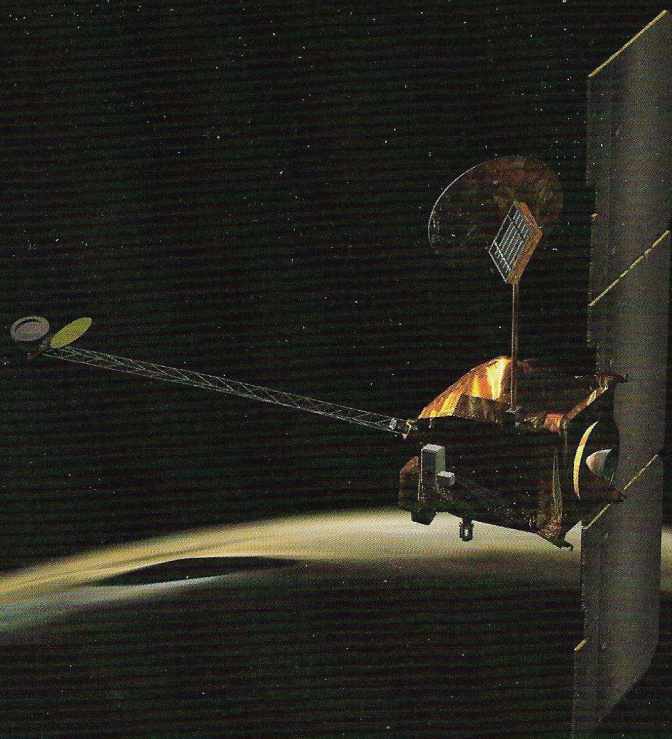
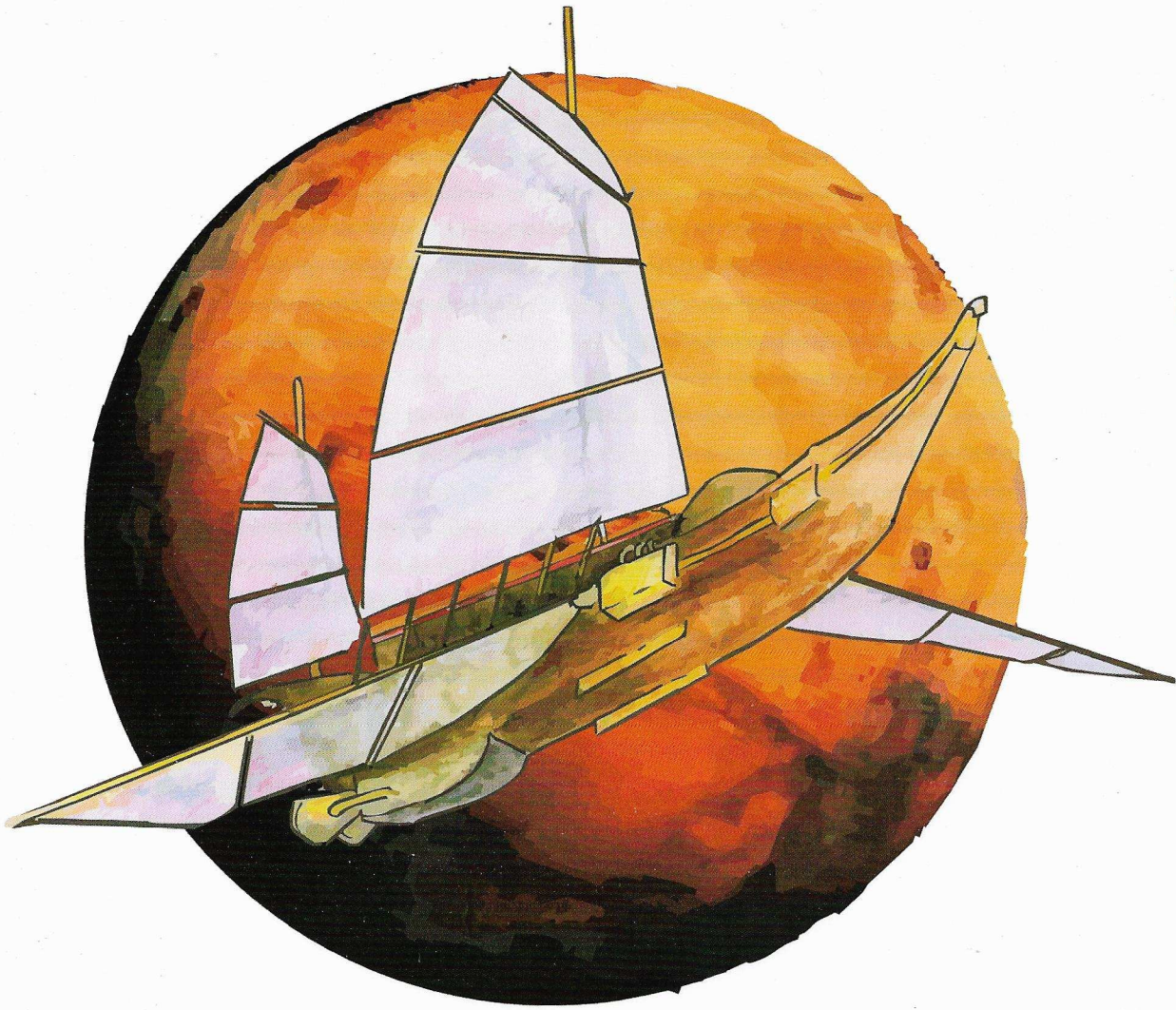


ODYSSEY 2010

THE 61ST BRITISH NATIONAL
SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION
2-5 APRIL 2010





...the next giant leap



Guest of Honour
Charles Stross

Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow
25-26th February 2012

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ODYSSEY 2010

THE 61ST BRITISH NATIONAL
SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION
SOUVENIR BOOK

GUESTS OF HONOUR

ALASTAIR REYNOLDS

IAIN M BANKS

LIZ WILLIAMS

MIKE CAREY

FAN GUESTS OF HONOUR

FRAN & JOHN DOWD

2-5 APRIL 2010

WWW.ODYSSEY2010.ORG

RADISSON EDWARDIAN HOTEL
HEATHROW, LONDON, UK

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A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

I am delighted to welcome you to the Odyssey 2010 souvenir book. Inside we've got a couple of great photo montages to remind you of the convention, a fabulous novelette written exclusively for you by two of our guests of honour, Liz Williams and Alastair Reynolds and detailed biographies of all our guests of honour. We have also included a full list of our members and the financial report for Orbital 2008.

Yes - this souvenir book has been a long time coming; it's been a labour of love for Gaspode, who has doggedly (hah hah!) persevered in trying to track down the elusive wisps of promised contributions to the book. Some of these proved a bit too elusive and we've focussed on producing a book that complements the excellent set of newsletters (available from our website) and the many memories of the convention recorded on blogs, forums and photo sharing websites across the internet.

Odyssey 2010 was successful for me in many ways. Those of you who know me well will know that I am a passionate believer in equality and the challenge I set myself was to produce an Eastercon that attracted people from outside the traditional white male middle class demographic without isolating the aforementioned white male middle class members. Revolution is exciting but evolution is less traumatic for everyone so my aim for the convention was quite simple; make everyone feel included and don't leave anyone behind. I think we made some good progress towards these aims but there is still a long way to go before my equality radar stops twitching.

We also wanted to run a programme that was inclusive for children and the majority of our programme was designed to be family friendly rather than child exclusive. I think this worked really well in practice, thanks to the efforts of the programme team and some very helpful advice and assistance from the parents. One of the highlights of the convention for me was seeing the number of conversations going on between adults and unrelated children. Really, when it comes down to it a fan is a fan no matter what their age!

A few statistics I'd like to share with you:

1,324 Warm bodies at the convention (including 2 rogue unregistered but non-mobile infants)
72 Children came to the convention
35 Apocryphals (including Beeblebears) attended – 4 never made it to the con!
698 Fans watched Doctor Who together on the Saturday
20% of the Committee were non-white
80% of the Committee were female
100% of the Chair was female and non-white

I would like to thank the committee and senior staff for turning Odyssey 2010 into the inclusive and friendly convention I wanted it to be. I am conscious that many of them stepped well outside their comfort zones to achieve this and I am very grateful to them for their tireless work. We were a committee of five people and two of us (including me!) had never been involved in running a convention before, so the professional and heroic efforts of the senior staff were particularly welcome to us.

I'd like to thank our guests of honour for their huge contribution to the success of the convention and for being so approachable and friendly towards the members. I'm sorry I got to see so very little of you myself!

The key component that turned our planned convention into a smooth running reality was the legion of helpers that put themselves at our disposal and donated their time to set up the convention and then to keep it going. A huge proportion of our members helped out in this way, by participating in the programme or by working as a volunteer. To them I would like to say a very special Thank You!

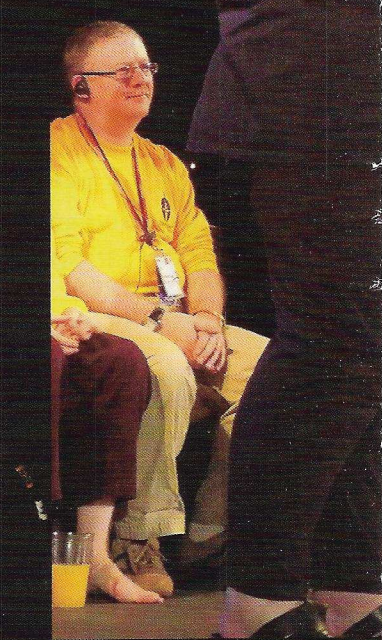
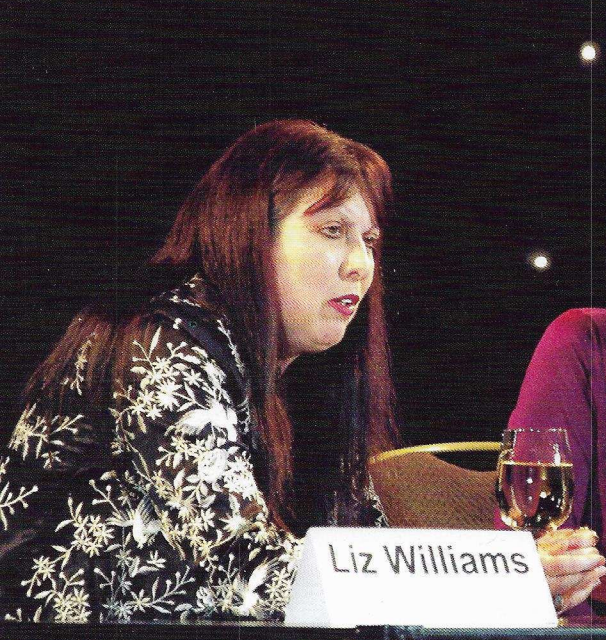
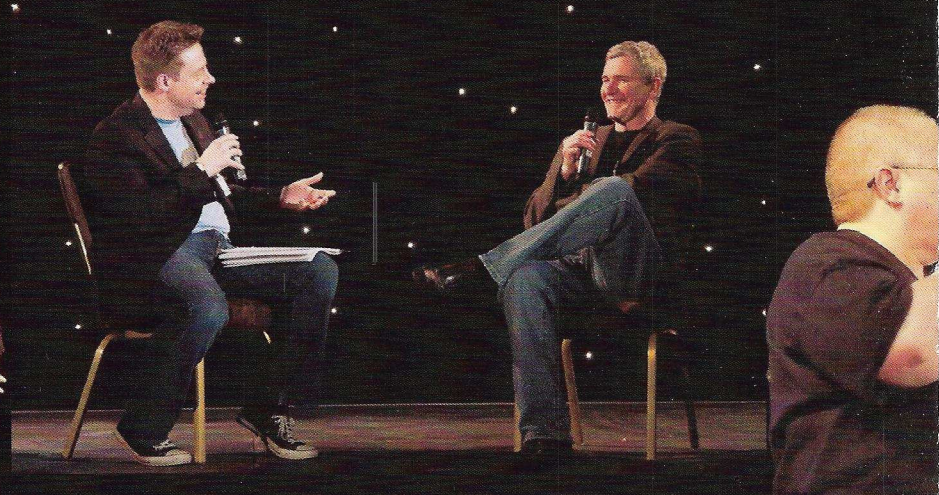
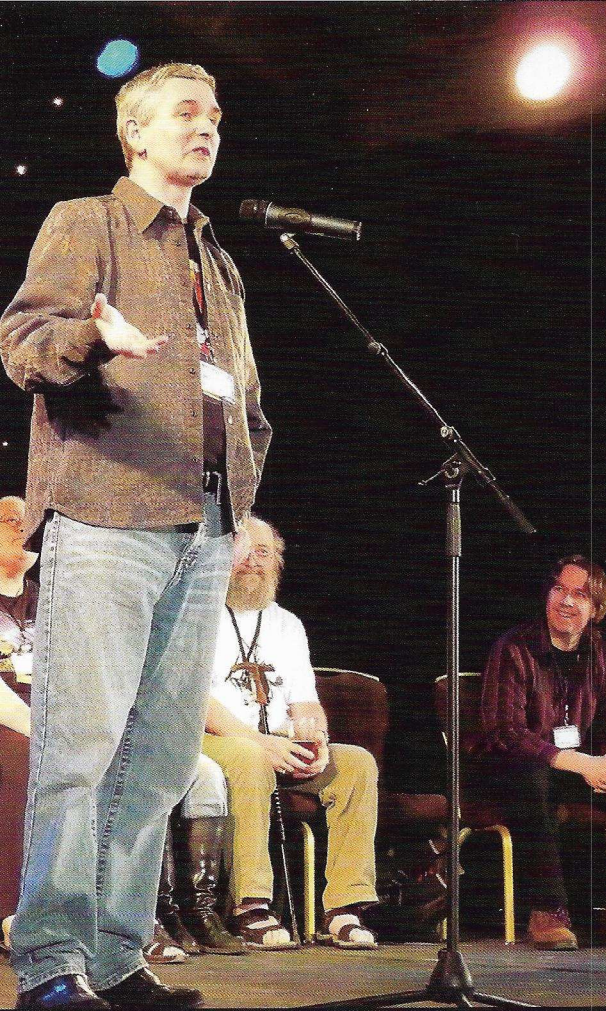
I would also like to thank the Orbital committee for paving the way for us. They added a much needed boost of energy (and more importantly members!) to Eastercon and made our work that much easier by leaving behind a good set of notes.

I'd like to add a special word of thanks to the BSFA and the SFF for their contribution to the programme. These folks put on several SF related events for their members (and in many cases for non-members) and their advice and support was very welcome.

I've been chewing my nails over how to end. My natural geek tendencies are warring with my inner accountant. "Live Long and Make Sure You Are Contributing to a Pension Fund" doesn't scan too well, but really I do wish you all the very best and hope to see you back at the same venue for Olympus 2012.

Rita Medany
Chair, Odyssey 2010









ODYSSEY GUEST BIOGRAPHY : AL REYNOLDS

ALASTAIR REYNOLDS IS one of a new breed of writers putting the science back into science fiction. He studied astronomy at Newcastle University and followed up his degree with a Phd from St Andrews in Fife. He spent sixteen years working as a scientist, mostly for the European Space Agency in the Netherlands.

Reynolds has established a reputation for stories that take current science as their starting point and extrapolate to more far-flung conclusions. "Having a science background gives one, I hope, a gut feeling for what's more or less plausible," he told Dave Langford for Amazon.co.uk. "I have stacks of science books at home so I tend not to have to look far to check anything, and of course the web does come in incredibly handy if you can sort out the useful stuff from the rubbish."

Like many science fiction writers before him, Reynolds cut his teeth on the short story. He made his first sale to *Interzone* in 1989 and, despite a short break when he first moved to Holland, continued to write in this format until his first novel, *Revelation Space*, was published in 2000. The book, which he describes as "Gothic space opera with slower than light travel and speculation about extra-terrestrial intelligences" was greeted with great enthusiasm by the SF community, and made both the BSFA and Arthur C Clarke award shortlists.

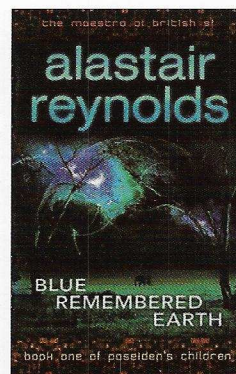
The work that followed established himself firmly as one of the major writers of hard SF in Britain. *Chasm City* won the BSFA award, while *Pushing Ice* and *House of Suns* were both short-listed for the Clarke. His 2010 steampunk novel *Terminal World* made the final of the Wales Book of the Year.

"Most of the time, writing is simply a matter of sitting down in front of a keyboard (or typewriter, or notebook) and just forcing the stuff out, with as much joy or pain as it takes," says Reynolds on his website. "Generally speaking, I don't greatly enjoy the process of creating the first draft. It has its moments, undeniably, but for me the proper business of being a writer is rewriting, and that's

the part I can't wait to get to. The rest is usually one kind of slog or another... But it must be done: it is, in a sense, what I get paid for, because the revision doesn't feel like work at all."

His latest novel is *Blue Remembered Earth* (January 2012): "the first volume in a monumental trilogy tracing the Akinya family across more than ten thousand years of future history... out beyond the solar system, into interstellar space and the dawn of galactic society." He's also written a *Doctor Who* novel, *Harvest of Time* featuring Jon Pertwee's Doctor, Jo Grant and The Master, which is due out in 2013.

Reynolds moved back to his native Wales in 2008 where he lives in the valleys not far from Cardiff with his French wife. Among their hobbies, he says, are horse riding, birds, long walks in the woods, good curries and old films.



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- Blue Remembered Earth (2012)
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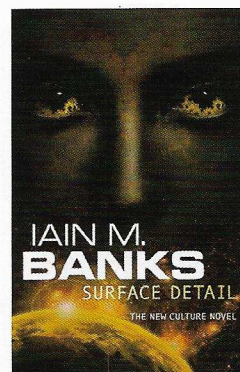
ODYSSEY GUEST BIOGRAPHY : IAIN M BANKS

IAIN BANKS' BREAK-OUT novel was *The Wasp Factory*, which must have come as a bit of a surprise to those who knew him as a science fiction fan who'd been writing about spaceships and alien worlds for years. He started at the age of 14, writing book after book and collecting rejection slips from publishers. *The Wasp Factory* came out of a desperation to write something which editors might be willing to buy. Even then, the story of a 16-year-old using violence to take out his frustration in the Scottish village where he lived, owed much to Banks' SF roots. "The island could be envisaged as a planet," he told *The Guardian* in 2008, "and Frank, the protagonist, almost as an alien."

The Wasp Factory was both successful and acclaimed and was followed by two more mainstream novels. At this point, Banks decided to try-again-to get publishers interested in his science fiction. The result was *Consider Phlebas*, an old novel from 1984 which he dusted off, re-wrote and published under the name Iain M Banks (the initial added to distinguish his SF from his other work). It was the first appearance of The Culture, the society in which many of his novels are set. "There were a lot of things that I was trying to do with it," he told *Sci-Fi Now* in 2011. "To use a fairly epic format to demystify, to bring it down from heroes and princesses to the level of the grunts... I love space opera and I love the opportunity it gave me to work a huge canvas."

The pattern for his career was set with these early books and he continues to write a novel a year. Famously, this involves the majority of the year doing research and thinking, followed by an intense few months at the computer at his home in North Queensferry in Fife. He maintains his strong connection with Scotland where he was born (1954, Fife), educated (Stirling University) and returned to (in 1988) after a spell working in London. His personal life has not been without trauma. In 2007, it was announced his 25-year relationship with his wife, Annie, was over and she died two years later, shortly after their divorce. He now lives with author and founder of the Dead by Dawn film festival, Adèle Hartley.

His latest novel is *Surface Detail*, another Culture novel. Asked by literary magazine, *The View from Here*, in 2010 if the Culture will continue, Banks was non-committal. "It will go on until I stop having fun with it and then I will just sort of leave it be. There's no overall strategic plan... The plot of the Culture is not going to come to some huge climatic end. Well, unless I come up with an idea that can only work in those terms, but I'll try not to."



