of reassurance on my shoulder. I hear him whisper in my ear, "the others are about to be seated for the ceremony of the calming so that we are ready to link in with planet mind and do what we all know is right to continue to maintain the harmony between us and mother nature." The lighting becomes more subdued perfumes from a thousand plants are injected from tiny apertures suspended from a disc hovering above our heads. The President leads the prayer chant and all eight of us emit a deep note rich and hypnotic in its effect. The very chamber vibrates in unison. I always enjoy the opening rituals of our communion meetings. It just feels so right gathered together as one united in power and love. After what seems an eternity the mind fusion is finished. We all sit back eyes on the President and let him speak.

"My beloved brothers we are all here today to find wisdom from our inner selves and to reflect on how we can serve our world community more effectively and lovingly. Indeed we are a fortunate generation inheriting a world of beauty as well as peace. No conflict between us as a diverse tribe of many races exists. War is now thrown into the black hole of history. However let us be vigilant in ensuring we keep it that way. Now I need to hear a report from each of you over what has happened over the last week regarding developments in your unity lodges."

After the formal speech by our regional leader I saw Gregory smiling broadly catch the eye of the chief. The President coolly stares back. Silence reigns for what seems like a century of time. I feel a twinge of irritation at why it is that at every meeting we begin by having this ritual of catching the chief's attention. I feel this foreign emotion so strong it takes me completely unawares. Then I laugh inwardly realising we are in the 23<sup>rd</sup> century not the 21<sup>st</sup>, mirroring a flashing smile of equal sincerity back at my brother guardian.

The meeting drags serenely on and my attention is maintained by continual doses of acia juice so I do n't drift off into a detached state wrapped up in my own thoughts and inner musings. Before I am sucked down this tunnel any further I hear the insistent voice of the Chief ringing in my ears.

"I need your contribution Adam as a guardian, as the next wave of the serenity and health programmes needs implementing. You will recall prior to the next phase of our work you were given 6 months to carry out this vital survey, surely you have done it by now?"

I looked sheepishly at my Mentor who I had known since I was 20. I did not want to upset him as I had agreed to take on this project willingly as a gesture of goodwill, showing my commitment to the serenity programme. “Yes I can definitely confirm that my findings indicate that our programme to promote the harmony creed is working. All custodians and guardians favour the approach as it is contributing to the current stability and conflict free situation on the ground. Everything remains level, the guardians of public order report all is harmonious and settled. Is n’t that the result we all want?”

I scanned the faces of my fellow members including the chief’s noticing that all were nodding helpfully willingly in agreement. The only flicker of dissent came from the playful twinkle in Gregory’s eyes. But somehow I just knew he would be contrary like that. To my surprise though I was quite preoccupied in my thoughts, I was able to produce a well rounded coherent report that made sense. Seemingly an automatic part of me delivered the stats to perfection faultlessly. The Chief as well as the council nodded in approval and I was showered with praise. My recent planned elevation to a senior custodian is now a foregone conclusion. Unless I hijack that promotion by my own hand which I have no intention of doing, as so many people depend on me for that to happen, especially my family. Suddenly out of the blue a thought appeared which I had not felt before. It hit me hard between the eyes. There was something strange about that thought I just could not get to the bottom of it.

Paulus suddenly spoke in the brief interruption that followed. “Would you like to dine with me tonight as Caitilyn is away in Arcadia with her group, and I am on my own. Please say you will come, and I will cook your favourite seaweed burgers with rice.”

I nod helpfully in return. Yes I will come, because I actually like Paulus and he has been invaluable in his support while I have been completing my survey. A few minutes later the meeting concludes. We are all given our individual instructions as to the next phase of the programme.

“I can. Can I say something? Don’t you feel at times that we can just let the programme adjust itself, without us there?” I felt it was important to test out the sincerity of my fellow guardian’s intentions to actually trust that the programme could be relied on.

“You are reading more into all this than you should. Just connect with your inner voice and await its guidance. Simple there is really no need to complicate our lives like we used to.”

