

A tall, jagged rock formation, possibly a natural rock formation or a small structure, stands prominently on a forested mountain peak. The base of the mountain is shrouded in mist or low clouds, creating a dramatic and atmospheric scene. The sky is overcast with soft, diffused light.

archaea.  
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is  
my  
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**Book 4 of I Am The One - Lewis Phillips - Author**

## Preface

Another adventure was about to unfold for LP. He and his son will drive across Australia in six days from east to west. It will test the patience of both. Either they bond or their likely to kill each other when they find themselves alone in the Tamini Desert. It's a time of reflection and dealing with the past, and looking to the future for both. For Mitchie to find his independence, for LP, contemplate why a copy of the Scroll was left in New York, as well, another should be taken across Australia and released into the Indian Ocean. And find some answers to what is Archaea?

What unfolds after LP returns from the west, led him back to the sacred mountains of Aboriginal folklore. With help from his daughter, together they will attempt to reach the peak of Mt. Beerwah, so LP can reveal - *For what I see, you will see. For what I know, you will know.*



# Foreword

These chapters are written after a spell from writing, but when I pick up a pen, there no stopping me. So I hope you like book 4 of, I Am The One - Lewis Philips - free to download, and the full story available to buy on Amazon or any book store can get it in - ISBN: 978-1-4525-1377-5 (sc)

It's seemed like a long journey since I became motivated to write in 2008. It all started with a strange occurrence; that's described in the Epilogue of my self-published book. The journey has made me a better story teller through practice and commitment, resulting in an expanding writing ability including info eBook publications.

Although this book was written as fiction, it probably could be better classified as historical fiction, because so much of the story has been drawn on from the past, spanning four decades when you read books 1, 2 and 3.

As well, I offer a gift to my readers. Request a **free** download of one of my info eBooks -

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# Chapter One

## Archaea rising

*'Armies on the move  
soldiers of Archaea  
moving from the north  
their weapon rising  
a silent reaper  
from depths below  
breaking open oceans  
releasing their weapon  
of mass destruction  
returning their world  
to reign for a billion years.'*

“Wake up your mumbling in your sleep,” Ingrid said as she nudged LP’s shoulder to wake him up.

“I’m not asleep. I’m just having one of those moments when I start predicting the future, and what I see I don’t want to talk about right now.”

“Well, leave me in the dark as usual, but I warn you, snap out of these negative thoughts, or it’ll send you crazy,” Ingrid said, while turning to him and giving a reassuring hug.



Feeling her warm body against him, he started to relax and let go of those thoughts that dogged his mind.

Sunrise was approaching as first light filtered through the bedroom window. It was time to get up like every other morning to capture the perfect sunrise.

“OK, are you coming. Sunrise in ten minutes, let’s be quick about it,” whispered LP.

“You can’t take your time about anything. Go and we’ll talk later.”

LP quickly changed into his board shorts, put on his runners, grabbed a warm flannel and sprinted out the front door clutching his camera case in one hand, and in the other his iPhone and car keys for his Holden Cruze. Ice on the rear window, and cold wind pushing against his face was a taste of what to expect when he arrives at one of the beaches of Caloundra.

His car was not completely covered from the cold morning air in the carport. He kept a bucket of water just opposite the car for moments like this. He picked up the green bucket and tossed its contents over the trouble spot with a mighty splash, but it wasn’t enough to remove all ice. It just needed a quick wipe and a bit of scrapping to remove any trouble spots for seeing in reverse. Now LP was ready to back out from his driveway, camera ready on the passenger seat, and iPhone on speaker as he turned the ignition on.

Changing colours of sunrise always got him excited, as he rushed to one of his favorite beach locations to capture the moment. It would take three minutes to get there.

Enough time to go over in his mind what he was going to say to Ingrid over breakfast, and explain what Archaea is, was, or whatever, and not frighten the living daylights out of her. Caution may be the better tack and explain it away as dreaming. The last thing she'd want here is a lecture of biblical proportion connecting the creation story of God removing Adam's rib to create woman. Then compare it to bacteria and Archaea becoming one, billions of years ago, being the source of all multi-celled life forms on Earth over time - you may well call them the creator - but at the same time the opposite could be true.

The question Ingrid may well ask, '*Where did they come from in the first place*'?

His answer won't please her. *From space. Hitchhikers of the universe, remaining dormant for hundreds of thousands of years in the most extreme conditions, including meteorites. That may well be the real creation story. They harbour no disease, no pathogen nor*



*virus.*



LP stopped his car at Dicky Beach car park with a few minutes to spare before sunrise. He quickly walked down to the foreshore feeling the wet sand sink between his toes. Early morning, weather permitting, not only revealed the changing colours of sunrise. This morning, reflected a golden glow reflection before his feet, stretching back across the ocean. After his photo shoot, he found it the best way to kick off any day, with a morning walk along the beach to boot. Not everyone can do it. But when you have the opportunity, one should take advantage of it, with a camera or iPhone, capturing the moment forever and share it.

Ten minutes after sunrise LP was back driving home, but not before going to the top of Queen Street looking inland to see what the Glass House Mountains looked like - clear blue sky, mist or overcast. He would decide if it's worth taking the twenty-minute drive to his other favourite spot for snapping photos, walking the mountain trails, and climbing the not so hard mountain peaks.

Storm clouds on the distant horizon engulf the peaks, so he proceeded to drive home along Sugarbag Road, and back up his driveway within two minutes. Parking his vehicle in the carport, LP then went straight inside with his phone and camera in hand.

Ingrid called out to him. "Bacon and eggs are almost ready. Are you using Photoshop or eating now?"

"Just give me a sec. I'll upload the pics I want to edit and post on Twitter for later."

LP walked from his laptop that dominated the kitchen table, strewn with scribbled notes on A4 sheets of white paper. A second glancing eye would see typed pages of his latest novel spread out in chaotic order. It looked like you'd need to be a mind reader to figure out what he was doing.

If Ingrid had her way, she would wipe her hand across the table and bin the lot of it. However, that was not going to happen while LP could get his way, by pointing out there's a perfectly good table on the veranda for eating off.

And he would say when Ingrid complained about wanting her kitchen table back. *'When you stop using the outdoor table for planting miniature cactus, I'll stop using the kitchen table as an office.'*

Stalemate. Nothing would change. They're both too pigheaded to comprise.

“Come on, I'll make room on the outdoor table, but you better get the bacon & eggs off the barbie, before it goes cold. I've turned it off,” said Ingrid.

LP placed breakfast in front of Ingrid, and he sat down with his food, and said, “I'm one step ahead of you, eat it while it's hot, and I'll tell what I was on about earlier this morning.

In between scoffing down mouthfuls of food LP started to explain, “Well, I'm not going into it too much, but Archaea is a single-cell organism, *that*' joined together with bacteria forming multi-cell organisms. Archaea that remained singled-celled, went about transforming an inhospitable world that looked like Venus today, along with Caynbacteria into something habitable for multi-celled life forms like us. Archaea can still be found in the most extreme conditions on earth - in hot springs, sulfur plumes, puma-frost, and active volcanoes above and below the ocean. And up until 1978, these single-celled organisms were unknown to scientists. Only after 1990, were they recognised as a separate kingdom, classified like plants, animals and fungi.

“Hang on, what's the problem with that? That's in the past?” Ingrid said with a distorted look on her face.

“That's right, 3.5 billion years ago, and they're on the march to take back their world,” replied LP.

“How can that be relevant now. Get your mind off this shit” Ingrid said with a dismissive tone in her voice.

LP replied, “Just two words - Global Warming.”

“Are you still on about that?”

“Yep, and you’ve got your head in the sand. You should read more.”

“Stuff you, and take your food with *ya*’,” she screamed.

LP stood up from the table, pushing his chair back with such force it bounced over the balcony rail. He didn’t speak, just scoffed down a last mouth full of bacon, and figured he should keep his mouth shut. Ingrid put her head down and continued eating. She was not happy. LP walked inside sitting down in front of his laptop with Photoshop opened. To take his mind off what just happened, he started editing his morning sunrise shots for posting on Twitter. When Ingrid was in a better mood he would try to expand on the subject about micro organisms, and why they could end the world we know.

After uploading his best sunrise photo on Twitter for his followers, he figured it was time to give his old mates a phone call, and fill them in about Archaea, as well, his plan to climb Mt. Beerwah. Maybe they’ll be more receptive to what he’s got to say.

Bear was first in his contact list. A quick touch on his iPhone and he answered, “How the fuck are *ya*’. When are *ya*’ coming down to Sydney next. We’ll get on the piss and do some gambling.”

“I’m not ringing about doing that. What do you know about Archaea?”

“Can you bet on it?” Asked Bear.

“Possibly your life, if the powers to be get it wrong,” LP snapped back..

“Fuck no, what are you on about this time. Are still paranoid. I thought this all ended after you left New York. You delivered the Scroll and it was up loaded as foretold back on New Year’s Eve. It’s over, there’s nothing more any of us can do, it changed nothing, it’s still a violent world with crazy weather all over the place.”

“My concern is not for myself, it’s our kids and grand-kids to have a better future or should I say, a future! We need to meet.”

Bear was starting to get curious. “Why, tell me now what else do you know?”

“No, let’s meet at your old beach house and I’ll fill you in why we need to return to the mountain as well. I’ll reveal what I know, and only then. I’ll let you know when, after I speak to Brownie, Kato and Mason.”

“They’re not going to climb the mountain. Certainly not Brownie. He thinks it’s his Dreamtime ancestor.” Bear said in a raised voice.

“We’ll see. I’ll phone you again after speaking to everyone.” LP replied.

Next, LP would do the ring around, contacting the old gang and explain what’s on his mind. He would say Bear will be coming up from Sydney, as well, to climb Mt Beerwah.

Assuming that Bear was on board, LP was sure they would all agree to meet at their old haunt. LP only had to lock the time and date.

LP looked at the front door as a loud bang demanded attention. Before he could get up from in front of his laptop, Mitchie his youngest son strode in carrying his tool box, looking like he was in a hurry to be somewhere else.

“What’s the panic,” asked LP.

“I’m packing my bags. Loading up the vehicle and I’m out of here.”

“Out of here to where?” LP asked with a surprised look and a stare.

“Port Hedland in Western Australia. That’s where big money can be made over in the Pilbara region.” Mitchie replied with confidence.

“Who’s going with you?” LP asked.

“No one! One of my mates is already over there earning the big bucks. So the sooner I get there the better.”

“Hang on, have you got a job lined up?”

“Nope!”

“So, you’re going to drive 5,000 clicks across Australia and hope you’ll get work. Are you sure that’s a good idea?”

“You’re too conservative, *‘old man.’* Where’s the old risk taker, the visionary, the adventurer?” Mitchie said while shaking his head.

“I’ve still got it, so I’ll be your navigator, I’m coming too.” LP replied.

There was silence for a few seconds as those words sunk in, and then Mitchie laughed with a surprised look on his face.

“OK, be ready in five days. We’re crossing Australia in six days from East to West, down to South Australia, up to



Uluru, onto Alice Springs, and up to Kathrine. Then across the top end to Broome. And if I've timed it right, then it's only another six-hour drive south, and we'll hit Port Hedland."

"I'll find my old road maps, and check out if you're on the money or your calculations are out. Where we're travelling we won't get much of a GPS signal, so I'd rather rely on my old paper map of Australia."

Mitchie was OK with that, and walked away heading for his bedroom to start looking at packing, while LP went out to his vehicle, opened the glove box and grabbed out a folded map. He went back inside and on the kitchen bench, opened the map to mark the route and check if his son's calculations were correct.

Ingrid shouted from the balcony. "Who were you talking to?"

"Mitchie, he's leaving home and I'm going too," replied LP.

"Talk sense, what's going on?"

"I just told you. And when you're in a good mood I'll explain what's happening, and when you come inside I'll show you the map."

He could see on Ingrid's face, she was still grumpy as she folded her arms, and gave LP a stare that could kill from where she was sitting on the balcony.

LP thought, *'It was time to be tactful. Walk away and not talk about what he was on about earlier at breakfast. Nor try to explain why he was leaving in five days to cross Australia without her. Just not good timing.'*

# Chapter Two

## Across Oz

Friday on his mind came around fast enough for LP, going over everything they'd need for their road trip to the red centre, and across the top end. LP's son insisted that they check out Uluru previously known as Arjes Rock, four hours south of Alice Springs in the heart of Australia. This wouldn't be the quickest route to take to get to Port Hedland in six days.

“OK ‘old man’, are you sure you got everything packed back there. You know I would have helped, but I’ve been working all week.” Mitchie said, as he walked behind his vehicle, checking everything was secure before closing the canopy windows of his Holden 4x4 Rodeo tray back.



“Take care of our son and get him there safely or don’t bother coming back,” said Ingrid.

You could tell in her voice, she was still pissed off with LP’s attitude earlier in the week, because he still hadn’t explained what he was on about regarding Archaea, or talk much about the trip across to the West Coast.

“See you in a week love, and I’ll phone to let you know how we’re travelling when we’ve got reception.” LP replied.

Ingrid walked to the driver’s side door and gave her son a big kiss on his cheek, and said. “Stay safe, and ring me before you listen to your father’s advice.”

LP laughed off that last comment, as Mitchie pushed the gear stick into first gear as LP started to rattle off a checklist - two food bins, two five litre containers of water, fishing rods, carton of beer, bedding, tarp, poles, ropes, table, gas stove, camping chairs, phones, wallets, jack, fuel drum, tools box, and the cooler with cold food from the fridge, with a few chilled beers on top.

“Did you fill up the Jerrycan?” Mitchie asked.

“No, it’s half full. We’ll fill it when we fill up next, and if we’ve forgotten anything, there’s no turning back,” replied LP.

Mitchie drove out of the driveway and gave a wave to his mother, and LP stretched out his hand and gave a thumbs up as they left home. Heading west they would travel past the Glass House Mountains, LP’s second home when it comes spiritual enlightenment.



Two and half hours into their journey they drove across a railway line, stopping directly opposite the rail crossing at a pub on the outskirts of Dalby. There they would down a cold beer, before, changing drivers. ‘*The Bun,*’ the nickname for this pub had the longest town name in Queensland. By the time they try to pronounce it, the publican would have two beers poured.



