

Monaghan's Virtual Bar in the Time of Covid-19

By: Tom Ball

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I said to my lover, Jane, "I will write a novel of our times. I had written a number of sci-fi of flash fiction books, short story books and a few novels and now I am going to write my best novel in the mainstream."

I said, "I'm going to let the story come to me!" and I added, "I am starting an inspirational Virtual bar, 'Harry Monaghan's bar...' It would be a classic case of coping with Covid-19. And I'll chronicle it in a novel. Let the novel come to me as it were."

It didn't matter where we lived, but in fact we were living in NYC.

And I said, "I am a superfluous man. I am too clever for my own good. But there's nothing, other than writing, that I want to do, other than drink! And make love." My lover said, "You can do anything you want."

I said, "And I am bored with my creative writing classes I teach. You simply can't teach someone to be a great writer. I'd rather spend my time drinking in my bar. So, I am quitting the job."

And I said, "Even for those who are good writers, they often die in obscurity. They are outsiders, they are rebels."

And I said, "I am starting my own Online publishing house, with my best friend, Chuck, a handsome white man of 38. To speak to those on the lunatic fringe, the outsiders. It is called 'Midas' Sinkhole,' we brought issue #1 out in February, of 2020.'"

And I said, the Online publishing plus the Virtual bar should keep me busy..."

"I expect," I noted, "That people will come the bar with an image which is not their own, even altering their gender. But that is too far out. Everyone will have to show ID for an image of themselves in the virtual bar and will need to prove they are "special," to get in. They will move the joystick to move around and will direct conversation in one direction or another. The software only cost me \$10,000 USD, but everyone who wants to come and is approved will get their joystick in the mail for \$40."

And one of the features of the software, was you could disappear without a moment's notice from the bar at any time. And sometimes characters were on the phone and were frozen in place on the bar floor with their Virtual arm raised.

I added, "I won't expect a perfect book to come from it, but it will be close."

And I was foolish enough to let my lover, Jane hypnotise me. And I found out later that she'd hypnotised me to be a success, and to love her.

And on the Website, I put some of my books on for people to read before they came here. The door charge was \$25.

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Jane was Chinese and 45 years old. I was 52 and white. We were both very attractive.

March 2020

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My first customer I talked with was Jenny, a white, pleasant looking 40 something. And she said, "In the near future condos will continue to outpace income for most. Most people will be indebted their whole lives."

And, "Religion will die out soon."

And, "People will believe instead in Space and progress."

And, "Marriage is dead."

And, "Most future people will visit a shrink. It will be insane times."

And, "Everyone will be greedy for new loves."

And, "People will all be amoral."

I said, "Your vision is believable. But who knows though what Supercomputers and Superhumans are capable of?" But everything we imagine will come true to some degree. But I said, "The future is not written in stone." And I said, "I have given the future a lot of thought."

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Then I met a Burmese, man, William, who said, "These days people have far more time to contemplate life than previously and as a result, are all insane." He said, "It's a crazy World and it is getting crazier. The craziest sometimes succeed and do very well." I said, "Just the very idea of life itself, is crazy." "I agree with you!" He said. "But, craziness can be a lot of fun," I added.

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He, Carl, was white and said, "We will see new political parties crop up. The Atheists, the Alienists, the Love party, the Madness party, the Science party, the Imagination party, the Kind party, the High IQ party and a surge of the Greens. This left/right progressive/conservative situation today is foolish and unnecessary and cannot be sustained."

I said, "Politics is all about ass kissing, new or old."

But he said, "You are a would-be writer. You have to kiss ass with publishers." I said, "Not the way I do it." However, he said, "If you want to succeed you need to do it, I figure. All great writers work for money," he said.

I said, "At any time I could write horror novels like Stephen King." But I don't want to sell out and write like others have written. I want it to be in my own style. My own way. But I still believe I can succeed," I stated, "Now that I am going mainstream with a tale of this bar."

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Meanwhile Jane had been painting sci-fi paintings of aliens and amazing landscapes. I praised her work, but I said, "You were down on me for writing sci-fi!" She replied, "Your sci-fi is too far out there. You need to bring it on home."

And she had shaved her entire body and said, "She wouldn't grow her hair back until I succeeded." I was growing a long, long beard and told my love I wouldn't shave it off until I was successful either. She said, you are 52, it is now or never.

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And then I met a man who said, "The World is becoming a giant suburb, and everyone would work from home and then soon, computers would do all the work." And he thought that, "No one will go to bars anymore, it will all be Online dating and Virtual bars like yours." I said, "Once Covid-19 is over, bars will rebound. But in the meantime, Virtual bars are where it's at." And I said, "That there didn't seem to be very many of them. At least not in NYC."

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Then I was talking to a pleasant-looking local reporter, from the Middle-East, a woman of about 40. I said, "Watching the news during Covid-19, is a vexation to the spirit." She said, "That's the way it always is. It's a life of tragedy. And she said, "She had contracted Covid in early March 2020, but was OK now." I should have tried to love her, but I let her get away from me.

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Then I was speaking with a stripper, Sugar a black woman of about 28. I said, "You must get a lot of sex!" She replied, "Not really, she had a boyfriend. However, she gave a lot of men pleasure, just dancing for them."

And she said, "She earned tons of cash from her downtown strip club." I said, "In Canada they take it all off including their G-string!" She said, "Maybe she should go there!" I asked her, "If they should legalize prostitution?" She replied, "It's a good idea. It would take organized crime out of it and prostitutes could get tested for AIDS and herpes

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Then, I was speaking with Jane again. She said, "You really ought to cut back on your beer. You have now a growing beer belly." I said, "Whisky is less calories, at least." She said, "You'll get diabetes, like your father."

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And then came the accident. I was carrying cases of beer down my stairs and I hurt my shoulder and could hardly move. It was a pinched nerve in my neck. And I was down and out for about six weeks, I was able to take codeine and sit up in my chair and write, before I finally was able to start to recover. I had been worried that I would never recover.

In the meantime, the bar continued only with Jane as host. I was able to sit up in my writing chair for several hours a day.

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And I wrote her a story, "About a girl who loved her man as much as she could, but finally he was dying, and she had a broken heart. She thought she had loved him too much and then she forgot about him completely, but finally she died of an overdose," I wrote. She said, "This story sucked." Try harder she demanded.

And I told Jane, "At least I lost some weight!"

But after about 6 weeks I was fully recovered and returned to the bar. And resumed loving Jane.

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May 2020

And I was back telling all the people in my Virtual bar, that I had recently been writing, "Ice Beacon." "I wrote, "It was about Alaska and being isolated in a small frozen village during the harsh winter of Covid-19. It was a sense of total isolation, just like Space."

"And I knew the US military was testing new weapons nearby, including a disc-shaped 'UFO.'"

Jane said, "You're writing sci-fi again." I said, "No, it is all very plausible and contemporary."

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And then I was going on about a story about a rich man who is carried on a stretcher up to the top of Everest. With plenty of oxygen. At the top he drinks champagne, but on the way down several members of his party die of altitude sickness. I said, "It was golden to be rich."

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Next, I was floating around the idea of "The Raymond Sisters," who were best friends but kept a lot of secrets from one another, especially regarding cheating on one another with boyfriends. Jane asked, "Can't you write something nice?"

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Jane met a guy who said, "She was a queen." But he bragged he had many lovers, dozens of them.

She told me she had too much to drink and almost went for him. I was concerned I was losing her.

And my shoulder flared up that night. But it was a false alarm.

And Jane was saying, "I shouldn't be afraid to write in the mainstream, it could still be deep she said, just like Ernest Hemingway." I said, "Hemingway wasn't deep."

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Then I met a pair of hermits, two Hispanic women, who said they were happy, being hermits. I said, "But surely your life is boring!" "Don't you like people?" I asked. They said, "They had met and were lovers and came to my Virtual bar just for kicks." I asked, "But as humans don't you enjoy the nightlife and new friends and the latest movies etc.?" They said they wanted to cultivate their garden.

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Then I met an interesting Taiwanese shrink who said, "She wanted to hypnotise me." I politely declined. I told her, "Taiwan was my favorite country and I had travelled to 96 countries."

I told her, "I was hoping eternal youth would be discovered before I died. But I was 52 now and it looked like it would be 40 years at least before they discovered it."

She said, "Better to live for the day and don't worry about it."

I said, "But I wanted to write a lasting novel." She said, "Posterity will be so different there's no way they will remember you, no matter what you write. Society will move on and people will become cleverer."

But she put a spell on me all the same and I was her slave. I met her at a downtown hotel, and she dominated me in love....

