

♠ **DIARY OF A HUMAN TARGET**

Book Two:

The Path Towards the Inside

written by

ISIDORA VEY

♣ **Copyright © 2015, Isidora Vey**

All rights reserved.

This book may not be reproduced,
in part or in full, digital or otherwise,
without prior written permission from the author.

This diary is a work of fiction.
Any similarity to persons and events
is entirely coincidental.

♠ Phase Five: Metaphysical Quest

Spring 1990

Years pass by very fast, I am almost 27 now and I have hardly realized I am that old. At this age, I should have already sorted out where my life is leading; however, there is no progress in any field, and there never will be -I know. Let's face it, there is nothing here for me. Therefore, I think it is high time I did what I have been postponing for years: *Take the path towards the inside...*

From the beginning of March I have started to attend parapsychology lessons in a school of spiritual development called "Janus". Although it is in Kypseli, very far away from Glyfada, I am eager to go there once a week, defying the exhaustion from the double bus journey to and from Athens: Since I still work in my office near Omonia Square in the mornings, every Wednesday -when I go to Janus- I spend six or seven hours of commuting in all. However, I don't mind because I feel there are new spiritual horizons opening for me there. The fact is that metaphysics really excites me, and it is the first time in my life I am excited about something.

The lessons include teachings of the guru Alexander Romanos regarding the evolution of the soul, the domination of the subconscious in a man's life, methods of relaxation and meditation, the awakening of telepathy and so on. The guru is gifted with a lot of eloquence, he knows well the art of persuasion, he is said to possess psychic powers, and he doesn't hesitate to go against the dominant dogmas of metaphysics. For instance, he doesn't believe in the theory of karma -in contrast to all the other schools of spiritual development.

We have already learned a *basic technique of relaxation*, which can be applied either sitting on a chair or lying in bed, as long as the spinal cord is kept straight: In the beginning, we relax our body from toe to top, giving the respective mental orders to each body part separately. For instance: "My feet relax" ... "My calves relax" ... "My thighs relax" ... and so on, to the head. Then, always mentally, we countdown from 10 to 1, ordering ourselves to relax after each number -for example: "10: I relax, I relax" ... "9: I relax deeper" ... "8: Deeper and deeper" ... "7: No external noise interrupts my relaxation" and so on, till you reach 1. When we reach zero, we enter the "void space", where we let no thought or feeling come inside us. We stay there, in absolute tranquility, for as much time as we can.

Alternatively, after staying in "void space" for a while, we choose a subject and meditate on it as thoroughly as possible, taking into account events, thoughts, feelings, ways of action; after the awakening, we write everything in a notebook. By following this specific technique, the subconscious gets clearer and clearer; later on, as we keep practicing, the unconscious reveals itself too, unfolding great cosmic truths which could lead even to enlightenment.

The awakening is done by counting slowly from 1 to 5, while ordering ourselves to wake up with all our senses on the alert. After the number 5, we open our eyes and stand up at our ease.

When we finish the lesson, some of the guys gather together and we go for a coffee to Fokionos Negri Square, where we discuss lots of controversial but interesting subjects: parapsychology, spiritual development, magic, social matters, etc. Some of us meet on Saturday nights too. I can barely believe what's happening to me: It is *me* who goes out every Saturday night, having fun in tavernas, cafeterias and

pubs, together with an interesting, large company! I experience and enjoy my new reality to the fullest, even if sometimes I feel that the atmosphere around me is strangely tense...

From the company of Janus I especially like Apostolis: He is 25 years old, tall, slender, calm and sensible -unlike most guys I know. I show him my interest at every opportunity, he doesn't seem to respond but I, as usual, refuse to acknowledge the bitter truth. Only once did he accept to go out with me, just the two of us, because he thought he could persuade me to take out a life assurance policy by the insurance company he works for; I pretended to care only because I hoped I could start dating him. Another time, I phoned him and suggested our going to the cinema together. "I have other plans for today", he answered flatly. Since then, any time we meet together with the others, he looks rather buttoned-up towards me but very friendly to Danae, who is eight years younger than me and much richer. Nevertheless, I still hope...

Friday, 29th July 1990

Every year "Pangaea" remains closed during the whole month of August, which is very convenient to me: I won't have to fight in order to get my summer leave! I have already arranged to spend a week abroad: I will go to Dalmatia with a travel agency and the group leaves tomorrow. Of course, first I finished typing all the texts given to me, I delivered them to Mary Bonanos yesterday (she happens to work for Pangaea too) and I explained to her I wouldn't be able to type any more this month -that is, they will have to do without me for three days. She bore no objection, since the company is about to close, anyway.

This morning, however, I had an entirely unexpected phone call; as soon as I picked up the receiver, I heard a very angry woman's voice telling me:

"Listen, Yvonne, I am Mary from Pangaea and I am furious at you! You left us three days before the end of July, while there is still so much work to do! And don't forget that I was the one who talked to the bosses and they hired you as a typist!"

For a moment I was speechless; then I answered calmly that "I thought there wasn't so much work to do and that I could leave..."

"What are you talking about? There are whole volumes of our new encyclopedia waiting to be typed! You hear? Whole volumes!" she interrupted, outraged.

"Yes, but I'm leaving for Yugoslavia tomorrow! What can I do?"

"Find us another typist, one who can sub for you during these three days that you won't be working for us!"

"Alright, I will try" I replied hastily, just because I wanted get rid of her as soon as possible.

"And make sure she is educated, not an illiterate one, you understand?"

"Yes, alright..."

I thought about Mrs Georgia, a schoolmate in Janus, who also happens to be a typist. I came in contact with her at once, I told her all about it and asked her to visit the company tomorrow morning. She expressed her wonder about the whole story, she was even worried "But what if they hire me and fire you?" but I insisted on her going there, because I didn't want to displease Mary Bonanos and the bosses of Pangaea.

Wednesday, 10th August 1990

The trip to Dalmatia proved to be a fiasco: The group consisted of some boring old people, and the

primadonna was a black-dressed middle-aged shrew who wouldn't miss a chance to show off her knowledge in everything, while the others were admiring and applauding her. The only company I managed to find was a 42-year-old divorced lady with her 5-year-old son. She told me she had two adult daughters as well, and that she had given birth to that boy so as to keep her aged lover -yet he got away. So, the lady was always in a bad mood, she didn't have much to say, but she dropped me certain hints every now and then: "I don't know if you are still in the market, but I am not", or "Do you mind your that you didn't get married?" -as if I were some 50-year-old spinster.

Moreover, I was unlucky enough to share the room with an old neurasthenic who swallowed the sleeping pills by the dozen, yet she couldn't get any sleep and when the morning came she started complaining to me:

"Aren't you ashamed at all? You look at your watch, at 6:30, before the day breaks, then you put it on the bedside table and the noise wakes me up! Shame on you!"

"Eeeeh, I'm sorry!"

"And you snore all night long and you don't let me sleep!"

The hen got on my nerves with her hysteria; first of all, I don't snore; then, every morning we had to be at the foyer by 7:00, ready for the tour of the day.

After a couple of such incidents, I went to the reception and asked to be given a single room, but there were no such rooms in the hotel, I was told. I complained about that to the travel agent, to no avail of course, everybody in the group got wind of the situation, and in the end they were all fond of the old neurasthenic, while they looked askance at me.

Anyway, I saw some beautiful places as well: Herceg Novi, Kotor, Cetinje, Mostar, Dubrovnik, Budva, Saint Stephen. However, the good impressions were blemished by the four exhausting days (two to go and two to return) in the small but packed ship...

This morning I phoned Georgia and asked her about her collaboration with Pangaea. To my great astonishment, she informed me that they didn't need her at all and that they were surprised to see her!

Monday, 3rd September 1990

Pangaea is open again for the first day after the summer holidays, and I went to find Mrs Bonanos in her office.

"How are things, Mary?" I asked smiling. "Did you have any problem during those days I was away? I sent you another typist, like you told me on the phone, but she said that you didn't need her at all!"

"What? I never phoned you!" she replied astounded.

"But you called me on the 29th of July and you said that..."

"It wasn't me! It was probably Mary Skina!"

Right at that moment, Mary Skina happened to enter the office and, full of joy and laughs, confirmed it was her who had phoned me!

"So, it was you," I told her solemnly. "I thought it was Mary Bonanos, that's why I was worried! You introduced yourself as "Mary from Pangaea", and your voices are alike..."

"Oh, no, it was me!" she repeated, with an innocent smile on her face.

If I had known it was Skina on the phone then, I would have acted differently and, of course, I

wouldn't have involved Georgia. Mary Skina is an old maid who works as a typist inside the company; she is a little nutty, she tends to overreact and all she thinks about is how to do as little work as possible. She is not to be taken into account...

* * * *

Tuesday, 1st January 1991

Like every year on New Year's Eve, last night we played cards after dinner, according to the custom. When my turn came, I cut the cards and Alice started sharing them; I suddenly thought of an ace of hearts and I got an ace of hearts! A few moments later, I had another *premonition*:

"Let's see who will share next! Who finds the smallest number will!" said Costas, cousin Niki's husband, while shuffling the cards.

Antony, who was sitting next to me, got an ace.

"Is it an ace of hearts?" I asked.

It was an ace of hearts.

Later, as we were playing the game "twenty-one", I managed to guess the cards I received first in every round: ten of spades, three of diamonds, two of hearts, four of spades instead of four of wands, six of diamonds instead of six of hearts. For a few seconds I could see them being shaped on the white wall opposite me! However, after a while my telepathy started to wane and I could no longer guess right...

Sunday, 6th January 1991

Last night I went out with the guys from Janus and we went to Plaka for crepes. I am still interested in Apostolis, he is always fascinating, and maybe he cares about me: Many times his legs touched mine (casually?); all at once he took my hand in his so as to have a look at my ring, as he said. However, deep inside I know nothing else is going to happen...

Yesterday I didn't hesitate to talk to my friends about my doubts regarding Alexander's teachings. How shall I follow the way of apprenticeship, unless I trust the guru completely? I even explained to them my recent suspicion about an imminent mutation of the human species. All these things we do -meditations, telepathy experiments and the like- what are they if not attempts to transcend nature? Besides, if those "doors" should be open, would they be so difficult to open?

The point is I have already started to question the "traditional metaphysics" most spiritual masters stand for. After all, nothing can be certain: Meditation and relaxation techniques guarantee no results, no matter how often someone practices them. "Do not expect any specific result" says the guru again and again. What should we expect, really?

Spiritual leaders talk a lot and they all say the same: They show contempt to the world of matter and they propagandize abstinence from any demonstration of life: "Don't talk, don't protest, don't judge, don't desire, don't be happy, don't be sorry, don't be angry, don't be afraid, don't even think!". Of course, I don't believe it is possible to achieve this condition of non-existence while living, but I can't imagine what purpose such ideals serve. All these "wise men", with their suspiciously confusing teachings, give me the impression they hide something. Sometimes they use rhetorical tricks to taunt their disciples, sometimes they just say nonsense, other times they deliberately say and unsay just to cause agitation -and all this contrary to the old saw: *Those who know don't speak; those who speak don't know*. Real knowledge isn't taught anywhere. Only personal experience can lead to real knowledge. Second-hand knowledge is good only for devout stooges who like showing off their allegiance to a master...

Wednesday, 9th January, 1991

After the failure of the negotiations in Geneva, the situation in Iraq is getting worse and worse. A million of American soldiers are ready to go to war. The Greek warship "Lemnos" has departed. The Iraqi threaten to strike Israel and they refuse to leave Kuwait. Some fear this war could become a world war. Yet, I suspect all this has been premeditated and planned in advance -just like everything else in the world.

All at once the future looks bleak, as it is getting clearer and clearer how little we can really control our lives. The average citizen's existence depends mostly on the whims of the elite. Maybe Alexander is right when he says that nothing really ever changes: our few liberties have not been "gained with fight" -as we like to believe- but granted by the elite because it serves their interests for the time being. However, if they suddenly decide that a different policy serves their interests best, we shall lose all liberties immediately -and nobody will dare protest. As we are approaching the End of Times, there is no progress in any field: We tend to postpone whatever we want to do, and if we finally do it, it brings no significant result. Strange, though: I thought this was a characteristic of my life only...

Wednesday, 16th January 1991

When I went to Janus this afternoon, for the first time after Christmas holidays, I found out that my class no longer exists. Most disciples have "moved up" to the advanced class of Tuesday, although the guru had claimed something like that would be extremely difficult: "If someone fails (*in what, really?*) two or three times, they won't move up!" were his words. Nevertheless, Manolis changed class just because his working hours don't allow him to come another day. As about me, I wasn't admitted to the advanced class because I didn't show enough self-confidence, says the guru. I also need to listen more, he claims, since "good disciples have no beliefs of their own, they obey the guru in any case" -and this is not what I usually do.

Anyway, very few of my old class will remain in the "retarded" group of Thursday, and I am one of those few. Really now, are all those who were admitted to the advanced class so much better than me? Something is wrong here. I believe Alexander chooses the "advanced ones" with only one criterion: how obedient they seem to be towards him. I also suspect I am not wanted here, probably because I sometimes question the guru's teachings openly. Maybe those persons I consider my friends go and tell Alexander everything I confide to them...

Tomorrow is Thursday and I will go to Janus again, this time in my new class. I shall see who's left in there, I shall feel the atmosphere, and soon I will decide if I will keep on attending Janus or find another school of metaphysics.

Thursday, 17th January 1991

This evening there was a heated argument at Janus, regarding the war in the Persian Gulf: The allies of America keep bombarding Iraq relentlessly, while the Iraqi don't react anyhow. They could have intercepted many blows but, strangely enough, they didn't. To retaliate, the Iraqi are bombarding Israel; however, there are very few victims, mostly because of their own negligence or panic. Israel could have intercepted the missiles but it didn't- why?

"They are preparing something else, something a lot bigger; maybe Iraq is to be sacrificed for the game of the Great Powers, which is just beginning. The Apocalypse is coming, as most "signs" have already appeared: Global environmental pollution, war in many countries, forest fires everywhere etc. Moreover,

most ancient prophecies agree: Everything will end in 1999," claims the guru passionately.

Anyway, Alexander got on my nerves again: When I raised my hand and tried to express my opinion about the war, just like many others had done before me, he interrupted me scornfully saying the subject was over -right at the moment when I started talking. He didn't answer to what I said, nor did he let anyone else reply. He just sought to shut me up in a rather offensive manner. He doesn't like me because I don't worship him as a god, like many others do...

Saturday, 19th January 1991

No meditation today. It is impossible for me to find a moment of quiet in this house! It is weird, though: Any time I try to meditate, there is always some noise which prevents me from relaxing enough - even during the hours of peace: Alice's naughty children come in and out of the house all the time; neighbours yell outside; there is loud music -and so on. Not even in the bus can I relax, as there are always certain persons near me who make a lot of noise: Some chat at top voice continuously; others clatter their keys in a most ostentatious manner; others play with their string of beads maniacally; it a never-ending *sonic war*...

Monday, 4th February 1991

This evening my class had a celebration at Janus, and it so happened it was also Alexander's birthday today. For this reason we bought him a huge birthday card, where we all wrote our wishes. Instead of a present, he asked to be given some money because, as he says, he prefers it to a meaningless consumer gift.

We made a buffet and we all sat down on our hunkers, after we had removed the chairs. Only Alexander sat on his chair near the window and, under his guidance, we had a team psychoanalysis based on our sexual preferences and fantasies: Danae admitted she has been thinking about becoming a lesbian, due to her disappointment from men; Theano declared her first sexual relationship was with a woman; Christos confessed that his first time was with a man! Conclusion: We shouldn't judge the others according to a label, because we aren't so different as we think. For example, we have all had homosexual relationships or fantasies. Under certain circumstances, anyone can do anything.

Then there was a long discussion about matriarchy, and Vanessa was the leading lady. Alexander wasn't such a misogynist as he usually is. I said that "In our patriarchal society a woman can't develop her innate intuition, because man plays all the roles: he develops not only action (male) but intuition (female) as well. A woman can't be a real woman in a patriarchal society; it is as if she didn't exist at all." Paradoxically, the guru didn't hasten to interrupt or contradict me this time; he only smiled enigmatically.

Then, we played "Courage or Truth". That sex-bomb of Aphrodite chose "courage" and she was riding for a strip-tease. Finally she was left only with her underwear on, and she could barely help disposing of it too. At the end, as she was getting out of the circle, she "accidentally" dropped her bra. Christos, who is quite good-looking, chose "courage" too and he was given two minutes time for a strip-tease. One minute and 45 seconds later he had only taken off his shoes. Yet, within the last 15 seconds he managed to take off all the rest, with fast, accurate, professional movements! He has a fine body indeed but... what was that really? A demonstration of liberation or what? His girlfriend, who is in our class too, complained that "The level of the class is getting lower and lower". Then, it was Aphrodite again who chose "courage" again and this time she had to make a declaration of love to Vanessa. Finally she made it clear to her that "I want to have sex with you!" and dropped her jacket on the floor with a theatrical movement.

When my turn came, I chose "truth" -so, I was bombarded with questions:

“Why are you so absolute in your opinions?” asked Mary, who belongs to the guru's close circle.

“I am not absolute in my opinions.” I replied.

“What disappoints you most?” asked someone else.

“Hypocrisy”

“What gives you joy?”

“Young children make me happy.”

“Do you believe there is love in the world?”

“There are different kinds of love,” I answered diplomatically.

“Do you lead a happy life? What would make you feel complete?” asked Vanessa.

“In general, I consider myself happy; If I achieved inner tranquility and spiritual ascension, I would feel complete.”

“What are your dreams?”

“I want to become rich and famous!” I joked, and that's when Alexander intervened:

“Do you want to become very rich and very famous?” he asked, while he was folding a napkin in four.

“Yes,” I replied fast.

“Pinch here,” he said and urged me to cut off a little piece from the spot where the napkin was folded.

“Are 50 million drachmas enough for you?” he asked then.

“No,” I answered.

“Pinch a little more,” he said and I obeyed.

“How about 100 million?”

“No,” I joked on.

“Pinch again!”

After a few more questions, we reached a satisfactory sum of money: “Are two billion of drachmas enough?” he asked cunningly.

“I think they are enough!”

“Pinch a little more!”

After I had done so, Alexander unfolded the napkin. In its centre there was a huge hole. “This is what your ass will look like, by the time you are rich and famous, you poor thing!” he concluded tauntingly. Everybody burst into laughing, and so did I.

But that was not all; there were some more questions for me:

“How often do you make love?” Danae asked me.

“Often enough,” I replied calmly but not sincerely.

“What was the size of the biggest and the smallest penis (!) you have ever dealt with?” Vangelis asked then, with a cunning look on his face.

“I don't measure the length of my lover's penis,” I answered calmly.

“Why did Vangelis' question shock you?” asked Alexander then.

“The question didn't shock me; yet, I found it strange,” I explained.

Really now, how should I have reacted to such a question?

All in all, the celebration was interesting, amusing, constructive. It was, maybe, the most pleasant social event I have ever been to. “If only Alexander weren't here,” joked the guru at a moment.

Thursday, 7th February 1991

Lucid Dream: I am climbing a tree, so as to escape from rhinos and other beasts chasing me. Up there, I decide to meditate. Almost immediately, my body starts to hover but it is two-dimensional, as if inside a film, while I am trying to discern various scenes taking place behind a black veil. Suddenly, I am being carried away into a dark spectral tunnel. I am afraid, I want to resist and I finally manage to return to the original dream, up on the tree. I wake up with difficulty and anxiety...?

Tonight, at Janus, my class carried out a *telepathy experiment*: Alexander put an object on the reception table, right outside our classroom. Then, we all relaxed, reached the “void space” and tried to “see” what it was. Many of us guessed almost right: the object was a white candle in a candlestick, placed on a small plate. I “saw” something oblong like a stick, with a cross on the upper part, standing on a circular base. Alexander considered it a success. He also told me that as he was passing by me during the relaxation exercise, he felt something like a shiver or an emotion...

Saturday, 9th February 1991

I have arranged to meet the guys and go to a Chinese restaurant tonight. I do have fun with them, going out with friends is a new experience to me, yet neither this time shall I avoid the usual hardship: I leave home at 19:40 and go to the bus-stop. Until 20:00 there is no bus to be seen. I take a taxi and get off at the bus-stop of Helioupolis. From there I take a bus to Athens. Ticket inspector. I find out, luckily before it's too late, that I have left my monthly pass at home. I get off quickly, I get on another bus and I finally make it to the centre of Athens. From there, I get on a third bus and arrive in Kypseli. Then it's a five-minute walk to Fokionos Negri Square, where our venue is. At least, I am on time: I meet my friends at 21:00 sharp.

Time to return: I take a taxi to the Columns of Olympian Zeus, in Athens. I am hardly on time to get on the 1:00 o' clock bus, which has its terminus in St Tryfon. From there I have to walk about fifteen minutes, in the middle of the night, while a drunken old man is following me, raving and vomiting, until I finally reach home.

Indeed I wonder: Is all this fuss worth the while? Are these guys really my friends? Yet, they are my only choice for a social life. What else could I do? Stay at home and watch TV? Never mind... Enjoy it while it lasts...

Sunday, 10th February 1991

Night Adventure: I am reading a beautiful poem about someone who travels all over the world and has lots of experiences, seeking the meaning of life. Finally, he returns home, near the fireplace, in tranquility and simplicity. The last verse I remember is something like “and then, the thoughts are coming...”. All of a sudden, the piece of paper goes away and I wake up...?

Today my parents were absent from the afternoon till late at night, because they were invited to dinner by old relatives. I wasn't in the mood of going too, so I stayed home alone and enjoyed some

precious privacy. When my parents are around, I have the impression of being constantly watched. Especially my mother observes every move I make: how I act, how I talk, how I listen to music, even how I blink -and she complains about everything. Her situation is getting worse and worse, she likes nothing about me, probably because I am still single. Luckily, I will soon be living in my own house...

Thursday, 28th February 1991

Sensational news, piece one: Although she is an excellent pupil, Persephone has just quit school, just a few months before finishing the third class of Lyceum, because she is sick and tired of studying, she says. Anyway, I suspect there are other reasons too: In all probability, her classmates have been making fun of her because of her excessive obesity.

Sensational news, piece two: My sister has recently had the bright idea of opening her own gym, in partnership with Milena, her best friend. With what qualifications, really? Neither of them is a professional gymnast! As about the huge capitals requested for renting the building and buying the equipment, wealthy Milena is willing to spare a certain sum of money, while penniless Alice wants to sell her house! Of course, since neither has a degree from the Physical Education College, they won't be able to get the necessary license, which means their gym will be illegal! Nevertheless, my parents don't even think of saying "no" to the princess. They always yield to every demand of hers, no matter how preposterous it is!

Anyway, this idea will finally be abandoned because Milena's parents (obviously more sensible) won't agree to spend so much money on an illegal enterprise. Thank God...

Sunday, 3rd March 1991

Night Adventure: A vast desert is gradually converted into an ocean, by use of magic, nuclear stations, special missiles, strange machines. There are lots of people at the beach now, and I am amongst them. I can hear a nice song coming from headphones: "In the Eye of the Hurricane".

After a while I am inside an immense ship of the future. Not everything is ideal in here: Thousands of people perform specific, slavish tasks for endless hours every day, and they all follow an identical way of life. I am watching a beautiful brunette, for whom the electronic computer has prearranged to live thousands of years, by alternating heads on different bodies. I find this perspective rather bleak...?

Premonition: In the second chapter of my new novel there is a protagonist called Rhodes, who steals 11 million units from a rich man; later, I change those 11 million units to 15 million. In today's episode of my favourite TV series, one of the main characters was called Rhodes, he mentioned a sum of 11 million pounds and 15 years of prison...

Tuesday, 12th March 1991

Aphrodite, the vivacious blonde who happens to be my classmate in Janus, has expressed the desire to know me better, as I was informed by Vanessa. So, this afternoon the three of us arranged to go for a coffee at Victoria Square. Aphrodite narrated some incidents from her life, which show she is gifted with innate telepathy. She also suggested we three should make a team of parapsychology experiments. This is not a bad idea! She is impulsive, maybe light-minded, but not cunning -as some others are. Later on, she invited us to her house, where we performed a *telepathy experiment* by using the Zener symbols. I didn't manage to concentrate, I only got 2/20; Vanessa got 4/20 and Aphrodite 7/20. Anyway, it's been years since I last had such a good time with friends.

The point is I feel a lot more comfortable with these girls, than with the others. When I am with Vanessa and Aphrodite, I speak more freely and I feel happier, since they accept me as I am; with them I can be myself. There is no problem among us, not even when I question the guru's theories; they don't believe in him blindly, either – in contrast to the others, who become hostile whenever I express the slightest doubt about Alexander's teachings, let alone they ridicule everything I say. Aphrodite and Vanessa don't make me act nervously or gibe stupidly at my own words -things which always happen when I am with the others. *In the long run, we become what the others want us to be...*

● *Dead Ends*

Monday, 18th March 1991

I can no longer ignore the facts: Once again, my job is reaching a dead end. The distance St Tryfon - Omonia Square is getting longer and longer because of the increasing traffic jam. It takes me about two hours to get to work every morning and two more hours to return home in the afternoon.

Moreover, I don't have many clients and there is almost no work during the summer months. As about Pangaea, they haven't given me a pay-rise so far, while their texts are getting more and more time-consuming, as they are rather illegible and full of corrections; therefore, the money is not satisfactory any more. On the other hand, the basic expenses (electric current, social security etc) are increasing, and so is competition: More and more free-lance typists appear every day, opening new, luxurious offices equipped with expensive computers and Xerox machines. Naturally, clients prefer them to me, since I still work on an electric typewriter in a small office. What can I do? I can't even think of looking for a miserable office job in the Classified Ads. Is there a way out? Why is always so much stagnation in my life?

Saturday, 23rd March 1991

I went out with the guys yesterday evening. First we went to a creperie, then to a pub in Glyfada. I invited Aphrodite to come with us, but I'm afraid it was wrong: First of all, she delayed us a lot because of her negligence or frivolity; then she nervously monopolized all conversations, mostly saying nonsense. That was not the Aphrodite I know; maybe she was trying too much to make a good impression on the others. The fact is she can't fit in this company, and neither can I.

Besides, I'm getting more and more certain that something is wrong with these guys: Firstly, they always phone and invite me out just one and a half hour before the meeting time – which means I hardly have the time to get ready; as if they were doing it on purpose, hoping I would say "sorry, I can't come because it's too late for me now". Moreover, their behaviour towards me is usually enigmatic or, even, hostile. Yesterday Danae was ironic to me because I gave her back the negatives of some photos without their paper envelope; yet, when she gave me those negatives, she told me she didn't care about them at all. Apostolis joked he would have a child with me only if I paid him one million drachmas; Manos laughed mockingly.

On the way back, at 1:30 o'clock after midnight, I asked Danae to take me in her car (five persons in all) and leave me at St Tryfon Square -barely a five-minute ride. She frowned and complained that the car was too small to carry five persons! I was ashamed and spoke no more. I am sure Danae doesn't like me at all, and I bet there is a lot of gossip behind my back. I don't think I will go on that trip to Chios with them next week...

Most people are ghosts: Last night I cried. Truth hurts, especially when you decide to face it after many years of delusion. Something is wrong. Everybody ignores me. This is and this will always be the main problem of my life. All the rest are just natural consequences. Everybody acts as if I didn't exist at all: When I am in the company of others, they either don't let me speak or interrupt me as soon as I start talking -as if I hadn't even begun speaking. My opinion is never taken into account, or it is shrugged off immediately, without the slightest explanation. Whenever I manage to speak openly to friends, I usually

regret it at once, since every word I say is misunderstood -as if I were speaking a foreign language. I feel alone in the world, with few contacts only. To be precise, my only contact is my mother, with whom I do have some communication. Actually, she is my link to the human society...

When I am with others, I always feel a strong sense of alienation. Alien. It is always the same, no matter how I describe it. All people around me seem to be having a great time, spontaneously taking part in all kinds of entertainment. To me, such things have always been an ordeal. Everything seems boring and meaningless to me, because I never find any external response: I write books which will never be published, even if I were willing to pay. At work, I have no say; I am always the typist, just a cog in the machine. I try to accost certain men I like, but they never pay any attention to me. All my life is limited to a strictly personal field of action. Whenever I try to reach the others, the result is a complete failure.

No matter what I do, it is like shouting in the desert. The desert. This is the real face of my world. People come and go, voices, parties, laughs, throbbing life – but there is nothing here for me. Everything looks too distant and fictitious. All these “fellow-human beings” that surround me, could as well not exist at all. *Maybe they do not really exist; they come alive only for a few deceitful words and an enigmatic smile, then they fade away like ghosts. Most people are ghosts, probably dangerous ghosts...*

Saturday, 30th March 1991

Yesterday evening I set off for the island of Chios, together with my friends Apostolis, Danae and Manos. As soon as I arrived at the port of Piraeus, problems started to appear: The ship with the cabins, in which Apostolis had made reservations, proved not to be going to Chios at all! I definitely wanted to stay in a cabin, since it would be a ten-hour night voyage, so we asked in another ship but there were no cabins left! “Will you come with us, now?” Apostolis asked me, as I was standing before him with my baggage in hand. Strange question: Would he prefer my not coming at all? Finally, we all travelled together on the deck, under my woolen blanket, “like a big, happy family”, as Danae joked.

This morning, after we disembarked at the port of Chios, a new misfortune was awaiting us: Soon we found out Apostolis' parents had changed the lock to the front door of their house, without his knowing; so, we had to wait in the car from 6:00 to 9:00, for an uncle of his to wake up and give us the new keys. I couldn't help wondering: couldn't Apostolis wake him up a little earlier, given the circumstances? Did we really have to wait in the car for three whole hours?

Anyway, despite our heavy drowsiness which lasted all day long, we had a pretty good time today: We saw the Mansions and the Monastery, and then we went for a walk along the seaside. Late at night we met some cousins of Apostolis in a nice cafeteria at the port.

Sunday, 31st March 1991

This morning we visited the New Monastery (Nea Moni). The landscape is wild but fascinating, studded with gray rocks and ruined medieval houses. *I am so close to him, and yet so far... So wonderful, yet so sad... Could it be better this way, for some strange reason?*

When the night came, I dreamt of George Franzis: We were drinking coffee together in a cafeteria, he looked gorgeous, as always; we were having a wonderful time together but, when I asked to meet him again, he refused! *Interpretation: Probably George Franzis signifies Apostolis (they look alike), with whom I go out as friends, but he doesn't want anything else from me...*

Holy Monday, 1st April 1991

In the morning we visited Daskalopetra and took photographs in front of the big rock where Homer is supposed to have been teaching. Later, we had lunch in the seaside town of Lagada; When we finished and got out of the restaurant, I asked the guys to take a photo of the small picturesque river, full of small boats, which flows into the sea. They all refused in unison, suggesting “we should leave it for tomorrow, when there will be more light.” However, on the way back to the city of Chios, we stopped the car in the middle of nowhere in order to photograph a couple of blue church domes in the distance. There was “more light” there...

Later, at home, Manos questioned a saying of Nietzsche written on Danae's diary. The lady just burst into tears (she is just not accustomed to being questioned) but soon she got over it. Later, we had a discussion about life after death, and I was naïve enough to declare that I can't feel sorry when somebody dies. “It seems to me you are a blockhead!” Apostolis told me, supposedly joking. Anyway, I didn't burst into crying.

Holy Tuesday, 2nd April 1991

Once again we had lunch in Lagada; this time we went to a taverna, where we ate fish and had a nice time. Yet, neither this time did we photograph the river because it was “dirty” and “very ugly”, as they all said mockingly. Nevertheless, on the way back to the city, Apostolis asked Danae to stop the car, again in the middle of nowhere, so that he could take some photos of sea-gulls down at the seaside, about 300 metres away. “It's no big deal” I dared say and Danae applied the brakes all at once, stopping the car near the precipice. By the time we were out of the vehicle, the birds had flown away, so there were no photos taken. Anyway, it is now crystal clear to me that these persons don't take me into account at all, because they put me down as a complete idiot.

In the evening we went to the port and bought the tickets back home. Although I had explained to Apostolis I wished to be in a cabin this time, he mentioned nothing about it to the travel agent. Manos laughed mockingly and I didn't protest anyhow...

Holy Wednesday, 3rd April 1991

Return to Athens, that is ten endless hours of absolute boredom in the chill of the night. Nevertheless, I am experiencing an awakening as I am now here, all alone on the deck, while the others are crouching on their chairs of the economy class, after a brief quarrel I had with that wiseacre of Manos: It all began when the gentleman mocked that my jacket had been reduced to a “dusting cloth”. Then, I went to the bar and took a cup of coffee; as soon as I returned, he told me tauntingly:

“Be careful or you will spill it on us!”

“Now that you say it, it could as well happen! It's a matter of basic psychology! You claim to know a lot about psychology, so I suppose you know this too!” I replied.

“Oh, don't start again!” complained Danae.

Moments of truth in absolute silence: These guys are certainly not my friends, and they never wanted me to join them on this trip. Not only during these days, but also whenever we meet in Athens they constantly make fun of me, they treat me as if I were a retard, and they ridicule every word I say.

It's high time I cut down on jokes and confessions to these persons, and I won't ask them the slightest favour ever again. For the time being, I will keep on seeing them, since I still need a circle of friends to go out with -but I won't be the same anymore: I will be serious, reticent, a diva.

Holy Thursday, 4th April 1991

Night Adventure: Alexander is angry at me and he is chasing me along the streets. He knows I am not loyal to him, since I keep my own ideas instead of obeying him completely. In the meanwhile, my parents have discovered everything about my interest in metaphysics and Janus. While running, I end up at the edge of a steep precipice. The guru is approaching threateningly, and I am beset with agony.

At that moment, I realize I am dreaming; I am looking at my hands, according to Castaneda's instructions for lucid dreaming, yet everything looks blurred and the sun is setting fast; however, I finally manage to fly away before Alexander catches me. *Interpretation: Guilts and fear for the guru; or, maybe, a psychic attack of his against me? ?*

In the afternoon cousin Niki, together with her husband and her two daughters, paid a visit to my sister. I, as usual, ran to join the party, ignoring the wry faces. At a moment that smart aleck of Costas said he got married young because he didn't want to lose his time and his life aimlessly; then he added that "singles suffer from softening of the brain" - a clear innuendo against me. I felt bad but I pretended I hadn't taken the offense. I guess, from now on I had better avoid parties consisted of couples...

Monday, 8th April 1991

I have been feeling the need of living alone lately. There is no peace and quiet in our house: As soon as I return from work and wish to relax and have a nap for an hour, here comes my sister with her two sons -both handfuls aged two and six now- and she parks them here, till late at night. Therefore, I explained my parents that I'm too old to be still living with them and that I need some privacy; then I asked them to inform the tenants of the first floor we want the apartment for ownership-occupancy.

