

The World According to CHAD

**The World According to CHAD  
(Complete History Archive Database)**

**A Prelude to  
Volume One: Forever Tomorrow  
The Book of Tomorrows**

**Alexander Ulysses Thor**

## The World According to CHAD

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*“What is a man,  
If the chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed?  
A beast, no more.  
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,  
Looking before and after,  
Gave us not that capability and godlike reason  
To fust in us unused.  
Now, whether it be bestial oblivion,  
Or some craven scruple of thinking to precisely on th’ event-  
A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom  
And ever three parts coward--  
I do not know why yet I live to say,  
“This thing’s to do,”  
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means to do it*

William Shakespeare  
Hamlet

There comes a time  
When it becomes necessary  
To dissolve the old ways  
Connecting us to the past  
And begin a new way of thinking that separates  
Knowledge from Belief,  
Truth from Myth,  
The Laws of Nature from Faith in a Divine Presence,  
So mankind can rise from the ashes  
To once again assume among the powers of earth  
And prosper from the inalienable right  
That everyone is born equal and  
Deserves the Liberty of Life, and the Pursuit of Happiness

The Prophet Warrior  
Preamble to the New Constitution for a  
New America, established May 6<sup>th</sup> 2090

## CHAPTER ONE

1

**Wednesday 9:00 a.m. May 5<sup>th</sup> 2190**

The man stood waiting outside a museum. He was no ordinary man. Nor was it just any museum.

The man was important. Only he didn't know it, yet. Then again, he did not know much about himself, either. He knew his name, Michael Angel, but not a whole lot beyond that simple fact. Twenty-one-years-old, five-foot-ten, one-hundred-seventy-pounds, dressed in a reserved fashion, wearing a powder-blue pullover, fitted grey slacks, black leather shoes, and while not exactly handsome—nor ugly for that matter—he had a very congenial and relaxed manner, with a gold-tone complexion, light-brown hair, and a face sans of facial hair or even the hint of a five o'clock shadow. His dark brown eyes hid a deep, intense craving for knowledge. The thirst of which drove his very being. It fueled his ambiguous nature, motivating him to seek out his purpose in life. Why he is here, living in a world he felt he did not fit. As with his reason for being here today, waiting for someone he never met.

Michael didn't mind waiting, especially since this was one of his favorite places. It wasn't just any museum. To him, it represented everything worthwhile in the world—truth, beauty, knowledge—a guiding-light illuminating the dark tunnel through the past, which surprised him when she chose the meeting place.

The statue he stood next to, with a strange sense of pride, represented that guiding-light showing mankind how to rise from the ashes of yesterday's fires. Everyone had their heroes in life, that special someone who inspired them to be a better person because of what they have accomplished. And for many, that man was the Prophet Warrior.

Nobody knew where he came from. Or his real name, for that matter. Just that he came out of the wasteland armed with only a sword and The Book of Tomorrows—one of the last books written before the fall. No one knew anything about him, except that he knew. He knew how to lead the country out of chaos and disorder by shining that guiding-light on the awesome power of the written word, found in the pages of The Book of Tomorrows and taught at the end of a sword. The life-size monument memorializing the sad occasion of his death, one hundred years ago at the start of the New America he help rebuild, stood as a symbol to the peace and civilization the epitaph declared.

In Loving Memory of  
THE PROPHET WARRIOR  
Who came out of the darkness,  
To show us the light of a New Day  
Born in 2030—Died May 5<sup>th</sup> 2090  
Finder of The Book of Tomorrows &  
Author of the New Constitution for a  
New America, established May 6<sup>th</sup> 2090

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The statue was a magnificent work of art, exquisitely sculpted out of white marble stone. Bestowing such a remarkable likeness, it embodied an actual presence of being. Set on a three-foot pedestal, engraved with the epitaph, the six-foot statue rose in form and structure to reveal the man. His timeworn Stetson covered most of his long, scraggily hair, except that which flowed out underneath in curled marble stone. A heavy beard shifted focus to the finely chiseled facial features, where his penetrating gaze was still noticeable in the stone-carved eyes. The long leather coat, which along with his legendary sword and hat people came to identify him by, covered his entire body right down to his boots. The coveted Book of Tomorrows—the title etched on its cover, minus The Author’s name—was in his right hand held tight to his chest, while his left rested on the hilt of his mighty sword with its powerful blade pointing down, standing sentinel.

Twenty schoolchildren on a fieldtrip walked past Michael. Escorted by their teacher, a sixty-year-old woman so dedicated to shaping young minds, she elected to continue teaching long after becoming eligible for occupational retirement. Her looks by no means revealed her real age and could easily pass for a woman in her early forties or younger. Still able to turn a head or two walking down the street, she could even feel a discerning gaze coming from the man standing next to the Prophet Warrior monument as the children flocked by the statue with their eyes all amazed.

“It certainly is a lovely day for a fieldtrip, Miss Laurence,” a Dutch-boy-blonde, ten-year-old boy declared with childlike innocence beaming from his dark blue eyes. He, like all his classmates, would be starting high school next year and could earn a full college education by eighteen or training for any qualified skilled trade, providing a clear-cut path for every child’s future.

“Like so many things today, we are truly indebted to the Prophet Warrior for showing us the way to a better living. Even though he left us much too soon, if not for him, we would never have had the opportunity to achieve the technology to save our planet,” Miss Laurence replied then flashed Michael a quick smile.

“You mean things like the Shiteflowers that help restore the ozone layer by reducing greenhouse gasses and rebuilding the atmosphere, so we can have beautiful days like today,” a dark haired girl with bright hazel eyes divulged a perceptual knowledge of how things worked.

“That is a very good example, Sally.”

“But they don’t smell so good,” another schoolgirl added.

All the kids giggled as Michael pinched his nose closed while shaking his head in a mock gesture of pungent odor. Before moving her little troop forward, Michael exchanged smiles with Miss Laurence as he watched her escort her charges up the walkway leading to the museum entrance. The children followed two by two, boys and girls holding hands, and while not wearing school uniforms, their clothes were reserved, simple fashions with nothing outlandish or meant to call attention to the wearer.

Looking up from the children, Michael took in the splendor of the architectural design of the New America Museum of World History, Art, and Science. Serenely nestled on top of a high-rising, barren hillside, the museum had become one of the most popular tourist attractions in the nation’s new capital—the District of Colorado. Three inter-layered, photovoltaic domes, constructed from gallium arsenide semi-conductor wafer panels, with self-generating power cells, converted the radiant solar energy into electricity. The environmentally superior technology generated and stored enough energy to operate the entire facility 24/7. It had no moving parts or harmful pollutants, and also had a high structural integrity. It was a reliable, independent power source used in the construction of businesses, residences, and all means of transportation, where applicable.

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A large blue banner strewn over the museum entrance signified the centennial tribute of the once again thriving country. Printed in solarized neon lettering, it simply read:

In Celebration of  
New America's 1<sup>st</sup> Centennial  
2090-2190  
Forever United Together In Everlasting Peace

As Miss Laurence led the children into the museum, Michael reflected back on his reason for being there, wondering if someone might have made a mistake with his SBP notification. Unsure of his own place in the world, he did not know if he was capable of taking on the awesome responsibility expected of him.

2

The Selected Breeding Program (SBP) was an added amendment to the New Constitution, instituted on September 13<sup>th</sup> 2091. The first Guardian Administrator Cain proposed the amendment, and the Committee of Twelve Experts ratified it as supreme law of the land.

When first starting over there was an attempt made to hold some traditional ways in place. The people were already facing a rapidly changing country—with re-aligning the still viable States into Five Territories of Providence, disavowing the authority of every conflicting belief system (whether based on religious or political ideologies) to void them of all power, and to ensure it, the elimination of wealth and currency by allocating a barter system for the mutual fair exchange of goods and services. Thus, it was deemed necessary for the people to retain the free will to choose their own lifestyles as long as the nation's citizens endeavored to act responsibly in matters of procreation and their sexuality. Providing of course, they did not jeopardize or restrict anyone else's pursuit of happiness. But after just one year of a drastic rise in sexually related crimes (rape, spousal abuse, hate crimes against homosexuals), along with unplanned pregnancies fueling the fear of a population growing too fast, combined with a moral indignation that could lead to greater violence, the line between rights and privileges blurred to the point where hard choices and harsh measures had to be implemented.

In accordance with the SBP method of procreation, selected subjects were between ages twenty to thirty-five, and matched through a Computer Compatibility Program (CCP), designed to find couples suited to each other physically, intellectually, and most importantly, fertile. They did not force the arrangement on potential parents. A happy family environment was an essential ingredient to ensure the mother/father dynamic considered necessary to raise children properly. Matched couples deciding to stay together would move into a new home in a suburban community center reserved for SBP families and could have a civil wedding ceremony, if they wanted, while unselected men and women lived separately in townhouses or condos. Out of a familial sense of tradition, most SBP couples used their own namesake for their infants first and last name. The new parents then raised their child from birth to age fourteen. After which, the child moved on from parental guidance and primary education to a higher learning of his or her choice. Each couple could have two children, if they wanted, which included twins. Afterwards the man would usually get a voluntary vasectomy. Once their offspring journeyed out into the world, the couple could elect to stay together or separate to seek their own path, while still maintaining a relationship with their son and/or daughter.

All other forms of sexual intercourse (whether heterosexual or homosexual) and procreation outside of the SBP system were outlawed and severely punished in the form of

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banishment. While there was some resistance at first, the citizens of New America had little choice in the end, only able to form a few underground splinter groups with a David and Goliath complex—except David didn't have his slingshot this time around. Thomas Jefferson once said, '*A government big enough to give you everything you want, is big enough to take away everything you have*'. A statement never so clearly understood as in its current application.

Based on the belief this was not how it was supposed to be, Michael always had his doubts about the necessary validity of the SBP system. He never gave it too much thought, though, feeling they would never select him.

## CHAPTER TWO

1

Michael still had her SBP image floating around in his mind as he closed his eyes for a couple of seconds to focus his thoughts more clearly. She was certainly very attractive in a way most appealing to him, which was something the SBP usually got right. But that wasn't what concerned him. He knew he would have to make adjustments in his work schedule. Luckily, he could do most of his job from home, and his next expedition to New York City would take place long before any new arrival to his would-be family could come along. Then of course, there was always the chance of rejection by either party. Part of him thought it would be better for both of them if she found him unacceptable. That way neither of them would feel any repercussions from the decision. While Owen did not suffer any loss of position in his field as a sports commentator, Michael felt it could affect his ability to go on digs, and as for her, he thought even the folks at the SBP should realize it would take a very special person to put up with him. He did not believe himself to be the ideal candidate for a husband or a father. Letting out a dejected sigh, he opened his eyes.

“Michael Angel.”

“Eve Adams.”

The vision transplanted from his thoughts into his mind now stood directly in front of him. Eve's SBP notification image could not have prepared Michael for how this alive and radiant beauty would affect him. Her sunlight-blond hair seemed to glisten in the bright morning light shining behind her, while blue, soulful eyes beamed out from a cheerfully rosy countenance. Surprised by the twenty year olds' abrupt presence, Michael took a moment to collect his thoughts before continuing with the formalities of the occasion.

“It is a real pleasure to meet you,” Michael said holding out his hand.

“I am very pleased to meet you, too,” Eve replied taking his outstretched hand as she leaned forward and gave him a quick, friendly hug.