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ODYSSEY GUEST BIOGRAPHY : LIZ WILLIAMS

LIZ WILLIAMS' LIFE has been so varied and unusual that the phrase "stranger than fiction" comes to mind. The daughter of a stage magician and a gothic novelist, she has degrees in philosophy and artificial intelligence from Manchester and Sussex universities, and a Phd in the philosophy of science from Cambridge. She's said to have worked as a tarot reader on Brighton Pier, and ran an IT programme at the Brighton Women's Centre. For some years in the 1990s, she worked in Kazakhstan, as the administrator of an education programme. She lives in Glastonbury where she runs a witchcraft supplies business, teaches creative writing and the history of science fiction, as well as writing her own novels.

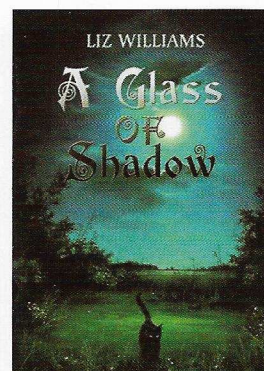
Williams first published novel, *The Ghost Sister*, was tipped for many awards in 2001, including a nomination for the Philip K Dick and was shortlisted by the BSFA. The early excitement surrounding her writing was rewarded with more acclaimed science fiction novels, including *Banner of Souls* which was shortlisted for the Arthur C Clarke award. At the same time, she began her series of Detective Inspector Chen novels, following the investigations of a supernatural and mystical police office in Singapore.

Williams told *Locus* in 2004: "I write what I define as science fantasy because it allows me to have a foot in both camps, to have my cake and eat it — the cake being science. Although I have a background in the philosophy of science, I don't have a hard-science background. Science fiction is one of the most philosophical literatures. I did my master's in philosophy and artificial intelligence, cognitive science, in the days when they thought sentience and consciousness and intelligence were possible on a machine level, so everyone was trying to replicate that. The central question of philosophy actually is, 'What is the nature of human consciousness?' It's hard to replicate anything approaching that in a machine."

Her influences, she told *SFF Chronicle*, include Jack Vance. "Because he was one of the first SF writers I read and I loved his books. The exoticness of them was always presented in such an

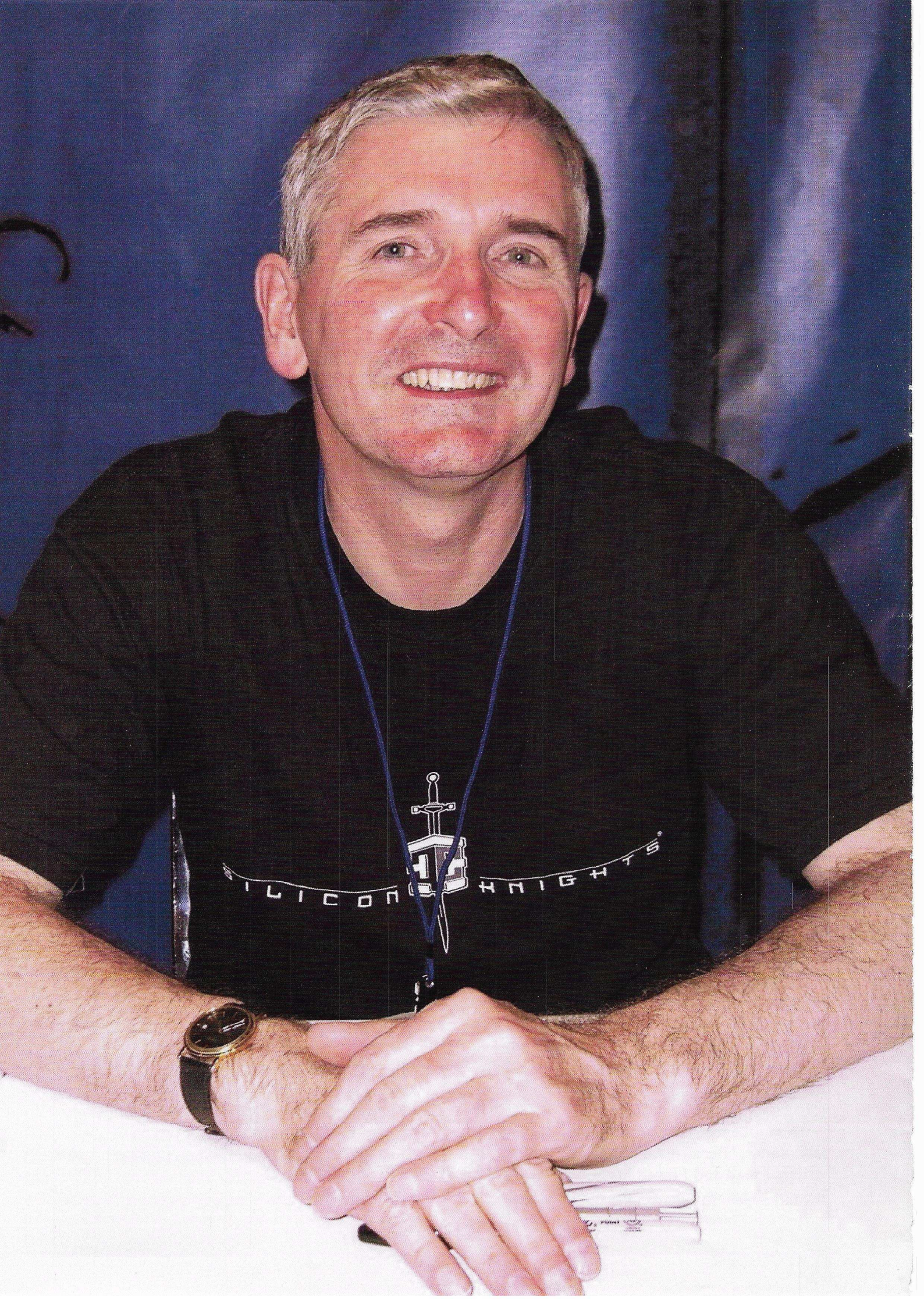
offhand, matter-of-fact way. His protagonists used to meet the most bizarre people and these people would appear only for a paragraph or so, and then never re-appear. Other influences—more for my fantasy than my SF—were people like Alan Garner and Lloyd Alexander, Susan Cooper and L M Boston. I was brought up with Welsh legends like the stories in the Mabinogion, and the Victorian literature and British folklore that my mother collected. My father had a great many occult books and I read my way through those, too."

Her latest book is a collection of short stories, *A Glass of Shadow*, with a forward by Tanith Lee. She has also co-authored, with her partner Trevor Jones, *Diary of a Witchcraft Shop*, the real-life story of the business she runs in Glastonbury.



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ODYSSEY GUEST BIOGRAPHY : MIKE CAREY

LIVERPOOL-BORN MIKE CAREY established himself as a comics writer in the early 2000s, but has more recently branched out into novels, giving him access to a whole new group of readers.

Carey was educated at Oxford University and initially became a teacher, a career he pursued for fifteen years while writing comics on the side. His first comic, *Aquarius*, appeared in the 1980s under the Trident imprint, which had been developed by the distributor Neptune. His subsequent works in the 1990s included comics for Malibu's Rock-It Comics division, 2000 AD, and Caliber. Eventually, he realised he was earning more money writing than teaching and took the gamble to write full-time. It was a gamble that paid off.

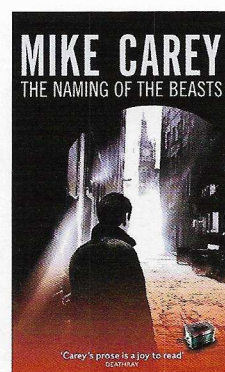
While at Caliber, Carey came to the attention of DC editor Alisa Kwitney and he was offered the chance to write *Lucifer*, a spin-off from the highly successful Neil Gaiman-penned *Sandman* series. Other high-profile work followed, including *Hellblazer* and becoming lead writer for *X-Men*, all of which meant putting his own stamp onto characters and situations which had already been established. He said of writing *X-Men*: "I built a team out of dysfunctional and damaged individuals who had tangled histories with each other, and I used them as the launch point for some stories in a classic mould: the kind of stories where the team is already falling apart under its own internal pressures and conflicts even before anything bad happens to it from the outside." (The Cult website, 2008).

Other notable comics work includes *Crossing Midnight*, several miniseries and a nine issue adaptation of Neil Gaiman's novel *Neverwhere*. He's also co-written, with his daughter Louise, *The Unwritten* for DC's imprint for teenage girls, *Minx*. In 2008, he received the Keith Dallas' "Favourite Marvel Writer" of the year on *Comics Bulletin* for his work on *X-Men* and *Fantastic Four*.

His first novel appeared in 2006. *The Devil You Know* began the well-loved and highly successful Felix Dexter supernatural crime novels. "It [writing novels] was something I'd always wanted to do," he told Scott Butki at *Blogcritics.org* in 2007. "It

was also something I'd tried and failed to do a long time ago, back when I was still teaching. I didn't have any grasp of story structure back then, and I'd never learned the discipline of planning, so I wrote these things that were not so much novels as big, shapeless, bulgy bags of events. But comics teaches you to plan scenes and story beats like a miser working out his monthly outgoings... I knew that after ten years writing comics in a dozen or more different formats, I could write a novel and make it work."

Carey lives in London with his wife Lin, three children, and family cat, Tasha

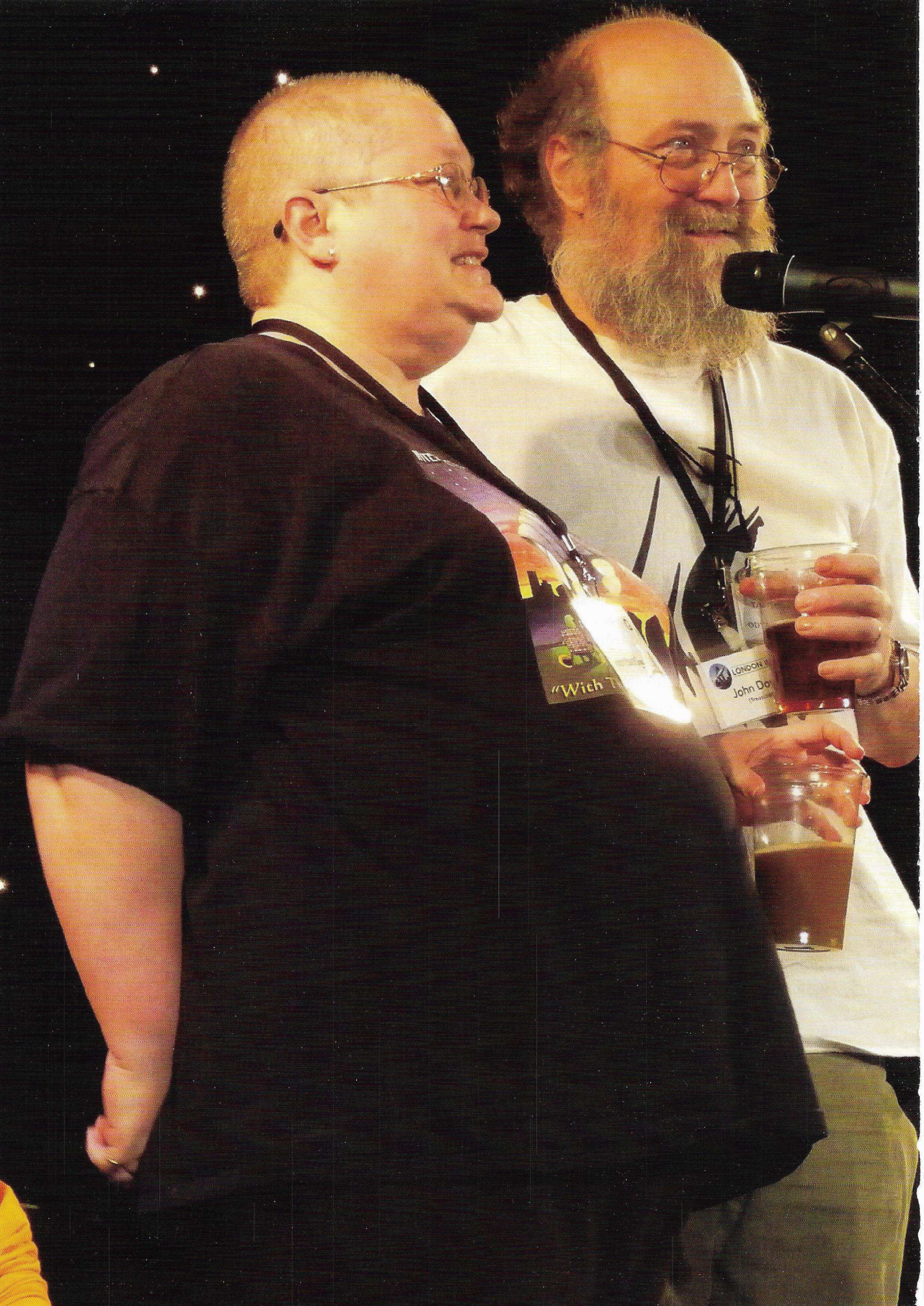


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ODYSSEY GUEST BIOGRAPHY : JOHN & FRAN DOWD

STALWARTS OF THE Sheffield Science Fiction Group, John and Fran Dowd have taken their warm and welcoming approach to fandom to conventions across the country.

John's first introduction to science fiction was through reading, but he also watched the first transmission of "Dr Who" in 1963 with anticipation. He became Treasurer for the Sheffield Science Fiction Group shortly after moving to the city in 1974, but his first convention wasn't until 1982; Novacon 12 – he has been to every Novacon since.

John is a keen sailor, owning his own yacht, the Penny Star. He was one of only two attendees at Conspiracy '87 in Brighton who travelled there by yacht, providing valuable crash space for friends who found the hotel prices too steep. At this convention he worked on the information desk, and was infamous for sending a queue jumping woman to the back of the queue, only to discover that she was Anne McCaffery!

Since these heady beginnings John has taken on a variety of roles with gusto: from treasurer at many Eastercons, to pioneering the use of digital photos in Eastercon newsletters to designing and creating the collectable Groats given to volunteers at Interaction, the 2005 Worldcon. What more is to be said? John has a beard and a Volvo, and he drives with his hat on.

Oh, and he is married to Fran.

Fran was a member of the Warwick Science Fiction Society at University, after which she absconded to America for 5 years of comic reading and role-playing. Returning to the UK in 1987 she met John at a Birmingham fandom New Year party. Being a mover and shaker she swiftly became a "sort-of chair" to the Sheffield Science Fiction Group in about 1990, and attended her first convention that year, Novacon 20. She mooched around doing a bit at the 1995 Worldcon, where she foolishly got involved with the planning of the 1998 Eastercon. Fandom has been grateful for her hard work chairing many-a-convention: From her first, DiSection (the post-Worldcon relaxacon in

Sheffield), through to Intuition in 1998, Paragon 2 in 2001, and Contemplation in 2007 at Chester, the emergency replacement Eastercon which she co-chaired.

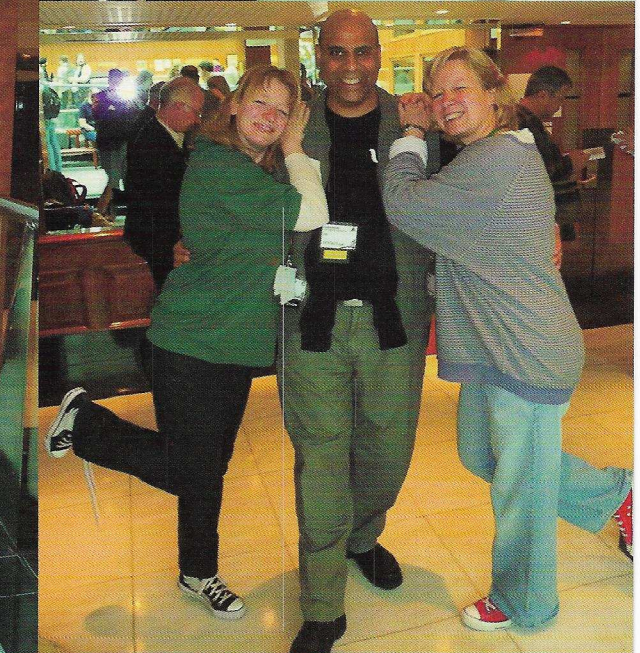
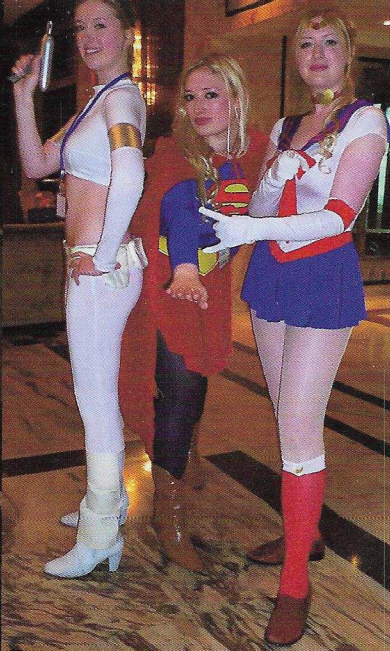
In addition to all this chairing (or, as Fran would have it, "sofa-ing"), you'll also find her name gracing the credits of many convention publications, such as the Souvenir Books for Paragon 2 and Contemplation, to being part of the newsletter staff for LX in 2009.

Not bad for a girl who describes herself starting out as a "Geek chick in the school lighting box." And yet, there is still more. Fran is a foodie in her heart and soul, and was the founding and only administrator for CHEFF, the foodie apa during the 1990s. She now runs a foodie blog, and is renowned (or should that be notorious) for her bust-a-gut breakfasts.

She is married to John with whom she founded the Sheffield Hogswatch celebrations.

They live together in decadent splendour with a cat called Flynn.

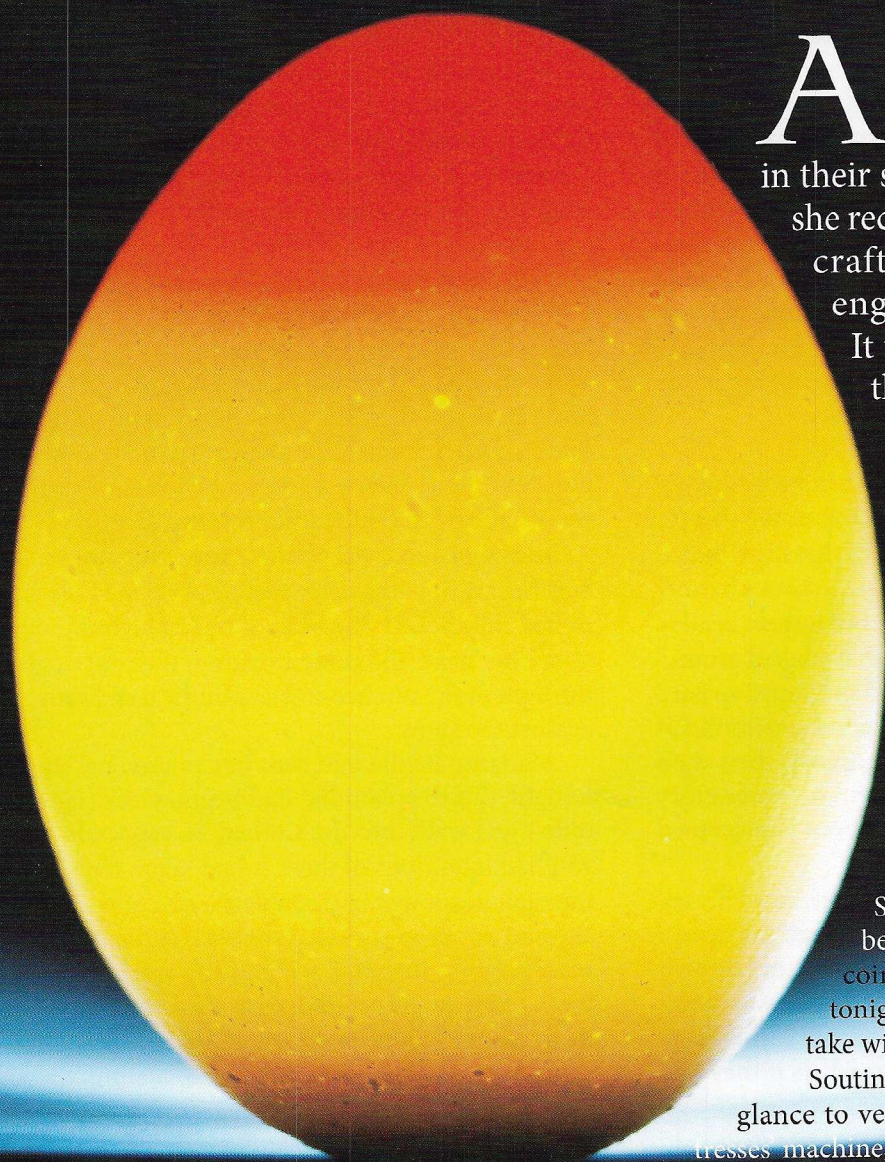




LIZ
WILLIAMS
&
ALASTAIR
REYNOLDS

PRESENT AN ODYSSEY
EXCLUSIVE NOVELETTE

LUNE AND THE RED EMPRESS



AN ARGOSY SLID under the stars and for a moment the two of them paused in their skating. Lune wondered if she recognised the heavy-bellied craft, with its dull-droning engines and gaslit gondola. It was rare to see an argosy these recent years; still rarer to see one flying and not be aboard it herself, in the service of Madame Bezile.

