

DOTIAN

BOOK 4 - CHAPTER ONE - THE HUMANS

DREAMS



LARS RAY



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Dotian Dreams - Book 4
Chapter One - The
Humans

What's that smell?

Dr. Jason Ata, a sandy-haired young professor, was scuttling down the freshly scrubbed hall towards the cafeteria. Considering his girth, some would say he was waddling. *I have to be ready for this talk. They must see all of this.* Jason was focusing on the upload of his latest information, from the MU he held in his hand to the ship's central communications databank. Not a difficult task, but with the hallway, the people, the tardiness, and the coffee – Dooosshhh! *No!*

The man in front of him had suddenly stopped. Jason looked down and saw his disposable coffee cup squished and mostly emptied, between his chest and the dark suited back of the man in front of him – and yes, it was hot.

Jason rebounded backwards. The woman behind him yelped as the back of his elbow hit her folded arms, forcing them to release the armful of papers she was holding, now scattering about on the floor.

Before Jason could turn to see what had just happened to her, the man in front of him twisted around to see who did what, and – *Shit!* It was Survival Marshal North, in the flesh. *Of all people* – Jason gave a weak smile, said a quick, “Sorry, Marshal North,” and quickly turned to see who else was involved in this pile-up.

It was Deborah, North's secretary. Although Jason recognized her, he did not know her name. *Cute*, he thought. *She's with North's group?* Her hair was dark brown, and this close up, he was able to observe her intelligent green eyes. *She still has some outstanding African lines*, he thought. She had an elegance of motion that captured Jason's attention the day before, while boarding the behemoth interplanetary cargo ship within which they were now hurtling through space.

Deborah was gathering the papers from the newly re-carpeted hallway floor. He bent to help her, although she was reaching for the

last of them.

Jason said, "Sorry," again, this time to her. He squatted with her, picking up the remaining papers, as others bustled past them.

Deborah brushed it off, saying, "No problem, it's not the first time." She gave him a sweet smile, which was pleasantly surprising for Jason. It only took a few more seconds to pick up the notes. She then centered a worried look in North's direction. "Thanks for the help – we'd better get going," she said, and Jason readily agreed.

They started for the cafeteria, again. As they neared its entrance, they saw that North's deputies were wiping the coffee off his back with towels. *Where did they get those towels?* Jason wondered, looking down at his own shirt. His nice white shirt now had a big coffee stain on the front of it, running down to his belt line. He glanced up to see a deputy watching him, and with a scornful look, he tossed Jason a towel, which landed a few feet short.

Jason went for it, and heard the deputy bark authoritatively, "Pick that up!"

As Jason was picking up the towel, he felt his cheeks redden. *What a dick.* He started wiping himself off as he looked for the deputy who had insulted him. That deputy had moved ahead of North and was entering the cafeteria.

North turned a couple of times, looking at Jason and shaking his head. North stood at six feet and five inches, and was an imposing figure in any right. It was his chin – always sticking out.

Aggressive, Jason thought.

North's face did have a distinctive profile. Along with his protruding forehead, he had a razor straight nose angling down at forty-five degrees, coming to a point before cutting back and up to the upper philtrum above his lip. He had squared off nostrils, which matched his wide rectangular mouth and that equally wide protruding chin.

Jason, at six feet and two inches, weighing in at three hundred and ten pounds, was not small, yet he had the look of an academic-for-life. Pudding-like cheeks lent him a childish look for a man of thirty-four years. His longer hair was unkempt, compared to North's salt and pepper, tight military cut.

Look at that expression on his face, Jason thought. *He looks like trouble. What's he have against me?* After a bit of thought, Jason decided that North didn't have anything against him personally. North simply did not like Jason's *kind*. Jason was old school Guild, and North was connected with that part of the Guild that was more “practical”. Jason then let those thoughts go, and focused on the impending lectures.

All the attendees made their way into the white and lavender lit cafeteria, and took their seats. The ship's cafeteria still had the pleasing aroma of freshly grilled garlic, onions and butter. Jason heard earlier that lunch had been quite good. He had skipped it, having plenty of snacks in his office, where he had been preparing for this presentation. There was the spirit of “freshness” in the room that always seemed to go with a new adventure. The people attending the meeting numbered about two hundred twenty-five, although the cafeteria could hold over one thousand. They were all sitting in groups at the long lunch tables there. The Social Director, Rini Hay, was making her way to the podium, as Jason hastily joined five other speakers sitting to the right of the podium.

Since Jason was the mission's Director of Soul-Typing and Guidance, he was slated to follow Survival Marshal North, and so they were seated next to each other. North ignored Jason, his eyes studying the audience.

Jason turned his attention to the audience as well. He recognized many of the directors, managers and supervisors of three thousand, one hundred and twenty-eight breeding couples, specially selected and prepared to re-inhabit the planet D'ot8. As Dr. Jason Ata, soul-type-psycho-physiologist, he would explain his part of the mission. More importantly, he would cover what it was that made this one different from other missions. In the meantime, he was loving-up the blend of aromas of the cafeteria.

What is that smell? Sniff. Well, certainly garlic and onions – but what else? As he considered the possibilities, Social Director Hay arrived at the podium. The briefing was being broadcast to all members aboard the S&H Interplanetary cargo ship, Excelsior. The cafeteria was clean, but very plain, as was the rest of the ship. From the outside, the ship looked like a big orange blimp. S&H never was that fancy.

Rini started, “This is the last briefing you will receive before we enter hyposleep. Much of this information you already know. I realize you have all trained diligently, and many of you could be lecturing up here as well. Still, please pay attention. In another two hours, you are going into hyposleep, and what we are presenting here will be the last thing imprinted on your memory before you go under. You will need all of this information at the ready when we awaken in three years at Wormhole B9. I want to remind you that it takes a few days to reorient yourselves at that time, also.”

Maybe it's burnt sugar. Caramelized.

Rini was a short and stubby woman, sporting a new hairstyle for the trip. Her light-brown hair had accents of red and gold. It was shorter now, and had been teased into a rounded appearance. She straightened her too-tight dark gray and sky blue dress a bit, and shifted herself to a more upright stance.

“So let’s get on with it! It is my pleasure and honor to introduce our Survival Marshal, whom, as you know, has complete authority in matters he deems to be critical to our survival in our new home. Survival Marshal North has commanded the settlement of four previous planets, quite successfully. It is our great honor and pleasure to have him watching out for us during the brief few years he will be with us on D’ot8. Marshal James North, please speak to us of your thoughts and observations. Everyone give him a warm welcome!”