Kaimkillenbun pub was your typical hotel design from when Cobb & Co. Coaches, and men on horseback would stop for accommodation, a cold beer and food. The two story building had surrounding balconies, with overnight rooms upstairs for travellers, and the public bar downstairs.

LP and his son walked into the public bar and asked for two schooners of cold beer on tap. They sat at the bar and chatted about where to stop overnight. It wouldn't be upstairs. They were travelling on the cheap, and tonight would be under the stars further west, and there was still enough light for another couple of hours of driving before sunset. They took their time knocking down their cold ales, but Mitchie wanted more beer, a carton of Corona to be to his liking. But not there, grog would be cheaper in Dalby. They finished their beers and said thanks to the publican and walked out the way they came in. Through the front door and two steps down to their vehicle parked out front.

Mitchie was up for more driving. He wasn't tired and drove off to find a bottle shop in Dalby. After angle parking in front of Liquorland, he then went in to buy a carton of Coronas. Mitchie got back behind the wheel, still keen on driving, and let 'old man' be a tourist for now.

They headed west with a fair amount of traffic coming their way from workers ending their shift, most likely from the hundreds of coal seam gas wells that had been drilled throughout the district. It was now dark on the outskirts of St. George as they looked for a spot to pull off the highway and set up camp. LP pointed to a cutting in the bush, and Mitchie left the bitumen driving twenty metres into an open clearing of scrub. It was eight o'clock and they weren't going to bother setting up the tarp over the rear of the vehicle. Just remove the table, gas stove, camping chairs, and cooler making enough room for two to sleep in the back, on a form mattress under the fiberglass canopy. But a problem presented itself. They had to find a hunk of wood to prop up the tailgate because the tray back was short for the mattress. They needed to prop it to allow for the mattress to fit. If not, their feet would be overhanging by a foot. Mitchie spotted a solid tree branch not far from the vehicle, walked over and cleaned it up with LP's axe, and positioned it under the tailgate as support.

Mitchie dropped the axe next to the cooler then pulled out a cold Corona and asked, "What are you having?"

"I'll have one too. Grab a couple of stubby coolers from the consul while you're at it." LP said.

They didn't bother with cooking a meal because they got KFC on the way through town.

Sitting and relaxing beneath a cloudless night sky, stars shone bright. Bush abounded with red dirt under foot, as they melted into their surroundings. This was just a taste of what's to

come. This is the real Australia. Not the city lights and hustle and bustle, but highways with little traffic that stretch in a straight line for hundreds of kilometres.

After a quiet drink under the stars, surrounded by silence, LP folded up his chair and pushed it under the not so white vehicle covered in red dust, and climbed up under the canopy and settled down for a good night's sleep. Mitchie decided to knock down another beer and listen to some music before crawling into bed.

During the night, the barometer dropped to almost freezing. Daybreak couldn't come sooner for them, as LP started to stir. He stretched out his hands and started worming his way out of his not so comfortable makeshift bed, and planting his feet back onto red dirt. Looking around he spotted his shovel leaning up against the corner of the bullbar. He picked it up and continued walking into the bush to make a bush toilet. A hole in the ground and then cover it with dirt. One thing LP was very wary of was snakes, especially after the snake attacked Mason, his old mate, on their road trip in the early seventies. LP was wiser from that - pay attention to your surroundings, or if you're unlucky, you might get bitten on the arse while doing your morning constitutional. LP placed the shovel next to his axe so not to forget it when packing up. He then started preparing to make bacon, and eggs on toast.

By the time Mitchie crawled out of bed, breakfast was ready as he handed him a plate, saying, "Get this in ya", and we're on our way as soon as we pack up."

Well, the old saying, '*we'll hit the road,*' was an understatement. Wallabies and kangaroos littered the road as road kill. Eagles soared above looking for a feed, on the stretch of road to Cunnamulla Mitchie had to zigzag a long.

They reached their next destination without too much drama since there was little traffic on the road, and fewer animals feeding on the side of the road in daylight. Most of the animals killed at night were from road train bullbars striking them dead.

Stopping at the Roadhouse on the outskirts of Cunnamulla, Mitchie filled up for the first time, and just in time as the fuel light flashed '*fill tank.*' Seventy three dollars later, and checking the trip meter for how far they could go on a full tank of diesel showed - 840 km. Before leaving Cunnamulla, they took a quick drive around town. It was known as the centre of the largest body of underground water in the world. Cunnamulla is an aboriginal word meaning - long stretch of water, and the Warrego - river of sand, is the river, along with the Artesian water supply that made the mulga country viable for European settlement. The town became the home of the largest sheering shed in the world, sheering half a million sheep in a year. And in recent times for the statue of a bushie, looking thoughtful as you drive into town - named - The Cumnnamulla Fella.

Next destination Broken Hill. Arriving at 7:00pm at a Big Ten caravan park in Broken Hill, they proceeded to book in and find a campsite for the night. At least hear they could shower and freshen up and use the cooking facilities at hand, which they did. The next morning they were back on the road again heading towards the South Australian border. They wouldn't be going to Adelaide but would take the fork north to Port Augusta. Arriving there, it was time to stock up on supplies, mainly alcohol from the local bottle shop - Coronas were on the hit list, and a hot chook for lunch from Woolies across the road.

Mitchie asked LP to open up his map, after loading their supplies in the back of the vehicle. He reached over and pointed to Coober Pedy on the map, and said, "We can make it before sunset, you do some driving. I'm having a Corona."



Seven hours of driving lay ahead with Mitchie's music blaring. Stopping every couple of hours to change drivers, the navigator would look for something to drink as they crossed paths, reaching in the rear window, and digging deep, he'd find the coldest beer in the cooler.

They arrived at 8:15pm, later than Mitchie calculated, and booked in at the tourist caravan park on the outskirts of town. It also had a restaurant with pizza on the menu. That solved where to sleep and eat, in one go.

The next morning they packed up early, after LP heated up a can of cream of chicken soup to share for breakfast. Mitchie wasn't in the mood for sharing. He wanted something stronger - black coffee to get his brain into gear. Before driving out LP walked over to reception and handed over the amenity keys. The owner of the park may well have been the local tourist guide, pointing at a map on the wall, places of interest to see before leaving town. He told LP to walk in the front entrance of the resort in the main street, you couldn't miss it. Then turn left and you'll see stairs leading down to underground workings of an old opal mine. It's well worth looking at, and it's free to enter. And check out the underground church across the road.



They took on board local advice, and did a quick tour of a maze of tunnels under the resort. Memorabilia of yesteryear was displayed over the walls, and rusty digging equipment was roped off for safety.

Next, LP strode across the road, leaving Mitchie walking around checking tyre pressure, and lifting the bonnet to check fluid levels. Mitchie wanted to make sure everything was right for their next leg of their journey.

Mitchie shouted out to LP as he crossed the road, “By the time I check over the vehicle, be out of there. Make it quick or I’ll leave you behind.”

Under a pile of red dirt that was a roof on a church, LP pushed open a solid door, opening to a small entrance leading to another door. He turned the door knob, and gently pushed, and started to walk down the aisle until he was standing in front of the church altar. It reminded him of a grotto from many a movie watched. It was starting to give him goose bumps. It was like been transported back in time. Here was one man, a priest performing a ritual started two thousand years ago. As LP cast

his eyes around, he realised there was no one else there, just him and a priest at the alter head down reading.

He thought to himself, since they were alone, he could ask the question to the meaning of life, in this sanctified place of worship. So what does LP blurt out when the priest stopped what he's reading. He asked, "Do you pull a better crowd than this on Sunday."

"Yes, fifty yesterday, and if you have any more questions sit down there, and I speak to you later," while pointing to a pew.



LP missed his opportunity to know more. He didn't know why he asked such a silly question, and didn't have time to wait to know what else could be revealed there. Mitchie was waiting outside, anxious to get on the go, and if LP didn't hurry up, his son might be true to his word, and leave him behind. LP turned, walking out, cap in hand, sunglasses on, thongs flapping and a T-shirt blazoned with a New Zealand map and a Kiwi bird on it. At that moment, he thought what he must have looked like to the priest - a Kiwi tourist, not a potential convert.

LP stepped back into the passenger seat, and before he could click his seat belt on, they were heading north out of town, onto the main highway. Destination Uluru, but first they needed to fill up at the BP Roadhouse on the outskirts of town.

After paying, they were back on the road with clear blue sky ahead of them, and to the west, thunder heads were brewing. Looking left and right as they left Coober Pedy behind; what they witnessed resembled a crater-like scared landscape as far the eye could see, with mounds of dirt looking like miniature pyramids.

After hours of driving their destination looked within reach on the horizon, but they mistook a table-top looking mountain for the rock - Uluru.

LP looked at his map and said, "That's not Uluru its Mt. Conner and over to the west is Walpa Gorge. Uluru's not much further."

"Well, the old map has come in handy, since we can't get any GPS signal out here!" said Mitchie.

Mitchie kept a sharp eye on the road as a wonder of nature seemed to swallow them as they entered the national park, and now the monolith over shadowed their vehicle at the base of Uluru. Mitchie was keen on climbing it, but after reading about the rock and the aboriginal trustees, it was clear they wouldn't be climbing Uluru today. It was closed for climbing indefinitely.

Mitchie was disappointed. They took the long way around to get to Port Hedland. If it wasn't for sight-seeing, they could have cut a thousand kilometres of their trip by firstly heading north to Mt. Isa, across the Barkly Highway and onto Katherine to cross the top end along the Great Northern Highway.

Mitchie may have missed the opportunity to climb the red rock, but LP wasn't going to miss snapping some photos at sunset. They'd spotted a car park when entering Kata Tjuta

National Park encompassing Uluru renamed in 1958, which would be perfect for photos. They headed back the way they came, not before exploring around the base of Uluru, that still, some tourist company's call - Ayers Rock, named after the South Australian of the time, Premier Sir Henry Ayers, and discovered by Ernest Giles an explorer, in 1872. If Giles had been able to speak the local language, the indigenous people, the traditional owners, would have told him - *'the rock has been here as long as they have, going back to Dreamtime. It didn't need discoverin'*.

LP and Mitchie entered a cave entrance, what looked like a wave rock overhang protecting aboriginal drawings, going back possibly tens of thousands of years. Not touching anything, LP got up close and snapped a couple of photos he hoped he could reproduce as prints on canvas when back home.



They stopped at the car park where dozens of vehicles were parked. Light drizzle popped up the brollies from tourists standing against the fence line, trying to get a clear shot of the changing colours of the rock on sunset. As LP grabbed his camera and umbrella, he overheard one couple saying, "Pity about the rain."

LP saw it differently. It's not often in this part of Australia you get much rain, let alone a rainbow striking the rock. That's exactly what LP captured. A rare moment that connected him to aboriginal folklore of the '*Rainbow Serpent*'. LP left the car park with Mitchie driving to the caravan park on the outskirts of the National Park, fifteen clicks back down the road from Uluru.



On arriving LP's plan was to freshen up, eat and hit the sack early, then get a head start on all the tourists next morning. Mitchie plan was to stay up and knock down a couple of Coronas, and see if he could attract some female talent walking by their somewhat messy campsite.

Still dark when LP woke, to be exact, 4:30am. He tried to wake his son to no avail. What he'd find out later, Mitchie hooked up with a fellow female tourist and had a late night.

Leaving his son sleeping in the back, LP jumped in the driver's seat and headed out of the car park, with Mitchie

somewhat cramped in after LP put all their gear back next to him.

Arriving back at Uluru, but a different car park for sunrise, with walking trails lit up by low posts with solar lighting revealed paths to follow in the dark. One thing LP was unsure about - Dingos, the native Australian dog roamed this place, and have attacked tourists in the past.

LP didn't want to waste time thinking about what may be lurking in the dark. He walked the dimly lit trails looking for a perfect vantage point for a sunrise shot. What one of the trails led to, was a large elevated viewing platform. LP decided that was the best spot to set up, so he headed back to the vehicle and grabbed his camera gear. He tried to wake his son, but no go.

He then returned to the deck, and walked up six steps, turned left, and positioned his camera on his tripod up against the front handrail, ready for what Uluru is famous for - the changing colours of the rock..

Tour buses were starting to arrive as LP looked back to see if Mitchie had stirred, but no sight of him yet. Tourists poured out of those buses, as well, hundreds more tourists arrived by car, and you don't have to guess where they were heading. Well, within minutes the platform creaked with eager photographers as they filled the platform. LP had laid claim to his corner, as tourists jostled shoulder to shoulder to snap a memorable photo of sunrise at the rock. LP readied himself, for the moment, to capture the sun striking the rock from the east as he pointed his camera west. It was still overcast and it would be later than sunrise, before the sun broke through low storm clouds.

Mitchie by this time still hadn't risen, and LP couldn't go back for him, or he'd lose his position, and he didn't want to leave his camera and tripod unattended, even if he could push through the crowd.

The moment arrived as cameras clicked and the crowd was not disappointed. LP had captured a wonder of nature, as the colours of the red rock changed before his eyes. Whitish grey cloud streaked across the rock framed against a background of blue sky.



LP hoped Mitchie would wake up, and at least, look out the tray back window, because it was his idea to go the long way around, just to see Uluru. And this moment was spectacular, and he missed it.

Pushing his way through the crowd LP headed back to Mitchie's vehicle and found him still asleep.

“Mitchie wake up. Last chance to see the rock.”

With no response, LP placed his camera gear on the back seat, and drove out of the car park heading for Alice Springs, leaving Mitchie to sleep in. He'd check on him in a couple of hours.



After travelling east along the Lasseter Highway, then turning north onto route 87-Stuart Highway, he veered off onto an expanse of red dirt, after seeing only - desert, bitumen, and the odd backpacker van go by. He steeped out of Mitchie's vehicle, and thumped on the side window to wake his son up. It was his turn to drive.

Mitchie shouted, as he looked out the canopy window, "Stop the banging." "Where are we?"

"Not Uluru, you missed sunrise. We're on the way to Alice. You drive." LP shouted back.

