

# CHALICE

BUDDHA'S TOOTH II

## A Cambodian Adventure

Robert A Webster



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Darkness will settle on the people of Cambodia.  
There will be houses but no people in them, roads  
but no travelers; the land will be ruled by barbarians  
with no religion; blood will run so deep as to touch  
the belly of the elephant. Only the deaf and the mute  
will survive.

### **Ancient Cambodian Prophecy**

Deal with difficult situations like a dog.  
If you can't eat it or hump it.  
Piss on it and walk away

### **Not so ancient English Prophecy**



## *-Foreword-*

**T**he world already has Bond: James Bond.  
Jones: Indiana

Man: Super, Spider and Bat.

Now meet the next generation of super heroes as they begin their second adventure in South East Asia, once again thwarting the plans of some very dodgy characters in the face of adversity.

Stu, Spock, Nick and Pon, who can crush an empty beer can with one hand, leap from a girl's bedroom in a single bound. Emit lethal methane flames sometimes without scorching arse hairs; once again face their adversaries in the land of smiles (Thailand) and the beautiful and friendly country of Cambodia.

Enjoy the adventure as they unknowingly enter once again into a deadly chase to recover a holy relic and solve an age old mystery. All this they achieve whilst undergoing a metamorphism from being juiced, through spannered and shitfaced to totally wankered, by taking the magic potion otherwise known as beer and, although forced to drink their nemeses fruit based drink for ladies, remain in total control, as they fight for a place near the bar.

Follow once again their hilarious antics as they undertake another voyage of discovery in their search for chalices. A journey which takes them from the hustle bustle of the streets of Phnom Penh, to the splendour of Angkor Wat and the tranquil, golden beaches of Sihanoukville in the pursuit of women and good times, whilst aiding their friend in the recovery of the holy relic.

Join in the fun as they fumble around discovering lost worlds, make new friends, and unlock mystery from the annals of science.



## *- Prologue -*

The telephone ringing brought Detective Inspector Crinigan out of his daydream. He picked up the receiver.

“Hello, Inspector Crinigan, Scotland Yard” he announced.

“Hello detective, this is Dr Timothy Clerk, I work for H.M Ambassador, David Reader from the British embassy in Cambodia and we seem to have a mystery here.”

“How can I help, Dr Clerk?” said the detective now thoughts fully focused on the conversation.

“A body was found a few weeks ago in one of the shallow dry wells in a recess in the main temple at Ta Prohm, about 1km away from one of Cambodia’s main tourists sites, Angkor Thom. A tour guide and party of tourists found the body after the guide decided to frighten the party by taking them off the usual route and into the dark back recesses. It backfired, as he shone his torch into the well, saw the body and scared himself shitless. We are having difficulty with identifying the corpse. All we really know from the autopsy is the man had been brain dead for about a week. He wasn’t carrying any form of identification and he was dressed only in a flimsy hospital gown, but the nearest hospital is 12km away

and they have had no Berang (foreigners) admitted in the last few weeks and none have been reported missing. We have kept the body on ice for about a fortnight to try and work out the puzzle and identify him, but so far we have had no success in doing either. We had a few people come forward when we put a photo in the Cambodia Daily reported seeing this individual around Phnom Penh several weeks ago, and said that he was an Englishman called Nick, a tourist from Brighton.” Clerk explained and then asked “ I was wondering if I could send you blood and DNA samples taken from the body and dental x-rays, along with photographs and fingerprints to see if you could positively identify him”

“Yes of course” said Crinigan after listening with great interest and enquired, “How did he die?”

“That’s the mystery” said Clerk. “The corpse only appears brain dead and we just don’t know how, it appears he had some kind of fright that caused a Berry aneurysm, which subsequently burst, but there are some major anomalies which we can’t fathom out and the facilities here aren’t great. We have done all we can at this stage. I will you the report and you can see what I mean, it is incredible but I don’t want to say too much on the phone”

“What do mean by only brain dead?” enquired a now confused detective.

“That’s one thing I don’t want to discuss on the phone” repeated Clerk.

“I understand,” said Crinigan, “if you send what you have to my office, I will see to it”.

“Thanks I will dispatch them immediately” and make arrangements for repatriating the body.”

“Could you send the corpse to our coroner’s office, so we can investigate further” Crinigan requested, now his Detective juices tingling with anticipation of something to get his teeth into at last.

Clerk thanked the detective then hung up the phone and wrote on the top of a small package already address to:

New Scotland Yard,

Broadway,

London

SW1H OBG:

Urgent: For the attention of: Detective Inspector Donal Crinigan.

Head of Special projects investigation unit.

Detective Inspector Donal Crinigan was born in Dublin the son of an Irish Guarda; he had followed in his father's footsteps and family tradition and joined the police straight from school. He then went on to join the Metropolitan police and moved to London where he became a homicide detective, and due to his fastidious nature and thorough detective work, rapidly moved up the ranks, now after 18 years with the Met, at 53 years of age, he was bored with the police force. He had two grown up sons, both in the police and an ex wife, who he still kept in contact with and still had strong feelings for, even though she had remarried. His Irish accent though still audible, had all but gone, unless he got angry then a string of Irish obscenities could be heard echoing around the corridors of New Scotland Yard, his subordinates knew they were in deep shit, when he would come out of his office point to the offending individual and with a broad Irish twang shout 'Johnson come here you little bollix.' Nowadays the only thing he got to investigate was dead Yardies and drug dealers, although he knew who committed the murders, he knew months of investigation and footslog, would only result in some slick city lawyer getting the accused murderer set free on some technicality. He was now ready to take a redundancy payment if offered and doing something different.

‘I am sick of these bollixes getting away with murder because we didn’t describe in detail what their fart smelt like’ he used to moan to his colleagues ‘Bloody red tape’.

Maybe this case will be different it certainly sounds intriguing he thought.

He swung around on his chair and gazed out of his office window overlooking St James Park and the pelicans; it was a warm sunny beautiful day in June.

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In the morgue at Phnom Penh’s Royal Rattanak hospital, a corpse lay on a large metal post mortem table, around it stood bemused men from the Cambodian coroner’s office, and Dr. Timothy Clerk. Having just got off the telephone to Detective Crinigan, he stood and looked at the post mortem corpse.

‘This will baffle them in London’, he thought ‘it certainly mystified me, I will keep up to date with this strange case’.

Orderlies came in and swathed the body and Timothy signed the orders to have the corpse and all tissue and organ samples sent to England.

He left the hospital and headed to the Frog and Parrot, a small bar situated on the banks of the Tonle Sap River, for a well deserved beer and to see if the owner, Steve, could assist, as he knew most of the happenings around Phnom Penh.

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*Angkor Thom was the last and most enduring capital city of the Khmer empire. It was established in the late twelfth century by King Jayavarman VII. It covers an area of 9 km<sup>2</sup>, within which are located several monuments from earlier eras as well as those established by Jayavarman and his successors. At the centre of the city is Jayavarman's state temple, the Bayon, with the other major sites clustered around the Victory Square immediately to the north*



*Ta Prohm is the modern name of a temple at Angkor, Cambodia, built in the Bayon style largely in the late 12th and early 13th centuries and originally called Rajavihara. Located approximately one kilometre east of Angkor Thom and on the southern edge of the East Baray near Tonle Bati, it was founded by the Khmer King Jayavarman VII as a Mahayana Buddhist monastery and university. Unlike most Angkorian temples, Ta Prohm has been left in much the same condition in which it was found: the photogenic and atmospheric combination of trees growing out of the ruins and the jungle surroundings ensures privacy and only very few brave visitors*

*Angkor Wat (Angkor temple) is the central feature of the Angkor UNESCO World Heritage Site containing the magnificent remains of the Khmer civilization. Angkor Wat's rising series of five towers culminates in an impressive central tower that symbolizes mythical Mount Meru. Thousands of feet of wall space are covered with intricate carving depicting scenes from mythology. Soon to be classed as one of the Seven Wonders of the World.*



## *- Chapter One -*

“I’m going in squadron leader, bandits 12 o’clock high”  
I said Stu, in a well spoken English from the annals of a World War air ace accent, as his head went down toward a familiar black triangle with his tongue out ready to please Dao. He was stopped mid way down by a slap across his ears.

“Don’t yap, just work” exclaimed a perturbed, but horny Dao.

Stu continued on to Dao’s moist pink chalice and tasted her nectar. Now on the first day back of his third visit to the land that he now called home, he was pleasing the woman he now knew as the love of his life and the woman he intended to spend the rest of his life with.

Spock, also getting up to similar antics in the adjacent room at the Sawasdee hotel, with his little angel Moo, also happy to be back in Thailand with the woman who he now endearingly called ‘ little shit.’

It was now May and the lads had saved their money for this third visit to Thailand. They had previously spent a fortnight there during March, but it didn’t seem as magical or adventurous as their first visit, and they had almost missed their flight out, due to having to get Nick some medical attention at the airport. They again returned to UK depressed, and after a few hours of arriving home went to the travel agents and booked another flight. While in the UK they had phoned the girls daily, which had left them yearning more to go back there to be with them

Both Stu and Spock had mellowed since they’d been going to Thailand. Spock had even been kind to Chunky, Stu’s faithful old boxer bitch, and had willingly shared his

## CHALICE

bars of chocolate with the bemused animal that previously had to steal them off his table. Stu's mum, Pearl, had seen her son turn into a right goopy Jessie, who spoke constantly about Dao and how he wanted to bring her to meet Pearl;

“you'll love her mum” and despite the fact Dao could hardly speak English, Stu convinced his mum they could sit and chat all day and compare treasures, as Stu referred to the ornaments Pon had given them. The carved, flawless ruby had been kept in Pearl's ‘treasure box’ as she used to fondly refer to the small wooden box made by Stu in woodwork class when he was 12. It had become a handy home for all the junk that Stu had given his mum over the years.

“Well, bring her over then son,” Pearl would say.

“Can't get a bloody visa,” Stu would grumble, “too difficult and we haven't been together long enough, but Spock and I will try again next time”.

They had tried to contact Nick several times by telephone, but they only got to speak to his sister who, when she realised who it was, became very nervous and agitated and, one time when Stu announced “It's Stu here, Nick's mate from Thailand, is he there?”

Stu was certain that he'd heard a panicked yelp in the background, followed by the sound of wood breaking and a groan of pain,

Stu put this down to the television.

Stu and Spock decided not to try to contact Nick again and thought they might run into him in Pattaya.

Nick however, had other plans, and after Stu's phone call, where he subsequently fell off the kitchen stool and cracked his head on his sister's oven, decided that Pattaya was too dangerous, so therefore decided to go somewhere different. He had friends who had visited Cambodia and said that they'd

## Robert A. Webster

had a great time, so he decided to try there and booked a flight for May 3rd to Phnom Penh, the capital city.

Now shagged and showered, Spock, Stu, Dao and Moo decided they should go out and have a bite to eat. They met in the reception of the Sawasdee and Stu announced.

“Tonight girls we will eat steak”.

They had heard about a small restaurant located at the top of Walking Street, which had the reputation of serving the best Kobe steak in Thailand and, after finding out what Kobe steak was, and the usual price elsewhere in the world, they decided to splash out 450baht and try some.

They left the hotel and got on a baht bus and travelled around the one way system and alighted at the bottom of Walking Street.

*Walking street is a large street closed to traffic, on either side there are large bars, discos and go-go bars and the most concentration of entertainment establishments in Pattaya.*

They had just entered the street when Spock noticed a large complex filled with small bars, at the centre stood a boxing ring where two Muay Thai fighters were exchanging blows. The customers cheered when a fighter landed a punch or a kick.

“Shall we go have a look after we finish eating matey?”  
Spock Stu

“Good idea,” said Sty

They continued walking toward the restaurant and something in one of the shops caught Spock’s eye.

“Hang on a minute,” he said and went into the shop and returned several minutes later, much to the bemusement of the other three, wearing a hat, which looked like something the Australian soldiers wore for jungle warfare.

“I’ve been looking for one of these for ages, look” he said you can put the sides up or down” he removed the hat and

## CHALICE

folded one side up and popped in the press-stud, and then replacing it on his head announced, “Errol Flynn. . . , what do you think?” He said with cheery grin

Dao, Moo and Stu all agreed he looked like an absolute twat.

Undaunted Spock mumbled,

“Well I like it” and he sauntered off in the direction of the restaurant as the other three followed far behind, so nobody would think they were with the ‘twat in the hat’.

They entered Tranquillity, a small but plush restaurant and they were led to a small four seat table and sat down, Spock removed his hat.

“Right,” said Stu, “we will start with two beers and two fruit based drinks for the ladies.”

“Coke” announced Dao and Moo ordered a beer

Spock and Stu ordered two Kobe steaks with Rockford cheese in the centre and the girls, as usual, wanted fried rice. However when their meals came, Dao tried the delicious steak and ordered a plate for her and Moo to share. They agreed that it was the best steak the lads had tasted, plumb, juicy and served just how they liked it, one medium, one well done, it just melted in their mouths, with the cheese in the centre exploding with a tangy sensation, which left them enjoying every fork full.

Now fed and happy, they wandered onto walking street and into the boxing bars. They positioned themselves at a small bar directly in front of the ring and ordered three beers and a wine cooler and then settled down to watch the boxing. After 30 minutes, the ring announcer asked the audience if anyone would like to try their luck against a Thai boxer.

Moo volunteered Spock, who looked confused, but not wanting to embarrass himself, decided to give it a try. He removed his daft hat and handed it to Moo, for safe keeping and he entered the ring to roaring cheers, mainly from Stu

Dao and Moo. Spock went to the centre of the ring and faced a small Thai boxer.

‘They want me to fight this toothpick’ thought Spock.

They had given Spock the largest boxing gloves they had, but although still too small for his large clubbing maulers, he squeezed into them and the bell sounded to start the fight. Toothpick man became like a small whirling dervish, as he rounded on Spock and rained down high-kicks, elbows and fists against Spock’s chest, which was about as high as he could reach. Spock, shaken by this flurry, tried a wild swing that the fighter easily avoided and punched Spock in his gut, bringing a gasp to Spock and another sound, familiar with his usual trick. Again, Spock swung wildly, but the Thai moved to his right and moved behind Spock. This move was a terrible mistake, as the Thai’s face came level with Spock’s arse. A large, hair blowing methane gas deposit, erupted from Spock’s sphincter, full into the face of the horrified toothpick.

The fighter got a face full of this deadly mixture; he coughed and spluttered, in a vain attempt to expel this foul odour.

Spock swung around and brought his fist down like a hammer on the head of the Thai. The stunned boxer looked at Spock, smiled and then fell face down unconscious.

A loud cheer came up from all the foreigners present. The Thai ring announcer and trainer rushed into the ring to check the fallen and cyanosed fighter, followed by the complex manager, and herded Spock, who now stomped around the ring in a victory march, out of the ring. Spock returned to his seat and recovered his hat from Moo. The trainer led his still dazed fighter out of the ring, shouting obscenities at Spock in Thai, and Moo shouted and screamed back at him. Moo then turned to Spock

“Man speaks no good, say you cheat”.

Stu, amused by all this, turned to his old friend and said

“Cheese and Singha beer mate?”

## CHALICE

“Yep” replied Spock “lethal mix” and to prove a point, Spock let rip again.

“Nasty,” grimaced Stu, getting a whiff.

Dao and Moo also got a nostril full and they got off their seats and started to move away.

“Go take a dump” said an unimpressed Moo as she headed off around the other side of the bar.

Still amused, Stu turned to Spock.

“Moo’s English seems to be getting better mate”.

“Yep,” said Spock, “you should hear what else I’ve been teaching her.”

“I can guess” replied Stu as the two lads carried on nonchalantly drinking their beer.

The four returned to the hotel around 1 am and, after replenishing their beer, whisky and the girls Listerine mouthwash supplies, decided to have an early night and plan what to do the next day.

Dao woke Stu early the next morning.

“Somebody knock on door.”

“What?” said Stu, still half asleep.

“Somebody knock on door.” repeated Dao.

Stu got out of bed and slipped on his shorts, grumbling under his breath,

“If it is a bloody cleaner screeching, ‘clean loom, clean loom’ there would be an arse kicking coming in the vicinity of room 114.

There came another knock.

“Wait stupid, I’m coming” growled Stu as he swung open the door.

His face turned from anger to a large smile and he chuckled.

“Hello mate,” he said, “What brings you here?” he looked at his watch, scowled, and then growled

“At 6 bloody 30 in the morning.”



## *- Chapter Two -*

Professor Norman Rumble sat in an easy chair listening to Holst, The Planets through the headphones of his iPod. He stared again at the clock, which he'd been doing for the past few hours now. His gaze fell upon the framed photograph which hung on the wall 'Soon', he thought, "and at last the world will give us the recognition we deserve. It will be good to get out of here and live a normal life, instead of the life of a mole'. He stared again at the black and white photograph of himself as a young man, alongside an older woman, both smiling, and holding microscopes.

Rumble looked around his office at other photographs on his wall. Many were of a younger Norman with a pretty olive brown skinned lady with round brown, sparkling eyes, and a young boy of similar complexion, but with deep blue eyes that resembled Rumbles. His eyes flitted to other photos in the room that showed the same people, but at different times. The last photograph showed a young man in an academic robe, holding a diploma in computer science.

Rumble smiled with pride when he saw this photo of his son and, with as tears weld up in his eyes he looked at an old faded colour photograph of just the woman.

"Sorry my darling I was just too late" he said aloud to the photograph and as he wiped the tears from his eyes said. "But soon, I promise we will be back together again".

Norman smiled at the photo.

The Planets concerto reached its climax as the door burst open.

"Norm," said an agitated professor Boran Ngem. Norman immediately removed his headset and asked

"Is the process complete?"

## CHALICE

“Yes, the process is complete, but you had better come to take a look”.

“Why?” said Rumble, “what’s the matter old friend?”

“Please, just come and look” repeated Ngem.

The two professors walked down the brightly lit, clinically white corridor in silence. They entered an adjoining corridor and walked past a glass screened room.

Rumble stared into the large room where a man lay on a bed in a foetal position with his back turned away from the window. Inside the room, bitmap machines, infusers, ventilators, scanners and other machines beeped and lights flashed intermittently. Several orderlies in the room had started to take away stained sheets and cleaning, what appeared to be a large rubber electric blanket, which incorporated thousands of fine needles that coated the underside, with strands of fibre optic cables leading to some of the machines. At the side of the bed a woman spoke to the unresponsive figure, Rumble and Ngem entered the room, which had an odour of Hycaline and the smell of a maternity theatre, post birth. Handel’s Water Music softly filled the room. The woman, still speaking to the figure in ancient Indian-Pali language, fell silent when the two men entered.

“He doesn’t appear to understand,” said the woman in Khmer.

The man on the bed then turned to face the professors. A look of shock came over the face of the usually composed professor Rumble

“What the hell?” said a shocked Rumble, in English.

The figure started to sit up, as if he’d understood what the professor had said. He rubbed his eyes and looked around the room, bewildered and confused and lay back down and fell asleep. The two professors stared at the figure in a blissful slumber. The woman mumbled something in Khmer to the orderlies and they left the room.

## Robert A. Webster

“What has happened Norm?” said Ngem.

“I don’t know old friend,” replied Norman.

“Shall we wake him?” asked Boran, “maybe he has the answers.”

“No let him sleep for now, we will have plenty of time for that later. Now if you will excuse me”

Rumble left the room, leaving a puzzled Boran Ngem to set, and check the monitors.

Norman headed back up the corridor and into his large office. He went over to his desk, removed a key chain from around his neck, unlocked a drawer and removed a small object, which he studied for a moment.

‘You have more to tell than we thought,’ he uttered at the object, ‘what other secrets do you hold I wonder?’

He picked up his mobile phone off the desk and found a number in his contact list and dialled.

“Hello Norm,” said a voice on the other end.

“Tighe, we have a problem and it looks like we will be requiring your services again, could you come down and meet me?” said Rumble.

“Sure,” said the voice on the other end, “I will be with you in a couple of hours.”

“No rush today, in the morning will be fine” said the professor.

“It is morning Norm, That’s the problem with living underground you don’t know night from day,” chuckled Tighe.

Norm laughed

“I will see you soon, son” said Rumble as he hung up the phone and picked up the object again, still confused.

‘Now we are all sons of bitches’ he thought, quoting from Oppenhiemers assistant after he’d created the A-bomb.

Professor Norman Rumble was born in Auckland, New Zealand in 1938. His parents had been wealthy land owners.

## CHALICE

He developed a passion for science and chemistry from an early age, and at 14 his parents and teachers, realising he was a genius, sent him to Cambridge University, where he became the youngest PhD in the history of the university. He came to the attention of Rosalind Franklyn, a brilliant and innovative scientist, whose work in x-ray diffraction for sequencing and pairing \*DNA and the connection between DNA and RNA had sent the scientific world into a buzz in the early 1950's.

*Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is a nucleic acid that contains the genetic instructions used in the development and functioning of all known living organisms and some viruses (The cake)*

*Ribonucleic acid or RNA is a nucleic acid made from a long chain of nucleotide units. (The recipe)*

Franklyn took the young 17 year old Rumble under her wing and acquired him a research post alongside her in the John Randall department at, Kings College, London.

Norman excelled in the field of genetic research and, over several years came into contact with many top scientists within the same field of research. He and Rosalind discovered forms A & B of DNA and they developed an ingenious method to separate the two forms, which provided the first DNA crystals pure enough to yield interpretable diffraction patterns and the all important missing piece of the puzzle the secret of heredity itself.

Two other scientists in particular stood out to Rumble. James Watson and Francis Crick both brilliant in their field and Rumble had many discussions with the pair about the project that he and Rosalind were currently working on. These discussions went on long into the small hours of the morning and joined in by the new prodigy on the team, Ian Wilmut, who although slightly younger than Norman, enjoyed each

## Robert A. Webster

other's theories especially about cloning and the possibility of one day cloning a human and they became great friends.

*Human cloning is the creation of a genetically identical copy of an existing or previously existing human. The term is generally used to refer to artificial human or replicant.*

Watson and Crick published a paper in the mid-fifties, when Norman read it, he knew it to be the information that he had shared with the two scientists' about his and Rosalind's research, which these two shysters had copied and declared as their own work.

Rosalind Franklin never knew how Watson and Crick had gotten access to her research and wasn't bitter about their deceit, however Rumble was.

Rosalind Franklin died of cancer in 1958 and the 20 year old Rumble went deep into his shell. His mentor and best friend had gone, so he threw himself deeper into his research of the human genome.

Rumbles parents both died in a car crash in 1960, the same year that he was awarded a professorship at Kings College. Norm returned to New Zealand and sold his family's holdings which made him a very wealthy man. Norman wasn't interested in money; he'd dedicated his life to science. While in New Zealand, he met another scientist, an archaeologist named Boran Ngem, a Cambodian national who came to New Zealand to research the possible connection between the ancient Mori-ori tribes, and the ancient Khmers. Boran and his archaeological team had found crude wall paintings and faded parchments in an inner chamber of Angkor Wat, in recently discovered catacombs. One wall painting depicted two men stood together. One man appeared dark skinned and wore clothing that bore striking similarities to the traditional clothes

## CHALICE

and decoration wore by the modern day hill tribes of Ratanakiri province, Northern Cambodia.

The other man on the drawing appeared to be a native and adorned in tribal decoration, this they'd assumed to be a Mori Ori, and the figure held what appeared to be a dead kiwi bird, which he appeared to be handing it to over to the tribesman. There was also a large drawing of a lizard, which they identified as a Tuatara, a species indigenous to New Zealand. Also, one parchment showed pictures of boats painted with symbols. These strange markings had been recently found on wall designs at Angkor Thom and Angkor Wat

*Mori-Ori's were the first known people to have inhabited New Zealand and its islands, before the Maori tribes came from the Polynesian islands and ate them all*

This left the Cambodian team who discovered the catacombs in 1960 stunned, could Cambodians have sailed to New Zealand as early as the 12th century and bring the Mori-Ori, or did the Mori-Ori arrive in Cambodia to escape being washed down with a fine Claret, as it was widely believed that Mori-Ori could make, sail boats, and navigate,?

This puzzle had intrigued Boran and, at his own expense funded an expedition to the South Islands of New Zealand. The fruits of his labour paid off by the find of clay skulls of dogs, cat's birds all laid out in monument form and dating back about 650 years, pre Maori, but unfortunately found no sign of a Khmer connection there, so now had to assume the latter.

Norman and Boran first met at a luncheon party, and they became friends and when Boran had gone back to Cambodia, he and Rumble kept in contact.

The year was 1962, and one day as Norman worked in his large recently purchased laboratory, he heard something on

## **Robert A. Webster**

his radio, which t made his blood boil. Watson and Crick had just received the Nobel Prize for physiology and Medicine for their ground breaking works in the discovery of DNA. Although Franklyn had been briefly mentioned for her input, she would not receive the award as it could not be given posthumously. Rumble was never mentioned.

It would be several years before Boran and Norman would meet up again and give Rumble the opportunity to exact his revenge.

## **CHALICE**



## *- Chapter Three -*

The Boeing 737 came to a halt on the tarmac of Pochentong, Phnom Penh international airport and the passengers disembarked. One in particular looked very smug, even though it had been a long flight. ‘Maybe here at least I will safe away from those two.

On a hot morning in May, Nick cleared customs, got into a tuk-tuk and told the driver to take him to a good, but cheap, hotel. They drove out of the small airport and headed off into the city and towards the riverfront. The tuk-tuk stopped outside the Angkor International hotel.

“Here’s very good,” said the driver knowing he would get a commission from this hotel. “And only five minutes walk to the riverfront and lady bars”.

“Great,” said Nick and went into the reception and took a \$15 room.

Nick decided to have a sleep, watch a bit of TV, then go out to explore Phnom Penh. He had been given details of several bars to visit along the riverfront and the names of the British ex pats who owned them. Nick turned on the TV and nodded off.

Pon, the Tinju Prime Masters life had changed dramatically since returning the holy relic. He decided to accept the position and title of Prime Master of the Tinju for protection of the holy relic and, undertook another role as defender of the monarch to Crown Prince Vijiralongorn, which had taken him too many countries. He had just returned from the visit to King Norodom Sihamoni of Cambodia in order to repair relations between the two nations, after once again, the Thais had accused the Khmers of amassing troops around Preah-Vihear temple in the North of the Cambodia,

## CHALICE

which the Thais have always claimed to be theirs. The Cambodians never accepted this and now the politicians of both countries seemed to be ignoring each other. His majesty, King Bhumipol of Thailand, and his friend, King Norodom Sihanouk, the present Kings father and former King of Cambodia, decided a state visit was in order, to heal the rift growing between the two neighbouring countries, therefore King Bhumipol sent his son the Crown Prince.

This was Pons third visit to the Preah Barom Reachea Vaeng Chaktomuk, Royal palace in Phnom Penh and the third time he had seen Kim Doung, the head maid in waiting to Her Majesty Norodom Monineath Sihanouk, the King's mother. Pons feelings for Kim had grown stronger, but he hurt inside as he realised they could never be together as her parents had arranged for her to marry a rich, powerful Khmer.

Although they had only talked and on occasions held hands, Pon knew that he loved this lady and she felt the same way, but Khmer tradition and parental authority in Cambodia is paramount and his position would not allow him to plan any different.

‘But at least I get to see her often and she is always in my dreams, which will have to do,’ Thought Pon  
Kim announced during Pons last visit that her marriage had been planned to take place on the next day of the new lunar cycle, as that was considered to be a lucky day. Neither Pon nor Kim considered this to be lucky as it was only two weeks away.

*Arranged marriages still happen in Cambodia between the traditional and usually rich Khmer families, which would increase the parents status and social standing .As in other cultures the girl has to stay a virgin (pure) but the man who is usually a lot older, can take as many concubines prior to marriage as he wishes: The Khmer men are the diamonds .The ladies silk: You can wash a diamond and it is still pure.*

## Robert A. Webster

*You can wash silk but it will never be pure again, although now in modern day Cambodia with the foreign influence, more and more families ignore this tradition*

Pon, now back in his large living quarters at the Royal Palace in Bangkok, prepared his notes for his English language class, but his thoughts, as usual, on his beloved Kim. His mother, Banti, entered his room.

“Are you okay my Son?”

“Yes mother, I am fine,” said Pon, lying.

“Are you in love son?” Banti enquired.

Pon, shocked by his mothers question replied

“Yes mother,” he then went on to explain about the situation regarding Kim and when he’d finished his mother hugged him.

“Don’t be sad my brave son, Buddha will find a way.”

She then held on tighter and repeated, “Buddha will find a way.”

The tender moment was abruptly broken by the rapid entry of a Tinju monk.

“Prime Master,” said the agitated monk catching his breath. Pon knew the monk to be one of the guards of the holy relic.

“Prime Master,” repeated the monk, after regaining his composure and respectfully Wai-ed Pon

“Please come to the temple of the sacred light, we have a grave problem, master.”

Banti broke her hold on her son and Pon and the Tinju hurried out of the room.

\*\*\*\*

Nick had a peaceful nap, showered and headed off to the riverfront ‘Eat, then on the beer’, he thought.

His first stop was the Green Park restaurant, a recently opened eatery near the riverfront and got talking to Max, the

## CHALICE

owner. Max recommended the best places to go for a good time, and while Nick chomped down a Chicken Florentine, Richard an English friend of Max's came in to the restaurant and Max introduced him to Nick.

"This is Richard, also known as the animal," smiled Max and he will give you the grand tour."

Richard sat down next to Nick.

"Hi mate, hurry up and finish eating we have got a busy time ahead, and time, tide and chalice waits for no man." Said Richard appearing to be in a rush.

Richard had been in Phnom for two years and was a sous chef at the Intercontinental Hotel. His drinking, and shagging antics were legendary, and his benders usually lasted for days, earning him his appropriate nickname and, if a misguided tourist went out with him they would usually end up in some dubious Vietnamese brothel in a bad state of wankered.

"First on the agenda was the Night Owl bar, loads of girls," announced Richard as they left the restaurant and went into the hot, sticky Phnom Penh streets.

They arrived at the Night Owl on 104 Street.

"Where's the go-go bars mate?" enquired Nick

"Nope, don't have them, you will find Cambodia a lot more subdued than Pattaya. I went there once for a day or two but I can only remember the first couple of hours, I was spannered the whole time. I only came around in the taxi from the airport home," said Richard and smiled

They entered the Night owl and Nick instantly liked the place, as there were about thirty girls, all wearing short skirts, and no other men in sight.

"It's early," said Richard "get in early and pick the best," which is what he liked to do, but for what reason remained a mystery, as he always ended up wankered and usually either alone, or with an old tug he'd picked up at the end of his drinking session at 4 or 5am, from the Walkabout hotel, a 24 drinking and freelance taxi girls, hung out.

*Taxi girls same as Thai bar girls.*

They sat at the bar, the girls all whooped at Richard “Koy-t, koy-t” Nick not wanting to appear rude, never enquired what they’d meant by Koy-t.

Nick quickly realised about the bars being subdued, because after the initial excitement of the lads entering, the girls just milled about and chatted amongst themselves. Occasionally the girls would ask them if they were ok, and would they like another drink.

‘A refreshing change to Pattaya’ thought Nick, no hassle to buy them drinks or mauling and he thought the girls here were prettier than the Thai’s and spoke better English. Several had already caught his eye.

‘Yep,’ thought Nick, ‘I will enjoy it here, it’s a cheap Charlie’s paradise’.

*Cambodia has two main types of beer: Anchor and Angkor, yep, you read correctly, both the same sounding words, but to avoid confusion Anchor is pronounced Ansh-orr.*

\*\*\*\*

Pon and the young Tinju monk ran into the temple of the sacred light. The sun shone through the skylight, hitting the top of the statue, and the two treasures, but instead of the usual brilliant light show as the light danced its way between the two, nothing happened.

Three other Tinju guards’ wai-ed Pon when he entered and all five stood gazing at the non-spectacle. The tourists who had come to witness this daily wonder had been led out by the monks’ moments earlier.

Pon started to climb the fifty-foot statue of Buddha until he reached the top. He found himself a purchase and removed the clear glass cover off the Buddha’s tooth relic. He removed the gold bejewelled box, put it in his pocket and climbed down. Once on the ground he inspected the relic.

## CHALICE

Pon didn't understand, the relic appeared to be fine, it looked exactly the same as always, and he had seen this holy box many times before.

Confused, Pon took the box, left the temple, headed into the main part of the palace and went into Khun Taksin Sawaldees, office.

The remaining monks were shocked and bewildered "What has happened, have we failed in our duty"? Asked one monk.

\*\*\*\*

Nick and Richard had been steadily crawling from bar to bar, Nick having a great time, because the drinks were cheap and he hadn't given anyone a tip all night and Richard had paid for any lady drinks bought, so he was in heaven. His only problem seemed to be keeping up with Richard with drinks and by eight o'clock Nick was spannered.

They entered Barbados bar to the whooping of the girls "Koy-t, koy-t" and one girl prodded Richard in the cheek.

Nicks curiosity got the better of him and asked Richard,

"Why do they call you koy-t?"

"Ah, ha," said Richard, "it's a secret."

Richard ordered three Sambucas, one for him and Nick, and one for a pretty young lady who joined them.

Richard chatted to the lady, while the shots were poured. He produced a lighter, set fire to the alcohol, passed one to Nick and one to the lady.

"Welcome to Cambodia mate" toasted Richard and he blew out the flame and drank the shot down.

"Cheers" said Nick and he blew out the flame and drank the shot.

"Cheers said the Khmer girl and she drank down the shot, Horrified, Richard and Nick looked on as flames spluttered from her mouth and set the side of her hair alight.

"You're supposed to blow the damn thing out first!" exclaimed Richard, as the girl leapt off her stool wailing. The

rest of the bar staff threw water over her and slowly, but painfully, the flames got extinguished. The girl ran upstairs in tears. Nick and Richard hurriedly left as the girls blamed, Koy-t

“You won’t be going in there again will you mate?” said Nick.

“Of course I will stupid girl did the same last week, with a B52 type concoction that I bought her”.

Chuckling like a couple of clowns they got into a tuk-tuk.

“Shanghai bar,” ordered Richard, “Bun Man?” (How much)

“Two dollar,” said the driver.

“One dollar,” laughed Richard.

“OK koy-t” the driver laughed back and the tuk-tuk sped away towards street 51.

\*\*\*\*

Pon knocked and entered Taksin’s office. Taksin arose of his chair and wai-ed Pon

“Hello Prime Master what brings you to this part of the palace, it must be urgent”.

Pon returned the wai.

“Khun Taksin, we have a problem and I would like your advice.”

“Of course Pon, how can I help?”

He explained to Taksin about the sacred light and showed him the jewel encrusted box. Taksin took the box and inspected it while Pon continued.

“It does not appear to have been tampered with, it looks the same as always, but I don’t understand, every day we have had the same light show, every day, without fail since we placed the holy relic in the temple. So why now has it suddenly stopped” said Pon concerned.

“Hmm” said Taksin “Your right Pon, it does appear to be okay, but just to be sure” Taksin put the box on his desk and picked up the phone

## CHALICE

“Hello Khun Taksin, how I can help you?” said his Personal assistant.

“Noi,” said Taksin, “Could you get hold of Ratray Sesilin at the gem lab in Bangkok.”

“Of course sir,” said Noi.

“We will get a more thorough look at this and decide then, what could have happened” said Taksin.

Several minutes later the phone rang and Taksin answered,

“Hello Ratray, it seems that we have a problem at the palace.” Taksin went on to explain what had, or rather hadn’t happened. Ratray listened, and when Taksin had finished explaining what he would like Ratray to do. Ratray replied,

“Certainly Khun Taksin, I will grab a few vital items of equipment and head straight over.”

“Thank you,” said Taksin, “We look forward to seeing you again, goodbye.”

He then hung up and said to Pon,

“Then we will know for certain, meanwhile Pon, have the temple sealed and look for any possible clues, I will see what I can find out from here”

Taksin recalled something and mentioned

“This does sound suspicious” and continued, “I received a phone call a few weeks ago from someone who wanted to borrow the relic for, he claimed, some scientific research and I told him, no way. I don’t know if this has any relevance. We will wait and see if Ratray can uncover anything before I inform his majesty.”

Pon agreed, wai-ed Taksin and left the office.

Taksin put the relic in his drawer and again picked up the phone.

“Yes Sir,” said a cheery Noi.

“Noi, I need phone records and files from immigration of any Cambodians who entered Thailand in the last few weeks.

“Right away sir,” said Noi.



Taksin thought 'just a precaution, maybe it's unfounded at this stage, but we will have to wait and see'.

\*\*\*\*

Nick was wankered. He snored himself awake, he had power napped for about 10 seconds and hazily rejoined the present. He looked around him at an unfamiliar and dirty, small room. He felt a strange but pleasant sensation around his todger, 'Oh yes I remember' he thought.

The small Vietnamese lady who had been sucking and manipulating his sometime flaccid todger now for about 15 minutes, noticed a bit of vigour returning to the tool 'Good' she thought, 'he has woken up again, I wish he would hurry up and finish, my teeth hurt, all three of them' She looked up at Nick and smiled.