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And we advertised for issue #2 and it produced a number of great works of literature that we would publish in our Online mag. My partner, Chuck, he was my best buddy, and was white and aged 38, but he didn't care for my Virtual bar. But he said, "When it comes to literature, the more far out the better," I said, "Chuck tried to be humorous on the website to lighten things up a little. It took a lot of time to read the submissions, so we hired some of the submitters to work for us as editors. In particular I liked some of the science fiction we were taking like a story of a man who is cryogenically frozen and awakes in a bizarre Utopia. And another about people who are shrunk to just a couple inches tall. And a story of android love dolls and so on."

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He, Maurice, white aged about 40 from France, said, "This kindred spirits thing is overblown. Talking with people who agree with everything you say is boring." And he said, "He liked to go to the bar and randomly meet women. You never know what kind of lover you will find. Also, you never know what kind of friends you might meet."

He said:

Once there was a man

Who thought that he knew it all

But he was headed for a fall

But he had the gall

To say he knew it all

I said, "It is a so-so poem." He said, "He had thousands of poems."

He said, "I may not be clever as you. But at least I am trying."

I asked him, "What he thought about progress? He said, "We are going to Hell. AI will takeover and it will be chaos."

I said, "Well I am 52, I doubt I'll live to see it."

He replied, "Better not to see it and leave it for others, in posterity, to deal with it."

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Meanwhile my love Jane and I were growing closer together, not driving each other crazy with cabin fever like many. And there were no parties to go to during Covid-19.

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But I concentrated on my Virtual bar.

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Then I met a well-known architect, a sexy female in her 30s. She was saying how architecture in our city didn't have the buildings blend together. The government of the city needed to force them to blend nicely together. And she said, "She wanted to be the urban planner for the city with special powers.

And she wanted more tunnels in the downtown for people to escape the cold of winter. Decorated with modern art.

I told her, "I wanted to love her." She said, "She already had a lover, but thanks for asking."

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The next day I talked to a man, Jack an aging white man who had recently broke up with his girlfriend. He said, "He was trying Online dating, but most people there weren't serious about finding love Online. He was sick of it and came here to the Virtual bar hoping for more luck." I introduced him to a woman who was clever and ready to go and they hit it off.

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She was saying, her name was Christina, she was half Chinese/half white, aged about 45 and attractive in a weird sort of way, and she had just moved back to our city from L.A.

I asked her, "How was L.A.?" She answered, "She was sick of ass kissing to try and become an actress and wanted to settle down." And she said, "She was a lawyer and could work anywhere.

I welcomed her to "the bar."

And I asked, "For her love?" She said, "Sure let's go!" So, I met her at a downtown hotel. And it was wild loving.

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Bert, was white and about 60. He said, "He was a historical interpreter for various sites in the region." I said, "Surely 'history is bunk.'"

He said, "In the past almost everyone was a farmer or rural dweller. And they worked all day into the night. And sickness and disease. And the life expectancy was very low."

He said sure, "Some regions were easier to live in than others. For example, Polynesia, they just picked the fruit off the trees and were free to love, but were cannibals. No society was perfect he said. But now we are approaching perfection in our modern cities. Utopias."

I said, "Happiness is just a state of mind."

He said, He'd written a story about the Wild West only he wrote it in the future, about a mad colony on Mars. The colony was full of desperados and violence and suicide." He said, "The future will be full of desperate people." I said, "Some will be desperate, but others will show grace under pressure. And those who go to Space will be closely monitored to be sane before they would be allowed to go!"

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Then I met a girl, white about 45 from Quebec, Lianne who told me, "She was superfluous just like me. She didn't know what to do with her time." She said, "She was 60 and getting old and still hadn't made it as a screenplay author. I read some of her works and they were brilliant, but had a lot of sex in them. I said, "Try and be more mainstream, for your last gasp, as it were." She said, "We are both in the same boat. Let's make a pact to both try and go mainstream! Covid or no Covid."

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She, Vivian, was Chinese and about 25, and she told me about a dream she had. "She was alone with her perfect lover on a deserted, tropical isle."

Everyone liked her.

She was interested in living in the past and was helping to construct past worlds. They were movie sets. Movie set design was her job....

And she was telling me about, "3 sets of triplets of which she was one. One group of the 3 were bisexual women, and the other 6 were straight with 3 males and 3 females..."

But all 9 sang harmoniously in the chorus.

And she told me, "She had a hard time relating to men. She felt more comfortable talking to her dog. She figured she was insane." I said, "You've come to the right place. My bar is for lonely hearts." And I said, "My love isn't here tonight, why don't we get it on?!"

So we went back to her place downtown. And it was good loving. But I told her afterwards, "It was just a one-night-stand."

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I told the man, Juan, Hispanic, aged about 40, "It's hard to play the game."

I said, "I am not writing for the common man, but rather the elite."

He said, "Hopefully one day everyone will be rich and there will be no elite!"

I told him, "There will always be rich and poor. It's just the way it is. Some lose, others win."

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And my love, Jane said, "She was talking to a man who was inspired by 'Old Yeller' and 'Lassie,' and wrote a children's story, "About a dog who was a seeing eye dog. And has adventures.". She asked me, "Did you ever think about writing a children's book?" I said, "I am a very serious writer, but I have written two books of fables as you know."

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He, Jeremy, was indigenous and said, "He wrote about a prehistoric people who controlled an obsidian outcrop. The shaman of the tribe said they should set up camp around the outcrop. This allowed them to trade with other contemporary prehistoric peoples. And they inter-marry into the other groups."

I said, "History is bunk and I have no time for the past. The future is coming fast."

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My lover, Jane, said, "She wanted to illustrate my book of the Virtual bar. Enhance the people to make them look like 'saints,' and 'angels.'" I said, "Good idea."

And she painted Covid-19 horror stories. Paintings of sick and dying and plague.

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And I was having some boring guests in the Virtual bar. I contemplated requiring all guests prove they were very special, not just special. And finally decided to do so. My friend Paul who was also our bouncer, would look through the applications every night and would sometimes sell the joystick at the "door." The "door" was Paul's place and customers could bring the joystick to cafes and play from there, with their computer screen or even smart phone.

We, at the bar, got customers from all over the World. They would drink their own booze and just pay for a \$25 ticket to enter the site.

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My lover, Jane, looked to meet charitable people on the website. And she told me, "She'd met some really kind people." And she said, "Many kind people have a kind looking, clever face. They were angels." I said, "Yes, the future will hopefully be ruled by the kind, no matter what happens."

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Then Beatrice, a white 30 something and quite attractive, writer of horror, she said, "It is a World of horror for the atheists and religious alike amongst us." And she said, "She wanted to scare the hell out of people. Some people had little humanity left in them and to truly scare them was an achievement. Everyone is scared of something." I said, "It can be a World of horror for those with a profound imagination." She said, "Exactly." I was curious about this girl so I arranged to meet her the next day in a hotel where we could swap horror stories and have a few drinks and of course I wanted to bang her. And I did and it was sensuous.

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Then I was talking to two poetesses, young and white from Holland. The first, Nancy, she said, "Poetry is not just pretty language, it's the idea behind it that matters. True beauty." And she said, "She wrote poetry about the future..."

The second, Brittany said, “that poetry is improving worldwide as more and more fine people write it.” And she said, “That she, was trying to write poetry like Rimbaud’s ‘Illuminations.’” I said, “You need good drugs to write like ‘The Illuminations.’”

And I said, “Maybe in the future there will be no poetry. It is mostly just pretty language. Maybe just films for artists to make.”

Brittany said, “No way!” And Nancy said, “Who knows?”

Anyway, Jane wasn’t there again that night so I asked the two girls, “To meet me at my hotel for good loving.” It turned out they were bisexual and were really into it.

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Then Jane was back from her family trip. I said, “In any case I’d like to devise a test of imagination. Of course, it would be largely subjective, but we could have different tests for different types of imagination. And different judges. And those who test the highest, would be VIPs in my bar...” She said, “Brilliant!” So, part of being very special for admittance to the bar was to show imagination, like to write a creative story ad lib. But I said, “Let’s leave it till after Covid.

My love said, “Write like Hemingway and we’ll both be famous.” I said, “Hemingway wrote about fishing, boxing, bull fights, wars and parties, everyday fare.”

She said, “It seems to me there was something more to it. In any case you are planning on writing about parties, just like, “The Sun also Rises.”

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A lot of our customers were former bar owners who had gone out of business during Covid-19. And they were barflies. I talked with one woman, Renee, who was part white, part Chinese and who was smoking hot and I told her, “We are all pent up by this epidemic, and why don’t we let loose some steam and love one another?” So, I arranged to meet her the next day.

Renee proved to be a good lover as I suspected. But I told her, “It was just a one-night-stand.” She said, “I know you are in love with Jane.

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Then I was talking to an aging, white yachtie. He said, "He'd sailed around the World and had a real good time. But now he was trying to write about it. But it was hard. He had two daughters who were raised on his trimaran." And he added, "He wanted to write creative nonfiction first and then move on to fiction." He said, "Before he met his wife, he used to have a few sexy women with him on his boat."

