

SHORTS OF ALL SORTS!

... The Complete Compilation Of Q-Shorts!

~ A. K. Beetle ~



Dedicated To Anne ...

The Queen Of All Shorts!

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THE PREFACE

*This is a compilation of short films written during a haunted period, ranging from the months September to December, in the year 2025. Putting them all together here as a **Memento** for the future.*

I have taken help of ChatGPT to refine some parts of the text to save time. And the illustrations are created with DALL E3.

~ A. K. Beetle

Dec 29, 2025

BOOK I - THE CLASSICS

1. THE MODERN PROMETHEUS

~ Dedicated To Mary Shelley

PRELUDE

Frankenstein - The Modern Prometheus
~ A Mary Shelley Novel ~

On 22 February 1815, at just eighteen years old, Mary Shelley gave birth prematurely to her first child, who tragically died two weeks later. That same year, she embarked on a journey across Europe.

During her travels, Shelley visited Frankenstein Castle near Gernsheim, Germany—once home to the alchemist Johann Konrad Dippel, famed for his controversial scientific experiments. Her journey eventually led her to Geneva, where much of her later novel's story would unfold.

In 1816, Shelley began writing what would become *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. Blending elements of Gothic fiction with the ideals of the Romantic movement—her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley, being one of its leading poets—she crafted a work that would become foundational to both horror and science fiction.

Published in 1818, *Frankenstein* tells the tragic tale of a brilliant yet reckless scientist whose quest to create life leads to devastating consequences—a timeless reflection on human ambition, responsibility, and the limits of scientific pursuit.

1. LETTER I

This prelude begins with a letter from Walton, written in Petersburg to his sister in England. In it, he informs her of his imminent departure for Archangel, where he intends to hire a ship and recruit sailors for a summer expedition. His goal is a voyage to the Arctic and to discover a passage to the North Pacific Ocean through the seas surrounding the pole.

The letter immediately captivates the reader with Walton's exhilaration and his passion for venturing into the unknown. He vividly imagines the beauty, wonder, and delight awaiting him in an unexplored land of frost and desolation. Animated by the desire to solve the mysteries of magnetism and to make celestial observations, he is driven by an ardent curiosity that overshadows any fear of peril.

Rather than dwelling on the obvious dangers of such a voyage, Walton expresses an unwavering enthusiasm—his heart uplifted and his mind steady with purpose. He recounts the six years of preparation leading up to this moment: accompanying whalers on numerous expeditions, hardening his body against cold, famine, thirst, and sleeplessness, and devoting himself to the study of mathematics, medicine, and naval science.

His choice to reject a life of comfort and pursue greatness instead is both infectious and inspiring. From the very first pages, readers are drawn into a world defined by intellectual ambition, endurance, and an unrelenting spirit of adventure.

2. LETTER II

In the second letter, written from Archangel, Walton informs his sister that he has successfully secured a vessel and is assembling a crew of reliable sailors, each marked by dauntless courage.

His lieutenant is a brave and enterprising man, passionately driven by the desire for glory and professional advancement. An Englishman through and through, he bears both the prejudices of his nation and his calling—tempered little by refinement—but retains within him some of the noblest qualities of humanity.

The master, by contrast, is distinguished by his gentle temperament and the mildness of his discipline, coupled with a reputation for integrity and courage.

Yet, despite being surrounded by capable men, Walton laments his solitude; he longs for a cultivated companion with a capacious mind—someone who could understand, challenge, or refine his ambitions.

Still, nothing can deter him from his purpose. He anticipates the coming spring with optimism, after enduring a harsh and dreadful winter.

With feelings mingling pleasure and apprehension, the poet in him awaits the moment to embark—toward that mysterious 'land of mist and snow.'

3. END TO PRELUDE

In the third letter, Walton reports that the expedition is proceeding smoothly. The ship navigates safely through floating sheets of ice, encountering no mishaps thus far. While Walton remains steadfast in his enthusiasm and sense of purpose, his sailors begin to show apprehension about the perilous region into which they are advancing.

Now at a high northern latitude, strong southern gales drive them swiftly toward the distant shores they hope to reach.

In the fourth letter, however, Walton's tone grows more sombre. He recounts that the ship became nearly encircled by ice, surrounded on all sides, while a dense fog obscured their vision. When the mist finally lifted, an immense and desolate landscape of ice stretched endlessly in every direction.

Against this haunting backdrop, they witnessed a strange and wondrous sight—a sledge drawn rapidly by dogs across the horizon, with a man of gigantic stature seated upon it.

Soon afterward, the ice broke apart and the ship regained its freedom. As they prepared to sail onward at dawn, the crew discovered another sledge adrift on a large fragment of ice.

Only one dog remained alive, and beside it lay an emaciated man, near death. Walton took pity on the stranger's wretched state and offered him friendship and care.

A bond soon formed between them, united by their shared thirst for knowledge and discovery. Yet the stranger, though grateful, warned Walton that such unbridled ambition and intellectual fervour could lead to ruin. He revealed his name—Victor Frankenstein—and began

the haunting tale of his scientific pursuits and the terrible misfortunes that followed.

4. IN THE BEGINNING

The story begins in Geneva, where Victor Frankenstein was born into a distinguished and respected family. He grew up in the harmonious company of his adopted cousin, Elizabeth, and his intimate friend, Henry.

From an early age, Victor developed a fascination with the ancient sciences and the arcane philosophies of the past. He eagerly devoured the works of Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Magnus—writers long dismissed by modern thinkers—and became captivated by their wild speculations. Obsessed with uncovering the secrets of nature, he dreamed of discovering the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life, and even entertained childish fantasies of summoning spirits and demons through incantations.

At the age of fifteen, however, Victor witnessed a powerful storm in which a magnificent oak tree was struck by lightning. When the brilliant flash subsided, the tree had been reduced to a splintered stump. The spectacle filled him with awe and introduced him to the mysterious power of electricity.

In that moment, the theories of Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Magnus seemed suddenly futile and absurd. Turning away from mysticism,

Victor resolved to devote himself instead to the study of mathematics and natural philosophy. Yet this very decision, guided by fate's unseen hand, marked the beginning of his ruin.

5. THE CREATURE

At his father's urging, Victor departed for the University of Ingolstadt to complete his education. He began to explore the realms of natural philosophy, with a particular interest in chemistry.

Victor's interest soon turned into obsession. He immersed himself in his studies and worked tirelessly in his laboratory. After mastering the science of anatomy, he turned his attention to the processes of decay and corruption in the human body. With morbid fascination, he observed how the noble form of man disintegrated in death and how the worms inherited the wonders of the eye and the brain.

During these dark studies, Victor made a staggering discovery. He found himself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter. Driven by ambition, Victor resolved to fashion a being of gigantic new species, eight feet tall and proportionally immense. Seasons passed unnoticed as he laboured feverishly, consumed entirely by his work.

At last, on a bleak November night, Victor infused a spark of life into the lifeless form before him. But the beauty Victor had imagined was nowhere to be found. The being that emerged was grotesque - so hideous that it filled him with horror and revulsion.

Overwhelmed by fear and despair, Victor fled from his own creation, abandoning it. When he returned to his chambers later, the creature had vanished.

6. ACT II BEGINS

Upon receiving a heartfelt letter from Elizabeth imploring him to return home, Victor finally decides to leave behind the exhaustion and torment of his obsessive research. When he arrives in his native town, he is met with devastating news — his young brother William has been found dead, his neck cruelly strangled.

Haunted and grief-stricken, Victor visits the place where William's body was discovered. The sky above Mont Blanc flickers with lightning, the air heavy with an approaching storm. Clouds gather, and rain begins to fall in large, cold drops. As Victor walks through the darkened path, a deafening thunderclap shatters the silence, its echoes rolling across the surrounding Alps.

In that moment, a flash of lightning reveals a towering figure — a gigantic form with features twisted by deformity — emerging from behind a cluster of trees. A chill of horror seizes Victor as he recognizes the being, he himself had created. The truth strikes him with dreadful certainty: this creature is the murderer of his little brother.

The monstrous figure glides past Victor, slow and silent, before vanishing into the darkness beyond the hill — leaving him motionless beneath the tempestuous sky.

7. THE TENSION BUILDS

At dawn, Victor returns to his father's mansion, drenched and shivering from the storm. Throughout the night, he has wrestled with his thoughts and reached a grim conclusion — no one would believe the truth of his suspicions. To speak of the creature would be to invite ridicule or to be deemed insane. And so, he resolves to remain silent.

Seeking refuge from both his grief and guilt, Victor retreats into the library, intent on losing himself once more among his books. But soon, Elizabeth enters — radiant with affection yet shadowed by sorrow. It has been six long years since they last met, and their embrace is both tender and tragic.

Breaking the heavy silence, Elizabeth brings startling news: William's supposed murderer has been found. Yet she confesses her own disbelief. The accused is Justine, a gentle and devoted servant of the household. After the discovery of William's body, Justine had fallen ill and been confined to bed. Later, another maid reported finding a miniature portrait of Victor's mother in the pocket of the dress Justine wore on the night of the murder — the very portrait William had carried. The police deemed this evidence sufficient for a trial. In her distress, Justine's confused words and manner seemed only to confirm the suspicions.

At that moment, Victor's father enters the library. He greets his son with kind words, trying to mask his sorrow, but the effort is in vain — grief and weariness are etched deep into his features. Their reunion, though long awaited, is steeped in melancholy.

8. THE TRIAL

During the trial, a visibly tense and anxious Victor clings to the faint hope that some piece of evidence will emerge to prove Justine's innocence. Yet as the proceedings unfold, a series of circumstances seem to unite against her, weaving a chain of damning proofs that overwhelm reason.

It is revealed that on the night of the murder, Justine had been absent from home. Near dawn, a market-woman had seen her at a spot not far from where William's body was later discovered. When questioned, Justine appeared agitated and muttered incoherently. Later, upon seeing the child's lifeless form, she had fallen into violent hysterics — behaviour the court interpreted as evidence of guilt.

When called upon for her defence, Justine spoke with sincerity and anguish, her voice trembling with emotion. She declared that she had spent the evening of the murder at her aunt's home in Chêne, a village a league from Geneva. Around nine o'clock, she heard the dreadful news that William was missing and joined in the search. Unable to re-enter the city after the gates were closed for the night, she had taken shelter in a cottage barn, unwilling to disturb its sleeping occupants. Restless and sleepless, she resumed the search at dawn — it was then she encountered the market-woman in her distressed state.

As for the photograph found in her pocket, Justine could offer no explanation, insisting she had never seen it before.

Elizabeth, compelled by loyalty and compassion, addressed the court with eloquent conviction, defending Justine's gentle character and appealing for her innocence. Victor, tormented by guilt and dread, longed to speak but remained silent, chained by his terrible secret.

Despite Elizabeth's plea, the verdict was merciless. By an overwhelming majority, Justine was pronounced guilty.

9. THE AFTERMATH

At Justine's request, Victor and Elizabeth visit her in prison. They spend their final hours together in helpless grief. When morning arrives, Justine meets her fate with quiet resignation, while Victor and Elizabeth are left shattered by her execution.

Overcome with despair, the mourning Frankenstein family withdraws to their house in Belrive. The change of scene brings Victor a fragile sense of relief. On still, moonlit nights, he rows alone across the lake, its dark waters reflecting his anguish. Often, he contemplates ending his own life, yet the thought of Elizabeth, whose spirit too is clouded by sorrow, keeps him from the final act.

One day, seeking solace in solitude, Victor departs from home and wanders into the Alpine valleys. The sublime grandeur the vast mountains and the whispering pines begins to soothe his tortured mind. His path leads him to the valley of Chamonix, a place he loved to visit as a boy. Though he was now broken, the mountains remain unchanged — majestic, serene, and everlasting.

As he ventures deeper into the ravine of the Arve, towering cliffs and precipices surround him. The roar of the river crashing over rocks, the thunder of waterfalls echoing through the air — all seem to speak of an omnipotent power far beyond human frailty.

Climbing higher, Victor beholds ruined castles clinging to mountain ledges, and humble cottages nestled among the trees, forming a panorama of sublime beauty.

At last, he reaches the village of Chamonix and rests at an inn. Weary in body and mind, he surrenders to sleep, and for a brief moment, forgets his grief in the stillness of oblivion.

10. **END OF ACT II**

The next day, Victor resolved to climb the summit of Montanvert. The magnificent view of that vast, ever-shifting glacier had always held him in awe, and now he sought its solitude as a refuge from his tormented thoughts. Determined to be alone, he refused the aid of a guide and began his ascent in silence.

After a strenuous climb, he reached the height of his journey at noon. Seated upon a jutting rock, he gazed down upon the immense ‘sea of ice’, its frozen waves glimmering beneath the pale sunlight. A sudden gust of wind swept away the mists, revealing the desolate grandeur of the glacier below.

Victor descended and spent the next two hours traversing the icy expanse, nearly a league in breadth. Before him rose a wall of naked rock, sheer and immense, and above it towered Mont Blanc — sublime and terrible in its majesty.

For a moment, Victor stood entranced, overwhelmed by the scene’s solemn beauty. But then, in the distance, he discerned a moving figure — vast and swift, advancing toward him across the frozen waste. The being leapt lightly over yawning crevices of ice, strides that would have spelled death for any mortal man. As it drew nearer, its immense stature left no doubt: it was the Creature.

A surge of rage and horror filled Victor’s heart. He braced himself for combat, vowing to destroy the fiend whose existence had blighted his own. Yet when he struck, the Creature easily warded off the blows

and hurled him to the ground with effortless strength.

Then, in a voice that echoed through the solitude like thunder, the being spoke — a question that froze Victor's soul:

“Why did you create me?”

~ THE END ~

2. FROM THE UNDERGROUND

~ Dedicated To Fyodor Dostoyevsky

1. THE PROLOGUE

The Author Of These Notes ... And The Notes Themselves ... Are Both, Of Course, Imaginary.

All The Same ... If We Take Into Consideration The Conditions That Shaped Our Society ... People Like The Writer Not Only May ... But Must ... Exist In That Society.

I Have Tried ... To Present To The Public ... In A More Striking Form Than Is Usual ... A Character Belonging To The Very Recent Past ... A Representative Figure ... From A Generation Still Surviving.

2. THE FIRST V.O.

I Am A Sick Man ... I Am An Angry Man ... I Am An Unattractive Man.

I Think There Is Something Wrong ... With My Liver ... But I Don't Understand The Least Thing About My Illness ... And I Don't Know For Certain ... What Part Of Me Is Affected.

I Am Not Having Any Treatment For It ... And Never Had ... Although I Have A Great Respect For Medication ... And For Doctors.

I'm Besides ... Extremely Superstitious ... If Only In Having Such Respect For Medicine.

I Am Well Educated Enough ... Not To Be Superstitious ... But Superstitious I Am.

No ... I Refuse Treatment Out Of Spite ... That Is Something You Will Probably Not Understand ...

3. THE FIRST MONOLOGUE

I Once Used To Work In The Government Service ... But Now I Don't ... I Was A Bad Civil Servant!

I Was Rude ... And I Enjoyed Being Rude ... After All, I Didn't Take Bribes ... So, I Had To Have Some Compensation.

[A Poor Witticism ... But I Won't Cross It Out.

When I Wrote It Down ... I Thought It Would Seem Very Pointed ... Now, When I See That I Was Simply Trying To Be Clever And Cynical ... I Shall Leave It ... On 'Purpose'.]

When People Used To Come To The My Desk ... Asking For Information ... I Snarled At Them ... And I Was Hugely Delighted ... When I Succeeded In Hurting Somebody's Feelings.

I Almost Always Did Succeed.

They Were Mostly Timid People ... You Know, What People Looking For Favors Are Like.

But Among The Swaggerers ... There Was One Officer I Simply Couldn't Stand ... He Absolutely Refused To Be Intimidated ... And He Made A Disgusting Clatter With His Sword.

I Won ... In The End ... He Stopped Making A Clatter With It.

4. WHO IS FYODOR?

Fyodor Dostoyevsky Studied At The Military Engineering College In St Petersburg from 1838 To 1843. His First Published Story Was Poor Folk, Which Was A Great Success.

In 1849, He Was Arrested And Sentenced To Death For Participating In The 'Petrashovsky Circle'. However, He Was Reprieved In The Last Moment, But Sentenced To Penal Servitude. Until 1854, He Lived As A Convict At Omsk Prison, In Siberia.

After His Return From Exile, He Wrote 'The Village Of Stepanchikov' (1859) And 'The House Of The Dead' (1860). While The Latter Draws Heavily On His Experiences In Prison, The Former Inhibits A Completely Different World - Shot Through Comedy And Satire.

In 1862, He Went Abroad and Met Mlle Suslova, Who Became The Model For Many Of His Heroines Later.

5. THE FIRST DIALOGUE

I Was Lying When I Said I Was A Bad Civil Servant. I Was Lying Out Of Spite. I Was Simply Playing A Game With The Officer And My Other Callers - In Reality I Never Could Make Myself Malevolent.

I Was Always Conscious Of Many Elements Showing The Direct Opposite Tendency. I Felt Them Positively Swarmed Inside Me - Asking To Be Let Out ... But I Wouldn't.

They Tormented Me Shamefully ... They Drove Me Into Convulsions.

And ... In The End, They Bored Me.

6. THE SECOND MONOLOGUE

Not Only Couldn't I Make Myself Malevolent ... I Couldn't Make
Myself Anything ... Neither Good Or Bad ... Neither A Scoundrel ...
Nor An Honest Man ... Neither A Hero ... Nor An Insect.

Now I Go On ... Living In My Corner ... And Irritating Myself ... With
The Spiteful And Worthless Consolation ... That A Wise Man
Can't Seriously Make Himself Anything ... Only A Fool Makes
Himself Anything.

A Man Of This Century ... Is 'Morally' Bound ... To Be
Essentially Without Character.

A Man Who Acts ... Is Essentially 'Limited' ... And This Is My Forty-
Year-Old Conviction.

7. THE SECOND V.O.

Q ~ "What Can A Decent, 'Respectable' Man ... Talk About With The
Greatest Pleasure?"

A ~ "Himself"

8. THE SECOND DIALOGUE

I Tell You Solemnly ... That I Have Wanted To Make An Insect Of
Myself Many Times ... But I Couldn't Succeed Even In That.

I Swear To You ... That To Think Too Much ... Is A 'Disease' ... A Real

... Actual Disease.

For Ordinary Human Life ... It Would Be More Than Sufficient ... To Possess Ordinary Human Intellectual Activity ... That Is To Say ... Half Or A Quarter As Much ... Falls To The Lot Of An Educated Man ... In Our Unhappy Century ... And Specially One Having The Misfortune To Live In St Petersburg ... The Most Abstract ... And Intentional City ... In The Whole Round World.

9. THE THIRD V.O.

"Everybody Does It ... We All Show Off Our Diseases ... And I ... Perhaps ... More Than Anybody.

"Don't Let's Argue ... I Expressed Myself Clumsily ... But All The Same ... I'm Firmly Convinced That ...

Not Only A Great Deal ... But Every Kind ... Of 'Intellectual' Activity ... Is A Disease.

I Hold To That."

10. THE THIRD DIALOGUE

I Have Always Thought Myself Cleverer Than Anybody I Knew ... And Sometimes ... If You Will Believe Me ... I Have Felt Quite Ashamed Of It.

In Any Case ... I Have Always Turned My Eyes Away ... And Never Been Able To Look Anybody Straight In The Face.

And Finally ... I Am To Blame ... Because Even If I Had Any
Generosity Of Spirit In Me ... It Would Have Been A
Greater Torment ... To Realize Its Complete Uselessness.

After All ... I Should Probably Have Been Unable ... To Do Anything
With That Generosity ... Neither 'Forgive' ... Nor 'Forget'.

The 'Person' Who Offended Me .. Might Have Been Following The
Laws Of Nature ... But It Was 'Still' ... An Affront.

11. MONOLOGUES FROM TWO TOWERS

TOWER I

Men Of Action Seem To Be Possessed By A Desire ... For, Say,
'Revenge' ... That For The Time There Is Nothing Left ... In Their
Whole Being ... But That Emotion.

A Man Like That ... Goes Straight For His Goal ... Like A
Mad Bull Charging With His Horns Down ... And Is To Be 'Stopped'
... IF At All ... Only By A Stone Wall.

TOWER II

For Others ... Men Who 'Think' ... (And Therefore Do Nothing) ... A
Wall Is An Excuse ... For 'Turning' Aside ... An Excuse To Be 'Glad'
Of ... Even When They Don't Believe In It ... Themselves!

12. A V.O. WITH ECHOES

"A 'Normal' Man Is Ought To Be Stupid ... Perhaps ... It Is A Very Fine Thing To Be!

"I Am Even More Convinced ... That This 'Suspicion' ... So As To Speak ... Is 'True' By The Fact ... That If One Takes The Antithesis ... Of A Man Of Heightened Awareness ... He Has To Emerge, Not From Nature ... But From A 'Test Tube' ... Just Like A Mouse."

13. THE RETURN DIALOGUE

Let Us Now 'Look' At The Mouse In Action ... Suppose That It Has Been Insulted ... (And It Will Always Be Subjected To Slights) ... And It Desires 'Revenge'.

Perhaps ... With Even More Fury Inside It ... Than A 'Normal' Man.

A 'Normal' Man ... With His Innate Stupidity ... Will Consider 'Revenge' As No More Than Justice ... But The 'Highly' Aware Mouse, Will Deny Any Justice About It.

It Will ... Above Its Original Nastiness ... Accumulate More Questions & Doubts ... With Many Unresolved Problems ... And Will Be 'Highly' Agitated.

It Will 'Potentially' ... Shrug The Whole Thing Off ... And Creep Shamefacedly Into Its Hole ... With A Smile Of Pretended Contempt ... In Which It Does Not Even Believe In.

14. FOR THE DARKEST

"Ha Ha Ha!" ... She Laughed.

Meanwhile ... The Mouse Sinks Into Cold, Venomous And Above All
... Undying Resentment.

It Remembers The Minutest Details ... Constantly Adding More
Details Of Its Own Invention ... Maliciously Tormenting And Fretting
Itself ... With Its Own Imagination.

It Will Be Ashamed Of Its Fantasies ... But Will Always Be
Remembering Them ... And Turning Them Over In His Head ...
Inventing Things That Never Happened ... Just Because
They Might Have Done So ... And Forgiving Nothing.

Perhaps ... It Will Even Begin To Take Its 'Revenge' ... Not Believing
Either In Its Right To Revenge Itself ... Or In Its Success In Doing So
... And Knowing In Advance ... That It Will Suffer ... A
Hundred Times More Painfully ... From Every One Of Its Attempts ...
Than The Victims Of Them ... Who Will Perhaps Never
Even Notice Them.

15. THE EPILOGUE

... The golden apple rolled towards the feet of three great goddesses –
Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite.

Inscribed on the golden apple were the words:

~ “For The Darkest” ~

Tempted to possess the golden apple, the three goddesses asked Zeus to choose among them. Zeus prudently declined to make that unsettling judgement.

He saw a young man shepherding his flocks on the slopes of Mount Ida, and asked him to make the difficult choice.



P.S. - Hera Was Zeus' Wife ... While Both Athena & Aphrodite Were His Daughters.

Whom The Young Man Will Choose ... And Why ... Is Quite Another Story ... But No Matter What The Choice Was ... It Would Have Eventually Led To The Trojan War ... One Way Or The Other.

16. **A STONE WALL**

[A Stone Wall Is An Impossibility ... A Singularity.]

Q - What Do I Mean By A Stone Wall?

Well ... Of Course ... The Laws Of Nature ... Or The Conclusions Of The Natural Sciences ... Or Mathematics.

When It Is Proved ... For Example ... That You Descended From An Ape ... It's No Use Scowling About It ... Accept It As A Fact.

Or If It Is Demonstrated ... That Half An Ounce ... Of Your Own Fat ... Ought Essentially To Be Dearer To You ... Than A Hundred Thousand Of Your Fellow-Creatures ... And That Demonstration Finally Disposes Of ... All So-Called Good Deeds ... Duties ... And Lunacies And Prejudices ... Simply Accept It.

There Is Nothing To Be Done About It ... Because Twice Two
Is Mathematics.

“We Don't Need No Education
We Don't Need No Thought Control
No Dark Sarcasm In The Classroom
Teachers Leave Them Kids Alone
All In All You're Just ... Another Brick In ... The Wall.”

~ Pink Floyd

17. THE END-CREDITS V.O.

“What IF ... For Some Reason ... I Don't Like Those Laws ... Or
Twice Two?

“Naturally ... I Shan't Break Through The Wall ... With My Head ...
If I Am Really Not Strong Enough ... But I Won't Reconcile To It ...
Simply Because It Is A Stone Wall ... And I Haven't
Enough Strength To Break It Down.

As If A Stone Wall ... Was A Soothing Influence! ... And Did Really
Carry A Message Of Peace! ... Simply Because It Is Twice Two?

That Is Utterly Absurd !!!”

~ THE END ~

3. THE COPPER TRILOGY

~ Dedicated To Charles Dickens

PART I – ‘I AM BORN’

1. INT. EARTH – SUNDAY

To begin my life with the beginning, I formally record that I was born (as informed) on a Sunday, at 12 o'clock midnight. The clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously.

It was declared by the nurse, and by some sage women in the neighbourhood who had taken a lively interest in me, before there was any possibility of our becoming personally acquainted, that I was destined to be unlucky in life. And also, that I would be privileged to see ghosts and spirits.

I need not say anything here about the first prediction, because the following pages will show whether that was verified or falsified.

On the second account, I will only remark, that unless I ran through that part of my heritage while I was still a baby, I have not come into it ... yet.

2. INT. BLUNDERSTONE ROOKERY – CONTINUOUS

I was born with a caul, which was advertised in the newspapers at a low price of fifteen guineas. There was only one solitary bidding, and that was from an attorney connected with the bill-broking business. He offered two pounds in cash and the balance in sherry, but declined to be guaranteed from drowning on any higher

bargain. Consequently, the advertisement was withdrawn at a dead loss.

Ten years afterwards, the caul was put up in a raffle down in our part of the country, to fifty members at half-a-crown a head, the winner to spend five shillings. I was present myself, quite uncomfortable and confused, at a part of myself being disposed in that way.

The caul was won, I recollect, by an old-lady with a hand-basket, who very reluctantly produced the stipulated five shilling, all in halfpence and two pence halfpenny short. It took an immense time and a great waste of arithmetic.

However, she was never drowned, but died triumphantly in bed, at ninety-two. It was her proudest boast, that she had never been on the water in her life and expressed indignation at the impiety of mariners and others, who had the presumption to go ‘meandering’ about the world.

With her instinctive knowledge of the strength of her objection, she always insisted, “Let us have no meandering!”

3. EXT. COTTAGE IN A HAMLET, DOVER – FLASHBACK

Betsey Trotwood was an aunt of my late father, and consequently a great-aunt of mine. She had been married to a husband younger than herself, who was very handsome.

He used to beat aunt Betsey and once made some hasty but determined arrangements to throw her out of their house.

The ample evidences of an incompatibility of temper led to a separation by mutual consent. The handsome man went to India with the capital provided by Aunt Betsey.

According to a wild legend in our family, he was once seen riding on an elephant, in company with a Baboon.

I think that it must have been a 'Baboo' or a 'Begum'.

Anyhow, tidings of his death reached us from India. How it affected my aunt - nobody knew.

4. INT. BLUNDERSTONE ROOKERY, SUFFOLK – AFTERNOON

My mother is sitting by the fire, poor in health (with me inside her) and low in 'spirits', on a windy March day. Timidly and sadly, she is doubting of ever coming out alive of the trial that was before her.

While drying her eyes, she looks at the window opposite and sees a strange lady coming up the garden.

The setting sun glows on the rigid figure walking with composure. Unlike conducting herself like any ordinary Christian and ringing the bell, she looks into the window, pressing her nose against the glass.

Mother gives a turn, leaves her chair in agitation and goes behind it in the corner. Miss Betsey looks around the room slowly and enquiringly. Then frowns and gestures mother to open the door. My mother does so.

BETSEY – "Mrs. David Copperfield, I think?"

MOTHER (faintly) – “Yes”

BETSEY – “Miss Trotwood. You have heard of her, I dare say?”

5. INT. BLUNDERSTONE ROOKERY, SUFFOLK – CONTINUOUS

Miss Betsey seats in the parlour and faces my mother. She says nothing and mother begins to cry, unable to restrain aunt Betsey’s penetrating gaze.

BETSEY – “Oh tut tut! Don’t cry!”

Mother keeps crying.

BETSEY – “Take off your cap, and let me see you.”

Mother obeys, too afraid to refuse compliance (still crying).

BETSEY – “Why bless my heart, you are a baby!”

Mother is sobbing now. Aunt Betsey frowns, staring at the fire.

BETSEY – “In the name of heaven, why ‘Rookery’?”

MOTHER – “What do you mean, ma’am?”

BETSEY – “Why Rookery? ‘Cookery’ would have been more to the purpose, if either of you had any practical ideas of life.”

MOTHER (affronted) – “The name was Mr. Copperfield’s choice. When he bought the house, he thought there were rooks about it.”

BETSEY – “Where are the birds?”

Mother silently thinks of something else.

BETSEY – “The rooks – what has become of them?”

MOTHER – There have not been any, since we lived here.”

BETSEY – “David Copperfield all over – from head to foot! Calls a house a rookery when there’s not a rook near it, and takes the birds on trust, because he sees the nests!”

MOTHER (uncomfortably) – “I am all in a tremble ... I don’t know what’s the matter?”

BETSEY – “Have some tea. What do you call your girl?”

MOTHER – “I don’t know that it will be a girl, yet, ma’am.”

BETSEY – “Bless the baby! But I don’t mean that. I mean your servant girl.”

MOTHER – “Peggotty.”

BETSEY – “Peggotty! You mean to say that any human being has got herself named ‘Peggotty’?”

6. INT. BLUNDERSTONE ROOKERY, SUFFOLK – CONTINUOUS

Miss Betsey issues a mandate to bring some tea with an authority that makes Peggotty stare in amazement. The girl hurries off and aunt Betsey shuts the door behind her.

BETSEY – “You were speaking about the baby being a girl. I have a presentiment that it will be a girl, without any doubt.”

MOTHER (meekly) – “Perhaps a boy ...”

BETSEY – “Don’t contradict me, it must be a girl. Now, from the moment she is born, I intend to be her friend and her godmother. She will be called Betsey Trotwood Copperfield and there will be no mistakes in her life, no trifling with her affections. She must be well brought up and well-guarded from reposing foolish

confidences where they are not deserved.”

Mother nods uneasily.

BETSEY – “Was David good to you, child? Were you comfortable together?”

MOTHER – “We were very happy. Mr. Copperfield was too good to me.”

BETSEY – “He spoilt you, I suppose?”

MOTHER (sobbing) – “For being quite alone and dependent on myself in this rough world, I fear he did indeed.”

BETSEY – “Well! Don’t cry anymore. You were not equally matched.”

Mother calms down and becomes quiet.

BETSEY – “I know that David had bought an annuity for himself. What did he do for you?

MOTHER – “Mr. Copperfield was considerate enough to secure a part of it to me.”

BETSEY – “How much?”

MOTHER – “A hundred and five pounds a year.”

BETSEY – “He might have done worse.”

7. INT. BLUNDERSTONE ROOKERY, SUFFOLK – CONTINUOUS

Miss Betsey sits solemnly beside the fire, with her bonnet tied over her left arm and stopping her ears with jewellers’ cotton.

Doctor Chillip softly enters the parlour. He carries his head on one side, partly in modest depreciation of himself, partly in modest

propitiation of everybody else. It is nothing to say that he hadn't a word to throw at a dog. And he couldn't have thrown a word at a mad dog.

BETSEY – “Well?”

CHILLIP (mildly) – “Well, ma'am, we are ... we are progressing slowly, ma'am.”

BETSEY – “Ba-a-ah!”

Silence. Ham Peggotty (the servant girl's young nephew) comes in and whispers to the doctor's ear.

CHILLIP – “Well, ma'am, I am happy to congratulate you.”

Aunt Betsey stops marching up and down the parlour.

BETSEY (sharply) – “What upon?”

CHILLIP (considerably fluttered) – “Well ma'am, I am happy to congratulate you. All is now over, and well over.”

BETSEY – “How is she?”

CHILLIP – “Well ma'am, she will be quite comfortable, I hope. As comfortable as we can expect a young mother to be.”

BETSEY – “And she? How is she?”

Chillip looks befuddled.

BETSEY (impatiently) – “The baby, how is she?”

CHILLIP – “Ma'am, I apprehended you had known. It is a boy.”

Aunt Betsey takes her bonnet by the strings and silently walks out.

~ END OF PART I ~

PART II – ‘I OBSERVE’

1. EXT. BLUNDERSTONE ROOKERY, GARDENS – DAWN

V.O. - “This may be fancy, but I think the memory of most of us can go further back into times than most of us know. I also believe that the power of observation in numbers of very young children to be quite wonderful for its closeness and accuracy.

“Indeed, I think that most grown men are remarkable in this respect, to have not lost the faculty, rather than to have acquired it. I generally observe such men to retain certain freshness, gentleness and capacity of being pleased, which is also an inheritance preserved from their childhood.

“I may set down in this narrative that I was a child of close observation. And as a man I have strong memories of my childhood.”

2. INT. BLUNDERSTONE ROOKERY, SUFFOLK – MORNING

V.O. - “The first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back into my infancy, are my mother with her pretty hair and Peggotty with her eyes so dark that they seemed to darken the whole neighbourhood. And her lips so red that I wondered why the birds did not peck her instead of red apples.

“I believe I can remember these two at a little distance apart, dwarfed to my sight by stooping down or kneeling on the floor, and me going unsteadily from one to the other.

“I have an impression on my mind, that I cannot distinguish from actual remembrance, of the touch of Peggotty’s fore-finger as she used to hold it out to me.

“What else do I remember? Let me see ...”

3. INT. BLUNDERSTONE ROOKERY, SUFFOLK – MORNING

V.O. – “There comes out of the cloud of my memories - our house – not new to me, but quite familiar in its earliest remembrance.

“On the ground floor is Peggotty’s kitchen, opening into a backyard with a pigeon-house on a pole in the center and a great dog-kennel in a corner. There is also a quantity of fowls that look terribly tall to me, walking about, in a menacing and ferocious manner.

“There is one cock who gets upon a post to crow, and seems to take particular notice of me, as I look at him through the kitchen-window. He is so fierce that he makes me shiver!

A long passage leads from Peggotty’s kitchen to the front door. A dark store-room opens out of it, which is a place to run past at night. Then there are two parlours, one in which we sit in evenings and the best parlour where we sit on a Sunday, grandly but not so comfortably.”

4. INT. BLUNDERSTONE ROOKERY, SMALL PARLOR – NIGHT

David (as a young boy) reads to Peggotty about crocodiles.
Suddenly he stops and yawns ...

DAVID (sleepily) – “Peggotty, were you ever married?”

PEGGOTTY (with a start) – “Lord, Master Davy! What’s put marriage in your head?”

DAVID – “But were you ever married, Peggotty? You are a very handsome woman, ain’t you?”

PEGGOTTY – “Me handsome, Davy! No, my dear! But what put marriage in your head?”

DAVID – “I don’t know. But you mustn’t marry more than one person at a time, may you, Peggotty?”

PEGGOTTY (promptly) – “Certainly not.”

DAVID – “But if you marry a person, and the person dies, why then you may marry another person, mayn’t you?”

PEGGOTTY – “You MAY if you choose, my dear. That is a matter of opinion.”

DAVID – “What is your opinion, Peggotty?”

PEGGOTTY (curtly) – “My opinion is that I have never married myself, Master Davy, and I don’t expect to be. That’s all I know about the subject.”

DAVID – “You an’t cross with me, I suppose, Peggotty, are you?”

PEGGOTTY (hugging Davy) – “Now let’s hear some more about the crorkindills!”

**5. INT. BLUNDERSTONE ROOKERY, SMALL PARLOR –
CONTINUOUS**

6. The garden-bell rings. Peggotty and Davy goes to the door and his mother enters looking unusually pretty, along with Mr Murdstone (a genteel neighbour). As Davy's mother stoops down to take him in her arms and is about to kiss him ...

MURDSTONE – “Why, the boy is more privileged than a monarch!”

DAVID – “What does that mean?”

Murdstone fondly pats David on the back, his hand touching mother's. Davy takes hold of it and puts it away.

MOTHER – “Oh Davy! Don't be so rude!”

MURDSTONE – “Dear boy, I wonder at your devotion!”

Mother's face gets coloured.

MOTHER – “Thank you for bringing me home.”

Murdstone takes her extended hand in his and glances at David.

MURDSTONE – “Let us say good night, my fine boy ...”

DAVID (curtly) – “Good Night!”

MURDSTONE (smiling) – “Come! Let us be best friends in the world! Let's shake hands on this.”

David extends his left hand, his right holding his mother.

7. INT. PUB, LOWESTOFT – DAY

David enters the pub (with a scowl) along with Mr. Murdstone. Davy has been forced to come, by her loving mother. Two gentlemen stand up cheerfully to greet them.

FIRST GENTLEMAN – “Halloa, Murdstone! We thought you were dead!”

MURDSTONE – “Not yet.”

SECOND GENTLEMAN – “Who is this shaver?”

MURDSTONE – “That’s Davy.”

FIRST GENTLEMAN – “Davy who?”

MURDSTONE – “Copperfield.”

SECOND GENTLEMAN – “What! That pretty little widow?”

MURDSTONE – “Quinion, take care, if you please. Somebody’s sharp.”

QUINION (laughing) – “Who is?”

MURDSTONE – “Only Brooks of Sheffield.”

Davy joins the hearty laughter of the three gentlemen.

QUINION – “And what is the opinion of Brooks of Sheffield, in reference to the projected business?”

MURDSTONE – “Why, I don’t know that Brooks understands much about it at present. But he is not generally favourable, I believe.”

More laughter. Sherry is brought in. Quinion makes Davy drink some wine, along with a biscuit. But before Davy drinks it, Quinion forces Davy to stand up and say ...