"Shit," said Nick, "you're old enough to be my granny."

Richard had taken Nick to about 20 different bars around Phnom Penh and, although drink for drink he himself was slightly spannered, noticed Nick was wankered. They staggered out of Bunny bar and Richard announced

"I know a friendly place on street 127 and it is time for you to meet Lilly".

Sophie's, a well known, B.J bar , which as you walk in, your todger is out and fought over by hordes of cackling, mature Vietnamese, ladies of the night, for want of a better description.

Richard liked to bring all the wankered newbie's here to initiate them into the seedier side of life in Phnom Penh. Lilly was his favourite lady, she was sixty-two years-old and in Richards description 'a friendly, toothless old hag and expert in the noble art of oral phallation 'Richard had taken Lilly to his heart as his adopted mother. It was Richard who had weaned her off tequila A concerned Richard used to go to see Lilly and the old girls, to try to stop Lilly from drinking tequila, which badly affected her health, and after several

## CHALICE

weeks of his constant pestering, Lilly gave up tequila, and to prove it, every time he went to the bar the girls would show him the bottle that Richard had marked, and it was genuine, Lilly, his old mum, had given up her deadly intake of tequila. She was however, unbeknownst to Richard, now hooked on the stronger Mekong whisky.

Richard always bought drunken tourists to Lilly, or animals victims as Lilly would call them.

Nick flopped into an easy chair as Lilly and another lady removed his pants, Nick gazed blankly into space as the last few shots of tequila kicked in. He was happy in his own world and glad that the calamity's that happened to him in Pattaya had not been repeated here.

"It was them bastards," he slurred, referring to Spock and Stu.

"What?" said Lilly.

Nick grunted again and nodded off.

Lilly and another hag led him to a small bedroom at the rear of the bar and laid him on the bed, where Lilly continued with the job in hand. Richard popped his head into the room

"Enjoy mate," said Richard

"See you later Lilly".

"Thanks Koy-t" said Lilly taking Nicks todger out of her mouth and rubbing the shaft.

After Nick came around a little and after the initial shock, he accepted the situation, and as Lilly put her heart and soul into finishing quick. Nick started to mellow and thought

'What the hell, this isn't so bad'.

He put his hands behind his head laid his head on the pillow and bravely thought of England.

*I will put you out of your misery Koy-t only means  
dimples*

## *- Chapter Four -*

Several years had passed, Professor Rumble received a telephone call from his old friend, Boran Ngem, with some exciting news about a recent discovery in his native Cambodia. Although Boran was an archaeologist, he had a passion for chemistry and science, which was why he and Norm had gotten on so well.

Professor Rumble had spent the last few years engrossed in his work and had spent little time keeping in contact with old friends, except for keeping tabs on his colleague, Ian Wimutt's research.

Borans phone call was a nice distraction.

"Hello Norman, this is Boran, How are you old my old friend?"

"Boran!" exclaimed Norm, "I am fine, it is great to hear from you after all this time, to what do I owe this unexpected, but welcome call?"

"Norman I have made a great discovery in Angkor Thom, but I would like your expertise in some diagnostics. I know your techniques could assist me and it would be great to see you again".

Rumble stroked his face and sat back, deep in thought. He looked around at his lab, his cocoon for many years.

"Ok Boran," said Norm and announced "I will book a flight. Do I need to bring anything with me?"

"Just you, my friend," chuckled Ngem.

"Will you book me a hotel?" enquired Rumble

"No need, you will stay with my wife, Roth and I, we have a large house in Siem Reap. . . . And I insist." said Boran.

## CHALICE

“How can I refuse an invitation like that? I will book my flight and be there in a couple of days.”

“We will pick you up at the airport, see you soon” said Boran.

Norman, intrigued, made his way out of the lab and into his adjacent apartment ‘It will be a nice break’, he thought as he put on his Trilby hat and went into the Auckland streets and to a travel agent.

He took a flight one week later and left a cold New Auckland International Airport behind and flew in a Fokker Friendship to Duong Muang Bangkok International Airport, there he chartered a small private L-410 turbo prop and flew to a small airport outside Siem Reap, Cambodia.

A smiling Boran and his wife Roth warmly greeted him and they drove 6km south to Siem Reap town, to Borans house.

They sat and chatted about Borans discovery whilst Roth and her sister, Theary, prepared a meal. Boran, excited about the amazing discovery, which had left him and his team confused and intrigued. What he’d uncovered could prove him correct and, with Rumbles help, turn it from just a theory to a 100% fact. They ate and chatted until early evening and an exhausted professor Rumble retired to bed for a blissful night’s sleep.

Norman was awoken by Theary the next morning with a steaming hot cup of tea. He thanked Theary, who couldn’t speak English but smiled and left his room. ‘She is pretty’ thought Rumble, about Borans seventeen year-old sister in-law. He showered, dressed and went downstairs, where an eager Boran, dressed in hiking boots, thick cotton trousers and shirt, waited.

“Here Norm, put these on, they should fit,” said Boran, handing Norman the same attire.

## Robert A. Webster

They drove off in Borans small Fiat towards a temple at Angkor Thom. The journey took about 20 minutes along a main road and then Boran took a sharp left turn and entered the jungle. The small car bumped and twisted its way through dense foliage and stopped in front of a large Dipterocarp tree.

“On foot from here, I’m afraid,” said Boran as he exited the car, machete in hand.

They hiked through the dense jungle for about an hour, until they came across a large ridge. Boran picked up a rope that had been tied off to a tree and both he, and Rumble, abseiled down about 50 feet, until they reached the ground. Norm looked around and noticed a large cave that Boran started to head toward

“Wow!” exclaimed Norm, “how did you ever manage to find this?”

“We found mosaics in Angkor Wats catacomb that appeared to be some kind of map” said Boran, “we just followed the directions and hey presto,”

They reached the cave mouth and continued inside and walked along a pre lit corridor.

“My team are already here, they lit the torches on the wall, but we have another climb I’m afraid,” said Boran.

They reached the end of corridor and the sight that greeted Rumble took his breath away. A large precipice dropped away to reveal a large cavern, which Rumble estimated to be about the size of approximately eight English football pitches, and seemed as high as the Empire State Building. The cavern was littered with stalagmites and stalactites and what appeared to be small shelters and houses that appeared to be of constructed from wood and rocks. The archaeological team had rigged up a generator which clunked away in the distance and powered several lines of 40kw bulbs strewn around the centre of the stalactites, which illuminated parts of the cavern. The two friends climbed down a makeshift

## CHALICE

ladder and after approximately 100 yards reached the cavern floor. Norm heard the sound of running water and saw a large waterfall in one corner of the precipice that flowed into a large lake, the water appeared milky brown and hazy under the string of 40kw bulbs. The pair walked over to the lake, Rumble noticed the end of the lake tapered off and the water disappeared underneath the cavern wall. Boran looked at the amazed expression on the face of his usually calm and composed colleague and instructed

. “Taste it Norm. It’s safe we have tested it.”

Rumble cupped his hands and scooped up the cool water and took a drink. The cool water refreshed him from the searing Cambodian heat.

“Where does it come from and where does it lead?” asked Norm.

“There is a larger waterfall at the top of a small mountain and we traced the flow of water to a smaller river about half of a kilometre to the west.

“Wow this place is incredible!”

“Wait Norman, we haven’t got to the good part yet,” said a proud Boran.

They walked over to corner of the cavern and reached a large trestle table where some people stood. Boran introduced Norman to five more of his team and he greeted each in turn.

“Show him,” said one man.

Boran laughed and handed the professor a hard hat and a miner’s gas lamp.

“We haven’t yet lit the next section, but come with me. I want to show you something” said Boran, and led Norman through a small chamber at the back of the main cavern. Norman noticed sheets had been laid out with skeletal remains and boxes, which looked like they contained forms of dress, tribal jewellery and weapons that appeared centuries old. Boran walked to a large wall and shone his light at a large flat stone on the ground.

## Robert A. Webster

“Stand on that” he said

The professor did as instructed and Boran went off to the side and cranked a handle. The stone started to rise. Norman, nervously watched Borans light get smaller beneath him.

The ancient elevator went up into the darkness for about a minute. Boran yelled up at Norman not to be alarmed and then he heard a creak as the ceiling above him opened up and become a wall. He was now in a small copse in front of a glassless window, in what appeared to be ancient ruins of a temple. The stone elevator had become the floor and it clicked into place.

Rumble surveyed his surroundings, the place was deserted, and then he heard Borans voice beside him.

“You ok Norm?”

Norman spun round, but there was nobody there

“Yes Boran, I am fine” said Norm confused “where are you?”

“Look on the wall to your right; you will see a stone missing.”

Rumble did as instructed and found the small space.

“Yes,” said Norm “it appears to go somewhere.”

“That’s right” said Boran “it goes here, the world’s first intercom!” chuckled Boran.

“Now stay on the stone I will bring you back.”

The floor moved and Norm descended back into the abyss, as the wall above him returned to be a floor.

He stepped off the stone and he and Boran returned to the main chamber and the waiting team. They patted Norman playfully on the shoulder and the lady on the team enquired as to whether he’d enjoyed a 12th century elevator ride in 1972. Norman said he had, but he could now use a 20th Century toilet as adrenaline shouldn’t be brown.

Boran laid out his theory and his interest in the remains and how Professor Norman Rumble could assist. Boran explained that from the writings and drawing he had found

## CHALICE

both at Angkor Wat, and Angkor Thom, the cavern appeared to have been used during ancient times as a military garrison, to house soldiers and their families.

The team surmised that this had been the last line of defence against any invading Thai army attacking the Ta Promh temple.

They assumed that the ancients would have had lookouts in the temple and if they spotted any army approaching, they would get the monks to safety and, March warriors through the cave and out to the rear of Ta Promh temple, thus enabling a surprise attack on the flank of the invaders.

However, it appeared from the evidence collected that no attacks ever came, although an underground community seemed to have developed as they had found evidence of livestock in the form of partially fossilized droppings and cart tracks from the start of the precipice, which could be a sign that they'd brought in provisions.

The professor looked puzzled

“What has that got to do with the Mori-Ori tribes and why do you need me?” enquired Rumble.

Boran then went on to show the professor the trinkets found in a few of the boxes and some skulls of the old cavern dwellers. Boran pointed out that some had more Negro characteristics. Boran went on to explain how he'd found teeth and bones that appeared to be from two different peoples. He wanted Norman to use his techniques to check to see if there were any DNA differences. Boran told Norm that he had blood and urine samples taken from a living member of a hill tribesman in Ratanakiri, and he hoped that the professor could determine the hereditary and thus prove his theory that the extinct Mori-Ori tribes had come to Cambodia, integrated with the Khmers and served as soldiers.

Professor Rumble agreed to try, but told them that it may take some time, the computers of the 70's had been slow and



cumbersome. The one Rumble owned took up the space of one room in his lab.

The other problem was they had no sample from the original Mori-Ori's. That was maybe an obstacle that could be overcome at a later stage, if they dug one up and Boran told Norman that some other of his team members were currently on the New Zealand islands scouring for remains. He went on to explain that some of the skeletal remains around the cave had been found in shallow graves, but there appeared to be no evidence of violence amongst the remains, so it seemed that from the age and stage of the teeth and bone decay that the skeletons of young and old folk, had probably died from natural causes, or disease.

Later that evening Boran and the professor, laden with samples and a cache of catfish, caught in the river topside, returned to Boran's house and ate. They drank several glasses of wine and Norman tried to communicate, with the assistance of Boran and Roth, with Theary, who was flattered and amused by this polite Barang, foreigner.

Norm tried over the next few days in Boran's crude makeshift laboratory within the cavern, he soon became that he needed his own equipment and planned to return to New Zealand. Although he wanted to spend a few more evenings in the company of Boran, Roth and, especially Theary.

Rumble flew back to New Zealand a week later to continue with the analysis.

*Cambodian people are known as 'Khmer'*

## **CHALICE**

## – Chapter Five –

Detective Inspector Donal Crinigan was writing a staff progress report on a Detective Nathan Rock, when there came a knock on his office door.

“Come in,” said Crinigan and looked up to face a man in a white laboratory coat.

“Brendan me old bollix, what brings you to the real side of the police department?” joked Crinigan.

“This does,” said Brendan O’Donnell also from Ireland and head of forensics at the Met.

Crinigan slid his report to one side and looked the file O’Donnell placed in front of him.

“What is it?” asked Donal

“It’s the report that you asked for from Phnom Penh to identify the dead body they’d found” said O’Donnell.

“And?” enquired Crinigan

“And nothing,” said O’Donnell, “these DNA fingerprints and blood samples do not match dental records we obtained for this individual. There are two people here, not one, and the blood cells are certainly nothing that I have ever come across before.

Crinigan looked at the report and then at O’Donnell.

Looking confused, he picked up the telephone and asked the Met operator to call Clerk in Cambodia.

“Hello, Timothy here, how are you Donal?” said the voice on the phone.

Crinigan switched to speakerphone,

“Confused,” said Crinigan “according to our forensic team these are samples from two bodies”.

“I know it’s baffled us too,” said Clerk “but I can assure you inspector, I was present when the samples were taken and

## CHALICE

it was only from one body. . . . Has the body arrived yet?" asked Clerk.

"No," O'Donnell intervened, "only the report, the body is "due in this afternoon."

"Ok," said Clerk "maybe wait until you examine that, maybe that might shed some light on something, but it has confused the hell out of us."

"Ok, Timothy, we will do that, thanks." Crinigan then hung up and spoke to O'Donnell.

"Have you got anything at all on this Brendan?"

"I have a name, address and next of kin details for the blood, DNA and fingerprints, but the dental records are no use at this stage, because the ones from Phnom Penh don't match the ones we obtained from Dr. Baker, the Brighton dentist, this morning."

"Ok," said Crinigan "anything would be a start, let me see what you have."

O'Donnell handed Crinigan another folder and he took a glance.

"Right," said Donal "I will wait and see what you can dig up from the autopsy. . . . Thanks Brendan."

"See you later" said O'Donnell and left the office

Crinigan moved the files to one side and returned to Nathan Rock's staff report, but unable to concentrate he put his pen down and glared blankly at the wall.

'This,' he thought, 'is going to be very interesting.'

## *- Chapter Six -*

The wind of change blew through Cambodia like a fierce tornado. Governments were being overthrown, and the monarchy was on the verge of collapse. The country was in disarray and nobody felt safe. This uncertainty would give way to the easy rise of the Khmer Rouge.

Both Norm and Boran became well aware of the rising tension within the country, but Rumble's analysis of the Mori-Ori connection was only 90%. He had isolated and compared genomes and chromosomes, but without the final piece of the puzzle, a specimen of DNA from the original Mori-Ori tribe, which at present could not be found, he could not be 100% certain.

Rumble, tired of the bureaucracy in New Zealand and the constant disturbances to his work by interfering officials, decided to re-locate his lab equipment, and himself, to Cambodia, to be with his friends and family, Boran, Roth, and his new wife, Theary. He transported his equipment by boat up the Tonle Sap River, then to the smaller Siem Reap River and then by lorry to the cavern near Ta Prohm, with the help of teams of builders and other scientists.

Over the next few years, generators, building materials and some modern day conveniences' had been brought in and they had built a small, but functional community in the ghosts of the twelfth century homestead, which included a laboratory. As time went on, due to the state and disarray of the country, they'd spent more time in the cavern. Norman spent most of the day within his laboratory. Days turned into weeks, then months, then years and more and more people came into the

## CHALICE

cavern to escape from the Communist Party of Kampuchea, the Khmer Rouge.

News came in the afternoon of 17 April 1975 that the Khmer Rouge had marched victoriously into Phnom Penh. The extermination had started the total annihilation of the Cambodian culture and people had begun.

### YEAR ZERO

This dramatic news brought a mass influx into the cavern of people and machines from Siem Reap. Teachers, doctors, tradesmen, came along with their families seeking sanctuary, in fear of their lives. Bulldozers and heavy excavating equipment and building materials started to pour in, as people tried to get their livelihood and assets hidden away.

There were now 220 Cambodian men, women and children inhabiting the underground citadel, along with one brilliant New Zealand scientist. They all worked together to secure the cavern and cut large sentry ports into the rock above the level of the ledge, these were entered by railings, so the guards could enter the sentry holes and have a vantage point that overlooked the entry ledge, similar to the archers slit in old English castle defences.

This early warning system for the citadel could be easily defended,

They built basic wood and brick dwellings, school rooms, and a communal kitchen. A small hospital was added onto the laboratory, and the ancient Ta Prohm elevator had been updated, and was now electrically powered.

They also blocked a section at the entrance to the cave, leaving only a small entrance for cattle and provisions and installed several cranes. Bulldozers and ball breakers had been used to flatten out the small and large stalagmites and stalactites. Air was supplied by pumps fitted on the surface

## **Robert A. Webster**

and the machinery hidden behind the large waterfalls to hide the noise.

The lighting system had been improved and the cave was alight with large 100 watt bulbs. The sewerage waste went through a series of pipes leading into the running stream outside the cave and a large opening was dug out of the rock for any septic waste and storage tanks.

Small dune buggy type vehicles flitted around with supplies and workers. They posted lookouts and scouts both inside the cave and outside at the temple, armed with AK47 rifles and thunder flash grenades, to warn of any Khmer Rouge patrols.

The inhabitants of the cavern lived relatively normal and safe lives, unlike the rest of Cambodia and its people, who were, unbeknownst to the citadel occupants, being exterminated in their droves.

The scientist spent their days working on their specific projects and Norman made great progress with his research, assisted as always by Boran.

## **CHALICE**



## – Chapter Seven –

Ratray was escorted into Taksin’s office by a smartly dressed lady in traditional Thai dress.

Taksin and Pon were sat at Taksin’s large mystat teak desk and going over some final details on having the temple closed off to the public.

“Good afternoon, Khun Taksin and Prime Master,” said Ratray giving both men a respectful wai.

“Good afternoon, Ratray” said Taksin and he and Pon returned the wai.

Noi, Taksin’s personal assistant, wai’d and left the room.

Ratray Sesilin, the head geologist, mineralogist and gemmologist in Thailand, who had and identified the minerals around Salaburi and surrounding mines.

“We have a problem,” announced Taksin as he gave the box to Ratray.

Pon joined in and told Ratray what had happened, or not happened as it was in this case, and told her that they thought the box might have been switched.

Ratray went into her bag and took out enlarged photos of the box. She picked up the box and examined it against the photos and then, using a jewellers’ loupe, studied the gemstones on the lid and sides.

“Chatham’s!” she exclaimed.

“What?” enquired Pon and Taksin?

“Chatham’s,” repeated Ratray and went on to explain. “The box, appeared perfect in every detail, except for two rubies and three sapphires, which are Chatham’s, in other

## CHALICE

words, grown in a lab. This box gentlemen, I am afraid is a fake!”

*Chatham's : In 1938 after many years of research a young scientist Carroll.F Chatham from San Francisco discovered the secret to growing Emeralds by duplicating conditions within the earth (the proper temperature, pressure and chemical properties)he was able to actually grow gems in his laboratory. Possessing the same physical and optical properties as mined gems.*

*This process has remained a closely guarded family secret and in the 60 years following, has developed and grown all types of gems, rubies, sapphires and diamonds flooding the market with cheaper and easily affordable gemstones, that were virtually indistinguishable from the real gems*

A worried look came over the faces of Pon and Taksin. They surmised that the box must have been switched within the last 24 hours, so whoever did this had a maximum of 24 hours head start. Taksin thanked Ratray and apologised for his hastiness in dismissing her, but she understood and realised this was a serious situation and would require immediate attention. Taksin got on his intercom.

“Noi has the information from immigration arrived yet?” asked Taksin.

“Yes sir,”

“Ok, bring it in, and then escort Khun Ratray to the dining room and organise her some lunch.” Taksin ordered and turning to Ratray said

“I trust you’re hungry Ratray, we will join you if we have time, but if not Noi will take care of you.”

Noi entered and placed a pile of files on Taksin’s desk and escorted Ratray out of the room.

Pon and Taksin waded through the files immediately.

Taksin felt a new tension in the air and noticed Pon had become sullen and he knew what was going through the warriors mind ‘the Tinju had failed, again’ and Taksin also knew whoever did this, would certainly pay the ultimate sacrifice at the hands of Pon.

They had spent two hours going through the entry forms from the immigration. Taksin looked up and smiled,

“Pon, look at this”

Both men scrutinised the immigration document that had a photograph stapled to the right hand top corner.

**Family name: Namsok First name: Tar**

**Date of entry 5th May 2008**

Pon looked confused,

“What makes you suspect him?” he asked

“Look at his employment and his employer”

Pon looked again and did not fully understand, but the name of the employer was familiar.

“He has put down, security force, and his employer, Colonel Tighe Nye. Colonel Tighe Nye is a well known ex Khmer rouge, turned government forces soldier and a leading politician in the CPP, Cambodian People’s Party, and it was Colonel Tighe who requested to borrow the relic a few weeks ago.” explained Taksin and tapped on the document “This must be the culprit”

Pon looked at the document again and noticed the date of departure from Thailand.

“That’s today” he said and Taksin immediately picked up the phone.

“Noi,” he said “Speak to immigration and check as to whether a Mr. Tar Namsok has left Thailand. Oh, and has Ratrav left?”

“Immediately, Khun Taksin and yes, Ratrav left, she thanked you for a delicious meal, but didn’t want to disturb you”.

## CHALICE

Pon and Taksin decided the next course of action; this would be easy to pick this man up at any border crossing when he tried to leave, so they both breathed a sigh of relief.

“Don’t worry Pon, we will get it back,” comforted Taksin although knowing the Tinju was not concerned with the recovery, he would be more annoyed that it was allowed to be taken in the first place.

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Switching the relic had been easier than Tar imagined. The timing and planning had been perfect, which he expected as Colonel Tighe Nye was a meticulous planner and great mentor.

He had entered Thailand two days earlier to observe the temple and its routine, posing as a tourist and was easily allowed access into the temple and palace grounds. He resembled a Thai, so nobody gave him a second glance. The box he carried in his pocket was an exact replica of the genuine one and, if things went according to plan, nobody would ever suspect the relic had ever been switched. Tar had been assured by the master jeweller who had copied the box that it was a perfect copy.

The jeweller however, thought he would cut corners and save money by using Chatham rubies and sapphires, which would be exactly the same as the original, same hardness same colour and a lot cheaper, so he could pocket the extra. However, Chatham’s do not have the same brilliance or refraction under the intense light, the Buddha’s sunlight.

Tar spent a few days working out the monk’s routine and had snuck in behind the massive Buddha statue on the second night and watched as the four guard monks herded the tourists out and bolted the door. The monks would then go over to the

statue, light some incense sticks and remain for the next four hours chanting and meditating. Two monks would then leave the temple to go to eat, leaving two to meditate, and then swap over. At midnight the monks would roll out their mats and sleep in front of the statue, so the remnants were guarded 24 hours a day.

Tar had been advised to time the switch for when the Prime Master was away, in case he came to the temple, as he would figure out something was wrong.

Colonel Tighe informed Tar that the Prime Master would be visiting Cambodia on the 7th and 8th May with the Crown Prince for an audience with the Cambodian King. Tar decided to make the switch on the 8th, which only gave him that morning to make his getaway.

Tar went unnoticed as the monks went about their duties and found himself a purchase on the statue. Tar, because of his military training as a sniper, knew that he could stay camouflaged and motionless for days and his gold coloured undergarment and backpack blended in perfectly against the statue.

The next day as the monks unbolted the door to let the throngs of tourists in, he changed and mingled with the crowds as he planned his escape route and, he knew that even with his inside contact, he only had a limited window of opportunity, as the Prime Master would be back the following day.

That night as the monks slept, he climbed down from his hiding place, took a small cylinder out of his back pack and a small face filter. He turned the valve, and nitrous oxide bathed the sleeping monk's faces. Tar left the cylinder in situ while he scaled to the top of the statue. Once at the head, he removed the housing, exchanged the fake holy relic, put the genuine on in his pack and replaced the case. He slid down to

## CHALICE

the base of the statue, turned off the sleeping gas cylinder, put it in his bag and returned to his hiding place.

The following day, unaware of what had transpired, the monks opened the temple doors and the masses came into the temple for the morning viewing, although the holy light show never occurred until the sun appeared overhead, people came and went throughout the day, to look at the palace and book a space for that afternoon's spectacle.

The tourists wandered in and scrutinised by the four guard monks armed with their 'Siamen' swords. The tourists milled around the temple and pointed at the holy relic, the emerald, the statue, the architecture and the monks.

From all over the world, people flocked into the Royal Palace and most would spend the day touring around as it is an interesting place, especially amongst the annoying Japanese and their clicking cameras.

*Siamen swords are the swords used by Tinju. Similar to the Katana swords of the Samurai. The Siamen swords have a serrated side and are made by folding two types of steel together then coated with clay and baked six times. They are very sharp and very strong and easy to re-sharpen. The handle is longer than the Katana, but heavier due to the weight of the Pitou contained within it, so balanced to throw.*

The guards stood motionless at the side of the temple, eyes staring ahead and unaware that they'd had a blissful night sleep, courtesy of Tar, who now mingled among the tourists wearing a shirt and jeans. He casually walked out of the temple and palace grounds and got into a taxi

"Where too?" asked the driver.

"Aranyaprathet," replied Tar.

"That will be 2500 baht" said the driver suspiciously.

"Make it there in less than 3 hours and I'll give you 3000" said Tar holding out 3 x 1000 baht notes

“Are you going to the casino in Poi Pet?” asked the driver, assuming Tar was Thai

“Yes,” said Tar not wanting to get into a conversation with the driver.

They arrived at the border crossing at noon, Tar got out, thanked the driver and headed for immigration and exited Thailand and went into Cambodia. He rushed into the nearest food shack and ordered three plates of Luk-Lak; he had not eaten for two days.

*Gambling in Thailand is illegal and many Thais enjoy a flutter, so they go over the borders into Cambodia, Burma or Laos. Many plush casinos have been built to accommodate this exodus. It's a strange sight to see high rise plush casinos amid the poverty and begging of the many border crossing. Most casinos are located at Poi Pet the Cambodian northernmost border.*

The intercom squawked in Taksin's office, it was Noi.

“Khun Taksin, immigration reported that Tar Namsok exited Thailand through the Aranyaprathet crossing this morning and was now in Cambodia.”

“Damn” groaned Taksin “This has given us an entirely different set of problems” he said.

Pon looked enraged and knew what he must do now.

“Excuse me Khun Taksin.” Said Pon as stood up to leave

“Wait Prime Master, we must plan our next course of action carefully, we have the monarchy to consider.”

Pon knew Taksin was right and went and sat back down

Taksin pointed out that they now faced several problems. Tar was across the border and Pon could not cross into Cambodia, because of his position as Defender of the Monarch, therefore for him to be there, without the Crown Prince, would be too

## CHALICE

suspicious and could cause yet another rift in the fragile Thai, Cambodian relationship.

He also knew that if Colonel Tighe Nye had been responsible for sending Tar on this mission, he would also know that if found out, the Thais would send the Prime Master of the Tinju to recover the relic and would be expecting him

Pon thought that he could try to sneak over, the same as before, but Taksin told him that if he were to be caught, he would have entered illegally and end up in jail.

Pon tried to argue, that he had done it before, but Taksin pointed out that before, they hadn't known who he was, and now the militia and police would be on the lookout for him as Tighe was a powerful man.

They pondered for a moment.

“We will have to send someone else,” announced Taksin

“No,” said Pon “I am the only one who will recover the relic, so to send someone else is out of the question.”

Taksin knew that Pon would insist he also knew he would not be able to talk him out of it.

“Ok Prime Master” said a defeated Taksin, and then after a few minutes silence, a plan formulated in his mind

“I have an idea,” said Taksin, “but it will be risky,” Taksin told Pon of his plan and concluded by saying.

“You still may get caught,” he said, “but we may be able to overcome that hurdle. . . . I will call my friends in Cambodia to make the arrangements.” Taksin, although worried felt positive about the plan.

Pon also had an idea pop into his head, which would make Taksin's scheme more credible and he laid out his part of the plan.

“That sounds great, but it is dependent on some important factors Pon.” Said Taksin

“I know,” said Pon, with an impish smirk, “but I am sure Buddha will help with that.”



## Robert A. Webster

Pon picked up the phone and asked Noi to check something with immigration. She returned on the intercom a few moments later, affirming what Pon had just enquired about.

“Told you,” said Pon, to a now even more worried Taksin.

Pon again picked up the telephone and asked Noi to get him a telephone number,

“If you can get the paperwork that we discussed organised Khun Taksin, I will leave as soon as the documents are ready,” said Pon

“I will see to it immediately Prime Master” said Taksin as Pon announced

“Please excuse me I need to go to get my equipment prepared” announced Pon

Taksin knew that equipment meant his weapons and he knew that the defender of the Monarch was now back as he should be, Prime Master and Tinju warrior, who had another duty to conclude.

“I have that number for you Prime Master” said Noi over the intercom.

Pon dialled the number and after a few seconds, a voice answered.

“Sawasdee Hotel, how may I help you?”

## **CHALICE**

## *- Chapter Eight -*

Between 1975 and 1979, the underground Citadel had developed exponentially. It was now named 'Let-cum-baan', the Cambodian word for sanctuary.

Because of the uncertainty of the current events in Cambodia, for the first few years everybody worked night and day to turn it into a home for their futures

The Khmer Rouge had systematically exterminated all educated 'new people' and the whereabouts of the cavern, and citadel had been kept secret.

Boran, who knew his archaeology days were over for now, boxed and stored all the remains and artefacts that he and his team had collected, 'Maybe one day we can continue where we left off' he thought as he closed the lid on his last box of bones.

He and his team now spent their time with Rumble, learning his techniques and assisting with his research. Boran's wife Roth gave birth to their son in 1976, followed by the birth of Norman and Theary's son in 1977.

Rumble and Ngem spent most of their time in the laboratory. Their work had now taken on an extra urgency in order to survive. The ancient lift that led to the temple above had been modernised and, now well lit with electric power it was faster and allowed the lookout's an easy, quick and invisible getaway, should they spot any Khmer Rouge patrols. Small metal rungs were built into the rock along the side of the elevator to maintain the machinery. This ladder ran up to the surface, via a small ledge and into a compartment approximately 1 metre high. This would come out underneath an ancient burial slab outside the temple wall, which would be another way of escape, in case any lookout became trapped outside the temple. The mouth of the cave had been partly

## CHALICE

sealed, leaving a small space for access to allow people to leave or enter Let-cum-baan with supplies. Air got pumped into the cavern from outside by natural occurring fissures and pumps, strategically placed and powered by hydro–electric power generators that an engineering team from the cavern dwellers had set under the waterfalls, which replaced the noisy diesel generators both outside and inside the Cavern.

A new lighting system had been developed, so the cave could be lit during the day with the same brightness as sunlight, and dimmed for the evening.

It was dangerous to leave the cavern and everybody knew that if they got caught they would surely be killed.

Rumble and Ngem had considered that they, and the other inhabitants could be in the cavern for the remainder of their lives, so they all worked towards being totally self sufficient and to create a new civilisation in this age of uncertainty.

Boran and Norm's research gained momentum and, in 1977 the first banana was picked from a tree grown in a large orchard section of grassland created within the cavern.

Norm and Boran work, now centred on creating genetically modified, flora and fauna, vegetables, grass and fruit, by altering their genetic structure.

With the introduction of RNA enzymes and nucleotides from the moss which thrived around the small freshwater lake inside the citadel and by altering the grass and floras DNA, they'd created a hardy form of plant life that required little or no light as photosynthesis was accelerated within the plant. They germinated the seeds they developed and grew a small patch of grass within a few days. This was followed a few days later by, spinach, beans and then carrots and potatoes. Over the next few weeks they'd brought in soil from outside and, with the addition of chemicals developed by Norm and Ngem to enhance it, a large area at the side of the cavern had now become a sustainable pasture. However they still had to go outside to farm their staple food source, rice, but due to the

storage time of dry rice, they rapidly built up stocks. They cultivated rice paddies within the fertile, wet-lands outside Angkor Thom. It took a while longer for the fruit trees to grow and to produce fruit, but the accelerants in the soil knocked off several years from the natural development time and so when the first banana was picked, it was a poignant day for the inhabitants of let-cum-baan.

These trees would produce 4 crops a year instead of the usual one. They also grew mango and pineapples, which would be ready to harvest sometime over the next few weeks. This section Norman named as 'The Garden of Eden'

The people within the citadel had been kept up to date with recent events in Cambodia, from a small radio station that had been built by the engineer and Norm kept up with current news from around the world, especially any groundbreaking news in his field of research. Although, due to his circumstance he had become far advanced on any of his peers.

Ta Prohm had been ignored. It was not a place the Khmer Rouge patrols would trespass as the Angkor grounds and temples were considered taboo, because Khmers held a great fear of ghosts and thought the temple at Ta Prohm to be haunted. The rumours abound of strange noises and lights pulsing out of the ground, so the Khmer Rouge patrols avoided the area, therefore they were relatively safe

As time went by, the cattle that had been previously slaughtered outside and the meat fetched in, could now be brought in alive and live off the modified roots and grass on the field within the citadel, which also supplied the occupants with fresh milk as well as meat, although there was a problem as the cows never lived for more than a couple of weeks. Norm put down to something in their genes not enabling them

## CHALICE

to survive on the modified food and he spent the next few months isolating the offending genomes.

Towards the end of 1978. One cow produced a calf that had been cloned and artificially inseminated.

Norm and Boran had achieved this by altering and replacing 42000 offending DNA strands. The cow had a lab created embryo implanted and, although the pregnancy was short, and the cow had to be left outside the cave in order to survive, she gave birth to a healthy calf

This became a nerve racking time for the citadel as the cow had to be tethered outside and well hidden, because if a passing Khmer Rouge patrol, had stumbled across her, a search would be on to find out who had tethered the animal.

The calf grew rapidly and, although its mother had died several days after its birth, it developed and flourished. Borans son named the cow Jake, the Khmer word for banana, as the young calf seemed to have developed a liking for them

*Rumble had successfully cloned an animal 11 years sooner, than his good friend, Professor Ian Wilmut, cloned 'Dolly' the sheep.*

This ground breaking revelation and birth meant the citadel could now look forward to total self sufficiency for the future. The technicians and engineers came up with a new source of power to work with the hydro and developed ways to use the abundant supply of dung and produced methane fuel.

Although Norm and Boran were overjoyed with Jake, they both realised this process could be improved upon so it wouldn't require a host, but they knew that this could take a lifetime to develop, because the massive information storage technology was not available to them at that time.

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## Robert A. Webster

“Look Comrade Commander” said a young soldier dressed in Khua Khmoa Arve Khmoa, black pyjamas, and Kror mar Kror harm, red and white checked bandana, the uniform of the Khmer rouge. He carried a rifle that was almost the same size as him. He pointed at something in the undergrowth that had caught his attention.

The commander went over to look and stared at two hectares of empty freshly picked wet rice paddy.

‘There were no comrades working near this temple from my province. This field should not exist.’ He thought, and puzzled by this, decided that it must be ‘new people’ hiding rice from Angka, the organisation, and feeding themselves, which violated every code for being a good citizen.

“It is new people they must be found and re-educated” he ordered and continued. “They are the cause of our downfall,” he told his men.

He ordered his soldiers to look for any trails, while he waited in the bushes. His six man patrol split up and went further into the jungle area to scout. The patrol returned two hours later and two of them reported finding two pregnant cows, tethered near a large cave mouth. The soldiers regrouped, went to the tethered cow’s position and found the cave entrance.

Suspicious and wary the soldiers entered the cave, they had only one torch between them that the commander held onto and went about 50 yards to the rear of the cave.

“It’s a dead end comrade,” said one soldier.

“Wait,” said the commander, “listen.”

A faint hum emanated from behind what appeared to be a solid wall of stone.

The commander edged around a mound of rocks and out onto the large gully precipice that overlooked the cavern. They cautiously walked a little further until they stood on the

## CHALICE

edge of the precipice and became shocked by the sight that greeted them.

Artificial sunlight bathed the citadel as people went about their work, which resembled a busy ant colony.

The soldiers, amazed to see lush green pastures and livestock happily grazing, also noticed orchards, houses, a school, a large laboratory and hospital with children playing and swimming in a cavern lake.

The soldiers couldn't understand anything about this Garden of Eden.

“Where did it come from?” asked a soldier

“New people,” sneered the commander and shouldered his AK47

The other soldiers followed suit and aimed their weapons into the cavern at some individuals in the distance. One soldier was then suddenly and violently spun around as a bullet smashed into his shoulder, followed by a croaking sound, as another silenced bullet hit another soldier, through the mouth and exited his neck.

The remaining Khmer Rouge panicked as they could not see or hear the direction of the shots and then as another soldier fell down dead, the commander saw a muzzle flash, from an opening on the wall of the cavern.