Mitchie wriggled his way out of a warm bed. Taking stock of where he was, and said, "OK, let's keep on the move. We wouldn't want to break down here. It'll cost a fortune to get us out of trouble."

Mitchie took control behind the wheel, accelerating, blasting a red dust cloud in the distance as tyres spun onto bitumen.

Alice Springs looked like a two stubby trip for Mitchie if he had his way, but '*old man*' would not be happy seeing him knock down a Corona while driving, so that was not going to happen. With cloud cover still overhead, kept the temperature down to bearable for locals. Air conditioning now on for them was a cool change from the '*outback*' heat. Entering Alice Springs, they were confronted with the local prison on the left, with a billboard - *Welcome to Alice* - in front of barbed wire fencing, and on the right, the airport.

LP commented, "Local cops take seriously any minor breaches of the law. I know you can't drink alcohol in public places, or you'll get arrested. So don't rip the top off a Corona until we're out of town, when I'm driving, or you could end up behind barbwire or on a plane back to where you come from."

"Got *ya*', let's fill up, Mitchie said.

LP pointed to a Shell *servo*, two intersections down the road. Green lights showed the way. Mitchie turned right and pulled up next to the diesel bowser. They both stepped out. Mitchie to fill the vehicle. LP to find a toilet. He was busting for a leak. Next he walked inside the front entrance to pay for the fuel. As LP walked outside he heard Mitchie '*revving*' the engine, prompting him to jog over to an impatient driver ready to plant his foot down on the pedal, and get on the move for the next leg of their journey.

Mitchie said, "Take a look at the map, '*old man*' we're taking a shortcut across the Tanami Desert, and we'll save a thousand kilometres and make up a days travelling time."

LP's first thoughts were, '*It's a dirt track except for a couple hundred kilometers of bitumen.*'

LP figured he would be wasting his breath trying to persuade Mitchie from taking the Tanami Track. What was agreed upon when they started their road trip was, to leave Alice Springs, head north to Tennant Creek and then on to Katherine, before tracking west, across the top end of Australia.

What was unfolding was the unknown? No phone reception, no recovery gear, and not enough fuel to make it to Halls Creek, and back onto bitumen after a thousand and forty kilometres across the Tanami Desert track. The best fuel consumption they had got so far, was eight hundred and forty clicks from a full tank. It was not going to be enough, but Mitchie pointed out he had a long-range fuel tank, and good for another one hundred twenty kilometres. Plus they had the Jerrycan.

By the time LP shuffled opened his old map and checked if Mitchie was right, he just realised something important, when Mitchie mentioned the Jerrycan - they'd forgotten to fill it up. It was only half full and only good for another eighty kilometres.

By the time they finished arguing over the map and change of plan, Mitchie was already on the outskirts of town.

Mitchie's four-wheel drive would have to be extremely fuel efficient. On LP's calculations they wouldn't have a drop to spare before making it to Halls Creek.

LP reminded Mitchie, "You can't run a diesel vehicle bone dry, or you'll have to bleed the fuel line, let's turn back and get more fuel. We won't make it."

"You worry too much 'old man.' We'll be able to get more fuel on the Tanami Track before it turns to dirt. The map shows a roadhouse at Tilmouth."

LP was still concerned with the change of plan, but as Mitchie approached the turn off for the Tanami Desert, LP said, "Let's do it."

One hundred and sixty six kilometres later, they entered the roadhouse at Tilmouth, but it was closed. No one was there. It wasn't a township, just an old abandoned fuel stop surrounded by desert.

LP said, "I guess the old map was older than I thought. We'll stop here tonight and go back to Alice and fill up again, and this time fill the Jerrycan."

"Nope, we'll keep going. The map shows an aboriginal settlement about another hundred clicks down the track. We'll get fuel there."

"The maps that old, the aboriginals will have gone on walkabout by now. It'll be deserted." LP said, with a concerned look on his face.

LP was not happy anymore, and could not persuade his son to wait until morning. Before leaving the old roadhouse LP went to the back of the vehicle, and pulled out a couple of cold beers. One for now, and one for later while Mitchie drove.

It was a two stubby trip, when, in the distance, they spotted a sign, you couldn't miss.

*Last fuel for 740 km.* The sign was the size of a roadside billboard with a large arrow pointing right to a smaller dusty track.

Mitchie said, "I told you. Nothing to worry about."

"Really, look at the gauge. It's dropped under three-quarters. There better be fuel there. Not abandoned like the last place." LP said.

Just a few kilometers down the road they entered the local indigenous township. Nothing flash but not abandoned. Homes could do with a lick of paint, but what stood out was their own Centrelink building for collecting government benefits. It was the best kept building they had seen in the township so far. Who ever worked in that green corrugated building, certainly would need air-conditioning on a hot summer's day.

LP made the comment, "That tin shed's spotless. I reckon when Centrelink people come out on pension day, they bring cleaners. I doubt if anyone else here would do it."

"Forget about that building. Look for a bowser." Mitchie said.

It was still twilight, but time got away on them. It was six thirty when LP spotted an aboriginal man standing next to a small general store. Mitchie pulled up next to him, and looked out from his window that was down, and asked, "Where do we get fuel around here?"

The answer was not what they wanted to here, "Hey bro, no fuel here now. Come back tomorrow."

"OK ....tomorrow," Mitchie answered.

As he engaged the clutch and pushed the gear stick into first gear, he drove away slowly, not to stir up a dust storm.

Mitchie turned, glancing at 'old man' saying, "I'll back track our way out of possible trouble. We're the only two white fellers here, from what I can see. We can't stay here tonight. It's an aboriginal settlement for locals only. I didn't see any signs about camping or accommodation, did you?"

One word summed up their situation, "Nope." LP replied.

Mitchie drove back the way he came, and turned right at the sign that warned them of the danger ahead. LP looked on the map, did the sums again and said, "We need to find a rest stop and set up camp, and go back early tomorrow for fuel.

"I'm not turning back. We can make it." Mitchie was starting to sound like LP's old mate Bear - always over confident.

Minutes pasted and LP could see another sign coming up. "Turn now," LP yelled.

Mitchie swerved off the track and stopped in front of a small sign that read, *Truck rest area. For your safety, no camping.* He thought that was odd, with an arrow pointing north, and below it, 33km.

LP needed to convince Mitchie they had to stop somewhere, but definitely go back for fuel. People die in situations similar to what they're about to get themselves into. They were ill prepared for what lay ahead, and what was fast approaching, tracking their way was a thunder storm. Lightning, in the distance, lit up the night sky. It was the worst time to travel with wallabies and kangaroos feeding on the side of the track eating sparse dry spinifex as tumbleweed blew across red dirt.



This storm had been building up since Coober Pedy, tracking slowly north to Uluru, and now it seemed it was going to bucket down on them. If that happened, the track would turn to mud. Stuck they would be, until rescued, and that could be a very long time, since they didn't tell anyone, they had changed their route, and now heading further into the Tanami Desert.

Mitchie drove from the sign in the direction indicated. They might be light on recovery gear, but the Shu-Roos on the bullbar were working a treat. Mitchie's headlights acted like spotlights as ears pricked up from the high pitch sound coming off their vehicle only some animals could hear. Literately, wallabies bounded from the edge of the dirt track where they were feeding, away from what was bearing down on them. What the Shu-Roo's couldn't stop was the big reds hopping across the track in full flight. Only the bullbar would stop them, and that still would cause considerable damage to Mitchie's pride and joy. Luck was on their side. They reached the next rest stop without hitting any animals. Only two giant roos came out of nowhere. Mitchie's quick reaction slamming on the brakes avoided certain impact, and with the storm now tracking west, it was one less thing to contend with.

Eyes fixed on the new sign as Mitchie pulled off the track onto more red dirt. They looked at each other and couldn't believe what they were reading on a larger sign - *Truck rest area - For safety no camping*. This time arrows pointed north and south. Go back 33km or forward 73km.

Although there were no facilities like, toilets, BBQ or shelter, just a vast expanse of emptiness and the black night, peppered with white dots above. Mitchie wasn't going any further.

Mitchie spoke first, "We'll make camp here until daybreak."

LP pointed to the sign lit up by the headlights and said,

"Look again at what's sprayed on it."

ICU. Mitchie replied, "Fuck, this place is giving me the spooks already. After we eat I'm locking myself in the front of the '*fourbie*'."

LP was still going to sleep in the back. They had no weapons except their short handle axe and a large carving knife.

Mitchie picked up the carving knife and headed for the front driver's side door, stepped in, supposedly, to lock himself away from anything out there.

LP stepped up into his makeshift bedroom under the vehicle tray back canopy, with stars above to the horizon. As he wriggled up to put his head on a dusty pillow, he dragged the axe along side. If anyone was going to try to drag him out by the feet, he was coming out wielding the axe.

As he lay on his side, he wiped red dust from the side window, and watched the stars give off a twinkle of light. His grip on the axe was tight. And to get his mind off the immediate danger, his thoughts turned to what to do with his book - *Image of the Past*, not the possible danger they were in. His conclusion seemed to be, bury it, leave it behind, and move on. He figured he'd spent enough time and money on it. Even though he was

passionate and motivated to write it. He figured it was time to stop.

After drifting off to sleep, it wasn't long before something unexpected happened. Suddenly, he felt a tap on his right shoulder, sitting now upright. In shock, he looked out the back, and the tailgate lights were on. He pushed his way out holding the axe. Quickly, he went to check on his son to find out why the headlights were blaring out to nowhere at twelve-thirty in the morning.

“Mitchie, Mitchie wake up, did you turn the lights on?”

The window was down, and the carving knife rested against the passenger seat. LP reached in and switched off the headlights.

Again, LP yelled, “Did you turn the lights on?”

Silence ....

LP pulled the key out of the ignition as he stood next to the driver's door, and dropped it on the floor, and checked that his son was breathing. He could only hope the battery was not drained too much, and Mitchie's vehicle would crank over in the morning. LP couldn't make any sense out of what just happened. Maybe his guardian angel woke him, or his fortune telling skills were no so rusty after all, and still worked even when asleep. LP climbed back in under the canopy and plonked his head on a dusty pillow while gripping his axe tighter than before, just in case there was trouble out there lurking in the dark.

Sunrise started the morning with a display of red and yellow colours on the horizon as LP opened his eyes. He was up beat, after a restless night. He didn't really sleep much after turning the lights off. He stepped down from the back of the four-wheel drive and walked over to the driver's door and gave Mitchie a shake on the shoulder. “Wake up sleepy head. I bet you don't



know what happened last night. I'll fill you in while I finish making something to eat."

"Nothing I hope. What are you making?" Mitchie asked, while wiping his eyes, stretching his arms, and giving out a big yawn.

"Help pack up, so we can get a quick start after we eat what smells good." LP said.

LP opened the driver's door and picked up the key off the floor. Pushing it into the ignition he asked Mitchie to kick over the engine.

"Why? We'll waste fuel. You said pack up."

"Just do it. We need to know if it'll start. I'll explain later."

Luck was on their side, as Mitchie's vehicle started to crank over with a blast of black diesel smoke from the exhaust, then he turned the engine off.

LP explained to his son what happened while he slept, and finished packing up, ready to head off while munching down a bacon and egg sandwich.

Both were back in the vehicle ready to head off when, LP said, "I've got something to do. Give me a sec."

He reached over to the back seat and grabbed one of his books - *Image of the Past*.

"I've just got to get the shovel out of the back."

You should have thought about having a shit earlier. You're holding us up. Hurry up, and you don't need to take a book to read." Mitchie said.

LP started to dig a hole, but the ground was like concrete, as the shovel bounced off baked red dirt. He managed to get to a depth of ten centimetres. There he placed the book wrapped in alfoil, with a note in it, for anyone, if they found it. He filled the hole and kicked a dry cow pat over it, then went back to the

running vehicle and hopped in, after placing the shovel back behind the cooler where he got it from.



They were on their way with Mitchie taking the morning shift on traversing the Tanami Track. As agreed they would change drivers every two hours or so. The driving was not so boring as they had to work the track, to avoid the corrugation from the dirt road not been graded for quite while. They owned the road, left and right and just let the vehicle drift when it hit loose sand. It was a bit like driving on the beach to Double Island Point.



There was no wrong side of the road out there, just more dirt stretching beyond the horizon that didn't seem to end, sprinkled with patches of spinifex and burnt out abandoned vehicles. Not to mention kangaroos, and wallabies that jump out of nowhere, or poisonous snakes, like, death adders waiting for the unwary to strike when stopped. Free range cattle posed a danger as well.



And surprisingly camels roamed the track too. Time ticked over in the morning without incident, while changing drivers at a cattle grid, and then a couple of hours later at a gold mine, with its own air strip for fly in fly out workers. No luck for diesel there only aviation fuel. LP continued to check the fuel gauge. Running the vehicle without air conditioning conserved fuel, and driving the vehicle with the revs between twenty-two and twenty-four hundred RPM, helped too. These measures should help get them closer to Halls Creek, and with a bit of luck arrive at the BP roadhouse to fill up.

“Look ahead we’ve got another sign, and the fuel light’s on. I’ll stop at the sign, and put the last bit of diesel in from the Jerrycan. I’m sure we’re going to make it. There’s still fuel left in the reserve tank,” Mitchie pointed out.

In front of the sign, left no doubt why other signs read - *For your safety, no camping*. They were on the road to Wolfe Creek, known for its meteorite crater, but more so, for what happened to Joanna Lees’s boyfriend. The cops still haven’t found his body. People can just disappear out here and never be seen again.

LP and Mitchie stepped out of their four-wheel drive and surveyed the landscape. More desert, a dry creek bed, and more abandoned vehicles, and no shelter from the blistering sun.



Having assessed their situation, it looked like they were still in the middle of nowhere, low on fuel with another two and a half hours before reaching Halls Creek.

Mitchie pulled the Jerrycan forward from the back of the tray back while LP removed the fuel cap, then Mitchie started pouring diesel in, ever so careful, not to spill a drop.

LP was quick to put the fuel cap back on before taking over driving. He was trying to be upbeat about what they got themselves into, but had doubts if they'd make it to Halls Creek.

