

Short tales
for the kindly hearted
Presented by
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SurrealiTales

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Chapter 1

A brain's hole tale

Future intelligent life in our universe would have but one remaining option: to inject enough information into a new universe to recreate our civilization on the other side of the wormhole.

Michio Kaku - "Parallel Worlds"

This is a tale of an ordinary man with ordinary thoughts. But something extraordinary happened to those thoughts, although no one really ever noticed. How do I know about it then, it doesn't really matter. The name of the man doesn't really matter either, but let's call him Ebwhe, or just Eb for short.

Previously published.
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Chapter 2

Par-cell

*The tragedy of old age is not that one is old,
but that one is young.*

Oscar Wilde - "The Picture of Dorian Gray"

This is the story of Boddes, a man who had to fight his own body in order to achieve his ultimate goal in this universe: to live a humble life.

Previously published.
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Chapter 3

God herself

One of the truly bad effects of religion is that it teaches us that it is a virtue to be satisfied with not understanding.

Richard Dawkins - "The God Delusion"

This story is about the origin of all things, and about a particular woman turned into a goddess who wasn't interested in becoming one.

Previously published.
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Chapter 4

Luck magnet

I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it.

Thomas Jefferson

This is the tale of Jimbo, a truly lucky man, or so everyone thought. All his wishes could have become true, if only he had wished for something. Some people get what they deserve, while others get what others deserve. And some others, they just don't care. But let me tell you Jimbo's story, and leave the morale to the reader's judgment.

4.1 The price of secrecy

Jimbo was on a secret mission. So secret that if I was to write about it, and someone read it, the reader would probably die before they could turn around. In fact, Jimbo was always on secret missions, so there's no much about his work that I can write about.

You could say that Jimbo wasn't exactly the talkative type. He had friends, who called him just Jim, and he had many things he would have wanted to say. However, he had to be very careful so not to leak any important information about his secret missions. So none of Jim's friends knew about his work. This created some invisible distance between Jimbo and others that made all kind of relationships quite superficial.

Of course, the secrecy extended to his work place, so you could tell Jim had really no colleagues. It was more like people that shared the same boss, but nothing else. It was for their own good, since knowing too much increased the risk of them having an unfortunate accident. Jim thought of quitting his job

several times, but you can't quit a job like this. Once you know something, it's too late to "unknow" it.

So, apart from some challenging missions, Jim's life was quite lonely and boring. Whenever he tried to organize some party, most people either had better plans, or they accepted the invitation but cancelled at the last moment. Jim suspected it was his own fault, with all his secrecy and stuff, so he didn't push his friends very hard.

Jim had told their family only that he was a secret agent. That was already too much of what he was allowed to say, but he couldn't keep that from his family. So at least, there was a silence agreement that they wouldn't talk about work at home. Not that they talked that much, since Jim lived in a different city and they just talked over the phone from time to time. In any case, it was a relief for Jim knowing that his parents knew.

But let's go back to Jim's secret mission, at the price of risking my life and the reader's. Some government had offered Jim big money for some good industrial espionage. He pretended to be a customer interested in the company's research findings. This way, he managed to get in personal contact with some of the main researchers of his target company. After following some of these people day and night, and spying them over the phone, he managed to find out that the biggest of their discoveries was yet to be disclosed. The information that Jim needed was probably resting in some nice computer in their research lab, but getting through firewalls and decrypting messages was something that only worked for world top-class hackers or for novel writers.

Having the information encrypted wouldn't discourage Jim from trying to get it. He knew that it would be that way from the beginning, anyway. That was also the reason behind all his detailed vigilance on the researchers. He was looking for any possible "back door". And he found it. One of the senior researchers hated computer screens, so he often printed out everything he was working at. And being a senior researcher, he had to be involved in one of the biggest projects of his company. It was clear to Jim that he had to infiltrate the research lab at night, when only a few guards remained, and look for a printout of the documents his customer was interested about.

So that's what Jim did. There were no dogs or robotic machine guns waiting for him at the entrance, just some lazy guards. He didn't even need to leave some erotic magazines on the floor to distract them, since they were half asleep already. There were no flesh cutting lasers in the corridors either. Living in an action movie was not Jim's idea for fun, so he welcomed all this quietness.