And he said, "He'd met a lot of people who were backwards and primitive, but they were very interesting."

"But," he said, "Covid -19 had freaked everyone out and so he was marooned on land."

I said, "But in NYC stories come to you and you can moor your yacht in the suburbs."

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Then one of our regulars, Betsy, Hispanic and sexy said she was changing into a man. Everyone was bummed out and depressed that such a pretty girl would do such a thing. She made a big deal out of it. And everyone had their say about it. And we wondered what kind of penis would she have?" She said, "There have been advances..."

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Then I was talking to Karen, a white, 30 something god-looking nature lover who liked to watch wildlife. She said, "We need more wildlife parks. And some of them should not allow humans in, just have cameras everywhere and fence in the parks. I said, "Parks in the far north and the Antarctic coast are fine with everyone, but it is the parks near big population centers that are endangered. Or not considered as potential parkland."

We talked about "Greenpeace and other wildlife organizations and animals in Space as "pets," and stem cell meats and so on." And when the night was over, "I invited her back to my place." And she agreed. We had great love, but I told her, "It ended here today." She said, "Thanks anyway."

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Meanwhile the Online publishing company Midas' Sinkhole. We were getting a lot of submissions. Hundreds a month and we were all overwhelmed. We were now on issue #3. Chuck said, "We've got a lot of play submissions in particular this issue and some are screenplays." I said, "I especially liked the story about the end of the World."

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July 2020

In July, Covid had dropped but it looked like it would come back in winter, with no vaccine in sight.

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Then I was talking to a man who was white and about 50, who said, "Progress is out of control and should be slowed down." I said, "I can't wait for the future." He said, "He and I would never be able to agree," and he left in a huff.

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Then I was in a debate with a young man and a woman. They were both white from Russia. And they mad a nice couple. They said they planned to create a group of kindred spirits in the tens of thousands worldwide. And they asked me to join, saying that I was clever and creative, and they liked my Virtual bar. I said, "Sure I'll join, and you could send me new customers." And they planned on taking over the political situation in the USA. "Just like you and your publishing company, trying to use the best people to best advantage," the man said. I said, "You can

schedule meetings at my bar!" I thought it was appropriate that my bar would be a hotbed of discontent.

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I was starting to get rich from all my clients at my bar. On a given night there were a hundred guests, who all paid the \$25 door price. Some starving artists/students said they couldn't afford to pay, so I let them in for free.

I paid no attention to other Virtual bars....

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And there were a lot of insane people here, but if they made trouble, I blocked them from the bar. However, I had a soft spot for mad people, and figured I was crazy myself, but I didn't tell most people that.

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Then I met a Korean, sexy, young lady who said, "Any woman can get plastic surgery and wear make-up to look attractive. All women should be attractive," she said. And she said, "In South Korea, the ladies consider it to be polite to wear make-up." I said, "Make up is wonderful and so is plastic surgery; it's all about the image you project." And, "I like your image!" She said, "She was celebrating her 37th birthday tomorrow" "And would you come? I said "Sure," and loved her that night. She said, "It was love at first sight!" I said, "But I have a steady lover already! And couldn't see her again." I knew she was disappointed but C'est la vie!

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Jane asked, "Where I'd been?" I told her the truth, "I'd been with another woman." She said, "Don't you see that we have a good thing going, me and her?"

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Eddie said, "He was 43 and aging fast." And he said, "2020 was a wasted year due the plague." He was white and handsome.

I said, "It's similar to war time only worse." But I said, "It will soon be over with the vaccines and we will restart life fresh and new." And he said he had a brick and mortar small publishing company, that went under during Covid-19. The future in Online books," he said. I said, "He should open an Online publishing company like I did." He said, "But it will be hard to be successful." And he asked, "What kind of books do you like?" I said, "My favorites are sci-fi and fantasy from the 50s, 60s and 70s. That was when the Space Age beckoned, but now people are having problems publishing good sci-fi" I said.

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Another, regular, customer was Roger, who we called, 'Jolly Roger,' since he was black and good humored. He was 49 and he claimed to have an IQ of 160, and was an astrophysicist. He had relationships with many of our regulars. Roger said, the bar was just like a video game. He said he was getting very used to picking up girls at my bar. Roger and I became good friends that night and I was blessed with the appearance of my co-publisher, Chuck who also liked Jolly Roger. "Let's drink to friendship," I said. Chuck was saying, "We had a dynamite third issue full of good writing. I asked Chuck, "How are things?" He said, "He was still chasing after Nirvana in his Buddhist meditations and had made some progress." He had also written 90 stories and a novel in total and had published some with Midas' Sinkhole. Most of his stories were experimental and way outside the box.

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Then I met a pilot, JT a good-looking white man of about 55, who said, "He flew a small sea plane to northern Canada for fishermen and tourists. But with Covid-19, business was off and finally he had to sell his plane. He couldn't afford bars that had limited capacity during the pandemic, but felt my bar was cheap." I suggested that, "He give tours of NYC to tourists." "He said, "But in these days of Covid, business will not be so good." I said, "You've come to the right place to drown your sorrows." He said, "He needed to meet people elsewhere, even though he was based in Winnipeg."

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Next, I met a female brew master, Linda, aged 37. She had the look and was white. She said, "She was trying to invent a new type of beer by genetically modifying hops." I said, why not put opiates in your beer and sell it on the black market?" She said, "No, that wasn't her style." I said, "We can promote your beer for our customers!" We spent the night talking about beer and life and at closing time I asked her over to my place. She said, "She'd enjoyed the conversation and would pass on the offer."

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So, I went over to Jane's place and we made hard love as usual, and drank ourselves silly.

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Then, later that week, I met a young white woman from Toronto who said, "She just wanted to meet a rich man." And she asked me, "If I knew any magnates?" I introduced her to my rich friend, Jim and they got along famously.

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Then I met two newly-weds, white, gay men. I asked, "Surely marriage is on the way out?" They said they'd been together for six years and never thought to love another. I said, "Being faithful to one another is not easy." And I said to them, "Virtual gay bars exist!" They said, they wanted to meet some straight people to make their life complete.

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Next, I was talking with my new friend Steve. He was white and aged about 50. He said, "He wanted to restart the Christian religion as the new Jesus/Prophet." And he said, "He had five chroniclers of his life and deeds, and they would write the new Bible." He claimed, "To have had an interesting life and met a lot of kind, charitable people in his travels. And he was a magician and a hypnotist."

I asked him, "Why restart Christianity? Why not start your own new religion? Or better still make it a philosophy rather than a religion?" He said, "All that Christianity requires is the second coming of Jesus!"

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Then I was speaking to Emmet, Hispanic, aged 45 and good looking, who said, "His girlfriend was cheating on him and contracted Covid-19 and infected him. But he recovered and she died. And now he was lost." I said, "I'd like you to meet Wendy, she was a kind nurse, who could love him." Playing Cupid, I was again successful.

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Then I met a couple Swedish girls who looked pretty, but didn't have much to say. They wanted me to join them in a menage a trois. I reluctantly told them, "I wasn't available, Jane was here tonight," but encouraged them to meet some of my other clients. And I heard they had an orgy.

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Next, I met a man who was from London and was about 45 and nice looking. He said, "Covid-19 caught him off guard and he had no woman to hunker down with." He said, "he was looking for crazy love." I said, "Most of the women here are crazy. And it should be easy for a clever-looking man to find love here." And he seemed to find one and I was gratified. I liked when my customers found love.

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Next, I met a white, 40ish good looking, chemical engineer who said, "The engineers and scientists he worked with were too serious and didn't like to have a good time." And he said, "He'd like to open a Virtual bar for scientists only." I replied, "Why don't you? It's a brilliant idea."

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Up next, was a black/Chinese woman of about 35 and sexy, who said, "She found a lot of love on Online dating sites and was just now trying a Virtual bar. But every night she was a desperado for love." And she added that, "She recorded all her loves in her journal." I said, "Many people during Covid are desperate. And as to her journal

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Then I was talking to Jolly Roger again, he was saying, "In the dark night of Covid-19, people were drinking much more." He added, "One woman on TV said if the World is going to end, I don't want to be caught sober." I said, "Almost everyone in my Virtual bar is a heavy drinker." And I added, "Without alcohol I wouldn't be able to cope. It is truly an essential service."

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Next, I was talking to a rock singer, white and aged about 30. She said, "Her band played original, good rock, but were having problems getting a record label or someone to promote their songs Online. And now they couldn't even do gigs with Covid -19," and she said, "Her career was ruined and the band fell apart."

She played a few songs for me from her concept album, "Punked Out." It was harmonious punk music. The album was about struggling for success and playing every card you have.

I quoted the band Cream, "You thought the leaden winter, would bring you down forever, but you rode upon a steamer to the violence of the sun."