Mitchie placed the empty Jerrycan next to the cooler, and then grabbed two beers out before stepping back in next to *'old man.'* Mitchie's mouth was dry, and any amount of beer or water wouldn't wash the taste of the Tanimi Track from his mouth, but he'd give it a go. Even trying to peel the red dirt from his tongue by dragging his teeth on it, didn't help. With the windows down for most of their desert journey, dust entered the cabin, and was painted red, and you couldn't keep it out unless you wound

the windows up, and that was not going to happen until they hit bitumen, and fill up, then they can turn the air- conditioning on and close the windows.

LP slowly accelerated trying not to spin the wheels and create a dust storm for more dust to choke on. It wouldn't be long before reaching their destination, and still no vehicles had passed them on the track all day, but up ahead may be their first encounter. It looked like a stationary vehicle. It could be another burnt-out wreck or someone stopped and in trouble. As they got closer, it looked like someone trying to wave them down for help, or could it be something more sinister.

“LP said, “I don't like the look of this. When we get up close I'll decide to stop or not. Remember what the signs indicated - *Don't stop*. Keep that in mind as we assess the situation.”

LP slowed, as he approached an old Toyota Land Cruiser that had seen better days. What he could make out was three blokes, not aboriginal, but looked like young lost backpackers, and most likely clueless to what lay ahead of them.

Mitchie could see they were definitely backpackers in need of help, as one guy rolled a tyre away from the back wheel.

LP pulled up alongside them, and said, “Looks like you lot have got yourselves into a bit trouble out here.”

“Yah, you have pump.” His accent left no doubt who these guys were - German tourists. “We need for other wheel. It low too.”

“ No, No” LP said, as he stepped out of his vehicle and inspected the other back tyre. It was half bagged out. “Can't help, turn back. Where you're heading you won't make it.”

“We have fuel for three hundred K's. We good. Just need air.”

LP was not getting through to this lot, so he added, “Turn back, you need fuel for seven hundred K’s. You die out here,” while pointing in the direction they were going. Halls Creek.

LP had enough of this bunch of losers. Said no more, and stepped back behind the driver’s wheel. Mitchie was already back in the passenger seat with his seat belt on.

LP looked back through his side mirror, and said, “we better report this lot to police when we get to the roadhouse. Who knows what their liable to do next?”

With no phone reception, the backpackers were on their own, and so were Mitchie and LP, until they got closer to a mobile tower to pick up reception. Mitchie pushed on keeping a close eye on the fuel gauge as they approached their destination, but it wasn’t long before the red light came on, flashing, ‘*Fill tank.*’

LP eyes focused on the red flashing light, and said, as he took a deep breath, “We’re going to make with some diesel to spare.”

Entering what they thought was a township turned out to be just a few houses, pub, roadhouse, police station, and school.

LP pulled into the BP Roadhouse and stopped at the diesel bowser. Mitchie wasted no time in filling up, as LP walked into the roadhouse and paid. Mitchie took over driving and drove out onto the Great Northern Highway, after LP hopped in with two meat pies to share he’d bought whilst in the roadhouse.

## Chapter Three

### Time to relax



Back on track and hard bitumen their next stop would be Derby, and find somewhere to set up camp for the night. It would take at least six hours to get there. Mitchie reminded LP about contacting the police, and he said, “OK, I’ll ring, when I finish my pie”

On a straight stretch of road across the top end of Australia, seemingly to have no end beyond the horizon, LP glanced down



and picked up his phone, to find the phone number for the local police, and phoned. A woman answered, who he guessed was a cop and proceeded to tell her about the backpackers out on the Tanami Track.

Her question was, “Do they have water?”

LP’s reply was somewhat sarcastic, “How would I know.”

“Backpackers, huh,” she answered back, and then there was silence from the other end of the phone.

LP thought that was a bit rude. Possibly the signal dropped out, or maybe they get a lot call outs to tourists who just don’t grasp how big this country is, and get themselves into trouble. You can travel on some byway’s long distances without seeing anyone, for hours or days can be unnerving. Even the local aboriginals sometimes get themselves into trouble out on these arid desert tracks throughout Australia, and need rescuing, let alone tourists who have no local knowledge at all.

Six hours later after a couple of driver changes, LP had taken over driving at the turnoff for Derby at around 8:00pm. It wasn’t long before they entered the township after a short drive. Mitchie gave directions to pull into the local caravan park. LP followed his navigator’s instruction, and parked outside reception to book in. LP opened the driver’s door stepping down onto a concrete pathway leading to a blue door. He knocked briskly, and was greeted by chap in P-Js answering the knock. “It’s too late too book in. Find somewhere in the park and set up camp. Fix me up in the morning.”

LP thought, *‘He’s a trusting soul.’*

LP and Mitchie were pretty tired after taking turns driving over fourteen hours from the Tanami Track to Halls Creek and onto Derby. Knocking down beers along the way didn’t help. They both had a headache.

They pulled out some of their gear and made room to sleep in the back of the vehicle.

The finish line was getting close, after their challenging road trip with just another six hundred and fifteen K's south left to go, once they get to Broome. They survived the Tanami Desert, and Mitchie's Holden Rodeo never missed a beat, travelling over five thousand K's in six days, without punctures or overheating.

Next morning, they will be in no rush to get out of town as reception didn't open until 7:30am. Mitchie was up first and made a fresh brew of coffee, and opened a tin of spaghetti to share for a change. LP climbed out of his not so comfortable bedding still covered in red dust. Everything needed to be washed, but that would wait until settling in at Port Hedland.

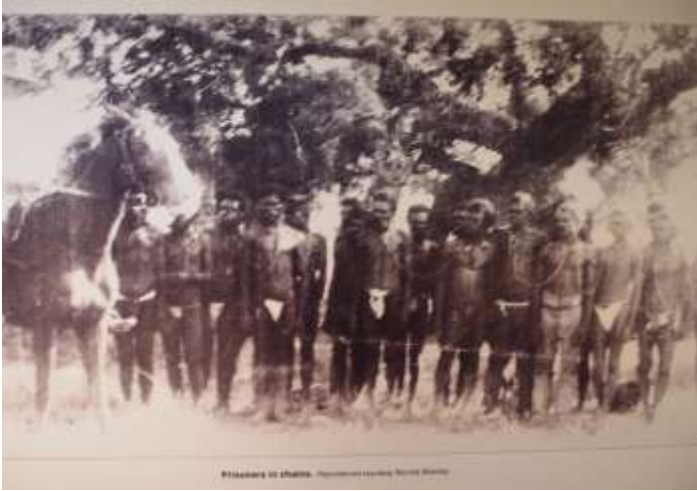
After something to eat Mitchie started up his vehicle, and they went for a drive along the main street of town. Then headed for the town jetty to check out if they could fish. No locals were fishing, as it was low tide, and the jetty looked like it was not good for fishing off at that time. They headed back to pay at reception and make tracks for Broome, just two hours away.





Arriving at Broome on the West Coast of Australia, Mitchie was excited at seeing the ocean again after so much dry land, and the first thing he thought of, *'I want to fish.'* Town Beach was not near the town, but was also the meeting place for the local aboriginals who were congregated under a large tree as the temperature hit unbearable. What Michie thought was unusual, or more to the point - a West Australian Police four-wheel drive vehicle drove off the bitumen, and literally parted a group of about thirty locals in the shade of a large fig tree. One of the coppers spoke to some of them through the driver's side window. Out of earshot, Mitchie, while standing on the sandy beach, thought what he might be saying, *'Drink here or cause any trouble to tourists, and we'll arrest the lot of you.'* LP and Mitchie turned away from what was unfolding under the tree. It

reminded LP of the Balboa tree they stopped at on the outskirts of Derby.



*'It's about power and control. Nothing much has changed. You just don't see the chains.'*

Before British colonisation it was a ceremonial site for the indigenous local population. There, a tourist sign now told the story of what was an infamous part Australian history called *'Black Birding'* - the forced removal of aboriginal men, from their traditional hunting ground, then sold into slavery. Old black and white photos depicted them chained together around the neck, with the Balboa tree in the background, an aboriginal sacred site. LP's thoughts turned to his mate Brownie, thinking, *'If he saw this, he'd want to hunt down those responsible and enact Aboriginal payback. But of course, he's two hundred years too late.'*

Mitchie looked at LP and said, “What do you think. Are you keen on fishing? I want to try my new rod. “

“What did ya say?”

“Fish,”

“Sorry, I was thinking of something else.” LP replied.

“Come on take your mind off everything. We made it. Let’s just relax and unwind after six days of grueling driving,” Mitchie said while pulling out his rod and tackle box from the tray back.

“Well, let’s not relax too much.” LP said, as he pointed to a yellow sign on the sand reading - *Recent croc sightings in the area BEWARE.*

“Ah, no wonder no one’s in the water for a dip. I thought it was a bit strange, with those aboriginal kids only playing on the rock groin.” Mitchie replied.

LP glanced back over to the shady tree, and watched a cop drive his vehicle slowly back over the gutter, leaving the local aboriginals standing on a patch of green grass. No one was arrested, but you could guess; they were warned, drinking alcohol in a public place will get them arrested, even if was their sacred site. The cops drove out of the car park without giving all the backpacker vans a second glance parked near the foreshore, as they headed back the way they came in.

LP grabbed his rod too, and both cast out using lures for bait, and waited for a bite. It wasn’t long before movement from the water got their attention, as a dog jumped in, and of course, dog paddled, further out near their lines. Then another splash, as some guy dives in and follows the dog out into deeper water. There was hardly any swell, more like at a still lake stretching to the horizon - until now.

LP couldn’t believe what he was seeing, and said, “Must be a backpacker who can’t read signs.”

“Backpackers huh.” He’ll need rescuing soon just like those Germans out on the track.” Mitchie replied.

They reeled their lines. It looked like the only thing they were going to pull in today was a backpacker, a dog or a croc. After packing away their fishing gear, they headed back into town to buy more beer, and find somewhere to knockdown a schooner of the local brew. At the bottle shop LP paid for two cartons of Coronas and a bag of ice. He asked the attendant, “Hey, mate, where’s the best place for a beer around here with a view over the ocean?”

He answered, while a security guard watched on, “Just go round the corner, and back up the main street. You’ll see Castaway Resort. Out the back is a beer garden. Check it out. It’s good for a coldie and the ocean’s right in front of *ya*, mate.”

After taking on local advice LP walked out past security, and placing six beers in the cooler with a bag of ice on top. He placed the remaining cartons next to the cooler, then followed the directions given. Parking opposite reception, they walked in past the front desk at Castaways. Mitchie waved to the young girl there, and said as he walked past, ‘*old man*’ “I’ll have a Corona with lime, your shout.”

LP walked around to the bar area as Mitchie went over to the edge of the beer garden overlooking the Indian Ocean. No problem finding a table, no one else was there, other than bar staff back where LP was ordering what his son wanted, and pouring LP a drop of the local brew. ‘*Swan Lager*,’ the barmaid suggested. “It’s what us ‘*westies*’ reckon is the best beer in the world.”

LP had some bad news to report after talking to another barmaid while holding two beers. Placing the beers on the table he said, “You wouldn’t believe this. The roads closed to Port Hedland.”

“What the hell happened? Mitchie asked.

“You saw me chatting to the barmaids.”

“Yeah, it looked like you were trying to crack onto *em*’.”

“Funny ha ha. No, there’s fires burning on both sides of the highway south. One of my so-called girlfriends said, her boyfriend works on a road gang, and he can’t make it back tonight. I’m off to check out what’s the standby rack rate is if we stay here. We’ll get an early start in the morning.”

LP booked in for \$140 overnight twin share. He figured it was good value for a luxury resort. They removed what they needed for overnight into their new luxury accommodation. Somewhat upmarket to what they were use too - Sleeping rough across Australia. LP was going to take full advantage of this delay in reaching Port Hedland. After finishing their beers LP went back to their vehicle and drove into the resort, parking out front of their new home. He grabbed two stubbies from the back of the four-wheel drive, and shouted over to Mitchie, “I’m having a coldie in the pool. Come over. I’m cooling off.”

Mitchie joined him in the pool, and chilled out with a cold ale in hand. Minutes later, Mitchie shouted out to a barmaid in ear shot, “Schooner of Swan and a Corona, thanks. Put it on room 120,” he said.

LP had something to say about that, since he was paying. “Next shout. Go back to the cooler, and don’t clock up anything more on my tab.”

It wasn’t long before their space was invaded by a couple young blokes that were staying in the resort. Mitchie struck up a conversation with them, and learnt a thing or two about them. They were backpackers with a taste for luxury, and had plans for tonight. What would transpire later was the young ones would head down to the backpacker hostel for a wet T-shirt contest? LP was invited, but he passed on that.

LP was more interested in snapping a sunset and sunrise before leaving Broome. First, he shared a meal of noodles & beef stir-fry with his son. Mitchie's cooking skills were improving to the point that he might actually be able to fend for himself.

It wasn't long before there was a knock on the door, and Mitchie was off with his new-found mates to check out Broome's night life, then later head over to the local backpacker haunt for some fun, and maybe get to know the winner of the wet T-shirt contest.



Sunset wasn't until after 7:00pm so after the boys left, LP walked around the headland from where Castaway Resort was located. Finding the best vantage point, he positioned his tripod with his camera ready to snap the setting sun. Smoke from fires burning down south acted like a lens filter, to produce an image, like looking at a planet through a telescope.





Next morning, LP will be up before sunrise and anxious to get on the go, but first he would have some sunrise photos taken

from the resort. After he finished his photo shoot and walked back up from the flat sandy foreshore, he called out to Mitchie,

“Get up lazy bones, let’s get on the move to Port Hedland.

“Let me sleep in. He moaned”

That didn’t cut it with ‘*old man.*’

“Come on, we can’t waste time, and you can fill me in on what happened last night. You got in pretty late.”

Mitchie didn’t have much to say about out on the town, except, “You should have been there. Those foreign backpackers got big tits, especially the winner. I got to dry her off.”