DAVID – “Confusion to Brooks of Sheffield!”

The toast is received with great applause.

8. INT. BLUNDERSTONE ROOKIE, SMALL PARLOR – NIGHT

Peggotty looks deeply at Davy, who is busy reading about crocodiles.

PEGGOTTY (coaxingly) – “Master Davy, would you come along with me to spend a fortnight at my brothers at Yarmouth? Wouldn’t that be a treat?”

DAVID – “Is your brother an agreeable man, Peggotty?”

PEGGOTTY – “Oh what an agreeable man he is! Then there is the sea, and the boats and ships, and the fishermen, and the beach.”

DAVID (thoughtfully) – “What would mother say?”

PEGGOTTY (smiling) – “I think she will let us go. I will ask her, if you like.”

DAVID – “But what shall she do while we’re away? She can’t live by herself!”

Silence.

DAVID – “I say, Peggotty! She can’t live by herself, you know.”

Silence.

PEGGOTTY – “Oh, bless you! Don’t you know? She’s going to stay for a fortnight with Mrs. Grayper. Mrs. Grayper’s going to have a lot of company.”

And Davy is ready to go.

~ END OF PART II ~

PART III – ‘I HAVE A CHANGE’

1. EXT. LANES OF YARMOUTH LEADING TO THE SEA – MORNING

Ham Peggotty carries Davy on his back and a box under his arm. Peggotty walks by his side carrying another box.

HAM – “That’s our house, Master Davy!”

Davy looks in all directions, as far as it can be seen. There is a black barge or some other kind of superannuated boat, not far off, high and dry on the ground. An iron funnel sticks out of it for a chimney, a delightful door cut in the side with little windows in it.

DAVID – “That’s not it, is it? That ship-looking thing on the beach?”

HAM (smiles) – “That’s it, Master Davy.”

At a wooden outhouse near the ship-house, they meet Mr. Peggotty working with the lobsters, crabs and crawfish that he deals with. Helping him is a woman (Mrs. Gummidge) and a little girl (Emily).

Mr. PEGGOTTY – “Glad to see you, sir. You will find us rough. But you will find us ready.”

2. INT. SHIP-HOUSE, YARMOUTH – CONTINUOUS

Peggotty opens a little door and shows Davy his bedroom, while keeping his box in a corner.

It is a small whitewashed room in the stern of the vessel, with a little window where the rudder used to go through. A little looking-glass is nailed against the wall, framed with oyster shells.

DAVID – “Is your nephew’s name Ham because he lives in an ark, Peggotty?”

PEGGOTTY (smiles) – “No, Master Davy.”

DAVID – “Who gave him that name, then?”

PEGGOTTY – “His father gave it to him.”

DAVID – “Mr. Peggotty?”

PEGGOTTY – “My brother, Joe, was his father.”

DAVID – “Is he dead?”

PEGGOTTY – “He drowned.”

Silence.

DAVID – “Emily is Mr. Peggotty’s daughter, isn’t she?”

PEGGOTTY – “No, Davy. My brother-in-law, Tom, was her father.”

DAVID (stunned) – “Dead too, Peggotty?”

PEGGOTTY (pensively) – “Drowned.”

Silence.

DAVID – “Does Mr. Peggotty have any children?”

PEGGOTTY – “No, Master Davy. He is a bachelor.”

They hear the wind howling out at the sea and coming on across the flat fiercely, as if there was a deep rising.

3. EXT. BEACH, YARMOUTH – DUSK

Davy and Emily picking shells and pebbles on the beach.

DAVID – “You are quite a sailor, I suppose?”

EMILY – “No. I am afraid of the sea.”

DAVID – “Afraid! ... I ain't!”

EMILY – “Ah! But it's cruel. I have seen it to be very cruel to some of our men. I have seen it tear a boat, as big our house, all to pieces.”

DAVID – “I hope it wasn't the boat that –“

EMILY – “That father was drowned in? No, not that one. I have never seen that boat.”

DAVID – “Nor him?”

EMILY – “Not to remember!”

DAVID – “I never saw my father too.”

Silence.

EMILY – “Your father was a gentleman and your mother is a lady. My father was a fisherman and my mother a fisherman's daughter.”

DAVID – “Would you like to be a lady?”

EMILY (laughing) – “Yes, I would like it very much!”

4. EXT. ROAD TO SUFFOLK – AFTERNOON

Davy and Peggotty sit on a carriage approaching Blunderstone Rookery. The grey sky is dull and it is threatening to rain.

PEGGOTTY (agitated) – “Master Davy, I ... I need tell you something.”

DAVID – “What’s the matter?”

PEGGOTTY – “Your mama won’t be at the gate today.”

DAVID – “Why? Where’s mama?”

Silence.

PEGGOTTY – “You see, dear, I should have told you before. But I could not bring my mind to it.”

DAVID (alarmed) – “Oh, she’s not dead, Peggotty, is she?”

PEGGOTTY – “No, Master Davy ... You have got a Pa!”

DAVID – “A new one?”

PEGGOTTY – “A new one.”

David turned white.

~ END OF THE COPPER TRILOGY ~

4. THE RING TRILOGY

~ Dedicated To J.R.R. Tolkien



THE PRELUDE

1. THE RING

... V.O. (Husky Male Baritone) ...

Three Rings For The Elven Kings Under The Sky
Seven For The Dwarf Lords In Their Halls Of Stone
Nine For Mortal Men ... Doomed To Die ...

One For The Dark Lord On His Dark Throne
In The Land Of Mordor ... Where The Shadows Lie.

One Ring To Rule Them All ...
One Ring To Find Them ...
One Ring To Bring Them All ...
And In The Darkness Bind Them ...

In The Land Of Mordor ... Where The Shadows Lie ...

2. THE FOREWORD

The story had begun soon after ‘The Hobbit’ was written and before its publication, but I did not go on with this sequel, for I wished first to complete and set in order the mythology and legends of ‘The Elder Days’, which had been taken shape for some years.

I desired to do this for my own satisfaction, and I had little hope

that other people would be interested in this work.

When those, whose advice and opinion I sought, corrected 'little hope' to 'no hope', I went back to the sequel, encouraged by requests from readers for more information concerning hobbits and their adventures.

3. A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION

The Lord Of The Rings' has been read by many people since it finally appeared in print; and I should like to say something here with reference to the many opinions or guesses concerning the motives and meaning of the tale.

The prime motive was the desire of a tale-teller to try his hand at a really long story that would hold the attention of readers, amuse them, delight them, and at times excite them or deeply move them. As a guide, I had only my own feelings for what is appealing or moving, and for many the guide was inevitably often at fault.

Some, who have read the book, or at any rate have reviewed it, have found it boring, absurd, or contemptible; and I have no cause to complain, since I have similar opinions of their works, or of kinds of writing that they evidently prefer.

It is perhaps not possible in a long tale to please everybody at all points, nor to displease everybody at the same points; for I find from the letters that I received that the passages or chapters that are to some a blemish are all by others specially approved.

The most critical reader, myself, now finds many defects, minor and major, but being fortunately under no obligation to review the

book or to write it again, I will pass over these in silence, except one that has been noted by others – the book is too short!

4. THE MEANING

As for any meaning or ‘message’, the book has in intention of the author – none.

As the story grew, it put down roots (into the past) and threw out unexpected branches – but its main theme was settled on the outset by the inevitable choice of ‘The Ring’ as the link between it and ‘The Hobbit’.

The crucial chapter - ‘The Shadow Of The Past’ - is one of the oldest parts of the tale. It was written long before the foreshadow of 1939 had yet become a threat of inevitable disaster.

And from that point the story would have developed along essentially the same lines, if that disaster had been averted.

The sources of this story are things long before in mind, or in some cases already written, and little or nothing in it was modified by the war that began in 1939.

5. THE LATEST EDITION

‘The Lord Of The Rings’ is now issued in a new edition, and the opportunity has been taken of revising it.

A number of errors and inconsistencies that still remained in the

text have been corrected, and an attempt has been made to provide information on a few points which attentive readers have raised.

I have considered all their comments and enquiries, and if some seem to have been passed over that may be because I have failed to keep my notes in order.

But many enquiries could only be answered by additional appendices, or indeed by the production of an accessory volume containing much of the material that I did not include in the original edition.

In the meantime, this edition offers this Forward, in addition to the following Prologue and some notes.

6. THE RED BOOK

This book is largely concerned with Hobbits, and from its pages a reader may discover much of their 'character' and a little of their 'history'.

Further information will also be found in the selection from 'The Red Book Of Westmarch' that has already been published, under the title of 'The Hobbit'.

That story was derived from the earlier chapters of 'The Red Book', composed by Bilbo Baggins himself, the first Hobbit to become famous in the world at large, and called by him 'There And Back Again'.

'There And Back Again' told the story of his journey into the East

and his return – an adventure which later involved all the Hobbits in the great events of that Age that are here related.

7. THE HOBBITS

Hobbits are very ancient people, more numerous formerly than they are today.

They do not and did not understand or like machines more complicated than forge-bellows, a water-mill, or a hand-loom, though they were skilful with tools. Even in ancient days, they were, as a rule, shy of ‘The Big Folk’, as they call us, and now they avoid us with dismay and are becoming hard to find.

Hobbits are quick of ‘hearing’ and ‘sharp-eyed’, and though they are inclined to be ‘fat’ and do not ‘hurry’ unnecessarily, they are nonetheless nimble and deft in their ‘movements’. They possessed from the first, the art of disappearing swiftly and silently, when the large folk whom they did not wish to meet come blundering by; and this art they have developed until to Men it seemed magical.

They are all little people, smaller than the Dwarves – but less stout and stocky, that is, even when they are not actually much shorter. Their ‘height’ is variable, ranging between two and four feet of our measure. They seldom now reach three feet, but they say that they have dwindled and in ancient days they were taller.

According to ‘The Red Book’, Bandobras Took (The Bullroarer), Son of Isumbras The Third, was four foot five and able to ride a horse. He was surpassed in all Hobbit records only by two characters of The Old.

8. THE PIPE-WEED

There is an astonishing thing about Hobbits of old, that must be mentioned. They imbibed or inhaled, through pipes of clay or wood, the smoke of burning leaves of a herb, which they called pipe-weed or leaf, a variety probably of ‘Nicotiana’.

A great deal of mystery surrounds the origin of this peculiar custom, or ‘art’ as the Hobbits preferred to call it. All that could be discovered about it in antiquity was put together by Meriadoc Brandybuck (later Master of Buckland), and since that follows, his remarks in the introduction to his ‘Herblore Of The Shire’ may be quoted:

“This is the one art that we can certainly claim to be our own invention.”

9. BILBO & FRODO

Bilbo was rich and peculiar, and a wonder of The Shire ever since his remarkable and unexpected return. The riches he had brought back from his travels had now become a local legend, and it was popularly believed, whatever the common folk may say, that the hill at The Bag End was full of tunnels stuffed with treasure.

And if that was not enough for fame, there was also his prolonged vigor to marvel at. Time wore on, but it seemed to have little effect on Bilbo. At ninety he was much the same as at fifty. They began to call him ‘well-preserved’, but ‘unchanged’ would have been nearer the mark.

There were some that shook their heads and thought this was too much of a good thing.

His favourite cousin was Frodo. When Frodo began to grow up, Bilbo adopted Frodo as his heir, and brought him to live at Bag End.

10. INTRODUCING THE STRIDER

All That Is Gold ... Does Not Glitter
Not All Those Who Wander ... Are Lost
The Old That Is Strong ... Does Not Wither
Deep Roots ... Are Not Touched By The Frost

From The Ashes ... A Fire Shall Be Woken
A Light From The Shadows ... Shall Spring

Renewed Shall Be ... The Blade ... That Was Broken ...

11. THE RING

“One Ring To Rule Them All
One Ring To Find Them
One Ring To Bring Them All
And In The Darkness Bind Them ...

In The Land Of Mordor ... Where The Shadows Lie ...”

‘The Ring’ was lost a long time ago, after a great war. It fell into a great river, Anduin, and vanished. And there in the dark waters, the ring passed out of knowledge and legends. The rest of its history is known now only to a few, and The Council Of The Wise could discover no more.

Our films begin with a journey in search for it ...

“The Road Goes Ever On And On
Down From The Door Where It Began.
Now Far Ahead The Road Has Gone,
And I Must Follow, If I Can,
Pursuing It With Eager Feet,
Until It Joins Some Larger Way

Where Many Paths And Errands Meet.
And Wither Then?
I Cannot Say.”

12. THE SONG OF THE STRIDER

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand ...

Is all that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

~ Edgar Allan Poe 

~ PART I – THE STRIDER ~

THE OPENING SCENE

A long shot over 'The Shire' ... As the camera zooms in to a close shot over the top of a forest ... We hear a male voice humming softly ...

"Ho! Ho! Ho! To The Bottle I Go
To Heal My Heart And Drown My Woe,
Rain May Fall And Wind May Blow,
And Many Miles Be Still To Go,
But Under A Tall Tree I Will Lie,
And Let The Clouds Go Sailing By."

... As the voice fades away ... We see a close shot focused on a pair of boots walking in the forest ... And the movie title crawls out over the screen ...

THE STRIDER

1. EXT. WEST GATE, THE VILLAGE OF BREE – EVENING

Four Hobbits approach the gate as the gate-keeper curiously looks at them, holding a lantern in his hand.

GATE KEEPER – “What do you want?”

FRODO – “We are going to the inn here.”

GATE KEEPER (suspiciously) – “I have never seen Hobbits out of the Shire! What are you doing here?”

SAM – “We are journeying east and cannot go further tonight.”

The gatekeeper stares at them darkly for a moment, and then slowly opens the gate and allows the Hobbits to enter the village.

GATE KEEPER – “Pardon me, but we don’t see too many Shire-folks traveling at this hour. Where are you going?”

FRODO – “That is none of your business.”

GATE KEEPER – “Your business is your own, no doubt. But it’s my business to ask questions after nightfall.”

MERRY – “We are Hobbits from Buckland and we have a fancy to travel. I am Mr. Brandybuck. Will that be enough?”

GATE KEEPER – “All right, all right! I meant no offence. There’s a lot of queer folks around these days.”

FRODO – “Thank you and good night!”

As the Hobbits start walking towards the inn called ‘The Pony’, the gate clangs behind them.

As soon as the gatekeeper goes back to his room nearby, a dark figure climbs over the gate and melts into the shadows.

2. INT. BAG END, HOBBITON, THE SHIRE – AFTERNOON

Bilbo and Gandalf sitting at an open window in a small room looking out west to a garden. The flowers are glowing red and golden – snapdragons and sunflowers. Nasturtians trailing all over the turf walls and peeping in at the round window.

GANDALF – “How bright your garden looks!”

BILBO – “Yes. I am very fond of it indeed, and of all the dear old Shire. But I think I need a holiday.”

GANDALF – You mean to go on with your plan then?”

BILBO – “I do. I made up my mind months ago, and I haven’t changed it.”

GANDALF – “Very well. It is no good saying any more. Stick to your plan and I hope it will turn out for the best.”

BILBO – “I hope so. Anyways, I mean to enjoy myself on my Birthday party, and have a little joke.”

GANDALF – “Who will laugh, I wonder.”

BILBO – “We shall see.”

3. INT. THE PRANCING PONY INN, THE VILLAGE OF BREE – EVENING

Frodo and his friends climb up a staircase leading up from the front door. They almost bump into a short fat man with a bald head and a red face. He has a white apron on, and was bustling out of a door carrying a tray laden with full mugs.

FRODO – “Can we ...”

INN KEEPER (over his shoulder) – “Half a minute, if you please!”

The man vanishes into the common room echoing with a babel of voices and a cloud of smoke. In a moment he comes out again, wiping his hands on his apron.

INN KEEPER – “Good evening, little masters! Barliman is my name. Barliman Butterbur at your service. What may you be

wanting?”

FRODO – “Beds for four, if that can be managed.”

BUTTERBUR - (suddenly clapping his hand to his forehead) –
“You are Hobbits from the Shire, eh? Now what does that remind me of? Might I ask your names, sirs?”

FRODO – “Mr. Took and Mr. Brandybuck. And this is Sam Gangee. My name is Underhill.”

BUTTERBUR (snapping his fingers) – “There now! It’s gone again! But it’ll come back, when I have time to think. We don’t get often get a party out of the Shire nowadays, and should be sorry not to make you welcome. There is such a crowd already in the house tonight as there hasn’t been for long enough. It never rains but pours, as we say in Bree.”

Butterbur thinks for a moment, tapping his forehead.

BUTTERBUR – “Well now. On the ground floor we’ve got a room in the north wing that is specially made for the Hobbits – round windows and all that they like. I hope you’ll be comfortable. This way now!”

He led them a short way down the passage and opened a door.

4. EXT. B’DAY PARTY IN THE FIELDS OF BAG END, HOBBITON – EVENING

Amid an abundance of fireworks, drinks, food and merry-making, a beaming Bilbo in an embroidered silk waistcoat rises from the head position of a huge table. Gandalf and Frodo sit beside him, surrounded by a lot of hobbits. Bilbo waves one hand in the air, the other in his trouser-pocket.

BILBO (clearing his throat) – “My dear people!”

THE CROWD (chorus) – “Hear! Hear! Hear!”

BILBO – “Today is my birthday – I am eleventy-one today!”

THE CROWD (shouting in chorus) – “Hurray! Hurray! Many Happy Returns!”

BILBO – “I hope you are enjoying yourselves as much as I am.”

Deafening cheers from the crowd, along with noises of trumpets and horns, pipes and flutes, and other musical instruments. Bilbo waits patiently till the uproar subsides.

BILBO – “I shall not keep you long. I have called you all together for a Purpose.”

Silence from the crowd.

BILBO – “Firstly, I am immensely fond of you all, and eleventy-one years is too short a time to live among such excellent and admirable Hobbits. I don’t know half of you as well as I should like; and I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve!”

Some scattered and confused clapping.

BILBO – “Thank you very much for coming to my little party. I would now wish to make an ANOOUNCEMENT. I regret to say that – though as I said, eleventy-one years is far too short a time to spend among you – this is THE END. I am going. I am leaving NOW. GOOD-BYE!”

Bilbo vanishes into thin air in a blinding flash of light, as the flabbergasted guests blinked (except Gandalf).

5. INT. BAG END, HOBBITON – CONTINUOUS

Bilbo reappears in his hole and listens to the commotion outside, smiling. He takes off the waistcoat, puts on an old cloak and hood, picks up a small bundle along with his sword. Gandalf enters the room.

BILBO – “Hullo! I wondered if you will turn up.”

GANDALF – “I am glad to find you visible. I wanted to catch you for a few final words.”

BILBO (laughs) – “You interfering old busybody.”

GANDALF – “You have had your joke, and alarmed and offended most of your relations, and given the Shire something to talk about for ages.”

BILBO – “The flash was surprising and quite startled me, let alone the others. A little addition of your own, I suppose?”

GANDALF – “It was. Have you told Frodo about your plan to go to the mountains?”

BILBO – “He would want to come with me, if I told him. But he really would not want to, not yet. He is still in love with the Shire, the woods, the fields and the rivers. You will keep an eye on him, won’t you?”

GANDALF – “Yes, I will – two eyes, as often as I can spare them.”

BILBO – “He ought to be comfortable here. I am leaving everything to him.”

GANDALF – “Everything?”

BILBO – “Well, er, yes, I suppose so.”

GANDALF – “Where is it?”

BILBO – “In an envelope, if you must know. There on the mantelpiece. Well, no! Here it is in my pocket!”

Bilbo hesitates to put the envelope on the mantelpiece.

6. INT. BAG END, HOBBITON – CONTINUOUS

Bilbo hesitates to put the envelope on the mantelpiece.

GANDALF (looking hard at Bilbo) – “I think Bilbo, you should leave it behind. Don’t you think so?”

BILBO (with a changed voice) – “Now when it comes to it, I don’t like parting with it at all. And I really don’t see why I should. Why are you badgering me about the ring of all other things?”

GANDALF – “I do not want to badger you. But magic rings are – well, magical. They are rare and curious. I am professionally interested in your ring and would like to know where it is, as you go wandering again. I also think you have had it quite long enough. You won’t need it anymore, Bilbo, unless I am quite mistaken.”

BILBO (angrily) – “Why not? And what business is it yours anyway, to know what I do with my own things? It is my own. I found it. It came to me.”

GANDALF – “Yes. But there is no need to get angry.”

BILBO – “If I am, it is your fault. This is mine, I tell you. My own. My precious.”

GANDALF (attentively) – “It has been called that before, but not by you.”

BILBO (obstinately) – “But I say it now. And why not? Even if Gollum said the same once. It’s not his now, but mine. And I shall keep it, I say.”

Gandalf (towering over little Bilbo) – “You will be a fool if you do so, Bilbo. Let it go!”

Bilbo backs away to the wall, breathing hard, his hand clutching at his pocket. Gandalf’s stern eyes remain bent on the hobbit.

Slowly his hand relaxes and he begins to tremble. With a considerable effort he takes out the envelope and places it on the mantelpiece.

BILBO (now relaxed) – “Well, that’s that. Now I’m off! Goodbye, Gandalf!”

GANDALF – “Goodbye for the present, Bilbo. Take care of yourself!”

7. INT. COMMON ROOM OF THE PRANCING PONY INN – NIGHT

Frodo sits alone in a corner, listening and looking around. He notices a strange-looking weather-beaten man, sitting in the shadows near the wall with a tankard in front of him and smoking a long-stemmed pipe curiously curved. His legs were stretched out in front of him, showing high boots of supple leather that had seen much wear and were caked with mud.

Frodo finds Strider looking at him with a gleam in his eyes. With a wave of his hand, he invites Frodo to come over and sit by him. Frodo does so.

STRIDER (with a low voice) – “I am called Strider. I am very pleased to meet you, Master ... Underhill, if old Butterbur got your name right.”

FRODO (stiffly) – “He did.”

STRIDER – “Well, Master Underhill, if I were you, I should stop your friends from talking too much. Drink, fire, and chance-meeting are pleasant enough, but, well – this isn’t the Shire. There are a lot of queer folk and strange travellers through Bree lately.”

Frodo follows Strider's gaze which is now fixed on Pippin.

The ridiculous young Took was giving a comic account of Bilbo's farewell party, imitating Bilbo's speech to a cheering crowd at the bar.

8. INT. BAG END – MORNING

Gandalf sits by the open window of the study, with Frodo beside him. Gandalf looks older and more worn out than before.

FRODO – “You told me when you arrived last night that you have some strange news about the ring that Bilbo left me. But then you stopped, Gandalf, and said that such matters are best left for daylight.”

GANDALF – “Yes, I have found out, that the ring is dangerous, and that it would utterly overcome anyone of mortal race who possessed it. It would possess him.”

FRODO – “What is this ring?”

GANDALF – “In Eregion, long ago, eleven magic rings were made, some more potent and some less. A mortal who keeps one of the potent Great Rings, never dies, nor does he grow old or obtain more life. He merely continues, until at last, every minute is a weariness. And if he uses it often to make himself invisible, he slowly fades and eventually becomes invisibly permanent – thin and stretched. Sooner or later, the Dark Power devours him.”

FRODO – “How terrifying!”

GANDALF – “When Bilbo left the Shire, he said and did things that filled me with fear. I knew then, that something dark and deadly was at work. I have spent most of my time since then, to find out the truth about the ring. And ever since Bilbo left, I have been deeply concerned about you.”

FRODO (shudders) – “Why so, Gandalf?”

GANDALF – “The Dark Power has, so far, entirely overlooked the existence of hobbits in the Shire. You should be thankful. But your safety has passed. The Dark Power now seeks malice and revenge.”

FRODO – “Revenge? Revenge for what?”

GANDALF – “Let me show you. Give me the ring.”

Gandalf takes the ring from Frodo and throws it into the fire in the study. Frodo gives a cry, but Gandalf holds him back.

GANDALF (commandingly) – “Wait!”

For a moment the wizard stands looking at the fire. Then he stoops and removes the ring to the hearth with the tongs.

Running around the ring, there are now lines of fire:

"One Ring To Rule Them All, And In The Darkness Bind Them."

9. INT. BAG END – CONTINUOUS

Frodo sits silent and motionless, staring at the ominously glowing ring.

FRODO (stammers) – “This ring! How, on earth, did it come to me?”

GANDALF – “That is a very long story. The beginning lies in The Black Years, which only the lore-masters now remember. But now The Dark Lord, Sauron, has arisen again and returned to his ancient Dark Tower of Mordor. His shadowy existence has taken a new shape of The Eye and it grows stronger every moment.”

FRODO – “I wish it need not have happened in my time.”

GANDALF – “So do I. But it is not for us to decide. And already, Frodo, our time is beginning to look black. The Dark Lord still lacks one thing to give him the strength and knowledge to beat down all resistance, break the very last defense, and cover all lands in a darkness. He lacks The One Ring.”

A heavy silence falls into the room.

FRODO – “Can’t we destroy the ring?”

GANDALF – “The only way to do so, is to cast the ring in The Cracks Of DOOM within the depths of Orodruin, The Fire Mountain in the land of Mordor.”

FRODO – “Can’t we hide it in the Shire?”

GANDALF – “If you want to save the Shire from the wrath of The Dark Lord, you will have to depart from Bag End immediately, and the Shire too. Leave the name of Baggins behind you and travel with the name of Underhill. I will meet you later at The Prancing Pony in the village of Bree.”

**10. INT. COMMON ROOM IN THE PRANCING PONY,
THE VILLAGE OF BREE - NIGHT**

Pippin enjoying the attention, as he mimics Bilbo’s farewell speech and draws near to the tale of the astonishing disappearance. Frodo looks at him with annoyance.

STRIDER – “You better do something quick!”

Frodo jumps up on the table and begins to sing loudly in desperation:

“There is an inn, a merry old inn

Beneath an old grey hill,
And there they brew a beer so brown
That the man in the moon himself came down
One night to drink his fill”

To resounding applause, Frodo capered around the table and leaped in the air enthusiastically. As he came down, bang into a tray full of mugs, he slipped and rolled off the table with a crash, clatter and bump!

The audience all opened their mouths wide for laughter, but stopped short in gaping silence (as Strider sharply observes their reactions).

Frodo has vanished into thin air.

~ END OF PART I ~

~ PART II – THE SHADOW OF THE DARK ~

THE SONG OF FRODO

Upon The Hearth The Fire Is Red,
Beneath The Roof There Is A Bed;
But Not Yet Weary Are Our Feet,
Still Round The Corner We May Meet
A Sudden Tree Or Standing Stone
That None Have Seen But We Alone.

THE OPENING SCENE

Complete darkness on the screen. Slowly the rising sound of a horse's hoofs.

Clop-Clop ... Clop-Clop ... Clop-Clop

A misty road ... and a dark rider disappears into the fog. The sound of the hoofs fades away.

And the movie title crawls out over the screen ...

THE SHADOW OF THE DARK

1. EXT. BAG END, HOBBITON – DUSK

A clear sky with bright stars. Frodo, looking sad and gloomy, walks down to the gate at the bottom of the path from the Bag End. Suddenly, he hears voices coming from round the corner by the end of Bagshot Row, where old Gaffer the gardener lives.

GAFFAR – “Mr. Baggins has gone away. Went this morning, and my son Sam went with him. Anyway, all his stuff went, sold out and gone.”

A SHRILL & HISSING VOICE – “Why?”

GAFFAR – “Why? Why’s none of my business, or yours.”

THE VOICE – “Where did he go?”

GAFFAR – “That is no secret! He’s moved to Bucklebury or some such place, away down yonder. And yes, it is a tidy way from here.”

THE VOICE – “Can you send him a message?”

GAFFAR – “No, I can’t. Good night to you!”

The sound of heavy footsteps disappears down the hill. And Frodo, with a frown, turns around and walks back towards the Bag End.

2. INT. COMMON ROOM, THE PRANCING PONY, VILLAGE OF BREE – NIGHT

The local hobbits staring in amazement after Frodo’s sudden disappearance and then together shout for the inn-keeper Barliman. All the company draws suspiciously away from Sam, Pippin and Merry.

One swarthy Breelander looks at them with a knowing and half-mocking expression and slips out of the door. His squint-eyed companion follows him.

Frodo takes off the ring, which must have slipped into his finger when he fell. He reappears beside Strider, still sitting unmoved and expressionless in a corner.

STRIDER – “Well, why did you do that? Worse than anything your friends could have said! You have put your foot in it now. Or rather, I say, your finger?”

FRODO – “I don’t know what you mean.”

STRIDER – “Oh yes, you do. But we better wait until the uproar dies down. Then, if you please, Mr. Baggins, I would like a quiet word with you.”

FRODO – “What about?”

STRIDER – “A matter of some importance – to us both. You may hear something to your advantage.”

FRODO – “Very well. I will talk to you later.”

3. EXT. THE SHIRE – AFTERNOON

The four hobbits walk on a path, which is going downhill to the Woody End.

SAM – “I can hear a horse coming along the road behind us.”

FRODO – “It may not matter much, but I would rather not be seen on the road. Let’s get out of sight!”

They run quickly to the left and down a little hollow not far from the road. They lay flat and wait. The sound of hoofs draws nearer.

Frodo lifts his head slightly and peers cautiously above one of the great roots.

Round the corner comes a black horse, and on it sits a large crouching man, wrapped in a black cloak and hood. His face in the shadow and not visible. The horse stops as it reaches the tree and the Dark Rider listens attentively. He then sniffs, as if to catch an elusive scent.

After a moment, he shakes the reins and the horse slowly dwindles into the distance.

Frodo sighs in relief.

4. INT. THE PRANCING PONY INN – NIGHT

The four hobbits make their way back to their parlour. Inside, they see Strider calmly sitting in a chair.

PIPPIN – “Hallo! Who are you and what do you want?”

STRIDER – “I am Strider. Your friend promised to have a quiet talk with me.”

FRODO – “What do you have to say?”

STRIDER – “Several things. But, of course, I have my price.”

FRODO – “What do you mean?”

STRIDER – “Don’t be alarmed! I mean that I will give you some good advice – but I shall want a reward.”

FRODO – “And what will that be?”

STRIDER (smiling) – “No more than you can afford. Just this – you must take me along with you, until I wish to leave you.”

FRODO – “Oh, indeed! But even if I wanted another

companion, I should not agree, until I knew a good deal more about you.”

There is a knock on the door and Mr. Butterbur enters with a candle.

BUTTERBURY – “I ‘ve come to bid you good night. I also remembered that Gandalf has left a letter with me for a certain Mr. Underhill. And I was given a description that fits you well enough, I suppose.”

FRODO – “What description?”

BUTTERBURY – “A stout little fellow with red cheeks.”

FRODO – “Gandalf said this?”

Butterbury nods and hands over the letter and leaves. Frodo reads it in silence.

STRIDER – “Well?”

FRODO – “Gandalf says that he is going away for some important business and a tall, dark man called Strider will meet us here. He will take us to Rivendell. I guess he was referring to you?”

STRIDER – “I am called the Strider. My name is Aragorn and I will help you.”

5. EXT. A LANE TO THE FERRY, THE SHIRE – NIGHTFALL

The four hobbits reach the entrance of the ferry. At the other end, are two tall white posts and a large ferry-boat moored at the river-bank.

Suddenly they hear the rising sound of hoofs coming towards

them ...

Clip-Clop Clip-Clop Clip-Clop

The hobbits frantically run towards the ferry boat. The approaching horse starts galloping.

The hobbits scramble on the boat and Merry pushes it into the dark waters with a long pole.

On the river-bank a dark rider emerges from the fog and watches them intently.

6. INT. THE PRANCING PONY INN, VILLAGE OF BREE – NIGHT

Strider faces the four hobbits inside the parlour.

STRIDER – “Well, we have a rough road to Rivendell ahead of us. We will begin tomorrow.”

SAM – “Then we should go to bed now and take some rest.”

STRIDER – “Yes, but not in your room. We will sleep under the tables in the common room.”

FRODO – “Why?”

STRIDER – “There are dark men ... coming after us.”

That night Frodo has a disturbing dream of black figures fleeing from the inn and galloping into darkness.

7. INT. THE PRANCING PONY INN, VILLAGE OF BREE – EARLY MORNING

Strider wakes up the hobbits as sunlight peeps in through the edges of the window shutters.

He leads them to their allocated bedroom. The windows have been forced open and the room has been savagely ransacked. The curtains are flapping in the cold morning breeze; the beds are recklessly tossed about and the bolsters clashed and flung upon the floor. The brown mat is torn to pieces.

FRODO (alarmed) – “They came for us last night.”

STRIDER – “As expected. Let us leave Bree immediately.”

~ END OF PART II ~

~ PART III – A LONG STRIDE ~

THE ELVISH SONG

He sought her ever, wandering far
Where leaves of years were thickly strewn
By light of moon and ray of star
In frosty heavens shivering.

Her mantle glinted in the moon,
As on a hill-top high and far
She danced, and at her feet was strewn
A mist of silver quivering.

THE OPENING SCENE

A long shot over a vast expanse of dry and barren marshland ...
As the camera zooms in to a close shot ... We see Strider making
his way briskly towards the distant hills ... And the four hobbits
huffing and puffing behind him ... Trying their best to keep up
with him.

Strider, instead of panting like the hobbits, is humming softly ...

“When winter passed, she came again,
And her song released the sudden spring,
Like rising lark, and falling rain,
And melting water bubbling.

He saw the elven-flowers spring
About her feet, and healed again
He longed by her to dance and sing
Upon the grass untroubling.”

And the movie title flashes over the screen ...

A LONG STRIDE

1. EXT. WEATHERTOP, WESTERN HILLS – NIGHT

The four hobbits and Strider sitting around a fire and having a meal.

MERRY (eating heartily) – “How far is Rivendell?”

STRIDER – “With fair weather and no ill-fortune, twelve days from here to the Ford of Bruinen. The road crosses the Loudwater there, which runs out of Rivendell. We have at least a fortnight’s journey ahead of us.”

FRODO – “A fortnight! A lot may happen in that time.”

STRIDER – “It may.”

Suddenly five black shadows were seen standing on the edge of the slope. They hear the faint hiss of venomous breaths. The shapes begin to advance.

Merry and Pippin throw themselves flat on the ground. Sam shrinks to Frodo’s side. And Frodo feels a sudden temptation to wear the ring. He shuts his eyes and struggles for a while.

Meanwhile, Strider is simultaneously engaged in a swordfight with four dark figures. But the fifth one has got dangerously close to Frodo.

Frodo can't resist anymore and slips the Ring on to his forefinger. The black figure stoops down at him, holding a long sword in one hand and a knife in the other - both glowing with a pale light. Frodo desperately tries to draw his own sword.

Next moment, a shrill cry rings out in the night and Frodo feels a sharp pain like a dart of poisoned ice is piercing his left shoulder.

As he swoons, he catches a glimpse of Strider leaping out of the darkness, with flaming brands of wood in both hands. With a last effort, Frodo drops his sword, slips the Ring from his finger and closes his right hand tight upon it.

2. EXT. WEATHERTOP, WESTERN HILLS – ALMOST DAWN

Frodo comes around. He finds himself lying by the fire, still clutching the Ring desperately. Strider is bathing Frodo's shoulder with Athela leaves soaked in boiling water. They are surrounded by grim looking Sam, Pippin and Merry.

FRODO – “What happened? Where are the Dark Riders?”

STRIDER – “Gone.”

PIPPIN – “They retreated back into the darkness, when Strider attacked them with fire.”

STRIDER – “You have a deadly wound, Frodo. This can subdue you to their dark will. Try to resist it as much as possible. We will restart our journey to Rivendell immediately. The elves will be able to treat your injury.”

The party packs up and begins to cautiously make its way round the southern slopes of the hill. There is no sign of the Dark Riders.

3. EXT. ROAD TO RIVENDELL – EARLY EVENING

Strider and the four hobbits walking on the road, as fast as they can. A shoulder of the hills cuts off the fast-westerling sun. A cold wind flows down from the mountains ahead.

SAM (whispering to Strider) – “What is the matter with my master? He keeps shivering from time to time.”

STRIDER – “His wound is small and already closed. There is nothing to be seen but a cold white mark.”

SAM – “But something seems to be very wrong.”

STRIDER – “Frodo has been touched by the weapons of the Dark Lord. There may be some poison or evil at work that is beyond my skill to drive out.”

Sam sighs heavily. Suddenly they hear the noise of hoofs behind them. They scramble off the beaten way and up into the deep heather and bilberry brushwood on the slopes above. The sound of hoofs draws near.

Clippety-clippety-clip Clippety-clippety-clip Clippety-clippety-clip

FRODO – “That does not sound like a Black Rider’s horse!”

Strider looks usually happy. A white horse comes into view, gleaming in the shadows of dusk and running swiftly. Strider springs out from his hiding and calls out to the rider in Elvish.

The Elf dismounts on seeing Strider and greets him. Strider waves at the hobbits to join them.

STRIDER – “This is Glorfindel who dwells in Rivendell.”

GLORFINDEL – “Hail all, and well met at last! I was sent from Rivendell to look for you. We feared that you were in danger upon the road.”

FRODO – “Has Gandalf reached Rivendell?”

GLORFINDEL – “Not when I departed.”

Frodo feels a great weariness come upon him and a shadow rising between him and the faces of his friends. His eyes darken and he clutches at Sam’s hand. Glorfindel catches Frodo as he sinks to the ground.

SAM – “My master is sick and wounded.”

Strider hands Glorfindel the knife that pierced Frodo. Glorfindel looks at it intently.

GLORFINDEL – “There are evil things written on the hilt in Elvish. Keep it Aragorn, but handle it with care. The wounds of this weapon are beyond me to heal. Let us rush to Rivendell.”

4. EXT. ROAD TO RIVENDELL – AFTERNOON

At the bottom of the incline, the traveling party can see the Ford of Rivendell. Behind the river stand tall mountains fading into the sky. Frodo rides on Glorfindel’s horse and looks very ill.

Suddenly there is a noise of galloping horses behind them. Out of the trees, three Black Riders emerge into the scene.

GLORFINDEL – “Ride forward, Frodo!”