"But... is this the right time for such initiatives?" wondered Antony, as soon as he heard about it. I can't say he is wrong: We won't be getting a rent any more, the times are hard indeed, but what can I do? I need to have my own space.

This afternoon my parents finished moving house. So, from now they will be occupying the first floor, while I will be living alone at the ground floor. When the night came, I watched an American comedy on TV. I laughed differently, freely, exuberantly. Alone at last!

Saturday, 13th April 1991

Night outing to Plaka together with Apostolis, Danae, Costas and Manos. We had dinner at a creperie, then we started looking for a pub. We searched all over Athens, but the lords liked none; we reached Glyfada in Danae's car, we searched again, to no avail. I decided to invite them to my house, so as to save the night. They accepted but they all looked enigmatic, as if hiding a secret or something. Danae suggested we should do a relaxation exercise, they all agreed happily (which got on my nerves; did we really have to?), then there was still and quiet, then we chatted till three o' clock in the morning. I think they are all obsessed with the guru. At a moment they claimed they couldn't understand what I was saying, but I avoided to ask why and how; instead I kept my mouth shut -much better this way...

Saturday, 21st April 1991

The Sum of all Crises: Apostolis has gone steady with Danae! Last night, when we all went out together, as soon as I saw all those gestures of intimacy between them, I dropped from the clouds! I've

never felt so miserable in my life! Their happy smiles and touches of affection, as they were walking hand in hand, caused me an insupportable feeling of jealousy for a happiness I am never meant to experience! As they said, they decided to become a couple the night of the 13th April, when I invited them to my place! They went steady inside my house!

I feel disappointed and supplanted, however I know well that the curious thing would be if Apostolis had preferred me instead of Danae. The truth is I am not attractive as a woman, since my body is still too thin, without any curves. On the other hand, there are other women who are a lot uglier than me (for example short and obese, full of rolls of fat under their skin), yet they marry the most handsome men. Besides that, my behaviour has no “feminine grace”: I never resort to mincing or simpering, it doesn't come natural to me; on the contrary, I often present interests unacceptable for a female, such as parapsychology, life after death, the multidimensional universe etc, and men hate me for this. However, neither this can justify my loneliness, since the world is full of vixens who inspire crazy passions, despite their awful character.

I would say there is an unconscious, mutual repulsion between me and men: They dislike me and I avoid them spontaneously. It seems there is a mysterious, invincible power inside me, which prevents me from having relationships with men, and the older I get the more I trust this power. Anyway, I've never had strong sexual desires: I have never pursued sex, I haven't masturbated even once in my whole life! I used to have some sexual fantasies with men, but they are getting rarer and rarer. They just don't come to me any more. In fact, I often think how simpler, clearer, nicer life would be, if sex didn't exist at all!

Thoughts like the above lead me to old, forgotten realizations: *I do not belong to the human species*. I am something different, and this alien nature of mine is getting more and more apparent, day after day. In all likelihood, this is the deepest reason why the human herd always has always been so hostile against me, constantly trying to keep me away from their world. Contrary to what Alexander trumpets forth, not everything can be explained according to “engrams on the subconscious”. Especially my case is entirely inexplicable: what is natural for humans, is not natural for me and vice versa! *I do not belong here. I have fallen to Earth, God knows where from...*

Sunday, 5th May 1991

Night Adventure: Inside a dimly lit corridor there is a black metal chair. At the centre of the seat there is a round hole. The chair doesn't have a back; instead, it has a metal staff which ends in a helmet. People come and go continuously along the corridor, without noticing the chair. Only seldom does someone sit on it; then, the metal helmet descends to their head and puts them to torpor. In the end, the person is melted, absorbed and lost inside the hole.

A team of researchers, amongst whom I recognize Apostolis, try to find out why people disappear in that corridor. Of course, nobody suspects that a piece of furniture is to blame. However, there comes a time when nobody walks along that corridor any more. The chair is left all alone in the corridor, thinking: *When will a human being come here, so as to keep me company? I feel so lonely; maybe, someday I will find somebody who's like me...*

Thursday, 23rd May 1991

This evening we performed a *telepathy experiment* at Janus: While meditating, I “saw” an empty vase, almost round in shape. The object Alexander had chosen and placed on the reception table was an empty vase of oval shape...

After the lesson, Vanessa, Aphrodite and I went to a fast-food restaurant and discussed all kinds of

interesting subjects, but mostly we expressed our doubts about the spiritual teachings which propagandize the so-called “*breaking of the Ego*”; they remind of medieval obscurantism, since they prohibit any question regarding the guru's authority.

Anyway, I wonder: What is really achieved with “breaking the Ego”? I talked to the girls about an experiment I have recently carried out with myself: I took care so as to feel, think and act according to Alexander's teachings, that is without the slightest vestige of selfishness. Pretty soon I started to ignore all my interests, needs, desires, emotions, because -according to the guru- “all these things satisfy the Ego, so they are contrary to spiritual development”. The result: If I had insisted on this for a few more days, I would have had a nervous breakdown, I would have even started thinking about suicide! Moreover, my self-esteem had diminished to a minimum: I had begun to believe that I was good for nothing and that everything I did was pointless since it served my own satisfaction. I was sinking deeper and deeper into apathy and that looked like liberation -at first.

All things considered, what can this fallacy of “breaking the Ego” actually cause to the human soul? Probably, it destroys other things too, apart from selfishness. Maybe it bears a serious danger for the soul itself; perhaps the ultimate purpose of all religious systems is the disintegration and fusion of souls into something else. Apart from obedience to an “authority”, all these systems claim that: “When you finally achieve to break your Ego, then other, superior energies will come inside you” ... “When there is no Ego, man unites with God”, and so on. I don't know, but this sounds like a method of demonic possession: *What really comes inside, when there is no Ego?*

Saturday, 29th June 1991

This evening we are expecting visitors, namely aunt Mary from Piraeus, together with a would-be groom whom she wishes to make me a match with. For this reason, following my mother's stringent advice, I have been to the hair-dresser's, I am in my best togs and I have made my glasses scarce.

The bell rings, we answer the door and a big group of persons appear at the threshold: apart from aunt Mary and the “groom”, there is cousin Diamanta and the bloke's mother, holding a cake as a present. At first sight, the guy doesn't seem to be a bad case: His name is Michael, he is tall, lean, well-dressed, he looks kind and, as far as we know, he has a permanent job in a big company. Yet, his face is kinda ugly, it has the shape of a slipper with a huge nose in the centre. “Never mind, he is okay; whenever you two do it, you will put a pillow on his face and everything will be fine,” jokes my sister.

We all sit at the living room, we have a pleasant conversation, the atmosphere is positive; at a moment I dare put on my glasses so that I can see faces and things clearer. I only hope the spectacles won't repel the would-be groom. Finally, we arrange to meet again next Saturday.

Saturday, 6th July 1991

The great day has come and aunt Mary insists on my calling on her, at her house in Piraeus, many hours before meeting Michael. I accept willingly, although I can't understand why. I arrive there at about 3:00 o' clock in the afternoon, and she welcomes me happily; we have a long, spirited discussion, and she finds the opportunity to offer me some discreet advice about how to seduce the “groom”. Anyway, time goes by pleasantly till it is 5:50 o' clock, when Michael turns up and we both leave in his car.

To my great surprise, instead of going directly to a cafeteria the two of us, the bloke informs me he is invited to a colleague's wedding at 6:00! Therefore, I have to follow him to church, attend the wedding ceremony of a total stranger, and wait in a long queue so as to congratulate the newly-weds. When this is all over and we are ready to go, here comes one of Michael's colleagues, a dark-skinned disagreeable guy,

and sticks to us like a leech. He suggests we all three go for a coffee and Michael agrees immediately.

“Sorry, Yvonne; I couldn't imagine something like this would happen!” the "groom" excuses himself in a low voice.

So, the three of us go and sit at a nearby cafeteria, where we have a rather boring conversation. At a moment, I try to start a more interesting subject, mentioning that the traffic jam in the streets is getting worse and worse. “Oh, so you think a lot!” says Michael in genuine wonder, as if witnessing a rare phenomenon. In the meanwhile, his friend has probably begun to get wind of what's going on, and he looks at us askance.

... I had no objection to meeting the “groom” again and showed it to him clearly. However, he won't come in contact with me ever again. I suspect that the only thing he wanted from me was to show me off to his colleagues as a girlfriend.

Monday, 15th July 1991

Despite the fiasco of my first book, in mid-April I finished my second fantasy novel, titled “Final Nemesis”. I phoned the publisher Halaris and told him about it (before realizing he had been stringing me along), but he didn't even deign to have a look at it: “You work too much; don't think you will be famous so fast!” was his answer.

After a lot of personal research, and having watched a relevant reportage on TV recently, it was finally clear to me it isn't easy at all for a new writer to be recognized. New authors take it as granted that they will pay for the publication of their first four books at least; as the about royalties, they are usually close to zero, even for the most distinguished writers. Therefore, seeing there was no other way to have the job done, I decided to pay for the publishing expenses of “Final Nemesis”.

I went to numerous publishing houses asking about prices, but they all wanted 500,000 drachmas (eight monthly salaries) for a simple paperback book; they refused to put the name of their firm on it, and as about distribution, it was out of the question. Only the typographer Jim Marcopoulos, Chryssa's boss, accepted to print my book at a price of 250,000 drachmas only; as about my cousin, she reassured me the book would be “very nice, very fine”.

Today, however, when I was invited to the printing house so as to see the final product, I found out it has nothing to do with what we had agreed! First of all, the cover is just a simple photo of a picture painted by me; it hasn't been computer processed, as we had said, and the result is rather poor. As about the interior, the paper is too thin, almost transparent, the letters too small, the lines too close, the margins too narrow. This is not at all what we had agreed! Even I, the author, find it too difficult to read this thing, let alone a reader! Nevertheless, I paid the agreed sum without making the slightest complaint...

Monday, 16th July 1991

This morning the situation got even worse: I had to collect the 1,000 copies of this unacceptable book and somehow transport them to my office, no further than 500 metres away. For this reason I had to find a taxi; I stood on Pireaus avenue for about twenty minutes, but it proved to be abnormally difficult to find one since, strangely enough, all taxis went to the opposite direction! Finally, I decided to act cunningly: I crossed the road, I stopped a taxi, I got on and told the driver to stop outside the printing house for a minute, without explaining why. As soon as he saw the ten packets of 100 books each he would have to carry in his trunk, he almost got a stroke! Next moment, when I explained to him he should change direction and head for Omonia Square, he looked at me sadly, without even finding the courage to protest.

Finally, as soon as we reached Omonia Square, he told me to get off, refusing to drive 100 more metres to my office!

Consequently, I had to leave the ten bulky packets alone in the middle of the Square, and run to my office so as to get a small trolley I happen to have there. This trolley could hold no more than two packets of books, so I had to repeat the itinerary five times in order to carry them all. In the meantime, hundreds of passers-by watched my hardship in wonder, however the only thing that mattered to me then was to finish the job as soon as possible. Eventually, I managed to carry all ten packets to my office without losing any...

● *Distractions*

Thursday, 8th August 1991

Yesterday I returned to Athens after 17 days of vacations in England, where I went together with my father and one of his sisters, aunt Tassia. We stayed at Temple Fortune, a suburb of London, at aunt Miranda's house. We decided to go there on occasion of cousin Thelma's wedding.

In overall, I had a fine time: In the mornings we visited parks, museums, and other sights of London: Madam Tussaud's, Rock Circus, the Tower of London, London Dungeon, St Paul's Cathedral, Windsor Castle, etc. One night we went to the casino, together with Thelma and her husband: I played roulette and lost five pounds in five minutes. Yet, I liked the environment: Luxury, devoutness, controlled tension. Since I didn't have any more money to play, I stood by the roulette and concentrated on number 11; The ball hit 11 twice, three times it hit the number next, almost every time it hit two or three numbers away from 11...

The afternoons were rather boring: I had nothing to say to all these well-to-do, conceited relatives – they didn't pay much attention to me, anyway. Especially aunt Tassia wouldn't miss a chance to express her contempt for me (“You look like a loser!”) and her admiration for my sister (“Alice is a fly customer, a go-getter, the devil incarnate!”). Moreover, we slept on the same bed, she snored continuously like a chainsaw, and her huge bulk (150 kilos) almost pushed me out of bed. I hardly got any sleep during those 16 endless nights...

Tuesday, 20th August 1991

There was a bad accident this morning: My sister and her friend Milena, together with husbands and children, went on a day trip to Catramonison, a small island off the coast of Voula, in Antony's boat. The men were absent for hours underwater fishing, while the women and children were having fun at the seaside.

At a moment, little Josef hid behind some boats in the shallows and started swallowing sea water without being seen by anyone. When they found him, he had already lost his senses. Fortunately, someone had a speedboat, so they managed to take the kid to the Aesculapius Hospital in Voula in time. When my parents and I got there, Josef was still unconscious, Alice was weeping and wailing, and Antony was threatening her furiously: “If the child dies, I will kill you!”. Finally the infant came to himself but he was diagnosed with pneumonia, so he was transferred to the Children's Hospital in Athens, where he will stay for a few days.

As soon as we returned home, the telephone rang: It was Lucas Zafirakis and asked me if I could “pop down” to his office in New Smyrni, so as to help him with an urgent job! “I can't pop down, because we had an accident this morning and my two-year-old nephew almost drowned” I replied. So, Mrs Dina came here and brought a two-page text for me to translate, because the boss considered his new secretary incapable of doing that. I finished the translation quickly, Mrs Dina paid me, and that was the end of it. It was a strange *coincidence*, though, that Lucas happened to need me urgently on this very day...

Saturday, 31st August 1991

Mum and I are on the island of Salamis, and we are going to spend the whole weekend at aunt Mary's cottage. Six-year-old Yanni is with us, and he is always a handful. Why did my mother insist on dragging him along? Can't she live two days without my sister's spoilt children? Anyway, we are having a good time here: We go for walks in the village or to the seaside and we have lively conversations in aunt's spacious veranda.

In the afternoon, as the kid and I were walking along the earthen road, we heard loud folk music coming from a neighbour's cottage. As soon as we were right outside that house, we heard a deep man's voice on the radio: "Hello Yanni, you young toughie!". We both laughed spontaneously at the *coincidence*. In the distance, up on the mountain, I could discern Mary Psomiades' cottage, where I spent a carefree week in the summer of '77...

Friday, 9th September 1991

Night Adventure: I am in a fast-food restaurant together with my friend Lena, but I find the waitresses' behaviour strange: They serve Lena immediately but they ignore me entirely. As time goes by, I get more and more nervous; I protest again and again, but they always tell me "Just wait a sec". A waitress is sitting at a table nearby and all she does is stare at me with an ironical mien.

"Why aren't you serving me?" I ask her.

"Just wait a sec," she answers mockingly and I get angry.

"I'll go somewhere else to eat!" I say and get up.

I am out of the restaurant now, but I suddenly change my mind. *Why should I always be the victim?* I think. I go back and demand to see the boss. The waitresses refuse to lead me to him, so I go up the stairs alone; I reach a spacious white room, and I find the manager's dark office. Yet, I hesitate to enter, I just walk past. *What shall I achieve, anyway? He won't pay any heed to me,* I think.

Going up some more steps, I enter a big bedroom with many white partitions. In there, the managers fuck the waitresses and I catch them red-handed. *I could blackmail them with this,* it occurs to me, but they all stand up at once and they start chasing me. I run fast and get out, to the balcony, through a small window. Two of them come too close and I have to fight hard in order to neutralize them. Then I hide behind a wall; the enemies think I have jumped down, so they lose me. I run across a dark place which looks dangerous, and I finally end up on a tiled roof. The sense of adventure makes me feel great.

Next moment I jump down to a narrow stone alley and run along it until I reach the wooden door of an old edifice. Hearing some of my persecutors approaching, I decide to knock on the door. A tall, middle-aged man appears at the threshold. "I am tired from travelling and I would like to rest for a while," I excuse myself. He allows me to get in, and I see it is an old-time saloon with wooden furniture, full of smoke and shady patrons. Nevertheless I feel comfortable, as if I were in my element. I sit at the bar and I am offered some stale cookies powdered with caster sugar on a saucer. The napkins are dirty, probably used. There is a black-dressed, sluggish guy sitting nearby, and he is staring at me with his glassy eyes...

Interpretation (all my life in an allegory): I always try to fit in the human society, but for some strange reason I am not accepted by the "servants", so I stay out. Recently, however, I have changed my way of thinking: Instead of fleeing, I seek to find the "boss", so as to complain and clear out the situation. Yet, I soon realize those in power won't take my side, since they "fuck" their subordinates; on the other hand, "servants" put on airs because they are fucked by the "bosses". Moreover, they realize I know what's going on, so they persecute and fight me. I can see that a frontal attack won't do me any good: they are numerous and I have no allies. That's why I hide wherever I can, although I am nowhere really safe...

Thursday, 26th September 1991

At about six o' clock in the morning I start a relaxation exercise in bed. As I fall into the "void space", I feel energized enough to attempt an *astral projection*: I instinctively envisage two bright lights performing circular, parallel, adverse orbits in the air; as soon as they reach the two opposite points of their orbits, I can feel a strong airstream pulling me out of my body. I come out violently, from head to toes, gradually but fast, and I hover above the bed for some seconds. I want to fly away, yet I return to my physical body instead. I try to "get out" once more, but I fail. I can only "see" my astral body being elongated and it looks rather strange. Then, all of a sudden, I am in another house with white walls. The astral projection has been reduced to a simple dream...

Friday, 27th September 1991

This morning I did another relaxation exercise; it lasted forty minutes, but it gave me the impression of lasting no more than fifteen minutes. It was right after waking up, when I suddenly sank into the "void space" and spontaneously started an *astral projection* -once again: My astral body sat up, but I couldn't detach my legs; yet I could see it, spectral and white, from all sides, even from behind! Then, I felt a cold but pleasant airstream coming up and down my spinal cord – a wonderful sensation which lasted only a few moments. I tried to open my eyes but it was impossible. All at once I found myself inside my physical body and I woke up...

Wednesday, 2nd October 1991

This afternoon I had an appointment with Harry, who is number two in Janus after Alexander, and talked to him about the two astral projections I had last week. Deep inside I wished to impress him and get a more specific astral projection technique from him.

However, he told me there aren't such techniques and he advised me not to pursue experiences of the kind, because I am not ready yet and I might get obsessed. The only thing he wasn't opposed to, was my changing a lucid dream into self-hypnosis, reaching the "void space" without trying to cause anything.

Then he explained that "Experiences which start from dreams are nothing but figments of your imagination. It all happens because you fear the real world; you feel unable to face certain situations, that's why you seek refuge in the world of dreams. You resort to your imagination a lot, but this can prevent you from advancing in metaphysics because it offers pleasant fantasies. Moreover, fantasies satisfy your Ego! So, you had better avoid them!"

Therefore, I must restrain my imagination, quit fantasies and experience reality as it is, moment by moment. Also, I must not take dreams, astral projections, and the like into account, because they are often deceptive.

He didn't like it at all when I confided in him the odd feeling I have sometimes, that I am the centre of the world and everything revolves around me: "Just like my cousin, who is schizophrenic and she always sees before her a killer with a knife in hand!" he exclaimed and I wondered: *What does this have to do with my case?*

Anyway, I didn't stay in his office more than half an hour, because Harry suddenly stood up with his hands in his pockets, making clear he was looking forward to my making myself scarce...

Friday, 4th October 1991

“Final Nemesis”, the rest of the story: Refusing to admit I have thrown away four salaries for publishing an unacceptable book, I tried to forward my novel to some distributors; however, none was willing to undertake the distribution of such a product -I should have expected that. Then, I tried to distribute it by myself to bookstores and kiosks. Very few of them accepted two or three copies and hid them in some dark corner – they certainly wouldn't put them at the shop-window. Realizing (luckily, early enough) how time-consuming, tiring and vain would be to go on distributing the books myself, I soon gave up. Even if I managed to distribute some copies, then I would have to visit the bookstores every now and then so as to check non-existent sales. In brief, too much ado for nothing.

Eventually, I gave away about thirty copies to friends and relatives, and piled the rest 970 books behind the door of my office. When people ask, I tell them the books belong to a friend of mine who is a writer and has asked me to keep them in my office temporarily. Anyway, I don't intend to do anything like that again; I am through with writing, publishing, and that sort of thing...

Monday, 7th October 1991

Lucid Dream: My sister enters my room but I can't see her clearly in the dim light. Someone knocks on the door again; to my surprise, it is my sister again. Surprise becomes fear as I realize that the first Alice hasn't got a head -there is only an odd cavity in the place of her neck!

Fear makes the dream lucid and I immediately decide to change it into self-hypnosis: I close my eyes and empty my mind; I feel as if “going out”, but I can't see my astral body, I can only discern my legs a little. I try to open my eyes; at first I can't, then I manage to open them but still I can't see anything but darkness. In the meanwhile, I feel an invisible force carrying me away, all the way down a wide, black tunnel. I end up in another dream, where I walk together with others up a narrow path by the seaside; golden lights flicker in the distance, stars sparkle on the night sky...

Tuesday, 8th October 1991

Lucid Dream: I am on a tree, I know I am dreaming and I decide to change the dream into a relaxation exercise. I shut my eyes, begin meditation and reach the “void space”. Soon I find myself sinking inside a dark tunnel; paradoxically, it seems to be two-dimensional, like a film, so I have become two-dimensional too. I fall down the tunnel faster and faster, while various scenes take place outside it but I can't discern anything; it is like watching them behind a black veil. Then I remember Alexander, who always advises us against taking such initiatives by ourselves, and I start to worry I might be doing something wrong. I try hard to stop, I manage to reverse my course, I finally get out of the tunnel and I am back on the tree again. I force myself to wake up, feeling unsatisfied and sad...

Wednesday, 9th October 1991

Yesterday I decided to talk to the class about my two astral projections, as well as the two last lucid dreams I attempted to change into self-hypnosis. At first it felt good; however, before long I regretted it, as I saw nobody had been even slightly impressed. Moreover, Alexander hastened to boast off: “That's no big deal! I have performed hundreds of astral projections!”

Right after, he sought to dissuade me from attempting anything like that again “because it is too early and the subconscious isn't clear enough,” he explained; then he added that lucid dreaming can lead to madness, especially if someone changes a dream into self-hypnosis. I was taken aback because this is not

what Harry had told me the other day -in fact he had said exactly the opposite! The two gentlemen contradict each other!

“What prevents me from succeeding in everyday life, will also prevent me from doing so in the astral plains. So, why attempt an astral projection or anything like that?” Theano chipped in suddenly, and I found her argument rather equivocal..

I am losing confidence in the guru once again – and not only because of the above. I am certain Alexander has been fooling us with all that sonorous mythology about “advanced classes”. Before closing for summer, he had told us that from September new classes would be arranged. On a Thursday he said something about “next time”. “Next time” proved to be three weeks later and the only thing that really changed was the day: Instead of Thursdays, now we come on Tuesdays. As for the rest, the supposedly “higher class” to which I belong now has proved to be something “medium”, neither theory nor practice - namely nothing! Actually, it's worse than the previous class! I can surely understand not all disciples are suitable for “moving up”. Some others, however, who can and want to advance in metaphysics, are discouraged with lame excuses such as “you are too emotional” or “too touchy” or “too disobedient” and so on.

Apart from that, I can discern some hypocrisy too: “Which of you went to a charitable establishment in the summer, so as to offer some help? None! You all went on vacations!” Alexander reprimanded the class at a moment, and they all stayed silent, acknowledging their guilt. Really now, which of the “advanced” disciples visited charitable establishments in the summer? Rena, who is always ready for a row? Or Mary, who thinks she is somebody just because she happens to be one of the guru's stooges? Or, maybe, Alexander himself? Allow me to doubt...

I strongly suspect natural psychics are not only ignored here, but they are also sabotaged on purpose. What makes an advanced disciple, after all? The “ability” to accept passively the usually irrational reprimands of the guru, maybe? Vanessa saw “the light” during her very first relaxation exercise, she did very well in the first telepathy experiments, but Alexander showed her no interest at all; on the contrary, he treats her as if she were paranoid because she occasionally questions his theories. Moreover, Alexander often accuses her of being neurotic and hysterical before the whole class! As a result, Vanessa has been blocked, she has never seen the “light” again, and her telepathy doesn't work any more. Aphrodite is also gifted with innate intuition, she used to be psychic but she isn't anymore -not ever since she started attending Janus...

I have come to believe that what is taught in Janus has nothing to do with metaphysics. I certainly expected more action: experiments of telepathy, spiritualism, telekinesis, astral projection, psychometry etc, by use of specific methods. Last year something was going on, but now nothing – always on the grounds that our subconscious is not clear yet. “When the time comes, I will show you the right technique for a successful astral projection, but not now. If you try anything like that now, you will certainly fail again and again; you can't fail all the time, because your subconscious will eventually connect this technique with failure!” claims the guru, so as to excuse the suppression of telepathy experiments in class.

As about obedience, which is so much propagandized by all gurus, at first it refers to spiritual matters but soon it affects the disciple's whole life. During the lesson, if we express even the slightest personal opinion on the most insignificant matter, Alexander jumps at the chance to accuse us of being unworthy disciples. Sometimes he even presents outrageous theories to us, just because he wants to sound out on reactions; only when these are non-existent, is he satisfied. The truth is that none of us dares speak in class anymore. We are afraid of opening our mouths lest we should be considered disobedient, maladjusted, unworthy. I don't like this at all...

Saturday, 12th October 1991

Night Adventure: I go up the white stairs of a palace. A handsome, muscular, dark-haired man accosts me and holds my hand. We become friends, he seems to be noble and gentle. He leads me to the royal gardens upstairs and I wonder at their beauty, as they are verdant with colourful exotic flowers. We both run and laugh together, like children. I feel great...?

In the morning, during a meditation exercise in the bus, I reached the “void space” and had the following *psychic experience*: I had the impression of being at the top of a vertical, dark tunnel. Down, at the bottom, there was bright light, it looked like a sea of light.

The same experience will be repeated two more times in the next two days...

Tuesday, 29th October 1991

This *psychic experience* is rather unusual and it begins as a meditation exercise at Janus. Following Alexander's instructions, we all focus on the love for our class. At first there is a sense of universal unity. Then, I can discern hazy, foggy masses whirling in the darkness of my shut eyes, gradually forming a spectral, distorted scull which gapes before me horribly, as if screaming. Soon the scull is transformed into a bright flower which, at its turn, becomes a revolving cosmic vortex; all forms in the universe are absorbed inside it. The vortex reshapes all things and disgorges them elsewhere, thus creating a new universe with entirely new forms. A new cosmic vortex is being shaped within the new universe and the same procedure is repeated to infinity. Ecstasy...

When I awake, my heart beats like a drum and I feel extremely excited and upset, as if falling apart. In a trembling voice I describe my experience in class.

“I feel strange,” I conclude.

“Keep on feeling strange; it is nice!” says the guru.

Sunday, 17th November 1991

Prophetic Dream: I am sitting in my room, looking at a photo of Manolis, who is my peer and an old neighbour. On the black background of the photo I can see colourful rays of light and an English poem, each verse next to each ray:

Into the night	(blue ray)
Out of love	(red ray)
Through the purple daylight	(purple ray)
When a golden ray attacks	(orange-yellow ray)
Through the window grille	(green ray)
Wish it were true	(green-yellow ray)
Because you're dying	(black-yellow ray)
Dying	(darker ray)
Dying	(almost black ray)

Verification: Three days later, Manolis will be killed in a car accident.

Monday, 25th November 1991

Night Adventure: I am somewhere abroad; I can see dry fields full of emaciated blond sheep; they look like gigantic kadaifis, similar to those we ate at Danae's last night. In the distance there is a stone bridge over a shallow river, and I can discern someone familiar standing there; but... it is me! Passing through a dark tunnel, I come near her. She is another Yvonne; we have the same face and body but she is fashionably dressed, wearing yellow trousers and a red blouse. Her hair is permed, just like when I was in Italy. "Hi, how do you do?" I greet her cordially; we kiss and hug full of joy, and then I ask her what she has achieved so far. She says she has failed to move up in University this year, because she hasn't written well in a subject. We both go to the offices of the University, so as to find the headmistress and discuss the matter. I feel happy for having found myself. Then I realize there is a white lighter in my right hand and it has a number on it: 2017. *It strikes me as an expiry date...*

Wednesday, 27th December 1991

At about noon Antony and Alice got ready to go to a local cafeteria. They had already reached the front door, when Antony gave me an enigmatic look which could be interpreted as "let's invite that poor thing to come along" and he asked me to join them. I accepted at once.

Soon we found ourselves in a cosy, lively environment, dim-lit but pleasant. We played darts, I went into a racing car simulator, I chatted and laughed spontaneously with many persons. I was also noticed by two handsome strangers at the bar. Then I realized how long it has been since I last went out with "normal" people...

Suddenly, everything was clear for me: I would have become a normal person if I had been accepted by the right circles at the right time. If the appropriate, normal circles accepted me, unless they all disapproved of me before even knowing me, everything would be different now: my way of thinking would be "politically correct", I would have a husband or a boyfriend, I would be able to dance tsifteteli, I might as well have children! I wouldn't have landed up in Janus. Therefore, what I've become is their fault, and what I'm becoming is their fault too; whatever I am becoming...

* * * *

Friday, 10th January 1992

Night Adventure: I am somewhere outdoors and I see a young woman bending down in a provocative way; behind her mini skirt, her hips are naked; then, I realize she is burnt all over! Some villains grab and throw her body on a heap of other corpses and they dump them all in a huge melting-pot.

I am an enemy of evil and I decide to stop the perpetrators. I try to walk away slowly, but they notice me as I go up the stairs. "Hey, you! Come here!" they shout at me and I turn round, pretending to be scared. They laugh, while preparing to fire their flame-guns. I ask for one minute time, so as to pray; they allow me and I squat down, next to a wall, for a brief meditation exercise.

When I finally finish and get up, the enemies fire at once. However, their guns produce no flame for they no longer function; there is only a soft light inside the long barrels. The villains get angry and they try to catch me but I fight back with two high kicks and send them roll down on the ground stunned. They realize something strange is going on and they withdraw quickly.

I know I don't have much time, because my psychokinetic influence on the flame-guns won't last long. So, at a moment when my persecutors don't notice, I enter a car of bright green colour and drive away at once. Yet, one of the enemies chases me in another vehicle. With a view to deceiving him, I get out of my car and let it go down a precipice...

Monday, 13th January 1992

The night walk in the vicinity brought back to my mind the old, *inner enigma*: *I, the only conscience of the world; I, the centre of the world; all what I can perceive out there is nothing but projections to my conscience, images shaped in co-ordination around me; and the other people, what are they but deceptive visions? What is going on, and what for?*

This is the perpetual question that can't even be put into words. This is the only problem I should work out. All the rest -everyday cares, personal issues, speculations about social, political, spiritual and other subjects- are just distractions from the inner enigma; they systematically detract me and I forget...

Tuesday, 14th January 1992

This evening I decided to express myself (the guru often coerces us into doing so) and talk about my recent thoughts in class. Ignoring a strong heartbeat and an inner voice screaming "no!", I proceeded to confessions concerning the *inner enigma* before everybody. My words came out uncertain, while Alexander was looking at me with strange, maybe malignant eyes. At the end he smiled cunningly and flung at me: "Be careful, or you will go paranoid!". Then, he addressed the class and started a pompous lecture which began like that: "This is nothing but tricks the Ego plays on you, making you think you are someone important, someone special, and for this reason you are the target of invisible forces! If you yield to such tricks of the Ego, you are likely to go mad!"

I froze in disappointment; on one hand I was astonished because I do feel like a target all the time - though I have never told a soul about it; on the other hand, I certainly hadn't expected so much contempt and hostility from the guru. As about my classmates, none of them uttered a word; yet, I could feel their ironic looks at me -all that condensed negativity being launched at me. My self-confidence wavered at once. I have been feeling miserable ever since. Just when I thought I had found myself again, I got lost once more.

From now on, I will never ever reveal anything about myself to the guru. All things considered, to talk about my psychic experiences or inspirations to others is a serious mistake. The others, as if in collusion, always question, distort or disapprove of anything I say. Since I am not considered to be an authority (like Alexander, for instance), my defeat in certain disputes is preordained. The result: Doubts, frustration, inner blocking. I go back instead of ahead. It is imperative that I should perfect the art of silence. I have to make a stand against my need for praise, which often urges me to say more than I should. Silence is gold...

Tuesday, 21st January 1992

Alexander wants us to gather about 5,000,000 drachmas, so that he will be able to buy land somewhere in the country and build his asram there. In a very natural way, he announces that if 50 disciples offer 100,000 drachmas each, the sum will be covered! As a reward, the "sponsors" will have the honour of working voluntarily at the estate the guru will buy with their own money!

The strangest thing, though, is that many of my classmates show spontaneous willingness to offer that money, while others are ready to sell their own fields and donate the money to Alexander, without even thinking twice. Moreover, Alexander makes clear that from now on the so-called "extra contributions" are actually obligatory, and that the amounts of money given to him will show who the worthy disciples are. He keeps talking incessantly and everybody listens to him devoutly, as if he were God on earth. Everybody but

me.

I believe Alexander doesn't give a dime for us. He is only interested in "contributions" and "donations". Most of the times he spends the whole lesson complaining about delayed fees and ignored contributions. He gets on my nerves. I pay my monthly fee in time, every Tuesday I spend three hours in commuting to Janus, and the only thing I learn there is that some persons haven't paid their fees. In fact, I haven't learnt anything in Janus for months now. The only thing I do when I go there, is lose my time and my temper...

Sunday, 26th January 1992

Night Adventure: I live in a medieval city-castle, together with my lover. I am somebody else: I have a different face and long, black hair. The castle is often attacked by hordes of Saracens. My boyfriend and I fight against them but there comes a day when he is murdered, while I fence against three enemies: I cut someone's arm off, I sever somebody else's legs, I gore the third one to death; yet, I fail to kill their chief, who chases me all over the castle.

While running to escape, I can see chests full of treasure behind glass walls; I concentrate and close the lids by using the power of my mind. In this way, I beat the temptation of wealth. Later on, I hide behind lofty bushes at the edge of a stone path, which is still under construction, and I can overhear some workers talking: "Long ago, someone was murdered there. His bones are still scattered around, somewhere among the bushes," I hear them say and I know they mean my dead boyfriend.

Eventually I reach the highest chamber of the castle, where the enemies can't find me. From there, I climb down the walls and the mountain, leaving the castle behind; however I intend to return one day. Nevertheless, the luxury of the city soon enchants me. I linger along the streets looking at sparkling jewels in shop-windows, I wonder at their beauty, I delay, I forget...