North, a private man who did not relish speaking in public, motioned with his hands as if to say, “Please. That’s enough applause.” His body language said that he did not like the attention at all. He walked up to the podium. North was tall, but not lean, and he obviously paid close attention to his conservative grooming and the maintenance of his uniform. He made an impression on most Guild-trained members that his was a soul-type that expressed love through duty. He was not the type to express love overtly or intimately, unless the situation demanded it. He usually avoided such, though it was relatively common in the Guild.

Clearing his throat, and accepting a glass of water brought by one of the crew, he paused, and took a drink. He looked around, with his usual detachment, very much different from those around him who were waiting to hear what he had to say.

“Ladies and gentlemen, you have been trained to be the finest, most advanced settlers the Guild has ever sent to re-inhabit a dead planet. Your genetics were specially chosen for their tendency to produce calm, non-aggressive offspring – for this mission in particular. The reason for this is that we will attract the more peaceful D’otian souls to the families you will be building. Another benefit is that the more negative souls attracted will be governed by your stable genetics.”

Jason was paying attention now. *If you only knew, brother.*

North continued, “If you only knew the wealth that this mission will bring to our beloved Guild, you would know this is a very exciting time for us all.” His detached tone did little to rouse his audience, and he continued to read his speech, “The trade that typically develops over time with a new planet is just one part of the total package of benefits we receive.”

North paused for another sip of water, put the glass down with a

hand that could have passed for a big thick glove, and continued, “With each dead planet that we colonize, we learn more. Of course, you know that by “dead”, we mean that humanoids became extinct there. Other than that, these planets are usually far from dead. The Guild learns more about systems and approaches to life in each new world. This, in turn, has helped us on our home planet.”

The Guild was a centralized church, which allowed and promoted only the positive elements of all religions on Earth. It began as a response to animosity between religions, and had its birth in the Philippines. It was a simple concept: Anyone who wished to join could bring his or her own religion along, but it had to be “stripped” of all negativity. Any parts of scriptures that were primarily negative were removed from the original scriptures, and what remained stayed in the Guild. The Guild was born on the island of Mindanao, in the southeastern Philippines. A good number of the ever-warring locals agreed to build a single church that all in the area could safely attend. They had hope of forming some kind of communication between the Catholics and the Muslims. Each member was considered an ambassador of the religion he or she came from. The local Muslim chieftains and Catholic Church leaders agreed to not attack the first Guild church, nor their members. They did this because their own religious doctrines would not allow peace, and they were very, very, tired of war. The first Guild church had both Catholic priests and Muslim clergy running the services.

By the end of its third century, the Guild had gained worldwide acceptance. The members thrived, spiritually and materially. The Guild and its members had invested well, and had uncanny fortune in their undertakings. Over the centuries, they grew a network of Guild-based worldwide jobs.

Because of this, many naturally joined, with all being welcome. Now, over one thousand years since inception, it was the largest religious body on Earth. The Guild had given rise to numerous political parties throughout the Earth.

The bishops and cardinals of the Church, by tradition, elected a new High Priest of the Guild when the reigning high priest died or aged to incompetency. The High Priest was typically a Pilipino. His holiness Jose Rizal Aquino VI was the current High Priest of the Guild.

The Guild had sponsored many interplanetary missions. In cases of planetary colonization and harvesting of natural resources, the Guild leased enormous cargo ships. They usually contracted the services of the shipping behemoth, S&H Interplanetary Logistics, for their missions. It was not because their ships were always fluorescent orange, (which in fact was the best color to repel space radiation,) it was because S&H provided predictable outcomes, based on their massive logistics capabilities.

“I have been chosen by the Guild to command this mission because this planet is so unlike any we have settled to date,” North said, and then he paused.

Jason very quietly muttered to himself, “Hmmm. I can certainly agree with that.”

North went on, “Granted, even though inhabitable, planets are very different from one another. This one seems *more* so. The temperature extremes throughout each day, the creatures, the unstable sun, and even the time structure are all unique. One year on D’ot8 takes five hundred and ninety-three days to complete. A day there is thirty-three hours long.”

“The Guild will only approve a planet for re-inhabitation if the atmosphere is breathable, without the need for masks. Some of you may be given drugs formulated to compensate for imbalances in the atmosphere, although for now that seems unlikely.

“The planet D’ot8 has an atmosphere which is generated from beneath the ocean. It is a truly unique ecosystem. There is no plant life on this entire planet, and yet there is an atmosphere not much different from ours. All life there appears to be predatory. Although we have never sent a manned mission to D’ot8, we have delivered over one hundred highly sophisticated robots there. They have given us all the information we need to move forward.”

Jason smiled at North's self-assured attitude. *You've looked at, but haven't really seen my information.* Jason became a bit concerned. *I've got to be careful how I present this. I shouldn't hit them with too much too fast.*

North continued, some evidence of excitement creeping into his voice. "Our robots have discovered a large, well-preserved library. Through them, we have poured over wonderfully preserved documents and recordings. It is as though we have a massive encyclopedia of this world. We have thousands of photographs. In spite of their rather advanced technology, there is no evidence that these D'otians ever achieved motorized transportation. They had no internal combustion engine technology, from what we have seen. However, they were very advanced in the sciences and engineering. They were well-versed in subjects such as biology, microbiology, chemistry, genetics, metallurgy, mining, processing, and refining the many metallic ores of this outstandingly mineral-rich planet."

Survival Marshal North paused, and pointed to the display monitor screen to his left. An image appeared, and then another. They were microscopic pictures of one-celled organisms imbedded in their own matrix.

He continued, "On D'ot8, mass quantities of this microorganism cover millions of crevices found on the ocean floor. We have named them 'Hydrosplitters'. The D'otians called these hydrosplitters, 'yama'. Based on our data, there are trillions of tons of this valuable resource available to be harvested. As far as we know, they are the only non-predatory species on D'ot8. These organisms make up the bottom of the food chain. Hydrosplitters have the unique ability to split the H₂O water molecule into hydrogen and oxygen. They utilize the split hydrogen to saturate carbon compounds they

manufacture from the raw elements of the sea and the sea floor. They do this to make saturated fat, which they both use, and also release, into the ocean. These tiny protein-coated fat globules slowly float to the surface of the ocean, but they usually do not make it to the surface. Smaller ocean creatures are attracted to these globules as high caloric food. Then the rest of the food chain develops above the yama fields. Larger creatures arrive, and they all leave their droppings at the bottom of the ocean on top of the hydrosplitters below. It is then utilized by the hydrosplitters, completing on part the cycle of this particular ecosystem, and maintaining it.

“The hydrosplitters release the split oxygen which provides the planet’s livable atmosphere.

From those countless fissures throughout the ocean floor, massive amounts of oxygen bubble up to the surface of the ocean, and into the atmosphere.”