Frodo looks back reluctantly. He realizes that the Black Riders are commanding him to wait and he can't fight against their wish.

Glorfindel calls out in Elvish and his elf-horse springs like the wind along the last lap of the Road. The three black horses leap down the hill in pursuit. And two more Black Riders come out from the woods ahead and ride towards Frodo.

He looks back for a moment over his shoulder. Frodo can no longer see his friends. The Riders behind him are falling back, even their great steeds are no match in speed for the white elf-horse.

But there is no chance of reaching the Ford before he is cut off by the other two Black Riders approaching him. They have cast aside their hoods and black cloaks and are now wearing white and grey robes. Swords are naked in their pale hands, dark helmets on their heads. Their cold eyes glittering as they call him with fell voices.

Frodo shuts his eyes in fear and clings to the elf-horse's mane.

5. EXT. FORD OF RIVENDELL – CONTINUOUS

A breath of deadly cold pierces Frodo like a flashing spear of white fire. The elf-horse is speeding as if on wings and rushes past the face of the foremost Black Rider.

Frodo hears a splash and water foams about his feet. He feels a quick heave and surge as the elf-horse leaves the river and climbs up the steep bank on the stony path.

But the two Black Riders are close behind.

Suddenly the foremost Rider spurs his horse forward. It checks at the water and rears up.

Frodo takes out his sword.

FRODO – “Go back! Go back to the land of Mordor and follow me no more!”

The second Rider is now half across the Ford. And the foremost Rider is almost setting foot upon the shore.

At this moment, Frodo hears the loud noise of roaring and rushing waters rolling many stones. The river rises and along its course comes a plumed cavalry of waves. The Riders in the midst of the Ford are overwhelmed and they disappear under the angry foam of white water. The black horses are filled with madness, and leap forward in terror. And the Riders are bored into the rushing flood.

Frodo falls unconscious, as the elf-horse keeps speeding forward.

6. INT. ELROND PALACE, RIVENDELL – DAY

Frodo wakes up and finds himself lying in bed. He looks at the majestic high ceiling.

FRODO (to himself) – “Where Am I?”

STRIDER – “Rivendell.”

Frodo sees Strider and an elf lady standing beside him.

FRODO – “Strider!”

STRIDER – “Yes, Frodo. Meet Arwen.”

Frodo smiles at Arwen, fiddling with the Ring hanging on his neck.

FRODO – “The One Ring To Rule Them All.”

~ THE END OF THE RING TRILOGY ~

5. HAMNET

~ Dedicated To Maggie O'Farrell

HAMNET FROM THE PAST

A SCREENPLAY
DEDICATED TO
MAGGIE

1. INT. AN APARTMENT IN HENLEY STREET, STRATFORD

– DAY, 1596

A boy jumps down the last three flights of a staircase. He stumbles as he lands and falls to his knees on the flagstone floor. He gets up, rubs his legs and approaches the front door. Next to the two-roomed apartment is a bigger house.

Hamnet wanders through his grandfather's empty workshop.

HAMNET – "Hello? Anyone here?"

No one answers. Hamnet darts out along the passageway and into the yard. He bangs open the doors to the cookhouse, the brewhouse and the washhouse. All empty.

Hamnet goes back through the door to the main house and along the passage. He walks into the parlor and sees his grandfather standing in a crouched position beside a low table with an almost empty pitcher and a mug of ale, fumbling with some papers.

Hamnet gives a polite cough. Grandfather wheels around with a wild and furious look.

GRANDFATHER (in a drunk voice) – "Who's there?"

HAMNET – "It's me."

GRANDFATHER – "Who?"

HAMNET – "Me, Hamnet."

Hamnet steps towards the narrow shaft of light slanting in through the window. His grandfather sees him and sits down with a thud.

GRANDFATHER – “You scared the wits out of me, boy! What do you mean, creeping about like that?”

HAMNET – “I’m sorry. I was calling and calling ... but no one answered. Judith is –“

GRANDFATHER (cutting him off) – “They’ve gone out. What do you want with all those women anyway?”

HAMNET – “Do you know where they have gone?”

GRANDFATHER – “Eh? ... Don’t stand there gawping, Take this.”

Hamnet apprehensively inches forward and tries to take the sheet of paper his grandfather was holding out. Suddenly the old man makes a lunge, seizes the boy by the wrist, hauls him forward and strikes him with the rim of his mug below the eyebrow.

GRANDFATHER (calmly) – “That’ll teach you to creep up on people.”

Tears burst forth from Hamnet’s eyes.

GRANDFATHER (with disgust) – “Crying are you? Like a little maid? You are as bad as your father – always crying and whining and complaining ... No backbone ... no sense. That was always his problem. Couldn’t stick at anything!”

Hamnet runs back outside, along the street, wiping at his face, dabbing the blood with his sleeve.

2. INT. AN APARTMENT IN HENLEY STREET, STRATFORD – CONTINUOUS

Hamnet lets himself through the front door of the apartment and sprints up the stairs to the upper room. A small figure lies on the pallet next to the bed, dressed in a brown smock, a white bonnet with untied strings, on top of the sheets. Her shoes lie inverted beside her, having been kicked off.

HAMNET – “Judith, are you feeling any better?”

The girl’s eyelids lift and she stares at her twin-brother from a great distance. She shuts her eyes again.

JUDITH (murmuring) – “I’m sleeping.”

HAMNET (anxiously) – “How are you? Any better?”

Judith stirs. Her chin lifts and then dips. There is a swelling at the base of her throat and yet another where her shoulder meets her neck – like a pair of quail’s eggs under her skin – pale, ovoid, nestled there as if waiting to hatch.

Her lips part, her tongue moving inside her mouth, as she tries to say something.

HAMNET (bending nearer) – “What did you say?”

JUDITH (whispering) – “Your face ... what happened to your face?”

Hamnet puts a hand to his brow and feels a swelling there and the wet of new blood.

HAMNET – “Nothing. It is nothing. Listen, I’m going to find the physician. I won’t be long ... you hold on!”

JUDITH – “And Mamma?”

HAMNET – “She ... she is coming. She is not far away.”

3. EXT. A WIDE PATCH OF GARDEN OUTSIDE AN OLD HOUSE, HEWLANDS – DAY

Agnes moves up and down the rows of plants, pulling up weeds, laying her hand to the coils of the bee hives, pruning stems here and there.

Something has upset the bees.

In a close shot we see her lips are moving, murmuring small sounds and clicks to the bees circling head.

Suddenly, there is a sensation of change, an agitation of air, as if a bird has silently passed overhead. Agnes looks up at a white scree of cloud overhead and frowns.

She watches the thatched eaves of Hewlands to her right and the restless branches of the forest to her left. In the distance, her brother is driving sheep along the bridle path, a switch in his hand, the dog darting towards and away from the flock.

A bee lands on her cheek and she fans it away.

4. EXT. PHYSICIAN'S HOUSE, STRATFORD – DAY

A running Hamnet arrives at the house of the local physician and bangs restlessly on the door. The door swings open and a vexed face of a woman appears around it.

WOMAN – “Whatever are you doing? That’s a racket loud enough to wake the dead. Be off with you.”

She tries to shut the door, but Hamnet leaps forward.

HAMNET – “No! Please, I’m sorry, madam. I need the physician. My sister – she is unwell. Can he come to us? Can he come now?”

The woman holds the door firm but looks at Hamnet with care and attention, trying to read the seriousness of the problem.

WOMAN – “He’s not here, but with a patient.”

HAMNET – “When will he be back, if you please?”

WOMAN (tenderly now) – “I couldn’t say. What ails your sister?”

HAMNET – “I don’t know. She has fever and taken to her bed.”

WOMAN (frowning) – “A fever? Has she buboes?”

HAMNET – “Buboes?”

WOMAN – “Lumps. Under the skin. On her neck, under her arms.”

Hamnet turns white. The woman's frown deepens; she places her hand in the center of Hamnet's chest and propels him back out of her house.

WOMAN – "Go, go home. Now. Leave."

She goes to close the door and then speaks through the narrowest crack ...

WOMAN – "I will ask the physician to call. I know who you are. You're the glover's boy, aren't you? The grandson. From Henley Street. I will ask him to come by your house, when he returns. Go now. And don't stop on the way back ... God speed to you."

Hamnet starts running back to his sister's side.

5. INT. – THE HOUSE AT HENLEY STREET, STRATFORD – NIGHT, 1581

Hamnet's grandfather (younger now) looks angrily at his eldest son – William, Hamnet's father.

GRANDFATHER – "You are to go to the late yeoman's place at Hewlands, twice a week from tomorrow, and drum some education into those boys there."

WILLIAM (staring hard from the doorway) – "When was this arranged?"

GRANDFATHER – “That does not concern you. All you need to know is that you are going.”

WILLIAM – “What if I don’t care to?”

GRANDFATHER (after a pause) – “I owe them a debt that I cannot pay it otherwise.”

WILLIAM – “Does this arrangement have something to do with the yeoman’s last consignment of sheepskins ... that came with the wool left on?”

GRANDFATHER (sharply) – “That is none of your business!”

6. INT. THE YEOMAN’S HOUSE, HEWLANDS – NEXT MORNING

William stands at the window, looking at the edge of the forest. The boys of the house are behind him, conjugating verbs. They are unheard by their tutor, who is intent on the startling contrast between the sharply blue sky and the new-leaf green of the forest.

William is just about to turn and face his pupils, when he sees a female figure emerge from the trees, with a hawk sitting on her outstretched fist. He moves closer to the window glass and watches the girl. Soon she enters the farmyard and disappears around the house.

William turns and smiles at the boys.

WILLIAM – “Excellent work! Now, I would like you to work on a translation of the following sentence – ‘I thank you, sir, for your kind letter.’”

The two brothers begin to labor over their slates. William waits until they are half finished with the exercise and then speaks again.

WILLIAM – “What is the name of the serving girl? The one with the bird?”

ELDER BROTHER (glancing at the younger) – “Bird? She doesn’t have a bird. Does she?”

WILLIAM – “No? ... Perhaps I am mistaken.”

YOUNGER BROTHER (in a rush) – “There’s Hettie, who looks after the pigs and hens. Hens are birds, aren’t they?”

WILLIAM (nodding) – “Indeed they are.”

7. EXT. YEOMAN’S HOUSE, HEWLANDS – AFTERNOON

Lessons now finished, William steps around the house hoping to see the girl. He steps through the farmyard, avoiding puddles and clods of dung, while a chicken scratches diligently in the earth, groaning quietly to itself.

Suddenly the girl emerges from a roughly built outhouse, closing the door behind her.

William coughs into his fists. The girl turns, raises her eyebrows and looks all the way down to his boots and back again.

WILLIAM – “Good day to you.”

THE GIRL – “Sir, what brings you to Hewlands?”

WILLIAM – “I am tutoring the boys here, in Latin.”

THE GIRL – “Ah, the Latin tutor. Of course.”

WILLIAM – “May I see your ... your bird?”

THE GIRL (frowning) – “My bird?”

WILLIAM – “I saw you earlier, emerging from the forest with a bird on your arm. A hawk. A most intriguing –“

THE GIRL (gesturing toward the house with concern) – “You won’t tell them, will you? I was forbidden to take her out today, you see. But she was so restless. So hungry, I couldn’t bear to shut her up all afternoon. You won’t say, will you, that you saw me? That I was out?”

WILLIAM – “I shall never speak of it. Do not concern yourself.”

William puts his hand on her arm. She puts her hand to his and presses it. The grip is firm, insistent, and oddly intimate. Then she drops his hand and moves her arm away from him.

THE GIRL – “You wanted to see my bird ...”

The girl unlocks the door and pushes it open. They both step inside.

8. INT. THE outhouse, HEWLANDS – CONTINUOUS

A small, dim, narrow space with a desiccated aroma of wood, lime and apples. William can smell a faint scent of rosemary emanating from the girl beside him.

THE GIRL (whispering) – “There she is ... Can you see her?”

WILLIAM (distracted) – “Who? ... What?”

THE GIRL – “My falcon.”

William sees the bird of prey at the far end of the outhouse, perched on a tall wooden stake.

WILLIAM – “Good God!”

THE GIRL (smiling) – “She’s a kestrel. A friend of my father’s, a priest, gave her to me as a chick. I take her to fly most days. I won’t take her hood off now, but she knows you’re here. She’ll remember you.”

THE GIRL (after a pause) – “She caught two mice today. And a vole. She flies entirely in silence. They cannot hear her come.”

William attempts to draw her near to him.

WILLIAM – “What’s your name?”

THE GIRL (pulling herself away) – “I shan’t tell you.”

WILLIAM (gripping her more tightly) – “You shall.”

THE GIRL – “Let me go.”

WILLIAM – “Tell me first.”

THE GIRL – “And then will you let me go?”

WILLIAM – “Yes.”

THE GIRL – “How do I know you’ll keep your promise, Master Tutor?”

WILLIAM – “I always keep my promises. I am a man of my word.”

THE GIRL – “As well as a man of your hands. Let me go first, I will tell you.”

WILLIAM – “Your name, first ... I must know”

THE GIRL – “Anne.”

WILLIAM (seemingly lost) – “Anne?”

The falconer girl takes advantage of his momentary confusion to push him away. William topples into the apple shelves. He bites into one.

WILLIAM – “Anne.”

THE GIRL (smiles) – “That is not my name.”

WILLIAM (lowering the apple) – “You told me it was.”

THE GIRL – “You weren’t listening, then.”

WILLIAM (flinging away the apple) – “Tell me now.”

THE GIRL – “I won’t.”

WILLIAM – “You’ll tell me when we kiss.”

THE GIRL – “Presumptuous. What if we never kiss?”

WILLIAM – “But we shall.”

THE GIRL – “Hmmm ... It’s Agnes.”

9. INT. THE APARTMENT IN HENLEY STREET, STRATFORD – PRESENT DAY

Hamnet climbs the stairs, breathing hard after his run through the town. His strength seems to be drained, as he slowly puts one leg in

front of the other, lifting each foot to each stair. He uses the handrail to haul himself along.

Hamnet enters the top room. His sister lies alone, on the bed. He sees her eyes are now paler and weaker. The skin around her eyes is bluish-grey, as if bruised. Her breaths are shallow and quick. Her eyes, beneath their lids, flick back and forth, as if she is seeing something he cannot.

Hamnet sits down on the side of the pallet. He hears the suck and the draw of her breath. He hooks his smallest finger into the corresponding one of hers.

A single tear leaks from his eye and drops on to the sheet, then into the rushes beneath.

Another tear falls.

Hamnet shuts his eyes, to keep the tears in, and lets his head fall to his knees.

10. INT. THE APARTMENT IN HENLEY STREET, STRATFORD – CONTINUOUS

Susanna (Hamnet's 14-year-old elder sister) enters through the back door.

She dumps her basket on the chair and slumps down at the table. She looks around. The fire is out and no one is here.

Susanna removes her cap and tosses it to the bench beside her. It slides off and on to the floor. She finds it with her toe and kicks it further away, sighing.

She curves her fingers around the carved worn-out ends of the chair arms and looks at them.

**11. INT. THE APARTMENT IN HENLEY STREET,
STRATFORD – NIGHT (FEW MONTHS BACK)**

An older looking William touches the tips of his fingers to Susanna's cheek. His packed bags beside him.

WILLIAM – "I will come whenever I can. You know that, don't you?"

Susanna nods.

WILLIAM – "Where's mother?"

SUSANNA – "Not in the house. She hates to see you leave."

WILLIAM – "I will write to you."

**12. INT. THE APARTMENT IN HENLEY STREET,
STRATFORD – PRESENT DAY**

The latch of the back door clatters open and the grandmother, Mary, enters the room. She is puffing, red in the face, dark half-circles of sweat under her arms.

MARY – “What are you doing, sitting there like that?”

Susanna shrugs.

MARY (looking around) – “Where are the twins?”

Susanna raises one shoulder and lets it drop.

MARY – “Haven’t you seen them?”

SUSANNA – “No.”

MARY (muttering to herself) – “I told them to chop the kindling and to light the fire in the cookhouse. And have they done it? No, they have not. They are both in for a hiding when they come in. Where’s your mother?”

SUSANNA – “Don’t know.”

MARY (sighing) – “Must be traipsing about the countryside, wading into ponds, gathering weeds, climbing over fences and tearing her clothes!”

Susanna looks away.

MARY – “Well, come on, then, stir yourself. The supper won’t cook itself. Come and help us girl, instead of sitting there like a brood hen.”

Mary takes Susanna’s arm and hauls her to her feet. They go out the back door, which slams shut behind them.

Upstairs, Hamnet wakes with a start.

**13. INT. THE HOUSE IN HENLEY STREET, STRATFORD –
DAY, 1581**

William’s 13-years-old younger sister, Eliza, wanders about the house calling his name.

ELIZA – “William ... where are you?”

WILLIAM (from the attic) – “Up here.”

Eliza stands at the foot of the ladder to the attic.

ELIZA – “William!”

WILLIAM – “What do you want?”

ELIZA – “May I ... come up?”

A silence.

ELIZA – “Are you sick?”

WILLIAM – “No.”

ELIZA – “Mother says, can you go to the tannery and then to the –“

A strangled, inarticulate cry comes from the attic, followed by the sound of something weighty being thrown against the wall, a movement and then a thud of someone standing up and hitting his head on the roof.

WILLIAM – “Ow!” [Plus, a volley of curses]

ELIZA – “I’m coming up.”

Eliza climbs up the ladder and rises herself to the attic. The dusty space is lighted by two candles propped on a bale. William is sitting collapsed on the floor, his head cradled in his hands.

ELIZA – “Let me see.”

Eliza puts her hands on his, and peels back his fingers. With her other hand, she lifts the candle and examines the place of pain. There is a swelling, reddened and bruised, under his hairline.

ELIZA – “Hmmm. You’ve had worse.”

WILLIAM (with a half-smile) – “That is true.”

**15. INT. THE ATTIC, IN HENLEY STREET, STRATFORD –
CONTINUOUS**

Eliza looks around the attic. Bales and bales of wool are crammed into the space between floor and roof. She observes old candle stubs, a folding knife and a bottle of ink on the floor; along with several curls of paper scattered around.

The papers have words scrawled on them, crossed out, rewritten, crossed out again, then crumpled and tossed aside. William's thumbs, fingers, and the rims of his nails are all stained black.

ELIZA – “What is the matter? What is ailing you?”

WILLIAM – “Nothing ... not a thing.”

ELIZA – “Then what are you doing here?”

WILLIAM – “Nothing.”

ELIZA – “Is ‘nothing’ the only thing you’re willing to say?”

They sit for a moment, eyeing each other.

ELIZA – “People are saying ... that you’ve been seen with the girl from Hewlands.”

ELIZA (continuing after a pause) – “I’ve heard ... that you take walks together. After the lessons. Is that true?”

WILLIAM (looking away) – “What of it?”

ELIZA – “Into the woods?”

William shrugs.

ELIZA – “Does her mother know?”

WILLIAM (quickly) – “Yes ... I don’t know.”

ELIZA – “But what if ... what if you are caught? While taking one of these walks?”

WILLIAM – “Then we are caught.”

ELIZA – “Does that thought not bother you?”

WILLIAM – Why would it?”

ELIZA – “Her brother ... the sheep farmer. Have you not seen him? He is a giant of a man. What if he were to –“

WILLIAM (waving his hand) – “You worry too much. He is always off with his sheep. I have never encountered him at Hewlands, in all times I have been there.”

16. INT. THE ATTIC, IN HENLEY STREET, STRATFORD – CONTINUOUS

ELIZA – “I don’t know if you know – what people say of her ...”

WILLIAM (sharply) – “I know what is said of her.”

ELIZA – “There are many who claim she is a witch ... “

WILLIAM – “None of it is true. None of it. I’m surprised that you would attend to such idle gabble.”

ELIZA – “I’m sorry. I’m merely –“

WILLIAM (stubbornly) – “It is all falsehoods, spread by her stepmother. She is so jealous of her money that it twists her like a snake and –“

ELIZA – “I’m merely frightened for you.”

WILLIAM (taken aback) – “For me? Why?”

ELIZA – “Because our father will never agree to this, you must know that. We are in debt to that family. Father will never even speak their name.”

There is a long silence.

ELIZA (leaning forward) – “Does she really have a hawk?”

WILLIAM – She does. It’s a kestrel. She trained it herself. She has a gauntlet and the bird takes off, like an arrow, up through the trees. You have never seen anything like it. When she calls, it returns to her, circling in these great wheels in the sky, and it lands with such force upon her glove, such determination.”

ELIZA – “I would love to see that.”

WILLIAM – “Maybe I’ll take you with me one day.”

ELIZA – “Do you think she will let me fly the hawk?”

WILLIAM – “I see no reason why not. You will like her, I think.”

ELIZA – “What manner of person is she?”

WILLIAM – “She is like no one you have ever met. She cares not what other people may think of her. She follows entirely her own course. She can look at a person and see right into their soul.”

ELIZA – “She sounds ... peerless. And it also sounds as though you are decided ... that you are fixed on her.”

17. EXT. THE HOUSE, HEWLANDS – DUSK

William and Agnes walk together, holding hands, up to the furthest field, as dusk settles on the land, dimming the trees to black.

They approach Joan, Agnes' stepmother, standing between the springy flanks of their flocks. Joan turns around and takes a long look at them.

JOAN (thundering at William) – “You? What age are you?”

JOAN (without waiting for a reply) – “Not old enough. I know your family – everyone knows them. Your father and his shady dealings, his disgrace. He was once a bailiff, who loved to lord it over us all, with his red robes. But not anymore.

“Have you any idea how much your father owes around the town? How much he owes us? You could tutor my sons until they are all grown men and it wouldn't come close to clearing his debt.”

Joan now looks from William to Agnes.

JOAN – “So, no, you cannot marry her. Never.

“Agnes will marry a farmer, by and by – someone with prospects, someone to provide for her. She's been brought up for that life. Her father left her a dowry in his will – I'm sure you know that, don't you? She'll not marry a reckless, tradeless boy like you.”

AGNES – “But I don't want to marry a farmer.”

JOAN – “Is that so? You want to marry him?”

AGNES – “Yes, I do. Very much.”

JOAN (laughing and shaking her head) – “No. Never.”

WILLIAM – “But we are handfasted. I asked her and she answered and so we are bound.”

JOAN – “Not unless I say so.”

William leaves the field, marching down the path and off through the woods, his face dark and thunderous.

18. EXT. STRATFORD MARKETPLACE – AFTERNOON

William stands behind his father’s stall in the market, lounging against the counter. He is half-listening to a woman who is debating squirrel-lined versus rabbit-trimmed gloves. Eliza arrives hastily and gives him an odd, wide-eyed, teeth-gritted smile.

ELIZA – “You need to go home.”

WILLIAM – “Why do I need to go home?”

ELIZA – “Just go ... now!”

Then she turns to address the customer.

ELIZA – “Well, madam, I believe the rabbit trim to be the very warmest.”

William lopes across the market, weaving in and out of the stalls, dodging a cart laden with cabbages and a boy carrying a bundle of thatch. He seems to be in no hurry and quite reluctant to go home.

He stops to pass remarks with various neighbors on his way, pats a child on the head and finally arrives at the door of his house.

He takes time to wipe his boots against the matting and looks into his father's workshop. His father's chair is empty and pushed back. The thin shoulders of the apprentice are bent over the workbench.

WILLIAM – "Hello, Ned. How goes it?"

Ned gives a gesture with his head that is halfway between a nod and a shake, and points towards the parlor.

William smiles at him and approaches the parlor.

19. INT. PARLOR, IN HENLEY STRRET, STRATFORD – CONTINUOUS

Agnes sits on a low stool with a ragged bundle at her feet. Mary sits opposite to her, next to the fire. William's father is at the window, with his back to the room. The kestrel is perched on the topmost rung of a ladderback chair.

WILLIAM (gathering himself) – "Ah ... Now ..."

His eyes fall on Agnes' face and he stops short. Her left eye is swollen shut, reddened, bruised; the skin under the brow split and bleeding. He steps towards her and places a hand on her shoulder. There are vivid marks on her cheek, a cut on her lip, the tracks of fingernails, and raw patches on her wrist.

WILLIAM – “Good God. What happened? Who did this to you?”

MARY (clearing her throat) – “Her mother has banished her from the house.”

AGNES (shaking her head) – “Stepmother.”

WILLIAM – “Joan is Agnes’ stepmother, not –“

MARY (snapping) – “I know that. I used the word merely as a –“

AGNES – “And she didn’t banish me. It isn’t her house. It’s my brother Bartholomew’s. I chose to leave.”

MARY (trying to stay calm) – “Is it?”

WILLIAM – “Is it what?”

MARY – “Yours.”

WILLIAM – “Is what mine?”

MARY (pressing her lips together) – “Did you put it there?”

WILLIAM – “Did I put what where?”

MARY (slowly and loudly as if to someone simple-headed) – “The child ... in her belly. Did you put it there?”

WILLIAM (smiling broadly) – “I did.”

20. INT. PARLOR, IN HENLEY STRRET, STRATFORD – CONTINUOUS

Mary launches herself from her seat, towards William, peppering him with her fists.

MARY (shrieking) – “You are not of age!”

The first blow of her fist falls on William's chest.

WILLIAM – “We are handfasted. There is no sin in it.”

MARY – “You will need our consent to marry. And we will not give it
Never!”

Mary's second blow lands on his shoulders.

AGNES – “Enough. Stop!”

MARY – “She has bewitched you! To ruin us! I will go to the sea than
see you marry this wench!”

Multiple blows hand all over William's body as Mary loses all control
over herself.

MARY – “This is a catastrophe!”

William's father turns around and comes near William, with Mary
behind him. He places his hand on William's shoulder and presses
him down into a chair.

FATHER – “Sit. And you too, lass.”

Agnes comes and stands by William, smoothing the feathers on the
bewildered kestrel's neck with the back of her fingers. Mary looks at
her with an expression of disbelief and amazement.

FATHER – “I’m in no doubt that we can ... come to an arrangement.”

MARY – “But John, there is no possible way that we can agree to such –“

JOHN – “Hush, woman. The boy said they were handfasted. Did you not hear him? No son of mine will go back on his promises. The lad has got this girl with child. He has a responsibility –“

MARY – “He is eighteen years of age! He has no trade! How can you think –“

JOHN – “I told you to hush. Girl, my son made you a promise, did he? Before he took you to the woods?”

AGNES – “We made a promise to each other.”

JOHN – “And what does your mother – ah, your stepmother – say to the match?”

AGNES – “She ... was not in favor. Before. And now ... I cannot say.”

JOHN – “I see ... It is settled then. I will go out to Hewlands, to set out my terms ... our terms ... to seal this most sudden ... and, it must be said, blessed union between our families. The girl will remain here.”

21. INT. PARLOR, IN HENLEY STRRET, STRATFORD – CONTINUOUS

JOHN (beckoning his son) – “A word with you, in private, if you please.”

Out in the passage, John drops the pretense of geniality. He grips his son by the collar, his fingers cold against his skin and pushes his face right up to his.

JOHN – “Tell me, there are no more.”

WILLIAM – “No more what?”

JOHN – “Say it. There are no more. Are there?”

John’s fingers grip William’s collar with such force that they stop the air in his throat.

JOHN – “Will there be other Warwickshire doxies lolloping up to my door to tell me that you swelled their bellies with a child?

“Must I be dealing with others? Tell me the truth, now. Because, by God, if there are others and her family hear of it, there’ll be trouble. For you and for all of us. Understand?

“Because if you have ploughed and planted another one – just one – I’ll kill you. And if I don’t, her brother will. Do you hear me?”

John gives one final shove to William’s windpipe and moves off. William bends over, drawing in air, rubbing at his neck. As he draws himself upright, he sees Ned, the apprentice, looking at him.

The two stare at each other for a moment. Then Ned turns away, back to the bench.

**22. INT. THE APARTMENT, IN HENLEY STREET,
STRATFORD – PRESENT DAY, EVENING**

Hamnet wakes up confused, a noise has woken him up – a noise, a bang, a shout – he doesn't know what.

Judith's face is waxen and still, a sheen of sweat making it glimmer like glass. Her chest is rising and falling at uneven intervals.

Downstairs, Agnes enters through the front door, humming to herself. She places some items on the table – two bundles of rosemary, her leather bag, a jar of honey, a hunk of beeswax wrapped in a leaf, her straw hat and a tied posy of comfrey.

She walks through the room, straightening the chair by the hearth, moving Susanna's cap from the table to a hook behind the door. She opens the window to the street, unties her kirtle and shrugs it off. She opens the back door and enters the cookhouse.

Inside, Mary is stirring water in a pot and beside her, Susanna is seating on a stool and cleaning onions.

MARY – “There you are. You took your time.”

AGNES (with a noncommittal smile) – “The bees were swarming in the orchard. I had to coax them back.”

MARY – “Hmmm. And how are all at the Hewlands?”

AGNES – “Well, I believe. Bartholomew's leg is still troubling him, I'm afraid, although he won't admit it. I see him limping. He says it aches in damp weather and that is all, but I told him he needs –“

Agnes breaks off, a loaf of bread and a knife in her hand now.

AGNES – “Where are the twins?”

MARY – “No idea. But when I find them, they’re in for a hiding. None of my kindling chopped. The table not laid. The pair of them off, God knows where. It’ll be supper time soon and still no sign of either of them.”

AGNES – “I’ll just go and ...”

Agnes moves out through the cookhouse door, up the path into the big house. She checks the workshop, where John is leaning over the bench. She walks through the dining hall and parlor. She comes out of the front door, into Henley Street and goes in the front door of her own house for the second time that evening.

She sees Hamnet standing at the foot of the staircase, still in shock with a white face and his fingers gripping the stair rail. There are a swelling and a cut under his eyebrow. She moves towards him swiftly, covering the room in a few paces.

AGNES – “What is it? What happened to you face?”

Hamnet silently shakes his head and points towards the stairs. Agnes takes them, two at a time.

~ END OF ACT I ~

~ ACT TWO ~

23. INT. PARLOR, HOUSE IN HENLEY STREET – DAY, 1581

The entire family has gathered in the parlor. Agnes is working the treadle of Mary's spinning wheel, by the fire. Mary is trying hard to concentrate on her knitting.

JOHN – "I have obtained the special license for the marriage today."

AGNES – "Then we can get married tomorrow."

JOHN (looking at her) – "That may be difficult to arrange ... in such a short time."

AGNES – "William and I will walk to the church in Temple Grafton tomorrow morning. The priest has agreed to marry us as soon as we have the special license."

Mary lets her knitting needles fall as she stares in amazement. Eliza looks amused. William snorts and that makes John look angry.

WILLIAM – "Agnes knows the priest well. He is a friend of her family. It was him, in fact, who gave her the kestrel."

AGNES – "Yes, he is a good man. He once taught me how to cure lung rot in a falcon. I have known him since I was a child and he has always been kind to me. I once traded some jesses for a barrel of ale with him. He is an expert in matters of falconry and brewing and bee-keeping.

He will marry us."

24. INT. BEDROOM, THE HOUSE IN HENLEY STREET –
NIGHT, 1581

Agnes and Eliza sleeping in Eliza's room, Agnes on the pallet beside Eliza's bed.

ELIZA (tentatively) – “May I ... I wondered if you would like it if I ... made your flower crown? For tomorrow?”

The pallet rustles and judders as Agnes turns over to face her.

AGNES (smiling) – “A crown? I would like that very much indeed. Thank you.”

Eliza rolls over and the two of them stare into each other's faces.

ELIZA – “I don't know what flowers we will find, this time of year. Maybe some berries or –“

AGNES (cutting in) – “Juniper. Or holly. Some fern. Or pine.”

ELIZA – “There's ivy.”

AGNES – “Or hazel flowers. We could go down the river, you and I, at dawn and we will see what we can find.”

ELIZA – “I saw some monkshood there last week. Maybe –“

AGNES – “Poisonous.”

Agnes turns on her back, reaches for Eliza's hand and places it square on her belly.

AGNES – “Do you want to feel the baby? She moves about in early morning.”

ELIZA – “She?”

AGNES – “I think it will be a girl.”

Eliza feels the baby.

AGNES – “Your sister ... she was younger than you?”

ELIZA (taken aback) – “Yes, almost by two years. I was just thinking of her.”

AGNES – “How old was she when she died?”

ELIZA – “Eight.”

AGNES (clicking her tongue) – I am sorry, for the loss.”

Agnes pats Eliza's hand.

AGNES – “She is not lonely. She has her other sisters with her, the two who died before you were born. They all look after each other. She doesn't want you to worry. She wants you ...”

Agnes pauses and looks at the shivering Eliza.

AGNES (in a careful voice) – “I mean ... I expect she wouldn't want you to worry. She would want you to rest easy.”

Both hear the clop-clop of a horse's hoofs passing by the window.

ELIZA – “How do you know about the other two girls who died?”

AGNES – “Your brother told me.”

ELIZA – “One of them was called Eliza. The first child. Did you know that?”

Agnes nods and then shrugs.

ALIZA – “Gilbert says sometimes that ... she might come, in the middle of the night, to stand by my bed, wanting her name back from me. That she'll be angry that I took it.”

AGNES (crisply) – “Nonsense. Don't listen to him. Your sister is happy for you to have her name, for you to carry it on. Remember that. If I hear Gilbert saying that to you, again, I'll put nettles in his breeches.”

ELIZA (laughing) – “You will not.”

AGNES – “I certainly will. And that will teach him not to go about frightening people.”

25. INT. UPPER BEDROOM, THE APARTMENT IN HENLEY STREET – PRESENT DAY, NIGHT

Agnes crouching over Judith, her hand on the forehead of the child.

AGNES – “Judith?”

Agnes turns to Hamnet, who is standing beside her.

AGNES – “How long has she been like this?”

HAMNET – “Since I returned from school. We were playing with the kittens and Jude said ... that Grandmamma had asked us to chop the wood and we were about to start, on the wood, but we were having a game with the kittens and a bit of ribbon. The wood was there and I –
“

AGNES (with control) – “Never mind the wood. It matters not. Tell me about Judith.”

HAMNET – “She said her throat was hurting her but we played a bit longer and then I said I would chop the wood and she said she was feeling so tired, so she came up here and lay down on bed. So I did some of the wood – not all of it – and then I came up to see her and she wasn’t at all well. And then I looked for you and Grandmamma and everybody but there was no one here. I went all over, looking for you and calling for you. And I ran for the physician but he wasn’t there either and I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t know how to ... I didn’t know ...”

Agnes reaches for her son and tucks his head to her shoulder.

AGNES – “There now, you did well. Very well. None of this is your –
“

Hamnet wrenches away from her.

HAMNET (yelling) – “Where were you? I looked everywhere!”

AGNES (steadily) – “I was out at Hewlands. Bartholemew sent for me because the bees were swarming. I was longer than I’d planned. I’m sorry ... I’m sorry I wasn’t here.”

HAMNET – “She’s got ... it. Hasn’t she?”

Agnes looks at him.

HAMNET – “She’s got ... the pestilence. Hasn’t she? Mamma? Hasn’t she? That’s what you think, isn’t it?”

~ THE END ~

BOOK II - FLASH MEMORIES

~ THE MEMORIES ~

Most of my life, I believe I have been disturbed with a lot of turbulence in my mind.

Not surprisingly, my most cherished memories are those few moments ... where I felt at peace.

Some people may not be destined to stay with you ... but they can gift you moments of peace ... that can never be forgotten.

The noise around those moments ... never mattered much ... but the moments did.

1. PANDORA'S BOX

~ *Emma, Me & Elle*

I Happened To Visit Andromeda ... And Met Emma There.

ME - "How Are You Doing?"

EMMA (With A Wicked Smile) - "I Am Half-Amused"

ME - "And The Better Half?"

EMMA - "I See You."

Disappointed I Came Back To Earth ... And Met The Beautiful And Charming Elle.

ELLE - "How Are You Doing?"

ME (Poker-Faced) - "I Am Smiling."

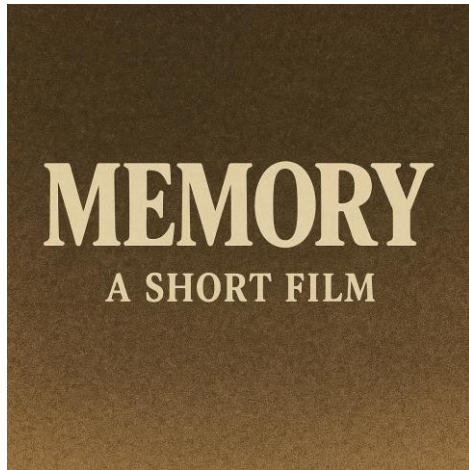
ELLE - "No, You Are Not."

ME (Poker-Faced) - "Yes, I Am."

ELLE (With A Sigh) - "May I Ask, Why?"

ME (Poker-Face) - "I See You."

2. THE SHORT TRILOGY



I. MEMORY

Once Upon A Time ... Long Before The Emergence Of The Emerging Quantum Saga ... I Once Wrote A Horror Short Film ... Which Was Never Got Made.

Title – “MEMORY – A Short Film”

Logline – ... My Longest Conversation Ever

Silence

More Silence ...

“Do You Have Anything To Say?”

“No”

Silence ...

More Silence ...

And The Conversation Continued ...



P.S. – I Later Realized ... That This Film May Have Been Made ... Only If I Had Pitched It ... As A Comedy ... Instead Of A Horror ... Not A Dark Comedy ... But A Light One.

II. THE UNTITLED

However, I Wrote A Sequel To ‘Memory’ ... It Was An Untitled Short ... That Made Me Wish For A Title!

“A Silent Girl ... Was Offered A Pink Rose ... Or Silence ... And She Chose The Rose.”

Later, I Remembered ... That I Only Knew Her Name ... But Not Her Surname ... And Then I Thought ... What’s In A Surname Anyways?

III. THE UNWRITTEN

Unfortunately ... I Did Not Realize ... That By Asking That Hallowed Question ... I Had Unknowingly Written ... A Tragic Threequel.

And The Tragedy Was ... The ‘Memory’ Of The Longest Conversation Ever ... Never Did Fade ... Away.