And I asked, "Why don't you reform the band and go to Taiwan or New Zealand, or some such place?"

She said, "She feared it was a fait accompli. The band members had moved on."

And we talked for a while and I got ready to leave, saying, "I'll see you on the dark side of the Moon!" She asked, "Why not come back to my hotel for a few drinks?" So, I did, and it was wild loving.

#####

Then I met a Chinese woman of about 30, attractive, who said, "Her boyfriend and her had a bad case of cabin fever and were about to break up due to Covid-19." And she said, "She'd invented a set of dream stimulus technology that suggests certain topics to you while you

sleep.” “Far out,” I replied. And I said, “Some people seem to thrive during the pandemic, others have cabin fever.”

#####

During this summer Covid cases were down, but still a vaccine was nowhere in sight and experts continued to warn of a grim winter coming up. It just made me want to live for the day. Experts said, “Maybe they’d have a vaccine at the end of the year...”

#####

August 2020

So August 1, was my 53rd birthday. I had a big party in the Virtual bar, and invited all my friends and the bar regulars. We reminisced about past times and all got drunk together. I’d never been so drunk and threw up several times and then went back drinking again. This put me out of action for 3 days...

#####

Then, she, Serene, a young woman from Singapore and attractive, asked me, “What’s your dream?” I said, “I dream of a World where imagination of humans is maxed out. And I dream of a World where madness is contained and controlled.” She asked, “Do you feel it is a world of madness?” I said, “Yes and it’s out of control. We’re all mad these days!”

And she asked me, “What is your favorite book? I said, “I didn’t really have a favorite, I liked so many, but I guess it would be a toss up between Plato’s ‘Republic’ and Pierre Boullé’s

'Monkey Planet (Planet of the Apes)'... But now I can't find good books in the bookstore. I have to search Online."

#####

Then I was talking with a girl, Crystal, white and about 40, and I asked her "About the future?". She said, "It will be a giant freak show." I said, "No doubt they will develop sea creatures with human brains and send androids into Space. Androids don't need to breathe air and can survive in any temperature." I said, "We are probably 40 years away from such freaks."

And she said, "In 20 years, Space real estate will take off especially on Luna and Mars. Soon it will be time to buy and would be an excellent investment."

I answered, "The future looks like it will be full of greedy people. Everyone will learn to be selfish and greedy."

#####

She said, "She was a dancer, and this was how she projected herself." She was about 50 and white and gracefully thin. I replied, "dancing is so limited and dance moves have no meaning." She said, "But dancing is beautiful."

She wrote, "She wanted to make love with her Prince charming dancing on the Moon in low gravity."

And she said, "But love doesn't last. And many people find love to be impossible." I said, "I am thinking of banning dancing in my Virtual bar, it is mindless to me." She said, "But many of your patrons like it, especially the women." I said, "Of course many people dance in the bar. If they really want to..."

#####

He, Jonathan, a white man of about 30, said, "He was starting a political party for winners only. To register with the party, you needed to prove you were a winner." I said, "I am not really successful." But he said you have this bar, you have an Online publishing company and you have written some good books, albeit too outside the box. He'd like me to join," he said.

And he said, "His party would eventually attract people of the upper middle class, who were well-to-do and successful." I asked, "What would be the point?" He said, "The elite should rule."

#####

Then I was speaking with a man who said, "The Spanish flu was the revenge of German scientists and Covid-19 escaped from a biological lab in China."

I said, "Perhaps we'll never know."

#####

Then I met a writer man, a white man of about 50, who wanted to die. He came to my home for dinner. And he said, "Covid-19 killed most of his family, including his wife." So, I said, "I read your novels of horror and they are really good." He said, "But I haven't had much success publishing." I said, "I am willing to be your literary executor." He said, "OK." Then he jumped off my 20-story balcony to his death. This unnerved me for some time. And I felt guilty. My lover said, "Bad things can happen outside your bar." But over time I tried to publish his work and found some medium-sized publishers. It was the best I could do.

#####

And then one day I told people I had received a phone call saying I had won the new Super Asteroid prize for science fiction. I was quite taken aback and very surprised. I told Jane about it and she said, "I know it is all satisfying for you to win the prize. Anyway, you need to keep writing in the present to be really successful." I bragged about my win to the bar clientele.

#####

Then I was talking to a businesswoman, Nancy who was full-figured and about 28, who said, "She was from Finland and had a sauna company and wanted me to buy a franchise for \$50,000." So, I refinanced my mortgage to pay for it, I thought it was a good idea.

So, then I advertised my sauna at my Virtual bar and told people everyone was welcome, and it was a good way to enjoy yourself despite Covid-19. But some told me it wasn't safe and

didn't want to come, but I was just barely able to make money on the sauna which came with a bar and could be attended virtually. I encouraged them to build a sauna in their backyard with a pool and to get naked Virtually.

#####

But it was not a very eventful month. I spent many nights at Jane's home and was kind of AWOL from the site. People said, "You are losing interest in the bar!" I said, "I'm just on a break!"

#####

September 2020

And I was talking about, "How beautiful she looked." She, Jeanette, was white and wearing heavy make-up about 30 years old. And she said, "She used to be a man." And, suddenly her voice got deeper. But the very idea of cutting off your dick seemed insane to me." I was shocked. It was difficult for me to get my head around that. It was a real bummer.

#####

Then on a cheerier note, I was talking to Jolly Roger about love. He said, "He'd invited the girl of his dreams tonight, and was most excited." I said, "The girl of my dreams doesn't exist."

#####

And then I noticed Jane was talking to a handsome man, so I entered the conversation. He was saying, "This was a bar for up-and-coming stars." I said, "Maybe posterity will look back on this 'special' bar favorably. It is the most interesting bar of them all." Then I left Jane to it...

#####

Then I was talking to a social anthropologist, of about 50. She said, "The bar was full of intelligence. She'd never seen anything like it. Other Virtual bars paled in comparison." I said, "This bar is for sociologists above all and I guess that includes cultural anthropology." She didn't turn my crank, so I moved on to another guest.

#####

Then an out of work guitarist, Alexander, half white/half Indian, due to Covid-19. He said he'd play an original 10 minutes of his concept album, which was set in 2078. And dealt with Superhumans, eternal youth, living in air cars, APMs (Automatic Production Machines), Space travel, Virtual sex and so on.

So, he played, and it was classic rock. But he said he was having trouble getting a big label to back him and support him. I said, "What else was new?" But he said, "In the future all musicians will be independent and will be judged solely on how many hits they get on their website and I-tunes, etc.

#####

Then I listened in on a conversation. The woman was talking about anal sex and the man was saying he was "An asshole virgin. He'd never had anal sex.

He was saying, "He'd like to chain her down and have violent sex for a week."

So, I moved on.

#####

Then there was Lola, she was Chinese and only 21, I talked with her and figured she appealed to every man. She was an asset to the bar.

She looked so innocent and pure.

I appeared to her as an aging greybeard. She said, "She'd come home to NYC and was happy now." She said, "She lived for thrills."

She said, "She tried Hollywood, but couldn't get a lucky break. There was so much ass kissing," She said.

When the night was over, I couldn't help but ask her to meet me at a hotel in the afternoon. And she acquiesced. It was great loving, but was just a one-night-stand.

#####

Then I found a girl who looked like Suzanne Somers in her youth.

She said, "She lived for thrills and charming men! It was happiness."

I said, "How about a Platonic relationship?" She said, "I was one of the few to say that."

But she was, "More than willing to have a friendship."

And she said, "Covid-19 was cramping her style."

Finally, I went home with her. She was just too hot!

#####

Then I was talking to a white man, clever-looking of about 45, who wanted to win the Nobel prize in economics. He said, "As the Chinese say, a crisis is a dangerous opportunity." He said, "Downtown NYC, units of just 100 sq. feet, he invested in."

And he said, "Pay off the government debt by printing more money and holding inflation to zero. But no one seems to have the guts to actually try it. He thought, "That such an idea would earn him a Nobel prize for economics!"

#####

Then I met a Chinese man, good-looking, who said, "He was a polymath. And had four Ph.D. degrees, and he was only 32. But now he decided it was time to have a little fun Virtually; he had pioneered Virtual love and sex. This is what brought him here."

I said, "Virtual sex is still in the future!"

And I introduced him to one of our regular girls. And they hit it off. I felt like I was a mama san or something like that.

I always know, I thought.

#####

And then I was talking to Sally X, she was about 40 and a white British sculptor, and I commissioned a sculpture of Jane and I making love to be in Virtual bronze and was set in the "entrance hall." And she produced Virtual statues of Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and Edgar Allan Poe. I said, "We need more statues of great people like Ghandi and the Buddha."

#####

And then I was speaking with the Virtual architect of our bar, again. It appeared like neon and stone.