I head out of the chamber but not before going to the quiet room closing my eyes and sending a thought transference message. I see my beloved’s smiling face. Yes she is fine with my having dinner with Paulus. And happy with me being back for 10 that night. Then something comes over me. As I sit at the table a fog suddenly envelopes me. I feel myself being forced down a pitch black tunnel like shape, the pressure is intense, what is this and why is this happening to me? Analysis is useless, at rapid speed to my astonishment my consciousness expands and I merge into the thoughts and speech patterns totally alien to my own. For what appears to be a split second myself is wiped out – all my memories are overridden and new ones replaced frightening in their intensity. Time and place have faded and I am no longer in

familiar surroundings. And yet they look familiar. The scene I am in becomes all too real. I am exiting a steel door with bars.

A uniformed stern faced guard hands me a battered bag, sighing he says, “next time you are here and nobody bails you out there will be no release for 12 months. Get going Mr Jones there will be no more warnings next time.” Another version of myself, understands exactly what this all means. I feel this unfamiliar me sigh and attempt to hold back a tear, as I know I will not be able to make it. A wave of dizziness hits, but I can’t linger by the gate. I shuffle onwards down the road. Somehow realising I am going nowhere as my home in this alien landscape is no longer an option. Then suddenly I blackout and all existing images vanish and I am back in the quiet room again. Disorientated I manage to rise shakily from the seat, having to grip the wall to regain my balance. I was in a state of confusion, as definitely an event I had never experienced before had taken place. How had this happened? Was it a primeval memory reawakened leaving a residue of fear vomited up from the dark force itself? I must get to the bottom of this flashback relapse. That was for later, as I realised I needed to get back to my family.

I am able to vacate the quiet room with great difficulty. I feel shooting pains radiating up and down my legs, back and arms. Literally I have to force myself out of the room walking gingerly down the centre of the room until I am able to fully re-orientate myself and head for the exit. Once I am outside heading down the corridor, I am spotted by the President of the Council who makes tracks in my direction. His face beaming, I sense that he is going to ask a favour of me, a part of me would rather not help but I know that as one of the Guardians on the Council of Harmony and Renewal I will have little choice.

“Ah my brother you and I need to talk. It has been a while since we have had the chance. You remember we have agreed to an amendment to our life education programme, well I think just for now we could hang back. I am uncomfortable with us implementing it. As I see you want to get home, I will suggest we both meet up soon, say next Wednesday with Simeon from the Economics Urban Research Council to get his organisation’s perspective of how best to adapt the programme to meet all our community’s needs. There I’ve said all I needed to say for now.”

“Thanks, I would be honoured to see you next week with Simeon as I trust and respect his views. He talks a lot of sense. I’ll go straight to your office, no problem.”

“Good that’s fine then. I will see you then, unless a major emergency arises. Until then go in peace.”

With my mind still distracted with what had happened in the quiet room, I stepped into the waiting purple lift pod and made my way up to the 9<sup>th</sup> floor and from there straight to my office. I just needed to see the new appointed head guardian. A voice calls out from a three dimensional hologram, I look up and notice its’ Dr Bloomer. Smiling Dr Bloomer the new head of the Harmony and Renewal Institute asks if I wanted to turn up the following day at his research lab, to see the latest breakthrough in brain regeneration tissue using crystal rod sound and light particle wave bio technology.

I said no, as I had to prioritise a report for the Council President.

“Sorry to hear Adam you can’t make the live demonstration tomorrow. I would have liked you there in your role as health public relations specialist. It’s important that our citizens know about what progress we are making in this area. All being well the bio medical technique will be available at all health regeneration clinics and recovery centres from Monday of next week. Send me a hologram message to let me know when you can come over. Peace be with you my brother.”

“And the same to you revered brother. I’ll hologram text you on Friday just to let you know I’ll get back to you then. And I’ll gladly try to come over if time permits.”

The hologram projection instantly vanishes and I decide to briefly head straight into my office. My obliging personal assistant Roo my mandroid instantly reactivates back into life; stands up from his desk console and bows.

“Hi Roo any messages for me from anybody please? Since 10 this morning?”

“No Sir nothing, most unusual Sir as we normally by 4 in the afternoon are overwhelmed by holographic dialogue requests. Do you need me anymore or do you want to be left alone in your office?”

“No Roo thanks I can manage on my own for the rest of the day. See you Friday at 10 am.”