Tuesday, 18th February 1992

Mother: Yesterday afternoon, when my parents and I went to buy a new refrigerator, mum didn't stop patronizing me for a single moment, constantly trying to make me choose the one she liked. She got on my nerves and we left without buying anything. This morning I went to the store with my father only and I bought the fridge I wanted without any complications.

I have noticed it many times: Whenever I talk with my mother, I tend to lose control of my thoughts and reactions; every conversation of ours ends in tension, exasperation, or even a quarrel, since she always discourages me and criticizes every idea or initiative of mine. When I was younger, my mother sought to control every move I made and I considered this natural: She always told me what to eat, what to wear, where to go etc, while bombarding me with admonitions such as: "Don't run, you will fall!" ... "Don't fight with other children, they will hit you!" ... "Don't wear this blouse, wear that one" ... "Don't be late at night, nasty things might happen to you", and so on. Till I was eighteen she used to be in total control of my wardrobe; she always escorted me at the shops and I considered it as a matter of course to choose the clothes she liked. Until I was 25, I was indissolubly bonded to my mother, who programmed the slightest move of mine, as if I were a robot. I had no friends, and I didn't need any because mother was there. My parents have never worried about my solitude – all they ever cared about was my taking good marks at school. Not that they ever expected me to become a scientist; it is just that studying kept me away from "bad company".

Even now, I take care to hide my diaries well, lest mother should see and disapprove of them. However, I suspect she has already found and read them: she knows I attend Janus -without my telling her-

and she demands I stop. She is always spying on me, because she doesn't trust me. When I am downstairs, in my apartment, she appears at my threshold every fifteen minutes, putting forward various strange excuses, but all she really wants is to spy on me. When she turns up, if I happen to be writing, I hasten to hide the "body of evidence" before she finds out the "crime"; if I listen to songs, I turn off the stereo at once, before she sees me seated on a chair and finds it peculiar. I have to escape mother's oppressive influence. But how? Should I move somewhere else, maybe?

Wednesday, 19th February 1992

I have noticed certain changes in my behaviour lately, changes of a "negative" tinge: For example, when I am on the bus, I no longer stand up and give away my seat as soon as some old crock comes near me. Very few old people really have this need; anyway, why do they get on the bus early in the morning or in the afternoon, exactly when workers and employees have a hard time commuting to work?

Nor do I look forward to going out with friends, anymore. I am no longer in the mood of wasting four hours in packed buses every time, just to meet some persons of doubtful sincerity. I still see them once in a while, but I have done away with laughs, confessions and nonsense. I used to be more tolerant to people, because I lacked self-confidence and I needed their approval. Recently, however, something has changed: I no longer feel obliged to put up with any moron.

I was doing some extra work at my office this afternoon, when the telephone rang. I picked up the receiver and I heard a coarse man's voice roar in my ear:

"What iiiis it theeeeere?"

"Typings - Translations" I replied calm.

"Who's theeeeere?" cried the bloke again, before I had even finished talking.

"My name is Yvonne Fezarris. How can I help you?" I asked kindly.

"Yvonne Fezarris, whooooo?" he howled exasperated.

Right at that moment I hung up.

The bloke called again at once and this time he was furious:

"How do you dare hang up on me? You know who I am?"

"I'm sorry, the line went dead" I excused myself.

Yet, he went on bawling undaunted: "If you think you are a toughie, then I..."

I hung up again and left the office immediately. As I was walking up Patission Avenue to Janus, I was feeling wonderful...

Thursday, 20th February 1992

Yesterday evening, once again, the guru said "In reality, there is no *Good and Evil*; only our personal point of view, alias the Ego, makes something appear as good or evil". The other disciples agreed implicitly but I had some doubts, which I cleared out this afternoon, through meditation:

Power is Evil: When you are more powerful than another being, there are two natural and spontaneous ways to treat it: a) If the being is a little weaker than you, you seek to tame it and make it your "servant". For this purpose you use either violence or charity; in the second case, it will owe you eternal gratitude and it will be obliged to serve you during its whole life – otherwise it will be considered

“ungrateful” or “unworthy”, and the consequences will be detrimental for its survival in any society. b) If the being is much weaker than you, a small animal or insect for instance, then it is not only entirely useless but also a nuisance to you; so, you exterminate it without second thoughts.

Evil is Power: Malice (the spontaneous desire to harm other beings) has always been the strongest motive to “action” and “progress”. Certain people gather extreme power in their hands, which finally takes the form of money, fame, social status. Malicious persons have the innate tendency to unite in *networks* – and all networks belong to a universal super-network that controls them all. The purpose of networks is to make sure that Power always stays within the same circles of persons; that's why their members support each other with religious fanaticism.

Hierarchy is a basic mechanism of networks. Thanks to the division of labour, each person is placed at a specific post (according to their natural abilities, qualifications, and allegiance to the chiefs) and is expected to offer as much as possible to society. Therefore, very specific activities are assigned to each member: Children go to school; women become mistresses, housewives and mothers -this is their main role, regardless of career or other activities; men become workers or employees. The more “ambitious” ones, that is the more greedy, become managers. Taking one thing with another, all day long we are obliged to perform boring, thankless, tiring, enervating tasks -which often have no clear purpose. They just keep us busy with various nonsense, so that they can suck our energy day after day, year after year – and we let go in complacent misery, boasting off that we are hard-working people, useful to society.

Networks of all kinds control the lives of ordinary people through special mechanisms (work, money, patriarchy, religion, nepotism, etc), but they are also structured in a rigorous hierarchy: There are many ways the bosses of a company can control the lives of their employees, but this happens always in accordance to the line they take from higher ranks of the elite. Yet, those “higher ranks” toe the line of other, “even higher ranks”, and so on. Consequently, the flow of Power follows a strictly one-way course through specific human channels, until it all accumulates to a secret *centre* -at the top of the social pyramid.

The *Centre* is not some human being; it is an invisible, incomprehensible, probably extraterrestrial entity, an absolute Lord, who demands to be worshiped as “God” by the human herd. This is where all authorities and powers derive from and this is where they all return, strengthened by the psychic energy of billions of human beings. The higher someone is in the pyramid of society, the closer they are to the so-called “God”. However, only those who manage to reach the highest possible level, near the top of the pyramid, can recognize what “God” really is.

Naturally, the pyramid stands on its base; the weak and the poor of this world are the “blood” which nourishes the invisible and unknowable Lord, since it is their energy that flows through the entire structure. On the other hand, the pyramid can “break” only at its lowest edges; only those who are on the fringe of society may escape from this tyranny -but it is not at all easy, even for them. It goes without saying that the higher someone is in hierarchy, the more unlikely it is for them to escape...

Wednesday, 26th February 1992

Doubts about the guru -once again: Now he needs many millions of drachmas for the creation of an asram, he says. For the time being, he demands 10,000 drachmas from each one of us, so as to buy the land. However, this is only the beginning; many more millions of drachmas will be needed for the building of the settlement – and the whole estate will be to the guru's name.

There follows a psychological extortion: “The imminent world annihilation makes the situation urgent (as if we would be safe in the asram!). Besides, those who are really advanced in metaphysics, will be eager to offer any sum of money needed!”. Then, he makes an example of Harry, who has an ordinary job

in a company and happily offers all his salary to Janus. Other “worthy disciples” have donated their own fields to Alexander, who makes it clear he owes them nothing at all, not even a “thank you”, since it is their honour to serve him!

All in all, the creation of a sect is the cleverest enterprise: If you play your cards right, within a few years you have a herd of loyal “disciples” who worship you like a god, they donate you their properties and they consider it their honour to work for you without pay! Brilliant!

Thursday, 27th February 1992

Psychic Experience: I get out of my body and whirl slowly, then faster; it feels good but my range of vision is limited. All at once I am in a horizontal, dark tunnel and I can see Theano in the distance. She runs to find the light and I follow her. Sometimes the tunnel glows, as if it were full of coals. Suddenly Theano falls down and some red-hot pieces precipitate on her, but she laughs and stands up easily. We soon see the light, which is red and shining bright ahead of us. However, when we come closer it slips away and we can't reach it. Then we are both out of the tunnel, in a snowed town. My friend sits on a bench and smiles happily...?

The managing director of Pangaea, Mr Nick Gryparis, has been giving me work at home lately – namely audio cassettes containing recorded dialogues of various rich and famous people. I listen to the tapes and type the dialogues. This is a very tiring and time-consuming job, yet I can handle it. A few days ago I took in my hands two cassettes, where three reporters talk about some famous actors and actresses. For safety reasons, I haven't put them together with my music cassettes, but in another drawer of my bookcase.

This afternoon, I felt like listening songs from the radio; as soon as I heard one that sounded nice, I decided to record it. I went to the bookcase, I opened the drawer, took a cassette and started recording on it at once. Right at that moment, the phone rang; it was aunt Penelope, Alice's godmother, and asked me to drop in on her so that she could give me some cake. I left the tape-recorder working (something I had never done before) and went to her.

When I returned home twenty minutes later, I stopped the recording, I ejected the cassette and only then did I realize it was one of the two Gryparis had given me! I stood there dumbfounded, hardly believing what I had done! *How could I be so absent-minded? How could I make such an incredible mistake? What am I going to say to Gryparis now?* I thought, full of anxiety.

Friday, 28th February 1992

This morning I rallied my spirit and got into the managing director's office, with the damaged cassette in hand. With a sorrowful mien, I explained the situation to him, I apologized for the mistake and finally excused myself that my eight-year-old nephew got into my room, found the cassette, recorded on it songs from the radio, and when I noticed it was too late. “But... you keep my cassettes at a place where children get in?” wondered Gryparis – yet, strangely enough, he kept his composure. He didn't yell at me, he only asked me to bring the other cassette back to him on Monday...

♠ Phase Six: The Path of the Dreamer

Tuesday, 3rd March 1992

Inner Revelation: For many years now, before even coming to Janus, I have been spontaneously using advanced spiritual techniques, such as lucid dreaming (conscious control of dreams). To be more precise, during lucid dreams I often attempt and succeed in the following:

- a) When I am in danger, I change the dream: for instance, when I am persecuted by villains, I consciously stop running, fight and beat them.
- b) I prolong pleasant dreams.
- c) I materialize or make disappear persons and things.
- d) I hover or fly in the air.
- e) I move objects with the power of my mind.
- g) Night adventures: These are very impressive dreams, not lucid but extremely lifelike. Self-sense is very strong, places are delineated in detail, and there is a specific plot with a beginning, a middle, and an ending. When I finally wake up, I wonder that all this adventure was just a dream.

The creation of conscious dreams is called “lucid dreaming” and it can lead to higher awareness. The path of the dreamer is followed by many women in metaphysics. Nevertheless, “these women can be very dangerous,” as it has been said by certain persons in Janus.

When I explained to the gurus what I can do, both Alexander and Harry sought to discourage me, claiming that lucid dreaming can lead to madness. More or less, they say it is a miracle I haven't gone mad yet! However, the other day Alexander admitted in class that with dream control someone can have experiences they haven't had in real life; moreover, they might go mad only if they cause lucid dreams 30 or 40 times in a row - which is rather unlikely.

At first I had been influenced negatively by the gurus and blocked lucid dreaming myself -but I don't believe them anymore. For the time being, I will go on attending Janus, but I am never going to talk about my night experiences to anybody again. From now on, I will keep my distance and teach myself...

Meditation technique for lucid dreaming

First of all, you will need two rosaries: one with 22 knots and one with 72 knots.

5 rhythmical breaths: 4 times inhale – 2 times hold – 4 times exhale – 2 times hold.

22 mental mantras: for example, “The universe and I are one”, counted calmly with the small rosary in hand.

144 (72+72) mental mantra in co-ordination with breathing: Inhale+mantra - exhale+mantra, counted calmly twice with the the big rosary in hand. It takes about ten minutes.

Stay in “void space” for some minutes -the longer, the better.

Then, give the mental order “Tonight I will get out of my body and be conscious in the astral plains” slowly, nine times.

Let yourself go to sleep.

Thursday, 5th March 1992

Starting from today, I will be working as a typist in Pangaea. I don't like being an employee again, but given the circumstances this is the best choice I have. If I hadn't accepted this job, they would have hired another girl; consequently, I would lose my most important client, I would no longer be able to earn a living by working free-lance and I would have to close my office, anyway.

I can't explain why, but Pangaea has actually been my only client for some months. There hardly came another client any more: the lawyers of the district are nowhere to see; a publisher who gave me many texts for translation hasn't appeared since December, and some other occasional clients are gone too. But why, indeed? Everybody admitted my typings and translations were flawless...

Anyway, this is my first day in Pangaea today, and there begin bus strikes which are expected to last long -in fact, they will last more than two months. I hope this is not a *sign of fate*...

Saturday, 7th March 1992

Strange night outing: I have arranged to meet the guys, at America Square in Patisia, at 8:00 in the evening. I leave home at 7:00, which is kinda late, because I was invited at the last moment -as usual. Until 7:30 there is no bus in sight, so I take a taxi to the bus-stop in Helioupolis. The cold is dreadful. Finally, I get on the bus no. 208, I get off at the terminus in the centre of Athens and then I take the tram to America Square. I arrive there at 8:30, full of agony and with few hopes to find my friends there. However, they are still there and they are waiting, not me -as I initially thought- but Nick, who finally turns up at 9:15! I wonder at their patience, since they never wait for me when I'm late, not even for a quarter of an hour! I have happened to be fifteen or twenty minutes late three times, and when I got at the venue I found no one there – which means I wasted almost four hours in the buses for nothing.

We go to a nearby Italian restaurant but it is closed. We end up in a packed and noisy taverna, where we pay through the nose. At about 11:00 we go for a drink at a nice pub, but I can stay there no more than half an hour, otherwise I will miss the last bus home. I leave without paying for my drink, because nobody can change my 5,000-drachma banknote.

I run to the bus-stop but I lose the 23:30 tram for one second, so I have to take a taxi to the bus terminus at Zappeion Park, hoping to catch the last bus to Glyfada. Before long I realize that the driver, a skinny old man, is a nutcase! He drives erratically, swerving or applying the brakes without any reason, as if trying to cause an accident! As he drives along Patisia Avenue, he often gets too close to the car in front, or turns the steering wheel with jerky movements -almost crashing other cars. Moreover, he swears at any driver who happens to be near! At a moment, as we have stopped at the traffic lights, he suddenly turns the steering wheel to the right and the taxi sticks to a tram!

When we enter Stadiou Avenue, he starts driving as slowly as a turtle; then he draws alongside another taxi and waves to the driver to stop. The other one pulls over; my driver puts on the brakes, he steps out and hastens to the other taxi, obviously ready for a row; in the meanwhile time flies and I shout:

“Come back, please, or I will lose the last bus!”

He returns to me and starts the car again, but he is outraged.

“If you do this again, I will send you to the dentist!” he threatens.

“What?” I cry, hardly believing what's going on. “Stop now and let me get off, right now!” I demand, with the intention of writing down his car number and starting proceedings against the madcap.

Probably because he suspects something, he corrects his erratic driving at once, he begins to smile and tries to patch up things with inanities such as: “Oh, you are so wild, you have misunderstood me, you haven't even congratulated me on the nice ride!” and we finally reach the bus terminus at Zappeion, at 23:59! I give him the 5,000-drachma banknote and he gives me my change slowly, one note at a time, hoping to delay enough so that I lose the last bus and he gets an after-midnight fare to Glyfada, double tariff! I, however, not only wait patiently until I get all my change, but I also catch the last bus in the nick of time!

As soon as I find a seat, here comes another lunatic and sits right behind me. He coughs continuously, at the top of his voice, and he always tries to lean his knee on my hips. The bus is already full, the journey is too long, and there is no other place I could stand or sit. That was not an outing, that was Calvary! Was it worth the while? I don't think so...

Sunday, 15th March 1992

Lucid Dream: I asked it consciously while dreaming, and I saw some Lotto numbers being carved in relief on a stone surface: 6, 17, 25, 11, 21, 33, 9. *Verification: The next winning numbers are 9, 17, 21, 29, 33, 35. I will get two fours and earn about 5.300 drachmas...?*

In search of a way out: My failure in meeting the guys last night (I was half an hour late and they didn't wait for me, which means I spent almost four hours in buses for nothing), led me to an outburst of realizations: No matter what I do, no matter where I go, the outcome will always be zero. In any case, I always have to answer to the others, yet nobody ever has to answer to me. At work I am always at the bottom of hierarchy; there is never anyone below me. The same thing happens with my social life: I am constantly criticized by everyone for the slightest thing, but nobody ever gives a dime about my opinion.

Enough is enough! I can't play the fool any more! I urgently need other alternatives in life and the most effective ones seem to be the following: a) Turn to the Left Path, b) Use of lucid dreams and astral projections as a magic technique, so as to have money and power. Of course, this can be dangerous. Yet, what isn't dangerous? Isn't the unnatural, deathly immobility of my life dangerous? Or, now that I am a “good girl”, all goes fine for me?

Tuesday, 24th March 1992

Night Adventure: I am travelling with my family by ship. I can't do well in certain tasks, while Alice does fine. My father has to set the sea on fire, so as to prevent some enemies from approaching and invading the ship. When we reach the port, he intends to kill me and I don't know why. However, I won't just sit there waiting for death. I start flying over the blazing sea, until I reach the coast and escape to a nearby wood. Yet, there is still danger, as my father is chasing me in a helicopter.

I hide in a clump of trees and then under a heap of leaves. My father takes another way, so he loses me. I get out of my hiding place and I end up in a public service. I ask the guards to let me hide in there but they don't let me in, so I neutralize them with karate blows. In the meantime my father has just arrived but he doesn't look threatening anymore: he smiles to me in a friendly way, probably because he is proud of my abilities now. Mum is with him and we all three go away together.

Interpretation: The dream shows my inner feeling of not being loved by my parents,

especially in comparison with Alice, the star of our family. Probably, deep inside I feel they are hostile to me, and I wish I could prove my worth to them...

Thursday, 26th March 1992

Night Adventure: I am another woman, someone muscular, dynamic, with long blond hair, and I am wearing a warrior's outfit with a leather bodice. A handsome blond man is flirting me and I like him. However, there is a red-haired woman who claims him and I feel jealous. We all belong to a wild tribe of the desert. She and I fight for him, I knock her down, I take her bodice off and reveal her flat, childlike breasts. I leave her alone, as the fight is over now and the blond man is mine. In the distance there is an elephant cemetery; a horrible monster is expected to rise from there, and I will have to fight against it...?

The real purpose of life: I have come to believe life is not the best thing that could happen to a soul. It is traumatic to live. Instead of experiencing higher levels of existence, the soul is trapped in a perishable physical body, and it has to comply with one sole order: "Survive!" Every moment of life, the soul is obliged to obey this order; yet the physical body is by nature mortal, as it degenerates day by day until it dies, usually of disease, old age, or both.

In general, we have to toil very hard every day in order to "earn our daily bread", often without much success. We usually need to fight tooth and nail in order to achieve a minimum result – and at the first mistake everything may fall apart.

The purpose of life is pain. We are born to know pain in its various forms. Each person is born with a personal fate, that is a specific kind of pain which will accompany him or her in life: famine, war, physical or mental illness, poverty, injustice, failure, misfortune etc. Sooner or later, most people end up in an almost complete lack of awareness, so they get accustomed to chronic pain and they can hardly realize it's there; in this way, they can endure their lives.

We come in life so as to perpetuate it, not to have fun. In fact, the more miserable a society is, the more offspring it produces. The poor always have more children than the rich, and they use them either as young workers, or as "hope for their old age". The rich seldom have more than two children, because they would rather live their lives than change diapers.

In the countries of the Third World, where disease, famine, destitution and death reign in every corner, women breed continuously and each one of them brings 8-12 children into the world. Most of them die before reaching adulthood; those who survive suffer endless misery, yet they all look forward to becoming parents themselves. As a result, the population increases vertically. In two words: Life thrives in pain. Life is pain and vice versa.

All in universe is One and the relation which connects them all is this: "Your death is my life". This truth is more obvious in the realm of life: The survival of each living creature depends on the death of other creatures. "Eat or be eaten" as people say. On the other hand, the prevalence of the mighty in the battle of survival is often apparent or short-lived. A microbe can kill the "king of the jungle", the lion. A tiny, brainless virus can exterminate thousands of clever, educated, civilized humans. The fall of a meteor eliminated the magnificent dinosaurs sixty billion years ago. Nevertheless, the humble snail -one of the first creatures that walked the earth- still exists despite its small size, its inability to harm other creatures and its slow evolution. It doesn't evolve because it doesn't need to evolve...

Sunday, 29th March 1992

Night Adventure: Someone tortures souls by dissecting their astral bodies with huge bone

instruments. He holds a dead baby boy in his lap and bores his skull with a strange lancet. The baby tries to find consolation in the thought that the astral body is immortal; he looks like a living dead, he punches the enemy with his tiny fists but he can't escape...

Lucid Dream: I meet Nestor, a handsome guy from the advanced class in Janus, and I consciously ask him to give me the winning Lotto numbers. He offers them to me in a sort of riddle, but when I wake up I can't remember them well. The most possible combination is: 3, 7, 10, 30, 33, 34.
Verification: *Some of these numbers will come out in Proto; I will get right the last three numbers and earn about 8,000 drachmas. However, the very next day I will have to give that sum of money to a doctor, because of a nasty otitis...*

Tuesday, 8th April 1992

Once again, the lesson at Janus made me think: What does Alexander (and all gurus) mean when he talks about **"breaking the Ego"**? Mainly, it is the suppression of personal judgement and will. However, when you have no judgement and will of your own, then you blindly accept the judgement and will of somebody else. The methods used by spiritual masters so as to break their disciples' Ego are mostly red herrings, sophistry or rhetorical tricks; the listeners seldom oppose to them, because of excessive psychological pressure they are usually subjected to. The same methods can be used to drive someone mad. In the end, the victims consider it as the greatest honour and happiness to serve an authority or a master. Schools of spiritual development are no different to the army: They teach you how to fight but never for your personal interest; it is always for a supposedly superior authority.

As about religions, what are they really? "I always tell you to meditate and observe yourselves so as to strengthen your souls. Nevertheless, who knows what really awaits us after death, to the Other Side? Imagine some sort of aliens waiting there, ready to be fed with strong souls!" Alexander said at a moment, in a rather equivocal manner.

"I wouldn't rule out that possibility," agreed Peter -one of the few in our class the guru thinks high of...

Saturday, 11th April 1992

One more of those days, when all goes abnormally wry: In the morning I went to Alimos, so as to buy ink-tapes for my typewriter. Yet, they don't sell on Saturdays, they told me. Why do they open the shop, then? Later, I spent some time with Alice and our cousin Niki but I couldn't avoid the usual boredom: These two are married with children, respectable persons in society; they don't even bother to conceal their contempt for me.

At 9:30 in the evening I had an appointment with the guys at America Square. It has been drizzling all day today and I couldn't decide whether to go or not. So, I lost the 8:00 o' clock bus to Athens for one second. The next one appeared at 8:30. The tram dragged along Panepistimiou Avenue like a half-slaughtered hen. I preferred to get off and take a bus but I accidentally missed the bus-stop at America Square. I finally made it to my destination at 10:05. Naturally, there was nobody there. I got on the first tram that came along, I got off at Omonia Square, then I was too bored to wait for another tram and walked all the way to the bus terminus at Zappeion Park. The bus to Glyfada got a breakdown -luckily not very far from St Tryfon Square: I only had to walk for twenty minutes to reach home. In all, I toiled for four and a half hours for nothing...

The bonds of fate: All my life, I often have to work very hard in order to achieve a minimal or even negative result. Anyway, it has just occurred to me that if too many difficulties appear while doing something, it should not be continued or it will lead to disaster. There are external, invisible, omnipotent

forces which define our destiny, in total disregard of our personal will and actions. Every moment in life is preordained from "above". Even our intelligence, abilities and talents are preordained by these forces; DNA is a matter of luck.

There is no flying from fate. Nobody can escape their destiny by acting on the physical plain. No matter what you do to escape from destiny, fate will eventually lead you where it wants by producing all the necessary coincidences and circumstances. In spite of our effort to make this world a better place, nothing ever really changes. But, maybe, there is a way out: *Conscious dream control and intervention in the astral plains may affect the flow or reality. A dreamer witch should not be a prey to the forces of fate...*

Tuesday, 14th April 1992

Before going to Janus, I paid a visit to Aphrodite -I like doing so lately. This afternoon she was not alone, though: there was also a young man there. Aphrodite introduced him to me as Zisis, her new boyfriend, whom she already lives with. He seemed to be a polite, nice guy; the three of us discussed various subjects and he proved to be an interesting person; he has sympathy with metaphysics too: he used to carry out astral projections but for some strange reason he can't anymore; yet, he can still see people's auras, he said.

"Can you see anything on me?" I asked him.

"You give me the impression of someone who has been searching and searching... what have you really been searching for, Yvonne?"

I shrugged my shoulders, wondering at his question; I thought that after the lengthy conversation we had just had, it would be obvious to him what I've been looking for -that is metaphysical knowledge.

"Can you see anything on my aura?" I insisted.

"Your thoughts are very intense; I can feel them slipping away to the universe and then they come back from the universe..."

That strange declaration of his made me think for a while, as I felt it contained a vestige of truth -I can't say what exactly.

"Do you see this only on me or on other people too?" I asked calmly.

"I haven't seen it on anybody else" he replied.

Later, at Janus, we all had a pleasant surprise: Alexander finally agreed to our attempting a ***technique for astral projection*** in class, which consists of the following steps:

We focus on the flame of a candle placed in front of us

Mental mantra (mine is: "the universe and I are one")

Physical relaxation

Mental countdown from 10 to 0.

Reaching the "void space", we observe the image of the flame which is shaped in the darkness of our shut eyes.

We open our eyes slowly, then close them again.

Mental countdown from 10 to 0 (twice)

We envisage coming out of our physical body and entering the guru's body (!). Always imagining our astral

body is inside Alexander, we envisage going out, to the reception, so as to see the object Harry has placed on the table.

The result was rather disappointing: Everybody failed except Mary, who “saw” that the copper statuette of Oros had been moved away from its usual place. Mary happens to be the most obedient of Alexander's stooges but, paradoxically, she is still in our “low” class. Anyway, I suspect her success was just a foul play, so as to show this special *telepathy experiment* was not just a flop...

Wednesday, 22nd April 1992

Night Adventure: I attend a memorial service for grandma Jenny. All relatives are in her old house, while she is lying inside a coffin on the big table. Suddenly, grandma sits up and starts talking. My father can't see, because his resurrected mother sees through his eyes. She can walk and move among us now; I am scared and I shout to her; then I say prayers like “Paternoster” in the hope of sending her away. Finally grandma disappears but I am still afraid and act as if she were still present.

Later on, I cross a bridge over a lake. When I reach the other side, I find myself in a picturesque village built on a hill, somewhere in Italy. However, not all is idyllic there: soon I find out that its earthen streets are studded with bones and skeleton parts. I walk along these streets in agony, feeling the bones under my shoe soles. *Interpretation: The very next day we will receive bad news regarding uncle George, my mother's brother. He suffers from lung cancer and he's left only a few months to live. Isn't it really horrible, to be sentenced to death and know it...*

Thursday, 7th May 1992

Work experiences in Pangaea: Yota, a disagreeable stammerer (very rich, though) is responsible for English correspondence. She has studied History of Art in America (studies for the satiated), yet she commits quite a few grammar and syntax errors when she writes letters in English. Strangely enough, none of the bosses -who sign her letters- has noticed anything. Moreover, Yota doesn't even suspect what filing is: She sends letters to various museums and photograph agencies all over the world asking for transparencies, yet she never keeps copies of them! They haven't noticed that either.

Naturally, I wouldn't dare say anything about it. If I commented on anything like that, I would fall out with Yota and all the other colleagues would hate me. Of course, this means that my knowledge of languages and secretarial skills is entirely indifferent to the company. They don't give a dime if I know perfect English and Italian, as well as very good German and Spanish. Obviously, there are other kinds of qualifications companies really appreciate in employees...

Saturday, 16th May 1992

Night Adventure: Alien robots have taken over the Earth. They keep us prisoners in small, yellow cells furnished only with a bed. They let us out only if we are to carry out certain tasks for them. As far as I've heard, those aliens reached the Earth because of someone who made the mistake of trusting them. I notice that adjacent cells communicate through a small window, high on the inner wall. I wonder whether I could use these windows to come in contact with other prisoners. *Interpretation: Maybe mankind is under occupation of an alien race, who keeps us isolated and mislead us into performing certain duties with unknown purposes...*

Tuesday, 26th May 1992

Lucid Dream: Between sleep and awake I dream of Billy, an obnoxious, ugly, fat, hairy guy who is a classmate in Janus. He is lying next to me in bed now, he is restless, he shouts, he puts his legs on my chest, he molests me. "You don't mind, do you?" he asks foolishly and I resent him. Then, the dream becomes lucid and it occurs to me this could be a possible future – but luckily, it is only for one night. In this way, I learn to appreciate what I have, that is solitude and calmness in bed.

! A few days later, Aphrodite will inform me Billy is interested in lucid dreaming a lot, and Alexander has been teaching him in private! What a serious person for the guru to teach personally! Is Bill supposed to be balanced enough for this? ?

In the evening I met the whole party - Vanessa, Theano, Aphrodite and Zisis- in a quiet cafeteria near my old office. I may never see Vanessa again: next week she is leaving for Volos, her hometown, because her studies of Philosophy in the University of Athens are over now. I feel I miss her already. "I dislike it that you are leaving" I told her, a little before saying goodbye.

Wednesday, 27th May 1992

After that travesty of a lesson in Janus last night, I realized all these years Alexander has been doing nothing but pulling our legs in there. Let me explain: After one and a half month of inaction, we finally carried out a *telepathy experiment* which "of course" proved to be a flop! Not even one of us managed to make a close guess of the object placed on the reception table. Alexander jumped at the chance to reprimand us all for being unworthy disciples and unready for such experiments. All thirty of us!

Yet, I wonder: If you take thirty persons from the streets at random and tell them to guess -without any prior meditation or preparation- what is placed on a table behind the door, in all probability at least one of them will guess right! However, thirty experienced disciples failed completely in making even a close guess! Therefore, I strongly suspect these experiments are put-up jobs!

I also think that, for some months now, Alexander has been applying a subtle mechanism of psychological war in his lessons: a) He talks continuously, usually without saying anything specific; I often feel as if I were subjected to hypnotic suggestion, b) He allows no one to express any opinion, c) He disrupts any conversation in class, d) If anyone manages to express a personal opinion, the guru treats them like a moron or a lunatic: "You read something, but you understand something else" or "Your sick Ego prevents you from seeing the truth" and so on.

In this way, a systematic, insidious "breaking of the Ego" is in progress within all of us: We no longer dare express an opinion, we make less and less questions, our self-confidence wanes day by day, we are gradually filled with guilt, our will gets weaker and weaker. Although we are bored in there, we stay from 9:00 pm to midnight every time. As about me, I can see I am going back instead of ahead: I often feel very anxious and my hands sweat before saying anything in class – just like in the distant past, when I was a timid child. What the heck, I want to eliminate my timidness, not revive it!

Friday, 29th May 1992

Mankind consists of two basic races: *Vampires and victims*. The former have the natural ability of absorbing energy from the latter, rendering them their puppets. On the other hand, victims enjoy certain rewards. The most common types of vampires are the following:

a) *Boyfriends and husbands*: Even in the modern, "feminist" society, a woman's thoughts and actions are focused mainly on one thing -how to satisfy her man. Otherwise, the woman has no man and

she is non-existent to society. This is exactly what the male-vampire offers the woman: A social position (as his wife or mistress) and an acceptable reason to leave (satisfy him sexually and have his children).

b) In a family, *children* are the most powerful vampires. With their cuteness, tricks, tears, mischief, as well as with their endless demands, they manage to keep their parents always busy -especially their mother. The proud parents offer all their time, money, thoughts and energy to sometimes unworthy children. On the other side, "What is the meaning of life? To have children, of course" claim all parents in robotic unison.

c) *Popular persons*: They are "the life and soul of the party", as it is often said. Indeed, in any party there is always one person who acts as a leader, although nobody can actually explain the reason why: in general, these persons are egocentric, frivolous and capricious. Yet, the popular person commands and the others carry out his or her orders with spontaneous joy. As about the reward, in this case it is socialization: the integration into a circle of friends, the avoidance of loneliness.

d) *Energetic giants*: These persons have a very high position in the hierarchy of humanity. They possess incredible financial power and world fame, usually from activities of dubious usefulness (actors and actresses, singers, top models, etc). Their most important talent is charm. The people just love to worship them like gods on earth.

e) *Mystics and religious leaders*: They are the most powerful vampires of all, as they have the unique ability of mesmerizing millions of people. In this case, absorption of energy takes place in deeper levels, since religious leaders are obeyed and worshiped by entire populations, while they systematically rouse guilt and terror. As about the "flock", they are willing to blindly accept even the most paranoiac religious dogmas and they are proud of it. Concerning their reward, what could be more alluring than the promise of a blissful "life after death" – even if it is intended only for "a few, chosen ones"?

f) *Gestalt entities* such as political parties, organizations, sects, companies: These are bigger or smaller groups of people which act as sovereign vampiric entities. A company consists of it employees, but it is not its employees; it is an entirely different entity with its own needs, goals and way of thinking. Companies are very demanding vampires: They want us to give them the best hours of our days (from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm), the best years of our lives (from 20 to 65), our full attention and the maximum of our potential any minute. As a reward they provide a usually miserable survival, a boring routine and a rather dubious security.

In general, vampires are gifted with excessive charm, personal magnetism (sex appeal), shrewdness and eloquence. They are easy to recognize, as they monopolize every conversation in an almost psychotic manner, and they manage to catch attention spontaneously, in a natural way. They are often arrogant and aggressive, yet everybody finds them lovely.

The roles of the vampire and the victim may be interchanged -according to the circumstances: In different environments, a vampire may become a victim and vice versa. For example, an employee/victim offers all his energy to the company/vampire he works for, but when he is at home he becomes a husband/vampire who demands from his wife/victim to give him all her attention and energy. Nevertheless, a truly powerful vampire never becomes a victim.

It is a fact that victims seek vampires -not vice versa. A vampire is like a magnet. It is not attracted, it attracts. Actually, victims are unable to live without offering their energy to vampires: People who don't really need to work go crazy if they stay unemployed for two months; many women complain that their man exploits or maltreats them, however they don't even think of staying single for more than one week; without a male to serve, they feel useless and unworthy of living. The truth is that victims are attracted to vampires. Probably, the absorption of energy acts as an anesthetic too: on one hand it weakens the victims, on the other hand exhaustion is often screened by the sweet delight of "offering".

Vampirism is the conjunctive tissue of mankind. The human society, in whole, is structured upon this basic relation of interdependence between vampires and victims. Social institutions (such as religion, family, work) are nothing but different faces of vampirism..