Separating, Michael noted how light and bouncy on her feet she was, wearing a floral print sundress, cut-off just below the knee. Girlish in appearance, projecting a bright outlook on life, she kept a deep, subtle intellect to herself.

“How was your trip over?” Michael asked. “I could have sworn I arrived here before you, and I didn't see you on the early shuttle.”

“I drove over from the Capital Building. Earlier this morning, I had to attend the final training seminar for my position at the Foreign Affairs Office in Alpha City.”

“Alpha City is only ten miles from where I live.”

“Guess we won't have to worry about a long distance courtship,” Eve said with a girlish giggle, then added. “I mean....I don't want to be presumptuous or anything. At least I can offer you a ride back home.”

“You are very kind, thank you. I do not like to take things for granted, either. I was hoping we could take some time to get to know each other before making any final decisions.”

“That is a very thoughtful and practical approach to our purposeful rendezvous,” Eve agreed, adding with a motion of her hand toward the museum. “Which I trust is to your liking. I know it is a ways to travel to meet someone, but I thought you would feel more relaxed in a familiar environment.”

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“Oh, this is just great. I try to get back here whenever I get the chance. It has been one of my favorite places since the first time I came here as a grade-schooler, just like the ones taking the tour today.”

“If you would like, we can join them. From what I read in your profile you can teach them a thing or two, yourself.”

“Now you sound like my roommate, Jacob. He is also under the impression I know more than I really do. I have just always had a strange fascination with history. It seems like a good place to look for answers.”

“Because that is where the answers to some of life’s most important questions remain. I truly believe your work has real value in helping preserve what most people want to forget. Everyone seems content to live in a Utopian haze, which there is nothing wrong with being happy. The world is a much better place than it has ever been. But we still need to remember the tragic cost it took to get here.”

“I am so relieved to hear you feel that way, too. I do not know many people who understand it like you do,” Michael said as a calm feeling replaced the nervous butterflies he felt fluttering in his stomach.

“Shall we, then,” Eve said holding out her hand to Michael.

Taking her hand, Michael smiled as he felt the force of life pulsating through her flesh, giving him a positive energy aura of pure joy. Feelings he had never known before swept through his body, causing him to laugh at an amusing memory as they started up the pathway to the museum entrance.

“What is so funny?”

“Nothing, it’s silly. A line I remembered from an old movie is all.”

“What? Tell me.”

“Louie, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.”

Eve smiled wider than she had since first laying eyes on Michael. She squeezed his hand tighter as they approached the museum entrance. “I think you might be right. Who’s Louie?”

The interior design of the museum was even more impressive than its exterior. The triple-dome structure split into three sections, offering an expansively wide space for every exhibit featured and educational program available. The middle dome served as the entrance and held a Learning Center, complete with a computer guided history tour. The other two sections were dedicated to opposite perspectives of world history, with the right dome displaying modern technology, science, and art, while the left dome was an exhibition of surviving ancient artifacts, which included everything from dinosaur bones, famous artworks, mechanical marvels of the past, and much, much more.

Still holding hands, Michael and Eve entered the museum stepping into the lobby portion of the middle dome where a triangle-shaped directory set, pointing inward. The back of the triangle designated the location of the Learning Center, just inside the entrance, with the sides of the triangle pointing the way to the other exhibits. Another large banner hung over their heads, also heralding the upcoming Centennial. They detoured off into the Learning Center, which was comprised of two sections. The first was an academic aptitude testing area that granted the children a way to plan a proper course of action for achieving their future goals in life. It gave them the responsibility of selecting the subjects they wanted to study. A smaller banner indicated today was Career Day.

The schoolchildren had just finished choosing their career goal paths. The system allowed the children to seek out the profession or vocation they were best qualified for and to avoid the

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ones they weren't. It helped them to make informed decisions by examining their strengths and weaknesses, while providing guidance for the educational needs of every child.

"Wow, this brings back memories," Michael said.

"Me, too. My indecisive mind always frustrated my teachers. I could never settle on a specific goal. They used to say I wanted to know everything about nothing in particular. While also telling me, learning as much as you can about anything and everything is not a bad thing, but it will leave you unfocused. Least that is what they believed. Me, I'm not so sure."

"I guess that explains why you took all those psychology and philosophy courses, plus you are fluent in five languages, when most people can't be bothered to learn a second. I can see why some might question your motivations, but not me. Sometimes I think people can't see beyond the nose on their face. I am glad you are not one of those worker-bee drones, refusing to think for themselves, and always do whatever their told."

"I believe we all have a purpose in life, and we are all meant to do something with our lives. Something that not only serves the self, but a greater good as well, which is the only way you will find true happiness."

"I take it that is what led you to the Foreign Affairs Office."

"Helping integrate foreign exchange students to our culture, while preparing teachers traveling abroad to others, has been a real uplifting and inspirational experience for me. I feel like I am playing a part in re-educating the world." Eve said.

Michael understood the sense of pride she took in her work, much in the same way he felt about his contributions to society, compelling him to tell her how simpatico he felt they were.

"While I am sure you must get plenty of obligatory and sincere compliments about how beautiful you are," Michael stated frankly as Eve shyly blushed, knowing the truth in his words, she was beautiful, there was no denying it, but sometimes she wished she was just average so... "I have to admit, I am really in awe of your mind."...people would desire her for her...wait, what did he just say...mind. "You see the world in a different way than most people do. You don't want to settle for a life full of complacent conformity. We are a lot alike in that way. Maybe there is something to this SBP system, after all. I never thought I would meet someone who sees things like I do."

With a burst of emotion stirred up inside her by his words, Eve embraced Michael, wrapping her arms around his neck as she gave him a quick, passionate kiss on the lips. Taken slightly aback by Eve's unexpected show of affection, Michael looked blank-faced at her for a moment. Sensing her building embarrassment, he responded in kind and kissed her back for a longer duration and just as passionate. Even though it lasted only a couple of seconds more, to both of them, it felt like a moment locked in time, forever suspended in blissful joy.

After separating from their strong embrace, a chorus of giggles greeted Michael and Eve, coming up from the schoolchildren staring at them. Now both of them felt embarrassed by their involuntary display of affection. Michael looked at Miss Laurence, whose forced smile seemed to indicate a clarifying response had better be forthcoming, to which Michael replied, "SBP."

"Aren't new beginnings just wonderful, children," Miss Laurence said as her smile became more genuine. "Perhaps when you come of age you will all be worthy of the chosen honor."

A museum tour guide came over from another section of the Education Center to lead the way to the next exhibit. She was a sixteen-year-old college student doing an internship at the museum, a position serving more as a hostess due to the almost fully automated function of the facility. Her uniform harkened back to a retro look of a Nineteen Sixties airline stewardess, complete with a nametag reading: JANET.

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“I hope everyone was able to make an informed decision on the path to furthering your educations. I remember how invaluable Career Day proved to be for me,” Janet said to the children before guiding them onward. “Now if you will just step this way, I am sure the next stop on our journey will be a memory you will carry with you for the rest of your lives.”

As the schoolchildren headed over to the next stop on the tour, Eve reached down and took hold of Michael’s hand once more.

“Want to tag along?”

“Sure, why not.”

### 2

Tour guide Janet led everyone over to a large platform stage, where she stopped in front of four huge letters mounted on the wall. Embossed in a golden glow, the letters spelled out C-H-A-D. Janet ushered the spectators forward with a guiding arm as they made their way up the three steps of the platform stage. She then pressed a small red button located on top of what looked like a microphone on a stand, but was really a start button. Once freed from her appointed duty, Janet left to go on break.

The stage came alive with the lights of the universe projected on the walls, floor, and ceiling. Galaxies and stars engulfed everyone on stage, making them feel weightless as if floating in space. For the children, it must have felt akin to when fantasy and reality mixed into one for the first time, when early 20<sup>th</sup> century theater patrons saw that iconic locomotive engine come barreling straight at them from up on the big screen.

Looking around at the schoolchildren’s awestruck faces, Michael leaned over and whispered into Eve’s ear. “I feel like a kid, again.”

“Me, too,” Eve replied, squeezing his hand tighter.

A single star reflecting high up on the ceiling instantly got much brighter than the rest. The illuminated star beamed out in a resplendent, radiating light shining down on the captivated audience. Next, a deep, loud voice echoed out all around them. “Prepare to have your minds enlightened by the wonderful world according to CHAD.”

With the blazing velocity of a streaking comet, the brightest star came crashing down to the stage, where it imploded into a sparkling, white glitter before taking shape and form as an animated, 3-Dimensional old man. Looking like a cross between Albert Einstein and the Monopoly Man, the four-foot cartoon caricature stood in the welcoming stance of a circus ringmaster, with his two short arms outstretched, top hat in hand, and coattails streaming behind. Despite his bushy, white mustache and frosty, spiked hair, the animated man exuded a veritable presence of life.

“Good morning, schoolchildren, Miss Laurence, and I see we have some old friends joining us on this lovely day with Michael and Eve. Glad you could come back for a visit,” the animated old man’s voice sprang out at a friendly, peppy volume as he marched back and forth making his introductory presentation.

Michael and Eve reflexively waved hello at the mention of their names, then giggled at themselves for doing so.

“And I am CHAD—a Complete History Archives Database. That is who and what I am, children. Because you see, right up here in this little noodle,” CHAD explained while pointing to his animated head before continuing with his boastful march. “I hold the most comprehensive, the most abundant, the most accurate...well, let me just say it—the complete recorded knowledge of history since the beginning of time. And today, children, we are going to explore the origins of our existence to learn how the greatest mystery of life, is life itself. We will begin with an in-depth look at the creation of life to see how it evolved into us. Then, we will take a look at what we did

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with this gift, building great cities and civilizations, before our greed for wealth and power destroyed it all. We arrogantly believed that we were superior to every other living creature, including some of our own kind.”

CHAD paused for a moment to let his audience take in his words of wisdom, which had a prideful exuberance to them.

“Now no one knows what came first in what I like to call the chicken or the egg scenario. Or more to our topic of discussion—did God create the universe and everything in it? Or did man create god to give a divine purpose to his existence? There is no way to know for sure. Until you die, that is. But, then you cannot tell anybody about it. So what I can tell you are the things we are ninety-nine percent certain of, but may never be able to prove. Once, it was a widely held belief God created the whole shebang in six days, rested on the seventh, and the earth was only as old as the Bible said it was—about six thousand years or so, depending on which version you read. Of course, no one ever said how long a day was. Could it have been a billion years? We do not know. No one does, which is where the controversy of inflexibly closed minds began, right at the start of time, itself. Arguing a day was only twenty-four hours, no more, no less.”

At the end of CHAD’S remarks, the stars all blinked out of existence. Pitch black darkness engulfed everyone on stage, bringing about a chorus of “oohs” and “aahs” from the children. The darkness lasted for nearly a minute. Then, a distant, emerging white star let there be light, once more.

“The most accepted scientific explanation for the sequence of events leading to the creation of the cosmos supports the concept that the universe has been continually expanding from an extremely hot, dense state for close to thirteen billion years.” CHAD continued while pointing up to the glowing white light.

“What created this initial hot, dense state or its origin—could it be a form of intelligent design or what we refer to as God crafting the beginning of all things—may never be known. What we can clarify through scientific method is the evolution of the universe from that point on in what has come to be known as The Big Bang Theory.”

As if on cue, the distant star exploded.