Another flash from the opening above and a fourth soldier fell, blood exploding from his torso. The commander ran to the edge of the precipice to get a clear shot at the opening, and he aimed. A bullet struck him in the knee and his leg gave way and sent him plummeting into the abyss. The two remaining soldiers ran back towards the rocks to escape, but are soon cut down with bullets to their heads.

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Darkness gave way to a bright light and the Commander opened his eyes.



## Robert A. Webster

“He is awake!” shouted a homely looking woman in a nurses’ uniform

A man in a white coat came over and spoke to the Commander.

“You are a lucky boy you should be dead after that fall”

The commander felt pain in his legs and looked down at them, both now in a plaster cast.

“We took the bullets out, but you broke both your legs in the fall. Lucky for you we have our refuse tip under where you fell, so shit broke your fall” said the man and smiled.

“New people,” the commander said through grated his teeth and tried to move, but the pain in his body kept him still.

“Now sonny,” said the man “what’s your name?”

\*\*\*\*

Tighe Nye had been taken from his parents and indoctrinated into the Khmer Rouge prior to the fall of Phnom Penh. His parents were pheasant farmers in Kandal province, which made Tighe one of the base people, country folk /farmers, and therefore eligible to join the Khmer rouge.

He had proven his courage many times in clashes with the government forces and quickly rose through the ranks and the province leader made him his second in command .He was ruthless with the new people and his philosophy was ‘Brother number one (Pol Pot) and Angka doesn’t need them, so why do I, they are only useful as fertilizer for the crops’. He had executed many of the new people within his province sometimes killing and gutting a mother just for fun, he hardly knew, or wanted to know his family, he only needed Angka  
The organisation,

Tighe, now 15 years old, was the eldest of his now dead scout troop. He enjoyed going out on patrols in case he came upon a straggler, then he and his men could have some fun, especially if it happened to be a girl that they could rape and kill. Now, with the Khmer rouge being forced to retreat into the jungles

## CHALICE

by the liberation forces, he had decided to investigate the ruins and ambush any soldiers behind them, and to also show his men that he wasn't afraid of ghosts. To stumble upon some renegade new people was indeed a bonus.

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Tighe dozed in his hospital bed, he'd been pain free after he had been given morphine and as the narcotic took effect he went off into a blissful sleep.

He awoke to shouting and screaming coming from outside his hospital room, and then he heard laughter as a man came into the room, looking jubilant.

"Are you awake?" He said to the boy.

Tighe just stared at him

"We have just heard the news it's terrific, you have lost, the liberation forces have overwhelmed the Khmer rouge and like the beasts they are, have fled into the jungle," snarled the man "and good riddance," he continued.

*7th January 1979 is a date etched into every Cambodian man woman and child. It is the day when the Vietnamese along with many disgruntled Khmer rouge factions in the east and south of the country ousted the Khmer rouge from power and regained Control of Cambodia. Although it would take many more years to stabilise the country it was a start. Cambodia was liberated.*

Tighe lay in his bed unable to move, the shock news plus his broken, shot legs and battered body made movement difficult. He wanted to rip the man's throat out. 'This', he thought, 'Is the worst day of my life'.

He thought wrong; it was about to become the first day.

The people within the Let-cum-baan had no real idea of the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge. They were a society closed off, and all the news had come from the BBC World Service on their radios and due to reporters and any outsiders being on the Khmer Rouge shit-list the news had been sketchy.

The townsfolk of Siem Reap had all been moved in a mass exodus by the Khmer Rouge to the countryside work camps, so that was now a city of ghosts.

This tiny amount of knowledge had been important for Tighe's well being; if they had known the full truth about the Khmer Rouges atrocities, Tighe would have surely been killed. The man left Tighe's room and rejoined the citadels' celebrations.

Hours passed and Tighe fell in and out of consciousness. The door opened and a foreign man entered, looked at Tighe's chart and went to sit on the chair at the side of his bed. Tighe had never seen a foreigner before and turned to face the jovial looking professor.

"My name's Norman," said the professor in fluent Cambodian.

Tighe just stared at this strange man.

Now you know my name, how about you tell me yours?" asked Norm.

Tighe just stared in silence.

"Okay then, have it your way."

Norm went on to explain to Tighe about his injuries and his treatment and prognosis,

"You may have a limp, but at least we have saved your legs."

Norm went on explaining, until a tap on the door disturbed him and Theory entered the room carrying Norman Junior.

## CHALICE

“There you are,” said Theory “I’ve been looking everywhere for you” she said and went over and sat on Tighe’s bed.

“Hello,” said Theory to Tighe “say hello Norman,” and waved the infants arm at Tighe, Norm Jnr smiled and chuckled.

“He’s the quiet type, won’t even tell us his name” said Norman.

“Here, hold the baby Norm, the poor boy’s sweating” Theory handed the baby to Norm and went over to the sink, got a bowl of cold water and a cloth, and wiped the sweat off Tighe’s face.

Tighe stared passed Theory and gazed at the baby and Norm, who threw the infant up into the air and caught him, the child gurgled happily by his father’s entertainment.

“Don’t do that darling,” Theory said “he has just been fed and he will be ...”

The warning came too late and on the downward stroke, a large gush of milky vomit splattered the top of Norms head.

Theory grabbed the still chuckling baby and Norm got his handkerchief and wiped his head.

“Serves you right!” said Theory.

“My name is Tighe,” said Tighe, chuckling

“Nice to meet you Tighe,” said Norm still wiping the vomit from his face “This is my wife Theory, and that little monster is Norman Junior”

Tighe smiled at the family, he had never had a childhood, but this felt normal.

Over the next few weeks the citadel became quieter as some of the dwellers started to leave and return to rebuild their homes and start a new Cambodia, even though it would take years to stabilise the country, they could make a start. The citadel inhabitants had a meeting and agreed to keep the

existence of Let-cum-baan a closely guarded secret, as they may one day have to return.

Within the space of a few weeks, all but 60 of the inhabitants had left the place they called home and returned to the old lives and homes that had been violently forced away from them.

The Citadel was silent, which suited Rumble and Ngem, as their research became difficult and they realised the enormous task that lay ahead of them would probably not be achievable in their lifetime, or possibly several generations, unless technology improved dramatically.

Tighe's rehabilitation had been slow and painful and hobbled around on crutches. He had become close with Norman and Theory and he doted on Norman Junior, and helped Theory with chores, which mainly entailed playing with Norman Junior and Tu Ngem, Borans son.

As Tighe's mobility improved, he started helping around the citadel. The remaining occupants found him a likeable lad, and he would spend time tending the created cattle, especial Jake. Tighe had become a carefree and happy adolescent, who relished responsibility and he became trusted and respected by everyone in the citadel. He lived well and learned to read and write unlike the majority of his kinsfolk as during Khmer Rouge era education had been banned. Norm taught him English along with his and Borans son.

Tighe didn't want to return to the outside world, he had come to realise the brainwashing of the Khmer rouge, had been in total violation of humanity and he was ashamed of the part he had played. However, news on TV and radios had informed people about sporadic fighting between liberation forces and small pockets of Khmer Rouge fighters, so with a heavy heart, three years after he'd arrived at the citadel, Tighe told Norm and the others of his intention to return to the outside world and join the fighting, as a government soldier

## **CHALICE**

and quash the Khmer Rouge once and for all. Rumble gave Tighe a few thousand dollars in order to help him with his life outside, and the community wished him a safe journey.

Tighe left the citadel on 3rd June 1982 and set off to join an infantry battalion at Siem Reap. He would return many times to the citadel to visit his adopted family, Norman and Theary, his father and mother, but especially his younger brothers Norman Jnr and Tu.

## *- Chapter Nine -*

Cattle in Cambodia wander un-tethered around towns and villages. Nobody seems to own them and nobody seems to care. They just happily amble on looking for the best cud and sleep where they feel like it, usually in the middle of roads. The Khmers are used to this but it is strange for foreigners to comprehend, as you have to spend most of your time avoiding them on motorbikes and, as they have no highway code sense, they can just step out in front of you and cow vs. man on bike, cow always win. Buses however are a different kettle of fish.

Nick had woken up at around lunchtime. He felt rough, his head throbbed and he had a taste in his mouth like he had just eaten a lump of elephant dung and, when he cupped his hand to smell his breath it was like the farts of 1000 camels. He thought back to the previous night and recalled the last thing he'd remembered.

Richard had returned to the brothel to collect Nick after Lilly had made his todger screechy clean,

The pair then headed to the Heart of Darkness disco, a lively late night disco on street 51. It didn't take Nick long to return to the wankered state and as his face drooped he realised that; he couldn't go on and wanted to sleep. Richard helped him into a tuk-tuk gave the driver instructions and they sped off with Richard hollering behind

“See you tomorrow”.

## CHALICE

Nick showered and dressed and went out of the hotel, into the hot sunny Phnom Penh Street. The sun beat down; blinding him and aggravating his hang over.

‘Sod this’ he thought and went back inside, to his room and back to bed.

‘Bloody Richard is an animal,’ he thought ‘I will avoid him, but at least nothing bad has happened to me, those two jinxes aren’t here’.

He pulled the covers over his head and snoozed Eventually re-surfacing at 7pm he went out into the night air and walked along the riverfront, until he reached an air-conditioned restaurant. He went into the cool restaurant and ordered some food. ‘I only want a quiet one tonight’ he thought ‘and hopefully won’t run into that animal, Richard.’ Nick had a few drinks in several bars along the riverfront and noticed some very nice ladies, but put off by having to pay a bar fine, so he took a motodop to the walkabout and had a look around. A young freelance lady caught his eye and he bought her a beer. They chatted for several minutes and left together and went to his room.

The lady left at 10am and Nick was bored he had wasted the previous day in bed, courtesy of animal and wanted to make the most of his holiday. He went downstairs to where a myriad of tuk-tuk’s and motodops converged and waited to pounce on customers. A driver approached Nick and asked him where he wanted to go and gave him four options. He decided, he didn’t want to see the killing fields or S21 and he had emptied his sacks already, so another brown chalice was out of the question, so he decided to try the shooting range the tuk-tuk made its way out of the city and the driver spoke to Nick.

“Do you want the regular range, or something a little bit special?”

“Special sounds good” replied Nick and the driver headed into the countryside and called up his friend on his mobile.



## Robert A. Webster

They had been driving for about 30 minutes, when the tuk-tuk pulled up at the bottom of a large field where two men were waiting for them. On the floor lay an old 1950's Bazooka.

'Great' thought Nick as he got out of the tuk-tuk and proceeded toward the men.

"\$50 to shoot our cow" said one of the men pointing to another man some distance away leading a cow along the field.

"Okay said Nick, not particularly wanting to shoot a cow, but he certainly wanted the chance to fire a bazooka, even though the sights had been adjusted to make sure nobody ever hit the cow. The man in the field held the cow on a long rope and signalled O.K.

Another man then picked up the bazooka and handed it to Nick, who rested it on his shoulder.

"Aim here and pull here," instructed the Cambodian.

"Pull what?" enquired Nick, as he touched the trigger. The shell erupted out of the muzzle and the recoil knocked Nick off his feet. The shell impacted into the side of the terrified animal exploding on impact, killing the poor creature instantly and sending bits of prime steak flying into the air over the field.

The two Cambodians next to Nick looked shocked and horrified. The Cambodian holding the cow now ran toward them in a state of total panic. Nick got to his feet and shoved back into the tuk-tuk,

"Keep your head down," said the driver as a bullet ricochet off the side of the vehicle.

"What's happening?" said Nick panicking as he saw a quad bike in the distance driving towards them along the field with the driver shooting a rifle at the fleeing Cambodians and Nick.

"Not our cow," said the driver now frantically throttling the little tuk-tuk to make a rapid getaway.

## CHALICE

Nick, still shocked, had the driver to take him back to the hotel. The driver explained that nobody had ever hit a cow before as the bazookas sights were altered, so usually the shell landed harmlessly in the next field.

Nick never aimed.

Nick 1.....Cows 0

Still in a state of shock, Nick decided to make himself scarce, and on arrival at the hotel asked the reception where would be good place to go, preferably with a beach

“Sihanoukville is a nice place, it’s about four hours away and right on the coast, would you like me to book you on the 2:30 pm bus?” said the receptionist.

“Yes,” he said “Thanks, I will go pack my belongings”

Nick checked out of the hotel, collected his bus tickets and caught the Mekong express bus to Sihanoukville.

*Sihanoukville, also known as Kampong Som, or Kampong Saom, is a port city in southern Cambodia on the Gulf of Thailand. The city was founded in 1964 to be the only deep water port in Cambodia (in part due to the waning power of the French leading to the Vietnamese tightening their control over the Mekong Delta and hence restricting river access to Cambodia) and its beaches have made it popular as a tourist destination.. The city is named after King Norodom Sihanouk.*

*Beaches that line the west contour of the city from north to south are Victory Beach, Lamherkay Beach, Koh Pos Beach, Independence Beach, Sokha Beach, Serendipity Beach, Occheuteal Beach and Otres Beach. The most popular beaches are Occheuteal, Sokha, Independence and Victory. Tourists can take water taxis to the nearby islands for diving, snorkelling, and game fishing.*

*The town centre is located in the centre of the peninsula and is seen as a distinct area for tourism promotion. It*

## Robert A. Webster

*contains the banks, bus station, shops, supermarkets and an outdoor market.*

The bus pulled into Sihanoukville at 6:30 as daylight faded. Nick ignored the hordes of tuk-tuk and moto drivers and walked along the side of the open air bus station. Nick noticed a few guesthouses and restaurant bars. One caught his eye, 'That must be English owned' he thought and made his way toward the sign. He entered the 'George & Dragon' and saw a red faced man behind the bar serving drinks to customers, Nick sat down.

"Mate, are you the owner?" enquired Nick

"Facking owner, barman, waiter, cook, cleaner, bottle washer, you name it, I am facking it" hollered George in a cockney accent with a beaming smile.

Nick taken aback by George's abruptness stammered.

"Have you got any rooms?"

"Facking rooms, where you from?" asked George

"Brighton" said Nick.

"Brighton, facking Brighton, me old cokka, course I have a room for you.

"I'm George" he introduced himself and continued "Nice to meet you, this is Tony, John and Steve" George went on introducing other customers at the bar "and that lovely lady" continued George pointing at a Khmer lady sat on a comfy chair "Is the dragon" he chuckled,

"Nick," said Nick as he shook George's hand.

"Do you still serve the Sunday roast this late?" enquired Nick after he'd noticed the blackboard outside.

"Yes we do," said George "You go and put your stuff in your room and I'll have a hot plateful waiting for you."

Nick went to a room and put his belongings on his bed 'this is alright' he thought 'only \$7 a night'.

Nick showered and went down into the restaurant. He ate a delicious roast and spent the next couple of hours talking to

## CHALICE

George, an ex lorry driver from London who also used to spend his time in Pattaya, but had visited Sihanoukville fell in love with both it and his wife who he had married the previous year. George explained to Nick where to go in Sihanoukville for a good time, these areas were out of the tourist areas, but easy to get to and George gave Nick the Sihanoukville Advertiser and told him everything to know is in there.

“This area is known as Downtown,” George informed him. He got on a moto outside the George & Dragon and told the driver to take him to one of George’s suggested points.

“Victory Hill” ordered Nick and the driver smiled and sped off.

Ten minutes later they arrived at the hill. He paid the driver, who said he would stay with him and take him around at his leisure for \$5 all night. Nick agreed and proceeded to walk along Victory Hill.

Victory Hill, is a small street bar complex well away from the beach resorts and lined with small bars, similar to Pattaya, but on a lot smaller scale. The majority of girlie bars are in this area due to its location away from the tourist spots.

The bars try unsuccessfully to emulate Pattaya bombarding customers with loud music.

Nick went into a lively bar called Bonobon and ordered a draft Angkor. A lady sat down next to him and started rubbing his neck,

“Massage” she said.

Nick ignored her and looked around the small smelly bar and his mind wandered to Pattaya and Luanne. He ordered another drink and his massage lady, who was an old tug, demanded,

“I massage you, buy me drink”

Nick bought the moose a drink and when an overpriced glass of wine came, he thought ‘This reminds me of the shit side of Pattaya.’

## Robert A. Webster

Disgruntled with the hill he got on the waiting moto,  
“Snake house” he said.

The moto drove for ten minutes and entered a large resort set back on its own.

The snake house is a modern and well designed resort, catering mainly for Russians, owned by an old family from Russia, who keep snakes and crocodiles in large tanks around the restaurant and a small, but elegant beer bar with swimming pool at the side. Nick went into the bar and ordered a drink. He gazed around the bar noticed how tasteful the decor had been set out, with a swimming pool and flat screen TV. An attractive girl caught his eye and she came over and politely asked Nick if he would like another beer.

“Not yet,” replied Nick “but let me buy you one” where them words come from, he will never know

“Thank you,” said the lady “Can I have a beer?”

Nick ordered the girl a beer and motioned for her to join him on the next stool.

The Cambodian thunderbolt had struck  
Nick and Shanti spoke for about an hour on all kinds of topics. Shanti spoke English and she explained that she had attended university. Nick, getting spannered became immersed in Shanti.

“Right,” he announced, “I will pay the bar and we can go.”

“Go where?” enquired Shanti.

“My room for a shag” slurred Nick.

“Sorry” said Shanti with a shocked expression “I am a hostess, not a taxi girl!”

“What’s the difference?” asked Nick sounding desperate.

“A lot!” fired back Shanti and got of her stool.

Nick sat gob smacked. What was this?

“Ket Loy,” the bill he growled.

He paid his bill and just about to leave, when Shanti returned to his side and pecked him on the cheek, “Sorry” she

## CHALICE

whispered, “but if you want I will go on the beach with you tomorrow.” and handed him a note with her phone number on it

Nick placed the note in his pocket and smiled at Shanti. He got onto the moto and asked the driver where the best place was for brown chalice.

The driver informed him, either freelance girls at Freedom or G’day mate, or if he didn’t want to chase it, Blue Mountain would be the place.

Nick decided on neither and returned to the George & Dragon and had a few more beers with George then went to bed. He had decided to rent a motorcycle the following day and take Shanti to the beach.

The next morning Nick woke early. He had a great night’s sleep in a comfortable room and thought about Shanti.

He ate a full English breakfast and went to find a motorbike to hire. He rented a nearly new black Honda wave and phoned Shanti,

“Hello Shanti, its Nick, We spoke last night and I called to see if the beach date was still on”

The phone went quiet, as Shanti collected her thoughts,

“Nick,” she said “How are you? Thanks for calling I thought I had upset you”

“I’m fine,” said Nick “and no, you didn’t upset me. I am sorry I tried to push you, I haven’t learnt about Cambodian people yet.”

Shanti laughed

“You will,” she said

“I want to,” said Nick not knowing were the bollocks that spewed out of his mouth came from.

“Okay,” said Shanti “I will meet you outside Dolphin Shack on Occheuteal beach at 2 pm,”

“Perfect,” said Nick “see you then.”

Nick hung up and looked at his guide book and found a map with directions to Occheuteal. Happy as a sand boy he decided to look for the beach that would bring him closer to Shanti, so he set off towards the beach. He drove round the golden lion roundabout and took the small road to take him to the beach, something ahead caught his eye. Three figures walked towards him on the opposite side of the road. He stared with shock and disbelief as he passed the men, who looked at him.

Two he'd recognised. Fear cut through him as he stared at the figures, who now seemed focused on something on the road ahead. Nick looked forward.

"Shit!" Nick pulled the front brake lever with such force the front wheel stopped dead, bringing up the rear end of the bike and launching Nick airborne. He flew through the air like a dart.

"He must be one of the most accident prone blokes on the planet!" said Spock

"He'll blame us for that" mumbled Stu

"I know," said Spock. "But I suppose that we had better help him get his head out of that cows arse."

The poor creature along with her calves and three other nomadic cows had been eating at the grass verge by the side of the road and now lazed in the centre of the road at their usual sunny spot. The old cow stood at the rear of the group with her month old calf. She had never expected that her lazy morning would be violently shattered.

After the initial shock, she let out a painful wailing Moo!! The others in the herd got up and bolted and the old cow started to run, with Nicholas Godfrey of Brighton's head stuck firm, his arms and legs flaying wildly.

Spock and Stu ran and caught hold of Nick's thrashing legs and held on firmly as the old cow carried on running and with a pop and a squelch, Nick was free. Pon recovered

## CHALICE

Nick's moto and wheeled it to a nearby bar, where Spock and Stu took the shocked, stunned, Nick.

The commotion had drawn a lot of attention and customers and staff at the restaurant, now in fits of laughter, helped the two lads and sat Nick was down outside the Cool Banana restaurant. Nick groggily looked around at Spock and Stu then noticed Pon, who although his face was vaguely familiar he could fully recognise the man with the Elvis mullet.

“Spock give him your hat and let him wipe that slime off his face” Stu chuckled

Spocks retort went unnoticed, as a laughing waitress appeared with a bowl of soapy water. She gave a towel to Nick to dry himself and then proceeded to wash his face and head to remove the cow snot. Nick, now coming around a little, looked at his two nemeses.

“What are you doing here?” he stuttered

“We are on a secret mission,” beamed Spock and nodded towards Pon.

“With the mad monk, with the mullet” continued Stu also nodding towards Pon.

“How about you, why are you here?” asked Spock.

“Holiday” said Nick, wiping the slime off from around his mouth.

The owner of the restaurant came out and enquired to whether Nick was okay as he tried not to laugh, and gave Nick a brandy which he knocked back.

“Where are you staying matey?” asked Stu

“Downtown,” replied Nick

“Fancy bumping into you here mate,” chuckled Spock,

“We only arrived here about one hour ago,” he continued and handed Nick a business card “We are right on the beach its fantastic”

Nick looked at the card ‘Coasters’ Serendipity Beach. Nick placed the card in his pocket ‘Won’t be needing that he



thought'. His faculties returned, so the waitress took the bowl away to the kitchen.

"Sorry lads" mumbled Nick "I need to go back to my hotel and clean up. I will join you later for a beer"

"Okay mate" said Stu and helped him stand up and get onto his bike "take it easy" said Stu

Nick, head still sore started up the bike, he looked ahead and saw the herd of cows now happily chewing the foliage off a bush at the patch of land at the top of the road. He noticed the old cow giving him the evil eye, then thought he saw her smile and wink.

Convinced that he was hallucinating, he drove off, leaving Stu, Spock and Pon, roaring with laughter at Nick, the walking calamity.

Nick rushed into the George & Dragon and George asked him if he was Okay.

"If you call getting your head stuck up a cow's fanny as being Okay, then yeah I'm peachy," said Nick sarcastically.

He rushed to his room packed his rucksack paid for his room and motorbike and then left. Nick ran over to the bus station and noticed only one outgoing bus.

"Where's this bus going and what time does it leave?" He wheezed.

"Siem Reap," said the girl in the office "and it leaves in 5 minutes."

"Right," said Nick catching his breath "Give me a one way ticket."

He took his lonely planet guide out of his bag, sat down and opened the guide at the Siem Reap section. His thoughts then turned to Shanti and he rang her to explain and apologise, she was a bit confused and wondered what had made him sound afraid. The bus pulled out of the station with Nick cowering behind the curtain of the bus window and until the bus left Sihanoukville far behind, that's where he remained.

Nick...1 Cows...1 a draw

## **CHALICE**

## *- Chapter Ten -*

**I**n the beginning, God created the earth and rested.  
Then God created man and rested.

Then God created women. Since then, neither God nor man has rested:

“That’s it!” exclaimed Boran as he ripped a report from the printer and took it over to Norm, who stood observing ‘The oven’ an immense machine Norman and Boran had developed and built. Norman went over to a computer consul and confirmed the print out information.

### **‘Programme complete and ready for access’**

A beaming smile came across his face.

“Well old friend, after all these years at last we have the information we require to help humanity”.

Norm picked up his mobile phone and dialled a number.

“Norman, it appears that Theory has finished

“Great dad! I’ll grab the others and be right with you,” said an exited Norman Jnr.

“Now my friend” said the old professor to Boran “our work can begin.

\*\*\*\*

The twenty years from 1982 saw an amazing transformation in both Cambodia, and Let-cum-baan. There were now 70 inhabitants, some of the old citadel citizens had returned, mainly technicians and scientists, as they knew they could learn much more from Rumble and Ngem than any other human being could teach them.

## CHALICE

The citadel now had modern domed buildings and powered by hydro–electric, methane and solar with plastic fullerene coloured panels that blended in with the green tree canopies, thus invisible from the ground and air, which gave enough electricity to sustain a large city, let alone a village of seventy. They had created an eco system with sunlight and rainfall, regulated within the cavern as the pastures and orchards flourished with fruit and flowers. Cows and sheep grazed in the fields all happy and contented. Domestic fowl scurried around being chased by the town's dogs and Jake, the first cow joining in with the chase. All the animals had been genetically modified and produced from inseminated hosts.

“You added dog DNA in with that cow Jake” Roth used to joke with Boran.

“I bet if it had a 'lipstick' it would be licking it" added Roth. ('Lipstick' dogs todger)

At night the ceiling of the cavern would be transformed by plasma screen pictures of the night sky, filmed from the outside so ever changing. The laboratory, now a glistening square structure the size of a cinema, contained rooms full of equipment, electron-microscopes, enhanced and modified \*magnetic resonance scanners\*, Visual Reality computers and other homemade machines. The laboratory was well technologically advanced on anything in the world outside. The cave mouth had an electronic shutter camouflaged to look like rocks, fifty-foot from the entrance, designed to make the cave appear as a dead end. It also had an intercom, night vision monitors and C.C.T.V cameras, to deter any unwanted intruders. An elevator had been installed against the side of the precipice, large and strong enough to hold heavy machinery, so getting equipment and tools to within the cavern was a lot simpler. A faster elevator was added to the back of the lab and the entrance to Ta prohm temple and both entrances could be monitored, and operated, from the monitors scattered about within the citadel. The Ta Prohm

elevator still had its original stonework structure, so it didn't attract attention, especially now the tourists came to the area. Two small monorails ran along against the walls that could rapidly take a person up to the sentry ports on the cave sides, an advantageous point for overseeing machinery that came and went into the cave.

Due to the rapidly changing information technology, satellite, mobile communication and faster high storage computers, Norman and Borans' research, went along at a feverish pace. Cambodia now had banking institutions, which had allowed Rumble to gain access to his fortune and, with the help of his adopted son Tighe, managed to acquire all the best and most modern high tech gadgets and equipment they'd required. Normans work in specifying and identifying genomes had taken a rapid upturn, and with the new magnetic resonance imaging technology, they could now categorise the DNA a lot faster than the old x-ray system could.

\*\*\*\*

In 1999 Normans' beloved wife and junior's mother, Theary, passed away, struck down by liver cancer, despite Rumbles research and treatment at cellular level. The cancer, a particularly virulent form, spread rapidly and took Theary.

Rumbles and Ngem's sons had been studying in America and became geniuses in their field of computer science. They both had reputations for being leaders in this field and both had been headhunted after finishing university by IBM to head their research and development.

Norman Jnr and Tu had returned to the citadel when Theary died. Norman Jnr had noticed his father looking strained, 'too much work', thought Jnr, but when he tried to convince his father to leave the citadel his father said,

"Now is the time to stay and work, if I had worked faster your mother would still be here,"

## CHALICE

Norman Jnr knew his father felt guilty and blamed himself for Thearys death.

Norman Jnr and Tu had always been fascinated by their fathers' research with DNA, neurons and brainwaves, which accounted for their interest in computer technology. They thought that they could combine the two sciences.

“What if we could develop a machine the same as a human brain?” Tu once said

“Maybe someday we will,” joked Norman Jnr.

Although only teenagers when they made that remark, now adults, they seriously considered that, with the rapidly advancing computer technology and their knowledge of their fathers work in the field of Cells and DNA, their thoughts for creating a human brain computer was no longer a pipe dream, but maybe a possibility.

Theary's death bought the families back together, the son's had not been back to the citadel since they had left for the U.S six years earlier Both Norm Jnr and Tu felt at home, especially being re-united with their older adopted brother, Tighe, who they had not seen for so long.

Tighe, now a colonel was ecstatic to see his geeky brothers. Norman had been proud of his adopted son, he owed a lot of the technology and equipment that he now had at his fingertips to Tighe's arm twisting and political connections.

\*\*\*\*

Tighe had left the citadel and joined the Government forces as a foot soldier in 1982. Due to his courage and dedication to his task, he quickly scaled the army ranks, and with the money that Norm had given him, bought himself a captain's rank and then a major and after 15 years of service, became a Colonel, and an active member of the CPP (Cambodian People's Party). He met and toured the country with Hun Sen, the prime minister who put Tighe in charge of his security. He assembled a crack team of Commandos to

## Robert A. Webster

serve as bodyguards, all willing to lay down their lives for Hun Sen and Colonel Tighe if necessary.

Tighe never married, but had a lot of ladies. He frequently visited the citadel to visit his adopted family, especially Theory and eat her pumpkin filled with egg custard, his favourite desert. He, along with the other former inhabitants of Let-cum-baan, had never told anyone about its existence, not even Hun Sen. He had pulled his political clout to ensure that Rumble got everything he needed for his research.

Several weeks after Theory's funeral, the two boys returned to their jobs at IBM and Tighe returned to duty. The life seemed to have been sucked out of Professor Norman Rumble and he continued with research at a frantic pace, but followed a different direction. He was getting old and he knew that unless some miracle happened, he could not complete his work in this lifetime, but he didn't care as he now had nothing better to do.

Four years after the death of his wife, Norman, engrossed in research was disturbed by a buzz on his intercom that led to the elevator in the temple.

This was usually a route that only Tighe used, as now people rarely left or came to the citadel. He turned on the C.C.T.V and the hidden camera positioned above the elevator within the temple, showed the smiling face of Norman Junior and a young lady.

"It's okay dad, there aren't any tourists about, let us down," requested Junior

Norman hit the switch and the elevator brought the young couple down and then returned to the surface four more times. Rumble, puzzled by this, left the room and went outside the laboratory area and greeted seven newcomers. Norman hugged his son and Tu. Boran, came out of the lab and hugged his son and Norm Jnr.

## CHALICE

Norman introduced the party of Americans

“This is Patty, my colleague and wife” he smirked

“This is Greg, Jerry and his wife Liz” they are software geeks and geniuses”

“And,” interrupted Tu, “this lovely lady is my wife, Anne, a computer designer one of the best”

Boran and Norman hugged them all and asked them why they had come.

The group made quite a stir in the citadel and breathed a new life into the stagnant work place. Norman telephoned Tighe to invite him to the citadel. Roth and a few others prepared a BBQ feast which they would all eat together on the pastures, Seventy seven people old and young had a loud joyful party. They turned the citadel environment controls from afternoon to night time mode at 2 p.m. to give them a long night of merriment. Colonel Tighe arrived at 7 o'clock and the party continued long into the night. The prodigal sons had returned.

The following day the group gathered in Norm's office to explain why they'd come.

Norman Junior explained that they had become disgruntled with IBM. Their research programmes budget had been slashed and they could progress no further in developing their new invention, without the help of Professor Norman Rumble. Computer technology had to embrace science in order to grow, but unfortunately IBM, not prepared to pursue this cross research, cut their funding.

“In other words, they fired us” said Tu

Junior went on to explain how they wanted to remain in the citadel and carry on with their work alongside Boran and Norman's and use their combined knowledge and skill to move to the next stage of computer evolution.

Norm Jnr then took a plastic box from his bag and placed it on Norm's desk. The box, about the size of a car battery had



sockets in the side for USB ports, and outlets that computers keypads and electrical components could be plugged into. Rumble and Ngen looked confused at the futuristic looking box.

“This is the housing,” said Norm Junior “the real brain is the core,” He opened the box and pulled out a large blue package filled with a blue gel and a mass of small optic fibre strands.

He placed the package on the table and Boran picked it up and inspected the blob.

“This,” said Norm Junior, “is the new computer technology and with your help, father and Boran, it will make the silicon chip become obsolete.

“This,” he went on, “will have the same advanced thoughts as the human brain, but a lot faster, and the storage capacity of just one of these battery cells will be approximately 10,000 times greater than any other computer.”

Norman Junior went on to explain about the project and the gel packs other amazing properties of growing and replicating. He informed his father, and Boran, that their research was pulled after IBM sank billions of dollars into the project, but after they presented them with a colourful although non functional battery, IBM assumed that the gel didn't work and pulled the plug. Even though the team informed them that they needed to get the scientific community involved to discover a way to activate the gel. Norm Jnr, Tu and their colleagues believed in this project, and left IBM

They knew that with Norm, Boran and the other citadel scientist's help, they could design and build their 'Theory computer'.

When Norm Junior mentioned his project name he smiled at his old father. His father smiled back and understood why the project was named after his deceased mother. Theory was

## CHALICE

pronounced Terry the 'h' being silent, but when Norm saw the spelling, he used to affectionately call his wife, Theory.

"How can we help son?" asked Norm.

Junior went on to explain the gel needed a synthetic brain stem in order to function and the only way this could be achieved, was by scientists who had researched brain cells and understood how the brain functioned and how specific cells could be harvested.

Norman and Boran both looked at each other and smiled, their work now had become tedious and mundane, Norm realised if they could get Theory to function, it could conceivably mean they could complete their work a lot sooner, maybe in this lifetime. They agreed and the group cheered, knowing that if they succeed it would secure them a place in history, alongside the genius's of the human race. However for Norm it was part of a bigger plan.

The work started the following day after the newcomers were settled into the citadel with another welcome party. The three software specialist set about correlating Norm's data and creating a programme for Theory. Norman and Boran where working in the lab recovering old research from their laptops. Norm Junior, Tu and their two spouses made a list of needs that Tighe could acquire in order to replicate the gel. The process was relatively simple with basic synthetic neurons that they'd invented. (Although the gel would not function yet as it would only replicate itself in the right environment, which they could already create).

The project was named CAIN: Created Artificial Intelligent Neurons.

The problem facing Norm and the others was how to create a neural brain cell with DNA that held no genetic information, but a memory capacity, a clear canvas, so the computer would not have any personality.

That problem took them over a year to resolve. They found a single cell organism in plankton and with the MRI, sequenced its DNA structure, which they altered by adding a RNA messenger and made an almost human genome, a strand that contained no memory. However there appeared to be a catch 22 in developing a memory, because, although the machine they were creating could do this with ease, it would first require a memory, so without the help of Theory, they could not create Theory.

Norm, Boran and Norm Junior eventually solved the problem, but not by research or calculations it was pure luck. They required the genome from a human, one that had no memories, but had the capacity for learning.

A newly created human.

Norman Jnr and the now six months pregnant Patty agreed to allow Norm to take a stem cell sample from their developing baby's hypothalamus. This was a tricky microscopic procedure, but with the help of his friend Professor Rom Pyett, an eminent neuro surgeon and resident of the citadel, and Rumbles 'cell sniffer' as he called the instrument for detecting the presence of cells, along with a Visual Reality scope and MRI micro scanner, they successfully removed two microscopic cells from Patty's unborn infant causing no damage to either mother or baby. They used the CAIN teams gel to rapidly duplicate the cells.

The next obstacle was to get the cells to merge with the single cell plankton and create one perfect cell. After three months of trial and error, and on the same day Norman Junior's son Cain was born, the MRI's computer beeped. Rumble and Ngem rushed from the maternity room to the machine and looked at the TV screen displaying the image from an electron microscope, which showed cells dividing and growing at a vast rate.

## CHALICE

“Where?” said Rumble as he looked at the screen

“I don’t see it,” said Ngem the machine still beeping.

“False alarm,” said Rumble and reset the alarm, but beeping continued.

“There!” exclaimed Ngem.

Within the millions of cells, one perfect cell with a short DNA strand and no human characteristic. Pure trial and error, LUCK

The two scientists removed the cell and placed it in the Gel, where it immediately divided and replicated itself once, twice, and ten, hundred a thousand fold in the space of a few minutes.

Over the next few days it was mayhem, they had loaded the cells into the gel batteries and the Neural cells had nearly all converted to Neurons and the team buzzed with excitement.

They now had to add a memory to see if the CAIN pack worked. Several days later they hooked it up to Greg’s laptop. They turned the CAIN fibre optic memory storage on, which glowed for a second, and then went dead.

“Nothing’s happened,” said Jerry

“It bloody has,” growled an angry Greg, “that fucking contraption has erased all 600 GB data off my computer and it doesn’t even work,” He carried on frantically tapping away at his now memory erased computer.

They all stood and stared at the black blank screen plugged into the CAIN battery pack.

“What a waste of time and money,” growled Greg at the screen.

The disappointed team were about to leave the room when Liz said. “Wait a minute. Greg what did you have on your computer?”

“Every bloody thing,” Greg snapped.

“An example?” asked Liz.

“All my software programmes, including the one that I wrote for the professor, named ‘Rumble soft’ Greg moaned.

Liz typed into the keyboard ‘Run rumble soft’ programme The screen came to life, files flashed on and off at a rapid rate.

“You only have to ask, its learning” said a smug Liz.

