

# **DIARY OF A HUMAN TARGET**

## **Book Three: Homestretch**

written by

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## Phase Eight: Paroxysm

### Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> October 1997

I find it hard to believe I am so lucky! Selene and Victor, just 21 and 24 years old respectively, the two star athletes in our taekwondo class and a well-matched couple for four years now, have just asked me to go out with them! They both excel in taekwondo because of their extreme suppleness. Moreover, Selene has the appearance of a photomodel; in fact, very few models are as dazzling as she is.

We have arranged to meet at the corner of Nereid and Meteoron streets at 8:00 o' clock this evening. So, I am standing here now, waiting for them, full of enthusiasm and impatience. *Just think about it: I, a nobody, am about to make friends with two persons who are not only normal, but role models for the normal!*

Now the time is 8:10; soon it is 8:20... I get more and more anxious, trying hard to ward off the pessimism which gains ground within me moment by moment. At 8:30 I feel completely disappointed and I am certain the two youngsters have only fooled me, so I return home sad and frustrated. However, as soon as I step in, my mother informs me that Selene has just phoned and that she and Victor are waiting for me at St Tryfon Square! In two words, the diva hasn't got right where our meeting place is...

We finally manage to meet and we reach Glyfada in Victor's car. We sit at a fine cafeteria, we stay there for three hours and we have a fine time, as we won't stop talking for a single moment! Strangely enough, it seems I have a lot in common with these young people. As a matter of fact, they do make me feel happy, as they spontaneously exude the joy of life - in contrast to the rest of my friends, who are boring and constantly depressed...

### Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1997

I often go out and have a nice time with Selene and Victor -two or three times a week. There are some problems in our relationship, yet I prefer their pleasant company to the gloom of my other friends. "We are more cheerful than them", Selene told me the other day, as she got wind of the situation. She is certainly not stupid; she is crazy: We rarely go out without her delaying at least 45 minutes or her misunderstanding the meeting place! You tell her to be in Glyfada at 8:00 o' clock and she goes to Voula at 9:00 o' clock! This usually means a lot of trouble for me and Victor, who acts her taxi driver.

This afternoon she invited me to her house; she lives in Pallini, in a beautiful cottage with a tiled roof and a big garden. I was quite surprised to find out she can draw very well, mostly portraits in pencil. To be more precise, she exclusively draws herself; only in one or two pictures Victor appears seen too. She also likes making hagiographies. *Selene making hagiographies... doesn't this sound like a joke?*

### Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> November 1997

As time goes by, I get less and less enthusiastic about this new friendship of mine. I just can't stand Selene's stupid delays, her silly misunderstandings, her subtle games of dominance. She is surely a narcissist: She likes flirting all men around her -which drives Victor mad. She also enjoys boasting

about successes and abilities she's never had: This evening, when we met, once again she bragged that a few years ago, when she lived in Cyprus, she used to be a reporter and write articles for a big magazine; at the same time, she was also a dancing mistress in a famous dance school, she said. She also trumpets forth she is a taekwondo gold champion in Cyprus. She has also worked as a cinema editor, she says. And all these wondrous feats by the age of twenty-one...

The fact is that nutcase of Selene is constantly surrounded by dozens of friends, who are always very willing to tolerate the diva's whims. They all adore her just because she is who she is. Nobody ever doubts her words, nobody seems to be jealous of her extraordinary successes -real or imaginary ones. On the contrary, they all show pure admiration to her.

This is exactly the opposite to what happens to me: If I ever dare mention the slightest success of mine, everyone will question me, or they will seek to belittle me or they will be green with envy. If I am ten minutes late in an appointment, I get a trouncing. If I happen to pronounce one wrong word which offends anyone anyhow, they just don't talk to me anymore. Of course, don't have Selene's snake-like charm...

### **Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1997**

Since October Mary Glenos and I have been attending a new school of spiritual development, situated near Omonia Square. It is called "Centre of Applied Philosophy" and its teachings are based on theosophy. Nathan, the guru, is an agreeable guy who just conveys his knowledge without acting the Myst. His theories are quite interesting, well-constructed, though complicated. At least, he doesn't make a fool of us by constantly talking about delayed fees and unworthy disciples. He is also eager to drive all the way from Lamia (where he lives) to Athens every Wednesday, so as to teach us -and he does so without any vested interest: there is no monthly fee; everybody offers as much money as they can.

Theosophists believe in past lives and karma, but they claim that the course of reincarnations is generally ascending: A soul first comes in the vegetable kingdom, then it gets into the animal kingdom, finally it upgrades to the human kingdom. A human being won't be born as a plant or an animal again, unless they commit a very serious mistake -*such as?*

According to Nathan's teachings, dreams belong to the astral worlds. Every living person has an "astral permanent self", which is the self they assume in their dreams; lucid dreaming presupposes a superior spiritual development and it is encouraged by theosophy. It is even possible that a person's real self is expressed more in dreams than in the material reality: "A man may appear to be a loser in life, yet you never know what he does in his dreams; and what happens in the astral worlds influences the material world we live in," Nathan told us this evening.

Nevertheless, telepathy is considered to be a defect in theosophy: "Those who can tell the future and act as psychics, are as if they had cancer in the astral plains! Telepathy is a serious vice; if someone has it, they had better stifle it" claims Nathan but he doesn't explain why. He also believes that "affection is satanic, a black wizard's work!"

### **Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1997**

However, the parts of theosophy which make me doubt most are those regarding the construction of the human society:

"The whole of humanity follows a strict hierarchy, and each person has a very specific position in it" explained Nathan this evening. "Those who have the highest positions are enlightened, non-incarnated entities; these superior beings have completed their circle of reincarnations on earth, and they have experienced all types of mental and physical pain someone can possibly experience in life. This gives them the right to decide about the misfortunes which may afflict a person, a group or

a nation, so as to accelerate their spiritual evolution; this is the Plan” ... “These enlightened non-incarnated entities often have to take hard decisions about the fate of mankind: Sometimes they boost evolution by wiping out thousands or millions of human beings; wars, epidemics, natural disasters often serve this purpose” ... “We, lesser minds, should never question the Plan or the decisions of the enlightened minority; nor should we protest when we see thousands or millions of people suffering and dying!”

“Then, maybe we should start killing each other,” someone joked.

“But you have no Plan!” retorted the guru.

*What if we had one?* I thought but passed it in silence.

“Taking into account that a soul is not vanquished by death, why would it matter if -for example- two billions of people died of some epidemic?” went on the guru. “Something like this is due to happen quite soon, and when it happens we should consider it a real blessing! Sometimes a reform of mankind is needed!” he wound up, and none of the disciples -educated adults, all of them- put forward any objections.

### **Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> December 1997**

This evening there were some more revelations in class: “Very soon a New World Order will be established all over the globe, that is a regime of electronic surveillance which will include the whole of humanity” .... “All people will be constantly watched and controlled by a universal network of cameras, satellites and computers” ... “Many dislike the idea of a kind of Big Brother controlling their lives; this is immature and selfish of them” ... “Moreover, cloning and gene manipulation will allow the creation of new, hitherto unknown lifeforms; in this way, certain kinds of entities which can't normally appear on earth, will then be able to come and live here, amongst us”, says the guru complacently. *What kind of demons are expected to come into this world?* I wonder.

That was definitely the last time I attended a lesson at the “Centre of Applied Philosophy”. Even Mary, who is generally well-disposed towards everybody and everything, has finally acknowledged that “these people are satanists”. On the other hand, Nathan knows very well what he is talking about: The Plan is certainly on its way to realization; the New World Order will only take a few more years to come into full effect. Those who will be deemed incompetent or unsuitable for the Wondrous New World, will be eliminated from the face of the earth. It's as simple as that...

### **Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1997**

Two days ago my sister's two parrots were found dead in their cage -just like that, with no reason whatsoever. It struck me as a *sign of fate* but I dismissed the thought at once.

This morning we found out that Josef, my 8-year-old nephew, suffers from osteochondritis. This is what his recent medical tests show, and it means that a certain microbe has been eating up his left thighbone, at the gristle of the joint to the pelvis, which makes him limp more and more. The doctor says it is curable but he will have to stay in bed with the leg bandaged for two years and, if he is lucky, he won't have to undergo an operation and have metal implants attached to his thighbone. I just can't help wondering: Why can't anything good ever happen to our family?

As for the rest: Radical changes have been taking place at work for some months now: In fact, the once mighty Pangaea, famous for its quality publications, has been going from bad to worse. Forty employees have already been fired -that is half of the staff. The production department on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, where I used to work till recently, no longer exists; the sales department on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor is history too. At least one employee gets fired every week and I don't where this is going to end.

As about me, I have been transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, where all the bosses and their minions work. To the moment I don't have a problem, everything seems to be quiet here, though somewhat boring. As I am the only typist in the company, I don't run the danger of being suddenly sacked; yet I always feel insecure, maybe because I am always at the bottom of the ladder: as a typist, I am the only person in the company who has to take orders from everyone else. Besides, I haven't taken a raise for five years; I get the lowest salary of all, even the cleaning lady gets more money than me! I have started looking for another job -but how strange: all the jobs I find are worse paid than the one I already have...

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### **Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1998**

**Lucid Dream:** I feel myself coming out of my body. I fly among old edifices and temples, I go up the white stairway of an old building. Then I fly away but I soon wish to return; however, the building disappears and I feel disappointed. At that moment, the dream becomes lucid. I seek Josef and I find him in a park nearby. I stretch my arms towards him and I say the words: "From now on, your leg will be fine; I remove all negative influences from you". Next moment, the youngster turns his back on me and he goes away. Nevertheless, I repeat the cure three times.

*Verification: Pretty soon my nephew's leg gets unexpectedly better and the doctor hopes he will avoid the operation. However, it won't be long till the microbe starts eating up the boy's thighbone again, so he will eventually be admitted to hospital...🙏*

In another attempt to improve my poor social life, I have recently placed an advertisement in a TV magazine, asking "to correspond with interesting people, who are fond of travel and metaphysics". I have received dozens of letters, but only a few of them were worthy of an answer; amongst them was the one written by the 28-year-old Nineta Mavilis: She seems to be a kind, serious and interesting woman; she lives in New Faliron, she belongs to a wealthy family and she works as a private tutor of English. She is constantly under stress about when she will get married at last, but in overall she is a reasonable and balanced person. I have already introduced her to Helen and Xanthippe, and we all go out together almost every Saturday. Now, with Nineta, we all have more fun when we meet...

### **Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> January 1998**

I was standing there, outside the Church of St Constantine in Glyfada, kicking my heels for 45 minutes, waiting for Victor and Selene to turn up. Just as I was getting ready to leave, disappointed and exasperated, I caught a glimpse of my friends looking for me in agony, in Victor's car. Luckily they had seen me before I was gone; they stopped, we kissed and hugged full of joy.

Then Selene, rather irritated, explained to me that Victor hadn't understood where we would meet, that's why he had been following her orders obediently: "Now you will drive all over Glyfada until you find Yvonne! We won't go home unless you find her!" - *nevertheless, I had talked to Selene on the phone, not to Victor.*

They apologized for the delay, they said they couldn't explain how they got so confused and "it's a paradox, but such things happen only when we plan to to meet you!" concluded Selene.

*Is it possible that, for some strange reason, such delays and misunderstandings happen only when Selene and Victor intend to see me?*

### **Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> January 1998**

**Fear and Pain:** After last night, when the fear of pain took over me completely, without my being able to control it anyhow, I think it's time I cleared out the relation between fear and pain.

Having the impression that I was in for a horribly painful experience (aponeurosis) at the dentist's this morning, I was scared out of my wits. Fear enhances pain and vice versa: All night long I felt such a strong clasp in my heart, that I thought I were about to have a heart attack; I also had a terrible headache because I felt completely helpless towards the imminent physical pain. *As a matter of fact, mental pain is ridiculous in comparison with physical pain...*

However, what made me wonder most was the fact that even when I tried to sort things out within the bounds of reason (neither my friend Mandy, nor my sister Alice felt any pain when they had the nerve of a tooth killed; anyway, I may as well have the tooth pulled out), I wasn't relieved at all. It was as if fear were acting of its own accord, like an entity with a will of its own!

Conclusion: When I went to the dentist this morning, she decided not to kill the nerve of my tooth; she just filled my tooth instead. "We had better try to save it", she explained. My relief was beyond words...

***"Nobody escapes what they fear"*** (folk belief): It seems that somehow pain and fear rule this world. Just like a dog which attacks those who fear it, a misfortune strikes those who fear it. You attract what you fear; you repel what you wish. This is how reality is formed in this world. *The dreams that come true are those we've never dreamed of.* This means our world is a living hell, and hell is the place where all fears materialize...

Life is the kingdom of pain and fear. Through religion and metaphysics we try to give pain a reason, discover its origin and find ways to deal with it. Therefore, we talk about "a visitation of God", "karma", "lessons of life" etc. The so-called "virtues" we try to cultivate, are just ways to deal with pain. For example, patience is needed when we have painful experiences, otherwise we don't have to be patient; forgiveness presupposes that someone has harmed us, otherwise it has no meaning; compassion is welcome when people suffer, otherwise there is no reason for it, and so on. In the long run, as a final reward for all these virtues, we expect to go to heaven or experience eternal nirvana -which is the final deliverance from all pain - always after death, of course...

## **Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January 1998**

Feeling the need to go out and have some fun tonight, at about 5:00 o'clock I phoned Selene and suggested we meet in Glyfada this evening. As usual, she put forward certain objections: "I am not sure, I have something else to do, I don't know when I'll finish, if I finish early enough, I will call you, no later than 7:00 o'clock".

I was on tenterhooks for two hours; the time got 7:00, then 7:15... until 7:30 there was no sign from the countess and my impatience and irritation reached a peak. At about 7:40 I decided to phone Helen Tanagra and arranged to go for a coffee with her, at Kalogiron Square. The outing proved to be joyless and boring, just like Helen is. I barely managed to avoid depression.

The crown of my efforts: When I returned home late at night, my mother informed me that at about 8:00 o'clock Selene and Victor came to visit me and they dropped from the clouds when they found out I was not there! "But... we had an appointment!" Selene complained to my mother. I had better watch out: this girl is a lunatic...

## **Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 1998**

At about noon Selene calls me at work and asks me the reason why I wasn't at home last night, when she and Victor came to see me. She sounds polite but stern, and I remind her -as calm as possible- that we hadn't made an appointment and that I had waited for her to call me till 7:00 pm - which never happened. "But we had said we would meet for sure, you blockhead! You should have only waited for me to call!" she bursts out, full of impudence.

I dissent strongly from what she says, yet she insists stubbornly and I, for fear of losing this

diamond friend, begin to give way and finally admit that maybe it was I who didn't get things right yesterday. Finally, we fix a new appointment for 7:00 this evening.

At 6:05 o'clock Selene phones me at home and says she will be "a little late because something has just come up, so wait for another phone call of mine later. Alright?". Alright...

I sit down and wait -like a fool. The time gets 7:00, 7:30, then 8:00, and I can hardly contain my exasperation. Finally, the diva calls me at 11:00 at night and says she couldn't phone earlier because something very bad happened this evening and she has been down in the dumps ever since.

Nonsense: The lady just played all this trick to me so as to take revenge for yesterday, because she thinks it was I who stood her up! What a horrible person! I must get rid of her as soon as possible...

### **Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 1998**

*Night Adventure:* Soldiers of evil go around and arrest all those people who are considered to be incapable of serving the system. They throw the prisoners into a kind of incinerator, where they are burnt alive. At a moment I can see them dragging a dark-haired woman down the stairs and I go away because I don't want to see the rest of it happening; yet, I can hear the woman screaming as they throw her into the incinerator, and I cover my ears in horror.

There are some other people near me, waiting for their turn passively. When the soldiers come, they choose me for cremation. I try to explain that I don't belong here, but they won't listen. "I'm not going anywhere," I say then, in a firm voice. Strangely enough, instead of being angry at me they send me to a superior committee for rehabilitation. The four members of the committee are seated on a kind of dais and I reach them by going up a white stairway. They check my "education", they find it insufficient and they put me on probation. Nevertheless, I feel no fear and I take no heed of them.

When the time comes, once again my "education" is found to be insufficient, so I am sentenced to death in the crematory. However, I don't intend to give in without a fight: I run away and manage to escape. Some soldiers are after me, launching a number of round bombs at me; I neutralize them all with the power of my mind -which makes the enemies wonder. However the bombs are still dangerous for the whole planet; I stretch my arms out and express a wish for world peace. Now the bombs are harmless and my pursuers wonder again.

"How can you do this?" one of them asks me.

"I have something you don't have: A clear subconscious. You are driven by fear", I reply calm.

I wake up feeling complete and deeply satisfied.

*Is there an everyday experience that could ever have the power of this night adventure?*

### **Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> February 1998**

*Question:* Does our short and joyless lives on earth really serve a purpose?

*Answer:* With every step we take, we make the rich even richer.

When the Titanic started sinking, those in charge made sure to accommodate the rich first, placing them sparse and comfortable in the life-boats (only 15 people where 60 could be seated), so that the rich hens wouldn't get any dishevelled. At the same time, they barred all passages from the third class to the deck; as a result, the majority of the poor passengers were trapped in the ship and drowned like mice.

This is exactly what happens in everyday reality: The lives of the poor are considered to be worthless, so they are sacrificed at the first opportunity -as long as this makes the rich sharks richer.

I happen to be in such a position as well: During the day I work hard for a pittance; in the evening I



spend my little money in cafeterias, restaurants, hotels, gyms -hoping to relieve myself from the physical and mental hardship I endure while working all day. In other words: During the day I work for a rich scumbag, and during the night I give my beggarly salary to another rich scumbag. This is the real meaning of life for the poor, no matter what they like to imagine...

### **Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1998**

*Night Adventure:* I am somewhere in a block of flats; through a window I can see a giant octopus which has come out from the sea and threatens to invade the building. I take the elevator at once and get down to the entrance, before the monster comes in; I run along Vouliagmenis Avenue but the octopus is after me, devouring everything in its passing, growing continuously. At a moment I think it has lost me, but then I see a gigantic tentacle at the corner of a back street.

Soon I find myself going up a mountain; there are lots of people running to escape or hiding wherever they can. Persephone is with me. The monster is nowhere to see; yet, a strange vehicle appears soon which, as we know, precedes the monster. Persephone throws a lit match at it, the vehicle is blown up. There is no sign of the monster now; but are we out of danger?

*Possible interpretation:* The giant octopus could symbolize the mythical demon Cthulhu, "who has been sleeping and dreaming" in the depths of the abyss, until the time comes for it to wake up and rule the world once again...

### **Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1998**

The serial "Selene-Victor" is still on, but I don't meet them so often any more. They say they have parted, yet they still meet on "friendly terms". Victor hopes to make it up with the diva again, and he is always willing to act her taxi driver: Almost every day he drives all the way to Selene's house in Pallini and he takes her to Glyfada, where she meets her new boyfriend! Poor Victor looks miserable: "I've lost ten years from my life!" he confides to me at a moment.

As about the other guy, his name is Panayotis and Selene met him at the aerobics school she has been attending for a couple of months now. As Selene herself has told me, he is in a mess too because the lady sometimes seems to be infatuated with him, other times she plays hard to get. She often lets him cook his heels outside her house for an hour or two, without her opening the door, but the bloke doesn't split because "I like feeling you are near!" he confesses. "Who gets to know me, gets mad!" says Selene, full of complacency.

I guess she is right about that: Even I, who can see through the dirty games of dominance she plays with everybody, desire her company. She is always getting on my nerves but when she phones and asks to meet me, I am on cloud nine.

Just like this evening: I have been sitting and waiting for Selene and Victor to come with food from a fast food restaurant. The two stars were supposed to arrive at 8:00, but now the time is 8:30; soon it gets 8:45, then 9:00. I no longer expect them to turn up when, at about 9:15, the phone rings. It is Selene, she sounds rather gloomy and narrates the following incredible story to me:

They went to a fast food restaurant, they bought hamburgers and fried potatoes and they were about to come to me, when the lady decided she definitely had to make a phone call in a telephone booth. Heaven knows how much time she chattered on the phone, while other people were waiting outside -namely a middle-aged couple with a child. At a moment, the man told the lady to get over with it. I guess Selene was rude to him, and before you could say Jack Robinson the two super karatekas put up a bad fight with the middle-aged people! They went at it hammer and tongs, and eventually the two champions got a pasting! Soon there was a big crowd around them booing the two superstars (I wonder why), who tried to knock down the middle-aged folks with their taekwondo acrobatics! To no avail, though: The "old people" beat them up!

### **Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1998**

When we met at Selene's this afternoon, she and Victor described the above events in more detail. Victor showed me the bruises and scratches he had on his face and neck from the fight; Selene didn't show me any scars; maybe she didn't want to show me anything like that, or maybe her happy boyfriend got all the drubbing.

A little later, we took Liana, Selene's 18-year-old sister, and we went to a nice cafeteria in Varkiza, where we met two friends of hers. We chatted pleasantly for some time until, suddenly, Liana asked me about my age. I found it a little strange, I groused and joked about it, but then I gave a sincere answer.

As the two sisters explained to me later, one of their friends (a serious and good looking guy, only 25 years old) asked Liana to introduce him to me, because he liked me! As about my age, he didn't mind at all, he said. *Just once I happened to go out with normal people and someone showed an interest in me...*

Despite the fact that he is a lot younger than me, I didn't rule out the possibility of getting to know him better. "Anyway, he is quite mature for his age", Selene told me on the phone. "As soon as we hang up, I will make some phone calls and fix certain appointments", she promised in a soft voice. Nevertheless, I'm never to see that guy again...

### **Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 1998**

Selene is throwing a party tonight and I am invited. In the afternoon I go to a gift shop because I want to buy a present for her. After a lot of searching, I finally decide to buy her a lovely music box. I take it in my hands and, I don't know how, it slips off, it falls down and it gets broken! I can't believe my own eyes! Something like this has never happened to me before! Then, the sales woman approaches and says I have to pay for it - naturally...

Anyway, I hasten to choose something else and I go to the cashier's desk, carrying both items in my hands. Fortunately, at the last moment the saleswoman changes her mind and tells the cashier to charge only the second present.

I feel relieved, but I can't take the event off my mind: I can't help considering it a *sign of fate*, which means that such experiences (making friends with divas and going to their parties) are not for me and that I can get nothing but trouble out of them.

The night comes and the party proves to be a success: There are lots of young people gathered in Selene's living room; Panayotis is present as the diva's boyfriend and Victor as her civilized ex. There are also three guys aged about thirty, who seem to like me, since they have lengthy and pleasant conversations with me. When I find the opportunity, I talk to Selene about them. "They are too young for you", she says enigmatically. Needless to say, I am never to meet any of those people again.

Nevertheless, I must admit Selene is the only one of my friends who: a) has a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, b) introduces me to them, c) invites me to her parties. On the other hand, she makes sure I never gain anything from all this...

## **Concord**

### **Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> March 1998**

This morning I had an unexpected phone call at work. It was from Mary Skina, who was fired from Pangaea a month ago. Mary is twenty years older than me but she hides her age very carefully. After thirty years of work in Pangaea, she is now unemployed. Moreover, Helen Roussos (Mary's best friend, also recently unemployed) gave her the boot without an explanation. Maybe that's why Mary decided to invite me out to lunch today. Anyway, I was kinda surprised: During those seven years we've worked together in the same company, I've often asked her to go out with me but she has always refused with various excuses. I thought she didn't like my revolutionary ideas about social networks and the like, because she considered them "negativity", as she said.

After work I met Mary in a nearby restaurant and we had lunch there; then we went for a coffee in Kolonaki. Hours and hours passed very pleasantly, since we two agree a lot and we have many common interests, such as metaphysics and literature. I think Mary is somewhat "different", somewhat non-human, like I am. Probably for this reason her life has been a never ending sequence of misfortunes: Abandonment, solitude, childlessness, premature death of her parents, gradual loss of a big fortune, poverty, unemployment and debts.

### **Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 1998**

At first I didn't like the idea of spending the weekend with cousin Annita, who is pregnant now. Her husband, will be absent for work these days, so she asked me to keep her company while he will be away from home.

Annita is my peer and a typical example of the ordinary person (medium intelligence, no spiritual interests), who sleeps while their good luck works for them. She barely managed to finish high school, and she was referred in all classes. However, she happens to belong to one of the wealthiest families in Cefallonia, so she has never had to work up to now. At the age of 22 she got married to Peter, who is rich enough to provide her with everything she wishes. Consequently, the lady doesn't think because she doesn't have to think. The only problem in her carefree life has been the absence of a child. She has been married for thirteen years, in the meanwhile she has undergone eleven in vitro fertilizations, and the last one was successful. Now my cousin is pregnant on twin girls and she is in the seventh heaven...

### **Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1998**

We spend our time calmly, sometimes boringly, watching TV or chatting about various subjects. However, as soon as I inform Annita that I have lots of friends and that we go out almost every night, she changes her tune:

"Be careful or something nasty will happen to you, if you go on fooling around like this every night! You and your friends might be stalked by perverts, who will rape and kill you!"

"We don't frequent any cheap dives, you know! Besides, we don't go around on foot; my friend Nineta has a car and she takes us wherever we wish," I reply coolly, as I haven't realized yet what she is getting at.

"Really? You know what happened to an acquaintance of mine, one night that she drove along a busy avenue? She was cornered by some drunk men in a car, she was forced to pull over, then she was raped and almost killed!"

“But this is something extreme, I've never heard of anything like that happening in Greece before!” I wonder.

“You have no idea how many such incidents happen every day! It is just a matter of time until something similar happens to you too!” my cousin concludes in an aggressive tone.

### **Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1998**

I have to endure the same tense atmosphere for a third day, as Annita insists on giving me certain advice regarding my future: “Really, Yvonne, have you ever thought of marrying an Albanian? You are 35 years old now, in all likelihood no Greek man will wish to marry you now! If I were you, still single at this age, I would be thinking about it!”

“Maybe you would,” I retort, yet she goes on undaunted:

“For instance, you could go to Omonia Square and offer some food to the homeless foreigners who gather there! Who knows, if you do this quite often, one of them might ask you to marry him!”

“I am not at all willing to be stuck with a beggar! You see, marriage is not everything to me!” I answer, as calm as possible.

In the evening, when Peter returns home, I notice he is rather cold towards my cousin. The atmosphere between them will remain tense and gloomy until the time comes for me to leave. According to what relatives say, Peter makes himself sparser and sparser, as the date of the babies' birth comes nearer and nearer -probably because the twins were not conceived with his own sperm. “I'm not going to ruin my life, just because Annita wants to have children!” I heard him say at a moment.

A few weeks later, after the twins are born, my cousin will empty the flat and return to her parents in Cefallonia - without her husband knowing anything about it. When he comes home from work in the afternoon, he will find himself all alone in a completely empty apartment...

### **Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1998**

This afternoon I met Mary Skina after work. Our discussions of today proved quite interesting, as my new friend confided to me some incredible facts from her life:

When she was still new in Pangaea, Mary invited all her colleagues to dinner one night. However, just two days before the meeting it rained in torrents and the water flooded her house; in fact, it was the only house in the area that was flooded! As a result, all her newly-bought furniture was destroyed and the dinner with her colleagues was cancelled.