The audience was starting to show more interest. They all knew what this meant. If humans transplanted these organisms on Earth, perhaps in isolated lakes, it could help solve the problem of decreasing amounts of oxygen in the air there due to deforestation. There were no plans to grow the hydrosplitters in the oceans, due to threat of ecosystem imbalances. Most of the audience was unaware that hydrosplitters required a much higher level of salinity in the water than that of the Earth’s oceans. Indeed, measures were already in place to quarantine the first emigrations of this unique microorganism to Earth. The Great Salt Lake in Salt Lake City, Utah, United Continents of America – was the obvious first choice, and planning was currently taking place for the first new “guests” that would be arriving in about seven years.

“The amount of life that inhabits these oxygen-rich plumes is vast. They not only feed on the hydrosplitters and their fat globules, but also on the minerals of the ocean and its floor as well. Moreover, they feed on each other. Cannibalism is common, with many species eating their own young. All things combined, this releases nitrogen into the ocean, and from there, into the atmosphere, giving us an atmospherically near-perfect balance. It is a fragile atmosphere. With no plant life filtering it, the air can quickly become poisoned.

“This ocean has most of the same minerals we have on our own planet, in sometimes highly different ratios. Every colonist will receive

my D'ot8 survival manual. This will outline in detail what I am about to tell you briefly here.”

Marshal North looked slowly and with great authority into his audience, forcing many of them to look him in the eyes. This was abnormal behavior in this society, if only because life had become so – well, pleasant. The expression of human intensity was unusual. The people listening were just agreeable, sane, intelligent, hard-working humans. Wars and strife were merely distant history for them. They knew that challenges were always ahead, but they were prepared for that. The network of the Guild was always there to catch them. His audience, having nothing to relate to his intense demeanor, simply looked at him, waiting for him to continue.

Jason Ata was also noticing North's expression. For an instant, Jason imagined that North might have some knowledge of what was potentially going to happen.

Look at Marshal North, Jason told himself as he put his hand on his unshaved chin, chubby fingers rubbing his lips. He may actually have some knowledge of what we really face there. Oh, here it comes. Jason felt a surge of a bittersweet emotion as he surveyed the group of team leaders gathered there. You lovely people don't have a clue. If you did, many of you may not have come along. God bless you. He thought a moment. Maybe I should give it to them straight – not sugar coat it.

That may not be the wisest choice,
the inner voice said. Jason wasn't listening – the Marshal distracted him.

Survival Marshal North was talking about the animals. “The life forms on this planet have been surviving and evolving for millions of years. Because there is no plant life, they all appear to be predators. It is interesting that we have found no flying animals, just a few small flying insects.

“We have vast experience clearing out such animals on other planets, and these should be no significant problem here. However, because of the unknown, you must all know that it may be some time before we can breed them for domestication. We bring a good, healthy mix of livestock to the planet for the interim period. In the meantime, I would like to cover a few of the creatures we expect to run into. If you please, look at the screen again.”

North proceeded to discuss some of the strange and interesting creatures found on D’ot8. The newly discovered underground library had everything the robot probes needed to learn a language called “Aletian”. Sound recording archives allowed them to learn the pronunciations of the words. As he showed pictures of each of the creatures he wanted to illustrate, he talked in detail about them.

He started with the primary creatures of his concern, the “trachnas”. These were similar to spiders on Earth, except that they were about twelve inches around. Their legs had exoskeletons, like crabs on Earth, so that the muscle was inside the shell-like leg sections. The shell itself was a chrome alloy that the trachnas could utilize and grow from chrome deposits where they would nest. They used their legs to tear and rip into their prey until it was dead. There they would remain, staying for as long as the carcass lasted, sharpening their claws against one another for the next attack. They traveled in packs. They were one of the few creatures that could kill an “ela”.

North went on to the elas saying, “The ela is a snake-like creature that holds poison in its tail. It can grow over one hundred feet in length, but most are less than fifty. It attaches to its prey using its large jaws, and then it raises its tail, curling back on itself, kind of like a scorpion I would say.” North looked around, and then went on, “The poison tip of its tail curls from above, pointed down at its prey, and immediately penetrates the prey, injecting it with the poison. The prey dies instantly.”

North stopped and looked around the room. “I hope we are not

getting bored yet,” he said with a smile. Someone gave a snoring sound from the middle of the room, and the folks laughed a bit. North said, “I did also want to go over some of the domesticated beasts they used as pets, and for transportation and hauling.” He changed pictures on the monitor screen. “These animals are also still surviving there. They called this one, an ‘emui’. It reminds me of our cats. It has a bigger cousin, the ‘crantic’, which had not been domesticated, and can be compared to our tigers. These creatures are among the few that have fur.

“Another was one they called a ‘gendra’, and it is a huge, stegosaurus-like creature. It, however, is four times bigger than our stegosaurus ever was. They walk into the water to spear, screen and feed on fish with their long claws. They had been able to domesticate gendras in the past, and they apparently were not dangerous as long as they were well fed, typically with fish. They not only were able to plow and heavy equipment, but their long claws dug up the dirt as well when plowing. They have very pointy scales, and weigh over twenty thousand pounds. They can grow up to twenty feet high, thirty feet wide, and seventy-five feet long.”

North went on, “Although there are many animals to review, I am only going to mention one more. These quite interesting animals exist on the planet now, just like the others I have shown you. They called them, “contisses”. The D’otians used contisses as we used horses in our ancient history. They have leathery scales similar to an armadillo – however they have elastic properties, and can stretch. A contiss has loose skin between its front and hind legs, like our flying squirrel. This enables it to leap great distances. When alone, it can land by rolling into a ball. They were fed live ‘tacks’ and ‘blogs’, along with hydrosplitters. Tacks are like our rats, except that they are reptilian. The blogs were

primates of the D'otians. Blogs have both mammal and reptile characteristics, as the D'otians themselves had.”

North was busy trying to get the monitor to show the pictures of each animal as he mentioned them. He went back to the contisses. “Here we are with the contiss again. We have learned that these animals were considered to be very intelligent and great protectors of their owners. They could even defend against the spider-like trachnas. They did this by rolling on them, biting them, and by stomping them. There was also a separate breed, which they called ‘guard contisses’. D'otians could not ride them, but they were fiercely territorial, and provided protection.

“We have located areas amenable to farming, and have brought twice as much soil starter as we need. This will rapidly break down the specific minerals and other nutrients from the planet’s soil and make them available for our vegetables. The hydrosplitters and animal life will provide food for us as well. Our robots have found that the hydrosplitters were the major source of carbohydrates, essential amino acids and vitamins for the inhabitants of D’ot8. D’ot was the name that the inhabitants called their planet. We add the ‘8’ because this is our eighth colonization mission, in accordance with the Guild’s Planetary Naming Conventions.