Things after the creation of CAIN moved swiftly. They built ‘Theory’ the central system, which fed off the large network of storage fibres from the CAIN batteries and stored all the information They housed Theory separately in with 500 CAIN battery cells and decided to test it by attaching it to the World Wide Web.

Around the globe the information super highway went silent for a split second and then returned to normal, but not before Theory and CAIN had ingested and stored all its knowledge.

The team had made a successful start, but now they wanted to put this to some practical use, one that would benefit mankind. Norman Rumble and Boran Ngem’s work would be the project that Theory would now work on, and with Rumbles own scheme in mind, his plan would not only benefit mankind, but would be of great importance to him.

The only thing the team would not know is how long Theory would take to solve the problem that Norman had posed it and realised that it could take generations.

The software team would try to develop a programme, with the two professors’ help, for the computer to sequence every living cell and its DNA the RNA recipe and give the formula to replicate the cells of every living creature. They added a shortcut that the professors had been working on, as some of the RNA duplicated approximately 1.2 billion DNA strands and several trillion cells. Greg, Jerry and Anne worked on a programme to ask Theory.

Rumble started to develop a machine that could take instructions from Theory and mix up the various synthetic

## CHALICE

enzymes, proteins, and acids to exactly cook up the recipe of each and every DNA gene and create living cells. This machine they named simply, 'The oven'.

This machine would work on the same principal to a paint colouring machine. Put a code into the computer e.g. peppermint green with lilac, the machine would mix in the right amount of paint to make the desired colour.

The oven however would be much larger and with pinpoint, microscopic accuracy.

They figured that with this technology they could detect faulty DNA, and grow, alter or remove what genes they wanted, thus curing every virus and cell attacking disease known to man, including Cancer and aids. But more importantly for Norm, Theory and the oven could create life from nothing, 'Genesis'

The results would be phenomenal, gone would be the need for painful plastic surgery, just inject the altered DNA and hey presto a raven haired girl could be a blond, in the time it took the old cells to be naturally impregnated with the new recipe and multiply. A few minutes, depending on which cell it was.

In 2006, with the programmes complete, the teams were ready to enter the software and connect to the MRI devices and monitors, so Theory could work on Professor Rumble's information. A large group gathered around the building that housed Theory and the programmers stood back.

"There you go dad," said Norman Jnr the next honour is yours. The rest of the team and other scientists stood back and let Rumble through.

"Press this," instructed Anne.

Rumble hesitated and took baby Cain from Patty's arms.

"Let's do it together, the old and new generation,"

Baby Cain cooed and Norm, holding Cain's finger pressed the button as instructed. The machine glowed for a second and then nothing.

“Bloody useless,” mumbled Greg.

“No,” said Liz, “it’s working, just thinking and learning and unlike you Greg, it can actually think without belching, farting and grinding its teeth.”

After this anticlimax, they all left the building and spoke to the crowd, who went about their work, but would party tonight.

“The truth is,” Norm told the crowd of scientist and technicians. “We don’t know how long it will take, or if it will ever finish its calculations. I am afraid ladies and gentlemen we are in the dark over this one.”

2007, four years since the computer group arrived and less than one year after they had started the Theory programme to work on Normans task, the machine beeped to life for a brief second and sent a signal to the printer.

The Theory group, what the computer experts were now called, assembled in the room and tapped in instructions on keypads set into and around the machine. RUN programme

Large screens along the wall of the room instantly came alive, flashing information wildly across the monitors, molecular cell structures, DNA strands, chemical formulas, atoms, molecules all whizzed before the scientists and the Theory group.

The software programmers looked bemused at the screen, but the two old professors and their sons looked in amazement.

“What is it, darling?” Anne asked Norm Jnr

“Life,” was all Norm Jnr replied.

None of them could believe the speed in which Theory had managed to solve this seemingly impossible task and were amazed by how Theory had not only mapped out the cells and the DNA components, but it had also worked out the formula that the RNA messenger carried. They now not only had the cake, but also knew the recipe and how to bake it and the oven was almost complete.

## CHALICE

A few weeks later the group gathered in front of a large machine that resembled a futuristic paint mixer with the small pots hidden away behind metal containers that were infinitely smaller, far greater in numbers and contained variety of synthetic proteins and enzymes, carbons and base chemicals. These chemicals were deposited by nozzles onto small black pads along the edges of a 10'x10' table, at the centre of the table lay one large pad and several large nozzles were suspended above, this would deliver the mixed suspension and along with several banks of CAIN cells and fibre optic cables leading to scanners and monitors 'The Oven' looked like something from the star ship enterprise engine room. The machine was housed behind Perspex walls, along one side had a doorway cut into the Perspex for gaining access to the machine.

Outside the mixer compartment were screens and monitors, the Theory team entered instructions to the Theory via the CAIN cells that powered the oven.

The oven sprang to life as it connected to Theory and information passed from one super positron brain to another. There machines whirred as they started mixing and understanding. Then silence.

The screens went blank, the machines stopped mixing and there became a surreal quiet within the room

"What's happened?" asked Greg "bloody thing stopped working again" still annoyed about the computer wiping his laptop of its memory.

"What's happening son?" asked a concerned Norman.

"I don't know dad" admitted an equally concerned Norm Jnr.

"Any ideas team" Norm asked the Theory team.

Everyone looked confused.

Several hours passed, the team had checked everything and became confused as they'd found everything to in working order.



“Back to the drawing board,” said Greg “I knew it was too good to be true”

“Of course!” said Anne realising the problem.

The group looked at her.

“Of course what?” said Jerry

“Theory gave the oven an instruction to map out the cells and replicate”

“And?” interrupted Jerry

“We have given it nothing to map and replicate,” said Anne ignoring Jerry

“Of course,” said Norm.

“Well done Anne,” said Tu.

“Dad the oven needs a sample of something,” Norm Jnr spoke, now understanding.

Professor Rumble left the room and looked for something that Theory and the oven could use, but not human and something small.

He returned from the lab a few minutes later with a large brown lab rat in a cage.

“Perfect,” said Norm Junior, who took a pair of tweezers removed a hair from the rat and placed it on the ovens scanner. He typed in an instruction and a scanner light bathed the hair.

“How about a white one?” Norm Jnr joked

The machines CAIN cells glowed and the oven hissed and spewed into life and, within a few minutes chemicals got deposited on several pads around the centre, which then became absorbed into the machine as it assembled them all into order and then deposited a large translucent blob in the centre of the machine.

The blob grew and quivered as the machine released small electrical discharges into the blob. The team watched awestruck through a screen at this metamorphous occurred.

For two hours the team watched as the blob grew and began to take shape. It resembled a multicoloured balloon

## CHALICE

being filled with dripping water. After twelve hours, the now pinkish blob resembled something like a small rat, but it was still growing, so the exhausted Theory team decided to retire for the night and check in the morning.

Professors, Norm and Boran, along with several other scientists' remained to keep vigil and chatted about the miracle they were creating.

After three days of watching the rat develop and grow, the machine's screens came to life and displayed.

### **'Process complete'**

Information started to flash around the Ovens and Theory screens. Tu went inside the machine walked over to the large pad and collected a perfectly cloned white rat. Heart, lungs, brain, eyes, fur, tail an absolute perfect copy of the professors' brown lab rat, apart from the fact that it was white, and dead.

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*Except for germs like viruses and bacteria, just about every other living thing on Earth is made up of cells. This is probably why cells are called the building blocks of life. Most forms of life are made up of many cells. It is estimated that the average human adult body contains about 10 trillion cells. Placed end to end, they would stretch around the earth 47 times. A ten year old, has about half that many cells. If you could count them at a rate of one cell per second, it would take you over 2600 years to complete the task.*

*Numbering in the trillions, it is not surprising that most cells of the human body are very small. In fact, an individual cell is invisible unless viewed through a microscope. The largest human cell, an egg cell produced by females when they are able to have babies, is about the diameter of a human*

*hair. The smallest, a sperm cell produced by the male, is one-tenth of the diameter (the distance across) of a human hair.*

*Even though they are quite small, not all cells are alike. They differ in size, shape and function (how they work). Bone cells differ from blood cells and nerve cells differ from muscle cells. Each one is designed to do a different job. Red blood cells carry oxygen throughout the body. Nerve cells carry electrical signals to and from our brains to muscles all over our bodies. Bone cells, which are very rigid, form the skeleton that gives our bodies shape. Muscle cells contract to move these bones to help us get around. Stomach cells secrete an acid to digest our food. Special cells in our intestines absorb nutrients from the food we eat. And no matter what they do, many of these cells change food into energy to keep our bodies working. Cells are packed tightly together. They combine to form tissues, like skin and muscle. Tissues combine to form organs. Muscle cells combine to form muscle tissues. Muscle tissues combine to form organs like your heart. Organs cooperate (work together) to keep us alive.*

*All human body cells are covered by a membrane. This layer holds the contents of the cell in just like the sides of a container. The membrane lets good things, like nutrients, into the cell. It also keeps bad things, like germs and bacteria, out.*

*In four square centimetres of skin there are 3 metres of nerve fibres, 1300 nerve cells, 100 sweat glands, 3 million cells, and 3 metres of blood vessels. Except for your brain cells, 50,000,000 of the cells in your body will have died and been replaced with others, all while you have been reading this sentence. Except for red blood cells, all other cells in our bodies have a nucleus. Because it controls what the cell does, the nucleus is often called the brains of the cell. A nucleus appears as a large dot in the centre of a cell. The word nuclei are used to refer to more than one nucleus. Each cell nucleus contains D.N.A the genetic instructions. The formula for life. There are approximately 3 billion genetic recipes in each*

## CHALICE

*DNA sequence and in each sequence millions of recipes for proteins and enzymes that the RNA messenger is responsible for mixing up to create the DNA.*

*So now that I have bored the pants off you with mind-blowing information, and working on the given information, this seemingly impossible task, should, in theory, take millennia to isolate, cells, sequence the DNA and replicate the recipes of the RNA. Millennia, that is, unless you are two brilliant geniuses, develop a shortcut and have a super fast revolutionary computer, and then it may only take a lifetime.*

*The only other expert in this field was God, and he had given up after creating women.*

*\*A human interface called Virtual Scope that enables computer graphics (CG) data to be manipulated without the use of traditional computer devices and that facilitates the appreciation of pictures and paintings on a large, high-definition screen. This capability of manipulating CG data without the use of a mouse or keyboard has been developed originally for the art world and now used extensively in medicine giving surgeons high-definition images for microsurgery.*

*More recently, the scope of VR applications in medicine has broadened in diagnosis of diseases. The scope of this survey reflects the range of medical and surgical applications to which VR is being applied.*

*\*Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a medical imaging technique primarily used in Radiology to visualize the structure and function of the body. It provides detailed images of the body in any plane. MR has much greater soft tissue contrast than computed tomography (CT) making it especially useful in neurological, musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, and ontological imaging. Unlike CT it uses no*

## **Robert A. Webster**

*ionizing radiation, but uses a powerful magnetic field to align the nuclear magnetization of (usually) hydrogen atoms in water in the body. Radiofrequency fields are used to*

*Systematically alter the alignment of this magnetization, causing the hydrogen nuclei to produce a rotating magnetic field detectable by the scanner. This signal can be manipulated by additional magnetic fields to build up enough information to reconstruct an image of the body. Rumble had enhanced and modified this technology to imaging at the cellular level*

## **CHALICE**

## *- Chapter Eleven -*

“Nick must be the unluckiest bloke who ever lived” said Spock as Nick hazily drove off on his motorbike and the laughter had died down. They ordered three draft beers and sat outside the cool banana bar. Pon made a call on his mobile. Pon, Stu and Spock chatted for about 30 minutes, and then a black Lexus Lx 470 cruiser stopped in front of them. The electric window slid down and the Cambodian driver poked to the group,

“Chai?” he asked Pon

“Yes,” said Pon.

“Come with me please,” said the driver “and hurry,” said the agitated man.

“What does he want?” Stu asked Pon.

“I have to go with him to meet my contact,” said Pon, who nodded to the driver, picked up his bag and went into the passenger side of the car.

“Don’t worry my brothers, I will be alright, you enjoy yourselves, and I will call you later.”

“OK,” said Stu concerned.

“See you later shit-head,” said Spock, also concerned, “if you have any problems call us.”

The car then drove away.

“Do you reckon he will be OK?” Spock asked Stu.

“Yes mate,” replied Stu “Who in their right mind would hassle a man with a mullet like that, you should have given him that daft hat, and then he would have double protection.”

Concerned for about a minute, they finished their beer and decided to go to change some Thai Baht into dollars and Riel and go back to Coasters and wait, or leave a message for Nick.

## CHALICE

*Riel is the currency of Cambodia, but the preferred currency is the US Dollar .There are approximately 4000 Cambodian Riel to 1 US Dollar*

*The notes range from a 50 riel to 50000 Riel note. So a pile of Riel is worth very little, so people and business's prefer Dollar notes. However Riel is handy to pay taxis and tuk-tuk's as they never have change.*

\*\*\*\*

Pon had arrived early the previous morning at Stu's room, after he'd collected the documents that Taksin had rushed through

After the initial shock, Stu calmed down enough to invite Pon into the room and composed himself enough to clip the little monk around his ears for waking him up at such an ungodly hour, and because he hadn't done it for months and he felt Pon was due one.

Pon asked Stu to get Spock, as what he had to discuss was for them both.

Stu went and thumped on Spock's door.

"Fuck off," bellowed Spock.

"Mate we have a visitor," laughed Stu.

"Tell him to fuck off too," growled Spock.

"It's the mad monk," said Stu.

With the sound of wind breaking and Moo wittering, the door eventually opened and Spock stood in the doorway in a pair of loose boxer shorts, inside out, with his tackle hanging out

"What does he want?" asked Spock and looked at his watch.

"I don't know, put your todger away and we can go find out," laughed Stu as he walked back to his room, followed by Spock, who jumped around to pop his todger back into his shorts.



Pon sat on the bed speaking to Dao about Kim, when Stu and Spock came in and sat by the side of him, Spock clipped Pon around his ear, for the same reasons that Stu had done.

Pon related the story about how the box had been switched and his problem with getting into Cambodia unaided. He told them that Taksin had devised a plan, but he would need their help to carry it out. His English had improved in the 5 months since he had last seen the lads. He had been taking lessons but he still needed Dao to translate, as her English had vastly improved with the constant teachers that she'd had (customers). A sleepy Moo entered the room and sat down.

“What’s the plan then?” said Stu.

Pon told them he intended to enter Cambodia as a tour guide and how it would be more credible to travel with a group of foreigners, and say that he was their Cambodian guide, and as he spoke Cambodian, nobody would suspect if he travelled with a group.

They would be expecting the prime master Pon Meesilli to try to recover the relic alone and he told them that he had fake Cambodian passport.

Pon went on to explain that he was only maybe a day at the most, behind the man they knew to be responsible. He then produced the passport photograph taken off the Thai immigration form.

“This is the man,” he said as he showed the Photo of Tar to the group, “He works for this Colonel” and produced a photograph of Colonel Tighe, he is the one who I have to avoid if at all possible, he is a powerful man and could cause a problem with the monarchy of both countries should I get caught. Pon explained that the box’s exchange would not be reported, so Tighe would not realise that the Thais knew about the swap. Pon and Taksin could not afford to take that risk, and would give Pon time to get in without a full scale search being launched.

## CHALICE

The lads thought for a moment.

“Cambodia,” said Stu.

“Yes,” said Pon, but we have to go in through the southern border at Hat Lek,” he went on to explain on how Taksin had arranged with a contact in Sihanoukville, who had gathered information about Tar’s whereabouts. Taksin’s contact did not like Colonel Tighe, and he was also Kim’s uncle

“So I may be able to see my love” smiled Pon.

The two lads thought long and hard and then Spock recapped.

“So,” said Spock “You want us to escort you into Cambodia as our tour guide, go to the seaside and relax, while you nip off and get that bloody box back and then come back in a couple of days. . . is that correct?”

“Correct,” said Pon “that’s all and the palace will pay all the expenses.”

Stu, Spock, Dao and Moo thought long and hard, after all, if the relic was never found it would suit them, but Pon was a friend, plus Stu and Spock wanted to see the lady that had captured the heart of the mad monk. The girls started wittering about helping the King and Thailand and more importantly, it was free. (Nick would have loved it if he wasn’t already there) Spock looked at Stu who nodded. Spock announced

“Right mate we’re in, girls pack your bags. Cambodia, here we come!”

The girls looked at each other and spoke in Thai to Pon. Pons face turned from a happy smile to a sad droop and spoke again to the girls in Thai, and then to Spock and Stu.

“It’s Okay my friends, I understand but thank you anyway.”

“What” said Spock “what’s happening?”

“We don’t have passports” said Dao “we cannot go over the border.”

“And we have no time to get them made” added Pon

Pon got off the bed and looked disappointed. Pon went to the door and smiled at the group.

“I will see you all when I return,” he calmly spoke but knowing now having to regroup and rethink the plan.

“Hang on matey,” shouted Spock, who looked at Stu and then the girls, Stu knew what Spock had been thinking, so did the girls and they smiled. Pon walked back over to the bed.

“So,” said Spock and nodded at Stu, “You want to go into a strange country, recover that bloody box, laze on a beach, rescue a damsel in distress, have a wild adventure and go into the heart of danger . . . , without us. Spock paused for effect and continued. “Not on your Nellie” and in unison with Stu announced.

“Count us in, when do we leave?”

The two girls hugged their heroes

“We leave immediately” said Pon, happiness and relief etched on his face.

“Have we time for shag first” said Stu and received a clip around his head from an embarrassed Dao.

Pon sat down again and produced a passport and showed it to Stu and Spock.

“Please call me by my new name,” and handed his Cambodian passport to Spock, who read out loud.

“Shite” said Spock.

“Its pronounced Chai” said Pon.

“Chait-ead” Spock read out.

“Its pronounced Chai te-ad” corrected Pon

“Shit head,” Spock announced “well that should be easy to remember.

Pon not understanding what a shitehead was decided Spocks pronunciation was near enough.

“That’s great beamed Spock I have a little shit,” he pointed to Moo, “and a shitehead,” he looked at Pon and chuckled at his own scathing wit.

## CHALICE

Pon, not knowing what the big lad was prattling on about, reached in his bag for his next surprise.

Stu looked at the passport photo of Pon and noticed,

“This isn’t you, this man’s got a stupid mullet and you’re as bald as a bell end.”

Pon then produced a wig and slipped it on. The two lads looked, and then burst out into fits of laughter, joined in by the two girls

“I thought Elvis was dead,” cackled Spock tears of laughter streaming from his eyes as Pon adjusted his wig and smoothed it down. He couldn’t see what the fuss about, besides Kim liked Elvis.

After the laughter died down Pon got his bag, which containing his Pitou, Glave, wharm Lorn and other herbs and potions, his monk’s robes plus a few civilian clothes, and he left the room. He would wait downstairs in the foyer. Spock and Moo had gone to their room to pack and Dao started packing Stus bag. Pon said that he’d expected them to be away for about four days, if things went to plan, but Stu considered that four days without Dao was a sad prospect.

“But,” assured Dao, “if you help the King you will be my superman, and Pon did say we have time for a shag” she smiled and they left the packing for 30 seconds.

Stu and Dao joined Spock and Moo. Moo had a gleam in her eye but it wasn’t the same gleam as Dao’s post shag gleam, this was a mischievous grin.

“Ready matey,” said Spock.

“Ready,” said Stu, a little sad.

“Right girls,” announced Spock “we are going to save the world,” and put on his daft hat.

‘That’s all I need,’ thought Stu ‘a mad monk with a moronic mullet and a twat in a hat, some adventure this is going to be.’

“Urrrrrh” groaned Spock as white shaving foam oozed out from under his hat, much to the delight of Moo, who burst

out laughing joined in by Stu and Dao. Spock looked stunned, but coolly composed himself and carried a kicking screaming Moo back into his room, grumbling about ‘teaching the little shit’.

Howls and screams emanated from Spocks room followed by a slight buzzing and after a moments silence, followed by Moo ranting and raving. Spock came out of the room, wiped the foam out of his hat and headed toward the elevator

“Come on then, let’s go, see you in a couple of days Dao,” he chuckled as he walked into the lift. Stu kissed Dao goodbye and joined him in the elevator.

Stu looked at Spock who beamed from ear to ear and calmly asked

“Remington?”

“Remington,” confirmed Spock as the elevator door closed.

Dao rushed into Moo’s room to see her in tears stood by the mirror cursing at the now departed Spock and rubbed at her eyebrow. The one that Spock had not shaved off. The lads got out of the elevator and walked towards Pon.

“Come on, shithead,” ordered Spock and continued walking out of the hotel with Stu and Pon at his side, into the street outside the Sawasdee Hotel. They looked like The Earp brothers walking into the OK Corral to face the Clanton’s. The lads were on another adventure.

They caught a bus from Pattaya to Trat about four hours away, and then took a mini bus to Hat Lek and the border crossing. Pon exited Thailand on his Thai passport and then he, Spock and Stu crossed over the 50m stretch of no man’s land and across the border into Cambodia. They all went together to the immigration booth and the official looked briefly at Pons passport and then engaged him in conversation, but didn’t pay any attention to his forged Cambodian passport. The lads got an entry visa and went out of the office, and got into a taxi.

## CHALICE

“What did he want” asked Stu referring to Pon’s conversation with the immigration official.

“He wanted to know who cut my hair, he liked the style,” replied a smug Pon.

The taxi pulled away. Nobody outside the office heard the conversation within a laughter filled office, about the ridiculous haircut that the Cambodian tour guide had. “He should shave his head rather than parade around with hair like that” said one official that brought roars of laughter from his colleagues, but at least nobody became suspicious. The lads had crossed their first hurdle and crossed over the bridge taking them into Koh Kong town on the way to the Sihanoukville ferry. Pon spoke to the driver and then turned to Stu and Spock.

“We have a problem,” said Pon and continued “There was only one ferry a day, which departed at 08.30 and two of the road bridges were closed, so we couldn’t go by road.”

“Oh well,” said Stu “we will have to stay the night in Koh Kong, its only 2pm, so we can explore,” and asked he the taxi driver to take them to a hotel.”

*There are four river crossings in total between Koh Kong and Sihanoukville. All being bridged, of which two are already completed. The remaining two are almost finished, but at present, 2009, they are being crossed by floating platforms.*

The taxi pulled up in the centre of a small town and the driver pointed to a guest house.

“Here is very good,” said the driver, knowing that he would get a commission should they stay. The lads walked into the reception and booked three rooms, they paid the taxi, who said he would pick them up in the morning and take them to the ferry. They thanked the driver and got their bags from the trunk, went inside the restaurant and ordered three beers,

and told Pon that it was a well known fact that Cambodian beer was alcohol free. Pon tried to phone his contact to tell him the plan to meet him tomorrow and the lads tried to phone the girls, but their phones wouldn't work, so they went to a small mobile phone shop and bought three Cambodian Sim cards, then they all phoned their respective contacts.

Pon arranged a meeting with Kim's uncle Lee, his contact for the following afternoon and Stu phoned Dao and gave her his new Cambodian telephone number. Spock phoned Moo who answered the unfamiliar number and when he spoke, she hung up.

"Got a shitty on mate?" asked Stu

"Yep," replied Spock unconcerned "The eye-browed deficient stroppy little shit."

They ordered another beer and decided to eat and then explore.

Whilst they ate, the owner of the restaurant came from his room and introduced himself.

"Jock from Aberdeen" said a gnarly looking old Scottish man extending his hand.

The lads introduced themselves Stu, Spock and shithead and they enquired what to do in Koh Kong.

"Flap all," said Jock "you can go back over the bridge to the casinos at the border, or snorkel at one of the beaches, but again this meant crossing back over the bridge. The only other alternative was Safari world."

The lads didn't want to risk going near the border again, and zoos were on their shitlist, because the last one they visited a monkey shit on their ice cream. Jock informed them the only thing to see in Koh Kong was the chicken farm, which didn't open until late, so all that would be there at that time of day would be chickens.

It seemed that the only thing to do during the day would be to get spannered, which was fine by Spock and Stu, but

## CHALICE

Pon, after a few more beers, realised he had been, Goh hocked too. . . . Again (both in Cambodian and Thai, Goh hock means 'lie') and after an hour Pon went to lie down feeling worse for wear, shitfaced to be more accurate.

Stu, Spock, old Jock and his young Vietnamese wife drank and chatted all afternoon. There were no other customers in the restaurant or in Koh Kong for that matter, and at 4pm the lads went to their rooms for a nap.

They returned to the restaurant at 6 o'clock after unsuccessfully trying to wake Pon, and ordered mince, mash and a couple of beers. Half way through eating, six ladies came in and Jocks wife brought them over to the lads table,

"Which lady you want?" said Giau, Jocks wife.

The lads nearly spat their food out.

"What?" said Spock.

"You want fuck," repeated Giau.

"It's a little early," said Stu and not wanting to upset the ladies added "maybe later."

Giau sent the ladies away and the lads carried on eating they intended to wait for Jock, who had promised to take them to the chicken farm, but he still slept.

Several hours passed and by 8 o'clock the lads felt juiced. Six more ladies came into the restaurant and Giau brought them over to the lads table,

"You want fuck yet?" she enquired

"Not yet," said Spock although a large lady caught his eye, she wasn't pretty and had home-made tattoos, but Spock thought she would be sturdy old shag and winked at her "how are you horse?" he joked. The lady smiled as she and the others left the restaurant.

Jock eventually came down around 8:45pm and enquired as to whether Giau had been taking good care.

Giau was an attractive, small Vietnamese lady, a lot younger than Jock; the lads thought she looked to be in her mid twenties, while Jock looked well into his sixties.



## Robert A. Webster

“Yeah we’re good,” said Stu smiling at Giau

“Ok,” said Jock “I’ll grab a bite to eat and we will go to the farm.”

Stu phoned Dao and Spock phoned Moo while they were waiting, again Moo hung up.

“Ready,” said Jock and, as Giau cleaned away the plates. Stu, Spock and Jock got into his ancient Toyota car and headed for the chicken farm. Jock carried a bottle of Mekong whisky under his car seat and swigged it as they drove.

The chicken farm was about 10 minutes away and along a dirt track road, lined either side with large wooden shacks, each contained girls, mainly Vietnamese, all quite young.

The car stopped in the centre, they got out and went to sit at a table, outside one of shacks and ordered three beers. Several ladies came out and sat with them and they bought the girls a drink.

After about two hours, the lads now spannered walked into the last shack on the strip, Jock became wankered as he’d been slurping his whisky.

“Have a few beers here lads and then we can head back,” announced Jock, “and if you aren’t taking a lady we can get pissed at my place and Giau will have some brought to the restaurant for you,” he continued.

Three more beers arrived and Spock looked at the lady bringing the beers.

“Horse!” he shouted at the lady.

The horse put down the beers and grabbed Spocks hand, put it up her dress and smiled as Spock probed her knickerless brown chalice.

“She’ll do” said Spock and the lady sat down with Spock still probing.

The four went back to Jocks guesthouse, Spock and Horse went to Spocks room and Jock, Stu and Giau sat and drank some more. Jock drank whisky and beer, Stu stayed on beer

## CHALICE

and Giau had wine and moaned at Jock about drinking too much.

After an hour, a wankered Jock said that he and Giau wanted to go to bed. Stu knew this was his cue to leave and go to his room, so he said goodnight to the couple and went to his room.

Stu could hear Spock and the horse going at it hammer and tongs in the next room. There had been no sign of Pon all evening. He had slept through. Stu showered and got into bed, and decided to sleep, so he would wake up in time for the ferry. Stu had just nodded off, when there came a knock on his door; he got out of bed, put a towel around himself and answered. To his surprise Giau stood in the doorway. She walked past him into the room. She had a large towel wrapped around her and stood waiting for Stu, who closed the door and turned to face Giau.

“What’s the matter?” asked Stu.

“Jock no good,” she said “too drunk, fall asleep snoring” she then removed the towel to reveal a small slender body, with small pert breasts and a little hairy black triangle covering her chalice

“You want fuck yet?” she smiled and slid between Stus sheets.

The next morning Stu, Spock and Pon came down and ate breakfast, served by a happy serviced Giau, who had left Stu’s room in the early hours and returned to a still snoring Jock, none the wiser.

Jock was still asleep when they left and Stu told Giau they may return in a few days. The horse had left Spock at 6 am, nicely serviced. The taxi arrived and drove them the five minutes to the waiting ferry. They bought tickets, boarded the boat and went to sit downstairs in the large air conditioned seating area of the ferry.

The four hour boat journey was uneventful and they sat outside on the roof compartment and enjoyed the sea-breeze and they could smoke. Both Spocks' hat and Pons wig had almost been blown, off much to the delight of Stu, but they'd managed to hold on to their respective head dresses much to Stu's disappointment. The boat docked at 12:30pm and the lads got off, they had to stop at the immigration box. Pon mingled with the other Cambodians and walked past without getting stopped. They caught a waiting tuk-tuk and told the driver that they wanted to stay on the beach. The tuk-tuk headed off from the port, through the downtown area and to Serendipity beach and into Coasters resort.

They checked into three air-conditioned rooms with private balconies, with spectacular views of the main beach and islands and met David one of the partners. David was a cheerful Australian and introduced the lads to the Manager, Ravuth.

"This is Mappy," informed David "his real name is Ravuth, but everybody calls him Mappy" (Cambodian for porky) anything you need to know or if you want to hire motorbikes just speak to Mappy," then David went to chat with some other customers while the lads checked in and Mappy furnished them with free guide books and explained where some of the more interesting places in Sihanoukville were located. Ravuth was mid thirties and a happy round faced Cambodian who looked like General Urko from planet of the apes. He had been working at Coasters for five years and he loved it and was well known in Sihanoukville as the manager of the busiest resort in town, he spoke fluent English, but with a stutter.

"You want to hire a mow, mow, motorbike" stammered Mappy, who only stuttered in English.

"Not yet mate we want to look around for a while" said Spock.

## CHALICE

The lads went to their rooms, unpacked their small bags and came down to the reception and walked out of Coasters, up a small dirt track to join a tarmac road, they noticed earlier when they first arrived. They walked along a road lined with restaurants. They then ran into Nick (and Nick ran into a cow's fanny).

Pon had gone to meet his Cambodian contact, so the lads decided to go back to Coasters and wait for Nick, who unbeknownst to them had already scarppered. They got chatting to an ex pat in Coasters restaurant who had lived in Sihanoukville for years, named Shifty the baker. Shifty, a well known jack-the-lad character who ran a bakery in town, liked to drink on the beach during the afternoons. Shifty told Spock and Stu the best places to go for good food, good conversation and a shag. The lads listened and marked off the places on the free guide book that they had picked up from the reception.

“Tonight lads, I will show you around, I will meet you at Spinning Bobs, which he marked off the Tiki shack on their map.

“See you later,” said Shifty

“That sounded Okay,” said Stu “I like this place already,”

The two lads went outside the coasters restaurant and lay down on two sun lounges and ordered two beers that were bought over by a pleasant young lady.

“Everything alright lads?” said Dave as he walked on the beach.

“Yes mate,” said Stu “everything's fine.

“Great lads enjoy yourselves. Oy Dragon!!” David shouted at the lady who just brought over the drinks.

“Make sure you take good care of these boys and who knows,” David winked at the girl and announced “her real names Srey Longdy but everyone calls her Dragon, she is always looking for a foreign boyfriend, but she always scares

them away,” David flitted away and went to talk to other customers.

The lads looked at the two attractive waitress's, and could not understand why Srey Longdy had been called Dragon, until she stuck her hand up at Spock, middle finger extended. Stu on the other hand closely watched the other girl.

“I hope Pon takes his time, I think I will enjoy it here. He looked at Srey Mom, the other waitress.

*Srey means female and is usually placed before any girl's name Proht is the same for boy but is not used as frequent. Bong or Owahn can be used as an alternative. Bong meaning older and Owahn meaning younger person, same as Non and pee in Thai language.*

Pon arrived at Lees' house, located on the other side of Sihanoukville near Hung Sen beach, a 25 minute drive away. He was taken into the large house by the driver and met with Lee. Pon knew Lee briefly, he had seen him a few times at the palace in Phnom Penh and Kim had told Pon that Lee was her favourite uncle. He currently held the position of the Cambodian Royal family's foreign affairs officer, and the army rank of Brigadier. He was Taksin's counterpart and good friend, although Lee never knew of the developing love between his niece and the Elvis impersonator. Pon relayed the full story to Lee and showed him Tars photograph.

“I know, him he is one of Colonel Tighe's elite commandos, I believe his best.” Said Lee

Lee went on to tell Pon that Tighe and Tar stayed in Siem Reap, Tar lived in the army barracks, and Tighe lived in a large house on the city's outskirts. Lee produced a map of Siem Reap and pin pointed Tighe's house. Lee informed Pon that nothing had been heard with regards to a search for him, so they assumed that Tighe was still unaware that the Thais

## CHALICE

knew of the switch, so therefore Pon still had the element of surprise.

‘Good’ thought Pon ‘we can leave straight away’

Lee then produced another map showing the route from Sihanoukville to Siem Reap, and were studying this when the door bell sounded. Brigadier Lee looked at his watch and mumbled

“She’s early” and went to answer the door.

Lee returned a few minutes later accompanied by beautiful lady. The woman looked at Pon who looked back, his heart pounding.

“This is my niece Kim,” announced Lee

Kim looked at Pon and smiled

“This is my friend, Chai” said Lee, not realising they already knew each other and were very much in love.

Pon and Kim wai’d each other.

“My niece is due to marry soon and wants to discuss something,” said Lee, “Please stay for lunch, Chai.”

“Thank you,” said Pon and the brigadier left the room, to organise the meal, leaving the two love birds to chat.

Pon briefly explained why he was there and they kissed before Lee came back into the room.

“Excuse me Chai, I must speak with my niece, make yourself at home,” said Lee and he and Kim left the room.

‘Anywhere Kim is, I feel at home’ thought Pon

Pon heard the two arguing in the next room, but could not hear about what, so he studied the maps Lee had given him. They could hire a car and drive to Siem Reap. Pon could now read maps, although he still had one major problem, but thought his two friends could help with this.

Pon could tell that Kim had been crying as she and Lee returned to the room and Lee announced it was time to eat. They went to a lavish dining room. Pon noticed the tension between Lee and Kim, but after they had eaten, Lee said to Kim.

“Ok Kim, I will see what I can do” which brought a smile to the face of the beautiful Kim.

Then he looked seriously at Pon and rubbed his brow, and knew that this could become a big problem.

“When are you leaving Chai?” asked Lee.

“Tomorrow,” said Pon not knowing why, but knowing he still had the element of surprise, so there didn’t seem to be any rush, which meant that he could spend more time with Kim, even though he knew it could be for the last time.

“You must stay the night here” ordered Lee “I will have a room made up for you. . . . Kim, show Chai around the grounds.”

The two walked around the large grounds and stopped in a gazebo and kissed. With sadness Kim told Pon why she had come to see Lee. She explained about her parents being traditional and this arranged marriage would go ahead no matter what, However, they’d always listened to her father’s brother, Lee, and would take notice of him, so she had come to ask her uncle to try to get her parents to postpone the wedding. Pons heart leapt and he held on to Kim.

“My uncle was the only person I have told that I love someone else,” said Kim and they again.

They spent the day around the grounds and at night they ate and, together with Lee, watched English football on Lee’s 40” plasma TV. Pon had not told Kim exactly why he was in Cambodia, just that he had to find someone and something. Kim never pressed the fact, she didn’t care, just the fact that he was there was enough for her. They all went to their rooms at 10pm and, as the Brigadier closed his door, Kim ran silently to Pons room. They lie together on the bed and fell asleep in each other’s arms, very content.

Pon awoke at 4 am and gently stroked Kim’s face; she woke up, kissed Pon and said.

“I will return to my room and see you later my love”

## CHALICE

Kim got off Pons bed, accidentally knocking over his bag containing the maps and files given to him by Lee. A photograph spilled out and Kim picked it up and stared at it. Pon sat up.

“I know this man” said Kim, handing Colonel Tighe’s photograph to Pon “He is ex Khmer Rouge and very dangerous, was he the one you’re after?” Kim enquired Pon, unsure what to say, remained silent

“Please my love, do not anger this man, he will kill you for certain,” pleaded Kim, not knowing Pon to be a Tinju assassin, all she’d ever known about Pon was that he escorted to the Crown Prince.

Pon held her again and pecked her on the cheek

“Don’t worry my love, I will be perfectly safe, besides I have two trained bodyguards with me, referring to Spock and Stu I will return to see you again, my mother already foretold this.

Kim left the room unconvinced and with a heavy heart returned to her room, closed the door, fell onto her bed and wept ‘I should have told him,’ she thought.

They all gathered outside Lees house after breakfast and exchanged pleasant farewells Pons wai-ed Kim and Lee goodbye, although he felt upset as this could be the last time he would see Kim, unless her if her uncle could dissuade her parents, but the wedding was only a few days away.