Jim found the senior's research office. He quietly skimmed through every paper he could find, sitting in the dark with a small LED flashlight. There was nothing of interest there. He found some strange keys, and left for the main lab, to check if he could find some door that could be opened with those. After

some search, those keys led him to a kind of big refrigerator room, like those in big restaurants. He entered the room, that was just mildly cold, but he didn't notice a flat metal plate that covered the low ceiling. He bumped on it badly and cut his forehead. He rushed to clean the blood, without checking where he was stepping, and he slipped and fell in a huge pool filled with a strange substance. It was odorless, but it felt almost like body soap. He hurried out of the pool, worrying that the guards may have heard something. He cleaned the mess the best he could, put his clothes and shoes in a vinyl bag, and left the building as quickly as possible, half naked.

He ran down the street, looking for his car, when he stepped on a broken glass with his bare feet. Jim ouch, and a policeman nearby noticed him. When he saw him almost naked, he came by to ask what was going on. Of course Jim couldn't tell anything of what had really happened, so he had a hard time inventing excuses, which the policeman perceived they were just excuses anyway. However, the cuts in Jim's foot and forehead looked quite bad, so the police agent accompanied him to a hospital, where he would need to answer to more questions from the nurses and doctors. Definitely, not a good night.

4.2 Mr. Friendly

A nurse asked Jim about his cuts. The pain in his foot was killing him, and he felt that there may be some piece of glass inside the cut. It felt like a deep wound. A doctor took a look at it. He cleaned the wound and with some small forceps, took something from inside the cut. It was a small ring. The nurse gasped. She took it from the doctor's hand and cleaned it under the faucet. She read some words that were inscribed on it. She said it was hers! She had lost it that morning when rushing to the hospital. She thanked Jim and Jim smiled back, –“at your service”.

After Jim was healed, he dealt with the police the best he could, and he managed to get back home safely. The first thing he did was to contact the government agency that paid for his job, and inform them that he hadn't found any documents, and that it would take even more time and effort. His clients didn't care any more, they said. There had been an accident at the research lab and the latest research was all gone thanks to a big fire. The government was happy with the outcome, since it could probably take years until they reproduce whatever the results they had obtained. Furthermore, it was believed to have been a lucky accident, the lamp on some guard's desk had short-circuited and started a fire. The guards were outside, checking the surroundings, startled by the siren of some police car nearby. When they noticed the fire, it was already too late. At least they were lucky they didn't fall asleep inside.

The government would pay Jim for his job, anyway, and Jim was planning to use that money for a long, long vacation. Thinking of his vacation, Jim was suddenly startled by some noise coming from the kitchen. It was a small kitty knocking at the window. It was a beautiful white cat, with honey-brown and black stripes. It had no ID tag with it, so it must have been a cat from the streets. It was very cute, but Jim had allergy to cats. He started sneezing. With every sneeze, he would feel like knives in his wounds. But the cuteness won, and he fed the kitty with some milk in a bowl.

Jim remembered one of his friends who was very fond of cats. She already had one, but perhaps she wouldn't mind another. He called her, and surprisingly, she came straight away. She seemed to be always busy, so last time they had met had been six months ago. When she saw the kitty she burst into tears. Her cat had died a couple of months ago, and this cat looked exactly the same as her late one. Jim gave her the cat, and she said Jim had just made her dreams come true. The kitty also seemed to like her, so they both happily left Jim's apartment.

The phone rang. It was Jim's mum. They had won the lottery! It was not a big amount, but enough for the cruise they wanted to go this summer, but they thought they couldn't afford paying. Jim celebrated with them, but suddenly felt something awkward was going on. Except for Jim himself, that was still in pain from the incident of last night, everyone around him seemed very lucky. What are the odds? Whatever the odds, there's always a small probability anyway, so Jim quickly stopped thinking about it.

The next day, the friend who liked cats called him and invited him to dinner, to thank him for the kitty. She had won a raffle at work that consisted in a free meal in a new expensive restaurant in town. She had invited some other friends they had in common, so Jim agreed to go, with wounds and all. If he walked slowly it was not that painful anyway.

The restaurant turned out to be excellent. The food was delicious and the place was very cozy. During dinner, his friend updated him with their recent news. One of them just got a raise that morning, so he was toasting for it all night. Another friend who loved painting, but didn't feel like she could live on it, just got a very interesting offer from an art entrepreneur to promote her works. Another guy just got a date with the woman of his dreams in that same restaurant. While walking to the toilet, he accidentally stepped on her foot, he apologized, they exchanged a few words, and they fell for each other.