“In the earliest phases of the Big Bang, the universe was expanding and cooling with a rapid progression and contained an incredibly high energy density, combined with extreme temperatures, and immense pressures. About a microsecond into the expansion, a bang within the bang caused a cosmic inflation in which the universe grew exponentially.”

CHAD explained as waves of expanding space moved across the cosmos away from the initial explosion, followed instantly by a second explosion carrying newly forming galaxies past the astonished observers, who could feel phantom fluctuations in the air rushing by them.

“Afterwards, the universe was made up of elementary particles of quark-gluon plasma—matter and antimatter. But with temperatures so high, the random particles were constantly being created and destroyed in collisions. Then an unknown reaction occurred, called baryogenesis, resulting in a very small excess of matter over antimatter. As the universe continued to grow in size and fall in temperature, the quarks and gluons combined to form baryons of protons and neutrons, but none of their antiparticles remained. The same process happened with electrons and positrons, after which photons dominated the universe. A few minutes into the expansion, when the temperature was about a billion Kelvin, neutrons combined with protons to form the universe’s deuterium and helium nuclei in a process called Big Bang nucleosynthesis. About 379,000 years later, the electrons and nuclei combined into atoms of mostly hydrogen. The leftover radiation continued throughout space as cosmic Microwave Background Radiation, which has helped

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scientists to pinpoint when the universe began. Dense regions of matter were gravitationally attracted to nearby matter and over a long period of time grew even denser, forming gas clouds, stars, galaxies, and other astronomical structures observable today.”

With his words visualized in 3-D images floating around the fascinated onlookers, CHAD offered some clarifying statements on the differences of opinions that impeded the process in attaining scientific knowledge of our creation.

“The Big Bang Theory was first proposed in 1927 by Georges Lemaitre, a Belgian physicist and Roman Catholic priest, who called it the hypothesis of the primeval atom. It wasn’t widely accepted for many years—mostly due to conflicting opinions, religious implications, and the lack of advances in telescope technology. And while we do not have time to explore the important research done by the many brilliant minds of their day, or else we would be here until you all graduated, please feel free to access our database for a complete history of time to learn how, depending on when you lived, if you would have been persecuted for your pursuit of scientific knowledge.

“After the Big Bang, a large rotating cloud of interstellar dust and gas composed of hydrogen and helium, called a solar nebular, formed our solar system.”

Once again brought to life, CHAD’S words were in miraculous detail.

“Approximately nine billion years later, the solar nebular started to contract—more than likely induced by shock waves generated from an exploding supernova—impelling it into an accelerated, rotating momentum that caused it to flatten into a proto-planetary disk. Most of the concentrated mass in the middle heated up and mixed in with collisions of large debris to create proto-planets orbiting the center of the nebular. Through an increase in its rotational speed and the force of gravity, the solar nebula’s center created a tremendous quantity of kinetic energy, causing a nuclear fusion of hydrogen into helium, which contracted and ignited a T Tauri star—our sun. As gravity drew in matter and condensed around the new star, the proto-planets separated into rings, including the third rock from the sun; Earth. Shortly after the formation of its initial crust, another proto-planet struck proto-earth, ejecting part of earth’s mantle into space to form the moon. After the impact, the planet was thrown off its axis, producing the tilt responsible for the earth’s four seasons—unique to our planet.”

“Isn’t it amazing?” Michael whispered to Eve.

“It looks so real,” Eve replied.

Watching the sun, earth, and moon form, they stood alongside the amazed schoolchildren, whose bright, shiny faces reflected the wonderment in their eyes.

“In over its 4.5 billion year history, the earth has gone through many extreme geological and biological changes. Mankind has only come to dominate it for the past ten thousand years or so. Using this geologic time scale, you can see the many different stages in the earth’s development.”

The earth’s surface transformed into the geological scale with a detailed timeline diagramming the planet’s progression from creation to present, broken down into a system of chronological measurements known as eons, eras, and periods.

“During the Hadean, earth’s first eon, the surface underwent an intense period of meteor showers, called the Late Heavy Bombardment. It began over four billion years ago and lasted until the end of the eon, two hundred thousand years later.”

The earth transformed back to its early state to illustrate the meteorite showers pulverizing the surface.

“At the start of the Archean eon, 3.8 billion years ago, like a baby in a womb, the earth was covered with oceans, partly from degassing volcanoes, but mostly from impacting comets

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containing ice. The impacts enriched the earth with carbon dioxide, nitrogen, methane, ammonia, and water. As the planet cooled, rain clouds formed and created oceans. Primordial life began to evolve in the early Archean eon. Molecules gained the ability to copy themselves, forming replicator cells, called prokaryotes. Through the process of photosynthesis, which converts carbon dioxide into organic compounds using energy from sunlight, the cells were able to increase their metabolism and obtain more sustenance from the same food source.

“In the Proterozoic eon, remnants of early continental crust, known as cratons, grew into continents of large land masses. Released into air overtime, oxygen, a waste product of photosynthesis, enriched the upper atmosphere to form the ozone layer, which freed lifeforms from the water and allowed them to colonize the surface of the ocean and eventually land. Previously, ultraviolet radiation would destroy all life not protected by the water, and without the ozone layer, the development of more complex lifeforms, like prokaryotes into eukaryotes and multi-cellular forms, might never have happened. Around 2.3 billion years ago, the earth suffered the first of many vast ice ages so severe they created snowball earths, frozen over from both poles to the equator. This was more than likely a result of increased oxygen in the atmosphere causing a decrease in methane, a strong greenhouse gas, weakened by the high oxygen concentration.”

The earth morphed into a giant ice ball, captivating the schoolchildren in awe as they absorbed the valuable knowledge like sponges soaking up water. Michael and Eve followed along reminiscent of a couple watching their favorite old movie.

“Throughout earth’s history, continental drifts related to plate tectonics helped cause the formation and break-up of many supercontinents. Rodinia, the first supercontinent, formed about a billion years ago. Around the same time, the first multi-cellular plants formed when single cell lifeforms merged and became dependent on each other to survive. Within another hundred million years, the first animals evolved from the same process and probably resembled something similar to today’s sponges. There were two more snowball earths during this time, along with some intense volcanic activity that resulted in the breaking up of the supercontinent. Rodinia broke up a hundred million years later, with most of the continental mass uniting around the South Pole by the end of the eon.

“Most of the time life evolved slowly, however, every once in a while there were unexpected dispersions of new species or mass extinctions. These bursts of evolution were usually the aftermath of dramatic shifts in the environment from meteor impacts, climate change, or other natural disasters. The start of the Paleozoic era, five-hundred-forty-two million years ago, was such a time as the Cambrian explosion witnessed the appearance of many new species, unprecedented in its time before or since. The development of hard body parts—shells, skeletons, or exoskeletons in arthropod animals akin to Mollusks—made fossil preservation possible and them easier to identify than their ancestors.”

“What is the difference between eons and eras?” the dark hair girl who mentioned the Shiteflowers back at the Prophet Warrior monument asked.

“A very good question, Sally, one few ask. As a matter of fact, last time someone asked that particular question he was your age. Perhaps you would be kind enough to edify our little band of knowledge seekers, Michael.”

Feeling a bit embarrassed by the sudden attention, Michael found his voice and presented his wisdom on the subject.

“Eons are at least half a billion years or more, and there are four of them. Eras are several hundred million years each, and there are twelve in total.”

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“Very good, Michael, I can tell you have been keeping up with your studies. Because you see, children, during our time together, I can only give you the scientific conclusions of the most accepted evidence available. Of course, there will always be differences of opinion on how to interpret the data. This is why you must always remember to think for yourselves, do your own research, check the facts, and even draw new conclusion from improved data not available in the past. Great minds are born every day, and it is up to you to seek your own destiny and to make a difference.” CHAD offered them an equally important lesson as the one they were already learning, before continuing with the tour.

“The earliest vertebrate animals appeared during the Cambrian period, with the first fish evolving about five-hundred-thirty million years ago. When the first animals migrated to land, is not exactly clear. Evidence suggests arthropods, invertebrate animals with segmented body parts and jointed appendages, colonized land some eighty million years later. With the ozone layer acting as a protective shield, organisms making it to land were more likely to survive by developing the ability to adapt to their new environment. In between the Cambrian and the succeeding Ordovician period, a mass extinction took place that wiped out many of the new lifeforms. But over the next one-hundred-fifty million years, more diverse species arose that were better suited to their surroundings. The first four-legged animals, called tetrapods, evolved from fish, probably through a process of limbs forming from fins. Considered to be the origin of amphibians, it allowed them to breach the surface and breathe air. They eventually conformed to terrestrial life, only returning to the water to lay eggs, but overtime developed an amniotic egg, laid on land. When plants obtained the ability to generate seeds, they spread out across the land, turning the earth into a tropical swamp inhabited by enormous insects and early reptiles. Pangaea, the last supercontinent, also formed during this period.

“At the end of the Paleozoic era two-hundred-fifty million years ago, the most severe extinction event took place as volcanic eruptions persisted for over a million years, wiping out ninety-five percent of all lifeforms.” CHAD paused a moment to note the children’s astonished faces. “I can see by the looks in your innocent, young eyes it is difficult to understand how life could have ever survived on our volatile planet. Trust me, life will always find a way. It perseveres under the most traumatic circumstances, and sometimes-even flourishes as the dinosaurs did.

“During the Mesozoic era, dinosaurs split off from their archosaurian ancestors in the Triassic period. They eventually became the dominant terrestrial vertebrates for the next one-hundred-sixty million years. Primitive dinosaurs were small bipedal predators that continued to evolve after two more extinction events, which also spared pterosaurs (flying dinosaurs) crocodylomorphs, turtles, and some small shrew-like mammals restricted by size and niches. After the second extinction event in the early Jurassic period, two-hundred million years ago, dinosaurs evolved into diverse and varied groups. As the supercontinent Pangaea started to break up, it spread them out worldwide.

“Dinosaurs would soon be present on every continent, comprised of many different terrestrial habitats, called faunas. Although known for the large size of some species, most dinosaurs were human size or smaller. They could be herbivores or carnivores. Some were bipedal and some quadrupedal, while others could switch between either body postures.”

As CHAD described the distinctions of species, a cavalcade of computer-generated prehistoric beasts (some big, some small) paraded across the stage in front of the awestruck audience.

“Herbivorous sauropods, like the popular Brontosaurus and Brachiosaurus, were gigantic even by dinosaurs’ standards.” Two of the massive creatures strolled by, dwarfing the amazed

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onlookers. “Some dinosaurs—the Triceratops, Protoceratops, and Stegosaurus—developed elaborate skeleton modifications with horns, crests, and or bony armor used to attack or defend against predators.” All of which followed the sauropods.

“Avian dinosaurs, like the pterodactyls, became the dominant flying vertebrates.” Two of the winged species soared over the stage. “Fossil records indicate birds evolved from dinosaurs around one-hundred-fifty million years ago, and most paleontologists regard them as their only ancestors living today.

“And of course, the favorite of many dinosaur enthusiasts since the discovery of their fossilized remains, the king of the carnivorous predators, the Tyrannosaurus—more commonly known as the T. Rex—became the most recognizable of the monstrous creatures due to the fierce nature of the beast.” A loud roar echoed out, shortly followed by a second as two of the large predators made their way across stage.