With that the mandroid switches off into hibernation mode. Before I needed to go home there was some work I needed to finish on my computer storage console. I went straight into my office sat down; feeling suddenly drained and closed my eyes, as if an overwhelming force was compelling me to do so. I was unable to resist as sudden waves of heavy foginess pressed down upon my mind and I zoned out. A sensation of being sucked into a vacuum and falling within myself, and my alarm that I could not stop that feeling, I was unable to move or cry out. Then suddenly I felt a strong sensation of falling at great speed down from the sky. I could fleetingly see to my horror the ground was rapidly rising up in front of my eyes.

So vividly was the experience and the scene now forming, that I noticed images of a row of unfamiliar dingy looking buildings, and I felt myself literally falling straight through one of the buildings. Strange, I never felt a thing, going through the roof structure, no pain no panic. Within what seemed like seconds, I descended through a ceiling of some sort and merged into a cold clammy like body. This is weird. Temporarily I felt lost unable to understand what was happening around me. What’s going on? How can this be? The body I have jumped into felt strange full of pain, it ached in every joint, its chest felt congested, and a wave of emotional sadness seemed to wash over me. The other entity’s mind just seemed to take over, me as Adam seemed to be merge with the mind of that other me.

It did not take time to adjust to the new surroundings. I was truly shocked at what I saw. The place appeared to be a damp dilapidated room, with stained walls all filthy grime on the walls, with a dusty discoloured carpet. This other version of myself, was sitting on a decrepit filthy settee; with only a small table and a solitary chair. There was nothing else in the room

other than a single bed and a torn curtain half covering the window. A tiny gas heater provided basic heating to the room, along with one overhead light providing light to the room. The other I still seated on the settee was able to make out a long table top surface on which stood a small cooker device and a small white box like machine making a strange humming noise.

From the other side of a wooden panelled door, I heard a loud series of banging noises, as if something was banging against the door opposite mine. Raised voices were heard followed by screams quickly ending in breaking of heavy objects. The whole building seemed to shake. Petrified I stayed stock still without moving a muscle. Straining I heard a voice proclaiming “The fucking runt has been neutralised for good. He owed money and came out with the sob story that he’d run out. The turd is flushed down the toilet. Come on Ram let’s get the fuck outa here. This joint stinks of shit.”

Then I hear a long drawn out growl and before I could react a heavy object started banging violently against my door. Immediately I began to feel my stomach tightening up into a knot. My breathing became laboured and I began to feel a sharp sense of pressure in my chest. Trembling with my legs struggling to keep me upright, I heard a high pitched piercing voice demand that I open the door at once. “What do you want?” I cried out in my wavering scared voice.

“Look mate you need to pay your accommodation charge and you owe a week’s charge to cough up.”

“Do you want to come in then? Because I want to say something to you which can’t wait.”

Before the voice could reply I quickly opened the studio flat door. What I saw caused me to shrink back in terror. A face deeply scarred along with an array of face (different sorts of facial piercings) stared down at me through the gloom of the corridor. I was struck however by the beauty and sensitivity of the face. It was stunning in its impact. The body wearing a gym tank top revealed a massive, huge chest with monster arms that could crush a human being to pieces. The guy must have been close to 7’ tall. In this current body I appeared to be inhabiting; I was very tall myself close to 6’6” from what I could make out by checking in the mirror. Almost eyeballing him, I saw him smile and extend his hand out which engulfed my own due to its size.

“Sorry to have banged on your door like that my brother but I just wanted to say if you are struggling to pay your protection money it frankly does n’t matter. The crew can survive and for another month without your sub. But we need you to do something for us as a favour.”

“What’s that?” I asked pensively.

“Look we just want to put a camera in your window as we are concerned about some rival slime showing their faces in our territory out to find out what’s happening which is none of their business.”

“Do you have the camera with you, and is it conspicuous, basically easy to notice as I do not want any bricks through my windows.”

“No bro, the camera is tiny and is placed in a jar of artificial flowers so no shadowy scum can spot it.”

“Okay yeah come in and place it on the window cill.”