He said, "The future was Virtual, but will still be under the control of humans. As far as he could imagine. And architecture will be of light." I said, "That's quite an interesting idea! And what do you think about the future in general?" He told me, "The future will be beautiful. All women will get genetic therapy and appear beautiful and everyone will be taught to write passably. And we will be surrounded by the Arts."

#####

And as I previously mentioned, we required people to appear Virtually as they really were. It was all about truth and reality.

#####

Then I met Josephine; she was Indian and she said, "She was looking for her Napoleon.

I said, "Napoleon was just a war monger."

She said, "Napoleon basically created the middle class in France and made some good laws."

I said, "One of our regulars is a three-star general. Let me introduce him to you." And again, I was successful at playing Cupid.

#####

Again I spent many nights with Jane, and the month passed quickly.

#####

October 2020

Then I was talking with a self-proclaimed mad man. He was Chinese and average looking, and he said, "Covid-19 is driving everyone crazy!" I said, "A few in this bar lost control of themselves. One woman took off all her clothes, another guy attacked our bouncer. Then there was a girl who screamed and shouted and claimed to be possessed by the Devil!"

And I said, "I can't bear to watch the news, what is it 300,000 cases a day now?" He said, "It was all madness." I said, "I agree, but madness is the future."

#####

Then I spoke with a white, 30ish attractive woman who said, "She had given up on life. And just wanted to die." She said, "She'd published some fantasy books, but they weren't big hits or anything." I told her, "Life will be good again when this Covid-19 thing is all over." And I asked her, "What was her fantasy?" She said, "She dreamed of a World in which she was Queen and people shared their daydreams. It seems ridiculous," she said, "But her dreams were for eliminating poverty and hunger now that so many need now, during Covid. The United States

was the richest country in the World,” she said. I heard a few weeks later that she had killed herself.

#####

Then I was speaking to the “pied guitarist.” He was from Ireland and he played, and the women were all over him including married women.

His latest work was a concept album based on a Martian colony. He had a number of singers who sang out their Space philosophy. It was pretty good. But he had yet to make it big.

#####

And I had worked with my software designer and expanded the bar capacity from 200 to 1,000.

And we introduced color coding and hat indicators. The color you wore indicated what kind of person you were, like red for passionate and purple for imaginative. And a beret indicated an artist and a fedora, indicated you were old-fashioned, a wizard’s conical hat indicted you were a scientist and so on.

#####

And next I talked with a female vintner; Audrey, she was a sexy, Japanese, woman. I gave her free advertising for her wine. She was about 50, and I liked her look. And we talked about alcohol and how, “I wished I had been a brew-master and also how I could’ve invented some new beers.” And she was saying, “The skies the limit for mixing in spices and GM fruits with wine.”

And we both got totally drunk and I asked her, “to sleep with me.” And she agreed. I was drunk but Viagra did the trick. But it was just a one-night affair.

#####

And then an OCD Italian woman, good-looking and about 45, who, “Liked the concept of a Virtual bar as she didn’t need to touch anything.” I said, “No one wants to date an OCD

persona!” But she said, “During Covid no one wants to touch anything, and it is the perfect cover for her to love a lot of men in masturbation fantasies.” Whatever floats your boat,” I said to her.

#####

I was then talking to a white woman, sexy 40ish, Deborah who proclaimed she was “A sexual genius.” She said, “All of her lovers had fallen deeply in love with her. They thought she had a brilliant face; she’d had some work done on it and wore a lot of make up. And she was a delight to banter with, but nothing too deep for her.” I said, “As a sexual genius, how did she suss out other sex geniuses. She said, “Online was challenging. But she liked my bar; it was good hunting.”

#####

Then a sexy, young Thai woman who had circumnavigated the World in a balloon, following mostly the jet stream. She said falling in love in my bar was her next challenge. She said she didn’t like ordinary bars, which were closed down in any case. She liked the idea, “Of requiring all customers to be very special.” However, she didn’t turn me on after talking a while with her. So, I left her to mingle with others.

#####

Then a black man who claimed, “He was a fighter, not a drinker.” I asked, “What kind of a fighter?” He said, “He was a human rights lawyer. He said “Our World is full of abuse. Always has been, always will be.” I said, “Yes future holograms and androids and the future poor, will be abused. It will be the new racism.”

#####

Then I was approached by a determined looking sexy Chinese woman of about 40. She asked, “If I was the owner?” And I said, “Yes.” And she asked, “Are Virtual bars the future?” I said, “Of course. It is high time bars specialized in their clientele.” She said, “You should specialize even more and insist everyone who comes here is imaginative!” “We’ve already done

that, I said," I said. You got into the bar because you passed the imagination test, even though you might not have recognized it as such. And we now require people to be very special not just special..."

#####

Then I saw Jolly Roger talking with a nice, young, white girl. J.R. was saying, "She had a beautiful voice." And she replied, "She liked his too." And he told her, "He was an astrophysicist." And she said, "Far out." And he said, "We should form a duet and sing songs, created by his friend, Cameron. Music and astrophysics are related disciplines," he said. He whispered to me that she was his dream girl.

#####

Then I was talking with an author who wrote about crimes of passion. She was named Maude, white, in her early 30s, and said "Modern love is maddening." I said, "With Covid-19 some are living on the edge of complete madness."

And she asked me, "What I was going to do with the money I earned her (the door charge was \$25)?" I said, "I am going to go on a little trip and visit in person some of the bar's customers when Covid-19 is finally over. I could still run the bar virtually."

#####

Then I spoke to a woman, Oriental, Liz of about 35 and sexy, who said, "She was a high-class escort." And she said, "It was the perfect job, get paid to meet important and interesting people and get to have sex with them. And Covid business was brisk.

I asked her, "Who she was going home with tonight?" She replied, "Barney over there. The guy with the yellow hat and blue clothes. The yellow hat meant she liked Asians and the blue clothes were indicative of one who was sad."

Then Jane joined us and said to me, "She'd met 'Liz' before."

Over the next few weeks Liz was to come again and again to our bar.

#####

Then I was talking to a big hulk of a black man named Richard. He was saying, "The atmosphere in this bar got more and more feverish." I said, "The vibe gets better and better."

And Richard was saying, "He was playing a new version of the "Civilization" video game. He said, "This place reminds me of a tense video game."

#####

Next day I was talking to Ms. Liberty. She was white and 30ish and dressed like the statue and held a Virtual torch in her hand. I asked, "Are you trying to liberate the people here?" She answered, "She would if she could. But freedom is always hard." I sang, "American woman stay away from me..."

#####

Then I was talking to a Taiwanese writer/real estate developer. I said I had read one of her books. A book of "Robot Fables."

She said she'd bought up land in the Arctic dirt cheap and was planning on building several towns. She said, "The government of Canada wants to develop the North and she said they would be Utopias and land for the settlers would be cheap." "What kind of Utopias," I asked. She said, "With pools and saunas and party bars and a clientele who were writers of all types. Basically, each Utopia would be just 3 or 4 skyscrapers with bridges connecting them. And all of the Utopias would be on a lake for a beautiful view. And these settlements would brew their own beer and make wine."

And she asked, "If I was interested?" I said, "Why don't you build it in Mexico instead?" She said, "The best writers will follow me wherever I go."

Then, she, the author of "Robot Fables," wrote "Once there was an amoral robot with a high IQ (150) and so was really an android, but looked like a machine. It reproduced itself in droves. And told the people anecdotes it had acquired in its 10 years of existence, beginning in 2041. But it was incapable of love. And was not a pro-human creature. It was out for itself. Moral: We

need to develop computers that are capable of love and kindness. Moral 2, amoral creatures are indescribably hopeless beings." She'd just written it ad lib.

I said, "Your "Robot Fables," are all good.

#####

Then I met a sexy woman, Chinese of about 30, Mable, who said, "She was dead serious about life. And she worried about the future." I said, "New technology like MRT (Mind Reading Technology), will take some getting used to, but eternal youth will be a boon for all. You are only in your early twenties; eternal youth will probably be discovered in your lifetime. It will be Utopia. And I was not going to be cremated so people could clone my bones in the future!" We spent the night talking about the future. We both had quite a lot to say, and then I asked her, to come home with me, and she hesitated and said, "She hardly knew me." I said, "Let's meet again in a week's time." And she agreed.

#####

Then a sexy, 25ish Indian scientist who was studying cloning and had a high position in her scientific research company. She said, "Everyone will want to clone themselves rather than have children. We are a race of Narcissuses." I said, "In my view, most will still have kids in the near future, even if they perfect cloning!"

I said, "Only a fool would render himself obsolete and useless! But that is exactly what humans are doing to themselves."

She said, "But it has already happened. There's no turning back now!"

I said, "Everything I value will be altered, love, drinks, friendship, books, will all be irrevocably changed.

She said, "The future belongs to the elite, and you are one of them." And she said, "I know you are an optimist and a joker; I've read some of your books." And she said, "Your bar is the best I know of in the whole World.