When Mary was young, she used to be a good-looking and elegant woman with blond hair and big green eyes; she was also a lively, pleasant and sociable person, with a very seductive dowry composed of half a dozen houses in the posh suburb of Psychico and lots of money in the bank. Nevertheless, none of her boyfriends has ever proposed to her - “not even just for my money”, as she complains. The only man who ever asked her to marry him was a 27-year-old neighbour of hers, when Mary was 19. Three hours later, before even Mary had had the time to decide whether to accept or not, the young man was killed in a car accident! *“There is no fate”, some wiseacres claim. Yet, in this world there is nothing but fate...*

Not only that, but all her property has been squandered little by little, because of bad management, inheritance problems, shrewd lawyers, demanding lovers. Moreover, although she was -and still is- a beautiful, attractive, lively blonde, most of her boyfriends wanted her company but refrained from having sex with her! “I doubt if I have done it more than twenty times in my whole life! I just don't think about it, because I don't want to lose my mind!” she confesses to me.

Mary has never been married, she has no children, and for this reason she is obsessed with marriage. Even now, that she is over 55, she dreams of having a young, handsome and educated husband; yet she can't find anything of the kind -which makes her feel sad and anxious. Another serious problem of hers is how to pay off debts of four million drachmas; Mary is up to her eyes in debt because of Zachary, her latest young boyfriend: she has travelled with him all over Europe, she has paid lots of money for him, yet he hasn't even touched her hand, she says.

It is obvious that Mary is neurotic and full of obsessions regarding men and marriage, yet this doesn't explain why she has ended up all alone in the world, unemployed and in debt. Anyway, there are other women who are more stupid than hens, completely unbalanced, with a horrible character, yet they have the best husbands and their lives are as regular as clockwork.

Besides, despite her psychological problems, Mary is always polite and pleasant; she listens to me when I talk, without putting forward all kinds of silly objections to everything, like most "normal" people do. With her I can communicate better than with any other person I know...

### **Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> March 1998**

My friend Louise is giving a feast tonight and I am invited. However I can't go, neither can any of the other guests, because there is a terrible windstorm with heavy rain outside -something unprecedented for the county of Attiki! It is just impossible for me to step out of my house!

At a moment my nephew John comes upstairs so as to keep me company. My parents are absent; they are at the Children's Hospital in Athens, where Josef is under treatment. All at once, there is a loud bang, the iron door of the kitchen breaks open -although it was locked- and the windstorm invades the house! John helps me close the door again and we put the table, the chairs and a broom against it, so that it won't open again!

Late at night my father returns home, after a long bus journey from Athens to St Tryfon Square. He is in a sorry state, I wonder how he made it to arrive home.

Next day we will find out that the unprecedented windstorm has uprooted lots of tall and robust trees, which now lie down in streets and squares...

### **Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1998**

**Lucid Dream:** Looking for a handsome man in my dream, I finally meet two guys but I choose one of them: he has blond curly hair and he is about 30 years old. I caress him, he responds positively. I unbutton his shirt and I see he has a nice, lean, trained body. I can feel the contact and the excitement, then I have an orgasm that lasts a few seconds...

**Psychic Experience:** In the evening, I sit on a chair listening to some music, and I feel very relaxed. At a moment, I have the impression there is a bright light before my shut eyes, where I can make out an angelic entity made of light. *This wonderful experience lasted only a few seconds; I was not sleeping...*

### **Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> May 1998**

This afternoon my mother and I visited Mrs Zeta, an old neighbour. The woman got on my nerves because she seems to be certain about the natural inferiority of Greeks in comparison with all the other peoples of the world.

The fact is that more and more Greeks -usually "respectable" citizens who have neither travelled abroad nor received any superior education- suddenly have an opinion about everything and they trumpet forth ideas such as: "Greeks are good for nothing, they are lazy rascals, whereas Americans

and Europeans are perfect in everything!”

I can't help wondering: What's happened to the traditional patriotism of Greeks? As if they all attended the same special seminars, they have all become xenomaniac and they ardently support the dogma of the inferiority of Greeks -as if they were not Greeks!

***Predictions about the future:*** Sooner or later, Greece will disappear from the map. This is the plan of undercurrent networks, since the Greek spirit of freedom is considered to be dangerous for the imminent New World Order. The rulers of the world dislike the fact that the average Greek is still relatively carefree and likes having fun, in contrast to Europeans or Americans who work day and night like robots.

Pieces of a certain puzzle: The massive invasion of emigrants in our country has caused serious unemployment, as well as a spectacular increase of delinquency. Moreover, the inevitable intermarriage is due to alter the genetic characteristics of the Greek race. The third world economy, which has been methodically imposed on the country during the last decades, gradually leads the lower social classes (alias: those who don't belong to any networks) to destitution. The uncountable fires and conflagrations during the summer destroy our forests and natural resources. The continuous downgrading of education leaves the new generation of Greeks practically uncultured.

The purpose of all the above is to undermine the Greek civilization and gradually turn Greeks into soulless machines, who will work obediently for endless hours for a pittance, deprived of any personal or national consciousness.

Nevertheless: Why should I care? I know they are all willing to join any kind of dark networks, in exchange for a permanent job, a more expensive car or a bigger social circle...

### **Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> May 1998**

My friend Mary Glenos and I are on a two-day seminar of self-knowledge at the asram of the sect “Spiritual Harmony”, which is situated near Marcopoulon. During a meditation exercise, we are told to write a word on a piece of paper, fold it and give it to the person sitting next to us. There is a plump lady near me, with whom we exchange pieces of paper. Then we sit one opposite the other, and we hold hands. The plump lady shuts her eyes, concentrates and gives her oracle about me in a low voice: “Your heart is a bright sun, which shines for all people; there are birds flying to the sun, their open wings block your light; lots of traumatic experiences have caused a blockage somewhere deep inside you; you are a reserved person, because of evil people who harmed you in the past; you only wish to be loved; people do love you but you want more...”. I don't know why, but while her monologue lasts I can't help crying with tears...

### **Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1998**

This morning we are having a lesson of dance-therapy: According to the mistress's instructions, we all close our eyes and dance to evocative music, each one of us doing whatever we feel like doing, without caring about the opinion of the others. No movement is considered to be ugly or ungraceful. The purpose of this activity is to make us feel free and express ourselves, just by co-ordinating our movements with the music. Nobody here poses as a sex bomb or a super star, as it happens in ordinary night clubs. Indeed, this is the first time in my life I've enjoyed dancing so much...

### **Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> May 1998**

I am on an evening outing to a cafeteria in Glyfada, together with Selene, Victor, Liana and her boyfriend Nick. At a moment Selene frowns and starts talking about a certain problem she has faced lately:

"I bought a pair of shoes the other day, yet I found out soon they were too tight for me. So, I phoned and asked them to let me change that pair for another one; however, not only did they refuse to do so, but they were rude to me as well - maybe because it had taken me three hours to choose... I had to shout a lot so as to make them agree!"

"You did the right thing! And then?" Nick asks to know.

"Then something else came up, so I wasn't able to go to the shoe-shop at once; but I went there a few weeks later," replies the diva smiling.

"Sorry, when did you buy that pair of shoes?" I wondered.

"I bought them in the beginning of March!"

"And when did you phone them for the change?"

"In mid April!"

"So, when did you finally return those shoes?"

"Three days ago! I went there and asked them, very politely, to change them for another pair. However, the season was over, so they had put away the winter shoes..."

"And the rogues refused to change them?" asks Nick, full of anxiety.

"Yes, those rascals! I yelled at them, yet they wouldn't listen; so, I threatened that my mother, who is a journalist, would libel them in the newspapers! This is how they finally agreed to let me look for a pair of summer shoes. Nevertheless, after a three-hour search I found nothing I liked and I asked for my money back! Then, those idiots began to call me names, they called me crazy, and they refused flatly to give my money back. "Excuse me, you mean I am obliged to throw away 8000 drachmas?" I said to them..."

"Don't tell me you just gave up!" I said ironically -but she didn't get it.

"Of course not! I threatened them again, they made fun of me and then I phoned my mother; she called them immediately, she swore badly at them, and she made clear they would be in for serious trouble unless they conformed to my wishes! In the end, the morons agreed to let me come to their shop any time I like, and search for as many hours as I like, until I find a satisfactory pair of shoes!" concludes Selene with a wide smile of complacency, while the others look at her in admiration.

At least she is going away: Selene is leaving for Cyprus in a few days. She has a house there, as well as many relatives who have found her a job as an aerobics trainer in a gym. So, she won't be here any more, and that's the best for all of us...

***The Perfect Evil:*** In general, evil beings look repugnant and they give out a dark, repellent, slimy aura. Nevertheless, the Perfect Evil is hard to recognize since it is gifted with a charming appearance and a pleasant aura. I've never sensed anything negative coming out of Selene; only a few times has her beautiful face reminded me of a snake...

Persons like Selene and Ellie (the biggest star in our taekwondo class) represent the Perfect Evil. They are gifted with an impeccable external appearance, invincible charm, innate hypocrisy, sophisticated arrogance as well as simulated politeness -traits which conceal very well the demon inside them.

Such people have a natural talent in absorbing energy from the people around them, and they exert a quasi hypnotic influence on any social environment. Wherever they are, literally everybody and everything revolves around them. They enjoy being the centre of attention, manipulating everyone, playing with other people's feelings, hatching all kinds of plots against those they dislike, taking full advantage of persons and situations. However, no matter what they do, no matter what they say, the others always adore and obey them. Nobody ever accuses them of anything, no matter how obvious the evil they do is. Human beings eagerly worship the Perfect Evil...

## Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> May 1998

About a month ago I had an unexpected phone call from Apostolis and Danae, old friends from Janus, now married together. At first I was happy to hear them, as I thought they would suggest a reunion of the old party; however, I realized soon they had another purpose: They did invite me to their house, but not for a friendly meeting; they wanted to recruit me to the famous multinational company "Network 3001". I refused spontaneously.

Apostolis called four or five times again, and he insisted a lot on my joining their network. When he was finally discouraged, a chief salesman of the company undertook the difficult task of persuading me. He phoned me this afternoon and in the end he seemed to be kinda annoyed because I resisted him: "We always find the people we need!" he said before hanging up.

The same company has also come in contact with my friend Louise through her brother-in-law, who is already a member. However, she refused flatly to join them.

"I know what kind of game you play!" Louise's brother said to the chief salesman who visited them the other day. "You are supposed to sell various household products, but the truth is you are a citizen surveillance network!"

"We'll talk about it later!" the salesman replied coolly.

*A citizen surveillance network? Which means what?*

## Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1998

This afternoon I finished writing the sixth volume of my illustrated manuscript "*Sandra Anderson - Astral Fantasy*", after two years of delay. It is clear to me that the star of the heroine Sandra Anderson is setting. This book contains three stories and I have observed only one *contact*, in the second story: Snow in the village of Lamatag; then the sun is coming out. As I am writing and drawing the scene, it is snowing here in Athens; then the sun is coming out.

That's all. From now on, my inspiration wanes. I don't write often anymore, I don't feel the need. After the sixth book, there comes twilight for "Astral Fantasy". Two more books will follow in a time span of five years, but they don't have the "soul" of the previous volumes, nor do I observe any *contacts*...

## Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1998

*Psychic Experience:* While walking along Akademias Avenue in Athens, I have a strange sensation just for a few seconds: Something like a whirling rainbow appears before me on my left, while a soft, heavenly music is ringing in my ears...🕯

On occasion of my birthday, I invited my friends to a pizzeria in Glyfada this evening. Then we all went to the disco "Vinyl" and danced to nostalgic music of the '60s, '70s, and '80s. Nineta, Xanthippe, Helen and I had a wonderful time tonight; it's been years since I last had such a good time. "It was a moving experience", according to Nineta's words.

## Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> July 1998

My mother, our friend Theone and I went for a walk this afternoon; at a moment we paused outside a clothes shop and I noticed a lovely dress on the shop window. It was short to the middle of the thigh, it had a beautiful floral design and its price was unexpectedly low. I decided to buy it immediately, so we entered the shop, I tried the dress on and I saw it suited me fine, since I am tall and thin with long, trained legs; however, mum and Theone started complaining:



“This dress is too short, it's not right for you! Why don't you buy the other one, which is long to the ankles?” my mother suggested and Theone agreed.

The saleswoman got wind of what was going on and she expressed her wonder.

“Yvonne can't wear such things!” explained Theone.

“Why not? Is she disabled or something?” said the saleswoman and I felt awkward.

I finally bought the dress despite my mother's and Theone's strong objections. Indeed, I can't understand why they reacted like that: Alice, my dear sister, often wears clothes which are much more provocative than this, yet they never say a word to her..

### **Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> July 1998**

Early in the morning my mother and Theone drink coffee together in our balcony, while zealously trying to let my new dress down by lowering the hemline by two centimetres -it can't get any lower. I try the dress on again, it is still short to the middle of the thigh and the two ladies are not satisfied. Mum takes the belt of the dress in her hands, she sees it is made of the same cloth, but it is too narrow to be added as a gusset to the hemline. Then, she has another idea: “We must go back to the shop and ask the saleswoman if there is any more of this cloth left, so that we can lengthen the dress at last!”

I disagree because the gusset will look bad, yet nobody listens to me. Theone grabs the belt and she leaves the house running all the way. After a while she comes back disappointed because she couldn't find what she wanted. *Was that incident very weird, or is it just me?*

### **Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> July 1998**

***Night Adventure:*** I am in Alexander's asram. It looks like an ideal society, where everything seems to be fine and peaceful. However, I discover soon that all disciples undergo some special brain surgery which turns them to obedient workers. I try to sabotage that society of slaves -but when I wake up I don't remember any details. *Interpretation: In all probability, this is the truth about sects and asrams; they turn their members into mindless slaves by use of special mind control methods.*

***Psychic Experience:*** It begins as a lucid dream, which soon ends in black emptiness. However, far and away there is a bright light pulsating in waves. I wake up with a sensation of deep satisfaction and fulfillment..

## ***Culmination***

### **Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> August 1998**

It is 6:00 o' clock in the morning and I am leaving for holidays in Santorini, with tickets offered by the Workers' Home. I will spend nine endless hours on the deck of the crowded ship, seated on a plastic chair. The group will gather when we reach the port of Skala and get on the coach to Perissa.

Night has fallen when we are guided to a seaside restaurant for dinner. Since I have no company of my own, I sit all alone at a table, where I vainly wait to be served. All waiters ignore me because I have occupied a whole table by myself, which isn't profitable to the restaurant. Finally I stand up and leave, feeling gloomy and vexed. I go to a nearby steak-house and buy two skewers full of fat, so as to satisfy my hunger...

### **Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1998**

At 8:00 am someone knocks on my door. It is our tour guide, who announces I should promptly empty my beautiful, quiet, single room on the second floor and share a double room on the first floor with a 70-year-old woman! I drop from the clouds, I protest, to no avail: The tour guide frowns, she says I am normally entitled to a bed in a double room, not a single one, and she orders me to be quick because a couple of tourists has just arrived from Crete and they want my room at once. Therefore, I have to pack my things and carry my luggage downstairs, to the reception, waiting for further instructions.

About an hour later, we all gather and go to the beach of Perivolos, where I try to forget my misfortune and enjoy swimming. Later, while having lunch in a seaside taverna, two women from the group invite me to their table. The 40-year-old Corina works as a teller in a big bank and she is divorced with two adult children; the 34-year-old Donna is a saleswoman and still single.

At a moment Donna complains she has found a hair in her food. The waiter apologizes and he fetches another dish, where Donna finds another hair pretty soon. She is offered a third dish, where she finds one more hair! This time she won't complain to the waiter, she will only frown. In all likelihood, all three hairs were hers...

In the afternoon the three of us take to bus to Fira, the capital of the island. We shall spend more than an hour at the hospital because Donna has a pimple on her chin and she is afraid it might be mortal...

### **Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> August 1998**

We are on a tour to the seaside town of Kamari. The beach proves to be extremely craggy, it is impossible for us to swim here. Corina and I decide to hire a parasol, but Donna disagrees because "it is too expensive; besides I prefer to sunbathe" she says. So, she lies down on the sand, away from us -what a weirdo! When the time comes for us to leave, the lady approaches and says meaningfully: "The place isn't anything special; and when the company is bad, it is even worse!"

In the afternoon we take the afternoon bus to Oia, with a view to watch the sunset, which is considered to be a special sight. For about an hour or so we walk around the beautiful town that extends for two kilometres along the northern edge of the caldera. When the time comes, we stand at the Sunset Serenade point, together with dozens of other tourists, so as to watch the famous sunset in the horizon; It's fascinating but I can't say I am thrilled: actually, some sunsets in Glyfada are more impressive!

Later, as we go around the busy streets of the picturesque tourist resort, all at once I realize I walk alone, as the two friends of mine have unexpectedly paused for a while. I have to turn back and it takes me about five minutes to find them again. As I hear, a bloke has just flirted Corina, she played hard to get for a few moments, but then they exchanged telephone numbers. Yet, both ladies agree the guy was obnoxious.

On our way back to Perissa, we suddenly decide to get off the bus in Fira and go to a very popular club where we meet (by chance?) the bloke mentioned above, who will come and sit with us. He is short, fat, slimy, ironic, disagreeable and he claims to be a wealthy businessman. Corina seems to be anything but annoyed; in fact, she looks kinda flattered with the whole situation.

At a moment Donna takes me out to the yard because she wants to smoke a cigarette and she complains that "I don't do things like that, I am not used to encouraging any moron who might flirt me; I respect myself and I don't like making a fool of myself..." I can't say she is wrong in this case.

### **Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1998**

This morning we went to the sandy beach of Monolithos for a swim, and then we had lunch in a traditional seaside restaurant. When we returned to the hotel, the old woman who happens to be my roommate started complaining to me because, in her opinion, we were overcharged for the salad (about 100 drachmas) and, more or less, she wanted me to give her that sum of money! I refused flatly, in a rather rude manner, and she shut up. *Sometimes this is the only way to make them understand...*

In the evening Corina and I went to Perissa for dinner. The boor-faced waiter set his cap on her and then he gave her a small piece of paper with his telephone number written on it. *What a sex bomb Corina is!* Later on, she and I agreed to go to a nearby club for a drink. While walking along the street, we talked about the obnoxious bloke we met in Fira yesterday; Corina said she hadn't liked him at all. Then she hastened to make an urgent phone call in a telephone box. Finally, we sat at a fine outdoor club decorated with straw umbrellas.

We had been chatting pleasantly for some minutes, when suddenly the dandy from Oia turned up, "just by chance", as Corina assured me. I noticed, however, that the bloke hadn't been looking around for us; I saw him enter the club without the slightest hesitation, as if he had known exactly where he would find us. Pretty soon the two love birds made it clear I had to hit the road, so that they could be alone - and this is what I did, like a good friend full of understanding and adaptability...

### **Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> August 1998**

Corina and I have arranged to go to a luxurious hotel nearby, so as to spend the afternoon in its wonderful swimming pool. When the time comes, I leave my room and wait for the duchess to appear at the reception. Twenty minutes later she is still nowhere to see, so I decide to go there alone.

The swimming pool is really fantastic: It looks like an exotic land full of green-leaved palms and straw umbrellas. There is a nice wooden bridge over the pool and a small green island decorated with little statues at the corner. I feel wonderfully calm as I swim slowly in the turquoise water and, later, as I sip my frappé coffee under the setting sun. I spontaneously experience *another reality*, an unhopd-for bliss I could have discovered earlier, all those days I spent running behind wayward friends.

I am greatly surprised as soon as I realize the people around me are unusually quiet and unobtrusive. Most of them are foreigners and they belong to a superior social class; maybe that's why they don't feel the need to show off by yelling, screaming and making trouble. Nobody shouts,

nobody swears, the children don't squeal hysterically all the time, nor do they annoy everybody by plunging near other people's heads - a big difference from the exasperating, boorish behaviour which prevails at the swimming pools of cheaper hotels.

Nevertheless, after an hour or so I decide to leave this small paradise so as to catch the bus to Fira, together with my two friends. Till late at night, when we finally return to our hotel, they barely talk to each other and they always look gloomy and resentful, while I am bored to death...

### **Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1998**

This is our last night in Santorini but I am still not sure whether tomorrow morning I depart or not. It's three days now that Corina and I have been discussing our staying here till Tuesday, but she hasn't given me a final answer yet. First she said she hadn't taken her debit card with her, so she couldn't withdraw money from the bank; then she couldn't remember the pin of the card; then she wasn't able to find her son on the phone and ask him about the pin! And now that this problem has been solved at last, the lady can't reach a decision! Nevertheless, it was she who first suggested lengthening our stay, it was her idea!

The time is 9:30 now, and I ask her -once again- what we shall do. She refrains from answering, she only shrugs her shoulders, still undecided. So, I take the initiative and tell her we are leaving tomorrow for Athens, together with the rest of the group. I just can't help wondering: *How do such brainless people get on in life? How can they even cope with everyday reality?*

### **Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> August 1998**

I have been on the island of Melos since yesterday, together with my friends Nineta and Xanthippe. We are staying in a triple room in a hotel near the port of Adamantas. This morning we went swimming to Hivadolimni, a long sandy beach with crystal waters. Unfortunately, I have my period so I can't swim, but I walked barefoot on the seaside for a while; Xanthippe grumbled I should stay motionless and guard our things. I paid no attention to her.

In the evening we visited the picturesque village of Pollonia, built around a small cove full of fishing boats. Xanthippe was not in the mood for exploring the place; as usual, she wanted us to go and sit at the nearest cafeteria. Luckily, Nineta suggested our promenading along the semicircular sea front, to the white chapel situated at its furthest end. So, despite Xanthippe's incessant complaints, we enjoyed a wonderful walk around the cove -no more than half an hour on foot.

Approaching the chapel at a very slow pace, Xanthippe looked worn out, ready to collapse of fatigue. No sooner had we reached the wooden door, than the delicate countess stood still and exclaimed: "It's 8:00 o' clock already! Soon it will be dark and we'll be in danger! We must return at once!" She swung round immediately and took to her heels, while Nineta and I had no other alternative but follow her hastily. Too bad we weren't able to light a candle...

### **Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> August 1998**

I wanted so much to visit the Catacombs, a renowned sight of Melos, yet it proved to be impossible for me to persuade Xanthippe; she strongly refused to agree, claiming that tour would be exhausting. Nineta, always languid and sleepy, went along with Xanthippe.

At night we agreed to go to a famous club near the port. We left the hotel at 10:30, we walked and walked, but there was no end to that walk! Then I realized our pace was incredibly slow. "Sorry, but why are we walking like this, as if we were attending a funeral?" I asked. Nineta burst into laughing but she didn't go any faster, neither did Xanthippe. It took us about an hour to reach the club and right at that moment Xanthippe stood still and exclaimed: "Oh no, we can't go in now, it is only

11:30! It will certainly be empty!” Then, she swung round and, ignoring my objections, walked away fast, taking the road back to the port. Nineta and I had to follow her once again, until we ended up in another club near our hotel. It was not bad, but it was almost empty.

### **Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1998**

Having finally realized I can't depend on my friends for sight-seeing, this morning I decided to go to Papafragas Beach by myself, without telling them anything. Anyway, they never wake up earlier than 1:00 pm.

The rocky landscape proved to be really enchanting, but I didn't dare go down the narrow, slippery path, carved all the way down the precipice, to the magical beach of Papafragas. Yet, I discovered another beach nearby, equally beautiful, where I relished swimming.

When the afternoon came, the two others decided to go swimming at the Papafragas Beach -which surprised me a a lot. When we arrived there, they didn't know where to stand but I impressed them with my “instinctive” knowledge of the territory.

“Are you sure you've never been here before?” Xanthippe asked me suspiciously.

“Me? Of course not!” I replied innocently.

### **Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> August 1998**

Time flies and the ladies haven't decided yet whether we'll go on a boat tour around Melos or not. I want it very much, but Xanthippe gets tired just by thinking about it. I have reconciled myself to the the idea of spending the morning in the hotel, when a miracle happens: Suddenly Nineta makes her mind up and she asks in a resolute manner: “So? Where shall we find tickets for the boat tour?”

We leave at once and we reach the port within ten minutes; the travel agency proves to be quite near that famous club -the same distance which had taken us an hour to walk two days ago. We manage to get the tickets just at the last moment.


Our first stop is at the world-known gulf of Kleftiko: The landscape is unique; a cluster of impressive volcanic white rocks rise above the crystal turquoise waters; I swim to the coast and reach a cave with two entries; I swim through it, relishing the iridescence of the water on the bottom of the sea, completely absorbed in the natural beauty of the landscape. Only when I reach the end of the tunnel, do I realize there are many people following me, as if I were their leader in the fight for liberty! As about my friends, they haven't dived into the sea yet, I don't know where they are, and I don't care. Then I swim to the middle of the gulf, where a lofty arched rock rises shimmering to the sunlight. I swim under it, watching the colourful pebbles of the sea-bed like hypnotized.

Words are too poor to describe the absolute bliss I experience while swimming in Kleftiko. It is the first time in my life I have been so aware: *Even if the rest of my life is torture and pain, it will be worth living only thanks to the utter joy I can feel here and now. This trip to Kleftiko is enough to give my whole life a meaning. I don't need any “higher destiny”. I am proud of myself because I can revel in all this magic. Very few people are able to feel such happiness...*

Xanthippe, for example, didn't swim at all in Kleftiko because it was too early for her (10:30 am), as she said. She had even suggested each one of us should swim only for twenty minutes, while the other two should stay on the boat and watch our stuff! Because of such silly negotiations, I lost fifteen minutes out of one hour we stayed in Kleftiko. Nineta swam only for twenty minutes, because she made the mistake of listening to Xanthippe. Thanks to my disobedience, I experienced *another reality* for 45 minutes, and I was the last to return to the boat. Xanthippe put on a long face until the boat stopped again, this time at Gerakas, a wonderful sandy beach with tiny cavities formed around the rocky coast.

## Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> August 1998

While we were having lunch, Nineta suggested our going to Sarakiniko for a swim, later in the afternoon. I liked the idea but Xanthippe disagreed because “it is very far away and it will be too tiring”. Frankly, I don't know what to do with these two: Sometimes I feel as if I were stuck with two 70-year-old women. Finally, we agreed to have a nap till 4:00 pm and then catch a taxi to Sarakiniko.

***Psychic Experience:*** At a moment, as I am getting asleep, a heavenly landscape is being formed before my shut eyes: Two cylindrical towers, made of blue marble and decorated with white alabaster balustrades, rise over a serene turquoise lake. The place is magical, outlandish; it's such a pity this experience won't last more than a few seconds...

Anyway, I was the only one who was ready to stand up at 4:00. I had to try really hard so as to make the other two wake up at 4:30 -as tactfully as possible. They lied in for a quarter or so -my nerves- and then they started drivelling incessantly, without ever leaving bed. Soon the time was 5:30, then 5:45. Whenever Nineta was about to get up, Xanthippe went on with her rigmarole, making sure they delayed more and more. When, at last, Nineta decided to leave her bed at about 6:00, I could hardly believe my eyes! “Isn't it too late to go to Sarakiniko now?” said Xanthippe. However, to her great disappointment, the trick “chatter-delay-cancel” didn't wash, so at about 6:30 we took a taxi to Sarakiniko. The journey proved to last no longer than ten minutes by car.