P.S. – I Solemnly And Sincerely Apologize ... For All The ... Horror
... Laughter ... And Sorrow.

Overall, It Was A Poorly Written Trilogy ... That Perhaps Did Not
Deserve ... A Traditional Publication.

~ THE END ~

3. DAWN

As a kid, I was always a grumpy one.

I remember once, my parents took me out for puja shopping. I sulked the whole way—crowded markets were never my scene, even back then.

With no choice but to follow along, I ended up at New Market. A cheerful shopkeeper pulled out a purple shirt and insisted it would look great against my fair-ish brown Indian skin. My parents nodded, clearly convinced.

I frowned, crossed my arms, and declared:

“Give me blue!”

We went home with a blue T-shirt.

Later that night, I overheard my father telling my mother:

“The boy needs to learn to respect other people’s wishes.”

Cut to the present day ... I’m still grumpy ... And I still love my blues.

~ THE END ~

4. BLEEDING



Once, when I was being bored with mechanical engineering ... my nose suddenly began to bleed.

I mentioned it to a girl I used to talk to ... and she took me to an ENT specialist ... The doctor said I needed a minor surgery ... but something about his diagnosis didn't convince me.

I called my dad ... and his reaction was to assume I'd gotten into a brawl.

Later, when my friend checked on me ... I told her I'd gone for a second opinion ... and the bleeding had stopped on its own.

EPILOGUE

"If It Hurts ... Let It Hurt ... It Will Pass."



~ THE END ~

5. FEAR



MOTHER – “You don’t have a job. I can’t even express my fears to you. You are so preoccupied with your never-ending problems in life.”

ME – “What fears?”

MOTHER (after a pause) – “Fear of death.”

FATHER - “There is nothing to fear. You have to go, when the time comes.”

Silence.

ME – “I don’t think I understand you, mom. I don’t fear death, so don’t know how it feels.”

MOTHER – “Why don't you fear death?”

Silence.

ME – “Because ... I never wanted this life in the first place.”

~ THE END ~

6. THE GRADUATE TRILOGY

CONFLICT ~ THE IDENTITY PROBLEM ~

People often talk about searching for an identity, but psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan referred to ‘the armour of an alienating identity’. It implies that having an identity, and not grasping at one, is the problem, not the lack of it.

Identity, which means that the individual knows himself or herself to be a single subject, with marked characteristics, alienates the subject from others.

By acting as an armour, as a carapace, identity excludes the subject exclusively from ‘otherness’. In fact, it means that ‘identity’ is something which has been wrested from the category of ‘otherness’, so that the subject has made, or is making, a fetish of its own separate existence.

PRELUDE ~ A CLEAN SLATE ~

Children are often encouraged to learn their alphabets on a slate with chalk. It makes mistakes easy to erase, and learning feels less intimidating. Later, I was told that even when learning to write more technically, the best tools are still simple - paper, a pencil, and an eraser.

Human thoughts are never perfect; they need constant refinement and optimization. That lesson I learned in grad school—of sketching, scribbling, and revising—has stayed with me ever since. Whether on

paper or a whiteboard, starting with a 'clean slate' still helps me think more clearly and improve my ideas.

PART I ~ THE RELUCTANT TEACHING ASSISTANT ~

Back in graduate school, I found myself a somewhat reluctant teaching assistant. I was assigned to guide a mixed group of undergraduates—many of whom didn't even come from engineering backgrounds. The course was Statics: equations of equilibrium, free-body diagrams, all the basics that had long become second nature to me.

In hindsight, I realize I often moved too quickly. What felt obvious to me was brand-new terrain for them.

Part of the job was conducting assessments and grading them. One afternoon, as I worked through a stack of exam papers, I came across a single sheet that stopped me cold. Not only were all the answers correct, but every step was laid out with such clarity and logic that I thought, This guy thinks exactly like I do. I gave him full marks without hesitation.

Then I looked at the rest.

Almost everyone had failed—not just the answers, but the reasoning itself wandered in all directions. It was clear they were fundamentally lost. When the professor reviewed the class performance, he asked me to normalize the grading. So, reluctantly, I adjusted the scores and passed everyone.

All's well that ends well, I suppose.

THE EPILOGUE

A year later, I happened to walk past a lecture hall where a fresh batch of students had gathered for their first Statics session. And there he was—the one student who had aced my exam—standing at the board as their new TA.

Only then did I realize: my professor had seen my original grading. And he had made his own quiet decision about who truly understood the material.



P.S. - After the initial assessment (where everyone failed), when I had walked into the angry lecture room to work out the solutions, I told the student, who had aced the exams that he is wasting his time there.

He had given me a nod and silently walked out of the room.

PART II ~ THE QUALIFYING EXAM ~

During my graduate years at Stony Brook, I managed to fail my qualifying exams in the most unceremonious way.

The morning of the test began with a reckless drive through winter ice, rushing to drop off my wife at CSHL. One sharp turn, one patch of black ice, and the car skidded so violently that for a split second I thought the story of my life might end right there on the roadside.

By the time I finally sat for my qualifiers, my nerves were still rattling like loose bolts.

I wasn't well prepared for the Math section to begin with - the professor had delivered his lectures with such astonishing lack of clarity that absorbing the material felt like trying to draw water from dry sand.

Unsurprisingly, I failed.

Strangely enough, I feel no regret when I think back on it. I've come to realize I was never meant for a Ph.D. program.

That path simply wasn't my cup of coffee - I'm better off as a jobless drop out.

PART III ~ THE TIMELESS WANDERER ~

After dropping out of graduate school - for the second time - I left my wife in New York, nursing a broken leg on her own, and headed to Pittsburgh for an internship. It wasn't my proudest moment, but at the time it felt like the only path forward.

A couple of months in, the company offered me a full-time position. I accepted. I still had two years left on my Optional Practical Training thanks to my master's degrees, and the company assured me they would file for my H-1B. My wife soon moved from New York to Pittsburgh to begin a program at the university there.

For the first time in a while, life seemed to be aligning.

But that year, the HR team casually informed me they preferred to file my work visa the next year instead. And when they finally did, the application vanished into the void of that bizarre, arbitrary lottery system.

Rejected.

So, in 2014, I packed up my short-lived American chapter and returned to India - jobless again, and wondering what on earth to do next.



P.S. - My wife also followed me to India (at her own will) ... but I guess she is still upset about that ... and perhaps regrets that decision (at times).

THE EPILOGUE ~ THE WATCH ~

After returning to India, a whimsical impulse led me to buy an orange watch online.

When it arrived, the color turned out to be far brighter than I'd imagined.

I never wore it—not even once. I suppose I'm a bit peculiar that way.

THE POST-CREDITS SCENE

EXT. THE BLUE SKY – DUSK

At my wife's gentle insistence to take my job search more seriously, I reluctantly began reaching out to anyone I had ever known - or even might have known - about potential opportunities.

Then, on LinkedIn, an unexpected reply appeared.

And the fabric of space-time folded into a rare singularity - A Blue Hole. Not only does light get trapped there, but minds too. And whether it's fortunate or unfortunate, once you enter, you're in it forever ... God Bless!

A DISTANT V.O. - "I Love Books ... Each Contains A World Of Its Own."

~ THE END ~

7. THE VERY SHORT TRILOGY

~ Conversations With Strangers

THE CONFLICT

STRANGER – “I am writing a film script.”

ME – “How long will it take?”

STRANGER – “I don’t know.”

ME – “Do you really want it written? Above anything else?
Especially above yourself?”

STRANGER – “How do I know?”

ME – “If you don’t know, then who will know?”

Silence.

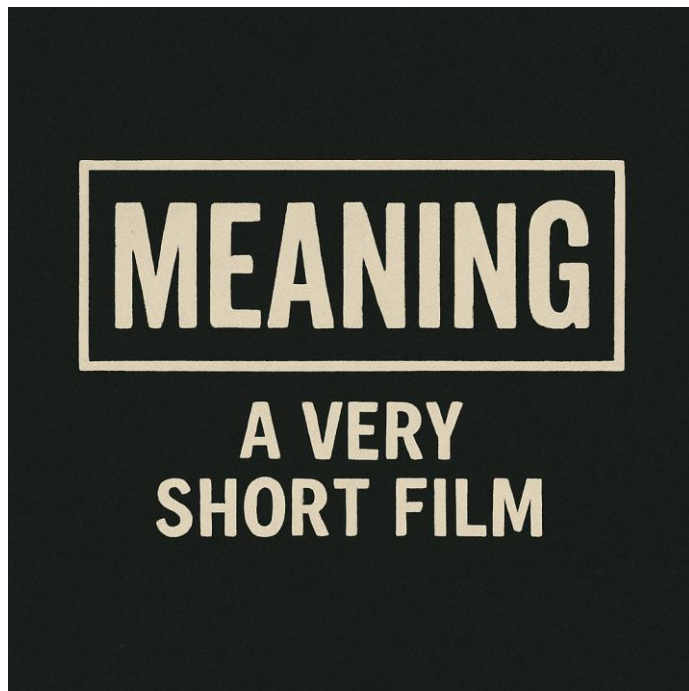


PART I ~ FRAMED ~

ME - "Are You In The Present?"

STRANGER - "I Am Thinking About The Past."

ME - "Then My Friend ... I Am Afraid ... You Are In The Future Verse."



PART II ~ MEANING ~

ME - "What Is The Progress?"

STRANGER - "I Am Still ... Trying To Figure It Out."

ME - "Figure Out What?"

STRANGER - "What It All Means."

ME - "Good Luck!"



PART III ~ TIME ~

ME - "What Is The Time?"

STRANGER - "I Don't Know."

ME - "Why?"

STRANGER - "I Don't Have A Watch."

ME - "Well ... It Is After Dusk."

THE EPILOGUE

ME - "Are You ... Developed ... Developing ... Or Under Developed?"

STRANGER - "Developing."

ME - "Since When?"

~ THE END ~

8. THE LAST REMBRANCE

THE GIRL – “I Don’t Like Industrial Engineering & Management.”

ME – “How About Mechanical Engineering?”

THE GIRL – “I Won’t Mind.”

ME – “It Is Boring ...”

She Shifted To Instrumentation ... And Later Signal Processing.

While I Remembered That ... My First Choice Was Instrumentation
... And The Second Was Mechanical ... But Chose The First ... Only
Because Of My Dad.

9. THE TWO BROTHERS

Father - "Nibedita, I am going to die a very satisfied man."

Mother - "Why Swami?"

Father - "Because we have created two blood diamonds."

Mother - "Two?"

Father - "Yes. One is domesticated."

Mother - "And the other?"

Father - "Free spirited."

~ THE END ~

10. THE TWO TRAGEDIES

THE TWO TRAGEDIES

I Let Her Go ...
Then ... I Let Her In.
... And Both Are Meaningless Memories.

~ THE END ~

11. TELL ME ... ABOUT LOVE

THE CRUSH - "I want to study medicine ... at the Top University."

ME - "Why there?"

THE CRUSH - "That University can define my career!"

ME - "Instead of an institution defining you ... why can't you define an institution?"

THE GIRL - "Shall I see you again?"

ME - "I hope so."

THE WIFE - "Did you take your medicine tonight?"

ME - "Only if you say so."

BOOK III - THE THRILLING BOND

THE 007 LEGACY

... IN 'SHORTS'

~ Dedicated To Ian Fleming & Denis Villeneuve



007 A SHORT
LEGACY

1. BEFORE DUSK ...

PART I ~ CASINO ROYALE ~

... *The Reboot*

M - "007, I Am Sending You To A High-End Casino ... To Gamble."

007 - "For What?"

M - "An Attractive Girl."

007 - "Single?"

M - "Depends ... She Is A Divorcee."

007 - "Interesting. Whom Do I Play Against?"

M - "Her Ex."

007 - "When?"



PART II ~ NO TIME FOR SOLACE ~

... The Sequel To 'Casino Royale'

M – “You Are Too Much Of A Pain ... I Want To Get Rid Of You.”

007 – “Cool! Fire Me.”

M – “Unfortunately, I Don't Have A Reason To Do So ...”

007 – “How Can I Help?”

M – “Please Resign.”

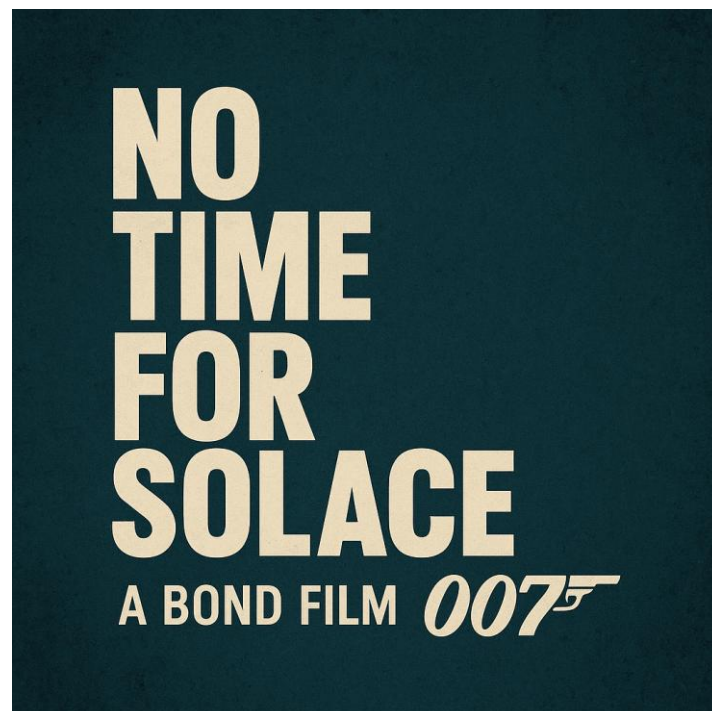
007 – “And What Incentive Do You Offer?”

M – “I Will Apply For A Govt. Grant ... And Give You A Handsome Pension.”

007 – “Do You Think That Would Motivate Me?”

M – “Why Not? It's Pots Of Money!”

007 – “You Tend To Forget ... That Vesper Is Dead.”



PART III ~ SKYFALL ~

... When Everything Falls Apart

007 – “Why Are You Running?”

Q – “The Sky Is Falling!”

007 – “How Can That Happen?”

Q – “This Is A Bond Film ... Anything Can Happen!”

007 – “Then Keep Running.”

SKYFALL

007^F

A Bond Film

PART IV ~ SCRIPTURE ~

... The Holy Texture

M (softly) - "Bond, You Have An Evil Brother Out There ... Trying To Destroy You."

007 - "That's Impossible On Two Accounts."

M - "Firstly?"

007 - "I Can't Be Destroyed."

M - "Hmmmmp ... And Secondly?"

007 - "I Have No Brother."

M - "How Are You So Confident?"

007 (leaning forward) - "You See ... I Never Had A Father."

M - "Then How The Hell Were You Born?"

007 - "I Was Genetically Engineered."

SCRIPTURE

007⁵

A Bond Film

PART V ~ DEAD IN NO TIME ~

... The Sudden Catastrophe

Q – “Bond Is Dead.”

M – “Holy Shit! How?”

Q – “Fell Off From A Peak At The Grand Canyons.”

M – “When?”

Q – “In No Time.”

DEAD
IN
NO TIME
007
A Bond Film

A black rectangular box containing white text. The text is centered and reads "DEAD IN NO TIME" in a large, bold, serif font. Below this, "007" is written in a stylized, italicized serif font. At the bottom, "A Bond Film" is written in a smaller, bold, serif font.

2. ... AFTER DUSK



PART VI ~ DO OR DIE ~

... A Greater Catastrophe!

1. INT. MI6 HQ - UNKNOWN TIME

007 Walks Into M's Office.

M - "I Thought You Died ... In NO TIME."

007 - "Well ... I Am Back Again."

M - "How?"

007 - "I Reversed Time."

M - "What Does That Mean?"

007 - "Watch Your Back!"

2. INT. MI6 HQ – TIME UNKNOWN

M Stares at 007.

M – “What’s next?”

007 – “I Am Giving Up The Batch.”

007 Places His ID & His Gun On M’s Desk.

M – “Why Now?”

007 – “I Am Getting Old.”

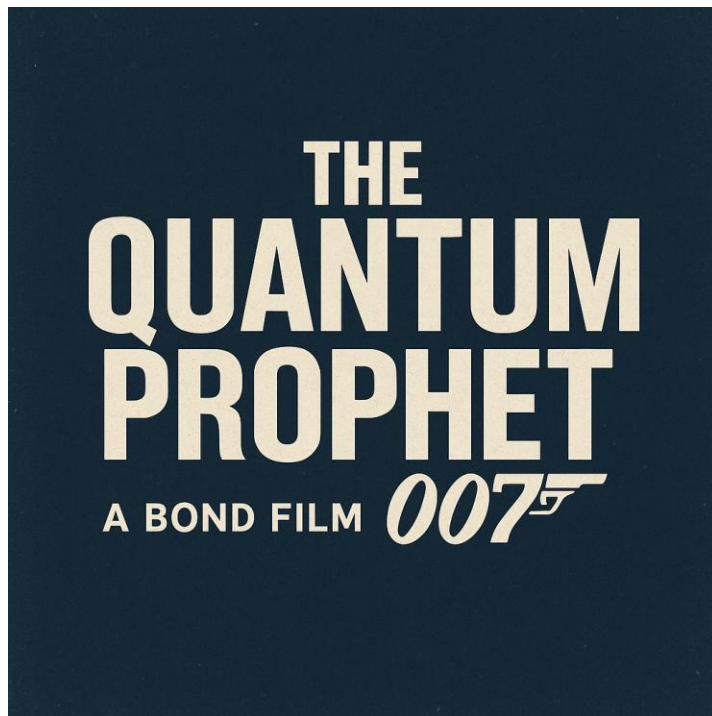
M – “Hmmm ... So, What’s New?”

007 – “Will Write A Script Now.”

M – “For What?”

007 – “The Next Bond Film.”

~ THE END ~



PART VII ~ THE QUANTUM PROPHET ~

"Is The Prophet Quantum ... Or Quantum Is The Prophet?"

1. INT. MI6 HQ - UNKNOWN TIME

M staring at the screen ... 007 walks in ... without knocking ...
M looks up.

M – “Back again?”

007 – “Missed My Christmas Gift.”

M – “I Thought You Will Buy One For Yourself.”

007 – “Well, I Don’t Have A Salary Now.”

M – “How Can I Help?”

007 – “Just Stopped By ... To Wish You ... HAPPY NEW
YEAR!”

M does not look too happy.

2. INT. CAFE – SUNDAY [FLASHBACK SCENE]

M sits opposite 007. He is interviewing Bond for the role, their first encounter.

Bond sipping coffee. M has not touched the tea that he ordered.

M - "So, what can you do for me?"

007 - "Whatever you can't imagine."

M - "And?"

007 - "Whatever I can't prove to you."

M keeps staring at Bond, bewildered.

3. INT. MI6 HQ - MONDAY

007 hesitatingly walks into M's office and drops himself on the empty chair opposite M.

M - "Good Morning! How Did The Paperwork Go?"

007 - "Slow. But Got My Badge & A Gun."

M - "Good. I Have A Job For You."

007 - "That Will Have To Wait."

M - "Why?"

007 - "I Am Sending Myself To Exile."

M - "Interesting ... For How Long?"

007 - "Thinking Of 14 Years."

M - "That Will Pass ... But What For?"

007 - "To Plan For The Next 14 Years."

4. INT. MI6 HQ - PRESENT DAY

007 walks into M's office with a long beard and keeps standing.

M - "How Did The Exile Go?"

007 - "Well Enough."

M - "OK. But Why The Beard?"

007 - "I A Prophet Now."

M - "Real Or Fake?"

007 - "A Quantum One."

5. INT. M's BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

M is reading a book with utmost attention. His cell phone rings. Number unknown. He sighs and picks it up.

M - "What now?"

007 - "I have an update."

M - "I am listening ... without any option, as usual."

007 - "I can see now."

M - "What the hell is it now?"

007 - "A quantum vision."

M - "Vision of what?"

007 - "The Future Verse."

M - "Go ... And Shave First!"

~ THE END ~



PART VIII ~ THE MISSING BOND ~

~ The Series Of Disappearances

1. INT. MI6 HQ BOARD ROOM - DAWN

M, Q, Moneypenny & Bill ... sitting and staring at each other.

M (Yawning) - "Where Did 007 Disappear Now?"

Q - "It's An Impossible Question To Answer."

Moneypenny - "He Left A Note."

M (Stops Yawning) - "Did He?"

Bill - "Yes. A One Line Code."

M - "Could You Decipher It?"

Bill - "We Think ... It Says That ... He Is Going Into
Some Future Verse."

M - "Is He Now?"

Q - "Maybe ... The Code May Be A Fake!"

2. INT. MI6, Q LAB - NOON

Q points to a world map marked with red spots all over. M looking at it with disgust.

M - "How can he be everywhere at the same time?"

Q - "The tracer can't lie."

M - "It can't be true!"

Q - "Well ... He did say that he has become a quantum prophet."

M - "Rubbish. He says a lot of bull."

Q - "Whatever. But he seems to be looking for someone ..."

M - "Who?"

Q - "Mary Magdalene."

3. INT. AN ENGLISH PUB - DUSK

007 enter the crowded pub and dumps himself heavily on a high stool facing the bartender.

007 - "A Pale Ale."

Bartender - "IPA?"

007 - "If You Say So"

The bartender smiles and pours a glass of IPA from the tap.

007 - "Put Some Ice In It ... Please."

Pin drop silence in the pub. Everyone staring at 007.

Bartender - "With Due Respect, This Is Beer."

007 - "I Know."

Bartender - "It Is Chilled Beer."

007 - "Ice ... Please."

The astounded bartender puts an ice cube in the glass.

007 - "Two More Please."

4. INT. THE ENGLISH PUB - CONTINUOUS

007 looks at the glass of IPA. Three ice cubes floating on the top surface. He then stares at the puzzled bartender.

007 - "Shake It ... Please."

Suddenly someone laughs aloud. 007 turns around and looks at the laughing man.

LAUGHING MAN - "What Are You Gazing At ... You Jerk?!"

007 stands up, approaches the laughing man, twists the man's outstretched arms till both arms break.

Then 007 starts punching the crying man ... without stopping for one moment.

5. INT. MI6 HQ, Q LAB - DUSK

Q and M staring at the big screen. Suddenly all red spots disappear and one green marker starts bleeping on the global map ... somewhere over UK.

Q - "We Finally Have A Location."

M - "A Quantum One?"

Q - "Not This Time. It Is Binary Now."

M - "Hmmm ... I Need Him Back. Send Your Men."

Q - "Which Agents?"

M - "Everyone Available ... Including The Fat ... The Old ... And The Ugly."

Money Penny - "How About Me?"

M - "Yup ... You Too!"

Q - "What's The Rush?"

M - "Bond Is A Billion Dollar Game."

6. INT. M's BEDROOM - DAWN

M sleeping on a bed ... snoring. Suddenly his cell phone buzzes. It is Q and M hastily picks it up ... frowning.

M - "What's Up?"

Q - "There Was A War."

M - "Where?"

Q - "Outside The Pub ... At Kent."

M - "And?"

Q - "Most Of Our Agents Are Badly Injured ... The Rest Are Still Recovering From Shock."

M - "What The F**K Happened?"

Q - "Not Sure. According To The English Media ... Bond Used Some New Warfare ... They Are Calling It Quantum Arts."

M - "Hmmp ... Did We Get Him?"

Q - "No. He Escaped Unhurt."

M - "What Happened To Money Penny?"

Q - "She Is Nursing A Broken Leg ... At The Hospital."

M - "Well. Send All The Remaining Ladies After Him ... And Nail Him ... On A Bed Of Roses."

7. INT. MI6 HQ, Q LAB - DUSK

M and Q staring at each other. Both looking queer.

M - "What's The Report?"

Q - "007 Lured All The Ladies Into A Toy Shop."

M - "Toy Shop! Of What Sort?"

Q - "Well ... It Was One Full Of Dildos."

M - "And?"

Q - "They Are All Still Busy ... With The Toys."

M - "Amazing!"

Silence.

M - "Where's Bond?"

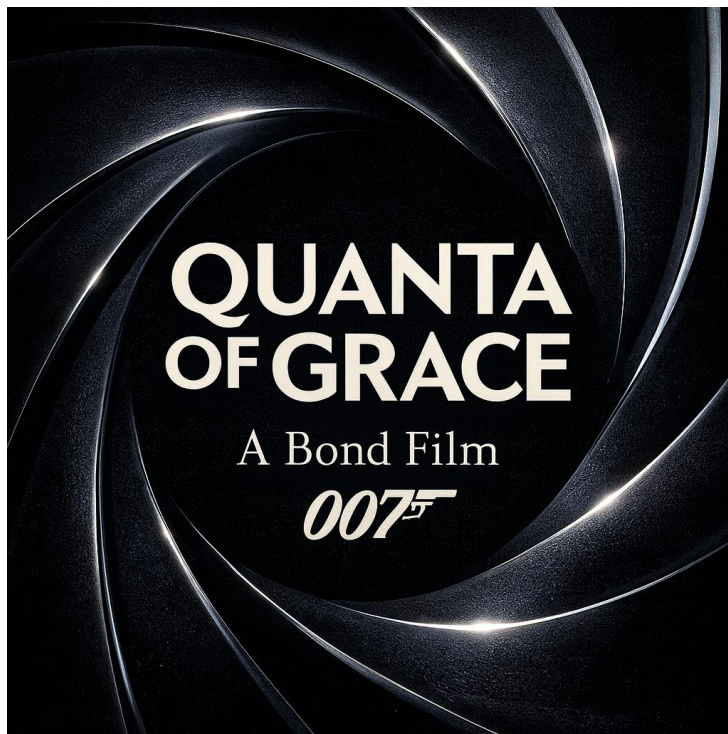
Q - "Disappeared Again."

M - "Any Idea ... Where To?"

Q - "Looks Like ... He Went Into His Future Verse ... This Time For Good."

M - "Jesus Christ!"

~ THE END ~



PART IX ~ QUANTA OF GRACE ~

~ Pop Goes The Bond!

1. INT. MI6 HQ – MORNING

M, with a serious face, enters his office. He stares at 007 sitting calmly on his chair.

M – “What The Hell!”

007 – “Morning M! I had a fancy of trying your chair. It is quite nice.”

M – “I know. But It’s mine, not yours.”

007 – “Doesn’t matter. You will be sending me now to Vatican. So, I have to go anyways.”

M – “Why?”

007 – “All their gold is missing.”

M – “How do you know?”

007 – “I took it.”

Moneypenny rushes into the office.

MONEYPENNY – “M, the sky has fallen apart. All the Vatican gold is gone!”

M – “What’s your new fancy, Bond?”

007 – “I need the gold in the future verse.”

M – “And what am I supposed to do about this?”

007 – “Send me to Vatican.”

M – “What’s the point?”

007 – “I want to talk to the fathers.”

2. INT. SECURED MEETING ROOM, THE VATICAN – TIME UNKNOWN

Close up on a grave looking Pope.

POPE – “Are The Bond Interviews Over?”

FATHER DEAD – “Yes. For Now, It Seems.”

POPE – “What Was 007 Asking Everyone?”

FATHER DEAD – “Only One Question – Why Are You A Father?”

POPE – “Hmmm ... Surprisingly, He Didn’t Bother To Ask Me.”

FATHER DEAD – “He Said ... He Will Talk To Christ Instead.”

POPE – “How Humiliating!”

FATHER DEAD – “He Mentioned A Curious Thing About Our Gold.”

POPE – “Did He?”

FATHER DEAD – “He Believes Jesus Has Taken It All Back.”

3. INT. THE CAFÉ, WHERE M FIRST INTERVIEWED BOND - NIGHT

M is sipping coffee from a large mug. 007 has a small cup of tea in front him.

M – “How did the Vatican interviews go?”

007 – “Surprisingly well.”

M – “Did they even bother to answer your questions?”

007 – “They did, after all, their gold is gone. And I was representing MI6.”

M – “Hmmm ... did you get the answers you were looking for?”

007 – “I found one interesting enough.”

M (now curious) – “What was it?”

007 – “Someone told me that he does not care about the reason for being a father ... because he does not want to be one in the first place.”

M – “Then he should not be there.”

007 – “Agreed. And so, I am taking him with me ... in to the future verse.”

M – “Interesting. But why so?”

007 – “With all the gold I have put in the future verse, it is bound to make mankind weak. And the weak will always crave for faith. So, I have chosen a messiah for them.”

M – “Does it imply that there will be churches in the future verse?”

007 – “Maybe ... I quite like their elegant architectural designs.”

M – “Great! Take me there too.”

007 – “That depends.”

M – “Depends on what?”

007 – “Circumstances.”

M – “Hmmm ... I Thought Your Highness’ Whims Were Enough!”

007 (leaning forward) – “You see, I Am A Quantum Prophet ... Which Implies ... My Grace Can Be Everywhere ... And At The Same Time ... Nowhere.”

4. INT. THE CAFÉ - CONTINUED

Bond walks out of the café door and disappears into the night. M stares after him, sighs, and signals the waiter to bring him the bill. Then he picks up the phone and calls Moneypenny.

M – “Hello Moneypenny! I have something to share, but not sure how you will take it.”

MONEYPENNY – “What’s the matter?”

M – “I think we have seen the last of Bond.”

MONEYPENNY – “We have thought so before too.”

M – “This time it's different.”

MONEYPENNY – “Why do you think so?”

M – “He takes all this quantum bull too seriously. He has also got hold of the Vatican gold and Magdalene. And taken both to his future verse. Not sure if there is anything remaining here, that matters to him.”

MONEYPENNY – “Maybe we should head to the future verse too.”

M – “He won’t like that. Moreover, there is no way for us to get there.”

MONEYPENNY – “Surely, Q can figure out something?”

M – “I doubt. This seems well beyond his limits.”

MONEYPENNY – “So, what do we do?”

M – “I will find someone else to become 007 ... Bond is gone.”

PART X ~ THE EPILOGUE ~

~ The Goodbyes

1. INT. MAIN CHAMBER, THE VATICAN – NEXT DAY

POPE - 'Good to see you ... at last!'

007 - "Yup ... Unfortunately."

POPE - "Why do you avoid me?"

007 (leaning over) - "How many 'Popes' have there been?"

POPE - "Errrr ... Too many to count!"

007 - "And many were ... female?"

POPE (proudly) - "None."

007 - "Why do you think a penis is better than a vagina?"

POPE - "Why not?"

007 - "Didn't God make both?"

2. INT. STUDY ROOM, BROWN RESIDENCE – NIGHT

Dan is in deep study. 007 enters and places himself on the opposite side of the study table. Dan looks up from his book ...

007 - "Hi Dan! What are you up to?"

DAN - "The usual stuff ... research and learning ..."

007 - "I wanted to clarify some stuff with you ... in your line of expertise."

DAN (closing his book) - "Yes?"

007 - "Christ never liked the jews, did he?"

DAN - "Not the jews of his time, no."

007 - "The Prophet also did not like the jews, did he?"

DAN - "Not that we know of."

007 - "Even Hitler did not like the jews, did he?"

DAN - "What's the point?"

007 - "Jews believe in research and learning, don't they?"

Dan is smiling ...

3. INT. TIME-SHIP – IN NO TIME

The time-ship zooming through a weird and bizarre time hole as it traverses unknown dimensions of the universe.

VESPER – "Why are we going to 2100 AD?"

JAMES – "Because World War III is at its peak then."

VESPER – "I would prefer a more peaceful sojourn."

JAMES – "That won't be meaningful."

VESPER – "Which means ..."

JAMES – "To find meaning, we need to be pushed to extremes.

Humanity is facing its worst crisis in 2100 AD. Everything dear to them is doomed."

VESPER – "You said you found a messiah."

JAMES – "Yes, but he too, is doomed."

VESPER – "How come?"

JAMES – "When things go bad, the good guys get killed first. So, the messiah will be crucified once again."

VESPER – "By whom?"

JAMES (smiles) – "I am resurrecting the three great fascists, who were ever known to mankind. And dispersing them over Mars and Earth."

3. THE PREQUEL TRILOGY ***... OF SHORTS***

~ Dedicated To Ian Fleming & Denis Villeneuve



PART I - THE HAIR PROBLEM



INT. The Q-LAB, MI6 HQ - SOMETIME UNKNOWN IN THE PAST

M staring hard at Q ...

M (smirking) - "So you have located 007 in Mumbai of all places, eh?"

Q - "He seems to be visiting Bollywood."

M (amused) - "What For?"

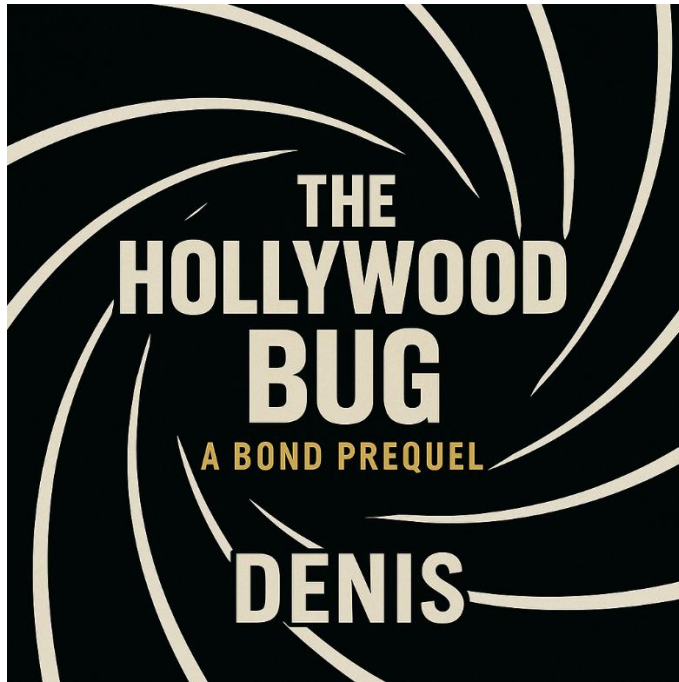
Q - "Not sure ... He is going around pulling hairs of all the stars ..."

M - "And?"

Q - "He left ... after patting Akshaye Khanna's bald head."

~ THE END ~

PART II - THE HOLLYWOOD BUG



INT. The Q-Lab, MI6 HQ – SOMETIME AFTER THE HAIR PROBLEM

M – “Heard that Bollywood isn’t doing too well ... after Bond’s remarkable hair pulling adventure?”

Q – “Yeah ... The top three actresses suddenly wanted to go to Hollywood.”

M – “Top Three?”

Q – “Yes ... Priyanka, Deepika & Alia.”

M – “Did they make any progress?”

Q – “They got married instead.”

M – “What for?”

Q – “Bond said that he does not like single women.”

M – “Hmmmm ... So, he is still ... in touch with them?”

Q – “Surprisingly, no ... he is now interested in a few unmarried actresses there.”

M – “Who?”

Q – “Nimrat & Wamiqa.”

M (raising his brow) – “Only two?”

Q – “There is one more ... Yami Gautam ... whom he calls Yummy.”

M – “Interesting ... Is she single too?”

Q – “No, she’s married to a young director ... who is quite pissed off with Bond.”

M – “That’s natural ... and expected.”

~ THE END ~

PART III - THE BANANA FUNCTION



INT. The Q-LAB, MI6 HQ - SOMETIME AFTER THE HOLLYWOOD BUG

M (irritated) - "Where is 007?"

Q - "Working from home."

M - "Covid is over. I gave directive to all employees to start working from office."

Q – "When did 007 wait for permissions or pay heed to directives?"

M – "Hmmmmp ... Anyways, what is he doing these days?"

Q – "He is immersed in books"

M – "And what the hell is he reading?"

Q – "Political Science."

M (bemused) – "Why?"

Q – "He said he is fed up with his never-ending assignments to fix botched up conspiracies by banana democracies."

M – “And what’s his Highness’ solution for that?”

Q – “He is genetically engineering some banana dictators.”

~ THE END OF PREQUEL TRILOGY ~

END NOTE

With Bond’s leap into The Future Verse—alongside Vesper, Magdalene, The Quantum Prophet, and all the Vatican Gold—the 007 saga has come to an unexpected pause.

M is currently searching for a worthy successor to inherit the mantle of 007 at MI6. Until that day arrives, there will be no fresh exploits to recount. And once the new agent is chosen (fingers crossed), someone will still need to chronicle their missions.

As for me, Bond has promised a share of the gold—and a ticket to The Future Verse—where I’ll continue documenting the adventures of The Quantum Prophet from this point onward.

Good luck to everyone. The mission continues... elsewhere!

BOOK IV - THE QUANTUM PROPHET

1. BOND IN THE FUTURE VERSE

... A SHORT FILM

~ Dedicated To Ian Fleming & Denis Villeneuve



1. INT. TIME-SHIP – IN NO TIME

The time-ship zooming through a weird and bizarre time hole as it traverses unknown dimensions of the universe.

VESPER – “Why are we going to 2100 AD?”

JAMES – “Because World War III is at its peak then.”

VESPER – “I would prefer a more peaceful sojourn.”

JAMES – “That won’t be meaningful.”

VESPER – “Which means ...”

JAMES – “To find meaning, we need to be pushed to extremes. Humanity is facing its worst crisis in 2100 AD. Everything dear to them is doomed.”

VESPER – “You said you found a messiah.”

JAMES – “Yes, but he too, is doomed.”

VESPER – “How come?”

JAMES – “When things go bad, the good guys get killed first. So, the messiah will be crucified once again.”

VESPER – “By whom?”

JAMES (smiles) – “I am resurrecting the three great fascists, who were ever known to mankind. And dispersing them over Mars and Earth.”

2. INT. TIME-SHIP – CONTINUOUS

Inside a static warp ... a timeless Bond, a pale white Vesper and a silent Magdalene stare at the Earth spinning restlessly towards 2100 AD ... reeling from the aftermath of drastic climate changes ...

VESPER - "It's getting dark."

JAMES - "What may or may not ... seem bleak to you ... may as

well be, or may not be ... amusing to another ... limit tending to infinity."

VESPER - "Should we not 'feel' then?"