Lee handed Pon a set of car keys and pointed to a Range Rover Intercooler 4WD

“Take the Rover,” said Lee “it would save you hiring one and keep you inconspicuous.”

Pon thanked Lee.

Pon now faced his quandary, he couldn’t drive and realised Stu and Spock would have to take him to Siem Reap. He informed Lee and requested his driver to take him to Coasters to collect his crack team, who could drive.



The Tinju Prime Master's crack team, bodyguards and chauffeurs, still festered in their beds, snoring their heads off after a great night out. They had spent the day relaxing in the sun outside Coasters, trying to chat up unsuccessfully, the two staff. They had arranged to meet Shifty at 8pm and had persuaded Dragon and Mom to eat with them first.

The two girls could not go out at with them as they couldn't get permission from their parents.

"Harder than Thailand," said Spock.

"Yes mate," said a disappointed Stu.

They told the girls they weren't sure of how long they would be staying, as that was down to their friend, shithead. The girls agreed that if the lads could stay for a few days, they could go to \*Bamboo Island with them on their day off. The lads were happy about this and Stu thought Mom would look great in a bikini. Although he wasn't that concerned about a relationship going anywhere, he loved Dao and missed her, but he thought he might as well enjoy himself.

Spock wasn't concerned at all about Moo. She had not spoken to him since they left and she kept hanging up the phone, besides Spock wanted to get into Dragons bikini. The girls finished work at 5pm and chatted and ate. Spock noticed something on the wall in the Coasters reception that had interested him and he asked Dragon about it.

"You need to speak to Rob, another partners, he did the course" said Dragon "he will here shortly, he works the night shift."

They finished eating and the girls went home. The lads stayed in Coasters and met Rob, a small Englishman, with a similar build to Stu. Rob explained to them that the metre high wooden broken propeller and the pictures on the wall were of a \*paramotor that he had crashed whilst on the four day course, that he had done with his friend, 'Swoop' Oliver.

This had wetted the lad's appetite, until Rob explained that you had to do a lot of running to take off, hence why he

## CHALICE

crashed. His running consisted of two paces, and instead of soaring up into the clouds like a majestic eagle, ended up on his arse in the sand, with the propeller whirring away and breaking against the sand. They all had a laugh and Rob bought over two drinks.

“Try this,” he said as he handed the lads, two John Collins cocktails “very refreshing,” smiled Rob.

Stu and Spock not wanting to offend, thanked him and tasted the fruit based concoction

“Very nice, cheers matey,” said Stu, taking another swig, and when Rob went to chat with other customers, the lads poured the cocktail into the sand and ordered two beers to take the nasty taste away. Nick hadn’t shown up, so the lads decided to set off for their first night in Sihanoukville.

At 7pm they went up to the main road and found the first place Shifty had marked off for them to meet, The Tiki. There they met the man Shifty fondly referred to as, Spinning Bob.

Spinning Bob had a large wooden bar built on stilts. The lads went up some wooden stairs, sat down and ordered two beers. They were the only two customers in the bar and they told Bob, a friendly American from California, who resembled the actor Robert Shaw, they were waiting for Shifty. Bob, happy about having two new customers at the bar, immediately ordered himself a drink and turned up the volume on his C.D player, which was blaring out Bob’s favourite Hawaiian singer Gaby Pahanui, which sounded to Sock and Stu like Pavarotti gargling a bumble bee . Bob then proceeded to tell Stu and Spock how he ended up in Cambodia He had left Nelles air force base prison after 5 months on probation. He was arrested after he had taken a hooker home and, while doing the business, noticed that she had stopped groaning, due to the fact that she was dead. He went on to tell the lads that he liked prison so much tried to open a pizza hut inside. When his case eventually went to trail

he was acquitted. He attempted other dubious activities to get back inside prison, but when all his attempts failed, he moved Thailand and then to Cambodia, where he married and had a beautiful baby daughter, Sarah, which was Bobs first child, at the ripe old age of 65. The more Bob told of his story, the faster he drank, and the more excited he became. The young girl serving behind the bar cringed, she had seen and heard the story many times and knew what was about to happen.

“And the best part,” shouted the now excited Bob “the hookers name was Merci” he then got off his stool, laughed out loud and started spinning around, laughing to himself, every now and again he would stop spinning, look at the lads and then continue laughing and spinning.

“Sorry I’m late lads,” spoke a voice from behind them.

“Oh you got Bob spinning already, a little early Bob,” shouted Shifty as Bob stopped and said Hi to Shifty, then carried on with his routine.

“An Anchor please Tina” Shifty requested from the barmaid.

“How about you lads?” He asked Spock and Stu

“No mate were fine,” answered Stu

“Okay we will have one drink here and then hit the town” said Shifty and ordered Bob a vodka to stop him spinning, because they all felt dizzy.

They tagged along with Shifty all night. He took them around the downtown area, to several bars, these, observed the lads were a lot quieter and serviced the ex-pat community. They went up to victory hill and were becoming spannered. Shifty announced

“We’ve done the hill, so now let’s go to the mountain. They got into a tuk-tuk.

“Blue mountain, Windy” Shifty ordered, the driver smiled and set off.

The tuk-tuk headed out of the town and up a dirt track road. It rocked back and forth as Windy, the driver, tried to

## CHALICE

avoid the mounds and potholes on the small, dirty street lined with small huts and shacks that buzzed with life as they drove past, small massage parlours with girls whooping at Windy to stop. The tuk-tuk pulled into an open courtyard with a large covered seating area, surrounding the courtyard were 20 chalet type rooms with the outside painted in a bright luminous green. The lads were shown to a table in the seating area and about 30 young Vietnamese ladies surrounded them. They ordered beers and surveyed the gaggle of beauties now gathered around them. Shifty said with a glint in his eye.

“When in Rome lads” and took a small lady from the back of the bunch. The mamasan knew Shifty and told him that room 1 was available, Shifty and the girl headed off to room 1. The fairly tall, lean mamasan, appeared slightly older than the other girls.

“Must be his regular” said Spock noticing how quickly Shifty had chosen.

“The large mamasan then turned her attention to the lads.

“Which lady you want, short time” she asked

The lads hadn’t been given any chance to look.

“Maybe later” said Stu

Within seconds, the mass of girls dispersed to wait for the next batch of eager customers. Spock and Stu looked around for the next few minutes; foreigners and Khmers were going into and coming out of the rooms and appeared very contented. The mamasan returned several minutes later to the table.

“Well” she said “Seen anyone you like, yet?”

“You’ll do” said Spock to the mamasan, expecting her to go and get a replacement.

“Ok she said but I am \$10,”she grabbed Spocks hand and led him into one of the rooms.

Stu sat, drank his beer and tried to look as if he wanted to be left alone.

Spock and the lady went into a dingy room. The dirty room must have housed at least three girls, piles of clothes were discarded everywhere. Mamasan calmly removed her clothes and instructed Spock to shower in the filthy cubicle at the back. He did, as instructed and noticed a bin full of used condoms on the floor, this put Spock off a little and he returned after his cold shower, which was a ladle of cold dirty water from a large stone well. The lady waited on the bed, with her next pile of new condoms within easy reach. Spock lay down and tried to kiss her, she immediately pulled away and put a condom on his now active todger and started to rub and suck Spock's todger. She then mounted Spock and rapidly thrust Spock in and out of her. Spock came quickly. The lady removed his condom and went into the shower room and washed herself down. She put on her clothes and held her hand out. Spock gave her \$10 and went to rejoin Stu.

"Bloody hell mate that was a short time, less than four minutes" laughed Stu

"That was shit" mumbled Spock "I was raped" and calmly took a swig from his still cold beer.

Shifty joined them about 20 minutes later and enquired why they hadn't taken anyone.

"Someone did" said Stu pointing to Spock and laughing.

"I was violated" Spock grumbled.

The pair laughed at Spock, finished their beers and got back into the tuk-tuk. The mamasan came up and said "See you again."

To which Spock replied, "Not in this life you won't."

The tuk-tuk went back to the dirt track and returned the two spannered lads to Coasters and they went to bed.

The next morning Pon woke them early and, after the morning ear clipping had been dished out, he told them about his meeting with Lee and that they must leave immediately and drive to Siem Reap. The lads looked at Pon's map and

## CHALICE

estimated the journey would take approximately eight hours. They checked out of Coasters, said goodbye to Dragon and Mom, but said they would return and take them to Bamboo Island. They left instructions that should Nick show up to give him their mobile number, and tell him they had gone to Siem Reap.

They got into the range rover. Now they were kings of the road. They dropped Lee's driver off at the brigadier's house, and Spock, Stu and Pon caught a glimpse of Kim. Pons heart pounded and he felt extremely saddened by the thought that this would be the last time he would see her.

They headed off towards Siem Reap with a still tired Spock at the wheel, and Stu snoring away in the back.

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*\*Bamboo Island or Koh Russie is a small island within a group of small islands about 50 minutes boat ride from the mainland beaches. Bamboo Island has several traditional bungalow resorts. The most popular of these is the Coasters run bamboo beach bungalows, which has the only restaurant on the beach and owned and managed by an old, selectively deaf, randy Canadian named Wayne. Bamboo Island is a popular tranquil get away for both foreigners and Khmers, as there is nothing to do but relax, swim or snorkel on the many reefs at tranquillity bay which is a small bay on the island. The island is the only one in this group inhabited. There is no mains power to the island and it is only run on small generators, which are usually turned off early evening leaving you to just enjoy the light of the moon and if you listen carefully it is said to be so peaceful you can hear the stars twinkle*

*\*Powered Paragliding or Para motoring, as it's known in Europe, is one of the fastest growing sports in the world. Due to its simplicity (no hangar, runway, or trailer needed) and surprisingly low cost, the freedom of flight is available to all. A pilot quite simply straps on a 2 (or in some cases 4) stroke motor, launches a paragliding wing, runs and lifts off. After an hour or two of buzzing around at heights varying from 1 - 3000ft, you can touch down lightly either at the same take off point or another. The beauty of powered paragliding is its portability. You can transport all of your equipment easily on a plane, in a car or even a tuk-tuk! This allows you to access varied flying sites throughout the country and the rest of the world. The training is short and one of the world's best training schools is in Sihanoukville.*

*\*Koh Kong, a convenient stop-over for a visa run from Thailand and access to Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville. This a quiet province is bordered by the Cardamom mountains, with Koh Kong town being its capital, it is connected to the border crossing by a bridge. The people of Koh Kong, speak Khmer, Thai and English and prices are in Thai Baht. Several Westerners own restaurants, bars and tour services in Koh Kong and Cambodian visa's are obtained at the border, which cost around \$20 to \$30, depending on the mood of the immigration. Few tourists stay in Koh Kong, because most have bad experiences at this well known rip-off border and there is bugger all to do there*

## **CHALICE**



## - Chapter Twelve -

The gathered scientist stared at the dead rat, not understanding what had gone wrong. They'd had their calculations correct, and the dead animal appeared to be an exact copy of its living breathing donor.

This now became a problem for the scientists to solve. Three of the software specialists decided to leave the citadel and introduce CAIN to the outside world and, after a huge party they left the following day, promising to keep the citadel a secret. Now it was the task of Rumble and Ngem to solve the riddle, along with their sons, daughters in laws and remaining scientists.

Boran named the project: Ophiuchus, the new beginning.

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*Ophiuchus, the 13th sign of the zodiac which was well known through 15-1700's as the centre of the universe The constellation, situated in the dark rift between Sagittarius and Scorpio was speculated to have been removed from records by the Catholic Church in the late 16th century, during the inquisition periods. It was predicted that when three solar eclipses occurred in the same lunar year, and when the sun rose in alignment with Ophiuchus, it would mark the return of the Antichrist and Armageddon. This date was worked out on the Gregorian calendar by Nostradamus and the ancient Mayans as 2012. This is also the reason the number 13 is considered to be unlucky.*

This prediction Boran also firmly believed in. He had studied, and became interested in, the works of Nostradamus. However he'd interpreted the scriptures completely differently to the

## CHALICE

doom and gloom merchants. Boran saw it not as the end of civilization, but with a little help from the human race, it could be a new beginning for the little blue planet that we fondly call home, and the only planet we know that has chocolate.

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They performed an autopsy and microanalysis on the dead rat and took countless tissue samples but could find no reason why the animal had not lived. They repeated the process several times over the next few months using different specimens, monkeys, dogs, cats but all produced the same result, a perfect replica but dead. Even their attempts to artificially ventilate and shock start the heart, failed to animate the animals.

Then, in the August of 2007 Norman Junior had an idea and explained to the team.

“Maybe the problem is, we have just thrown the thing all together into a mix and not done it the same way as nature; in other words, slowly and piece by piece” Norm Junior continued, “maybe we should start at the beginning with a plain canvas and we can add the picture later. And simplified his theory by comparing it to a computer,” build the machine the circuits and hardware, then add the memory and programs”.

The other scientists listened to Norm Junior’s analogy, Boran and Rumble looked at each other and smiled.

“That should work” said Rumble “It made perfect sense, well done son,” and patted his son proudly on the back.

“Ok,” said Boran, “back to the drawing board”

It only took several more weeks for the Ophiuchus project to be tried again, although this time with some changes. The oven made the cells first for the skeleton and within a few

days a skeleton appeared on the centre pad, then added muscles, white cells, red cells and platelets.

After several more days, a rat began to take shape on the centre pad. The rat was covered by a layer of transparent membrane, and through this skin you could see all the organs and muscles forming, which looked like someone had skinned the poor creature. The visible heart and lungs started to function.

They developed a way of injecting all the cells into the body at specific times, by an apparatus that resembled a small rubber blanket with 1000's of tiny needles, which could be enlarged, or reduced in size depending on the region they are trying to implant, this they called the 'shroud of life'

"Right," said Rumble, "now add the paint."

The oven injected through the shroud, the synthesized DNA cells that contained the characteristics.

Then they waited.

It only took several hours for the cells to bind with the plain DNA cells and once the shroud had been removed, a white, living breathing rat stood motionless on the pad.

"Right," said Rumble, "let's program it."

A small robotic syringe swung over and injected the rat at the base of its skull and injected 100000 Neutral's, RNA enhanced neurotrophins cells into the rat's hypothalamus.

There was silence for several moments. This they expected, it would take some time for the Neurals to convert to Neurons. However, after 90 minutes, the rat twitched into life and as its short term memory returned, it started to look around, then slowly walked on the pad, looked around at its new surroundings, then dropped dead.

There was a silence as the scientists just stared at the rat.

"Well," said Boran breaking the silence, "at least it works and, I think I know the problem. I suspected this could happen, but we will have to autopsy the animal to confirm my hypothesis."

## CHALICE

The team, although a bit deflated, gathered up the dead creature and started more tests. A few weeks later they were ready to try the experiment again. The same process as before skeleton, muscles and blood, only this time they had altered the cells to create a synthetic oxygen carrying cell, which adhered better to chromosome and enzymes more efficiently. They discovered from the post mortem, that most of the original blood cells in the previous test had died before the DNA characteristic cells had been added, also, as Boran suspected they could not use a live subject, as it was shock that had killed the first test subject.

The memories were the same, so as the neurons grew, and the short term memory returned the poor creature couldn't fathom out why it was in two places at once. The shock on its new brain tissue proved to be too much for its unready new body that resulted in the internal carotid artery in the centre of its brain exploding, resulting in instant death. Boran suggested that the samples must be taken at a place that would not shock the new life form would be created, unless they created something that could understand speech so they could reassure them.

25th December 2007 was not only a special day in the Christian calendar, but also in the citadel as a living breathing walking rat, now happily chewed on some cheese in the centre of the oven pad, with the sound of Mozart playing in the background and a happy cheering team of scientists who praised one another for their contribution in creating 'Adam' the first synthetically created creature

They gathered up Adam and put him in a cage outside in the pasture. All the inhabitants stroked him and petted him, and the little creature, although confused, enjoyed the attention. His last memory was of being in a glass case and smelling a strange substance, and then falling asleep, waking up a few hours ago, a little unsteady. Rumble and Ngem

returned to the lab and started the process again this time using a monkey hair from a macaque, commonplace in the jungle surrounding Ta Prohm. The result was the same, and after a fortnight the created monkey scampered around the lab, with the two old professors trying to catch and cage it. With the continued success of the Ophiuchus project, Professor Rumble and Ngem sat down and in deep discussion on whether to give their process to the world. They were joined by their sons and other scientists involved in the project. Except for professor Rumble the others agreed that the world was not yet ready for this technology and, knowing the superpowers they would use the project for military use.

Rumble disagreed, because he wanted the process available and credit his dead mentor Rosalind Franklyn as playing a large part of this find, as her original research had started the whole thing off and she deserved the recognition that Rumble had always considered had been stolen from her. The team discussed this long and hard and eventually came to the conclusion the outside world neither could, nor would, use the process for the correct reasons, but if they could educate and bring together the world and make it a more peaceful place to be, only then they would allow the process to be shared.

Norman Rumble, almost 70 years old, had remained alone, and had devoted his entire life to science and spent his middle age researching this field to give Rosalind recognition. Since his beloved Theory had been gone, he had worked tirelessly in something that he never dreamed could be achieved in his lifetime. But it was, so now, he wanted something for his tireless and unselfish work, he wanted something that, because of his achievement, he could now obtain. He wanted his life back.

“We will make a human being,” he announced.

“What?” said the gathered scientists’.

“We will make a human,” Norman repeated

## CHALICE

“We aren’t ready for that step Norm,” said Boran, knowing who Rumble wanted to reincarnate.

“We are,” said Rumble “it would be the same for any living creature, we can create anything, the process, as we know is successful and therefore, theoretically we can make anything, or anyone.”

“It’s too soon,” said Boran.

“Too soon!” bellowed Norm “We are generations too soon. We’d never expected to achieve what we have in our lifetime, therefore we have no reason to wait, and I say we do it, now.”

The team looked shocked, especially Boran and Norm Junior, who had never seen his father lose his temper before. Boran went over to the enraged old professor and put his hand on his shoulder.

“I understand old friend,” said Boran.

They had been colleagues and friends now for most of their adult life and Boran had to make Norm understand that now was not the right time

“Why?” said Norman and kept on asking the same question, which the group could only reply we need more tests. Norm stated that this would be a test, just like any other and called them all short sighted. After a few hours of lengthy and heated debate, and private talks with Boran and Junior, the team finally relented.

“Okay,” said Boran. “You have done so much for us, so we will grant your request to create a human. The playing God card came into the equation, which Rumble shrugged off saying it was too late for that and, if God had given them the knowledge to create the machine, he must have a plan.

“There is a stipulation though,” said Boran

“Well! What is it?” said the now jubilant Rumble.

“We will choose who is to be cloned,” said Boran.

“That’s obvious” pointed out Norman “Someone recently deceased, someone whose life touched so many others in the

citadel, it is obvious who it will be” exclaimed Norm. “My beloved wife, his beloved mother and Cain’s grandmother,” Norm continued and looked at Norm Junior for a back up.

The backup never came and the rest of the team left the room leaving Norman, Boran and Norm’s son all holding hands, the sadness now etched in the tearful old eyes of Rumble.

“Why son, why my old friend?” he pleaded.

Boran and Norm Junior had tears running down their faces.

“Because father,” whispered Junior “I don’t want to risk losing my mother again should we fail, lets first try somebody else, and if we succeed then we can then bring back mum, but if we fail we can continue to perfect the process.”

Rumble thought hard, he felt that he wouldn’t be around for much longer, so this would be his last chance. They were however, uncertain of the time-frame to create a human and, because of the complicated human brain structure whether that it would even be possible.

Professor Rumble pondered, and then replied,

“You are right my son and you my old friend, I am sorry for my outburst,” croaked Norman. “But if not Theory then who?” asked Norman

That answer came several days later as they input instructions into Theory for creating a human blueprint, Patty walked into Norman’s office, along with Norm Jnr, Tu, Anne and Boran.

“Here is who,” said a smiling Patty and tapped at the keypad on Norms, desk top computer and linked with hers.

The screen filled with old newspaper articles from the Bangkok post dated 26 December 2007, about a sacred holy relic that went on display to the public that day. It went on to describe the bejewelled box and its 2500 year old contents, stating the box had not been opened for over 2000 years.

Norman read the article with interest

## CHALICE

“How can we get cells after 2000 years?” asked Norm, now intrigued.

“It’s a well known fact” said Patty “teeth enamel lasts for millennia, archaeologists will tell you that cells have been found in tooth enamel, and if the box has been sealed for two millennium they should contain at least a few cells for the cell sniffer.” Boran nodded his agreement,

“and,” continued Patty, “what better person to introduce back into the world, it was what the Ophiuchus project was designed for, to bring peace and tranquillity back to the world, a new beginning, and what better person to return to the planet than the ultimate enlightened human being; Prince Siddhartha Gautama, The Buddha:”

“Plus” added Junior “from what the history books tell us, he was an educated man who died peacefully in his sleep, so if we find someone who had knowledge of ancient Pali language, we should be able to reassure him, until he is able to grasp his incredible situation, thus avoiding any shock.

*Siddhārtha Gautama, in Sanskrit, or Siddhattha Gotama, in Pali, was a spiritual teacher from ancient India and the founder of Buddhism. He is generally recognized by Buddhists as the Supreme Buddha (Sammāsambuddha) of our age. The time of his birth and death are uncertain: most early 20th-century historians date his lifetime from circa 563 BCE to 483 BC. Gautama, also known as Śākyamuni or Shakyamuni (Skt.; Pali: Sakyamuni; English: “sage of the Shakyas”), is the key figure in Buddhism, and accounts of his life, discourses, and monastic rules were said to have been summarized after his death and memorized by the sangha. Passed down by oral tradition, the Tipitaka, the collection of teachings attributed to Gautama by the Theravada, was committed to writing some centuries later.*



*\*One of the most anticipated targets for cloning was once the Woolly Mammoth, but attempts to extract DNA from frozen mammoths have been unsuccessful, though a joint Russo-Japanese team is currently working toward this goal. In 2002, geneticists at the Australian Museum announced that they had replicated DNA of the extinct Thylacine (Tasmanian Tiger), from DNA extracted from a fossilised canine tooth.*

## **CHALICE**

## – Chapter Thirteen –

It was hot July day, Detective Inspector Donal Crinigan sat in his eight floor office at New Scotland Yard, with a telephone in his hand, looking dumfounded.

‘What just happened there?’ he thought as he replaced the receiver. ‘This appears to be becoming like something from the X-Files.’

“Rock!” he hollered through his open office door

“Yes sir,” said Detective Nathan Rock from the workstation outside.

“Get me the number of Mulder and Scully you little bollix,” he shouted, much to the amusement of the other detectives in earshot.

“Pardon sir?” queried Rock.

“Nothing, get back to work” said Crinigan as he got up, closed his office door and reflected on recent events

The body from Cambodia had arrived the previous afternoon and taken to the Morgue. O’Donnel and his forensics team had started work on it immediately and carried out another post mortem examination.

O’Donnel had called Crinigan to the morgue first thing the following morning. Donal hated the morgue as it always left him stinking of Hycaline and formaldehyde, which lingered on his clothes. However O’Donnel had insisted that he should attend before a report was filed.

Crinigan walked out of the metropolitan Police main building and into the forensic section at the rear. He was met in the corridor by O’Donnel who escorted him to the morgue and informed him that they had been mistaken. They entered the morgue through large vulcanised rubber swing doors. The

## CHALICE

forensics lab in the Metropolitan police is one of the world's best, it contained all the most modern up to date analysis machines available. The walls of the large morgue covered in blue cobalt ceramic tiles, which gave the feeling of being in an immense bathroom.

“Wrong about what?” asked Crinigan.

“The samples,” said O'Donnel, “they do come from the same body and not two as we first suspected,” he led Crinigan to an autopsy table, where a large operating theatre light hung central, which shone onto a body of a Caucasian male. The torso had been splayed and the internal organs dissected and either in sample jars or on plates of analysis machines. Crinigan noticed the face of the corpse was contorted with a look of pure terror.

“I thought the body had been in a dry well for ten days before being discovered” commented Crinigan, “this body looks fresh,”

O'Donnell knew the shrewd detective would pick up on this fact straight away and stated

“The Internal carotid artery seemed to have exploded, brought on by some kind of shock and the brain has been dead for at least two weeks,” explained O'Donnel “but the cells in the body were still active and reproducing, albeit now very slowly.”

“How is that possible?” Crinigan asked

O'Donnel went on to explain how the blood cells had been somehow altered to carry their own supply of synthetic oxygen that didn't die; however, at the rate they were now replicating they should die soon. He showed Crinigan a photo scan of the femurs bone marrow, which looked like a honeycomb. This was not a natural structure and neither were the cells. O'Donnel explained that as far as they could figure out, the bones of the skeleton are the oldest things in the corpse, and went on to tell the intrigued detective that,

according to the tests they had performed on the bones they had dated them to be a few months old

“Nothing about this corpse was usual” said a puzzled O’Donnell.

“Have you got an identity for me so we can at least inform someone’s next of kin,” said a still confused Crinigan.

“O’Donnell handed him a medical folder and an identification sheet.

“Not exactly,” said O’Donnell and went over to the side wall, to the x-rays light boxes.

“The DNA, blood and fingerprint suggest this person,” he said and pointed to an identity form, with a name address date of birth, occupation and next of kin.

“But” he said, “these are this man’s Skull and dental x-rays” pointing to the identity form

“However” he said as he slid a small dental x-ray next to the first x-rays

“This is our friend’s here,” he said as he pointed to the corpse. “

“So unless his teeth grew back, they don’t match” noticed Crinigan.

O’Donnell opened another envelope and produced two x-rays and put them onto the light box.

“Our John Doe here is this one” he said and pointed to an x-ray.

“And this one,” he said and pointed to the second “we obtained from the medical records of the man to whom we assume it to be” he said and again tapped on the identification papers.

Crinigan studied the identical x-rays of a shoulder. He picked noticed one had signs of a fracture on his right clavicle. O’Donnell then showed Crinigan an accident and emergency photograph taken December 2007, at Pattaya Bangkok Memorial Hospital, which showed a small shaven section of a scalp with ten sutures.

## CHALICE

O'Donnel went over to the head of the corpse

“According to the photographs and diagnostic casualty reports, it should be right here” and pulled the hair away from the spot marked.

Crinigan looked.

“No scar,” he said.

“Correct,” said O'Donnel. “And, no indication of any childhood disease or any illness, in fact if you want me to put an age on this body, despite how it looks, I would say this man to be several months old”

Crinigan was baffled as Brendon continued

“I know it sounds crazy, but it appears as if this man has been made, or at least genetically altered.

“Is it a hoax?” asked Crinigan clutching at straws, “Did this person actually live?”

“I think only briefly,” said O'Donnel.

“What was the cause of death,” inquired Crinigan.

“All we can presume is that due to some unimaginable shock, his internal carotid artery literally exploded as he appeared to have died terrified of something.”

“So,” said Crinigan “You're telling me that a...” Crinigan looked at the notes from O'Donnel and continued,

“A thirty-six year-old man with a body a few months old died of fright.”

O'Donnel corrected him, “A modified or created body of a few months old. . . . Yes.”

“What a load of old bollocks” shouted Crinigan, “little green men, conspiracy theory?”

“I honestly don't know inspector,” said a confused and mystified Coroner. “It has baffled us all,” and added, “This level of genetic engineering could not have occurred during present day,” he went on “we haven't the technology to sequence, replicate and grow a human. This technology would be centuries, probably millennia away”

“What about that new CAIN process that the computer world has gone crazy on?” asked Crinigan.

“That supposedly enhanced computers to the next level of evolution, or so they boast.

O’Donnel thought for a moment and replied

“That has only been developed a short time and they still don’t know the possibilities for that. This technology seemed to far advanced, maybe even for CAIN.

“So,” said a now perturbed detective, “We are back to little green men?” he glared at O’Donnel.

“Maybe”, said O’Donnel “or Frankenstein, we just don’t know”.

“Let me get this straight,” said Crinigan, trying to condense the facts.

“Little green men travelled the stars, spent light years getting here, grabbed a.....” He looked at his papers and continued, “Grabbed a 36 year old builder’s labourer from Brighton, genetically altered him, and dropped him off in a well inside an ancient Cambodian temple. Then scared the bejesus out of him and left him dead for us to find.”

He looked at O’Donnel, who stared back at his Irish colleague and stated

“Donal, I have given you the facts and that’s all I can do.” He continued “You are the detective, you piece it together. My official report will state that this man died of a ruptured Berry aneurysm of the internal carotid artery in the circle of Willis, blood vessels in the base of the brain.”

Crinigan looked at the I.D. papers in front of him. He studied the next of kin details.

“Right,” he said “It’s time to do some real detective work then isn’t it?” Crinigan then strode out of the morgue and walked back into the main building and back into his office,

“Rock,” he shouted.

“Yes sir,” shouted detective Rock.

## CHALICE

“Bring me a coffee and come in here, you may be useful for once in your life,” hollered the inspector.

Rock brought in the coffee and they both sat in front of Crinigans’ crime computer.

“Right,” he said “Here is our problem, we have a body, possibly a homicide, no motive, don’t know what opportunity , and we don’t have a murder weapon, in fact we have sod all, so where do we begin?” he waited for a response, which came surprisingly quickly for Nathan Rock

Detective Rock took the ID information from the folder.

“We have a next of kin name and address sir, how about we start with that?” he said and tapped the name and address into the computer

“Good lad, we will make a copper out of you yet,” laughed Crinigan.

A name, address and phone number along with other information flashed across the screen.

Crinigan studied the screen and wrote down a telephone number.

“Make yourself scarce lad, this could be the difficult part” said Crinigan and detective Rock left his office.

Crinigan composed himself and dialled the Brighton Police station and spoke to the chief constable, and then he dialled the number he had written down.

“Hello,” said a lady’s voice.

“Hello,” said Donal “Is that Mrs. Lorraine Stephenson?”

“Yes” said Lorraine “Who is this, and you had better not be selling anything.”

“This is Detective Inspector Donal Crinigan of the Metropolitan Police and I am afraid I have some bad news for you. We have a Mr. Nicholas Godfrey on report as staying at your address is that correct?” asked Crinigan.

“Nick? Yes he’s my brother, he stays with me and my husband; why what has he done?” asked Lorraine.



## Robert A. Webster

“He has done nothing, Mrs Stephenson, I am afraid I have some bad news for you. I am afraid your brother Nicholas is dead” he pauses “I am truly sorry, Donal, as expected hears no reply, so continues

“We have your brother’s body with us here and I have sent a female constable to your address to counsel you and arrange for you to visit us here in London. You have to identify the body, and we have some questions that you may be able to help us answer.” said Crinigan with remorse in his voice. “I am sorry to have to break the news over the telep.....”

“Hang on” said Lorraine interrupting the Detective.

“Nick!” she hollered then silence

“Nick!” she shouted again, “Get your arse down here. One of your numb nut mates is on the phone and wants to speak to you and don’t worry it doesn’t sound like those two. This idiot’s Irish”

## **CHALICE**

## *- Chapter Fourteen -*

Some of the scientists and technicians in the citadel still felt doubtful over whether they should be replicating a human, however, having the chance to meet their holy prophet in their lifetime was a chance too good to pass up, after several hours of debate they agreed and set about the project in hand.

The Oven made plain human cells of bone, muscle and synthetic oxygen carrying blood cells, sequenced with no characteristics and completed the instructions to Theory. They waited and after a few hours the oven sprang to life mixing and whirring.

“All we can do now,” said Rumble, “is wait and see”

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Norman wanted Tighe to use his connections and influence to obtain the holy box.

“You can assure the Thais that it won’t be harmed and they would also benefit from this project, so will the rest of mankind.” assured Rumble.

Tighe went along to the citadel to get details, along with some pumpkin custard. He also wanted to see his family because he had an announcement to make, so the timing had been perfect. They were all delighted to see Tighe, as due to his political and military duties he hadn’t been able visit for quite some time

Tighe came in through the temple elevator and to Norm’s office. He hugged his old adopted father and asked the whereabouts of Norm Junior and Tu.

Norman said they were all waiting for him in Tu’s residence dome. He asked Norman and Boran to leave their

## CHALICE

work for a short while and come to Tu's house, for his announcement.

The family gathered at Tu's residence dome and Tighe produced a bottle of Johnny Walker, black label whisky and some gold invitation envelopes, which he handed out.

"You sly old dog," said Norm Junior as they all gathered around and hugged Tighe, The betrothed.

"Who's the lucky lady?" asked Tu.

Tighe told them all about his fiancé and Norm Junior shouted,

"The lucky sods got a virgin!" and he received a dirty look from Patty for his outburst.

They opened their golden coloured invites and looked at the date 20th May,

"That's only a few months away," said Tu. "If things work out well here, we may have someone rather special to conduct the service" he laughed.

That night they partied and the next morning, Rumble showed Tighe the news article about the holy box.

"I will see what I can do Norm" said Tighe "and don't worry, you shall definitely get it one way or another."

"Thanks son," said Norman, hugged Tighe and gave him an envelope containing \$20000 for his wedding dowry.

"As long as you come along with the rest of the family, it will do you good to get away from the mole hole" said Tighe,

"I wouldn't miss it for anything" assured Norman, "and that goes for the rest of us" he continued.

Colonel Tighe left the citadel, went home and started making phone calls to obtain the box for his adopted father, by fair means or foul.

Over the next few weeks as they waited for the Oven to start its process and make a blank human, they made a few alterations.

They didn't want the replicated human to wake up in the middle of the machine, which would have caused the ancient holy man, who would never seen a light bulb, let alone a machine, to have a seizure. They realised that at this stage his body would not have readjusted or settled and, any shock would caused a major system failure, the same as the first rat. They made a small hospital ward in the room adjacent to Theory, and partitioned off the room so all the fibre optics and monitors would not be visible from the bed in the centre of the room. They reconnected the shroud of life into the room

They'd installed a DVD player in the room to play soothing classical music. Srey Dar, one of Borans old team of archaeologists and now a teacher in the citadel, had started to learn basic Indian-Pali language, so that she could communicate and reassure Buddha. Everything had been prepared and all they had to do now was wait and hope.

Colonel Tighe telephoned after a several weeks and told Norman the Thais had agreed to release the box, but informed him that it would be a few more weeks before it arrived as they had to provide security. Norman had no cause to disbelieve him and carried on waiting. After several weeks, a skeleton had grown and the oven sprayed and injected cells.

The muscles formed a few weeks later and, after just six weeks Theory flashed up an instruction on the ovens screens.

### **Process complete, awaiting instructions.**

The scientists had monitored this process all the way through and glared at a transparent body with all the organs in perfect condition, blood started to flow through the body, being pumped by a healthy heart with the lungs being ventilated through a small ventilator. The transparent lifeless human lay motionless, its round white eyes in stared into nothingness.

## CHALICE

“That’s the canvass and box of circuitry, chips and wires completed,” said Norman Junior, using his analogy; all we need now is the paint, artist and software program”

“That’s the thing about science son,” said Norm, “It won’t be rushed.”

They moved the replicant from the oven pad into the bed in the ward and wrapped the shroud of life around it, in preparation for the final process. They spent their time checking and double checking the workings of the machines and monitors, until the box arrived.

They did not have to wait long, two days later a buzz alerted the citadel that someone was at the temple elevator. Boran checked the CCTV and saw it was Tighe and another man. Boran brought down the elevator.

He met Tighe in the corridor of the lab and told him he had sent someone to fetch Rumble as he was taking a nap. Tighe introduced Boran to Tar and went to Borans office to await the professor. Norman entered the room ten minutes later. Tighe apologised for the late hour, Tar had only arrived that evening at his house and they wanted to get the item here immediately. Norm said hello to Tar and Tighe handed him the holy box.

“Thanks son,” said Rumble as he carefully examined the treasure “Why don’t you show your friend around.”

Norman noticed how Tar treated Tighe with great respect, ‘he must be a subordinate’ thought Norm as the pair left the office and went into the artificially created starry night of the citadel to Tu’ s dome.

The two scientists looked at the box and wondered that if, after 2500 years, it would still contain the genetic code for the enlightened one. They also thought about the ramifications it would have on today’s modern world. Would Prince Siddhartha Gautama once again be a holy leader and bring peace and enlightenment back into a world gone crazy. However, it was now too late for conjecture; they had come

too far to be having doubts. The next problem the scientists faced would be how to search and remove any cells without damaging the precious contents.

They had considered two problems that may affect the outcome:

1. If any air had gotten into the sealed box, which they'd assumed had been sealed by a vacuum for 2000 years, the old remnants would disintegrate and any cells would be lost.