As soon as we reached the fantastic, unique in the world beach of Sarakiniko, I forgot my exasperation at once. The place looks like a moonscape: the narrow beach with the dark blue waters is surrounded by oddly-shaped, petrified sand dunes made of white volcanic tephra. Carried away by the incomparable natural beauty, we began to explore the place, taking photos everywhere. Then we swam in the calm, deep blue sea.

“Isn't it wonderful here?” I asked the others, full of excitement.

“What are you talking about? This water is too dirty!” Xanthippe retorted irritated.

“Dirty? But it is so limpid! You can see all the way down to the bottom!” I disagreed.

“Yet, it is full of bubbles! It's awful here! You can hardly swim here! This place is good for photographs only!” insisted Xanthippe in the same tone.

Indeed, there were some bubbles nearby. Nonsense; I wouldn't allow Xanthippe and her hysteria spoil this unique experience of mine.

“Let's avoid the bubbles, then!” I said and swam away.

## Monday, 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998

This is our last morning on Melos. I wake up early and I put on my bathing-suit and my clothes, taking special care not to wake up the others; I open the door and get ready to leave, as noiselessly as possible. At that moment, Xanthippe's voice makes me pause: “Where are you going?”

“I am going to the baker's, so as to buy something for breakfast,” I excuse myself and leave hastily, with a view to catching the 8:00 o' clock bus to Hivadolimni. I definitely want to visit that place again, before leaving the island.

When I arrive at the seaside, I find out I am completely alone there. The crystal sea is wonderfully calm, not even the slightest wave ripples its surface. I relish feeling the silky, limpid water on my skin, in absolute silence. No voice, no scream, no human presence disturbs this divine serenity. An unprecedented, inner tranquility entrances me. Once again, within the same month, I feel fully aware and proud to be able to experience *another reality*. It's a pity, though, that I have only forty

minutes time to enjoy this unique sensation. We are leaving for Athens at noon and we have to empty the room by ten o' clock.

“Why didn't you tell me when I asked you? I would have come with you!” complained Xanthippe as soon as I returned to the hotel.

“It was an on-the-spot decision, as I saw the bus to Hivadolimni leaving!” I excused myself in a sugary voice, while thinking: *Of course I didn't tell you anything, I didn't want you to pester me with your perpetual grumbling!*

Some days later, when I met Louise and told her all what I had gone through during my vacations on Melos because of the bossy Xanthippe and the lazy Nineta, she couldn't help exclaiming: “Are you kidding? Those were anything but vacations!”

Nevertheless, I consider this month as the culmination of my whole life, since it offered me certain experiences which led me to the limits of nirvana...

## Omens

### Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1998

Nineta, Xanthippe and I are on an evening outing to “Cataralla”, a wonderful seaside cafeteria in Glyfada. At a moment I decide to propose our going to the concert of the pop singer Bill Parascos, which is taking place at the Theater of Rocks in Helioupolis the day after tomorrow. Nineta seems to be interested but Xanthippe puts forward some objections -as usual:

“Why not go to the concert of Lina Voulgari instead? She is going to sing at the same place two days later!”

“But we went to her concert last year!” I remind her, wondering at Xanthippe's desire to watch the same concert so soon. It wasn't that fantastic...

“Yes, but Voulgari is a lot better than Parascos!” she insists. “Besides, Nineta wasn't with us when we went to that concert last year!”

At that point Nineta changes her mind and says she'd like to watch Lina live. I don't like the conclusion of this conversation but -as always- I prefer to show adaptability and understanding, so I eventually agree with them. After all, it's the company that counts most, right?

### Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1998

Here I am, walking up the street to the Theater of Rocks in Helioupolis; I have arranged to meet Nineta and Xanthippe outside the gate at 8:30, so as to watch tonight's concert of Lina Voulgari. To be honest, I am not thrilled about that; I would rather have watched Parascos' concert who sang here two days ago...

Now the time is 9:00, the concert is about to begin, but I am still here, outside the gate, waiting for the two top-drawers to arrive. The outdoor theatre is already full, all seats are occupied and I am the only one who's still waiting outside. The time gets 9:15; I know that even if they come now, there are no more tickets available. I try hard to hold my temper in check. At 9:30 the ladies haven't appeared yet, so I give up and start walking down the road to Vouliagmenis Avenue -quite relieved I'd say.

Later, at home, I receive a phone call from Nineta, who tries to explain: She met Xanthippe in New Faliron and they took a taxi together. The driver didn't know where the Theater of Rocks is, and Xanthippe was eager to guide him. It's a mystery how she got so confused, but they finally ended up somewhere in Pagrati, outside another gate which was deserted and closed!

“Is there another gate?” I wonder.

“In the meanwhile the time was already 9:30 and the concert was just beginning!” Nineta winds up.

*Which means: how long had they been wandering around the streets in a taxi?*

“How did you manage to get lost like that?” I wonder. “I walked all the way from Daphni to the theatre and I didn't get lost. How did you get so confused although you had taken a taxi? Besides, Xanthippe has been to the Theatre of Rocks before! She knows where the gate is!”

“Yes, you are right, it sounds stupid, but we lost the way!” Nineta replies sad.

Xanthippe phones me a little later and apologizes for the mess. “You have no idea how distressed I feel,” she says. I neither show nor feel any anger, although I suspect Xanthippe misguided the taxi driver on purpose, because she didn't really want to watch that concert for a second time. She only



wanted to oppose me when I expressed my preference for Parascos. In two words, the madwoman engineered the whole plot just because she wanted to get on my nerves...

### **Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 1998**

Amazing! Tonight Bill Parascos is giving a concert at the Stadium of Argyroupolis -just twenty minutes on foot from my house! So, Nineta and I have arranged to meet there at 8:00 pm. "Don't mention anything to Xanthippe! She will do anything to spoil the fun!" I've recommended.

The stadium is not big and the seats we find are pretty good. The artist sings his greatest hits with brio and he excites the crowds. However, I have to try hard to ignore a little problem which has just arisen: The young man on my left wouldn't stop waving his arms full of enthusiasm, right before my eyes! For some time I try not to pay any attention. *Let's no be crabby, all youngsters act like this*, I think. Wrong: Taking a more careful look around, I realize that the gentleman next to me is the only one in the whole stadium who gesticulates so violently, all the time. Amongst hundreds of seated spectators, the only idiot is sitting right next to me!

At a moment I explain my problem to Nineta and she seems to understand: "There is only one lunatic in the whole stadium and he is sitting next to you!" she says. Nevertheless, when I ask her to sit on the upper tier, she is too bored to move a finger. A little later my patience is exhausted, I can no longer stand the spastic moron beside me, so I stand up and sit on the upper tier without saying anything to my friend. Nineta stays put and silent, but I know she's taken it amiss.

### **Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> September 1998**

It is 10:00 o'clock at night and I am sitting at our veranda together with Alice. We are watching the traffic of the street in languor, when her friend July arrives unexpectedly. A little later they start talking about the concert of the famous pop group "Lofty Rocks", which is about to begin at the Olympic Stadium. All of a sudden, July suggests their going there at once! "But the concert must have already begun and we don't even have tickets! Moreover, the stadium is in Kalogreza and it will take us two hours to get there by car!" replies my sister. However, July insists and Alice is convinced.

Unbelievable, yet true: They arrive at the Olympic Stadium at 11:30. Twenty thousand people are in there, but the concert hasn't begun yet. They ladies have no tickets, neither can they get any, because they are all sold out! But! A policeman (who fell in love with them) allows them to enter without tickets! They even manage to find good places to sit, right in front! In this way, they will be able to enjoy the impressive live concert in comfort and free of charge! *Now: Let's make a comparison between my fate and my sister's...*

### **Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1998**

This afternoon I visited Persephone at her old house in Athonos Street, for the last time. The day after tomorrow my friend is leaving for England, where she will study English literature. This old house will be demolished tomorrow and at its place a huge, modern, five-storied block of flats will be built.

Persephone's departure, along with the demolition of her old house, causes me mixed feelings of impatience and nostalgia. On one hand I want her to go because I know she is involved in suspicious networks and actions against me; on the other hand, I feel that together with Persa a whole world will soon be gone for ever -the relatively innocent years of the 80's and the '90s. Anyway, this is the end of a 13-year-old friendship, the first serious friendship of my life: No matter what happens in the future, our relationship will never be the same again.

Little by little the world I've known so far is falling apart and it is gradually replaced by another, which is being built very fast and it has nothing to do with the old one. My reality is being altered continually, unpredictably, radically...

### **Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1998**

Something kinda strange happened during the taekwondo lesson this evening: The class was divided into four teams and we had a running contest. When my turn came, I outran three men who were objectively faster than me! Unbelievable but true! How did this happen? One of them stumbled and fell down. The second one was somehow confused and didn't run at all. The third one started running too late. "You were outrun by Yvonne," he was told disparagingly.

Fate is an invisible, indefinable force hovering above our heads and it has the last word in everything. Naturally, a person's abilities can improve someone's odds -but this is no guarantee for success. Anyway, our whole life depends on specific moments...

### **Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1998**

This afternoon Mary Glenos and I visited "Spiritual Harmony", a modern sect situated in Marousi, so as to enroll in one of the beginners' classes. First of all, I found it strange that Mary just wandered from desk to desk, chatting and smiling to everybody, without joining any class. She hasn't got any free time, she told me. At a moment, two ladies came into the vast room; they looked completely lost and Mary was eager to guide them to the right desk. "Here are two new disciples!" she said to the woman in charge, with a big smile. *Why did this strike weird to me?*

Later on, we decided to go for a souvlaki in an outdoor steak-house. For a while we discussed various interesting subjects, mostly about metaphysics and parapsychology; at a moment, a middle-aged man, who was sitting at the next table, turned round and asked us:

"Excuse me ladies, are you teachers?"

"No, we aren't," I answered abruptly, thinking the man wanted to dally with us.

However, the stranger soon proved to have no such intentions. He only felt the need to confide his problem to two persons who seemed to be cultivated enough for that. As he explained, he has been suffering from disseminated sclerosis for some years now. His malady has deteriorated recently and he can hardly move.

"Once I was married; but when I began to paralyze, my wife left me," he said bitterly.

"Did she know about your disease from the start?" I asked to know.

"Of course, I had told her right from the first moment!"

This is not his only problem, though: Some years ago he had his own profitable advertising company with numerous clients, as well as a rich social life: "Back at those times, you would have had to pull some strings if you had wanted to see me for five minutes! But now, everybody has turned their backs on me!" he complained, and we expressed our understanding and compassion to him. Mary told him about "Spiritual Harmony" and she advised him to seek psychological support there.

A little later the stranger stood up, he bid farewell and went away at a very slow pace. Mary expressed her disapproval about his ex wife, who deserted him as soon as difficulties began. A few months ago I would have agreed with her, but my mind works differently now:

"I can see you point, but think about it: There are lots of men around us who are healthy, good-looking, excellent husbands and fathers, yet their wife abandons them just because she wants to! So, why should a woman be eternally faithful to a disabled man?"

"Maybe the "excellent husband and father" doesn't do it right!" retorted Mary with an enigmatic smile. I was astounded at her reasoning.

"You mean that a disabled man, who's paralyzing day by day, does it right?" I answered back.

"And then we say we are spiritual persons, interested in metaphysics!" concluded Mary, with an air of profundity.

"Indeed, why is it right that two lives are wasted instead of one? Why is it considered right for a healthy person to sacrifice his or her own life so as to serve a cripple who's never going to get any better? Because religions say so?" I insisted and regretted it immediately. Yet, it was too late: Once again I wasn't wise enough to keep my mouth shut...

***"Be sorry for nobody but yourself":*** My whole life is the living proof that human morality is nothing but hypocrisy, since it favours the handicapped at the expense of the healthy. I have always been physically healthy, relatively good-looking and intelligent. As a person I am calm, cultivated, adaptable, understanding. Nevertheless, since early childhood I have experienced nothing but contempt from everybody. Until I was 26 years old, nobody wanted me as a friend -still I can't fully explain why. I had to search high and low, even resort to sects, so as to find a few friends -all of whom have proved to be wayward and insincere.

Therefore, the guy who complains everybody turned their backs on him as soon as his disease manifested itself, is in a much better position than me. At least once he had a wife, a successful career, a rich social life. I have always been healthy, yet I've always been shrugged off by everybody ever since I was born.

All things considered, Mary Skina is absolutely right when she advises me: "Don't feel sorry for any cripple you see! You never know what kind of support they have! Who has ever supported you? No one! That's why I'm telling you: Pity nobody but yourself!"

### **Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1998**

This evening I have arranged to meet Maria, a 17-year-old girl with whom I keep company at the taekwondo school. I can see this is a little strange, because she is a lot younger than me; I feel even more awkward when I see her arriving, dressed casually in blue jeans; I am dressed more formally. We sit at a nice outdoor cafeteria, and we chat pleasantly for about three hours. Despite our disparity in age, we can communicate well and we have some common interests.

Odd coincidence no 1: We have hardly been at the cafeteria for ten minutes, when Ellie and her husband pass by and see us! She approaches, she greets us, she kisses us full of joy, and then she goes away smiling in satisfaction.

Odd coincidence no 2: As soon as we get on the bus home, we bump into George: He is a nice 18-year-old guy and he also attends our taekwondo class. "I didn't know you two go out! If you like, the three of us can go out together!" he tells me politely. As if the whole taekwondo class were out tonight, so that one of them might locate Maria and me. Or am I too suspicious?

### **Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1998**

***Night Adventure:*** I am in a strange, dark room. Monstrous, shrunk heads rush in threateningly. I advise a child to fight the monsters by saying the Lord's Prayer. The monsters are after me and I try to escape running up and down many flights of stairs or through hotel rooms. Having a more careful look, I can see the heads belong to some of my classmates in taekwondo, namely those who belong to Ellie's clique. I keep on running full of agony, always wondering "Why?" Finally, I jump through an open window to the garden and I manage to escape, since the monsters can't come out in the sunlight. *Verification: See below.*

## **Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> October 1998**

I don't know what's happening any more: All my classmates at the taekwondo school ignore me completely, as if I were nonexistent. Maria has just exchanged telephone numbers with Ellie and she has already begun avoiding me, while the clique is obviously in a hurry to include her.

This is getting weirder and weirder: As if I did something terrible to them, they all treat me like a miasma. I have never been popular in my life, but this is the first time I have faced such condensed, concerted hostility. Even Victor, who has come to my house and we have been out together many times, when we are at the taekwondo school he acts as if he were a total stranger.

After today's lesson, I plucked up my courage and approached the others, who were sitting at the bench by the door; at a moment I heard Victor announcing with a smile: "The weak should be exterminated!"

"Victor is a good guy! We should include him in our racket!" Costa (a 45-year-old half-baked karateka) responded immediately.

Christina, a 16-year-old new pupil who has a lot of arrogance for a new pupil, stared at me and asked me ironically: "When are you leaving, Yvonne?"

"Soon," I replied, acting the fool -as always.

## **Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> October 1998**

It's been a couple of months that I have been friends with Urania, an old acquaintance of mine. She has two children now, a 16-year-old daughter and a 10-year-old son, she has divorced her husband because he is a gambler and a womanizer, she has worked as a military nurse for 18 years and she is already a pensioner, at the early age of 37. She has had many negative experiences which have caused her certain psychological problems, as she admits. In general she is extrovert and interesting but she often loses her temper and she wouldn't hesitate to throw out certain innuendos against me, such as: "You haven't made any sacrifices in your life, that's why you haven't achieved anything!" - *which could be true...*

This afternoon we had a lengthy conversation about her fervent desire for economic independence: "I have always wanted to have money in my pocket," she says. "That's why as soon as I finished high school, I decided to work at once and become a military nurse. If you don't have money, people walk all over you, Yvonne!" she concludes with a serious mien.

She also believes that human adaptability is admirable, even before death: "There comes a day when you accept you must work so as to make a living; in the same way, there comes a day when you accept you are about to die..." she says, according to her age-long experience as a nurse.

## **Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 1998**

This morning Mrs Zolotas came into my office and started bragging about her beloved son who is a computer genius, working on multimedia ever since he was eleven; he has been studying computer music in America for the last two years, she told me.

"Not like us, who waste our time on trips and outings!" I said.

"My son doesn't have to study much; he is able to finish the curriculum of two years within six months! And when his studies are over, he will be earning one million drachmas per month!" she concluded with an air of importance.

What kind of lecture was that? Anyway, I no longer take such fairy tales seriously, because I know well what's going on around me: For example, Mrs Zolotas and her son excel in one thing only:

serving powerful, dark networks.

## ***Pincer movements***

### **Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> October 1998**

This is my first day as a receptionist and telephone operator in Pangaea. After a six-month wait, finally I was brought a desk from the abandoned fifth floor, which is big enough to hold the computer, the printer and the telephone central on it. Two men employees from the bookshop undertook that difficult task. Six months of wait for two minutes of work...

Therefore, from now on I will be responsible not only for typings and invoices but for the telephone central as well. Liliana, the previous telephone operator, resigned because she had never taken a raise in eight years of work. All colleagues advised me to ask for a raise, which I did. I am still waiting for the boss to answer.

So, here I am now, in a stuffy and noisy reception, which is full of smoke and it doesn't have a window! I have to type endlessly, while the telephone lines ring like crazy. I feel like a fool, but I try not to think about it...

### **Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> October 1998**

The atmosphere at the taekwondo school is getting more and more hostile against me. I feel they can no longer endure my presence in there. Even Maria avoids talking to me. Yet, suddenly someone suggests our going out to a nearby cafeteria after today's lesson (how come?) and I am spontaneously willing to join them. *Maybe things are not so bad after all*, I think.

There is a little problem, though: I have no money with me. Fortunately, the others seem to be eager to wait for me to go home and bring my wallet -my house is not at all far from here. So, I go home and change clothes hastily, I take some money with me and I return to the taekwondo school -it hasn't taken me more than fifteen minutes in all. The time is already 11:00 at night and we depart in two cars.

We arrive at a nice cafeteria near St Paul church. The party consists of Victor, Maria, me and four others. The place is nice and exotic, with straw umbrellas and fine rock music. We order drinks and we start chatting in a very friendly manner. Yet, I do find this outing kinda strange, after the exhausting taekwondo lesson, while everybody is dripping with sweat; and the others haven't had the chance to change clothes, like I did.

We are still having a pleasant, animated discussion, when someone announces:

"It's too late now! We must go!"

I look at my watch and I see it is only 11:20. Strangely enough, all the others agree it is too late and we had better go.

"But... we have hardly been here for a quarter of an hour! We haven't even finished our drinks!" I protest.

"Alright, let's stay a little longer," says Victor and everybody goes along with that.

Nevertheless, at about 11:25 they all rise from the table and they want to leave at once because "it is too late now". We pay quickly and leave hastily, as if we were chased by hounds.

"Victor will give me a lift; but how will you get home? On foot?" Maria asks me then.

"Victor will take me home first, since I live nearby, and then he will drive you home, in Argypolis," I reply calm.

Strange question: There are two cars available, so there is plenty of space for all of us; in any case, why am I the only one who should be left out? And what about all that hurry? As if they all had some urgent appointment or something. Detail: Ellie was not with us.

**Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> November 1998**

*Shiatsu at the asram of "Spiritual Harmony" in Marcopoulon:*

Gently pull your partner's head upwards  
Massage the nape, the shoulders and the arms  
Massage the nape to the base of the skull with your forefingers  
Massage the whole skull  
Massage the upper part of the skull with your forefingers  
Massage the forehead, the nose, the cheeks, the chin, the ears  
Gently pull your partner's head upwards  
Touch the skull with your palms; place the two forefingers on the forehead  
Close your eyes; concentrate on the light, inhale it, exhale it  
Take your hands off the skull slowly; surrender the energy to God

What a rare, wonderful experience! For the first -and probably the last- time in my life I've had the chance to enjoy a shiatsu session. I would have enjoyed it a lot more if the moron who happened to be my partner didn't keep pressing my head continuously, with all her might! Instead of making me relax, she was hurting me! I complained twice politely, but she kept on squeezing my head like a maniac. Was it really so hard for her to understand that shiatsu pressures are applied gently, not violently? The point is: You are either fortunate or unfortunate in life...

**Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1998**

The atmosphere at the taekwondo school is getting heavier and heavier against me. They don't even deign to talk to me, while they drop certain hints making sure I listen: "We'll be in touch" or "We shall all meet on Friday evening" etc. At a moment, I hear Maria saying to Ellie: "It was wonderful at the club on Saturday! It's been years since I last had such a great time!"

After the lesson Maria shunned exercising the poomse with me -like we've done every time so far. She excused herself she was in a hurry to leave, but she stayed in class for one more hour and exercised the poomse with others, until I left. Who knows what she's heard about me...

As about Nicky, the master, I can see he has no intention of giving me a higher belt. He just ignores me, he doesn't show me the poomse, he doesn't guide me, and when the time of the examinations comes, he will find lots of excuses so as to fail me: "Your leg wasn't bent enough", or "The arm wasn't straight enough" and that sort of thing.

Just like the previous time: At the last moment, just before the exams had started, the master remembered to remark I was not fast enough. I also found out he hadn't showed me some taekwondo forms correctly; I learned I performed them wrong during the exams! He gave me the green belt finally, but with obvious unwillingness and an expression of scorn, as if he were doing me a big favour.

Anyway, I have never aspired to be a world champion in taekwondo, but I hate being a victim of discrimination. Moreover, I suspect I've never gone any higher than the yellow belt: The certificate I have received for the half-green belt says "yellow belt", whereas I was given no certificate for the green belt. Therefore, I believe Nicky makes sure to favour his "circle" of pupils, while the others, the "outsiders", are never meant to progress in taekwondo. The master has been pulling our legs all this time...

In addition, I can't say I am pleased with taekwondo in general: Despite the hard training we do

every time, I haven't become much suppler than before -actually I don't think I have become any suppler at all. I admit the muscles of my legs are very well trained, but I can't say the same for the other parts of my body. All things considered, taekwondo is not complete work-out, since it disregards the upper part of the body almost entirely. Moreover, in Nicky's school we hardly ever fight -especially us, the "outsiders". After two years of training, I doubt whether I'd be able to defend myself against a tramp in the streets...

### **Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> November 1998**

Once again they got on my nerves at the taekwondo school: They kept staring at me with angry eyes all the time - once or twice I thought they were going to kick me out! After the lesson, when I dared sit on the bench together with the others, Victor asked me ironically: "So, when are you leaving Yvonne?" Next moment Christina repeated the question in the same tone. Then, that whale of her mother began boasting off -as usual: "When I was a bank manager, bla bla, admire me" ... "Before that, I used to work as a doctor, bla bla, worship me" ... "Once I worked as an insurer, bla bla" ... "Now I am the exclusive representative of a multinational company in Greece!"

Once again, everybody listened to her agape. Nobody ever questions her, nobody ever shuts her up. The clique is getting larger and larger and everybody is happy because they see new profits coming. Their only problem is they have to get rid of me before I see or hear too much...

### **Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> November 1998**

I woke up this morning feeling fed up and wrathful, with a dominant thought in my mind: *Evil to evil is good!* My inner voice is screaming for revenge and I can no longer ignore it. It is like an initially weak flame, which has become a blaze or an atomic bomb. Enough with all those demons who lurk for me and fight me in every step I take! From now on, if anyone harms me anyhow, I'll make them pay dearly!

What the soul desires is what the soul needs. The obstacles to the fulfillment of a wish are mostly due to visible or invisible hostile forces. The so-called "negative" feelings, such as anger, hatred, sorrow, vindictiveness, are the natural reaction of the soul to such obstacles. Therefore, I had better take such feelings into careful consideration rather than ignore or stifle them.

First of all, I must leave Nicky's taekwondo school. It is no longer possible for me to confront all that concentrated hostility against me every time. I will attend two or three more lessons, until the end of the month, and then I'll stop for good. But! The story doesn't end here: In one year or so I will make an anonymous phone call to the police and I will tell them there is drug trafficking taking place in Nicky's taekwondo school. *It doesn't matter if this is true or not; I am 100% sure that something very suspicious is going on in there...*

Later, in the evening, I feel very impatient; I just can't wait so long to do something about it, I want to take action tonight! So, I decide to perform a simple *magic ritual* recommended to me by my friend Mary Skina -I definitely want to do it: I draw a sketch of Ellie on a piece of white paper, I write her name on it and then I burn the paper with a match. As the flame moves on, I watch the drawn figure burning little by little, until it's all reduced to ashes. In the end I feel relieved, as if Ellie were already eliminated...

### **Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> November 1998**

Ever since I performed the magic ritual mentioned above, Ellie hasn't appeared in the taekwondo school. This evening her husband dropped by and informed us the following: Ten days ago Ellie passed out suddenly while doing the housework. She had to go to hospital for some days so as to have some medical tests, but the doctors found nothing wrong with her.



“Everything will be fine,” I reassured him.

“Everything will be fine, until nothing will be fine,” he replied sceptical.

Finally, the diva will recover soon and she will be back to her family and to the taekwondo school.  
*A bad dog never dies...*

### **Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1998**

***Prophetic Dream:*** I am in England and I intend to enroll in an English university. Soon I find myself in a campus and I ask aloud: “Which university does Persephone attend?” while performing a magic ritual in the dark, which enables me to send a hostile aircraft against her. At that moment, a tidal wave comes and hits us both slightly. ***Verification:*** *Early in the morning my mother is watching a documentary on TV about English universities. In February Persephone will quit her studies in England and she will return to Greece. “The climate disagreed with me,” she will vindicate her decision...⚡*

This morning Mr Gryparis arrived at work together with his three sons aged seven, nine and twelve. As soon as the boys came in, they all gathered around my desk and wanted to have a look at my computer.

“Do you play computer games?” I asked the boys.

“Of course, but not only that!” answered the eldest.

At that moment I heard someone congratulating the managing director on his three sons. Mr Gryparis smiled and said: “Let me tell you, my friend: The more sons you have, the more likely it is that one of them proves to be a poofter! On the other hand, I've never seen an unhappy poofter!”

### **Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1998**

I have arranged to meet Mary Glenos outside “Spiritual Harmony” in Marousi at 8:00 o'clock this morning. From there, together with some other disciples, we'll go to the asram of the sect in Marcopoulon, where we shall spend the weekend.

I take a taxi from St Tryfon Square, because I don't want to be late. I begin to worry as soon as I realize that the taxi driver acts the madman and he speeds to the north, beyond Marousi! I urgently ask him to stop and when he finally does so, I find myself in a big avenue, while it has started to rain. I take another taxi and I manage to reach our venue at 8:00 sharp, having paid 2500 drachmas in all, while the others are about to leave without me...

Mary and I get on the car of a classmate, who is good-looking -from the waist up. The poor guy suffers from polio, his legs are wry and atrophied, and he can't walk without crutches. I wonder at his being able to drive; I also wonder at the arrogance he shows soon: He constantly brags about how much money he earns as a mechanical engineer, he says he is estranged from his wife but “who cares about her, I can find lots of women” and he winds up “there are lots of females available, but what is hard to find is a good, serious woman!”