'It's not ours,' Soutine said quietly, as if he'd read her thoughts.

'I thought she might have left early. When she called me to her room it was full of suitcases and crates. That always means she's about to leave Paris.'

The wavering lamplight caught Soutine's nod. 'I was told it wouldn't be until tomorrow evening. It's no coincidence that she's sent you out tonight, though. She wants that egg to take with her.'

Soutine was right; it took only a second glance to verify that this was not their mistress's machine, but simply the modest transport of some middling merchant or privateer, coming or going from some other part of Free France.

So she had not been left behind.

'We should separate now,' Soutine declared. 'I shouldn't have come with you at all about.'

'Them too.'

'I can take care of myself now. Thank you, Soutine.'

'See you back at the Château. Hopefully you'll have a nice fat prize when you return.'

'I'll try.'

She watched Soutine skate away around the end, out of sight. He skated proficiently but with a lingering stiffness in his right leg. He had broken his ankle after parachuting from the old argosy, the night it burned. Already Lune was faster, nimbler, more elegant in her moves. Soutine was seven years older and had been her mentor and instructor from the day she began to be trained. Like Lune, he'd been born poor in one of the filthier quarters of Paris and soon indentured into Madame Bezile's service. He also took his duties to their mistress with the utmost seriousness. She was stern but fair, and she treated her boys and girls with kindness except when they were stupid or indolent. Beyond that, they both knew that they were doing good work, perhaps the best of all.

Alone now, Lune resumed her journeying. For a little while, as she took bends at speed, and jumped walls and obstacles as if she had wings, she travelled down empty streets, past unlit windows. But then her course took her into a busier quarter and she had no sooner passed the theatre than a squadron of Aftmen began to follow her. There were four of them, wearing blackflame cloaks and masked in accordance with city law. They were not in hard pursuit but it was clear that she had drawn their curiosity.

This was not good.

Wishing Soutine had stayed with her a bit longer, Lune dodged back behind the awning of the theatre, weaving through the hissing torches that illuminated the beer garden, and then out onto the back channel. She did not turn for the main river, but instead headed quickly for the maze of passages that snaked around the Quai. Her heart hammered, and she skated so hard that a fall would have brought certain catastrophe. If she hadn't dawdled to look at the argosy, then she'd have passed the theatre earlier, when there was every chance that the Aftmen would have been preoccupied with other business...

But after a few more minutes she convinced herself that the Aftmen had given up on her. When she slowed to take a bend, she heard only the whisk of her own skates, no others. That didn't mean that she wasn't just as likely to run into another squadron, somewhere else. There were a lot of them abroad, as if they had an inkling that something was going to happen.

Her little theft? She doubted that very much.

All the same, maybe it was still too dangerous tonight. Perhaps she should go back to the Château and explain to Madame Bezile that she couldn't have

her egg right now.

That, of course, would not go down very well. Lune could imagine the scolding reprimand she'd be likely to receive: all the more stinging, given that she had disappointed Madame Bezile on so very few occasions in the past.

'She likes you,' Soutine had told her, not long before she'd been invited to ride in the new argosy for the first time, to see Paris from the air, laid out at night like a jewelled courtesan.

Lune stopped at the foot of the steps that led up to the island, she bent, slid off the blades, and was left in her ice shoes. She dashed up the steps, keeping close to the shadows, and took stock. Here there was no ice on the street, just bare stone. Chalked onto the ground under her feet in scratchy, half-smearred lines was a weblike design, which she assumed to be part of some pavement game. Lately she'd seen figures like it elsewhere in Paris, scrawled in odd corners and alleys, sometimes on walls. But there were no children around at this hour.

Beyond the nearest row of houses, the ice-locked river shimmered in the torchlight. The bulk of the Cathedral rose beyond, its upper reaches blacker than the sky itself. The mansions along the river were dim, with only the occasional meagre flare of light. A murmur of voices, a burst of bitter laughter, carried across the ice from the Left Bank. A moving blue flicker betrayed the lit epaulettes of Aftmen, as they raced after some other hapless victim.

Lune pulled the mottled cape further over her head and ran down the alleyways towards the Cathedral. She crossed a short, icebound bridge with low, worn parapets, then traversed a narrow winding street, and was finally by the cathedral's soaring flanks.

The huge doors were bolted; she could not remember the last time that they had been opened. Perhaps in her childhood? The bulk of the cathedral loomed above her head, the golden struts of the roof catching the light of the torches and sending it back, wan gold against the snow.

Madame Bezile had sent her to retrieve the egg tonight, but the planning had begun weeks ago. You didn't just walk into the Cathedral, especially when you had intentions of theft. It had taken days to find the right document in the bibliotheque, and even then she had not been sure that she was on the right track. Breathing in dust and age and the smell of ancient books, she had carefully unscrolled the parchment, heart thumping in her chest, so loudly that she had half expected the librarian to come bustling up with a complaint. And there was regret, too: in another age, this kind of learning would have been her right, and her life. Instead, she was indentured to Madame Bezile. She looked down at a map, of the Isle, with the cathedral depicted in circle and rectangles in the

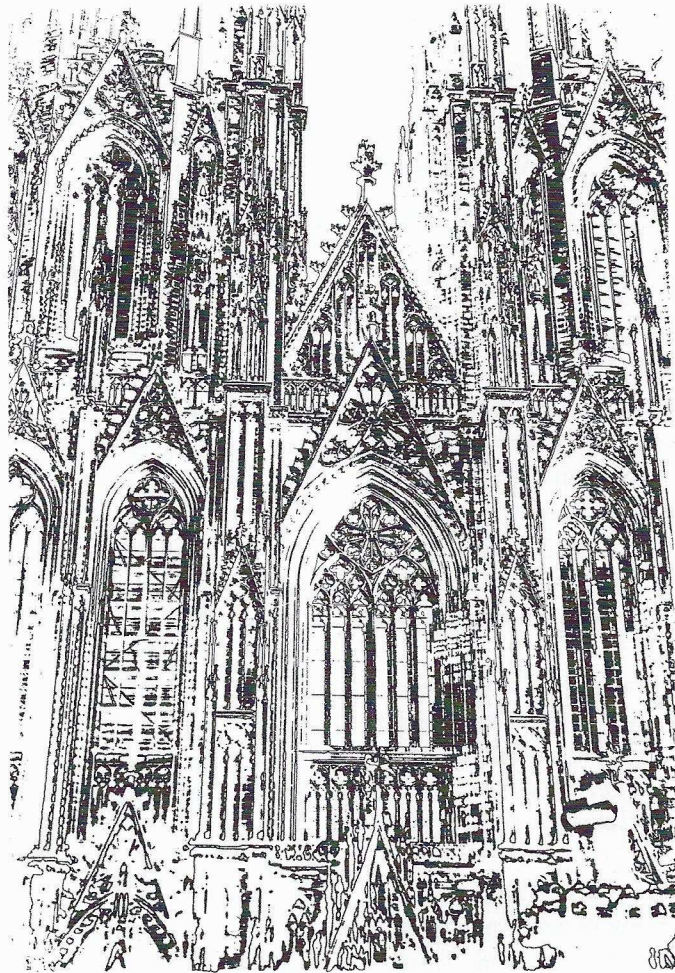
middle of it. A faint dark line angled beneath: an old sewer, perhaps, or a way in to the cellars.

Not sure, but now she had to try. Around the back of the cathedral, to the delivery vaults which serviced the cafes and bars. Some were now closed for the deep winter, but others remained open. Lune took out the picklocks, found the door indicated by the map, hoped she was right.

It took a minute or so to break the lock and she expected the breath of an Aftman, a flicker of flame cloak, down her neck at any moment. It did not come and she slipped inside, into sudden dankness and damp.

The wall was slimy beneath her gloved hand. She sparked a small flare and saw that the vault extended deep under the street. The passage, if it still existed, was at the back. She closed the door softly behind her and clambered over the massed barrels. Salt fish, from the smell of it, carried down in the icebreakers from the North Sea. She wondered how long this had been here. At the far end of the vault, wooden pallets had been stacked against the wall. She tore them aside, and at the end of the wall was a small open space, barely large enough to squeeze through. But she did so and found

herself standing in a passage. Lune, not tall, had to duck her head but there was enough room to walk down it. She followed it, twisting and turning, and at last came to a further door. Hard to keep track of the twists – she hoped she wouldn't end up in someone's cellar. Out with the picklocks again, a harder task this time due to the rust, and the door creaked open. It sounded hideously loud in the confines of the passage. She stepped cautiously through into a narrow space between tall stone walls. Someone was watching. Lune jumped, before she realised it was a statue: Notre Dame D'Hiver, Our Lady of Winter, wearing her white and silver gown and clasping a branch of olive, symbol of a spring which would never now come, unless you believed.



She crept past the Lady's downcast gaze and into the dimness of the Cathedral. She had expected priests, but there was no one. Light flickered from the tiny candles lit by the faithful during the day and a shaft of light came from somewhere in the height of the vault, making dust motes dance in its beam. She'd heard they kept what she was looking for in its own shrine, towards the back. She went up between the huge pillars, a small swift shadow.

The shrine was locked behind a grille, but she could see it now. It sat on a small stand on the altar. Its

jewelled sides glinted in the candlelight, sparking green, gold, a deep shining black. Scrolls and filigrees of silver and gold, impossibly fine and delicate, wrapped around the jewelwork. There was a thick metal band around the middle, and in the middle of that was an ornate ring, enclosing a kind of spiralling motif. The egg was smaller than she had been expecting, but at the same time more delicate, more visibly precious in appearance. She opened the grille. There would be an alarm, surely, electricity or hidden tripwires. But she could see nothing to prevent her taking the egg. She cast a coin across the floor, it skittered and rattled to a stop. Nothing moved, nothing sounded.

Lune stepped into the shrine, and for long moments it was all she could do to slow her breath. It was one thing to break into the cathedral, another still to stand this close to the egg. Caught now, she could always claim that she had only come to admire the fabled thing. But to hold it, to take it in her hands, to smuggle it out of the shrine: there could be no excuses then.

Lune reached out and hefted the egg from its stand. It jerked up, as if she had made to lift a goblet in the expectation of its being full, only to find that it was empty. She knew then that the expedition had been in vain, for the egg could not possibly be authentic. It felt no more substantial than if it had been made from layers of papier maché, a cleverly-done fake to fool the gullible and the ignorant. Which surely made sense:

the egg in the shrine must be a decoy, with the real one – if it even existed – cloistered somewhere much more secure. No wonder there were no priests to guard this fake: it wasn't worth anyone's bother. Bitterness flooded into her mouth: she had failed Bezile, failed the debt that she owed her, failed the mother who had left Lune beneath Bezile's dark wing. The feeling that now she would never be free brushed over her skin like moths.

But then she felt the cold, even through her gloves. The chill reached her fingers and stayed there, like the first tingle of frostbite. This was more than just the coldness of something that had been kept in a dank vault for a long time. It emanated from the egg itself, a fierce, ever-renewing coldness.

And who had ever said that the eggs were heavy, anyway? Now that she gave the matter due consideration, Lune thought it likely that she had assumed this detail herself, rather than being told it by anyone who might have known better.

She fingered the ring set into the egg's waist-band, and felt an edge of metal, like a tiny sprung lever. The lever budged against the pressure from her finger, and curiosity compelled Lune to push it all the way. She heard a tiny metallic rasp and saw the spiral motif reveal itself to be a shutter, whose elegant curved blades retracted to expose the dark faceted red of a ruby, or a stone very like it.

She released the lever. It sprang back, and the shutter snapped closed again. It was only then that she felt the second lever, set under the ring. It did not yield when she applied pressure to it. Perhaps the first lever had to be held back first, or perhaps the second lever was jammed with age.

Nervous – conscious that she should have resisted the urge to tamper with the egg in any way – Lune swaddled it into the pouch under her cloak. Immediately she felt its cold insinuate its way through the fabric, into her belly. How, she wondered, could something so cold bestow warmth and light and power, when used properly?

She had not even retraced her steps past the statue of Our Lady of Winter when the priest emerged from the gloom, blocking her way.

'You did well, child, to get this far.' He was a young churchman, barely old enough to shave, but his face was so drawn – and the shadows so deeply accentuated by the gloom – that there was something grim and skull-like about his countenance. 'Well, but not well enough. I take it you were sent by the Château, to steal what is rightfully ours? To prove yourself, I don't doubt?' His eyes flashed with avaricious interest: she wondered how long it had been since this young

acolyte had seen a woman, or anyone from outside the cathedral.

'It meant nothing to you,' Lune said. 'You weren't using it, just keeping it locked away down here.'

'Because it is holy. Because it is not a thing to be "used", or made into a gaudy spectacle.' He was blocking her exit. Although the priest appeared unarmed, she thought little of her chances of overpowering him. The Château had not given her a weapon: not even a dagger, let alone a discharge pistol. Soutine carried one; he'd let her fire it once, in the Château's courtyard, just so she knew how it would one day feel to be trusted with that power. But the point of this errand – as the priest had rightly deduced – was to prove that she could take the egg by wit and stealth alone, not force of arms.

Well, on that score she had

failed miserably, hadn't she?

But Lune remembered something the Madame Bezile had said, in their last moments alone in the Château, before she had put on her skates and run the gauntlet of the Aftmen. 'If you are trapped, my good Lune, and the egg is in your possession, you are never without an ally.' She had paused to wrap another layer of fur around her body, against the chamber's cold. 'But call on that ally sparingly. The light of creation can never be put back, once it is loose in the world.'

Lune had only been half listening, preoccupied as she was with the task ahead. Her mistress was fond of cryptic utterances, and it didn't pay to dwell on them all.

'Give me the egg,' the priest said. 'Do it now, and you will be treated with leniency.'

'I came for it,' Lune said. 'I'm taking it.'

At last she recognised the apprehension in the churchman's face. It wasn't just that he was worried about her dropping or damaging the egg. Something else: the same apprehension he might have shown if she held a blade against his throat.

He moved. Lunged toward her, reaching out to snatch for the egg. But Lune was faster. She brought the egg out of the pouch. Cradling it from underneath with her right hand, she used the forefinger of her left hand to work the lever on the shutter: this time pointing the ruby at the priest. With the thumb of her right hand, she pressed hard against the second lever, the one that had felt stiff before. This time it moved, but only grudgingly, like very old clockwork that had nearly seized into place. Yet as she worked it back, she felt other things – subtle geared mechanisms – click and whirr inside the egg, moving within layers invisible to the eye. Each successive movement seemed to trigger another, deeper and deeper into the egg's heart. And from the ruby eye in the middle of the ring

'If you are trapped, my good Lune, and the egg is in your possession, you are never without an ally.'

came light. The needle of brightness that skewered the darkness of the underground chamber was whiter than anything she had ever imagined, without the slightest tint of pink or red. Lune nearly dropped the egg in surprise. The priest raised his hands to his face, but he was not nearly fast enough. Lune doused the rapier of light across his eyes, the priest screaming, and then released the two levers. The shutter snapped tight, and inside the egg mechanisms unwound hastily. The light was gone, though the memory of it was seared across Lune's vision.

The priest had fallen to the floor. He was clutching hands to his eyes, almost like a man trying to gouge his own sight away. And he was moaning and wriggling, as if in the grip of some grave palsy.

Lune stepped over him and continued on her journey.

She hardly dared pause when she reached the outside world. The egg was still giving off its chill, a cold that seemed to leech energy and resolve from her between one breath and the next. It was still an arduous journey back to the Château. But she was out, and there were no Aftmen waiting to detain her. Lune put on her skates and set off along the streets that bordered the black ribbon of the frozen river, trying to push all thoughts of the blinded priest from her mind, at the same time reassuring herself that what she had done was right and necessary.

The eggs had been made by men, in ages past, as an insurance against this long and deepening winter. Fire had been poured into them. Bottled for centuries, it was a gift from the dead. Though the eggs were rare, and rarer still with each passing generation, their fire was all that stood between the world and slow freezing death.

'What we do will seem wrong at times,' Madame Bezile had explained. 'It will seem harsh, and it will involve deception and cruelty. The Aftmen will dog our every step, thinking that they act for the greater good. We will make enemies of decent men and women, the pious and the misguided, the brave and the foolish. The churchmen are not wicked, but their scripture has led them badly astray. They revere the eggs so highly that they would sooner see the lights go out than waste a drop of holy fire. But we serve science, not superstition. Across Free France, even beyond its margins, children shiver and starve for want of the energy a single egg can bring. My argosy carries life to those who most need it. Our mission is truly sacred.'

If there had been few travellers abroad before, there were even fewer now. The beer gardens and theatres had finished business for the evening. Lit windows and lantern-decked alleys were now dark. The occasional illuminated mansion or civic building served only to emphasize the nightly gloom that had settled on most of the city. Some of these places ran on gas or other

contrivances, but as always fuel was scarce. And even gas or torchlight offered only a feeble defence against the night and the cold. Only the eggs could truly push back that chill, and even then only until the pure white light had stopped pouring from their hearts. That same light could make ancient machines turn again; it could send icebreakers to the Northern Wastes and propellers and argosies to the ends of the Earth. It could energise weapons potent enough to slice a tenement in half, or make the frozen river boil again. Lune had seen something of that light now, as she turned the egg against the priest.

How much had she spent: a hundredth, a thousandth, of the egg's capacity? As her skates flashed along the ice, she wondered if Madame Bezile had some means of evaluating what portion of an egg had already been depleted, and whether some sanction would be forthcoming against Lune for squandering that which was precious beyond measure ...

She heard the whisk, whisk, of another skater coming up behind her, moving with effortless, confident rhythm. A scissoring noise like knives being sharpened against each other. Lune did not look back. She maintained her pace, neither hastening nor slowing, until the road forked ahead. She took the rightmost turn, braking sharply, and sped down a narrowing, meandering alley away from the river. She knew the city well but not this winding passage. Old, sagging buildings, three or four storeys tall, leaned in on each other, trapping a thread of star-flecked sky between their jagged rooflines. The ice was rough and rutted and she had no choice but to slow down. A black cat, or rather a cat-shaped absence, dashed across the ice ahead of her, almost losing its tail under her blades. Lune drew breath sharply, but as the cat disappeared between barrels stacked at a doorway, it occurred to her that the other skater was not on her heels. Lune smiled at her nervousness. Any other night, she wouldn't have thought twice about another traveller catching up with her from behind.

The alley terminated in a set of rising steps, glazed with treacherous ice. She risked a glance back the way she had come, and thought for a moment about returning to the main thoroughfare, where the going would be easier. But no, she wasn't chancing it. Lune removed the skates again and climbed the steps, taking particular care now that the egg was in her care. If her mental map of this district wasn't failing her, she had an idea where this alley ought to come out.

She had nearly reached the top of the steps when the figure loomed over her, blackflame cloak rippling and billowing as if stirred by some hidden breeze. Aftman, Lune thought to herself: almost immediately followed by the realisation that she had failed; that in fact this was worse than merely failing because now she would have to answer to more than just the

authority of the Mademoiselle. Then something steely and sharp glimmered in the Aftman's hand, and she recognised the curlicued barrel of a pistol.

'Come with me,' the Aftman said. 'I think you have something I want very much. You have just come from the Cathedral, haven't you?'

Lune's heart roared. She couldn't see the Aftman's face, only the cloak and the pistol. The rest of him was lost in shadow. Strangely, he stood next to a patch of wall marked with the same chalk design she had seen before entering the Cathedral.

The chalk marks bright, unsmudged by rain or passing hands – as if they'd been made very recently.

'You mean this?' she asked, innocently enough, and began to bring the egg out of the pouch, cradling it as she had done before.