The giant strode into the flat. Only when he was physically in my lounge could I see just how huge he actually was. Built like a solid wall his chest shoulders and arms were literally dripping with chiselled defined peaks of muscle. His legs where bulging with separate slabs of muscle; a pair of tree trunk sized legs if ever I bore witness to. Anybody stupid enough to take this man on would risk his body being crushed to pieces. I am a very tall man myself 6’6” but he had the advantage over me being at least twice my size.

I quickly backed away from him as he made his way towards the window overlooking the street. He placed a small wire like instrument on a stand barely noticeable from outside. With the net curtains behind, no one would think anything of this nondescript piece of wire on a tiny stand facing the street outside. Turning to face me, the colossus informed me that he planned to visit me again in “4 weeks I will be swinging by matey to see what you’re up to as well as check up on the recording gear plus any unusual movement in the street. You should be safe where you are in the flat, providing you don’t draw attention to yourself. Before I go I’ll leave you some notes as a payment for allowing us to have the camera in your flat. Does that sound good to you? Look bro I know you could do with the notes to supplement your poncy wage you get as a bookkeeper. In case you need us I’ve written down my mobile to contact me in a hurry.”

Sighing I replied, “How reassuring that I can contact you guys in the event that’s necessary. Anyway thanks for your generosity.”

“Cool bro, cool. I am only a key press away, should anything kick off. See ya later.”

With that the giant left and I was relieved that nothing threatening resulted from that head to head. The next thing I remember was a sudden wave of exhaustion come over me and I quickly lay down, finding myself slipping into a dark warm void blanking out all pictures of the place I was in currently. Including a sense of detachment to the physical environment as it no longer seemed to matter. Felt a sensation of dizziness as felt myself falling into myself it was hard to pin it down to anything. However I felt a pulling sensation and I then was jolted back finding myself on the floor when I woke up of the room in the centre and not in the dingy smelly flat, I had just been in.

A loud banging brought me round rapidly from my daze like state. The room stopped spinning round so violently. In a dizzy state I managed with difficulty to grip onto the table. Hauling myself up, I could hear somebody repeatedly banging on the office door. It was really irritating me, I shouted out, “Alright alright I heard you let me just get to the door for God’s sake.”



I looked at myself in the mirror and I looked absolutely white as if I'd seen a ghost. I then opened the door and a concerned caretaker robot humoid stared in puzzlement. The caretaker robot quickly moved out of my way. In an embarrassed tone without going into a detailed explanation I quickly said, "I was working in the room and then just drifted off to sleep. I was not aware it was so late."

In very respectful tones the robot humanoid replying back to me said, "I was just checking there was nobody in the quiet room as it was locked. I did not have the code to enter which was overridden. Sorry sir, to have caused any distress. It is 8 pm sir and I am sure you need to get back to your home pod."

I was so shattered to respond as all I wanted to do was get back to my home pod to recharge myself relax and calm myself down. I did not want to share my story as to what had happened with anyone.

I was able to hail a high speed people conveyer to get me back home. The strange experience of my flashback was just unsettling. Taking some deep breathes I managed with difficulty to calm my nerves down. Nothing of this nature had ever happened to me before. I was in unknown territory. I knew one thing for certain I had definitely experienced something out of the ordinary. Being in that space felt like I was there. In that filthy room, with that noise coming from a room opposite mine, was just too much of a coincidence not to believe that I had time jumped back into the past. Everyone knew about the barbaric first half of the twenty first century. Virtually the whole world was in chaos back then. Many people in dire poverty, starving virtually depending on food banks, living in no go areas dominated by vicious psychopathic gangs. In shock I queried whether I actually experienced a past life vision. I believe in past life visions; as it's taken for real as an event which can't be challenged. While I was turning over in my mind all these separate upsetting images trying to make sense of it all, I was unaware that we had stopped outside my home.

I quickly got out and made my way up the ramp to the front door. Dogon is there waiting for me as I come in. A look of concern registers on his face as he holds in his hand a small round messenger crystal.

"Hi Dogon what's up with you? Look I had to work late at the assembly centre, lots of work to do. I had no choice. Sorry I forgot to contact you as I was just so busy."

An indignant Dogon in an angry voice, "Why did you not send back a flash message on the dimension imager? That's all you had to do sir. Your life partner has left to see friends and both the boys are out with their girl and boyfriends. Have you eaten dinner sir?"