Later, in our room at the asram, I express my disapproval of the bloke's behaviour: despite his condition, he thinks he is gorgeous. Paradoxically, Mary seems to be annoyed:

“Come on, you shouldn't discriminate against the handicapped! Even women doctors marry them! I happen to know a woman surgeon who's married to a completely paralyzed man!”

“That's perversion!” I protest.

“Smart women don't take a man's appearance into account, if they want to get married some day!” retorts Mary.

“Really? I believe that all those who mate with cripples are perverts!” I insist.

“You are wrong,” she replies with a cunning smile. “In a marriage, the woman offers beauty; the man offers money. As long as he offers money, he is alright even if he is disabled!”

“I wouldn't marry anyone just because he has a lot of money!”

“You don't invest in the future!” concludes Mary irritated, and at that point the discussion is over.

*Why does the whole incident strike me as a match-making of a sort? No, thanks, I'll pass...*

Later, as I go down the outdoor stairs to the yard, I slip in the rainwater, I fall on the steps and I get a huge bruise on my right hip. I can't help taking this as a *sign of fate*: as if some invisible force were trying to prevent me from attending the seminar “Reaching higher awareness” which is about to begin.

In general, the asram is perfectly organized and it beams with positivity and calmness. The quiet natural environment, the cultivated people, the vegetarian diet, the interesting lectures and the pious, always calm guru make a pretty attractive package. Nevertheless, I find it hard to accept some of the teachings: Paul, the guru, rules out the existence of evil and he claims that:

“There is no evil, God has created everything in wisdom. What we consider evil, is just a lesson of life” ... “Misfortunes are welcome because they teach us” ... “Life is a mirror: All evil you see around you only reflects a negativity of yours.”

*Translation: The whole world is good and positive, apart from you...*

My soul revolts at such dogmas because I know well our world is far from angelic. Besides, when someone accepts such theories, they are embroiled in a never-ending self-criticism, which should always lead to the same conclusion: “Whatever happens, is my fault.”

According to Paul, it is not evil that causes pain; it is our personal convictions, or what we regard as evil. “The human mind is programmed by convictions”, says the guru. “Therefore, by changing our convictions, we change our programming; thus, we will be happy with the same things that now make us unhappy!”

“Which means what?” interrupts Michael (isn't he handsome!). “We just replace old convictions with new ones, so as to have a good time?”

Paul nods saying “that's right”, and I doubt even more about the theories propogandized by sects such as “Spiritual Harmony”.

Anyway, I don't think I can follow such a time-consuming, complicated, dubious course of self-analysis and self-accusation, pretending not to see anything wrong around me. I can lose neither my time nor my way, so I decide to stop the course of self-knowledge I started a month ago. I think it's not worth the while or the money (25,000 drachmas per month).

“In general, the so-called “schools of spiritual development” create people without judgement, without feelings. Judgement gives birth to feelings and in such schools any kind of judgement is forbidden. The absence of judgement stifles feelings, and without feelings a man can't act!” says my friend Urania, when I explain to her all the above. *And when someone can't act by themselves, they obey any order they receive from a leader, I suppose...*

## **Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1998**

On the other hand, I wouldn't like to lose contact with dance-therapy, which takes place in the asram almost every Sunday. As we all dance to the evocative music, we share a strong sense of freedom and joy, without any desire to show off. At a moment, as we dance in a circle, I take a glimpse of a middle-aged woman who has come here with her mongol adult son.

Later, during the break, another woman approaches Mary and me and she talks to us about her son:

The young man is a genius and he had been studying Astrophysics in America until recently; then he got a strange neurological problem and started to paralyze; within a few years' time, he is due to end up completely paralyzed on a wheelchair. However, thanks to Paul's teachings, this lady has come to consider her son's disease as "a blessing in disguise" or "a lesson of life"!

Another case: A young woman in my class has confided to me she often feels her hands going numb and numb. "Could it be tendonitis?" I asked. "No, it isn't; I wish it were," she answered with an expression of bitterness.

Take into account the dandy with the polio as well - aren't there too many serious illnesses gathered in "Spiritual Harmony"?

And a pleasant coincidence: Mrs Vivian, the dancing mistress, teaches dance-therapy at the Recreation Centre of Glyfada every Monday at 7:00 in the afternoon! That's no further than twenty minutes on foot from my house! And I found that out completely by chance, thanks to a conversation my friend Mary had with her during lunch! Isn't it fantastic? I look forward to joining her class!

### **Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> November 1998**

The same inexorable war is still going on against me at the taekwondo school: Maria had a party on Saturday night and she invited the whole clique, while I had no idea about it. It was Victor who blurted out the secret: "We all had a wonderful time in your party on Saturday, Maria!" he told her, loud enough so that I could hear. I fell from the clouds but said nothing. Nevertheless, the young lady was pretty friendly with me this evening and she was eager to walk along with me after the lesson was over - which has never happened before.

The die is cast, then. During this month, I've had all good intentions of letting it pass and forget all about revenge. Yet, they've lost that chance. Therefore, when the time comes, I will do what I must. Evil to evil is good: (-)(-) = (+)

\* \* \* \*

### **Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> November 1998**

Mary Skina has proved to be a very good friend -actually she is the only friend I really trust. I can talk to her about all those weird facts happening to me all the time, without being afraid she might misunderstand or disapprove of me. We also discuss various "forbidden" subjects such as magic, parapsychology, networks, social injustice etc. She is the only one who listens when I talk, without her putting forward all kinds of stupid objections. She is also the only one who takes into account my wishes: "Tell me, where do you want to go? We'll go wherever you want!" she often says when we meet. In fact, she is the only one who always shows a sincere wish to see me, without the unbearable shilly-shallying of my other friends: "If nobody else calls me, then we'll go out together" (Persephone) ... "I can't meet you this evening, I must mop the floor!" (Louise) ... "I am not in the mood!" (Urania). Every meeting of ours lasts five or six hours and I don't get bored even for one minute.

This time we had lunch at "Neon" in Kolonaki and then we went for a coffee. Six hours passed pleasantly, as we talked about the secret forces which rule the world through magic and witchcraft. Then Mary had the opportunity to narrate some of the odd experiences she's had in her life:

Many years ago, when she was afflicted by all kinds of misfortunes and her mother suffered from severe dementia, my friend decided to seek help from a renowned professional witch. The woman explained she would have to search all over Mary's house for "hidden magic, invisible to the eye". My friend agreed to that and the witch visited her one night. She took off all her clothes and started looking for bewitched items, room after room. She returned from the kitchen walking on all fours, with a big purse hanging from her teeth. When she let it fall down, it proved to be full of strange

items such as small scythes, dolls tied up with string, a human skull etc. Mary screamed frightened, but her parents (who, in the meantime, were sleeping in their bedroom) didn't wake up. The witch explained the devil blinds people so that they can't see the bewitched items, even if they are right before their eyes. Then she agreed to break the dark spell which deprived Mary of all good luck and made her mother sick; however, the very next day the witch fell down the stairs and broke her pelvis; she has been on a wheelchair ever since! Mary's mother died a few weeks later, having lost her mind completely, at the age of 62.

Some years ago Mary's mouth started closing gradually, until she could no longer speak or eat! She could only suck liquids through a straw! She saw lots of doctors who told her all kinds of nonsense, but they had no idea what was wrong with her. One of them diagnosed trigeminal neuralgia and advised her to have an operation, but Mary wasn't convinced. Finally, she went to a priest who specialized in breaking spells; he advised her to lift a red cushion from a chair, so that she could find a piece of bewitched holy bread under it. "But I don't have a red cushion!" Mary wondered, yet the priest insisted. When Mary returned home, she realized she did have a red cushion with black stripes on a chair in the kitchen. She took it in her hands and discovered a piece of dried holy bread under it. She got rid of it at once.

I would rather not believe Mary, but I know she isn't lying. Sometimes she exaggerates but she doesn't lie. Besides, this isn't the first time I've heard stories about magic. In fact, I suspect that what has happened to Mary and her family may as well be happening to lots of unfortunate families. *Could it be possible that half of the human population casts spells on the other half?*

That was a metaphysics seminar, indeed! Nothing like all that rigmarole I hear in various "schools of self-knowledge" which trap your mind, eliminate your judgement, and methodically discourage you from exploring "forbidden" subjects such as magic, satanism, networks, invisible forces etc. Real metaphysics is taught nowhere...

***Appearances are deceptive:*** I can see it clearly now; it is my destiny to sink deeper and deeper into the abyss, facing darker and darker forms of evil. As time passes, I will be coming in contact with diverse kinds of evil, as it has now spread all over humanity. *And yes, you can fight the system; but you can't fight the satanic forces that lie underneath...*

It is often said: as above, so below; only that "above" is the world we live in, whereas "below" is the world of black magic and demons. Behind the everyday reality we experience, there is another plain of existence, which is a lot more filthy and demonic: It is a world made of scythes, lancets, blood, dead body parts, skulls, dolls tied up with string or stabbed with knives.

The whole story goes down to the energy games played by human souls: Success in life is not enough for "smart guys"; the others must be entirely destroyed. A castle in France is not enough for a "smart guy"; the others should be completely homeless. In order to secure that kind of success, certain people use certain means. There are quite a few stories about magic I've heard from various people. Here are some examples:

a) Vanessa (an old friend from Janus) had a friend who suddenly started losing weight and got thinner and thinner every day. The sick woman saw many doctors but none of them could find out what was wrong with her. Finally, she went to Egypt and found a renowned wizard, who broke the black magic spell cast by a cousin of hers. A few months later, her cousin died of leukemia.

b) Louise once knew a woman who, just like the above case, suddenly began to get thinner and thinner -but that one eventually died. A few days later, her mother dreamt of her dead daughter saying: "Please, mother, remove those pieces of coal from the big flower-pot in the yard, because they burn me even here, where I am now!" When her mother emptied the soil from the flower-pot, she found some pieces of coal buried there.

c) Mrs Daphne (Persa's mother) has told me about an aunt of hers who had been wasting away for

years, sat on a chair in a corner, her shoulders hunched up. Since there was no reason for her condition, everybody believed she was a psychopath. One day an unknown man knocked on their door. He introduced himself as a gipsy wizard and told them he could see their house was under a black magic spell. The family ruled out that possibility and sought to get rid of him, but the man insisted: "And what's wrong with that round-shouldered woman in the corner over there?" he asked, although he could not see the sick woman from the threshold, where he stood. Finally, he was allowed to break the spell and the woman recovered at once.

d) There was a time when Mary Glenos had very serious family and health problems; her husband was very sick and soon died of cancer. Some days later, she discovered some excrement hidden in a cupboard in her kitchen.

My personal experience includes lots of similar incidents, which I have taken lightly up to now:

i) The broken Easter candle (the wax perfectly cut in two pieces, as if with a knife) my godmother brought me every year, until I was 14 years old. Strangely enough, my parents always let me hold that broken candle during the Easter mass; they never thought of buying me another one. I was an adult when I read in a book of magic that a broken Easter candle is supposed to transfer all good luck from goddaughter to godmother.

ii) Many years ago Mrs Lemony (an old neighbour) brought us some liquid butter in a glass bottle. When the bottle was half-empty, we found a small knitting needle inside! When mother complained to Mrs Lemony about that, she excused herself that it was done by mistake.

iii) During the '70s, we often found broken eggshells dyed dark purple, right outside our front door.

iv) Aunt Wilma's strange visit, just a few days before Jasmine was born (18<sup>th</sup> March 1972).

v) On 31<sup>st</sup> December 1980, uncle Jim (my mother's brother) died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 52. The very next day, Mrs Lemony came and offered her condolences, pretending to be devastated for the loss of a man she hardly knew -since she hadn't spoken to us for years. Detail: A big flower-pot had disappeared from our yard three days before uncle's death; mum had regarded that as a bad omen.

vi) On the day I was to take the Pan-hellenic examination in maths for a second time (June 1982), as soon as I got out of the house I noticed our canary was not in his cage. We had left him out all night, and obviously someone had found the opportunity to take him during the night. Once again, my mother considered the fact as a negative omen. When the time came for me to write, the subjects looked completely alien to me; Eventually I got a 01 in the exam -the worst grade in my whole school life.

So, what has been dogging us since the 70's? My family has been afflicted by all kinds of incredible misfortunes ever since: Jasmine was born a quadriplegic and died when she was five; Alice got married when she was 16, her husband proved to be a bum, she got divorced ten years later, and my parents are almost destroyed financially because of her never-ending needs. As about me, no matter what I do to improve my life, there is never any progress in any field; "Nothing but rigor mortis", as my friend Mary Skina appositely remarks.

**Secrets of power:** The co-operation with demonic entities and the use of black magic is the terrible secret of those in power – and it is very well hidden behind the mask of civilization and scientific advances. Nevertheless, during the last decades things are changing dramatically, since more and more people, even from the lower classes, are recruited in all kinds of networks. In the New World Order, which is coming fast, more and more citizens will belong to networks and share such "secrets of knowledge". Paradoxically, in the so-called developed countries the poor are getting fewer and fewer every day.

**The greatest mystery:** It is objectively very difficult to control your own family. No matter what you do, you can never be completely sure that your wife won't run away with the baker or that your lovely children won't become drug addicts. You can hardly be sure about what will happen to you

the very next day. So, how have the secret rulers of the world managed to keep the whole of humanity under their control for thousands of years? Such a thing is simply impossible and unnatural! It can't be happening, yet it is happening!

How have networks managed to spread worldwide? Nowadays, thanks to the so-called "electronic revolution", their power will soon be absolute. It is a common secret that they use black magic, but what is the "pact" which has brought the world into their hands? *Which arch-demon has the world been sold to?*

**Terms and pacts:** Beyond all that idle talk regarding the wonders of the human mind, the basic product of humans is rubbish: Every item manufactured in factories usually has a short time of utility; eventually it ends up in some huge rubbish dump or it is just left somewhere, polluting the environment for hundreds or thousands of years.

Evil spirits are especially fond of negative situations such as misery, illness, pain, torture, mass deaths, environmental pollution, burning of forests, accumulation of rubbish etc, and they are eager to offer mundane power and money to all those who are willing to impose such situations on a world-wide scale.

**Forbidden suspicions:** Sometimes it occurs to me that the modern technological civilization is actually a work of black magic and demonic entities, aiming at world domination. These dark forces use certain charismatic humans, the so-called "geniuses", as tools. I also consider it possible that all electric and electronic devices function thanks to the intervention of such invisible forces. For instance, electricity could be called "spirit This" and electromagnetism could be called "spirit That"...

### **Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1998**

This evening I went to a big night club in Athens, together with Helen, Xanthippe and Nineta. I don't really like the artists who sing there, but I agreed to take part in that outing just for the sake of company.

As soon as the main door opened, we were among the first who got into the huge room; however, we finally ended up at a table which was at the far end of the dancing floor. Soon the room was so crowded that we could hardly move. Besides, the dancing floor was too small, certain people wouldn't sit down, so it was them who danced again and again. That meant six hours of boredom and immobility for us. I had a good time only during the first hour, when we heard pop and rock songs. The rest of the program consisted of folk songs, which only made me sleepy.

Apart from that: It's been some time now that my friends have estranged themselves from me, while I am getting bored of them. Moreover, our party never gets any bigger; none of them ever introduces a new person. "What kind of people are they? Don't they have any further circle of friends?" Selene wondered once (she said the right thing once in a while). Certainly not. All of them are isolated from society, just like I am. We have nothing to offer to each other. I am only wasting my time with them. Really now, is this how a circle of friends functions? In my sister's circle, for instance, when someone is single for a week, all the others do whatever they can to find her a new boyfriend!

The truth is I enjoy my sister's party a lot more than mine: Milena and Helen come and visit us once in a week, we drink coffee and we chat pleasantly for hours. I certainly prefer their cheerful company to the depressive gawks I usually go out with: Helen can barely help yawning all the time, Nineta is obsessed with a dancing master who has been giving her the cold shoulder for two years now, and Xanthippe always puts forward silly objections to anything she hears. As about me, till when shall I tolerate their whims?

### **Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1998**

At about 7:00 pm I arrive at the Recreation Centre of Glyfada, with a view to joining the dance-therapy class of Mrs Vivian. However, my enthusiasm wanes fast when I find out that the big green door of the dance hall is locked. I look around for a placard or something - in vain. I run upstairs, to the Public Library, I ask the librarian about the dance-therapy class, but says he has no idea about it. I don't know what to think about this mystery...

I return home, I phone Mrs Vivian at once, and I ask for an explanation politely. She apologizes for the mess, and then she tells me the following incredible story: She was driving from Piraeus to Glyfada, when the pupil A called her on her mobile phone and said she wouldn't be able to come because she was sick. A few minutes later, the pupil B called and said she wouldn't come either because her son had the flu. Right after, the pupil C phoned and said she had a serious family problem, so she wouldn't come to the lesson. Vivian had almost reached the Recreation Centre, when the student D phoned and said she wouldn't appear either, because of an unexpected visitor. So, since none of her pupils would be present, the dancing mistress had no other alternative but return home.

"I am very sorry you came this very evening and found nobody there," she winds up in a gloomy voice.

"Never mind, I will come next Monday," I answer calm, although I haven't been convinced by the above story.

I will go to the Recreation Centre three more times (that is three successive Mondays), but there is no sign of dance-therapy whatsoever; the only thing I find there, is the locked green door. I will ask at the Library again but no one knows anything about Mrs Vivian or her ghost dance class!

So, what kind of machination was that? Obviously, the lady has never taught dance-therapy in the Recreation Centre; all this was nothing but a put-up job, organized by Vivian and my "friend", Mary Glenos. What's Mary's game, anyway? Why did the two of them tell me all those lies? What did they expect to achieve? Who can see through the paranoia of networks?

## **Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> December 1998**

This evening I have arranged to meet Selene, who has been in Athens for a few days. Since the beginning of June she has been living in Cyprus, together with Panayotis. However, the poor guy faces certain problems, because Selene often leaves him home alone and goes out with seven (!) boyfriends of hers, all together at the same time, as she admits! The lady is in good terms with Victor as well, who still serves her as a taxi driver any time she is in Athens.

During our outing at a cafeteria in Glyfada, Selene doesn't stop bragging about her athletic records in Cyprus: She attends a fine taekwondo school, and her master is so enthusiastic about her that he expects her to take a gold medal in the Olympiad of 2000 -although the lady hasn't taken the black belt yet. She also works as an aerobics trainer, however she hasn't set foot in the gym for more than a month because of psychological problems, she says. Before coming to Greece, she was locked in her room for two weeks and refused to see anyone because she was too depressed for that! *Why indeed? What was the diva's problem?* As about her employer, he showed lots of understanding and told her there is no problem with her absence, and she may return to work any time she likes! *What a saint of an employer is that?*

After an hour or so, Panayotis arrives at the cafeteria and joins us. I can hardly recognize him! The poor guy must have lost at least twenty kilos! He is a bag of bones and he can barely talk, as if he were more dead than alive! "What have you done to the guy and he's become so thin?" I ask spontaneously, and Selene laughs in a simpering.

In the meanwhile, I've begun to find the situation amusing. Once I could have never imagined that the so-called "normal people" are constantly sunk in depression and psychopathy. As about the guys, they are just not men...

## **Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> December 1998**

A fateful outing with Nineta, Xanthippe and Helen: Firstly, I didn't like it at all when they all ticked me off because I was twelve minutes late. After all, as soon as I saw the bus wasn't on time, I took a taxi. They are often late, and I usually have to wait for them a lot more than twelve minutes, but I never complain or get angry at them. Then Xanthippe proposed our going to a posh cafeteria in Argypolis, and we all liked the idea. Of course, this means I just lost my money and my time trying to be on time in our appointment in Glyfada.

We got in Nineta's car and ten minutes later we were outside the cafeteria. It was very crowded, yet there was a free table at a corner by the window. However, the ladies (especially Xanthippe) didn't like it because it was "kinda secluded". So, we got away and wandered all along the avenue hoping to find a cafeteria which would be appropriate for the duchesses. In another beautiful cafeteria, decorated with stained-glass windows, there was a free table next to the window; yet Xanthippe refused to sit at it -especially when she found out I liked it. We searched and searched in agony all over Argypolis, Xanthippe constantly running ahead of us, rushing in and out of numerous cafeterias and restaurants, always crying in dismay: "It's full of youngsters here! Nothing but youngsters!" Detail: Xanthippe is fond of mature men, aged 50 or more.

Finally, we landed up in a pizzeria which was completely empty. There was not a soul in there. We sat at a big wooden table and started chatting nonchalantly; at a moment we talked about the other sex and I expressed the opinion that "most men are boring". At that point Xanthippe looked at me ironically and said: "They are bored of you, too! If only you knew how boring you are!"

I froze at once. The unpleasant surprise soon became anger, indignation, then realization. The others didn't get wind of anything, as if they hadn't heard anything. All at once, I felt like a stranger among them. Suddenly, it was clear to me that our friendship is at its last gasp. We keep going out together only out of habit.

Then I began to ignore Xanthippe. I didn't talk to her at all, I didn't even look at her, as if she were non-existent. At the same time, I decided to change some of my plans and I told the others immediately: "Listen, I have just made up my mind: I won't come with you to that night club on New Year's Day. I don't like folk music, and I don't like those singers either!"

Consider this: Just a few minutes ago I was willing to join my "friends" on that outing on New Year's Day. Which means, I was eager to have a rough time all night long, fixed on a chair for about six hours, inside a crowded room full of smoke, so as to watch singers I actually dislike and spend about 30,000 drachmas for it! All this, just because I wanted to be with friends! What friends?

The next two or three times that we meet again, I will maintain the same attitude towards Xanthippe. Soon the lady will understand what's going on and she will appear rarer and rarer, until she is gone for good. On the other hand, I know countdown has begun for the whole party of ours: When a link is missing from a chain, sooner or later the whole chain falls to pieces. Nevertheless, there is nothing else to do: This is the natural course of events...

## **Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1998**

*Crisis (once again):* The fatigue from work, the discomfort on the bus home, the incessant rain, brought me an apathy, a deep disappointment, as well as certain realizations. No matter what I do, my life always remains the same: the same discomfort on the bus to and from work, which lasts three or four hours every day; I never get a better position at work -on the contrary I'd say; as about my salary, it couldn't be any lower; moreover, ever since I undertook the telephone central, everybody in Pangaea has been treating me like trash; I foretell I will have to leave that job soon; my friends are estranged from me, and I can't stand them anymore; I was kicked out from Nicky's taekwondo school, after it proved to be a network of great calibre; "Spiritual Harmony" is too far



away from my house and it's not worth the while; dance-therapy at the Recreation Centre of Glyfada proved to be a hoax. For some strange reason, there seems to be no place for me anywhere. There is so much going on around me, however nothing happens for me; actually, everything happens against me. *Everything changes fast, so that nothing ever changes for me...*

On the other side, I can see that an entire phase of my life is reaching an end and I feel extremely insecure about the next phase which is about to begin. For the time being, I have taken some New Year resolutions: from now on I intend to meditate more often; I will also pursue lucid dreaming and psychic experiences -which I have neglected for some years. I feel the time has come for me to ignore the seductions of the world and take, at last, the path towards the inside...

## Phase Nine: War

### Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> January 1999

The new year found me bored to death in Louise's house. There was almost no conversation, while the men of the party (Nondas and Michael, Louise's husband and brother respectively) were doing nothing but watching TV in languor. We didn't even play cards.

About a quarter after the new year had arrived, Hyacinth (Louise's younger sister) withdrew and I wanted to leave too. Michael offered to give me a lift home. When we reached my house, I thanked him and said goodbye; at that moment he put his arm around my waist and sought to kiss me - supposedly for the new year. He has been flirting me for a couple of months now, but I don't feel like reciprocating. It is just that the bloke repels me, and I can't really explain why. He is kinda plump, dark-skinned and he beams with depression; on the other hand, he is a serious and educated guy from a good family.

By the way, I've never heard of Michael having a girlfriend. As about Hyacinth, she is 28 years old now, she is a polite, intelligent and good-looking woman, yet quite lonely. Just like her brother, she used to have some friends once, but now she is completely alone. And she has never been with a man either...

### Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> January 1999

*Night Adventure:* Two adventuresses discover a gang which exploits children. Soon they are chased by murderers around tall buildings. I am one of those women, I fight the enemies with karate blows, but I have a difficulty with side kicks. Finally, both women manage to escape, though still persecuted by enemies.

The women take refuge in a hotel, but a female cyborg is after them. The two friends run into a room; a handsome male cyborg is in there and he helps them by shutting the heavy, iron door behind them. Yet, the female cyborg breaks the lock and she is ready to rush in. At that point, the male robot decides to fight for the two women. There is a lot of confusion, but he finally manages to neutralize the female by hitting her head with an iron bar. Nevertheless, more enemies arrive in a helicopter and they start bombing the place.

The two adventuresses rush out in time through a narrow gap at the door, but then they have to follow separate ways. I go to the showers, and I slide down a kind of crystal waterfall; There are many black people there, and I don't like that. All of a sudden I realize my clothes are dirty, so I take them off and have a bath; then I relax and fall into a friendly conversation with an unknown woman. Suddenly, someone approaches from behind; I recognize my red-haired friend, who is now dressed in a white uniform. We leave together and we return to the den of the gang, disguised as women of lax morals. However, it's not long before the enemies discover who we are, because of a woman who knows our true identity: it is the one I had seen in the showers. Our fate is hard to foretell, but most probably it is death.

I am another person now and I happen to hear about the above case; I decide to take revenge for the two women by breaking up the gang. So, I go and flirt the chief, who is supposed to be a shop owner. He likes me very much, he is even willing to change the shop's name for me. Soon he is nowhere to see and he is said to have died mysteriously -he was probably murdered, a rumour says...


### Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1999

Scenes of beauty at work: A certain Mr Costakos phones and asks to talk to Mr Gryparis, the managing director of the company. The latter refuses flatly to be put through, so I have to lie he is absent. Mr Costakos phones again later, I tell him the same; he goes berserk and complains Pangaea refuses to pay him for some texts he has written for the book "Byzantine History". I try to calm him and I promise to convey his message to Mr Gryparis. Nevertheless, the bloke refuses to hang up and shouts that the managers of Pangaea avoid talking to him because they have no intention of paying him (which could be true...)!

I guess Mr Costakos is right, however he keeps me busy on the phone for more than half an hour, while the other lines are ringing like crazy. This means I have to interrupt our colloquy all the time, so that I can serve other people too - isn't this a bedlam! In the meantime all colleagues look at me gaily, as I try to solve this impossible case; then, Gryparis frowns at me because he doesn't like some of my answers to Costakos.

As a matter of fact, the managing director has become more critical to me lately, and he is always trying to cause me anguish, while all the other managers demand more and more from me; I do my best to satisfy them, but they never seem to be happy. And they say nothing about a raise...

### Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1999

*Night Adventure:* My nephews and I are on the street outside our house and we play a representation of the board game "Hero Quest". Real monsters, which look like dinosaurs, chase us in the nearby neighbourhoods. The roads represent the board of the game, we are the pawns. There are dice too. *Possible interpretation: Maybe we shouldn't play so often that strange game which includes tiny plastic monsters such as dragons, demons, zombies, skeletons and other satanic beasts; or, maybe, I live in a very negative neighbourhood...* 

This morning I had an unexpected phone call from Maria, my ex friend at the taekwondo school: "What's happened to you? Why don't you come to Nicky's school any more?" ... "We miss you!" ... "Why did you leave us? Were you really bored, or is it something else?" ... "Why don't you drop by someday? We'll be happy to see you again!"