LP responded, “Sounds like I should have gone with you and your mates last night, but I would have missed sunset. Let’s now try focus on getting to Port Hedland without any more distractions or delays. I’m driving, and I’ll book out. I’ll meet you at the front desk. Hurry up.”

I’ve just gotta brush my teeth. Don’t rush me,” said Mitchie.

LP thought, ‘*Son you would test the patience of a saint.*’

He walked out the door. Started the vehicle and pulled up outside reception. Looking confident and refreshed LP walked up to the young receptionist, and commented, “This place is like heaven compared to we’ve been staying over the last couple of days.

“She smiled and said, “Have a safe journey. I’m in heaven everyday. Where you’re travelling along next, will look like hell, from what one of the bar staff told me.”

LP pushed their room key forward, picked up the receipt as Mitchie joined him from their overnight stay in paradise. Although, it looked like a clear run to Port Hedland, with blue sky above - was deceiving. A north-easterly wind pushed smoke from the burning fires down south. Within a half-hour of travelling they were confronted with still smoldering scrub.

The receptionist was spot on. It looked like hell on Earth. Tree stumps glowed with red amber's looking like guide posts along a highway to nowhere, while smoke washed across parts of the roadway. Undeterred they pushed on along a straight stretch of road for hours, without a bend in sight. Another hazard to overcome, boredom and fatigue before reaching their destination.

They could tell they were close to Port Hedland when they entered an intersection you'd normally see driving into any capital, not a seaside township, but from this small township, developed the largest port in the world, exporting gas and iron ore around the globe.

LP pointed at the road sign above the highway and said quickly, "Turn left."

They arrived. They made it, and so too Mitchie's vehicle in one piece.

That afternoon Mitchie settled into his new accommodation. A small bedroom that needed painting, in a share house with four bed rooms. A filthy toilet, that LP scrubbed out before using. It was so bad it should have been condemned. The squalid kitchen was not much better and in need of a '*reno*'. One good thing was a full length covered patio at the back of the low-set house. Seven other workers would share the facilities, while they dream of earning the big money offered in Port Hedland.

Twenty-four hours later Mitchie dropped LP at the town airport for boarding a Qantas flight to Perth, then he'd connect with the red-eye flight, so called because it takes off at 11:30pm and arrives at Brisbane at 5:30am the next day.

LP said his good-bye and gave Mitchie a big hug, reminding him he was only a phone call away.

LP didn't leave Perth Airport. No time for sightseeing, he just checked in and waited for his flight. At 11:00pm, the

boarding call for his flight brought him to attention and quickly followed other passengers onto his flight. He plonked himself down in the left aisle seat 53-D, after placing his carry-on luggage above.

Just before take off one of the young, pretty cabin crews greeted LP and said, “After we level off there’s more room to stretch out up front. Business class is not full.”

He figured she thought he was a bit cramped, after seeing him angle his left knee into the aisle and looking somewhat uncomfortable. Being helpful, she suggested moving up front, when the seat belt light turned off after takeoff.

# Chapter Four

## Nostradamus's Prophecy

As the plane taxied down the runway, it reminded LP of bumping down the tarmac at JFK airport leaving New York behind in 2012. Thoughts returned to the question he asked himself back then. "Why?" Why New York? Why, did the Scroll need to be delivered and be in water? Why, did he need to be there over Easter? Part of the questions now could be answered, but others not. Why, fulfill the prophesy's from a sixteenth-century sooth sayer that coded his writings and made no sense to most people or scholars, but hundreds of books have been written about him, and his visions of the future coded in quatrains.

Ding, the seat belt turned off. LP looked down to business class, watching the stewardess about to push a silver beverage-food trolley forward. He stood up, stretched his legs, and walked down the aisle, before she started serving passengers. He spotted a row of seats empty and shuffled himself along to the window seat. As he sat down he grabbed a throw rug, and pulled it over his somewhat out stretched body taking up all three seats, thinking, '*Now this is comfortable.*'

As he drifted in and out of sleep, his mind connected with his deeper self, that he now calls Lewis Philips, the writer, the visionary who sees the future, getting him out of many a life's

threatening situation, and along with foresight, making decisions came easy.

What turned over in his thoughts relating to New York, was - for what reason did he need to be at Ground Zero in the first place, and deliver the scroll?

The site of destruction that had befallen the twin towers in Lower Manhattan, fits a quatrain of Nostradamus. LP thoughts were muddled, jumping from one line of thought to another. But what resonated, beyond leaving a copy of the Scroll at Ground Zero, and boarding the Staten Ferry, and dropping a second copy of the Scroll into the Hudson River to flow out into the Atlantic Ocean, still puzzled him. The fact that a quatrain related to LP's presence in New York, could justify for him, why travel there in the first place from Las Vegas, rather than, go back to San Francisco for sight seeing.

Firstly, Nostradamus, in his coded writings mentioned the new city that scholars believed was New Amsterdam - now known as New York. The quatrain goes something like this -

*One will travel from the east  
and stand in the shadow of towers  
he will be marked on the face  
with a gap between his teeth, and bald.*

LP fitted the description above. He travelled from the east to the new city (New York) was bald, and had a gap between his teeth and a birth mark on his left side of his face.

Another quatrain was interpreted by scholars of medieval literature to predict the destruction of the World Trade Center twin towers. And there he stood at Ground Zero were once the towers stood tall casting shadows. It was an eerie feeling, an uncanny fit, that Nostradamus predicted, now it seemed to include LP. Was it coincidence, fate or chance, that LP stood at Ground Zero, half a world away from home?



His answer for why New York, was becoming clear. The image he now called Zero (the beginning of time) that became part of the Scroll coupled with the mantra, seemed to have some magical power when the image appeared while whispering the Mantra and looking at the Scroll. It seemed to unleash the power to connect with something greater than self - The infinite universe. Some say, Mystics and Prophets tapped into what some describe as universal thought, connecting with future events, because it's happened else where in other worlds - parallel universes, and thus give warning to avoid disaster if heeded.

It's a long bow to draw, but LP was drawn to the conclusion that whatever we perceive God as - The true God, the eternal God of creation - or something else, is part of, but beyond existence as we think, and thus uncomprehending to the human mind. The Scroll he figured is the prophet for our time, and LP delivered the Scroll to ground Zero, and he thought this would bring peace and healing for those that lost love ones from the fall of the towers. Add in the symbolism of Easter, becomes a potent mix for renewal and forgiveness. And why did the Scroll need to end up in water? Well, LP assumed it was symbolic of baptism, to clean the earth of the poison of destruction, and now; one of

the copies of the Scroll is immersed in one of the great oceans of the world flowing out from the Hudson River. LP's plan when arriving back in Australia was to allow another copy be taken out by the current into the Pacific Ocean from Dicky Beach. And with a trip across Australia unbeknown to him when in New York, he would again travel from East to West, this time across Australia to another new city, and cast another Scroll, this time into the Indian Ocean.



LP hadn't mentioned to Mitchie why he was so quick to volunteer to be his co driver across Australia, as it fitted in with taking the Scroll across the continent to Port Hedland, and leave it to flow out from the harbour as the tide was going out into the Indian Ocean.

More thoughts captured the memorable moments he enjoyed with Ingrid before returning to Australia via their five-day stopover in Los Angeles to see Disneyland, Warner Brothers Movie World and Hollywood after leaving New York.

Ding, as the cabin light came on with the pilot saying, "We are starting our decent shortly, and touch down in Brisbane is on



schedule. The weather is fine. Please fasten your seat belts. Cabin crew prepare for landing.”

Four weeks went by before LP heard from his son unexpectedly. He answered his phone in bed, having decided to hit the sack early after not picking the Melbourne Cup winner that paid big time. His psychic skills were starting to let him down these days.

So, to help a good nights sleep; he knocked down a couple of Buds before retiring. That didn't help much either.

He was just starting to think about how Mitchie and him survived the Tanami Track, and made it to Port Hedland. All was good now, or that's what he thought, until the phone rang, hearing his son's voice.

‘*Old man,*’ Mitchie here, “I’ve run into a bit of trouble.”

”I’m listening, but do realise, it’s dark over here, and I’m in bed. First, I won’t put you on speaker, for your mother to hear what you’re about to say. You do remember her. She’s worried sick about not hearing from you. Now what’s up?”

“It’s not what’s up. It’s what’s down. I went for a fish. I’ve hit a sink hole at Pretty Pond, and the vehicles down to it axles like in quicksand.” Mitchie said.

Pretty Pond is a spit of sand and mangroves jutting out from Port Hedland. It’s a recreational area for fishing and driving on the beach.

“Have you phoned a tow truck mob,” LP asked.

“Yes, one bloke came out while there was still plenty of light, and said he wasn’t going anywhere near it.”

“Look up to the roadway, I saw plenty of houses with four-wheel drives parked out front. I drove down to Pretty Pond in your vehicle on the Sunday morning while you were sleeping in. Go up and knock on a couple of doors and see if anyone will

help you. As well, watch out for crocs. There were signs up on the road saying there were recent sightings.”



Mitchie was getting frustrated with ‘old man’s’ advice. He phoned to let him know what was happening, not get a lecture.

“I can’t talk anymore, the water is up to the doors, and I’m trying to salvage what I can. My phone will be the last thing I take out, when I pull the cord out of the cigarette lighter, then it’ll be dead. And if I don’t hurry - Me too.” Then there was silence. The phone disconnected.

LP shouted out, “Ingrid, I’ve just heard from Mitchie, and you better be sitting down when I tell you what’s happening.”

It was a restless night for both, hoping their son was OK. There was no other way to contact him. They didn’t know who he was working for, or even a contact number where he was staying. His phone was their only link to him.

Next morning, after Mitchie was able to charge his phone, he phoned his father to give him the bad news. “The vehicle was swamped - it went under twice.”

LP asked, “What are you going to do now?”

“I could do with five hundred dollar. They’re slow payers on the new job site. I’ll need it to pay the tow truck guy and get some new wheels.

“You’ll need more than loose change for that.”

“No, I’m getting a skate board to get around on until the insurance payout. “

“Son, your living on the edge. I’ll transfer the money today. Fix me up when your on top of things.”

“OK, talk to you soon.”

Just as LP hung up another call came through. He could see it was Bear, “How’s it going. Still planning to climb Mt. Beerwah?

“Yep, twenty third. Make sure you’re fit enough to make it. LP replied.

“Twenty third of what?

“January, that when the sun sets on the peak of Mt. Beerwah.



That's when you'll find out what I've learnt from the Scroll.”

“How’s that bloody Archaea? I’ve done some homework. It’s a fucking disaster waiting to happen. Bloody hell! What else have you unearthed about it?” Bear asked anxiously.

“Probably no more than what you’d find in Wikipedia. The only people who could shed some light on it may be climate scientists. It needs a peer review paper linking Archaea as a hot bed for global warming, as well, fossil fuels. Climate change deniers have sway for now, but they need to pull their heads out of the sand. Join the dots. Analyse the data and get on board with the rest of the population fixing the problem” LP answered.

“OK, that’s a mouthful. I’ll keep researching if I can find out more about these resilient ancient inhabitants of Earth, and let you know what I come up with, and how to keep these buggers buried for another billion years,” Bear said.

“What I need to know, now. Are you good for 23<sup>rd</sup>? LP asked.

“All been well I’ll see you then,” responded Bear, with a bit of a chuckle.

LP was happy to hear Bear was on side, now it was time to contact Mason at his Masonic Retirement Village, before he became part of the sedated retirement lot. He figured a face to face call will get a positive response. A phone call would be too easy to fob him off.

“Hi, could you let your CEO know I’m here to see him, thanks.”

The receptionist replied. “And you are, and do you have an appointment?”

“Just tell him it’s LP. Your boss knows me.”

LP was glad it wasn’t the same receptionist Bear gave a hard time too, when he last asked the same question long ago. Hopefully, the old dear would be part of the retirement crowd, and recovered from the hard time Bear gave her back then, when

he threatened to kill her if she didn't show them to Mason's office.

The young receptionist looked at LP, and nodded, then proceeded to walk with him to Mason's cedar paneled office door, knocking twice, then opened the door and let him in.

"Hi LP what's happening? Mason asked.

"Just letting you know Bear arrives on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. to climb Mt. Beerwah. I'm just here to make sure you're in."

"Last thing I heard the old bugger was using a walking frame to get around, but if he's in, I'm in."

"Good, bring your climbing boots. I'll be in touch." LP replied.

"Would it be too much to ask why are we climbing Brownie's mountain?"

"Yes, you'll find out then. Just be there. 23<sup>rd</sup>. January. Put it in your diary," LP replied.

Mason asked one other question before LP was leaving. "Why is there some misunderstanding relating to the numbers and New Year's Eve?"

As you know, the numbers you revealed back at the ancient aboriginal site after you were struck by that deadly snake, and almost died, were 0101100000. We understood it to be the first day of the New Year - midnight - 0000, the year 2010. That being New Year's Eve 2009. That's where some mistook the date to be New Year's Eve 2010. Once it was explained that 0000 in railway or military time is the start of the next day, as well as midnight, then there is no issue. Anyway, New Year's Eve 2010 turned out to be pretty eventual as well. There was no mistake with the upload and download of the Scroll. No confusion if you take into account railway time.

LP continued saying. “And you heard what happened on New Year’s Eve 2010, so I won’t repeat myself.”

Next it was a phone call to Brownie when LP got back home from seeing Mason.

“Who is it. Speak up, you’re breaking up, Brownie here.”

LP walked outside, but reception was still crackly. He shouted, “It’s LP, are you good for the 23<sup>rd</sup>. January for the climb up your Dreamtime relative.

The line dropped or he hung up from LP’s sarcasm. LP wanted him there, because they’d been through so much relating to the Scroll, and wanted his mate’s strong connection to the Dreamtime spirits of The Glass House Mountains. He would try to ring again. This time get straight to the point, before he hung up or dropped out.

That left Kato to contact. LP scrolled through his contact page and pressed on Kato’s name.

“G’day mate, what’s up?” was Kato’s first comment.

“Are you up for climbing Mt.Beerwah on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. January?”