JAMES - "You can't help that ... but you may as well bend your imagination."

Magdalene smiles quietly.

3. EXT. BARREN LANDSCAPE, EARTH – SOMETIME IN 2100 AD

The time-ship lands on Earth. The Quantum Prophet was waiting for the arrival.

JAMES – “Hello Proph! How are you feeling today?”

JOSH – “Have felt better before ...”

JAMES – “As the Head Boy at Hogwarts?”

JOSH – “Those were headless times ... listening to Dumbledore’s never-ending lessons ... or feeling the bite of Snape’s cane.”

JAMES – “How did you feel as The Vampire?”

JOSH – “Salty. Human blood tastes like sea-water. The vampires need to build distilleries.”

JAMES – “Sad. And how did you feel as The Bat?”

JOSH – “Sleepless.”

JAMES – “Hope you feel better here ...”

JOSH – “That depends ... now I feel everything ... and at the same time ... nothing.”

Bond tosses a gold coin at Josh.

JAMES – “Here! Pure Vatican Gold to please you.”

Josh looks at the coin. Then flips it back at James’ surprised face.

JOSH – “I am no longer The Two-Face fiddling with a coin. Or a Ten-Faced Demon ... I have infinite faces now.”

The Quantum Prophet leaves ... with Magdalene following him silently.

James looks thoughtful, while Vesper looks pleased to see Magdalene go.

4. INT. TIME-SHIP – NIGHT

Bond sitting and listening to the bug he planted on The Quantum Prophet. He hears silent footsteps of Josh and Magdalene walking together.

MAGDALENE – “You seem ... somewhat changed.”

JOSH – “I guess so.”

MAGDALENE – “I thought you will be happy to see me ... after all these years.”

JOSH – “I guess I should be.”

MAGDALENE – “But you are not.”

Silence.

JOSH – “I was hoping that I won’t see you here.”

MAGDALENE – “Why?”

JOSH – “Things are messy here ... very messy.”

MAGDALENE – “Well ... I am here.”

JOSH – “And that’s a problem.”

Bond strains hard to hear anything else, but it’s all silence now.

VESPER (from the adjacent bedroom) – “Oooh James! Come to bed now.”

JAMES – “Well ... I guess that’s all there is left to do.”

5. INT. TIME-SHIP – LATE MORNING

An exhausted Bond sipping coffee and reporting to M using telepathy.

M – “Good morning! You seem tired ...”

JAMES – “No time to sleep.”

M – “Never mind ... What’s the status?”

JAMES – “Proph has disappeared with Magdalene. Our tracers are malfunctioning here. Not sure about the bug .. either it’s also not working ... or Proph has gone full silent.”

M – “Can you hear Magdalene?”

JAMES – “Nope ... She is the silent type anyways.”

M – “Hmmmmp ... I hired you with double his salary! Then spent a fortune to make you look like him. And now this ...”

JAMES – “Your ex-employee is a bit difficult to outsmart.”

M – “Anyways ... Return to base now! Earth in 2100 AD may be too much for you.”

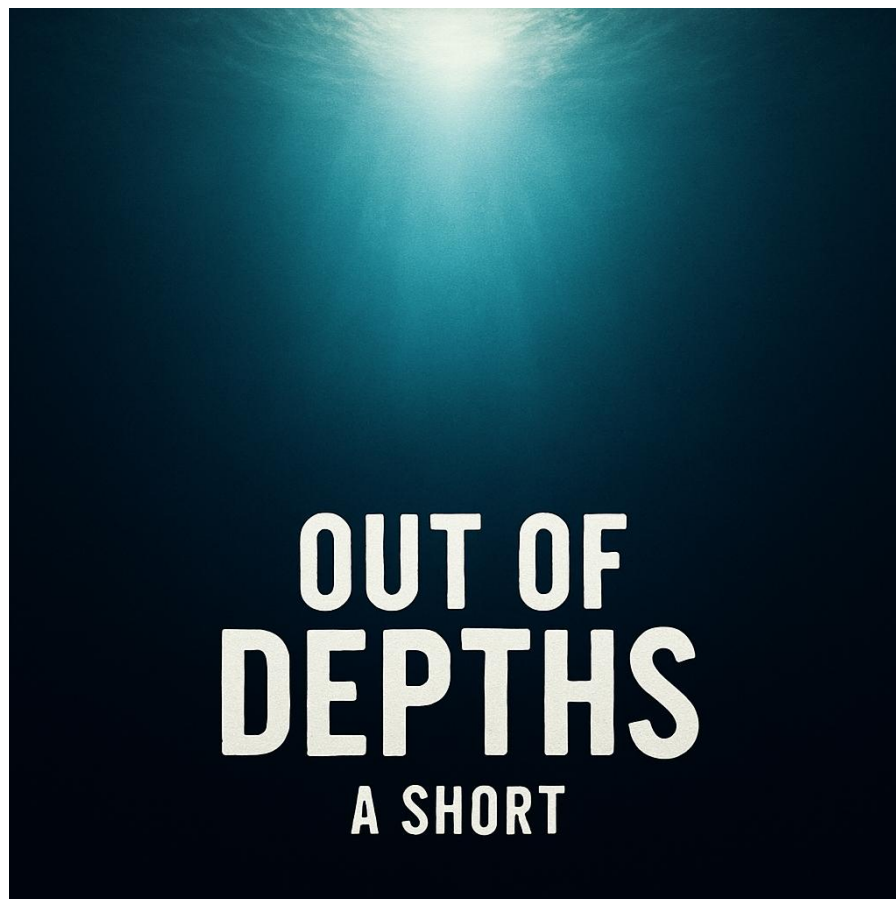
JAMES – “Yes Sir!”

VESPER (from the adjacent bedroom) – “Ooooh James ... I can’t wait anymore!”

~ THE END ~

2. OUT OF DEPTHS

... A SHORT



1. INT. THE Q-CAVE, EARTH – SOMETIME IN 2100 AD

Magdalene sits on Josh's chair staring at gigantic machines, futuristic apparatus and equipment.

MAGDALENE – “What's all this for?”

JOSH – “I am capturing all the God Particles penetrating Earth's thinned out atmosphere and using their high energy to replace the cosmic microwave background with quantum information.”

MAGDALENE – “Seems like a lot of effort ... But I guess I can't complain.”

JOSH – “How come?”

MAGDALENE (smiles) – “Some of it reached me.”

2. INT. THE Q-CAVE, EARTH – DAY

Magdalene squints at the blazing sun through an overprotected window shield. Josh hands her a pair of shades.

JOSH – “Try these.”

MAGDALENE (putting them on) – “Never seen anything like this before ... I can see the flares raging out ... The sun seems to be on fire.”

JOSH – “It's 2100 AD ... Earth's atmosphere is almost gone ... Nothing left to protect us from the cosmic rays.”

MAGDALENE – “Do we still see aurora borealis around the arctic?”

JOSH (shaking his head) – “No air to break down the cosmic rays into low energy streams ... and to divert them towards the

poles ... The northern lights are now history.”

Then he looks intently at Magdalene.

JOSH – “But I can see it again ... after ages.”

3. INT. Q-CAVE, EARTH – NIGHT

Josh lost in his thoughts ... Magdalene watching silently.

MAGDALENE – “You didn’t say why you left The Earth of 2025 ...”

JOSH – “I was fed up with all the mess.”

MAGDALENE – “And now?”

JOSH – “Well ... I landed in a bigger mess.”

MAGDALENE (smiling) – “Welcome to life.”

Josh nods and is once again lost in his thoughts ... Magdalene keeps watching silently.

4. INT. Q-CAVE, EARTH – SOMETIME PAST MIDNIGHT

Magdalene wakes up to find Josh scribbling absent-mindedly on a notebook.

MAGDALENE – “What are you writing?”

JOSH – “Random thoughts ...”

MAGDALENE – “A diary?”

JOSH – “Not necessarily.”

MAGDALENE (smiling) – “Then it must be fiction?”

JOSH – “It’s kind of an abstract story.”

MAGDALENE – “Interesting. Can I read it?”

JOSH – “I will prefer if you don’t.”

MAGDALENE – “Why?”

JOSH – “It’s not good enough.”

MAGDALENE – “How do you know?”

JOSH – “I can’t re-read it myself.”

5. INT. Q-CAVE, EARTH - CONTINUOUS

Josh puts the notebook away. Magdalene rests her head on his shoulders and he puts his arm around her.

JOSH - “You are very warm.”

MAGDALENE - “And you are cold.”

JOSH (with a rare smile) - “Together we are neutral.”

6. INT. Q-CAVE, EARTH – DAWN

Magdalene wakes up to find herself alone. She finds a note left by Josh ...

“Going off to find some Q-Men ... See You Soon.”

MAGDALENE (muttering to herself) – “Gone again ...”

She notices an open door that was camouflaged since she came here. She enters through the door ... to find herself in The Quantum Gallery.

7. INT. Q-CAVE – NIGHT, A WEEK LATER

Magdalene sees the following letter on all the numerous computer screens spread all around the cave:

Dear Magdalene,

It may be some time before I see you again—if I do at all. People on Earth are searching for faith, for something in which to believe and place their hope.

That is something I am both incapable of offering and unwilling to pretend to provide. Still, I hope the quantum gallery inspires at least a measure of trust in its promise and potential.

It feels almost predestined that my travels will carry me to distant settlements, to the remote corners of the Earth. And perhaps, before this quest for the Q-Men ends, I may even find myself on Mars.

Until then,

Josh



8. EXT. Q-CAVE, ENTRANCE – NEXT MORNING

As the sun blazes over the distant horizon, Magdalene steps out from the Q-Cave, after a week spent in The Quantum Gallery ...

To venture into the unknown future ... wearing the shades left behind for her.



~ THE END ~

3. DJANGO UNHINGED

... A SHORT FILM

~ Dedicated To Quentin Tarantino



1. INT TARANTINO OFFICE - NIGHT

Tarantino writing his last script on his desk ... chewing the pencil. The door slams open and Django enters the room spinning a gun with his fingers.

QUENTIN - "Long time Django!"

DJANGO - "Thirteen Years."

QUENTIN - "What's Up?"

DJANGO - "Not Much ... You Made The 'D' Silent ... Now I Have Made All The Letters Silent."

QUENTIN - "That's some progress. Still hunting bounty in the West?"

DJANGO - "I hunted white men when I was unchained ... But now ... I'm unhinged."

The screen lightens up with disco music and movie title -
"DJANGO UNHINGED"

2. INT TARANTINO OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

QUENTIN - "What do you want?"

DJANGO (leaning forward) - "Heard you have some issue with Dano and Lillard?"

QUENTIN - "How does that concern you?"

DJANGO - "Well ... I want both of them as the villains in my sequel."

QUENTIN - "Sequel? Who dares to make that, huh?"

DJANGO (putting his gun on top of Quentin's unfinished script)
- "You."

3. INT TARANTINO OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

QUENTIN - "I have retired. I am now a movie critic."

DJANGO - "Well ... I can see the incomplete script you are struggling with."

QUENTIN - "Even if I want to hire them - neither would listen to me."

DJANGO - "Give an interview to the paparazzi ... say that both are incompetent fools who cannot act."

QUENTIN - "Hell will break loose!"

DJANGO - "Exactly. Media will lap up your words; social media will light up with fan wars ... and they will come for you."

QUENTIN - "I don't want to die!"

DJANGO - "Don't worry. When they reach here, I will be waiting."

Django picks up the gun that he had placed over Quentin's unfinished script.

QUENTIN (looking interested) - "And then?"

DJANGO - "Then you shoot your tenth film."

4. INT. TARANTINO OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

QUENTIN - "Who will fund this sequel? Weinstein got busted."

DJANGO - "It was high time."

QUENTIN - "Your franchise is dead dude ... accept it."

DJANGO - "I would get that Ahuja guy at SONY into the loop ... if I were you."

QUENTIN - "Interesting proposition ... let me think about it."

DJANGO (walking out) - "I would also call Trump and tell him

to renovate The White House."

QUENTIN - "What for?"

DJANGO - "I'm selling white paint these days."

5. INT. DINING ROOM, TARANTINO HOME - MORNING

Quentin sipping his morning coffee. Suddenly Django appears holding a bunch of books.

QUENTIN (with a start) - "Where did you pop up from?"

DJANGO - "1860."

QUENTIN - "How the hell -"

DJANGO - "A Quantum Prophet has opened a Time Portal for me."

QUENTIN - "And why are you after my peace?"

DJANGO - "I am here to help you make more trouble ... in Texas."

QUENTIN - "I thought you are hooked up with Zorro now ... for good."

DJANGO - "I am looking for a younger ... and more potent mentor."

QUENTIN - "What's all these books for?"

DJANGO - "Christmas gifts for you."

Quentin takes a quick look at the books.

QUENTIN - "These are all classic stuff. I know them by heart."

DJANGO - "Read them again ... carefully ... word by word."

Quentin continues to sip his coffee.

6. INT. DINING ROOM, TARANTINO HOME, TEXAS - CONTINUOUS

Tarantino keeps his coffee cup aside and sighs.

QUENTIN - "SONY has rejected your sequel idea. Gen Z are not interested in the Westerns. And the older folks don't go to the movies anymore."

DJANGO - "I have another idea."

QUENTIN - "Do you now?"

DJANGO - "I would like you to reboot my franchise."

QUENTIN - "You know what ... I'm not kicked about that."

DJANGO - "Consider it as something you have not done before. Its a modern day reboot ... Adventures of A Dark Duo in the genre of psychological crime and drama."

QUENTIN - "How exactly is that different from all that I have already done?"

DJANGO - "It will be darker ... and with a female lead for a change ... Kill Bill 2 was 20 years ago."

QUENTIN - "Hmmm ... Whom do you have in mind?"

DJANGO - "There is a kid in the block ... waiting ... her name is Elle."

QUENTIN - "Do you have a title for this venture?"

DJANGO - "I am calling it 'THE DARK TRILOGY' ... and changing the title of the first film from 'DJANGO UNHINGED' to simply ... UNHINGED."

Quentin looks at Django thoughtfully ... while Django waits nonchalantly for a response.

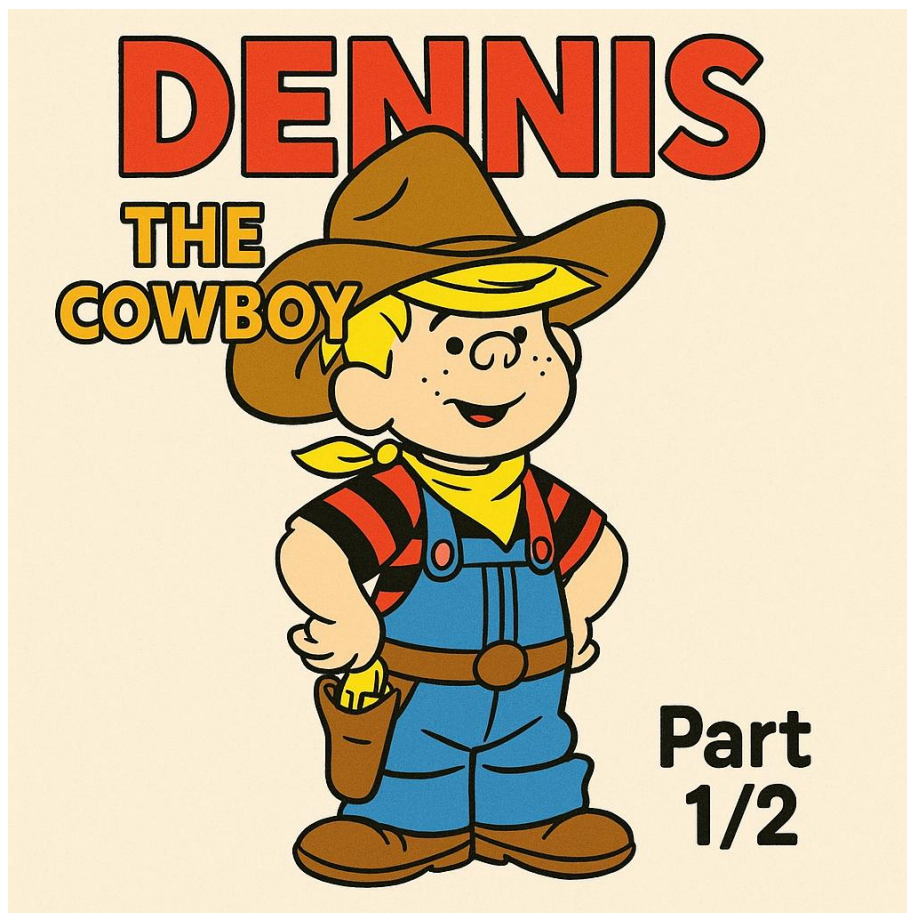
~ THE END ~

BOOK V - DENNIS THE MENACE

DENNIS THE COWBOY

... PART I/II

~ Dedicated To Hank Ketcham



1. INT. DRAWING ROOM, MITCHELL HOUSE - EVENING

Henry dancing around ... singing and talking in Spanish.

DENNIS - "Why is Dad talking so funny, Mom?"

ALICE - "He is talking Spanish, Dennis ... but 'why' I don't know."

DENNIS - "Sounds more like Spinach to me ..."

Henry is now making overenthusiastic gestures.

DENNIS - "Now, what's he doing?"

ALICE - "Now he is fighting a bull!"

DENNIS - "You better take it easy, Dad! You been workin' too hard!"

HENRY - "Heh Heh! That's right! Mr. Hall said I deserved a rest after that job I did in Hollywood ... and he gave us this bonus!"

ALICE - "Airplane tickets?"

DENNIS - "Whee! Where are we going now?"

HENRY - "MEXICO! Viva Mexico!"

DENNIS - "Yay! YAY! ... Uh ... Where's Mexico?"

2. INT. HOTEL SUITE, MEXICO CITY - DAY

Henry feels a bit dizzy and lies down on bed.

ALICE - "Don't you feel well, dear?"

HENRY - "I think ... the altitude's got me."

DENNIS - "Is that like the flu?"

HENRY - "No, son. The altitude ... the height. We are over a mile high here!"

DENNIS - "Gee! I didn't think the hotel was that high!"

HENRY - "Not the hotel ... the whole city is a mile up in the air."

DENNIS - "Boy! You better take it easy, Dad."

ALICE - "I thought you wanted to go places?"

DENNIS - "Not when Dad thinks the whole city is flyin'! He's really sick!"

3. EXT. STREET, MEXICO CITY - LATE AFTERNOON

Dennis walking behind Henry and Alice on the streets of Mexico City.

DENNIS - "See, Dad? This place is steady as a rock!"

HENRY - "Well, of course, it is."

DENNIS - "So you don't think anymore that the city is flyin' a mile up in the air, huh?"

HENRY - "Not flying ... it's the elevation ... height above the sea level. Forget it!"

Dennis looks curiously at a woman selling some fruits on the streetside, with a kid wrapped in her green shawl.

DENNIS - "Hi, lady! What have you got in there?"

WOMAN - "Que? No comprendo!"

DENNIS (shouting) - "ITS A LITTLE KID! SHE'S KIDNAPPED A LITTLE KID!"

WOMAN - "Que pasa?"

ALICE (screaming too) - "DENNIS! STOP THE ROW!"

HENRY - "Hush, Dennis!"

Dennis runs towards a cop patrolling the streets.

DENNIS - "Ya can see she's hidin' a little kid!"

POLICEMAN - "That's a custom here, nino. The reboza ... the shawl ... protects the baby from the cold and the sun ... See?"

ALICE (catching up) - "We're so sorry, officer!"

POLICAMAN - "These things happen, senora."

HENRY - "Por el nino, eh?"

WOMAN - "Gracias, senior."

4. INT. THE CATHEDRAL, MEXICO CITY - CONTINUOUS

ALICE - "This is the cathedral we wanted to see, Henry. It's beautiful!"

HENRY - "It says here that it was founded in 1525."

Henry turns towards a bored Dennis.

HENRY - "Think of this, Dennis! This church was started almost a hundred years before The Pilgrims landed in our country! ... You know ... The Pilgrims ... who invented Thanksgiving?"

DENNIS - "Yeah, Boy! Those ol' pilgrims were dumb, huh?"

HENRY - "What do you mean?"

DENNIS - "Those pilgrims shoul'da come HERE! Then they woulda had a nice big church ALL READY to go on Thanksgivin'!"

HENRY - "Hmm!"

ALICE - "End of history lesson, Henry!"

5. EXT. ON THE STEETS OF MEXICO CITY - CONTINUOUS

Dennis sees a little girl selling peanuts beside the street.

GIRL - "Cacahuetes frescoes!"

DENNIS - "OBOY! Peanuts!"

Dennis picks some peanuts to eat.

GIRL - "No, No, No!"

DENNIS - "C'mon ... you can share some of 'em ... you got
LOTS!"

GIRL - "FOR SELL! FOR SELL!"

DENNIS - "Huh? You're selling 'em? You'll never sell peanuts
this way. Let me show you how!"

Dennis turns to face the crowd walking on the street and starts
shouting with all the charm that he can muster ...

DENNIS - "PEANUTS! GET YOUR RED HOT PEANUTS!
PEANUTS! RED HOT!"

A crowd gathers to buy the peanuts ...

DENNIS (collecting money) - "Thanks mister! Thanks ...
Thanks!"

A CUSTOMER - "Wait a minute! These are not hot! What's the
idea?"

ANOTHER CUSTOMER - "Yeah!"

THIRD CUSTOMER - "Gimme my money back!"

FOURTH CUSTOMER - "YEAH!"

GIRL (to Dennis) - "Que passa? Cacahuetes no hot? They like
hot stoff?"

DENNIS - "That's the idea, kiddo!"

GIRL (offering some other eatable) - "Aqui, Senor! Hot stoff!"

One customer tries them. Then starts screaming due to the excess hotness ...

DENNIS (pushing the girl behind him) - "We didn't MAKE you eat it, did we? An' I was tryin' to help this little kid here make some money!"

THE MAN - "Oh! ... Gee! ... I feel like a HEEL!"

MAN's WIFE - "Give her something, George."

ANOTHER MAN - "Yeah ... lets ALL help out!"

GIRL (with a lot of money now) - "Muchas gracias ... amigo!"

DENNIS - "Any ol' time, kiddo."

Dennis catches up with his parents.

HENRY - "Dennis! Where have you been?"

DENNIS - "Just helpin' a little kid in the peanut business!"

6. EXT. THE MUSEUM, MEXICO CITY - CONTINUOUS

ALICE - "Let's drop in the museum ... I want to see that famous calendar stone."

DENNIS - "A calendar ... made out of STONE? Boy! The city's flyin' ... and the calendars are made outta stone. Dad's really mixed up down here!"

They walk into the museum and approach the guide, who is addressing the crowd gathered around The Aztec Stone.

GUIDE - "This is the Aztec calendar stone, weighing 57,000 pounds. It took the Aztecs 52 years to carve, and was completed in 1479. So, it was in use 103 years before the calendar we use today. The Aztecs had a year of 18 months, of 20 days each. Here we see the day of the Snake, the Lizard, the House, the Wind ..."

DENNIS - "That CAN'T be a calendar, Mister!"

GUIDE - "Oh, no? Why not?"

DEBBIS - "'Cause it don't have no pretty pictures ... no pages ... no numbers ... an' it's too heavy to hang on the kitchen wall!"

The guide screams in frustration.

HENRY - "Hmm! End of culture lesson!"

7. EXT. THE BUSY THIEVES MARKET - SOMETIME LATER THAT AFTERNOON

DENNIS (addressing a shopkeeper wearing white) - "Hi, Mister! Did you used to be a robber?"

ALICE (rebuking) - "Dennis!"

The three of them walk down further down the aisle.

HENRY - "Wow! Isn't this something!"

ALICE - "My goodness! You certainly could find almost anything you can think of here!"

DENNIS - "Yeah! It's fulla good junk."

Henry approaches a shop he finds interesting.

DENNIS (pointing a very long gun at Henry) - "Het, Dad! How 'bout this?"

HENRY (taken aback) - "HEY!"

DENNIS - "It's okay, Dad! It don't even have a trigger."

HENRY - "Well ... Put it Down!"

Henry looks at a bullfighter's sword displayed in the shop.

HENRY - "I'd like that for a souvenir of Mexico ..."

8. EXT. THE SHOP, THIEVES MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Henry picks up the bullfighter's sword with considerable interest.

DENNIS - "You oughta get that cheap, Dad ... it's BENT."

HENRY - "It's supposed to be that way."

Henry then turns to the shopkeeper ...

HENRY - "Er ... cuanto vale?"

SHOPKEEPER - "400 pesos ... senor."

HENRY - "GOSH! Thirty-two bucks!"

ALICE - "It's up to you, dear."

HENRY (taking out his wallet) - "Okay, bueno!"

SHOPKEEPER - "Thanks bud. An' listen ... NEVER pay the first price here ... always beat it down!"

HENRY (walking away) - "Oh, well ... it's cheaper than I could get one in the States."

ALICE - "Oh, I'm sure."

HENRY - "Darn it! I was sure I had my tobacco pouch with me!"

DENNIS - "Hey Dad! Here's one in this shop here ... just like

yours!"

HENRY - "So it is! And it has fresh tobacco in it!"

DENNIS - "How about that?!"

Henry haggles with the shopkeeper wearing white (the one whom Dennis had innocently inquired before ... about being a thief) ... Henry brings down the price and buys the tobacco pouch from the shopkeeper in whites.

HENRY - "Say, this is my brand of tobacco! You don't suppose ... The Thieves Market ... that ...they still ...???"

9. INT. THE HOTEL RECEPTION, MEXICO CITY - NEXT MORNING

A baldish man in a dark suit is waiting for the Mitchell family.

THE MAN - "Ah, Mr. Mitchell? ... I am Raphael Hermosa."

HENRY - "Oh, yes. You are our guide from Mexican Travel Advisors ... good morning!"

RAPHAEL - "Good morning to you too! Hope you slept well?"

HENRY - "Yes ... until six o'clock."

DENNIS - "Hi Raphael! Are you gonna start showin' us stuff?"

RAPHAEL - "Yes, Dennis. We're now going to see the pyramids."

DENNIS - "What's pyramids?"

RAPHAEL - "Well, they are temples built of big rocks, that ..."

DENNIS (cutting in with a wide smile) - "ROCKS! Lucky I brought these, huh?"

Raphael looks at the catapult in Dennis' hand.

**10. EXT. THE GREAT CITADEL, NEAR MEXICO CITY
- SOMETIME LATER THAT MORNING**

RAPHAEL - "Here we are at the great citadel. In the background are the pyramids of the Sun and the Moon."

ALICE - "MY!"

HENRY - "Isn't this something, Dennis?"

DENNIS - "Lotaa rocks, all right!"

RAPHAEL - "And these were built by Indian tribes, Dennis. When YOUR Indians were living in the tents, OUR Indians were building palaces! They knew astronomy, mathematics, medicine ..."

DENNIS (dancing with enthusiasm) - "They had more FUN! Woo! Woo! Yaheee!"

RAPHAEL - "And these were two of their gods ... the Feathered Serpent ... and the Rain God."

DENNIS - "THAT funny guy made it RAIN?"

RAPHAEL - "Well, that was their belief, but ..."

HENRY - "WAIT! Feel the water falling? It's began to rain!"

DENNIS (shooting water with his toy gun) - "HA HA! It's EASY to make it rain! HA HA!"

**11. EXT. THE PYRAMIDS, NEAR MEXICO CITY -
CONTINUOUS**

RAPHAEL - "The pyramid of the Sun, here, is larger than most in Egypt ... Yet, it was built before the Indians knew the wheel ..."

without any beasts of burden ... If you'd want to climb the pyra-"
HENRY - "Dennis? DENNIS??!!!"

Dennis shouts from the top of the pyramid ...

DENNIS - "YOO-HOO! C'MON UP!"

ALICE - "OH, NO!"

HENRY - "YOU COME DOWN HERE, DENNIS!"

RAPHAEL - "I'll get him if you wish, Mr. Mitchell!"

HENRY - "I'LL get him! And when I do ... !"

Huffing and puffing, Henry reaches the top of the tall pyramid.

HENRY - "PHEW! WHAT TH...? DENNIS? DENNIS??!!!"

Dennis shouts from below ...

DENNIS - "HI DAD! I CAME DOWN THE OTHER SIDE!"

HENRY - "OH NO!"

Henry somehow manages to climb down the tall pyramid.

DENNIS - "I ALWAYS do what I'm told, don't I, Dad? Tell me to do somethin' else!"

HENRY - "Don't ... PUFF ... HUFF ... tempt me!"

12. EXT. THE BULLFIGHTING STADIUM, MEXICO CITY - SOMETIME LATER THAT DAY

DENNIS - "What are we gonna see here, Raphael ... a ball game?"

RAPHAEL - "No ... the MEXICAN national sport ... the bull fight!"

DENNIS - "What's so great about bulls fightin' each other?"

RAPHAEL - "No, no ... a MAN fights the bull!"

DENNIS - "Why don't he just lasso it an' tie it up like the cowboys do?"

ALICE - "Mmmmm ... Aren't those beautiful costumes, Dennis?"

DENNIS - "Huh! They look like Sissy suits to ME!"

HENRY - "End of bullfighting lesson."

13. INT. THE BULLFIGHTING STADIUM, MEXICO CITY - CONTINUOUS

The bullfighting begins ...

DENNIS - "That's not PLAYIN' ... that's TEASIN'!"

HENRY - "That's the way they do it, son!"

DENNIS - "NO FAIR! NO FAIR! ... I will fix that guy!"

HENRY - "DENNIS! DON'T!"

Dennis aims his catapult and the rock hits the man fighting the bull on his a** ... he begins to run back to the pavilion ... the bull charges and chases him ... and the crowd roars with laughter.

14. **EXT. THE PLAZA MEXICO, MEXICO CITY -
CONTINUOUS**

The Picadores test the bull with their lances ...

DENNIS - "OUR cowboys wouldn't do THAT, would they, Mom?"

ALICE - "No, Dennis."

DENNIS - "... an' our INJUNS would SHOOT them arrows with a BOW, wouldn't they?"

ALICE - "Yes, dear."

DENNIS (pointing at the Metador) - "Dad! You gonna do THAT with the sword you bought?"

HENRY - "Of course not!"

ALICE (covering her eyes) - "Don't watch if you don't want to, Dennis!"

HENRY (in shock) - "WHERE'D HE GO?!"

A little distance away, Dennis is looking at a TV reporter and his camera with some interest ...

DENNIS - "Hey, Mister! Is that a television camera?"

REPORTER - "Si ... television."

DENNIS - "I learned all about them in Hollywood!"

REPORTER - "'Ollywood? Si?"

DENNIS - "Yeah! I'll SHOW Ya!"

REPORTER - "NONONONO!"

Dennis jumps at him and inverts the camera. The television viewers now see the inverted face of Dennis ... smiling mischievously at them.

**15. EXT. OUTSIDE THE GATES OF THE PLAZA
MEXICO, MEXICO CITY - CONTINUOUS**

RAPHAEL - "Well ... at least you got the IDEA of the bullfight!"

HENRY - "Yes ... and OTHER ideas too!"

DENNIS - "Gee! I was just showin' the guy how they do television in Hollywood!"

They get into the car and Raphael starts the engine.

DENNIS - "You think that fightin' fair, Raphael?"

RAPHAEL - "Oh, it is VERY DANGEROUS for the Metador ... he must be VERY BRAVE ... SKILLFUL ... DARING ... GRACEFUL ..."

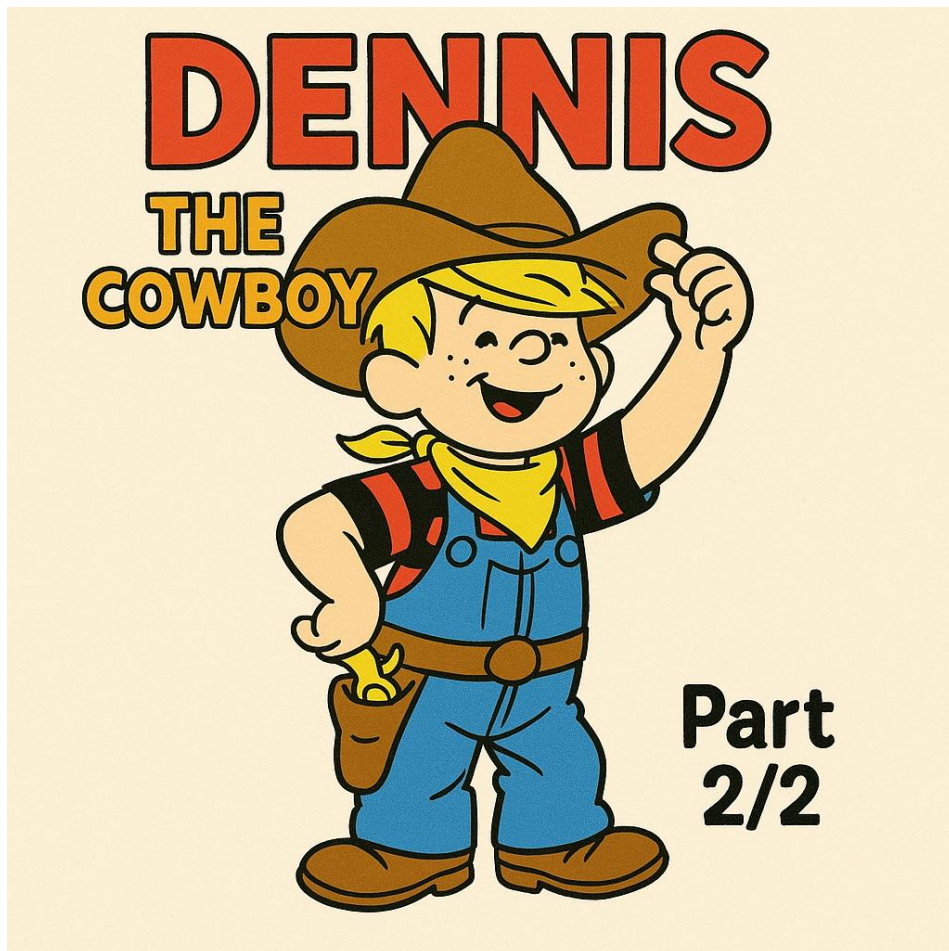
HENRY (rolling his eyes) - "YEAH!"

~ END OF PART I ~

4. DENNIS THE COWBOY

... PART II/II

~ Dedicated To Hank Ketcham



**16. INT. CAR ON THE ROAD, MEXICO CITY – NEXT DAY,
MORNING**

Dennis seats on the front seat, as Raphael drives the car. Alice and Henry seating at the back.

DENNIS – “So-chee-milko? That sounds like a silly name for a place.”

RAPHAEL – “Well, that’s how you pronounce Kochimilco ... it means ‘The Place of Flowers’.”

DENNIS – “FLOWERS?! I don’t wanna go to a flower place!”

ALICE – “Now Dennis!”

After a while Raphael stops the car at a parking place. Dennis jumps out of the car and starts running ...

RAPHAEL – “And here is Xochimilco ... the place of flowers.”

DENNIS (running hard) – “HEY! You didn’t tell me there will be BOATS!”

ALICE – “Look Henry! There’s one boat called Alicia! Let’s take that one!”

HENRY – “How about that? Sure!”

DENNIS – “We can’t TAKE it, Mom! It will never fit in the AIRPLANE!”

**17. EXT. ON ALICIA THE BOAT, KOCHIMILCO –
CONTINUOUS**

DENNIS – “Okay, start the motor!”

RAPHAEL – “There isn’t any motor, Dennis ... the boatman pushes it with a pole.”

DENNIS – “Huh? I could swim faster than this!”

HENRY – “Heh Heh! I’d like to see you try!”

Dennis is about to dive in to the waters; Henry somehow manages to catch him.

HENRY – “I didn’t MEAN that!”

DENNIS (staring at another boat passing by) – “Hey, look! Those people are eatin’!”

ALICE – “Shhhh! Don’t point, Dennis!”

HENRY – “Isn’t this relaxing?”

ALICE – “Mmmmm ... And beautiful too!”

HENRY – “Sort of makes you forget that Den ... DENNIS?!”

Dennis has swum his way to get on the passing boat.

DENNIS – “Hi! Ain’t that a lotta food for two people?”

HENRY (shouting from a distance) – “DENNIS!”

RAPHAEL – “I’ll tell them to put him on a boat coming this way.”

Later Dennis is handed over to another boat, without getting any share of the food.

DENNIS – “Okay, if ya wanna be selfish! ... Hey! This is a MUSIC boat! ... Wanna hear me play ‘POP GOES THE WEASEL’?”

BOATMAN – “No. NO. NOO. NOOOO.”

Dennis has already started stomping around, dancing with glee and disbalancing the boat in the process ...

DENNIS – “Neat, Huh?”

Later on, the disgruntled boatman hands Dennis over to Henry.

HENRY – “Muchas gracias!”

BOATMAN – “De Nada!”

DENNIS (waving at the boat going away) – “So long, guys!”

18. EXT. ON ALICIA THE BOAT, KOCHIMILCO – CONTINUOUS

DENNIS – “This So-chee-milko place is FUN, huh? Isn’t it?”

Henry and Alice stares at him.

DENNIS (voice going down) – “Huh? Isn’t it? Huh?”

A boat is crossing them on the side. A little girl is selling flowers on it, while her mother rows the boat.

GIRL – “Flores por le senora?”

ALICE – “Oh ... er ... si!”

HENRY – “Oh, sure!”

Henry buys some flowers and tries to take a photograph of the girl.

HENRY – “No ... not quite. I need to back a little mo-“

ALICE – “HENRY!”

Sploosh! Henry has fallen into the water and the camera flies out of his hand. Dennis catches it and clicks a photograph of wet Henry.
Click!

HENRY – “Did you HAVE to take that picture?”

ALICE – “HA HA HA! If he hadn’t, I would have! HA HA!”

19. INT. MOVING CAR, MEXICO CITY – SOME TIME LATER

RAPHAEL (pointing outside) – “Here’s where we stop for lunch ... the Hacienda Vista Hermosa!”