'If you're intending to blind or stun me, it won't work,' the Aftman said, and – by dint of leaning towards her – his face revealed itself, along with the black globes that he wore on his eyes. 'Besides, it would be a shame to waste any more of that power, wouldn't it? Not when you've gone to so much trouble to steal it.'

There was something wrong, Lune realised. The man looked like an Aftman, but he wasn't speaking like one. Aftmen didn't normally travel alone, either. Usually in pairs, or threes, the better to overwhelm their prey. And that pistol: it was strangely ornate, agleam with baroque ornamentation. Not the weapon of civic militia, but of a privateer, or a rich playboy...

'Who are you?' Lune asked.

'Oh,' he said, mocking. 'Isn't that obvious?'

'I think you're bluffing,' Lune said, and once more took the egg from its pouch, once more touched the lever.

The same light as before shot forth. She saw it echoed in the Aftman's lenses, a flash like black fire, as though the light of the egg had reflected from something deep within the iris itself.

'Ah!' cried the Aftman, but it did not sound as though he had been wounded, nor did he fall. Rather, it was a cry of triumph. Lune stepped back, but she was too slow. A cone of light snapped from the Aftman's left eye, expanding outwards until she was enveloped in an aura of shifting colours: magenta, vermilion, ebony black. She batted at the lines of colour, fighting a dark rainbow, but though her hands went straight through, the colour held her. Black expanded, held, was all there was.

LATER, LUNE WOKE. There was a gritty sourness in her mouth and a pungent smell, not unpleasant, filled her nose. It made her sneeze. She blinked, but the darkness around her was all-enveloping: she could not even see her hand in front of her. But the surface beneath her bound hands was velvety soft.

'It would be an idea not to move,' a voice said from the darkness. It sounded amused, and this annoyed Lune.

'Why not? Will you shoot me?'

'Oh,' the voice said, and now she felt sure it was the Aftman, or whatever he might be. 'If I'd wanted to do that, now, I'd have done it some time ago. I took quite some trouble to bring you here.'

'And where is 'here'?'

'I'll show you.'

Light, dim and grey, began to creep into the room. Objects swam gradually from it: a table, spindly chairs. Lune found that she was lying on a black velvet chaise longue, trussed like a chicken for the pot, but when she looked down at her hands, she could see nothing that bound them. An experimental tug. No result. The room was grey, pallid drapes, a grey carpet. All monochrome, with one spot of colour: the egg, which rested on a small velvet cushion on the table, glowing with a faint crimson fire.

Across the room, the Aftman sat on a fragile armchair. His ornate weapon rested across his knees. He wore a belt with an ornate buckle, set with gleaming studs. Without the hood, and the lenses that had hid his eyes, he was revealed as young, a pale, gaunt face, all sinews. His eyes were silver grey. He looked as though he had been carved from shadow. Lune had never seen anyone like him before.

'Who are you?'

'My name is Arquelle. I am from a place called Courtrai.'

'Never heard of it,' Lune said. It was the truth, but it sounded like a put-down.

'That,' Arquelle said, 'is no surprise. It's in Belgium, not Free France.'

Lune waited for a further explanation, but none was forthcoming.

'So,' Arquelle went on. 'You stole an egg. Very enterprising.'

He sounded as though he approved. Lune said nothing.

'But why should you do such a desperate thing?'

'Isn't that obvious?'

'Humour me. I'm not from round here.'

'Power.'

His pale eyebrows rose. 'For yourself?'

'Of course not. For all of us. The church seeks to keep the power of the eggs for itself, secretes them away, keeps them hidden in a holiness which is no use to anyone.'

'Use,' Arquelle mused. 'And you would use it?'

'I know those who can. For the good of society, for the benefit of ordinary people.'

'You work for someone. A woman who calls herself Madame Bezile. She finds eggs, gathers them unto herself, and bestows them on the poor and the needy.'

He said this with a mildly sarcastic lilt.

'If you know,' said Lune with contempt, 'then why question me?'

'I wish to see if you believe in what you're doing. I don't know, you see. Do you have the interests of others at heart?' He waved a long hand. 'Young, idealistic, full of glorious notions?'

'I am not a fool.'

'Or simply a mercenary, a thief for hire, a cynic?' Arquelle went on as if she had not spoken. He spoke as if musing, his gaze fixed upon the air.

'I am not that, either,' Lune said, hotly. 'Madame Bezile took me in, when no one else would have me, when my mother was dying. I owe her a great debt.'

'Yet you know what she is?'

'She is my mistress,' Lune said, stubbornly, forcing down the long-held doubts. Bezile commanded more of her loyalty than Arquelle, after all.'

'So, neither a thief nor a fool. The egg likes you, you know.'

Lune gaped at him. 'The egg – what are you talking about?'

'Because,' Arquelle remarked, 'if it did not, you'd be dead. Letting the fire out like that ... Now come with me. There's someone I'd like you to meet.'

Lune found that she could rise. The invisible restraints had melted away. At once, she began to make plans: snatch the egg, and run – but the moment the thought entered her mind, a tightening about her wrists warned it away.

'Tedious, I know,' Arquelle said, although his back was to her. 'But necessary until you're able to make an informed decision.' He reached into his coat and pulled out a long black strap. 'Here. Buckle this around your waist, and make sure it's tight.'

Lune took the object warily. She could move her hands provided she kept thoughts of flight from her mind. 'A belt?'

'More than a belt. Don't fiddle with the buckle once it's on, or you'll bash your skull on the ceiling.'

It was the same as the one Arquelle already wore. She fastened it around her waist, flinching when the belt seemed to tighten of its own accord. It stopped just before it became uncomfortable.

Away from the grey, elegant room, the building was more typical of the city: ancient blocks of stone, a smell of the damp and the river. They walked past a wooden-shuttered window, through which orange light betrayed the coming of dawn. Lune only felt as if she had been unconscious for minutes, when in fact it must have been hours.

'I must get back to the Château.'

'In time,' Arquelle said.

He led her into what must have once been a

stairwell, before the stairs crumbled to dust. Now it was a circular shaft, its windows shuttered. They stood on a creaking wooden platform with gaps in the floorboards. 'Your belt is slaved to mine,' Arquelle said, touching one of the studs on his buckle. 'If you need to know how it works, I'll show you later. That'll depend on the Captain's view of your usefulness.'

The belts emitted a dual rising whine, a sound that quickly passed the threshold of audibility. Lune gasped as the floor dropped away from her feet. There was a feeling in her belly like falling, but instead of plummeting she was rising smoothly up. The cold stone walls slid by, the circular platform dropping away with increasing speed. Arquelle had his thumbs tucked into

the belt, as if this was the most normal thing in the world. He was grinning.

The discharge pistol, the stunning weapon, the restraining mechanism – these were all old-world technologies, vanishingly rare. But Lune had heard of them. The belts were something else. These were

functioning relics from an even earlier time, when men and women strode the skies like gods.

Things that no one was really sure had ever been real.

It was as if Arquelle had read her thoughts. 'We use the belts sparingly. There's only a finite charge in their power packs, about ten thousand ascents per unit, and they can't be re-energised once they're dead. You might say we'd be better off putting stairs back.'

'Why don't you?'

'The Captain has many enemies. At least this way no one can get to him without going to some considerable bother.'

Lune hardly dared look down, but by the time they reached the wooden landing at the top of the shaft, it was clear that they'd come up the equivalent of ten or twelve stories in a normal building. The landing was semicircular; as they reached its level Arquelle touched another belt stud to make them slide sideways, until their feet were only a sole's thickness off the flooring. He cut the power and Lune felt her weight return. She edged away from the drop.

'You can keep the belt on for now,' Arquelle said. 'You wouldn't get very far with it, even if you tried.'

He opened a heavy wooden door and she followed him into what she judged must be the very top of the building. It was a half-octagonal room, with doors leading off it into what must have been other parts of this garret. There were no windows as such, merely narrow, glass-filled slits. Through the nearest slit she made out the four iron stumps of the Old Tower, clawing at the dawn sky like four attenuated fingers.

At once, she began to make plans: snatch the egg, and run – but the moment the thought entered her mind, a tightening about her wrists warned it away.



Above her head was another level, a metal platform reached by a black spiral staircase, and above the platform was a circular window, facing all the quarters of the compass and surmounted by a dark-fretted iron ceiling.

Some kind of apparatus sat on the platform, a con-
traption of mirrors and lenses whose function was at first unclear.

Lune paid it little heed beyond that first glance. Paris was full of strange things that no longer worked properly. What had her attention were the clocks.

There were hundreds of them, all manner of clocks filling the walls, crowding in on the window-slits. A relentless ticking filled Lune's hearing, summed from innumerable tiny pendulums and cogs. Across a wide table, clocks lay in various stages of disrepair.

'You'll realise why I've brought you here,' Arquelle said, 'Once you've met him.'

'Met who?'

It was only when the figure made the tiniest of movements that Lune registered that they were not alone in the room. The gowned and hooded form sat, or rather slumped, at a worktable, leaning so far forward and with its head so low that it was at first almost hidden by the larger clocks. The figure might have been presumed to be unconscious, or even dead, except that the black gloved fingers of its right hand were moving, poking slender instruments into the open gearwork of a clock while the left hand supported the instrument's square-framed chassis a few inches off the table.

She understood now the purpose of the mirrors and lenses situated on the high platform. Between one moment and the next the Sun must have pushed a splinter of light above the horizon. The apparatus gathered that sunlight, concentrated it, and marshalled it into a bright spot where it was most needed. The open clock was transfixed in a golden beam of intense brilliance, beautified like a saint in one of the time-faded paintings Madame Bezile kept in the Château's long corridors.

From the clock issued delicate picking and scratching sounds. The figure was silent, giving no indication that it was aware of Lune's presence. Of its face she could see nothing, but from the hood of the gown protruded a dozen or so brassy tubes, all pointing in the same direction. As she stared one of the tubes clicked and retracted, as if in response to some hidden stimulus. Another whirred out to replace it, thicker this time. The fingers continued their work.

'I have her,' Arquelle said, raising his voice as if to address a crowd. 'And I have the egg.'

'A moment.' The reply was impossibly hoarse, barely a voice at all. 'I've waited hours for the light, Arquelle. Let me make the most of it.'

Lune stood still. 'Who is it?' she asked.

'My master,' Arquelle answered in a low tone. 'I mentioned him already. Captain Pallas. Does that mean anything to you?'

'I've never heard of this man before tonight.'

'Bezile wouldn't have seen any need to educate you. That doesn't mean she isn't aware of the Captain. They're in approximately the same line of work, after all. The acquisition and exploitation of eggs, for the betterment of Free France and whatever humanity lies beyond it. Isn't that what she tells you?'

The hooded form made an irritated grunt and lowered the clock to the table, withdrawing its tools. 'You know I need absolute concentration, Arquelle.'

'You also wished to be informed the moment she was in our custody,' Arquelle pointed out. There was just enough insolence in his reply to suggest that he had little fear of reprimand or dismissal. 'Or did I misunderstand that bit?'

'No,' the hooded man said, his rasp of voice managing to soften itself. 'You did not, of course. Well, I suppose I should see her, and the prize. It is the one we hoped for, isn't it?'

'It's real enough.'

'You know this?'

'Damn right I know it. She tried using it against me.'

'Resourceful, then.'

Arquelle shrugged. 'Or cavalier.'

The seated man raised his slumped form slightly and reached up with his gloved hands to push back the hood. He had on a kind of mask, strapped around what appeared to be a bald, skull-shaped head. The mask was made of metal and leather, and covered most of the front of his face, except for his chin, mouth and the very tip of his nose. The skin that she could see was old: raw and leathery in places, sagging and winky in others, veined through like marble, dotted here and there with scars, colourless lesions and bubbling growths. A fuzz of beard around the chin was pure white. Of his eyes, nothing showed. The metal front of the mask was as complicated as any of the gutted clocks on the table. The brass tubes were lenses, set into swivelling mechanisms. Fine tubes, black and flexible, ran from the base of each lens around the back of his head, where they braided together into a single bunch and vanished into the hood and down the back of his neck.

'What do you want with me, Captain Pallas?' Lune asked. 'Because if it's nothing important, I've work to be doing.'

'You have spirit, girl, I'll give you that. But do you have enough? That's the question.' Slowly, Captain Pallas reached up and began to undo the leather fastenings of his mask.

'What do you want with all these clocks?' Lune asked, not sure if she wanted to see what was behind that mask.

'It's about being prepared,' Captain Pallas said, undoing the last of the straps. 'A back-up policy. We live in a world where things work a little less well each year. One day, sooner than we realise, there won't be power to run the argosies and icebreakers, or light our buildings, or keep us warm as the ice closes in.' Slowly, he pulled the mask away from his face, before pushing it back over his scalp, where he allowed it to rest, with the lenses pointed at the ceiling. 'Then, we'll be back to fire and wood and metal. Things that work by muscle and wind and water, like clocks. I have no illusions that I will play any role in that world – I am old enough now, older than you probably realise – but I cannot turn my back on the changes that are coming. When the last egg has given up its fire, perhaps one of these clocks will serve some useful function, somewhere in the city. I'm hoping for something better than that, you understand. But it pays to take precautions.'

Lune was looking at a blind man. His face wasn't as bad as she'd feared – there was no hideous disfigurement there, nothing that moved her to pity or revulsion. You saw worse every day, in the lines of beggars on the approach to the Quai. But it was certainly the face of a very old man. And his eyes were a sightless milky white, staring at her and yet not at her, as if only remembered where she had been standing.

'What happened?' Lune asked, sensing that there was more to it than just age.

'An egg burned my vision away. I caught a glimpse of the holy fire, and this is the price I paid. The strange thing is that even now, I cannot say that it wasn't worth it.'

'But you must see, to be able to repair the clocks.'

'In a manner of speaking.' He touched a glove to the lenses on his scalp. 'Machines. Camera eyes, of varying focal depth. Recovered from the close-prox hull sensors on my ship, after I crashed near Anvers. You'll have noted how the outputs converge and run together, down my back. A good neurosurgeon could have wired them straight into my skull, but where do you find a good neurosurgeon these days? Rhetorical question, of course.'

'So how do you see?'

'Beneath my clothing, strapped to my back, is an array of actuators. Again, it was recovered from my ship: its original function lay in the active cushioning mechanism of an acceleration couch. With some assistance, it was adapted to enable me to see. When the cameras transmit a picture, it is converted into a pattern of stimuli across my back. My skin receptors detect the pattern and transmit nervous impulses to my brain. It took some while before I was able to

perceive those impulses in terms of a coherent image, but eventually the necessary adjustments took place. Having no input from my eyes, my brain craved visual stimulus. It soon latched onto the nearest substitute.' Captain Pallas gave a ghastly, skull-like smile, his lips parting to reveal a grim assortment of ancient, yellowing teeth. 'The peculiar thing is that it still feels like vision. The image is crude, but because the sensation of seeing is synthesized in the visual processing centre of my brain, it feels perfectly normal, as if my eyes are still working.' He paused, not smiling now. 'Alas, the lenses do not all function as well as they used to, and the actuators are losing their potency. Pixel by pixel, line by line, I am becoming blind again. But while I have something, while I can still see enough to work, I let no moment go to waste.'

'Then I am sorry to be such a burden on your time,' Lune said sourly. 'Who made you look into the egg?'

'No one but myself. I did it deliberately, in the full and certain knowledge of what it would do to my eyes.'

'Then you are insane.'

'Now, possibly. Then – not in the slightest. Greedy, perhaps.'

Insanely inquisitive, almost certainly. But foolish, or unaware of what I was doing? Not at all. I understand exactly what the egg would do to me. And I submitted willingly.' He paused, reaching up to lower his mask back into place, the lenses turning on her with the gleam of scrutiny in their glass ends. 'That's better, Lune. I hope I didn't disturb you, but you needed to know what I am, what I was.'

'You mentioned a ship. Did you come from the Northern Wastes?'

'No, not from the Northern Wastes.' Captain Pallas stared at her for long moments: she had the sense that she was being measured, judged, evaluated. 'It was a spacecraft. A void-crosser, one of the last. *Atalanta in Calydon*. I hadn't picked up the signature of another ship anywhere near here for centuries. Not for parsecs out, in all directions. Zero return. I think they were all gone, except for me.'

Disappointed, Lune said: 'Only children speak of such things. They sing about them in nursery rhymes.' Although at the back of her mind was the thought that children also said that men and women had once been able to step through the sky ...

'Which doesn't make them untrue, merely forgotten, distorted,' Captain Pallas said. 'Until a thousand years ago, this city was the centre of an empire infinitely greater than Free France. A realm of trade and exploration that reached far beyond Earth, out into the galaxy. Settlements, commerce ... worlds of wealth and marvel beyond imagining. It lasted five thousand

years, Lune. Then it ended. Not at once, but in slow, painful degrees: just like the world is ending now. We don't remember it, most of us, because we choose not to. The memory of what we once had would be a cold slap in the face from reality, every waking moment. So we buried it, along with everything else.' With an effort, he made to stand from the table, the chair scraping back on its wooden feet. 'You realise, of course, that I mention all of this only as preamble. The eggs are the crux. The eggs are what matters.'

'Then why did you waste one, by letting it blind you?' Lune asked.

'I would like you to do something for me,' Captain Pallas said, sidestepping her question. 'That is, you must make a choice. It's easy enough.'

'What kind of choice?'

'To go back and work for Madame Bezile, and do her bidding, or to go back and work for Bezile and do mine instead. In other words, I want you to betray her.'

'And if I say no?'

'Then you'll have made an enemy of me, and my enemy is also Arquelle's. He's very good, Arquelle. He found you once, Lune. It won't tax him to find you again.' He softened his tone. Above them, the contraption of lenses and mirrors clicked and moved by the tiniest of degrees, tracking the Sun's ascent. 'But it's not my intention to threaten you; I'd far rather convince you we are on the side of right. You will return to her, as she expects, and you will have an egg. Not the one you stole from the chapel, but a close copy, although nearly depleted of fire. It will suffice to convince Madame Bezile that you have done what she asked of you.'

'While you keep the other one?'

'It hasn't been completely wasted, so yes.' Captain Pallas examined one of his tools, fingering it as if making the acquaintance for the first time. 'But there's another egg that's much more useful to me. It's called the Red Empress, and its fire is unusually ... potent. Have you heard of this egg?'

Lune shook her head, then thought to add: 'No.'

'That doesn't surprise me. It's what powers her argosy. You've been aboard, we gather?'

Lune prickled. How well did they know her? 'She takes me on her errands, when I'm of use to her.'

'That's what we thought. Our intelligence tells us that she'll be leaving the city very shortly, on another "errand".' He stressed the word as if it had some double meaning lost on Lune. 'You'll do what you can to be aboard, Lune, and then you'll do something for us. Or not, if you choose otherwise. It's up to you.' Captain Pallas put down his tool. 'I'll leave her in your hands now, Arquelle. Tell her what she needs to know, and make sure she grasps the importance of her decision.'

'That shouldn't be too difficult,' Arquelle said.

*

PARIS-BELOW, so different from Paris-above, and yet with tinges of the same, even in daylight: darkness, shadows, the damp and the cold. Arquelle and Lune made their way swiftly through a maze of cellars, tunnels, runnels, passages and sewers. Once, they used their suspensor belts to leap across a terrifying black pit, a hole into the bowels of the Earth itself, and when a grinning Arquelle paused to toss a stone into the abyss, Lune had stopped counting before she heard its distant impact.

Her guide moved with such confidence that Lune wondered if he had been raised here – such things were known – or had lived here for a long time. But when she voiced this thought, a whispered mention, he said only, lightly, 'Ah, I'm just someone who dances well with dark.'

'You're from Earth, though. You didn't come down from the stars, like Captain Pallas.'

'No, the Atalanta came down near Anvers – it's just a shivering little hamlet now, but it used to be a great city—and I wasn't born very far away, in an even smaller and more shivering little hamlet. When he passed through on his way to Free France, I became one of his followers.'

'Are there many of you?'

'Enough.'

And then he stopped, before a carved oak door, so old that it felt as hard as metal when Lune ran a wondering hand over it. Arquelle spoke a word, raised a small device with whirling spirals, that flashed red and blue in the shadows and caused a ripple to run down the surface of the door. An answering shimmer seemed to run inside Lune's mind. She gave a little cry.

'What –'

'Hush.' He reached out a hand and pulled her inside to sudden warmth. 'Don't speak, Lune. Don't make another sound.'