“Dinosaurs get their namesake from the Greek words *deinos saurs*, which roughly translates to ‘terrible lizard’, a term coined by paleontologist Richard Owen in 1842. For many years, people thought dinosaurs were dumb, sluggish, coldblooded animals. But after further review, it became the consensus of scientific opinion they were active, intelligent creatures, exhibiting behavior of social interaction, possibly traveling in herds for protection from predator pack-hunters, like the velociraptor. Also, the discovery of ancient nesting grounds indicates care of young after giving birth, along with new evidence showing some might have been warm-blooded and thrived in cooler climates.

“In the Cretaceous period, flowering angiosperm plants became a major part of the ecological system, replacing previously dominating gymnosperm plants. This metamorphosis in plant life caused a great upheaval in the dietary needs of most herbivores unable to adapt to the new food source. Their failure to diversify doomed them to extinction—like the Stegosaurus, which appears to have died off around then. Even if they managed survive the new conditions, their efforts would have been in vain as the rest of their brethren soon followed them.

“The death knell for the dinosaurs exploded with the same sudden fury in which life began with the Cretaceous-Tertiary extinction event wiping out their species sixty-five million years ago. A general consensus was reached that an impact event from a meteorite, approximately six miles wide, struck the earth somewhere near the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico. And while the meteor impact is believed to be the primary cause, other factors may have contributed, like severe climate change and a failure to adapt to the new plant life that was already putting a strain on the dinosaurs’ harmony with nature.”

As CHAD finished his sentence, a comet blazed across the stage trailing the path of the dinosaurs in a fiery ball of flames and crashed into the animated horizon they were heading.

“Afterwards, life on the planet would have been extremely difficult as vast amounts of particle matter and vapor ejected into the air blocked out the sun and prevented photosynthesis. Whatever caused their extinction (except for the birds), the only other survivors were varied species of lizards, snakes, crocodilians, and some small mammals—who’s time to dominate was on the new horizon.”

Once again, the stage faded into darkness as the startled spectators felt the blackness creeping in all around them. Signaling the dawn of a new day, a rising sun appeared on the horizon bringing life back to the battered planet.

“At the start of the Cenozoic era, life on earth was marked by great changes in the climate, flora, and fauna as the continents continued to drift toward their current positions. The planet appeared much different than today. Still connected to Greenland, Europe was in the process of

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separating from North America—joined to Asia by a land bridge. The continental movement continued to play havoc on the environment creating warmer temperatures worldwide and giving rise to thick tropical jungles (including the first rain forest), along with ice-free Polar Regions. Without any dinosaurs to graze upon the land, the flora grew denser as modern plant species like Cacti and Palm trees appeared. The flowering florae co-evolved with the insects pollinating the plants as they fed on them. Birds also evolved considerably during this time changing to roughly modern species, like perching birds; cranes, hawks, pelicans, herons, owls, ducks, pigeons, loons, and woodpeckers, including some large, carnivorous, flightless birds—long since extinct. Even though reptiles were more widely distributed over the globe with the climate giving way to warmer seas and producing an abundance of marine life, this period is most notable for being the time when mammals evolved from relatively small creatures into a larger group of diverse animals dominating the land.”

As CHAD described what was happening, the stage divided into two sections. The wall in front of them turned into a map of the world illustrating the continental movement, while the floor, ceiling, and the open space around them transformed into the changing landscape showing the continuing evolution of life on the planet.

“When mammals first appeared in the Triassic period, they were small rodent-type creatures living in insect-rich underbrush or high-up in the trees. These survivors of the mass extinction, considered primitive, archaic mammals, had not yet developed specialized teeth or limbs and also had a low ratio of brain to body mass. Around fifty-five million years ago, the first modern mammals evolved, however, dwarf forms still reigned. The most successful and diverse group were placental mammals, whose members included hooved animals of various species (consisting of both carnivores and herbivores) and long thin-legged primates with feet and hands capable of gripping things, in addition to the growth of differentiated teeth for chewing. Woodlands spanned from pole to pole, including polar forests with palm trees as far north as Alaska, giving way to numerous habitats capable of supporting the new faunas. Then a cooling period began over the next twenty million years, bringing about the Earth’s seasonal changes. It marked a transitional time from the archaic world of tropical forests to a more modern ecosystem, culminating with a major extinction event around thirty-five million years ago, called the Grand Coupure or Great Break. Most likely caused by one or more meteor impacts, it coincided with an abrupt climate change after South America broke off from Antarctica, allowing the Antarctic Circumpolar current to flow freely, rapidly cooling the continent. Tropical and sub-tropical forests died off as seasonal woodlands, open plains, desert regions, and the expansion of grasslands took their place. The turnovers in flora made it possible for animals to grow larger than earlier groups, including horses, camels, rhinoceroses, along with more modern marine fauna like whales and sharks.”

CHAD’S words continued to be recreated as the amazed viewers watched the floor transform from tropical forests to deserts, open plains, and vast seasonal woodlands, corresponding with the evolution of life on land and at sea and in the air. Early primates, horses and other hooved animals, along with the new marine life, morphed into more evolved states.

“Over the next thirty million years, Brown algae, called kelp, provided a fresh food source for marine fauna, supporting new sea life from otters, to sea lions, to seals, to early dolphins, plus a variety of fish. With the continents still drifting toward their present positions, mountain building took place, creating wondrous ranges like the Andes and Alps. The continental drift also formed a land bridge linking North America to South America, called the Isthmus of Panama, making possible a great land migration of formerly isolated species. Mammals became more identifiable by regions they came to dominate with the appearance of dogs, raccoons, beavers, deer, pigs, bears,

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elephants, cows, hyenas, antelopes, giraffes, kangaroos, and now extinct saber-toothed cats, woolly mammoths, and mastodons. The creation of the Isthmus of Panama also led to extreme changes in the climate. With the warm equatorial ocean currents being cutoff, the extremely cold arctic and Antarctic waters lowered the temperature of the Atlantic Ocean, signaling the beginning of repeated glacial cycles, known as Ice Ages. It is believed as much as thirty percent of the earth's surface was covered in ice, with the glacial effect being global."

The map of the world displayed the connecting link between North America and South America forming as the stage gave way to migrating prehistoric beasts making their way over a frozen landscape. The room temperature actually dropped to a chilly degree, allowing the spectators a tangible perception.

"During this time, there were about a hundred species of apes living all over the globe, varying in sizes, diet, and anatomy. Molecular evidence indicates around six million years ago humans branched off from their last common ancestor, the chimpanzee—to whom their DNA is ninety-eight percent identical. The first recognizable hominid genus, *Homo habilis*, appeared about two million years ago in Africa. Many species of the genus *Homo* evolved that are now extinct, except for one. The first humans to walk upright and gain the ability to control fire was *Homo erectus*, who evolved around eight-hundred-thousand years ago and migrated throughout much of the world, giving rise to many different variations of prehistoric man. Around four hundred thousand years ago, Neanderthals were the first humans to show signs of spirituality by burying their dead with tools, food, and other artifacts. *Homo sapiens* evolved in Africa about two-hundred-thousand years later and began migrating out between seventy and fifty thousand years ago, eventually replacing other existing hominids in Europe and Asia."

A vivid 3-D recreation of the standard scale of the evolution of man appeared, showing the earliest homo genus, *Habilis*, all the way to and ending with *Homo sapiens*.

"The Latin translation for *Homo sapiens* essentially means 'human intelligence', which is only appropriate considering the great steps forward they took over their predecessors. An expansion of the skull accommodated for a larger brain size, leading to the development of elaborate stone utensil use, along with the evolutionary growth of opposable thumbs making the crafting and handling of tools possible. Until around forty thousand years ago, human technology progressed stepwise with each *Homo* species starting at a higher level than the previous one. At that time, a Great Leap Forward occurred as modern humans developed sophisticated hunting techniques, like trapping animals in pits or driving them off cliffs. They fashioned clothes out of the hides using bones for needles and buttons. Other examples of exhibiting human behavior included early forms of art expressed in cave paintings, jewelry crafting, and stone figurines, possibly used for spiritual worship. There is also evidence of organized living spaces, exploring less hospitable areas, and even engaging in barter and trade.

"Using mitochondrial DNA, researchers have concluded that all species of the *Homo* genus are descended from a single woman in Africa, dubbed mitochondrial Eve." CHAD winked over to Eve, who blushed at the mention of her name.

Michael whispered in Eve's ear as he squeezed her hand he had been holding since tour began. "Guess I have been matched to someone with superior genes. Do you think my DNA might be as impressive?"

Finding the astute nature of Michael's statement too hard to suppress, Eve inadvertently blurted out a silly girlish giggle she meant to keep to herself. "Pardon, me," she said after realizing everyone was looking at her.

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“That is quite all right, my dear. Life often holds a strange irony that applies to all our lives.” CHAD said as the ancient female of name appeared before them and started mingling among the different geneses of beguiled primitive men. “The Out of Africa theory has been a hotly debated area of paleoanthropology for maintaining the concept that mankind first evolved in Africa before migrating out into the rest of the world. However, unless this is your field of study, we can leave those questions for other scientific minds to ponder. We will just continue with the most accepted theory, since it is not relative to our purpose here, today. Because, in the end. It does not matter where humans evolved to become the dominant life form on the planet. The main point is we did evolve. We survived.

“The ice age ended between twelve and ten thousand years ago depending on the regions affected by the climate. With the continents in place, the rising sea levels doomed many species that were unable to adapt to their environment to extinction. Large mammals—mammoth, mastodons, and saber-toothed cats—died off worldwide, replaced with coldblooded animals, migratory birds, and smaller, swifter mammals, while North America experienced the elimination of native horses and camels.

“Along with the prehistoric mega-fauna, all species of hominids became extinct during this period, except *Homo sapiens*, who have proven to be the most resilient of survivors.”

Many of the prehistoric beasts faded away with the less fortunate species of humans as modern mammals and *Homo sapiens* continued to thrive.

“Throughout over ninety percent of their history *Homo sapiens* lived in small, nomadic groups of hunter-gathers. They sought sustenance by gathering plants and hunting animals, more than likely living in an egalitarian society. Then with the development of language, mankind gained the ability to remember more and communicate complex information, easing the transition into the Agricultural Revolution, which also led to the end of man’s first society.

“In the Fertile Crescent of the Middle East between 8,000 and 7,000 BC, humans began the systematic husbandry of plants and animals, including the domestication of dogs used for either herding or hunting. Agriculture soon spread to neighboring areas and even developed independently in other regions as needs dictated, until most humans lived as farmers in permanent settlements near life-sustaining bodies of water.”

The stage converted from campsites and cave dwellings to agricultural farming communities with growing crops and grazing livestock.

“Food surpluses allowed communities to expand and governing classes to form, creating divisions of labor, which resulted in a dramatic surge of social inequality. As landowner’s increased their possessions, a hierarchal society arose to exert a firm control over those who came to depend on it. Agriculture became the lifeblood of cities that grew out of the earth to become the heart in the center of the surrounding countryside. Feeding off of harvested crops and raised livestock, cities provided trade goods, manufactured products, security for its citizens’ livelihood, and protection from hostile forces. With more free time to pursue higher knowledge, many people benefited from the opportunity by creating and cultivating revolutionary inventions to help make their lives easier, instead of applying all ones efforts to avoid becoming part of the food chain.”