“We have successfully farmed on each of our planets, and since the rate of farmland production will be faster than the growth of the colony, there will be an ample amount of vegetables for us. As farmers, we know we are hostage to the weather. The closest sun lies between D’ot8 and Black Hole 17C. This black hole is a relatively close one. It appears to have significant effects on the planet’s sun, which causes quite large solar flares that have significant effects on the weather of D’ot8. There is nothing good about a black hole. They cause problems with communication, as well as throwing off our navigation.

“The reason we are starting this mission now is because D’ot8 may only have one thousand years or so before the planet becomes uninhabitable. This will be because of these tremendous solar flares, which also have ‘tides’. These tides can become amplified because of the harmonic convergence with the pulsations coming from the black hole. One thousand years is shorter than you may think. The Guild needs the resources on that planet, and the souls bound to it need

recycling. Although one thousand years is not enough for that, it is better to be late than never,” he said with a sour grin.

North motioned to the monitor screen again, and displayed new photographs of the interiors of homes and buildings.

The audience started up with excited chatter. This was the first time they had seen pictures like this.

The rooms in the photographs appeared quite large, and they were beautifully ordained with various metallic designs, which were quite elaborate in some rooms. D’otians had a simple design for underground building. The entrances that descended into the occupied areas had a “trap” connected to them that kept water from being able to gather in the living quarters. They apparently had sewage systems that drained into common containing areas, then into the ocean or rivers or lakes. There were obvious lighting fixtures – however there was no active electricity. The robots taking the photographs supplied their own lighting. The corners and edges of the rooms were rounded, and thresholds were curved, and smoothed-out. Kitchens were the central rooms of most homes. D’otians had stoves, ovens, and refrigerators. The living quarters often had a radio in them. The robots had found some recording devices in the homes as well, and it appears they played music with them.

Marshal North went on, “Although we have brought building supplies, D’otians built most of their living and working structures underground, in well-designed architecture which you can see here. We believe these structures to be very usable even now, although we won’t know for sure until we actually arrive.

“Regarding our exports to Earth, there is a natural compound on the planet called ‘agrist’ which is in plentiful supply, and it is very expensive to produce on Earth. When added to metal in the AOD, it increases the volume of that metal by over eight hundred times. In other words, it will make virtually any metal seventy-eight percent lighter, while retaining ninety percent of that metal’s hardness and strength. It can make a ‘metal foam’ by combining it with almost any metal. When added to the alloy films we already use, this provides a low mass, tough outer shield. This helps to make space ships almost impervious to space dust erosion. Erosion is the main reason our ships end up decommissioned. The company that we lease these ships from gave us a very good deal on this mission, just to be the first to be able to buy this compound from us.

“We have two nuclear power sources; one will be activated upon our arrival at D’ot8, and one will stay in one-thousand-year-hibernation for any unforeseen need in the future. Since so many things are dependent on plentiful electricity, we want multiple redundancies here. Both the hydrosplitters and the agrist will be important exports for this planet to develop. Mining and harvesting equipment is on board to develop these resources.”

Marshal North continued, “The microorganisms on any prospective planet are typically a concern to incoming colonists. Unknown viruses, pepotads, fungi, and viro-bacillus can be unpredictable, no matter how much probe research we have done. As you know, we always seem to lose a few colonists to a new disease, until we come up with a solution. We have always come up with an answer, although, you all know about Omegon, and what happened there – the first colonists were completely wiped out. Other than Omegon, we have only lost three percent at most, to disease. This is why we all wear masks until we know for sure. This is a three-month requirement, and it is for your own safety.

“Please read your manuals before you go to sleep. Keep this important mission in your uppermost thoughts. Thank you for your time.”

Here we go. Jason suddenly longed for the day he could purely work and not be required to speak in front of people.

There was brief applause, and Survival Marshal North took his seat.

Social Director Hay took the podium once again, and said, “Thank you, Marshal North, for your exciting picture of our future home!” She paused while those in attendance gave another round of applause. Then she asked Dr. Jason Ata, Director of Soul-Typing and Guidance, to take the podium. “Now everybody, please give a warm welcome to our Soul-Typing and Guidance Director, Dr. Jason Ata!” There was polite applause as he rose from his chair.

Jason quickly forgot his butterflies on the way to the podium. He paused, took it all in with a deep breath. As he took his place at the podium, he looked at the audience, and overflowed with a tremendous surge of love for them. He had been Guild-trained, and this was habit by now. Jason did not appreciate how aware he was of that state as compared to others. It extended into them and he could feel them returning it. It felt good. It always did. He took another deep breath. *Thank you.*

Jason began to speak. “Where do I begin? Well, I believe this mission will be a challenging one. With challenges come opportunities.” He paused for several moments. As he intended, almost every eye was focused on him. You will need to practice your faith every day, for everyone around you.” Jason continued, “I have reason to believe that the soul-types we will be receiving will be beyond the genetic harmonics you carry. I don’t want to alarm you, but we need to be prepared for the arrival of very violent and difficult newborns.”

“What do you mean?” A member of the audience blurted out.

Someone else yelled, “I never heard of this!” The room was now alive with motion and murmurs.

Alarmed by the audience's reaction to Jason's words, the social director stood up and addressed him, "Dr. Ata, please excuse me. I have heard about your team's research into the dissociative soul-mind. Does that have something to do with this?"

Dr. Ata looked at her, unmoved by the sudden onset of fear in her eyes. He was not unmoved because he didn't care. He was unmoved because his mind was always focused on one thing: *Stay connected*. Connection with the tranquil Source was habitually fixed in Jason's mind. Social Director Hay waited, continuing to stare at him. She became placated by his quiet confidence, and she relaxed some.

Looking at Social Director Hay, he softly said, "In our world, the Guild trains parents trying to conceive a baby to 'call' to the soul-type they believe they can help in the world. As you know, we accomplish this with specific meditations and prayer. When the baby is born, my department's job is to analyze the baby for its soul-type, and fashion the best guidance we can for the development of that particular soul. A soul is categorized as one of three primary types. A Type I baby is easy to raise and love. Type I babies are very responsive to love, and when loved, they return the love. They learn to use love, and it blends in with most of their efforts as they grow and mature."

Jason accepted a drink of water brought to him, and then continued. "Type II children have a tendency to *repress* love. They don't respond as well to love, and do not return it as easily. However, they can recognize love and respond, if they are in the mood. These ones will need more love, because they as they grow older they don't recognize or appreciate love, and they waste it. They waver in their ability to grow love intentionally until they are past their teens. Much depends on the skill and love of the parents. Eventually, we can guide Type II babies to give and receive love as well as Type I's can. Type II babies are the largest category, and most of us were primarily Type II babies, with both Type I and Type III characteristics in varying degrees."