He led her up a narrow, twisting flight of stairs. The heat was stifling; Lune had never felt anything like it. It made her skin itch and her eyes prickle. Dryness caught the back of her throat like sudden sandpaper. She had to struggle not to cough. It grew darker as the heat increased, until she found, to her shame, that her fingers were clutching Arquelle's hand with a grip that must have hurt. She felt him gently free his fingers, then take her by the shoulders until he could pass her in front of him. They were in an enclosed space. Her fingers brushed smooth hot stone. A chink of light caught her attention and Arquelle breathed, 'Look.'

Lune bent her head. In the stone, there was the smallest slit, vertical and precise: not some natural configuration of the blocks of the wall, but something that had been created. Curious, she looked within.

A woman was reclining on a couch, amid brightness and lightness and warmth. Not the day's paltry brightness, magnified by mirrors and lenses, but something

artificial. The room was filled with hot house flowers: orchids, jasmine, huge unnatural blooms in every shade of golden and crimson, scarlet, sapphire, silvery-white. Lune blinked: the colours were so intense as to be distressing. The woman herself wore nothing except a chain around her waist, rubies flashing red fire against her pale skin. Her hair was red-gold, and long, cascading over the velvet edge of the divan. She held a glass in one hand, turning it up to the light so that its contents glowed and gleamed. And as she did so, Lune saw her face.

It was Bezile. Amongst all this colour and heat and splendour and waste – Bezile the ascetic, the prim. Bezile, lying here in languor in an artificial tropic. Bezile, who had been Lune's mentor for so long.

Bezile, who wanted an egg.

WHEN THEY WERE safe again, lying low on a flat-walled roof within sight of the Château, Arquelle said: 'She's a liar and a con-artist, not really any better than the churchmen. She doles out the odd egg now and then to the poor and the needy, but it's really just a smokescreen. She keeps the powerful ones for herself, and a handful of wealthy clients spread across Free France – or as far as her argosy can reach, which is about the same thing. Nimble-fingered boys and girls like you keep her operation running. She brings you up as thieves, trains you to steal eggs and steal them well, and you think you're doing the world some good. But she doesn't give a damn about what the power in those eggs can do for anyone else, so long as they keep her warm at night.'

'You could have tricked me somehow, made me see what wasn't there.'

'I suppose,' Arquelle said, as if the thought had never really occurred to him. 'Still: ask yourself – did it make sense? She's rich, Lune – you don't need me to tell you that. Do you think she got that wealth from a lifetime of charitable deeds?'

'Captain Pallas wants me to steal an egg. How does that make him any different?'

'Because he knows what the eggs really are. Or what they really were, until they fell into our hands.'

Lune spoke as if reciting some text burned into her brain so long ago that she had forgotten the origin. 'Before the world turned cold, and the energy began to run out, the wisest men and women of that golden time scooped fire from the ailing Sun and bottled it in the eggs. They did this so that we, their descendants, might hold the winter at bay. It was their gift to us, across the numberless ages.'

Arquelle tilted his head. 'Well, that's one theory. I'll tell you another. The eggs are a lot older than that, and they weren't made for our benefit.' He put a finger under Lune's chin and gently forced her to look to the sky. 'If it were night, what would you see?'

Her answer was sullen. She was still thinking of Bezile, the red rubies against her pale skin. 'Stars.'

'A few thousand, at the most. But each of those stars is a sun like our own, with its own little family of worlds. You can't even begin to imagine how many more stars there are beyond the small number we can see at night. A great whorl of them, the galaxy we call the Milky Way ... hundreds of billions. More stars than there are people who have ever lived on Earth, let alone Free France. But even that isn't the end. Our galaxy isn't the only one, not by a long margin.' He reached down and pinched a piece of windblown grit from the edge of the roof, where it met the low wall that offered them some shelter. 'Think of all the other pieces of dirt, in all of Paris ... and you've got some idea of how many galaxies there are out there.'

'And you would know this, would you?'

'It's what Captain Pallas tells me, and I have no reason to doubt it. Nor to doubt the fact that all those galaxies, all the stars and worlds they contain, once had an origin. The universe is not infinitely old, Lune. It's not even three times as old as this world we're sitting on now.'

Lune thought of the statue she had seen the evening before. 'You sound like a churchman now, preaching of God and Genesis.'

'The origin I speak of isn't the same as theirs. But they're right about one thing. There were Gods in the old days. Just not the kind they tend to go on about.'

Lune shifted. The Sun was up, though now cloud-veiled, and the roof was still cold.

'There's another?'

'When the universe was young, very young, it was smaller and hotter than it is now. Unimaginably small and unimaginably hot: all space and time bound into a bubble the size of my fist. Everything we now know grew from that one seed. Matter and energy, space and time. Galaxies. Stars. Worlds. Cities. You and me.'

'This is nonsense.'

'Would that it were, then we could both do nothing and go home with a clear conscience.' He shook his head sadly. 'I'm afraid we can't do that, Lune. We have an obligation. A duty.'

'To the eggs?'

'They aren't eggs,' Arquelle answered carefully. 'They're lifeboats.'

She answered this with an uncertain laugh. 'You make even less sense.'

'When the universe was younger than a heartbeat, it was very different. It was unimaginably hot and dense, a tiny seething realm of fire and light. We couldn't have survived then, even if we were small enough to fit inside: there were no worlds, no atoms, no matter as we understand it. But there was life. Creatures of the quark-gluon plasma, Captain Pallas called them. They hadn't just formed in that fire; they *were* fire.'

Millions of them: thinking beings, angels with the wisdom of gods. They had no choice but to be wise. They'd survived countless aeons, endured the rise of fall of kingdoms and empires beyond recall. And all this in less than a heartbeat since the first flash of creation. All human experience, Lune, every word ever set to paper, every thought, every dream, is just a childish scribble compared to that vast and luminous pageant. Of course, it had to end. But it wasn't through foolishness or hubris. The universe was changing as it grew older. It was poised on the brink of a transformative event – Captain Pallas called it a phase of superluminal acceleration – when it would suddenly become much bigger and much colder. Without that event, creatures like you and I could never exist. But it was death to the fire beings, and there was nothing they could do to stop it from happening. Except, that is, for a very few who found a way to survive, to ride out the transformation.'

'The eggs,' Lune guessed.

'The wisest of the fire beings found a way to cocoon themselves, to create little pockets, in which they could endure. They would be cut off from their fellow for the rest of time, or until external conditions returned to a state that they could withstand – but it was better than ceasing to exist. So they wrapped themselves in armour and survived the expansion phase, and even as the universe swelled and cooled and atoms gathered into stars and galaxies and then worlds and people, they stayed alive. Billions of years passed, and the eggs spread through the cosmos like seeds on the wind.'

'Until we found them, I suppose.'

He gave her a smile. 'We weren't the first, not by a long stretch. We humans aren't the first thinking creatures to climb out of the mud. Ours wasn't even the first stellar empire in the Milky Way. There'd been many before us. The eggs had been found and examined. They'd passed through many alien hands before we humans chanced upon them. Nor were we the first to discover that the eggs contained energy. But that wasn't the point of them. When we crack open an egg and send its fire into furnaces, we're killing a being as old as creation itself. Madame Bezile isn't just wrong to use the eggs for herself. She's a murderess.'

Lune remembered what she had seen earlier that evening, when Pallas removed his mask. 'Even if that was the case, your captain's no better. He told me himself. It was an egg's fire that blinded him.'

Her own voice sounded hollow, as though she tried to convince herself, force down old doubts and new.

A memory of the library floated, unbidden, into her mind: thoughts of a time of peace, when she would have been allowed to study books, to think, to follow her own will. A time that was long, long gone. She blinked back tears which she did not want Arquelle to see, and turned away.

'That's true,' Arquelle allowed. 'But he also told you that he considered it a price worth paying. Did it occur to you to wonder why?'

'Mad old men say strange things.'

'That's also true. But Captain Pallas isn't mad, at least not as I understand it. The egg blinded him, yes. But it did more than that. It reached into his head and changed him. The creature in the egg died, in one sense. But in another it survived. It passed its essence, its wisdom, its memories, into the head of Captain Pallas. His eyes were the window into his soul, until the fire burned them away.' Arquelle waited, as if he expected Lune to dismiss his words.

But instead she remembered the priest who had blocked her escape from the Cathedral, the way he had twitched on the floor.

'I blinded a churchman this evening. Did the fire change him as well?'

'That would depend,' Arquelle answered carefully. 'If

the fire's too bright, then it just *burns*. And even if the fire's not too bright, if the contact's too brief, there won't be enough time for the essence to cross over.'

'What does that mean?'

'It's like sending a code, but only getting half the message through. Or not even half. You're left with something that doesn't make sense.' He paused. 'Half a mind, or less than that. But you needn't worry. By the time you stole that egg, I doubt there was enough of the fire being left to cross over.'

'It was different for your Captain.'

'He endured the fire, and the contact was prolonged. Since then, Captain Pallas has what you might call a ... different view of things. He remembers what he used to be, but it's as if he sees his old life through a dirty window. And his priorities aren't the same. He understands that we have a very clear choice. We can use the eggs to keep the night at bay, for a little longer. When the last egg is cracked, though, we'll be no better off than when we started. There's another way, though. It's harder, and it won't bring us much comfort against the cold, at least not to begin with. But what we need now is wisdom, not more fuel for our furnaces. We can shiver a bit more, but be wiser. And in being wiser, we'll stand a better chance of doing something that will last.'

**'Even as the universe swelled
and cooled and atoms
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'You are saying we should let the eggs blind us.'

'Their wisdom is wasted, if it's left inside the eggs,' Arquelle said. 'For the fire beings, they're in a kind of prison. Our lives may be short, our minds tiny. But the fire beings would rather a few years of bright existence than a billion more years of limbo. They'll gladly accept to help us, if we let them.'

'Who would choose to be blinded?'

'There are those who are willing. Around the city, even now, they're waiting for the right time. The moment. The hard part isn't looking into the fire, though. It's not dying in the process. Captain Pallas was lucky, but only a fraction of an egg's fire did that to him. That doesn't mean there isn't a way, but we need the Red Empress to make it happen. That's where you come in. We've infiltrated Bezile's organisation in the past, as she well knows, but we've never come close to the Empress.'

'It's not like I can just walk anywhere I want to, open any door.'

'You can now.' He dug out the charm he had used on the carved oak door when they had been on their way to spy on Madame Bezile. 'I'm assigning this to you. It'll work on anything, including the doors in her argosy. Those doors may be cross-wired to her bridge, though, so once you open them you'd best not dawdle. You've handled eggs before, so you needn't be afraid of the Empress. I'll show you how to remove it safely, and put a second egg back in its place before anyone notices the power interruption.'

Lune frowned. 'Won't you also be killing the second egg?'

'It's too late for that one. Once a certain amount of energy is drained from the egg, they can't survive. There won't be much fire left, though. You'd best get off the argosy as quickly as you can.'

'And I suppose you have a plan for that, if we're already up in the air.'

'Of course.' And Arquelle tapped the suspensor belt that Lune was still wearing. 'There's a loading hatch in the argosy's belly. You can drop through with the egg. There's a tracking device in the belt, slaved to mine. By the time you touch down, we'll be waiting for you.'

'It's that simple.'

'It's that simple,' Arquelle confirmed.

BUT HE MUST have known that nothing was ever like that. He left her on a quiet street corner, the city only just beginning to wake up around her, the egg back in her possession. He had given her instructions on the night's work as if it was a transparent and obvious given that she would do his bidding, and thereby turn against Madame Bezile after years of willing loyalty. As if, in her head, was a mechanism that could be adjusted as easily as some gear or ratchet in a clock, turning her from servant

to traitor. Perhaps that was how it worked in Captain Pallas's world of clocks and mirrors and lenses, of suspensor belts and void-crossers.

Not Lune's.

She had expected to arrive back at the Château when it was still night, but now it was day and she fully expected to be quizzed on her lateness. As she approached through the scrawl of ever-tightening side-streets, Lune imagined the difficult questions she might now expect, the lies it would be hard to sustain. The argosy was attached to the Château's highest tower, straining at the mooring lines as its engines stirred the air, eager to propel the fat-bellied machine across the rooftops and beyond the margins of Paris. Men laboured in the high airs, loading provisions into Madame Bezile's swollen craft.

'The safest lie is the one closest to the truth,' Arquelle had told her. 'You crossed paths with a priest. Say that you blinded him, but before he was down he managed to knock you out.'

'With what?'

'You don't have to say. Just that you came around in a dark part of the cathedral, and the priest was still unconscious – or however you left him – and that it took you a while to find your way out again.'

When Lune was ushered into Madame Bezile's presence, this was the story she gave. Yet instead of doubting her, Madame Bezile put down the gold-clasped box she was holding and ushered Lune closer. 'Let me see your face, child. The churchmen did this to you?' Her eyes were narrowed, not with skepticism but with sudden interest.

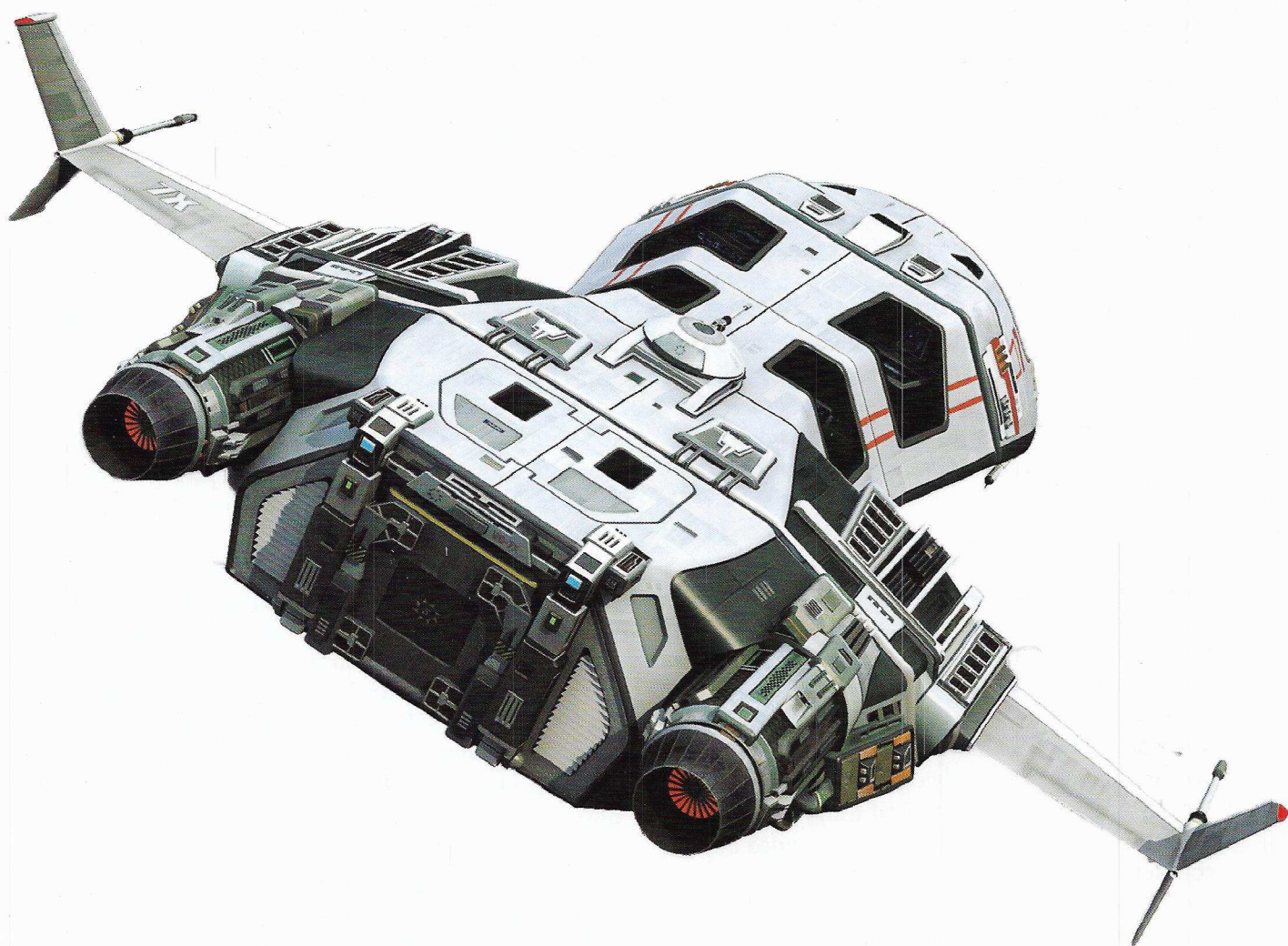
Lune did not know what to say. 'I don't remember what happened. I had the egg, and then I was trying to get out. It was still dark. Then something happened. I think I remember a priest, but I'm not sure. I woke up, but I was confused.' She scanned Madame Bezile's face, searched for a clue as to how readily this concoction was being swallowed. 'When I reached the outside it was light. I came back as quickly as I could.'

'If you were knocked out, you must have gashed your face as you fell. Or they cut you.' Madame Bezile reached for a hand-mirror and offered it to Lune. 'Here. Does it hurt? I would send you to one of the local physicians, but there is a good man in Holdenheim; when we land tomorrow he can look at it. I'm afraid there may still be a scar left behind.'

Lune reached to touch the hard-ridged scab on her cheekbone. There was no pain, not even a tingle. It was as if a dark red caterpillar had been glued to her skin.

'I didn't even know it was there.'

'If the churchmen had caught you, you'd have got off a lot less lightly than that. Which does not excuse the crime. Oh, Lune. My Good Lune.' Madame Bezile skimmed the wound with the back of her hand, so gently that Lune barely felt it. 'That settles it, of course.'



You must come to Holdenheim. We leave after sunset, and now you must rest.

Lune brought out the prize. She left the other things in the bag. 'Soutine told you I made it back with the egg.'

'Yes. I never doubted that you would, but it's still good to see it with my own eyes.'

Madame Bezile took the green-glinting egg, cupping it between both hands. Her mouth was open. She let out a tiny little exhalation. Lune had heard that sound before, and always mistaken it for admiration. Now she understood exactly what the gasp meant.

Even if she hadn't, it was there in Bezile's eyes. The avaricious gleam Lune had seen a thousand times before, and never recognised.

Not fascination, not even gratitude.

Lust.

'My Good Lune,' Bezile said softly. 'How well you've done.'

THEY CAST OFF after sundown. Aboard the argosy, Bezile had continued to be fulsome in both her congratulations and her sympathy for the wound Lune had suffered.

Lune, for her part, had been obliged to act and pose as they got underway. Yet it was not all insincerity. Long bonds still held – gratitude, an eagerness to please, simple fear. She could not escape from the thought that Bezile could read her mind, study her face like one of the books in the ancient library and see what lay beneath her words, her stammering thanks. But Bezile had shown no signs of suspicion, had expressed a grave and sorrowful regret for the risk that Lune had run, had placed a thin white hand upon her head in benediction and murmured a brief and apparently heartfelt prayer. As she did so, the memory of Bezile's creamy languid form among the orchids had welled up in Lune's mind, bringing revulsion in its wake. She had closed her eyes and bent her head in apparent piety, and Bezile had glided on.

Once she had done so, Lune went to the small porthole in the wall of the argosy and looked out, as if the sight could scour her clean. Beyond her scabbed reflection, Free France lay below, a spangle of dark and bright. She could dimly make out the towers of the churches, and the curve of the river. How strange, to think that once men had sailed from this city to the stars... Lune peered upwards, but the night was clouded. Her mouth

tightened. Bezile, Arquelle, Pallas span though her thoughts like skaters taking the bend of the river, small as toys. The prospect of her own betrayal was rancid in her throat, as though she had eaten something sour. But hadn't Bezile betrayed her in turn, from the very beginning? Lune knew that it was so, and yet, and yet... She looked down again, concentrating on Paris and the future. Arquelle's charm lay heavy in her pocket, as weighty as she had once imagined the eggs to be, and then, checking that she was unobserved, she made her way to the power room.

The charm worked on the door as effectively as he had promised. The same red and blue flash, the same ripple in the door's fabric, the same answering shimmer in Lune's head. This was old and arcane technology, and she did not care to be near it for any longer than necessary.