“I’m up for an operation. Could go pear shape on the 1<sup>st</sup> February, so if anything going to kill me, it might as well be the mountain. I know the way up. I’ll be the guide as far as I can make it. Then you’re on your own.”

“I can’t ask for more. I’ll talk to you before then.” LP replied with a sigh of relief.

LP rang Brownie again with better luck with reception.

“Where the fuck are you. You keep dropping out.”

“Just driving on the outskirts of Charleville, thousand K’s west of Brisbane.

“No wonder I can’t pick up reception. Hey, all but you have given the thumbs-up to climb the mountain on the 23<sup>rd</sup> are you in?”

“What mountain?” Brownie replied. “It better not be Mt. Beerwah.”

“I’ll leave you guessing. You’ll need to be there to try to stop us, or be with us.” LP answered.

“I’ll see you then. What month? And we’ll see who’s climbing the mountain.”

“January.” LP replied.

*‘Not exactly the response he wanted from Brownie as he, disconnected, but he’ll be there,’ LP thought.*

Finally, he had his mates almost on side for the climb. With Brownie’s secret knowledge to connect with his Dreamtime ancestors. Mason with his Masonic beliefs that puts him on a path to connect with his - immortality. Bear’s never give up attitude, and Kato’s climbing knowledge of the mountain should be enough to see LP reach the peak to make known - *For what I see, you’ll see. For what I know, you will know.*

The secret revealed within the Scroll LP had discovered was not what could be learnt, but what could be bestowed upon those with an open heart, peace, and forgiveness.

# Chapter Five

## Archaea - Ancient kingdom

LP's view was not dissimilar about scientific consensus relating to climate change, and was somewhat in sync with experts in the field of studying global warming. Overwhelming they agree through peer review publications, and come to the conclusion - Man made carbon emissions are contributing, and increasing the risk of further adverse climate change that will impact on civilisation throughout the 21st. Century. LP calculated in two other possibilities - global dimming from a three kilometre layer of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, and methane producing Archaea seldom mentioned in mainstream thought relating to climate change. LP formed his own view, not peer reviewed, but still valid if researched - The greatest risk to our way of life are the ancient ones - Archaea, and warming oceans, already on the rise as the perma-frost melts in the Arctic accelerating the problem.

The awakening of Archaea and the thinning of the Arctic ice shelf will exacerbate global warming, and is a potent mix that will cause a rapid rise of methane in the atmosphere, thirty times more potent than carbon. Natural carbon sink holes can't absorb the burning of fossil fuels fast enough, let alone the release of unsustainable amounts of methane as well. With the planet's eco- system out of balance with the natural order of things of



past centuries, methane, from thawing tundra, the ocean floor as oceans warm, due to the lower layer of the atmosphere radiating heat back to Earth, scientists refer to as - *the greenhouse effect*, a recipe for disaster.

Climate scientists have been vilified by skeptics and climate-change denier. LP figured unless the fact that 97% of peer review research by scientists, in their field of expertise relating to factual current data, is accepted relating to global warming, and not negated by propaganda peddled by media on behalf of big business, nothing will change. He hoped social media would get the truth out, and negate the influence of media barons who rely on advertising dollars from corporations, and hence vet any negative reporting that may impact on their clients. It's not their business to save the planet only report news that sells papers, hold viewers to the six o'clock news, and deliver a profit at the end of the day to shareholders.

It seemed obvious data relating to global warming has been suppressed and you could only hope the truth would get out somehow. It looked like even 100% consensus will not sway those with power and influence. What the public needs to do is get behind the facts, and protest for change, relating to scientific data from experts in their field of study (climate change) who overwhelmingly agreed through peer review publications, there is a real threat to civilisation as we know it.

LP's research on global dimming didn't negate global warming. What it meant is the sun is going through a period of lower solar activity, which would have plunged the world into a mini ice age, similar to the one in the middle of the last millennium, if not for carbon build-up in the atmosphere.

What has occurred more so in the northern hemisphere is the build-up of greenhouse gasses in the lower stratosphere. Good for plant growth, but bad as the ocean warms, and the North

Pole, in particular, melts, not so good news. What this also means as glacier's retreat and tundra in the north becomes exposed, algae like blooms will become more prevalent. The ancients - from the Greek word - Archaea are returning, and their contribution is methane, more potent than burning fossil fuels. If left unchecked will return the world to their kingdom like billions of years ago.

LP thoughts rolled back to 2010, a time of extreme weather, not only in Australia but throughout the world. It was Earth's most turbulent weather since 1816. The Amazon experienced its second one hundred year drought in one hundred years. With unabated clearing of the rainforest, the ability for it to remain a major factor in absorbing carbon, is under major threat through land clearing and burning. Its role in this complex biosphere is clear. It takes out two billion tons of Co<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere a year. But due to drought in 2005 caused a net five billion tons to enter the atmosphere. The Amazon as well stores carbon dioxide in soil and biomass equal to almost fifteen years of human causing emissions, which may well be released if global warming measured by carbon in the atmosphere exceeds 350ppm (parts per million). It's already hit 400ppm in March 2015 in some parts of the world.

Pakistan was hit hard by flooding that killed thousands of people and displacing twenty million citizens.

Moscow scorched under its worst heat wave in late June.

Extreme heat wave conditions in the Arctic is making it hotter than cities across Europe and North America.

2011 fared no better with drought, wildfires, famine, and earthquakes to name a few. Christchurch, New Zealand, and even worst, Japan was hit with a 8.9-magnitude earthquake causing a tsunami engulfing Fukushima and taking out its nuclear power plant. It was estimated 15,000 people died.

Drought throughout East Africa impacting, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Erithea and Djibouti in June and July caused wide spread famine accounting for deaths of tens of thousands of children.

The Philippines was hit hard in December, by a severe tropical storm bucketing down so much rain in such a short time, caused widespread flooding, and a death toll in the thousands.

In April tornadoes ripped through the Alabama region, causing severe damage and many deaths. And on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. another tornado destroyed the town of Joplin, Missouri.

2012 played out with more severe weather, fires storms and earthquakes.

In January of 2013 Cyclone Oswald struck the North Queensland coast, causing extensive property and crop damage North Queensland as well as major flooding. Severe flooding occurred after Mexico was hit by hurricane Ingrid, and in North America, Oklahoma bore the full impact of a severe tornado killing twenty-four people, destroying homes and infrastructure in May. Typhoon Haiyan more destructive and larger than Hurricane Katrina in 2005 caused a four metre storm surge in November resulting in wide spread damage to roads, water sanitation and infrastructure. The storm displaced millions of people and killed hundreds in the Philippines.

LP's view of these so-called natural disasters are not so natural. They are more intense and more often. Looking back over the past fifteen years and comparing statistical data going back over the past one hundred years, showed an increase in extreme weather, even taking into account the scientific view relating to Australia going through a one hundred year cycle of more dry than wet. This assessment was too simplistic in explaining away drought and wildfires as the norm. They were

happening too often and more chaotic in nature - Not only in Australia but throughout the world.

Without exception, 2014 brought more flooding in places like the Solomon Islands, Bosnia and Pakistan to name a few. Typhoons hit the Philippines, earthquakes in Yunnan Province, China, and throughout the world billions of people were sensing something was wrong, and could be seen, expressed in anxiety and violence as the temperature rises. The climate looked like spiraling out of control. If you join the dots, you'd get - Global Warming, caused by man made burning of fossil fuels - creating the perfect storm.

News reports attributed heat waves in 2015 killing close to fifty five thousand people throughout the world. And it was predicted, heat wave activity will increase ten fold by the year 2100 if global warming is not abated.

2016 gave no reprieve from famine, earthquakes, fire storms, tornadoes, cyclones and typhoons across the globe.



# Chapter Six

## Stars align

**23 Jan. 2016**

News on TV, in newspapers and social media were reporting on an astronomical event that will not be seen in the night sky again until July 2020, and who knows when on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January again. LP was now joining the dots relating to the Glass House Mountains and the sun setting on the peak of Mt. Beerwah.

From Bulcock Beach vantage point at the mouth of Pumicestone Passage, LP spent many an evening there over the years capturing sunsets across Pumicestone Passage; looking to the Glass House Mountains on the horizon, in the laid back beach-side town of Caloundra. Those mountains formed from volcanic plugs, remnants of volcanic activity twenty six million years ago. Or as Brownie tells it from Dreamtime folklore.

*‘His mob lived by the sea, but retreated inland as the great waters swallowed up the rivers and streams. They took sanctuary in the deep forest. But there, Beerwah, Tibrogargan, Coonowrin and his brothers and sisters who*

*were turned to stone after Tibrogargan turned his back on his son, Coonowrin, for disobeying him, by not helping his mother who was pregnant, and his siblings get to higher ground. Coonowrin only thinking of saving himself, caused the Rainbow Serpent of Dreamtime to turn them into stone, as a warning to all.'*

Now, LP had another story, and it goes like this -

*'In the beginning, he and his mates were entrusted with a Scroll at an ancient aboriginal ceremonial site in outback Australia, that involved the numbers, zero and one. Zero and one relating to a date in time, an image that some could see, and the secret knowledge that would unfold over time.'*

It was only in 2010 after the upload of the Scroll on New Years Eve that LP discovered the sun set on the peak of Mt Beerwah on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January looking from Bulcock Beach. Another coincidence relating to numbers. But now, aware that the planets were aligning on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2016 as well as a full moon, things started to fall into place relating something he had sketched many years earlier - A triangle drawn over a drawing of the setting sun on the peak of Mt. Beerwah exactly fitting over the sun. It was an equilateral triangle measuring twenty three millimetres. This sketch foretold the alignment of - Planets and Sun, as well as a full Moon rising on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2016. It was becoming clear these events were more than coincidence. And what was becoming clearer based on signs in heaven above, and on Earth, encompassed one thing - The peak of Mt Beerwah. Not only did the sketch

reveal something new. It also revealed a facial image on whatever angle you moved the page. It was a strange drawing LP had done, since he didn't intentionally draw the image. It just appeared as a ghostly aberration.



What had been on his mind for more than a year was to reach the peak of Mt. Beerwah, and make known what else could be revealed from the Scroll? That time was approaching. All would be revealed on 23<sup>rd</sup>. But obstacles arose causing LP to contact his mates, days before they planned to climb to the summit.

Bear wasn't impressed when he heard the news, since he'd already booked his flight, and wanted to know what date, he could change his ticket too. LP told him to hold off



booking another flight just yet, because his daughter was about to arrive from Cairns on the same day of their planned climb, and he had to pick her up.

What he didn't tell everyone, Ingrid reminded him their granddaughter's birthday party was on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. This was about to become an issue on reaching the summit by sunset, and being there when the planets align.

It was made perfectly clear by Ingrid; he was to be present for their granddaughter's party, and pick up their daughter from the Brisbane airport that morning. There will be no time for going off with his mates climbing Mt. Beerwah.

LP tossed over in his mind how he could get a compromise out of Ingrid, and still reach the peak of Mt. Beerwah as the sun set on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. January. Impossible he concluded, but he had a light-bulb moment - *'Pick up his daughter at the airport, drive to the car park at the base of the mountain. Walk and climb a third of the way and leave his latest book - I Am The One, Lewis Philips with a handwritten message on the inside cover for someone to find.'*

He hoped when someone removed the shrink wrap and read the message inside, it would go viral through social media for all the wrong reasons. It needed something more added. But it would get his book noticed and potentially a book deal beyond been self published. All he needed was someone to take it up the mountain.

He'd already penned a few words on a yellow post-it note, and stuck it on the cover before shrink wrapping. It read -

*Whoever picks up this book,  
please take it up the mountain  
and leave it there.*

*Thanks, Lewis Philips*

So if he couldn't climb it, he was going to be there one way or another. What he would do is ring around to get a flight over the mountain on sunset. Helicopters no go, but he managed to contact a pilot whom he had flown with before in a Waco replica 1938 single engine open cockpit bi-plane. It seated two in the front and one behind for the pilot.

Rodney remembered the last time he flew with him, and gave instructions on what time to be at the airstrip. Weather permitting, take-off would be 4:45pm. The forecast was for thunder storms in the afternoon. Rodney only gave a fifty, fifty chance of taking off from the tarmac if the weather didn't improve, as well, he would be pushed for time with an engagement party to attend later.

The day arrived to pick up Nicky from the airport, about a one-hour drive from the Sunshine Coast. Ingrid and LP would pass the Glass House Mountains on the way to the airport, following the Bruce Highway and turn off for the domestic terminal. Minutes from the airport the phone rings.

LP pressed speaker and answered, "Hi Nicky, are you at the pick up area?"

"Almost," she answered.

"We're just about to pull up in the black Cruse. I'll flick my lights on." LP said.

No time for small talk, Nicky quickly opened the back passenger door, threw her carry-on case in, and followed, slamming the door shut.

“Let’s get out of here. It’s bedlam,” she said, “Love you for doing this. You know I could have caught the bus.”

“Wouldn’t have it. Anyway, I’ve got a surprise for you.” LP replied.

What is it? Nicky asked.

‘I’ll tell you when we get to the base of Mt. Beerwah.’ LP said.

“Mum, what he up to?”

‘I’ll let him explain,’ Ingrid said.

‘It’s not dangerous so long you follow me and don’t touch anything you’re not suppose too.’ LP said while looking at Nicky in the rear vision mirror, giving her a reassuring wink and smile.

Ingrid was not sure what he was up too either, but it better not interfere with their granddaughter’s birthday party, or she’ll not be happy.

The pick up area had only one rule. Don’t park and wait. Just pick up or get fined by over-zealous traffic controllers. Forget about road rules it was every man for himself or woman. Road rules went out the window there. The only thing that mattered was, pull over, pick up, and get out as quickly as possible.

“Hang on,” LP said in a loud voice, *‘While thinking it’s like driving dodgems at the local theme park.’*

He accelerated from the gutter swerving to miss in coming and out going traffic chaos, and headed back onto the highway heading north. First stop Mt. Beerwah.

Mother and daughter chatted while LP drove, tossing over in his mind his plan when they reached Mt. Beerwah.

“Anyway, what happened about Mitchie’s vehicle? Nicky asked.