Jason continued, "The III babies are those souls that have completely *dissociated* love from their awareness, resembling someone with the split personality variety of schizophrenia. One side does not know what the other side is doing. These are the most difficult to overcome. They cannot recognize love. They actually have a

defense mechanism in their subconscious that actively *avoids and rejects* any recognition of love. This is hidden in a part of the invisible soul-mind – the ‘blind spot’, if you will. It hides a savage distrust and hate of love. If conscious recognition of love comes to the surface, they will mentally ‘run’ in the opposite direction. They will shrink from love, or, if they cannot escape, attack the source of the love – covertly, or overtly. Whereas a Type II child may use love, and manipulate a parent’s love to the child’s advantage, a Type III child would not think to use love for anything, love being taboo. As adults, they can learn to develop a social persona, but behind it is something very cold.”

The audience was getting confused with these classifications, and Jason could tell that his description of Type IIIs was not getting through well enough, so he plainly said, “Type IIIs are where sociopathic killers originate.”

The group before him seemed to get that, so, going on, he said, “Although a pure Type III baby is rare, we are all a blend of the three types. That is where we try to narrow down the soul-typing of the baby. We do this in order to provide customized training to overcome the negatives, and grow on the positives each child has.”

Jason paused, and looked down at the lightly stained natural oak grain on the podium. *Should I?* He asked silently. *Tread lightly*, the voice said. Jason took another deep breath, and went on speaking, “I am a specialist in what some others call “devils”. These children are always Type III. They usually have a background of childhood trauma, but a surprising number do not. When we eliminate genetic, nutritional, and environmental factors as causes, we are left with one conclusion – these are some

seriously retarded souls, and all effort must be made to avoid irritation of these souls, from childbirth on.”

Jason gave an example, “Think about a puppy or a kitten. We tell our children, ‘don’t play rough’ with them, because the pet will start biting or scratching too easily. That ‘button’ can be ‘turned on’ in adult pet, even though years of gentleness have kept the pet peaceful. They will become ‘bitey’, or ‘scratchy’, when simply trying to pet them. That is how it is with Type IIIs. They rarely appear these days, and my team has developed our own classifications of them. The wheels of research turn slowly. Although these theoretical ideas have not yet been fully embraced, I obviously believe that we may be correct in our hypothesis. I am actually here because my superiors want me to prove these theories or shut up about them. In any case, since this is a lifetime mission, they won’t have to face me anymore if they don’t want to.” Jason gave a wry grin, “Perhaps they chose me for this mission, if only for that reason.”

He paused.

No laughter. Nothing.

“I have a very strong feeling that we will need to use these theories on this planet, if we are to be successful. It will also help us to refine our guidance of these dissociative souls, and broaden our understanding of our own souls as well.”

“I don’t understand your reason for negativity,” another person in the audience complained. “Please let me explain further,” said Jason. “Everything about this planet is unkind. It is like a very nasty jungle, without the jungle. The humanoids that lived here before must have had those predatory traits. God only knows what kind of lives they lived there. The souls still there have been bound to that planet for thousands of years, held as if by gravity, exactly like the other dead planets we have colonized. They are burning with the desire to do something to move on – but are imprisoned. When we arrive, I believe the hungriest souls will force their way into our newborns, regardless of the parent’s genetic phenotypical passive harmonics. Our first generation of offspring will be their first avenue for incarnation in one hundred thousand years.”

Jason continued, “Please look to the screen to my left. There you can see anatomic illustrations of the D’ot8 humanoids, generated after medic-robotic dissection of one of two well-preserved bodies

recently discovered. These bodies were found inside recently discovered suspended animation containers. The containers were still powered, after all these millennia, and I find that amazing.”

The audience started talking among themselves. This was the first they had seen of the anatomy of the D’otians.

Jason went on, “You see that they had scales, and also had bodies similar in shape to ours, but about fifty percent larger and heavier. Their faces were amazingly humanoid, considering their reptilian roots. The average height of the inhabitants of the planet was eight feet, five inches. They have what appears to be a nuchal crest on the tops of their heads, similar to our lizards. The two we’ve seen in suspended animation had different colors of nuchal crests.

“We have found some remarkable things in our robotic dissections of one of the bodies. To understand what I am about to say, please look to the diagrams on the screen.” He showed a picture of something that looked like three vertical tubes, side by side, each with a bulge in the center. “These are diagrams of three brainstems. The first one on the left, with a small bump in the middle is a lizard brainstem, a reptile. The second one, the one in the middle, is a dog’s brainstem. It has another layer over the bump in the center, making it thicker. This is what is associated with a mammal’s ability to fear and love, and it is what allows a mammal behave differently from a reptile. A reptile is only interested in basic body functions, but it does understand pecking order, and can follow certain animal behaviors we would call ‘ritualistic.’ It follows ‘routines’. What the reptile does not understand are emotions like fear

or love. If you were to call someone cold-blooded, you are saying that he or she is emotionally cold like a reptile.” Jason took a Freudian glance at North, who was looking in Jason’s direction with a blank face.

Jason went on, “Let us go on to the third brainstem on the far right. It is a human brainstem. It has another layer making the central bulge even bigger. It also has a more complex limbic system, and a huge cortex, compared to the first two illustrations. We have studied the medical illustrations of the D’otians’ central nervous system anatomy. We can see in this next illustration that they had the roughly the same size cortex as humans. However, the thicker, emotional layer of the brainstem is very thin, compared to ours.”

He stopped. *What’s the best way to say this?* He went on, “I have consulted with a number of anatomical experts, and they agree that their limbic system appears to be vestigial. What they mean is that these humanoids once had a well-developed, human-like brain stem, limbic system and neo-cortex. Something happened over a long period of time to cause some sort of devolution. Not only did their limbic systems regress to something more like the reptilian brainstem, their female breasts had become vestigial as well, and ceased to function. This probably happened because although they were mammals, they retained many reptile-like characteristics, such as their scales, nuchal crests, and their tails, which also had caudal crests.”

He looked at their blank faces. *I’ve lost them.* Jason elaborated, saying, “Form follows function.

Evolution follows function, and so does devolution. If you don’t use it, you lose it. We believe the growth of that middle bulge on the brainstem in humans is a *result*, not a cause. It is a result of their growth in channeling love over many millennia.”

Now that he had completely bewildered most of the listeners, Jason nonetheless continued to make his case. “What I am trying to say is that I believe that it looks like the D’otians’ brainstems regressed because they stopped using love – love ‘left’ their society. They devolved emotionally. We know from the library records that constant warring among themselves eventually caused their extinction. I fear that these are the souls we will be receiving on D’ot8, and I need to get you be prepared, for this mission to succeed.