She was all sugar and spice! No doubt the clique told her to phone me so as to sound me out on the real reason why I left Nicky's school; or maybe they wanted to see if I know anything about their network. Needless to say, I played possum and all my answers were very polite.

### Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 1999

*The fraud of knowledge:* I had to type a rather lengthy text about "Film direction" at work this morning. I wrote and wrote, then I realized most of the text was incomprehensible; I just couldn't understand what I was typing, as if I were a retard.

The point is that if I wanted to study film direction, I would have to learn this text by heart, as well as a big number of similar texts, entire books of such texts. If I couldn't memorize them (which is natural), I would fail in my studies. But how can you memorize a text which is full of obscure terms and meaningless details, while it lacks cohesion? Most educational books are written like that on purpose, so as to confuse students and give them the impression they are too stupid to learn anything.

Educational books are supposed to provide people with knowledge, yet all they do is isolate the reader from real knowledge, which is gained by personal experience. Those who have the right "connections", get all the needed information at first hand, without losing their heads in

meaningless, endless rigmarole. The others, those who lack "connections", waste the best years of their lives cluttering their minds with all kinds of useless information, which is immediately forgotten after the "exams". If they ever manage to graduate, it will be impossible for them to find a job commensurate with their qualifications.

Since early childhood, you always hear that "you don't know this or that" ... "you are ignorant" ... "you are of limited potential", so "you must gain knowledge" from certain "experts". Therefore, you must spend the best years of your life in various kinds of "schools", where the so-called "experts" will provide you with the "correct knowledge" you ought to have. And woe is you if you don't study enough or if you question the experts...

It is generally admitted that "schools" (educational centres, universities, gyms, dance schools, centres of spiritual development and so on) don't convey useful knowledge that could be helpful in real life. They just tempt you with various "prizes" -which are impossible to get unless you join their inner circle and serve their purposes. The offered courses usually consist of shallow information, suitable only for a display of superiority to the "those outside", who are "inferior" and "ignorant". Anyway, the majority of students are deliberately kept in a state of ignorance, while they are systematically given the impression of being unworthy. As about the really important knowledge, it is offered only to the "few and chosen ones", to the core of the clique. As about the students who are found to be inappropriate for networks, they are constantly brainwashed and sabotaged by teachers and other students, so that they feel inferior, incapable of learning, complete losers -before they are methodically driven away.

All kinds of schools are nothing but recruitment centres for networks. Their basic purpose is to recruit citizens in all types of cliques and rackets; they also exert mind control, since they impose the worship of authority, while they discourage personal judgement.

Only personal experience can offer essential knowledge. In the journey to knowledge, you can trust only yourself. There will be some mistakes, detours, deviations or delays, but it is better to make your own errors and learn from them, than be a victim of other people's errors or intrigues.

### **Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> January 1999**

This morning we had some bad news about Josef's health: The microbe is still active, his thighbone has been affected even more and he will have to be operated on in a month. *Why doesn't anything good ever happen to our home?*

Moreover, I was informed by Lena, an assistant accountant of Pangaea, that I am not going to get a raise despite all the extra work I have undertaken since October. Nevertheless, Andromache (the boss's executive secretary, who has no computer skills, speaks lousy English but she is an eager informer), just got a raise of 60,000 drachmas! I've been feeling outraged all day today! Even my sister, who is an illiterate chamber maid in a hotel, gets a higher salary than me!

"Which means, Yvonne, they don't appreciate what you do for them in there" Helen Tanagra commented when I told her all about it on the phone.

Anyway, my mother advised me to refrain from hasty reactions and ask for a raise again next week, in a polite manner. This is what I intend to do.

### **Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1999**

Once again I try to respond to a cascade of phone calls, when suddenly Chris (one of our editors) comes to my desk and confides to me the following: The book "World History in Brief", which has come out lately, must be withdrawn from bookstores because it is full of misprints -and they found out too late! He shows me the book, I leaf through it for a few moments and I see there are -indeed- countless mistakes in every single page!

“But how is this possible? The typed texts I've given you were flawless!” I wonder.

“Yes, but the printer's typist, who had to retype our texts, put her foot in it!” explains Chris.

“Why did she have to retype them? Didn't you give floppy discs to the printer?”

“No, we didn't give any floppy discs!” he replies sharp and goes away.

Incredible but true. This blunder will cost millions of drachmas, as well as a nasty ridicule to Pangaea.

Later on, Mr Gryparis summons all editors in his office, Chris included -since he was responsible for the above book. For about twenty minutes I can hear nothing but low voices behind the closed door. As far as I understand soon, none of them will have any consequences for the whole fiasco. All those editors, with their high positions and tidy salaries, come out of the managing director's office smiling, calm and carefree.

Nevertheless, whenever I make the slightest mistake in some idiotic letter, Gryparis gets ironic and offensive towards me. Moreover, even the most insignificant error of mine gets known by everybody in the company in no time. I know that, because some irrelevant colleague will always come and drop me a hint. *Conclusion: The only thing that doesn't matter to a company is work...*

### **Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1999**

The whole situation at work since yesterday: Everybody has been deviously deriding me, making allusions to my supposed inability to operate the telephone central, let alone malevolent innuendos such as: “Yesterday I left my silver ring in the kitchen for a minute and someone stole it! Have you seen it Yvonne?” Nelly told me at a moment.

Undoubtedly, the subtle war against me has escalated ever since I was naïve enough to show I have understood whose fault the fiasco of “World History in Brief” is. In the meanwhile, telephone lines are ringing like crazy, I am up to the neck in typing, the place is full of smoke and lots of people are coming and going, always shouting around me. Can things get any worse?

### **Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> February 1999**

*Inner scream:* After a night meditation, I was overwhelmed with negative thoughts and feelings: sorrow, indignation, injustice, disgust, vindictiveness and insomnia till 4:00 am -the focal point being the new circumstances of my job. No matter how hard I've tried to think reasonably (good jobs are too hard to find, in other companies things are even worse, salaries are very low in general, and so on) and appease my feelings lately, it finally proved to be impossible for me to ignore the screams of my inner voice.

The truth is there is too much concentrated hostility against me in this company: My workroom looks like a prison, it is full of smoke and people who shout all the time around me, repetitive telephone rings that would exasperate a saint, subtle irony in the mask of paranoiac demands, no raise, no prospects. Moreover, my dear colleagues do whatever they can so as to show me I am nothing but rubbish -especially now that I have undertaken the telephone central.

During those three and a half months I've been in my new post, I have shown efficiency, adaptability, politeness, willingness, reliability -I could say I am perfect in my job. In vain, though: If there is one thing employers are not at all interested in, this is good work - otherwise “World History in Brief” wouldn't have come out full of misprints.

Besides, Pangaea has published no more than 120 books in thirty years, yet it is still considered to be one of the major publishing houses in the country! They have spread the rumour of facing financial problems recently, yet this can't be true since they intend to hold a very expensive

reception for the presentation of the book "The Unknown History of Christianity" which is expected to come out next year. I have no idea who's pulling whose leg and why...

I must get out of there as soon as possible, because this kind of environment has a very negative influence on my soul! I can no longer be a helpless victim! I just can't go on like this! Starting from tomorrow, I will fight against the evil of work, in a methodical manner: a) I will block any telephone lines I can, b) I will delay connections using excuses such as "He is not here now", or "He is speaking on another line at this moment", or I shall leave them on "hold" for some minutes. c) While typing, I will no longer correct the writer's mistakes -like I've done so far, hoping to get a medal or something. d) As for the rest: Smile, laughs, joy! *I feel better already...*

### **Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> February 1999**

This afternoon I had a heated conversation with my friend Urania, regarding evil and forgiveness. I expressed the opinion that "Evil should by no means go unpunished. Forgiveness is complicity to a crime. Moreover, in the end it makes you feel contempt for yourself. When someone harms you, you ought to get even with them!"

"This is natural! You will get sick unless you do so!" said Urania.


"Nevertheless, this should be done only after enough time has passed, and in such a way that the evil won't suspect who harmed them and what for. That's why we say that revenge is a dish best served cold!"

"Forgiveness is unnatural! Revenge is balance!" concluded Urania and I couldn't agree more...

### **Shrove Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1999**

**Night Adventure:** I visit a strange shop where small birds are bred; they never grow any bigger and they are destined to be pets. Despite my initial hesitation, I decide to buy one, since the little birds seem to have no future in that shop.

Soon I discover there is a secret organization using that shop as a cover; they believe in magic and they convey positive principles to the next generations. They don't eat meat and they avoid doing any evil. The superior caste are witches, who protect all the others without oppressing them or enjoying any special prerogatives.

The organization uses a huge tower as their seat. However, the biggest part hasn't been built yet; only one and a half out of four designed floors have been constructed. When the tower is complete, most of it will be underground. The largest department of the underground building will be the library, which will convey essential knowledge to the next generations. The quarters of the witches will be at the lowest floor, so that they are protected from the nuclear holocaust which is due to happen in the future. I can feel everyone is sincere here and I wish to live with them...

**Imagination = Reality:** It's so many years that I've been exploring everyday reality in search of the truth, yet all I have found is fraud. Mental anguish is born when we identify ourselves with everyday life. Nevertheless, imagination and dreams are real life. The worlds of dream and imagination are true. The so-called "everyday reality" is a lie.

It is an indisputable fact that at the end of the day (life, reality) we feel empty and tired. At the the of the night (dreams, imagination) we feel rejuvenated, full of energy. When we experience everyday reality, our mind can't roam fast; on the contrary it is compelled to function as slowly as possible, so that it can be controlled not only by us, but by society as well.

When we dream, our mind is free from the bonds of "reality" and it roams about the astral plains at top speed. While dreaming the brain functions normally, as if it received stimuli from natural experiences -and this has been proved in scientific laboratories. However, scientists haven't

discovered yet what sleep exactly is, nor why we need it so much...

### **Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1999**

This morning I had an unexpected phone call from Persa: To my astonishment I heard her say she came back to Greece two days ago, having left University in England for rather mysterious reasons: "The climate disagreed with me," she said. After the initial surprise, I showed a friendly mood and advised her to become a teacher of English, while trying to hide the wild satisfaction I felt as soon as I heard the news!

Really now, didn't it ill become Persephone to act the heavy swell with University, thanks to big money and special connections? How would she ever be able to study in England, since she couldn't graduate from high school in Greece due to serious psychological problems? It seems that in certain cases networks can't guarantee success...

### **Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> February 1999**

**Prophetic Dream:** I take part in an odd computer game and I find myself moving inside its cyberspace. I pass through various gates which lead to other places or levels, according to the respective Tarot cards. *Verification: As I will find out soon, a similar computer game really exists!* ♠

Early in the morning we prepared Josef for hospital. Then Alice and I had breakfast together; there was gloom in an air, but the child looked calm and quiet. At a moment he came near me and sprayed some carnival foam on me. A little later we went out, to the veranda, until it was time for my sister and nephew to leave.

Eventually the operation will be postponed for a week because Josef has a cold. Moreover, mum is sick: her back and right leg ache a lot due to a slipped disc and she must stay in bed for a couple of days. Once again, everything combines against us...

### **Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1999**

**Drums of War:** I begin to know "evil" and it fascinates me. My mind has started to work differently and I like this. I don't feel like a victim any more. In addition, I experience an unprecedented inner balance: until recently, that I was "righteous" and "good" (a sucker), I was easily hurt because the others harmed me at any offered opportunity, while I felt helpless and unable to defend myself effectively.

Nevertheless, ever since I changed my way of thinking and began to sabotage them secretly, whatever they do or say to me no longer bothers me because I know sooner or later I will get even. Their offensive remarks sound ridiculous now: *So, Mr Manager, you are in a bad mood because I didn't interrogate that bloke on the phone? But I hardly answer the phone, you mean little man!* I think and smile to myself.

The fact is that "good to evil" leads to practical and psychological dead-ends. On the contrary, "evil to evil" offers spontaneous satisfaction and equanimity. When I manage to defend myself or pay back for the evil done to me, injustice doesn't depress me so much. On the other hand, when I am "a good girl" and stoically endure all kinds of maltreatment without reacting accordingly, I feel awful and I end up hating myself. It is only natural...

In general, "bad" people are more cheerful and lively, and they have more self-confidence; as about "good" people, they are often unbalanced and miserable because they feel like poor victims, passively waiting for others to harm them -like sheep destined to be slaughtered. Moreover, they often feel guilty because they usually don't manage to forgive and love their enemies -as dictated by religions...

### **Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1999**

Josef had an operation on his leg three days ago. There were metal blades implanted, but no bone was cut off; the surgeon just brought the head of the thighbone in its place. This means the boy won't have a limp, as we feared. Nevertheless, they have put him in plaster from the chest down.

Early in the morning mum and I went to the Children's Hospital to spend the weekend with Josef. Alice can't stay sleepless one more night, while the child is in a miserable condition: The plaster itches him all over his body and it burns him a lot on the butt; the boy is in pain, shouting and crying all the time. Every now and then we help him lie prostrate and we scratch him or put some ice cubes on his butt. At least, he seems to be better than the previous days, when he cried and screamed continuously, day and night. When night fell, we gave the child some sedative and he slept for almost nine hours. That was un hoped-for...

### **Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> March 1999**

Josef still suffers, while the nurses show an impressive indifference -if not malignity; let alone they are puffed up with conceit, even more than the doctors. Finally, after certain complaints I made, they agreed to cut off some of the plaster on Josef's butt and the child was relieved a little. He is still whining, but he is getting better and better.

Lots of people came and saw Josef today: First, Alice's colleagues from "Blue Rose"; then our cousins George and Damian with their families; a little later the surgeon appeared and wanted to see how the child was. He complained a little about the crowd, but he seemed to be a nice and positive person.

In the beginning I was depressed by the atmosphere in the hospital. However, as hours went by, I experienced a strange sense of adaptability. In the end, I didn't even mind staying longer! Therefore, everything is relative: When you are in a hospital for many hours or days, going to the toilet looks like fun! When you go out for a walk in the yard, that's a spree! In any case, sooner or later we adapt ourselves to the surrounding environment, no matter what it is like. Personally, I prefer the gloomy environment of a hospital to a workplace!

### **Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1999**

It is Woman's Day today; Nineta, Helen, Xanthippe and I have arranged to go to the taverna "Cavern" in Sourmena. The environment proves to be very pleasant, and the impressive decoration reminds of a cavern: There are stalagmites and stalactites made of expanded polystyrene foam, lots of mirrors and special effects, talented singers with a large repertoire of folk and modern songs, a wide variety of good food. Tonight the place is full of women who are having a wonderful time, singing, dancing and saying ribald jokes - me and my friends included.

I was sitting comfortably at my table, when I turned to the left and saw that a young woman, two tables away, was staring at me. I recognized a vixen I often saw when I went to the gym. Just like she often did then, she was now looking at me full of irony and malice, constantly making faces at me. I tried to ignore her but there she went on her hobbyhorse! She ignored her big party -eight women in all- so as to make fun of me! Aren't people crazy!

I stopped looking at the vixen and crossed my arms with the elbows on the table. Every now and then I gave her the open palm under the table -a fast and accurate gesture, discreet but well-aimed. About a quarter of an hour later, when I had a look at her table again, I was surprised to find out all eight women were gone! Their table was completely empty, while it was about midnight and the party was at full swing. I felt relieved and cheerful...



We left the taverna at 3:00 am, when the music program was almost over. I was feeling wonderful, so were my friends. As I got out, on the street, I saw the handsome lead singer standing by the door. I said goodbye and he asked us if we had liked the program.

"It was excellent," I assured him.

"I am glad you had a nice time," he smiled.

### **Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> March 1999**

I have often been disappointed by schools of spiritual development up to now, however I am always willing to try something new. So, this afternoon I attended a lecture on self-knowledge somewhere in Kolonaki.

The well-dressed, middle-aged "guru" called Costas Sekeris, didn't convince me at all. He talked about various platitudinous subjects such as reincarnation, karma, love which beats karma and so on. As about the listeners, about ten in number, they were all over fifty, ugly or weird. The atmosphere was heavy, repellent. I noticed a plump, disagreeable, slimy guy, about fifty-five; he wore his white hair in a greasy plait and didn't take his eyes off me even for a moment. As soon as the lecture was over, I hit the road.

### **Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> March 1999**

Early in the morning I got a phone call from Mary Glenos at work and she asked me about Sekeris, if I liked him etc. Then she announced happily the following: She bumped into an old acquaintance of hers on the road yesterday, whom she hadn't seen for years. They talked and talked, and she soon found out he had attended Sekeris' lecture on Wednesday, where he noticed a beautiful tall woman whom he liked a lot and he wished to introduce to a friend of his! Mary told him that woman was probably me, since I had informed her I would attend a lecture of Sekeris within this month.

Finally, Mary proposed our going out to a taverna one night, all four of us. In the beginning I was willing, then I started making questions:

"Who old is the would-be groom?"

"He is about fifty, like my friend, but he is more handsome. He has got neither protruding tummies nor a plait..."

"By the way, who was that acquaintance of yours who saw me in the lecture? Was it a fat, nasty guy with a white plait?"

"Oh, don't criticize him like that! He is a very remarkable person! It's just his appearance that makes a bad impression! I have told him so many times! "Your slovenly appearance cuts a poor figure" I told him again, yesterday. He has a heart of gold, you know!"

"By the way, isn't there a young, handsome, interesting man you could introduce me to?" I asked but she refrained from answering.

**Mystery No 1:** I've lied to Mary that I have a love affair with an imaginary, nice guy. Nevertheless, she insists on introducing me to the aged friend of her aged friend.

**Mystery No 2:** Athens has a population of five million people. There were about ten persons in the lecture of Sekeris. Mary says she bumped into one of those ten, the most disgusting of all, the one who was giving me the glad eye during the whole lecture! What is the statistic possibility of something like this happening? Isn't this a miracle? *Let's get serious: Mary knew I would go to a lecture of Sekeris on a Wednesday in March, and she made sure her "old acquaintance" would be there too...*

**Mystery No 3:** From now on, that obnoxious guy will appear pretty often in Glyfada, usually at the

bus stop where I wait for the bus to work every morning. He will never talk to me or bother me anyhow -strange, though...

Conclusion: All sects and schools of metaphysics are covers for suspicious networks and Mary Glenos is involved with them up to the hilt! She is connected to many sects without actually attending any of them, but she is always trying to involve me in any of them: Every time we meet, we always "happen" to drop by some sect because she wants to say hello to certain old friends, as she says; then she makes sure to introduce me to all gurus and receptionists. Let alone the fiasco with the dance-therapy. In two words, Mary Glenos is a deceitful person I had better avoid....

### **Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 1999**

This morning my friend Urania and I went to a seminar on crystalotherapy in "Spiritual Harmony". We talked about the healing power of crystals, which can restore the balance of the seven chakras, and it proved to be much more interesting than I had expected.

The lecturer used a quartz crystal pendulum. By holding it motionless above the chakras of a lying person, the quartz crystal makes a circular movement if the chakra is balanced; if there is a problem with the chakra, the crystal moves to and fro.

When she tried it on me, it was revealed that my chakras are quite balanced, since the pendulum always made circular movements. My "third eye" is pretty strong, and the chakra of the neck (creativity) is the strongest of all.

When Urania's turn came, all her chakras proved to be unbalanced, since the quartz crystal always moved to and fro. While hanging above the two chakras of her head, the pendulum didn't move at all. This means that Urania is a rather disturbed person -probably because of her bad marriage and divorce.

In the end we were offered some crystals to our liking. I chose a big pink quartz stone, which means a certain subject affects me a lot -that is work, what else? A light brown stone with a white circle formed on it shows that a circle of my life is reaching an end, disturbing the chakra of the solar plexus (emotions). It also means my life has taken a bad, dead-end path for years now and for this reason I need tranquility...

### **Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1999**

**Night Adventure:** Together with other people, I am inside a satellite which orbits the earth. However, the night sky looks weird: I observe various buildings and landscapes which seem to be upside down in the concave sky - as if the earth were a hollow sphere where mountains, seas, plains, cities, are all in the interior of the planet, not in the exterior. During the day everything looks normal, as the sunlight conceals the truth. *Is it possible that scientists have been lying to us about the earth and the universe?* I wonder.

**Lucid Dream:** I walk in the streets of a village and I ask myself: *How will I succeed in life?* Next moment, a strange talisman appears in my hand. It has the shape of a disc separated in twelve sectors, and there is a different picture on each one of them. Each picture represents a field of human life: family, work, love, money etc, and there is a plastic demonic figure standing on each sector. All twelve figures are repulsive: they look like ugly black mice with big red tongues stretched out. I don't like the talisman, I don't want to take it. Next moment, I find a small envelope in my hands; inside it there is a debit or credit card...

**Interpretation:** *The realization of serious ambitions in the material world presupposes the alliance with dark forces. However, my soul refuses to enter into an alliance with such forces, even if this means I will fail in life. Besides, these spirits don't offer real power: their figures are "plastic" and they actually make fun of the holder -since their tongues are stretched out. The round disc,*

*separated in twelve sectors, surely corresponds to the twelve houses of the Tarot. Every field of human life is controlled by a specific demonic entity. Moreover, something fishy is going on with all kinds of debit or credit cards...*

### **Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1999**

Mr Tsamados (a 70-year-old University professor) arrives at work smiling, with a bunch of red roses in hand: He offers three flowers to me, five to Mary Bonanos and the rest of them (about twenty) to Andromache - like he does every morning.

A little later, he starts making offensive remarks regarding my clothes -today I am wearing blue jeans and a colourful blouse. "Certain women come to work dressed as peasant harvesters, whereas Andromache is very elegant in her gray costume!" he says and gets on my nerves. Isn't he an old gossip! By the way, Mr Tsamados and Andromache (who is about twenty-five years younger than him) are always dallying with each other. Are they going steady or what?

The day proves to be rather tiring and exasperating: The phones ring continuously, some people keep me on the line for a lot of time saying nonsense, Mr Gryparis refuses to talk to certain persons and I have to appease them by telling lies such as "he will call you back soon", "he isn't in his office at this moment", etc. Hours pass and I can't find the time to go to the toilet; none of those harlots who happen to be my colleagues can sub for me for two minutes, because they are all "too busy", as they say.

I won't hesitate to complain to Nelly (who is said to be Mr Spyropoulos' mistress) about that: "I remember, when Liliana used to work here, everybody was eager to sub for her and keep the telephone central, not only for two minutes but for an hour or so!" - so the star had all the time she needed to drink coffee with her dear colleagues.

"Have you been to the toilet yet?" Nelly asks ironically, some hours later. I certainly haven't. Right then, I stand up and run to the toilet without leaving anyone in my position. This is what I will do from now on...

### **Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1999**

Another day in paradise: The telephone lines ring like crazy and there is nobody on some of them; other lines, which are supposed to be idle, ring and ring although their light isn't on and nobody talks when I answer the phone. At about noon, Gryparis' wife calls -once again- and complains no one answers when I put her through to her husband.

Pretty soon I find out the whole company knows about that, since everybody comes and throws out certain innuendos against me. "If you had tried some more lines, you would have found the correct one!" Andromache says arrogantly and disappears in her office. At that point, I stand up at once and disappear into the toilet, while the phones are still ringing madly! Andromache has to run and pick up the receiver, mumbling: "How can one work in here?"

*This can't be happening... Maybe they have "affected" the telephone central somehow, so that non-existent lines ring continuously... or, perhaps, they have various people phone every minute, without any reason, just because they want to get on my nerves... I begin to suspect.*

In the evening I go out with Mary Glenos and tell her all about my recent adventures at work. To my great surprise, she takes the bosses' side immediately: "You see how they make each one of you do the work of two or three persons, so that they have more profit? This is natural, you know: A businessman wants to earn as much as possible!" ... "In some European and American factories workers have to wear diapers during their shift, so that they never leave their post to go to the toilet! In this way, not even a minute of work is lost!" I was taken aback by that statement. Is it possible that such monstrosities take place in modern companies? I think it is...

**Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 1999**

**Modern concentration camps:** The 38-year-old Christina, who works in the Sales Department, comes to my desk at a moment; we chat a little and she informs me she is about to get fired: “Where shall I find another job now, at my age, with two children? Bosses demand you don't grow up, you don't have children...”

Work and education block human energy: Just when a person reaches their prime, they have to enter the arena of work, where everything is a foul play. All their energy is blocked in boring, tedious, repetitive tasks and slavish behaviour. Soon they find out that if they want to succeed, they must be cunning and deceitful, sabotage their colleagues and lick the boss's boots. Work makes human beings inhuman.

Workplaces (offices, laboratories, stores, factories) are usually stuffy, depressing, muddy dungeons, deprived of sunlight and fresh air. Moreover, there is this paradox: Managers and supervisors are often incompetent, useless, yet very expensive bibelots. Low-paid workers and employees are those who actually work and run the company, while conspiring against each other continuously, from dawn till dusk. Nevertheless, the company grows bigger and bigger!

The system allows no latitudes for reaction: The starvation salary I receive from Pangaea is legal, and it is legal for the employer to charge me with as many tasks as he likes. There is no limit to that. At the same time, there is terrible unemployment out there which is getting worse and worse, year after year. Moreover, you can't find even the humblest job unless you pull some strings. Nowadays if you don't belong to a network, you don't eat.

**“Be fruitful and multiply...”:** After all what I've known and experienced so far, how good is it to have children? Well, if someone finds true love at a very young age, when they haven't seen anything in life yet, then it is natural to get married and procreate. However, when a person reaches a certain age, when they have seen the misery, rottenness and evil which prevail everywhere, then it is a real crime to bring a soul in this world.

Let's see what is in store for the great majority of people on earth: Supposing they escape the worst kinds of pain and suffering (famine, incurable diseases, war -which afflict about three fourths of humanity today), they will be obliged to spend the best hours of their day (from 9:00 to 5:00) and the best years of their lives (from 20 to 65) at work. This means the average “civilized” person has to waste almost all his/her life performing boring, unpleasant, exasperating tasks in a competitive (if not hostile) environment – and they will consider themselves very lucky if they ever manage to find a permanent job. In fact, the biggest bugbear in the world today is “unemployment”: lack of work.

In a society which is getting more and more competitive, while networks are expanding day after day, sooner or later all human beings become monsters -if they wish to survive. *Work perverts mind and soul.* In such a society, when a child grows up, he/she will have two alternatives: a) To become a monster, b) To be devoured by monsters.

Question: Why do most people (employees, workers, slaves) look forward to having children?

Answer: The “system”, created by the wealthy and the powerful, favours patriarchy because it serves perfectly the interests of plutocracy. Thanks to the institution of family, the elite gets: a) Uncountable cheap workers who work eagerly for decades, from generation to generation, making the rich always richer, and b) Discouragement of possible rebels: When you have children, you don't dare move; you won't quit your job, for example, no matter how awful it is. Neither will you dare not join a network – otherwise there will be certain consequences, not only for you but for your children as well. When you have a family, the “system” binds you hand and foot.