Everyone around Jim seemed to get exactly what they wished for. A lonely man drinking gin tonic at the counter wished he would die. And moments later he had a heart attack. A young doctor looking for promotion, tried to help the dying man, but he was too late. Nevertheless, he appeared in the news as a good samaritan, and eventually got promoted a few days later. A man selling roses at

the restaurant managed to sell them all to Jim's friend, who gave them to the girl he had just met.

For the next month, Jim started to notice that a lot of good things happened around him. Whether it was real luck, or just that he failed to notice that bad things were actually happening too, it didn't matter. Jim didn't wish anything for himself, but having everyone around him feeling so happy made him feel good to. He noticed that his friends called him more often too. Suddenly everyone seemed to realize how good listener Jim was. And this time Jim also had a lot of things to talk about: about all the good luck of the people he knew.

4.3 Automatic infection

Jim was barely active as an agent these days. After his mission at the research lab that was burnt down in a fire, he tried to select the most simple of the missions he had access to. He was paid on a mission basis, but he didn't need that much money to pay the rent. And since most of the time he was invited to eat out by friends, he barely expended any money on food.

To remember lonelier times, from time to time Jim liked to go for a walk to the beach at night. One night he saw in the distance the figure of someone sitting by the seashore. He walked by and sat next to the person. It was a beautiful woman, staring at the stars. The stars and the moon seemed brighter than usual that night. The woman's name was Om. She didn't mind the company, so they chat for a while under the starry sky.

Om was a woman from another universe. That universe was dying, so she had created our universe in order to escape. And she came to this planet thinking she would find some wise men here, but her expectations didn't match reality at all. She was trapped in here, but she didn't care, since Earth was indeed very beautiful. Jim believed everything she said, and she apologized for the rudeness of humans. Om felt Jim's words were sincere, and she felt lucky to have found such a good listener.

From that day on, they would meet from time to time at the beach. Then, they would go out for dinner at a times. And eventually, they got married. They talked about many things and enjoyed their time together. And since either of them had too much work, they had a lot of time to expend together. Om talked about her moon, about the A.I., about a man who had lived one thousand years, and about her nanomachines.

Om was surprised that Jim knew something about nanomachines himself. Although he was surprised to see all that shapeshifting in Om's clothes, he understood the basic principles behind it. Jim confided to her that he had been spying a company working on nanotechnology. Apparently, they had found a

way to mass-produce nanomachines out from biomolecules. They were basically genetically engineered viruses. But the business went bankrupt after some fire had burnt their main research lab, and he hadn't heard about them since.

For the first time, Jim felt very lucky about himself. At last he had found someone he didn't mind to give away his secrets to. More than that, she was truly interested in everything Jim shared. She was particularly interested about the story of those nanomachines. Om believed that the substance in the pool that Jim had fallen in was actually a plasma of nanomachines. If they were indeed viruses, they would need some bacteria farm to keep them alive. If Jim had any open wound, he could have become "infected".

Om ran some tests on a sample of Jim's blood. There was indeed some strangely shaped viruses in his blood, probably the nanomachines. These viruses could live outside Jim's body for a while, but they would soon disintegrate. But inside Jim's body, they healthily reproduced without causing any disturbance to the host. Basically, Jim was not in any danger. But what was the purpose of those nanomachines? Jim had never found the secret documents he had been looking for, so he had no clue. Then, he had the wildest idea. Perhaps these nanomachines worked the good luck around him, since the very first moment he fell into that pool!

Om's nanomachines were able to read her mind and understand simple commands from direct thoughts. But these were just primitive nanomachines, just mutated viruses, she couldn't believe they would read complicated wishes, and not from a brain other than the host's. Also, it was very improbable they could materialize real objects. Another possibility was that these nanomachines just emphasized the luck in everyone's lives. People are lucky most of the time, but we just fail to notice so. When getting in contact with some lucky viruses coming from Jim's body, Jim's friends would suddenly emphasize the luck in the small happenings in their lives. Or perhaps it was just Jim who perceived their friends as being extremely lucky when they were not so at all.

They both agreed that any theory would still left many questions unanswered. The nanomachines perhaps had no effect at all, and it was all genuine luck. Perhaps there was a god after all, who could actually be a survivor from Om's universe who was sending all the good karma that was left in that universe through a wormhole to ours. Whatever the reason, now Jim felt he was the luckiest man in the world, and perhaps the universe too.

Some call it luck, some call it coincidence, yet some others would rather call it a blessing. Your wife may just say it's a virus.