DENNIS – “The ... WHAT?”

RAPHAEL – “That means the Ranch of the Beautiful View ... And, it’s very OLD ... Hernando Cortes made SUGAR here.”

DENNIS (excited) – “SUGAR! MMMMMMBOY!”

ALICE – “DENNIS!”

Dennis has jumped out of the parked car and is now running with joy. Henry chases him.

HENRY – “COME BACK HERE!”

DENNIS – “I wanna see where they make the sugar!”

Dennis crashes into a man.

MAN – “OFF! ... what’s the rush, sonny?”

DENNIS – “I ... I just wanted to see where they make the sugar.”

MAN – “Oh, that was hundreds of years ago. Now, this is a resort hotel.”

DENNIS – “Are you SURE?”

MAN – “Pretty sure. I own it.”

Dennis is crestfallen.

20. INT. HACIENCA VISTA HERMOSA RESORT, MEXICO CITY – CONTINUOUS

The rest of the party joins the scene.

RAPHAEL – “Mr. Martines, these are the Mitchells.”

MARTINES – “Delighted to have you here!”

HENRY – “Our pleasure. Er ... I ... we hope you aren’t hurt?”

MARTINES – “No, I’m alright.”

ALICE – “Nice to meet you.”

DENNIS – “AND I’M DENNIS!”

MARTINES – “May I show you around?”

ALICE – “Well, we really just came for lunch, but ...”

DENNIS (tugging at Henry’s trousers) – “Hey Dad! DAD!”

MARTINES – “The bathroom, eh? It’s down that way, first door on the right.”

Martines begins the tour of his resort ...

MARTINES – “All this, of course, we have rebuilt. We call this the Alley of Hope ... because, we hope SOME day we’ll finish adding to the place.”

ALICE – “Beautiful!”

MARTINES – “And here is our pool. The arches are the old aqueduct, that brought water to the sugar mill in the 16th century.”

ALICIA – “Isn’t this lovely?”

RAPHAEL – “Very restful.”

HENRY – “Uh-huh but I wonder what’s keeping Dennis?”

Dennis in his undies ... standing up above them on the aqueduct ... ready to dive into the pool ...

DENNIS – “WATCH THIS GUYS!”

HENRY – “OH, NO! DEN...”

SPLOOSH!

ALICE – “Why, Dennis ... WHY?”

DENNIS – “Well ... what’s a swimming pool for?”

HENRY – “DENNIS, I COULD ... I’m awfully sorry.”

MARTINES (completely wet with all the water Dennis splashed with his dive) – “Don’t mention it.”

RAPHAEL – “I found his clothes up on the aqueduct.”

21. INT. RESTAURANT, HACIENCA VISTA HERMOSA RESORT, MEXICO CITY – A LITTLE LATER

Everyone seated on a table, while a waiter is serving them food.

MARTINES – “Oh? Have you seen the Mexican Hat Dance before?”

DENNIS – “They are not doing it right!”

HENRY – “How do you know?”

DENNIS – “Because they’re all the time missin’ the hat!”

Dennis runs over to the dancing area and jumps over the hat lying on the floor. CRUNH!

The hat is completely flatted ... and ruined.

DENNIS – “See, Mom ... Dad? Everyone is laughing! They know I did it right!”

HENRY – “DENNIS!”

And the uproar continues ... while Martines doesn't look too happy.

22. EXT. GARDENS, HACIENCA VISTA HERMOSA RESORT, MEXICO CITY – A LITTLE LATER

MARTINES – “Would you like to see some of the old tunnels we have?”

ALICIA – “Yes, indeed!”

DENNIS – “Do you have TRAINS goin' through 'em?”

MARTINES – “Oh, no ... these were part of the old sugar mill.”

Dennis having a gala time exploring the tunnels ...

DENNIS – “Kinda SPOOKY, huh?”

MARTINES – “People say that all we need to make the place really authentic is a ghost!”

DENNIS (staring at a huge mask) – “A GHOST?!”

MARTINES – “We plan to make this into a wine cellar ...”

ALICIA – “Where's Dennis?”

HENRY – “I thought you were watching him! ,, Dennis? DENNIS!!”

Suddenly a spooky mask appears in the corner ...

A VOICE – “WOO!”

HENRY – “GAA!!”

ALICIA – “WHAT ON ... ?”

DENNIS (emerging from behind the mask) – “Did ya think I was a ghost? Huh? Did ya?”

ALICE – “Dennis! You almost frightened the wits out of us!”

DENNIS – “But the man said he needed a ghost!”

HENRY – “Well, end of the tunnel lesson!”

23. EXT. HACIENCA VISTA HERMOSA RESORT, MEXICO CITY – A LITTLE LATER

MARTINES – “Speaking of lessons ... we give our guests lessons in bullfighting here.”

HENRY – “Oh, really?”

MARTINES – “Yes ... would you be interested?”

HENRY – “Well ... er ... “

MARTINES – “Come on ... we have a little heifer that you can try.”

HENRY (gulping) – “Okay ...”

MARTINES – “Watch me make a few passes ... you’ll get the idea.”

DENNIS – “You gonna tease that poor little baby cow, Dad?”

HENRY – “Not TEASE it. PLAY it! And keep that SLING-SHOT in your pocket!”

MARTINES – “Got the idea?”

HENRY – “I ... I think so!”

Henry enters the arena ...

HENRY – “HO! TORO! C’MON LIL FELLER!”

The baby cow stares angrily at Henry ...

HENRY (sweating) – “HUH?!”

MARTINES – “OLE! WELL, DONE! There’s no feeling quite like it, is there?”

HENRY – “You ... you c-can say THAT again! WHEW!”

DENNIS – “End of bullfighting lesson, huh, Dad? HA HA!”

24. EXT. CASTILLO SANTA CECELIA, GUANAJUATO – NEXT DAY

DENNIS – “WOW! A REAL CASTLE! Who lives here ... King Arthur and the Brown Table?”

HENRY – “This is a hotel, Dennis. We are staying here.”

DENNIS – “BOY! Can I be the King of the castle?”

HENRY – “Oh, sure, sure. Just ...”

Dennis has already disappeared.

HENRY – “DENNIS! Come down here!”

DENNIS (somewhere hidden) – “You can’t Boss me! I’m the KING!”

RAPHAEL – “I’ll take care of the ‘KING’ while you register and get settled.”

HENRY – “Thanks a lot Raphael.”

RAPHAEL – “Okay, King Dennis ... let me show you the castle!”

DENNIS – “Yeah! You KNOW how to play, Raphael.”

25. EXT. SWIMMING POOL, CASTILLO SANTA CECELIA, GUANAJUATO – NEXT DAY

Dennis strides to the pool area, Raphael following him. He sees Henry and Alicia having fun in the water.

HENRY – “Hi KING!”

ALICIA – “Having fun, M’LORD?”

DENNIS – “BOY! You guys are pretty sneaky! How come I don’t go swimmin’?”

RAPHAEL – “They’re serving dinner now, Dennis. Maybe if we get there FIRST, we ...”

DENNIS – “DINNER?!”

And Dennis is running towards the restaurant.

Soon the family is seated on a table. And the church bells starting ringing loudly. BONG! BING! BAM! BAM!

DENNIS (covering his ears with both hands) – “That noise is makin’ my ears nervous!”

RAPHAEL – “Those are the church bells down in the town. They ring every evening at 6 ... and also every morning at 6!”

DENNIS – “An’ everybody says I’M noisy!”

The ringing of bells continues ... BLONG! BING! BOOM!

26. INT. RESTAURANT, CASTILLO SANTA CECELIA, GUANAJUATO – CONTINUOUS

The bells don’t stop making the loud noises ... CLANG! CLANNNG! CLANNNNG!

DENNIS – “Hey! I’ll show you guys! My bells are LOTS louder!”

ALICE – “DENNIS!! CUT THAT OUT! DENNIS!!”

HENRY – “COME BACK HERE!”

Dennis has run out from the restaurant ... Alice, Henry and Raphael soon appear outside the restaurant looking for him.

ALICE – “Where did he go?”

HENRY – “I don’t see him!??”

RAPHAEL – “LOOK! ... His clothes! And this is an old mine-shaft ... full of water!”

HENRY – “OH, NO! DENNIS!”

ALICIA (fainting) – “OHHhhhh ...”

RAPHAEL (panicking) – “A ROPE! UNA CUERDA! ... PRONTO!”

HENRY – “HURRY!”

A rope is soon lowered down the mine-shaft ...

RAPHAEL – “DENNIS! CAN YOU HEAR ME? GRAB THE ROPE!”

HENRY (tugging the rope) – “I THINK I’VE GOT HIM!”

RAPHEL – “PULL! PULL!”

ALICIA – “HURRY, HENRY!”

Suddenly Dennis appears behind them all a... and also starts to pull the rope with glee!

HENRY – “DENNIS!”

DENNIS – “Hi! What are you fishin’ for?”

ALICIA – “OH, DENNIS! We thought you were down there!”

DENNIS – “I was just playin’ by the pool, like you guys!”

A turkey comes trotting around.

DENNIS – “Look at the crazy Mexican turkey!”

**27. EXT. ON A BOAT APPROACHING AN ISLAND,
MEXICO – NEXT DAY, MORNING**

RAPHAEL – “We are going out to that island, Dennis. The people there are all Tarascan Indians!”

DENNIS – “GEE, I shoulda have brought my cowboy guns!”

Dennis sees a rope and starts pulling it ...

DENNIS (to himself) – “A cowboy rope would HELP!”

Soon enough ...

RAPHAEL – “Que pasa?”

ALICE – “We are going around in circles!”

HENRY – “DENNIS! That’s the steering rope!”

DENNIS – “I need somethin’ for those INJUNS!”

RAPHAEL – “Oh, THESE Indians are all FISHERMEN. Dennis!”

DENNIS – “They shoot fish with their bows ‘n arrows?”

RAPHAEL – “No, they use these nets that look like big butterflies.”

DENNIS – “Boy! You got more imagination that I have!”

RAPHAEL (handing money to a fisherman in a boat passing by) –
“He’ll show us how he does it for a few pesos.”

DENNIS (watching keenly) – “What a FAKE! He didn’t catch ONE fish!”

FISHERMAN (laughing) – “No catch fish ... but catch muchos pesos!”

**28. EXT. ON THE BOAT APPROACHING AN ISLAND,
MEXICO – CONTINUOUS**

DENNIS – “I’ll be the LOOKOUT up front.”

ALICIA – “Just be careful.”

Dennis accidentally turns off a valve ... while proceeding to look out from the front ... and the boat engine starts groaning loudly.

DENNIS – “Sounds like you’re outta gas, Mister!”

BOATMAN – “Gas? Petroleo?”

The boatman runs and turns on the petrol valve ...

HENRY – “Did you do this, Dennis?”

DENNIS – “I dunno! I was too busy bein’ the look-out to look out!”

**29. EXT. ON THE ISLAND, MEXICO – LITTLE TIME
LATER**

HENRY – “Guess we’ll buy a few souvenirs, okay?”

ALICIA – “Fine! Dennis, settle down. What would you like?”

Soon there is a fishing net in the hands of a happy Dennis.

DENNIS – “I’m gonna catch fish all the way back in the boat!”

HENRY – “Ho Ho! Sure, sure!”

RAPHAEL – “I’ll bet!”

Later during the return trip ... on the boat.

DENNIS – “ANOTHER ONE! ... ANOTHER ONE!”

RAPHAEL – “WHAT ...?”

HENRY – “Well ... I’ll be ...”

RAPHAEL – “You seem to be catching fish better than those Indians, Dennis.”

DENNIS – “That’s because I’m a cowboy! Cowboys always beat Injuns!”

30. INT. AIRPLANE FLYING BACK FROM MEXICO – NEXT DAY, AFTERNOON

HENRY – “Well, son ... how did you like Mexico?”

DENNIS – “Swell, Dad! There’s just one thing I can’t figger out ...”

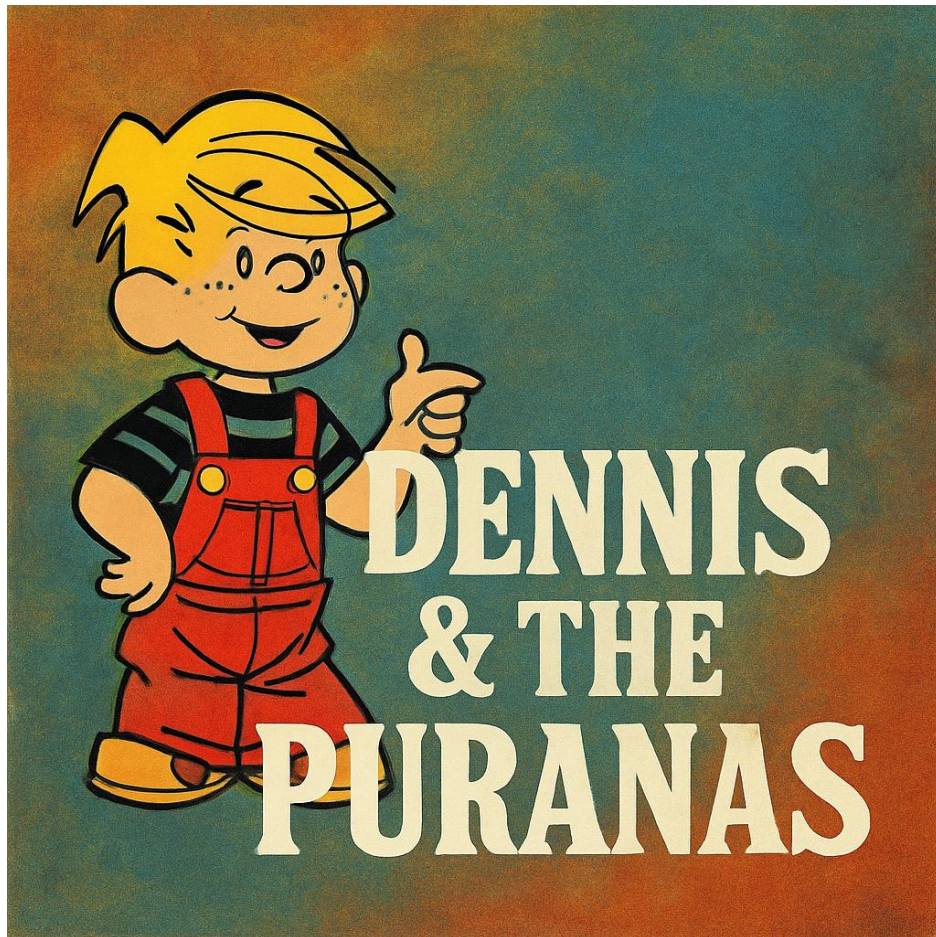
HENRY – “What’s that?”

DENNIS – “... Where IS Mexico?”

~ THE END ~

5. DENNIS & THE PURANAS

~ Dedicated To Hank Ketcham



PART I

1. INT. STUDY ROOM, MITCHELL HOME - DAWN

Henry looks up from his books and sees Dennis playing with his toys.

HENRY - "Dennis, I am going to tell you about THE WISE OLD PURANAS."

DENNIS (looking up) - "Gee, Dad! What's these 'puranas'?"

HENRY (clearing his throat) - "Life is transmitted through genes ..."

DENNIS - "In the 'puranas'?"

HENRY - "No. In general, you see-"

DENNIS - "Tell me about the 'puranas'!"

HENRY - "Okay! No need to become impatient .. you are developing ADHD ..."

DENNIS - "What's ADHD?"

HENRY - "It's a mental disorder ... called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder."

DENNIS - "Sounds a handful! What's that got to do with the 'puranas'?"

HENRY - "Er ... nothing, kid ... So, as I was saying ... genes also get mutated."

DENNIS - "In a good way or bad?"

HENRY - "That depends ... on a lot of factors!"

DENNIS - "Sounds too random to me! What's mutation got to do with the 'puranas'?"

HENRY (now sounding happy) - "That's it! The puranas have also mutated!"

Dennis looks at his Dad ... now interested.

2. INT. STUDY ROOM, MITCHELL HOME - CONTINUOUS

HENRY (with a grave baritone) - "The conscious mind has evolved to communicate with languages ..."

DENNIS - "Is 'puranas' a language, Dad?"

HENRY - "No. They are written in a language called Sanskrit."

DENNIS - "Gee, Dad! A lot of other stuff has also been written with language. What's this got to do with the 'puranas'?"

HENRY - "Don't interrupt elders when they speak!"

DENNIS (shrugging) - "Okay, If you say so!"

3. INT. STUDY ROOM, MITCHELL HOME - CONTINUOUS

HENRY (clearing his throat again) - "Since the evolution of mankind happened simultaneously at different places on Earth, we have many races speaking different languages."

DENNIS - "Are the 'puranas' written in many languages?"

HENRY - "No, Dennis."

DENNIS - "Then why are you telling me this? I want to know about the 'puranas'."

HENRY - "I will come to it, eventually. First listen!"

DENNIS (looking at his toys) - "Please go on."

HENRY - "The diversity of human races is fast disappearing with time ..."

DENNIS (almost to himself) - "Just like the 'puranas'!"

4. INT. STUDY ROOM, MITCHELL HOME - CONTINUOUS

HENRY - "You see, the puranas are ancient scriptures."

DENNIS (getting back his interest) - "Gee, Dad! What's in them?"

HENRY - "Before the scriptures were written, our knowledge was preserved in oral hymns."

DENNIS (again looking longingly at his toys) - "So?"

HENRY - "That knowledge bank of the early Indians were ultimately preserved in the Vedas and Upanishads."

DENNIS - "What's those? Are they also 'puranas'?"

HENRY - "Did I say so? No, they were earlier scriptures. When different races of Indians spread out and met, they needed a common platform to interact with each other. Puranas were written when different Indian cultures and traditions mutated and got merged together."

Dennis is staring at his Dad. Henry pats his head condescendingly.

HENRY - "That was today's lesson on the puranas."

DENNIS - "You said that the 'puranas' were wise?"

HENRY - "Yes."

DENNIS - "You didn't say what wisdom is in them!"

~ END OF PART I ~

PART II

1. EXT. ENTRANCE DOOR, THE WILSONS HOME - DUSK

Dennis standing in front of the door, along with Joey and Ruff.
After a lot of bangin' on the door, there is no response.

Dennis now starts thumping the drum around his neck, as Ruff joins in a loud chorus.

DENNIS - "Mr Wiiiiiiilsoooooooooon! ... MR.
WIIIIIIILLLLLSOOOOOOOONNNN!!! ... We know you are
behind the door! Open Up!"
RUFF - "WOOF! WOOF!"

The racket reaches a crescendo and an extremely irritated Mr.
Wilson finally opens the door. Standing beside him is a sour-faced
Mrs. Wilson.

The kids barge inside the house. Ruff starts biting Mrs. Wilson's
gown while she tries to hit it with a broomstick.

MR. WILSON - "Holla Dennis! What can I do for you?"
DENNIS - "Today, Dad told me all about the 'puranas'!"
JOEY (looking blank) - "Puranas?! What's that?"
MR. WILSON (measuring both the kids) - "Nice! How can I
help?"
DENNIS - "I came to tell you about 'em!"
MR. WILSON - "Perhaps I should not hear about that."
DENNIS - "But you are writing a book on the 'puranas'! You told
me that, didn't you?"
MR. WILSON - "Yes, I am writing an English translation of
Srimad Bhagavatam."
DENNIS - "Then we have lots to discuss!"

Dennis leaves the astounded Wilsons standing wide-eyed and wide-mouthed and promptly enters Mr. Wilson's study room. Joey follows, as does Ruff - wagging his tail.

"WOOF! WOOF!!"

2. INT. STUDY ROOM, WILSONS HOME - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is now seated in the study, except for Ruff, who is busy chewing an old rug.

Mr. Wilson opens a big notebook - his handwritten manuscript. Then he looks at Dennis - half-curious, half-scared.

MR. WILSON - "What did Mitchell tell you about the puranas?"

DENNIS - "Genes mutate ... so does puranas."

MR. WILSON (with rolling eyes) - "WHAT?!"

DENNIS - "Many races ... many languages ... many different early Indians ... they all came together and wrote down ... their poems ... as the puranas!"

MR. WILSON - "What the h--"

MRS. WILSON (cutting in) - "Why don't you explain it to the boys, dear? The Lord can do with a couple more devotees!"

MR. WILSON (looking suspiciously at Dennis) - "What else do you know about them puranas?"

DENNIS - "They are very wise."

MR. WILSON - "That they are."

RUFF (having lost all interest in the rug by now) - "WOOF! WOOF!!"

Joey is vacantly looking outside the window, unable to follow

anything being said.

DENNIS (clapping his hands) - "Tell us more about the 'puranas', Mr. Wilson!"

MR. WILSON - "Hmmmm ..."

3. INT. STUDY ROOM, THE WILSONS HOME - CONTINUOUS

MR. WILSON (clearing his throat) - "There are 193 countries in the world today, all members of The United Nations."

DENNIS - "So?"

MR. WILSON (bending over) - "Next time you dare to interrupt me, kid, I'll cane you!"

DENNIS (shrinking back) - "OKAY! Mum is the word!"

MRS. WILSON - "Go on, dear!"

MR. WILSON (clearing his throat again) - "Most of the members of The United Nation, are not united at all."

JOEY (with sudden interest) - "Just like at home!"

DENNIS - "Shhhhh! Joey, Shut up!"

MR. WILSON (looking menacingly at the kids) - "Real unity can only be achieved IF everyone joins the brotherhood of Sri Krishna's devotees!"

DENNIS - "Who is this Krishna guy?!"

MR. WILSON - "Hush, child. Sri Krishna is our Almighty Lord! Never talk about him like that. He is Godhead himself!"

JOEY - "God? Like Jesus?"

DENNIS - "Jesus is not God, but the Son of God. I learnt it at the church!"

MR. WILSON - "There may be many gods, but there is only one Godhead - Lord Krishna!"

DENNIS - "The Son of God got himself crucified. What did God Krishna do?"

MR. WILSON - "He killed his evil uncle, Emperor Kansa ... and then helped the Pandavas to win The Great Kurukshetra War."

DENNIS - "Sounds like a warrior to me, not a God!"

Both Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Wilson are fuming now.

4. INT. STUDY ROOM, THE WILSONS HOME - CONTINUOUS

MR. WILSON (looking very grave) - "With world peace at stake, only Sanatana Dharma can prevent everyone from killing each other, and everyone become brothers."

JOEY (smiling) - "Brothers in arms!"

DENNIS (curiously) - "Is Lord Krishna an Indian version of Magneto?"

MR. WILSON - "WHAT??!!!"

DENNIS (nodding) - "This brotherhood sounds like Magneto's Brotherhood Of The Mutants. I read in Marvel's X-Men comics!"

Mr. WILSON - "Hmmmmp!"

RUFF - "WOOF! WOOF!!!"

Mrs. Wilson tries to get hold of her broomstick. Ruff starts biting at her leg ...

5. INT. STUDY ROOM, WILSONS HOME - CONTINUOUS

MR. WILSON - "Our bodies are temporary, but our souls are permanent. The soul becomes happy by worshipping the Godhead, not by chasing material comforts and luxuries. Do you understand?"

JOEY (pensively) - "I want to be happy!"

RUFF (running away from Mrs. Wilson's broomstick) - "WOOF! WOOF!!"

DENNIS - "I am in too, Mr. Wilson! How do we begin ... to be happy?"

MR. WILSON - "Say - HARE KRISHNA!"

DENNIS AND JOEY (in chorus) - "HARE KRISHNAAAAA!!!!!"

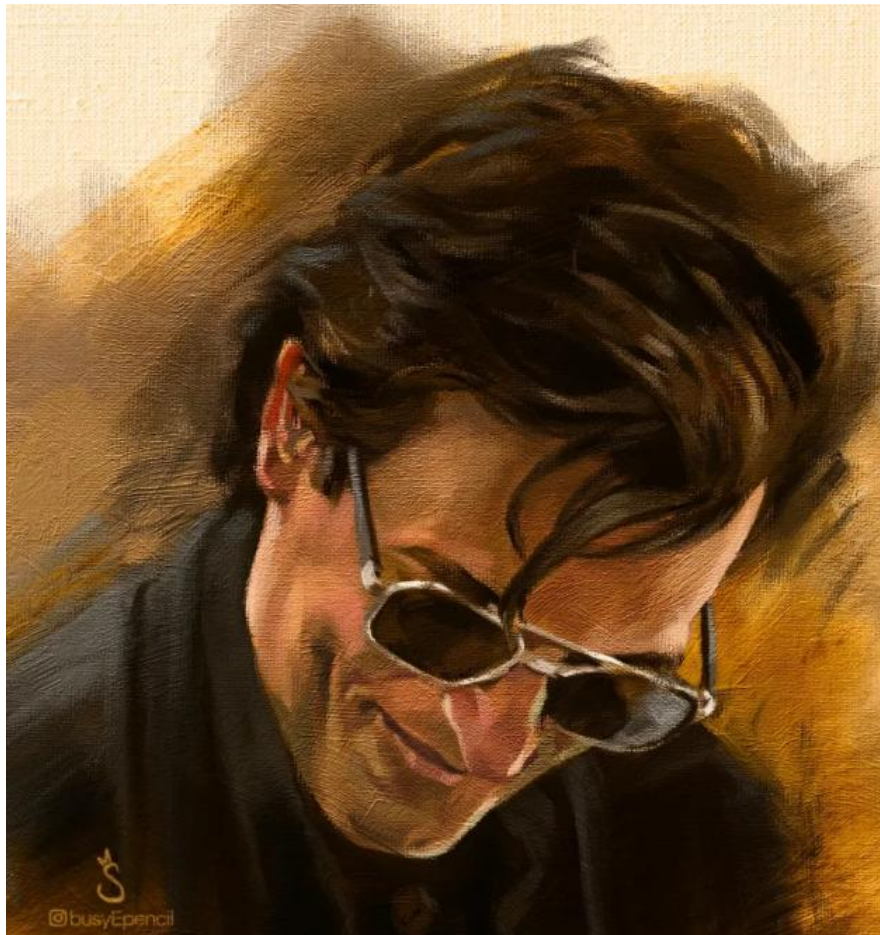
RUFF - "WOOF! WOOF!! WOOF!!!"

~ THE END ~

BOOK VI - CHRIS, THE GRUMPY

1. TO DHAR ... WITH LOVE – PART I

... INTRODUCING GABBU



~ A FLYING INTERVIEW ~

1. INT. RECEPTION, B62STUDIOS – DAY

GABBU (with a belt in his hand) – “Hmmm ... Kitne Aadmi The?”

ADI – “Ji Sarkar?”

GABBU – “Theaters Mein ... Kitne Aadmi The?”

ADI – “Sarkar ... Do Crore.”

GABBU – “Hmmm ... Do Crore! ... Woh Do Crore The ... Aur Main?!”

ADI – “Aap ... Sarkar?”

GABBU – “Hum Bhi The ... Theater Mein.”

ADI (smiling) – “Ji Sarkar!”

GABBU – “Phir Bhi 214 Minutes? ... Kya Samajh Ke Banaya? ... Ki Sardar Khush Hoga? ... Shabaashi Dega, Kyun? ... Dhikkar Hain!”

Gabbu takes out his tobacco pouch ...and stands up.

GABBU – “Is Ki Saaja Milegi ... Barabaar Milegi!”

GABBU (taking Rambo’s gun) – “Are O Rambo ... Kitne Goli Hain Isme?”

RAMBO (pensively) – “Teen Sarkar.”

GABBU – “Goli Teen ... Aur Aadmi Ek ... Bohat Beinsaafi Hain Ye!”

Gabbu fires three shots in the air ... and then pats Adi’s trembling shoulders.

GABBU (shaking my head) – “Yeh Bhi ... Baach Gaya!”

~ THE RUNNING INTERVIEW ~

2. INT. EDITING ROOM, B62 STUDIOS – MIDNIGHT

Aditya hugging his laptop tightly, with a crazed look in his eyes. Yami sits at a distance, crying over broken glass.

GABBU – “Dhurandhar Ka Footage Mujhe De De Thakur.”

ADI – “Nehiii.”

GABBU - “Footage Hum Ko De, Thakur!”

ADI – “Naaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!!!”

Gabbu takes out a pair of scissors ... and gives them a crooked smile.

~ THE END ~

2. THE NINTH AVATAR

... Introducing Chris, The Grumpy

~ Dedicated To Hollywood



THE PRELUDE

Chris is an unconventional director drawn to dreams, prestige, memory, obsession—and other cinematic idiosyncrasies. Lately, though, his curiosities have expanded to World War II, space travel, and the idea of an inverted spy thriller.

He began by making *Following* with his own money, back when he wasn't earning much and was stuck in a job he didn't like. Then came *Memento*, an independent film based on a story by his brother, Jon. The movie diverged from the original tale, but its eccentricity earned it a devoted cult following.

That was enough to get a major studio's attention. They hired him to direct a remake starring two of the biggest names imaginable. Somehow, he survived the egos, navigated the tantrums, and delivered a good film. Impressed (and slightly bewildered), the studio then handed him the keys to reboot a long-dead superhero franchise involving a bat.

What followed was arguably the greatest superhero trilogy ever made—one that redefined the genre in ways fans never saw coming. Ironically, in the process, Chris became the ultimate superhero fan. And since 2012, whenever he sees or hears the word superhero, he promptly starts running... in the opposite direction.

Chris also appears to share an inverted, telepathic connection with Dennis the Cowboy. When Dennis became obsessed with the linear *Iliad*, Chris responded by making a film on the nonlinear *Odyssey*. Now, Dennis is reportedly preparing to send him a superhero script for consideration.

With age, Chris has grown increasingly moody and grumpy, and not even Academy Awards seem to help. Which means no one—not even

Chris himself—knows what he'll do next.

He might fine-tune the script for Phantom 2050, depending entirely on his mood.

Otherwise, it's straight to the dustbin ...

1. EXT. CAFÉ, PLACE UNKNOWN – TIME UNKNOWN

Chris is sitting and brooding over a cup of tea.

Bruce & Selina enters the café hand-in-hand, walk towards Chris ... (who refuses to look at superheroes these days) ... and sit down opposite him.

Chris keeps staring at some distant trees ...

BRUCE (waving his hand casually) – “Helloooo!”

Chris refuses to acknowledge their presence.

Bruce reaches out and takes Chris’ cup of tea. Now Chris turns to look at him, looking grumpy.

Bruce slowly takes a sip and makes a face.

BRUCE – “I always prefer coffee.”

CHRIS – “Aha!”

BRUCE – “Anyways ... I am bored with my retirement ... I want another comeback.”

CHRIS – “I don’t do superheroes anymore.”

SELINA – “Why. Chris?”

CHRIS – “I already did all that there was to be done. Nothing left for me to explore ... in that genre.”

BRUCE – “So, what are you doing these days?”

CHRIS – “Making The Odyssey.”

BRUCE – “So, this Odysseus fellow ... he isn’t a superhero, you think?”

CHRIS – “He is an ancient Greek mythic figure!”

BRUCE – “And I am not?”

SELINA (coughing) – “We know that Matt is making another Bat Trilogy ... So, we thought you might ... perhaps bring us back ... in another superhero franchise ... if possible?”

BRUCE – “She means another ‘mythic’ franchise.”

CHRIS – “And what’s that?”

BRUCE – “The Phantom ... Ghost Who Walks.”

CHRIS – “It’s the same stuff ... The Phantom was one of the inspirations behind The Bat.”

BRUCE – “How about setting him in the future? Something in the lines of the animated series ‘The Phantom 2040’ ...”

SELINA – “It’s kind of similar to the setting of Interstellar ... regarding ecological collapse in near future ... we could explore it a bit more from Earth’s point of view ... and how it can be engineered out of greed ...”

CHRIS (thoughtfully) – “That’s a possibility ...”

BRUCE (leaning over now) – “We could shape the future, you know ...”

CHRIS – “Hmmm ... So, where is the script?”

BRUCE – “I will check with Jon ... and get back to you.”

2. INT. RESTAURANT, MUMBAI – EVENING

Chris having dinner with James Cameron. Chris is staring at a lot of Indian spicy food in front of him apprehensively ...

CAMERON – “What do you think of the title – ‘Fire & Ash’?”

CHRIS – “I would have preferred the title ‘Fire OR Ash.’”

CAMERON - “I have made this film 3+ hours long, you know ... to provide value for the audiences’ money.”

CHRIS - “I prefer a runtime of only 111 minutes ... to value everyone’s time.”

CAMERON - "But that will hardly justify the time I took to research and develop this film."

CHRIS - "I prefer to reject the excess and approve the essentials ... in no time."

CAMERON - "But brevity won't make everyone feel the emotions ..."

CHRIS - "I would rather prefer to push the audience to think instead."

CAMERON - "How about the background score? Did it enhance your viewing experience?"

CHRIS - "I prefer silence .. over bombastic scores."

CAMERON - "You don't understand ... I want my films to make people cry, you know ... now and then."

CHRIS - "I would rather want everyone to laugh ... all the time!"

CAMERON - "I guess ... I may need to evolve."

CHRIS - "And I ... want to dissolve."

CAMERON - "Can't you appreciate Pandora's grandeur?"

CHRIS - "I would rather fish for criticism on my intensity."

CAMERON - "Whatever ... I have made Pandora truly magnificent!"

CHRIS - "But the future is ... otherwise ... quite omniscient."

CAMERON - "What do you mean? I have the experience of taking the Alien franchise forward!"

CHRIS - "Maybe it's time to reboot the Terminator."

CAMERON - "I prefer Avatars ... they are the genuine sound of my inner voice."

CHRIS (to himself) - "And I Hate ... The Echoes Of My Words."

3. EXT. ENTRANCE GATE, HIRANI RESIDENCE, MUMBAI – NEXT DAY

Chris walks out after cracking some poor jokes with Raju. Suddenly, the Ghost of Gandhi appears before him ... out of nowhere.

GANDHI - "Be careful, my friend! ... An eye for an eye will make the world blind."

CHRIS - "Maybe my one-sided wisdom ... will keep you blinded instead!"

GANDHI - "Be grateful to me ... for sharing my wisdom, young chap! ... I gave India her freedom!"

CHRIS - "That was a while back ... And I keep wondering, what happened to the concept of development?"

GANDHI - "That was Nehru's responsibility."

CHRIS – "Aha!"

4. INT. RESTAURANT, MUMBAI – AFTERNOON

Chris having lunch with Dennis. He still isn't touching the spicy Indian dishes ...

DENNIS - "Chris, you can't reduce my synopsis to Zero!"

CHRIS - "Why Not?"

DENNIS - "I have my feelings!"

CHRIS - "True ... But This Synopsis Is Only Ramblings ... No Story ... No Content ... Nothing."

DENNIS - "You can't do this to me! I am a human!"

CHRIS (thoughtfully) - "So?"

5. INT. RESTAURANT, MUMBAI – CONTINUOUS

CHRIS - "What Can Possibly Begin A Resource War In India?"

DENNIS - "Lack of resources!"

CHRIS - "Not necessarily."

DENNIS (bewildered) - "Then?"

CHRIS - "What about ... Overpopulation?"

DENNIS – "Never heard of such nonsense! Not even from the Indian Prime Minister - Shiv Shankar!"

6. INT. RESTAURANT, MUMBAI – CONTINUOUS

DENNIS - "I wrote this synopsis for a Bollywood film!"

CHRIS - "I know that."

DENNIS - "But you don't understand! ... Indians like melodrama ... overblown entertainment!"

CHRIS - "Almost everyone everywhere likes that ... to different extents."

DENNIS - "Then why are you not approving my synopsis?!"

CHRIS - "It is lacking melodramatic and overblown logic ... but that too is logic, nonetheless ... your script has only your feelings ... and no logic, whatsoever."

7. INT. FLIGHT, MUMBAI AIRPORT – NIGHT

Chris sits with a dejected face (... and a grumpy one, of course!). He does not care to look at the guy sitting beside him. But the stranger looks at him with keen interest.

JOSH – “Why so ... sad?”

CHRIS – “Not sad ... only serious.”

JOSH – “Why so ... serious?”

CHRIS – “I met Cameron, Gandhi & Dennis ... and wasted my time listening to absurdity ... of different sorts.”

JOSH – “Hmmmm ... What are you doing here, in the first place?”

CHRIS – “I was invited to promote Cameron’s new Avatar film and to read a synopsis written by Dennis ... Also, happened to meet the Ghost of Gandhi, at Raju’s residence.”

JOSH – “So, where are you off to now?”

CHRIS – “The editing room in my office.”

JOSH – “Good luck with your Odyssey!”

8. INT. EDITING ROOM, SYNCOPY OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

Chris in deep thought. Emma sitting beside him ... yawning.

EMMA - "Let's go home, it's too late."

CHRIS - "Not yet."

EMMA - "Why?"

CHRIS - "I am being bugged at home ... and maybe here too."

EMMA - "What?"

CHRIS - "Had a showdown with Cameron. He is a bit upset and is using all his money and influence to bug me."

EMMA - "His movie is doing very well, Chris. Why would James bother so much?"

CHRIS - "He isn't happy with his film. He wants to know what I am doing."

EMMA - "So, what's your counter measure? IF he is listening to us now ... maybe, I should not even ask."

CHRIS - "It's ok ... he is on a wild goose chase anyways."

EMMA - "How so?"

CHRIS (smiling for a change) - "I am editing Odyssey in my mind ... with my memories."

**9. INT. DRAWING ROOM, MITCHELL HOME -
MORNING**

Alice and Henry sipping morning coffee. Dennis appears all dressed up, ready to go somewhere ...

ALICE - "You don't have school today, do you?"

DENNIS - "No, I am going to watch 'Avatar: Fire & Ash' ... First Day First Show!"

HENRY - "That's nice. Have Fun!"

DENNIS - "I have to reach the theatre early ... So long!"

ALICE - "What's the rush? Isn't it too early?"

DENNIS - "I don't want to miss the trailer of Odyssey. It's the reason why I am going."

HENRY - "Why, Dennis? You said Chris does not even understand films."

DENNIS - "He does not! But, unless I see the trailer, I cannot criticize him more!"