On the other hand, the poor are constantly bombarded by certain indisputable principles urging them to procreate proudly: “Why aren't you married at this age? Is anything wrong with you?” ... “It is a shame not to have children” ... “Why are you still single? Are you impotent or

something?" ... "Having children is the meaning of life" ... "If you don't have children, you don't have a reason to live" and so on. Naturally, nobody ever wants to hear such things said to them. Childlessness has always been the worst nightmare for the poor. *In the human society, a serial killer is more respectable than a childless person.*

Anyway, if I ever had to say to my twenty-year-old son or daughter: "Listen, my child: I love you, I adore you, but we are poor, so you have to go and work in a fast food restaurant, a factory, an office, a shop, anywhere, for the next forty years of your life", I would rather strangle him/her with my own hands...

### **Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> March 1999**

I am at "Jackson's Hall" in Kolonaki, together with Mary Skina. The cafeteria is full of young people, it has a nice wooden decoration, there are tables on the balcony and pleasant pop and rock music. Our conversation, which lasts more than three hours, proves to be very enlightening, as I confide to Mary the following: My sister looks down on me and she acts the diva; my mother obeys Josef blindly, making at least two lunches every noon, just for him; from 4:30 to 5:30 pm, right when I lie in bed and try to relax a little, my nephews raise the roof with their incessant comings and goings, shouting and making a din, but nobody ever tells them anything.

"I understand... Your life is shit: Gryparis despises you and refuses to give you a little raise; men despise you because you don't behave like a whore; your mother despises you because she is obsessed with Josef; your sister despises you and makes sure everybody cares about her..."

"But I can't say that they have ever caused me any serious harm!" I retort, wondering at Mary's way of thinking.

"A little harm here, a little harm there, there is nothing left for you, my dear!"

I stay silent, acknowledging she is right.

"There is no joy in your life, that's why you seek happiness in lies such as meditation, crystals, yoga, and that sort of thing. People like us live in lies" she winds up chagrined.


Once again, I can see her point: Indeed, I resort to such activities (meditation, lucid dreaming, seminars of metaphysics, yoga etc) so as to restore the inner balance I would get if I had a husband, two children, enough money, a successful career, a satisfactory social life.

"However, the strangest thing is that I have succeeded in this: I am more balanced than most of those who have all the above," I reply thoughtful.

"That's true!" Mary agrees spontaneously. "Remember all those super successful editors in Pangaea, who always complained about migraines and psychological problems? All the well-fucked and the well-to-do suffer from chronic migraines or depression, and they can't sleep at night unless they take sedatives!"

## ***Last Hopes***

### **Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1999**

***Prophetic Dream:*** My sister's husband comes and takes me to the city of Ioannina, where Alice is. We walk to the lake and we swim in there for a while; suddenly, a black cloud covers the sky. Far away, in the horizon, there is a long line of smoke emerging from the water. I know bombs will fall soon and we flee in time. ***Verification:*** *In the evening we hear on TV News that a toxic cloud is coming from Serbia to Greece soon, because Serbia is being bombed by Americans...* 

After work I went to a big import company near Victoria Square, where I bought fine and cheap covers for my sofa and armchairs. Then I discovered a small shop nearby, which deals in strategy and fantasy games. The strange items in the shop-window arrested my attention and I entered the shop like hypnotized. I had a careful look at everything (role playing games, card games, board games, all of them unusual and impressive) and finally I bought a card game called ***Esoterra***. The packet contains 60 cards divided in two decks. Why did I do that? I just wanted to try something new...

### **Easter Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> April 1999**

My dear nephew John and I took our bikes and went cycling along the beaches of Glyfada. We rode past the funfair and we reached the motorcycle speedways. We arrived at a beautiful, quiet, isolated place by a serene small wharf. There were nice purple spring flowers all around; I picked up two of them and decorated my bicycle.

John led me along a narrow path by the cliffs. It was a little dangerous, I thought twice before following him, but I went on. On our way back I discovered another path along the coast, which was wider and safer, so I could enjoy the natural environment to the fullest.

We returned home riding up the road that skirts the airport. It was a little tiring but it was fun. When we reached Iasonidou street, we got off our bikes and walked home, tired but happy.

That was one of the most joyous experiences in my life -and it is not meant to be repeated ever again: Just one week later, John will no longer be the innocent, carefree child I've known: as if grown up suddenly, he is a typical adolescent now -not at all interested in cycling with his aunt anymore. Starting from next Sunday, he will begin to invite about a dozen of friends in the half-finished apartment right above my head, and they will make incredible trouble all day long, almost every day...

### **Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1999**

This evening Persephone paid me a visit and I had the bright idea of trying the card game ***Esoterra*** with her. In the beginning my friend wasn't in the mood for playing, but when we got the hang of the game, she was enthusiastic about it. So was I.

Soon ***Esoterra*** proves to be a very exciting game, as it seems to be intended to convey metaphysical knowledge and great truths, mostly in an unconscious level. When I play, I feel myself experiencing another reality, where everything (wondrous creatures, fascinating landscapes, magic and enchantments, extraordinary artifacts) serve one main purpose: the perpetual battle between Good and Evil. Every moment of the game is a strong, inner delight. Whether I win or lose, is of no

importance. What counts most to me is the sense of freedom and awareness this game offers...

### **Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1999**

*Night Adventure:* I am in the Land of the Dead. The place is empty and foggy, with an ochre atmosphere. All of a sudden, some women appear and I tell them:

“You are dead, I am alive.”

“So, what?” one of them retorts calm...🏠

Maybe it isn't wise of me to worry about any “fellow-man” who seems to be unhappy. By the way, who ever worries about me? For instance, I feel sorry about Josef who is sick now and I spend my afternoons with him, because he needs company. However, when I pretended taking a bank note from him -I just wanted to joke- he flew off the handle and sought to get out of bed, so as to strangle me -although he is still in plaster! “Don't get him wrong, he is just a kid!” my mother excused him at once. *I don't think I get him wrong at all...*

Now I sympathize with Josef, because he is in such a miserable condition; however, I can foresee that fifteen years after, when the adventure with his health will have been forgotten and he will have begun to ascend in society, he will put on airs. Anyway, he already has all the needed qualifications to be accepted in networks and succeed in life: He can't stand being second in anything; nothing is sacred to him, he does whatever it takes to achieve his purposes; he would sell his own mother for money -he admits it himself...

### **Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1999**

This afternoon, my friend Helen Tanagra and I went to a big hotel in Athens, where an exposition of fantasy games takes place these days -at least this is what I read in a big magazine. Yesterday, when I phoned the hotel and asked about the exposition, the telephone operator hummed and hawed, she left me on the line for a while and then she told me: “I don't know anything about that!”

Finally, as we were informed at the reception, something like that does place in the fourth basement of the hotel (it couldn't be any lower!). When we got out of the elevator, we were surprised to hear a lot of hubbub in the corridor. We walked past a security guard who looked at us full of curiosity and, as soon as we entered the vast room, we saw hundreds of youngsters who were playing devotedly a card game, probably *Esoterra*.

So, there was a fantasy games tournament held down there, but there was no exposition. When we approached, the guy at the desk seemed kinda worried, he didn't even ask us what we wanted, while suddenly there was deathly stillness all over the room! Seeing we were not welcome there, we swung round and hurried off. At that point, we bumped into the security guard, who had been following us!

When we arrived in Glyfada, Helen informed me that two youngsters had followed us from the fourth basement of the hotel to the bus station, they got on the same trolley-bus as us, they got off at Panepistimiou Avenue just like we did, and they kept following us all the way to the bus terminus. Then, they vanished -fortunately.

I wonder: Could such games and shops selling them serve as a cover for other, shady transactions? Anyway, this is what happens with the great majority of clubs, gyms, schools, shops, companies and so on. Surely, I am never going to attend such an exposition again...

### **Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> April 1999**

*Night Adventure:* I am in a strange land which is separated in two regions: “Good” (light, unspoilt nature) and “Evil” (darkness, melancholy). I seek to “engraft” Good in Evil and I take by my side a

woman who lives in the region of Evil. In the end the whole place changes into a kind of asram... ①

Arriving at work this morning, I was astounded to see a graffiti sentence written with big black capital letters on a white wall beside Pangaea: HELL IS WAITING FOR YOU! For some seconds the first word struck me really bad -I didn't like it at all. *Athens is a vast city, did they have to write this right here?* I wondered. For a moment it occurred to me it could be a *sign of fate* foretelling a bleak future, but I refused to take it into consideration any longer. *After all, I am not the only one who can see this*, I thought.

In the afternoon my parents decided to go for a walk in Glyfada (how come?), just the two of them. They reached the wonderful seaside café "Cataralla" but they didn't sit there because my father didn't want to spend any money for a drink.

Till late at night my mother wouldn't stop complaining about my father's miserliness: "Just once we went out together after so many years, and you weren't willing to spend two drachmas to treat me to a coffee!" she mumbled and mumbled. He, as always, accused her of being too extravagant and wasting all his pension month after month...

### **Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> April 1999**

Once again, Mr Spyropoulos makes fun of me when I go to his office and ask for a raise. "We'll see," he says ironically.

A little later, some colleagues gather around my desk and, full of simulated interest, they ask to know if the boss has agreed to my request. They all seem to wonder at his indirect yet clear refusal.

"What now? What are you gonna do? You must do something about it!" says Nelly.

"You can't leave it at that!" Andromache chips in.

"Don't let them take advantage of you," says Mary Bonanos, while I feel angrier and angrier. I am about to burst, yet at the last moment I keep my composure and I only complain that:

"If they just gave me a raise of 20,000 drachmas, I would be satisfied!"

"Don't tell them anything like that, they will take you for a fool!" Nelly says smiling.

However, what depresses me most is that I've been searching for a better job for months now -to no avail: all employers like my curriculum vitae, but none of them is willing to give me a higher salary; in fact, they give much less! To be precise, I get 165,000 drachmas per month in Pangaea, whereas other employers offer me no more than 140,000 drachmas -that is the basic salary of an unskilled worker!

Isn't this a *mystery*: I know quite a few working people, but none of them gets a lower salary than me -no matter what their job is! Nevertheless, when I look for a better paid job, all the positions I find are worse paid than the one I have!

### **Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> May 1999**

It's been some months now since my father started building a room in the plot I bought in Kypseli of Aegina seven years ago. Almost every weekend he goes there alone and strives to finish the small cottage. This morning he bought the roof tiles -which means the house was almost over. However, as soon as he got ready to start making the roof, a policeman arrived and announced the house should be demolished because it is illegal, since the plot is outside the town planning zone and there is no building license.

Without thinking about it twice, without letting anyone else know first, my father began to tear down the house he had been building by himself for so many months, until there was nothing left but a heap of shattered bricks. He told us all about it when he returned home late at night,



exhausted, sad and disappointed...

## **Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> May 1999**

**Prophetic Dream:** Someone phones and tells me Selene has a serious problem in Cyprus, and for this reason she will return to Greece. *Verification: Two days later, Selene will give me a call and we shall go out together. She will stay in Athens for a few days because she has psychological problems -again...🙏*

It is about noon and I am at work. Andromache and Mary Bonanos are eavesdropping outside the meeting room, and I can't resist the temptation to go and join them. As usual, Mr Spyropoulos and his managers are discussing the future of Pangaea, which appears to be dark and dismal. We are astounded to hear them talking about selling the company to another publishing house! They are in a hurry to sign a contract with the highest bidder -who has already been found- until the end of the summer. Naturally, this means even more dismissals.

A little later, I go to the Xerox machine so as to make some photocopies. I happen to meet Rita there, she talks to me in a friendly way, as always, and I confide the news to her. I don't consider myself revealing anything new; the miserable condition of Pangaea is no top secret, and rumours about the sale of the company have spread for many months now. Besides, sometimes Rita eavesdrops with us outside the meeting room. "I only wonder: Shall I have anything to eat after summer?" she whines and I am surprised: She is certainly not that poor...

I have hardly returned to my desk (about six metres away from the Xerox machine), when Andromache stands right before me, she stares at me and asks with a stern face: "Tell me, Yvonne, was it you who told Rita, Chris and the others that the company will be sold?"

"No! Of course not!" I deny the accusation at once, while I am astonished and wonder: How fast do rumours spread in this company, anyway? What part does each "colleague" play towards me? How long did it take Rita to inform Andromache (Spyropoulos' secretary and nark)? Since when has the sale of the company been such a big secret?

Andromache won't go on with the interrogation; she stays silent, though she keeps the gloomy expression of a judge who has decided to sentence the accused to death.

In the long run, the company will never be sold. It will go on firing employees and shrinking, but it will never change owners. As about the generous buyer, he will soon vanish into thin air...

\* \* \* \*

## **Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> May 1999**

It's three months that I have been attending the taekwondo class of Acron Gym, in Argyroupolis. I haven't told the master I've had taekwondo lessons before, because I want to make an impression of a charismatic beginner. So far so good, everything is fine, but I have returned to the white belt (I couldn't care less).

Like every time, today's lesson was boring and predictable, until something amazing happened: That two-meter-tall young man with the curly brown hair and the shiny almond-shaped eyes, smiled sweetly and bowed before me, as we were about to perform some exercises together. I just couldn't believe it!

When the lesson was over, the young man hurried and got into the elevator with me. He said his name is Orestes, he is 24 years old, he studies Medicine, he is in the fourth year now. Soon I found out he leaves his bicycle by the entrance, just like I do every time. He is polite, friendly, witty, fascinating, he looks like an angel and he shows a clear interest in me! I don't know what's happening, but I think I am falling in love!

## **Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> May 1999**

Once again I saw Orestes in the taekwondo class this afternoon. He gave me a sweet smile, we talked for a few minutes, then we performed some exercises together -how wonderful! When the lesson was over, he waited for me and we left together. He told me he likes cycling and he is used to covering long distances on his bike. I let him know I like cycling too.

“Unfortunately, I had a flat tyre yesterday, when I rode to Panorama of Voula”, he went on. “Luckily, I happen to have relatives there, so I took the opportunity to pay them a visit!” - just a few simple sentences, as valuable as diamonds to me...

## **Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 1999**

I can't understand what's going on: This time Orestes wasn't at all warm towards me! In fact, he did whatever he could to stay away from me during the whole taekwondo lesson! He refrained from practicing with me, he even avoided looking at me; I tried to approach him three times but he looked away, so I had to change direction!

When the lesson was over, I didn't leave at once; I delayed for about a quarter of an hour, hoping to see him in the elevator. When we finally met, I tried to break the ice by starting a conversation regarding body building. He responded politely, yet I could feel a distance between us. Something has changed in our relationship -before it has even begun...

No matter how hard I try to convince myself about the opposite, it's crystal clear that his interest in me is waning fast. Why, indeed? We have hardly known each other! Could it be our disparity in age? But I look ten years younger than I am -everybody says so...

## **Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 1999**

*The trap of happiness:* It's about ten days now that I have been in a muddle of contrary thoughts and feelings: On one hand, I am happy because I have fallen in love again; on the other hand, I am tantalized by strong doubts and agony. Especially after the latest developments, I constantly feel a lump in my throat and a burning in my stomach, as it is impossible for me to control the fear that Orestes might vanish from my life any minute.

This afternoon, when I saw Orestes in the gym again, he was even more indifferent, frigid, estranged from me. It was impossible for me to approach him anyhow. There is nothing else to do and I have to live with it.

All things considered, this short love story was a lesson of life to me: When I found out the young man wasn't nuts about me, at first I was disappointed; very soon, however, disappointment gave its place to relief! My head isn't spinning any more, and I do feel much better! I have calmed down!

For twelve days I thought I had found absolute happiness, that is mutual love. Nevertheless, right from the start, I could feel something was wrong; a part of me wouldn't be taken in by that kind of “theater”. I was excited, but I couldn't feel the nirvana I expected; in fact, the joy of love was neutralized by the fear of separation.

“Live here and now,” New Age sects command; but what is “here and now?” In this world, what you fear will materialize sooner or later. What you wish, will probably remain a fantasy for ever; but even if it comes true, in the long run it will be destroyed or distorted.

The quest for happiness in the material plain is nothing but fraud: The system methodically compels the average man to pursue chimaeras such as love, friendship, money, success, glory, etc; yet, wishes are seldom realized - but even if they are, finally things turn out to be entirely different to the expected. Moreover: the more invaluable something is, the bigger the fear of losing it is...

### **Weekend, 29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> May 1999**

Just what I needed to take my mind off all this: the incredible story with Orestes, the never-ending mobbing I endure at work every day, my bitter friends who are getting harder and harder to see: I spent the whole weekend at the nice beach of Koropi, together with my sister and her good friends Milena and Helen. I had the opportunity to enjoy the sea, the sun, the pleasant company, for many carefree hours – a rare joy which was offered to me spontaneously, without my having to run after wayward girlfriends or enigmatic boyfriends...

### **Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1999**

Probably the most significant day of my life: The taekwondo lesson is over, Orestes hasn't spoken to me at all, I feel disappointed and sad. As soon as I get out of the locker-room, there he is, standing right before me, giving me a surprised and evasive look. "Come, let's go Yvonne," he says in a strange, maybe ironic voice. I say nothing; I just obey, while a sudden joy fills my heart.

Neither of us has come by bike this time, so we walk together to the nearest crossroads, about one hundred metres from the gym. We discuss jovially various subjects, such as studies, cycling, taekwondo -does it matter? I am on seventh heaven, experiencing every single moment to the fullest, as if it lasted years.

As I walk next to him, I don't care about anything else; I even disregard that he seems to be looking forward to getting rid of me as soon as possible: "Shouldn't you turn here and walk to Vouliagmenis Avenue?" he asks me once or twice, before we have even reached the crossroads. I pretend not to understand until, inevitably, the time comes for us to go our separate ways. I say goodbye smiling, and I watch him for a while as he goes up the road; then I turn to the left and walk to Vouliagmenis Avenue, with a clasp of melancholy in my heart.

Sitting at the bench of the bus station, absolute happiness fights the deepest bitterness inside me: Indeed, I had to reach the age of 36 before I was given the chance to walk one hundred metres next to a handsome man -only once...

### **Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1999**

I content myself just with seeing Orestes in the taekwondo class. This is enough to make me feel alive, just like then, in the year 1977, when I loved George Franzis platonically.

After the lesson I linger on purpose for a quarter or so, and I manage to meet him in the elevator once again. We talk a little about various subjects -in a most typical manner- until we reach the ground floor. It is impossible for me to disregard a certain frigidity from him.

He takes his bike and goes out to the road hastily, as if he were champing at the bit to get rid of me, and he gets ready to leave before I have even gotten near him. Just a second before speeding up, he turns his head, he smiles and bids me "Farewell!"

I return the farewell and I watch him ride away, feeling sad as never before; yet I wouldn't dare imagine the truth -that I will never see Orestes again...

### **Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 1999**

Aunt Despina (and her proverbial hoodoo) has come to spend two days with us, and everything is going from bad to worse already: First of all, I decide not to go swimming with my sister and nephews because I don't want to miss the taekwondo lesson. When I reach the gym, I find out Orestes is nowhere to see. He hasn't appeared since last Monday and I am very worried...

“What's up?” asks the master when he enters the big room and finds me standing by the door, looking around in frustration.

“All is quiet,” I reply calm.

“I can see that; all is quiet!” he says meaningfully.

When I arrive home at night, Alice tells me about her adventures: As she was driving to the beach, she had a flat tyre. Then she got a fine of 20,000 drachmas for illegal parking at the beach of Kavouri -where thousands of cars are illegally parked every day. Moreover, she lost a tooth filling, which will cost her 10,000 drachmas or so.

## **Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1999**

The penetrating, beady eyes of aunt Despina never stop observing everybody and everything in the house. She has also managed to pester us all with her incessant grumble about everything and her exasperating ravings about how perfect a housewife she is and how much everyone loves her.

In the afternoon I get ready to leave for the gym, with the view of taking part in the aerobics session of 7:00 o' clock. Aunt Despina glowers at me and says scornfully: “Are you going to the gym again? Why don't you mop the floor instead?”

I ignore her and run to the bus station. I wait there for five minutes and the bus comes on time. It is about to turn round the triangular square but it gets stuck between two parked cars and it can no longer move! I wait patiently for almost ten minutes -in vain. Then I decide to take a taxi, so as not to miss aerobics. However, when I get to the gym, I am surprised to find out the lesson hasn't begun yet because none of the fifteen women who compose my class has turned up! All I can do now is a little bodybuilding. Am I wrong to be thinking that aunt Despina's proverbial hoodoo has struck again?

## ***Traumatic Summer***

### **Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1999**

***Fateful birthday:*** Boredom at work, boredom at the gym. Orestes is nowhere to see. My sister has ignored me entirely. None of my friends has remembered my birthday. At night, the TV film "Nightmarish Youth" suits my psychology perfectly.

I turn 36 today and I am not at all in the mood for inviting people and celebrating anyhow. What could I celebrate indeed? That I am 36 years old and I have achieved nothing in life? That I have come to naught once again? Neither am I in the mood for receiving silly presents such as trinkets, books, or pots of flowers. In general, I feel as if I absent in my own life, because most of the events happening to me don't really concern me. I only try to endure every meaningless day...

On the other hand, I am no longer what I used to be; I am growing up and my needs are changing: An outing with wayward friends or a lecture on dubious metaphysics doesn't excite me anymore. Maybe I would be excited if I went out with Orestes. But where is he? He has disappeared for two weeks now.

Once again, I am in a crisis; but this time many circles are closing in my life simultaneously, everything is falling apart around me, and there is nothing new for me apart from one sole truth: *As long as I wish something, it will never happen!* And I don't even dare to imagine what the future will be like...

### **Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1999**

Strange phenomena at the gym: Helena is a short, plump Albanian woman, who claims to be English and a secretary in a big company. Moreover, she has got the half-black belt in taekwondo although she can hardly move.

This evening she and I had to practise some fighting movements together. I kept changing positions all the time, so that she couldn't strike a blow at me. "Stay put so that we can practise!" she told me nervously at a moment. I obeyed, yet she still couldn't do anything to me.

"Don't look down on Helena; she is an expert in locks; if she performs an arm-lock at you, you will see stars!" I was told suddenly by Natasha, the blond vamp of our class, as we were changing clothes in the locker-room after the end of the lesson. I wondered at her spontaneous eagerness to stand for Helena, taking into account I have never said anything bad about Helena or anyone else in the class. It seems to me the blonde plays the part of the leader/supervisor in our class, just like Ellie did in Nicky's school...

### **Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> June 1999**

Good news: First of all, Josef got rid of the plaster this morning. From now on he will be able to walk, but he will have to use crutches for a few months. In addition, my short story "Adventure in the Land of the Dead" was published in the magazine "Greek Fantasy", in the issue of June.

In the evening I went out with my friends Annita, Xanthippe and Helen. We went to "Cataralla", which is our favourite seaside cafeteria: An exotic environment, fabulous colourful fountains, artificial gurgling streams and an interesting occasion: A fashion show with beautiful mannequins dressed in attractive, ethereal outfits. While it lasts, we keep on watching carefully, without superfluous talking. Better so...

## Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1999

Mathusala, my goldfish, died yesterday. He was two years old. This afternoon Urania and I went to a pet shop and bought new goldfish. I chose two beautiful fish with impressive tails. "Make sure not to stir them while walking, because goldfish get stressed," the shop assistant advised us.

Back at home, I sought to empty the two fish in the fish tank on the heat accumulator. However, I accidentally dropped one of them behind the heavy radiator! It was kinda difficult for me to get it out of there. "What a shock for the poor fish!" joked Urania.

Then, my friend and I had some tea and we chatted for a while; at a moment I expressed a heretical opinion: "In a jungle, it is the strongest or cleverest animal that prevails; in the human society, however, it is yes-men who prevail -those who serve networks blindly. A person's natural abilities are of no importance; on the contrary, the more gifted someone is, the more the human herd fights them!"

"What you say is anarchic and subversive and you shouldn't say it! It means that human society is a lunatic asylum!" Urania answered with a set face -and she is right: Human society is not a jungle -if only it were! It is an immense bedlam, indeed...

## Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> July 1999

Early in the morning, before arriving at work, I went to a nearby toy shop and bought two new decks of the card game *Esoterra*. New cards, more rules, an advanced game I can hardly wait to play.

In the evening I didn't go to the gym, I don't give a dime about taekwondo, besides Orestes doesn't come anymore. I visited Persa and we played *Esoterra* like hypnotized, under the light of candles for three hours. We both had a whale of a time! After all, this is what life offers me, this is what I relish. Why should I go around like an unfair curse, vainly pursuing things that are never meant for me?

**Ex Oblivion:** An inner truth, which I have always tried to forget, has just recurred omnipotent once again: There is a difference, indefinable but evident, between me and human beings! I neither think nor feel the same as they do, I don't pursue the same things in life as they do, I don't even have the basic characteristics of the human psyche: wickedness, cunning, lust.

All my life I have been feeling like a prisoner in an alien world, inside an alien body. Wherever I go, whatever I do, no matter how hard I try to pretend I am one of them, the truth always prevails and haunts every moment of my life: *I am different from the other people; I am alien, extraterrestrial, extra-dimensional!*

That's why nothing really satisfies me, that's why I never achieve anything, despite my continuous efforts: The terrestrial, human aims in life (studies, business, money, love, perpetuation of the human species) are not for me.

That's why it is impossible for me to mate with a terrestrial man.

That's why, wherever I go, I can never fit in.

That's why no one is ever on my side, not even the members of my family.

That's why I've always been a target: at school, at work, in social occasions, in gyms, everywhere: My "fellow-men" can sense my difference and, since they are herd animals, they instinctively attack anything foreign -let alone extraterrestrial. I've always been alone against everybody.

Happiness is to be in your element, but I am very far from my element. I know I don't belong here, but I have no idea what I am, how I ended up here, or what I've come to do on this earth. I can feel

there is a special "mission" for me here, but I haven't had a specific sign yet. So, I spend my time waiting and finding ways to make my everyday life more tolerable.

The only thing I really wish is to go away, very far from here. This has always been my innermost desire, ever since I was a toddler: to come in contact with some alien race, my race, who will take me away from earth, beyond the galaxies...

### **Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> July 1999**

In the meanwhile, the situation at work is getting worse and worse: Andromache and Gryparis are always bombarding me with offensive remarks and they are constantly complaining about everything. I've begun to believe the two of them have launched a war against me because they intend to make me quit my job; in this case, the company won't have to give me a dismissal pay. Moreover, when Spyropoulos arrives at work in the morning and I greet him politely, he just turns his face away and pretends he can't see me. As usual, I have no allies in there. All my colleagues avoid me and they look down on me.

This morning, Mrs Julia -an old, good colleague- called; I answered the phone -since I am the telephone operator- and she asked for "Andromache?" at once, pretending she hadn't recognized my voice. I put her through immediately, so she didn't have to talk to me at all. Who knows what she's heard about me...

As for the rest, I carry out all my duties in the best possible way. Nevertheless, sometimes I bring pamphlets from travel agencies at work; when I have free time, I riffle through them right before their eyes. Judging by their angry looks, I understand they get furious; especially when I let them know I intend to spend a week in Paris, lots of people make wry faces -and I like it so!