“Insurance crowd are slow on paying out. Its been eight weeks and still no payout. We’ll know more next week.”Said Ingrid.

After crossing the Pine River bridge on the outskirts of Brisbane, traffic congestion was still heavy. By the time they approached the Steve Ewin Way, to fork left, it wasn’t long before they passed the car park at Mt Tibrogargan. Turning left at the next intersection, and sharp right at an old ‘*homestead*’ and they’d be almost there. Little traffic now, just woodland with a sprinkling of homes, cattle properties and macadamia plantations; a photographer’s paradise to drive through. While passing Mt. Coonowrin on their right, suddenly LP crossed to the opposite side of the road braking hard on loose gravel. Cattle had moved up close to the fence line twenty metres from the roadway. He quickly stepped out from behind the wheel with his Olympus camera in hand, and trodded his way through long grass, while keeping a sharp eye out for any surprises - snakes under foot, and spider webs at eye sight level. The cattle were inquisitive and approached closer. LP aimed his camera, and clicked off in rapid fire to capture a perfect

shot of good breeding stock, with Mt. Coonowrin in the distance.

Back in the Navara LP said to Nicky, “ That would be a top photo to paint. I’ll send it to you.”





“Thanks Dad, I’ve almost finished painting the one you texted last month. You know it’s nicknamed - Crookneck.” She opened her phone and showed him the painting she was working on.

LP nodded and said, “ Looking good, I’ll buy it when finished. ”

Twisting bends on narrow bitumen lay ahead as LP accelerated away whipping up a trail of dust behind him.

“We’re almost there. The mountain turnoff is just past that macadamia plantation, where the dirt road forks.” LP said with confidence.

LP stopped in front of a sign depicting what you can and can't do when climbing the mountain, or walking the trails.

He turned to Nicky and said, "It's your birthday on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, so just in case we don't catch up then, here's a birthday surprise. We're going to climb up part of the mountain. I know how you love hiking, and then, in the arvo we'll fly over Mt Beerwah on sunset. It's an early birthday present for you. How goods that?"

I can see how we'll walk the mountain trail, but fly over it, in what?

'If I tell you, I'll spoil the surprise. Let's do this first.'  
LP said.



What he didn't say as well, was, why he put his novel titled - *I Am the One*, in his small backpack along with his camera and bottled water. He would fill Nicky in on what he planned to do, after they walked and climbed the trail to a location that presented a challenge, to climbers to proceed to the peak. There he would explain what his intentions were, then and only then.

Ingrid said to her daughter, as she, and LP started to walk away. "If it gets dangerous don't listen to your father, turn back."

"It won't be a problem. I've done plenty of back-packing on trails in Asia. You wouldn't want to know about the obstacles encountered there. Don't worry." Nicky replied, as she gave her mother a reassuring hug before walking away.

Nothing was going to stand in LP's way. He was following through in getting his book with the message written on the inside cover to the peak. The hand-written message contained inside the cover made a statement - *for what he knows, you will know*, but there's more to be revealed in his book. All he needed to do was get it noticed in a big way, one way or another.

Even though LP buried the original book titled - *Image of the Past*, in the desert hoping that would end it - it was not over. He was motivated to write again and continue his story in the new book titled - *I Am The One - Lewis Philips*, detailing his journey of discovery relating to the Scroll, spanning four decades. Firstly, travelling down south to Bells Beach with his mates for a surf contest in



Australia, while been perused by bikies that wanted to kill them. Bear and Brownie confronted the Bad Meadows bikie gang on a lonely stretch of highway. Outnumbered big time, surviving to tell the tale. George disappeared mysteriously after been shot by Herbertsin, a crooked cop. Red was never seen again after his canoe capsized in rapids at Big River, after discovering a gold nugget weighing over three kilos. Cassa, LP's albino mate didn't make it out of Asia alive. And Kato, inventor, hindered by government once authorities found his invention saved eighty percent off power bills, was always the skeptic. He kept LP grounded and not let him get too over excited with his mission in life - to finish what was started back at the ancient aboriginal site in 'Outback' Queensland - *to save and deliver the Scroll.*

LP's journey to New York to stand at Ground Zero and deliver the Scroll, in the end, didn't go exactly as planned.

Mason helped with advice with his connection to Masonic beliefs, and how to achieve his brand of glorious immortality.

Without Brownie's Dreamtime connection with the legend of the Glass Mountains, LP would not be standing before the mountain to climb it.

LP travelled through many parts of the world, but his journey always ended back at the mountain. Now destiny awaits again.

LP and Nicky trekked through dense forest, following the trail to a place on the mountain LP had visited many

times before. He knew the lay of the land to that point. Three hundred paces from the car park to a clearing, and BBQ area, then another seven hundred before a full assault on the mountain.

Brimming with confidence, LP pushed on followed by Nicky, after stepping up some well placed stones, where fresh water trickled down. And there it was, the peak in sight, with low cloud moving across the top of the mountain.

LP said to Nicky as they stepped onto flat ground, “We can’t stay long. Read that sign over there.”

Nicky repeated what she saw, “Beware, rock falls, do not wait in this area.”

LP went on to say, “Let’s make it quick. I want you to take a short video of why I’m leaving this book here. And hopefully someone will pick up the book and take it up the mountain.”

He pulled out his camera and book from his backpack, and handed Nicky the camera while he held his book in his right hand. LP then said, “Nicky turned the camera on to video and when I say start, click the left hand top button to record.”

As Nicky was about to film, three strangers approached from where they had just walked. LP thought, *‘This could be good or bad. Are they Herbertsin’s cohorts or just blokes out to climb the mountain? Paranoia was stating to set in. He needed to act fast.’*

“Hey guys, are you planning on climbing to the peak,” LP asked cautiously.

The answer was what he wanted to hear. All three answered, “Yes.”

“Can you do me a favour. Take this book to the peak and leave it there,” asked LP.

They looked puzzled as they watched on, as LP explained why he was doing what he was doing, as Nicky filmed. He then handed the book to one of them entrusting its contents to reach the peak before sunset on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. January 2016. LP and Nicky walked back the way they came, with LP hoping what he had put in play would make a difference, in a world he saw spinning out of control.

In eye sight of his vehicle, he heard Ingrid shout out, “Hurry up. About time, We’ve got a birthday party to attend, and help prepare some party food for the kids. Are you satisfied now? I don’t want to hear any more about the mountain?”

“ Not quite satisfied. You well know. I have a second surprise. Me and Nicky are going to fly over the peak of Mt. Beerwah on sunset. Happy Birthday for the 23<sup>rd</sup>.”

“What’s dad on about, Nicky asked.

“I’ll let him explain.”

“I’ve booked a flight for both of us in a 1938 Waco open air cockpit bi-plane. This is your birthday present for March. We’ll fly over the peak of Mt. Beerwah on sunset after your niece’s birthday party, weather permitting. How goods that?” LP said with a confident smile.

“I’m up for it.” Nicky replied with a wide grin.

Everything was starting to fall into place, and it looked like he and his mates wouldn’t need to climb to the peak

after-all. LP hoped this would be enough, by just leaving someone else to take his book up the mountain, and when opened, reveal what was hand-written in the book for all to know, and get some publicity for his book.

LP placed his backpack back on the back seat leaving the rear left door open for Nicky to get in. He was back behind the wheel and heading home, happy that his first part of his mission was completed. Later, if the pilot gives the OK, Nicky and LP would be flying over Mt. Beerwah on sunset. Mission accomplished. So he thought.

LP was starting to get impatient. As much as he wanted to be there for his granddaughter, his thoughts were fixated on flying over Mt. Beerwah on sunset. Time was running out. It was nearly four-thirty in the arvo with thunderstorm heads brewing in the north, and south west. BOM weather radar on his phone confirmed storms approaching from the west, and it looked unlikely they would clear, for take off from Caloundra airstrip. Luck would be on their side. The weather gods shone on them as they stood on the tarmac, with their pilot, as they looked for clear sky over the Glass House Mountains. No radar or weather report would dictate a decision by the pilot. It was his call based upon the weather conditions as he saw it at that time. LP and the pilot remained on the tarmac waiting until the sun broke through storm clouds on the horizon, while Ingrid and Nicky exchanged small talk just inside the hanger. It was forty-five minutes before the setting sun could be seen through the low menacing storm clouds.

“Right, we’re good to go.” Rodney, their pilot said.

He instructed his passengers to climb up and squeeze into the front cockpit with just enough room for two people.

He then followed and positioned himself in the rear cockpit and would fly the plane from there. The instruments in front of LP and Nicky were disengaged, but the pilot still warned not touch anything, or he could lose control of the plane. Rodney waved over his mechanic to give the propeller one big heave down to crank over the engine, that sounded like a car backfiring as it started to roar. Moments later, they were in the air heading a straight course to Mt. Beerwah. The storm clouds had now dissipated somewhat and within five minutes they were flying around the mountain, and over it, as the sun sunk below the distant horizon. LP got what he wanted. An incredible sunset full of colour, and Nicky was really excited at witnessing a spectacular display of nature, as thunder and lightning strikes could be seen to the south and north as Rodney turned the plane around, pointing it in the direction of Caloundra Airstrip. LP continued to snap photos by holding his camera in reverse and hoped he'd capture the amazing colours of sunset and engulfing storm.

There was no room to turn around in the front cockpit. It was just guess work if he'd capture anything worthwhile for posting on Twitter or Facebook. After looking at one photo as the plane was about land, it looked like they were not alone at that moment in time.

Landing with a smooth touchdown and taxiing down the runway brought their day to a magic ending. Nicky was

over the moon, a full moon at that, with what she had experienced, and LP was thankful everything ended almost to plan.

They thanked Rodney for a great flight, and he replied, “I should be thanking you. I’ve never seen a more spectacular sunset ever in all the time I’ve been flying over the Glass House Mountains. Email me a couple of photos. I’d love to add them to my Facebook page.”



# Chapter Seven

## The end is near

Six months passed, and nothing was reported about finding LP's book on the peak of Mt. Beerwah, with the message enclosed. Something must have gone astray. Did the guys entrusted with LP's mission fail to leave his book at the peak? Did they turn back and keep the book, or maybe it was it thrown from the mountain? There was one other possibility, two giant eagles soared above the mountain every day, and something shiny might attract them, and possibly one of them took it back to their nest.

LP decided on a new time to climb the mountain to see if he could find out what happened to his book. He contacted all his mates and told them the new date - 23<sup>rd</sup>. January 2017. Lock it in, he said to them all.

The new plan, had finally come together, and he would find out if the young blokes had delivered his book back in 2016, and left it on the peak to be found.

LP's mates all met on Sunday, at Bears old beach house the day before the climb. Not so old since the renovations started. All knew how to get there with a short drive along the beach to the small township at Teewah. LP greeted Bear, first with a firm hand shake and a hug, next

Brownie, Kato and Mason. Together they would end what was started all those years ago at the Bora Ring in *outback* Queensland.

Bear did some reminiscing and said, “Love this old place. It’s full of stories.”

“Yeah, like the time we had that confrontation with Nutter and his mad bikie mates, Mason said.

Bear answered pointing at the doorway, “I thought we weren’t going to make it out alive as I summed up the situation that day. From what I could see we were outnumbered ten to one.”

“But mate, you were fearless confronting Nutter.” LP responded.

“I had Nutter bluffed and put on a pretty impressive front. That just gave us enough time to get out of there, and catch up with Brownie waiting in the back street before the house exploded.”

“Better late than never,” Brownie said with a bit of a chuckle. “And you did a pretty good job on the *reno*.”

“Pity Red’s not here, he’d like hearing that story again, and seeing what you did to the old place since last here” LP said.

Bear responded in a soft voice. “I still feel responsible for losing Red down the rapids at Big River. I got the gold nugget, but it wasn’t worth it in the end. I shouldn’t have got him involved. If I hadn’t picked him up in Melbourne and taken him on a gold hunt, he’d be still alive today.”



“Don’t be too hard on yourself, Red was a risk taker, if it wasn’t then, it would have been somewhere else.” LP said

“Yeah you’re probably right, now what the plan.” Bear asked.

LP went through his idea on how to proceed, but wanted input on making sure all would make it to the peak. If everything goes to plan he figures they ‘ll make the news big time.

“LP you should be more up front with us. Is that all you want to do,” asked Brownie. He knew that there was no way of stopping LP from going ahead with whatever he was on about, so he figured he’d better tag along and keep a watchful eye out at his Dreamtime ancestral home.

“No there’s more, but not to worry I’ll handle it.” LP said to everyone.

“This is not an easy climb at our age. In our younger days not a problem, but now we’ll be pushing it.” Bear said.

Mason had something to add. “You’ve seen the news reports lately and just about every second week someone’s taken off the mountain by state emergency rescue guys.”

Kato spoke up while sitting on the lounge room couch, “I’ve climbed it when the mountain was closed after the rock falls. It’s easier now, but still dangerous if you don’t know what you’re doing. LP if you want to be on the peak by sunset on the 23<sup>rd</sup> we’ll need to allow an hour for the accent and fifteen minutes to get back down.”

“That doesn't add up.” Mason pointed out.

LP ignored Mason's question and nodded in agreement, then speaking to everyone, "Firstly, I'll point out how it's going to go down or should I say, go up!" When we reach the peak, we'll find my book, second, we upload the evidence of Herbertsin shooting George to social media, third, upload the Scroll and mantra too. Finally, explain what was hand-written on the inside front cover of the book, then capture a sunset photo. Simple as!"

LP had been taking sunset photographs across Pumicestone Passage from Bulcock Beach looking to the Glass House Mountains for the past seven years. His patience would pay off one day, on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. January and snap the perfect sunset photo as the sun set on the peak of Mt. Beerwah. But this time he'd be standing on the peak on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Sunset at 6:42pm and allowing for fifteen minutes as the colours of sunset change, would still give them time to descend with enough light.