"No I have n't since breakfast. Yes I need to eat, I understand and appreciate that. Just let me have a quick radion shower to rebalance my auric energy field. Give me 10 minutes."

"Right Sir I'll prepare your food straight away. Vegetable and seaweed bake, and strawberry cream for your dessert if that's to your liking."

“Yeah that’s fine Dogon, menu sounds great. Oh just wanted to know when Zara is due back and I take it the boys will be staying out tonight.”

“Your life partner will be back around 11.30 tonight – she did ask me to remind you about some guests coming round from her people from the Justice Chamber. Andreas and Rico are away tonight back tomorrow evening. They are with their partners.”

Sighing I went into the infrared shower to wipe out the effect of the day as I was so totally drained by what had happened. The heat rays soothed my tired body. It also knocked out my overcharged full on mind. Suddenly what I had experienced just a short while back no longer seemed to matter. As the shower’s rays gently caressed my body and mind I enjoyed the temporary sense of relief from all that had happened. I was in no mood to analyse what had taken place. I was living in the 23<sup>rd</sup> century and that was that. I had attended an important meeting of the council and was heavily involved in all the planning and implementing of new proposed changes to our current health policy for our people. What’s not to like?

Everything is harmonious today. My family loves me and my community respect and love me to, and feel worthwhile and that I matter. These thoughts were still going through my mind, when I changed into my tunic and headed for the family refreshment room. I sat there in silence just letting my mind go into free loading mode not fixing my mind on anything in particular. My rational critical mind was shut down. Just as Dogon arrived with my dinner I suddenly had a thought appear on my mind screen. It was about that nightmare image of myself back in a filthy grim rectangular shaped room. The thought just seemed to persist in my mind, and I was unable to erase it from my consciousness. I suddenly experience a flash of an intimidating image of a huge man towering over a very tall man, which I identified as being myself affected me to the point where I was beginning to feel uneasy, but I could not pin it down to what. While I was lost in my thought maze I forgot about eating my meal. I was just staring off into space.

I had no idea how long I had sat motionless and death like at the table. What interrupted my concentration was a sharp tap on my shoulder and jerking myself back and turning myself around I noticed a concerned Dogon looking concernedly at me.

“Are you ill Sir? You have n’t touched any of your food. Should I call a doctor?”

“No Dogon, really I don’t need any treatment from a doctor I have just had a late working day, and I am sorry but I have lost my appetite. Sorry to have put you to all that trouble for nothing. I think I’ll head off for bed.”

“As you wish Sir. Your life partner will not be back until very late around 11.30 this evening so she said. It is highly likely your life partner and one of your son’s will return home. Your other son plans to stay out and come back tomorrow. Shall I go into shut down mode until tomorrow, as its 10.00 pm already.”

“Yeah Dogon do that I’m off to sleep anyway as I’m really tired. See you tomorrow at 7.30 in the morning. They have the front door card to let themselves in.”

“Good night Sir.”

Dream like I rose up and went to my sleep room.

Once back in sleep mode I was catapulted straight back into the vision of suffering. I felt and heard and saw the vision of the 21<sup>st</sup> century hell another part of myself I became a part of. I was in my dilapidated filthy bedsit studio apartment. I was coughing up blood, doubled up in pain, crying as I felt so trapped and alone in this hell that I knew there was no escape from. The suddenness of my return to this flashback image within minutes of falling asleep alarmed me deeply. How the hell could it be that that me, had managed to jump back into another time period over 2 hundred years ago into a dark barbaric age where I felt so trapped and vulnerable. God my chest and throat really hurt. What was I to do?

I felt all the horrible sensations of coughing wrenching my guts out by vomiting onto the studio flat floor. I felt this other version of myself crying begging to die and be relieved from my pain. I had no money, nobody cared, was on my own and what made it worse was the fact that it was Christmas Day. All I was able to do was to just lie there gripped by this pain, this relentless ability of my throat of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to go into bizarre spasms without end. There was nothing I could do to stop it. Oh fuck what the fuck is happening to me. My life now defined as one long coughing binge. Christ it is cold in this shithole. I felt the words I was speaking and thinking was so totally alien to everything about myself in the 23<sup>rd</sup> century.