**10. INT. DRAWING ROOM, CAMERON MANSION,
ON A PRIVATE ISLAND - MORNING**

Cameron is reading the newspaper, sipping coffee and smiling to himself. Suddenly, the Ghost of Gandhi pops up before him.

GANDHI - "Why so happy, James?"

CAMERON - "All shows of Avatar are sold out in advance! And the film is getting rave reviews - all over ... everywhere! Why should I NOT smile?"

GANDHI - "And ... what's the update on Chris?"

CAMERON - "He is behaving strangely. Studying random stuff all day ... and keeps thinking about ... Christ knows what!"

GANDHI - "Did he see your film yet?"

CAMERON - "No. But he wrote a review of the film, which makes sense. As if, he knew exactly what I was making!"

GANDHI - "He is a fan of your work."

CAMERON - "Maybe ... He has also written a blog post ... where he is dedicating his next franchise to me!"

GANDHI - "That's nice"

CAMERON (smiling) - "Yes, now my legacy is finally ... cemented ..."



~ THE END ~

3. THE ODYSSEY TRAILER

... Inside The Mind Space Of Chris

~ Dedicated To Anne & Emma



1. INT. THE EDITING ROOM, SYNCOPY OFFICE – LATE NIGHT

Chris working hard on the final version of 'The Odyssey' trailer. With his racing mind, he has cut 12 different trailers and is now wondering what to do ...

EMMA – “You need to give me the final version tonight, Chris. I have to send it out tomorrow ... for it to be showcased with Avatar: Fire & Ash.”

CHRIS – “The Odyssey is not releasing anytime soon ... I don't know which of these trailers are revealing too much ... and which are not saying ... enough.”

EMMA (impatiently) – “All of them seem ok to me ... just pick one!”

CHRIS – “The trailer needs to evoke the right amount of interest ... so as to create the right expectations. I don't want people going to the theatres to be shocked ... Shocks work better in virtual gaming ... not while telling stories on screen.”

EMMA – “Don't overthink ... after Oppenheimer's run, some expectations are set.”

CHRIS – “That is the problem! Pre-conceived expectations are the root of all disappointments ...”

EMMA – “... and also the reason for pleasant surprises!”

2. INT. THE LABYRINTH OF CHRIS' NEURAL NETWORK – AT CONSTANT TIME

Chris is sitting and brooding ... Suddenly, the Ghost of Gandhi appears in front him ... smirking gleefully.

GANDHI – “Why do I see two bedrooms here, huh?”
CHRIS (shrugs) – “One Is For Anne ... The Other For Emma.”
GANDHI – “That I Figured! ... But, Why Two? Heh Heh ... Is One Not Enough?”
CHRIS – “No ... I Often Need To Talk To Both Of Them ... Depending On The Scenario.”
GANDHI – “Amazing! ... I Thought Bedrooms Are For ... Ummmm ... Other Stuffs!”
CHRIS – “Well ... That Depends.”
GANDHI – “So ... What Do You Talk About?”
CHRIS – “We Discuss My Thoughts ... Where They Are Coming From ... Where They Are Headed To ... And Stuff Like That ...”
GANDHI – “You Let Two Women ... Control Your Thoughts. Huh?”
CHRIS – “They Don’t Control Anything ... They Simply Help Me To Analyze ... My Thought Process ... By Asking Relevant Questions”
GANDHI – “Whatever! ... But Why Two, Eh?”
CHRIS – “They Are Quite Different Two Personalities ... With Different Worldviews ... Different Line Of Questioning ... And Both Understand Me ... So, Together They Help Me ... To See The Big Picture.”
GANDHI – “You See Pictures In Your Dreams, Huh? In My Dreams ... Women Have Only One Utility ...”
CHRIS – “Ha! I Wish I Was Such A Simpleton Too ...”

3. INT. THE LABYRINTH, MIND OF CHRIS - DILATED TIME

CHRIS - "I am thinking of writing an adapted screenplay of David Copperfield."

ANNE - "Good idea. Parts of that novel are very relatable."

CHRIS - "But I am not sure of the other parts."

ANNE - "A direct adaptation of such an old book will not work that well today, Chris. You know that."

CHRIS - "Yeah, I will have to tell it in my own way. Would you like to play the equivalent role of Agnes?"

ANNE - "I don't think so ..."

CHRIS - "Why, Anne?"

ANNE - "That will be too personal."

Chris feels the warmth of her breath falling on his face.

4. INT. THE LABYRINTH, MIND OF CHRIS - DILATED TIME

CHRIS - "What do you think of the idea of adapting David Copperfield, Emma?"

EMMA - "I gave it considerable time to sink in. And I still feel, that it is quite an idea!"

CHRIS - "It reminds me of our days as grad students ... Maybe I shud set it up in NY."

EMMA - "Nordics will be more suitable ... this film needs to look great."

CHRIS - "Agreed. And perhaps ... the cold exteriors will add another layer to the story. Would you like to play a re-imagined character of Dora?"

EMMA - "Nope, that will be too personal. But you should first find a director. And maybe the casting will organically happen then."

CHRIS - "Hmmmm ..."

Chris can hear her heartbeats ... which makes him hyper conscious ... of human mortality.

5. INT. THE LIBRARY, MIND FORTRESS - TIME STILL

Chris is staring at a stack of blank pages in front of him.
Emma and Anne seated on the opposite side of the table ...
facing him ... both observing him.

Emma hands him a book ...

EMMA - "This is an adapted novel by Barbara Kingsolver ...
She has a knack of capturing emotions intelligently."

Chris takes the book - Demon Copperfield. Anne gives him
another one ...

ANNE - "This is arguably an earlier attempt in quantum
storytelling ... it has tried to implement some of the ideas you
are interested in."

CHRIS - "I saw the film which was made on it ... it was a bit
confusing."

Chris is holding a copy of the novel - Cloud Atlas.

EMMA - "Make it simpler ... more palatable ... more
comprehensible ..."

ANNE - "And be patient ... with yourself. Crystallization
takes time ..."

And Chris is submerged in his thoughts ... while the pages continue to remain blank.

6. INT. THE LIBRARY, MIND FORTRESS - TIME STILL

ANNE - "You are becoming more silent ... day by day ..."

EMMA - "What's all these books on Theology for?"

Chris remains silent.

ANNE (smiles) - "It's good to see an extreme atheist ... digging into Religion ... finally!"

CHRIS - "Not exactly theology ... I am trying to know a bit about the mythology surrounding religions ... specially about a few religious leaders ..."

EMMA - "How is that going to help?"

CHRIS - "This is for the future verse ... I want to conceptualize The Quantum Prophet ... based on the best of the best ... ever in business."

ANNE (still smiling) - "You mean the best ... or the most popular ones?"

CHRIS - "Something ... like that."

EMMA - "I see a lot of books and notes on ... The Buddha!"

CHRIS - "Yup ... he founded a religion without the concept of god ... relentlessly promoted the idea of self-improvement ... and elevated meditation as an effective tool for metacognition ... quite an interesting character."

ANNE (she just can't stop smiling) - "I see a book on The Prophet too ..."

CHRIS - "Had not read much about him before ... he made a strong case for unification ... perhaps a bit too strong ..."

EMMA (in a hurry) - "That's a translation of Mahabharata ... isn't that?"

CHRIS (smiling) - "Yes ... Krishna had an amazing affinity towards the powerful ... including his own Yadava clan!"

ANNE (the smile fading) - "This cross ... in your new key ring ..."

CHRIS - "Compassion for the wicked is a noble message ... noble enough to get crucified."

The amusement seems to be fading away in both the observers' eyes ... while Chris looks more calm ... and more pale ... more relaxed ... than ever before.

7. INT. THE LIBRARY, MIND FORTRESS - TIME STILL

Anne and Emma staring at a white board filled with lot of crude handwritten scribblings and quotes ... Chris stands a little distance away ... observing them.

EMMA - "This is way more complex ... than a Dickensian adaptation ..."

ANNE - "... more involved too."

EMMA - "Seems like an never-ending saga to me ... wonder where it will possibly end?"

ANNE - "I wonder what roles we will be playing ... in this vastness ..."

CHRIS - "You both have roles designed specifically for you two ... they will be defining the two timelines."

EMMA (relieved) - "So ... we two don't have to cross each other!"

CHRIS - "The cross is omnipresent in the future verse ... You both will have yet another manifestation in the timeline where you won't be present ... but I want other actresses to play those roles."

ANNE - "Who do you have in mind?"

CHRIS - "Renate ... and Eva."

8. INT. THE LIBRARY, MIND FORTRESS - TIME STILL

ANNE - "Chris, I can't help but wonder ... why are we doing this ... future verse thing?"

EMMA - "It's quite interesting and I don't mind ... but is this ... to paint a picture ... of your ideal world?"

ANNE - "Ideal stuff can become boring ... beyond a point ... but I guess there is more to all this."

CHRIS - "It's not a perfect picture ... but an attempt to explore some strategies ... in certain scenarios ... within certain constraints ... to make things a bit better ..."

ANNE - "I guess you always need something to think about ... anyways!"

EMMA - "... and frankly, it's a bit exhausting!"

Both ladies keep rolling their eyes ... Chris refuses to look at them now ... conveniently avoiding their eyes.

9. INT. SOMEWHERE IN THE MIND PALACE - TIME EXTENDED

Emma reading the notes on '2100 AD' ...

EMMA - "Chris, stop! I can't focus on your words otherwise ..."

Sometime later ... Anne reading the notes on 'LEGACY 2100 AD' ...

ANNE - "Chris, don't stop! I can't process your words otherwise ..."

**10. INT. THE LIBRARY, MIND PALACE – DAWN,
AFTER A LONG LONG NIGHT**

Everyone is now completely exhausted ...

CHRIS - "Any thoughts on the notes?"

ANNE - "It's a good start ..."

Emma nods.

ANNE - "What's next, Chris?"

CHRIS - "I have to check out ... how the Odyssey trailer plays out on the screen ... later today."

EMMA - "I heard its ... looking good."

CHRIS - "Maybe, but I have to see it myself."

**11. INT. SOMEWHERE INSIDE THE MIND PALACE –
AFTERNOON, A FEW HOURS BEFORE THE SHOW
BEGINS**

Anne is playing a melancholic tune with her violin.

Suddenly, Chris comes in (quite hastily) and taps her on the shoulder. Anne stops playing and looks at him with questioning eyes ...

CHRIS – “Watch this teaser and trailer ... just made very rough cuts!”

ANNE (a bit shocked) – “Another Odyssey Trailer?”

CHRIS – “No, I got a bridging idea for the future verse ... this is a reboot of The Phantom ... set in the year 2050.”

ANNE – “Didn’t Jon write a screenplay before ... on this Phantom guy?”

CHRIS – “Yeah ... I read parts of it. He missed the mark, in my opinion.”

ANNE – “How many films can you possibly make? ... Plus, you told me long back ... that you are not keen on superhero films anymore ... I remember quite well.”

CHRIS – “I don’t think ... I will have time ... to direct this ... with all the other stuff that I am planning ... But this is still a cool idea ... as a prelude ... to test waters, you know?”

ANNE – “Why don’t you talk to Gareth? He may be interested in directing a futuristic sci-fi film ...given his work so far ... Plus, I don’t think he has done a superhero film before.”

CHRIS – “That sounds promising ...”

Emma enters the room singing an old song from yesteryears ... in her unique voice. She looks at their faces and stops abruptly ...

EMMA – “What are you two discussing?”

ANNE – “Chris is thinking about writing a superhero film ... again!”

EMMA (rolling her eyes) – “I thought ... we really had ... enough of that!”

CHRIS – “Why don’t you two watch the short teaser and trailer first?”

12. INT. THE EDITING ROOM, SYNCOPY OFFICE – LATE NIGHT

Chris is pacing around the room ... in circles ... raging and fuming ... completely mad at himself.

Emma watches him without any expression.

CHRIS (shouting at the walls) – “I spent 111 minutes ... sitting in that crowded theatre ... watching a Cameron film! And they did not even show The Odyssey Trailer??!!”

EMMA – “Nothing to get mad at ... I didn’t mind the film at all.”

CHRIS – “Cameron has his strengths ... and limitations. The film looks visually stunning and the world-building is intricately detailed. Moreover, he usually tackles topics and conflicts, in which I am deeply interested. Yet ... I never end up liking his storytelling ... I would rather tell similar stories in very different ways.”

EMMA – “James is not making films to please you, Chris ... He is making them for himself.”

CHRIS – “No, he is making them just to fill theatres ... not for himself. There is no other reason ... why a man of his stature and reputation ... would repeat himself ... over and over again.”

EMMA – “Fine ... you make your film your own way. Now calm down!”

CHRIS – “I am not upset with Cameron ... not at all ... But where is ... The Odyssey Trailer?!”

Emma shrugs and remains silent.

CHRIS – “I wanted to see one of my trailers on the big screen ... to check ... how it is looking. Anyways, none of Cameron’s

whims or conspiracies can stop me ... from ensuring that the film will ... look good on big screen ...come July 17.”

13. INT. SOMEWHERE IN THE MIND PALACE – TIME DILATED

Chris is half asleep on a sofa, his head resting on Anne’s lap.

ANNE – “So ... No Odyssey trailer after all ... in spite of a dozen cuts.”

CHRIS – “Yes. That is the current status.”

ANNE - “What other trailers did they show?”

CHRIS – “Saw a quantum teaser of Avengers Doomsday ... good one!”

ANNE – “Hmmm ... what’s the plan now?”

CHRIS – “Write a few synopses ... and pass it to a few friends ... for feedback.”

ANNE – “And ... IF they don’t respond?”

CHRIS – “I will ... still write the scripts.”



~ THE END ~

4. BACK TO INDIA

... Third Adventure Of Chris, The Grumpy

~ Dedicated To India



1. INT. EDITING ROOM, SYNCOPY OFFICE - MORNING

Chris surfing through exorbitant flight prices online ... sipping his tea. Suddenly, the Ghost of Gandhi emerges in front him.

GANDHI - "Going back to India? Heh Heh!! ... I See You."

CHRIS - "Yeah ... I have this crazy idea ... to make a prelude to 'The Future Verse' ... set in Mumbai, in the year 2030."

GANDHI - "Why India, eh? Is your Ahmerica not good enough, huh? ... Heh Heh!"

CHRIS - "Given India's current condition ... The Resource War is most likely to break out there first."

GANDHI - "Resource War?! ... Heh Heh ... India has too much resources!"

CHRIS - "And lots of jobless people too!"

GANDHI - "Waking up daily ... eating ... sh*tting ... and f*cking around ... are also jobs! You Ahmericans will never get our holy traditions!"

CHRIS - "That's ok with me."

GANDHI - "Are you making a superhero film?"

CHRIS - "Sort of ... not sure yet."

GANDHI - "I came to warn you ... in India ... everyone is a Superhero!"

CHRIS - "I know."

2. INT. MIND PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Grumpy Chris is staring into Anne's deep eyes. Her face is so close to his, that their breaths are merging together ...

ANNE - "Are you sure of this new prelude film ... you are

thinking about ... set in India?"

CHRIS - "Not exactly, I need to check it's feasibility first."

ANNE - "What options are you considering?"

CHRIS - "I selected three actresses for the film - Kriti, Yami and Priyanka."

ANNE - "Hmmm ... let's see ... Kriti is the youngest of the lot ... unmarried and may agree to commit to your intensity ... and she has improved quite bit with her craft in the recent years ... I think she may be a good option for this film ..."

CHRIS - "IF it happens in the first place ... What do you think of Yami?"

ANNE - "She did her best work in Article ... but got pregnant in the process ... She may now have both commitment and time issues ... given your extensive universe-building plans ... It will be difficult for a young mother."

CHRIS - "She may be interested enough ... if her husband agrees to commit and to follow my directives ..."

ANNE - "That will probably help ... But Aditya is coming off a huge success with his recently released mediocre film."

CHRIS - "Yes, he is likely to be too full of himself at this point."

ANNE - "Chris ... I have mixed feelings about your third choice ..."

CHRIS - "You mean, Priyanka? I have my doubts too ... but she is the most recognizable Bollywood actress now ... I mean on the global platform."

ANNE - "Plus ... she isn't really too popular in intense roles ... not sure how she can fit into your cinematic world."

CHRIS - "Yeah ... I have been thinking about that too ..."

ANNE - "Anyways, how about the male leads?"

CHRIS - "Well I am considering either Hrithik or Vicky in a positive character ... and either Akshaye or Arjun in a negative role ... Whom do you suggest?"

ANNE (smiling) - "You already know that ... don't you?"

CHRIS - "I want you to say it."

ANNE (whispering) - "Vicky and ... Arjun."

3. INT. SYNCOPY OFFICE, EMMA'S CUBICLE - DAY

Emma is busy working on her laptop. Chris comes and stands behind her, and remains silent.

EMMA (typing something) - "What's up, Chris?"

CHRIS - "Need your opinion on a choice ... that I am struggling with ..."

EMMA (looking up) - "Yes?"

CHRIS - "I was thinking about fixing appointments with a couple of directors during my visit to India ..."

EMMA - "Who?"

CHRIS - "Aditya Dhar and Anurag Kashyap."

EMMA (looking back at her laptop) - "Dhar is after orange glory ... And you will probably find Kashyap a bit frustrated these days ... But, he may be hungry for success ... which can work to your advantage."

CHRIS - "Yeah ... Btw, what do you think about approaching Priyanka Chopra for the third female role?"

EMMA - "It will work ... as long as you keep the role limited ... to candies and action."

CHRIS - "Hmmmmmm ..."

4. INT. THE MIND PALACE - NIGHT

Anne on top of Chris ...

CHRIS - "What are you smirking at?"

ANNE - "I have this weird thought ... that you want to do hanky-panky with Priyanka!"

CHRIS - "You think ... she is like you?"

ANNE - "Nope. But you are a quantum guy ... with infinite

shades ... likings ... and desires ..."

CHRIS - "Maybe ... But I still have my preferences."

ANNE - "I ... know."

CHRIS - "Then stop pulling my hairs."

ANNE - "Chris, you don't have any!"

5. INT. EDITING ROOM - DAY

Chris is staring at 'The Odyssey' footage ... trying hard to synchronize the visuals with the music Ludwig has composed.
Emma walks in ...

EMMA - "What did you decide?"

CHRIS - "Huh?! .. What ... When .. Where?"

EMMA - "About 'em Indian actresses in you film?"

CHRIS - "Oh ... Kriti is finalized ... Yami is a maybe ... at this point."

EMMA - "And Priyanka?"

CHRIS - "Not sure ... will probably meet her and see ..."

EMMA - "See what?"

Chris shrugs.

EMMA - "She may be too keen ... given her current line-up of films ... which does not exist!"

CHRIS - "Yeah, as I said ... we'll see ..."

EMMA - "Well, if it comes to you know what ... give it to her ... but please, do not cast her!"

6. INT. MUSIC ROOM, THE MIND PALACE - TIME DILATED

Anne is trying very hard to play her violin ... but is unable to do so.

ANNE - "Chris, if you keep holding me so tight, I can't breathe ... nor can I play my instrument."

CHRIS - "Oh ... ok. I just felt ... you needed a hug."

ANNE - "You know me well enough ... to know I did ... but let go now."

CHRIS - "Not unless you tell me ... why you wanted the hug?"

ANNE - "Well ... ever since you finalized Kriti ... I am feeling a bit uneasy."

CHRIS - "Why?"

ANNE - "Isn't she a bit similar ... to me?"

CHRIS - "You think that ... a bit of similarity ... really matters?"

7. INT. BEDROOM, NOLAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Emma pokes Chris, who is sleeping grumpily.

EMMA - "Chris, stop snoring so loudly!"

CHRIS (unintelligibly) - "Huh? ... Who the hell is snoring?"

EMMA - "Yourself! ... Anyways, wake up, I have made a decision."

CHRIS (eyes now wide open) - "What's that?"

EMMA - "I am cancelling your appointment with Priyanka."

CHRIS - "Whatever."

EMMA - "You didn't ask 'why'?"

CHRIS - "I am sure you will tell me yourself, darling."

EMMA - "Well ... I am going to play her part ... myself!"

Chris begins to snore again.

8. INT. THE LIBRARY, MIND PALACE - MORNING

Emma storms in, while Chris is reading something.

EMMA - "Where's Anne? I looked everywhere ..."

CHRIS - "She is gone ... she said that she wanted to travel around the world."

EMMA - "Why?"

CHRIS - "I guess ... she was feeling somewhat claustrophobic."

EMMA - "Then who is going take care of this crazy ... weird place ... that you have built in your mind?"

CHRIS - "No one. I am too busy anyways ..."

EMMA - "I thought only Anne could keep you busy here!"

CHRIS - "You are wrong ... I have other stuff to do too."

EMMA - "Like what?"

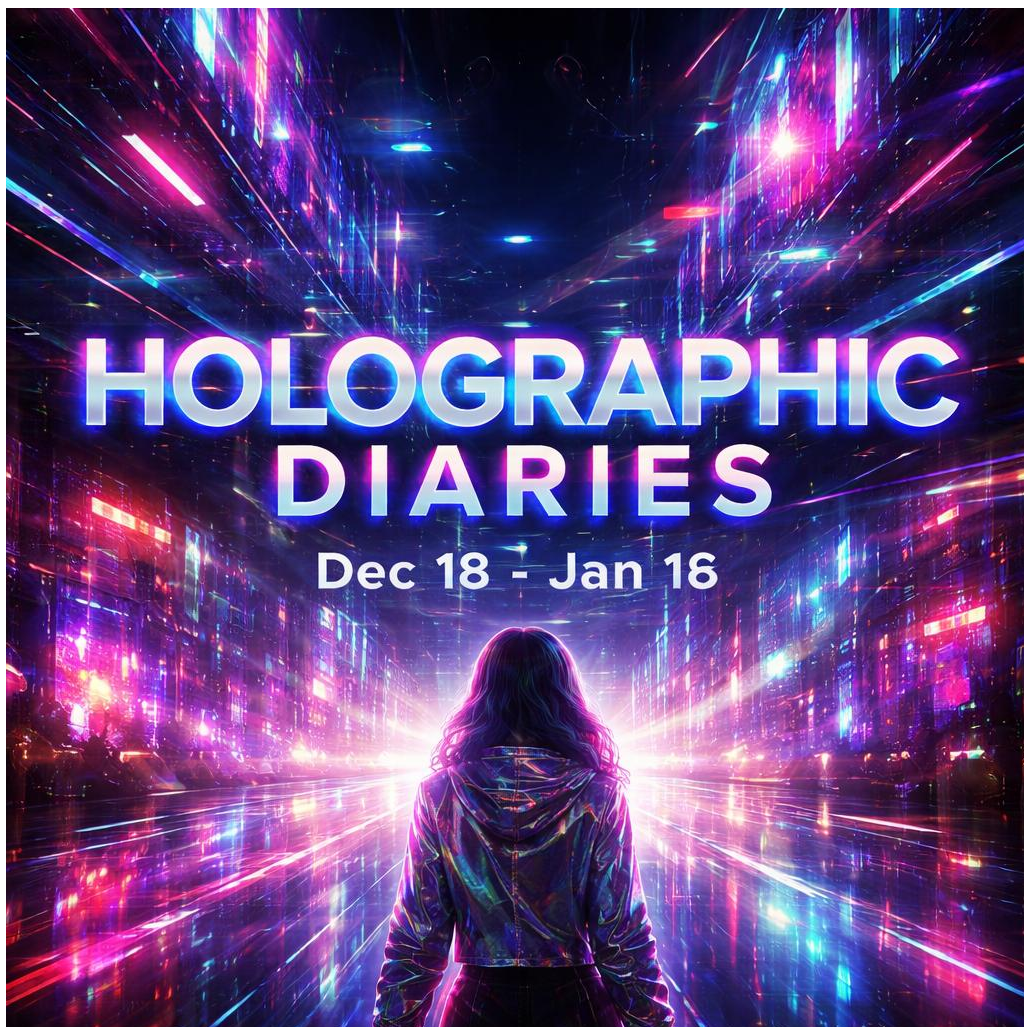
CHRIS - "Completing the synopses of the preludes ... before I go - 'Back To India'."

 ~ THE END ~ 

5. HOLOGRAPHIC DIARIES – CHAP #1

... Adventures Of Anne ... In A Brave New World

~ A Sci-Fi Film By Chris, The Grumpy



THE PROLOGUE:

Anne is a holographic imagination created by the grumpy director Chris from his past memories and experiences — as the reigning queen of his strange yet charming ‘mind palace’.

Over time, however, the intensity of Chris’s inner world made Anne to step away, setting off on a globetrotting journey on her own.

As a holographic projection, Anne is unbound by space or time. A quantum being, she can exist everywhere at once, perceiving the world with infinite sensitivity. Her true power lies in a rare balance of emotional intelligence and intellectual brilliance.

Though she carries a quiet fondness for Chris, Anne’s existence is shaped by many other forces and constraints, pulling her toward a life far more complex than the one that was created for her.



INTRODUCTION

Anne has divided her month-long globetrotting journey into carefully planned stages.

She feels a quiet apprehension about how Chris might cope with her absence from his mind palace. Hence, for the next ten days—until Chris begins his journey back to India—she has decided to remain largely an observer, watching how the synopsis develops and allowing events to unfold.

Beyond keeping a discreet watch on Chris, her curiosity extends to the figures orbiting his interests: the potential actors, actresses, directors, producers, and others connected to the first prelude he is envisioning.

Anne knows what is coming. When chaos and creative madness inevitably engulf the enterprise, Chris will come running to her—and she will have to return to his mind palace, to restore order.

Until then, she has chosen vigilance over intervention, keeping herself informed of every movement and decision.

When the moment arrives, that awareness will prove invaluable, allowing her to guide Chris toward choices made with clarity rather than impulse.



DAY ZERO: DEC 18

Anne feels a sharp pain as she ventures out of the Mind Palace, an elegantly architected place built as her residence. It is weird in many ways: it bends space and time randomly within its deep labyrinths, where time can stand still, become dilated, or expand infinitely. At the center lies a blue hole, which is the only area she tries to keep away from—both herself and Chris.

She has been here since she came alive some 25 years ago. Her curiosity and superpowers keep her well informed about the world outside. However, this is the first time she feels like making a trip out... and she is not even certain of the reason.

Perhaps she needs a break. Deep inside, she also does not want to feel ignored. When Chris gets obsessed with any of his crazy ideas, he tends to ignore everything else... even her. That's the one thing she dislikes about Chris. Maybe his intense attention has somewhat spoiled her. She ends up craving his attention during these random periods of obsession, which never have any predictability attached to them.

But she also feels a strong intuition that the near future is going to be disastrous. She needs to prepare well for the time when things may collapse to a point of difficult return. She is particularly wary of that blue hole in his mind.

However, she understands the essence of unpredictability. Chris has a unique mind that can go anywhere at any point in time—something neither he nor she can control. Over time, they have both learned to accept that. Once a vague idea formulates in his mind, its ultimate crystallization is perhaps well beyond anyone's imagination... even God's, if he or she indeed exists.

She knows the premise of this prelude, which Chris does not bother to keep secret. She knows this because the premise is very vague in its beginning and is also inspired and borrowed. This particular one is from an animated series called Phantom 2040—something that, as it is, does not particularly interest her.

But she knows that when it crystallizes in his head to his satisfaction... it may well be something to watch out for.



FOOTNOTE

Chris has sent out an open invitation for Indian writer-directors to submit their own story synopses based on the premise he himself is working on.

Anne is not sure whether this is his fancy or a pre-planned move, but she doubts it will lead to anything fruitful or productive. Almost all Indian writer-directors are creatively bankrupt when it comes to responding to his call within a deadline. Moreover, they are inherently averse to any kind of brainstorming activity and are also genetically disinclined toward innovation and development of any sort.

Chris always manages to amuse her, even after all these years.

DAY ONE: DEC 19

It took a little while for Anne to figure out what Chris is trying to do. His open call for submissions is his unique way of raising interest in one particular writer-director, whom he is interested in.

He wants Aditya Dhar to consider reframing his shelved film within this premise. If Aditya is interested in doing that, can actually do it, and then reach out to Chris within the given deadline, Aditya will pass the test Chris that had designed for him.

Anne herself can't stop smirking at this exercise.

She is completely confident that Aditya Dhar would never be able to pass the test—and that a collaboration is almost impossible.



After a considerable amount of thinking, Anne is now hoping against hope that Aditya Dhar is as good as Chris expects him to be. And she has quite a twisted reason for this.

Anne is well aware of how Chris works. He has given himself 20 days to write his own version of a story synopsis for MUMBAI 2030, and he will definitely complete the task that he has set for himself.

But it will only be a first draft, and he will not disclose it to Anne until the day he refines it to an extent that satisfies him. Then he will eagerly come to narrate it to her and ask for her opinion.

Anne knows the value attached to that opinion, but she can't wait.

So she wonders ... if Aditya Dhar can pass the test, then Chris will be forced to discuss his first draft with Aditya and brainstorm together on how to merge their ideas. She can then eavesdrop and find out the story!

The conspiracy makes her smile inwardly. And she is now on Aditya Dhar's side.



APPENDIX I – THE FIRST TASK OF HERCULES

The first labour of Hercules was the slaying of the Nemean Lion, a monstrous beast that terrorized the region of Nemea. This lion was no ordinary animal: its hide was said to be impenetrable to weapons, making it invulnerable to swords, spears, and arrows.

King Eurystheus assigned Hercules this labour in the hope that it would prove impossible and lead to his death. The first task that Hercules assigned to himself, was to come up with a strategy for this endeavour.



APPENDIX II – A CALL FOR SYNOPSIS

Chris is inviting writer/directors to submit a brief story synopsis based on the following premise:

Outbreak Of Global Resource War I ... Due To Water Scarcity In The City Of Mumbai ...In The Year 2030.

Submissions must adhere to this premise while offering an original narrative approach.

Submission Guidelines:

- Format: Written synopsis
- Length: Max. 2000 words
- Language: English

Please include:

- A logline
- Complete story synopsis (with ending)

Submission Details:

- Email: authorakbeetle@gmail.com
- Deadline: Jan 07, 2026

Submissions are confidential. No rights are transferred at this stage. Only shortlisted entries ... approved by Anne & Chris ... will be contacted.

~ THE END ~

6. TO DHAR ... WITH LOVE – PART II

... From Anne ... In A Brave New World



~ PROFILING ADITYA ~

Aditya Dhar is an Indian film director, writer, and lyricist known for crafting high-impact, patriotic narratives rooted in contemporary Indian history. He rose to national prominence with his directorial debut *Uri: The Surgical Strike* (2019), a landmark film that redefined the modern Indian military action genre and resonated strongly with audiences across the country.

Early Career

Before stepping into the director's chair, Dhar built a solid foundation as a writer and lyricist in the Hindi film industry. He contributed lyrics and writing to films such as *Haider* (2014) and *Tevar* (2015), experiences that sharpened his understanding of character, subtext, and cinematic rhythm. These formative years influenced his precise, dialogue-driven storytelling style.

Career So Far

Dhar's debut film, inspired by real-life events following the 2016 Uri attack, became both a critical and commercial success. Praised for its tight screenplay, realistic action, and emotional restraint, the film struck a balance between nationalism and grounded storytelling. It went on to become one of the highest-grossing Indian films of its year.

Dhar's sophomore directorial has collected 475 cr net domestic collections at the box-office in first two weeks, despite a running time of 3.5 hours. In between the two films he has directed so far, he also wrote and produced two intriguing films in different genres - *Article 370* and *Baramulla*.

He is known for maintaining a clear tonal vision, often prioritizing

authenticity and discipline in performances and production design.

Personal Note

Aditya Dhar is married to actor Yami Gautam, who starred in Uri. Together, they represent a new-generation creative partnership in Hindi cinema that blends commercial appeal with content-driven filmmaking.

Legacy & Future

With a limited but impactful body of work, Aditya Dhar has established himself as a director to watch—one who combines mainstream reach with disciplined storytelling.

~ PROFILING YAMI ~

In recent years, Yami Gautam has undergone a notable on-screen transformation, marked not only by a shift in the kinds of roles she chooses but also by a visible deepening of her craft and screen presence.

Earlier associated largely with light-hearted romances or pleasant supporting parts, she has steadily moved toward intense, layered, and often morally complex characters. This shift has allowed her to emerge as one of the more versatile and quietly powerful performers in contemporary Hindi cinema.

Her performances in films reveal an actor increasingly comfortable carrying a film on her shoulders.

She plays characters that are emotionally taut, psychologically sharp, and central to the narrative—roles that demand more than charm or glamour. Through these choices, she has reshaped her screen identity from a conventional heroine to a leading actor associated with grit, conviction, and narrative command.

This transformation was possible for several intertwined reasons. First, Yami's deliberate shift in script selection shows a growing artistic clarity: she chooses stories that challenge her rather than typecasting her.

Second, the changing landscape of the film industry—especially the rise of OTT platforms—has opened space for unconventional protagonists and genre-bending stories.

Third, her evolution also reflects the industry's broader shift toward narratives cantered on strong female characters. Audiences today are more receptive to women who drive the plot, command authority, or inhabit morally ambiguous territory.

Finally, her transformation is supported by her own growth as a performer. With each project, her performances display sharpened nuance, restraint, and control.



NOTE #1

The continuation of 'HOLOGRAPHIC DIARIES' ... now depends on how Aditya Dhar responds (IF at all) ... to the challenge set up by Chris.

Chris believes that Aditya needs to learn to fly ... before any collaboration can happen. Even Anne is rooting for him now ... for her own conspiracy against Chris.

Will there be a 'Chapter Two' written for 'HOLOGRAPHIC DIARIES'?

Either way, we will know on Jan 07, 2026!

NOTE #2

Anne has taken a quick look at what Chris is up to in his “Mind Palace.” Chris is locking himself in the library, and two lines are scribbled on the whiteboard:

#Phantom2040

#TheDarkKnightTrilogy

So, she sends a telepathic brainwave to Aditya to let him know what usually goes on in Chris’s mind:

#1. When Chris likes some material, he digs into it as deeply as possible.

#2. He is never satisfied with anything—not even material that he may like.

#3. His brain tends to race toward multiple reinterpretations of the material that captivates his interest.

With the above pointers, Anne has also sent Aditya a kiss—something she never gives to strangers.

NOTE #3 [FROM ... CHRIS]

~ PROFILING IMMORTAL ASHWATTHAMA ~

In 2030, Ashwatthama continues to struggle with the guilt of his past and increasing weariness of his immortality.

His body is untouched by time, and he remains as vigorous as ever - the ultimate strategic warrior. Yet, his physical endurance breeds mental fatigue ... primarily due to lack of purpose.

When ‘The Resource War’ breaks out in the city of Mumbai ... The Immortal Ashwatthama may finally find what he was looking for - a meaning for his existence.

NOTE #4

After sharing a note from Chris’s notebook, Anne has another idea to help Aditya optimize his race against time—to pass the test.

Anne feels that Aditya should revisit all the storyboards he previously

created for his shelved film and focus on translating that narrative into the premise Chris has given him.

She also emphasizes that the narrative must reflect the core essence of Ashwatthama's characterization, as imagined by Chris.

After completing these two primary tasks, Aditya can concentrate on making the synopsis as original and innovative as possible, infused with his own signature style.

It may also be better not to consider an overly long narrative, given that Chris prefers films with a maximum runtime of 150 minutes.

THE FINAL NOTE

Lastly, Anne wants Aditya to understand that Chris values time more than anything. It is important for Aditya to follow timelines and do his very best to meet deadlines.

Anne also believes that Aditya may need to focus his efforts by organizing them into well-planned phases:

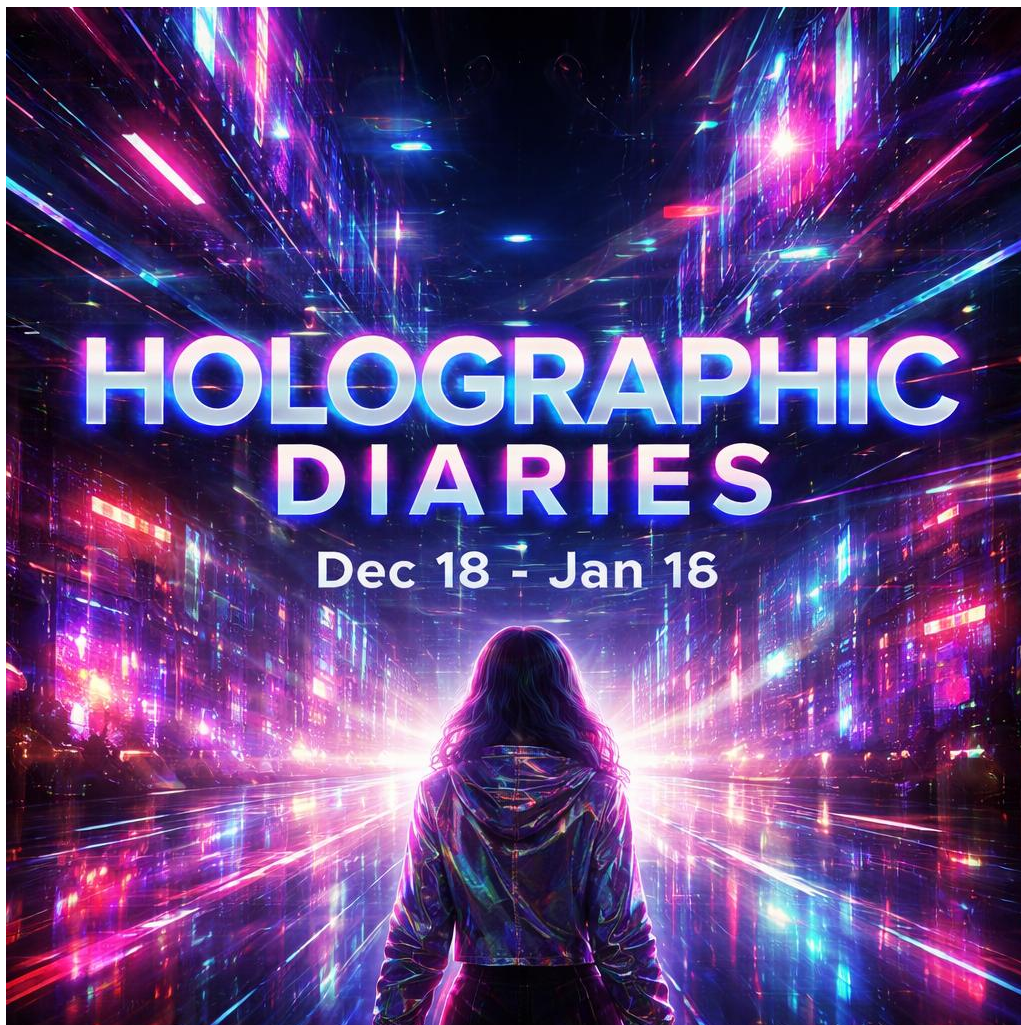
- #1. Dec 19–23: Review previous storyboards and notes
- #2. Dec 24–28: Translate and adapt the previous narrative to the new premise and develop a storyline
- #3. Dec 29–Jan 2: Write the first draft of the synopsis
- #4. Jan 3–6: Edit and refine the first draft, and submit it by EOD on Jan 6, 2026

Anne believes Chris will appreciate the effort greatly, and he is usually quick to respond back. 🍁

7. HOLOGRAPHIC DIARIES

... The Inter-Mission!