## CHAPTER THREE

1

“Boys and girls, this concludes the first part of our tour on the origins of life. We are now going to explore how mankind has used this gift for both Good and Evil. And by analyzing the fable of Cain and Abel, we can uncover two defining moments in history. The Bible story of the two sons of Adam and Eve represents a key moment in time as the first recorded murder. It also serves as an allegorical metaphor for the time when agriculture replaced the ways of the hunter-gather. Cain, a crop farmer, killed his brother Abel, a shepherd, when God showed favor to his brother’s offering over his.”

The rural setting everyone seemed to be occupying disappeared as the stage returned to its normal condition, with the exception of the world map stretched out across the wall. CHAD sauntered over to the map in a continued bravado of pride, his pie piped legion of followers falling in line behind him. Stepping up to the wall, CHAD pointed to the map and started to explain its features.

“With the next stop on our journey through time, I am pleased to tell you about one of the more recent updates to our system, or better yet, maybe I should let the designer, Michael, would you be so kind?”

Again, Michael felt a bit embarrassed by the unexpected attention. Eve gave him an encouraging nod as he released her hand for the first time since the tour began.

“It was just an idea I had one day while studying for finals. I thought how helpful it would be to have a country’s entire history available in an interactive database that could be accessed from a map at the touch of a finger, kind of like having your own personal CHAD.”

Michael could have sworn he actually saw the animated man blush.

“I’m not telling them anything they don’t already know. The Touch & Go program has been a standard feature on school maps for the past three years. I just thought it up and let the technicians do all the hard work.”

“Please, demonstrate your idea for us, Michael,” CHAD said with a prideful smile. “I am sure you remember where our presentation resumes.”

“I believe we left off in what was once dubbed the cradle of civilization. So if we go to the map, touch the section of the Middle East, formerly known as Iraq, an information directory will pop up.” Michael explained as a window box popped up on the map with a directory listing the four main categories:

- 1.) ARCHEOLOGY & GEOLOGY
- 2.) CIVILIZATIONS & CULTURES
- 3.) DATES & TIMELINES
- 4.) FAUNA & FLORA

“If you touch one of the main categories, you get another list of subjects to choose from. For example, I will press DATES & TIMELINES, and you get a chronology of every civilization, kingdom, empire, monarchy, or dictatorship ever built in the region. Starting around 3500 BC in Ancient Mesopotamia with the Sumerian Kings, considered the first civilization, to the Akkadian Empire, which lasted from 2300 BC to 2200 BC, or the Babylonian Empire between 1728 BC to

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1531 BC, all the way up to the beginning of the Ottoman Empire in 1533 BC and its end in 1918 AD, which led to the rise of the Kingdom of Iraq in 1932, and a good place for CHAD to resume today's lesson."

"Thank you, Michael. That was very informative." CHAD acknowledged Michael's helpful participation, who felt inclined to give a short bow after the children started clapping along with their teacher, CHAD, and Eve.

Returning to Eve, Michael automatically took hold of her waiting hand.

"An oddly appropriate place to continue the tour," CHAD added. "Since this area of the Middle East not only represents where civilization began, it is also where it affectively ended. A nuclear wasteland since the end of World War III, this region of the globe is where mankind developed the technologies that separated modern man from his primitive ancestors. We can trace the origin of writing back to the Agricultural Revolution. The list of Sumerian Kings in cuneiform syllabic script marked the beginning of recorded history. It also revealed the true power of the written word, which along with inventions such as the potter's wheel and other advances in tool making utensils, gave man the ability to dominate the land and his fellow man as well."

An example of the list of Sumerian Kings appeared on the wall of the world map.

"Systems of control were needed to maintain order among the people subjected to the ruling class of landowners. Over many years, a family's inherited wealth created nobilities passed down from generation to generation. As landowners grew more powerful, kingdoms arose and fought each other for control of more land, power, and ultimately rule over mankind. But powerful monarchies alone were not enough to keep the will of the people faithful to their kings, especially when all power and wealth is fleeting, often dependent on one's strength to keep it.

"The greatest system of control ever conceived over the minds of men rests in his belief in a higher power. Having blind faith in a divine presence essentially provided man with a righteous cause to fight, kill, or die for, whether in justly fought battles for survival or wars devised for the greedy manipulations of kingly profits. The tricky part to interpreting the history of mankind is what I refer to as the Human Factor. You see, when calculating the age of the planet, for instance, there are certain geological measurements applied to the equation used to formulate the most accurate data attainable. But when you add in the Human Factor history is as much fable as it is fact. Someone once said all history is a lie agreed upon, but more often than not, it relies primarily on who is telling the story as to what version may be set forth as true. Some countries and empires have even tried to erase all records of their most notorious leaders, until another tarnished ruler came along who needed someone worse to compare himself to by saying, 'at least I am not as bad as that guy'.

"The lies of history were never more egregiously clear and piously practiced than where religion is concerned. Evidence of early man's belief in an afterlife dates back to the Stone Age, but throughout his existence who or what he worshipped has varied with a diversity of deities and religious ceremonies. Truth or myth, the lessons we learn from the past do not necessarily rely on the story being accurate or a fabricated fable. The profoundly omnipresent and allegorical lesson established from the belief in myths, either in pagan gods or a single divinity, can be more significant than the actual facts of the matter. Blind faith in dogmatic piety guided men's minds, spawning a morally misguided impetus to condone horrendous crimes against humanity in the name of their god or gods. A prime example of this distortion of historical facts and spiritual beliefs is the biblical story of the Book of Moses and the Exodus out of Egypt.

"In the Old Testament, Moses led the Israelites from the bondage of slavery after Yahweh, their 'one true God', inflicted the Ten Plagues on Egypt, ending with the death of the firstborn

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male child of every household not protected by the mark of lamb's blood on their door. After the death of Pharaoh Ramesses' II firstborn son, Moses was allowed to lead the Israelites to the Promise Land the Lord vowed would one day be theirs." CHAD explained.

"According to biblical history, not to be confused with actual history, Moses and his people spent thirty-eight years in the desert. At first, they fled Pharaoh's army after Ramesses decided on a vengeful rebuke for the death of his son. But through purportedly divine intervention his army was annihilated at the Sea of Reeds."

The world map displayed on the wall vanished and was quickly replaced by a scene from the 20<sup>th</sup> century film of *The Ten Commandments* showing Charlton Heston as Moses parting the Red Sea, shortly followed by walls of water crashing down on the Egyptian army. The film continued to show scenes in synch with CHAD'S words.

"After miraculously escaping the Pharaoh's wrath, Divine Intervention continued to aid the Israelites on their long journey with the burning bush speaking to Moses on Mt. Sinai, where God carved out the Ten Commandments—his Tablets of Law. However, the Lord could be an angry God when man doubted His word, telling Moses he could not to enter the Promise Land after he questioned the Lord. Nor were any of the first generation who left Egypt, because upon reaching Canaan, they refused to go on after scouts reported there were giants living in their Promise Land. Before his death Moses named his apprentice, Joshua, leader of the people, and as a reward for being one of the only original scouts to bring back a positive report, the Lord permitted him to enter the Promise Land. Although, the Lord might have neglected to mention there were Canaanites already living in their Promised Land, who did not pray to the same god as the Israelites, and had no plans to leave without a fight.

"The first battle for control of Canaan was in Jericho, whereas quoted from the Book of Joshua, *"they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both men and women, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword."* Now there is no historical or archeological proof any of these events ever took place. Historians could not even agree on when it all happened. But in this case, when or if do not matter. It is the important precedent set by these fables that guided, influenced, and condoned the actions of self-righteous future generations, who thought themselves wiser and more civilized than their ancestors. Strongly motivated by his greed for power in this world, man has always sought ways to ensure himself an exalted place in the next one. "

A lost and dejected look seemed to overwhelm the animated man as he spoke in a soft, mournful tone.

"It saddens me to think words like slavery, rape, murder, and especially genocide ever had to be invented."

Quizzical Sally walked up to CHAD and attempted to put her hand on his shoulder to console him, but only passed through air.

"Don't be sad, CHAD. It's a beautiful world now."

"You are a very sweet girl, Sally. What you do not understand, it was a beautiful world then, too. We just took it for granted, something we must fear to never do again."

Miss Laurence stepped up behind Sally, actually being able to place her hands on the young girl's shoulders, and gave praise to her student. "Sally is one of our brightest students."

"I am sure she will do many great things with her life." CHAD said before getting back to the history tour, which started to turn into more of a diatribe.

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“Whereas the first civilizations developed independently, the countries originating from them (Egypt, Persia, and Greece) blossomed into empires controlling large territories and had major influences on the different cultures they spawned.”

CHAD went over to the wall as it transformed back into the map of the world. Using the Touch and Go application, he tapped his animated finger on the country of Greece, causing the information box to pop up. He then hit the CULTURE category and another list, though much longer, appeared as CHAD began to consolidate historic events.

“Ancient Greece was comprised of several hundred, mostly independent, city states and is considered to be the seminal culture providing the foundations for Western civilization. The long list of contributions the Greeks gave the world were lasting, grand achievements that are still the basis for many practices used today. They established the first democracy in Athens, truly put to the test by King Leonidas and his 300 Spartans, who fought to the death in 480 BC at the Battle of Thermopylae to remain free from the reign of Xerxes, the Persia king bent on dominating the world. But it was Ancient Greek art, and not Persian, that spread out across the land, particularly in form of architecture and sculpture. The teachings of Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, still provoke contemplative thoughts on modern day philosophy. It was Hippocrates, a Greek physician called the father of medicine, who made many important discoveries and was the founder of the Hippocratic School of medicine all doctors swear an oath to uphold. Even their economy prospered from having a well-educated society, which deduced the fundamental rules of mathematics, along with the development of astronomy and basic geometry. Using an alphabetic script, a Greek playwright named Aeschylus forever changed the way we write plays with the introduction of interacting characters exchanging dialogue, thereby creating...drama. And ever since, the written word has given men the power to rule the world. Right from the start, great works of literature, such as Homer’s Iliad and the Odyssey, inspired dreams of grandeur in historic figures like Alexander the Great, whose mother deluded his mind with tales of how he was the son of Zeus, the mighty Greek god, which led to his unwavering obsession to conquer the known world.”

CHAD touched the MYTHOLOGY category in the CULTURE section, and a list of Greek gods from the Titans to the Olympians appeared. CHAD then touched the OLYMPIAN category, but instead of another list, several sparkling lights started glimmering over the heads of the surprised onlookers that began taking shape in form of the Ancient Greek gods from Apollo to Zeus.

“Throughout time, all history, especially Greek, has been strongly mixed with religious myths and legendary sagas. We can literally trace a direct lineage of Western Civilization through the famous mythological fables passed down over the centuries, beginning with the face that launched a thousand ships during the Trojan War, to the founding of Rome with the tale of Romulus and Remus, and onto the rise of Europe from the ashes of a fallen Rome with the legend of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table in Camelot.”

The hovering Greek gods faded away, replaced by images depicting the Trojan horse used to infiltrate the city, the sacking and burning of Troy, refugees fleeing the lost city, and the death of Achilles with an arrow through his heel.