Monday, 1st June 1992

Night Adventure: It is late at night and I am in bed, inside a medieval castle. Outside my window I can see lofty stone arches and an orchard in the distance. I want to go to sleep but certain noises distract me; I try to ignore them, but I can't. I get up and start looking for the origin of the annoying noises. The stone walls of the castle are thick and gray; the wooden doors are arched. I close a window which has been left open and I go back to bed.

Right then three girls, aged about twelve, appear timidly at the threshold of my bedroom, chaperoned by their old nanny. They are dressed in long, white nightgowns and nightcaps. They hold an oil lamp and they look at me in wonder.

“What do you want?” I ask them.

“We live here” the first one answers.

“Since when?” I wonder.

“Ever since we were born!”

At this point I wake up and I still feel confused...?

My friends are getting harder and harder to meet. There is more and more pressure at work; Yota's pungent remarks about a writer of Pangaea who wasn't paid in time because I was too late in typing his entry, as she said. The ironic laughs of children on the road; this evening, as soon as they saw me, they shouted “here comes the vampire!” Everybody thinks they are my boss! I can't stand them anymore!

For days now I have been drowning in a whirl of violent emotions. I strongly want to punish the others for all the things they do to me. I feel I don't love humans. Ever since I was born, they have been launching all kinds of psychic attacks against me: They deride me, they underestimate me, they tell tales about me, they are unfair to me, they undermine me, they hoodoo on me. Right at this moment I am overwhelmed with terrible wrath, which could be used as a carrier of black magic. *Could this be my inner inclination?*

Sunday, 14th June 1992

Night Adventure: A football match begins at a nearby pitch but it is disrupted soon, because something is very wrong. All of a sudden, alien monsters appear from all directions: reddish beings which look like gigantic octopuses, spectral whirlwinds, enormous spider-like insects etc. I, together with other people, run to the mountain so as to escape, while weird liquid objects keep falling from the sky. At that moment, a white substance rises over the tombs and the cypress-trees of the old cemetery, and it gradually forms something like a dinosaur's skeleton on the night sky. Someone shouts we should all run away together...?

It is high time I started observing *Silence*. I need to keep my mouth shut, since I am not able to ignore the other people's opinion. Anyway, the others can't possibly approach the fascinating worlds of my dreams; that's why they usually show disbelief, boredom or envy. Even when they seem to be interested in my experiences, I should be reserved and keep silent.

Unfortunately, I tend to talk a lot and ask for approval or advice because I am insecure inside. I

also like to believe that the narration of psychic experiences will make me a more interesting person -but this has always proved to be wrong: Even Aphrodite and Theano, who are my best friends in Janus, seem to be more interested in sexual experiences than parapsychology; as a result, I often encounter disapproval, disbelief, or ironic remarks. The fact is that this situation affects me negatively, it makes me doubt about myself and it blocks my development.

The soul is a sacred place, a sanctum. Nothing sacrilegious must invade there: no harmful information, no malevolent mouths or ears. For this reason, the law of silence must be observed...

Saturday, 20th June 1992

Night Adventure: I, as well as many other women, drive cars along a big avenue full of traffic, strange turns and obstacles. Driving proves to be very difficult, we have to manoeuvre a lot in order to stay on the right course, until we reach some bright traffic lights. We get off there, men take our cars and they drive comfortably along straight roads, until they finish. They all win a trip abroad as a prize. Women are left behind. *Interpretation: Possibly, the dream symbolizes the roles of the two sexes in our society...?*

In the afternoon I went to the nursery school "The Little Castle", so as to watch the celebration for the end of the school term. Josef, my three-year-old nephew, took part in one of the sketches, showing unexpected shyness. I had a very nice time, realizing the importance of every moment: All what happened during those two hours was unique, nothing like that will ever happen again. It was also evident to me that those who are destined to be distinguished in life, take this path from a very early age – like the cute little girl who was dressed as Minnie...

Sunday, 26th July 1992

Prophetic dream: I am at a nice beach with blond sand and a few sunbathers. A lofty, black water tank dominates the place. I slowly get into the sea, wearing my black swimsuit. I enjoy swimming in the clear blue water; Aphrodite is with me. *Verification: The beach of Kourouta, I will unexpectedly visit on the 9th of August.*

Prophetic dream: I am in a travelling coach. I am seated by the window, my mother is next to me. We pass through narrow streets with old, half-ruined houses. Later, I notice a blue car which has the number 2504. *Verification: The trip to Kranidi on the 15th of August... ?*

This is the first day of my illustrated manuscript "**Sandra Anderson - Astral Fantasy**", which I start writing today. I feel great, like being born again! Sandra Anderson is a revolutionary cosmonaut, who fights against evil all over the universe. Her stories are structured in a very unusual way: I have written down in a separate notebook memories, fantasies, as well as dreams of mine and I have classified them in certain categories: Start of story – Main events – Secondary events – Cosmic truths – Fights – Dialogues – Space and time – End of story. Each item corresponds to a card of the Egyptian tarot. So, I draw a card at random for the category I need each time, I develop the respective item into one or more paragraphs, and I gradually form a full story...

* * * *

Thursday, 6th August 1992

Since yesterday afternoon I have been here, at Alexander's asram, somewhere in Peloponnese, together with other guys from Janus. It is a quite large field full of nut-trees, at the shadow of which we have put up our tents. To the north there is a wood of fir-trees; to the east, a spring forms a babbling stream at the shadow of a lofty plane-tree. Green hills crown the horizon to the south and west. The

landscape is picturesque and peaceful, yet the weather is too hot and I already feel disappointed. What shall we be doing under the scorching sun so many hours every day?

Friday, 7th August 1992

Endless conversations about metaphysics and self-knowledge by the burbling stream, at the shadow of the old plane-tree. Obviously, it is a battle for prevalence: Fat Savvas (what a moron!) acts the guru and everybody takes their hat off to him. Men are all around Aphrodite, maybe because she is cool, feminine, sensual. As about me, they treat me with hostile indifference. Nobody ever talks to me, neither do they listen when I say something. They act as if I were not there at all. If my good friends, Aphrodite and Theano, weren't present, I would be a complete stranger here. Nevertheless, I don't care about what people think about me; not any more...

Saturday, 8th August 1992

Alexander has been pressing us importunately so that each one of us reveals their innermost secret before everybody. He insists we can't advance in metaphysics unless we confess our secrets to the others. I feel confused. What can I do? How can I reveal that at the age of 29 I have never had a relationship with a man, without becoming the laughing stock of Janus? At the same time, I feel guilty because I can't reveal in public what I am.

On the other hand, how can I trust someone who is always scolding us because we don't consider him a god? At night, during dinner, there was unexpected merriment among us. Alexander hastened to tell us off because "we all revel foolishly and forget our spiritual course". Some of the disciples tried to assure him this is not the case, but he refused to listen and started singing in a plaintive voice, carrying everybody along to a sad "concert" full of guilt.

Sunday, 9th August 1992

It is early in the afternoon and we are all sitting around the big wooden table. We have just had lunch and the guru wants to show us how much he loves Bessy, his big, pitch-black, hairy dog. Quite a few times he has made clear to us he deems his dog equal to any human being -this time, however, he intends to show us too: He takes the bitch in his lap, he holds her as if she were a baby, and says tenderly: "This is my child! Is she any different from a child?". Then, he explains it is necessary for all dog owners to masturbate their dogs, in case the animal hasn't got the possibility to find a mate during the mating season. Next moment, he puts his finger in the dog's vagina and the animal writhes accordingly for a few seconds, while Alexander is looking at us with a mockingly. I am flabbergasted, I don't like this at all, but I say nothing. The rest of the disciples stay silent and calm, as if that were something absolutely natural, something you see every day.

As for the rest: I can no longer stand the heat of August! The sun is scorching us from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm every day. It is impossible for us to stand anywhere on the field or even have a nap after lunch, because the tents get extremely hot under the blazing sun. The only thing we can do is sit at the shadow of the plane-tree and wait patiently for the hours to pass. Everybody suffers but nobody expresses the slightest displeasure. I am the only one who keeps complaining to my friends, everybody knows about it and they all look askance at me.

This afternoon, however, after hours of negotiations, the guru finally gave us permission to go to the beach of Kourouta for a swim. So, we got in three cars (I was nearly left outside; no group looked willing

to include me) and we drove for forty-five minutes until we reached the seaside. During the journey I was feeling rather isolated, as I was in a car with five men who didn't utter a word. Not that I actually cared; I enjoyed the scenery of the picturesque golden-green hills, the blooming nature, the loud music, the speed.

The beach was very big, with blond sand and only a few people. Then I noticed the lofty, black water tank and I remembered the dream of 26th July; I recognized the place. I got into the sea together with Aphrodite and Theano, the water was wonderful -just what I needed in the summer heat- but, after fifteen minutes exactly, we heard a voice calling us to get out now, urgently.

We found ourselves walking on the sand, without knowing where we were going and why; then we reached the cars, we got in and departed for the asram at once, as if we were being persecuted! This means we drove for one and a half hours in all, just for a fifteen-minute swim! None of the other disciples found that strange –and none of them will even think of suggesting our going for a swim again...

Monday, 10th August 1992

When Aphrodite and I decided to ask John, one of Alexander's most advanced disciples, why we left the beach so hurriedly yesterday, he answered in a casual style: “Come on, guys, we've spoken so many times about how harmful sunbathing is because of the hole in the ozone layer! If we don't observe what we say, then what are we doing?”

I didn't contradict him but I wondered: When we left the seaside the time was 6:30 in the afternoon; how harmful would it have been, if we had stayed for fifteen more minutes? All things considered, I believe yesterday's excursion was one of Alexander's tricks, aiming to keep his disciples in subjection: He doesn't allow them to enjoy anything, so that they don't demand anything.

In the meantime, Savvas has been trying to show off how “cool” and “liberated” he is. He won't even hesitate to undress before everybody and have a bath with the water hose (luxuries of the asram). My friends hastened to follow his brilliant example at once and everyone admired their courage. Of course, I didn't even think of doing anything like that. I am not that liberated and I admit it.

Nevertheless, something very weird must be going on with me: Listening to the numerous erotic adventures of Theano and Aphrodite, I realize how odd my case is. It is not that I once had some love affairs which were not consummated; I am talking about absolute zero in love! I have never dated three times the same man! After the second date (tops) either he disappears or I make myself scarce! Isn't this a *mystery*?

Tuesday, 11th August 1992

This is our last morning at the asram: The beauty of the spring, the peace and quite of the surrounding nature, breakfast around the big wooden table. Aphrodite, Costas, Vangelis and I in a white car, driving fast over magical copper-green hills, listening to fine rock music. When we reach the city of Pylos, we sit at a round metal table in a small bistro and we drink coffee, waiting for the coach to arrive. Unique moments in the endless space and time...

Thursday, 13th August 1992

Night Adventure: A culture of a unicellular organism proliferates rapidly until it forms a reddish mass which looks like thickened blood and it covers a vast expanse of land. When it is cut with iron scissors, it is dried out. People are obliged to live on the dry culture, inside uniform metal quarters, while

the dried, half-dead organism stirs under their feet. The children don't want to play outside because they can feel something is wrong, but their parents compel them to do so.

Soon I am informed that the only way to prevent humans from being destroyed is to do away with technology. People must learn how to handle the energy of light, they must learn how to work with light. Only in this way can they beat the horrible danger which lurks under their feet...

Saturday, 15th August 1992

This morning I went on an excursion to Ermioni with my parents, with a view to buying a piece of land for future exploitation. I didn't find anything worth the while, yet I relished some unique moments in time: the polite woman at the souvenir shop; the cheerful foreigners in the yachts; the small forest with the winding path; the white chapel; the ruined red house; the rocky beach, full of sea-urchins; the gorgeous blue-eyed man in the ferry-boat back home. *Happy moments I will soon forget...*

The real profit from the excursion: As the coach was passing through the village of Kranidi, I recognized the narrow street and the old houses I had dreamt of on the 26th of July; a little later I saw a blue car with the number 2504...

Thursday, 20th August 1992

In the afternoon we paid a visit to uncle George, who was diagnosed with lung cancer four months ago. His wife, aunt Despina, who is usually full of malice and grumble, seems to be calm now. On the other side, uncle George looks restless and discouraged; understandable, since his disease is getting worse and he is already in pain. "When I see people walking on the roads, I feel sorry for them because they don't even suspect what the future has in store for them!" he says.

The spectre of death already lingers in the rooms of the house, yet neurotic aunt Despina moves around with a liveliness I have never seen on her before. Moreover, her huge flatulent belly has now disappeared...

Friday, 21st August 1992

Lucid Dream: I am in a train but my head is too high and I can see the sky above the roof. Then I realize I am sleeping and I start praying in a low voice: "Virgin Mary, Mother of God, help me". An azure, spectral cross is formed before me, yet there is darkness all around me. "This cross will cure my uncle George and will protect him from all evil," I say aloud and push the cross away. It looks smaller and smaller as it slips away, further and further in the distance.

Verification: I won't manage to cure uncle George, but he will be lucky enough to escape from the "big pains". In the beginning of December he will need a cylinder of oxygen but aunt Despina will be nagging him not to use it very often, for reasons of economy. Finally, one night the bottle will accidentally be left on and all oxygen will evaporate, drying the air and my uncle's lungs. He will die peacefully in his sleep because of lack of oxygen...

Sunday, 23rd August 1992

Night Adventure: The commander of a spaceship secretly collects extraterrestrial organisms and brings them on board. Soon they escape from their cells and gradually contaminate all the crew. The aliens look like fat, short, rosy anthropoids. I, together with others, run to higher and higher levels of the

spacecraft in the hope of escaping, until I find myself in a big restaurant with purple round tables and chairs. I cross the room, I find an officer and explain to him what's going on. Then, I keep on running.

Outside, on the planet, the situation is even worse: Horrible watery beings contaminate humans and transform them into aliens. Initially, the contaminated don't look any different from normal people, but they can't maintain a solid form for long. I run up a spiral stairway to higher and higher levels of the craft, till I reach the top. However, the aliens are still after me, there is no hope. My guns can stop them only for a while. While trying to defend myself, I accidentally find out that water turns the contaminated into humans again. Using a hose as a gun, I sprinkle them all with water, but more and more aliens arrive from all directions; I am in agony, yet I can feel the enemies admire me.

At that moment I realize this is a dream and I feel relieved: if it gets tougher, I can change it or even stop it. Anyway, I finally manage to outrun my persecutors and, always running, I reach lower levels of the spaceship, where I find out an exit, just in time, before my enemies get too close.

Possible interpretation: Alien organisms contaminate and control earthlings, although human beings don't suspect anything. Does water neutralize the invaders? Have I arrested the attention of hostile, extraterrestrial entities?

● *Self-determination*

Tuesday, 6th October 1992

Lessons at Janus started again last month, but they are still meaningless and boring. We don't learn anything new and there is no practice. The guru wastes all our time complaining about delayed fees. In addition, he allows nobody to say anything in class any more, as he doesn't tolerate even the slightest indication of a personal opinion. Sometimes we are given lessons by Harry, the brightest example of obedience in Janus, who trumpets forth that: "Disciples who are entirely subjected to their master, have a good chance of reaching illumination – no matter who the master is, no matter if the master is a complete idiot! It doesn't matter who you obey; the important thing is to obey!"

This evening we had a celebration in class. It proved to be a fiasco: as usual, the guru monopolized all conversations, emphasizing that he is in total control of our lives now and that he knows exactly what we are doing every moment. He got on my nerves but... *Could he be serious about that?*

Later, on my way home, a lunatic on the bus scared me: He sat right opposite to me and kept shouting, swearing and gesticulating during the whole journey, while the bus was full and there was no other seat vacant. I am getting sick and tired of this all...

Saturday, 10th October 1992

Since the beginning of the month I have been in two minds whether to leave Janus or not, until the following incident happened at Danae's this evening: There were eight persons from our class invited, we all sat together in the living room, but there was a strange silence among us; the TV was on, we all gaped at it, but we neither watched anything nor uttered a word. There was only embarrassment, frigidity, absolute lack of communication.

"Shall we turn it off and talk a little?" I suggested calm, after an hour of exasperation.

"I would like it to be on!" someone retorted with an air of importance.

"Me too!" another one seconded and the others agreed, probably because they wanted to oppose me.

Anyway, we stayed there for about three hours doing nothing but stupidly looking at the screen. We hardly talked, I was bored to death, I got furious and I decided to leave Janus for good. By the way, how "spiritual" can someone be, if they can't resist the telly? What have we been doing all these years?

Monday, 12th October 1992

Night Adventure: I am in the yard of a monastery, among many people. Something extraordinary is about to happen, something we've been waiting for a long time. *Could it be Judgement Day?* I suspect. There is a lot of agitation now, as crowds of people hurry towards an arched gate. I follow too, although nobody knows if we are heading for Heaven or Hell. Reaching the gate, there is a white, marble stairway before us; a hawk goes up the steps, next to some people; it scares me although I can hear them say it is a good demon.

Next moment, the hawk screeches loudly and it changes form within a bright light. I am in agony, as

I am not sure whether it will be transformed into an angel or a demon. *No, it will be an angel*, I finally decide and indeed, the bird becomes an angel with white wings: It has the form of a beautiful woman with blond hair, dressed in a white long dress, who beams with tranquility and wisdom.

Suddenly, the woman changes form again: She is holding an infant in her hands now and she hasn't got wings anymore. I recognize Mother Mary with baby Jesus. She leads us all to a spacious room, full of chairs. Some kind of lecture is about to begin in there. There are only four or five persons sitting at the front row, but I prefer to wait for others to arrive. The preacher, who is Jesus Christ, begins his speech by announcing his Second Coming at the beginning of the New Age.

Thursday, 15th October 1992

This afternoon I visited my friend Aphrodite; I found her home alone and she looked kinda strange. When I asked her if anything was wrong, she confided in me that during the last two hours (that is immediately after I had phoned her) incredible things had happened: All of a sudden she felt like suffocating and, without even thinking about it, she left home, she went to find Zisis' best friend, and asked to have sex with him at once! The guy was not alone, he was in the company of a friend. The latter, as soon as he got wind of what was happening, sought to leave; yet, Aphrodite didn't let him go, making clear she didn't mind having sex with both of them!

"I felt very liberated when I had sex with two men at the same time, and I had no problem that one of them was my lover's best friend! Now it is all crystal clear to me: Love is one thing, sex is another! There can be sex without love!" she concluded with an air of expertise.

A little later, Zisis arrived home. Aphrodite sent me to the kitchen and she told her boyfriend everything, with all details. I heard some shouts, then silence for about half an hour. I was beginning to wonder, when they called me to their room. The window was wide open despite the freezing cold, but the place stank awfully, like vomit. In fact, I had never smelt anything so disgusting in my whole life. I suppose it was some kind of narcotic – taking into account that Zisis often provides Aphrodite with hashish, and who knows what else. I felt very embarrassed but I acted the fool. "Now I want you even more!" said Zisis to his girlfriend in a mawkish voice, and hugged her tenderly. Is all this madness, or what?

Monday, 14th December 1992

I left Janus behind two months ago, but I always felt the urgent need to find new friends. Therefore, as soon as I quit Janus, I enrolled in a local school of folk dances, together with my sister. During the first month, there was a crowd on the dance floor: about 45 persons had initially joined the class of beginners. Yet, it didn't take me long to understand that certain pupils are already professional dancers! Sometimes, the teacher tells them to dance in a separate circle, so that the rest of us can see "how people dance". Then, it is obvious that these persons have a relationship with the teacher, as they are: his wife, his wife's sister, the boyfriend of his wife's sister, his sister, his sister's boyfriend, his brother-in-law and so on.

Before the beginning of the lesson and during the ten-minute break there is always an atmosphere of ostentatious hilarity in the class, as mocking laughs and jokes echo everywhere. There are two jolly friends, Lisa and Nina (both are good friends of the teacher's wife) who catch all attention with their shouts, giggles and claptrap; it's evident they consider the dance school as their own property. Nobody seems to mind that, on the contrary everybody fawns upon them. Alice has often tried to join their clique; yet, for some strange reason she was frowned upon, so she has quit trying.

The only pupil I used to speak to was Catherine, a 17-year-old nice girl; however, since the beginning of the month she hasn't appeared at all, and she is not the only one who has disappeared: out of

45 people, now there are only 20 left – namely the teacher's kin and a few more persistent persons like Alice, me and four or five others. Those few, who don't belong to the teacher's clique, are always under pressure to split: When we dance in a circle, we are always pushed to the rear places; moreover, we are often scolded or ridiculed by the teacher: "It's a good thing there aren't any injuries!" he says ironically, meaning two young men who don't have a great talent at dance, yet they do their best. Or, he mockingly mimics some pupils (maybe me too) by dancing a spasmodic dance, complaining that "certain people in here dance like wooden puppets". Alice and I play the fools because we like folk dances and we prefer not to make much of this nonsense. Anyway, we don't intend to become professionals or steal anybody's glory; we just dance for fun.

We were waiting for today's lesson to start, as I suddenly saw Nina running fast towards me. Before even realizing what's going on, she was already close to me; she jumped on the air in no time and with a loud martial cry she feigned kicking me on the face, stopping her right leg just a few inches from my head! Obviously, the slut wanted to prove to her friends she can jump "that high" -and they all laughed in satisfaction. As about me, I just smiled about the "joke". I didn't react dynamically, because I didn't want them to think of me as an unsociable, humourless shrew. Despite the bad omens, I still try to look positive, sociable, pleasant etc. Or else, how will I ever find new friends?

* * * *

Monday, 25th January 1993

Since the beginning of the new year, the atmosphere at the dance school has been getting more and more hostile. The clique seems to be unable to tolerate the presence of the few "foreign bodies" anymore, and the teacher keeps saying that "three or four persons spoil the whole class".

Alice, who is a really good dancer, still remains at the rear places of the circle -just like I do, of course. This afternoon she couldn't contain herself and burst out before everybody, complaining that Lisa and Nina are always giggling and acting the giddy goat, annoying the rest of the pupils. Lisa responded immediately, declaring that "nobody else here has a problem with us". Indeed, no one dared second my sister and there was a lot of hubbub in the class, until Alice left the circle and walked away in indignation. I did the same. Then, a man's voice (Lisa's boyfriend) echoed all over the room: "Bravo Lisa!" and the whole clique clapped their hands in enthusiasm.

Monday, 8th February 1993

After the above incident, Alice never set foot in the dance school again; yet I still go there, ignoring the concentrated hostility which is persistently hovering over me. I haven't given up yet, maybe because I like folk dances, maybe because I have nothing better to do...

This afternoon a team of inspectors came to check our progress. In general, they were satisfied with us, but they made some remarks regarding the atmosphere of frivolity in the class and the teacher was obliged to reprimand certain persons. It served them right!

Monday, 15th February 1993

I have started to observe strange facts at the dance school: Certain young men, who can barely move their legs, have been promoted to the front places of the circle and they are properly instructed, even if it is obvious they lack talent.

Rania, a mediocre dancer, has also been promoted to the fourth place of the circle – probably because she has managed to join the clique. She usually wears a white blouse painted by her, like this:

Nutcase Rania

? + ? + ? = Oooooohh!

A word to the wise is enough...

This afternoon a new pupil turned up: It was Nick, Mrs Lemony's eldest son; the lady has been keeping herself busy with the church lately, and she has become quite wealthy ever since. Anyway, as soon as Nick said "Hello", he took the third place in the circle and none of the clique showed the slightest displeasure.

Sunday, 28th February 1993

Next Sunday my class will give a performance of folk dances at the old cinema "Paris". This afternoon it was the second time we all gathered there so as to rehearse. All pupils are supposed to be allowed to take part in the rehearsals but, naturally, only the best ones will be chosen.

I know I am not much of a dancer and I don't expect to perform in public; I just go to the rehearsals for my own pleasure. Yet, the wry faces I confronted these two times were out of this world! As soon as we finished the rehearsal today, the teacher congratulated everyone except "two or three persons who spoil the dances; but let's not always complain about them!"

... Next Sunday Nick will be the only one who will take part in both kinds of folk dances -islands and mainland. Other dancers, better ones, will appear in one kind of dances only, or even in neither.

Sunday, 28th March 1993

Night Adventure: I am at the edge of Chaos but I am able to watch a struggle which takes place extremely far away, at the edge of a reddish, steamy hell: A brave warrior strives to save his son, who has fallen in there. He tries to pull the young man out with his two hands, but it seems to be too difficult. I wish to go and help them, but I can't cross the incredible abyssal space between us...?

As about the dance school, I am now left all alone among the proud members of the clique, as all the other "foreign bodies" have been removed. I can hardly stand at the rear of the circle now, as the others are clearly unwilling to hold my hands. I often need to run after them and make them hold my hands either they like or not! Moreover, during the break I can barely endure all that concentrated negativity against me: It is impossible for me to exchange even a word with anyone in there; if I dare approach a group of pupils, they turn their faces the other way, they stop talking and they all split in a second. I often prefer to disappear from class during the ten-minute break. Anyway, I don't intend to set foot in that hornets' nest again...

Tuesday, 6th April 1993

Psychic Experience: After a relaxation exercise in bed this morning, I suddenly feel myself sinking in the void. Looking up, I realize I am falling down a black tunnel, the edge of which is a huge, toothed mouth of a snake. I fall faster and faster and I can't see the mouth anymore. I can only feel a cold, pleasant airstream coming up and down my spinal cord. I enjoy the sensation and I manage to prolong it for a few more seconds...

Prophetic Dream: I am at the foyer of the hotel "Galactic" in Saronis, together with my mother and my sister. We sit on plastic, purple chairs. An old man complains I have taken his seat. I disagree and tell him I haven't taken anybody's place. A young woman walks past us; she wears a long white blouse with

the words "Free Shop" written with big black letters on her chest.

Verification: Next morning Alice informs us we should go to the Organization of Telephony in Helioupolis at once, so as to pay a delayed telephone bill. When mum, Alice and I arrive there, we sit on plastic purple chairs. Then I stand in a queue and the old man behind me complains I have taken his place. This isn't true, so I deny it by saying "I haven't taken anybody's place". Then, a young woman walks past me; she is wearing a long white blouse with the words "Free Shop" written with big black letters on her chest.

Wednesday, 28th April 1993

Psychic Experience: Early in the morning, after a meditation exercise, I feel myself sinking deeper and deeper inside; then I perceive a white, liquid yet vaporous substance spreading everywhere. Little by little, a colourless landscape starts to form out of this substance, and I walk about it. I feel wonderful, I hope it isn't just a dream; right at that moment, I realize it is a dream. I shut my eyes, empty my mind and fall into the void again, while I can feel a cold, pleasant airstream coming up and down my spine. I keep on sinking in a dark tunnel, until I discern a golden disc shining bright at its bottom. I hope to reach there but I wake up instead...?

It's been a month now that I have been an employee of Pangaea, which means I am entitled to social security. For this reason I have decided to break my life insurance contract with the company "EasyLife". This afternoon, as soon as I informed my insurance broker about it, he went berserk and started cursing me: "Now you are healthy, Yvonne, but in five years you may be not be healthy at all! Then, you will be very sorry for breaking the contract!"

Later, when he saw I was undaunted, he suggested another alternative: "How about continuing your insurance policy, while I will be paying your premium? Of course, in that case I will be the lawful beneficiary!" – which means, if something bad happens to me, the smart insurer will get the dough. I turned down the offer, of course...

Wednesday, 5th May 1993

Night Adventure: I live in a world which is governed by ruthless politicians. All people are imprisoned in stone cages, away from nature. Strange huge canons aim at us continually. I try to escape but they watch incessantly. A gigantic canon aims at me -I almost bump against it- as I fly high with a view to escaping. At a moment, when they aren't watching and the canon isn't aiming at me, I run fast, I climb up a wall and I am finally out of the city-prison. However, nature is still very far away.

Now I wander on the fringes of civilization, in and out of empty cells. I feel alone and insecure, but at least nobody watches or confines me anymore. Intending to leave once and for all, I go on smashing shut doors; however, I can't find a way out. I meet a woman, who looks like Aphrodite, and I suggest we go away together; yet, she doesn't want to: "I don't give a fuck about them," she explains. "Where is nature?" I ask her then, and she points at a strip of green which can be seen in the distance.

A woman politician, who is dressed in a dark-coloured suit, has short blond hair and reminds me of Persephone, tries to prevent me from flying to liberty -but she can't stop me. I fly high towards the countryside, enjoying the fresh breeze on my face and arms. I am transported with an unprecedented joy as I fly freely over green fields and deep gorges. *What happens if I fall?* I wonder, as I suddenly discern large bulks of iron lying on the ground. For a few moments I lose height, but I finally manage to beat my fears and go on. I wake up full of joy and excitement.

Interpretation: A clear allegory of our prison-world; I wish to escape, but hidden enemies watch and obstruct me with strange guns. I eventually find the opportunity to escape, but I feel lonely and insecure. I am alienated, but still I can't escape. Certain persons who seem to be friendly, may actually be indifferent or hostile. Finally, I manage to go away, I am free. Nevertheless, inner fears and doubts make me "lose height", as I can see they have polluted everything, even beyond the limits of their civilization. However, in the end I beat my fears and continue my spiritual ascension...

Sunday, 30th May 1993

Prophetic Dream: At the crossroads of Smyrnis street and Kyprou avenue, a bus crashes into a car. The right front wheel of the bus is detached and rolls down the street. *Verification: In the afternoon, as I return home from work, the bus I am in crashes into a car at the crossroads of Smyrnis street and Kyprou avenue. The right front wheel of the car is detached and rolls down the street...?*

This evening I finished my first illustrated manuscript of the series "***Sandra Anderson - Astral Fantasy***", which contains eleven fantasy stories. While writing them, I noticed some odd coincidences: First I write or illustrate a scene; then, after a few hours -or one day- a similar scene takes place in my reality or in a film on television. Such coincidences I call *contacts*. To be more specific:

Fifth story: Venor, Sandra's archenemy, hides inside a laundry cart and escapes from prison. In a film I watched at the same night, the imprisoned hero hides inside a laundry cart and escapes from prison.

Seventh story: I draw a picture of a dinosaur's skeleton rising over a cemetery. A few hours later, at night, uncle George dies unexpectedly.

Eighth story: Sandra sings in a disco pub. Next day I am unexpectedly invited to go to a disco with my cousins -I hardly ever go to a disco.

Tenth story: I write about a gigantic monster which absorbs energy from spacecrafts. A few hours later, in a cartoon on TV there is a strange machine which absorbs energy from a spacecraft.

Tenth story: In another cartoon on TV, the hero has been captured by his enemies. Suddenly, he turns round and fires at them with an anesthetic laser gun. They fall back, the hero runs away. Earlier in the morning, I had written an episode where Sandra Anderson escapes from her enemies exactly in the same way.

Eleventh story: On the 21st of May, at the funfair of Saints Constantine and Helen, a young blond man who resembles Venor a lot happens to be standing next to me. My friend Mandy, who is with me, suddenly talks about a whip and moves her hands accordingly; she is dressed exactly like Sandra in a similar scene, where Venor holds a whip. I drew that scene the day before, on 20th May.

Friday, 18th June 1993

The carpenter's workshop my brother-in-law opened a few months ago has been going from bad to worse, since Antony prefers fishing to working. More often than not, the bloke receives money in advance for the construction of furniture the client hardly ever sees. As a result, clients and creditors are getting angry because Antony owes them either money or furniture. As about my sister, she is obliged to work so as to support her family: For some months now she has been working as a chamber maid in the hotel "Blue Rose" in Vouliagmeni.

This morning things came to a pretty pass: While I was at work, one of Antony's creditors became too aggressive and threatened to sue him; in order to make sure her son-in-law will not end up in prison,

my mother ran to the bank with my deposit book (she is co-beneficiary) without telling me anything, she withdrew 400,000 drachmas and gave it to Antony! When my parents informed me about it, I got very angry and asked them to give me my deposit book in hand. From now on I will be keeping it in a safe place, together with my monthly salary. Up to this day I have trusted my money and my deposit book to my parents -very stupid of me...

Friday, 2nd July 1993

Mrs Lemony's husband, Harry, has had a bad accident recently: He got his left leg badly injured by a press in the factory where he works as a factory-hand. Doctors say the leg needs to be cut off because it has started to rot. I think I may be able to do something about it:

Lucid Dream: I wander about in our neighbourhood, I know I am dreaming and I look for Harry. I find him outside my house, at the street. I extend both my hands towards him and I send positive energy to him, saying: "This will cure you and it will protect you from all evil". *Verification:* Two days later my mother will inform me that Mr Harry's leg is "miraculously" getting better and it won't need to be cut off.

Monday, 9th August 1993

Another neighbour of ours, the 25-year-old John Zarifis, has been taking drugs for years. It is said he is now very badly addicted, there is no hope for him, and he is expected to live no more than one year. Once again, I decide to take action:

Lucid Dream: I look for John in my dream and I find him in my yard. He is dressed in an orange suit. I extend my hands and cure him, in the same way as above. *Verification:* A few days later I will be informed that John has suddenly escaped danger and he is about to start detoxification. Soon he will get off the hook and find a profitable job in a big company, although he hasn't got any special qualifications. From now on, both Harry and John will be in the pink of health.

Sunday, 22nd August 1993

For about two years now I have entered a very interesting phase of my life, since I have more and more psychic experiences; yet, I have also perceived certain paradox incidents which appear more and more frequently, surrounding me like a *Sonic War*: At daybreak, when I do the most important meditation exercise of the day, there is incredible mobility in the block of flats next to my house: A number of cars come and go continuously in and out of their outdoor garage, which happens to be right next to my bedroom window! Even earlier, from 4:00 to 6:00 am (no exaggeration) they race engines incessantly and/or slam car doors uncountable times! Why, indeed? Only God -or Satan- knows! The fact is that more often than not I can hardly sleep, I feel exasperated and I can't meditate properly.

In addition, the family who lives on the second floor of this building throw parties twice a week and there is very loud music till 3:00 o'clock in the morning. Besides, they are always on the balcony, shouting, screaming, listening to music or television on full blast, every day, all day long! Moreover, the family who lives across the street have a nasty black dog which barks continuously for hours and hours, day or night! The weirdest thing, though, is that nobody else in the neighbourhood seems to be annoyed by all that pandemonium!

I was hopeless about the problems mentioned above, but this morning an unexpected solution came up: After years of moving houses, my sister has just decided to return here, at her own house, so that my

mother can help her even more with raising her children. Yet, she suggests she and I should change houses: she prefers to live in my house, on the ground floor, because it is bigger and it has a veranda; therefore, I will move into her apartment, on the second floor, which is much quieter since it is not so close to the street and the outdoor garage.

I can hardly believe my good luck! Of course I have agreed to change houses with Alice! Finally, I will have a little peace and quiet! How could I ever be so lucky? Maybe my life is going to take a turn for the better, after all..