2. If they had used MRI or x-ray scans on the box the radiation from these would have killed any cells of that age.

They had to obtain the cells blindly and with the box sealed in a vacuum. They had figured this out prior to the box's arrival and had built a large square container, inside contained a sealed laser cutter, minute drill and sealed cell sniffer. All accessible with pre positioned gloves. The box had been placed in the container and all the air sucked out to create a vacuum. They then measured to the micrometer the thickness of the lid and cut with the pinpoint laser, a micron size hole depth until 1 micron of gold lid remained, a sort of pilot hole, they then inserted the drill and through it centre the hair like sniffer and continued the last stage until the sniffer was now fully inside the box. The drilling and inserting took around 8 hours they all expected the sniffer to be rooting around finding cells amongst the decaying 2500 year old teeth for hours. But after a few seconds of inserting the sniffer, the scanner beeped with the discovery of four cells. The sniffer was then removed and its precious cargo placed in CAIN gel and taken to Theory scanner and the box resealed.

Norman put the box in his office drawer where it would be ready to return to Thailand.

So far it was a complete and surprisingly quick success.

Tighe and an amazed Tar left the citadel and the professors went to bed after an exhausting night. It was now just another waiting game

## CHALICE

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The two old professors had been checking equipment, when the monitors from Theory flashed.

### **Process complete awaiting instructions**

They were astounded as it had only taken three days. Norman went into the large black blanket covered body, checked all the monitors and machines had functioned correctly and then went to the head of the shroud, picked up an attached infuser and a large laser needle. He penetrated the base of the skull into the medulla and hypothalamus of the replicant. And injected a solution containing two million RNA enhanced neural cells.

Then again they waited. Norm estimated the delivery and bonding of the cells and the body to create Neurons and short term memory allowing self ventilation could take 24 hours. Norman left Boran, Srey Dar and a few technicians assigned to orderly positions in the ward to monitor the replicant. Norman went to his office and daydreamed, whilst he looked at his photographs.

He was interrupted by Boran four hours later.

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Now that he had seen the replicant, Norm was shocked and confused. He and Boran had to now decide what had happened, and what to do. He had telephoned Tighe, who said he would come straight over.

They needed to figure out why a 2500 Asian man, who should have black hair, brown eyes and a dark complexion now appeared to be a blue eyed, brown haired Caucasian who didn't respond to ancient Pali language, but seemed to understand modern day English. They considered that either,



The machine had gone wrong, or history books weren't accurate, it was a mystery they couldn't answer, only one person could. The scientists knew the replicant would sleep a lot at first, whilst his mind and body hardened 'but', thought Norman. 'He may have the answers'

He and Boran returned to the ward. The replicant, now dressed in a hospital tunic was awake at intervals.

"This is natural," thought Norm, the brain will switch off while his body adjusted.

The figure looked at Norm.

Srey Dar told them that the replicant had motioned something and had spoken, but she could not recognise the dialect. Norman looked at the monitors, then at the replicant and then to the heavens. Norman only spoke Khmer nowadays, everyone in the Citadel except for Patty and Anne spoke Khmer, and most of the inhabitants never understood English at all, including Srey Dar, so when Nick's replicant suddenly spoke, only Norman and Boran understood.

"Can I have a cup of tea" he whispered to the surprised party.

A very confused Norman was first to react.

"You speak English?" he asked.

"Yes," said the clone, "are you a doctor?"

"What do you remember?" asked Norm.

The replicant looked around the room and whispered.

"Someone fell on my head, so I assume I have been brought to the hospital. I don't remember much from before though . . . who am I?"

Boran, Rumble and Dar stared at one another and then at the Nick replicant.

"How much is this going to cost?" asked the clone, and fell asleep. Norman took blood and tissue samples as it became apparent that this was not the ancient holy man, but a far more recent and modern individual, which confused the scientists, why was this replicant still alive, when all other

## CHALICE

attempts to clone living cells had resulted in death. They put this down to the sample cells being taken from something inanimate, saliva off false teeth for example.

Over the next few hours the replicant spent longer intervals awake. He told them he could only remember much from his past. He thought originally his name was 'matey', but after several hours as the RNA mixed more memory cells into the DNA enhanced Neurals, he announced his name was Nick and was, for some unexplained reason in mortal fear of something or someone, but didn't know who or what.

The monitor leads had been removed from the replicant and after two hours he attempted to walk assisted by the Scientists and their sons. He took his first tentative steps and walked slowly and feebly to the window of the citadel and gasped.

"This isn't Pattaya, where the hell am I?" he stumbled, and the scientists hobbled him over to the bed.

Norman didn't know what kind of shock the truth would put on the still fragile clone, so he told him that he had been unconscious for a while and they had transferred him to another hospital where he would stay until he was fully healed and, it was free of charge. This relaxed the replicant who nodded off again. This respite would give them some thinking time.

Colonel Tighe came to the citadel and went into Norms office

"Sorry I have taken so long getting here father. I had a problem at home" said Tighe, who appeared extremely tense.

"That's okay son" said Norman.

Norman explained about the clone problem that they couldn't fathom out, and hoped that Tighe may be able to help, but a short way into their conversation, the intercom buzzed from the CCTV camera within the Ta Promh temple.

## *- Chapter Fifteen -*

Colonel Tighe Nye status had grown over the past few years. Now in sole charge of Hun Sens security, he wielded a lot of power and, along with land and property that a grateful government had given him for his dedicated service, he had become wealthy. His stocky built and hard features made him a formidable individual, although his firm but fair methods made him a popular commander with his troops. However, his fits of rage, especially with other ranks, political opponents and anyone associated with Royalty, had made him many enemies. He was a staunch democrat and hated the royal family and when the royalty was reinstated after the conflicts, he was not a happy man, his attitude was ‘While the monarchy hid, the Cambodians fought and died for their freedom’

Tighe had visited the royal palace many times with the Prime Minister and, although the royal family knew of his views, they tolerated him. It was there where he’d had met his fiancé and approached her parents to force her into marriage. He lived in a large house on the outskirts of Siem Reap which he’d had raised so that he could look out above the trees and had all the mod cons available, satellite, Jacuzzi, swimming pool etc. His house was surrounded by mango, banana, and Guava trees. A long driveway from a forked tarmac road led to his house. One of the roads went to Siem Reap and one led direct to Ta Prohm. Tighe lived alone. He had serving staff and owned several cars. A Mercedes for formal visits and a Hummer for when he visited his adopted family and for his jaunts into town for the temporary companions he used to take for a night of fun. He was not a lover of the Thai nation and would use any opportunity to piss them off and, apart from

## CHALICE

Norm; he was not a lover of foreigners and saw them as an invasion force. Norman was the only real father he had ever known. Even though he was no longer Khmer Rouge, killing to him was second nature and his crack team of commandos, the Prime Minister's bodyguards, had been accused of many murders to get the Colonel up the political ladder.

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Tighe had returned home from his visit to the citadel, and Norm's request to obtain the box. He had phoned the palace in Bangkok and had spoken to Taksin to request the use of the box. Taksin knew of this man's reputation and loathing of the royal family, from his friend, and Cambodian counterpart, Brigadier Lee and turned Tighe down flat.

'If you won't give it to me, I will just take it' thought, Tighe and set a plan in motion for his best commando Tar, with the assistance of his contact within the imperial palace, to exchange the box. He'd obtained pictures and photographs from his palace spy, and set Mr Heng Ty, a well respected, jewellery craftsman, the task of replicating the holy box. It took Heng Ty several weeks to make an exact copy of the box, Tighe then planned for a military exercise to take place at Preah-Vihear temple, knowing it would anger the Thais and would leave the Royals to have to smooth things over. He was aware the Thais would send their crown Prince, who would be escorted by the Tinju Prime Master, leaving the way clear for Tar. Tighe knew that Pon had a fearful reputation and believed the rumours that he had killed a foreigner and a Cambodian in Caw Kong last year,

Tighe's plan worked out perfectly and once he knew that Pon was in Cambodia, he dispatched Tar.

He assumed that the Thais would be none the wiser and that the holy remnants that the world would worship would be a box that contained Cambodian soil from his garden.

(Although unbeknownst to almost everybody they had already been worshipping a box of sand and Nick's false choppers).

Tighe had received a phone call from Tar at the border and arranged for a limousine to bring him from Poi Pet. Tar arrived in the early evening and after celebrating with fine malt whisky, they got in Tighe's hummer, drove to Ta Prohm and delivered the box to Norman.

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Tighe had just woken up when Norman phoned and told him that they had a problem and asked Tighe to go to the Citadel.

It had been four days since he had delivered the box and so Tighe assumed that Norman needed something else. 'I hope it's not urgent', thought Tighe 'I have a wedding to attend and a peach to pluck' he laughed to himself and looked at a photograph on his desk of his intended 'beautiful' he thought, 'I look forward to deflowering you my love' and kissed the photograph.

The maid came in with his breakfast and he sat down to eat. Half way through his meal the phone rang.

"Hello darling," said the women's voice at the other end and continued,

"Darling we have a big problem"

The woman went on to explain that the Thais had already discovered the box had been switched and she went on to inform Tighe that the palace had been sealed and the palace staff had not been allowed to leave and she'd had to sneak out of her quarters to call him.

"Calm down darling," said Tighe reassuringly "How did they discover the switch?"

"The box did not throw off the halo around the head, and when I had lunch with the geologist, she told me that some of the precious stones were fakes, which didn't radiate the same as real gemstones." Said Noi

## CHALICE

Tighe cursed the jeweller as Noi continued and told him that they had dispatched Prime Master Pon to recover the box several days earlier and knew that it was Tar who switched the box and escaped with the original.

“They also know Tar works for you,” said Noi “Pon has got a false Cambodian passport, but I can’t get close enough to Taksin to find out the name that he is travelling under.”

“Damn, when did he leave?” asked Tighe

“He left early the following morning” said Noi, starting to panic “Darling, I am so scared, when will you come to get me away from here.

“Soon Noi, my darling, very soon” said Tighe lying to reassure her, “Keep me informed, and find out what name he now goes by . . . now, get back to Taksin’s office and take care, I love you”

‘Damn’ he thought ‘Pon could have entered three days ago, why didn’t that stupid bitch sneak out and tell me sooner and why didn’t she get more information, the bastard could be waiting outside for all I know, or worse, be in the citadel.’

He cursed aloud and then phoned Lieutenant- Colonel Pagna chief of immigration and border patrols. Tighe gave details to Pagna about the Prime Master. He knew they would have details and photographs of him from his previous visits

Lieutenant-Colonel Pagna confirmed they had a passport photo and would dispatch it immediately to all border posts, he would also check with the palace in Phnom Penh on the off chance that he hid there. Tighe then called the army barracks at Siem Reap and spoke to Tar.

“Tar, I need you to come here as soon as possible, we have a problem, and on your way detour to Heng Ty’s jewellers and shoot the bastard.

“Right away Colonel” said Tar

Tighe waited for Pagna to call, His initial panic had subsided and he now considered what Taksin had been worried about.

## Robert A. Webster

Pon was a Royal representative and had crossed illegally into Cambodia,  
Pon could be shot as a spy and then Tighe could discredit Thailand to the rest of the world  
Tighe smiled to himself “This could work in my favour” he smirked.

\*\*\*\*

A bell above the door tinkled as a man entered the small shop. An old man sat behind the counter as the man approached him.

“How may I help you sir?” asked the old man

“Are you Heng Ty?” asked Tar

“Yes I am Heng Ty, master jeweller.” he said proudly

Tar produced a photograph of the holy box and showed it to the old man, who looked confused

“Can you make this?” asked Tar

The old man looked at the photograph

“I have already made one similar to this,” said Heng

“Well next time, make it real,” said Tar as he took a silenced Glock 17, 9mm pistol from his jacket and shot the old man through the centre of his forehead, the old man’s eyes rolled back and as the exiting bullet splattered the old man’s blood and brains over the back wall of his small shop. Tar calmly turned and walked out of shop, turned the sign on the door to close and locked the door behind him.

\*\*\*\*

After an hour Pagna called to report that nobody matching Pons description had crossed any border into Cambodia or into any airport and there had been no reports that any or monks had crossed. Pagna, to lighten the tense situation mentioned that they did however have a Cambodian

## CHALICE

cross three days ago at Koh Kong, a tour guide for two foreigners, he wasn't suspicious, just had a bad hairstyle that they were still laughing about. His name was....

"Never mind," interrupted Tighe "that won't be him, the Prime Master is as bald as a Ka-bharl (Cambodian for bell end) and he would be travelling alone."

"Has there been any news from the palace?" Tighe continued.

"Nothing" said Pagna "they were getting prepared for the wedding of a royal handmaiden, so I believe congratulations are in order Colonel Tighe"

"Thanks for your help Pagna I will see you at the wedding, I will send you an invite" said Tighe

"Anything else you need, just call me" said Pagna

Tighe sat in his easy chair; he knew Pon would now be in Cambodia and therefore a fugitive. He would circulate his pictures and description around all military bases and police stations. Tighe hoped that Pon would soon be found and apprehended; meanwhile he would wait for Tar, and go to the citadel. He heard a noise outside and looked out of the window.

\*\*\*\*

Pon covered the ringing phone and slid down a small embankment and behind the base of a tree and pressed the answer button.

"Pon, we have a big problem" said Brigadier Lee, panicking "They know you are here."

"How?" said Pon.

"I don't know, there must have been a leak, I can only assume it came from Thailand," said Lee "But as far as I know they don't know your new identity, or who you were travelling with. The immigration called me at the palace and



## Robert A. Webster

we have all been given a stark warning about assisting you and to report if you made any contact with us, so I am taking a big risk, and the Royal Family cannot afford for you to get caught as it would create a massive problem.”

“Thank you for the warning my friend,” said Pon “I won’t get caught don’t worry, and if I do I will take the necessary precautions, to neither implicate you, nor the Royals.”

‘They can’t question vapour’ thought Pon, as Tinju committed suicide by swallowing the “Wharm Lorn” mixture and a sword or Glave through the stomach, the acid in the stomach would react with mixture and with the introduction of steel from a sword or Glave it would cause it to ignite and evaporate the Tinju, instantly.

“Take care master monk,” said Lee, “and make sure you stay safe. My niece would die of a broken heart if anything were to happen to you.” Lee then turned off his phone leaving a shocked Pon staring at his mobile.

‘How does he know?’ Thought Pon and then he smiled to himself. He climbed back up the embankment surrounding Tighe’s house and from his hidden perch in a large mango tree, carried on watching Tighe.

After an hour of phone calls to various friends and colleagues, circulating by fax, Pons photograph to armed force and police departments. He heard Tars Toyota tiger pull up. Tighe invited Tar into his drawing room.

“Make it look inconspicuous, and go take a look out of the window,” said Tighe. Tar did as instructed and nodded.

Several minutes later, Tighe left his house, got into his Hummer, and shouted back at Tar

“I will take the box for safe keeping; you stay here to keep a lookout for the monk in case he comes here”.

“Yes sir, I will stay here and keep a close watch” shouted Tar.

Tighe drove his hummer down the driveway and onto the road and took the fork to Ta Prohm and the citadel.

## **CHALICE**

Followed a short distance behind by Pon on a hired Yamaha Raid 250cc, dirt bike.

Then, a short distance behind him, Tar in his Toyota Tiger.

## *- Chapter Sixteen -*

Pon, Stu and Spock arrived in Siem Reap town early evening . It had been a long journey and apart from getting lost once and having to dodge the occasional herd of Nomadic cows, the drive hadn't posed too much of a problem.

They had stopped in Phnom Penh and bought some English music CD's. They became tired of listening to the Khmer music on the radio, which sounded to them like a cat with its nuts in a vice. Pon explained about the songs, which all seemed to have the same theme, a poor boy losing his girl to a rich boy and getting her back with some disease.

"All very depressing," said Pon, after learning the word depressing from Spock and a few other choice words not for the faint hearted.

They also became fed up listening to Stu's snoring, however the countryside was beautiful and after they stopped in Phnom Penh, Stu took over the driving. From the short time they'd spent with Dragon and Mom they had learned a few Khmer words and Pon had corrected them on the pronunciation,

'Ock Khun' thank you 'som' please, and beer, the same word in any language. They were taught 'cadoy-gam-gow' and told by a sniggering dragon, that it was a pleasant way to greet to a lady. However, Pon told them it actually meant 'your knickers were too tight up your pussy,' an insult, but the lads decided to use it anyway, seeing that they had remembered it. They also learned that 'Bong' older person, had been used quiet frequently in conversation and decided that it sounded a good word, so everyone became a Bong. Waitress Bong, shop keeping Bong and sexy Bong, as they

## CHALICE

referred to the lady that sold them the CD's, they also came across a village idiot Bong.

They had travelled for about one hour from Phnom Penh and came to a fork not indicated on the map, unsure, they took the right hand road and, after 20 minutes along a country lane they saw a Khmer man leant against a gate. They stopped and Pon asked if they were on the correct road. The man just stared at them and pointed straight on. The lads set off in that direction, and after the road narrowed and turned into dirt tracks, they knew the man had sent them in the wrong direction. Eventually they drove into a small village, stopped and got out of the car to ask for directions.

The villagers had never had any foreign visitors before and they all came out of their houses, all happy smiling people saying, "Hello", the only English word they knew. A villager spoke to Pon and he relayed to Stu and Spock that they had been invited for some food and led them to a house. One by one, the villagers came and gave them food and drink. Spock and Stu noticed how happy and contented the Khmers appeared to be, they had never witnessed hospitality like this anywhere before, total strangers being treated as long lost family. They stayed for about an hour and after Pon had been given the correct directions, they set off back down the dirt tracks. Spock shouted,

"If we see your village idiot again, we will send him home, he wasn't safe wandering around," leaving the village inhabitants confused.

They passed the village idiot still stood at the gate, but he ran off when the car stopped, afraid of getting a damn good ear slapping. They got back on the road and after an 11 hour drive saw the lights of Siem Reap. They checked the map and the hotel that Lee recommended was not too far from the town and Angkor Wat. Thirty minutes later they pulled into the courtyard of Angkoriana Hotel.

"I'm ready for a beer," announced Spock.

## Robert A. Webster

“Me too,” agreed Stu.

“I have to prepare for tomorrow” said Pon

“Ok then, let’s check in and go look around,” said Spock and they walked into the reception and booked three rooms.

“Make them with good views, bong, ” ordered Spock “And bring us three beers while you do the paperwork.”

Stu phoned Dao and Mom.

Spock phoned Dragon.

\*\*\*\*

Nick had spent a boring time in Siem Reap, and stayed mostly in his hotel room watching TV. He had phoned Shanti on several occasions and missed her, even though they’d had only a brief encounter. Nick decided to head back to Sihanoukville the following morning. He’d considered that Spock and Stu would stay around Coasters resort, so he decided that he would just avoid the beach to be safe

Pleased with his plan he decided to go out and eat, have a few beers and sleep early. He showered, changed and went downstairs to the foyer of the Angkoriana Hotel and ran into his three best friends in the entire world.

“Hello matey!” exclaimed Spock as Nick walked past them, “so this was where you shot off too!”

Nick’s heart sank into his mouth and he went from euphoria thinking about seeing Shanti, to extreme panic. He looked at the smiling faces of Stu, Spock and Pon and groaned

“Hi lads, yeah I had to meet someone, I have to go, see you shortly,” said a deflated, scared Nick, who quickly ran out of the hotel and fell over a noodle trolley. The three lads just glanced at one other, no words were exchanged over the incident as it had become an expected occurrence from the walking calamity.

The lads went to their rooms and showered. Pon decide to stay in the hotel to hire a motorcycle, study his maps and get

## CHALICE

his bearings. Pon had told Spock and Stu that they would be of no help in the next step of his quest, as they would slow him down, although he never told them the real reason, he didn't want to expose them to any danger.

Spock and Stu had no problem with this as it meant they could tour Siem, Reap, get spannered, get laid, fester in their beds and meet the mad monk back at the hotel once he had concluded his business.

"We will probably run into Nick somewhere" said Spock "he can show us around."

Nick hobbled back into the hotel reception after about an hour. He made sure the coast was clear, no sign of Spock or Stu, and hurried to his room, packed up his clothes and checked out, much to the confusion of the staff, and hurried into a waiting taxi

"Phnom Penh, quick" said Nick to the driver who smiled and told him it would cost \$120

"No problem," said Nick, although seething about the price, he would save that on the hospital bills that he would accrue if he stayed.

He sat in the front seat and planned his next move. 'Get to Phnom Penh in the morning and catch the early bus to Sihanoukville, that's Ok', he thought and relaxed back into the seat. The taxi got on the main carriageway and sped out of the city towards Phnom Penh and Nick felt safer.

The hotel staff, still confused, called down the hotel manager and told him that Nick had rushed out of the hotel.

"What is the problem, didn't not pay?" enquired the manager

"Oh yes he paid, but he left an envelope in the hotel safe with his valuables in" said the reception, bong.

The manager opened the safe and took out the envelope that had Nick Godfrey room 12, written on the front. They

opened it and found his passport, return flight tickets to UK. £800 in Stirling traveller's cheques and his visa cards.

"His friends are here, we will ask them if they know where he has gone" said the manager who had noticed him talking to Stu, Spock and Pon earlier.

"I think he went to Phnom Penh, I heard him tell the taxi driver," interrupted one of the tuk-tuk drivers who milled around the hotel reception.

"Seal up the envelope and put it back, he would probably come back when he realised he had forgotten it," ordered the manager.

Nick started to drift off to sleep in the southbound taxi, blissfully unaware he was on his way to Phnom Penh, without a pot to piss in.

Pon remained in his room and studied maps, information and routes, he went outside briefly and hired a 250cc Raid dirt bike with lowered suspension and drove it back to the hotel, He owned a Honda steed in Thailand, so knew how to use the gears and handling.

Spock and Stu went to an area marked on the map as 'Pub street' They took a tuk-tuk and left Lees car at the hotel as they knew they would more than likely get spannered.

Tired after the long journey they ate a happy herb pizza, unaware the happy part was marijuana and became instantly wasted. Now a bit hazy, although not understanding why, they fell into the Red Orchid bar and listened to a band, which consisted of three foreign lads that called themselves 'The Fabulous Beer Brothers', who thumped out pretty good cover versions of the Beatles. The bar was quiet, and during the break, Strat, one of the guitarists came and sat with them, and noticed they looked spaced out, especially Stu who just smiled and gazed blankly at the ceiling. Strat chuckled when Spock said he felt terrible and told him that they'd only eaten and this was their first beer, Strat then explained about happy

## CHALICE

Herb pizzas. Spock and Stu both felt strange and half-listened to Strat, until he asked them if they liked fishing

“Course we do,” mumbled Spock “we are from Cleethorpes and most of our family work on Grimsby trawlers it’s in-bred.”

“If you want something to do tomorrow, I know a great little spot not too far away, but you will need dirt bikes or a 4 wheel drive to get there,” said Strat

“Got that covered. What about rods and bait?” murmured Spock.

“Hang on,” said Strat and spoke to a Khmer tuk-tuk driver who’d been hovering around.

“Give him \$30 and he will sort that out and also get you a polystyrene cooler box,” said Strat

Spock gave him \$30 and announced to Stu,

“Mate, we are going fishing tomorrow”

“That’s great news darling” mumbled a spaced out Stu “Can we take one of those pigs, that’s just crawled out from under the bar with us?”

“Wasted”, said Strat

“Wasted,” confirmed Spock looking at his old friend with a dopey grin on his face and trying unsuccessfully to pick his nose. Strat and Spock chatted for about 30 minutes. Strat marked off on a free tour map the turnoff to the fishing spot.

“It wasn’t far, just off the main road and about 2 km from Wat Po along the Tonle Sap which should take you about 20 minutes to get there,” Strat informed him.

The Khmer who Strat had sent to the market returned with two telescopic fishing rods, reels and a small, white hesky.

“Your hooks, lines and sinkers are in the cooler box” said the Khmer.

“I think we better get back to the hotel now and have an early one” said Spock having only half finished his first can of Anchor and feeling anything but happy after the pizza.



“Come on matey, we will get up early and go exploring and catch our lunch,” Spock told Stu

“Okay sweetheart, can we take one of those green elephants with us?” enquired Stu.

“No matey, they are busy” said Spock, who got up and dragged his old stoned friend out of the bar and into a tuk-tuk. They had only been out for less than two hours and returned to the hotel. The receptionist mumbled something about their friend leaving his valuables in the safe, but the two just ambled past the reception, took their keys and went to their rooms, oblivious to any conversation that had just taken place.

Pon arose before the dawn broke. He packed his Glave, Pitou, wharm Lorn and gold filing mix into a small backpack along with the photographs, mobile phone, maps and information on his target and went through the quiet hotel lobby and past the security guard, asleep in the reception area. Pon went outside, got on the dirt bike and set off towards Tighe’s house.

Spock and Stu awoke around nine o’clock and felt quite good. They’d had a great night’s sleep due largely to the pizza .They came down to the reception and noticed Pons key hung up, so realised that he’d already left, so they sat down and ate breakfast.

They stocked up their cool box with ice, beer and some bread. A tuk-tuk driver went out and brought back a small bag of charcoal, so they could cook up their catch for lunch. They put their equipment in the back of Lee’s cruiser, checked the route on the map that Strat had marked off with the fishing spot, drove out of the forecourt and onto the main road, for a pleasant day out, fishing.

## **CHALICE**

## *- Chapter Seventeen -*

Pon found Tighe's house with relative ease following the directions given to him by Brigadier Lee. He leant the bike up against Tighe's wall and covered it with shrubs and foliage from the embankment. He scaled over a wall that seemed more densely covered with trees and made his way through high mango and banana trees until he'd reached a five-foot high embankment of Tighe's house. He climbed a large thick mango tree and wedged himself into a crook of the tree and covered himself with peeled off bark and waited. From his vantage point Pon had an excellent view into Tighe's drawing, dining and living room, also the driveway and porch. He stayed in his camouflaged hiding place for about two hours. As he waited to get a glimpse of Tighe, confirm his identity and formulate his next course of action.

Tighe came into his living room and used his landline several times, which gave Pon the confirmation that he needed. Pon noticed several of Tighe's household staff milling around and decided that once the coast was clear, he would sneak into Tighe's house, confront him, get the holy box or, information on its whereabouts and then dispatch Tighe. After several hours, Pon noticed the staff had dispersed out of sight, and saw that Tighe is again on the phone in his living room. He knew this would be the ideal opportunity and started to climb down the tree. Just then his phone rang, it was Lee. Pon, tried to muffle the sound as he scrambled back into his hiding position and answered.

After he finished speaking to Lee, Pon scanned the house for Tighe, and spots him in the drawing room using a fax machine. Tighe went to look out of the window several times but Pon thought his camouflage was excellent, and knew that

## CHALICE

only a very experienced trained sniper would have had any chance to spot him. Pond, now knowing that Tighe knew that he was on his trail decided to act swiftly and once again started to climb down. Once again his actions were thwarted, as a Toyota Tiger came up the roadway.

Pon returned to his camouflaged spot and watched

The Toyota parked next to Tighe's hummer. Tar got out and went to Tighe's door.

'Tar,' thought Pon 'Now I have both my targets'

Pon saw Tighe and Tar speaking in the drawing room and Tar go over to the window.

Pon decided to act and started his slow climb down. He reached the bottom, removed his Glave and sprung out the blades. He stopped when he heard the side door open and Tighe shouted at Tar that he had the box and ordered him to remain there.

Pon hid behind the tree and saw Tighe get in his hummer, Pon knew that even with his speed he would not be able to reach the vehicle without being spotted, or in time to stop the Colonel.

The hummer pulled away. Pon retracted the blades of the Glave, tucked it into his jeans, picked up his backpack and ran to get his bike. Knowing that he wasn't far behind Tighe, he sped off to join the main road. He saw Tighe's Hummer which seemed to be driving along slowly and he caught up and stayed a short distance behind. Having no mirrors on his bike and the noisy 250cc engine, he never noticed Tar's Toyota following him.

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"We're bloody lost," said a frustrated Stu.

"No we're not," said Spock.

"Where are we then?" enquired a frustrated Stu.

“I’m not 100% certain, but we must be on the right track” said Spock in a reassuring tone.

“You’ve been saying that for nearly three hours now, and we’re still bloody lost. I thought you said that Strat told you that it was only twenty minutes away,” said Stu

Spock grumbled under his breath and carried on bumping along a small trail. Spock drove through a dense palm and coconut tree jungle and there had been no room to turn the vehicle around. They drove on for another thirty minutes and decided to stop and look at the small map Strat had given them. They stopped in front of a large tree and scrutinized the map, and the turnoff.

“According to this, we should have taken the first turn off and a lake was supposed to be on the right hand side,” noticed Stu.

“I did,” said Spock indignantly as his mate doubted his navigational skills.

“No you never, we must have passed at least three turnoffs before you took one” said Stu.

“Shortcuts,” said Spock.

“We’re lost then,” Stu repeated.

“Not exactly, if we can find some place to turn around and follow our tyre marks, we should come out around here” Spock said, pointing at the map “Then we just turn right and that should bring us up here.” Again pointing

Stu looked at Spock, raised one eyebrow and pursed his lips. Spock knew this cutting look and he had received it several times, usually before he got bollocked over something.

“Yeah OK, we’re lost,” confessed a beaten Spock, “but I think we are near this place,” and pointed on the map to Ta Prohm temple, to which he received another of the looks.

“Or maybe not” He conceded.

They both stood with hands on hips and surveyed the area. Spock then hollered.

## CHALICE

“There it is,” and pointed to a lake just visible through a small clearing of trees.

Stu looked and said,

“That’s not it, we are miles away.”

“It’s a lake isn’t it? . . . And there is fish in a lake.”

Stu couldn’t argue with this logic and walked a few paces forward, stopped at a ledge and looked down at a fifty foot drop to the ravine below, with the lake on higher ground beyond.

“Right then brains of Britain; tell me how do we get there? We can’t drive around there are no roads or paths and if we walk, how the fuck do we get down there?” said Stu returning to an agitated state. Spock walked to the edge and looked down into the ravine and then around the trees that lined the edge.

“There, Mr. glass half empty” said Spock pointing to a rope ladder” see it must be a good spot, someone’s put a ladder there.”

The lads went to the Range Rover and unloaded their fishing tackle and drank a can of beer before they started having to do something physical like climbing down a rope ladder. Twenty minutes later they, and the equipment, were at the bottom of a small valley. They thought the lake would only be a short walk, but now they were level with its base, it looked a long way off and the foliage that covered the floor with rocks, which had looked small from the top of the rock wall, was now dense and large. They sat on a rock and looked around.

“We’ll have another beer and go that way,” said Spock pointing, “that should take us around those rocks and, as the lake seems to disappear around there it should be . . . .”

“Another bloody shortcut” interrupted Stu and his eyebrow started to rise.

Spock then announced,

## Robert A. Webster

“Bollocks, I haven’t locked the car and I’ve left the keys in the ignition.

“Oh great” said Stu and looked at the ladder and didn’t like the prospect of having to climb up.

“It’ll be OK” said Spock “who’s going to find us out here, let alone steal the car” also not relishing the thought of another climb.

“Yeah you’re right, so long as we remember where it is,” said Stu. They picked up their gear and headed towards the rocky outcrop.

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Tighe arrived at the temple, parked his Hummer in the grounds at the front, went into the temple, over to the elevators intercom and asked Norman to be brought down into the citadel.

Pon cut the bikes engine, free wheeled it into undergrowth near Tighes Hummer, covered it over and moved stealthily up to wall at the side of the temple. He had seen Tighe go into the temple ruins, but as Pon looked through one of the ancient window holes he could see no sign of him.

He hurried around to the rear of the temple, which would be a perfect place for an ambush, but still no sign of Tighe.

He never noticed Tar walk into the temple and position himself behind a walled copse inside, watching his every move.

Pon was confused, he stayed round the back of the temple and looked around at the burial slabs strewn around the grounds. He noticed one was slightly raised. He went over to the slab and shone the light from his mobile phone, and put his head into the small gap which was deceptively wide, he crawled under the slab and into a small compartment and stared down the maintenance shaft, illuminated by the citadel lights, He crawled farther along and saw the metal rungs of a

## CHALICE

ladder at the side of the elevator. He continued along to the end of the compartment and came face to face with a descending slab and a Glock 17 being held by Tar as he descended on the elevator slab, and the sound of a guns action being cocked from the floor below.

Tighe had sprung his trap. He had been trained to be a skilful sniper with the Government forces and it was he who trained Tar, they had both easily spotted Pon. Tighe had gone into the citadel and waited for his signal from above. Tar watched Pon disappear under the slab, used to disguise the maintenance shaft and another lookout post, and alerted Tighe.

Tighe had left Normans office when Tar buzzed on the temple CCTV, went to the elevator and brought it down to the level of where Pon would be. Pon knew that he could not move quick enough to avoid a bullet and he was ordered out of the compartment and down the rungs of the ladder, with two guns aimed at his head.

Tar bound Pon's hands behind his back and he was shoved down a corridor towards Norman's office. On the way he passed the hospital ward, and noticed through a large glass window, a familiar figure in a room. The Nick replicant looked at him. Pon became confused as he continued to be pushed along and into Professor Norman Rumble's office.



## *- Chapter Eighteen -*

**B**rigadier Lee Tangh was a worried man. He had returned with Kim to the Royal Palace the previous afternoon and had a pointless discussion with his brother, Kim's father, which had resulted in a slanging match

Kim was going to marry Tighe and that was that, her fiancé had already paid a \$100,000 dowry, which the family were not prepared to return.

Lee, faced a series of quandary's being Kim's uncle. He had both fear and loathing of her fiancé, Colonel Tighe Nye, and knew the damage to the royal family that Nye would cause, should his involvement with Pon ever be found out. He was well aware that Tighe had a ruthless and vindictive nature. Lee's major concern was that peace between the two royal families and country's had to be maintained and he had chosen to side with, and help, Pon, although he realised that this could be a risky decision, but he also knew Kim was in love with someone, and it certainly wasn't Tighe.

Lee had figured out it had been Pon during his stay at his house, when he noticed the way they'd looked at each other His suspicions were confirmed on the drive back with Kim to Phnom Penh and he said.

“Chai is a nice man, and I hope he will be Okay.”

Kim never replied and started to cry. Lee put two and two together and asked

“Is he the one you love?”

Again Kim wept, but through her tears mumbled,

“Yes, and his name is Pon.”

Lee could see how sad and unhappy his niece seemed and he became determined to stop the wedding with Tighe and assured Kim that everything would be fine,

## CHALICE

They were both aware that Tighe was a dangerous man and assumed Pon was only an escort for the Thai prince. However Lee reminded Kim about Pons two foreign bodyguards, especially the giant Spock, who had met Lee when they had driven back his driver.

Lee became anxious when his friend Lieutenant-Colonel Pagna from immigration had called to warn him that Tighe knew about the Thai Prime minister entering Cambodia and wanted to know whether Lee knew anything about it. Lee lied to Pagna and said he knew nothing. That's when he phoned Pon to warn him. Lieutenant-Colonel Pagna was a good friend of Lee, who also tolerated Tighe because he was afraid of him. Pagna had told him that he had been invited to Tighe's wedding but wouldn't go, to which Lee replied if it wasn't for the fact Kim was his niece, neither would he, and unless he could stop it going ahead, he was committed.

‘Maybe Pagna could help me in another matter that will kill two birds with one stone and I hope Pon is successful and soon, because now there is a deadline.’

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The successful Pon, his hands bound behind the back of a chair in Norman's office, where Tar, Tighe Norm and Boran stared at him.

“What does he want?” Norm asked Tighe.

“I want what belongs to my country” interrupted Pon and he received a blow to the face from Tighe.

“Stop that!” said Norm and asked Pon “What do you want?”

Pon spat some blood out of his mouth and replied that he was trying to trace the holy relic

Norman listened and turned to Tighe, “Son, I thought you said the Thais gave permission for us to borrow it.”

Tighe went on to explain about the Thais refusal and he knew how important that obtaining the box had been to Norman, and he only wanted to swap the box temporarily and he assured Norm that he planned to replace it later.

“Now we have a problem, what do we do with him?” asked Norman.

“He knows about the citadel” said Tighe

Norm then went to his drawer and removed the relic and placed it on the table.

“If I give you this, will you keep this place a secret?” Norm asked.

Pon thought for a moment, in order to keep this secret meant having to conceal the truth about how he had recovered the relic. Pon looked at the old New Zealander. He knew Norman was not involved in the theft.

“Yes,” said Pon.

“He’s lying,” snapped Tighe “he cannot keep this secret, he is a Buddhist monk, who works for the revered King of Thailand and he dare not lie to him,”

Tighe went on

“This man is a ruthless killer we know that he murdered a friend of mine last year, even though Andrew’s body has never been found. He doesn’t deserve to live,” Tighe sneered.

Norm listened to Tighe and the confused old man sat in his chair not knowing what to do.

“I have an idea” exclaimed Boran and he whispered in Norm’s ear.

“Of course” said Norm “that may just work”

Norman got on the citadels internal phone system and a few minutes later Norm Junior entered the room with a small Petri dish and a needle.

“I need to take a sample of your blood,” Norm told Pon.

“This is crazy,” said an angry, frustrated Tighe we have to kill him and bury him along with his belongings”

## CHALICE

“We don’t kill anybody,” said Norm “we have an alternative.”

Norm Junior took the blood sample and the three scientists left the room, this would take all of them to execute the plan and operate the machines.