I was stunned that this other version of myself had come out with this degraded language. There was nothing I could do about it. This baser version of myself just stayed under the clothes in a curled up fetal position so totally not going with the flow of anything. Suddenly my attention was drawn to a huge black thing on legs moving ponderously slow across the floor. I stared at this black coloured armoured plated object moving across the carpet. I finally saw this fucking aberration of nature. It was what I recognised as a beetle from doing an interest course in 21<sup>ST</sup> century insect life. With vicious sharp pincers positioned straight out in front of me. Was it aware I was watching its every move? Then before I could summon up my energy to take immediate action the fucking little monster had crawled into an opening in the skirting board.

Groaning I quickly tumbled onto the floor banging my screwed up right knee in the process. I raced to turn on the heat so my privates would not become bitten by cold. Then I rapidly put on my dressing gown and opening my flat door I almost tripped over another resident who was lying face down on the floor stinking of alcohol and urine. Jesus, I never met this dude but there he was blocking my path. I managed to step over this piece of human meat and went straight to the hall table where an envelope with a wage slip was waiting to be collected by myself. Amazingly I was in this other life I was re-living an accountant earning monthly amounts of money paid electronically into a bank account. Opening the envelope I was aware that there was another face peering from another doorway staring at me from the landing on the floor above, in the semi darkness of Christmas day.

This unshaven youngish man with a heavily slashed face stared malignantly at me. I could feel his hostility as he stood there sizing me up. Then just as I was turning to go back into my flat, he unzipped his trousers and out came a massive pole of meat. With a look of sneering contempt he aimed his white column of meat and tried to spray his yellow jet of urine in my direction. His planned goal of his urine splashing my face was a failure. Noticing how pissed off he was I rapidly returned to my room slamming the flat door shut and caught out of the corner of my eye the glint of a steel blade. My heart and pulse racing I felt my whole body shaking as I freaked at the thought of this human reject smashing his way into my home to kill me.

I was n't sure I was going to make it through to Boxing Day. The two muscle giants in suits were unavailable. Somehow I just knew this was the case. All of a sudden as I went rapidly back into my flat for refuge to escape the staring eyes of this grotesque man I just about sat down when I felt a sudden wave of exhaustion overcome me. Bang I felt myself fall onto the floor covered in sweat I woke up and I was back in 2275. I must have cried out as I heard the sound of movement hurrying down the corridor. The door opened immediately and I saw staring down at me my partner it was Zara. Andreas my son was with her. They both helped me to my feet. I was shaking with sweat pouring off my face.

Zara looked pale asking me over and over again because I just was n't registering what she was saying, "What the hell has happened to you?"

"Oh hi honey, I've had a nightmare a really powerful dream so realistic it was scary. I'm trying to make sense of it all, but have never experienced anything quite like it before. Can I tell you all about it tomorrow? You and Andreas both need to get to bed. I'll offload to you after 12 tomorrow. In fact I'm working from home so I will take the time to do just that. Have a good night you two; see you then thanks for coming in to see me when I needed it most."

Both my wife and son gave me a hug and a kiss. Just for tonight I would crash in the spare bedroom. For the rest of the night I would not have a reoccurrence of the strange horrific vivid back flash as all I was just begging desperately for was a dreamless dead sleep. The next day I woke up refreshed with no headache or achy joints or nausea in my stomach.

At the back of my conscious mind the fear I had of the vivid vision of a version of myself stuck in a tiny run down room seemed to be hovering over me as I had a lot of important stuff to do, which just could not wait. While I was going through various important reports I suddenly was sent a holographic alert. It was the President of the Council.

"I really need to see you my brother at my office. Can't tell you what it relates to as it is private. Can you get to me within the hour? You have got this alert? Adam have you got my message? Do please answer."

For a moment I stared in a daze not registering what he was saying. It was a blur that seemed to pass over my head.

"Mr President, of course it's you. I was deep in my thought bubble. Of course I can see you in an hour, that's fine."