Kato spoke next to answer Mason's question, "I agree, I've timed it. It's possible to get down the mountain in fifteen minutes, but we'll need extra time to do all the things you said LP. We'll need to leave fifteen minutes earlier. Delaying decent after sunset is pushing it. It will be dark as we walk back the last seven hundred metres, so we'll take small LED torches, the latest innovation in lighting. At the hardest part of the decent will be made easy, as LP pointed out, by wearing denim shorts, and we'll need to be on our arses sliding down, digging in our climbing boots on rock to stop us tumbling down. It's almost impossible to stand and descend after passing

through the limestone cave, and without light, too dangerous.”

Bear scratched his head, looked over at LP and said, “What book? What’s it doing on the peak?”

I don’t want to go into it now. All will be revealed soon enough, LP replied.

“OK, but I don’t think I’ve got the right gear for climbing.”

Bear didn’t have proper climbing boots nor denim shorts.

LP wanted to reassure everyone, “clothing and foot wear wasn’t a problem, just cut the legs of your jeans, and runners are OK for climbing.”



The next day, Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup>. they all bundled into LP's 4x4 off-road vehicle, leaving Teewah Beach behind and headed for a turn off, from bitumen onto dirt, leading them to Brownie's ancestral home, the forest surrounding Mt. Beerwah, mother of Dreamtime folklore.

Brownie, Bear, Kato, and Mason were silent. LP could sense that his mates doubted why they needed to climb Mt. Beerwah. He hoped they wouldn't back out on what was agreed, even though they all had their health issues, could give them good reason not to go with LP.

LP slammed on the brakes stirring up a dust storm. In front of LP's Navara was another sign, this time depicting what you can and can't do when climbing Mt. Beerwah. Nothing had changed since he was last there with Nicky. The mountain was still open for climbing, and being a weekday, few other people would be climbing, especially in the late afternoon.

Bear was first to break the silence. "Are you sure this is a good idea. Look at the photo, that's no rock fall. It's boulders tumbling down where we're supposed to climb."

LP responded, "Yep. We've been through worst shit before, remember back when we lost George, and the rock fall back then. That's past, and we are now in the future and it's been cleaned up now. The mountain is open for climbing."

Brownie had a question on his mind. "Hey bro, do we worry about Herbertsin anymore, after what happened at

New Year? What if he's gotten wind of what we're about to do today."

"Forget about him. It's been over seven years since he wanted to kill us. If he thought, he could, he would have done it long ago. I've got the evidence of him shooting George. Today is his day of reckoning. I've got it on a memory stick with me now, plus the video on my phone to upload later. That's our insurance, our get out of jail free, and his ticket to jail" LP replied with confidence.

Kato was at the back of the vehicle pulling out what was needed for climbing. Five bottles of water and ten metres of climbing rope and shackles, if needed.

All had their smart phones, climbing boots or runners, and wearing denim shorts as LP requested. They were prepared for the climb. Before LP locked the Navara, he grabbed his small backpack out. It just had room for his iPhone, book, a copy of the Scroll shrink wrapped, and squeezed his water bottle in, then gave the key to Brownie for safe keeping. They then headed single file along a narrow pathway engulfed in forest with sunlight filtering through. Three hundred paces brought them to a clearing with table, chairs and BBQ covered by an awning. From there they could see the peak as low white cloud slowly drifted across. As well, two eagles soared above the summit.

It reminded LP of the Great Eagle in the rock face of the Grand Canyon, that kept a watchful eye on the first peoples of the Americas. He hoped this was a good omen.

“Let’s push on,” said LP, while pointing to another track leading into more dense forest. This part of the climb he knew well. The incline was starting to get steeper and LP could hear heavy breathing behind him. It was already becoming a struggle for some of them.

LP raised his hand and said. “We’ll stop for a few minutes and catch our breath.”

The guys looked relieved - crouching down catching their breath and lowering their heart rate.

“OK, take a few deep breaths, not much further to the next clearing, and then we can take another break. Let’s go” LP commanded.

Now they were within sight of their quest, as clear water trickled down the last forty stone steps. They could see the next clearing as they looked up at sheer rock, their next obstacle to assail. Kato’s knowledge would come in handy now. He’d climbed this part of the mountain many times before.

LP said to Kato, “You lead, you know the way best.”

Leaning forward with the climbing rope over his right shoulder, Kato leads the way up. No need for rope yet. If needed it would be on the descent.

Kato was now in sight of the cave opening, and turned his head to those behind him and said, “Not much further guys to the limestone cave. It’s just ahead. When we enter we’ll rest again.”

Kato was really pushing himself. He knew he couldn’t make it to the summit. He was going to keep the rope with him at the cave. The entrance would be as far as he’s going.

He questioned why he was doing this at all. But he knew - mateship. He would wait until they came down and help, with the rope if need be.

They entered the cave, all looking up, seeing creamy stalactites hanging from the cave ceiling like daggers. It gave them all an eerie feeling as they looked around the walls, depicted in aboriginal drawings from Brownie's ancestors.

Brownie was not only feeling the strain of the climb. He was spooked. He knew he shouldn't be there. It's a sacred site for his mob. And he now knew; he should have taken heed of the warning from the custodians of this place. The sign also read in front of where LP pulled up. *In respect to the elders and folklore of the mountains, please do not climb.*

Brownie called out to LP, "Sorry mate I can't go any further or bad shit is going to happen. We'll end up like *Tibrogargan* - stone dead."

"Bullshit. Your taking Dreamtime to far, but it's your call. If anyone else wants to turn back, go with Brownie," LP answered.

Bear who was tough as old boots but was feeling the pain. This climb had challenged what he thought he was capable of. In the old days, he was fearless, but age does weary him. What he thinks he can do, his body is no longer up to it. He will turn back as well.

That left Mason to have his say. LP looked over to him and said, "What's your excuse for not following me."

“Don’t second guess me. I’ve followed you this far. We all have, and I’ll follow you to the peak. I’m not exhausted. I feel great. I’ve been working out in the gym at the Masonic Retirement Home after work..”

“That’s good, but if you change your mind, I have a selfie stick for a live feed on my phone. I can do this alone if I have to.” LP replied.

Now, I’ll be quick. Sunset is approaching. What I have to reveal is about immortality.”

Bear butted in. “I knew you were fucking crazy.”

“Let me finish,” LP shouted. “At times I’d have to agree but hear me out.” He then continued in a soft calm voice.

“You know what we’ve all been through in saving the Scroll.”

They all nodded in silence.

“You all have seen the image within the Scroll.

Again, they nodded.

“And we all know about the mantra relating to the Scroll.

Again, they nodded.

“Well, I’ve looked into the centre of the Scroll revealing the facial image, and whispered the mantra daily since returning from George’s mountain hideaway, after what happened back on New Year’s Eve,” said LP.

Bear blurted out. “Yeah, shit happens. I reckon Herbertsin and his cohorts are still out to get us?”

“Stay with me on this, I have something important to repeat. Before whispering the mantra one morning.”



*“May the healing spirit of god  
through the enlighten One  
rest upon you  
and all who you  
come in contact with  
in peace.”*

LP continued. “I had a feeling of dread, and of my mortality and a feeling of nothingness. Then there was a flash of intense white light that saturated my whole body as I started to whisper the Mantra. At that moment, I connected with my immortality. Not this mortal life, but the knowing. The part of God, my soul, will go back to God. I have no fear of death, because I’ve been blessed with the knowing. *Not scripture. Not faith. Just the knowing.* It’s just impossible to fully explain in words - I only have belief.”

Mason said. “That’s a big call, but I believe *ya*’, I too yearn for glorious immortality along with my Masonic brethren.”

LP had something else to add, “What I discovered relating to the mantra is it has twenty three letters in the first line and twenty three words in total.”

“OK, another coincidence with numbers. We’ll talk about that later. What actually are you going to do when you reach the summit? Is it about Herberstsin?” Bear asked.

“Yes and no. The memory stick is not just insurance it’s payback time. I have a plan to live feed it to social media, as well, deliver a message for all the world to hear.

Mason, we're running out of time. We'll push on to the summit. It's only a half-hour before sunset," said LP.

He instructed the guys to head back down, but they would defy him, including Brownie, who may well bring the wrath of the mountain upon them all, if he didn't appease the Dreamtime spirits of his ancestors - *'Leave this sacred place now.'*

LP and Mason started walking deeper into the cave, exiting through a large crevice to a tall stand of forest on the mountain side. They traversed up along to the edge of the cliff face with just enough rock under foot to get a foothold.

*'Kato's rope would come in handy now, but there's no time to turn back,' LP thought.*

Looking ahead LP pointed to another worn track leading further up, and twisting around to who knows what? What confronted them was the edge of another challenging cliff face. Looking up from that vantage point, they could see the summit only few more minutes climb away.

LP struggled to concentrate on his footing. One wrong step would send him over the edge, if he didn't blank out thoughts of what he was going to do, when he reached the summit.

Mason shouted out. "Face the rock. Don't look out, just look at your feet and grip the rock face, and move one foot and one hand at a time. They shuffled along making it to the peak. There they stood looking out over a panoramic view of the coast and mountains, with the setting sun soon

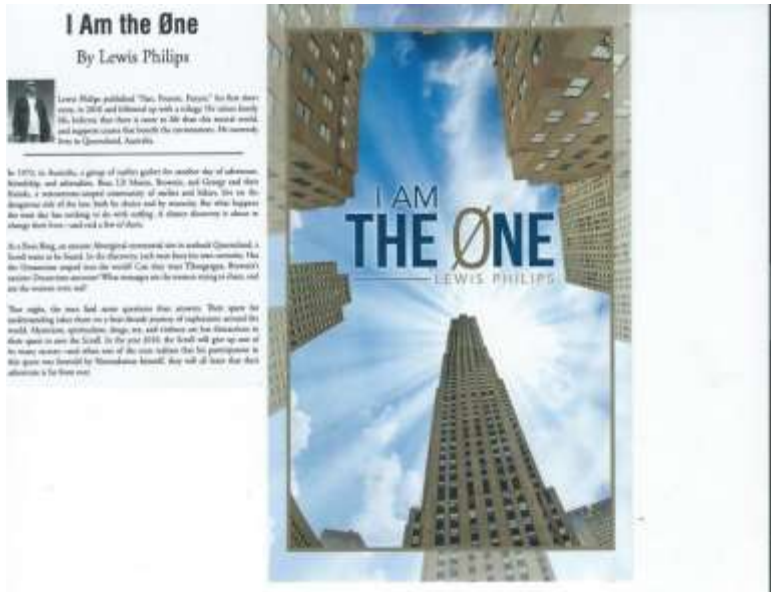
to drop behind the mountain range in the distance. Now, LP had little time to waste. He reached into his small backpack, moved his bottled water aside, and pulled out his iPhone and a copy of his book.

Mason looked at what LP was doing, and asked? “What’s first on our do list?”

LP replied, “I plan to kill two birds with one stone.”

Mason replied, “Look above, I think you might need more than one stone. Those eagles soaring above look like trouble if you ask me.”

“What I mean is I’m going to reveal the message handwritten on the inside cover of my book. It should have been revealed by now by the guys, I entrusted my book too. Can you see anything up here that looks like this book cover?”



Mason looked around and sighted nothing at first. Then he spotted something over in a crevice of rock at the edge of the peak. Mason took a couple of paces to the edge of the mountain, and pushed his hand down and grabbed it with his thumb and fore finger, and pulled it out carefully, handing it to LP.

It was LP's book he entrusted to the young blokes. It was still in shrink wrap, and LP wanted to add to what was already hand-written, but time had run out.

"Well, let's get on with it, hand me your phone, and stand side on to the sun. It's just dropping behind clouds on the horizon." Mason said, with an anxious tone in his voice."

"Are you expecting a call?" Mason looked at who was trying to contact them.

It was Bear.

"What's up? Are you off the mountain yet?" Mason asked.

"Shut up." He yelled. "Listen, Herbertsin's just passed the cave. He's on his way up with help. Can't you here it"

Mason pressed end.

"Bloody hell, it's Herbertsin, hear that noise, He'll be here in a *sec*. Start talking I've got a live feed now. I doubt if he's here to rescue us."

LP raised his right hand, with his shrink-wrapped book in hand, standing straight as the sun was setting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and said - *Take more notice of -*

and with his left finger, he made the sign of

V+I and continued to say.

*And in my name.....*LP paused.

While I have your attention, I'll add.

*Protect children nor exploit their labour.*

*Don't own slaves nor be a slave to money.*

*Desert people release your slaves, now.*

"Is that it." Mason asked, as swirling rotor blades woofed above.

LP stood silent as though in a trance, then shook his head, looked up and spotted Herbertsin holding a handgun, pointed at him from the helicopter side opening.

His first thought was. *'They always shoot the messenger.'* So he yelled out. "Give it your best shot arsehole." Not that Herbertsin could hear him.

We'll Brownie was right, bad shit was about to happen.

LP stood defiant, arm stretched out with his book in hand. Herbertsin took aim. At that moment, the sun reflected off the shrink wrap, like a laser beam, blinding the pilot momentarily, losing control, as Herbertsin fired a bullet past LP.

There was no escape, once the pilot regained control. But like the eagle legend from the Navajo people of the Grand Canyon, so too, two giant eagles gave a watchful eye over their domain - Mt. Beerwah. This other big bird - blades swirling with deafening noise needed to be taken down. LP could see what the pilot couldn't, two eagles soaring on a thermal current, with wing spans of almost

two metres, about to attack anything that invaded their territory.

Herbertsin was their prey and swooped in on him, clawing and pecking Herbertsin's head, before he fell from the side of the helicopter, landing before LP's feet.

LP placed his foot on his body and said to Mason, "Send the feed about Herbertsin. Then I've got something more to say."

"OK, sent, I'm ready, what next," Mason asked.

"Hand me my phone, thanks... Done! I've sent the photo on Instagram of sunset."

LP changed back to Twitter to send the final message to his followers - *The end is the beginning, life renewed. Download the Scroll, whisperer the mantra, and connect with, what I see, you will see. What I know, you will know.*

LP closed his phone case and said, "I think that's enough for today. Let's catch up with the guys, and get down this mountain before worse shit happens. I'm leaving the book behind, as well, a copy of the Scroll - It's home now. Let's go."



May the healing spirit of God  
flow through the chamber of  
rest when you and all who  
come in contact with it have

Leont. Phelps