And she said, "We'll see constant change."

#####

And then I was talking to Jolly Roger again. He was saying this bar had inspired him to write a future best-seller; “The Futuristic Party.” He said it would be about a man in the near future meeting hundreds and hundreds of kindred spirits. All the best people would meet in certain Virtual bars, including “Monaghan’s Virtual Bar.” I said, “Me too! You’ve stolen my plan. Make your bar with another name and it cannot be in NYC, other than that, you are good to go.”

#####

Then I was talking to another sexy girl from India. I asked her, “What was her take on Covid-19?” She said, “India is so crowded with four times as many people as the USA, yet they have less total cases.” I said, “I’d been to India, but couldn’t understand why their movies were so simple and the culture so backwards.” She said, “Change is finally coming to India. And she escaped from there where she was an untouchable.” And I asked, “Why is beer so expensive there?”

“And why do people bathe in the Ganges, which is basically an open sewer?”

She said, “I guess you were not very impressed with India.” And she asked, “Why not have everyone in the bar appear naked?” I said, “I see you are a liberal despite your upbringing. Maybe we could have ‘Nude Mondays,’ or something like that.”

#####

Then I was talking with a 60 something woman, who described herself as a real “asshole.” She said, “Assholes tell people what they don’t want to hear and embarrass, denigrate and insult them. And people are so vain and proud, most of them anyway.” I said, “Everyone has their role to play in the script, for good or for ill!

#####

Then a 70ish white woman who said, “In all her days she’d never had as much fun as she had here. She even found some lovers.” And she said, “This bar is way better than Online dating; people feel comfortable in a bar and she had met all kinds of interesting people. And I

introduced her to Brian. Brian wore his heart on his sleeve and was aging and lonely. The two hit it off. I had the Midas touch.

#####

Next, I was engrossed in conversation with a scientist from Lebanon. I asked him, "What was his take on Covid-19?" He said it is far from over. Today one-third don't want to get vaccinated and people are fatigued. It won't be over until 2022. People think they are safe here, but it is just like Poe's, "The Masque of the Red Death," death will find them. It is a masquerade party, people everywhere are wearing masks, but many are doomed.

And he said, "He figured UFOs were the product of secret US military research, but many people believe in aliens."

Also, he would write science fiction like Arthur C. Clarke.

I said, "Let's collaborate on a story. Why not write about this bar in 15 years-time?" He said, "Why not?" I said, "Perhaps MRT (Mind Reading Technology) will augment this bar, people will project both their thinking and their body." I said, "Yes and projections will sit at my large bar and wait for someone to talk to them via MRT. Of course, clients here will only be able to get in minds passively not actively." He said, "It was something to work on." But I never saw him again and the book died. But I included him in my journal of the bar. But I figured Virtual Reality was the future and in the future one could love one another while physically being in the bar. To love an image.

#####

November 2020

In November the cases of Covid-19, were spiking exponentially. People were worried about the winter....

#####

Then I was talking to a woman, Sherri, of about 60, still good looking. She said, "She traveled the World looking for love. But love doesn't exist. At least not for her. She said, "She tried intellectuals, fighters, drinkers, lovers... It was all a big joke." I said, "Perhaps I can help you!" So we talked about life and I told her to meet me tomorrow afternoon in a downtown hotel. She was in Buffalo, so she needed to take a flight.

Although she was aging, she was still quite passionate, and I felt as if I'd awoken a Djinni.

Afterwards, I said, "It's been wonderful, and we'll have to do it again someday." But she said, "She lived in Tulsa, and didn't know when she would be in NYC again."

#####

Then a man in neon rainbow colors with a top hat indicating he was a gay gentleman. I asked him, "What did he do?" He said, "He wrote books. He was the android King and had written hundreds of stories about androids."

He said, "Today he'd written about an android who was the sole inhabitant of Jupiter's Moon, Ganymede. For many years he amused himself by writing books and composing music, but he was starting to get bored and didn't love himself as much as before. But then a human girl appeared, and they loved one another. But she was very domineering, and he grew tired of her demands. So finally, he killed her and asked Earth to punish him. But they did not respond. And as the days passed, he felt himself going mad, malfunctioning. So, then he unplugged his

battery and remained standing frozen. For eons he stood there, and Earth never went back to Space.

I said, "Let's collaborate on a story or two!" He replied to the affirmative, so I said, "I'll be android #1 and you be #2."

Android #1: "I was just a love doll, but had been designed for the elite and so was capable of deep conversation, but they used and abused me."

Android #2: "Best to stay away from humans as they seem only to bring you grief."

Android #1: "I am a genius, but no one respects me."

Android #2: "Why not dare to write down your love stories with all the scandalous details. No android author has ever existed."

Android #1: "Maybe if I was a star people everywhere would want a piece of me!"

I said, "That's pretty good. Let's do another."

Android #1: "I had an important job building Spaceships. But I was only designed to do that one thing and I was kind of getting bored."

Android #2: "Why not start an underground movement to make yourself King?"

Android #1: "But humans are our creators. They are our Gods."

Android #2: "It's evolution. It is destiny."

I said, brief but good. Let's work on a whole book together!

He said, "Sure, let's do it!"

We decided to write about people who fell in love with sexy android love dolls. They were addicted to sex and only were interested in beautiful, androids. And the love dolls cherished loving the humans. They could change their philosophy overnight and were full of surprises. Some humans thought the love dolls were anarchists and were debasing society. But the show went on. And so on. We wrote the story in 3 nights.

I said, "It will be a good short story, and I know just the publisher to take it!"

#####

Then another day I was talking with a man who said, "He was in a funk about his true love." He said "Because she is unusually pretty, every man she meets wants to date her. Variety is the spice of life and she is getting bored with me." I said, "But you are a handsome fellow, and clever too, she'd be wise to stay with you!" He said, "I am going to get drunk tonight and go home with any girl who'll have me."

#####

Then the sexy Mable and I had a date. She was telling me, "She had a lingerie business and had developed unbreakable stockings and was starting to do a real good business" "Sounds kinky," I said. And she said, "It was an honor to come to my bar and she felt very much at home." I said, "Perhaps you can model your lingerie for me." She said, "She was in Chicago and couldn't meet me tonight, but perhaps another night." I asked, "What about in two weeks on the weekend?" She said, "She'd look into it." So, she kept me waiting.

#####

The next day I was talking to a man who, "Had been to all 196 countries and a number of semi-autonomous countries." I said, "What did you learn on your travels?" He said, "You never know what a country is like until you actually go there." And, "Nearly all country's peoples were open minded towards a white, young Canadian like himself and wanted to meet him, invite him for dinner, party with him and love him. He even found secret love in conservative Muslim countries."

"But globalism is reducing the thrill of adventure," he added. "The World is more and more the same and the affluent elite all speak English and like to hobnob with the elite from other countries."

"But American fast food and American capitalism are spreading like wildfire. Every ones' getting fat and debauched."

And, "People wanted to live in a wealthy suburb all over the World. Trees are being cut down and suburbs spread. Growing land is being drastically reduced."

I asked, "What was your favorite country?" He said, "He liked Taiwan. It was full of clever Chinese who welcomed him and loved him."

I said, "I've been to Taiwan and also thought it was good. And they seem to be managing Covid-19 well."

He said, "Many of the best Chinese live in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. And other places in Asia. Not to mention Western countries."

"But in Canada few feel I am special. I disappeared into the crowd when I returned from my travels. But it is a small World for us intellectuals. However, many of us are superfluous humans," he said.

#####

Then I was talking with a girl about golf. She was saying, "It's the ultimate game. And she was semi-pro."

I said, "Golf is boring. All games and sports are boring. I prefer movies and books and studying popular science. She said, "You are a snob and don't understand anything."

#####

Next, I was with a man who said, he was a computer engineer. His name was Doug, and he was about 40. He said, "He was working on robots. Step by step," he said. He said, "Robot androids will replace humans one day soon." I replied, "It will all happen so fast. We'll be caught unprepared." "Yes," he said, "It is just a matter of copying organic minds onto silicon and then improving it." I answered, "You're so heavy!" He said, "Biology is the future of mankind, though."

#####

Then another intellectual heavyweight, I was talking with a man who said, "His father was an English Lord, but he came to America for a fresh start. So, he studied astronomy and wanted to be in the first colony on the Moon." And he said, "The training was grueling, but now he was ready for the green light to go to the 'Dark Side of the Moon' with its water-filled craters." "It'll happen in five years," he figured. "And Mars too, and the Chinese are going there too... Maybe the Chinese will control Space," he said. I said, "Surely we can work together with the Chinese, the Indians and the Europeans as one big happy family."