Wednesday, 10th November 1993

Night Adventure: I, together with some other persons, carry out researches into the dominance of Evil in the world. We have come to the conclusion that Evil will soon be too powerful to fight against, as it grows fast, like a living organism.

All of a sudden, three hostile women attack me; I fight back with karate kicks, but I can see I won't last long. I begin to hover in the air but they keep on chasing me, as they can fly too. Hovering higher and higher, I find out my enemies can't follow me over a certain height. I keep a safety distance, and I can see they admire me now. Besides, I am not afraid of them anymore because I know I can reach even higher.

After a while I decide to come down, as I know they can't harm me, and I land on a green field near the beach. One of my co-researchers is still examining some viruses of Evil in a wooden lab. "They would contaminate the whole world if they didn't have so many enemies," she says.

Sunday, 12th December 1993

I have just finished writing the second book of my illustrated manuscripts "*Sandra Anderson - Astral Fantasy*", which contains four stories. The most important *contacts* I have observed are the following:

First Story: I write and illustrate a music concert given by Venor. Two days later, my mother decides we should pay a visit to my godmother in Piraeus. Her daughter, who is a professional pianist, plays some classical pieces on the piano for us - a private concert.

Third story: I write about Astrid, a dangerous woman who explores cyberspaces. Next day, a colleague at work tells me she has had such an experience in England. "It made me cry for two days!" she confides in me.

Third story: Sandra sings in a music concert. A few hours later, I watch a cartoon where there is a concert given by a woman singer.

Third story: Late at night I watch a film on TV; there is a man who asks a woman to help him get rid of another, dangerous woman. The two of them make love, while the evil woman is secretly watching them. A few hours before, I had written and illustrated a very similar scene with my protagonists Venor, Sandra, Astrid.

● *Crisis*

Wednesday, 17th January 1994

The new year has found me in a state of disorientation. I thought I were about to make a new start in life, however nothing seems to be going well. At work I confront a never-ending war from persons of dubious value: First of all Nicoleta, a clerk, who is always insulting, mocking and slandering not only me but other colleagues as well. Then Athena, who has studied multimedia in London and is supposed to be a great expert in computers, yet she is completely off base. Moreover, she is always trying to sabotage me in various stupid ways: She steals my back up floppy discs and accuses me of losing them, yet I see them as soon as she opens her drawer; she refuses to show me some useful things on the computer; she gives me to type the wrong texts and then she says I am the one who doesn't work right; she drops hints I am illiterate and I don't know the computer program, and so on. Luckily, Mrs Julia, our chief editor, knows what's going on and she is on my side.

As about my social life, it is not at all satisfactory: I don't see the guys from Janus anymore and I seldom go out at night. I occasionally meet Mandy (aunt Hermione's extremely boring niece: the only thing she does is answer "yes" or "no" to my questions), Lena (an incredibly dull, married hen: I visit her once a week, and as soon as I get there she starts helping her sons with their homework; she won't stop until I leave) or Persephone (rather depressed, yet she is the only one with whom I have something to discuss).

For some months now, I have been attending another centre of spiritual development, the "School of Superior Knowledge". This centre is of foreign origin, it is widespread all over the world, and a branch happens to be in Glyfada – hardly a 15-minute walk from my house. However, I don't like their fascist theories at all, let alone they are obsessed with the so-called "karma of retaliatory justice", which excuses and praises even the most blatant injustices in this world.

As about the guru, it is a woman called Donna; she is a very aggressive person, full of irony and malice, and doesn't hesitate to insult anyone who dares express the slightest doubt about her teachings. "Certain people here make me feel like vomiting," she said this evening staring at me with a malignant look. I know she dislikes me because I often show disbelief to her preachings. I must admit, though, I am still not smart enough to keep my mouth shut. Sometimes I even present my own ideas in class. I face disapproval and hostility almost every time.

In my opinion, some of Donna's teachings are unacceptable: For instance, she believes that people are divided in two basic categories, "the ascending" and "the descending". The rich, the powerful, the lucky, are ascending; the poor, the weak, they unlucky, are descending. Insupportable pain and mortal danger can make a person spontaneously aware. Nazi concentration camps were something very good, because such horrible living conditions made the inmates live every moment in full awareness! "Many ex inmates of those camps often feel homesick of the years they spent in there!" claims Donna complacently and everybody listens.

According to the basic dogma of this school, man's most important goal in life is the breaking of the Ego (how original!). In every single lesson Donna trumpets forth the urgent need for wiping out all the separate "egos" which compose a personality: Any personal like, dislike, opinion, thought, feeling, will, is an expression of the Ego and for this reason they must all be eliminated, so as to achieve the so-called "awareness". She also teaches all human beings are One, and for this reason they should all think, feel and

act identically. Any expression of a personal opinion is considered to be an aberration. "You head for the darkness! I head for the light!" said Donna full of arrogance, when a disciple dared disagree with her about that. So much of breaking the guru's Ego...

The purpose of all these new age cults mushrooming all over the world nowadays, is the creation of human puppets. The majority of these cults are international and widespread in most civilized countries. In Greece there are hundreds of such schools which prepare the people for the New Age, let alone the systematic propaganda in the mass media: Innumerable articles on magazines and newspapers, as well as plenty of TV programs regarding modern cults, oriental religions, alternative medicine, yoga, magic, astrology, tarot fortune-telling etc.

Modern cults appear to be different in many ways, but actually they are all the same: they all trumpet forth the "breaking of the Ego" with a view to creating obedient, passive citizens who are always ready to carry out any order without thinking or asking questions...

Sunday, 30th January 1994

Lucid Dream: I fly freely over green fields, then I enter a narrow path between two lines of leafy trees. As a hover in the air, I feel the fresh leaves in my hands, I enjoy a unique sense of jauntiness. Yet, the scene gradually fades away; I wonder why and I consciously try to reshape it -in vain. The only thing I finally manage to form is a strange, white, relief picture which unfolds before my eyes: The narrow path winds its way among white tree trunks which sprout out of the white ground towards the white sky. I try harder, but I finally "fall" into a dream, where I swim in the sea together with other people...

Saturday, 12th February 1994

Astral Projection: I change a lucid dream into a meditation exercise. I wake up instantly but I fall asleep again, thinking I would like to be on the bridge of Rialto in Venice. I find myself walking along the bridge, observing the small shop-windows with the fine clothes, handbags and accessories. I can also see the blue water of the canal flowing under the bridge.

Verification: Early in the morning, while having breakfast, my mother says suddenly: "Do you remember when we were in Venice, walking along the bridge of Rialto, observing the shop-windows with the handbags?"

"We were not together in Venice," I remind her.

"Yes, you are right" she agrees.

Mum visited Venice in the summer of 1980, together with Alice and met my father on his ship. I didn't join them because I was having the Pan-Hellenic Examinations then...

Sunday, 27th February 1994

Lucid Dream: I am in an open wagon speeding into a dark crater. Before it goes any lower, I consciously get out of the wagon and fly towards the huge, dim sun. The atmosphere is steamy, whitish, full of strange beams. I fly over a white stairway, until I arrive at a vast playground. There are lots of people there but they all look like ghosts...?

This afternoon my sister and Antony finally decided to take a divorce by mutual consent, after ten years of misery and irresolution. The basic reason for the divorce is hunger: If Anthony provided his family with a minimum sum of money, Alice would never leave him. The carpenter's workshop he opened last year

had enough clients, yet he hardly earned anything because he used to grab the money paid in advance and disappear, without even setting foot in the workshop. Creditors were furious, they even went so far as to knock on their door and the couple pretended to be absent! So, Alice finally got sick and tired of this all and decided to ask for a divorce. In the meantime, she still works as a chamber maid in the Hotel "Blue Rose" in Vouliagmeni, while my parents have undertaken the bringing up and support of her two sons – which means at least half of my father's pension is spent on the needs of Alice and her children. Nevertheless, all friends and relatives regard my sister as "a "heroine, who works and raises two boys all alone"...

Thursday, 17th March 1994

Astral Projection: I induce my astral body to get out, in the darkness of my bedroom. Then I fly out of the window and along Nereid st; black dogs get in my way as I fly towards the playground, yet I manage to leave them behind. I go to the painted red swings, then to the slide with the wooden pyramid on top. Around its base there are nice lilies and nearby there is an apricot tree. I go there, I cut a leaf off and hold it in my hand. It suddenly occurs to me I could bring it with me in the material world. I force awakening at once, while I hold the leaf tight. I wake up, feeling the leaf melting in my hand, as if it were made of some liquid substance...

Interpretation: Dark enemies, in the form of dogs, try to prevent me from exploring the astral plains. Obviously, it is impossible to bring an object from the astral plains to the material world. Nevertheless, when I return from work this afternoon, I will unintentionally bring home an apricot-tree leaf, which will be stuck under my shoe.

Tuesday, 3 May 1994

Psychic Experience: I can feel my legs in bed, but at the same time I feel myself walking; then I hover in the air, but soon I fall into a black tunnel crossed by a thick luminous beam. Numerous thinner beams intersect it, forming a kind of mesh. The dark tunnel ends in a square bottom, where there is light, a bright white light. As I sink towards the light, it seems to be growing bigger and bigger, until I can almost touch it: liquid, runny, white light. It feels wonderful...

Tuesday, 10th May 1994

Night Adventure: Aliens have invaded the earth. Alice and I hide behind a thick green hedgerow and we watch them. A handsome, muscular, blond warrior fights against the aliens with his weapon. They capture him but he finally escapes, although the enemies carry heavy firearms. Inside a vehicle there is a woman who has been tainted by an alien micro-organism: it "melts" the human figure within a blue aura, and the woman is transformed into a kind of plant. She regains her external appearance but is one of them now...

Psychic Experience: I wake up at about 1:00 after midnight. To my great astonishment, I can discern something hovering half a metre above me: it is a black, hideous shadow which looks like a living creature. I observe it for a few moments and it scares me stiff. "Jesus Christ!" I shout in the darkness. Then I reach for the standard lamp and turn on the light. There is nothing up there. *Interpretation:* Maybe one of the "shadows" which dominate humanity -according to many modern cults? Anyway, that was no dream. I was not asleep when I saw it...

Sunday, 15th May 1994

Night Adventure: Aliens which look like human beings are enclosed in metal capsules and are cast out from an extraterrestrial spacecraft. They all fall on an inhabited planet, probably earth. One of them hides in the basement of a cottage. Finally, he gets out and meets the family, which consists of five people: mother, father, two sons and a beautiful blond daughter.

The extraterrestrial spacecraft is dangerous to the planet, but only the stranger knows that. A little later, weird natural phenomena start taking place: Odd-shaped clouds cross the sky in incredible velocity; strong winds blow furiously, uprooting trees and carrying away telephone booths and other heavy stuff. Something crashes against the window pane, breaking the glass before me and I (the stranger?) have to remove the fragments from my back. The violent natural phenomena are repeated several times.

Eventually, the stranger reveals his true identity. This doesn't prevent him from going steady with the daughter of the family, but their happiness won't last: While she is in the garden, she bumps her head against a tree branch; she falls down on the ground and some mutated plants swallow her up; when they vomit her she is no longer what she was: she looks like a gigantic snail-like monster, a living horror. Her alien boyfriend swallows her up with a view to reshaping her; a little later, when he vomits her, she becomes an ethereal fairy. Yet, the only thing she wants now, is to harm him. The wind blows again and the landscape changes completely. Then I wake up, feeling confused and bewildered...

Monday, 6th June 1994

Night Adventure: I go down a white spiral stairway; suddenly I fall deeper and deeper into a whirl of crystals, until I find myself in a kind of asram. At first, it all looks nice and peaceful, everybody is kind to me, but I soon realize that the members of the cult gradually turn into monsters. At a moment I hear them say they intend to spread the taint to all humans on earth. I don't know what to do, I am in agony, and I want to get out of there as soon as possible. Then, I wake up and I am sorry I can't remember any more details...?

Now that I live on the second floor, I certainly enjoy more peace and quiet: at least, I don't hear the noises of the street so much. Of course, there is still some *sonic war* I cannot avoid: The residents of the second floor in the next block of flats still have parties two or three times a week. Some new tenants, who live across the street, listen to music on full blast all day long till 1:00 after midnight, every night. Don't these people ever go to work?

Yesterday, at 2:00 am, I woke up with extra loud folk music in my ears! The duds across the street were having fun once again, right at that time, so I decided to call the police at once. When I explained to the telephone operator what I wanted, she just hang up to me! Nevertheless, whenever old-Zarifis calls them for the same reason, the police arrive here in no time so as to restore peace and quiet! When my sister threw a party some months ago, the old man called the police as soon as the clock struck midnight and they arrived five minutes later. Oh, I forgot: Mr Zarifis belongs to a political club...

Saturday, 30th July 1994

Psychic Experience: It begins as a lucid dream, but I change it into a meditation exercise using the mantra "Energy" (inhale) - "Ecstasy" (exhale). Almost immediately I hear a strong hum in my ears and I see before me an endless cosmic vortex composed of umpteen white spirals. I feel cold, I am inside the cosmic vortex, *I am the cosmic vortex...* Fear... Suspense... Hypertension... but I don't intend to stop, I wish to go on. However, mum wakes me up right at that time, disrupting my unusual experience. It is only 8:00 o' clock in the morning and she only wants to ask me if I went to the supermarket yesterday

afternoon...?

I have just finished the third book of the series “*Sandra Anderson - Astral Fantasy*”, which is composed of four stories. The most important *contacts* I observed are the following:

First story: I write about a ship sailing among lightning. Just an hour later, in a film on TV there is a similar scene (a ship sailing among lightning in a thunderstorm) which lasts many minutes.

Second story: I write about an ocean and its sea life. On the same day, my friend Mandy buys an aquarium.

Second story: I write about an elephant cemetery guarded by a monster. In the same evening, in a movie on TV there is a similar scene: A tribe of Indians lives near an elephant cemetery guarded by a monster.

Third story: Venor, Sandra's enemy, is wounded by an arrow on his chest. At night, in a film on TV the hero resembles Venor a lot and he is wounded by knives on his chest. Moreover, uncle Alex gets a heart attack the next day.

Third story: I write and illustrate a scene where Sandra passes through a window and gets into a room, so as to escape from enemies who chase her; below the sill there is a sofa decorated with colourful cushions. On the same day, in a film on TV, the hero escapes from his enemies exactly in the same way. The sofa with the colourful cushions is identical to mine.

Fourth story: Sandra gets a nasty blow on her heart. At the same night my sister feels a strong pain in her heart and goes to hospital; the doctors find nothing wrong with her.

Saturday, 6th August 1994

I was sunbathing at the beach of Glyfada, when a beefy guy with tiny swimming trunks accosted me and started flirting me with trite phrases such as: “Have I seen you before? On an island maybe? Was it in Corfu? Or in Rhodes?” and so on. I noticed the white foam around his lips (a sign of serious mental disease), yet I let him talk on – lest I should lose the opportunity of meeting Mr Right, or maybe because I wanted to prove to myself I am “sociable”, “extrovert”, “open to new experiences” and the like.

I was rather confused and he was quite eloquent, so we soon started chatting like old friends. His name is George and he works as a literature master, he said. When he offered to give me a ride to St Tryfon in his car, I just couldn't refuse. So, I suddenly found myself in a small, green flivver, which could hardly speed at 40 klm per hour, together with a stranger...

Monday, 8th August 1994

This afternoon I walked all the way to St. Constantine Square in Glyfada, where I had a date with George at 7:00. Reaching the venue, I noticed his green ramshackle car passing by; in all likelihood, he didn't see me. Anyway, I waited for him outside the church; more than half an hour had elapsed when he finally turned up. I didn't show any displeasure and we walked to a nearby cafeteria.

George managed to win my confidence very soon, as he appeared to be a thoughtful and understanding person. He listened carefully to what I said, he agreed in everything and declared he had just found his soul mate. I was seduced into revealing many things about myself and he made so bold as to suggest our going to his house “for a drink, as friends”. I refused, of course.

At a moment I mentioned I had seen his car going round the square at about 7:00. “Eeeh, I was driving to the seaside, because I wanted to change clothes. I had gone swimming first!” he excused himself. *Nonsense; he was well-dressed and his hair was nicely combed; he had not gone swimming. In all probability, he was late on purpose, so as to strain my impatience. But no, probably I am all wrong*

he can't be so silly, I thought. "It is not right for a woman to be stood up and accosted by every bum! No, this will not happen again!" he said pompously and I believed him.

A little later, as we were chatting on, I complained about the awful noise made by cars at the outdoor garage below my window every night; he expressed his understanding and then he asked smiling: "Outdoor garage? What's does "outdoor" mean?". I wondered at his not knowing this word, but I explained it to him.

After that, he confided in me he intended to buy a house in Glyfada (meaning he is wealthy) and then he asked: "When I read the classified ads, looking for a house to buy, I often see an advertisement saying "Naxiotis real estate". What does "naxiotis" mean?". I explained to him it is the name of the real estate agent and he smiled satisfied. *He is either pulling my leg or a penniless Albanian; he is certainly not a literature master*, I thought but suppressed that suspicion at once.

After a while he pushed his chair closer to mine and complained "there are too many tables and people in here". He was not wrong about that. We agreed to leave and drive to the seaside.

A few minutes later we reached the beach "Diamond" but we didn't get out of the car at all; we stayed in, facing the magical rosy-red sunset before us. Yet, I could hardly enjoy it, as the bloke started bombarding me with lots of silly questions such as: "Are you sensitive?" ... "Are you emotional?" ... "Is love the most important thing to you?" and so on. I tried to give him satisfactory answers, yet I felt very uncomfortable. Soon he went on with an meticulous interrogation regarding my previous love life, while I was feeling as if I were being interviewed by a potential employer. Hoping to make him stop this, I made up a melodramatic love story about a boyfriend of mine who was killed in a car accident nine years ago; strangely enough, I felt quite emotional about it and when I said "I have lost someone" I meant it. Anyway, I don't know if the would-be groom believed me; however, we agreed to meet again two days later and go for a swim at "a nice, isolated beach in Kavouri", as George suggested.

Wednesday, 10th August 1994

Ignoring persistently a strong heartbeat and an inner voice crying "Don't go!", I arrived at St. Constantine Square on time, expecting to meet George at 6:30 pm. *By the way, how would we ever reach Kavouri in that ramshackle car? And what time would we leave the "nice, isolated beach?"* I kept wondering, rather anxious.

Anyway, the bloke didn't turn up until 7:15 so, in immense relief, I left the square and went for a swim at the nearby beach "Diamond". At last, now I had a wonderful excuse so as to get rid of him!

George phoned me a lot later, at night, he complained about not finding me there and said he had arrived at 7:30. When I protested about his delays, he flew into a rage and started to shout: "Listen, Yvonne, from now on, when we have a date you will wait for me for as long as it takes! It might be one hour, two hours, I don't know, but I am a busy person and I can't be punctual! Let alone sometimes the car breaks down! (*really?*) In this case, I am usually held up for three or four hours! Got it?"

"Yes, alright, got it," I replied hastily and he hang up on me.

After some confusion and thoughts of guilt such as *Could he be right? Did I leave the venue too soon? A relationship demands sacrifices*, and all this trash, I came to my senses and I disconnected the phone at once; I left it like that for a few days, so as to make sure the dud wouldn't be able to contact me again.

... Undoubtedly, the bloke was a pervert, maybe a dangerous one. Luckily, it didn't take me long to figure it out. On the other hand, someone else in my place wouldn't let the stallion go away. She would go

on dating him, she would endure all his whims and vices, and eventually she would break up with him after two or three miserable years, when things would have come to a pretty pass.

That's why I can't ever have a love affair: a) I am not adaptable enough, b) I don't feel "half" when I am single; I feel "half" when I am with somebody. On the contrary, when I am alone I feel complete! c) I am also too perceptive: I can see a man's fault within ten minutes – the same fault another woman would see in two years...

* * * *

Sunday, 25th September 1994

Gregory's wedding: The first friend of my childhood is getting married this evening. He won't be living in our neighbourhood anymore. From now on I will be seeing him rarely and he won't be the Gregory I used to know.

I reminisce scenes from the carefree childhood years we lived together, back at the 70s: Some games of hopscotch, soldiers, monopoly, hide and seek, the apples; the warm family gatherings later, at the 80s, during the years of adolescence. Tonight a nice part of my life is going away together with Gregory. I lose an innocent past, I experience an agonizing present, I await a threatening future...

Nothing lives for ever: What belongs to the past is as if it had never existed at all. There are only memories left, but they fade away moment by moment like a distant dream, until everything is lost in oblivion. Sooner or later all is gone: Good or bad, success or failure, bliss or pain.

Everything fades with time. Whole generations eventually die out, omnipotent dynasties are finally wiped out -it is just a matter of time. Entire civilizations have disappeared from the face of the earth, civilizations that once thrived on vast continents for many thousands of years. Sooner or later the earth swallows up everything, all the big and wondrous works of the past. Life itself will be extinct from the earth when the sun starts to cool. Whole worlds, maybe more advanced than ours, may have vanished because of unpredictable or inevitable cosmic phenomena. The only thing that remains is dust in space -maybe not even that...

Saturday, 8th October 1994

Night Adventure: As I go out of my house, in the distance I can see a beautiful landscape with green hills, picturesque cottages, azure lakes and black statues. I fly all the way there, feeling wonderful. Yet, all of a sudden my optical field gets narrower and narrower, until it is as if I were looking through a long metal pipe. Then, darkness.

I decide to fly through the dark pipe and I find myself in a land of exquisite beauty: Vast green gardens with wooden kiosks, luxurious glass houses, marble staircases and magnificent works of sculpture. On my left I can see an impressive kiosk made of white marble with a flower pattern. After a while I fly over the green hills again and return home. I can see the smog of Athens in the distance now...?

Once again determined to escape from the unnatural stagnation of my life, since the beginning of September I have been attending a local gym, together with my friend Mandy. Sometimes Alice comes with us too. We go there three times a week and we do bodybuilding and aerobics.

We have met a nice guy there, whose name is Dimitri Papayannis; he came and talked to me after he had recognized me as an old schoolmate from junior high school. We get along very well, we have pleasant chats, I like him. I show him my interest whenever I can, I have even given him my telephone number. However, he is clearly infatuated with Mandy, he has even confessed his love for her to me, although she has a relationship with another man and she doesn't like Dimitri. Yet he insists on flirting her,

using me as a point of contact with Mandy. Yet, I keep on playing the role of the match-maker, hoping that Dimitri will eventually be disappointed from Mandy's frigidity and notice me. At weekends I even arrange friendly meetings and outings, where we are all present: Dimitri, Mandy and I; sometimes my sister comes along too.

I also like another guy: It is Themis, the aerobics instructor. He is thirty years old, chestnut-haired with almond-shaped eyes, not very tall but handsome and sensual. I flirt him openly during the aerobics session, just like all women in class do; especially the married ones surround him ostentatiously during the lesson, preventing any single woman from approach him! Themis smiles and dallies with all women, giving them hope for something more. Needless to say, his class is always filled to capacity...

Sunday, 6th October 1994

Astral Projection: Persephone and I are getting ready to go to bed inside an old house. A sweet melody comes from a music box, mesmerizing me; I feel strange, as if I were falling into a dark grave. Outside the half-open window there is a bright light. The melody works in seven stages; when I reach the seventh stage I fall into hypnosis. Yet, I return to the dream fast and try to close the window with the power of my mind. I finally manage to do so, but next moment the shutters are open again. I try again, but now I can't close the window well. Persephone is there watching me, while a woman is trying to get in through the window. I go and close the shutters with my hands, but in the meantime the woman has broken into the room. She looks old and ugly. I am afraid of her and push her out. Then, I wake up with a start. The time is 4:30 am.

Verification: As Persephone herself told me this afternoon, during the night strong wind kept opening the shutters of her room. The first time she woke up, she didn't dare stand up so as to close them; she was frightened because she thought someone were trying to break into her room. The second time she woke up, she stood up and closed the shutters; the time was 4:30 am...

Tuesday, 25th October 1994

Night Adventure: I am on vacation in a village and I stay in a stone house; the veranda is spacious, made of the same kind of stone. On my right I can see a stairway which leads to the terrace. Then I am in the big green garden and I chat with a young, handsome man, the wind flapping his shoulder-long hair. I kiss him gently but suddenly I lose contact with him, while he seems to be aging fast...

Psychic experience: I change a lucid dream into a meditation exercise. As soon as I reach the "void space", I perceive a black star which beams white light to infinity. I am so scared that I wake up instantly. There follows a second meditation exercise in bed: I feel as if falling in a white whirling vortex; it is not empty, there is something inside; I fall deeper and deeper, I feel myself fading away, my heart stopping. I wake up with a start...

Saturday, 17th December 1994

Psychic Experience: I dream of being in another city, maybe Ioannina, together with my parents. I want to leave this place we can't find a bus at 2:00 in the afternoon. I feel tired and annoyed. Verification: At the same night Helen Roussos, a colleague in Pangaea, dreamed of being in Ioannina together with her father. She wanted to leave the place but she couldn't. "You two are insane! You see the same dreams!" malicious Nicoleta commented, as soon as she heard about the dream Helen and I shared tonight...?

This morning I finished the fourth book of my illustrated manuscripts "*Sandra Anderson - Astral*

Fantasy”, which contains only three stories. The most important contacts are the following:

First story: I write and illustrate a scene where Sandra, full of concerns, faces a rosy-red sunset at sea. Two days later, George and I face a rosy-red sunset at sea and I am not at all carefree.

First story: I write and illustrate a scene where Sandra embraces her lover from behind. The day after, while walking in Athens, I see a woman embracing her lover (who resembles Sandra's lover) from behind, exactly in the same way.

First story: The “Ship of Destiny” is blown up while it is empty. Some hours later, a bomb explodes at Mr Gryparis' house, while it is empty.

Second story: A crazy monster falls on a table and then it crushes a man. Next morning a bus, which is out of control, crushes and kills six people who are waiting at the bus terminus near Pangaea.

Third story: Sandra's spacecraft is rammed by an airborne object "via radio transmission". In the same evening I watch a film on TV, where an aeroplane is rammed by an airborne object "via radio transmission" -just like in Sandra's case...

♠ *Phase Seven: The Seductions of the World*

Sunday, 12th February 1995

It's about three months since I first noticed a radical change in Persephone's behaviour: She is always shouting and laughing at top voice, she is trying to be clever and expert in all subjects, she is constantly asking for favours: "Type these poems for me" ... "Tell your mother to sew this skirt of mine" ... "Will you paint this picture for me?" ... "Go to that public service and ask this or that" and so on. Since the beginning of the year she had been talking me into buying her a certain blouse, which costs 12,000 drachmas, as a present for her birthday -which was yesterday. Finally, when she realized I had no intention of spending so much money for her, she asked me to buy her a book of poems -and I did that.

I think she has lost her mind, yet she also seems to have become paradoxically popular lately: Until last Christmas she had no friends but me; now, however, she has friendly relations with lots of young people. Persa keeps mentioning names of old schoolmates whom, as she says, she meets on the road by chance and they become best friends at once. Moreover, she has started to believe that she is gorgeous and desirable and that men admire her beauty despite her 140 kilos. She is also sure she can charm any male with the poems she has been writing recently.

The greatest *mystery* of all, Persephone's 21st birthday party yesterday: First of all, she didn't want me to come at the same time as her other friends. She suggested I should come the next day "so that we can be alone". I avoided giving her a definitive answer, so she asked me to phone her before deciding. Finally, seeing I hadn't phoned her till yesterday afternoon, she called me at about 4:00 pm and asked me whether I intended to come or not; then she commented jokingly: "Those who don't bring an expensive present, won't come in!"

As soon as I arrived at Persa's yesterday evening, I was astonished to see there were about thirty guests there. All of them seemed to be ordinary persons, while there were also some "divas" – who normally wouldn't deign to have a look at an obese woman like Persa. Her mother, Mrs Daphne, greeted me frigidly, turning her face away. In the process, Persephone showed me in and tricked me into sitting at a specific place: She took two chairs, making me believe she intended to sit near me, and we approached a group of three girls. As soon as I made myself comfortable, Persa stood up and walked away. To my surprise, the girls -all three a lot younger than me- started chatting with me quickly and eagerly. *I am not used to such politeness...*

At a moment I noticed my friend was dallying with a handsome blond man who, instead of mocking or spitting on her (like it usually happens when an ugly woman dares look at a good-looking man), he was extremely tactful to her.

"I know how to seduce you! With a carnation!" joked Persa, rather foolishly.

"Not with the initiation, with a carnation!" another guy joked and I wondered: *Initiation? What kind of initiation?*

During the whole celebration, Persa hardly talked to me - in fact she avoided even to come near me. Many times I noticed impatient looks all around me; everybody hoped I would hit the road soon, but I persevered heroically till the end, when there were only four guests left. At a moment I heard Mrs Daphne

ask her daughter: "Is Yvonne still here?". *Have I spoiled the party or what?* Finally, when the time came for me to leave, I was the only one Persephone didn't see out...

So, what was that? Was it just a birthday party or a network assembly? I suspect that, turning 21, my good friend officially joined some network of great calibre - as her father's daughter: he is an illiterate, neurotic, rude boor, yet he knows lots of wealthy, educated and powerful people. In all probability, Persa was informed about the network a few months ago - which explains the radical change in her behaviour ever since.

And then I wonder why I don't have any friends! I don't belong to any network;

I am not a member of any political club; I am not a disciple of any cult -even if I have often tried to be one! How could I ever have friends? And they always make me think I am an unsociable, stupid, boring misfit. This is what they all have been doing to me during my whole life. How satanic they all are -venal, dirty, evil -this is what they all are...

Thursday, 30th March 1995

Having finished work this afternoon, I was walking along Academy Avenue to the bus terminus, when I suddenly saw Persephone and her mother just a few metres away, waving at me happily! They looked thrilled to see me, they ran towards me at once and I could do nothing to avoid them. Pretty soon I had to endure complaints about my disappearance, ending up to "All those years I've been nothing but the little one you deigned to keep company with, just because nobody else wanted to be your friend!" – at this point Persa almost burst into tears. Then I had to explain to her that what had put me off her during the last five months was a negative change in her overall behaviour.

"You were arrogant, obtrusive and impetuous, probably because something has changed in your life," I went on.

"My life is shit, as always, Yvonne!" she retorted at once.

Indeed, the Persephone standing before me now was the reserved and quiet girl I once knew -and I told her so.

"You prefer me like this?" she said bitterly.

"What about all those persons I saw in your birthday party?" I asked then.

"I just wanted my house to be full of people that evening!" she answered.

Is it really so easy to find thirty persons eager to come to your house in a particular evening? I wondered.

Anyway, feeling happy that the old, modest and reasonable Persephone had returned, I accepted to meet her in a cafeteria in Glyfada on Sunday, so as to sort things out.

Sunday, 2nd April 1995

At about 8:00 o' clock in the evening Persa and I met in the cafeteria "Venezia" in Glyfada. She looked friendly, pliant and understanding; once again she assured me nothing special had happened to her lately; as about those persons in her birthday party, she said she had never seen them before and she would never see any of them in the future. She also apologized for what she had told me three days before in Athens, that I deigned to keep company with her just because nobody else wanted to be my friend. She sounded calm, reasonable and sincere, and we renewed our friendship spontaneously.

Nevertheless, at a moment Persephone made another complaint to me: "You never say anything to me, Yvonne; you never talk about yourself, whereas I have told you everything about me. From now on, I would like you to tell me more about yourself!". I promised to do so, yet I wonder: I had the impression of being already quite trustful to Persa; in fact, if there is someone to whom I confide almost everything, this is Persa. I have even spoken to her about my lucid dreams and psychic experiences: "Do you have any idea what you are telling me now?" she had exclaimed in astonishment. So? What else does she expect to hear from me?

Saturday, 8th April 1995

It is early in the morning and I am in a cheerful mood; I go downstairs to see my sister -and who do I find there? Apart from Alice's close friends, Milena and Despina, Dimitri Papayannis is also present! I am dumbfounded, since I would never imagine Dimitri has any dealings with Alice, however I join the party and I soon find out the following: Dimitri is dallying with Alice, but she wants him to get off with short and ugly Despina! I can hardly believe my own eyes, I drop from the clouds! Until yesterday I kept on flirting Dimitri, my sister knew about that but I had no idea what was going on behind my back! As far as I can see, the bloke is willing to go steady with any woman but me! As about my sweet sister, she has entirely ignored my feelings and decided to act as a match-maker between Dimitri and her insignificant friend, as if I didn't even exist!

I get very angry, I run upstairs and confide all my complaints to mum. She goes downstairs immediately and talks to Alice - which means everybody gets wind of the situation. Right after, Alice comes upstairs and wants a word with me.

"What's the matter?" she asks provocatively.

"What's the matter? You ask what's the matter?" I start shouting. "I'll tell you what's the matter: You never care about me, you never give a dime about how I feel! You always invite people at your home, people I know too, but you never invite me, although you know I spend hours and hours alone! And now, while you know I like Dimitri, you act as a match-maker between him and your friend!"

"So, you have finally understood what our relationship is like and it drives you crazy!" she replies enigmatically.

Later, in the afternoon, here comes Alice and takes me for a coffee to Milena's cafeteria at Karaiskaki Square. Feeling rather guilty about our quarrel, I accept the invitation smiling foolishly, while Alice makes a wry face. As we are walking up the avenue to the square, she doesn't lose an opportunity to express her contempt for me: "You will go mad soon, because you can't find a man! By the time you are 35, you will be completely mad!" she tells me with a cunning smile on her face.

There is a big party of friends waiting for us in the cafeteria; I can't say they are cool to me - at least they are not cooler than usual. Yet, there is something: A young woman has brought her seven-month-old baby, a nice and smiling boy, and everybody takes him in their lap. However, any time I try to hold him, his concerned mother hastens to take him off my hands at once!

It takes me a few moments to remember: My sister Chryssa reacted exactly in the same way when she visited us the other day, together with her husband and her baby boy! What's the matter with all hens and they don't want me to touch their brood? Are they afraid or what?

The essence of existence: In this world, all beings are enemies. One way or another, they all try to extinguish each other. This is what all living creatures live for. "Friends" are temporary allies against a common enemy or adversities. As soon as the common enemy or adversities cease to exist, masks are thrown off. Friendship gradually becomes contempt, abhorrence, hatred.

You never know what is hidden behind a sweet smile. You never know what they really want from you. You don't know where they belong to, you don't know whom they answer to. Everybody looks nice, until you disobey. Then, smiles become screams of attack. Don't ever confide in anyone. As a rule, you always regret it. Don't you?

Saturday, 15 April 1995

New hopes: Themis, the aerobics instructor, has invited the whole class to a restaurant tomorrow night! Needless to say, I will join the party and I already wonder what I could do to catch his attention...