Yet it functioned. The door admitted her and she stepped over the raised gold threshold, pausing only to close the door behind her. The room was smaller than she had imagined, and it was obvious from the first glance that no one was in attendance. The mechanisms in here were as dependable as an old pair of skates, needing little maintenance or adjustment. The room's curved and bolted gold walls were blank of windows or ornamentation, with the only significant feature being the gold plinth on which the Red Empress sat. The egg rested within a spherical cradle, suspended under a counterpart of the plinth which instead projected down from the ceiling. The cradle was the only complicated thing in the room, but Lune was not daunted. Arquelle had told her what to expect, and nothing she saw gave her cause to doubt his instructions.

There were no locks or traps on the cradle, since anyone entering the room was deemed to have authority to approach the Red Empress. Lune worked the delicate catches and clasps, until all that remained was the golden apparatus feeding the egg's fire into the argosy's furnaces. The many-jointed and knuckled pipes gave off a faint brassy heat, but when her fingers touched the metal it was strangely cool. Arquelle had told her that it would be safe to disconnect the egg for several seconds, but that she must take care to close the screening shutters before she did so. Hardly daring to breathe, she worked the little mechanisms that operated the inner and outer screens, robbing the furnace of its energy source.

She stood for a moment, straining to hear some alteration in the argosy's engines, some telling hesitation in the throb of the floor plates. But there was no change.

She removed the Red Empress from the cradle, slipped it into the bag, and replaced it with Arquelle's egg. The new egg was a little smaller, its ornamentation plainer, but the cradle had obviously been designed to accommodate many varying sizes and styles, and the

spring-loaded clasps fell back into place without complaint. Fixing the pipes into position was more nerve-racking, if only because there could be no error. But the egg's eyelike iris mechanisms were similar enough not to cause difficulties, and when Lune reopened the shutters, the outer and then the inner, there were no catastrophes. The argosy powered on. Her work was nearly done.

She opened the door, exited the power room, and used Arquelle's charm to secure the place as she had left it. Then she made her way back through the iron guts of the argosy, avoiding attention, and once more using the charm to open doors that would not willingly submit. She wondered how long she had, before the new egg gave up the last of its fire and the furnaces began to cool. How long again, before anyone would think to check on the power room, and how long still before the crime would be linked to Lune?

She was nearly there. The deck plates under feet whistled with the passage of night air. Ahead was a twist in the corridor, and then the last door, the one that led to the belly hold, and to freedom.

And to Charleroi Soutine, who now stood before her in the doorway. Lune's instructor was as surprised as she herself but Lune was quicker. She brought the pistol up, two-handed, and unwavering. She saw Soutine swallow.

'Lune?' His voice was uncertain.

'I don't want to shoot you,' Lune said.

'Lune, what are you doing?'

'I saw her,' Lune said. She found that her voice was urgent, wanting to convince. Soutine had always been kind to her, of all Bezile's young men. 'Last night, on the way back from the Cathedral. They took me to see her. She speaks of sacrifice and duty, but I saw her in a winter garden, among a thousand flowers. The power it must have cost...'

She did not expect him to believe her, but she saw his glance waver and fall and then she realised that he already knew. He muttered something.

'Soutine?'

'I - she asked me to do something, there in that garden. A guest, someone on the city council whom she wanted to impress. She said - but I couldn't. And then she made me.'

Lune thought of Bezile's white form, the glitter in her tigress eyes; of squandering resources. Including, it seemed, human ones. She lowered the pistol. 'Soutine. It doesn't have to be like this. It could be different.'

She had no proof, but with rising hope, she saw that she did not need it. He wanted to believe. He nodded, once.

'Go. I have not seen you.'

And, choosing to trust, she did.

*

LUNE KNELT BY the floor hatch and pulled on the lever. The hatch was stiff. She tugged harder, and the hatch moved a little in its runners, exposing a rectangle of open air. The night's cold touched her face, howling between the gap. It was wide enough to push a hand through, but certainly too narrow for escape. She risked two hands on the lever and tried again, grunting with the effort. The hatch budged again, doubling the gap, but then jammed resolutely. She couldn't move it any wider, no matter how hard she tried. It felt as if there was metal wedged in the runner, not just grease and muck.

Paris slid under her. Tenements and houses, roofs and towers, cupolas and garrets, the moonlight glittering back from pale skate-scratched alleys and streets. She made out one or two dashing figures, but there were few people abroad at this hour. The cobalt flicker of an Aftman patrol, epaulettes lit as they went about their nocturnal business. No other fliers or argosies below her.

The gap still wasn't wide enough. It wasn't even close. She knew what she was capable of squeezing through, and that narrow aperture wasn't it.

Curse Arquelle, and his plans. Curse his certainty that there was a means for Lune to escape.

But the Red Empress could fit, even if she couldn't.

She thought about it for a few moments, hoping that there would be a catch, something she'd missed. Lune had already risked much to get this far, but always on the understanding that there was a way out. She'd hardly been enthusiastic about the idea of leaping from the argosy, even with Arquelle's suspensor belt to convey her safely to ground. But she would much sooner have done that than face Madame Bezile when the theft came to light. As it surely would, once the egg died and the engines faltered.

There was another possibility, wasn't there? She still had the charm, and no reason to assume that it wouldn't let her back into the power room. She had swapped the eggs once; she could swap them a second time. Put things back the way they were; return the Red Empress to her golden throne. Get back on with her miserable life, and let Captain Pallas make other arrangements. There was hazard in returning to the power room, but she would gladly take that risk rather than submit to Madame Bezile's inevitable wrath.

But she had said she would do this thing. And besides, there was that memory of Bezile, among the flowers...

Lune unbuckled the suspensor belt and removed it from her waist. Remembering how Arquelle had adjusted the load-dial, she turned it to its minimum setting and pressed the activator. The belt emitted a rising whine and tried to lift itself from her grasp, but she was stronger. Feeling as if she was wrestling a snake, she stuffed the still humming belt into the bag that

already held the stolen egg. She added the charm and the discharge pistol.

Lune tightened the drawstring and hefted the rattling bag above the deck plates. She let go, and watched it settle to the floor as if lowered by an invisible thread.

That would suffice, she judged.

Lune took the bag and pushed it through the gap in the floor. The wind chilled her wrist. Dropped from this height, the bag could end up almost anywhere. That was Arquelle's problem, though.

Not hers. Not now.

Lune made to stand. She had no plan in mind, beyond going about her business as if nothing had happened. Perhaps, if she was extraordinarily lucky, the argosy would make landfall before evidence of her crime came to light. She dared not put much hope in that, though. And even then, where would she go?

There was a sound behind her. Lune turned to face the opening door, almost relieved that she was going to be spared the need to pretend that all was well. Soutine and Derain were there, filling the doorway, faces thrown into diabolic relief by the lantern Soutine held aloft. 'Step away from the hatch, Lune,' Derain instructed.

She paused before answering. 'Nothing's wrong. What do you want with me?'

'You don't have any business down here. Even if you did, you'd need to explain why that hatch is open.'

'It was like that when I got here.'

Derain's smile was a quick twitch of his mouth. 'We saw that the hatch had been opened from the bridge. There's a circuit. If you knew about electricity, you'd understand what I'm talking about.' He nodded at Soutine. 'Close it. And bring her to Madame Bezile. I'm going to check on the power room.'

She tried to read Soutine, tried to tell if he'd gone against his promise, or had been powerless to act in any other way once her escape attempt had come to light.

She couldn't decide.

BY THE TIME she was brought into Madame Bezile's presence on the argosy's bridge the evidence of Lune's crime was supremely obvious. The egg had died, robbing the furnace of life. A reserve egg had been installed, but the fire was feeble and with its engines reduced to idle, the argosy could do little but hover, barely able to counter the prevailing winds. Derain had already conveyed the dead egg to his mistress, verifying – though this was obvious enough from its appearance – that it was not the one they had set out with.

'It was nearly inert,' he told her, while Lune looked on. 'Just enough power in it to feed the furnaces for a few minutes.'

'You've searched thoroughly?' Madame Bezile

turned the dead egg over and over in her hands, staring at it with a peculiar and lingering revulsion, as if it was some kind of large dry turd.

'There's no sign of the Red Empress?'

'If she's hidden it, then she knows the argosy better than any of us. I think there's a more straightforward explanation. We found her by that open hatch. She could have dropped the egg easily enough.' Derain nodded at Lune as if she was a piece of meat. He had strapped her into one of the bridge's skeletal metal chairs while her fate was decided.

'A spectacularly pointless gesture, wouldn't you say? Not to mention risking half of Paris, if the egg had broken.' Madame Bezile held the dead egg before her. 'Here. Take this useless thing and destroy it.'

Soutine took the egg, but with as much wariness as if there had still been energy inside it. Lune understood. It was very hard to accept that the egg had given up all its blinding fire.

'Someone must have helped her get into the power room,' Derain mused. 'If they went to that much trouble, then presumably they already had a plan for getting the Red Empress out safely.' He hesitated. 'There are any number of individuals who covet eggs that badly, but very few with the wherewithal to steal one from under our noses.'

'Pallas had the means,' Madame Bezile said slowly. 'And we know how badly he likes his eggs.'

'Do you think he got to the girl?'

'Someone obviously did. She hasn't the wit to have put this together on her own.' Having relieved herself of the egg, Madame Bezile had moved to stand at one of the large, down-facing windows, her hands clasped behind her back. 'Pallas is no fool,' she said in a low murmur. 'If she dropped the Empress, then he had a means of recovering it.'

'The hatch wouldn't open all the way,' Derain pointed out. 'Perhaps she was meant to go with the egg.'

'And survive that drop?'

'There are ways and means. We've searched her, and there's nothing on her but the clothes she's wearing. But we don't know what she might have brought aboard.'

'How long has it been now?'

'An hour since we found her. We can maintain this altitude for a few more hours, but we won't last the night. Our reserves were for emergencies only; they don't have enough fire to enable sustained flight.'

'Never mind the eggs. I want to know what Pallas is up to. An hour's a long time. If he was fast, he could have had my egg for nearly all that time. What do you suppose he's going to do with it?'

'Nothing is a distinct possibility,' Derain said.

'Merely owning the Red Empress may be sufficient for him.'

'That's not how Pallas works. Other than its value as a commodity, the only useful thing about the Red Empress is the fire it contains.'

'If the egg is on the ground, and he turns that fire on us ...' Derain did not need to complete his sentence.

Madame Bezile dismissed his point with a curt shake of her head. 'No; it won't be that simple. Pallas already had access to discharge weapons, and he was never so gauche as to use them against me directly. Whatever he means to do with the Empress, it won't be that.'

'Are you sure?' Lune asked from her chair.

Madame Bezile's attention snapped onto her.

'What?'

An egg's fire was lancing from a garret, scribing a line through the air, reaching across the rooftops and to the city's white-hemmed margins. Though the line of fire seemed to Lune to be as bright as the Sun, it offered no illumination to the streets below.

'That,' Lune said.

Madame Bezile's fingers dug into her forearm like talons. Lune yelped as she was dragged to the argosy's window, brought to her knees with her face mashed against the glass.

'Did you imagine that you were cleverer than me?' Madame Bezile said, her breath warm against Lune's ear. 'Even for a moment? Did you imagine that you might go so far as to triumph?' She let out an appalled little laugh. 'If it's any consolation, you were not the first to cross me. I doubt that you'll be the last. This pitiful little world may be running low on resources, but there never seems to be any shortfall of fools. My only regret is that I thought slightly better of you, at least for a while.'

It was hard for Lune to speak, with her mouth squashed against glass. 'You've lost the egg.'

'Your point being?'

'If I've failed, then so have you.'

The line of fire was turning, sweeping across different quarters of the city.

'If that egg was the last in the world, do you think I'd have entrusted you with its recovery? There are more out there, Lune, and still more in my possession. Its loss is disappointing, and it will complicate my short-term plans. But in the longer term, it merely delays the inevitable. That's not to say that it doesn't pain me to see it squandered in such a fashion.'

'Rather than squandered keeping you warm, while the rest of us freeze?'

That earned Lune a smack against the glass. Something crunched in her nose, and she felt a sudden gush

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of warm wet fluid spill into her mouth. 'I'm sorry,' Madame Bezile said, with unctuous insincerity. 'I didn't mean to get your blood on my window. Here, mop yourself up.' She was pushing a handkerchief in Lune's face.

Despite herself, Lune took it. It was very fine, with the slippery, eel-like nap of an old-fashioned textile.

'You've still failed.'

'I don't think so.'

Lune pressed the handkerchief to staunch the blood. 'You wanted me to see this, but it's you who needs to understand. I knew that Pallas wasn't going to waste that egg.'

'Then you appear to be labouring under a misapprehension, child.'

'I'm not,' Lune said. 'Watch, if you doubt me.'

At last the egg's fire had found its target. From the garret where the egg had been opened, to the distant cupola far across the Seine, must have been thirty minute's hard skating, three or four city quarters at least. Now that the alignment was made, though, the beam appeared to lock into position, as if its path through the air had always been ordained.

'Nothing is happening ...' Madame Bezile started to say.

Lune cut her off. 'I said watch.'

Two lines of fire emerged from the distant cupola in opposing directions. They searched the night and then found their own individual targets: two more buildings, higher than most, in what Lune judged to be the second and ninth quarters. From these buildings emerged two more pairs of sun-bright lines, redirected back across the city. These in turn found their marks and created still more beams. The process continued, the lines of fire now multiplying too rapidly to track. It was as if a spider had begun to weave a fiery web across the city, a web that was at first simple and then increasingly demented and complex.

'What,' Madame Bezile uttered. It was a command, not a question.

Lune answered in the sure and certain knowledge that nothing she now said or did could endanger Captain Pallas's work.

'The fire's too bright for anyone to look into. Those who have done it, most of them ended up mad.'

'And blind,' Madame Bezile said.

'The blindness wouldn't matter, if they could end up not going mad at the same time.'

Madame Bezile gestured with an unsteady hand at the fire-webbed city. 'And this? What does this have to do with it?'

'Mirrors,' Lune said carefully. 'Mirrors and glass. Captain Pallas made them, so that the egg's fire could be split up, redirected, shone into more than one mind at a time.' She swallowed. 'With each doubling, the fire's intensity is lessened. It's still bright enough to

blind, but there's much less chance of madness.'

'They?'

'The people at the ends of those beams. Acolytes of the captain. Volunteers, who've agreed to open their eyes to the egg's fire.'

There was scorn in her voice now. 'So that the fire can burn out their minds?'

'Captain Pallas says they won't go mad – most of them, anyway. There's still a risk.'

Madame Bezile seized Lune's hair. 'Speak sense to me, girl. If they don't go mad, what happens?'

'The eggs are alive. The fire in the egg isn't ...' Lune trailed off, smiling at her own inarticulacy. 'It's not really fire. It's the living essence of something much older than us. When the eggs are opened, the fire leaks. The beings inside the eggs perish. After billions of years, they just fade out and die.' She paused. 'But there's another way. If the fire's shone into another mind, a human mind, then not everything is lost. Some of the wisdom of the eggs ... the wisdom of the beings trapped inside ... it crosses over.'

'Captain Pallas put this nonsense in your head?'

'The fire touched him, a long time ago. He survived, obviously. The egg blinded him, and left him ... changed. Some would say mad, I suppose. But not so mad that he couldn't make this happen.'

'The fire's fading,' Madame Bezile said, relinquishing her hold on Lune's hair. 'Look, you can see it dying away. The egg's spent its power. Wasted on glass and mirrors, when it could have done some good for us all.'

'You're wrong,' Lune dared to pull away, dropping the blood-soiled handkerchief from her face. 'The fire touched the acolytes. It's done what Captain Pallas wanted it to do.'

The fire-web was indeed guttering out, line by line, but for a moment the memory of it was seared into Lune's vision like a brand. Then it was just the rooftops and the icebound streets and cold dark ribbon of the Seine, and it was as if the egg had never been opened.

'How many?'

'Twenty,' Lune said firmly. 'Twenty people with the same will and determination as Captain Pallas. Twenty people who understand that the world doesn't have to be like this. That it doesn't have to end in ice and darkness.'

'Fools.'

'Perhaps. But you feared Captain Pallas, and there was just one of him. Now there are twenty more.'

'Assuming none of them went mad.'

'That's true. You'll just have to wait and see, won't you?'

After a moment Madame Bezile said: 'When you helped them steal that egg from me, you must have known there'd be consequences. Or were you so stupid as to imagine otherwise?'

'No,' Lune said. 'I knew what I was doing. I knew

what you were, and I knew what you were capable of.

Madame Bezile nodded gravely. 'Then what's about to happen won't come as any great surprise. That's good. This late in the game, I'd hate for there to be any misunderstanding between us.'

'I'm sure there won't be,' Lune answered.

With genuine regret she said: 'I gave you everything. I took you as a child, took you from the piss-stinking sewer of your life, made you something. I had hopes for you, Lune. You were quick and clever and you showed uncommon courage. I dared to think that one day you might inherit my mantle. I see now that my investment was wasted. A foolish whimsy, nothing more. You're no better than the rest.'

The floor lurched. 'We're losing control,' Derain said urgently. 'We should attempt landfall now, or abandon the argosy.'

'Let it crash,' Bezile said, as if the flying machine was of no more consequence than the soiled handkerchief. 'I'll find another one, as I did before. Tell the crew they may leave, and ready my own parachute. I'll be at the door in a few moments.' When she had finished speaking, she reached into a secret pocket and withdrew a tiny gem-encrusted discharge pistol. For a second or two she marvelled at it, as if it had been years since she last set eyes on the dainty little weapon.

Then flicked an arming stud, and caused lights to glimmer along the involute barrel.

Lune backed away.

'It'll be quick,' Bezile said. 'I said you were my favorite, and I meant it. Only the best for my good Lune. But I can't let this treachery go unrewarded.'

She aimed the vile thing at Lune's face.

'It's over,' Lune said. 'Don't you realise? It's over.'

'Yes, it is.'

But it was Soutine who had spoken, not Bezile. And in his hand was another discharge pistol, the one he had sometimes let her handle, against the day when she might be allowed to carry one herself.

Now he pointed it at his mistress, his hand trembling, but not so badly that the shot wouldn't be fatal, were he to squeeze the trigger. 'You were right, Lune,' he said softly. 'It doesn't have to be like this.'

'Charleroi,' Bezile said, astonished. 'I thought better of you.'

'Go to the parachutes,' he told Lune. 'There'll still be one left for you.'

'What about you?'

'I'll be there shortly.'

She did as she was told, as she had always done, whether it was Madame Bezile or Arquelle or Captain Pallas. When she reached the parachutes, three parachutes remained on the rack. She took one of the black, pillow-sized package in her hands, bewildered by its dangling straps and obscure fastenings. She had never been shown how to use the parachutes. Why

would she? No one had seriously expected the argosy to come to grief, and if it did, she had never imagined that she would be among the last to leave.

The floor lurched sickeningly. The exit door was wide open. No problem stepping through that, except now she didn't have the suspensor belt. Another lurch, as the argosy lost still more power, and she had to grab a handhold to stop herself sliding along the deck plates, to the door's hungry night-black aperture.

Even if she succeeded in wearing the parachute, she had no idea how to use it, how to control her descent, how to select a landing spot, in the confusion of streets and buildings below. But she thought even less of her chances of surviving the argosy's fall, when at last it succumbed to gravity.

'Slip your arm through that hoop. Yes. Now the other one.'

It was Soutine, still holding the discharge pistol, steadying himself against a bolted wall strut. 'Now the belt. Tight as you can. That's good.'

'I don't know how to work it.'

'The ripcord is that yellow tag. Pull it when you're clear of the argosy's engines, and not a moment sooner. That's blackflame silk, and it won't rip, but it still won't thank you for being tangled in the propellers.'

'Where will I land?'

'With the wind as it is, you've a good chance of hitting Bestiary Park. But only if you go now.'

She hesitated. 'Shouldn't you be wearing yours?'

'I'm not going, Lune.' His hand tightened on the pistol. 'I'm afraid there's still work to be done here.'

'Leave her. She doesn't need you. She's ...'

'Nothing. I know. And I should follow you. But what you said, about things not having to be this way? You were right. It is over, for her. But not just Bezile.' As the floor tilted again he redoubled his grip. 'I saw what happened down there, Lune. It was beautiful fire. Whatever happens after tonight, whether or not your Captain Pallas was mad or sane, it won't be the same Paris, or even the same Free France. Because there's an idea loose in the world that wasn't there yesterday, and that changes everything. An idea that maybe it's better to be wise than warm.' He joggled the pistol at her, not with the threat of violence, but urging her to go. 'She made me what I am, Lune. I knew what she was long before you ever found out, but I didn't have the strength to turn against her. And if I couldn't make that change then, I can't make this one. I don't belong in the future you've just made happen. But you do. Now jump.'