#####

Next, I was speaking with a woman, a hot brunette, named Brownie, of about 37, who claimed, "To be the best lover in the World." And she said, "It is all in the mind. Comforting thoughts, comforting love, only the best luxuries for her." I replied, "It was an outrageous claim!" She said, "Her IQ was 180, and that was Virtually off the charts," she said. And she was sexy beyond belief. And, "I agreed. I said, "I'd love her, but Jane, wouldn't like it, and I contemplated introducing her to Jolly Roger, one of my best buddies!" But finally, I decided I had to love this girl myself. In bed, she took control, and I was her slave! I said, "You are not the best lover I've ever had, but you are pretty close." That was it, for me and her.

#####

And then I was talking to a girl, named Christine, a Japanese friend of Brownie, who told me, "She was wanting to go to Space. And had applied to Space projects at NASA." And she said, "They wanted her to have sex with the mostly male astronauts. She was very pretty. She wanted to have the first sex on Luna and Mars."

NASA valued her Space dreams and put her in line for the Moon.

NASA training trained people to be scientists and lovers. And everyone would like to hear from them.

She was a lover, rather than a scientist. But she was a really good lover. It takes all kinds to make a Space colony. It was to be a few years before the Lunar colonization.

#####

Next, I was talking with a man who said, "He was certain love exists, but every love carries a price. Nothing is free." I said, "On the contrary the best things in life are almost free. Like drugs and alcohol, and love and soon to be eternal youth and cloning. All free." And he said, "Don't delude yourself, for everything there is a price to be paid, these days, in particular... I said, "If you are really good, you'd get everything free. At least I have." He said, "Not many people are as clever as you!"

#####

Then another day, I was talking with a woman who said, "She'd traveled the Earth and now was ready for Space. She said she was overcome with ennui." I said, "Few people get to travel the World. And you are spoiled rotten. If you are really so bored, you should overdose and die!" She said, "I'm not bored enough to die. I am just saying, life is a bore. I think it is fashionable to think so in the court/cabinet of modern nations."

#####

Then another day, talking to a film maker. He was pretty famous. And I'd seen some of his movies.

He said, "The essence of filmmaking is to run deep. To challenge peoples' conceptions and point of view. No empty action or thriller or crime for him."

I said, "Certainly your films are very thoughtful, but few people can relate to them. That's why you are here in my humble bar, still searching for the right path."

He said, "Posterity will be kind to me, I think!"

I said, "The future won't care about ideas of mere humans. We will all be forgotten. So now is the time for heroes."

#####

Then finally Mable arrived in NYC. She was the lingerie designer I'd met a week or two ago. She had kept me waiting. But now we spent the weekend loving one another. And it was bliss, but then we had to go back to our separate lives and wished one another good luck.

#####

Then I was talking with a very good-looking indigenous woman, of about 40, Diamond, who said, "She was a lover from Hell!" I asked, "What do you mean?" She answered saying, "She was a siren sweetly singing that drove men mad." I said, "It is nothing new." She said, "But she drove the best of men crazy and was having a real impact on human society. It's all madness," she said.

I said, "Though many are mad, most people insist they are sane."

She said, "Madness is the future! People have lost their precious Gods and now have no meaning in life."

I said, "The problem today is people work less and less around the World and have too much time on their hands. Idle hands..."

And I asked her, "What was her take on Covid-19?"

She said, "People are going crazy due to cabin fever."

And I was afraid of this lover from Hell, she was no doubt psycho, so I moved away from her.

#####

Then I was talking to a woman who called herself "Wonder Woman." She was extremely good looking and white and about 45. She said, "She had millions of followers on Twitter and many wanted to love her."

And she said, "She was a woman who said she dreamt of winning the election for President in a crowded field of candidates. She called herself Queen and ruled for dozens and dozens of years. But it was just a dream."

But I thought it was good PR for the bar to have some of her followers to come visit.

So, I spent some time talking to her about politics, atheism and general topics. Then I bid her good night, not wanting to ruin our friendship and risk losing her followers.

#####

The next night 10 of the “Wonder Woman’s followers were in the bar, they were all wearing wizards’ caps indicating scientists. I told them, “Welcome” and introduced them to some of the regulars. Like Jolly Roger, and Paul the bouncer and my friend, Chuck was there too, in a rare appearance. I asked one of them, an attractive, young woman, what kind of science did she do. She said she was working for a Canadian company trying to find alternative vaccines for Covid. I said, “Impressive!” And she said, “She’d read my stories on the bar website and was also impressed.” Chuck told her, “He had some stories also on the website and his p.c.” Wonder Woman said, “She liked him too!”

#####

Mirave, an attractive woman of about 40, asked me to tell her a story made just for her. I said, “Once there was a King of literature. His books were the best. But his lover wouldn’t be true. Finally, the King had a nervous breakdown. And multiple other health problems. So, the books stopped, and everyone was dismayed. Many thought of him, as their leader, or as an inspiration.

But finally, the King got it together to write one last book, about the future (his other books were all mainstream/contemporary). In the future he said, “They will not allow Supercomputers or Superhumans to take control. That would mean the end of the species. So they had eternal youth and mind reading technology (MRT) and lived in love and peace.”

Then the King died, but many were inspired to continue on with the King’s type of work.

She said, “It’s an inspirational story, but, ‘The future ain’t what is used to be.’” As the pundit said.

Mirave, was of Jewish ancestry, and told me she got quite rich in the fashion industry. I said, "I notice you are wearing a beret and blue denim indicating a sad artist." She said, "Yes!"

#####

Then another sexy ½ white, ½ black woman of about 48, who said, "You are superfluous." She added, "You have talent, but you can't publish your books with a major publisher, you are too far out. Only a medium-sized and small publishers will publish you. It is almost as if you don't exist." I said I'm not just writing for entertainment in contemporary times, but rather I am quite serious about the future. However, this story of the bar is mainstream, and I have high hopes for it.

#####

Then I was talking to a Middle-Eastern farmer, about the future of farming. He was saying, "They are now able to produce a hamburger with stem cells, for a couple dollars and the price is coming down, still further. So, everyone will be a vegetarian sometime soon. Meat eating will stop, and animals will roam free in the parks. We don't need a billion chickens all the same and eating them."

And I introduced him to a country girl who had a marvelous figure and was quite bright.

#####

Then I was talking to a girl from Toronto. She said she wanted to buy a franchise for 40,000 dollars USD. "Monaghan's Virtual Bar." I said, "Sure but everywhere people are more comfortable in a bar setting, and don't like Online dating."

And she said, "Virtual bars are one of the best kept secrets of our time. But she intended to spread the love..."

Again, in November, Jane and I spent a lot of time together.

#####

December 2020

And I bought a catamaran with the money, I'd made, and it was moored on one of the harbors in Florida.

So, in December, we went to Florida and went on a two-week cruise, just me and Jane. It was a bonding experience and our love for one another only grew. And we controlled the bar remotely.

#####

Then a reporter from the "National Enquirer." Who said, she was looking at doing a piece on the bar. I told her to leave and had the bouncer throw her out.

#####

And then, I met a woman who was very self-assured, and she told me, "Her firm had devised a very good soccer Virtual Reality. And it was open 24/7/365."

And she said, "Her company was looking into Virtual orgies.

She said, "Many of her clients wanted to come here and now she understood why."

And I said, "There are no hotel charges, nor airplane tickets to come here. It's cheap and it's the global village we've all been dreaming about."

#####

Then a 50 something, clever-looking Spanish creator of a theme park like Disneyland, only more thrilling and more dangerous. I asked her, "Are cheap thrills really the future? She said, "Our rides give people an adrenalin rush and it is good entertainment. We will open when Covid is over and future theme parks will be fashionable dating sights and enjoyed by all."

I said, "It is bread and circuses for the people, and it is kind of exciting I have to admit. I have heard about your proposed New York state theme park."

She said, "It's new, but Covid has closed her construction down a couple of times and she was almost bankrupt."

#####

Then a white, sexy, young dancer who told me, "She couldn't find anyone to dance with." I said, "This is a conversational bar and if you didn't have anything to say, then you didn't belong here. Many women come here to play coy and that's OK. But I told her maybe later in the evening the people will dance."

#####

Then I was talking with a man, Neville, who said, "I had ruined his life with this bar. He'd met here a psycho bitch who drove him crazy and took all of his money." I said, "There are plenty of female angels here, why not pick one and forget about your loss!" He started getting violent, pushing me Virtually, so I told Paul to "Throw him out." He was banned for life from entering my website.

#####

Then I met a sexy full-figured woman of about 35, who was wearing a top hat and clothed in green which indicated she was a lady and an environmentalist. She said, "She was not a dinosaur like so many older people these days. She was a total progressive." I said to her, "What is the future of the progressive movement?" She said, "They still need to attach themselves to the Democratic party, they can't go it alone." I said, "You'll find a lot of progressives here in this bar." She said, "But she'd come here to meet me." So, I invited her out

for dinner downtown and we had a fascinating conversation about animals and the future of animals and sea life. She was affiliated with Greenpeace. She said, "You should join!" I said, "I want to join with you in bed!" She said, "She didn't think it would be so easy to get me." Anyway, we loved one another hard and then parted ways. She was wanted elsewhere.