Finally, I decide to perform a simple *magic ritual* I have found in a book: I light two green candles and meditate on Themis' love for ten minutes. Then I take a potato, I cut it in half and stick twelve pins on it -the number of pins must be the same as the number of letters in Themis' christian name: Themistocles. Then I squeeze the two halves together and tie them up with a red ribbon. Finally, I throw the potato in fire. Now, all I can do is wait...

Sunday, 16th April 1995

The critical night has come! I meet Mandy at 8:30 pm, we get in her car and we leave for the restaurant "Rooster" in Verkiza. I am in my best togs and I feel happy and very optimistic. As soon as we arrive there, I see the party consists of more than twenty people. I am excited at the thought of the great time we are going to have tonight. *Maybe this is my night*, I think.

The result? Naught! All men seem to be enchanted by Mandy, especially Themis! As about me, at a moment someone speaks up and says he remembers me from elementary school - so, my age is revealed before everybody! Later on, Themis suggests our going on an excursion on May Day and all the married hens (who, as usual, have formed a ring around him) hasten to enter themselves for it.

Conclusion: From now on Themis is not only uninterested in me but he also ignores me completely! A week later I will repeat the magic ritual -in vain; I could as well say the situation is getting worse and worse: Now Themis is courting all women in our class except me, especially when I am present! He is flirting everyone but me! He even arranges outings or day trips with them in such an ostentatious manner that I -as well as the whole gym- can hear everything; needless to say, I am never given the chance to be a member of that enviable party...

Strange May Day, 1995

Themis has gone on an excursion with his "harem". Naturally, I was not invited and I'm spending the day at home since I haven't had a phone call from anyone, not even for a coffee in Glyfada. Suddenly, at 5:00 pm, the telephone rings. It is Mrs Daphne, Persa's mother, and she asks me to come and keep company to her daughter urgently. Then, Persephone herself talks to me and says I must go and meet her at her place at once, because "there is a very serious reason".

Arriving at Persa's, she seems to be kinda strange and secretive. At first I fear she has relapsed, but no: She neither overreacts nor shows off, she just looks drowsy and sluggish. Her father is at his desk, looking at some bills; he stays taciturn but he is obviously vexed. Then, Mrs Daphne takes me aside and explains to me, in a low voice, that Persephone has just taken about ten sleeping pills so as to kill herself! I am astounded and worried; I thought Persa had overcome such problems long ago - it is not the first time she has attempted something like this. Fortunately, the pills were not strong enough and she got away with some drowsiness.

We leave at once and we go to Glyfada for a coffee. "Be careful or I might fall down!" she jokes as we are walking along Metaxa Avenue.

"I was feeling desperate this afternoon; I was choking with negative thoughts, I felt so bad that I lost control and smashed the window pane with my hand! Right after, I took the pills!" she confides to me as soon as we sit at a seaside café.

"But why?" I ask to know, since till that moment she hasn't mentioned any reason for attempting suicide.

"There are some things about me you don't know," she replies enigmatically.

In the process I try -and manage- to console her and put her off any further thoughts of self-destruction. "Suicide is no solution," I tell her. "Anyway, we can't be sure whether death is really the end, and we don't know what awaits us after..."

Saturday, 19th May 1995

About two months ago, as I was returning from work by bus, I bumped into Louise, my old friend. We talked about the old times, we made it up, and we meet quite often ever since. She is married to Nondas now, she has an eighteen-month-old son, whose name is Manolis, and she is pregnant to a girl.

I like Louise because she is a cheerful, talkative and extrovert person. She invites me to her place two or three times a week and every time she wants kisses and hugs -as if we hadn't met for ages. We spend hours and hours discussing various subjects and we have a very nice time together, we are ideologically compatible I'd say. Moreover, she considers me a member of the family, like a sister, she says - maybe because she has no other friends now; she no longer sees all those persons she once hanged out with, probably because of her family obligations: Louise is a wife and mother now, she has no time for outings and excursions.

"Really, Yvonne, you are the most sincere and unselfish person I have ever met," she told me this evening, when I visited her. Then I made so bold as to propose my being godmother to her baby daughter, who will be born in a few months. "Thanks, Yvonne, but I have already arranged that with Martha, one of my colleagues; I can't go back on my promise now," she replied fast. "As about the third child I intend to have in the future, I have already promised that to Nicolas, another colleague!" she went on hastily. Her flat refusal made me think for a while but I guess it's anybody's right to choose the godmothers of their children...

Friday, 2nd June 1995

My good friend Louise has often asked me to visit her at the law office she works in as a secretary, so as to introduce me to Peter, one of the lawyers. "He is a good and sensible person; you two could match together," she says smiling.

I decided to drop in on her early this morning, before going to work. At first I was flabbergasted when I saw how big the company she works for is: Three storeys full of offices and lots of people coming and going. Then, I was disappointed to find out that the would-be groom is a chubby, bald guy with fat cheeks and short legs -exactly the type I have told Louise I dislike. "But look how big muscles he has!" insisted my friend, who probably considers fat as "muscles".

It didn't take Louise long to understand I am not interested in that guy, so she started introducing me to some other lawyers, all of whom, paradoxically, were as fat and short as Peter. "This is my friend Yvonne, who is an artist and a writer," she kept saying in a rather ostentatious manner, and I had to shake

hands and smile to each one of them. Then, very cheerfully and eagerly, she took me to various offices on all three storeys, where I had to shake hands with lots of surprised people I had never seen before and I -in all likelihood- I will never see again.

After a while we returned to Louise's office at last; a little later, a new person came in: it was a young lawyer who, unlike the others, was slender, good-looking and agreeable. I let know my friend I liked him but, strangely enough, she showed no willingness to introduce me to him. "He is six years younger than you!" she pointed out. However I insisted, so my friend considered it right to begin a rather provocative conversation with me:

"So, Yvonne, you are a talented author and you write novels! How many of them have you had published?" she asked me loudly, making sure everybody could hear.

"Only one, years ago," I replied in a low voice.

"Only one? Who paid for that, you or the publisher?"

"I paid for it, of course; publishers don't support unrecognized writers" I hastened to explain, while I was already feeling uncomfortable.

"And why haven't you published anything else?"

"It is not so simple; paying is not enough, connections are also essential; without backstairs influence no publisher pays any attention," I answered and regreted it immediately, as I knew I had said too much already.

"Correct, public relations are necessary too... yet, you are also an artist, aren't you?"

I answered in the affirmative and Louise went on undaunted:

"Have you ever participated in a painting exhibition?"

"No, I have never thought of anything like that; besides, neither this is so simple," I replied and the conversation went on in the same pattern for a few more minutes.

In the evening Louise phoned and informed me that the young man I liked had come into her office once again later, but all he did was laugh up his sleeve before her. "Nondas told me the guy was making fun of us because we were talking nonsense," she concluded. I said nothing but I do agree with Nondas...

Thursday, 8th June 1995

In spite of the above fiasco, I agreed to visit Louise in her office once again this morning, for the same purpose. She introduced me to three plump and gauky guys as an author and an artist, then we did the round of the offices once again, I had to shake hands and smiles with all those astonished people, once again we arrested everybody's attention.

I was feeling frustrated when I finally noticed that a tall, blond, blue-eyed lawyer was standing at the next desk and he was giving me the glad eye. I flirted him back for a few moments, then I let know Louise discreetly. "Oh, this is assistant of John Commenos, one of the most important lawyers in Greece," she informed me and right after she hastened to take me down a peg or two: "He is also a moron, an idiot!" she added contemptuously. Next moment, the young man left the office.

I don't intend to pay another visit to Louise in her office again; I can see there is no reason, besides it occurs to me I have made a fool of myself for nothing. Naturally, I don't question Louise's good intentions; on the contrary, she is the only friend of mine who supports me in deed...

Wednesday, 21st June 1995

Yesterday afternoon I saw Dimitri in the gym. We hardly did any bodybuilding; he spent all my time confessing to me his passionate love for Mandy. As about Despina, he needs her only for sex, he said. In the end, he made clear he wanted me to invite him to my birthday party today, so that he could meet Mandy.

... And this is what I eventually did! Anyway, seldom do I have the opportunity to celebrate my birthday in the company of friends. Persephone, Mandy and Dimitri came and wished me to live to be a hundred. A little later, my sister turned up as well. We listened to pop and rock music, we chatted and laughed till late at night. Mandy hardly paid any attention to Dimitri, but in overall it was a pleasant and joyful evening for all of us.

Thursday, 29th June 1995

As soon as I arrived at the gym this afternoon, I noticed a white card on the reception desk saying "Massage from Themis. Tel 96....." in big, capital letters. I could hardly believe my eyes. *What shall I do now? Call him and ask "how much is it?"* I wondered bitterly. At that point I begin to quit on Themis...

Pretty soon all the married women in our aerobics class will be his regular clients and one of them - a swarthy forty-year-old widow with two children will go steady with him. It seems she is the most talented of all in massage...

When I express my wonder about all the above to Louise, Nondas listens carefully and says: "Why are you so surprised, Yvonne? What do you expect from such persons - gymnasts, dancers, models and the like? There's no need to see or hear much about them!". Right; I guess he is right...

Thursday, 20th July 1995

It's been two months that Mandy and I have been discussing our going on an organized trip to Corfu. Having, finally, reassured squeamish Mandy that we won't be cut off on the island because of ships on strike or landing Italians, she visited me this afternoon, together with her mother, so as to give me the money for the reservation. Yet, I couldn't stay with them for long, because I had already arranged to go to Louise's at 7:00.

When I returned home late at night, I was astounded to hear eventually Mandy didn't leave the money for the trip because her mother convinced her, at the last moment, that if we two go on holidays without being escorted by a man, we will be raped! They are inviting me to a week of vacations in their cottage in Amarynthos instead. I don't like this, but I don't have another alternative: Tomorrow is the last day to make a reservation for the trip to Corfu, I am not in the mood of going alone and it's too late for me to find another companion. So, I say farewell to the trip to beautiful Corfu! Gosh, what a stupid being Mandy is!

Tuesday, 25th July 1995

On another attempt to develop my social life, about a month ago I answered to a classified ad for correspondence and friendship, placed by the 25-year-old Denia Chrysanthou. I had almost forgotten about it until yesterday afternoon, when she called me and we arranged to meet in the centre of Athens this evening.

At first I was kinda circumspect, yet I found out soon that Denia is a quiet and reasonable woman.

She is square-faced with curly hair, short and skinny, and she makes an impression of being a very harassed person. She was born in Patras, she has an older sister and a younger brother, her parents were too poor to bring up three children, so the girls were raised by their grandmother. She has been in Athens for four years, she lives with an aunt of hers but she isn't pleased and she wants to change address. She hasn't been able to find a permanent job so far, so she has to change jobs all the time – in two words, she is always under steam. Nevertheless, we had a nice time together, she asked to meet me again and I agreed with pleasure. I intend to call her as soon as I come back from my holidays in Amarynthos.

Wednesday, 26th July 1995

After my own initiative to call him, Dimitri Papayannis and I met in Glyfada this evening. We went to the seaside cafeteria “Cataralla”; the Mexican-style environment is fantastic, full of rocky formations, small waterfalls and gurgling rivers. Dimitri proved to be a very interesting interlocutor, we stayed almost three hours together and we discussed lots of diverse subjects. He even talked to me about his past love affairs and disappointments; he also gave me the impression he were getting over Mandy. I think we are well-matched and I am beginning to hope...

Tuesday, 1st August 1995

Since last Wednesday I have been in Mandy's cottage in Amarynthos, on the island of Euboea, together with her parents and grandparents. During the first two days my friend seemed to be so displeased with my presence that she even avoided talking to me – not that she has ever been communicative...

Anyway, it didn't take me long to find out she is a wet blanket only when she is with me: For example, whenever we two go to Kavouri for a swim, she barely utters a word, she stays in the water taciturn for five minutes, and then she comes out hastily, as if she were chased by sharks. On the contrary, when we are in the company of her two cousins, Mandy becomes incredibly talkative, cheerful, spirited! When we all four go swimming at the nearby beach, I can hardly believe my eyes as I see her splashing around, laughing and diving for an hour at least -as if she were another person!

As for the rest, the week in Amarynthos has proved to be really boring, since we've spent most of our time playing cards or chatting with the old crocks. We have been to a disco only twice because, according to Mandy, it is dangerous for her grandparents to be alone at night. Great vacations and they are almost over...

Saturday, 5th August 1995

Once again I took the initiative to phone Dimitri and we arranged to meet in a much frequented cafeteria in Argroupolis. I didn't like the environment so much, it was crowded and noisy. I told him about the fiasco of Corfu and my boring holidays in Euboea. “You know what? Your friend is a bit screwy,” he concluded smiling.

In overall we had a nice time, but soon he let it be understood that mental harmony is not enough to start a love affair. In the end, he even asked me if there was another friend of mine to introduce to him...

● *Regression*

Tuesday, 10th October 1995

Despite the new openings I have ventured for about a year now (gym, new friends, man hunt) I still feel unsatisfied. I do get out more often than before, but there is no mental challenge in my new relationships, let alone the mittens I got from Dimitri and Themis; having often caught myself reminiscing the years of Janus, this afternoon I decided to make a phone call to Harry:

“I know I haven't been just to you, I should have explained the reason for my leaving three years ago, but now I would like to return to Janus...”

“Why do you begin with negativity?” he exclaimed at once happily.

We arranged to meet at his office in Janus as soon as possible, that is tomorrow; I am starting lessons on Friday...

Friday, 13th October 1995

As soon as I got into my classroom in Janus for the first time tonight, a good-looking lady came and sat next to me; she introduced herself as Maria Glenos and she fell into conversation with me at once. She is 48 years old but she looks younger, she is married with a daughter, and she soon made it clear she is thrilled with Alexander and his teachings. I felt comfortable with her and I was surprised at her spontaneous friendliness towards me. I am not accustomed to being treated so well...

At first Alexander looked surprised to see me in his class after three years of absence -as if he hadn't known I would come tonight. After welcoming me, he began to complain about “a woman who left Janus three years ago, without even explaining the reasons for leaving; she left because she couldn't find a boyfriend, but neither away from Janus did she find a boyfriend; maybe it's her karma, maybe its her idiosyncrasy...” (at that point I begin to suspect he means me) “She has asked to return to Janus lately, I accepted, but I know she will leave again soon; nevertheless, I am not going to take her back for a second time, I won't allow such a disciple to come back...”

Monday, 23rd October 1995

This afternoon I finished the fifth volume of my illustrated manuscripts “*Sandra Anderson - Astral Fantasy*”. I consider this book to be the culmination of the whole series, as it is the most well-written, with the most impressive illustrations. It contains only two stories.

The contacts I noticed were few and they were all in the second story: a) I write and illustrate a scene where Sandra fights with gigong sticks. A few hours later Josef, my nephew, holds two similar sticks and acts as if he were fighting with them. b) I write and illustrate a scene where Sandra hits Venor on the neck with her elbow. In the same evening, my sister accidentally hits Milena, her best friend, on the neck with her elbow.

Saturday, 11th November 1995

Early in the morning Denia called and we arranged to meet at Filopappos Hill this afternoon, together with three other girls she has recently met through correspondence: Helen Tanagra is 21 years old, tall and plump; she has a beautiful face, she looks nice and quiet and she happens to live in Glyfada. Helen Tandoulou is 24 years old, she knows four foreign languages and she gives private lessons to children. Xanthippe Malamos is 25 years old, she has impressive, long black hair and she works as a secretary in a shipping company in Varkiza.

At first I liked Xanthippe, she looked cheerful and talkative, but soon she proved to be a spirit of contradiction. She always argues to any opinion, spoiling any conversation. I did have a very nice time with the girls this evening, but Xanthippe got on my nerves because she kept objecting to anything we said.

... The fact is that I, the "misfit", have met quite a few new friends lately; although these persons look for friends in classified ads, they prove to be more positive and well-disposed than the so called "normal" people. They may be conservative, stressed, lonely, but they show a genuine desire for new experiences and they are more innocent, more sincere than the majority of the people I know.

Tuesday, 28th December 1995

Night Adventure: Aliens, which look like gigantic parasites, invade the earth. A young couple consists their biggest enemy. The two of them discover an alien womb in an isolated building; it looks glassy, it is full of alien monsters and it gets bigger and bigger, moment by moment. Suddenly, the womb grows long, bird-like legs. The girl informs the boy at once. He runs and overturns the "temperature bars"; the environment gets cold and this suspends the growth of the womb. The young couple run fast so as to save themselves, while the womb, with its ugly bird-like legs, chases them along the road...?

There is a matter that has been bothering me a lot recently: A few days ago old-Zarifis died. Since he lived right next to me, pretty soon one of his two grandsons, Takis, will take his apartment. He is already moving in, making a lot of noise all day today. The problem is he will be living right on the other side of the wall – he, his electric guitar, his stereo and his mania for rock music on full blast. I have very bad forebodings already...

* * * *

Sunday, 14th January 1996

It's been about two months I have been meeting Helen Tandoulou and Helen Tanagra quite often. The three of us have a good time together, yet Tandoulou sets me thinking sometimes: On one hand she is intelligent and knowledgeable about many subjects; on the other hand she is rather bossy and obsessed with religion; she is also a scrooge, counting every cent she is to pay. She always wants us to meet no later than 6:00 in the afternoon so that she can be back home by 10:00, because she is afraid of being out at night, she says. What bothers me most, is that she often tries to be clever and she likes slighting the others - especially me.

Last night we went out to a nice cafeteria at Kalogiron Square and she managed to piss me off with her malignant hints: She dislikes my going to the gym ("Only women of easy virtue do aerobics"), my living in Glyfada ("certain persons think they are aristocrats just because they live in Glyfada"), my speaking foreign languages just like she does ("Actually, you don't know any language since you don't have a university degree" -she doesn't either). I usually act the fool lest I should lose my new friend...

Friday, 16th February 1996

The main reason I decided to return to Janus is the quest for spiritual development, as well as a

wider social circle. Unfortunately, the Janus of today has nothing to do with the Janus of 1990: First of all, we are hardly given any knowledge, since we never complete a subject. We don't even practice meditation in class. Moreover, the monthly fee has risen to 12,000 drachmas and, almost every time, it is the exclusive topic of the lesson: "Certain ungrateful people, who are unworthy disciples, always delay their monthly fee and Janus faces serious financial problems because of them" Alexander keeps harping on the same string, vexing me more and more every time. I guess he could be right about some persons, but what about the rest of us who pay regularly? Why do we have to endure all this nonsense in every lesson? He also talks about necessary "extra contributions" that we, like good disciples, ought to make often and eagerly. I just can't hear this any more.

There is also something else: Every time, after the lesson, I suggest our going for a drink at Fokionos Negri Square -just like we did some years ago- but none of the other disciples seems to like the idea; in fact, they all seem to detest it. My only friend there is Mary Glenos. She occasionally calls me and we chat on the phone for half an hour or so, but she avoids arranging an outing with me. As about her 22-year-old daughter, I was surprised to know she is in the same class in Janus; strangely enough, mother and daughter never sit next to each other and they seldom talk before or after the lesson. Unless Mary had told me, I wouldn't know who her daughter is...

Friday, 23rd February 1996

Returning from Janus this evening, as I walked into Dardanellion street, not far from my home, all at once I had a sudden realization: *The road behind me no longer exists; a new road unfolds before me; time and space around me changes moment by moment, step by step; every moment, a world dies and a world is born...*

This is how I suddenly got the *Key to Awareness* – which allows me to experience the interrelation between time and space, to experience death and birth every moment, always expecting the unforeseeable.

And a strange *coincidence*: In the very next lesson at Janus, Alexander will speak about the awareness of time and space! Does he really have exceptional psychic powers?

Saturday, 24th February 1996

One of the positive aspects of the Janus case is that I have found my good old friends, Aphrodite and Theano, again. We occasionally meet at Aphrodite's, just like we used to some years ago, and we revel in long, delightful conversations about our favourite subjects: parapsychology, psychic experiences, lucid dreaming and the like. I can say we still share a strong inner relationship and we get along very well.

Nevertheless, I often suspect -from askance looks, certain phrases, bored movements- that Aphrodite doesn't really like such discussions. Besides, she is obviously more interested in sex than metaphysics now. As she explained to me this evening, when I visited her, during the three years we have been apart she has gone steady with lots of men, until she ended up in a yearlong relationship with a woman! Anyway, for the time being she is single; she doesn't have any love affair of any kind...

Wednesday, 28th February 1996

I have arranged to meet Helen Tanagra this evening and suggested we go to "Onar", a wonderful cafeteria in Argyroupolis: the decoration reminds of ancient Greece, as there are white columns, sculpted pediments, earthen vessels, artificial but life-like plants, supposed archaeological finds enclosed in glass show-cases on the floor, fine rock music, pleasant ambiance.

However, as soon as we reach the threshold at 9:00 o' clock, suddenly Helen stays still as if she were rooted to the spot. "I'm not going in there, it's too dark!" she declares sharply. I try to make her change her mind, assuring her that I have been in this cafeteria before, that the environment is alright, that there is no danger -in vain: Helen remains as solid as a rock. I have no other alternative but run all the way to Vouliagmenis Avenue together with her, wait for the bus to Glyfada and finally end up in a colourless cafeteria of the common run.

Soon Helen proves to be boring and insecure, as she barely has anything to say; in fact, every word has to be screwed out of her. Moreover, she is always trying to prettify her public image -rather awkwardly I'd say: Tonight, once again she told me she has a love affair with a young man from Crete, yet they only phone each other. She also trumpets forth that all men go crazy about her, despite her 120 kilos, and that she has studied microbiology - yet, she has never set foot in the university. From now on I will avoid going out with her only, as she is a mollycoddle and she hardly talks...

Monday, 4th March 1996

For some months now I have been meeting Christina on the bus to work every day. We always sit together and chat pleasantly as, despite her young age, we have many common interests and we keep good company to each other. Especially this morning, she revealed to me many things about herself: She is 23 years old, very sociable and popular, with a large circle of friends! I talked to her about myself too, adding a fib or two, that I also have many friends and that I often go out to discos and clubs. She was impressed and she suggested my joining her party! I accepted at once, full of joy. Then we exchanged phone numbers and she told me she would talk to the others about me. "Tomorrow morning I will let you know about our next outing!" she concluded smiling.

I am on cloud nine! At last, I will start going out with a large, cheerful party of young people, one of those I always envied but never had the chance to approach -not even in a summer night dream!

Tuesday, 5th March 1996

It is early in the morning and I am at the bus station, waiting impatiently for Christina to turn up. However time goes by slowly and she is nowhere to see. The bus is already leaving when I see her arriving; she is running as fast as she can, yet she misses the bus for two seconds! *Maybe tomorrow*, I hope.

... Nevertheless, I am never going to meet Christina again. For some strange reason, she will never appear at the bus station again. I will call her twice until the end of the month, I will propose our going out together, she will promise to call me back, but no; I will never see or hear from her again.

Doubts: Something very suspicious is going on under the surface of reality. Everything looks like a foul play -*but what part is mine in all this performance?* There are dark forces controlling our existence (fate, nature, time, genes) and our lives (secret orders, networks, institutions) with obscure purposes. I can't predict everything, I can't escape from everything. It's time I got used to the idea.

Neither can I believe all the rubbish propagandized by modern cults, that there is a balance between Good and Evil in the universe. On the contrary, it is crystal clear to me that Evil prevails everywhere. For example, when an infant has an accident and is paralyzed for the rest of his life, I can never swallow the tale that "this event serves an invisible but good purpose" or "his soul chose this because he needs this experience", or "he is punished for something bad he did in his past life" and all that paranoiac piffle. Let's face the truth: The world we live in is very far from perfect...

● *Deviations*

Sunday, 10th March 1996

It's been about a month now that I've been friends with Diana, whom I met in the gym. She is 26 years old, she has studied French Literature, she is a successful sales manager in a big company which trades in books, she gets a monthly salary of 240,000 drachmas, and she has a rich social life. In two words, she is a normal person! I can hardly believe she and I have become friends!

At first she makes a good impression to me, as she proves to be an intelligent, interesting, dynamic person, entirely different from all the other friends I've had so far. On the other hand, any time I tell her about my problems at work, such as continuous computer breakdowns, she jumps at the opportunity to belittle and offend me: "But what are you, a nitwit? Don't you know how to fix a system error by yourself?" ... "What kind of company is this you work for? I think your boss is a niggard!" ... "People who do office work are stupid!"

I began to suspect what's going on with her last night, when we went out together and she revealed more details about her job: As a sales manager, she controls some teams of commercial travellers. Mostly they sell in Athens, but they also travel all over Greece and sell books door to door.

"Peasants are very easy to handle: Before they know it, they are persuaded to buy expensive encyclopedias, which they pay by monthly installments!" Diana said complacently.

"How is this possible? As far as I know, people hardly open their doors to travelling salesmen!" I retorted, but Diana was ready to answer:

"People do open their doors and buy whatever they are told, if the salesman knows his job!"

According to Diana, travelling salesmen are superhuman beings, a lot superior to the average person. Firstly, they attend some special seminars which render them omnipotent speakers, able to persuade anyone to do anything; moreover, they get exceptional knowledge of psychology, so that they can control perfectly the subconscious of a potential customer, making him or her buy whatever they want, no matter how expensive or useless it is...

Tuesday, 19th March 1996

Like any time we go out together for a coffee, once again this afternoon Diana is trumpeting forth how proud she is of her job. She believes she is great at what she does and she likes bragging about it: "A good sales manager, like me, is irreplaceable! Not like all those stupid office clerks who are all disposable!"

Then, full of arrogance, she claims it is very easy for a travelling salesman to earn as much as 600,000 drachmas per month, whereas the basic salary of an office employee is no more than 140,000 drachmas. "They are losers, who stupidly make do with 140,000 drachmas a month; they are cyphers, all of them!" she cries pompously and goes on with an air of profundity: "A businessman wants to earn as much as possible, this is natural! He will pay you as little as he can, unless you prove to him you deserve to be given something more!" ... "A clever businessman will hire a secretary who will work for him for a month or so "on trial", then he will tell her she is incompetent and he will fire her without paying her a dime;

then he will hire another stupid chick who will work for him for another month without payment, then another one will take her place, and so on, until he finds the one who will satisfy him fully” harangues Diana, showing her admiration for bosses.

When I tell her I earn no more than 160,000 drachmas per month, she looks at me scornfully and says: “You work in the production department, I work in the sales department -that's the difference! There is only one kind of work that's worth the while today, and this is sales!” she concludes triumphantly.

“Yes, but I work only six hours a day, whereas you work ten hours and you aren't paid any overtime! If I worked so many hours as you, I would earn more than 250,000 per month!” I reply and she shuts up.

Tuesday, 26th March 1996

This afternoon I saw Diana at the gym, we had an aerobics lesson and then, as we were leaving together, she revealed to me some more interesting details about her job; in fact, she didn't hesitate at all to describe -always with an air of importance- a fixed fraud committed by the company she works for: It all starts with an advertisement they place in the newspaper every week, looking for new commercial travellers; they offer an alluring basic salary, as well as commission on the sales, plus social security.

“What if someone doesn't sell enough in a month?” I wonder.

“Every would-be salesman signs a contract which contains a penal clause: If the salesman doesn't sell enough within the first month of work, which is "on trial", they are not only fired without being paid but they also have to pay 50,000 drachmas to the company!” she explains with glowing eyes.

“Amazing! Maybe I could organize a trick like this so as to earn some serious money!” I exclaim spontaneously.

“Our company offers you two weeks of free seminars!” snorts Diana. “These lessons provide you with all the knowledge you need so as to manipulate customers and sell books. If you don't sell, it means you are a moron and the company has suffered a loss by allowing you to participate in the seminars. So, they do what's right: they fire you, they don't give you a dime and they make you pay the penal clause!”

“What if someone refuses to pay?”

“If anyone dares oppose to us, our team of lawyers will take their pants!”

“I bet the company earns more from penal clauses than from book sales!” I conclude.

... That explains it: I have heard about certain persons lately who, although they are illiterate, have become successful travelling salesmen and earn up to 700,000 drachmas per month! Taking into account that a salesman's commission is no higher than 10%, how do they manage to make sales of 7,000,000 drachmas every month? What do they really sell? Encyclopedias? Come on now! Nowadays you can find cheap and voluminous encyclopedias in bookstores or, even, on offer in newspapers! Why would anyone pay dearly a commercial traveller? *Unless they sell other things, other "services", instead of books...*

Tuesday, 11th June 1996

I barely go out with Diana anymore, I don't like her and she doesn't like me; yet I still meet her at the gym. This afternoon she looked distracted but triumphant, as she showed me two or three circular bruises on her right hand; looking at them more carefully, I saw they were bites.

“Did a dog bite you?” I asked her.

“No! It was a would-be saleswoman!” she answered, and I was flabbergasted.

Then, with an air of importance, she narrated the whole story to me: Yesterday morning a young woman came into Diana's office; she aspired to become a professional commercial traveller, she was beautiful and well-dressed, with a pleasant personality; in two words, she looked suitable for the job. She also signed the contract without reading the "small letters" -just like most candidates do. However, as soon as she realized the fraud (too late), she pounced on Diana and fought very hard to grab the contract from her hands and tear it up -she even bit her! Unfortunately for the girl, in the end she didn't manage to get the contract.

"Our lawyers are going to put her into very serious trouble!" went on Diana, glowing with exhilaration. "I have already sued her, because that imbecile bit a nerve on my hand and I can't close it well now!" – *humbug: there is nothing wrong with Diana's hand.* "I will ask her to make amends to me for this injury, I can demand three million drachmas at least, our lawyers say! Woo is her, who dared tangle with me!" Diana burst out, full of anger.

"Will it be so simple? Won't she also hire a lawyer?"

"Nobody can confront the lawyers of our company!" Diana exclaimed, obviously vexed. "Their main job is to take care of all those nitwits who refuse to pay the penal clause!" While shouting, she got even more exasperated: "My fair lady, you were stupid enough to sign the contract! So, pay the fifty thousand and let us be!" she screamed like a drama actress.

After we had left the gym, Diana stopped at a telephone booth so as to phone her lawyer, as she told me. I stood at a distance and waited, but she kept shouting – I guess on purpose, because she wanted me to hear and envy her: "So, I can ask for even more money... four million drachmas... maybe more! Fine, fine! Thank you very much!" ... "You saw?" she smiled to me cunningly as soon as she hung up. "That's why you must always have a lawyer handy! Better yet, have not only one, but many! In this way, you can make a lot of money from suckers! I am going to leave that bitch penniless!" she concluded triumphantly.

"Why don't you send her to me too? I need some millions of drachmas too!"

"But... but she won't make the same mistake again!" Diana stuttered; obviously, she didn't get the irony.

"Tell her to come and find me in Pangaea, on the fifth floor! She shouldn't go to the third floor, the bosses are there and they don't need any more money! I do!" I kept on pulling her leg.

I will never find out how this story ends. I will see Diana at the gym two more times till the end of the month and that's all..

Tuesday, 18th June 1996

This evening I had an unexpected phone call from Rena, one of the most "advanced" disciples in Janus -she also happens to be the secretary of the centre. With remarkable politeness, as well as subtle pressure, she asked me to translate (free of charge, of course) Alexander's book "Self-knowledge and Metaphysics" from Greek into English as soon as possible, so that they can present it at the Book Fair of Frankfurt in October.

I accepted willingly, because I wanted to show good will, obedience and a spirit of service to the leaders of Janus, hoping they will eventually begin to like me. Right from tomorrow I will start working on the translation feverishly, aiming to finish it by the end of summer. It should be noted that the book is rather badly-written..

Thursday, 20th June 1996

As I was informed by an advertisement posted up all over the city of Athens, a famous lama has just arrived in Greece. He is of European origin but he has spent many years in Tibet; for many years now, he has been travelling all over the world teaching Tibetan Buddhism. This afternoon he is giving a lecture about how to face unhappiness. He seems to be a very agreeable person, and the subject interests me a lot; moreover, the lecture is taking place at a centre of Buddhism which is only some metres away from Aphrodite's house!

I wish to attend the lecture but I would rather not go alone, so at about noon I phone Aphrodite and let her know. I expect her to be enthusiastic about it, yet I am nonplussed at her immediate frigidity: "I have nothing to do this afternoon, but I am not in the mood of going to such a lecture, I had better stay home alone," she announces in a low voice and leaves me wondering, since she has always given me the impression of being very interested in such matters. I try to bring her round, she resists, I emphasize I will come all the way from Glyfada, while she will only have to walk some metres; she grumbles a little more and finally she says in a plaintive voice: "Alright, Yvonne, I will come. But you should know I will do so just because a friend is asking me to, there is no other reason!". I don't like this conclusion, but I act the fool so as to achieve my goal.

We meet outside the centre of Buddhism at 8:00 o' clock. I wonder again, because Aphrodite doesn't seem to be bored or sulky now, she looks cheerful and lively. The lama proves to be quite agreeable and interesting, he answers all questions carefully and diplomatically, he surely knows how to win his audience over to his views. He speaks English and one of his disciples translates his words into Greek. At a moment, he advises us: "When bad things happen to you, instead of thinking "I am unhappy", you had better think "There is unhappiness in the world". In this way, you won't be feeling like a target any more!"

This statement makes me think because it breaks the Ego; on the other hand, it is a reasonable way to fight that dominant impression I have had ever since I was an infant: I have never stopped feeling like a target of visible and invisible evil forces, though I often try to ignore it. Maybe this feeling is nothing more than selfishness in disguise -according to the lama and most gurus...

* * * *

Wednesday, 31st July 1996

The truth is I am disappointed from life. No matter how hard I try to achieve something in any field of life, the result is always poor or naught. That's why I have returned to Janus, that's why I am ready to go to Alexander's asram again, despite the fiasco of '92. This time I am even willing to pay 90,000 drachmas for ten days. The price includes accommodation in tents and full board. On the other hand, this is the best proposal for holidays I've had this summer. I know I won't have a good time but I am leaving tomorrow morning...

Sunday, 11th August 1996

All things considered, it was much nicer than I thought; the asram has been improved a lot since 1992: A spacious cottage has been built to the west, and another one is under construction nearby. To the south there is a vast field of cultivated vegetables. The central field is still full of nut-trees at the shadow of which we have set up our tents. In the middle there is a picturesque pond full of goldfish; it is decorated with a wooden bridge, stone banks and a green islet with a palm-tree on top. To the east they have constructed a big tank, which receives water from the spring and serves mostly as a swimming pool. To the north there is a well-built stone wall; behind it, the thick forest of fir-trees.

Every day we followed a specific routine which, although it restricted our freedom a little, made life simpler: In the morning we performed various tasks such as cooking, cleaning the house and the lavatories,

washing the dishes etc. I also managed to finish the translation of "Self-Knowledge and Metaphysics" from Greek into English - that's about 200 pages in one and a half month! To my surprise, though, I found out the same task had been assigned to Danae, who had hardly finished the first chapter!