“Don’t harm him,” said Norm “we will be only about thirty minutes,” and left the room.

Tar went through Pon’s bag and threw his belongings on the desk and looked at Pon’s phone.

“Try and get his contacts in Cambodia,” ordered Tighe “we can kill him later, and the traitors who helped him.”

Tar went through the Nokia’s contacts list and after a minute Tar stopped and held the phone to Tighe.

“Sir, you’d better look at this”

Tighe took the phone, looked and he turned red with rage.

“How did you get this photo?” he spat at Pon and showed him the screen and one of the many photo’s Pon had taken in Lees garden of Kim

Pon stared at his beloved Kim, and knew if he told Tighe who she was, she would be in grave danger.

Tighe smashed his fist into Pons face again and repeated the question. Pon remained silent. Tighe flew into a rage

“He dies now,” he snapped, “Untie his legs and get him to his feet,” he punched Pon again in the face, as Tar cut the binds to his legs and torso and dragged him to his feet. Tighe pressed a button underneath the cave CCTV monitor and they shoved Pon out into the corridor, Tar carried Pon’s bag and, pointing their pistols at Pons back, pushed him forward and into the citadel grounds. They walked towards the caves cargo elevator at the side of the precipice, half a kilometre away.

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The intrepid fishermen and bodyguards to the defender of the monarch of Thailand had been falling and stumbling

around some rocks, with their fishing gear and hesky, following Spocks shortcut

“What happened to that river meandering around the back of here” groaned Stu, as once again his flip flop had got caught in yet another hole.

“Just around this pile matey, I can hear the waterfalls,” said Spock reassuringly.

“I can’t hear fuck all,” said Stu.

“That’s why they call me Spock, with ears like mine, I can hear a gnat fart at 200 yards,” he continued, to lighten the mood.

They crawled around the mound and there it was! Yet another mound of rocks.

“Oh great, more bloody rocks,” said Stu.

“Look matey there’s a cave,” said Spock as he pointed between the rocks.

“And are there fish in a cave then, humm?” said a sarcastic Stu.

“No but we can explore and maybe find an underground lake, or even treasure,” said a cheerful, glass half full, optimistic Spock.

“Yeah or be attacked by bears, or step in bat shit,” replied a glass half empty, but logical, Stu.

They walked to the cave entrance, put the cooler box down and took out two beers,

“And we only have four beers left,” said Stu, panicking. They sat down and drank beer. Stu then got up and walked into the cave about twenty yards and called back to Spock.

“It’s a dead end and bloody dark” which echoed in the cave

Spock carried on drinking, Stu came back and joined him.

“Shall we call it a day matey?” asked Spock

“That’s the most sensible thing you have said all day, but we are still lost, so we’d better head back and try to find our way home.”

## CHALICE

Might as well finish off the last two beers” said Spock and they cracked open two more Anchor cans.

“So much for an adventure,” said a pissed off Stu Suddenly they became interrupted by a grinding and whirring noise emanating from the rear of the cave.

“Bear!” shouted Spock and the two lads ran out of the cave mouth and hid behind some rocks.

“Are there bears in Cambodia?” whispered Stu, looking back into the cave.

“Buggered if I know,” said Spock as he peered inside. The rear of the cave was bathed in light and the two lads looked on in shock.

“It looks like the back opened up.” Said Stu baffled They came out of their hiding place, walked into the cave and went toward the light, telescopic rods in hand. They cautiously wandered through the cave and, as they drew near the end noticed a ridge that dropped down. They walked to the edge of the precipice and their jaws dropped as they stood and looked over the citadel and its inhabitants.

“Wow!” said Stu this place is incredible.

“I wonder where it is on the tourist map” enquired Spock. They gazed around and Spock noticed three figures approaching the wall beneath them. Spock looked confused at Stu and asked,

“What’s shithead doing down there?”

Norman and Boran returned to his office carrying a syringe, and found it empty, except for the discarded bonds.

They noticed the cave screen had been opened and saw on a CCTV cave monitor, a large man in a daft hat and a smaller man gazing into their abyss.

“Damn,” thought Norman and called to Boran and the rest of team who came rushing in.

In the confusion nobody had heard the blood curdling scream coming from the hospital room and a weak but

panicky Nick replicant emerge from the room in absolute terror. He had also seen the cave monitor and the two figures emerge into the light of the camera, carrying what appeared to be weapons and walking toward the entrance. His memory had not fully returned and all he knew that these two had been embedded in his psyche as people who had endangered him before and it now appeared they were coming to cause him harm again. His in-depth fear took hold, and like a child imagining that he was being stalked by bogeymen, the replicant stood in the corridor his head nearly exploding, he knew he must escape. He noticed the lit elevator and side controls, but no elevator only the raised stone, which he could not understand how to use, he did however know how to climb a ladder and ran toward the emergency escape route and climbed up into the small compartment that led out under the grave slab and into the hot afternoon air.

He surveyed the temple and noticed a small dark area behind a small recessed wall and he ran behind the wall.

He spotted a large dry empty well, about ten foot in circumference and approximately six feet deep, He jumped into the well, His body pulsing with fear and pain, he curled up into a ball and rocked like a child, while his new body recovered.

Norman, Boran, Junior and a technician ran into the citadel, just as three figures went into the elevator at the base of the cave wall someway in the distance.

“Damn and blast,” said Norman.

The intercom was only one way from the cave to the citadel, so there was no way to let Tighe know that two foreigners were in the cave and so he had only one course of action.

He gave Norman Junior and a technician each a rifle from his office and instructed them to try to stop Tighe. They got into a side monorail and accelerated along the side tracks,

## CHALICE

gaining speed as they ascended upwards and along toward the sentry ports.

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After seeing Pon being led at gunpoint in their direction, towards an elevator, Bewildered, Spock and Stu were unsure what to do, moved away from the ledge and up against the dark cave wall.

“What shall we do”? Asked Stu.

“Matey, we fight, after all we are warriors from Cleethorpes and Pon’s our mate” boasted a proud Spock.

“Matey they had guns” stated Stu.

“Yeah you’re right, let’s just fuck off” said Spock and started to walk away.

“Come back here,” said Stu and Spock returned.

“Only joking,” said Spock trying to lighten the situation.

“Have you got a plan?” Spock asked expecting Stu to come up with a foolproof idea that would save them all.

“Nope,” said Stu, “let’s just wing it.”

Tighe shoved Pon down to his knees on the elevator floor. Tighe and Tar got into the elevator, the doors slid shut, the elevator rose, and after a short ride reached, the cave level and the doors opened. They pulled Pon to his feet and shoved him out of the large elevator into the cave. Tighe and Tar violently shoved him ahead and followed behind with pistols pointing at his back. They walked on oblivious to Stu and Spock hiding in the shadows. As the three walked by Spock and Stu they stepped out behind Tar and Tighe and bashed them on the heads with two large rocks. Both Tighe and Tar stumbled, but quickly regained their composure, as Stu and Spock knocked the guns out of their hands with the rocks, followed by a large right hook to the chin of Tighe by Spock and a head butt on the bridge of Tars nose by Stu. Pon somersaulted through the



air and jumped through his bonds, now reversed, he fumbled through his bag that Tar had dropped. Tighe and Tar fought back and the Colonel punched Spocks face and knocked off his hat. That enraged Spock and after few harder blows, he knocked the Colonel into cuckoo land.

Stu hadn't fared so well, Tar was a martial arts specialist and a commando and struck Stu with a high knee to the face, which made Stu lose his balance and fell with Tar straddled on top of him. Tar quickly recovered and started to choke Stu. Pon recovered his Glave, sprang out the blades and sliced through his bonds. He looked at Spock who stood over the unconscious colonel. He then turned his attention to Stu and saw Tar choking his friend. Pon somersaulted over Tar and in a flash, pierced the nape of his neck with his razor sharp Glave and pushed it into his medulla oblongata killing him instantly. This took a slit second and Pon landed on his feet and surveyed the carnage.

Stu rolled Tar off him and assumed that his initial head butt must have had a delayed effect. He stood over Tar and kicked him in the ribs and pointed at the lifeless body.

"Don't fuck with the Brits," he yelled at the stone dead Tar, not noticing the pool of blood now soaking into the cave floor. Pon went over to the fallen Tighe who had started to regain consciousness, but a clubbing mauler off Spock sent him back to sleep.

"Thank you my friends" Pon hugged Stu and Spock. He then walked to the edge of the precipice.

"We must get down to the ground floor and over there" he said, pointing to the laboratory and hospital complex. The holy relic was there and they have Nick held prisoner"

"Nick!" said a startled Spock and Stu in unison "why have they kidnapped Nick?"

Pon couldn't answer, so he instructed Stu and Spock to get into the elevator and told the lads that he would restrain Tighe

## CHALICE

and Tar. The two lads did as instructed, they were both knackered.

“Just give us a yell if you need any help” shouted Stu as Pon dragged the lifeless body of Tar passed the elevator, Stu and Spock sat in the elevator exhausted and wished they had brought more beer with them

“That won’t be necessary,” shouted Pon as he stood over the colonel. Pon grabbed Tighes head and with a sharp twist snapped Tighe’s neck and heaved his body on top of Tars.

He went into his bag and took out his wharm Lorn mixture and spread the mixture over the bodies, gave a short blessing for a quick and safe journey to Nirvana. Then lit the mix with his lighter (he went modern). He never used the gold filings to direct the blast heavenwards, as he realised this could bring down the caves ceiling.

He quickly ran to the elevator and closed the door.

“What was that?” exclaimed Stu just before the elevator door fully closed

“What?” said Spock?

“That flash,” said Stu pointing at the now closed door

“I didn’t see anything,” mentioned Spock who now felt something different on the top of his head.

“I’ve left my hat,” he gasped

“Never mind my friend we can get it later” reassured Pon as the lift started to descend.

Norman and Boran looked at the screen in horror as Pon broke Tighe’s neck and they became blinded for a moment as the wharm Lorn ignited and evaporated Tar and Tighe’s bodies, fishing gear, hesky, guns, and Spock’s hat. Then the cameras went black as the powerful mix blew them to pieces.

Norm’s office went silent and after a few seconds, Norm spoke,

“What have we done?”

## Robert A. Webster

“Maybe it’s god’s way of telling us to slow down, maybe the world isn’t ready for a new prophet,” murmured a sad Boran.

“Maybe your right my old friend, what have I become” Norm wiped the tears from his eyes

“Goodbye my son,” he whispered and at the black screen and started to weep

He said a silent prayer and waited to see what would happen next. They didn’t have to wait long as Srey Dar burst into the office.

“Professor,” said the out of breath teacher

“The clone has disappeared. I had only been gone for a few minutes to see what the commotion was and when I went back to his room he had vanished.

The old professors looked at each other.

“He can’t be far,” said Dar “I will look around”

She hurried out into the citadel shouting “Lord Buddha.”

“God’s will” whispered Boran.

The elevator stopped and Pon peered out. Some people had gathered in the pastures and a few milled around looking above the cave wall where a few moments ago they’d seen a terrific light illuminated the cave and now became focused on the lift as the three cautiously stepped out.

They headed towards the laboratory complex and saw a woman in the distance shouting for Buddha.

“Look at this place” said Stu it’s incredible.

“Yeah I wonder what it is,” said Spock, followed by: “Ouch something just stung me!”

“What?” said Stu “ouch!”

Spock fell to the ground unconscious followed quickly by Stu. Pon spun around and looked for where the silenced shots had come from. He spotted a glint from the rocks above him, just before he was darted in the shoulder and also fell unconscious. The citadel occupants carried the three

## CHALICE

unconscious men to the laboratory area and into the hospital ward. They bound them to beds and Norman took blood samples and entered instructions into Theory. Norman Junior added extra instructions to Theory for one of the men's new RNA recipe. 'The man killed my brother he will have a constant reminder,' he thought.

Theory set about sequencing and making instructions for the oven.

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Search parties set out looking for the Nick replicant and after a few hours of searching around the cave and temple they gave up for the day, as the sun had started to set. Other members of the citadel started erecting screens around the hospital corridors and laboratory leaving a lit corridor leading to the temple elevator.

The Nick replicant had remained in the same position for a few hours in the dark well. He had heard people moving around earlier within the temple, but now silence

The lads had started to come around when Norman entered the room. They never spoke, as Norman and an assistant injected them in the nape of their necks and arm. The anaesthetic in their arms sent them back into a deep, but temporary sleep. They awoke with a start at the same time, moments later.

"Where are we?" said Spock as they all surveyed their surrounds. They appeared to be in a small lit corridor, walled in by white metal walls on three sides, they saw the metal ladder and a control panel to the side.

"I came in this way," said Pon "that's the elevator Tar had used."

They went over and looked at the control panel. Two monitors where situated on the outside, one showed the

elevator pad in the temple and who wanted to come down. The other gave a wide view of the temple and showed any people inside the main temple. The control panel had two buttons, marked with arrows pointing up or down.

“What about Nick and the relic?” asked Stu

“Mate we don’t even know where we are, besides the car could be miles away, but if we find that, we can work out how to get here again and rescue him,” replied Spock

“That makes sense, let’s go,” instructed Stu with the other two in agreement.

They got on the slab and pressed the up button, the lift slowly ascended.

The replicant had not heard anything for some, so, he climbed up and peered out from his recess, dusk had set. He had no plans he didn’t know anything, but felt hungry and started to climb out of the well. Startled, he heard a clunking noise as the elevator floor rose. He stared curiously at the large round object now rising up from the floor, followed by two smaller round objects as Pon and Stu’s head also came into view. Frozen with fear, this shock was too much for the newly formed human to take. He stared in horror at the rising figures of his executioners and his new and unready body shut down. He felt a sudden sharp piercing pain in his head as his brains main blood vessel exploded, and killed him, instantly. His body stumbled backwards falling arse over tit back into the well, returning him into the oblivion from where he had not so long ago arrived.

The three lads, oblivious to the demise of the poor unfortunate creature, ran out of the temple, as dusk started to lose its turn to twilight. Pon found his bike and helmet, but the lads could not get their bearings and now had splitting headaches and wanted to sleep.

## CHALICE

“Come on” Pon said as he drove up to his confused friends and Spock told him

“We don’t know where the car is, it certainly isn’t around here, and we had been in thick jungle.

They walked over to Tighe’s Hummer, the door was locked, but they had better luck with Tars Toyota Tiger parked nearby, he had left the passenger door open and the two lads got in. Their heads now felt like they were on fire, Spock broke off the ignition lock with a rock and pulled the two wires of the starter out. The Tiger roared to life and they pulled away.

“Didn’t know I could break into cars did you matey?” gloated Spock.

“Yes mate, you told me before that your mum taught you” replied Stu, “Now step on it, I have a blinding headache.”

“Me too,” said Spock “and I feel dizzy and sleepy, they must have drugged us.

“Oh, no shit Einstein!” said a sarcastic Stu.

They got back to the hotel about thirty minutes later and walked Zombie like to the reception, the manager mumbled something about Nick, but it was just a garbled noise. They picked up their keys and went to their rooms and fell asleep as soon as their heads touched the pillow, Pon had never even removed his crash helmet.

## *- Chapter Nineteen -*

Early the following morning Stu's phone alarm woke him up. He got out of bed and looked at his watch; 07:30 'blimey' he thought 'I never get up this early on holiday', and then he remembered. 'Fishing'.

He went to shower and shave and looked in the mirror.

'Where did that come from?' he said aloud as he saw bruise around his eye and marks on his neck. There then came a thump on the door.

"You awake matey? Don't forget we're fishing this morning, have you got the gear in your room?" said Spock through the door

Stu shouted back, "Hang on," and went to the door to let Spock in.

He opened the door and a smiling Spock looked at Stu's shiner.

"Blimey" exclaimed Spock "who gave you that?"

"No idea" replied Stu "I woke up with it."

"It must have been that bloody happy herb Pizza, we must have got into a fight, although I don't remember anything except for coming back here and deciding to go fishing" stated Stu.

"I remember speaking to Strat and both of us coming back in a tuk-tuk, but nothing else, so it must have been that bloody pizza, I felt sure that I put the fishing gear in my room, but it's not there now, and neither is my hat" said a puzzled Spock.

Both confused, they decided to go ask the reception if they could shed some light on this quandary.

## CHALICE

They went to the reception. Pon, already there, had a few red marks around his cheek and appeared just as confused as Stu and Spock. Pon told them he was about to go off earlier, but the security guard stopped him and gave him a package and his bag. Pon reached into his bag and produced an open bubble wrap envelope and took he out the contents, which he showed to Spock and Stu.

“Where did that bloody thing come from?” asked a bemused Spock, now staring at the holy box

“I don’t know,” said Pon “or why he had my bag or your car keys” and he gave Spock the keys to Lees range rover.

The three looked bewildered, and then Stu spoke.

“It couldn’t have been the Pizza, Pon never ate any.”

To add to the confusion the manager of the hotel came to speak to them and informed them their friend Nick had returned yesterday afternoon, picked up his valuables and had gone to Sihanoukville.

“What? We only got here last night and we saw him” said a still confused Stu.

The manager replied,

“You’ve been here two nights sir”

They decided that it was becoming too baffling for them to think about any longer and, since somebody had obviously stolen their fishing gear, and Spock’s hat and, as they now had the relic, they decided to return to Thailand via Sihanoukville and Koh Kong.

Pon confirmed that the relic was genuine and the guard from the night shift could describe the individual who had brought the items, just a Cambodian man of average build, who he didn’t leave a name.

Pon telephoned Lee and told him he had the relic and asked whether he had heard anything. The phone went silent and the lads eavesdropped as Pon, who looking even more confused, said to Lee “I have never been to Tighe’s house; I intended to go there this morning.”



## Robert A. Webster

Pon finished his conversation and turned to the lads and said,

“We have a problem. They know I am here, we have to meet Brigadier Lee in Phnom Penh this evening, and he will give us further instructions” and continued

“But what really has me confused is that Lee told me that he had already informed me of this yesterday, while I was at Tighe house. . . . But I haven’t been to his house”

Spock, Stu and Pon, now back in his wig, left the hotel mumbling about how confused they were, and about the hotel charging them for two nights. Pon returned his rented motorcycle and the lads got into the Range Rover .and drove out of Siem Reap and onto the highway to Phnom Penh.

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The citadel had been in disarray and mourning since the previous evening. There was a lot to plan and even more to do. They had search parties out from first light but no sign of the replicant. The search was called off at 10am, because the temple ruins opened to the public and tourists would be arriving. They held a meeting in the pastures. Norman, Boran along with Norman Junior and Tu and other leading members of the community had spent long hours the previous night discussing their situation and the decision they had to make.

They witnessed the three intruders leave as planned and, while searching for the replicant they came across Lees Range rover and keys. One technician had followed the three back to their hotel and called another resident to bring the car, holy relic and Pons bag, back to the hotel in the early hours of the morning,

Now all the inhabitants of Let-cum-baan gathered on the pasture. Rumble discussed his idea and they all agreed to Norman’s plan, which would be carried out within the next 24

## CHALICE

hours. The meeting finished and Norm Junior spoke to his father

“Do you think our formula worked on those three?”

The old man replied,

“I hope so son, but that’s why we have to take any future action now, just in case it didn’t, and they tell the world about us. This way, by the time anyone investigates, we will no longer exist.”

The builders and engineers commenced with the first phase later that day after the tourists had departed.

Another attempt was made to find the replicant, who now everyone thought had run deep into the jungle, and they all prayed for his safety and well being.

They filled underneath the temple elevator with concrete, removed all cameras and machinery and filled any spaces with rock and cement.

That route in now sealed meant that nobody could ever gain entry or exit from that route again.

Explosive charges were then set in the main cave with enough semtex C4 to collapse the cave roof and walls.

The following day some people silently exited the cave, went into the ravine and climbed up the rope ladder into the jungle clearing to a fleet of four wheel drive vehicles that waited at the designated area. Several members of the citadels community stood on the ridge of the jungle precipice and stared in tears down at their old homes main entrance. Norman Junior stood with a remote control in hand and, with tears streaming down his face, pressed the button and detonated the explosives. The ground rumbled and a loud thunderous explosion echoed as rocks tumbled down and completely blocked the caves entrance. They stood and watched as the dust settled and realised that it signalled the end of their lives in Let-cum-baan and would be a new beginning for them, but an eternity of perpetual seclusion for the twenty-two people who had remained inside.

## **Robert A. Webster**

Norman, Boran and Roth stood in the pasture along with the other 19 people who decided to stay, which consisted of a few older technicians and their families.

They heard a thunderous explosion and saw clouds of dust billow out from the cave opening and into their new world.

“Have we made the right decision old friend?” Norm asked Boran.

“We have made the only decision we could have” reassured Boran.

They patted old Jake the cow on his head and returned to their living domes to reflect on their past and plan their future.

## **CHALICE**

## *- Chapter Twenty -*

The RNA formula that the scientist, Theory and the oven prepared had worked and the three baffled lads drove into Phnom Penh early evening, having lost a full day of memories. They had discussed it during the drive and they could only remember going to sleep the night before and waking up to go fishing, apparently two days later. The RNA had bypassed the DNA memory marker for a full day, and the other little surprise instruction that Norm Junior had added slowly started to take effect.

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The Range Rover pulled into the car park at the rear of the Intercontinental Hotel and they met Lee in the foyer. Lee had booked them rooms adjacent on the eighth floor. He explained all the borders, police and army, were on the lookout for Pon. Therefore to leave by a conventional border would not be advised. He told them that the easiest way would be to fly, as he knew the airport immigration chief Lieutenant-Colonel Pagna

“But I will only use Pagna as a last resort,” said Lee and continued, “I don’t want to endanger anyone else.”

Lee was as confused as the other three about what had happened and he told Pon that Colonel Tighe did not return home the previous night, and hadn’t been answering his phone, because Pagna, and Kim’s family, have been trying to contact him. Pon could shed no light on the matter as he had no recollection of ever meeting, or seeing, Colonel Tighe.

“Unfortunately” said Lee “they will be looking for a single man travelling on a Khmer passport.” He smiled at Pon.

## CHALICE

“But fortunately, I have come up with another plan which would kill two birds with one stone “ He grinned at Pon and told them that his other plan had not yet been finalised, but he would know more later, when he would then inform them and he went on to explain he had contacted Taksin and he would be more than happy to assist with the Thai side of things. Pon, Stu and Spock weren’t concerned by Lee’s cloak and dagger stuff they still had the memory loss issue on their mind and in addition, Pon had another small embarrassing irritation starting to develop

Lee advised Pon to stay in his room. Spock and Stu would be Okay to go out as the authorities weren’t looking for them.

Spock and Stu weren’t okay, in fact far from okay, they had wanted to go to Sihanoukville and see Dragon and Mom.

“But at least we get to see our girls tomorrow,” said an only partially disappointed Stu, as he missed Dao more than he let on.

“Yeah,” said Spock “and the little shit will be happy to see me, she should now be over her strop” said a nonchalant, but deep down happy Spock.

Brigadier Lee left the hotel and told them he would send another car along that had tinted windows, to pick them up and take them to the airport for 07:45 as their flight was at 08:30.

Lee had phoned the airline to arrange a late check in as the less time they spent at the airport, and in Cambodia, the better. Pon went to his room to until they would be picked up for the flight, which he didn’t mind as his lower back felt sore and started to irritated him.

Spock and Stu went into the plush restaurant of the Intercontinental and ate the buffet. A tall young English man dressed in chef whites came to their table. The chef asked the pair,

## Robert A. Webster

“Are you from England?”

“Yes matey” replied Spock.

“Did you enjoy the buffet” he asked, noticing plates of chicken and rib bones.

“Yep, I felt so hungry that I could’ve eaten the arse off a low flying crow,” replied Spock

“Have you been Phnom Penh before?” asked the chef.

“No matey,” replied Spock

“I am off work in 30 minutes do you want a night out, I will show you around,” asked the chef

“Yes matey,” answered Spock and Stu nodded his agreement, while chomping on a chicken drumstick.

“Great,” said the smiling chef and stretched out his hand to introduce himself “my name is Richard”

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Stu, Spock and Richard headed out into the hot sticky air of Phnom Penh; Richard led them into the first bars on his excursion, hoping to have a laugh with the Phnom Penh virgins.

Spock and Stu loved the bars, a lot more reserved than Pattaya, so they could have a conversation and while Richard started knocking back Jack Daniels and coke, with tequila shots, Spock and Stu drank beer and gave the shots to the girls around the bar. Richard assumed that Spock and Stu had just flown over from England and would not be used to the drinking hours and stronger beer, he felt confident that he would have these two wankered and with Lilly and the old girls by early doors. He was wrong, and he tried to keep up with the beer monster. However, Richard drank double and sometime treble measures of Jack Daniels when Stu or Spock ordered, along with shots of tequila and Sambuca’s, plus the fact he had not eaten anything, and by midnight Richard was wankered. Spock and Stu, only spannered heard Richard

## CHALICE

mention about a special place he would take them later, so Spock asked,

“Matey, when are you taking us to that place you told us about earlier, and why does everyone call you koy-t?”

Richard staggered out of 136 bar, followed by Spock and Stu. They got into a tuk-tuk and Richard slurred directions to the driver.

They entered Sophie’s bar and immediately surrounded by women trying to sit them down and remove their todgers out from their shorts. Richard just gazed around in a world of his own.

“You Ok koy-t?” asked Lilly, Richard just smiled and lolled his head from side to side

The lads ordered some drinks and, while Spock and Stu re-lived their Soi 6 experience in Pattaya, Richard took a swig of his Jack Daniels and fell asleep. Spock and Stu finished their beer and their respective companions finished what they were doing, Spock turned to Richard,

“That was great mate, where next?”

Richard remained in his slumber and all attempts to raise him failed. Lilly spoke,

“It’s Ok you can go, we will take care of koy-t, he comes here all the time and we always take care” and gave a wide smile flashing her three teeth.

Spock and Stu thought that what she said must be true as she appeared to be a motherly sort of hag.

The pair left Sophie’s and Richard, who was asleep in a large comfy chair, and told Lilly to tell Richard when he’d woken up that they would see him for breakfast at the hotel. Spock and Stu got into a tuk-tuk and headed to the hotel, pleased they would be going home the following day to see their sweethearts, Dao and Moo.

Richard woke up and looked around at his surroundings in a daze. He felt a warm sensation in his loins and looked at Lilly who appeared to be straddling somebody and sucking



their todger. In his confused stupor Richard asked Lilly if she was Okay, Lilly removed the todger from her mouth.

“Yes koy-t, I am fine” said Lilly

Richard thought she had snared another one of his victims. He smiled at Lilly and said

“See you got another one, Lilly”, he then fell back into his drunken sleep.

Lilly sucked back onto Richards todger like a hungry black widow spider, with at last the prey she had been stalking for months firmly wedged between her three teeth. The animal had been tamed.

The following morning Spock and Stu went down for breakfast, Pon had his brought to his room and the lads tucked into a breakfast buffet. They saw Richard wandering about. and said hello and thanked him for showing them around. Richard looked embarrassed and tried to avoid them.

“Nice bloke that Richard,” Spock said.

“Yeah,” agreed Stu as he shovelled another lump of bacon into his mouth “He can’t hold his booze very well though.”

A darkened windscreen Lexus pulled up in the car park. Two men got out, one went to Lees Range Rover and drove it away, while the other went into the Hotel and collected his passengers. They drove the 12km from Phnom Penh centre to the airport and pulled into the departures section of the Pochentong International Airport.

Lee, met them and led them inside the terminal building and over to the check-in section, he pulled them over to one side and said,

“Pon you travelling alone would be far too dangerous, wait until the counter clears”

They waited until the last straggler cleared the check-in desk, and then Lee signalled to his driver in the car park. A

## CHALICE

car door opened and a lady stepped out and walked toward them.

“She is the girl that we saw at Lee’s house,” noticed Spock.

“Kim!” gasped Pon.

Lee smiled at Pon, “Not Kim,” said Lee, “Goy, your wife.”

Lee then explained that in order for Kim to escape from having to marry Tighe, she would travel with Pon as his wife to Thailand. Taksin had prepared everything necessary there, and Lee would tell Kim’s parents that had ran away.

He had also discussed it with the King’s mother, who was an old romantic and didn’t like Tighe, so she readily gave her approval. Lee would tell Tighe, when he turned up as nobody had seen him for two days, that Kim had gone to Vietnam to visit her family. Lee gave Pon a Cambodian passport with a photograph of Kim, with her new name Goy Te-ad.

Kim rushed into the airport and hugged Pon.

“Welcome my wife” Pon said and kissed Kim.

“I love you my husband,” said a tearful Kim.

“Now we have a shithead and a goythead” interrupted Spock chuckling, after he’d noticed Kim’s passport.

“Quickly,” said Lee and ushered them all through the departure lounge and upstairs to the gate.

Kim told her uncle Lee that she would call him from Thailand, they waved goodbye, walked through the gate and went outside to a waiting Air Asia Boeing.

They got settled in their seats, Spock sat next to Stu and Pon sat with his wife, Kim, although he fidgeted a lot to get into a comfortable position, as the base of his spine around his coccyx ached.

“What exactly is a goyt head?” enquired Stu

## **Robert A. Webster**

“I don’t know” said Spock chuckling “but it sounds good, I am sure I will think of some use for it” and added “shall we order some tea, goythead”.

The large aircraft lifted off the ground. Pon and Kim breathed a sigh of relief, they had made it, and she was free.

## **CHALICE**

## *- Chapter Twenty One -*

The large 737 touched down on the runway of Savarnabhumi airport, Bangkok. The passengers disembarked, except for four people who had been asked by the flight crew to remain.

A familiar figure entered the plane and went over to the four. Pon stood and wai-ed Taksin. Smiling, Spock and Stu stood up and shook his hand and told him it was good to see him again. Pon then introduced Kim who wai-ed Taksin.

Taksin told them they would be escorted out of the airport privately and he took their passports from them. They all left the aircraft and got into a large chauffer driven, white stretch Chrysler 300 series limousine bearing the royal crest.

The car drove out of the airport and onto the highway. They made their way towards the Royal palace and Taksin got de-briefed from Pon, although all he could tell that he could only remember getting ready in the morning to go to see Tighe and then the relic then being handed over to him by the security guard,

“It appeared to be strange” he said and Spock interrupted occasionally about his missing hat.

Taksin informed them that Brigadier Lee had asked him to carry out some personal instructions and now he had seen the Prime Master and Kim together, he was very happy to carry out Lee’s instructions.

Taksin told Pon that they’d caught the palace spy

“It was my P.A., Noi,” he told them, “She had been picked up on the palace security camera, making a phone call from just outside and, as all use of phones had been prohibited until the relics return, Taksin confiscated the phone and

## CHALICE

checked the last number dialled. It had been Colonel Tighe Nye's land line."

"Where is she now?" asked Pon.

"She is in custody at the Bangkok Hilton prison, awaiting trial for treason, but I dare say she will probably get away with a short jail term, instead of execution, she confessed that she had acted on her lovers orders, Colonel Tighe."

Kim smiled; she'd had a lucky escape.

The limo pulled into the Imperial Palace. They all got out and were ushered into the large, plush administration section and into a large conference suite where two monks' stood to greet them.

"Welcome back Prime Master," said two old monks' who wai'd the party. Overjoyed, Pon said,

"Master Cenat, Master Vitthae, what are you two dopey old farts doing here?" (Just making sure you were still awake)

The monks and Taksin spoke for several minutes in Thai, which Stu, Spock nor Kim couldn't understand, so they gazed out of a large patio window onto the beautiful flora in the royal grounds. They were interrupted by a buzzer as a small old man entered the room. The people in the room all bowed including Spock and Stu.

The King spoke to the monks and Taksin in Thai and then said to Stu and Spock in English

"Thank you for your help," he then turned and left the room.

A few moments later a man, dressed in military uniform entered and handed a small envelope to Taksin, who opened it and returned Spock and Stu's passports, they thanked Taksin. Pon asked Taksin something in Thai, Taksin smiled and replied.

A bell sounded to signal that lunch was ready and they sat around a large dining table. Several Thais, dressed in Traditional costume came in carrying cutlery and table

decorations, turning the table into an extravagant dining area and several moments later more stewards entered carrying plates of piping hot Thai food.

The party ate and chatted for about an hour and Taksin asked Stu and Spock if they would like to stay as their guest, or return to Pattaya, which didn't take a lot of thought and thirty minutes later, they sped along route seven on the way to Pattaya in a chauffeur driven, royal limousine

"This will put me back in the good books with the little goythead" said Spock chuckling to himself that he had found another use for his new word.

"Hmmm," mumbled Stu as he stared out of the window and thought of Dao and how he could work his and Spock's bruises, into a convincing story of heroism.

Taksin, Pon, Kim, Vitthae and Cenat took the relic to the temple of the sacred light. A scaffold had been erected around the statue. Pon climbed up, replaced the holy relic and climbed down.

Two men had been waiting in the temple and as soon as Pon had replaced the relic and climbed down, the two electricians took some equipment up to the Buddha statues head.

They installed touch motion detectors to an alarm system around the relics, thus bringing the temple into the 21st century.

The five left the temple and went to Taksin's office they'd planned to return to the temple in a few hours for another ceremony. Pon, Vitthae and Cenat left Taksin's office and went to the monk's quarters for a discussion. Banti and Pons sister came, and after the tearful reunion and introduction to Kim they took Kim along to their family quarters. Pons sister could speak a little English, so she and Kim, who could also speak English, could have a limited conversation. Taksin made the other arrangements that he and

## CHALICE

Pon had discussed. Pon told Vitichae and Cenat his request and waited for their wisdom and advice.

Several hours later the temple of the sacred light had a crowd of people for a religious ceremony, this time, however it wasn't tourists awaiting the Buddha's light. The people inside were monks, high ranking officials several members of the royal family and Pons family and, presiding over the ceremony Cenat and Vitichae. Two figures knelt in front of the chanting monks, The defender of the monarch and his new wife-to-be, Kim.

The chanting reached its crescendo as the sunlight hit the skylight and the holy remnants, which still contained Nicholas Godfreys' ceramic teeth, minus a few cells. Another member joined the ceremony, as an amazing dancing light show of Lord Buddha.

Pon had told Vitichae and Cenat that his love for Kim was too strong and he wanted to protect her, although he would always remain on the path to enlightenment, he would do this with his wife, but as it was forbidden for monks to marry he would relinquish his role as Tinju Prime Master, and no longer be a monk, however, he would remain the defender of the Monarch and protector of the relic, Pon would always remain a loyal servant of the Tinju and Royal Family.

Vitichae and Cenat both noticed how Pon appeared when he was around Kim, and could not, or would not refuse the brave warriors request.

Vitichae joked with Pon about if the big fellow, Spock, would consider the Prime masters role, as he looked very handy,

The wedding ceremony meant they had been joined in matrimony under the Buddha's teaching and laws.

Kim felt sad because she didn't have her parents blessing, or knowledge of her whereabouts.



## Robert A. Webster

However, she thought they would come around and hoped Tighe could find it in his cold heart to forgive her enough to allow them have a large ceremony in Cambodia, with the Royal families of Cambodia and Thailand attending. Unbeknownst to her, that day would come sooner than she thought.

The ceremony lasted two hours and after the sun had set the party dispersed. The monks remained in the temple. The happy couple went to their living quarters and made their first joint decision as a married couple, Pon told his mother and the rest of the family what they intended to do. A tearful Banti hugged her son and whispered “I told you Buddha would take care of his brave warrior” she hugged Kim and wished them both a safe journey. She then looked at her son and asked if everything was alright, she had been concerned about something she had noticed about Pon all the way through the ceremony,

“Yes, I am fine mother and I will see you in a few days” replied Pon embarrassed, but amazed again by his mother’s awareness of him, she was a wise person that was for sure. Mr. and Mrs. Meesilli left their quarters and went to Taksin’s office, who had been expecting them.

“Enjoy your honeymoon” said Taksin and handed Pon a parcel.

“Give them my regards” he added and wai’d the couple.

Thirty minutes later the happy couple canoodled in the back of a limousine speeding down route 7. Pon still in his defender of the monarchy white uniform and Kim, still in her traditional Thai wedding attire.

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Stu and Spock arrived at Pattaya in the limousine just after 1pm. The car pulled into the car park of the Sawasdee hotel

## CHALICE

and unloaded the lad's belongings. They asked the driver to wait, so they could show Dao and Moo how they had arrived in style after their dangerous mission. They went to their rooms. Both the girls were asleep in Stus room, Dao, and the eyebrow challenged 'Goythead' Moo.

They jumped up when the lads entered, smiled, got out of bed and went over to kiss the lads, who immediately herded them to the window and looked out, onto an empty car park.

"He's disappeared, the git" said Stu.

They had not spoke to the driver during the journey and every time they'd asked him something, he'd smiled knowingly, so they assumed that royal protocol meant that he couldn't speak to the passengers. It had never occurred to them that the driver didn't understand a dickey bird of English and when they asked him to wait, he just smiled, and once the lads had got into the elevator, he drove away, his job was done.