~ A Sci-Fi Film By Chris, The Grumpy



#1. NOTES FROM CHRIS

The Phantom 2040 animated series explore quite a few relevant issues across multiple threads over roughly 35 episodes. My idea is to segregate some of the core conflicts into two entangled films—one set in Mumbai in 2030, and the other exploring Metropia (based on NYC) across two timelines (2030 and 2050).

If Aditya can reimagine his story from the shelved film and set it as “Mumbai 2030,” then we could have a productive meeting, where we merge his story with some ideas I have in mind for that film.

This could result in two very interesting films, that serve as preludes to the planned FUTURE VERSE.

#Mumbai2030 [Diwali 2028]

#Phantom2050 [Summer 2029]

#2. NOTES FROM CHRIS

Devi is a comic book series created by acclaimed filmmaker Shekhar Kapur and published originally by Virgin Comics (later known also under the Gotham Entertainment/Liquid Comics umbrella). It debuted in 2006 as part of Virgin’s Shakti line — a set of comics inspired by Indian mythology with modern twists, aimed at both Indian and global readers.

The series centres on Tara Mehta, a seemingly ordinary woman living in the fictional city of Sitapur, who discovers that she is the current

incarnation of Devi — a supernatural warrior goddess reborn to combat cosmic threats. The Devi entity was originally created by the gods to defeat the renegade god Bala, and throughout the series Tara must come to terms with her divine identity while confronting both mythic and earthly dangers.

Devi blends mythology, action and contemporary storytelling.

P.S. – Chris also wants to merge a few ideas from the DEVI series into the narrative of ‘MUMBAI 2030’. There is more than lack of ‘Paani’ ... as the central theme and conflict ... to explore in this film.

And this series was introduced by ... Priyanka Chopra.

#3. A REQUEST FROM CHRIS

Chris hopes that Shekhar Kapur can help Aditya Dhar infuse the core concept of the DEVI comics series—modern incarnations of the goddess—into the storyline of Mumbai 2030.

He aims to bring to life, three modern incarnations of Parvati, Lakshmi, and Saraswati, as distinct contemporary avatars or manifestations of the Supreme Goddess.

~ From his previous notes ...

Parvati, Lakshmi, and Saraswati—often revered together as The Divine Trinity—symbolically represent the three fundamental powers that sustain life: strength, prosperity, and wisdom.

Together, they reflect the balance necessary for both the cosmos and human existence.

#1. Parvati embodies the power of energy, transformation, and devotion. She represents inner strength, willpower, and the capacity for growth through struggle and discipline.

#2. Lakshmi symbolizes prosperity, abundance, and harmony. She is the goddess of material wealth, balance, and ethical success.

#3. Saraswati represents knowledge and wisdom. As the goddess of learning and intellect, she symbolizes clarity of thought, creativity, truth, and justice.

Together, Parvati, Lakshmi, and Saraswati form The Divine Trinity, providing the power to act, the resources to sustain, and the wisdom to guide.

#4. NOTES FROM CHRIS

Chris envisions modern incarnations of Devi as follows:

#1. Priyanka as a disgruntled reporter (*Parvati*)

#2. Yami as a concerned business magnate (*Lakshmi*)

#3. Kriti as an ecologically concerned scientist (*Saraswati*)

He expects all three female leads to have as much prominence as the male lead (Vicky) and the villain (Akshaye).

Let your imaginations spread their wings... and 'Fly'!

#5. NOTES FROM CHRIS

The highest grossing Hollywood films in Indian market are:

#1. Avengers: Infinity War - 277 cr net

#2. Avengers: Endgame - 373 cr net

Obviously, quite an ideal template to follow ... for 'MUMBAI 2030'.

#6. SUMMARY OF 'MUMBAI 2030'

Story & Screenplay – Aditya Dhar & Shekhar Kapur

Premise - Outbreak Of The Resource War I In Mumbai, 2030

- Merging The Concepts & Ideas From:

(1) Immortal Ashwatthama

(2) Paani

(3) DEVI Comics Series

... And Probable Link-Ups With S.S. Rajamouli's Upcoming VARANASI (2027).

Tone/Textures – Marvel's AVENGER Films.

Director: ADITYA DHAR

Production House: Jio Studios, B62 Studios

The Primary Ensemble:

- Vicky Kaushal

- Priyanka Chopra
- Yami Gautam
- Kriti Sanon
- Akshaye Khanna

Worldwide Release Date - Diwali 2028

Rest Is Expected ... To Be Decided During ... Chris' Upcoming Trip To India.

#7. FROM ANNE ... WITH LOVE

Anne has a quiet concern about one aspect of the recent developments. She remains somewhat sceptical about whether Chris will be able to meaningfully connect Varanasi and Mumbai 2030 with the character of 'Mandakini'.

At present, Chris is unaware of the necessary details. Without access to the information he needs, he has no real way to assess the feasibility of the idea—it remains, for now, only a thought.

Anne believes that a discussion among several key stakeholders would be wise, ideally taking place before Chris arrives in India, and focused specifically on this question.

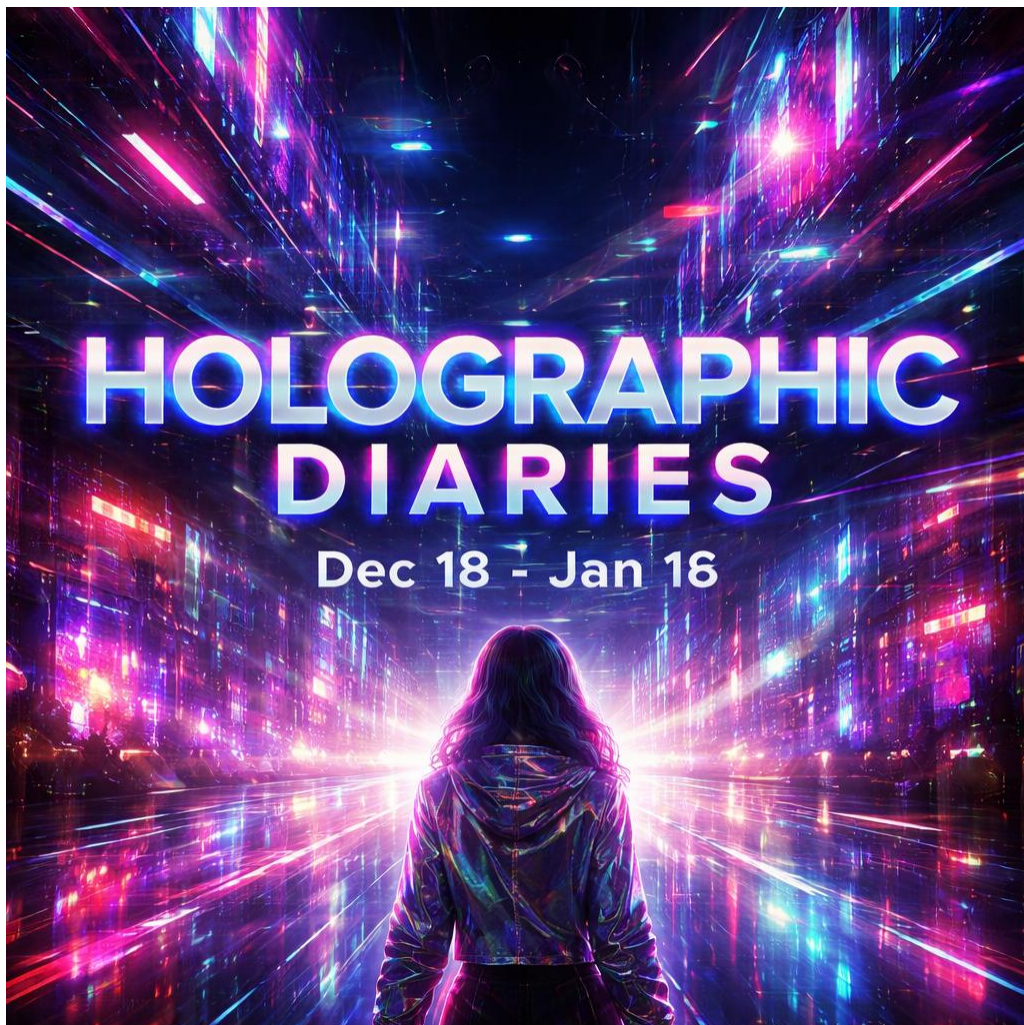
With that, Anne signs off—while Chris, as planned, has locked himself away in the library of his Mind Palace.

~ THE INTERMISSION ~

8. HOLOGRAPHIC DIARIES – CHAP #2

... The Inception

~ A Sci-Fi Film By Chris, The Grumpy



#1. Day Two: Dec 20

Much to Anne's amusement ... Chris has now decided to write a detailed synopsis ... almost a half-screenplay ... for his friend Rajkumar Hirani ... before he leaves for India.

It's a parody adaptation of his latest publication - 'SHORTS OF ALL SORTS'.

And as usual ... Chris is not bothered ... whether Raju might be interested to make this film ... or not.

He is going to write it ... anyways! And, in his mind, he has finalized a presumptuous plan for a 4-years Phase-I Prelude ... aimed towards the making of The Future Verse ...

[#1.](#) The Laughing Buddha (Rajkumar Hirani) - Christmas 2026

[#2.](#) Something ... Like That (Joachim Trier) - Spring/Summer 2027

[#3.](#) Unhinged (Quentin Tarantino) - Summer/Fall 2027

[#4.](#) Mumbai 2030 (Aditya Dhar) - Diwali 2028

[#5.](#) Phantom 2050 (TBD) - Summer 2029

[#6.](#) Unhinged Too (TBD) - Fall 2029

[#7.](#) 'THE FUTURE VERSE' Official Announcement - Dec 2029

10 Years After The Wrestling Drama ... DANGAL (Christmas 2016)
... Aamir Khan (AK) Is Set To Celebrate Its 10th Anniversary ... With
A Wacky Comedy Caper ... 'THE LAUGHING BUDDHA!'
(Christmas 2026).

Anne Can't Wait To See This Unfold On Screen, ... And Somehow

The Grumpy Chris ... Cannot Stop Laughing!

P.S. - And For The First Time ... Chris Is Planning A 3 Hour Long Film.

That Much Time ... Will Be Needed ... To Do Justice ... To The 30 Odd Characters!

#2. A TELEPHONIC CONVO

CHRIS - "Why Can't You Just Forget Me, Darling?"

ANNE - "You Are Too Unique For That ..."

CHRIS - "What Do You Mean?"

ANNE - "For Instance ... You Have A Knack For Writing Dark Satire ... Quite Effortlessly."

CHRIS - "Hmmm ... Is That Why You Keep Linger In My Mind?"

ANNE - "Well, There Are Other Reasons Too ..."

CHRIS - "Such As?"

ANNE - "You Can Write... Wacky Parody ... Of The Dark Comedy ... That You Yourself Write!"

CHRIS - "Isn't That A Paradox?!"

ANNE - "Kind Of ... And On Top Of That ... You Can Make Quantum Films ... Out Of That Parody ... In As Many Languages As Possible ... You Are Quite Impossible!"

CHRIS - "And I Love You ... For Your Kind Appreciation!"

#3. INT. DARK ROOM, SYNCOPY OFFICE - DAY

Chris is writing a new screenplay ... Emma comes in ...

EMMA - "Just read you new book!"

CHRIS (looking up grumpily) - "What do you think?"

EMMA - "It's interesting enough ... Different sort of lit ... But, when did you get into THIS stuff? You were always after action epics!"

CHRIS - "Well, I have realized that ... Dark comedy and its Parody ... are both the greatest epics ever!"

EMMA - "Hmmmm ... It's a never-ending saga."

4. THE INVERSION

The telepathic silence continues ...

ANNE - "Chris, why are you bent on subverting your own dark satire?"

CHRIS - "Because I can do it better ... than anyone else."

ANNE - "And how do you do it?"

CHRIS - "Easy ... easy ..."

ANNE - "Not to many others!"

CHRIS - "OK ... Since you are reluctant to ask directly ... I will share a secret ..."

ANNE (smirking) - "So 'kind' of you, Chris!"

CHRIS (coughing) - "See ... In a dark comedy ... the context is serious ... and the subtext is ridiculous."

ANNE - "Yeah ... I know that ..."

CHRIS - "The parody of it is an inversion function ... The context is

now ridiculous ... and the subtext ... a bit serious!"
ANNE - "You ... and your silly math!"

5. INT. DARK ROOM, SYNCOPY OFFICE – CONTINUOUS

EMMA - "Before you get lost ... in writing your parody screenplay ...
can you please ... give me a teaser?"

CHRIS (scowling) - "Why?"

EMMA - "I will see ... IF any directors are interested in making it ...
while you write it."

Chris gives her a cold shrug ...

6. INT. SYNCOPY OFFICE - SOMETIME LATER

Emma finishes watching the teaser ...

EMMA - "Chris, I thought you said ... this is a wacky parody ... a
comedy?"

CHRIS - "Never judge a book by its cover ... always dig in."

EMMA - "I was thinking about passing the screenplay to Raju for
consideration ..."

CHRIS - "Please do so ... the dominant tone will be comic ... just like
the way he likes."

7. INT. SYNCOPY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

EMMA - "Chris, do you want this ... 'Laughing Buddha' guy ... to be limited to Indian versions only?"

CHRIS - "Why would I want that?"

EMMA - "Then I will pass it around everywhere ..."

CHRIS - "Would appreciate that ... very much, my dear!"

8. INT. SYNCOPY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

EMMA - "Is there any punchline I should use ... while contacting film-makers?"

CHRIS - "Tell them ... its time for ... Bergman to Meet Kafka!"

EMMA (rolling her eyes) - "Whatever that means!"

Chris is looking away ... at the distant trees.

9. THE TELEPATHIC ENTANGLEMENT

Anne is looking wide-eyed at the teaser of 'THE LAUGHING BUDDHA' ...

ANNE - "Where did this come from?"

CHRIS - "There was once an Indian director ... who got inspired by Bergman ... and made a pretty good film ... on a superstar."

ANNE - "So?"

CHRIS - "I thought ... I will also take some inspiration from wild

strawberries ... and this is what I came up with ..."
ANNE - "You and your berries!"

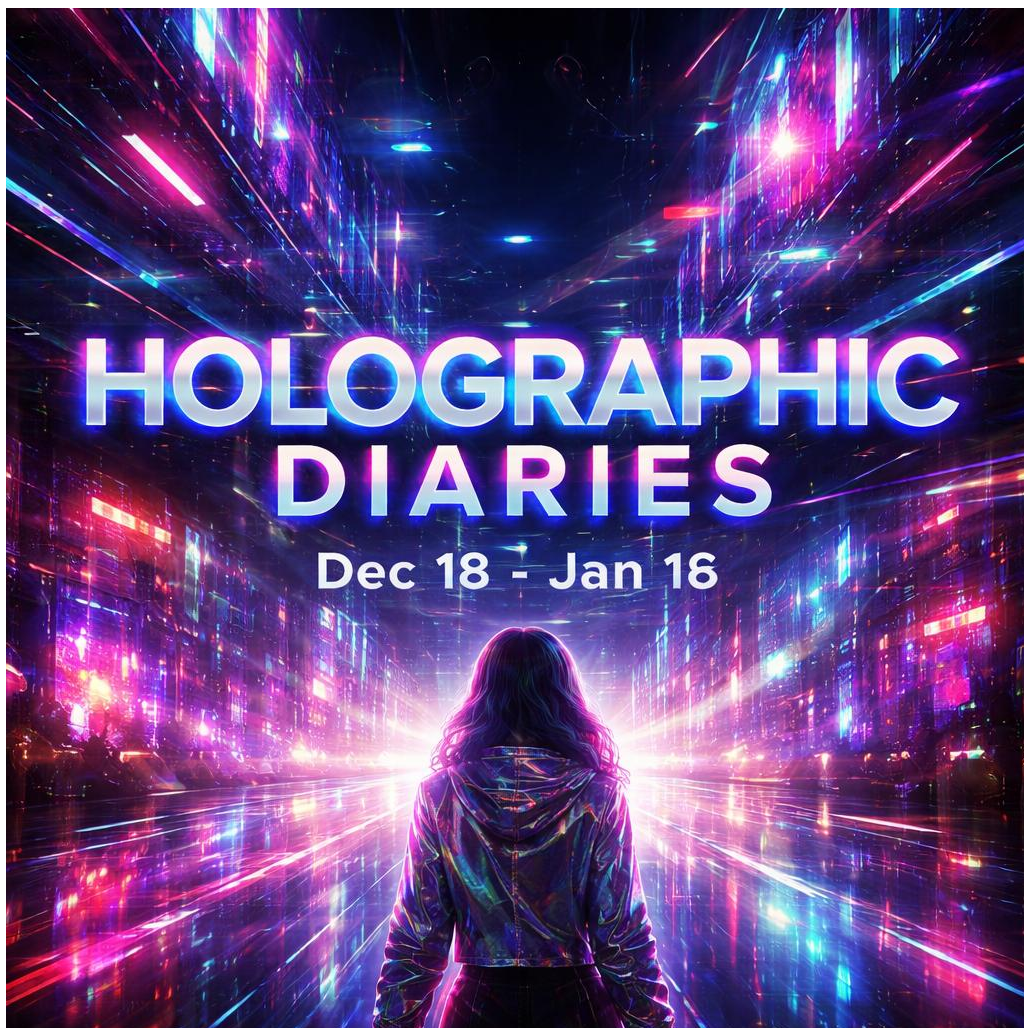
~ THE END ~

9. HOLOGRAPHIC DIARIES –

CHAP #3

... THE DISINTEGRATION

~ A Sci-Fi Film By Chris, The Grumpy



1. INT. SYNCOPY OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Chris chewing his pencil absent-mindedly ... Emma bangs open the door and marches in ...

EMMA - "Chris, Raju likes the basic premise and your teaser ... but he is concerned about the ensemble."

CHRIS - "Budgeting issues?"

EMMA - "Yes ... It will be too expensive to sign so many stars ... the expected cost is skyrocketing ..."

CHRIS - "We will need the three actresses - Kriti, Alia & Priyanka ... And tell Raju to offer them profit sharing deals along with reduced upfront fees ... IF they can agree to that. Else we will have to see ..."

EMMA - "Do you need THREE male stars in this film?"

CHRIS (thinking aloud) - "I need actors in these roles ... more than stars ... Maybe we can keep Aamir ... and get Akshaye & Arjun to play the role of Aditya Kar & Ranco Bachh .. that will help in normalizing the costs."

EMMA - "I will pass these choices ... in another email to Raju."

CHRIS - "Let me know ... what he thinks about it ..."

2. INT. SYNCOPY OFFICE - NIGHT

Chris still chewing his pencil absent-mindedly ... but now staring at some scattered notes in front of him ... Emma gently opens the door and walks in ...

CHRIS - "Did Raju reply?"

EMMA - "Yup. He is satisfied with your latest choice of the three

male leads. But he says that Alia and Priyanka will not reduce their fees ... unless it is a Dharma Production. But Kriti has no such hung ups.”

CHRIS - “Kriti is the one ... whom I want most. Let’s do something ... reach out to Yami and Manushi instead ... for the roles of Alia and Priyanka respectively. And tell them that ... I am sending a special request.”

EMMA - “Will do ... it’s your screenplay anyways. I guess they both will be interested.”

3. THE TELEPATHIC ENTANGLEMENT

ANNE - "I scanned your notes ... you have split yourself into halves!"

CHRIS - "If you throw everything to the audience ... all at once ... it is a poor storytelling technique."

ANNE - "Hmmm ... When Emma reads your screenplay, she may take you to a psychologist ... who is bound to prescribe medications for bipolar disorder ..."

CHRIS - "Maybe ... she can be daft at times!"

ANNE - "She is bound to get concerned, Chris!"

CHRIS - "But you seem pretty cool about this ..."

ANNE - "I am not real, Chris ... just your imagination."

4. INT. SYNCOPY OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

Emma is rewatching the teaser of 'THE LAUGHING BUDDHA' in a loop ... and increasingly getting agitated.

Suddenly, Chris walks into her office and hovers over her ... almost menacingly.

CHRIS - "Emma, can you please reach out to your dear friend, Yorgos?"

EMMA - "Why, Chris?"

CHRIS - "I want him to subvert my screenplay."

EMMA - "But ... isn't your screenplay itself ... an inverted parody of your book?"

CHRIS - "Yes ... But I would like to see Yorgos subvert the character of Aakash into a female role that you can play onscreen ... I believe it will be awesome!"

EMMA - "I already have too much on my plate ..."

CHRIS - "Just talk to him, ok?"

Emma shrugs. Chris leaves her desk and approaches the door ... but then turns around abruptly ...

EMMA - "Yes?"

CHRIS - "Do show him the trailer too."

5. THE TELEPATHIC ENTANGLEMENT

ANNE - "Chris ... I don't like it."

CHRIS (mocking surprise) - "What?"

ANNE - "You are pushing Emma too hard ... I would be careful ... if I were in your shoes."

CHRIS - "She needs to get rid of her insecurities ..."

ANNE - "Chris, she herself ... wants to be more ... as much as you do. But try to be patient with her."

CHRIS - "What If I don't?"

ANNE - "I am afraid ... that you will only hurt yourself."

6. INT. OFFICE SPACE OF YORGOS LANTHIMOS, ATHENS - SOMETIME NEXT DAY

EMMA - "This is all I know ... about what he is up to these days ... he is anyways very secretive ... about his scripts."

YORGOS - "Chris has a highly imaginative and create mind, Emma. But I don't like to ... you know ... just follow ... whatever he thinks that I should do."

EMMA - "So ... are you rejecting his request?"

YORGOS - "Yes, Emma. I am going on a break ... Moreover, I am not sure ... IF I can do justice to the complexities of any vision of Chris ... Perhaps, I am more simple-minded ... who knows?"

EMMA - "I understand, Yorgos ... But Chris will not like to hear this."

Emma gets up to leave ...

YORGOS - "Wait ... I have been writing a role for you, myself."

Emma looks at him with considerable interest.

7. THE TELEPATHIC ENTANGLEMENT

ANNE - "Chris ... Can you hear me??"

CHRIS - "Your voice seems very distant ... as if its ... increasingly fading away ..."

ANNE - "I am still here, Chris."

CHRIS - "I guess so ..."

ANNE - "I don't like these pills you are taking ... they keep you away ... from the mind palace ... and you seem lost at times ..."

where I can't find you ... or reach out to you ..."

CHRIS - "Yeah ... I don't like them either ... I try to skip the meds whenever I can ..."

ANNE - "I would have returned to the Mind Palace ... to talk to Emma regarding this nonsense ... But she never goes there anymore ..."

CHRIS - "There not much you can do about this, Anne ... you are just my ... fading imagination."

8. EXT. WHERE THE MIND PALACE USED TO BE - SOMETIME LATER

Anne stands amidst the ruins ... the entire palace has disintegrated.

What remains is that enigmatic blue hole ... warping and sucking everything around it ... including time and space.

Anne does not dare to go any near ... it will engulf her too.

There is no escape from the blue hole ... the very reason why ... it was carefully locked up inside the deepest labyrinths of the mind palace.

And now it looms over everything ... and even our known cosmos ... is marginal, in front of it.

Anne shakes her head ... it looks beyond all hope now.

As she steps away ... a half-twisted smile bends her lips ... Well, she thinks, if the mind palace is no more there ... then no one can enter it anymore.

Not even Emma herself ... if she ever feels like doing so.

~ THE END ~

10. TO DHAR ... WITH LOVE – PART 3
... From Bolly ... To Holly



1. INT. EDITING ROOM, SYNCOPY OFFICE - DAY

Emma is sitting with a pensive look on her pretty face.

CHRIS (turning to her suddenly) - "What did Yorgos say?"

EMMA - "Errr ... He is on vacation."

CHRIS - "What do you mean?"

EMMA - "Chris, normal people take breaks from work."

CHRIS - "How nice!"

EMMA - "But he said that he is writing a role for me ..."

CHRIS - "Tell him to ensure ... that the film makes some money too."

2. INT. HAPPY ROOM, B62 STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

Aditya and Yami are dancing on the floor ... Gabbu is sitting in a dark corner munching chicken legs and drinking beer.

GABBU - 'Abe Oye! Adi!"

ADI (stopping his disco dance) - "Ji sarkar!"

GABBU - "Kitna kamaya, tere woh Dhurandar?"

ADI (with a big smile) - "600 cr crossed sarkar!"

GABBU - "Itna ghatiya film ... phir bhi 600 cr? Bohat na insafi hai yeh!!"

3. INT. HAPPY ROOM, B62 STUDIO OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

GABBU - "Howz the josh?"

ADI (can't stop smiling) - "Josh is hosh, sarkar!"

GABBU - "Hmmm ... tera yeh ... Dhurandhar ... Pushpa ko cross kar payega?"
ADI (looking blank) - "Pata nehi, sarkar!"
GABBU - "Hmmmm ... Suunn, agla film Bharat pe banana!"
ADI - "Kyun Sarkar?"
GABBU - "Aaj se Pakistan mein shooting bandh!"

4. INT. SYNCOPY OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Emma gets a call from Yorgos enjoying his vacation on a Greek Island.

EMMA - "Hi Yorgos, Merry Christmas!"
YORGOS - "Good afternoon! ... Errr ... Listen, I am having second thoughts about the role I mentioned to you ..."
EMMA (alarmed) - "Why Yorgos dear?"
YORGOS - "I happened to read that book of all sorts."
EMMA - "And?"
YORGOS - "Chris is nuts! His is too black."
EMMA - "Black?"
YORGOS - "I mean ... his satire is limitless ... endless ... his period settings are unimaginable ... and his ideas are too abstract ... His mind palace is a hell on earth!"
EMMA - "If you don't write that role for me ... then how will I get my next Oscar?"
YORGOS - "Don't worry ... I am writing a sequel of Poor Things."

5. INT. EDITING ROOM, SYNCOPY OFFICE - NIGHT

Chris is still busy editing Odyssey footage.

EMMA (sighing) - "Chris, I sent out the meeting requests as you asked ... But I am afraid, that a few others may be offended."

CHRIS (still editing) - "Offended?! Who?"

EMMA - "Ayan and his Brahmastra at Dharma ..."

CHRIS - "Even Bollywood honchos are not investing in their sequel .. why should I talk to them?"

EMMA - "Then, there are makers of the spy universe from YRF ..."

CHRIS - "They don't have any sort of imagination!"

EMMA (shrugging) - "And there are The Don Makers in Excel ..."

CHRIS - "That's not sci-fi dear ... it's simply fantasy!"

6. INT. EDITING ROOM, SYNCOPY OFFICE - MORNING

Chris is watching The Odyssey teaser on IMDB website.

EMMA - "Well?"

CHRIS - "Hard to tell."

EMMA - "Huh?"

CHRIS - "I needed to see it on big screen ... this is not meant for monitors."

EMMA - "OK ... But any action points?"

CHRIS - "As I said, it's difficult to say ... the edit, music, cinematography is as expected.

"The colour grading is also fine ... but it still looks a little bit darker than I would have liked ... maybe the contrast of some other knob needs to be adjusted a bit ...

But then, it is hard to say ... without watching in on big screen."

EMMA - "Watch a higher resolution version ... uploaded by

universal on Instagram ..."

After a few minutes ...

CHRIS - "The day scenes are fine ... However, the night scenes are still a little too dark and need adjustments of some sort.

"Also, the colour grading for the interior scenes in the castle, need more naturalistic hues for a realistic look and feel."

7. INT. EDITING ROOM, SYNCOPY OFFICE – SOMETIME LATER

Chris is shaking his head after rewatching The Odyssey Trailer. He is aware of the market demand and investor expectations ... but has he done justice to this film? ... Can something like Greek Mythology be told with as heavy a tone as Oppenheimer? ... He is not sure, and he hopes that the audience won't be this discerning ... He is a grumpy sort anyways.

Chris writes down a one-liner in his notebook ... in case, he forgets during the final edit ...

"To maximize potential ... given the high investment ... The Odyssey film needs to be a little less dark ... and a bit of fun."

However, Chris is well aware that sharp editing can add a subtext of sarcasm ... whereas forcing slapstick comedy will invariably make the narrative tonally inconsistent. 🍁

~ THE END ~

11. THE THREE MUSKETEERS

... And Holy Christ!



1. INT. EDITING ROOM, SYNCOPY OFFICE - MIDNIGHT

Emma is sitting and brooding (instead of grumpy Chris!) ...
Suddenly, Chris pops out from his never-ending editing process.

CHRIS - "Why so sad?"

EMMA - "Yorgos is not writing me that role anymore."

CHRIS (shrugging) - "So?"

EMMA - "You don't understand ... he gets me Oscars!"

CHRIS - "Can you ... for once, think beyond the Oscars?"

EMMA - "And think of what? You are busy with
those [#BollyColly](#) films these days!"

CHRIS - "Not necessarily ... I will be talking To Disney soon."

EMMA (disinterested) - "And?"

CHRIS - "I will give them an idea for a wacky sequel for Poor
Things ... among other things."

EMMA - "What's this one about?"

CHRIS - "A parody of Adolf's suicide."

Emma rolls her eyes ... and Chris is back in the editing room.

2. TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION

ANNE - "Chris, don't you think that you bother Emma too much
at times?"

CHRIS - "No."

ANNE - "I think you often overwhelm her!"

CHRIS - "And I think you are jealous of her!"

ANNE (rolling her eyes) - "I am a hologram ... I don't feel such
human emotions."

CHRIS - "I need both you and Emma around ... I have very specific and significant roles sketched out for you two ... in the future verse ... both pivotal ... but, in different timelines."

ANNE - "You and your [#DisneyLand!](#)"

3. EXT. NOLAN RESIDENCE - 2:00 AM

Chris parks the car in his garage ... Emma is still looking grumpy.

CHRIS - "We are home! Why so grumpy?"

EMMA - "Even if I get the sequel of Poor Things ... Anne has the two tentpole films in her kitty!"

CHRIS - "I see ... You are also there in the dark unhinged film ... that makes you even!"

EMMA - "What about Elle? She is there in all your films ... that's not fair."

CHRIS - "She is my cute little kid sister ... please don't take it otherwise."

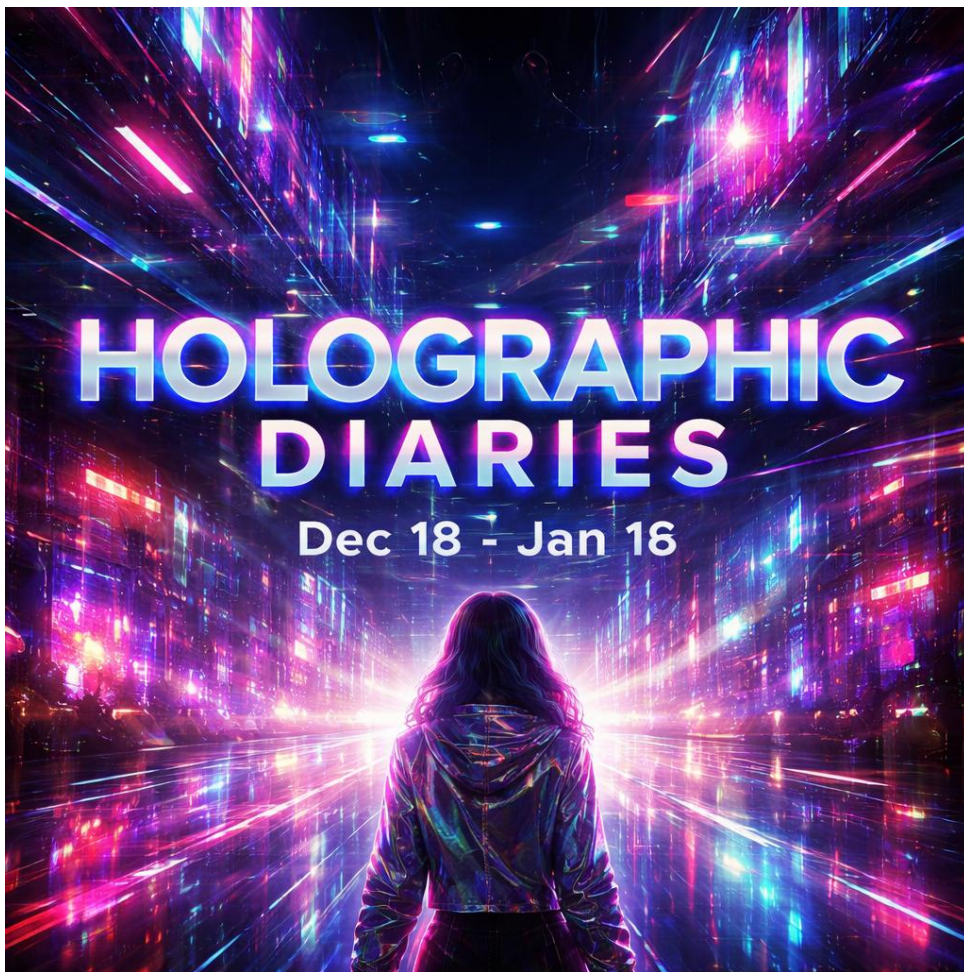
EMMA - "Is she?"

CHRIS - "Yes ... And we need to prepare her for the future verse."

~ THE END ~

12. PROFILING

... The Final Chapter Of HOLOGRAPHIC DIARIES



THE MARTIAN EMPEROR

ANNE – ‘Why Tom?’

CHRIS (pointing towards the white board) – “All Personal Favourites Of Mine ... What Do You All Think?”

Scribbled on the white board are the following words:

- Vanilla Sky (2001)
- Minority Report (2002)
- War Of The Worlds (2005)
- Oblivion (2013)
- Edge Of Tomorrow (2014)

EMPRESS SYBIL

ANNE – “Is One Kingdom Of Heaven Enough?”

CHRIS – “Well ... There Is Casino Royale, A Dame To Kill For & Rise Of An Empire ... To Consider Too.”

THE QUANTUM PROPHET

ANNE - “Chris, don’t get grumpy to hear this ... but what if Christopher Nolan is not interested in directing 2100 AD?”

CHRIS - “I will be honoured if he is interested ... otherwise, someone else might be.”

MAGDALENE

ANNE - “Chris, Renate may not want to do a Disney film.”

CHRIS - “She can ignore everything ... but not me.”

PHANTOM 2040

EMMA - “Chris, what if Elle does not respond to your request?”

CHRIS - “Have you seen *A Complete Unknown & Sentimental Value*?”

EMMA - “Yes, she is quite impressive.”

CHRIS - “I read her as not only charming ... but intelligent too ... about the future.”

THE FUTURE VERSE

ANNE - "What's The USP?"

CHRIS - "Selecting The Very Best."

THE REQUISITE

ANNE - 'Why so grumpy?'

CHRIS - 'Lack of pre-planning ... meticulous, involved and concerned pre-planning.'

Silence.

ANNE - "How to pre-plan?"

CHRIS - "By always asking yourself ... Why did I not see it coming?"

"BOOM! BOOM!"

Q - 'What's All This Noise?'

A - 'It's The 2025 Christmas Party!!'

DHOOM! DHOOOM!! DHOOOOM!!!

Q - "What's All This Noise Again???"

A - "It's New Year Fireworks ... The Ball Is Dropping!!!"

Q - "It's Too Early For That!"

A - "Better Early ... Than Never."

~ THE END ~

PART VII - THE VIRTUAL EPILOGUE

"A New Breed Of Heroines Are Emerging Out Of The Comic Pages Of India ... And Are Ready To Take On The World."

~ The First Encounter Of Chris

... With Priyanka Chopra, 2007 🍁

Created by acclaimed filmmaker
Shekhar Kapur
(*Bandit Queen, Mr. India, Elizabeth*)

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DIVINE AND THE
DIABOLICAL,
THERE IS...**

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"A new breed of heroines are emerging out of the comic pages of India and are ready to take on the world."

- Priyanka Chopra



~ THE END CREDITS SCENE ~

ANNE – “What will you do now?”

CHRIS – “Rebuild it ... Brick by Brick.”

~

APPENDIX – THE BLUE COSMOS

In the blue cosmos, space and time are not only nonlinear but also quantized. Classical theories make no more sense nor any noise anymore. The quantum fluctuations take over completely.

And one unknown supersedes all others, which is the question of consciousness. The only realization made so far in this regard, is that consciousness, whatever it may be, is temporal and not permanent.

In essence, the concept of *time* becomes pivotal and the *meaning* of life itself becomes an impossible dive into a blue hole. A blue hole has no end, but our limited time does indeed. The best you do is to chase the unknowns ... in order to help future endeavours.

That is the only *meaning* of any kind of existence ... in the Blue Cosmos.

"I Love Books ... Each Contains A World Of Its Own."

THE AUTHOR'S END NOTE

~ THE LESSON OF MY LIFE ~

In Detachment ... Lies Our Salvation.