'Soutine ...'

This time, for an instant, she thought he might well fire the discharge pistol.

So she jumped. Through the door, into the cold-clawed wind, into the air above Paris, her Paris, her city.

* * *

ODYSSEY 2010 MEMBERS

Number	Badge Name	72	Neil	145	Dalg	217	Alice
1	Harriet	73	Paul Treadaway	146	Emilio Englade	218	Toby Atkin-Wright
2	Bobby	74	A3	147	Peter Wright	219	Kate Atkin-Wright
3	Tim Kirk	75	Jonathan	148	Jenni Woodward	220	Beth Atkin-Wright
4	Covert Beach	76	Mary Burns	149	Colin Harvey	221	Gerry Webb
5	Murphy's Lawyer	77	Bill Burns	150	Dawn Abigail	222	Mali Perera
6	Omega Payne	78	Ecki Marwitz	151	David Wake	223	Gryphon
7	Jodie Payne	79	Miri	152	Ian Taylor	224	Ceri
8	Jesper Stage	80	Nige	153	Kathy Taylor	225	Sara
9	Rhodri James	81	Sabine	154	Charlotte Taylor	226	Andrew
10	Steve	82	Karen Furlong	155	Munchkin	227	Urban Gunnarsson
11	Andrew Patton	83	Simon Furlong	156	Sha	228	Dan Smithers
12	Paul Dormer	84	Claire Brialey	157	Peter Wilkinson	229	Lucy Smithers
13	Ian Maughan	85	Mark Plummer	158	Steve Rothman	230	Nathaniel Smithers
14	Paul Allwood	86	Kathy Westhead	159	Colette	231	Jonathan Smithers
15	Hoboslobo	87	Mike Westhead	160	The Bellingman	232	Matthew Smithers
16	Jenny	88	Peter Westhead	161	Sacha	233	David Farmer
17	Chris Southern	89	Karen Westhead	162	Stevie	234	Mike Figg
18	Ben Yalow	90	Roger Robinson	163	Dr Bob	235	Iucounu
19	John Dallman	91	Matthew	164	Pauline E Dungate	236	Kim Whysall
20	Peter Wareham	92	Michael	165	Chris Morgan	237	Tony Hammond
21	Gwen Funnell	93	Malcolm H	166	Trevor Barker	238	Ford
22	Steve Cooper	94	Jacqui	167	Zoe Deterding-Barker	239	Fire
23	The Magician	95	Stuart	168	Michael Barker	240	Larsen
24	1/2r	96	Smallclanger	169	Piers Barker	241	Cristina Pulido Ulvang
25	Peter Redfarn	97	Linda Stratmann	170	Mike	242	Daniel Pulido Ulvang
26	June Rosenblum	98	Gary Stratmann	171	Marcus Rowland	243	Emilia Pulido Ulvang
27	Howard Rosenblum	99	Smudge	172	Steve Grover	244	Nicolai
28	Peter Kievits	100	Dave Lally	173	Peter Cohen	245	Christine
29	Jan van't Ent	101	Fifitrix	174	Anne Sudworth	246	Michael
30	Jaap Boekestein	102	Fran Dowd	175	Warren Hudson	247	Martin Williams
31	Colin Harris	103	John Dowd	176	Mad Elf	248	David Damerell
32	Liz Batty	104	Rita Medany	177	Sybil	249	Elizabeth
33	David Haddock	105	Gaspode	178	Steve Davies	250	Robert Gorman
34	Sarah Haddock	106	Phil	179	Giulia de Cesare	251	Crazy Dave
35	Hans-Ulrich Boettcher	107	Herman Ellingsen	180	E.D. Buckley	252	Mike Scott
36	Julia Jones	108	Stian Alderin	181	Kat Takenaka	253	Flick
37	Gary Blog	109	Lisa Konrad	182	Alison Scott	254	Tony Berry
38	Wilf James	110	Kyara	183	Steven Cain	255	Minnow
39	Paul T	111	Martijn	184	Marianne Cain	256	Kate Soley Barton
40	Steve Rogerson	112	Chandra	185	Jonathan Cain	257	Andrew Barton
41	Tracey	113	Brian Parsons	186	Ming	258	Kathy Sands
42	Joshua Bentley	114	Peter Schimkat	187	Kate	259	Leo Sands
43	Dave Tompkins	115	Dave Cox	188	Tony Keen	260	Elaine Coates
44	Cal	116	Susan Stepney	189	Tibs	261	Mark Slater
45	BLUFIVE	117	Charles Whyte	190	Joan Paterson	262	Joel Coates
46	Alexander Long	118	Roger Earnshaw	191	Michael Abbott	263	Ethan Coates
47	Tommy Wareing	119	Colin Fine	192	Anne Wilson	264	Bernard Peek
48	Marcus Streets	120	rentawitch	193	Catherine Pickersgill	265	Mary Peek
49	Rae Streets	121	Dollym	194	Greg Pickersgill	266	Jennie
50	Tilly	122	Boggis	195	John Holden	267	Mister Roy
51	Alex Holden	123	Julian Headlong	196	Chris Stocks	268	Melica
52	Carolina	124	Robert Watt	197	Anders Frihagen	269	Martin
53	Bridget Wilkinson	125	Sue Edwards	198	Richard Stephenson	270	Pam Wells
54	Sneerpout	126	Keith Martin	199	Sue Mason	271	Andy England
55	Nik Whitehead	127	Chris	200	Metamorphosa	272	Susan Francis
56	DC	128	deCabbit	201	Magus42	273	James
57	Pat McMurray	129	Dave Row	202	Melusine	274	James
58	Julie Faith McMurray	130	Ian E Stockdale	203		275	Richard Kennaway
59	Tracie Kinnaird-Harris	131	Ruth Leibig	204	Mike Cheater	276	Roderick O Hanlon
60	Katie Price	133	Wendy King	205	Trevor	277	D. J. R. Allkins
61	James Bacon	134	Simon H. King	206	Pat Reynolds	278	Kate Solomon
62	Simone Van Zyl	135	Jenny	207	Jamie Scott	279	Malcolm Davies
63	Larry van der Putte	136	Black Knight	208	Emma Peel	280	Maura
64	Vincent Docherty	137	Barbara	209	Duncan Macgregor	281	mrgezpacho
65	Michael Bernardi	138	Oscar Logger	210	Mark Geary	282	Tony Rogers
66	Iain Alexander	139	Markus	211	Thomas Recktenwald	283	Rychard Winslade
67	Lars Strandberg	140	Jim Samuel	212	Eddie Cochrane	284	impy
68	Dan	141	Johan Anglemark	213	James Steel	285	John Coxon
69	Kat W	142	Linnea Anglemark	214	Shobah Steel	286	Zandy Hemsley
70	Steve K	143	Lapswood	215	David Drysdale	287	Judi Hodgkin
71	Lizzit	144	Michelle	216	Steve	288	Pat

289	Sebastian Cahill	377	Koren	451	Paul F Cockburn	527	Estelle Roberts
290	Nickey Barnard	378	Billy Abbott	452	David	528	James Shields
291	Smitty	379	Jackie E. Burns	453	Hebblethwaite	529	Carrie Mowatt
292	Marion Pitman	380	Terry Twine	453	Edward James	530	Jim Mowatt
293	Martin Hoare	381	Neil Williamson	454	Farah Mendlesohn	531	Anna FDD
294	Panda	382	Martin Owton	455	Tony Cullen	532	AlexMC
295	Alastair Reynolds	383	Rick Hewett	456	Mark Harding	533	Sue Willis
297	Liz Williams	384	Tony Lee	457	Helenex	534	Phil Willis
298		385	Serena Culfeather	458	Red	535	Amy Willis
299	Mike Carey	386	John Wilson	459	Lemming Man	536	Jaine Fenn
300		387	Batty	460	Gwen	537	David Weddell
301	Steve Green	388	Charlie	461	Richard Crawshaw	538	Andy Richards
303	Terry Wilson	389	Gail Weiss	462	Sarah Shemilt	539	Jane Smithers
304	Zoë Parkinson	390	Ernst Kuschel	463	Adrian Long	540	Danielle Ray
305	Zephyr Beeblebear	391	Jim Linwood	464	Blazing Skies	541	Alistair Maynard
306	Neil Summerfield	392	Marion Linwood	465	Judith Proctor	542	Auke Ypma
307	David Power	393	Susan Bartholomeusz	466	Richard Proctor	543	Donna Scott
308	Rachael Livermore	394	Alex Townsend	467	greg elkin	544	Neil K. Bond / Ewan Kershaw
310	Geoffrey Thorpe	395	Ian	468	Bear	545	Danacea
311	Ringman's Teddy	396	Colin Wightman	469	Silas	546	Susan Booth
312	John Jarrold	397	Sarah Wightman	470	Tommy Persson	547	Inamac
313	Peter Colley	398	Marwan	471	Henry Proctor	548	Nicholas Jackson
314	George Berger	399	Susan Peak	472	Clarrie O'Callaghan	549	Will
315		400	David Peak	473	Timothy Maguire	550	Mike Wood
316		401	Yvonne Hewett	475	Mark Sinclair	551	Sarah Wood
317	Margaret Austin	402	Sarah Jenkin	476	Sally Sinclair	552	Andrew J. Wilson
318	Martin Easterbrook	403		477	Rosie	553	Martin McCallion
319	Suzanne McLeod	404	Carol Naylor	478	Arwel Parry	554	
320	Martin McGrath	405	Lucas T Bear	479	SMS	555	
321	Martin Holmes	406	Jenny Barber	480	Eira	556	Frances Shipsey
322	Ian Whates	407		481	Cuil	557	Dave the Planetbuilder
323	Anne Woodford	408	Liz Moloney	482		558	Traci
324	Alan Woodford	409	David L Clements	483	David Langford	559	Jeremy
325	Niall Gordon	410	Amanda	484	Vincent Canning	560	David Thomas
326	Doug S	411	Kathy	485	Olivia Canning	561	Margaret Croad
327	Julia Daly	412	Sue Boulton	486	Ciara Canning	562	June
328	Roy Gray	413	Pádraig Ó Méalóid	487	Jane	563	Nick Mills
329	Adrian Snowdon	414	D.	488	Mark Young	564	Ian Snell
330	Peter Mabey	415	Gillian	489	Vindolandia	565	Ruth O'Reilly
331	Ian Watson	416	Kethry-Ashira	490	Lucien	568	Hazel
332	Clare Boothby	417	Paul	491	Nugget	569	Robert
333	Ian Jackson	418	Tom Womack	492	Mark Randall	570	Brad Ackerman
334	Bob Walker	419	Tom Clegg - Bragelonne	493	Jane Nicholson	571	Fuzz
335	Rog Peyton	420	Anne Bodell	494	Caroline Mullan	572	Matthew Woodcraft
336	Misha	421	ZoeP	495	Brian Ameringen	573	Neil McGurk
337	Gizmo	422	Zarkon	496	Meriol Ameringen	574	Susie Haynes
338	Paddy Sinclair	423	Michelle	497	Marion Naomi	575	Neil Hayton
347	La Femme Chocolat	424	Feline	498	Steve Pritchard	576	Roberto Quaglia
348	Martyn Dawe	425	BFG	499	Marion's Catbus	577	Lilian Edwards
350	Alice (the camel)	426	Tony Naggs	500	Kent Bloom	578	Juliet E McKenna
351	DavidU	427	Graham (Affordable)	501	Mary Morman	579	Ian McKenna
352	Nat	428	John Stewart	502	Andrew Armstrong	580	Terry Martin (Murky Depths)
353	John Wadsworth-	429	Barbara Stewart	503	Helen Armstrong	581	Liz (Murky Depths)
Ladkin		430	Ross	504	Kari Sperring	582	Arthur Chappell
354	Sue Wadsworth-	431	Claire	505	Phil Nanson	583	Marcus
Ladkin		432	Dyllanne	506	Assaf	584	penwing
355	Keris	433	Alistair Carty	507	Tamar	585	Jim de Liscard
356	Spike	434	Rhionnach	508	Murray Moore	586	Meike
357	Una McCormack	435	Stainless Steel Fox (nee	509	Mary Ellen Moore	587	Stef
358	Dexter	Hex)		510	Hoggy	588	Nigel Heffernan
359	elfin (E21)	436	LENA	511	Anna	589	Jim Worrad
360	Simon	437	RICHARD THE RAMPANT	512	Sandra	590	Matt Tope
363	Paul Nolan	438	Undecided Adrian	513	Chaz Brenchley	591	John Harold
364	Loli Cenalmor	439	Sandra Battye	514	Softly Brenchley	592	Robbie Bourget
365	Piers Beckley	440	Adam Osborne	515	Huw Walters	593	John Selmes
366	Iain M Banks	441	Nojay	516	Sarah Walters	594	Nolly
367		442	Valerie	517	Max	595	Diane
368	Carlos Ezquerria	443	Aletia Ray	518	Terry	596	Michael Owen
369		444	Bill	519	Dave Gibson	597	Shana
370	Bhob Smith	445	Ariane Ray	520	Austin	598	Colin
371		446	Pandora Ray	521	Caro	599	Zmi
372		447	Zachary Ray	522	Jessica Black	600	Tanya Brown
373		448	Tlanti	523	Crispin Black	601	Owen Dunn
374		449	Clare Goodall	524	Heather	602	
375	Tim Sherburn	450	The Redemption	525	Roger Octon	603	Sarah Ellender
376	Elsie Donald	Beeblebear		526	Dave M. Roberts	604	

605	Elizabeth Counihan	683	Penny Hill	758	Donna Rankin	835	Hitch
606	Gary Couzens	684	Gareth L Powell	759	Andy Bigwood	836	Derek Macleod
607	Deirdre Counihan	685	Allen Lewis	760	Lydia	837	Rosanne Rabinowitz
608	Graham Bates	686	Brenda Lewis	761	Philip	838	Andrew Hook
609	Simon Russell	687	Darby Lewis	762	Christian Sauve	839	Jon Crew
610	MEG	688	Katie, Ruby Blaze	763	Luke Spry	840	Rich McAllister
611	Lewis	689	Stefania, Ruby Blaze	764	Jude Roberts	841	Lin McAllister
612	Lewis P Bear	690	Edwin Rydberg	765	Zoe	842	Divyam
613	Martin Sketchley	691	Claire	766	Paul	843	Ian R MacLeod
614	Manfred Alex	692	Julian	767	Kevin	844	Stephen Gaskell
615	Mandy Slater	693	Sproc	768	Jetse de Vries	845	Rebecca J Payne
616	Caroline Hooton	694	Jarkko	769	Amiko David Delatte	846	Karo Leikomaa
617	Caitriona	695	Mithter Beathy	770	Raven Dane	847	Lee Harris - Angry Robot
618	Stephen Deas	696	Mithith Beathy	771	Enta The Dragon	848	Terje Pedersen
619	Michaela Deas	697	Frederick Von Flieder	772	James Treadwell	849	John Ayliff
620	Alice Kohler	698	Anthea	773	Alan Kobayashi	850	Ang Rosin
621	Hazel Meades	699	Wendy Graham	774	Juhani Vuorio	851	Sally
622	Dawn Upson	700	Martyn Taylor	775	Sanna Mykkanen	852	Tony Morton
623	Nick Upson	701	Cathie Taylor	776	Marion Engelke	853	Carol Morton
624	dmwcarol	702	Louise Dennis	777	Paul McAuley	854	Ian Sorensen
625	Kiran	703	Bill Sellers	778	Justin Pickard	855	Yvonne Rowse
626	Ruby	704	Erling Mork	779	Rebecca Brodeur	856	Christopher J Garcia
627	Harvey	705	Bjørn Tore Elvedal	780	Marcus Stefan Brodeur	857	Rafe Culpin
628	nutty	706	Charlotte Elvedal	781	Jo Ramsay	858	Mark
629	Paul Skevington	707	Ferdinand Elvedal	782	Terie Garrison	859	Michael Kaye
630	Sam Moffat	708	Julia Knight	783	Aliette de Bodard	860	Alan
631	Jester	709	Claudio Bottaccini	784	Thomas Olsson	861	Runesmith
632	PinkDormouse	710	James Swallow	785	Brett Alexander Savory	862	Goth
633	David A Harvey	711	dermot	786	Sandra Kasturi	863	Dave Hardy
634	Ros Day	712	Ian Alexander Martin	787	Bo Balder	864	Fantast Three
635	Morag	713	Frank Chick	788	Martin Andersson	865	Robert Maughan
636	Nick	714	Tom Anderson	789	Issica Baron	866	Janet Maughan
637	Paul Cornell	715	Lunatic E'sex	790	Naomi Bennett	867	Neil McChrystal
638	Gabriela	716	Tony Parker	791	Roger Bennett	868	Adrian Smith
639	John Bray	717	Judy Bemis	792	Panda	869	Patrice Sarath
640	Sam Kelly	718	Linda Wilson	793	Mich Sampson	870	Lennart Uhlin
641	Elly Metcalfe	719	Sharon Wheeler	794	Marilisa Valtazanou	871	Peter Halasz
642	Uitlander	721	Annika Malmø-Braaten	795	Simon Bradshaw	872	John Meaney
643	Ranger Hilary	722	Stephane Marsan -	796	Kim Lakin-Smith	873	Yvonne Meaney
644	Izzy Bear Phd	Bragelonne		797	Del Lakin-Smith	874	Sarah S
645	Mariel	723	Paul	798	Stephen Hunt	875	Chris G
646	Carrie Seal	724	Paul Brown	799	Sol	876	Tusela
647	kelvin Proctor	725	Supermouse The Rodent	800	Billy Stirling	877	Freda Warrington
648	Vincet	726	Ickle Richard	801	Chris Priest	878	Mike Llewellyn
649	Niall Harrison	727	Carmelo Rafala	802	Leigh Kennedy	879	Josette Sanchez-Reynolds
650	Nic Clarke	728	Scott Dennis	803	Rochita Loenen-Ruiz	880	Michael Cule
651	Chris Amies	729	Knud Lam	804	Chris Butler	881	Oliver Morton
652	Stuart Wallace	730	Roz Kaveney	805	Gareth Owens	882	Derek
653	Margo	731	Graham Sleight	806	Emma J King	883	Vicky
654	Peter Harrow	732	Teddy	807	Jonathan Ely	884	Craig Marnoch
655	Esther Friesner	733	Tom Nanson	808		885	TonyThorneMBE
656	Hellen G	734		809		886	Mike Coble
657	Neil Beynon	735	Deja Whitehouse	810	Linda Wenzelburger	887	Andy H
658	Gemma Morgan	736	Steve Whitehouse	811	Tobe ~Tobe	888	Tony Edwards
659	Barndoor	737		812	Nigel Bennington	889	Andii
660	alastair durie	738	Elin B. Stokstad	813	Maredudd ap Gwylim	890	Mister E
661		739	John	814	Judith Jackson	891	Al
662	Jack Vickeridge	740	Pepper	815	Glyn Jackson	892	Marcelo
663	Sebastian Bleasdale	741	Martin Glassborow	816	Charlotte Jackson	893	Rob
664	george budge	742	Helen	817	Anna Jackson	894	Diana Bass
665	Kimberley Verburg	743	Meggie	818	Charlotte Poulter	895	Tom Dodds
666	Jos Dingjan	744	Melissa Taylor	819	Marian Boreham	896	Peter Card
667	John Hawkes-Reed	745	Aaron Taylot	820	Joe Abercrombie	897	Henry Balen
668	Pat Hawkes-Reed	746	Kirsty	821	Iain Cairns	898	Renee Sieber
669	Jim	747	Jeff Spock	822	Kate Mitchell	899	Liz de Jager
670	Keith Scaife	748	Cary Meriwether	823	Rory Cairns	900	Mark de Jager
672	Topbit	749	Bobitha Brill	824	Frannie Cairns	901	Max
673	Angella	750	Sharon Reamer	825	Phil Raines	902	Gérard Kraus
674	Michelle	751	Gillian Redfearn, Gollancz	826	Jane McKie	903	Kasia Kraus
675	Joanne	752	Rob Rowntree	827	VeVe Raines	904	Abigail Nussbaum
676	Sam	753	Emma Davies	828	Theo Raines	905	Gwen
677	Phil Huggins	754	Jo Fletcher, Gollancz	829	Paul Holroyd	906	Kylie Ding
678	Sunila (DragonladyCH)	755	Simon Spanton, Gollancz	830	Cathy Holroyd	907	Norah Ding
680	Erik Arthur	756	Charlie Panayiotou,	831	Henry Gee	908	tinyjo
681	Ellie	Gollancz		832	Darrel Manuel	909	Alx
682	Chris Hill	757	Terry Edge	833	Kirill Pleshkov	910	