The President flashed a smile before his image faded out. I sit there frozen in silence. For some reason I am unable to move. The last thing I expected was to hear from the Council President. What was the reason behind this contact? It was unlike anything I had experienced a mind to mind fusion. Rarely did I have contact with this senior figure. He seemed to be unreachable above us inhabiting a rarefied space, which only a select few are able to gain access to. In no time at all I was refocused on completing the report which was needed by the Sub - committee on peace and harmony. New procedures to be enforced, to ensure that harmony was wherever possible maintained, so that the harmony could have a chance of being realised.

I rise from the table yanked by the loud noise coming from the kitchen. Inside I witness Nico dancing with the mandroid around the kitchen. They were both dancing in harmony with each other. All I wanted was to be free to do whatever was at that moment necessary to my well being and inner sense of balance. Nico broke off his dance to talk to me his father. By the look on my son's face and his body language I got a flash of his true intentions. Yeah to tap me for money. Shake me harder so the coins fall into his lap. Nico comes over his face grinning, hand extended to speak to me.

"Nico my son. I know you want something from me. You need to give me a convincing reason what that is. Nico you're living at home. Your mother and me provide you with all your clothes and basic necessities. Consider yourself lucky you don't live in the first half of the twenty first century. Gangs ruled all over the country known as England."

"Sorry father for being unreasonable. I am grateful for all that you sacrifice to meet my needs."

"Going out again to another harmony festival eh? Can't get enough of them. I was like that when your age. Anyway Rico how's the training progressing at the army academy? You should be getting close to graduating I think that's about right."

"Father I finish in October of this year. I am the leader of my class. Once I graduate I will be based with the community protection custodians."

"Good son, good, your sense of duty and commitment is touching and inspiring. I know when you have completed your training that you will go far as a protector of our people from danger."

"Thanks, I am touched Father and grateful that you are so supportive of me. By the way I am out with my girl companion tonight staying over at her place. I will be fine. Can I bring you anything from the food warehouse before I come home? Mum's away at her healing event group tonight not back until the small hours."

I smiled at my son, "That's fine Nico give my regards to Rachel won't you. Tell her she is a very welcome guest in our home. Coming over to stay also would be a joy."

After that I left the kitchen ready to meditate to repower my life force. It was the start of a new day, and before Andreas and Zara appeared in the lounge dining bar I wanted to have a

bit of peace by myself. Once inside my study I shut the door and sat down. I took a few deep breathes, keen to release the tight pressure across my chest. The last few days had been tough and exhausting. I tried hard to focus on my work, as I had a deadline to honour. My mentor and community chief guardian was not a man to cross swords with. Though we lived in a more enlightened calmer age all of us were still subject to our more baser natures taking the reins.

Once I got comfortable I closed my eyes. All external sound with some difficulty faded out. Slowly to begin with, I felt a haze begin to settle starting from my head extending down over my face. This resulted in my face then becoming fixed and immobile, with my facial features experiencing a lack of any sensation and movement. This steady sensation spread creeping down to my neck, my chest then down my back then my arms and hands, including my hips and lower limbs. I welcomed this feeling. My physical body machine was happy in its state of paralysis.

Then it happened. Almost imperceptibly at first, I felt the internal twinges of a heaviness developing as if it was imposing itself on my consciousness. A sensation of a leaden weight pressing on my head and a certain feeling of floating took hold over me. I seemed to be evaporating inside myself. It felt like my essence was drawing out of my body, like drawing a clam from its shell. Then as if out of nowhere, a door in the screen of my mind appeared, and I noticed an image seemingly expand coming out of the door growing rapidly taking up the whole field of my inner vision. Then a falling sensation, to my amazement I was being sucked into a form that appeared – it was me. I intuitively knew that something inside me had morphed into this other version of myself.

The thought processes now dominated as I merged my thoughts with the past me. Once I had adjusted to my new surroundings saw coming towards me a gang of three young adult males. The road I was going down was empty all run down terraced buildings. There was nobody there other than me and these three huge intimidating young men. All dressed in torn shirts and ripped jeans. Who they were or where they were going was unknown. Oh my God, as I looked at these dudes, they were leering menacingly at me. The tallest of these dudes moved ahead of the other two, speeding up his pace making straight for me. I was n't able to dodge out of the guy's way. I stopped dead in my tracks, with my hands shoved inside my coat pockets as I tried to convey the impression that these fuck faces if they messed with me, I could swiftly whip out of my pocket a blade ready to lunge at this piece of piss and stab him. The fuckhead saw what was going on, but still came towards me. Stopped inches from my face and spat his word script at me. "Hey you I want you to lick my teeth for me. Then my prick for you to then suck clean, when you have done that you male slag, I want you to do the same to my two mates. Finally take your pants down squat and have a crap. Then eat your shit in front of us, and we will let you move on down the road. Do you think you can handle that beauty boy?"