In the afternoon we all went to the swimming pool; we swam from 5:00 to 6:00 every day, together with the three huge dogs that roamed about the estate: one belongs to Alexander and the other two belong to close disciples of his. Very soon the water was full of dog hairs but nobody ever complained. I only wondered: Couldn't the animals swim right after we had come out of the pool?

In the evenings, all twenty of us gathered around the big table outside the cottage. Some guys played the guitar and we all sang various songs, Greek or foreign, under the stars. It felt wonderful...

During my stay in the asram I also had the opportunity to improve my relationship with Maria Glenos, with whom I shared the tent. We took part in interesting discussions, we played volleyball with the others, we walked to the nearby village every afternoon. On the fourth day, I was happy to see Aphrodite and Theano arrive at the asram.

In general, we all got along very well; in fact, I was surprised to realize there were no whims, disagreements, or quarrels among us during these ten days in the asram; I mean, if you take twenty "normal" persons and send them on holidays together, pretty soon they won't be able to tolerate each other. When I explained these thoughts of mine to Maria, she commented that "The guru has done a very good job with his disciples."

In the morning of my departure, as we were all sitting around the big table taking breakfast, Alexander turned to me and thanked me for the translation I finished so quickly. According to his publisher, I have done "a very good job, but the book has changed style". Then he turned to another disciple and proposed her correcting my translation, so that the text will return to its original style. I smiled and accepted the guru's review – which was nothing more than one of his tricks for breaking Egos. I only explained that when a book is translated into another language, it inevitably changes style.

So, that was my reward for the hard, specialized and unpaid work of one and a half month: The guru talked to me for ten whole minutes (something unprecedented within the five years in total I have attended Janus), he advised me to wear more modern clothes and nicer glasses, and he made clear that men avoid me because of my high intelligence and strong personality. He also acknowledged my discovery about the awareness of time and space; "Yet, if your Ego is satisfied by it, you are in danger of losing the way," he concluded.

Tuesday, 27th August 1996

Yesterday I came back from the island of Corfu, where I spent five days together with Helen Tandoulou and Vlassis, her retarded brother. Of course we went there on an organized trip, of course I stayed in my own single room. I know well how wayward my friend is...

During those five days of vacations, Helen didn't stop for a minute criticizing or belittling me over trifles. Especially at noon, when I was hungry and I wanted to go to a restaurant and eat something decent, Helen screamed that restaurants are too expensive, that we ought to eat nothing more than a souvlaki in hand, and that "certain people are like pigs, all they care about is food, food, food!". As about her brother, he didn't utter a word; he only followed obediently. Undoubtedly, he came with us just because his religious parents had compelled him to, so as to guard his sister's virginity!

At least, we did visit some wonderful places: Pontikonisi, Mon Repos, Barbati, Achilleion, Paleokastritsa, Benitses, Pelekas etc. I enjoyed every moment, although Helen wouldn't stop grumbling: "Isn't this a nasty beach!" ... "There is nothing but old ruins here!" ... "We were ripped off in that taverna!"

-let alone her ironic remarks:

“You like that guy, so what? When you look like an old witch, such a man will never fancy you!”

“Happiness isn't only to do what you want; happiness is also *not* to do what you *don't* want,” I answered but I don't think she got it.

My company in that trip was really bad, but fortunately we met three other young women from the group, with whom we arranged night outings to the clubs of Corfu, despite Helen's neurotic objections: “Why go to those sinks of debauchery which, moreover, are too expensive?”. Yet, she and her brother always followed us to those “sinks of debauchery” and we all had a fine time there...

Saturday, 21st September 1996

Tonight Pangaea is giving a reception at a big hotel in Athens, so as to celebrate the completion of the 15-volume encyclopedia “Arts in the World”. All employees have been invited (about eighty persons), all but two: Helen Roussos and me, although both of us belong to the team who worked for this encyclopedia: Helen as a proof-reader, I as an editor's secretary. “I am sorry about our bosses' boorishness, girls” said Mrs Julia, our chief editor.

Not that I care about this, yet I wonder: Why weren't we invited? Are Helen and I the only ones in the company who don't belong to high society? Or are we the only ones who don't belong to a network? I just wonder...

Wednesday, 25th September 1996

It was almost midnight when I got on the bus home after an outing with my friends. As I walked inside, I suddenly saw a man's hand snap its fingers before me, so as to distract my attention. I turned and faced Emmanuel, a tall, muscular, handsome guy who used to come to the gym. He started talking to me happily, and he clearly showed his interest in me! We got off at the same bus stop, we exchanged telephone numbers and we parted with a friendly kiss on the cheek. I was feeling very excited, I could hardly believe my good luck!

I was about to cross Hymettus avenue, when I noticed something very strange on the pavement at the opposite side of the street. I tried to discern what it was and I refused to believe my eyes: “What is this? What is this now?” I soliloquized and then, as I took two steps towards it, I saw it clearly: It was a dog lying on its back, with its legs stretched to the sky; its body looked bloated, as if it had been drowned! I observed more carefully, hoping to have seen wrong -but no... My heart was beating fast as I walked away, choosing to ignore completely that sinister *sign of fate*...

Saturday, 12th October 1996

Seeing that Emmanuel hasn't phoned me so far, this morning I decided to call him. He sounds happy to hear me and we arrange to meet at 11:00 at night. It is impossible for him to go out earlier, he says.

We agree to go to a nearby pizzeria which, especially today, offers as much pizza as we want at the low price of 1300 drachmas. Right from the start, the gentleman makes it clear he has no intention of paying for me; I wouldn't expect him to do so, anyway.

In the beginning, we talk about ages: Emmanuel is only 21 years old -I thought he was older- and I lie to him I am 26. All my friends believe I am that old, because I do look a lot younger than my age.

However, I am not sure whether he believes it too: "So, you are 26? Alright, no problem," he says enigmatically.

Then we talk about education and jobs. He seems to be quite proud of working as a doorman in a certain club in Athens, where there is traffic in drugs and sex in the toilets. He has only finished junior high school but he considers himself superior to university graduates, since he earns a lot of money from his job. He becomes ironic when I tell him I speak four languages and I work as an editor's secretary in a publishing company: "You have spent many years at school but now you make a lot of money!" he mocks.

After a while, he looks bored and nervous: "We shouldn't have come here! You should have invited me home, so as to spend a nice night together!" he snorts. As soon as he realizes I don't intend to do so, he can barely hide his exasperation. In a rather aggressive manner, he starts interrogating me about my experience in love. When I lie to him that I have some previous experience but not much, he spits out scornfully: "When I was in junior high school, all my classmates, boys and girls, had sexual relationships! And we sniffed at those girls who were still virgins at the age of 13!"

At least he is kind enough to escort me home; the time is 2:00 am now. At a moment he holds my hand – probably hoping for a night of wild sex. As we reach the corner of Nereid street, I show him where my apartment is. Then, without my expecting it at all, he pauses and seeks to kiss and hug me. I try to respond accordingly but he senses my embarrassment at once:

"Hey, what's that?" he cries in disapproval.

"You took me by surprise," I excuse myself.

"Oh, no, no, I'll pass!" he exclaims in abhorrence and, without my realizing what's going on, he pushes me away. I just look at him dumbfounded.

"We had better be friends only, nothing else!" he adds nervously and he takes his hand off mine. "Call me," he says as he goes away hastily.

This is what I intend to do soon -until next morning. Suddenly, I am so gloomy and confused, and I don't feel like seeing Emmanuel ever again. By the way: Why do I always feel so sad after a date with a man? Why do they all make me feel like a retard or a failed whore right from the first date? Why am I so unlucky? Or am I not? Are, maybe, all men villains by nature?

Saturday, 16th November 1996

Miracles do happen! After many months of negotiations, I finally managed to persuade some guys from Janus to arrange an outing tonight! So, seven of us met at a nice cafeteria in Exarchia, at 7:00 o' clock in the evening. The place, with its thick white walls, the rustic furniture and the cosy atmosphere, reminded of a country house.

For about an hour we were all having a nice time, until we started talking about unemployment which is getting worse and worse in our country year after year. Having in mind Helen Tandoulou, who earns a living as a private tutor, I said: "It is true there are hardly any good jobs nowadays, that's why many people are forced to do odd jobs, like private lessons. For example, a friend of mine gives private lessons of English and she is the best of all!"

Compact ice! Everybody froze! The atmosphere around me became an impenetrable wall of ice! All at once I felt a violent separation from the others, a strong, massive, absolute disapproval. I was astonished to realize everyone had been irreparably offended by that last statement of mine. Right after, there was a lot of murmuring around the table.

Constantine and Eva (a middle-aged couple who have nothing to do with private lessons) were already in a hurry to leave: "It's time we old folks went home!" said Eva with a hypocritical smile on her face. George and Ann (snob music teachers, obviously insulted) also wanted to leave immediately: "Let's go and give some private lesson, so as to earn a dime," said George bitterly. Mary Glenos, who was sitting next to me, stayed taciturn. The only one who didn't seem to be offended was Jimmy, a young physicist who works as a private tutor.

We stood up and left the place hastily, at about 8:15. Jimmy suggested he and I should go and sit somewhere else, but the whole incident had spoilt my fun and I was not in the mood for anything like that...

Friday, 27th December 1996

Last night my friend Aphrodite called and invited me to the celebration she and Stephanie (her co-tenant) are having tonight. "It is Stephanie's name-day tomorrow, we have invited many people and we are going to have lots of fun!" she told me cheerfully.

It is 8:00 o' clock in the evening now, and I knock on their door full of excitement, ready for a happy night with a large party -such joys are rare for me. I won't go to Janus tonight, where I normally have a lesson at 9:00. Tonight I intend to enjoy myself.

When I get in, the two women welcome me cordially. As I can see, I am the second guest to arrive, after Stephanie's sister. After a while, Stephanie and her sister go and sit alone in the big living room, where they chat in low voices. Aphrodite and I stay in the kitchen.

At a moment the phone rings. As I can hear, it is someone from Janus and they have called to wish many happy returns to Stephanie. They speak with Aphrodite too, and when she hangs up she comes to me with a box of cupcakes in her hands. Then, like a bolt from the blue, she announces to me:

"Yvonne, now that you will go to Janus, give them these cupcakes and say they are from me!"

I don't get it immediately and I just stare at her dumbfounded. Aphrodite repeats slowly. It takes me a few minutes to realize what's going on.

"Why are you sending them cupcakes?" asks Stephanie, who happens to enter the kitchen at that moment.

"They called and wished many happy returns," explains Aphrodite, rather thoughtful.

"So, what? Shall we let them fuck us?" mocks the other one and leaves the room.

In the meantime many guests have arrived and gathered in the living room. For about half an hour I sit and talk with them happily, as if nothing were going on. Yet, at about 8:55 I stand up and bid farewell because "I must go now". This is not what I had planned, but eventually I will spend this Friday night at Janus; at least, it is just a few-minutes walk from here.

"Yvonne, we didn't talk enough this time; I hope you are not angry at me!" my friend says, as I go down the stairs with the box of cupcakes in hand.

"What are you talking about? Of course not!" I assure her and disappear from her life for ever.

I didn't hear a word from that lesson. I was only feeling a deep grief growing fast inside me, turning into a dark ocean of self-pity and desperation. I could feel my face being contorted with sadness. Alexander noticed and showed an interest. Naturally, I refused to explain in class what and how. "I only hope I am not the one who caused this," he said, and then he tried to make me feel better by revealing to the class that "Yvonne is an unselfish person indeed: she was willing to translate "Self-knowledge and Metaphysics" from Greek into English free of charge, she did her best and finished it within a month!". I appreciated his attempt to cheer me up at this hard time -but it was in vain: I was still feeling miserable, as if

all the whole world were falling apart before me...

Saturday, 28th December 1996

Truth hurts: After that celebration in Aphrodite's house yesterday, from where I was actually turned away, I must face a truth I have known for a long time but refused to see up to now: For years and years I have been trying to become "sociable", "agreeable", "lovely", yet all I have achieved is beat the air! Human beings have never liked me and they have always sought to crush me by labelling me as "stupid", "unsociable", "a loser", "a misfit" and so on. On the other hand, I often act in a neurotic manner, like a typical victim of a self-realized prophesy. When everybody treats you as if you were a fool, in all likelihood you will become a fool.

I have tried very hard to become popular, socializing with all kinds of persons indiscriminately. I often yield to other people's demands, or act the fool by ignoring their insults or mockeries; sometimes I even seek to show off my knowledge and intelligence, so as to prove my worth to them. To no avail, of course; There is only one virtue for them, and this is promiscuity.

As about all these parties I have joined so far, I've never been an equal member. I have always been "a cog in the machine", constantly obliged to follow, obey, stay silent, show "understanding" and "patience". They tolerate my presence as long as I cringe before them. Any time I show the slightest opinion, preference or disobedience, they kick me out as if I were a mangy dog. They have always been doing this to me because *I am not human, full of wickedness, cunning, lust. I am different to them – that's why they detest me, they envy me, they are afraid of me!*

And here I face what I've been trying to ignore for so many years: The hatred and contempt of the others towards me. Indeed, nothing scares me more than human wickedness. I prefer to confront a natural disaster -a flood, an earthquake, a hurricane- than satanic humans. It's impossible to predict what they plan against me every time, so I can't defend myself effectively.

This is natural, of course: In general, when someone intends to harm you, a) you can't imagine who it is; you are usually stabbed in the back by the one you suspect least, b) you don't know what this person is up to, c) or when they are going to strike, d) or how many and who their accomplices are. When you finally realize you are in trap, it is already too late.

Human nature is evil: Humans are genetically programmed to worship and obey those who do the greatest evil. The more evil you do, the more havoc you wreak on animate beings or inanimate things, the more you are respected by humans. If you are quiet and good-hearted, they consider you to be weak and they automatically push on the fringe of society. Paradoxically, natural abilities, intelligence or, even, brawn, are not at all important for the choice of a leader within the human herd: It is harum-scarum who rule! Which means: *Human beings are monsters!*

My nature is entirely different: I neither rule nor follow, like all "normal" people do. I neither exploit others nor serve a herd -although I have often tried, always without success, to achieve the latter. As a result, I am spontaneously pushed out of society, out of humanity. I am not a monster; that's why monsters constantly try to destroy me any way they can. However, in spite of their continuous efforts I remain strong, hopeful, clean. And they fume with rage...

A serious error of mine: Up to now, instead of studying myself and my real potentialities, I have been busy with monsters: I have wasted a lot of energy, time and gray matter to find out how they think, how they act, what they like, how I will be agreeable to them and so on. Yet, they are all dirty, wicked, perverted. Those who seem to be "good", they are either hypocrites or handicapped.

Ever since I was born, they have been doing nothing but murdering me slowly: by sabotaging

everything I do, they always make me feel stressed, anxious, sad, discouraged, unworthy. But enough with monsters! Now I know: With their incessant subtle war against me they have been damaging my body and soul. Negative feelings can kill. All psychological problems I've had from time to time, have been caused by their wickedness -and I was naive enough to trust them.

Up to this day I thought communication with the others were the most important thing in life. I was completely wrong. When they disappear, all my psychological problems disappear as well: stress, nervousness, depression, timidity, self-pity, misery. *Loneliness is heavenly...*

* * * *

Wednesday, 22nd January 1997

New year, new (hopeful?) start: Despite the relative improvement of my social life in the last two years, I can't say I feel satisfied. Why, indeed? Maybe because all those friends I've found during this period are rather bereft persons. Moreover, they are isolated from the rest of the human race -just like I am; therefore, they can't help me in anything.

Not knowing what else to do in order to improve my social life, I have decided to quit gyms and start taekwondo lessons at Nicky's school, which is only a five-minute walk from my house. Physical exercise is certainly much harder here, while it requires special suppleness which -let's face it- I've never had. I often have the impression that my inability to perform certain moves correctly has been noticed and commented by the rest of the pupils.

I have also started to take yoga lessons at Janus, right before my class on Monday afternoon. I don't really know why I do this; yoga is very boring here, let alone I have to carry my gym outfit all the way from home, in a plastic bag. This evening I asked Mary, the receptionist, if I could leave the bag with my clothes somewhere in Janus, so as not to carry them any time from Glyfada to Kypseli and conversely. She smiled and answered: "There is a place for that, under the kitchen-sink!". As I found out soon, under the kitchen-sink there is place only for the rubbish bin. Mary's message was clear: *Your place is with the rubbish, since you are nothing but rubbish...*

Friday, 24th January 1997

However, what bothers me most is that shrew of Lucy Parissis: She is a wayward old-maid who has come to Pangaea recently. She is a professor of Religion, she is here to edit "The Unknown History of Christianity", she is considered to be a very important person and she obviously hates my guts -without a reason whatsoever.

By the way: The computer I work on has been upgraded too many times and, as a result, it breaks down every now and then: Sometimes the screen turns black, or the program fails, or the printer doesn't work properly and so on. Naturally, Mrs Parissis can't understand it is not my fault that my computer is faulty. She is constantly slandering me to everybody, grumbling I don't know how to use the computer and that's why it always breaks down. It is a *mystery*, though, that all problems appear when I type her texts!

This morning, as soon as she stepped into my office with some new texts in hand, the screen suddenly went black with a "system error", without my pressing a single key! *What the heck, has she got a magnet or something?* We called for a technician, as usual, but in the meanwhile the fair lady fumed and fretted at me and started shouting about my incompetence.

I suspect many of my colleagues believe her, although -as I often hear- I am "the best typist this company has ever had". The problem is that day by day the atmosphere around me is getting less and less friendly, which makes me feel more and more stressed...

Thursday, 30th January 1997

Night Adventure: The comic book “Arion and the King's Sceptre” comes alive. Arion is a charming revolutionary with red hair, who robs the king's shipments, coaches and trains. He is strong and brave, he often fights alone against many opponents. Finally, he manages to steal the king's sceptre in a train. He has to fight with many enemies and he gets wounded. In the end, he is stabbed in the back, he gets arrested and decapitated.

Verification: In the evening Alice invites me to watch an adventure film on video, together with her children and her new boyfriend. The plot of the film proves to be very similar to the plot of my dream.

Sunday, 2nd February 1997

Night Adventure: Aliens have reached Earth and they secretly occupy the planet. A man discovers their existence but before he does anything about it, a female alien absorbs him inside her. Then, her body falls into pieces which, when they unite again, they form a creature that looks like her victim.

The hybrid arrives at a sunny beach. None of the sunbathers can recognize his extraterrestrial nature. I am there too. I find out that the water can destroy the hybrid's body, as well as the bodies of other contaminated humans. They all look like skeletal zombies now and they start chasing me through narrow pathways among the cliffs.

Later I manage to escape from prison but I accidentally send a wrong message to space, which results in more aliens invading the Earth. Soon, beings from Saturn begin to experiment systematically on human beings.

In the end I reach the airport, aiming to take the plane to Boston. However, I soon find out my enemies have been waiting for me and they start launching “explosive cones” against me. I catch them in the air with my hands and hurl them at the extraterrestrial invaders. Yet, more and more dangerous cones are launched against me and it is too difficult for me to dodge them all...

Saturday, 22nd February 1997

Every other Saturday I pay a visit to my friend Lena (married, well-to-do, boring, with two infants who never get an inch away from their mother) from 4:00 to 6:00 pm exactly – as if I had an appointment with the doctor.

This afternoon I tried to begin a conversation regarding the necessity of human communication, but she interrupted me abruptly:

“All those who like parties, long chats and outings have nothing better to do, they are complete failures! Such persons have no aim in life!”

I pretended not to have taken the hint.

A little later, we started talking about Ivy, a serious and sedate forty-year-old single woman we occasionally meet on the bus to work.

“She has been learning how to play the organ lately; she also goes to a dance school,” I informed my friend, who suddenly frowned.

“I don't understand what's the meaning of this all! Frankly, I can't understand why this woman lives! She goes to one place; she goes to another place; so, what? All this is nothing but nonsense for people who

have no reason to live!” she concluded, full of contempt for old-maid Ivy. That was certainly a clear insinuation about me too; and I, as usual, kept on acting the fool lest I should lose that great friend.

Nevertheless, the question is still here and it is still unanswered: *What am I doing in this bleak and hostile world? I am virtually alone in a society of monsters and -for some strange reason- I have to survive...*

Thursday, 27th February 1997

After last night's dinner at Janus, which hardly lasted an hour, without any communication among us, with the guru complaining that he had not been previously notified and that he was doing us a favour by allowing us to gather around that huge board we use as a table (which seems to be specially made to isolate dinner guests) I took my final decision: I am leaving Janus -for good this time.

All things considered, lessons at Janus are nothing but a waste a time: Actually I am dragooned into going there, because they make me think I were lost without it. For quite a long time we've been learning nothing new, maybe because Alexander seems to have become too skeptical about anything: “There are no spirits; spiritualism is fraud” ... “(Self)hypnosis is harmful to the human mind” ... “There is no such thing as magic” ... “There are no astral worlds” ... “There is nothing beyond matter” ... “Telepathy requires a perfectly clean subconscious, so it is unfeasible” and so on. Alexander has always deified the subconscious but we don't talk about it either. Only once, in a rare demonstration of sincerity, he admitted that the subconscious affects human behaviour only by 2%. The rest 98% is affected by the unconscious, which is genes, as well as other external imponderable factors. However, this truth is usually revealed to the advanced disciples only; the rest of us delude ourselves with the fairy tale of self-improvement – and we never get anywhere.

As for the rest, the only things we talk about in class are delayed monthly fees, extra contributions we ought to offer every now and then, or how little progress we've made -and we are always to blame. No, I can't put up with such inanities anymore, I can't waste my time. It's not that I disapprove completely of Janus, but there is nothing to learn in there anymore...

● *Life (?) goes on...*

Wednesday, 19th March 1997

This evening my cousin Chryssa paid us a visit together with George, her husband. He is a nice, good-looking and sensible guy; moreover, he is quite wealthy and he has a good job in a big TV channel. The couple have a cute son who is three years old now.

I am really happy about Chryssa, whose life has changed radically within a few years' time: Four years ago, that is before meeting George, she used to live in a small apartment in Kato Patissia and worked as a phototypesetter in a tiny, dark, stuffy printing-office, which was full of rotten paper and huge mice. She was 34 years old then, but she was still single. Moreover, she suffered from systematic lupus erythematosus, a very serious blood disease.

It was about then that Chryssa visited the Monastery of Panagia Malevi in Peloponnese and bowed before the miraculous, myrrh-flowing icon of Virgin Mary, hoping for a miracle. Indeed, her disease has been under control ever since (with medication, of course) and it doesn't bother her any more. Then she happened to meet George, who fell in love with her, despite her illness, and married her six months later, while my cousin was already pregnant.

Chryssa doesn't work anymore, as her husband earns enough to support her and their child. She has let out her apartment in Kato Patissia, and she lives with her family in a spacious, sunny house in the luxurious suburb of Kifissia.

Naturally I feel happy about my cousin, yet I have started to suspect that all human beings, even the most miserable ones, sooner or later, more or less, find what they are looking for. Everybody settles down in the long run – everybody but me and I can't understand why: I believe in God too and I have visited quite a few miraculous churches...

Monday, 24th March 1997

Blond Annie, the 17-year-old slut in taekwondo, knows how to make all men pay attention to her: "I don't know a thing, show me!" she is always mewling and some simpleton will run to "show" her.

As about me, I am like non-existent in there, although I have been going there for almost three months. For some strange reason none of my classmates approaches me except Mary, a 16-year-old girl with whom I chat before the lesson begins. I have tried many times to start a conversation with the others but their extreme frigidity puts me to flight. I can also sense they underestimate and talk about me because I can't perform certain exercises right; for instance, I can't jump over the back of a standing chair or skip the rope 200 times in a minute. Especially my "dollyo chagi" (side kick), which is rather low, causes lots of ironic smiles and remarks. Anyway, I can't understand why they mind so much; after all, I don't intend to become a champion; I only want to work out.

Who gets most on my nerves is Ellie, a 40-year-old diva who seems to be in command in there. Subtly but clearly she observes and controls everything, while they all gather around her "like a big, happy family". All but me. I can't tell why, but I am always left out. She often arranges outings with all the others, and I am the only one who's never invited. Yet, they always make sure I learn what a wonderful time

they've had.

This is what happens every time: Wherever I am, the arch-harlots brand me as “unwanted” and that's it: I am always at the bottom, everyone looks down on me and they fight me until I am eliminated like waste matter. Nevertheless, what I have achieved so far (I have a permanent job, some friends, I work out regularly, I am active in metaphysics) is due to superhuman will and strength of character. Indeed, which “normal” person would go on doing anything, if they faced turned backs and closed doors everywhere? Anybody else in my place would have ended up either in a lunatic asylum or in a cemetery. But I am still here and I persevere...

Human Nature and Fate: The three basic components of the human soul are Wickedness, Cunning and Lust. This is the substratum of all human thoughts, feelings, inspirations and actions.

Lust is the corruption of the body. It is the human innate inclination to enjoy abnormal sex and use it as a means of social ascension. Especially to women, it is a must. A woman without “femininity” (a natural talent for harlotry) is considered to be less than zero. What do we mean when we say that a woman is “smart”? We mean she addicts a man to perversions in order to keep him. Lust rules humanity secretly, like a slimy undercurrent which permeates everything in our society.

Cunning is the corruption of the mind. It is the human innate inclination to satanic inspirations, machinations, intrigues, and underhand dealings. It has nothing to do with intelligence - on the contrary, it is much more manifest in persons of mean or low intelligence, and it is thanks to cunning that the mediocre often supplant the excellent.

Wickedness is the corruption of the soul. This element dominates over the two previous ones and it is the human innate inclination to do the biggest possible evil to animate beings or inanimate things. It is said that humans become wicked and do evil so as to get more money and a higher social status. That's wrong: Human beings are evil by nature and they like causing pain to those who happen to be weaker. Of, course, they always find plenty of other excuses: success in business, increase of wealth, religious, racial or political discrimination etc.

If the above mentioned three elements aren't strong enough in a person, sooner or later he or she is driven out of the human society, like a foreign body. Anyway, it is commonly known that “no good deed goes unpunished”. Moreover, the righteous are constantly dogged by all kinds of misfortunes. The more wicked, cunning, perverted you are, the more wealthy, successful, loved you will be.

On the other hand, nobody can say they lack these three characteristics completely; without them, even in a small degree, nobody survives infancy.

... That's why human beings have always rallied against me, launching all kinds of psychic attacks on me, subconsciously aiming either to drive me mad or make me commit suicide: For some strange reason, wickedness, cunning and lust are not sufficiently developed in me. I just don't have it and I can't get it. I imagine this is due to some peculiarity of my DNA. Lust is innate in human beings but not in me...

The war against me has become more subtle recently: I am not derided on the roads anymore, neither am I isolated; yet, they fight me in other, more complicate ways: Sooner or later, all my friends prove to be hypocrites or miserable; at work I am always at the lowest possible position and I take the lowest possible salary. In general, whatever I try to do soon results to a flop. Nevertheless, as Helen Roussos and Mary Skina (two good colleagues at work) admit, I do have achieved something in life: I have managed not to become a “hen with money”, like all those rich women who live in their opulent boredom, pretending they have no idea what dirty business their husbands are involved in...

Friday, 28th March 1997

At last! One of the uncountable (and usually dead-end) ideas I come up with in order to improve my life has just brought a result! Having found out recently that the monthly magazine "Greek Fantasy" publishes short fantasy stories of new writers, I thought of sending them one. This magazine doesn't sell much, but I don't care. So, I corrected and sent them an old story of mine titled "Escape from the Tower of Eons", and it was included in the issue of March! Certainly, this isn't a terrific success, but it is an unprecedented victory for me! I am on cloud nine!

However Josef, my younger nephew, doesn't seem to be happy about this success of mine. On the contrary, he looks angry and annoyed, as if he were jealous! Although he is only seven, he often shows such malice and arrogance which is rare even in adults. Anyway, at a moment he found a black pen and the opportunity to smudge two of the three pages of my published story! When I saw that, I flew off the handle! The little monster managed to stain the only success I've had in my life insofar!

A little later I found him in our yard smirking at me mockingly. Full of rage and frustration, I told him: "I'm never going to forgive you for what you've done! From now on I don't consider you a nephew of mine!" And I meant it. Detail: No matter how hard I tried, I wasn't able to find another issue of this magazine in the kiosks...

Sunday, 4th May 1997

Night Adventure: Hora is a beautiful, magical country; a picturesque river with blue gurgling water and carved banks flows through it. Nevertheless, evil invades little by little. "How shall we stop it?" the princess wonders.

Soon I explore an underwater cavity, the Cave of Amphitrite, which has been kept secret for centuries. I observe the marble relief frescoes, the finely carved ceiling, the strange stalagmites with ivory snakes coiled around them. I think I might find something helpful in here.

Prophetic Dream: Dry, barren land stretches before me, somewhere in Somalia. I shudder with horror as I see the hungry disinterring the dead in order to eat them. *Interpretation:* Next morning I get a phone call from Emmanuel. He says he has thought a lot during these seven months we haven't met, he has changed his way of life, and he wants to see me again. I automatically refuse and tell him I will call him back, but I don't intend to do anything like that; I don't trust him, anyway. As about the symbolism of the dream: He is hungry for sex, I am dead for sex...

Wednesday, 7th May 1997

Night Adventure: In the basement of Nicky's school there is an underground hangar full of aeroplanes. I, as well as some of my classmates, get down there through a secret passage which reminds of a slide. We soon reach Nicky's asram on the Chinese mountains. The landscape is magical. The master has a very big, impressive taekwondo school there. It is built with glass slabs which reflect the sunlight. The luxury of the edifice astonishes me. We go inside and Nicky shows us some old, precious black belts and other important objects.

Then we come out of the glass building and walk to the top of a nearby hill, where we find a strange lake with black water. A huge, ugly turtle emerges out of the dark lake slowly. We go away slowly and we wonder why Nicky wanted us to see that...

Monday, 12th May 1997

Early in the morning, as soon as I get to work, Mrs Magda Stavrakis (another super educated lady who was hired three months ago, so as to occupy herself with "The Unknown History of Christianity"), comes into my office. I find it strange when she asks me to go to a nearby mini market and buy a packet of coffee for her; she has always been polite to me and she has never sent me on errands so far -in contrast to some other important persons in the company.

Later on, Mrs Parissis comes into my office and asks about some letters she gave me to type yesterday afternoon. I have already finished them but I am printing them right now. "They will be ready in two minutes" I assure her but, instead of waiting a little, she just disappears.

In less than two minutes, my phone rings; it is Mr Gryparis, the managing director: "Have you got any untyped texts of Mrs Parissis?" he asks.

"No, nothing, some letters she gave me yesterday are ready now," I explain.

At that moment Mrs Stavrakis rushes into my office.

"Yvonne, what time did you arrive at work this morning?" she asks.

"At 9:20," I answer calmly.

No employee comes to Pangaea earlier than 9:30 every morning.

A little later, Mrs Stavrakis informs me that shrew of Parissis went to the managing director and told him "This morning Yvonne was half an hour absent from her office!" – that's when I was out to buy Mrs Stavrakis some coffee. Anyway, she assures me she has backed me up to Mr Gryparis by explaining to him the reason for my absence.

"Nevertheless, the fact that yesterday you worked overtime till 8:00 o'clock (because of Parissis' demands) doesn't excuse your coming late to work!" she adds stern.

"But I never come later than the others!" I retort.

After an hour or so Mrs Stavrakis appears again and tells me that "Parissis is talking about you all the time! She is furious at you! She is always accusing you of everything! She is even claiming you have refused to type some entries about "Christianity" for her!"

"But... she hasn't given me any entries lately!" I protest.

"She has them in her hands and says she gave them to you but you brought them back untyped and left them on her desk without telling her anything!"

"That's a lie!" I insist.

All those who hear the story show me their understanding, although some times they seem to be enigmatic: "Parissis is not bad! She just needs some politeness!" says Rita, a serious and kind colleague with whom I get along quite well. I don't know what's going on in my workplace anymore, but I don't like the atmosphere around me; something is very, very wrong...

Wednesday, 14th May 1997

Lucid Dream: I am in a strange funfair whose buildings remind of famous churches such as San Marco of Venice, Saint Basil of Moscow etc. I fly into a church of Gothic style; it is very beautiful, with impressive icons and carved pews, and it is all decorated with white roses. I make the sign of the cross, then I fly out. I look back, I admire the church again, I feel nice. Finally, I shut my eyes, I change the dream into a meditation exercise and ask for the one and only truth. Right then, I feel as though I were carried away violently; fear stops me for a moment but what follows is a...

Psychic Experience: All at once I come out of my physical body. I can feel a kind of airstream penetrating my body; in the beginning it fills me up, then I feel as if I were torn apart - it is an ecstatic sensation. Then I fall into very deep hypnosis, I black out, I feel my heart stopping, I cause a hasty awakening...

Friday, 23rd May 1997

Helen Tandoulou has invited me to a birthday party tonight. Her old friend, Clair, turns 26 today and she is having a celebration. So, at 8:00 o' clock in the evening all three of us -Helen, her brother and I- arrive at Clair's two-storeyed house in Kalamaki. My friend is holding three (counted!) roses in her hands as a present. "Don't mind about bringing a present. I will see to it!" she had reassured me when we talked on the phone earlier in the afternoon.

At first sight, what impresses me most is the luxury of the place: The neoclassical building is well-preserved and it has a small flowery garden. Inside, the atmosphere is cosy, friendly, decent – nothing like other stupid celebrations I have been to so far, where everyone put on airs and looked at me askance. Almost immediately we start chatting with two unknown girls and then we get to know some other people.

There follow unprecedented experiences to me: I have pleasant conversations with many lively persons, without seeing in them the suspicion and contempt I usually confront when I am in other circles of people. Even that retard of Vlassis doesn't seem to be such a misfit here: He is smiling and talking freely maybe because, in this large and well-disposed party, his sister's despotic presence can't upstage him.

Before long I notice George, Clair's gorgeous brother. He is 31 years old, tall, with a trained lean body and an attractive face; he has blond hair and brown eyes. He looks calm, balanced, intellectual - entirely different to the men I've met so far. He is an undergraduate of medicine school, confident of himself but not arrogant. Moreover, he shows his interest in me, he makes a kind compliment about my appearance, he accosts me without getting pushy, ridiculous or vulgar. "What counts most in a relationship is that mates inspire each other," he says at a moment. I feel wonderful as I respond spontaneously to this mutual love attraction; it's something I've never experienced before.

Later we join the others and we all continue chatting and having fun till 2:00 after midnight. We get along very well and we finally agree to meet tomorrow. I suggest we arrange where and when right away, but the others prefer to do that on the phone next morning. I don't insist, nor does George do anything to push things; he probably doesn't want to show impatience.