“Your mission is my mission: To spend the rest of our lives

organizing the recycling of the souls bound to this planet so that they may help us re-inhabit the planet, bringing it back to life for humanoid souls. We provide avenues for their minds to evolve and remember their soul's purpose, just as we are doing for ourselves.

“Our section of the universe will have another world to love and learn from, trade with, and according to the teaching of the Guild, bring more balance and harmony to the dimension of time. History has shown that the salvaging of a dead planet brings good fortune to not only the colonists there, but to our home planet as well. “Regarding the souls, in psychology, classic dissociation happens when a person has a part of their mind split off. This dissociated part is unknown by the conscious mind, yet is given a will, and operates from the subconscious. Our team takes it a step further and says that the same thing has happened to the spiritual side of all people in the dimension of time. It postulates that we have all dissociated from love, and that is why we need to ‘swim’ towards love. When we swim towards love, we swim towards our deepest eternal home, which is invisible to those who find their soul's focus in the dimension of time.

“Another way of saying it is this: All soul-types, including myself, must dissociate, split, if you will, from awareness of our spiritual minds in order to find ourselves in the dimension of time. Time is a non-real temporary arena for souls to learn that ‘one thing’. You all know that the Guild professes that the dimension of time was allowed to be made, or better, temporarily exist, by our eternal Author, the Source. The Author did allow this because souls have the free will to direct their attention as they please.

There is a safety control here, based on free will. We are free to wander, although that is not our creative purpose. However, you cannot walk away from the light without walking into the dark. Eventually, the dark becomes so painful and fearful that we turn around. Unfortunately, the deeper one is in time, the less they can see or hear the light of spiritual sanity. Our spiritual minds become blinded by the physical senses. It can take thousands of years and many lifetimes to for the prodigal son to get a solid footing on his way home.”

Jason paused, and took a drink of water. *They are listening.* He continued, “That is where we come in. We are the brothers to those who are lost. They learn our ways, and we speak to them of the Author of life, peace, happiness and love. By doing so, we perfect the lesson ourselves.”

He waited for a moment to let the thought sink in, then continued, “Guild dogma says that our wandering souls formed dissociations within dissociations in the dimension of time. This considerably complicated the problem, with further splits from love on various mental levels we made. Our memory of our true home in the dimension of eternity was lost, buried in the darkness of time. That memory resides in a part of our invisible subconscious, which we fear to look into. It is like the child who is skipping school, and is afraid to face the schoolteacher, who ironically is waiting in concern for the child’s return. Through the Guild’s teaching, we have learned how to reverse this. We did this by using love in every way and action. We discovered, and have now proven, that love actually affects time, similar to speed or gravity. We have tremendous agreement among top physicists on this subject, and are very close to proving the theory with the Guild’s new orbiting gyroscopic particle colliders.”

Jason noticed the Love by Duty people, mostly Survival deputies, crossing their arms, and shaking their heads in disagreement ever so slightly.

It disturbed him that they were so firmly set against love’s potential as a real, measurable entity.

He took a breath, shrugged it off and continued.

“Re-inhabitation of planets has been enough times that some experts feel that it has been perfected. Each of us does his or her job because our society developed us by properly elevating our minds and souls. Our society, guided by the Guild, saw the problem, and the

obvious answer. We promoted the swimming against the tide of time, swimming, if you will, in the opposite direction. The love we use and carry attracts thoughts that harmonize with order, happiness, and keep us pointed us in the direction of eternity. This keeps us on the path, swimming against the river of time, with success! Harmonizing our thoughts with the love that extends from eternity brings truly natural order and peace to all those living in time.

“Let us swim!” Jason pronounced the familiar blessing loudly, and the audience reflexively chanted back: “We travel to love together, or not at all!”

This ritual broke the boredom in the room. After all, they had been going to temple all their lives. This was rudimentary soul science. Still, Dr. Ata had added a new twist to their perspective. In the end, his theory said that the destination they were all “swimming” to spiritually was not just heaven alone. It was the other hidden side of their own eternal selves, which resided in the home of the Author, the dimension of eternity.

Jason continued, “A dissociative patient is brought to wellness by breaking through the dissociation and joining the separate parts. So it is in our theory that all people in the dimension of time have the same problem, except it involves the dissociation within each person’s soul.

“We know in psychology that the more severe the dissociation, the split, the more difficult the case. An interesting observation is that when the split is great, the other side relegated to the sub-conscious will usually expose itself in a less frequent, but more exaggerated way. This expression can be loving or not.

“I believe that the souls from this planet were severely dissociated, split, from their souls. This in turn caused the ‘shrinkage’ of the loving part of their humanoid brain over thousands of years. I find it fascinating that these people were so advanced in studying themselves, and their world, through microscopes. The paradox is that they had almost no science in looking around themselves, in reaching outward through better travel technologies, or flight. Their historical records indicate that when they did travel afar, they did so for purposes of conquest and war.

“We have seen a trend in past re-inhabitations of other planets. We know from past planetary expeditions that if most of the creatures are generally plant-eaters, the souls from that planet make for happy babies. The higher percentage of predators always appears to correlate with experiencing more problems with the babies. The ones born on such planets take more work, and never quite make it to their parent’s level. It will take those planets a few generations before the babies make for good citizens. Still, we have never had a planet quite like D’ot8. *Soften it up.* If I believed we could not succeed, I would have tried to stop this mission. However, nobody would have listened anyway, because of the enormous profit potential of the hydrosplitters and the agrist.”

The room started laughing at that, which surprised Jason. He smiled and looked around. He caught a glimpse of Marshal North. He wished he hadn’t when he saw a look that would burn a hole in his head if it could. Jason had an unusual flash of apprehension, and quickly looked down. *What was that look about?*

He was about to continue, when North unexpectedly got up out of his seat, laughing with the rest of the people. As he was moving toward the podium, North said, “That was great, thank you, Dr. Ata, but we must be moving on now. We have nap-time ahead!” He came over to Jason and firmly took hold of his arm, and guided him away from the podium. He was laughing as if Jason himself was joking the whole time.

Jason was caught off-guard, but he still wanted to make a good impression. *This is embarrassing,* he thought. He was not happy about having his authority undermined so callously. Jason looked at the Social Director, who was to handle the transitions of speakers.

Social Director Rini Hay appeared flustered and confused – and

before she could step in, North just took over her job by introducing the mission's Medical Director, and now *she* looked insulted. "We had better move along. Dr. Reiter, would you please take the podium?" North said this as he was "helping" Jason from the podium. They took the first steps away from the podium.