I looked stunned at this human drug machine. Said nothing but just stared at him. My face registered no reaction, I was an empty blackboard. Before I noticed it, the other two human drug machines came up and were crowding round me. They were young like their front man,

all of them tall, wiry and strong. One of these human specimens, the third one had one of his eyes gouged out leaving just an empty socket. Christ now what? These scum humans began making swaying movements; completely blocking me off. I was surrounded with two of the gang members standing either side of me. In the meantime I just stood still and said nothing. I mean what the fuck could I say?

Staring into the ringleader's eyes I caught two red flashes of fire show themselves. This scum human's face was turning bright red I could also hear his breathing becoming laboured. Alarming I noticed his body becoming tense and rigid, his muscles stiffen.

I knew it was coming. Bam the fucker had punched me hard in the stomach. The wind had been knocked out of me. Doubling over in pain, I collapsed onto the ground; clutching my stomach which had borne the force of the punch. While rolling around on the ground, I felt a barrage of kicks raining down on me. Boots aggressively connected with my body. There was nowhere to escape the savage attacks and I instinctively did my best to curl up into a fetal ball. The rain of boot punches carried on without mercy, all I could hear was laughter, while this fucking bunch of cunts continued on with their assault.

Crying I begged them to stop and leave me alone. They would n't. A wall of pain descended crushing me. There was no escape, no let up. I descended into a frenzy of wild sobbing, moaning, not knowing what the fuck to do. Then it stopped. My punch bag body still screaming in agonising pain as a result of the beatings just lay there. Inert dead pulsating with raw gaping wounds dripping blood oozing out of pockets of ripped skin. Then a warm stream of liquid cascaded down onto my face. Flowing down my taut curled up body. The sticky smell of the yellow rain made me wretch and feel sick. Out in a surge came this river of vomit. I felt I was half choking struggling to catch my breath. Then I passed out.

When I came to, I was back at my desk in my home. For a moment I had no energy. My mind was swirling around me, so fast I could not slow down the merry go round of faces and bodies. I was gasping feeling the tightening of the band of muscle steel pressing around my chest. Moaning in pain, Dogon the automated saviour grabbed me under my armpits enabling me to stand. Shakily I was guided to a seat. In rushed my life partner and son. They both looked ashen faced. I was adjusting rapidly to the realities of being back in 2275. Though there were no signs of any broken bones, or gashes to my chest and abdomen I felt throbbing pain radiating all over my body.

Zara standing over me, and peering into my face recoiled in horror as she saw a long bright red mark deeply imprinted on my face. Oh God everything is saw, saw, saw. Tears were flowing down Zara's face.

"Oh my goodness your face and back are just covered with deep red marks. I've never seen anything as deep as those marks. Oh honey what are all these red marks? So red in colour too, really strange."

I felt impelled to answer her as she had such anxiety in her voice it was unfair to just ignore it. "Zara how long have we been together you and me? I would say over 15 years, and we've

always got on well. We both over time have become closer together. Sharing our dreams and hopes for the community we live amongst, including our 2 sons. Over the last 2 weeks I have experienced a series of visions really vivid. Zara it was like I was actually there. These visions as I recall took place when I was feeling anxious, lazy or tired, or would just appear for no reason. The visions usually preceded an unusual high level of concentration. As soon as the first initial vision took over I felt my body and myself suddenly being sucked up some sort of tunnel – then I felt myself merge into another body I knew I somehow could not stop what was physically happening to me. Look Zara I just wanted you to know what I have been going through. But I held back because I did n't think you would understand or it would upset you."

I paused for a few seconds. Zara was looking at me curiously. Sighing I knew I had to somehow tell the story in full.