Dao and Moo looked at Spock and Stu unconvinced, even with the lads pointing, cursing and making gestures to highlight the fact that there was a royal Limo outside.

Deflated, they sat down Dao and Moo on the bed and told them the story of how they had bravely fought off invading jungle armies and hordes of cut throat, knife wielding natives in the dangerous snake infested Cambodian jungles and how, in the end, they'd prevailed victorious and had retrieved the relic. (Well they couldn't say they went on holiday, had a great time and came back without actually remembering doing bugger all. Now could they?)

The girls listened intently to their brave soldier's accounts and, after they had finished their tale the room went silent. The girls took in the facts as the two lads gloated and pointed to their faded bruises for effect.

It was Moo that broke the silence, by shouting,

"What a load of old bollocks!"

A stunned Stu turned to face Spock,

## Robert A. Webster

“You taught her that as well?” said Stu.

“Yep,” said a proud Spock “that’s my girl!”

The four burst out laughing and when the girls suggested that they wanted to go to eat. Stu and Spock told them they had already eaten with the King. The girls replied in unison,

“What a load of old bollocks!” This brought more laughter to the room, and Spock mentioned what a quick learner Dao was.

Thirty minutes later they left their rooms. The lads wore swimming trunks and the girls dressed in jeans and t-shirts. The girls went to eat, while the lads went to the hotel pool to find someone who would listen to their tales of adventure.

They returned to their rooms around 4pm after spending a lazy afternoon playing around the pool. They decided to have a shag and watch TV for a few hours, eat something and then go out on the town. The girls decided to return after they had eaten and stay in the room, as Spock and Stu announced that they wanted to go watch the boxing on walking street again, the girls knew this would be just another embarrassment, so they told them to go alone. They stayed in their rooms the rest of the afternoon, watched TV, and periodically get a quickie in, if the TV movie was crap. They only had a week remaining of their holiday and, as usual the last week was always a sullen time for the lads, it was the downhill part of their holiday and they had already wasted most of it.

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Nick meanwhile, had been having a great time after all the travelling that he had done to escape Siem Reap, although he always looked over his shoulder.

He had realised he had forgotten his valuables approximately 30 minutes from Phnom Penh, so he had the angry driver turn around and go back to Siem Reap. He

## CHALICE

quickly ran into the hotel, recovered his belongings from the hotel safe and paid the taxi \$300 which cheered up the tired driver. They then set off, once again to Phnom Penh

Nick having already spent a fortune on taxi fare decided to catch the bus to Sihanoukville.

A happy Nick spent his time in Sihanoukville with Shanti, lazing over on Bamboo Island.

He decided to stay there; it felt safe, romantic and tranquil.

It had taken Nick a few days to convince Shanti to stay with him. Shanti previously had caught the boat every day to the island at 10am, but always returned to the mainland for her work at 5pm.

Shanti and Nick had only kissed for the first few days, until a few days before he had to return to the UK. Shanti went to the island as usual in the morning, but brought with her a small bag, with a change of clothes and some toiletries. Nick was overjoyed to see her get off the boat and even more so when he saw her bag and she said that she would stay, but no hanky panky. Nick happily agreed and that night, after the generator on the island went off, they both lay in a hammock on the balcony of their bungalow and listened to the lapping ocean waves and the stars twinkle. Shanti kissed Nick and whispered

“If we do anything tonight don’t tell anybody.”

He readily agreed and knew if something happened with Shanti, he would spend the rest of his life with her, although realised that it could be short, if he kept running into Spock and Stu. Shanti loved Nick’s vulnerability.

That evening was the best night of passion that Nick wouldn’t forget for a very long time, he felt that he had made love, instead of just boom-boom. In the morning they stayed in bed until the afternoon and then snorkelled together around the bay, keeping away from the other tourists, so they could

## Robert A. Webster

get in an aqua shag. They caught the afternoon boat back to the mainland and stayed at the Coasters resort. They ate and enjoyed a few bottles of wine, but most of all enjoyed each moment together.

Nick caught the morning bus to Phnom Penh airport. Shanti went along with him to the bus station, to say a tearful farewell. She wiped the tears away from his cheeks and Nick, the Jack the lad builder's labourer from Brighton and owner of the world's most worshipped ceramic teeth, got on the bus and, with tears still flowing down his face waved his love goodbye. He would return.

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Spock, Stu Dao and Moo arranged to go out at 8pm they all showered and got ready. The lads told the girls they would treat them to a no expense spared meal at a K.F.C. At 7:55pm there came a knock on Stu's door,

"Hang on matey, we will be five minutes" hollered Stu. The knocking continued. Dao answered the door and smiled, bowed, wai-ed and started chatting in Thai. Stu came to the door and opened it fully to see what the commotion was.

Stu laughed and said "well don't you two look smart," and hugged Pon and Kim

"What's all the bloody noise?" said Spock opening his door and wandering into the corridor.

"The heads, shit and goyt!" He joyfully shouted and went over to hug Kim and clip Pon.

Pon smiled "Mr & Mrs Meesilli now," he smirked, which brought another, either hug or clip, and when Pon enquired what had happened to Moo's eyebrow, she gave Spock a contemptuous stare.

Pon explained about Kim and rushed marriage and told the group that they wanted to spend their first night together

## CHALICE

as man and wife with their brothers and sisters, told them that he had something special for them.

He took Spock and Stu to one side and told them he had a little problem that he felt his two brothers could advise him on later. Spock and Stu became intrigued.

“Glad to see that you have got rid of that stupid mullet” said Stu.

Pon smiled and reached into his bag.

He produced a small package, opened it and handed a Thai passport to Dao and one to Moo.

They looked in the pages and there it was, the Holy Grail, a UK tourist visa.

“You little beauty!” said Stu and put his arms around Pons shoulder. Pon then gave them four first class tickets on Thai airways with open return seats, so they could extend their holiday, neither Stu nor Spock had been on any time schedules. Stu had his own business so his time was his own and Spock didn’t really give a shit if they sacked him from his dustbin man’s job, he was fed up with that anyway and Stu said that he would employ Spock, but he knew Stu wouldn’t pay much. The four jumped up and down with joy and Kim and Pon joined in, Kim enjoyed her new life already.

Pon reached into his bag again and produced a hat, which looked similar to Spock’s old one, but with the Thai royal emblem skilfully stitched to the front. Spock tried it on.

“Fits perfect, Thanks matey!”

Dao, Moo and Stu cringed, the twat in the hat had returned.

Pon gave a blue ornament to Stu. The sapphire had an elephant skilfully carved into it.

“Thanks matey that will go nicely with my red one,”

“I will tell mum that this is a priceless sapphire and she can put it in Pearls treasure box’ announced Stu, who once again didn’t realise that it was indeed a flawless 96 carat sapphire worth a fortune.

The lads told the couple of their plans for the evening, but knew that Pon and Kim would want to enjoy their marital nuptials, so they arranged to see them tomorrow.

“Wait my brothers, I would like to discuss something in private with you,” said Pon and they went into Stu’s room, who whispered to Spock,

“He hadn’t had much experience of sex before, and Kim will be a virgin, so he probably wants to ask us about the birds and bees.”

“And who better to advise him,” sniggered Spock.

Pon asked the lads to sit on the bed and he stood in front of them, undid his tunic trousers, turned around, and pulled down his pants exposing his rear end.

“Wooah!!” exclaimed Spock “hold on there bald eagle, you have a lot to learn.”

“Easy tiger,” said Stu.

“Look,” said an agitated Pon pointing at his backside.

The lads stared at Pons backside and noticed a narrow flap of skin growing from the base of his spine and ran between his butt cheeks for about six inches.

“That looks like Chunky’s docked tail, but bald” announced Stu pointing at the proboscis. The tail popped up and Pon cried out,

“look! Is this normal?” and just like old Chunky’s stump, the tail started to wag from side to side.

Stu and Spock looked at the wagging tail of their friend. Pon explained it started growing in the car from Siem Reap to Phnom Penh and he was concerned, it didn’t look normal. Although, it only hurt when he sat on it,

The lads where aghast and when Pon pulled up his trousers. Spock broke the silence, seeing Pon concerned and not wanting to alarm him, said,

“Yep, perfectly normal matey.”

“Yep,” agreed Stu “normal at your age, maybe all the excitement had brought it on,” he then went on to mention

## CHALICE

“but don’t be too concerned it would probably disappear” and to reassure him added, “it was a fine looking tail and Kim would love it.”

Pon now relieved, wai-ed his lying brothers and started to walk outside to take Kim to the room that he had booked next to Spock’s.

He then took something black and furry out of his bag.

The lads, now crimson and their mouths quivered, as Pon left the room and closed the door.

Spock and Stu burst into uncontrollable laughter, at Norman Rumble Juniors revenge.

Spock and Stu had a change of plan and went out to fetch back two K.F.C’s for the girls and some wine cooler. With all the excitement they decided to go out on the piss and brag how easy it had been getting a visa for UK. The girls, happy to stay in the room and phone around their family and friends to brag, so it would be a long night

Spock and Stu arrived back 30 minutes later laden with KFC's and bottles of wine cooler. They went into Spock’s room, where the girls were already in mid-yap. The lads checked the Listerine supplies as they knew they were in for a good night when they came home.

They kissed the girls who chomped into chicken drumsticks and left the room. They walked towards the elevator, a smiling Pon opened his room door and shouted,

“Wait my brothers!”

Pon went back into his room, brought a smiling Kim out and gently shoved her into Spock’s room with the girls.

“Where shall we go?” Pon asked

The two lads looked at the smug face of Pon and Stu said,

“Why are you wearing that stupid wig again?”

“Kim likes it,” he said and smiled proudly.

“And the tail?” asked Spock

“Oh she really liked that” cooed Pon



## Robert A. Webster

“How come you’re allowed out on your wedding night?”  
Stu enquired.

Pon chuckled “I told my wife that it was an English tradition, after making love on the wedding night, it was customary to go out with your brothers and announce to the world that you are married and your wife is no longer cherry.”

“Good lad, your learning” said Stu, as they got into the elevator and chatted about the thirty seconds that it had taken Pon to consummate with Kim.

Pon told them he would do it again when they returned home, but he felt that with a few non alcoholic Heinekens, he could perform better. Spock and Stu got out of the elevator and Spock ordered Pon

“Walkies” and “come to heel,” and whistled, which Pon didn’t quite understand

“Change of plan,” announced Spock and nodded to Stu

“Change of plan matey,” agreed Stu and they left the Sawasdee Hotel, swaggered into the night like Wyatt and Virgil Earp, along with their faithful old hound, Shithead. They jumped onto a baht bus and got off at the top of Soi 6 and walked into the first bar of happy wailing muggers.

IT ENDED WHERE IT BEGAN

## **CHALICE**

## *- Chapter Twenty Two -*

Professor Norman Rumble got out of bed after the best night sleep he'd had for many years. He showered and put on a clean white laboratory tunic

“What time is it?” said a figure stirring from the bed.

“It's early, go back to sleep you still have an hour” said the old professor as he made his way out of his living dome and over to the laboratory. Norman Rumble loved the dawn; he walked over to the lab and took in the morning air as the sun started its daily ascent along the top of the cavern's plasma screened ceiling. He checked his watch and waited. At 6:30 precisely, a low click was heard as the computer that controlled the environment, gave instructions to the air blowers and mist making machine by the waterfalls. A cold light mist blew over the Citadel floor, which refreshed the citadel and reminded Rumble of New Zealand. Norman watched, as usual, as the curling mist bathed the pastures and orchards.

He then went into his large office and poured himself a glass of pineapple juice and gazed out of the window, back into the citadel, as the remaining inhabitants went about their daily routines. He noticed old bong Toah and his wife walking around the pasture, collecting cow dung for the methane tanks to process, a chore the old couple had done for years and, although the citadel now had Hydrogen power as well as solar and hydro electric, so methane power was rarely used but it kept the old couple contented. He watched as the brightly coloured parakeets and flowerpeckers, some made by The Oven and some by insemination, flew squawking over the herd of cows, with old Jake chasing after them as they headed back to their nests in the tall mango orchards, their morning

## CHALICE

fun now over. The citadel had all the noises and smells of the world outside.

A young native woman entered Norm's office and bought in a fresh jug of pineapple juice.

"Thank you Eve," said Norm to the girl who smiled and left the room. Norman then proceeded to the Theory computer to carry out his daily check list.

\*\*\*\*

It had been several months now since they had blocked off the entrances to the Let-cum-baan cut themselves off from the world outside.

There had been a country wide search for Tar and Tighe, which had fizzled out after a few weeks. All Norman and the citadel inhabitants could do was hold a memorial for his adopted son and Tar, but as only dust remained, a large brass plaque was made in their honour and placed on the wall of the precipice. The CCTV monitors had been disconnected and the large concrete pillar that had been placed under the floor of the Ta Prohm elevator had been covered in decorations, photos and paintings of the friends who had left the citadel as a reminder. The citadel had been unaware that the replicant had been discovered. Their only communication to the outside world was via their private satellite system that Norman Junior had set up. It was now 07:30 and Norman had returned to his office to await a communication to come in from the U.K.

Rumbles computer signalled an incoming transmission and the smiling face of Norman Junior and his son Cain flashed up on the screen.

"Hi dad," said Junior.

"Hi granddad," joined in Cain

"Hello boys," replied Rumble.

## Robert A. Webster

“Father have you been watching the news on your satellite T.V” enquired Junior.

“No son, I have been too busy, why?” replied the old man.

Norman Junior explained that the winner of the Nobel Prize for science and technology had a heart attack and died whilst receiving the prize. The Nobel committee therefore had to rescind their order of posthumous recognition after a public outcry. They had to amend their lists and Rosalind Franklyn was on the new list.

Norman Junior his wife Patty and his son Cain, along with Tu and Liz, had moved to London after the immense success of the CAIN celled computer, that had revolutionised computers and made them, and the software team, extremely wealthy. They had all been busy with other projects and assisted with their old home, the citadel, with computer technology and communication, which they had brought in before they had closed the entrance.

Norman started to weep and thanked his son for the information.

“What a great few days this had been already,” sobbed Rumble.

“Where is she father?” said an exited Norm Junior after several more minutes of chat

“I left her sleeping son; she has only been with us for a day and still tired from the effects.”

“Okay,” said a disappointed junior “maybe later,”

Norman’s office door then opened and a smiling old Khmer woman entered the room, went over to Norman and looked into the screen. Norman stood up to allow the old woman to sit down and with tears in her eyes she touched the screen and Norman Junior touched his screen.

“Hello son,” said Theary.

## CHALICE

“Mum,” said a tearful junior and turned to Cain.

“Say hello to your grandma.”

“Hi grandma,” said the tot “How are you?”

Professor Norman Rumble, put his arms around his wife and said,

“She is perfect Cain.”

\*\*\*\*

Boran and Norman had continued with the Ophiuchus project, which they had decided not to share this with the world, as they felt maybe God had interjected with the failure and possible demise of the Buddha replicant, along with the killing of Tighe and Tar made them think that it would be used for sinister, rather than good purposes.

They instead decided to create a new civilisation from cells that had been found in the skeletal remains that Boran had unearthed many years ago. They were not exactly sure whether the bones and teeth where from male or female, or whether they had been ancient Mori-Ori, ancient Khmer, or possibly both. The cell sniffer had found a few cells in the dried up marrow of some of the femur bones and teeth.

The oven first created a young native woman, who turned out better than expected, as Theory and the oven’s artificial intelligence had been constantly improving and upgrading their own programmes. The procedure from start to finish took about six weeks. They named the replicant woman Eve. Norman was then granted his wish and the second creation was Theory, Norman’s beloved wife, who had started life anew the previous day. They sped up the process and made two replicant’s at the same time, two canvasses, but could only add the paint and software one at a time. They intended to make about a hundred inhabitants altogether, and knew they could renew themselves at their leisure as and when their bodies wore out; this would be a perpetual turnover with the same neighbours and friends for eternity, if they wished.

The family's tearful reunion was interrupted by Norm's intercom.

"Norman could you come to the ward," said Boran who knew Norman liked to be there for moments such as these.

"Hi Uncle Boran," said Cain when he heard Boran's voice and Norman kept his finger on the intercom button.

"Hi Cain," said Boran "I will call you later, when I call Tu."

"Be right there Boran," said Norman and he kissed Theory on the forehead.

"Next time we speak I may be talking to my older brother and sister," said Norman Junior sarcastically.

"Or maybe younger," giggled Norman "and your mum may be blonde."

Theory slapped the old professor and told him not to be so cheeky.

Norman left the room and the three remained chatting on the computer.

Professor Rumble entered the ward where Boran and the Eve stood over a large male and while Boran checked vital signs, Eve stroked the man's forehead and spoke in an ancient Khmer dialect. The shroud of life was taken away, cleaned and made ready for its next occupant.

"Mori-Ori?" enquired Norman.

"Mori-Ori" confirmed Boran and smiled at the figure of a mid twenty-year-old male, who had previously died of a virulent form of flu virus and whose molar teeth had provided the cells. Theory had removed the virus cells and added a \*cop to the RNA recipe so it wouldn't return.

*Cop is a term used to stop the RNA replicating a certain type of cell, in this case an influenza virus, previously it had been Theory's cancer cells*

## CHALICE

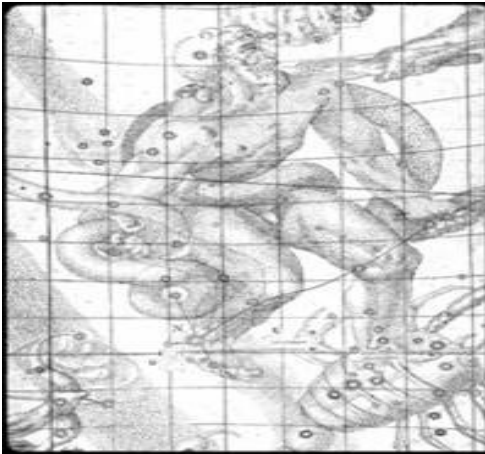
“Welcome to the new world,” smiled Norman and placed his hand on the new arrivals head.

The man returned the smile and fell into a deep sleep.

The two old scientists and now lifelong brothers just smiled at each other, they knew this was a friendship that would last forever. They had joked many times over the past few months on how they wanted to look on their re-birth; they had certain features that they wanted to change. Boran joked that he wanted Roth to have bigger titty’s and she responded by not wanting to give Boran a mouth, so he wouldn’t be so cheeky. They also discussed that if the world ever found out, would they be perceived as miracle workers for the plastic surgery brigade, or modern day Dr. Frankenstein’s. They didn’t care. They intended to create a new civilisation from the ashes of the old. Everything was now euphoric in their little utopia underground and would remain that way for eternity.

**Life is not measured by every breath we take.  
But by the moments that take our breath away.**

### **Ophiuchus, the new beginning.**







## *- Epilogue -*

Crinigan had not taken a holiday for many years. The last being to Spain, when his sons were children. However, this trip abroad, came with all expenses paid and a mystery that Crinigan looked forward to solving.

He had requested that he should be allowed to continue to investigate the John Doe that had remained unidentified in the morgue at New Scotland Yard for months.

His superiors eventually agreed, as they wanted the body, and the case, laid to rest as they had become fed up with cranks pestering them for stories about alien abductions and government cover ups, after the press had received a tip off from within the Met.

The Singapore airlines Boeing touched down in Phnom Penh after a seventeen hour flight. Donal enjoyed the flight, especially the several whiskeys and a few meals, but he felt grubby and wanted to shower.

Now into mid August, he'd presumed any trail would have gone cold, but when he had spoken to Dr Clerk on the phone, he assured him the trail wasn't there to begin with, so there had been nothing to go cold. But as Timothy explained,

## CHALICE

he was a coroner and not a detective and this needed a good old fashioned investigation to give it some closure.

Timothy told Donal about recent rumours of strange lights around Ta Prohm, near where the body had been discovered and a secret city underground, however he said that they had been just old wives tales as nothing substantial had surfaced.

“Little green men,” joked Timothy.

“Yes,” said Crinigan “I’ve been hearing that a lot.”

He recalled a telephone conversation that he’d had previously with Nicholas Godfrey in the UK. Nick had told Donal that he had visited Cambodia, but could not shed any light on the subject and he had never visited any temples, so he was as confused as the detective. However Nick said that he intended to fly over again the following day, and he would contact Donal on his return in a few weeks time. That had been a few months ago and Nick had never contacted him again. Crinigan thought it pointless to continue with that line of investigation, as all Godfrey wittered on about was how two Englishmen had hexed him. Detective Crinigan therefore thought Nick to be bonkers.

‘Who knows, maybe Nick is still here and maybe I will run into him in a bar somewhere,’ he thought, that would be fun.

‘Hi my name is Nick and supposedly I’m dead’ Crinigan chuckled to himself.

The plane came to a stop outside the terminal and the detective gathered up papers that he had been studying on the plane, put them neatly back in his briefcase, got off the aircraft and walked into the terminal. He went through customs and immigration and into the open air of the terminal arrivals, meeting point.

“Donal, Donal!” came a shout from a small middle aged man, wearing worn rimmed glasses from behind a metal rail

Donal noticed the man shouting and went over and shook the hand of Dr Timothy Clerk.

“How did you know it was me?” asked Detective Crinigan.

“You look Irish, Donal” laughed Timothy

“Welcome to Cambodia, this is my wife, Chanda” and introduced Donal to the lady who stood at his side.

“The embassy has laid on a car for you and we have booked you a room in a hotel on Moa Tse Toung Boulevard. It is Sunday, so just relax and freshen up and feel your way around”. Said Clerk.

The party got into the embassies Cadillac STS V6 and drove towards the city centre to the intercontinental hotel. They chatted about the mystifying case and Timothy told Donal that he had gotten no useful information from the tour guide, or group that originally found the body. He also told Donal that a Colonel and an army sniper who worked for the Prime Ministers security force had disappeared around the same time, and place, but wasn't sure if it had any relevance or could be connected, but maybe it could be another line of enquiry

“Maybe useful” said Donal and took out his notebook and scribbled some details down about Tighe and Tar.

Timothy made arrangements with Donal for the evening to go along to his house for dinner and then the following day they could proceed to Siem Reap and start the investigation and hopefully quickly solve the case, so the poor unfortunate individual in the Met's morgue could be buried.

Dr Clerk advised that it would be better to get out of Phnom Penh as soon as possible, as a wedding was due to take place, involving the royal families of Cambodia and Thailand, which was being held in the silver Pagoda in a few days time,

## CHALICE

so the streets and roads would be blocked off to traffic, which would make travelling around the city difficult.

“Who was getting married, a Prince or something?” asked Crinigan.

Timothy chuckled “No, apparently it is two of the respective Royal family’s employees. An ex-Thai monk and a Khmer royal lady in waiting and, according to the press, the couple story had been a real life fairytale, so it will be a big event for the two nations.”

They pulled up outside the plush Intercontinental Hotel and Timothy escorted Donal inside and confirmed his room on the top 15th floor, “the best view in the city“ Timothy told him, they shook hands and Timothy left the hotel. The bell boy took Donal’s bag to his room.

‘Drink first’, thought Donal and headed to the hotel bar.

“Jameson’s whisky and a Guinness,” he requested the Khmer barman.

“No Guinness sir,” said the barman “but we do have ABC stout”

“Fine” said Donal “and make that a double Jameson’s”

Detective Crinigan felt the amber nectar hit the back of his throat, he swallowed and let out a satisfying ahhh.

It was too early to make a judgement about Cambodia, so he decided to finish his drink, shower then go out and take a look around. Timothy had given Donal a mobile phone with a Cambodian sim card, with his number in the memory if he needed him. Donal looked at his watch ‘just after noon, another drink, shower and out’ he thought, as he gulped down the last of the whisky and took a swig of the bitter tasting stout.

“One more sir?” asked the bartender.

“Aye lad, one more double whisky, but no more of the stout, it tastes like Shite.”

## **Robert A. Webster**

“Top of the morning to you sir and the rest of the day for yourself” said a voice behind him.

Crinigan spun around on his stool and saw a man stood behind him dressed in chefs whites.

“That is the worst Irish accent imitation that I’ve ever heard” said Crinigan and continued, “You must be English.”

The chef laughed and in a posh southern English accent said,

“How did you guess?” and an evil smirk came over his face, as he extended his hand to shake Donals.

“I’m Richard....are you here on holiday?”

**THE END**

## **CHALICE**

# Whilst the world slept

A Brief history of the events leading up to 1975, the genocide period of the Khmer Rouge.

After World War II and into the early 1950s, King Sihanouk's politics became more nationalistic and he began demanding that the French grant the country independence and depart, echoing the sentiments of the other nations of Indochina, Vietnam and Laos. He went into exile in Thailand in May of 1953 and refused to return until independence was granted. He returned when his overtures met with success and Cambodia became independent on November 9, 1953. On March 2, 1955, King Sihanouk abdicated in favour of his father, taking the post of prime minister a few months later. Following his father's death in 1960, he gained election as head of state, but received the title of prince rather than king. In 1963, he forced a change in the constitution that made him head of state for life. While he had officially abdicated as king, he had created a constitutional office for himself that was exactly equal to that of the former Kingship.

In the spring of 1965, he made a deal with China and North Vietnam to allow the presence of permanent North Vietnamese bases in eastern Cambodia and to allow military supplies from China to reach Vietnam by Cambodian ports. Cambodia and Cambodian individuals were compensated by Chinese purchases of the Cambodian rice crop by China at inflated prices. He also at this time made any number of speeches calling the triumph of Communism in Southeast Asia inevitable and suggesting Maoist ideas were worthy of emulation. In 1966 and 1967, Sihanouk unleashed a wave of

## CHALICE

political repression that drove many on the left out of mainstream politics.

He had alienated the left, allowed the North Vietnamese to establish bases within Cambodia and the prime minister convened the National Assembly which voted to depose Sihanouk as head of state and give emergency powers to Lon Nol. staked everything on China's good will. On March 18, 1970, while he was travelling out of the country, Lon Nol was elected as the first president of the Khmer Republic in a blatantly rigged election. As per the new constitution (ratified on 30 April), political parties formed in the new nation, quickly becoming a source of political factionalism. General Sutsakhan stated: "the seeds of democratization, which had been thrown into the wind with such goodwill by the Khmer leaders, returned for the Khmer Republic nothing but a poor harvest.

On 29 April 1970, South Vietnamese and U.S. units unleashed a limited, multi-pronged bombing attack on Cambodia. Nixon wanted to solidify Lon Nol's position, although the Cambodian leader was not even informed in advance of the decision to invade his country. He learned about it only after it had begun from the head of the U.S. mission, who had himself learned about it from a radio broadcast.

From 1972 through 1974, the war was conducted along FANK's lines of communications north and south of the capital. Limited offensives were launched to maintain contact with the rice-growing regions of the northwest and along the Mekong River and Route 5, the Republic's overland connections to South Vietnam. The strategy of the Khmer Rouge was to gradually cut those lines of communication and squeeze Phnom Penh. As a result, FANK forces became fragmented, isolated, and unable to lend one another mutual support.



## Robert A. Webster

In January 1973, the Paris Peace Accord was signed, ending the conflict (for the time being) in South Vietnam and Laos. On 29 January, Lon Nol proclaimed a unilateral cease-fire throughout the nation. All U.S. bombing operations were halted in hopes of securing a chance for peace. It was not to be. The Khmer Rouge simply ignored the proclamation and carried on fighting. By March, heavy casualties, desertions, and low recruitment had forced Lon Nol to introduce conscription and, in April, insurgent forces launched an offensive that pushed into the suburbs of the capital. The U.S. Air Force responded by launching an intense bombing operation that forced the communists back into the countryside after being decimated by the air strikes.

As late as 1972–1973, it was a commonly held belief, both within and outside Cambodia, that the war was essentially a foreign conflict that had not fundamentally altered the nature of the Khmer people. By late 1973, there was a growing awareness among the government and population of the fanaticism, total lack of concern over casualties, and complete rejection of any offer of peace talks which "began to suggest that Khmer Rouge fanaticism and capacity for violence were deeper than anyone had suspected.

Reports of the brutal policies of the organization soon made their way to Phnom Penh and into the population foretelling a violent madness that was about to consume the nation. There were tales of the forced relocations of entire villages, of the summary execution of any who disobeyed or even asked questions, the forbidding of religious practices, of monks who were defrocked or murdered, and where traditional sexual and marital habits were foresworn. War was one thing, the offhand manner in which the Khmer Rouge dealt out death, so contrary to the Khmer character, was quite another. Reports of these atrocities began to surface during the same period in which North Vietnamese troops were withdrawing from the Cambodian battlefields. This was no

## CHALICE

coincidence. The concentration of the PAVN effort on South Vietnam allowed the Khmer Rouge to apply their doctrine and policies without restraint for the first time.

The Khmer Rouge leadership was almost completely unknown by the public. They were referred to by their fellow countrymen as *peap prey* – the forest army. Previously, the very existence of the communist party as a component of GRUNK had been hidden. Within the "liberated zones" it was simply referred to as "Angka" – the organization. During 1973, the communist party fell under the control of its most fanatical members, Pol Pot and Son Sen, who believed that "Cambodia was to go through a total social revolution and that everything that had preceded it was anathema and must be destroyed." Also hidden from scrutiny was the growing antagonism between the Khmer Rouge and their North Vietnamese allies. The radical leadership of the party could never escape the suspicion that Hanoi had designs on building an Indochinese federation with the North Vietnamese as its master. The Khmer Rouge were ideologically tied to the Chinese, while North Vietnam's chief supporters, the Soviet Union, still recognized the Lon Nol.

By the time the Khmer Rouge initiated their dry-season offensive to capture the beleaguered Cambodian capital on 1 January 1975, the Republic was in chaos. The economy had been gutted, the transportation network had been reduced to air and water systems, the rice harvest had been reduced by one-quarter, and the supply of freshwater fish (the chief source of protein) had declined drastically. The cost of food was 20 times greater than pre-war levels and unemployment was not even measured anymore.

The final offensive against Phnom Penh, April 1975.

Phnom Penh, which had a pre-war population of around 600,000, was overwhelmed by refugees (who continued to flood in from the steadily collapsing defence perimeter), growing to a size of around two million. These helpless and

desperate civilians had no jobs and little in the way of food, shelter, or medical care. Their condition (and the governments) only worsened when Khmer Rouge forces gradually gained control of the banks of the Mekong. From the riverbanks, their mines and gunfire steadily reduced the river convoys bringing relief supplies of food, fuel, and ammunition to the slowly starving city.

Sihanouk showed his support for the Khmer Rouge by visiting them in the field, their ranks swelled from 6000 to 50,000 fighters. Many of these new recruits for the Khmer Rouge were apolitical peasants who fought in support of the king, not for communism, of which they had little understanding. When the Khmer Republic fell to the Khmer Rouge in April 1975, Prince Sihanouk became the symbolic head of state of the new regime while Pol Pot remained in power. The next year, on April 4, 1976, the Khmer Rouge forced Sihanouk out of office again and into political retirement.

The Khmer Rouge was the ruling political party of Cambodia—which it renamed the Democratic Kampuchea—from 1975 to 1979.

The term "Khmer Rouge," meaning "Red Khmer" in French, was coined by Cambodian head of state Norodom Sihanouk and was later adopted by English speakers. It was used to refer to a succession of Communist parties in Cambodia which evolved into the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) and later the Party of Democratic Kampuchea. The organization was also known as the Khmer Communist Party and the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea.

The Khmer Rouge is remembered mainly for the deaths of an estimated 1.7 million people (estimates range from 850,000 to two million) under its regime, through execution, starvation and forced labour. Following their leader Pol Pot,

## CHALICE

who referred to himself as brother number one. The Khmer Rouge imposed an extreme form of social engineering on Cambodian society, a radical form of agrarian communism where the whole population had to work in collective farms or forced labour projects. In terms of the number of people killed as a proportion of the population (est. 7.5 million people, as of 1975), it was one of the most lethal regimes of the 20th century. One of their mottos, in reference to the New People, was: "To keep you is of no benefit. To kill you is no loss."

Whilst in power, the Khmer Rouge carried out a radical program that included isolating the country from foreign influence, closing schools, hospitals and factories, abolishing banking, finance and currency, outlawing all religions, confiscating all private property and relocating people from urban areas to collective farms where forced labour was widespread. The purpose of this policy, to turn all Cambodians into "Base People" through agricultural labour. These actions resulted in massive deaths through executions, work exhaustion, illness, and starvation.

In Phnom Penh and other cities, the Khmer Rouge told residents that they would be moved only about "two or three kilometres" outside the city and would return in "two or three days." Some witnesses say they were told that the evacuation was because of the "threat of American bombing" and that they did not have to lock their houses since the Khmer Rouge would "take care of everything" until they returned. These were not the first evacuations of civilian populations by the Khmer Rouge. Similar evacuations of populations without possessions had been occurring on a smaller scale since the early 1970s.

The Khmer Rouge attempted to turn Cambodia into a classless society by depopulating cities and forcing the urban population ("New People") into agricultural communes. The entire population was forced to become farmers in labour camps. During their four years in power, the Khmer Rouge

overworked and starved the population, at the same time executing selected groups who had the potential to undermine the new state (including intellectuals or even those that had stereotypical signs of learning, such as glasses) and killing many others for even minor breaches of rules. Cambodians were expected to produce three Tons of rice per hectare; before the Khmer Rouge era, the average was only one Ton per hectare. The Khmer Rouge forced people to work for 16 hours non-stop, without adequate rest or food. They did not believe in western medicine but instead favoured traditional peasant medicine; many died as a result. Family relationships not sanctioned by the state were also banned, and family members could be put to death for communicating with each other. In any case, family members were often relocated to different parts of the country with all postal and telephone services abolished. The total lack of agricultural knowledge by the former city dwellers made famine inevitable. Rural dwellers were often unsympathetic or too frightened to assist them. Such acts as picking wild fruit or berries were seen as private enterprise.

The Khmer language has a complex system of usages to define speakers' rank and social status. During the rule of the Khmer Rouge, these usages were abolished. People were encouraged to call each other 'friend' or 'comrade' (Khmer: *mitt*), and to avoid traditional signs of deference such as bowing or folding the hands in salutation, known as *sampea*. Language was transformed in other ways. The Khmer Rouge invented new terms. People were told to 'forge' (*lot dam*) a new revolutionary character, that they were the 'instruments' (Khmer: *opokar*) of the ruling body known as 'Angkar' (Khmer: pronounced *ahngkah*; meaning 'The Organization'), and that nostalgia for pre-revolutionary times (*choeu stek arom*, or 'memory sickness') could result in execution.

The ideology of the Khmer Rouge evolved over time. In the early days, it was an orthodox communist party and

## CHALICE

looked to the Vietnamese Communists for guidance. It became more Stalinist and anti-intellectual when groups of students who had been studying in France returned to Cambodia. The students, including future party leader Pol Pot, had been heavily influenced by the example of the French Communist Party (PCF). After 1960, the Khmer Rouge developed its own unique political ideas. For example, contrary to most Marxist doctrine, the Khmer Rouge considered the farmers in the countryside to be the proletariat and the true representatives of the working class, a form of Maoism which brought them onto the PRC side of the Soviet-Sino Split. By the 1970s, the ideology of the Khmer Rouge combined its own ideas with the anti-colonialist ideas of the PCF, which its leaders had acquired during their education in French universities in the 1950s. The Khmer Rouge leaders were also privately very resentful of what they saw as the arrogant attitude of the Vietnamese, and were determined to establish a form of communism very different from the Vietnamese model and also from other Communist countries, including China.

The main soldiers and disciples of the Khmer Rouge army were the children who were taken away from their parents (uncorrupted by the 'new people' who were many educated Cambodians) and brainwashed to believe in the 'Angka'(the organisation) and became the judge jurors and executioners of anyone failing to abide by the doctrines of Angkar many turned on their parents and killed their own or friends relatives in order to gain favour and rise up the ranks within the Rouge army usual age for a Khmer soldier was 13 and commanders 15

After four years of rule, the Khmer Rouge regime was removed from power in 1979 as a result of an invasion by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and was replaced by moderate, pro-Vietnamese Communists. It survived into the 1990s as a resistance movement operating in western Cambodia from

bases in Thailand. In 1996, following a peace agreement, their leader Pol Pot formally dissolved the organization. Pol Pot died April 15, 1998, having never been put on trial.

This vile period has been etched deep in the Cambodians (Khmers) and affected every present family. It is a period they do not like to talk about openly and a very high percentage had family members butchered during the Khmer Rouge rule. The Cambodian people have come through this period with strength and resilience and seem to be a gentle and peace loving people now hungry for knowledge and are able to move forward with drive and vigour

War trials are still going on nowadays for leaders and butchers of the regime. Some mass graves from this period can be viewed at the choeung Ek killing fields 12km from Phnom Penh and chilling reminders of this time at S21 the Tuol Sleng genocide museum, which gives a grisly reminder of a time best forgotten, but a lesson best remembered so never repeated.

**If you don't know how to fix the world  
Stop breaking it.**

Please enjoy **BIMAT** A Vietnamese adventure, the third and final episode







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