Jason figured he had to interrupt North's public control of him, and so with North still holding his arm, he stopped, like a rock. North did not want to make it *too* obvious he was forcing Jason, so he had to stop, too. North looked flustered, having assumed he had the situation controlled.

Jason turned to the Social Director, nodded and thanked her. He then concluded with his recognition to the audience. "I want to thank you for your kind attention, and I encourage you all to read the manuals I have provided to you and your teams."

After Jason finished his parting words, he left North standing there as he returned to his seat. The Medical Director was just rising, confused as well at the break of protocol. Jason thought, *North is a "Love by Duty" party member. Jesus, those guys assume they are so right in their ways – they should control those who aren't just like them.*

After Jason sat back down, he had a daydream/flashback of a class he once lectured:

"The Guild asks us to invest love in all thoughts and actions, whenever we can remember. Not to do so is not a negative, in as much as it is simply a reflection of the level of value placed on the goal of love. In the initial formation of the Guild, a large number of members in the Guild agreed that they could not accept the concept that love extends from our Author from the dimension of eternity - and is channeled by humans. However, they did acknowledge the value of the emotion of love in society.

Indeed, it was difficult to refute. Over the centuries, the research had shown this fact was indisputable. The active teaching and support of remembering a continual awareness of love in the homes and workplaces of Guild members increased productivity in the long run. Yes, there was a limit to love's productivity, because love rejected the turning of humans into corporate machines. Love rejects slavery. However, the quality of life in a loving society is so elevated that the bit of productivity that is lost is not important. In any case this group, which has grown, and is now called the 'Love by Duty' party, accepts that love should be a major goal in society, but they choose not to express love with intimacy and words, but rather by work and duty. They have the motto, 'Actions Speak Louder Than Words.'"

Jason broke out of his daydream of that classroom experience, and resumed his attention to the proceedings – well, for a minute or two anyway. Sniff. *Definitely caramelized.*

Dr. Hans Reiter was speaking now, but Jason's mind was on other things – many things. Once again, because of pure habit, love came to his consciousness, and he could look at the people there without worrying. He thought about it. *They'll be able to handle it. Sure, they don't know now, but they will learn. They will be up to the task.*

Jason was concerned about regression. Regression would yet occur on earth in many groups of people who lived in non-Guild areas that still had high populations per square mile. Harsh environments and the resulting stress were common predictors of regression as well. When you put those two elements together, the percentage grew. Regression into primitive human traits like possessiveness and obsessive control of things and people, along with the disharmony and violence that followed, had become fairly easy to re-direct, if caught quickly within Guild areas. Unfortunately, the ones involved in the regression had to be separated and re-located in order to be successful. It could take years before the regressed parties could come together again for successful release and closure.

When first re-inhabiting a planet, however, there was no infallible way to totally separate those who had regressed into negative relationships or behavior. A "re-integration" was necessary with different work and living groups, with as much separation as possible between the individuals caught in the regression. Re-integration was

an answer that worked, but it was not perfect. There had been revenge-related physical attacks among some of the “separated” colonists on other planets. Jason was concerned that it could be much worse on this planet.

With his attention drawn to his thoughts, Jason politely watched each following speaker. He applauded when appropriate, but did not hear much of what they were saying. The meeting went on for another hour, and then it was over.

Afterwards, most of the people there just hanged around, talking shop, planning. They had been on route for a day. In two more hours, they would be going to the hyposleep units and slumber in them for the next three years. Jason wished they had the new Brashier B2010 sleep units. He had heard that one woke up very quickly from those. The units on this ship were the standard fare Ebson 50’s. They were very reliable, but the wake up period took a few days. *I wonder if they could just let us sleep during the wake up phase?* Jason thought this to himself, and then chuckled at the absurdity of the idea.

There was really nothing left to do now, except think of any number of challenges on D’ot8 and the arising issues down the chains of possible events there.

He decided to have a snack while still in the cafeteria. All food eaten since on board contained an additive that would be converting the eaten food into a slow acting paste. This would provide balance to the intravenous solution he would be using while in hyposleep.

A cranberry muffin and skim milk smoothed with carrageenan seemed to be the right choice for now. He sat down at one of the long faux cherry grain laminate lunch tables with a few of the team leaders. Trained to confront disturbing situations by joining in reason, they engaged him.

“Are you really convinced it will be as bad as you say with the newborns?” A redheaded gal, Brenda was asking, (she was head chef of the bakery, and her huge frame said that she was loving it there.) Brenda’s life-partner Amanda was with her, looking very concerned. Some non-child producing colonists were “on-call” to receive children that would inevitably end up available for adoption. This would happen because of a parent’s disability, disease, death, or simply parents that decided that they were wrong about their goals. Whatever the reason, the system – the safety net, was there.

“Don’t worry so much as prepare,” Jason responded. “You have been trained thoroughly for anything that comes your way. It just means more work. You must give the children much love, no matter what. You know that is the way to build well-developed souls. Love lasts. Anything true is always revealed in the end. You just need to remember to recharge. Go to home-base, meditate, let your soul visit your Source and be refreshed. Your minds will become very well developed at D’ot8. You will be swimming harder than you have ever swum before, but you can do it. You are perfect for this mission.”

Marshal North came walking towards the table. He leaned forward across the table and said quietly, but within earshot of the others, “I am in charge of survival. Frightening these people with unproven theories, and creating uncertainty is something that threatens their moral. Low moral threatens survival. Keep your concerns to yourself when we arrive.” He then leaned in across the lunch table more closely – so close that his nose was just a few inches from Jason’s face.

His tone was low, but gained intensity as he said, “I am disgusted that the Guild put you in such a position of authority. When we get to D’ot8, every mistake you make, every blunder you trip over will be recorded by my team. Then I am shipping you the hell out of here!” North’s voice continued to rise, and Jason started to back his face away from the spray from North’s mouth. “You just keep your muffin-hole shut about your bullshit, do you hear me?”

He thinks I can fear. Jason thought to himself. *I give no obedience to fear.* “I care about them and want them to be prepared.” Jason countered, in a friendly way.

“That’s an order!” yelled North.

Jason sighed. “Well an order from the Survival Marshal is indeed an order, and protocol is protocol. I will abide by your

request.”

“It was not a request!” North was clearly frustrated by Jason’s lack of interest in his drama. “I would love to just slap you and wake your ass up,” North said under his breath.

“I can hear you.” Jason said, with a slight smirk. Then he got serious. “I *can hear* you,” he sincerely said, moving his head gently forward for emphasis. “I’ll be very careful of what I say, for your sake, and the sake of all the people on this ship.”