911		985	Alex Bell	1060	Jon Courtenay	1135	
912		986	Alex Davis - Black Library	Grimwood		1136	Elligraal
913	Helena Kiel	987	Malcolm Ramsay	1061	Tony Ballantyne	1137	Cat
914	John Trevillian	988	Gary Gibson	1062	Giles Golding	1138	Miki
915	Marcus Cotton	989	Deborah Custance	1063	Pooks	1139	Shaun
916	Rachel H	990	Lokifan	1064	Robin Hill	1140	Cheryl Morgan
917	Audio_n_Video	991	John Berlyne - Zeno	1065	Michael Pargman	1142	Liam Proven
918	Daisee Chain	Agency		1066	Stephen Rhodes	1143	Andy West
919	Robert Wardzinski	992	Nova	1067	Kerry Rhodes	1144	Elain Mayo
920	Kirsti	993	Charles Noad	1068	Collins Pete	1145	Alex Boon
921	Martijn	994	Jessica Yates	1069	Bright Nicole	1146	
922	Stephanie Burgis	995	Nick Hubble	1070	Mark Cotterill	1147	David Parkinson
923	Patrick Samphire	996	Christian Walter	1071	Huw Davies	1148	Bob Parkinson
924	Mr Darcy	997	JR Lautner	1072	Ashley	1149	Alex Veasey
925	Ellen Datlow	998	Ryan Alexander	1073	Susan	1150	Jon Harrison
926	Pat Cadigan	999	Susan Thomas	1074	Paul Graham Raven	1151	
927	Mike Brind	1000	Chris Beckett	1075	Girlofprey	1152	A J Dalton - author
928	James Lovegrove	1001	Ian Prosser	1076	Hunting Osprey	1153	Adam Colston
929	Fangorn	1002	Craig Arnush	1077	DavidBrider	1155	Mike Richards
930	Jofli Bear	1003	René Arnush	1078	Hayley Fazzani	1156	Alison Richards
931	Anders Hedenlund	1004	Jacob Arnush	1079	Simon	1157	Chris
932	Philip Palmer	1005	Miranda Arnush	1080	Karen	1158	Mårten Svantesson
933	Karen Stapleton	1006	Simon Morden	1081	Vera	1159	Moirá McGrath
934	Ann Looker	1007	Ricardo Pinto	1082	Richard P Grant	1160	
935		1008	Philippa Watts	1083	Nobody Important	1161	Sean Toole
936	Ashley Levy Saint	1009		1084	Warwick	1162	Ben
937	Mark Barrowcliffe	1010	Owen Carpenter	1085	Robert Grant	1163	Carl
938	Adrian Faulkner	1011	Mathias Wynne	1086	Celeste R West	1164	Sophie
939	Jonny Nexus	1012	Emily Richards	1087	Jared	1165	
940	clive trouberman	1013	Nick Lowe	1088	Anne	1166	Paul Dion
941	Tomas Cronholm	1014	Pete the Pete	1089	Jules the Squid	1167	
942	David Gullen	1015	Jennifer Smirthwaite	1090	Sue Dawson	1168	Martin Potts
943	Persephone Hazard	1016	Chris Smirthwaite	1091	Guy Dawson	1169	James
944	Stephen Miller	1017	Hannu Rajaniemi	1092	Alan Dawson	1170	Pam
945	Kksyryllyan	1018	Adam Edwards	1093	Chris T	1171	Dan
946	Claude Lalumière	1019		1094	Stephen Amer	1172	Alastair McCullough
947	Raj	1020	Tom 'palfrey' Parker	1095	Richard Ainslee	1173	DAVE TAMLYN
948	Zoltan Deathspawn	1021	Ellen/Ariel	1096	Stephen Clark	1174	Kevin Chettle
949	Kevin Anderson	1022	Ian/Raphe	1097	Paul Amer	1175	Anders Quest" Qvist"
950	Fiona Clements	1023	Katie May	1098	David Moles	1176	Kristina Knaving
951	Sam Sykes	1024	Astral Gypsy	1099	Ann Totusek	1177	
952	Anders	1025	Maggie Davison	1100	Nick Metcalfe	1178	Martin Ellis
953	Saxon Bullock	1026	David Bishop	1101	Flemming Rasch	1179	Jack Bowman
954	Rob Hansen	1027	Jonathan Oliver	1102		1180	Robert Valentine
955	Avedon Carol	1028	Jenni Hill	1103	Keith	1181	Dale Johnson
956	Albert Pickard	1029	Louis Savy	1104	Jenn	1182	Nancy Hynes
957	Katherine Pickard	1030	Jon Weir - Gollancz	1105	Admiral Otto	1183	Ken MacLeod
958	Brian Wakeling	1031	Darren Nash	1106	Alys Sterling	1184	Christine Halse
959	Chris Moore	1032	Simon Priest	1107	Trevor Barnes	1185	Joseph Halse
960	Bella Pagan	1033	Lizzy Priest	1108	Cheresse	1186	Catherine Rogers
961	Roy Gunnar Ovrebø	1034	Gavin Smith	1109	Tom Hunter	1187	Vic
962		1035	Gaie Sebold	1110	Ilana Galadriel	1188	
963	Darth Tigger	1036	sith happens	1111	bag it	1189	Shabs
964	Chris electric	1037	Chris Bradbury	1112	Nick Wood	1190	Toby Frost
965	hedghog" Dollin"	1038	Ian Duckworth	1113	Jason Baki	1191	Matt Colborn
966	Jack Calverley	1039	Chris Van Wilson	1114	Amanda Rutter	1192	John Clute
967	nicholas butler	1040	Eva Maria Chapman	1115	Ishkandar	1193	Jake Jellinek
968	Sara Townsend	1041	Alison Page	1116	Liz Myles	1194	Z3D J3LL1N3K
969	Cristina	1042	Mary Kay Kare	1117	Capt. Winter Hull	1195	N04H J3LL1N3K
970	Alex	1043	Adam Christopher	1118	Sebastien Cevey	1196	1Z44K J3LL1N3K
971	Jan Sørderberg	1044	Herr Doktor	1120	Just Dan""	1197	Pam
972		1045	Brian Gray	1121	Francesco Verso	1198	Dr. C
973	Sara Mulryan - Gollancz	1046	Anne KG Murphy	1122	Genevieve Hodgkin	1199	Evil Step-Mother
974	David Blank	1047	Timo Long	Hemsley		1200	Frank Reilly
975	Bagpuss Lord of the	1048	Pia Long	1123	Dave Hicks	1201	Not of this World
Tarmac		1049	Mike Shevdon	1124	Cat Coast	1202	
976	Neil Dobson	1050	Jim Burns	1125	Penny Hicks	1203	Evertjan van de kaa
977	Anthony Webster	1051	Mike	1126	Johan Frick	1204	Muchsake
978	Ben Goldacre	1052	Terry Jackman	1127	Rachel Berkson (Liv)	1205	K'Rotch
979	Jennifer Rohn	1053	Neil Briscoe	1128	Su	1206	Percedo John
980	Greyfore	1054		1129	Robert Ramsay	1207	Jay Felton
981	Josh	1055	Tobes Valois	1130	Jonathan Baddeley	1208	Kata
982	Becky	1056	Anders Reuterswärd	1131	Gunnar Nilsson	1209	Mike McCann
983	Elizabeth Carabine	1057	Joseph Berlant	1132	Rhys Hughes	1210	Emily Mah
984	Ian Taft	1058	Mark Charan Newton	1133	Tanya Turner	1211	
	Barrie Condon	1059	Rachel Warden	1134	James Turner	1212	Josie Gunn

1213	Ravinder Sangha	1262	Kate	1311	Mrs. Lou	1360	Mark
1214	Curran Sangha	1263	Grey Clanger	1312	Julia Cresswell	1361	Amanda Foubister
1215	Joe	1264	Seven	1313	Sean McLachlan	1362	SFX
1216	Emma	1265	Noah	1314	Philip Cresswell	1363	Supergirl
1217	James Tilley	1266	Flick	1315	Steve King	1364	Anderson
1218	Tessa Bold	1267	Mike Willmoth	1316	Grey Clanger	1365	Paul
1219	Julie Crisp - Senior	1268	Jean Goddin	1317	Peter Weston	1366	Rob Hibbert
	Commissioning Editor at Tor UK	1269	Lisa	1318	Jenny (clanwilliam)	1367	John Birchby
1220	Erik V. Olson	1270	Simon	1319	Gareth D Jones	1368	Melissa
1221		1271	Goth Clanger	1320	meg	1369	Chris Wooding
1222	Damon B	1272	Bogna Hutchinson	1321	Augeas ^{""}	1370	Martin
1223	Anthea McEiben	1273	Dave Hutchinson	1322	Chrisi Trasler	1371	Tom Pollock
1224	Shaun Moloney	1274	Maria	1323	Jim Mortimore	1372	
1225	Kate Moloney	1275	William Patrick	1324	Theresa Day	1373	Simon Kavanagh
1226	Tina Anghelatos		Beeblebear Brider	1325	Mark C	1374	Laura
1227	Heather Lindsley	1276	Mark Pilkington	1326	Jon Wallace	1375	Laura Sampson
1228	Al Robertson	1277	Sailor Moon	1327	Lyndsay	1376	trevor
1229	Sandro Bocci	1278	James	1328	Stephen S	1377	Grey Clanger
1230	Francis Dickinson	1279	Allyson Shaw	1329	Ian Hocking	1378	James Bloomer
1231	Helen Callaghan	1280	Mike Row	1330	Claus	1379	Elegaer
1232	Tom Cleaver	1281	Egghunter	1331	Berath	1380	Jim
1233	Dave McCarty	1282	cherry	1332	Christine	1381	joshua
1234	Charlie Allery	1283	Gideon	1333	The Glen	1382	Sparks
1235	Piotr Cholewa	1284	Sandy Whitehead	1334	Rebecca Levene	1383	Moirabella
1236	Alex Cholewa	1285	Clive	1335	Magnus Anderson	1384	Keith Souch
1237	Deborah Crook	1286	Carol MacLeod	1336	Stephen Jones	1385	Corvalion
1238	ROB SHEARMAN	1287	Damien Walter	1337	Eleanor Joslin	1386	Bjorn Sandberg
1239	Phil Proctor	1288	Yngve Petterson	1338	Graham McNeill - Black	1387	Nina
1240	Melodi Proctor	1289	Douglas 'Pallando' Reay		Library	1388	
1241	Cara Murphy	1290	Sigma	1339	Tom Lloyd	1389	beth
1242	Cathryn Easthope	1291	Mark Reay	1340	Colin	1390	Anne Stokes
1243	Robert Day	1292	Keith Brooke	1341	APF	1391	Ralph Horsley
1244	Paul Cope	1293	Anthony	1342	Stephie - Pellegrina	1392	Leo
1245	Joe Raftery	1294	Eric Brown	1343	Steve	1393	Tom
1246	Emily Raftery	1295	Simon XG	1344	Antony	1394	MALCOLM EDWARDS
1247	Gavin Knighton	1296	Ivan	1345	Fred Gambino	1395	Sarah Singleton
1248	Colm	1297	Tim Skinner	1346	Alison Eldred	1396	marc huynh
1249	Rob Jackson	1298	Christina Lake	1347	Steve	1397	Zuzana
1250	Bamm-Bamm Rubble	1299	Korblimee	1348	Natalie	1398	Rachel
1251	Jane Bathe	1300	Doug	1349	Sean	1399	Darrin
1252	Sencan	1301	Emma Chou Gibson	1350	Emma	1400	David Newman
1253	Discjirm	1302	Peter Tyers	1351	Quantum Mechanic	1401	sam enthoven
1254	Daniel K	1303	Gav Pugh	1352	Sara Passmore	1402	
1255	Richard Blog	1304	Iain Emsley	1353	Neal Tringham	1403	Liesel
1256	Ian Collier	1305	Susan Emsley	1354	Geoff Ryman	1404	Mark
1257	Caroline Elliott	1306	C Chen	1355	Sean Desmond	1405	
1258	Lissa	1307	Book Chick City	1356	AP Canavan	1406	Gavin Taylor
1259	Pete Young	1308	Adrian Morgan	1357	Ronan	1407	G4GRS
1260	Nigel Brown	1309	Najeeb Mirza	1358	Rob Meades	1408	Mike
1261	Matthew	1310	Ann	1359	Mister Pat Cardigan	1409	Mariele Runacre Temple

Odyssey 2010 Committttee & Staff

Rita Medany - Chair
Judith Proctor - Programme
Fiona Scarlet - Hotel Liaison and Membership
Nigel Furlong - Operations
Melanie Davis - Treasury and Finance
Gaspode - General Support and Dogsboddy
Fiona Marshall - Membership Services
Lindsey Proctor - Tech
Rachael Livermore - Gopher Dad
Paul Taylor - Website
Steve Rogerson - Publicity
Alex Holden - Publications
Chris O'Shea - Bright Ideas
Loli Cenalmor - Secretary
Richard Proctor - Dealers Room

ORBITAL EASTERCON 2008 - Final Accounts

<i>INCOME</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Memberships (Net of Credit Card fees)	
£44,180.00	
Pass-along from Concussion (2006)	£2,500.00
Pass-along from Contemplation (2007)	£3,000.00
Ads in Publications	£425.00
Artshow fees and commission	£651.13
Bank Interest	£748.57
Dealers Table fees	£1,995.00
Merchandise sales & garage sale	£2,088.17
TOTAL INCOME	£55,587.87
<i>EXPENSE</i>	
Back-Office	
Admin (web, stationery, office)	-£417.24
Insurance & Bank charges	-£206.15
Publications & Promotions	
Publications	-£7,821.62
Merchandise - Shirts	-£859.59
Promotions	-£116.40
At-con: Ops, Reg, Artshow & Dealers, Services	
Artshow & Dealers Room	-£459.78
Childcare	-£1,394.00
Furniture	-£1,735.00
Registration giveaways (Mugs, eggs)	-£2,291.73
Registration materials	-£1,322.82
Security & Access	-£1,680.41
Volunteer catering & Groats	-£2,295.00
At-con: Programme	
GoH costs	-£5,126.25
Performances: Mitch Benn, Musicians	-£5,158.64
Green Room	-£1,343.38
Catered events	-£1,198.20
At-con:	
Tech-Ops (A/V, staging & logistics)	-£11,019.55
TOTAL EXPENSES	-£44,445.76
<i>NET SURPLUS</i>	
Allocation of surplus	
Pass-along to LX	-£5,000.00
Pass-along to Odyssey	-£5,000.00
Grant to Redemption	-£500.00
Grant to ConRunner	-£400.00
Committee meal	-£161.18
Donation to «Bad Science» blog	-£80.93
Remaining Funds	£0.00

Cash collected for Charities at Orbital

(For information only)

Book Auction	£300.00
Guide Dogs	£60.00
Match it for Pratchett	£1,606.37
Stewart Auction	£1,350.00

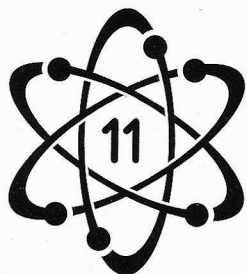
Orbital Treasurer: Vince Docherty

Credits :

Editor and cover artwork : Gaspode
 Biographies : Gaspode, Jane Killick, Kellie Takenaka, Julia Daly and Mike O'Toole
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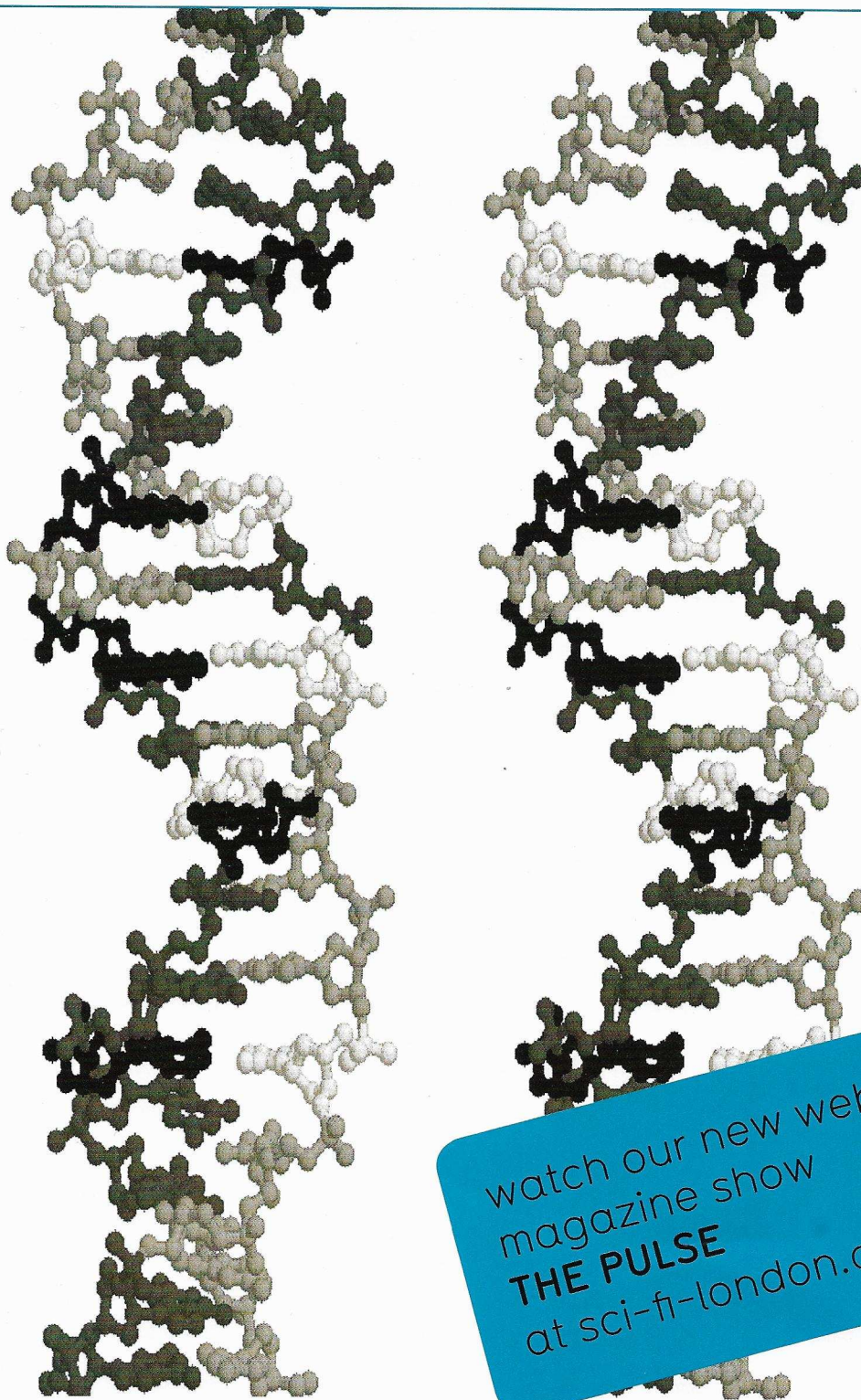
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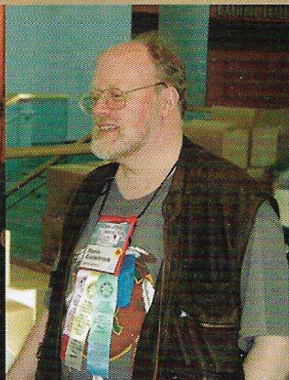
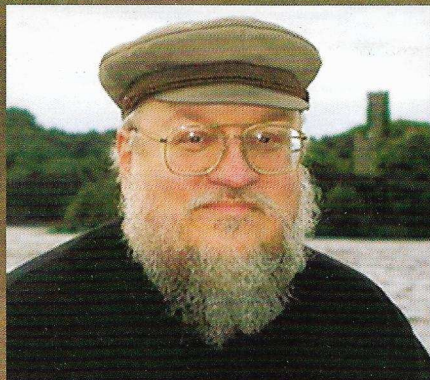
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