“Many years after the Trojan War the legend of Romulus and Remus was born. Descendants of the Trojan prince, Aeneas, who escaped Troy to settle in Italy, Romulus and Remus were twin brothers left in the woods to die by their jealous uncle. They were found by a she-wolf, who suckled and cared for them. Once restored to their regal birthright, the brothers acquired many followers and planned on building a grand city. However, a dispute over its location left Remus mysteriously killed. Romulus named his city Rome. He then proceeded to abduct women from

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neighboring tribes to populate it. He created the Roman legions, established the Roman senate, settled the Seven Hills of Rome, and waged war for two decades to expand Rome's territory, until his own suspicious death, possibly at the hands of the Senate—almost seven hundred years before Julius Caesar.”

The images of Troy disappeared, replaced by ancient artworks illustrating the origin story of the famous twins and their Roman legacy. The visual images moved along in coordination with CHAD'S description of events. The scenes revealed were pictures of ancient artifacts, famous artworks, and legendary ruins, including some 20<sup>th</sup> century film clips.

“Founded as a kingdom, Rome was ruled by seven Roman kings for almost two-hundred-fifty years, before turning into a Republic in 509 BC, which then outlawed tyranny and waged wars for the next five hundred years to continue expanding their territory. By 83 BC, Rome found itself embroiled in the first of three civil wars, culminating in the fall of the Republic and the rise of the Roman Empire. Lucius Cornelius Sulla was a gifted general, who possessed the cunning and courage to make him an ideal ruler. He never lost a battle and won the first civil war. And even though he was named dictator after marching his armies on Rome, he used his authority to enact reforms to restore the balance of power between the nobility and the people, and then stunned the Roman world by resigning his power and retiring to private life—which is not to say, he couldn't be ruthless. While in total control of the city, he had all those he perceived to be enemies of the state executed. One of his intended targets was a young Julius Caesar, who only escaped death with the aid of some of Sulla's supporters. In the end, Sulla was said to regret sparing Caesar's life, because he felt the young man dangerously ambitious and warned of a possible tyrant lurking inside him.”

A famous bronze statue of Julius Caesar in full military dress appeared on the wall map in a projected image of the infamous dictator.

“Sulla's warning turned out to be quite prophetic. Caesar marched his troops on Rome when ordered to stand trial for treason by the Senate and his old friend, Pompey Magnus. Pompey feared Caesar's conquest of Gaul left him a powerfully rich and ambitious man. After defeating his armies, Caesar pursued Pompey to Egypt. In an ill-advised effort to appease Caesar, they executed Pompey on order of Ptolemy XIII, the child pharaoh of Egypt. Angered by the pharaoh's arrogance, Caesar sided with Cleopatra, the pharaoh's sister wife, immersed in her own civil war with her brother. Victorious once again, Caesar left Cleopatra to rule Egypt and was rumored to have had a son with her, named Caesarian. Upon returning to Rome in 44 BC, the Senators proclaimed Caesar dictator for life, shortly before stabbing him to death on the senate floor. Hoping to restore the Republic, the unforeseen result of their action directly led to the rise of the Roman Empire and a third civil war.

“Octavian—Caesar's adopted heir—formed an uneasy alliance with Mark Antony—Caesar's top general—to hunt down the Brutus led assassins forced to flee the city from the wrath of an angry mob. After defeating Caesar's assassins, the peace between Octavian and Antony soured when Antony allied himself with Cleopatra in Egypt. Octavian, much like his adoptive father, was victorious in the end. Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide, leaving Octavian the sole ruler of what would become the Roman Empire and him the first Emperor. He took the adopted name of Caesar and the title Augustus in 27 BC (which is where the month of August comes from as with July being a form of Julius). Considered the best of all the Roman Emperors, Augustus' reign, called Pax Romana, was renown as time of Roman Peace. He ruled until his death in 14 AD. Unfortunately, a blood lineage of ruthless tyrants succeeded him, forever staining the memory of Rome with the blood of the innocent.”

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Famous paintings and sculptures of historic events and rulers flashed up on the giant wall screen, depicting everything from the assassination of Julius Caesar, the Battle of Actium, plus several sculptured busts of Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, and Mark Antony.

“Augustus was succeeded by his stepson, Tiberius, whose early reign of peaceful years enriched the treasury. Overtime, Tiberius became an increasingly paranoid ruler, who began a series of treason trials and executions. He eventually removed himself to the island of Capri, where lurid tales abounded about sexually deviant behavior and brutal cruelty, damaging the emperor’s reputation to the point where the people rejoiced at the news of his death in 37 AD.

“Followed by his grandnephew, Caligula Caesar started out beloved by the people for ending Tiberius’ paranoid persecutions, but a near fatal illness in all probability left him mentally deranged. Caligula rapidly turned into one of the most infamous and hated rulers ever as his brief reign of homicidal terror, extravagant living, and unrivaled debauchery led to his bloody death at the hands of his commander of the guard and Senatorial conspirators, who once again hoped to restore the Republic. The conspirators plot failed as the Praetorian Guard installed Claudius, the only member of the imperial family left to be emperor, since both Tiberius and Caligula considered him an idiot weakling and no serious threat. Despite his disabilities, Claudius proved to be an able ruler. He conquered Britain and improved much of the city’s infrastructure. He was, more than likely, poisoned by his ambitious fourth wife, who had high aspiration for her son, Nero. While his controlling, power-hungry mother might have been instrumental in Nero becoming Emperor in 54 AD, she did not get to enjoy the fruits of her labor for long. Nero’s intense hatred of his mother led to her violent murder five years into his reign. Regardless of the Romans passing a law to erase all memory of his existence, we know Nero as one of history’s most notorious rulers, who once savagely kicked his pregnant wife to death in a fit of anger.”

Historical depictions of the ancient Roman rulers materialized before the eyes of CHAD’S eager learners. Busts and statues of some of Rome’s most infamous Emperors appeared in various states of decay or demolition, like a headless statue of Nero.

“According to the Gospels, it was during the reign of Rome’s first five Emperors when Jesus Christ of Nazareth was born and spread the word of God, his father, before being crucified for our sins. Some of his followers, known as the Twelve Apostles, continued to spread his message of peace and love through Christianity. The apostles held faith in the belief that one day Jesus would return to save them from the torments they suffered under the Romans until 313 AD, when Emperor Constantine ended the persecutions after converting to Christianity. Almost one hundred years before the fall of Rome in 476 AD, Emperor Theodosius enacted a law establishing Christianity as the official religion of Rome. While the once powerful Roman Empire crumbled when the city fell seize to Germanic barbarian hordes, Christianity grew into the world’s largest religion with the belief in Jesus Christ as the son of God eventually changing the way we counted time. First devised by a monk in 525 AD, the BC/AD (Before Christ & After Death) system did not become more widely used until 731 AD, when the Venerable Bede came up with the method of counting the years Before Christ. In 1492, Portugal was the last Western European country to switch over. However, many years later the use of BCE or Before Current Era and CE for Current Era was adopted by scientists due to the religious connotations BC/AD denoted in what had become of more secular world, at least in the logical realm of scientific communities.”

Displayed across the wall scenes from the life and death of Jesus replaced the Roman Emperors with some famous artworks from the past.

“Much like the story of Moses leading the great Exodus out of Egypt, there are no historical records to prove or disprove what happened to Jesus of Nazareth. The belief in the divinity of

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Christ has been the subject of much debate since the day he was born, something else disputed by scholars and theologians, alike. The great divide among believers and non-believers rested in the conviction that Jesus was the son of God, which is not even the truly miraculous part of his story. As so often happens in matters of monumental importance, the people focused on the messenger, instead of his visionary message.”

CHAD appeared to ponder a thought or two before continuing.

“Maybe, if people believed Jesus was just a man—a very wise man, but still a man—someone able to grasp ahold of the true meaning of life while living in a backward time and such a strange land, his message could have reached the whole nation, without spawning a mass confusion of conflicting belief systems used to justify man’s greedy pursuit of power and glory. Don’t get me wrong, but if the simple words meant to promote peace and harmony could be converted into a complicated paradox of thoughts to protect the power and wealth men used to gain the world, then they truly lost the meaning of their messiah’s words and their own salvation, too.

“After the fall of Rome, the Catholic Church converted into a very powerful political player throughout Europe in form of the Holy Roman Empire. First becoming visible after Pope Leo persuaded Attila the Hun not to sack Rome in 452 AD, even though Attila’s decision to turn back was more likely due to the toll disease and famine took on his army. Soon the great hypocrisy of religious wars spread out across the land. Fought in the name of God to justify conquests of foreign territories, they arrogantly forced the conquered pagan tribes to convert to Christianity by instituting a death penalty for all those who refused. The corruptibility of power is absolute in its nature. Onetime persecuted for their beliefs by the Romans, some Christians continued the pattern by oppressing heathen pagans and even fellow believers. The Catholic’s assertions of the Pope’s authority as the leader of the church created a great divide among Christians who rejected the supremacy and infallibility of the Papacy. This ultimately led to a split from the church with the self-exiled followers establishing the Eastern Orthodox Church. The splintering would continue over the years into several different denominations.”

The stage flooded with light, the world map disappeared, and the room returned to its normal appearance. CHAD stood directly in front of his class of knowledge seekers, emitting a serious presence of someone now wanting to solicit information.

“I would like everyone to take a minute to ponder a simple question. How do you think Jesus would feel if he had lived to see what had become of his church?” CHAD asked.

After raising her little hand, Sally spoke with a maturity beyond her more advanced and learned years would even suggest. “I do not think he would be very happy how his followers squandered the beautiful gift of knowledge he gave his life for.”

“You are a very perceptive young lady. I do not think he would be very happy, either.”

“Is that why The Author of The Book of Tomorrows remains unknown?” Sally asked with another reflexive raise of her hand going up almost in unison with her words.

“Because of the time in which it was written, just before the fall of what we refer to as our Old Civilization, historical records from then are quite rare. So we do not know if The Author’s anonymity was by design or circumstance. Unfortunately, much like the Prophet Warrior there is a scarce amount of background information about the person we know only as The Author, other than where he was living when he wrote The Book of Tomorrows. But since most of Old California is outside the Safe Zone and a very dangerous place to travel, I am incapable of correctly answering your important query. And for that, my dear, I am sorry.”

“That’s okay CHAD. Maybe we are better off not knowing.”

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“Maybe we are, Sally. Maybe we are. But let us not concern ourselves with things we may never know and get back to the things we do. Like the third historical fable connecting our ancestral lineage to the rise of Western Civilization, from Greece to Rome to England and the legend of Arthur, King of the Britons. In a time known as the Dark Ages, the fall of the Roman Empire gave way to barbarian invaders conquering most of Rome’s abandoned territories left undefended. Born out chaos, the origin of three Western countries (Spain, France, and England) each rose up like a Phoenix from the ashes of a fallen Rome to become dominating world powers in their own right and time.”

With a snap of his animated fingers, the lights dimmed once more and the map of the world returned to its wall canvas projecting the grand design for all to gander and surmise. Moving over to the map, CHAD quickly tapped out a few commands on the Touch & Go screen menu, highlighting the countries under the current topic of discussion.

As CHAD pointed out England on the map and started to explain the connecting links to the origin story of King Arthur, Michael’s thoughts began to wonder from the telling of a familiar tale onto one yet to unfold. Although he could still hear CHAD telling how the deeds of Arthur (the Roman-British general who defeated Anglo-Saxon invaders in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, then established the Kingdom of England) were rooted more in legend than fact, Michael’s mind was preoccupied contemplating thoughts about being a good father. It all seemed to hit home when the thought struck him how proud it would make him to have a daughter as bright and full of life as little Sally. He practically blocked out CHAD’S continuing history lesson linking legend to literature with Geoffry of Manmouth’s 12<sup>th</sup> Century *History of the Kings of Britain*, and then onto the more magical and popular 15<sup>th</sup> Century retelling, called *Le Morte d’Arthur*, by Sir Thomas Malory, which became the standard for future stories.