North could see that Jason’s Guild training would automatically try to calm North by Jason’s “seeing” peace in North. North was not having any of that. He straightened himself up, preparing to leave. “This is a potentially critical problem, and as Survival Marshal I am responsible for those things I perceive as vitally important to our survival. Things that can be seen and heard and felt, *these* are what are essential!” he barked.

North turned to his waiting deputy on the way out, and said quietly, “The invisible world of Dr. Jason Ata and the rest of the Guild’s old guard certainly are *not* essential.” He could say this privately to his deputy, but would not dare to say it aloud in front of them all.

North left in a huff for his quarters. He and his squad would be among those sleeping normally for the next three years, not like ones in hyposleep. They would take turns at watch while the rest slept. They would also be the only ones coming back to earth after their usefulness was over at the new planet. That usually took a few years. They would go into hyposleep on the way back to Earth.

He was relieved to see North leave, and decided to settle in early himself. Jason felt he handled the Survival Marshal rather well, considering. He had resisted North's attempt to drag him down to the lower disharmonic thought realm.

With three long hallways, two stairways, and one elevator, it took Jason five minutes to get to his sleep unit. It had the same exterior as the rest of the sleep units in his section – orange plastic composite with yellow horizontal stripes wrapping around it. He looked at his watch. *I've got thirty-five minutes before lights out. I think I'll listen to some classical music for a bit.*

Jason scrolled through his MU, and decided to start with "Rock n' Roll Pain Train" by Kid Rock. He thought it queer, the way he often did, that this harsh music had become so popular in recent years. An elementary soul-explanation would be that it was simple yin-yang balancing taking place. Life had become so organically ordered and pleasant for most people that aggressive competitiveness was rare. One could fleetingly see it in the elderly, or in movies and such. The time-related desire to compete was smoothly re-directed through schooling into increased productivity on earth now.

The mix of rage, love, and ego that Kid Rock put forth over one thousand years ago was the diametric opposite of life on earth now. He chuckled. *Kid Rock would have considered Earth to be hell now.* He thought about the history of this guy. *I know Kid Rock was a persona. The human behind the persona – that's the question. He was a musical genius, which involves a solid connection with higher harmonics. On the other hand, I see he carried a great deal of the lower disharmonic realm into his music and his life. Typically, such an individual's world would become quickly trapped, and sink towards self-destruction, with an eventual early death.* Jason thought about it some more.

"A well-connected soul," Jason muttered to himself, "When love and life bursts through extreme negativity, as opposed to being watered down, trickling through a stable culture, it is indeed a colorful thing to behold." He sighed. He wondered where that soul was now.

How far we have come, he mused. *Yet we are still learning.* He thought about that, and spontaneously said aloud, "Still, I think I've learned more about the touching the truth."

"*Yes you have,*" said the Guide. Jason could hear him clearly

now.

As per Guild dogma, the Guide was in touch with both eternity and the sub-dimension of time.

All members sought the Guide, but few could hear him clearly or consistently, much less be able to channel him.

Jason had become an exceptional listener, but was spotty on the channeling. *Letting go is hard to do*, he often thought. He could connect well, unless he really wanted to hear something intensely. Then the connection would break. He knew that it was his own subconscious that broke the connection. The Guide was always ready when Jason was, if he bothered to think of him. The Guide had told Jason that he had a gift, but he had yet to appreciate it in this life. The Guide had never said anything condemning to Jason about himself, or anyone else, for that matter.

Jason knew why the conventionally accepted yin-yang explanation of Kid Rock's current popularity among classical music fans was incomplete. He had been beyond yin-yang too many times, to a *state* where there was *no* yin and *no* yang. Yin-yang was time-based: true enough in the sub-dimension of time, but there was more going on. Yin-yang was a good simple explanation for the conflicts and schizoid nature of life in this dimension, but that was all. It did not provide the ultimate answer. It was still two hands clapping, not one.

His mind wandered to another class, many years ago, *"We now know with mathematical certainty that the end of time will come. Time is a temporary phenomenon. The end of time does not mean you run out of time to do things, and then you are left with time and nothing you can do,"* he remembered telling his class. *"It does not mean that. It means that the entire dimension of time has been erased, along with everything that happened while our minds were focused and anchored in it. It no*

longer exists in any dimension, because there was always only the one dimension of eternity. All that is left is the truth, and it is very good. It tells of the dimension of eternity, the home of the Holy Author of our eternal souls, blesser of minds made holy again by choice. We hear the song of peace, love, and happiness. We join in intercourse and expansion, and that is the good news. The closer we come home to truth, the more we love her, and wings are lent from heaven itself to speed our return, that the prodigal child and father meet in truth at long last."

Jason recalled that classroom scene often. He smiled to himself because he remembered every word and still liked the way he had said it. Whenever Jason recalled that moment, he wondered if he channeled the last part. Since it was an area of frustration for him, when he would ask the Guide about it, he would find himself blocking the answer. He had given up asking.

He shook his head. Three minutes left. Jason removed his earpieces, got comfortable in his sleep chamber, laid back, eyes open, and waited for the sleep chamber technician to initiate the hyposleep sequence. A way-overdue crap would be waiting in three years. *Kid Rock*, he thought. He chuckled again.

As he felt the cryogenic mix of sedative gases take effect, Jason fell into a dream. His dream began with his co-travelers in it. It was as if he was a ghost, floating through recently visited areas in the ship, and then he found himself floating through the walls of the ship, and out into space itself. It was so weird because he fell into a state of perpetual déjà vu.

"Why do I remember this? This was so long ago – how do I know?" He found himself speaking aloud in the darkness of space. The stars were outstandingly bright, so that it was not so dark as usual. *So strange.*

His dreaming led him into a planetary approach to D'ot8. "I can see a planet. That looks like D'ot8. Is that D'ot8? That's D'ot8!" Jason said with shock. His mind was racing. *What a dream! Is my body here? It is. Then it's not a vision, I think. Where am I going?* He flew down into and through a city. *I'm landing on D'ot8! No, I am still flying. What's guiding me? Why do I feel like I've been here before? What is that short building, and why am I going into there? It seems familiar, too. There's nobody leading me. I think –*

Jason found himself floating down through a hospital, and into a plainly decorated room in which some D'otians were attending a birthing class. His journey came to rest at the location of a young couple listening to the teacher of the class. He found himself drawn to the mother's abdomen, slightly bulging with the baby it held. He heard himself say, "I know this. How do I know this?" He looked at the mother's finely scaled face. Her green eyes and her perfectly polished scales mesmerized him. *She's beautiful!* Her face then began to fade, and Jason's remaining dream slowly sank, through the twilight zone and then into the unseen realm of the cold long sleep ahead.

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About the Author



Lars Rey has written several scientific and philosophical non-fiction books. This is his first book of fiction.