There comes the time for me to leave, together with Helen and Vlassis, and I still haven't exchanged telephone numbers with George. In two words, I rely on my friend to act as a go-between and arrange the meeting with our new friends. I bid farewell to George with a warm handshake, reminding him that "We'll talk again tomorrow". When I leave the house, I feel upset but happy. *Maybe this is the night that could change my life*, I ponder.

Saturday, 24th May 1997

All morning I've been waiting impatiently for Helen to call me. She does phone me at about noon and after a meaningless prologue of twenty minutes, she cheerfully suggests we meet in Kolonaki, right away, in broad daylight – that is, she and I together, just the two of us, without George or anyone else from yesterday's party! As she explains then, she hasn't been able to find him or his sister on the phone. According to what she says, none of the friendly people we met yesterday has communicated with her up to now.

“As far as I've heard, he has a girlfriend in Patras, where he studies medicine,” Helen says cheerfully, as we walk down Kolonaki Square. “Anyway, what is a would-be doctor good for? You should wait for him to finish his studies, and that could take ages! Like an old friend of mine, who had an affair with a medicine student, she waited for him to take his diploma, she even helped him financially to open his surgery, and in the end he dumped her! So, what did you expect? It's a fortunate thing that he hasn't called!” she concludes with a shrieking voice and her usual air of importance.

It occurs to me maybe Helen is lying and sabotaged my meeting with George, yet I prefer to suppress this suspicion quickly. Anyway, there is no proof about that, besides I can't imagine she could be so mean.

“I have no reason to lie to you,” she assures me, as if she could read my mind. “Besides, I don't fancy that guy, I don't want him for myself!”

I know this is true, because Helen never shows the slightest interest in men, not even platonic. Whenever I confide in her I like some stranger on the road, she says scornfully: “Only silly women fancy such men!”

Therefore, there is nothing else to do; I can only accept the situation passively, as something I actually expected. “It was too good to be true,” my mother will admit later, when I explain to her the whole story. And life (?) goes on...

*The past is an invaluable treasure
well hidden in the creases of time.
A treasure which sparkles
weaker and weaker
as time goes by and I
sink fast into the night
deeper and deeper into the night...*

● *Fateful Summer*

Thursday, 5th June 1997

When you are poor, you had better lie low. Any investment you make will prove to be wrong because right investments are costly. Besides, when you are poor -that is away from powerful networks- you lack knowledge for a truly profitable enterprise. "Luck helps the bold," they say. That's a lie. Luck helps the rich. Those who are poor and bold inevitably make bad investments and eventually lose their money. For example, cheap plots of land are seldom included in the town planning zone. If you build something there, it will probably be small, miserable and illegal. Moreover, it will prove to be a money pit.

To be more precise: That 360 m² plot I bought five years ago in Kypseli, on the island of Aegina, seemed to be a good opportunity then: It cost only 800,000 drachmas and it was inside the town planning zone. A few months ago, however, just one day before I had a building permit issued, my plot was suddenly declared to be outside the town planning zone – only this and the two adjacent ones from the whole territory, because they are part of an archaeological site, as we were told!

Nevertheless, my father has set his mind on building a cabin there, even without a permit! For this reason, he goes to Aegina every weekend and works from dawn till dusk, while he is always asking me to give him various sums of money (10,000 to 50,000 drachmas) for the expenses of the cottage under construction. This time he wants to buy water pipes and he has asked me for 100,000 drachmas – that is all the extra money I happened to earn last month from free-lance typing!

... And something I have ascertained many times in the past: I have the impression there is an invisible force which prohibits me from earning even one cent more than the "allowed" to me basic salary of 160,000 drachmas per month! I'd say there is a mysterious factor which defines the exact amount of money that corresponds to each human being, in mathematical accuracy. No matter what you do, it is impossible to accumulate more money than the "allowed" sum: If the preordained amount is, let's say, 160,000 drachmas per month, and you somehow manage to earn 200,000 drachmas once, it is certain you will not enjoy that extra 40,000 by buying something you desire; you are much more likely to waste it on doctors, plumbers, electricians, or even thieves! It goes without saying that the preordained sum of money differs from person to person. For some people it is no higher than 160,000 drachmas, for others it is 500,000, for others it is 2,000,000 per month! Or, as the proverb says: "Work as much as you like and God will give you as much as he likes."

Friday, 13th June 1997

This evening I went to a cafeteria in Glyfada, together with Helen Tanagra. I was bored to death, like every time I go out with Helen. Taking into account tomorrow afternoon we two, as well as Xanthippe, are leaving for a three-day trip to Peloponnese, I hoped certain things would be settled during this outing. I explained to Helen that this morning I went to the travel agency and paid off for all three of us. She didn't give me any money but I imagine she will give it to me tomorrow, like Xanthippe will. Anyway, I wonder how her conservative parents finally allowed Helen to be absent from home for three whole days. They usually forbid her to stay out later than midnight...

Saturday, 14th June 1997

The time is 1:30 pm and I am getting ready to leave for a three-day trip to South Peloponnese, together with my friends Helen and Xanthippe. The coach departs at 3:00 pm from Athens. All of a sudden, the phone rings. It is Helen who announces in earnest that she won't be able to come with us, because she has just been hired as an assistant in a microbiological lab (!) and the boss wants to see her at 2:30, she says.

I can hardly believe my ears! I remind her that unless she comes, I will have to shoulder the 24,000 drachmas of her share! "No way! They will give you the money back!" she exclaims, although we both know that no money is reimbursed for cancellations of the last moment. I explain to her the situation once again, yet Helen makes clear she has no intention of paying for a trip she isn't going on – which means I will have to pay double for my share! Moreover, my good friend coerces me into assuring her I will take the money back no matter what.

"I hope so, because all this makes me sad," she says in a plaintive voice. "But tell me, Yvonne, do such things happen to you all the time, I mean your friends cancelling an arranged trip at the last moment?"

"This is what always happens!" I reply bitterly.

"Where do you find each one of them?" my mother wonders, as soon as I tell her the particulars of the story...

Sunday, 15th June 1997

Our morning visit to the Diros Caves proved to be very interesting: It consisted of a 30-minute boat ride and a 15-minute walk to the exit. It was a unique experience, that underground river which splits up into numerous passageways and underground cavities full of impressive stalagmites and stalactites that glitter in shading-off tints. As our rower led us through the stunningly enchanting halls of the cave, such as the Crossroads of Nymphs, the Lake of Exotic Ocean Creatures, the Sea of Shipwrecks complete with a sunken wreck, the Pink Chamber, the White Chamber and the wonderful Red Chamber, the rare beauty of the place took our breath away. Everything would be perfect if...

Xanthippe and I were lucky enough to occupy the first two seats of the boat and we enjoyed a panoramic view. However, right behind me there was an old crock who kept on shooting everything with a camera in hand (although it is forbidden), while drivelling incessantly with his piercing, exasperating voice. It was one of those psychotic, arrogant people who always want to be noticed no matter what. At a moment Xanthippe asked him politely not to talk so loudly because there was danger of landslide, the signs say so too. The rower agreed and the old crock shut up for a few seconds. Then he resumed the garrulity, even worse than before.

There were about ten boats floating around us, each containing 8-10 persons. Not a sound was heard from any of them. All visitors were speechless before the amazing beauty of the cave – all but the senile old man behind me, who kept on trying to be clever with a rather ridiculous demonstration of knowledge. I had to apply enormous self-control so as to ignore the imbecile behind me, suppress my exasperation and enjoy the fascinating landscape. I was determined not to let a subhuman spoil that unique experience of mine -and I made it.

In the afternoon we went to Monemvasia: It is a picturesque, medieval town built on a small island on the southeast coast of Peloponnese and it is linked to the mainland with a 200-metre long road. Old stone houses, narrow alleys, a ruined castle, emotive atmosphere. Yet, I didn't have much fun because Xanthippe wasn't in a mood of walking or exploring the place. So, we spent all our time in an outdoor cafeteria which didn't even have a nice view...

Monday, 16th June 1997

In the morning we visited Mystras, the medieval city which is situated on Mount Taygetos and it used to be the capital of the Byzantine Despotate of Morea. Xanthippe didn't follow the group; she stayed in the coach because "this is going to be extremely tiring" she said. The path proved to be too rough and I had a lot of difficulty in going up the slope, so I imagined going down would be impossible for me. When we finally reached the top, I asked a young woman from the group to help me come down but she got away at once, together with the others. Since I was left all alone, I had no alternative but look for another path; soon I found out one which was wide, smooth and well-built, and led me to all the interesting old churches and edifices - sights the others didn't have the chance to see.

Later we visited the town of Tolo, a nice tourist resort full of seaside tavernas. I went swimming alone because Xanthippe refused to get into the water. "It is full of bubbles! I am not swimming in here!" she declared with a frown.

Early in the afternoon we arrived in the seaport city of Nafplio, where we went for a walk. The city is nice, full of neoclassical buildings. Xanthippe dragged herself along, always sprinkling her head with a bottle of water, constantly complaining she were going to have a sunstroke. She got on my nerves! I advised her to go back to the coach, since she is so delicate, but she wouldn't get off my back, constantly grumbling about everything.

Then we stopped at the ancient theatre of Epidauros, then at the Isthmus of Corinth. Everybody in the group was exhausted and complaining. They were not all wrong; the itinerary was too long, with too many stops, yet I didn't consider it bad. We arrived in Athens at 8:30 in the evening.

Wednesday, 18th June 1997

Night Adventure: I am in a big church, full of fine icons. To my astonishment and horror, the depicted saints gradually change into demons. "Where are you, Christ? Christ?" I cry in despair but I get no answer. I wake up with a start and I wonder...?

What's going on? The *sonic war* against me is getting more and more unbearable day by day and I just can't stand it any more! For some strange reason, I am surrounded by all kinds of noise pollution: Every morning, at 7:30 am, my father gets out to the yard and keeps himself busy with meaningless tinkering and hammering at pieces of wood or metal for hours! When I return from work at 4:00 in the afternoon and lie in bed so as to have a brief nap, dad goes upstairs, to Alice's half-built penthouse, and starts hammering at stuff again till 5:30 that I leave for the gym! He doesn't really repair anything, he just enjoys the noise! The yard and the penthouse are full of rusty tools, old dilapidated furniture and all kinds of junk dad finds on the road and carries home! I often complain about the noise and the piggery but he never listens; on the contrary, he swears like a trooper!

In addition, the guy who lives right next to me, Mr Takis Zarifis, listens to loud music from 5:00 pm to midnight every day -as if he were paid for that! He sometimes plays that horrible electric guitar too! Luckily, I am away from home for most of the day, otherwise I would have gone crazy!

It goes without saying that all the other kinds of abnormal noise are still here: The black dog in the yard across the street barks hysterically, incessantly, all day and all night long; the family on the second floor of the block of flats next to us still throws parties two or three days a week and they keep me awake till 3:00 am; uncountable cars come and go in their outdoor garage, right under my window, their drivers revving up the engines for hours, especially during the night; all afternoon, every afternoon, five or six motorbikes go round in circles outside the new block of flats at the opposite side of the street and their

drivers never stop screaming and giggling like lunatics.

And the greatest *mystery*: Going on long bike rides almost every evening, I see lots of neighbourhoods from Helioupolis to Voula. Nowhere else have I noticed the abnormal hustle and bustle which takes place around my house every day! I am sure there is no other street so noisy as mine, in the entire city of Athens! Therefore, I have come to believe I don't progress in metaphysics anymore for the same reason I don't progress in any other field of life: I live in an extremely negative environment.

I've been thinking seriously about leaving my home and renting another house away from here! I can't go on like this; if this situation continues, I will go mad! In fact, I have just bought a newspaper and looked at the classified ads, hoping to find some cheap apartment. As soon as my mother got wind of it, she nearly had a stroke...

Monday, 23rd June 1997

On occasion of my birthday which was two days ago, this morning I treated my colleagues at work to cupcakes and received various gifts from them: a science fiction book, a neckerchief, an amber brooch. What has impressed me most is a pair of earrings given to me by Mrs Stavrakis; they are made of silver and carved with a variety of odd symbols and ideograms: three dots forming an equilateral triangle; upside-down question marks; five dots inside a circle, which is intersected by a triangle; three triangles whose tops point at the centre of a disc, at the lowest part of the jewel. I like these earrings. They are so original. I'll start wearing them right from tomorrow.

As for the rest: The latest issue of the magazine "Greek Fantasy" came out today and it contains my horror story "Contact with the Netherworld". It seldom happens to me but some days are full of satisfactions...

Sunday, 13th July 1997

Night Adventure: An extraterrestrial spacecraft has arrived on Earth and it burns immense forests to ashes; at the same time a gigantic, plant-like monster walks around and destroy whatever it finds in its way. I run to escape, while the spacecraft follows me hidden inside a cloud. I try to dodge the dangerous light it emits until, suddenly, the alien aircraft glows and I am scared stiff. There opens a small door, an extraterrestrial old woman walks out and says: "We are not really interested in Earth, we only seek spiritual ascension. We are just annihilating this planet..."

Tuesday, 29th July 1997

Night Adventure: Some of my old classmates in Janus have discovered a strange document in an abandoned house. A magic ritual is described on it, which includes walking on a black tape stuck on the floor and leads to another dimension. One by one, my old friends perform the ritual, yet they don't transcend to any other dimension; they only get deformed and they look like zombies now. Two or three of them who aren't deformed, have to fight with the contaminated. They and I haven't walked on that tape and we manage to escape by flying away, towards the sea. We know that water kills the zombies.

One of the uncontaminated guys returns to the house with a view to exterminating the living dead, but soon he is surrounded by his ex good friends -Nestor, Nick, Apostolis and others- who look very ominous now. The young man seeks to escape running along Nereid street, but he is someone else now: I am the man! A plump lady with blond plaits, who resembles my grandma Alice at a young age, appears as a spirit on the sky and declares that "the world of matter is appealing to everybody". So, from now on I

will be Yvonne and I have taken refuge in the world of the living, hoping to avoid a dreadful danger which awaits me in the astral plains.

Strange coincidence: My ex friend, Aphrodite, saw a similar dream a few years ago: All the disciples in Janus stood in line and walked on a black tape, one by one. She knew that was dangerous and shouted to them "Don't follow this line!". Yet, next moment she stepped on the black tape too...

* * * *

Saturday, 2nd August 1997

This morning we departed for the island of Zakynthos, on a trip organized by a travel agency. It was late in the afternoon when we arrived at our hotel at Kryoneri: I sighed in disappointment as soon as I found out how small, noisy, isolated and miserable it is - nothing to do with the hotel we had seen on the leaflet. It is supposed to be a second class hotel -we paid that much too- but it is hardly fifth class. I already feel exasperated, as I am also in bad company: Helen Tandoulou and her retarded brother. Needless to say, I am staying in my own single room. As soon as I accommodate myself, I sit down and wonder: What am I doing here with these two nitwits?

Monday, 4th August 1997

Days pass by, without much fun: We have already visited the church of Saint Mavra and enjoyed swimming in Alykes. We have admired the panoramic view of the city of Zakynthos from the hill of Bochali, and swum in the wild waves of Tsilivi. As for the rest, we spend our afternoons strolling around the city, which proves to be not so exciting. Besides, my friend Helen is not so talkative as she used to be; in fact, I can barely screw a word out of her. She usually opens her mouth only to belittle me with offensive remarks such as "I have all the ideas, I am clever, whereas you can't think of anything, you are brainless!"

Just like last year, every time we go on a tour Helen always demands to sit by the window, otherwise she gets dizzy, she says. However, this year her window pane happens to be entirely opaque, therefore she can see nothing outside -it serves her right! I have also noticed certain misfortunes dogging me: I have been to the cobbler's twice and my new watch has stopped. "You have been jinxed!" says Helen and she could be right...

Tuesday, 5th August 1997

This morning we went on an boat ride around the island: Picturesque caverns with blue, crystal waters; white arched rocks looming over emerald waves; swimming in the open sea near the Cave of Keri. And, the high spot of the tour, our stop at Navagio (the Shipwreck): Without the slightest compunction, I left behind the two undecided grumblers who happen to be my companions in this trip and dived into the clear blue water from the deck of the boat. The sea was as cold as ice but I enjoyed every moment to the fullest as I swam out, to the isolated strand. I walked on the white sand, I admired the high blond cliffs surrounding the beach, I passed by the old shipwreck which has been rusting under the sun for decades now. As about my "friends", after half an hour or so I found them observing the blackened tub – Helen with a surly face, as usual, Vlassis lost in space, as always. I greeted them coldly and I went on exploring the place.

In the evening the three of us went to the outdoor restaurant "Meltem" at the coast of Kryoneri: Pleasant ambiance with ancient-like decoration, lofty trees with thick leafage, idyllic serenity, sea waves crashing on the low cliffs nearby.

Once again I intend to relish the beauty of every moment, entirely ignoring my friend's sarcastic remarks: "Certain people think they are aristocrats, just because they live in Glyfada, whereas they are nothing but gypsies!" *How can she be so malicious, just like that, without any reason whatsoever?* I only wonder. Then we start talking about our jobs and I dare mention that when I worked as a secretary for Zafirakis, I also translated texts from/to English or Italian for him. Helen frowns at once and says:

"Listen, Yvonne, don't say such things, because people make fun of you! How could you translate anything, since you don't have a respective university degree?"

"I used to translate texts about wining machines. This kind of terminology isn't taught in any school, you learn it while working," I explain as calm as possible.

"Oh, let me be, I see how good your translations were!"

"Don't you think you've gone too far?" I start to lose my temper. "I'm sick and tired of your slighting and insulting me all the time!"

"Who, me? When did I insult you, Yvonne? What are you talking about, are you crazy?" Helen protests and looks at me aghast, as if she couldn't understand what I was saying.

"Don't you always tell me I am stupid, whereas you are the smart one who has all the ideas? Don't you always trumpet forth I should be jobless because I don't have a university degree? What diplomas do you have, anyway?" I retort.

"I never said I have diplomas! But maybe I do have some and you know nothing about it!" she answers with an air of importance.

"Maybe I have lots of university degrees too! You don't know anything about me!"

"I've never expected such behaviour from you, Yvonne! As far as I can see, there can be a lot of envy and spite between friends!"

"That's for sure! I've known that right from the beginning!" I talk back.

The golden full moon is mirrored in the smooth sea beside us. The summer night is serene, the surrounding environment is enchanting. I would like to experience the magic of the moment in a different way, yet Helen seems to be enjoying more the fight than the landscape. "I like it so much, when I hear you two fighting like a dog and a cat!" says then Vlassis, who has been silent so far. Next moment, he stands up and goes away, leaving the two of us alone. Time for the second round:

"Really now, Yvonne," Helen goes on pompously. "Where is your supposed social life? You always tell me about your numerous friends, but it's me you go out with every Thursday and Saturday, it's me you go on vacations with in August. Why isn't anyone else coming with you, can you tell me?"

"This isn't true!" I hurry to rebut the new accusations. "I do have many friends and and I often go out with them. But why not stop it now? This conversation leads nowhere! Maybe... maybe it was just a misunderstanding," I begin to recede, rather foolishly, hoping to save the rest of the trip, while Helen's face glows in triumph:

"Oh, no, Yvonne, I can't take that; I don't like it when someone abuses me and then, when they see they can't prevail, they ask for an apology!"

Preferring not to add fuel to the fire, I stay taciturn (always foolishly), while Helen continues undaunted: "By the way, do you know what kind of impression you make, Yvonne? I can't imagine what has happened in your life so far, but you give the impression of being very disappointed and fed up with everything! That's why you neither take photographs nor phone your family when you are on holidays! You don't hope for anything, that's why you always seek to experience the moment, as you say!"

She isn't wrong about that, I must admit. Before answering anything, I am about to pour some beer in my glass.

“And don't drink anymore! You are probably drunk, that's why you don't know what you are talking about!” she hisses and at that moment I abhor her. What she means is I am an alcoholic just because I usually drink a beer with my dinner! *Aren't they horrible, these churchy hens!*

At that point I think the fight is almost over, but the big bomb hasn't fallen yet: “Regarding that guy we met then, at my friend's party, why should I have helped you, Yvonne? Who has ever helped me?”

I can't believe my ears! Helen has just admitted, quite proudly I'd say, she has actually sabotaged my starting an affair with George!

“So, this is how things are,” I reply bitterly yet calmly. “You are right, after all! I am a fool and I am to blame for everything! But this is gonna change, you know! All mistakes will be corrected very soon in the best possible way, you will see!” I conclude and it is Helen's turn to shut up.

Wednesday, 6th August 1997

Early in the morning we visited the Museum of Solomos, then the cathedral of Saint Dionysios. Finally, we went swimming to Porto Roma. I can no longer enjoy the trip because I always have that nincompoop of Helen in tow. Yet, I have also noticed something about her brother: Any time he manages to escape Helen's reproachful look, he automatically becomes more lively, more cheerful, more intelligent! I've come to suspect the guy is not really retarded, he is just weak-willed because Helen has turned him into a scrub with her hysteria and her successive psychic attacks. He probably acts the fool so that the vixen leaves him alone.

In the evening the three of us went to a romantic, seaside bar in Kryoneri. Helen kept trying to patch up things by repeating her insults: “As I was saying, Yvonne, you shouldn't tell the others those things you often say, that you used to translate texts for example, because nobody believes you! Neither do I tell anyone such things!” *Why do I always get involved with wicked and abnormal persons? Why?*

Thursday, 7th August 1997

We are on a day trip to Cefallonia, together with the rest of the tourist group. Vlassis didn't wish to join us this time and I can fully understand him. “All things considered, your brother is very clever! He knows very well what he is doing!” I say to Helen, now that I have begun to look down on her and drop hints such as: “So, you are the smart one and you have all the ideas! Just wait and see what ideas I have! You will know soon!” or, even: “Let's do some mathematics: On the entire island of Zakynthos there must be about 2,000 coaches now; each one of them has twenty windows; 2,000 coaches x 20 windows each, makes a total of 40,000 windows! Out of these 40,000 windows only one is completely opaque and you are sitting by it!”

On the ferry boat to Cefallonia we get to know Peter, an attractive 26-year-old guy from our group. He has come with his parents, he looks a little peculiar and squeamish, he never swims, but he seems to be a nice and reasonable person. He has a sweet face with light brown hair and big green eyes. He has a trained body and he is quite good-looking, though a little short. I clearly show him I like him, but he seems to be more interested in Helen. *The same as usual...*

“You must be a lot older than me!” Helen tells me at a moment, with an ironic smile.

“Really? Would you like both of us to stand in front of a mirror, so that you can see who is older?” I retort

confidently and she shuts up.

The tour of Cefallonia proves to be very interesting: First we walk through the Cave of Drograti, which is full of impressive limestone formations. Then, we take a boat ride in the Cave of Melissani: the B-shaped underground lake consists of two water halls with blackish waters and a small rocky island in the middle. There is a big oval opening on the roof of the first hall, which allows the sunlight to come in. The boats seem to hover on an eerie blue light, it is a magical experience. Later, we go swimming at a pebbly beach in Saint Efimia; finally we arrive in Argostoli and, last but not least, we visit the famous church of Saint Gerasimos. I enjoy the trip to the fullest, without paying any attention to Helen's continuing digs at me...

Saturday, 9th August 1997

This is our last morning in Zakynthos and I relish a lonely walk along the promenade, without having the nitwits in tow. Everything around me looks fantastic: The bright sun, the blue sea waves, the cliffs, the soft breeze, the seaside empty bars.

Helen's last words as soon as we arrive in Athens, late in the evening:

“How do you feel now that you won't see me again?”

“I'm deeply moved!” I reply ironically.

“Give me a call!” she says, before we split -for ever.

“Count on it!”

The end.

* * * *

Thursday, 21st August 1997

The time is 6:00 in the afternoon and I am leaving home, aiming to meet Persephone at the corner of the streets Gennimata and Athanatou. After lots of negotiations (although she is quite wealthy, my friend complained a lot about the price of the trip), we have arranged to go on an organized tour to Parga. The group leaves the day after tomorrow, therefore Persa and I must go to the travel agency in Athens today, so as to pay off the trip.

Having just walked past the corner of Meteoron street, I go down Gennimata avenue full of excitement. I can already discern my friend waiting for me in the distance. All of a sudden, a motorbike passes right beside me, as fast as lightning, and its skinny driver grabs the bag off my shoulder! The youngster -he looks quite familiar- turns his head back, he smiles to me ironically and disappears speeding along the avenue! He even defies a police car which happens to be parked a little further. It takes me a few seconds to realize what has just happened; at first, it thought it was just a joke!

As soon as I realize the situation, I return home in a frantic condition: I have lost not only my beautiful English bag, but 65,000 drachmas as well! Once again, outside the block of flats opposite my house, five or six bums are ululating continuously, going around in circles on their motorbikes. “Has anyone just left here on a motorbike?” I ask loudly, pointing at the trumps with my finger. Nobody knows, nobody noticed. Not even my parents who are sitting in the veranda, or aunts Hermione and Penelope who have come to visit them. Yet, the more I think about it, the more certain I am the thief is one of the bums on the motorcycles. I don't hesitate to shout loudly “My bag has been stolen and the thief is one of them!”; nobody answers me but the motorbikes go away one by one, until none is left. They are never going to be seen in the neighbourhood again. Never ever...

Right after, I go and meet Persa, who is still waiting at the junction of the streets Gennimata and Athanatou. I explain to her what has happened, she is dumbfounded but she claims not to have seen any youngster on a motorcycle passing by her with a woman's bag in hand. For a moment I wonder because I'm sure the guy drove past her, but I can't say anything; she probably wasn't observant enough.

Finally, the two of us go to the police and inform them about the robbery. I am faced with the absolute indifference and incapability of the policemen who, while on duty, wear slippers and casual clothes. The sergeant is dressed in a fine suit, he has black glasses on and he is all airs and graces. There is nowhere a computer but there is a television in every room, so that the minions of the law don't lose their favourite serials.

Anyway, the incident mentioned above won't discourage me from going to Parga. On the contrary, I dig my heels in and decide not to allow any misfortune deprive me of the joy of travelling – even if this means I will have to pay double the price of the trip...

Sunday, 24th August 1997

It was late in the afternoon when we finally arrived at our hotel, which is situated on a green slope in the amphitheatrically built village of Lichnos. It is outside the picturesque town of Parga and it has a panoramic view to a blue-green bay. The beach is hardly fifty metres away from the hotel, while the swimming pool is right outside our room. I can say this is the finest hotel I've ever been to.

Later in the evening, Persa and I relished a long walk in the enchanting town. Undoubtedly, Persephone is the most balanced of all my other friends and I do enjoy her company. I think we'll have a nice time together.

Monday, 26th August 1997

In the morning we went on a boat ride along the river Acheron which, in ancient times, was supposed to be one of the five rivers of Hades. As soon as we disembarked on the river bank, our tour guide vanished into thin air together with some Italian tourists. Persephone and I, as well as some others from our group, walked around the fields for a while but it proved to be impossible for us to find the ancient Necromancy Temple. Finally, the guide and the Italians appeared again as soon as we returned to the boat. We hardly saw where they had come from. On the way back, some people dived into the emerald waters of Aphrodite's Cave. Why didn't I dive too?

In the afternoon Persa and I went for a walk in Parga and we visited the relatively well-preserved castle which overlooks the town. We walked along its stone paths, we enjoyed the view from its arched windows, we experienced the nostalgic atmosphere of a lost world. Later, we spent some time at the beach of Lichnos. I swam for an hour or so, while my friend stayed out of the water, reading a book. Persephone never gets into the sea because she doesn't dare show her 140 kilos in a bathing suit. When I got out of the water, we started talking and at a moment I commented on a charming and well-trained young guy who was in the company of a very fat, middle-aged woman. "She certainly pays him!" I assumed.

That was a blunder of mine. Persephone frowned at once, although she tried hard to conceal it: "We must accept ourselves as it is. For instance, I will always be obese no matter what I do and this is never gonna change! However, it is personality that counts most in a human being, not external appearance!" she told me with an air of profundity. I could do nothing but agree with her.

In the evening we went for a nice walk along the promenade of Parga. At a moment Persa stopped by a telephone booth and made two or three phone calls; I stood a little farther and waited for a few

minutes, no problem. We walked around for a while and when night fell we sat at a nice cafeteria near the castle, which has a wondrous view of the gulf and the green islet with the chapel. The environment was fascinating, so was the young waiter: handsome, muscular and friendly, he suddenly left his post and sat at our table! He treated us to fruit punch and entered into conversation with us at once; nevertheless, it didn't take me long to realize I was methodically excluded from the discussion, as the young man soon began to ignore me completely and dally with Persa! As time passed, he seemed to be more and more enchanted by my friend's personality, while I was like non-existent. In other words: A gorgeous young man, no older than 22, suddenly fell in love with Persephone (1.55 m tall, 140 kilos) and for her he forgot all about work, customers and boss!

The two of them bantered cheerfully for more than an hour, pretending I was not present. There were some satanic coincidences too: I was astonished to listen that the young lady killer lives in Glyfada during the winter, hardly 100 metres away from Persa's house! Finally, they exchanged telephone numbers and promises for a future meeting. As about me, I was shrunk in my chair embarrassed, confused, speechless, with a dominant feeling of humiliation.

When we left the cafeteria at last, my head was spinning. I couldn't think clearly, while I was feeling awful. Next to me, Persephone strutted in triumph:

“Am I not very lucky? Think about it, the guy lives in Gortynias street, not at all far from my house! I will certainly call him!”

“He could as well live in Athonos street, right next to you!” I replied, as my mind was already starting to work differently, despite my splitting headache.

Tuesday, 27th August 1997

This morning we went on a day trip to the islands of Paxi and Antipaxi. White sand, clear turquoise waters, exotic strands, picturesque green hills all around. Yet, Persa had a hard time: She neither swam in the azure sea of Antipaxi (she just sat at a seaside bar, while I was swimming and relishing the wonderful landscape), nor went for a walk in the town of Paxi (she only waited for me in the restaurant, while I was exploring the place).

On the way back, I found a shady corner in the ferry boat but Persephone insisted on standing alone under the hot sun all those hours, so she was roasted like a sausage and then she grumbled till late at night:

“That was exactly what I wanted to avoid, the sand, the sun, the hardship!”

That served her right! When someone is miserable by nature, no clique, no network can give them the joy they are incapable of feeling...

Wednesday, 28th August 1997

This is our last morning in the hotel and I am spending it in the swimming pool - the perfect antidote to the heat of the summer. As usual, Persephone is waiting for me outside and she is green with jealousy! Yeah, sweet revenge!

By the time I arrive home late in the evening, I have finally cleared out my thoughts and reached astonishing conclusions: *Networks act right before my eyes!* Yet, to whom can I say this and be believed? If such things happen to you all the time and you have no idea about the existence of networks, you just go crazy!

Undoubtedly, those were the most revealing holidays of my life, as everything seems to be very clear now: Persephone was personally insulted when I said that a fat woman can't normally have an affair with a young and handsome man unless she pays him, so she decided to give me a lesson. A few phone calls, contact with the network, and the performance was put up, quickly and easily! Certainly, the young waiter in that cafeteria in Parga was a member of the "family!"

As about the theft of my bag at the given place and time, it was no coincidence at all! The robber knew exactly when I was coming out with 65,000 drachmas in my bag, so he appeared out of nowhere and robbed me, just a few steps away from my house! As about the money, it was surely received by Persa! That's why neither she nor the policemen noticed the bum who drove past then on his motorbike, with a woman's bag in hand! Besides, why didn't the robber turn into another street before reaching the perilous spot where the police car was? Of course! Persephone is such a miser, she would never give 65,000 drachmas for a five-day trip! The funniest thing is I considered her to be the most balanced of all my friends! Yet, she has proved to be very dangerous...

From now on, I had better be a lot more careful: I should conceal not only my ideas but my moves as well. It is imperative to tell lies to everybody, since I can never know who belongs where! As about Persephone, I won't be meeting her so often from now on and I will be telling her tons of lies. The less she knows about me, the better it is.

Networks are excellently organized nowadays and each one of them consists of thousands or, even, millions of people all over the world! In all probability, every citizen who belongs to the middle class or higher, is a member of some network. *What "middle class"? In the so-called civilized societies, the really poor are a minority!* Maybe it is natural for human beings to form networks or cliques, so that wealth and power always remain within certain circles of people. Networks have existed since antiquity. Once they included only the elite, but nowadays they have spread even to lower social classes. Families who don't belong to a network or clique, are gradually driven out of society and they don't survive for long.

As about all those "dance schools", "clubs", "gyms", "art schools", "occult centres", "religious organizations", "political factions" and so on, where all decent citizens gather nowadays, are nothing but shop-windows for networks and they mostly serve as points of recruitment of new members. What is taught in those places is unimportant, as it is usually entirely useless outside the rooms of the "school". What really counts in there is "talent": the talent to be a herd animal.

That's why all my endeavours end in a flop.

That's why it is almost impossible for me to find new friends.

That's why men are never interested in me.

That's why wherever I go (workplaces, schools, gyms, clubs, etc), I'm eventually kicked out.

That's why in the taekwondo school I am treated as if I had scabies! Who knows what really binds them all -and it certainly isn't their passion for taekwondo!

That's why wherever I've worked so far, I've always been at the lowest position and paid the lowest possible salary.

That's why whatever I do is never considered to be good enough; no matter how hard I try, the result never satisfies the others. For some hitherto inexplicable reason, I've always been deemed insufficient, thus unworthy of living.

All things considered, I am not unlucky; I am a fool -Helen Tandoulou is right! All my life, up to now, I have always ignored the most important rule of survival: *Do not trust anybody!* Actually, I have been quite lucky so far, taking into account my credulity towards the others and my tendency to reveal a lot

about myself, begging for some approval.

It is clear to me now that many accidents (mortal or not) are not accidents at all! They are crimes, well organized and legal crimes! Any time an “outsider” dares challenge an “insider”, the former is punished immediately! Likewise, if someone from the “family” refuses to accomplish a mission, he is toast!

The price of knowledge: Thanks to Persephone I have just understood the basic function of human society, and that is networks. Of course, I have to do with a dangerous person, and I must be very careful with her from now on. However, if I had not met her, probably I would have never known how rotten human society is. Persa is a typical example of how a born cypher mysteriously ascends in the social ladder. I've known her ever since she was a child and I can tell; maybe she has forgotten all those times she has attempted to commit suicide but I haven't.

I became suspicious of Persa because of her unnatural obesity: If there was another friend with me in Parga, it wouldn't have occurred to me that the flirt scene in the cafeteria was a put-up job. I wonder: How many people, members of networks, put up such performances in order to create certain impressions or problems to unsuspecting targeted persons? What kind of backstage has been around me all these years? And what else am I going to confront in the future?

*The bad thing about the future
is that it is coming.
It wouldn't stay where it is.
I wish I could stop time,
and hold back the unknown,
dark, hostile future...*