By the time Michael turned his ponderous mind from thoughtful scenarios of a lifetime devoted to nurturing a child within a loving family environment and back to the tutorial, CHAD had covered the entire Dark Ages, during which the blight upon the land was not only brought about by foreign conquerors, but also from great famines and deathly plagues; and how countries like Spain, France, and England survived their hostile aggressors to become great nations, not through forceful suppression of their enemies, but rather by religious conversion of the pagan tribes; a system of control that would prove not only fruitless, but more an impelling rallying call for Islamic raiders, who gained control of Spain and the cherished Holy Lands in the Middle East at the start of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century; which in 1096 led to the first of nine Crusades, resulting in over two hundred years of bloody massacres, merciless victories, and brutal defeats, with power shifting struggles ultimately ending in abject failure for both military campaigns and in a moral hypocrisy that forever stained the offending faiths; but the power struggles did not end in faraway lands as religious abuses, internal conflicts, and territorial disputes still reigned supreme in the homelands, with many kingdoms desperate to stabilize their nearly bankrupt economies after long costly foreign wars; and how countries like Spain would find an influx of wealth through the exploration for profitable trade routes with the discovery of the Americas in the New World, making Spain a dominant power in Europe for the next two centuries.

As Michael came out of his self-imposed, contemplative trance, he turned his full attention back to CHAD, who was pontificating on what he called...“One of the strangest twists of fate in European history would have to be the extreme measures taken by King Henry VIII to ensure the legacy of his crown with a male heir. After marrying Catherine of Argon (his dead brother’s wife), the king of England broke off his alliance with the Holy Church of Rome when the Pope refused to annul his marriage so he could marry his mistress, Anne Bolen. While Catherine was the beloved

daughter of Queen Isabella of Spain and Anne Bolen was mostly despised by the people as the king's concubine, both of them fell out of favor with the king by committing the same grievous sin of giving birth to only daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, respectively—a sin which ultimately cost Anne her head. Although Henry VIII did have a son with his third wife (who he let die in childbirth), it is the morally divergent reigns of his two daughters that are remembered the most. From the womb of his good Catholic wife, Catherine, came the spawn of fiery retribution whose short, fearsome reign forever branded her Bloody Mary. And as for the supposed demon seed of the king's concubine, Elizabeth's time on the throne lasted five years longer than her infamous father's and was called the Golden Age, with England becoming a dominating world power for centuries to come."

Hans Holbein's famous painting of the oft-married English king stood out in the middle of two equally noted recreations of his queen daughters flanking Henry VIII'S grandiose stature with telling portraits, revealing Mary's harsh demeanor on his left and Elizabeth's regal presence on his right.

Sally stepped forward with her head tilted back. Her eyes shifted from side to side, unable to focus on an image. She seemed to be pondering upon another important question, but instead offered a rather rhetorical observation. "It does not matter, does it? A woman could be just as ruthless a ruler as a man or just as gracious, maybe even better, if she can remain true to herself, like Queen Elizabeth did."

"How very astute of you, Sally," CHAD commended her insight before elaborating further. "Throughout history, those who strayed from their true selves oftentimes found bad result occurring from their good intentions, and the discovery of the Americas was such a time. Although famously credited with the discovery (another historic fable that used to be taught to children), the closest Christopher Columbus ever came to North America was Hispaniola—modern day Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The real truth of matter, he was arrested, put on trial, and convicted for inhumane acts of violence against the indigenous people, which even included some of the settlers from his term as Governor. Sentenced to prison, his benefactor, King Ferdinand of Spain, eventually freed him. Not the great discoverer or hero they used to teach about, but rather another despot ruler corrupted by power and glory.

"After a Papal intervention, Spain and Portugal pretty much owned the early days of exploration when the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 presumptuously divided the world between the two countries. In the treaty, Spain was essentially granted the Northern Hemisphere, which consisted of North America and the Caribbean Islands, while the Southern half of the world went to Portugal, receiving South America, Africa, and Asia. The first Europeans to set foot in North America were the Spanish Conquistadores, when Ponce de Leon came upon what he initially believed to be an island and named it La Florida in 1513. Spain and Portugal took full advantage of the treaty as they began to explore the Americas searching for silver and gold, but settled for slaves when disappointed by their early finds in the island areas. It was not until moving inland they found the wealth so eagerly sought in abundant amounts of gold. First, Cortez conquered the Aztec empire in Mexico by 1521, richly rewarding Spain, and within ten years, Portugal's conquest of the Inca Empire in Peru greatly increased their treasury.

"While the native tribes were no match for the foreign invaders, their demise was greatly influenced by the devastating effects of European diseases like smallpox, which the indigenous populations had no immune system to combat such a formidable foe. There were many countries willing to ignore the treaty, except Spain's dominance of the oceans inhibited their efforts. It wasn't until after the English defeated the invading Spanish Armada in 1588—leading to the

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decline of Spain with the inept Habsburg regime bankrupting the country—that the seas opened up for England, France, and Denmark to search for riches in the New World. In time, England rose up to become the leading world power, unbeatable at home or abroad. Nevertheless, even the mighty British Empire would find itself on the losing side after the American colonies grew into a strong, independent nation.”

The wall screen changed from representations of English monarchs to Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese explorers, showing images of conquered native empires, illustrating the rise of the British Empire with the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and depicting the colonization of the New World. Moving along with the continual momentum of the history lesson, the visual elements transformed in accordance with CHAD’S derisive monologue.

“During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, thirteen American colonies formed from British, Dutch, and Swedish settlements, ultimately all falling under English rule. Much like with the early Spanish explorers stricken with hardships from disease and starvation, the settlers depended on the friendly natives to survive before turning against them. The American colonies were unique in the world, divergent from Europe where monarchies, aristocrats, and the established church governed and ruled. Made up from many different cultures, the colonies were a place where everyone had a say in making political decisions. They based their government on a Republican ideology of equal rights, and this independent spirit would be the framework for colonial resistance to British rule of taxation without representation.

“Ironically, thirteen years after the French Indian War, when receiving France’s North American territories after signing the Treaty of Paris in 1763, England decided to exert more control over its thirteen colonies, with entirely contrasting results. By enacting unjust laws, they incited the colonist to form the United States of America and start the Revolutionary War with the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1776. After suffering through grueling winters, small pox epidemics, and a superior military power, the colonists finally won their independence and instituted the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, guaranteeing everyone what Thomas Jefferson called the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Which only continued the ironic nature of history after America was torn asunder by its own Civil War, fought over States rights to keep slaves!”

As CHAD finished expounding upon the strange twists of fate throughout history, the wall screen paused from flashing images of the Founding Fathers’ fight for freedom and displayed copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

Once again, Sally stepped forward and pointed out her thoughtful observations. “There seems to be quite a few similarities between the ideas put forth in these original documents and our New Constitution.”

“And you would be correct in saying so, Sally,” CHAD agreed. “When the Prophet Warrior wrote the New Constitution based on principles learned from The Book of Tomorrows, he knew we could not just blindly dismiss all the good mankind accomplished over the years. Instead, they incorporated all the morally good, common sense values into our new civilization, while leaving out any prejudicially negative beliefs once used to breed a nobility of hate that was predominantly responsible for our downfall. The old saying about how ‘you don’t want to throw out the baby with the bathwater’, I believe will give you a little more perspective on what our recent ancestors were faced with when rebuilding a new world from the shambles of the old. While drastic changes had to be implemented to prevent a repeat of past mistakes, the Prophet Warrior knew certain truths would always be absolute, which he preserved in the foundation of our new society.” CHAD explained.

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“Of course, after the tour, you are more than welcome to view our New Constitution located right here in our Modern History section. Regrettably, the original has been lost in the nuclear wasteland that was once our nation’s capital.”

Michael’s thoughts started to stray again, only this time his mind wandered towards an early exit from the tour, and thanks to Constitution Sally, he was just given an ideal excuse to leave. It wasn’t because he didn’t appreciate American history, just the opposite. It was the most inspirational time in mankind’s growth as a species, creating a place where the individual rights of its citizens served as the strong foundation that built America, but also where it almost ended. At the height of all our accomplishments, the 21<sup>st</sup> century should have been a time to celebrate our place as a leading nation, instead of being the most shameful time in American history, something that always depressed Michael.

Not wanting to spoil the mood, Michael was about to lean over to ask Eve about leaving, when he felt her soft breath whisper in his ear. “What do you say we go take a look at the New Constitution? Then go get something to eat before heading back.”

“You must be a mind reader. I was just about to suggest the same thing.”

Eve smiled along with Michael, pleased he also wanted to get going. Only her reason for leaving was different from his.

CHAD also took notice of the young, would-be couple and offered them an easy out. “Of course, our two guests are free to carry on with their special day. I am sure they have other interests besides history to talk about, and I do tend to get a little long-winded.”

“Though it has been a wonderful trip down memory lane, we should get heading back,” Michael said with a pleasant smile.

“Don’t worry about us missing out on anything. We will be sure to stop by the Modern History Section before leaving.” Eve said.

“You would not want to deny yourself the pleasure one gets from viewing such a monumentally important document,” CHAD said.

As Michael and Eve exited stage left, CHAD carried on with his mission to educate the young.

“Now where did we leave off? At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the United States of America started to expand across the land after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 allowed settlers to travel west to seek their fortunes, and the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 prevented foreign powers from claiming American territories, truly making it our country. Arriving in unison with that pioneer spirit, the Industrial Revolution brought with it substantial public works projects in the vein of the Erie Canal and innovating inventions—the cotton gin, the telegraph, and the railroad—that helped connect and divide the nation.

“But the prosperity for some Americans came at the high cost of freedom for others. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 led to the deaths of thousands of Native Americans along the Trail of Tears, and within thirty years, the African slave trade increased by 2.5 million, due to the South’s need for plantation workers. While a moral outrage was brewing in the Northern States with abolitionist newspapers, the hypocrisy of living in a free country started to boil over after a Connecticut schoolteacher’s anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, became the best-selling book since the Bible. It inspired women to protest the Fugitive Slave Law that allowed slave-owners to reclaim their property anywhere in the country. Only five weeks after Abraham Lincoln was elected the Sixteenth President, eleven slave states seceded to form the Confederate States of America in 1861, igniting a bloody Civil War over the next four years, nearly tearing the nation apart forever.”

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Before continuing, CHAD paused to take an imaginary breath. He glanced at Michael and Eve leaving as Eve shot a look back over her shoulder, giving CHAD a sly wink that Michael didn't notice.

Still too caught up in history to notice, Michael went through the rest of the tour in his head. It was like a favorite, old book he read over and over again. The problem was he wished the story had a better ending, knowing the big difference between truth and fiction was that fiction had to make sense. How America went from being an economic global power manufacturing and supplying much of the world's trade goods at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to a morally corrupt and bankrupt nation heavily responsible for the events leading to the end of the old civilization barely a quarter of the way into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, just did not make sense.