### **Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1999**

This afternoon we had examinations in taekwondo, in Acron Gym. Finally, I managed to take the yellow belt again, although the master wasn't very pleased with me: "Yvonne, you were very nervous; and in the first exercise, you turned your head left instead of right!" he said dourly, as he was giving me -rather unwillingly- the precious belt. I was kinda disappointed; I thought I had done well in the exams.

Later, at home, I recollected the scene in my mind again and again, trying to understand how I managed to turn my head the wrong way, in the simplest taekwondo form ever: We bring the left foot and the left fist forward; the right elbow goes back, the hand in a fist. Then we turn body and head to the right, both arms stretched backwards; then, the right foot and the right fist come forward, whereas the left elbow goes back -and so on. I just wonder: How could I ever turn my body and arms to the right but my head to the left? This movement is unnatural, how did I make it? Did I make it?

"Stop! It is as if they were saying to you: Stop!" my friend Urania said calm, when I let her know all about it.

### **Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> July 1999**

After the taekwondo lesson, Natasha (the blond "leader" of our class) suddenly approached and sought to admonish me, lest my newly-acquired yellow belt might turn my head:

"So, you got the yellow belt after six months of practice! Big deal!"

"It's been four months ever since I started coming here, that is from April!" I reminded her, smiling.

"Six months, six months!" she insisted, supposedly joking.

As about Helena, the "wiz-kid", this time she came to the lesson wearing a black belt, although she hadn't even appeared in the examinations! *Isn't this a mystery...*

***Allegiance - The greatest human virtue:*** The most important prerequisite for success in the human society is allegiance, that is devotion to a hierarchy and its leader. From a very early age, you hear from everybody that you ought to be "useful to society" and think of the others as more significant than you. Naturally, the term "others" is too vague, it can't include all the people of earth. "The others" finally prove to be a specific group of persons: your family, the company you work for, a club, an association, a religious sect, a political party etc.

What they all demand is your mind, your time and, most of all, your energy. They all demand these three things from you: All your mind, all your time, all your energy. Whatever you do or think should serve one thing only, that is the interests of the group. Of course, all groups happen to obey a "leader", so the final beneficiary of your efforts is actually one person -the leader.

The demand for allegiance to a leader is an expression of primitive, brutal force: Those who don't show the expected monomaniac behaviour, are punished with isolation and failure in life. Unless you serve some "superior authority", you can't survive. What you can do and offer is of no importance to leaders; all they are really interested in is your becoming part of the "mass". If you wish to have a place in the human society, you will have to submit yourself sooner or later.

As about me, work has always been the plague of my life. The truth is I hate working in Pangaea, or anywhere else. I hate the job of a secretary, or any other job. Ever since I became an adult and had to find a job, work has been exasperating me, depressing me, frustrating me. Nevertheless, what I abhor most of all is not work itself, but my having to do with every man Jack. I waste too much energy by dealing with all kinds of scoundrels, psychos, ruffians, harlots day in, day out. "And you can do nothing to avoid them! While at work, you are just a sitting duck!" says Mary Skina. Anyway, I shouldn't be serving companies. This is not at all my mission in life...

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### **Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> August 1999**

***Night Adventure:*** Two opposite cosmic powers fight against each other. Their conflict puts the whole universe in danger, so I imprison them in two different magic seals and place them in a special frame on the wall. Two other women help me but one of them eventually betrays us. The seal is broken, the two powers are free again.

My friend and I are prisoners of a bad witch now. We are in a pink cell and we can hear the witch saying that the next room will soon be full of water and she will release a shark in there; then she will open a gap on the party-wall, so that the water and the shark will flow into our room; if we don't allow the sea monster to devour us, the universe will be destroyed by the conflict of the two opposite powers. I know there is a christian spell which could help us, but I can't remember it and I despair.

The time comes, the witch approaches but I still can't remember the spell. There are some people outside, shouting and complaining about the noise, without suspecting the imminent danger.

"You will die, so will the world!" the witch threatens, while through the door pane I can see not one, but two sharks swimming in the next room, which is already full of water.

At that moment, I remember and I burst into laughing. "You are only a dream and I am the dreamer! As soon as I shut my eyes, I am out of here and you can do nothing to stop me!" I say to the witch triumphantly. She looks at me with glassy eyes, probably she can't understand what I mean. The gap on the party-wall opens slowly, lots of water rush in, its flow echoes around threatening. I close my eyes and try to wake up, but I can't.

My conscience hasn't fully returned to this world when I extend my arm towards the standard-lamp, with great difficulty. I try to turn it on but it's impossible. Yet, I have to... Finally, I make it! I wake



up right on time, full of satisfaction and relief. *Maybe I saved a universe tonight...*

### **Thursday-Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> August 1999**

I am on a three-day trip on the island of Agistri, together with my mother and Josef who can now walk freely, without crutches. From the moment we left home, the boy has been a regular jack-in-the-box. His face is always red, he grinds his teeth maniacally and never stops railing at me: "You, senile old woman!" ... "You are evil and ugly!" ... "You, disgusting old spinster!" ... "I wish you never get married or have children!" and so on.

"This is just what I need, to have a child like you!" I say to him at a moment.

"If you have children, they will be retarded!" he retorts full of spite.

As about my mother, she always sides with him: "Shame on you, Yvonne, quarreling with Josef! He is just a baby and he has been through a lot! Just don't pay attention to him, is it so difficult?"

I wonder: How long can anyone endure insults and curses, repeated over and over again, all day long, without losing their composure?

Moreover, the ten-year-old "baby" never stops demanding that we buy him toys, ice-creams, sweets etc, and he swears like a lorry-driver any time we refuse. Whenever we go to a restaurant, he demands we order two or three different dishes for him, so that his majesty can decide which one he will eat. "The eye must be satisfied too!" he says impudently, and my mother is always ready to indulge as many of the prince's whims as possible.

Every time we go to the nice swimming-pool of our hotel, Josef always makes sure to arrest everybody's attention by yelling at me like a lunatic, at the top of his voice: "Now, aunt! Dive now! Now, now, now!" while he trembles all nerves. When I finally dive, he runs (always yelling) and falls right on me! Then he splashes around hysterically, annoying everybody in the pool, while his mocking guffaws echo all around. Sometimes, when my dive is not so good, probably because he makes me dizzy with all the fuss he makes, he shouts and laughs even more loudly until he screams himself hoarse: "Haaaa, ha, haaaa! You've just made a fool of yourself again! Come on, aunt, try again, again, again!" Needless to say, I've become the laughing-stock of the whole hotel; yet, at that time I can't realize what's happening, as Josef keeps guffawing and screaming in my ears continuously. I can't think clearly; I only try to have some fun...

On Saturday morning we depart for Aegina. First we go on a pilgrimage to the Monastery of St Nektarios. After midday we reach my building plot in Kypseli. We are flabbergasted as we find my father knocking around, hopelessly trying to build some kind of "house" there; it is made of tarred paper or something like that, it looks miserable and it stands in the place of the cottage demolished three months ago! What a ridicule! I can hardly believe my eyes! My mother is about to be struck all of a heap! She starts yelling at him and makes him stop at once, while Josef smiles maliciously.

Anyway, I don't really mind about all this, since I don't give a dime about this piece of land. What bothers me most, is a cockerel which has been crowing continuously every since we arrived. At 5:30 in the afternoon the damned bird hasn't shut up yet, and I decide to go for a walk around. *Pity, though... I thought that at such an isolated place I would find some piece and quiet at last; but it seems that a kind of sonic war follows me everywhere...* When I return, at about 7:00, the cockerel is still crowing! I complain about the awful noise, but none of my family members seems to sympathize with my exasperation. Actually, it is my complaining that exasperates them even more! In the meanwhile, I have already decided never to set foot on the island of Aegina again.

Paradoxically, Josef seems to have calmed down here; at least, he doesn't swear at me all the time, it is as if he were in torpor. As about me, I don't feel so well: I have a terrible headache and a fever (in the month of August!) and I know well what's made me sick. These are the worst holidays of my life...

## **Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> August 1999**

Early in the morning I depart for Corfu together with my friend Denia. Frankly, I don't know how I decided to go on this organized trip: I visited Corfu again, with the same travel agency, three years ago. Besides, I have arranged to leave for Paris on the 20<sup>th</sup> of this month, again with Denia. I guess I've been carried away by the desire to escape from my joyless routine as much as possible.

The journey to Igoumenitsa, more than ten hours in a coach, seems to be endless, tiresome, tormenting. I still have a fever, my head is spinning and I can no longer bear the scorching sun on my head. I lower the sun-stop but the Russian bumpkin sitting behind me keeps raising it, and this is repeated countless times until we reach our destination. In the meantime, my nerves have gone to pieces...

## **Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> August 1999**

In the morning we went on a guided tour to Mon Repos, not far from our hotel in Pontikonisi. Then we visited the church of St Spyridon, after that we went for a swim to the picturesque but crowded beach of Palaiokastritsa. As I was swimming in the shallows, I bumped into a woman from our group twice. It happened by accident, I apologized both times, but she complained "We two will keep bumping into each other all the time!" with an attitude.

When the time came, 3:00 in the afternoon, Denia and I were back in the coach, according to the tour-guide's instructions. To my great surprise, everybody had already returned to their seats, before 3:00 pm, like well-oiled robots, and they were all glaring at us. The fat tour-guide seconded two old men who grumbled over our being late.

"Didn't we say we should be back at 3:00 pm?" I wondered, looking at my watch. It was 3:00 o'clock sharp.

"Aah, yes!" she admitted unwillingly and everybody made a wry face.

In the evening my friend and I took the bus to the city of Corfu. We walked around the streets for a while, then we sat at an outdoor cafeteria in the main square, where we exchanged just a few words -Denia has never been very communicative. An Italian gipsy, who was supposed to be an artist, came near and asked for some money for a brief dancing performance she had just given. We paid no attention and she swore at us: "Antipatiche!"

Repulsion. During the whole evening I had been feeling a kind of repulsion, a smouldering yet strong sense of expulsion -as if all those people who were having fun didn't want us among them. We stood up and went away after an hour or so, and it proved to be extremely difficult for us to find a taxi to take us back to the hotel. Moreover, my friend seems to be more boring than usual, while the rest of the group is too hostile. I have the impression from now on holidays won't be what they used to be for me...

## **Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> August 1999**

It is a very special day today: An eclipse of the sun is expected at noon, together with an alignment of the nine planets in our solar system; such a rare concurrence takes place once in 2000 years and many people are afraid of imminent natural disasters on earth.

Early in the morning we follow the litany of St Spyridon, not without some strange obstacles and a certain nervousness; then, all at once, I lose Denia! *Where can she be hiding? The coach is about to leave without us!* I worry and worry, until my friend suddenly appears -right at the last moment; I suppose she wanted to go for a walk alone. Fortunately, some people happen to delay more than Denia, so we leave for Messonghi twenty minutes later. Strangely enough, none of the passengers

complains about this.

When we reach our destination, the driver announces the time of departure; he says we should "wait for the coach right here, behind this wall", and he shows a back street behind us. The beach proves to be mediocre and crowded. When the time of the eclipse comes, the atmosphere seems to be strangely heavy and hazy for a few minutes. As about the alignment of the planets, it escapes notice; nothing extraordinary happens, the end of the world hasn't come -as many feared. Nevertheless, I do feel a weird chill in the atmosphere, a kind of *breach*, an odd inner and outer rupture: *an invisible yet fateful change in the world and inside me...*

When the time of departure comes, Denia and I leave the beach and go to find the coach in the narrow street we were shown. Yet there is nothing there, so we run to the main road hoping to see the vehicle there. We wait at the bus station for a few minutes, yet the coach is nowhere to see. So, we begin searching here and there, full of agony, until we finally find it in a narrow street; we are ten minutes late. As soon as we get in, almost out of breath, the whole group starts booing us! An awful uproar resounds all around us, as we walk to our seats. Some crazy old men shout at top voice, accusing us that "You are always late! You do it on purpose!"

"This is not true! We have never been late before and this time we are because we didn't understand where the coach would be!" I protest, but my voice is muffled by a chorus of hooting, while Denia can't help laughing. "However, this morning as well as last night, certain people were more than twenty minutes late but you didn't have a problem with that!" I go on.

"Come on, nobody was late!" exclaims the young man sitting behind me. He is one of those who delayed our tour this morning.

Then I turn to Denia and I say to her loudly, so that everybody around can listen: "When we get to the hotel, I will explain to you what really bothers all these dandies!"

I am sure many have heard that and got the point but nobody reacts, probably because I've hit the nail in the head.

"But... is this where we were told to wait?" I ask Denia a little later, as the vehicle finally sets off.

"No way..." she wonders too.

As hours go by, I can interpret better the unprecedented feeling of "rupture" inside me: First of all, I can see it isn't temporary; it is permanent. This is how I will be feeling from now on: I can't tolerate them any more. I can no longer bear them. I can't endure their presence. *I mean human beings; I just can't stand them any more...*

### **Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1999**

This morning Denia and I visited the impressive Canal d' Amour in Sidari. We went just the two of us, since this excursion wasn't included in the organized tour. The landscape is fantastic, we had a fine time, yet Denia was always worrying about our losing the bus back to Corfu, and she demanded we leave the beach two hours too soon. First we had lunch at a fast food restaurant, then we had to wait for the bus under the blazing sun for more than an hour.

In the afternoon we went to a beautiful swimming-pool near our hotel. I offered to give swimming lessons to Denia, since she doesn't know how to swim right and she is terrified when she can't touch bottom. Sometimes she gets on my nerves with her ten-year-old mind ("Two fifty-drachma banknotes make one hundred drachmas?"), her phobias (she is afraid of getting drowned in half a metre of water), her inability to communicate (she seldom has anything interesting to say). Nevertheless, she proves to be the right person to go on a trip with! At least she doesn't avoid trying new experiences and she doesn't exasperate me with continuous, silly objections to everything...

## Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> August 1999

*Night Adventure:* A mermaid witch, called Hailey, decides to harm the immortal Triton. At a moment, when he gives Hailey his hand, she spits at it with disgust; strangely enough, this is how Triton becomes mortal. Someone knows and asks the witch: "Why did you do this to Triton?" but she gives no answer. Later on, he stands in the court of mermaids and declares he forgives Hailey. Then I rise and make a positive remark about forgiveness, which will set him free from many redundant future lives...👑

As for the rest: We return to Athens, taking the same endless, boring route. I've come to believe guided tours function in the same way as modern sects, since they deviously impose herding and submission: "You will go no further than there, you will eat at that restaurant, and at 3:00 pm sharp you will all be back to the coach without a second of delay". In this way, all group members adopt the same way of thinking, the same desires, the same obedience to an actually fascist regime. Moreover, organized trips prove to be too exhausting, since travel agencies always make sure to follow the longest possible distance between two destinations. This happens not because they want to satisfy their clients, but because they aim to exhaust and enervate the "cattle"...

## Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1999

Early this morning Denia and I are travelling to Paris by plane, again with a travel agency. By noon we arrive at our hotel, near Republic Square. It's not bad, but I expected it to be more luxurious. Then we go on a cruise along the Seine, after that we reach Montmartre Square, where lots of artists display their paintings, and we also visit the white church of Sacré Coeur.

In the days to follow we shall visit many wondrous sights such as the Palace of Versailles, the cathedral Notre Dame, the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, the Luxembourg gardens, the Champs Elysées and the Arc of Triumph, some castles on the river of Loire, and Disneyland: *How beautiful, fairy-like our cities would be if certain people allowed that...*

All is fine, yet my friend still makes me nervous as she seems to be completely unable to take any initiative or make the simplest calculation: She can't turn drachmas into francs, she can't go around by herself because she gets lost in the streets, and the metro is too confusing for her. This means I am obliged to do all the thinking and explain everything to her, as if she were a four-year-old infant. Strange, though: Whenever we meet in Athens for a coffee, she doesn't seem to be such a retard...

## Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> August 1999

I've decided to go on a special guided tour to Normandy today; Denia doesn't wish to join us, and I am happy to get rid of her childish, helpless mind for a few hours. First we visit the picturesque town of Honfleur, which is full of nice cottages and flowers.

Then we arrive in Dauville, where we'll stay only for an hour. The fascinating town with the luxurious houses and the expensive shops leaves me speechless. As the tour-guide informs us, this is a tourist resort for the rich; many music and cinema stars spend their holidays here. As I walk around the streets, I am surprised to realize that the elite know very well the meaning of beauty and harmony, and they make sure to have them in their cities. Most poor people, inhabitants of awful monster-cities, don't even suspect there are such magical places like Dauville.

When I return to the hotel in the evening, Denia says she has spent the whole day shopping. I am astounded to hear she managed to use the labyrinthine metro of Paris all by herself, without getting lost anywhere. So, she isn't so stupid as she seems; she only likes to depend on others, just like kids do...

## **Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1999**

Yesterday I came back from Paris and this evening I am meeting my good friend Mary Skina - first for a coffee and then for dinner, as usual. I'm never bored of her because she is an interesting person and the only one who's willing to hear about my problems:

"I really wonder, what kind of child Josef is! He must be an evil spirit! He's absorbed all your energy!" she exclaims spontaneously when I narrate my adventures in Agistri.

She is absolutely right about that: The little jack-in-the-box must be a psychic vampire: he is always absorbing energy from people with the incessant fuss he makes (constantly banging doors, furniture, metal stuff, or screaming without a reason) and with all that malice he shows (me) at the first opportunity: "You are ugly and old!" ... "You are obnoxious! I hate you!" ... "You will never find a man!" and so on. I am sick and tired of his malevolent glances, his endless demands, his offensive remarks, his crutches -which he keeps dragging around, so that everybody feels sorry for him. Just his presence makes me feel worn out; I think he affects me -and others around him- negatively, no matter how hard I try to stay uninfluenced.

"You give out an intense negativity", Mary goes on, "because you are always the target of many evil forces, which are too hard to ward off".

Indeed, I often feel as if I were trapped in a gigantic, invisible cobweb; and the more I try to escape, the tighter it is woven around me...

Then we start talking about my relationship with Alice, who has always disliked and looked down on me: "Maybe the most negative force which blocks your life on a material and a spiritual level is your sister!" says Mary and makes me wonder.

I can't rule out that possibility, though; it is true that the star of our family never misses an opportunity to attack me with all kinds of humiliating remarks: "You are so ugly that no man will ever like you!" ... "If I looked like you, I wouldn't go out of the house!" ... "So, you think you still look young? Till when will you look young, anyway?" Sometimes she even confesses she would like me to stay unmarried and childless, so that her brood inherits all my property. Nevertheless, they just can't help abusing and insulting me continuously; they consider me that stupid!

"Your life is a living hell!" concludes Mary.

I don't like the sound of it, but I think she is right -once again...

## **Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1999**

Unfortunately, vacations are over and I am back at work now. Suddenly the bell rings, I answer the door and Mary Bonanos struts in, holding a characteristic handbag from Disneyland! "As I can see, you went to Paris this summer just like I did!" I exclaim surprised but smiling. Mary explains to me that she and her eleven-year-old son spent ten days there in August. She says they stayed in a luxurious hotel inside Disneyland, and then she takes some photographs out of her bag and shows me the fabulous, very expensive hotel!

Then I begin to bombard her with lots of questions, always smiling: "Did you visit the castles on the Loire?" ... "Did you see the House of Magic in Blois?" ... "Did you go to the Louvre?" She answers yes to all my questions, with a sullen look on her face. "Did you also go to Normandy?" At that point she shuts up.

In the process, Mary starts showing all her photographs, one by one, to Andromache and me. Soon I notice she has photographed very few sights. She has mostly posed in front of shops or walls, always sullen, unsmiling, grim. So, despite her high education, the woman is incapable of recognizing beauty. She has hardly realized where she was all these days! Moreover, she gives me the impression she went on that trip to France just to pique me, because I had made sure to inform

all my colleagues I were going to spend a week in Paris! Yet, I've made it clear to her that I did go to France this summer and that I don't give a dime where she went...

## ***Tremors***

### **Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> September 1999**

*Night Adventure:* I can see the earth cracking; black, vaporous, demonic entities come out of the chasm and they move threateningly towards me. I say my prayers hoping to ward them off, but they won't go away. Then I push a plate with some food towards them; they take it and withdraw back to the bowels of the earth. *Verification:* *Two days later, a strong earthquake (6,3 R) rocks Athens, leaving more than 100 dead and thousands homeless.*

### **Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> September 1999**

The time is 2:45 and I am still at work. The bell rings, I answer the door and there appears a skinny, bearded man, together with a little girl. Before he has even said a word, I give him a stern look and I tell him to go to the bookshop on the ground floor and ask for some money -this is what we always say to beggars. The shame I feel is indescribable when the stranger explains he has come to meet Mr Spyropoulos! Soon I find out he is not a beggar but a scholar-monk from Mount Athos -wearing plain clothes, holding an infant by the hand- who has written some entries for the book "The Unknown History of Christianity"!

Frankly, I can't understand how I've made such a blunder! Anyway, this man looks like a modern saint; he suffers the slight with an impressive placidity and he won't betray me to the boss. I guess I was deceived by his humbleness, since nowadays all people act as if they were number one; the polite and modest are considered to be unworthy losers.

Now the time is 2:59 pm. A horrible rumble echoes all around and the earth begins to shake; it trembles violently for eleven seconds that seem to last hours. I stick to my seat and grab my desk scared, as white clouds of dust and plaster smother the air and huge crooked fissures appear on the walls. For a few moments I fear the one-hundred-year-old building might collapse.

When the earthquake stops at last, the building is still standing -fortunately! Mr Spyropoulos is hiding under the big table in the meeting room. He looks funny. Mr Gryparis and Andromache are standing by the door, both dumbfounded.

"Guys, let's go!" I exclaim and the managing director repeats "Yes, guys, let's go" mockingly, as we all rush down the three flights of stairs to the ground floor.

After an inspection is carried out, the building of Pangaea will get a yellow cross; this means it is not habitable until the necessary repairs are made.

### **Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> September 1999**

None of my colleagues on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor comes to Pangaea any more. They all prefer to avoid the "yellow building", so they work at home. Only Andromache and I come and work in the sales department of the book shop, where Mrs Kate Pikros is in charge. I sit next to Demetra, one of the clerks; Andromache is at a desk right opposite me. Mr Gryparis will be in the office of Mr Pikros from now on.

I am very optimistic about the recent developments. My new colleagues seem to be more friendly and easy-going. I believe this is a god-sent opportunity for me, since I've escaped from the hostile environment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, even if I still have to answer phones.

In the days to follow I do my best to show diligence, willingness and adaptability. I even undertake

additional tasks such as filling in customers' cards or running errands for the company. When I express my desire to work for the book shop permanently, the others seem to like the idea. On the other hand, I wonder: *Did an earthquake have to happen, so that I could have better working conditions?*

### **Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1999**

**Night Adventure:** I am inside a moving bus; there is someone sitting next to me and he looks strange and disagreeable. He annoys me all the time, then he says he is going to the dentist. I get off and walk along the road but soon I find out the guy is still near me, but this time he has a gun and he looks dangerous. I run to escape and I enter a door which leads to the house of a big family. I explain to them somebody is after me; they smile and reassure me:

“Don't worry, he won't come here, he is going to the dentist!”

“How do you know that? I haven't told you!” I wonder and then I realize they are his friends, now laughing at me.

At this point the dream becomes lucid: “You can't harm me, because I am a dreamer!” I say to them and I start showing off my psychokinetic abilities, making some objects hover in the air. Everybody is impressed, but suddenly Josef appears and he makes such a fuss that he disrupts my concentration and my psychokinesis.

*Interpretation: Clearly, the dream reflects my life. I never bother anybody, yet there are always cunning persons around me, who make sure to cause me all kinds of problems. I never meet any allies; I am often betrayed by people I consider friends. As about Josef, he often appears as a spirit of disturbance -not only in my dreams but in my life as well...*

### **Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1999**

**Prophetic Dream:** I am in the post office at Syntagma Square so as to receive some money for Pangaea; however, the employees refuse to give it to me because there are some signatures missing on the documents I've brought. *Verification: This morning I am told to go to the post office at Syntagma Square so as to receive some money that has arrived for Pangaea; yet, the employees won't give it to me because there are some signatures missing on the documents I've brought...* <sup>Ⓜ</sup>

I can already sense something is wrong with my new work environment: Certain people drop hints that Andromache and I should leave the book shop and install ourselves in the small, dark, dirty room behind the main stairs of the building. “All of you should go there!” says Mrs Pikros but I refuse to understand, probably because it is still my earnest desire to keep working in the positive - to the moment- environment of the bookshop.

By the way: Mrs Kate Pikros acts the big boss here and gets a tidy salary of 800,000 drachmas per month! Nevertheless, she doesn't do anything more than Demetra (she thinks very high of herself) and Penny (she is Mr Spyropoulos' niece), both of whom get basic salaries. All day long she types numbers on the computer, just like they do; on the other hand, she is married to Mr Pikros, who is the manager of the book shop...

### **Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> September 1999**

**Night Adventure:** I am in a beautiful, exotic beach together with a gorgeous man who has a fine, trained body and long blond hair. The place is wonderful: There are tall palms everywhere, I can see a gurgling waterfall in the distance and the sea is clear and serene. I touch my partner gently and I luxuriate in the peace and quiet of nature. All of a sudden, my nephew Josef arrives together with many friends of his and they make a lot of trouble. Goodbye romantic atmosphere... I wake up with



a startle and wonder: *What kind of being is Josef, anyway?* ⓘ

After a short conversation we all had this morning, my ex colleagues refuse to work in that "derelict, filthy hen-coop" behind the main stairs; they prefer to keep working at home. As about me, certain people demand I install myself in there, but I openly disagree; I certainly wouldn't like to be all alone, or together with that vixen of Andromache, in that rat-hole. Besides, I haven't received such an order from Mr Gryparis.

In the meantime, Andromache seems to be losing patience with me; she is constantly watching every movement of mine and she never loses an opportunity to belittle or slander me:

"Where were you when the earthquake happened?" asked Demetra at a moment.

"I was in my office, Mr Spyropoulos hid under a table, I have no idea where Yvonne was!" she answered full of spite and I was aghast at her nerve and her lies.

"Where were you, by the way?" Demetra asked me a little later.

"At my desk, where else?" I replied but I don't think she believed me.

### **Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> September 1999**

I arrive at work at 9:15 in the morning, as usual, whereas most employees of Pangaea arrive later than 9:30. There has never been a problem with that, since I've always carried out all my tasks properly. This time, however, as soon as Demetra sees me coming, she frowns and starts yelling at me: "Who told you that you are allowed to be so late every day? What are your working hours, anyway?" *I can hardly believe my ears...*

"Everybody in Pangaea comes at 9:30 am and they leave at 3:00 pm -for the last thirty years!" I explain as calm as possible.

"But I come at 9:00 am sharp every day and I can't fall behind with my work so as to answer the telephone! This is your job!" barks Demetra, full of malice.

"But nobody ever phones before 9:30!" I protest.

"The phone lines ring like crazy all the time!" she insists wrathful. She is lying, of course.

Nevertheless, next morning she apologizes to me because "we work together and we shouldn't be on bad terms". Anyway, after the above incident I decide to adapt myself to the new reality: From now on I make sure to arrive at work at 9:00 am sharp and I never leave before 4:00 in the afternoon, since there is always a lot of work to do in the book shop. Anyway, things have changed now: apart from operating the telephone central, typing all kinds of texts and making out invoices, I also have to do clerical work for the sales department; plus, I often run errands. As about a pay rise, it looks like a pie in the sky.