After the defeat of the Confederate South ended the Civil War, the Reconstruction Era began with the abolishment of slavery and the re-admittance of the once rebellious southern states. Within the first three decades of the 1900's, we went from boom to bust. The discovery of oil led to affordable cars and the manufacturing of inexpensive steel to great cities that scraped the sky, while modern marvels connected the nation through electric lights and a transcontinental railroad. Nevertheless, we soon found ourselves immersed in the human frailty of repeating past mistakes. Lost in our search for wealth and power, we brought about the Great Depression and our eventual demise. Sometimes even our good intentions spawned opportunities for wrong to prevail as it did with the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Enacted on January 16<sup>th</sup> 1919, the Volstead Act basically served up organized crime the murderously profitable gift of Prohibition.

After we reluctantly got involved in the First World War, which destroyed many of the old European empires and monarchies, our hand was forced the second time around. Still recovering from the stock market crash of 1929 and the subsequent years of economic depression, with the only aid coming from government-sponsored programs in FDR'S New Deal, the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor woke up the sleeping giant. Soon after the world felt our mighty roar in the form of devastating atomic blasts, forever reshaping the way we fought wars. Using the Red Scare of Communism, we found new enemies lurking in dark corners. Thought to be a great threat to our capitalist democracy, we gave our enemy a new face with the rise of the Soviet Union as the only other military superpower. These fears led to a forty-year nuclear standoff and near annihilation during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The Cold War did bring about two modern day military crusades in an attempt to prevent the spread of communist rule throughout East Asia in the war torn countries of Korea and Vietnam, with each conflict ending in colossal failure. The assassination of President Kennedy and other high profile political leaders brought about the social protests of the Sixties and Seventies, giving birth to a counterculture crying out for civil rights, while protesting against forcing the senseless sacrifice of American sons fighting a very unpopular military conflict in a faraway land.

Michael always thought the real tipping point for the loss of faith in the government was when two reporters broke the story that brought down a corrupt President and all his men with their coverage of the Watergate break-in. Nothing was the same after that. As the information age was born, some journalists, filmmakers, musicians, and authors attempted to enlighten a disenfranchised public filled with nothing but apathy for a broken system. Unfortunately, the nation was open to the mechanizations of corporate power players left unchecked and eager to fill their coffers. The contagious nature of greed spread out in the Eighties infecting the Me Generation riding a wave of materialistic pursuits all the way into the valley of silicon in the Nineties, when technology advanced the methods of creating wealth to the point where the bubble finally burst. The 21<sup>st</sup> century turned into the Disinformation Age as the split between conservative and liberal

agendas led to a stolen election with catastrophic consequences. The terror unleashed by fanatical religious zealots on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 influenced our fear-induced response to the vicious, unprovoked attack, and became the catalytic reaction that would lead to the end of our old civilization.

The sad story of our downfall began with a promise of great hope, which always depressed Michael and the real reason why he did not want to stay for the conclusion of the tour. A small sigh of relief escaped him as he entered the Modern History Section with Eve at his side unaware of his mental battle to get his mind out of the past. But, it was as if the story took on a life of its own and demanded an ending, even a tragic one. And like most tragedies, a villainous plot comes to fruition before collapsing on the purveyors heads. Of course, there was always a doomed sympathetic main character—to which a liberal President of mixed Hispanic-African-American heritage, seeking a second term after overcoming a political minefield of opposition in restoring the fading respect of our nation to its people and the rest of the world before his assassination, definitely fit the part. Since every story needs a villain, and ruthlessly ambitious political opponents usually made great ones, an extreme Right-Wing, conservative female Governor from Montana (who managed to capture the public's attention through a heavy façade of a down-home country gal, 'just trying to help out') heartily rose to the occasion, setting forth a series of treacherous schemes that elevated her into the Oval Office. Fraudulently packaged, she proved to be no more than a Presidential meat puppet with corporate Godfathers pulling her strings so they could increase their control over oil reserves in the Middle East by blaming them for the previous President's assassination. It wasn't until a conspiracy implicated the New President in the death of the old one that the walls came crumbling down, throwing the world into total chaos. Soon wars raged all over the globe, at home and abroad. And just when we were on the brink of wiping away all signs of our existence, something diabolically miraculous happened. A crazed environmentalist's deadly virus killed off half of the world's population, devastating man's ability to wage war, and in the process preserved our remaining natural resources. The Environmentalist committed suicide during a video manifesto he streamed live on the internet. Clearly infected by it, he confessed to creating the virus, taking responsibility for the desperate act, but not its conception.

It always bothered Michael the last unsolved mystery behind mankind's downfall was not that the insane plan actually worked, but where the idea came from to do it. A feeling of having just opened his eyes overcame him, along with the realization he never shut them. So lost in contemplative thought, he did not notice walking past the portraits of famous figures from recent history that lined the walls of the Modern History Section and was startled to find himself standing in front of the New Constitution display.

"Is something wrong?" Eve asked after feeling Michael's faint shudder.

"Oh, no, just caught up in the past, I guess."

"The world has a way of reminding us of the important things we should never forget." Eve pointed out.

"It's just a shame we tend to ignore those instinctual memories embedded in our genetic make-up."

"It is nice to have reminders, though." Eve nodded to the display case.

Michael fixed his eyes on the new and improved founding document with words of wisdom written by a rouge warrior destined to become a wandering prophet who would one day unearth The Book of Tomorrows and save the human race from extinction.

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### THE NEW CONSITUTION FOR A NEW AMERICA

*There comes a time when it becomes necessary to dissolve  
The old ways connecting us to the past  
And begin a new way of thinking that separates  
Knowledge from Belief,  
Truth from Myth,  
The Laws of Nature from Faith in a Divine Presence,  
So mankind can rise from the ashes  
To once again assume among the powers of earth  
And prosper from the inalienable right  
That everyone is born equal and  
Deserves the Liberty of Life, and the Pursuit of Happiness  
Therefore, a new society, a new beginning,  
Cannot solely be founded on  
The moral doctrines or structured legislature  
Of any legal institution, system of belief, or form of government  
Responsible for past atrocities against mankind  
Through either religious persecution,  
Administrative corruption, the bonds of slavery,  
Or any other form of oppression inflicted on man or woman,  
At any time throughout our history  
However, we will not abandon  
Any positive contributions from the past  
Proven compatible with present conditions and surroundings,  
And no matter what harsh measures  
We may take to prosper over the land,  
We will no longer be beasts that just sleep and feed  
And shall endeavor as a species to treat each other  
With the same decency and respect we all deserve,  
Not because we are told to do so,  
But because it is the right thing to do  
Thereby, giving us the cause, the will, the strength,  
And the means to find our purpose  
Forever united together in everlasting peace.  
With these precepts in heart and mind,  
We will start anew and rebuild  
Our nation on the following:*

### FIVE KEY PRINCIPALS FOR SURVIVAL

**1. Equality for All:** reserving our right to freedom of speech, a free press, and the right to assemble peaceably, no form of discrimination, racial prejudice, or harmful protest will be tolerated, granted inherent excuse, or considered acceptable behavior on part of any citizen living in New America.

**2. No Wealth/No Currency:** will be printed or minted, nor will any citizen accumulate or create any form of legal tender for payment of service, or for barter of trade, or used to amass personal fortunes to hold over others; and regardless of age and/or any disability preventing someone from taking an active part in society or the work place, the Country shall fairly provide for the needs of each and every citizen.

**3. No Conflicting Belief Systems:** of religious, political, or personal foundations will be funded by government subsidiaries, be the basis for policy of law, or be recognized as official holidays. Nor will any citizen be morally bound to any form of religious dogma or spiritual belief, but instead be guided by their own self-conscious morality of inherently knowing right from wrong.

**4. Population Control:** must be maintained through responsible reproductive behavior on part of our citizens to provide the necessary time to replenish our depleted natural resources and prevent over populating our food supplies, if not, it will be done by government decree and strictly enforced.

**5. A Universal language:** must be implemented in order to prevent communication breakdowns among different cultural backgrounds and to also eliminate any suspicious mistrust of foreign words used as coded communications to plot against others, with English being our country's language of choice.

"Say, I think my stomach just reminded me that it must be lunchtime," Michael said with blushed cheeks after feeling a slight, but audible, grumble coming from his gut.

"My car is this way," Eve said, giving Michael a quick tug on his sleeve as he started heading back the way they came.

Flanking the New Constitution were the portraits of the two founding fathers of New America. Eve stopped Michael in front of the Prophet Warrior's portrait.

Marlon Rosemary, the fastidious museum caretaker hurried past them, alerted to some pressing matter. Michael and Eve noticed what was calling his immediate attention as the caretaker went by the New Constitution display and stopped in front of the portrait of General Cain. A blinking red light located above the portrait sent out a silent alarm after detecting a foreign substance.

Michael and Eve went to see what the commotion was about and saw the gradual appearance of dark lines forming the letters F W F across General Cain's portrait, developing like an old Polaroid photo.

"I do not understand it," Caretaker Rosemary said with his hands on his hips, shaking his head in disgust.

"Doesn't FWF stand for Free Will Forever? I'm not really up on these fringe groups." Michael said.

"They are nothing but a bunch of ungrateful punks who think they know better how to keep things in order," Caretaker Rosemary said. "But what baffles me is how they managed to get away with it without tripping our sensors."

"I guess, where there is a will, there is a way," Eve said with a light girlish laugh, trying to play down the incident.

But Michael's inquisitive nature got the better of him as he took a closer look at the darkening letters before offering his deduction. "It must be a slow developing, reappearing, invisible spray of some kind. Your sensor didn't detect it until it started to appear. No telling how long before it was applied."

"Well, this is all very fascinating, but we should get heading back," Eve said with a slight nervous apprehension.

"Huh. What? Oh, yeah," Michael stuttered through his lost in thought moment, getting back to social conventions. Just realizing in order to get a closer look at the graffiti strewn painting, he had to let go of Eve's hand. Now feeling the vacant emptiness, he stepped back over and retook her open, waiting hand.

"Sorry for your troubles, Mr. Rosemary. But please let me know if you figure out how they did it. I would kind of like to know."

"Oh, we will get to the bottom of this, I assure you. These punks may think they are pretty smart, but so are we." Caretaker Rosemary said with conviction.

"I understand the need for asking questions about the way things are, but I just don't see how vandalizing public artworks will solve anything." Michael added before leaving with Eve.

Walking hand in hand toward the exit, leaning on each other in affectionately close proximity, Michael and Eve appeared to be the perfect young couple heading into a bright future filled with loving bliss.

"I believe at heart the FWF has the best intentions behind their cause, but free will at what cost. In the end, it was our selfish need to say or do whatever we wanted that bred the arrogant belief we were better than other people were just because we lived in a free land. We became prisoners of our own freedom. There needs to be a balance, which is why you and I are here, today."

"To restore the balance," Eve added as they exited the museum's rear entrance leading out to the back parking lot.

Feeling the late day sun on his face, Michael just smiled at the thought a moment before replying. "Maybe we are. Let's not ponder on these philosophical matters too long and go get some lunch."

"Sounds like a plan to me," Eve agreed.

After the initial ease in which she accomplished the first part of her mission, a growing uncertainty started to creep up in the back of Eve's mind. Nothing could have prepared her for the next part. The quandary of her decision to reveal to Michael she was really a member of the FWF, especially selected for him by the rebel group, and she was the one who marked General Cain's portrait on specific orders to gage his reaction. Or the most difficult part, how to tell him about a recently rediscovered DNA sample proving he was the only living heir and a direct descendant of the Prophet Warrior.