Although I do my best to satisfy everybody in there, I feel worse and worse every day; an indefinable but strong anguish torments me continually, as the atmosphere is getting heavier and heavier around me. I still don't know what's going on, but I have the impression they are all against me for some strange reason...

### **Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1999**

***Prophetic Dream:*** I am at work; Mr Gryparis swears at me and I decide to quit. Right then, Mrs Julia invites me to her office and says everybody here has a lot of regard for me. I can feel she is sorry and I delay my departure by walking as slowly as possible. On my way out, I meet a young woman who looks like Demetra and I tell her that "things would be much different if they had paid some attention to me". "They had logged you out", she replies with a stern face.

As I go up the street, I feel rather gloomy; *It's a pity that job didn't work out; What am I gonna do now?* I think. When I turn to the next alley, I see two dogs lurking for me. They start chasing me, but I finally manage to escape running along a paved road. I still feel sad about losing my job, but I also consider myself liberated.

*Verification: Right next morning, the subtle war against me is escalated by Andromache and Demetra, who play a very dirty trick on me.*

### **Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> October 1999**

I am at my old desk on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor because the computer and the printer are still here and I need to print some pages -this will last no more than ten minutes. Suddenly, the telephone rings beside me. It is Andromache, who says to me in a commanding voice: "Listen Yvonne, let go printing and come here immediately because the phones are ringing like crazy and Demetra can't answer them!"

I run downstairs at once, full of agony, and the two vixens look down their noses at me. That hypocrite of Demetra, who pretended to be good and polite at first, has now teamed up with Andromache and demands I go and work all alone in that hen-coop behind the main stairs because the telephone central drives her crazy, she says. Nevertheless, I refuse to do so and I neurotically insist on working in the hornets' nest of the book shop. The way I see it, they want to dump me in that dungeon because they consider me a piece of rubbish. Nobody else wants to work in there, why should I? No, I won't do them such a favour.

In the days to follow, the environment around me gets worse and worse. I can see, by the looks on everybody's faces, they all hate me. They hardly even say "good morning" to me. Every day, when I arrive at the book shop and I shut the door behind me, I feel as if I were buried in a grave. And all this just because I said I preferred to work in the book shop. Human beings are mad...

### **Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> October 1999**

Early in the morning, before arriving at work, I enter a telephone booth. I dial 109 (drugs prosecution) and I declare the following: "At 24 Tempi street in Ano Glyfada, there is a taekwondo school. They traffic in drugs there! That's it, good-bye!". Then I hang up at once. *Revenge is a dish best served cold and it tastes wonderful...*

As for the rest, nothing extraordinary happens today -just one thing: At a moment Mr Tsamados drops by, all smiles as usual, and informs us that on 1<sup>st</sup> November in the evening all those who have worked for "The Unknown History of Christianity" will have dinner in a taverna in Athens, in order to celebrate the completion (at last!) of the book. The idea sounds fine to me...

\* \* \* \*

### **Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1999**

It is a great day today: The electrician is here so as to make all the necessary connections for my computer to be in the sales department. So, from now on I won't have to run to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor any time I need to type or print something. In the meanwhile, all my colleagues in the book shop seem to have accepted the fact, since none of them expresses the slightest disagreement.

Nevertheless, they all look more indignant than ever when all the work is done, the connections have been completed and the computer is finally installed at my desk in the sales department. "I can't stand another computer in here! We'll all get cancer!" barks Demetra, red with fury. Mrs Pikros stays taciturn, yet she glares at me, probably because the electrician had to disconnect her coffee pot and take it to the kitchen.

All of a sudden, Andromache rushes in and shouts to me outraged: "Mr Gryparis ordered you take your computer at once and go to the room behind the stairs!"

I run to the managers' office and ask if what Andromache says is true. Of course it isn't...

### **Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 1999**

Mobbing against me gets worse and worse every day: All employees in the bookshop never lose an opportunity to give me a raw deal, they charge me with tons of work and they demand it's carried out "yesterday". I don't think I will be able to endure this for long...

At a moment Demetra complains to me about the computer again and Andromache chips in: "Don't say anything, or Gryparis will come and start shouting again!"

However, despite the unexpected support of the managing director, the atmosphere around me is getting more and more hostile. Eventually I understand I was wrong to insist on working in the bookstore, but unfortunately it is too late: The computer is here now, and it would be too difficult to make new connections in another room. What a mix-up...

"If they had been honest to me from the start, I would have known what to do!" I complain to some colleagues who have gathered in the room behind the stairs. "But they are all lunatics!" I add, while Andromache listens and smiles complacently.

Right at that moment, I realize the paradox: All my ex colleagues from the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor have just installed themselves here, in the "small, derelict, filthy hen-coop" which has just been painted and furnished at record time!

"So, you will all be working here eventually", I exclaim astounded.

"That's right", Chris replies enigmatically.

"Which means, you waited for me to be installed in the bookstore for good, and then you all agreed to come and work in here!" I conclude, dropping from the clouds.

As about Andromache, from now on she will be working in another place rented by Pangaea, I hear her say!

Therefore, it is as clear as daylight that all my dear colleagues have played a very dirty trick on me: they didn't want me to be in the same workroom with them, probably because they had received such an order, so they waited patiently for my final decision: if I had agreed to be installed in that room, none of them would come here apart from Andromache, who would spy on me and slander me all the time; But now that I will be working in the sales department, Mrs Pikros will undertake this task -and she is much worse! What a frame-up! And I've been so naïve...

### **Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1999**

Another horrible day at work: I arrive at 9:00 am sharp. Everybody frowns at me and nobody returns my "good morning". A little later somebody calls and wishes to speak to Mr Pikros on the phone. I put him through but the line is suddenly cut off. Mr Pikros appears at once and he is impatient to know who was on the phone. I have no idea, I didn't have the time to ask.

"The typist blew it once again!" says Mrs Pikros with a grim face.

"It's not my fault, the line went dead", I explain calm.

"You don't know how to operate the telephone central! You still haven't learned!"

At that moment Mr Gryparis summons me in his office because he wants to give me something to type. "It's a bedlam in here!" I say to the cashier, as I pass her by. When I return to my desk, Mrs Pikros glares at me and says full of spite:

"I hate brainless typists who can't do anything right!"

"I hate them too!" I reply, as I watch her typing something...

### **Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> October 1999**

Since the beginning of this month, Demetra has been trumpeting forth she intends to leave Pangaea soon. I suspect they want me to do her job as well, as they have already started to show me her work. This means even more responsibilities for me, always with the same beggarly salary and the same incessant war against me. I don't know what to do: If don't quit soon, I will surely face big problems.

At a moment Penny (usually polite, smiling and sweet) approaches, she gives me a huge pack of customers' cards to fill in and says in a commanding voice: "Finish them quickly! You listen? quickly!" Then she walks away and sits at her desk, glowering at me angrily: "Quickly, I said!" while I stare at her bewildered and embarrassed.

That was the last straw. I can no longer control myself. Moment by moment I feel more and more depressed, a torrent of negative thoughts invades my mind, and I only know one thing: I must get out of here as soon as possible.

### **Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1999**

***Prophetic Dream:*** I am in Pangaea together with Andromache and Mary Bonanos. The building is ancient and beautiful, with tall marble columns, mosaic floors and a square atrium with a glass roof. Suddenly I hear someone say that Mr Spyropoulos is dead, while the building is being demolished little by little. *What a pity*, I think sad, as we all get ready to leave.

*Verification:* Soon it will be known that the building of Pangaea will be completely abandoned at the end of the year. The bookstore will move to another shop nearby, whereas the offices will move to a different place - which means my dear colleagues weren't patient enough to tolerate my presence for two more months. Moreover, I hear that Mr Spyropoulos suffers from a rare disease and the doctors don't expect him to live more than three years. That's why he's let Pangaea go to the dogs, taking into account that his milksops aren't capable of running a company...

## ***Exit***

### **Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> November 1999**

Early in the morning, an incredible conjunction of circumstances hastens my decisions:

I get up at 7:00 am, as usual, full of anxiety lest I should be late for work. Due to excessive mental anguish during the night, I haven't slept more than four hours.

I have breakfast in a hurry, I leave half of it on the table and run like crazy to take the bus to Athens.

I have forgotten to renew my monthly pass, and I don't have a ticket.

Nobody at the bus stop has a spare ticket for me to buy.

The bus number 154 comes, but I don't get on it.

I walk along the avenue, looking for a ticket to buy in haberdasheries and kiosks. Strangely enough, none of them sells tickets.

Rather disappointed, I return to the bus station. Once again, none of the people waiting there has a spare ticket.

Nevertheless, I stay there and wait patiently for the bus, determined even to pay a fine in case an inspector gets on and finds out I have no ticket.

Half an hour later, the bus is nowhere to see.

In the meantime, the time is 8:30 am and I begin to worry: *What now? I will be late for work and they will yell at me again!*

All of a sudden, there comes a realization: The above freakish adventure is an ordinary situation for any employee! Indeed, what a "wonderful" way to begin your day until you end up in a black grave, while the sun is shining outside! Inside the grave called "work environment", you are obliged to toil continuously, breathless, obedient and distressed, patiently enduring insults, backstabbing and intrigues from your "dear colleagues" until the sun sets. And this is your entire life, day in day out!

Fortunately or unfortunately, coincidences guide me and I decide: I will neither go to work today nor join the others in that taverna in the evening. I am not at all in the mood for having dinner with Andromache, Tsamados, Parisi and the rest of the ragtag and bobtail who have worked for the "Unknown History of Christianity". Tomorrow morning, as soon as I get to Pangaea, I will go to Gryparis' office and announce to him that I quit my job at the end of the month for personal reasons. I feel this is the right thing to do...

### **Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1999**

As soon as I get to work this morning, I see Gryparis in his office and I inform him coolly that at the end of the month I will leave the company for personal reasons. He pretends to be indifferent and frigid, and he gives me something to type. I don't intend to tell anybody else about it - a type of silent contempt towards all my "colleagues". In the meanwhile, I already enjoy a unique sense of freedom: I no longer care what each one of those dunderheads says, nor do I worry about the consequences of my supposed mistakes.

When the working day is over, I walk along the streets of Athens and I watch carefully the people around me: Their faces are grim, full of anguish, but they look perfectly adapted to the hell of the city: A hell full of dirt, noise, ugliness. But I don't belong here anymore...

### **Thursday, 4 November 1999**

About a month ago I applied for the post of a secretary in an import company. They phoned me this morning and asked me to come and give them an interview in the afternoon. The company is situated in Argyroupolis, not far from my house, but I prefer to avoid it. I am not in the mood for becoming anybody's slave again.

Moreover: When humans try to harm me, my dark side wakes and I suddenly have wondrous ideas! For instance: If those jerks at work cause me any more problems, I will crash their computers with magnets! *Evil to evil is good...*

Everybody gets their own lessons from life. I've learned that work is satanism. Others learn that work is the greatest aim in life. No, I will never regret leaving Pangaea: It's better to live free for one hour than forty years in prison...

### **Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> November 1999**

Another hectic day at work. At a moment Mr Pikros approaches murmuring to himself, kinda irritated because of some recent complications. Before returning to his office, he looks at me and says loud enough for everybody to hear: "It's a madhouse in here! I envy you for leaving, Yvonne!" They are all dumbfounded, while I blush with embarrassment because my secret has just been revealed.

"That's a turn up for the book!" Demetra utters in astonishment.

"I was about to tell you", I reply calm.

"If I didn't have children, I would leave too!" she says mealy-mouthed.

Suddenly, all the unbearable heaviness in the air around me is gone for good. All at once, everyone seems to be relaxed in their vigilance. "So, you are leaving us", Penny says a little later. "And who knows what kind of person will come here!" she adds thoughtful. *You should have thought about this before*, I reckon.

### **Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> November 1999**

Early in the morning a hen comes into the bookstore and wishes to see Mr Nick Gryparis. She says she has come "for the ad in the newspaper" and she is interested in the position of secretary which is about to become vacant - mine. Soon she proves to be the managing director's cousin. Her name is Ann and she claims it was not her relative who informed about the imminent vacancy; she wants us to believe that she just happened to read the respective classified advertisement in the newspaper. Naturally, she is hired at once.


As about me, I will have to train her for the next two weeks. At a moment, Mr Gryparis summons me in his office and he asks me to stay one or two weeks more, so that I can show her the work better. I reply I can't stay any longer, not even for one more day.

This makes me wonder, though: Lots of employees have been replaced in Pangaea until now; most of them were "invaluable executives" such as editors and managers, yet none of them had to train their successor before leaving the company. Why do I, an "insignificant typist", have to give two-week seminars (or even more) to the genius who will take my place?

In the days to follow, all my colleagues in the bookshop do their best to cajole the new employee. They never stop fawning upon her, especially since Mr Gryparis appeared smiling in the sales department the other day and uttered a "hello cousin!" ostentatiously enough for everyone to hear. As about Mrs Pikros, she is always looking for a chance to belittle me before her:

“Ann, I hope you know how to talk on the phone, not like Yvonne who always asks the customers "Are you a bookstore" instead of "Are you a bookseller" which is the right thing!” she said this morning ironically. Once again I acted the fool and I stayed silent. I would rather not cause any kind of trouble till I'm out of here...

### **Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1999**

*Prophetic Dream:* I am on a trip to Switzerland by coach, together with my friend Nineta, her parents and some other people. We see many beautiful places on the mountains, then we visit a big museum and we admire the Caryatids and other antiquities. Later we arrive in a big city; as soon as we get off, Xanthippe insists on our sitting at the nearest cafeteria; we forget all about sightseeing and we obey passively. *Verification:* *In the evening I meet Nineta and she tells me she has travelled to Europe and Switzerland by coach, together with her parents...* 

Ann has followed a course of word processing in a private school and she has worked as a secretary before, she says. I don't have a reason to doubt her, yet I can't ignore the fact that she doesn't even know how to make the cursor move! However, she likes to be a smart aleck:

“I can see you work in a simple way; you don't use any complicated orders!” she told me at a moment. I gave her a stern look and she bothered to explain: “I mean, you do the job fine, but you don't use macro orders, for example!”

“I don't need to use complicated orders; that's why I am so fast!” I answered calm.

*What then?* Revolution is fine, but I have already started to wonder: What happens next? Surely, I will never seek a job in a company again. *If I ever work in an office again, this will mean I am a dead loss indeed, entirely incapable of controlling the slightest thing in my life.* But what are my alternatives, anyway?

Having pondered on various solutions to the problem (I am too bored to mention them) I have concluded that the best thing I could do is become a private tutor of foreign languages -English, Italian and German. I like the idea, yet there are some questions:

- a) How shall I find pupils? Maybe I'll put in some advertisements in newspapers.
- b) Will I earn enough money? I guess I won't find many clients near my home. I suppose it will take me about an hour to go to the pupil's house, the lesson lasts one hour too, plus one more hour to return home - in two words, each lesson will take me about three hours for 3000 drachmas approximately.
- c) How safe is it for me to receive an amount of money every week without giving a receipt (especially during the first year, when I won't have many clients). This job is actually illegal, what if someone squeals on me?
- d) What consequences will I suffer if some stupid kid fails in the Lower or Proficiency exams?

Maybe I am too apprehensive; however it has often proved that *what never happens to others, usually happens to me.* For the time being, I won't look for another job. Instead I will allow myself to relax and be on the dole until September. Then I'll see what comes next. There is no need to panic...

### **Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1999**

The managing director has just agreed to sign a virtual dismissal (so that I can be on the dole) as well as a letter of reference for me -and this is as good as it gets.

Later on, I go to the accounts department and I see Lena, the assistant accountant.

“Really, now” she wonders. “You asked to work in the sales department, together with Kate Pikros?”

Everyone knows what a shrew she is! I've worked three years with her! You can't imagine what I've been through during those three years!"

"How could you endure her for so long?" I wonder.

"I was a heroine! A real heroine!" she answers unsmiling.

As far as I've understood, everybody in the company knows what kind of skunk Mrs Pikros is - everybody but me. I was the only one who had no idea....

"You didn't know; why didn't you ask?" concludes Lena.

Admittedly, it never occurred to me to ask about Mrs Pikros, but I had made clear my intention to work in the sales department right from the start; however, none of my dear colleagues ever bothered to inform me, although they all knew what a rotten egg that woman is.

"Got it! All those years you've worked for Pangaea, you were practically non-existent to them!" Urania said this evening, when we met and told her all about it.

### **Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1999**

Today was my last day at work. When the time came, I made my farewells shaking hands with each one of my colleagues and I hated every moment of that hypocrisy. If it were possible, I would have left without even saying "goodbye" to anyone in there. Rita was the last person I saw, and she was kind enough to see me to the door. This is my last memory from Pangaea.

Right after *liberation*, what I feel is *void*: The seven years I've spent in there now seem to have lasted no more than seven days of a very distant past. Pangaea is already fading away in my mind like an elusive dream, as if it had never really existed in my life. *But where have these ten years gone?*

In the afternoon I got an unexpected phone call; it was from an import company in Glyfada and they invited me to give them a job interview for the position of a telephone operator. This job is certainly worse than the one I've just quit and I have no intention of going from one prison to another. Besides, I feel I can no longer endure the everyday anguish of "*Let's run or I'll be late at work*" or the endless "*Yes, Mr Boss, pigs can fly Mr Boss!*"

It seems to me that fate reacted immediately to my decision for liberation, offering me this "job opportunity" right on the day of my escape! But I have changed now: I am not going to run into a dark hole like a scared mouse, in search of some doubtful security...

### **Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> December 1999**

Strange, maybe fateful end of Millennium: Persephone has invited me to New Year's Eve dinner tonight, so as to welcome the new millennium together. There is a celebration all over the earth today - music, songs, joy, festivals everywhere.

We have roasted steaks with wine for dinner, while the television is on, broadcasting phantasmagorical festivities from various countries of the world: Fireworks, dancing and singing, smiling faces - all humanity has become one. However, I can feel a vague, strange sadness hidden within all that universal joy - the deep, unmentionable sorrow one feels when they know that the years of innocence are gone for ever...

Finally, Persa and I play "Esoterra" full of passion, and hours will pass in unique excitement: At this very night, the game has a different meaning inside us, as we both experience it as a paradox, magic ritual. What a wonderful way to welcome a new year, a new century, a new millennium...



## *Awareness*

### *Who am I?*

I am 36 years old.

I haven't got a husband. I've never had one.

I haven't got any children. I will never have any.

I haven't got a career anymore: After fourteen years of work, it has come to naught.

I haven't made a fortune: I haven't bought a house, or a car, or a boat, or a cottage. Nothing. Never.

I haven't got a social life: All my "friends" are nothing but boring misfits; and I know they won't be my friends for long.

Therefore, within these 36 years I've been on earth, I have accomplished absolutely nothing -which makes me feel wonderful! More than ever I feel like an alien who has fallen on Earth. For some strange reason my spirit has been trapped in this bleak world, where human beings strive continuously to conquer everything, pollute everything, destroy everything. They don't have a problem with that: They enjoy "the struggle for survival", "workloads", "family burdens", "responsibilities", and they work hard every day so as to make a world a worse place. On the contrary, I am here to walk in the sun courageously, whereas the human masses toil in sunless dungeons called "workplaces".

The fact is I abhor what humans are: A demonic entity with billions of faces. A Monster. I can feel a strong will for human destruction growing inside me. It is not focused on specific persons; it is the idea of total annihilation that enchants me. The most genuine feeling I've ever had in my whole life...

### **Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2001**

Psychic experiences and night adventures are fun but they do not fulfill me any more. I do need something else, something more powerful, more effective; having pondered on it for some time now, I think I know what I have to do -starting from tonight.

In the evening I take my bike and go on a long ride to Helioupolis. As I return to Glyfada, the sky behind me is full of heavy, orange-gray clouds; there is also a lot of thunder and lightning, but no rain. The storm seems to be following me all the way and the atmosphere is unusually ionized, enchanting. I don't even dare to wonder; I just feel great.

....

### *The Supreme Rite*

Place: My study room

Time: Friday, at midnight

Preparation: I have already made an effigy of the Monster Humanity; it is of black cardboard and it looks like a dark monster consisted of five tentacles full of eyes; the central big eye and the five ones around it are green -non human. The rest of them (human) are black, blue and green. The five tentacles represent the five continents of the world.

Setting: The "altar" (a small wooden table) faces east. At its centre I place the "crater" (an old, copper brazier) with the cardboard effigy of the Monster inside it. Behind the "crater" there is a lit epitaph candle; in front, on the right, I put a small bowl of water; on the left, a clay pot with some soil in it. The "fire sword" (a big knife with a black handle) lies right in front of the brazier.

Atmosphere: I open a window; I warm my hands by rubbing them together. Then I take the "fire

sword" in my right hand and find the right emotion inside me: Wrath.

Finally I begin recitation in a strong, firm voice; words come out of my mouth spontaneously, as if they were always buried somewhere inside me, finding a way out at last:

*I, Yvonne Fezarris,  
born on the day of the Black Sabbath,  
I summon you, Uriel,  
the Light of God,  
the Great Archangel of Earth,  
the Keeper of the Key to the Underworld  
Turn and look at me!  
Turn and listen to me!*

*For the astral worlds being endangered,  
for the natural kingdoms being destroyed,  
for the whole Universe being tainted,  
I, Yvonne Fezarris,  
born on the day of the Black Sabbath, command:  
Death to the Monster Humanity! (three times)  
Now I, Yvonne Fezarris,  
gather the Power into this Sword!*

I take the candle, I raise it together with the knife so that the blade touches the flame, and I continue:

*Now I, Yvonne Fezarris, have the Power to annihilate  
the Monster Humanity  
Death to the Monster Humanity! (three times)*

I lower the "fire sword" (flame and knife) and set the cardboard effigy on fire. I watch it as it burns to ashes, slowly reciting the *Ode*:

*It is too late for you all, who are One;  
the Light will wipe out your species,  
the Air will dispel your ashes,  
the Water will wash away the human taint,  
the Earth will swallow your filthy works.  
Soon it will be  
as if you never existed,  
Never  
Never  
Never*

When the fire is out, I break the burnt effigy into pieces with the blade of my "sword" and I throw the ashes into the lavatory-pan. Then I empty the "altar", leaving only the "fire sword" there; at the centre of the table I place a statuette of an angel, as a symbol or a new, chaste world. Now I take the "sword" in my hand again and recite the *Hymn*:

*So the astral worlds are shining again,  
So the natural kingdoms are growing again,  
So the Universe is chaste again:  
The Light has wiped out their species,  
The Air has dispelled their ashes,  
The Water has washed away the human taint,  
the Earth has swallowed their filthy works.  
Now it is as if they never existed*

*in the wondrous new world  
I behold with the eyes of my soul.*

....

Perfect. Just perfect.

I feel wonderful as I hold the "fire sword" in my hand, uttering the above spells, watching the Monster Humanity being burnt in my flames. A unique, unprecedented sense of fulfillment surges within me.

! While the *Supreme Rite* lasts, I feel a pleasant warmth all around me. When it is over, for one moment only I can make out a gray shadow vibrating under my desk.

I can't watch TV after that.

I can't read magazines or books after that.

I can't occupy myself with trifles after that.

### **Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2000**

Last night I had a night of insomnia: Mixed feelings of worry, doubt, guilt, fear kept me awake for many hours. However, the truth is I haven't read the *Supreme Rite* in some silly magic book. The whole idea has come out of my own soul, as a result of my experiences on Earth so far, energized by the rottenness of the so called "human beings". They are responsible for my enlightenment, they are to blame for everything that will happen from now on.

The *Supreme Rite* is the culmination of my life, the destiny I've been seeking for decades. In fact, my whole life has been leading me to it. Therefore, I have nothing to fear, no intervention of any invisible avenging forces. On the contrary, I feel I have inner guidance, as well as protection from superior spiritual entities. I can feel I am no longer alone. Revolving these thoughts over in my mind, I eventually managed to calm down and fall asleep.

At dawn I was awoken by violent, deafening thunder and lightning -as if the heavens were open! They went on for hours -maybe the loudest and wildest I've ever heard- filling my soul with an unprecedented excitement.

?! *As I hear on the TV News in the morning, there was an explosion in a big disco in Tahiti last night, right after I had finished the Rite! It was probably caused by terrorists, they said. More than 200 dead. I just wonder..*

?! *A little later, an extra news bulletin informs us the following: Scientists have just revealed that in the year 2020 a meteor is expected to crash on earth! The explosion will have the power of a thousand atomic bombs! They are all very worried but they hope to be able to change its course with nuclear missiles when the time comes.*

Fantastic! This is what it means to "invest in the future"!

### **Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2000**

**Night Adventure:** I am flying over an exotic beach, watching high tidal waves coming nearer and nearer, threatening lives and fortunes. The first wave arrives, then a second one -which is even higher. Some people run out of the sea so as to save themselves, while others just stay there indifferent, waiting for the end passively. Later on, I listen to the news on TV; the speaker says that no matter how much money is offered, the losses in southeast Asia will never be retrieved.

*Spontaneous interpretation: There will be a terrible natural disaster somewhere in Asia pretty soon...⤴*

?! Late at night, an earthquake of 9,2 R near Indonesia causes a huge tidal wave which kills many thousands of human beings. It was caused by the collision of tectonic plates and its epicentre was at the depths of the Bay of Bengal. According to scientists, it is one of the most powerful earthquakes ever. The whole planet has been affected by the earthquake and the tsunami: The island of Sumatra has budged by 28 metres; The axis of the earth has shifted a little; the whole earth rings like a bell; more earthquakes are expected sooner or later, because of the domino phenomenon of the tectonic plates. The worst natural disaster in the history of mankind, some experts say; it is an undeclared World War Three, others claim.

***What's most incredible:*** A similar natural disaster signals the beginning of the end for mankind in my unpublished novel "Nemesis", which I wrote fifteen years ago:

Nemesis: a) page 23: a gigantic tornado appears at the depths of the Bay of Bengal, b) in the year 2000, c) page 24: about half a million casualties, d) a huge tidal wave flooded the coastlines of India, as well as the islands of Andaman, Nicobar and Sri Lanka e) the name of the protagonist is Andon Barrens, f) page 25: Could the mysterious explosion of the nuclear submarine "Coolidge" have caused the tragedy in India?

Reality of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2000: a) The epicentre of the earthquake was at the depths of the Bay of Bengal, b) in the year 2000, c) there will be 350,000 casualties in all, d) a huge tsunami flooded the coastlines of India, as well as the islands of Andaman, Nicobar and Ceylon (ex Sri Lanka), e) On the island of Andaman there is a volcano called Barren, and it has been erupting for two weeks now, f) Some experts claim the earthquake was caused by nuclear tests carried out by the Americans.

In conclusion, the above mentioned coincidences prove that my novel "Nemesis" is prophetic.

As about me, I experience an unprecedented sense of tense excitement; I feel more satisfied and complete than ever, having finally found and fulfilled my destiny.

So, I don't wonder anymore; I know.

This is just the beginning.

This is the beginning of the end for mankind.

THE END