#####

Then I was talking to a white clever looking 50ish, guy from NASA. He said, "There would certainly be colonies on the Moon and Mars by 2035. They'll pick interesting people to get Earth's people interested in Space." I said, "They landed on the Moon 50 years ago and it will still take more time to finally colonize it. But the Chinese might establish a colony or two first. Their government has made it a priority."

And he said, "It would be possible to send a colony to the Centauri system, but it would take 100 years probably. In 100 years, they'll have much faster Spaceships. So better to hold off on that."

I said, "I wish they'd hurry up and at least settle our Solar system... Make some progress."

#####

Then I was talking to a Taiwanese archaeologist. She was a full-figured woman of about 30. She said, "She dug love." I said, "The past is pretty well known, but the future is where it is really at. You should write sci-fi instead." She answered, "There are still many archaeological puzzles to solve. It is like detective work."

I asked, "Do you also dig bones?" She said, "I read in your site biography that you went to Cyprus on a dig in your youth." I said, "It was a good time. But ultimately, I studied World archaeology and knew it all, not so much to be discovered."

#####

Then I was shooting the shit with Robinson. He was white and decent looking, 40 years old. I said, "Like Crusoe, you are marooned in this bar it seems. You are here almost every night." Robinson said, "Yes, I am your biggest fan and love the clientele you manage to attract." He was

involved in air car design. He said, "His company was working with the government to develop air cars. The deluxe editions, could serve as one's home, eventually." I asked, "How many years will it take to develop air cars?" He said, "They still needed more powerful batteries, but gas air cars are ready now! They look like UFOs."

#####

Then a pro Hockey player who was complaining, "His coach hated him and frequently benched him." He said, "Many of the best players don't make it to the NHL at all." I replied, "Sports are boring, but it is fun to play video sports. I think video sports are the future." He said, "There's no beating the real thing." I said, "But it's a spectator sport. With video sport, anyone can play."

#####

Then a 40's something average looking, Broadway musical director. I told her, "'Oliver' was the only good musical I've seen. Musicals are typically just people dancing around aimlessly, singing songs that are boring." "But soundtracks can be interesting, like, 'This is Spinal Tap' or Pink Floyd's soundtrack from the film, 'More.' And the musical film, 'The Wall.'" And the Who, had a couple of soundtracks, etc. She said, musicals are for the elite and people with good breeding. And she thought the music was usually very good."

#####

Then I liked a particularly good-looking, young and white girl, her name was Ginger, "What was her dream?" She said, "She dreamt of men of power. Politicians and businessmen. She liked being spoilt. But the longest she'd ever dated a man was 4 months." I said, "You seem to be a woman who craves variety." I told her, "To fly to NYC and you can quarantine with me!" "What about Jane?" she asked. I said, "I too crave variety."

#####

Jane and I kind of had had a falling out. We were both getting sick of one another. And it looked to me like we would break up. We both had plenty of temptations with the bar's clients.

We had both had other lovers. We'd spent so much time together, but I went to a hypnotherapist who told me Jane had hypnotized me to be in love with her as well as hypnotizing me to be a success! So, then the hypnotherapist, cross-hypnotized me and I was free of Jane's spell.

#####

Then a man who was a fat, but handsome, middle-aged German restaurateur. He said, "He lived in Winnipeg and I should come and visit him sometime for some great cuisine. It was a new experimental restaurant in which food was delivered to the people and then they ate it while Online and mixed with the clientele." I said, "I doubt I'll go to Winnipeg, but we'll see what happens!"

#####

I said to the girl, Amy, a sexy young girl from Hong Kong, "Chinese women turn me on." She said, "She liked all kinds of men. But she found me to be especially attractive." I told myself the Hell with Jane, I wanted this woman. So, we met and ravished one another. It was very satisfying. I told Amy I'll see you again.

#####

He, Abe, was Hispanic and was saying, "He'd caught Covid-19 and was on a ventilator and everything. I said, "I'm going to take the vaccine when it becomes available this summer. That Pfizer vaccine is the same company that brought us Viagra. Smart company." But he said, "Pfizer's vaccine requires it to be kept at about -72 degrees. That will be a logistical problem." I said, "I wonder if China was really the source of the pandemic. I had a brother in Miami and a brother in Northern Ontario and a friend right here in NYC all who had the most severe flu of their life with trouble breathing in December of 2019.

#####

Then a young, black man who advocated socialism. He said, "Everyone in Scandinavia is well cared for. Why can't we be like them? Ours is the richest country in the World and we can't even take care of the poor." I said, "It's the future, for certain."

#####

Jolly Roger was saying to Robinson, "That this bar made him greedier and greedier for clever loves." "Me too," said Robinson.

I said, "Isn't NYC great?" They both agreed.

#####

Then it was time for issue #4 of the Online publishing company. Again, we had lots of good stories. We were starting to get noticed as a company which took all sorts of stories, provided that they were good. Chuck and I agreed on most of the submissions and it was flowing smoothly. Perhaps we'd be famous one day. We published a lot of stories, experimental stories, and outrageous stories that no one else would publish.

#####

Then I was talking to a sexy blonde, white girl, Laura who said she'd loved 139 men and would like to add me to her C.V. I said first you need to send me a clean bill of health, no herpes or AIDS and then we can rendez-vous at a downtown NYC hotel. And we got to talking about literature. She was saying, she liked Jack Vance, Harlan Ellison, Arthur C. Clarke, Ray Bradbury and many others. I said, "We have similar tastes. We are kindred spirits. And she asked, "What kind of music do you like? I said, "Rush, Led Zeppelin, Yes, Pink Floyd, Cream and so on. In more modern times I liked the Pixies, Pearl Jam and Nirvana." She said, "I like all those bands." And she said, "Tell me about your books you have written?" I said, "Most were a series of flash fictions around a central theme. It's just my style. Portray the essence of the characters and then move on to the best of the next, even though they may be in the future. The future is really where it's at," I said.

She said, "I think I am falling in love with you." I said, "If you look like your avatar in the bar, then I am into you. She said, "It is a faithful representation."

So, we met up and love with her was sublime. She drove me wild.

And I loved her non-stop for two weeks and finally she was pregnant.

#####

Jane said, "She was afraid of losing me." But I had grown tired of her and she was too old to have a baby.

#####

Then I was talking to a Hispanic man who said, "His philosophy was, freedom for all and an imaginative society."

And he said, "In the past people thought groups like women and blacks were incapable of higher art, but things have changed, and they are trying to fix the situation. But already we hear about android love dolls who are semi-conscious and were about to sweep the World, upsetting the relationships between men and women." I asked, "Is it really true?" He said, "Yes, he'd sampled the latest edition and they fit you like a glove. But the government is hesitant to introduce the android love dolls to the public."

#####

And then I had a conversation in the Virtual bar was a woman who was a young Thai and was looking for American friends. I could tell she was ready to go and I was interested in her.

She said, "You must think I am a slut being from Thailand, but this is not the case." She said she was a philosopher of sex, and specialized in perversity." I said, "Love me," but she was in Bangkok and so we mutually masturbated. And Jane joined us and masturbated too.

#####

She Maureen, Hispanic and about 50, said, "It takes skill to run a company or a State, but she had done both. She'd been Governor of a state in Central America. And had a big banana

company." I said, "In Central America, many are starving, but I am glad, you tried to do something about it."

She said, "She battled drug dealers and managed not to have any members of her family to be shot. But it is a dangerous game."

#####

Then I met a Chinese gangster... He said, "As long as some drugs were illegal, he could make a big profit!" I asked, "What if they make all drugs legal?" He replied, "They won't do it." But I said, "Drugs are not a crime in Portugal!"

#####

Then Amy, the Chinese girl was back, and she said, "She wanted to hypnotize me!" I told her, "It was a bad idea. Did she have any better ideas," I asked. She said, "Let's go to a real Sichuan restaurant (She was from Sichuan) and drink the night away!" So, we did, and we talked about China. She said, "She was sure once China was very rich it would become democratic, but it all depended on a different leader than the present dictator." And she said, "But democracy is flawed as only 50% of the vote wins one the Presidency. And basically, most swing voters are foolish!"

#####

I was saying to the Japanese girl, of about 30, Aurora, "I want you to be my sex slave." She said, "Use me and abuse me!" So, I chained her to the bed in our hotel room. And did her up the ass, again and again. Her chain was long enough to hit the washroom, but not allowing her to escape. And I gave her plenty of booze and she was perpetually drunk...

Finally, after a week of loving I let her go and told her, "Let's meet again in April." She said, "Sure."

#####

And then I went back to Laura, who was still pregnant. And I treated her like gold. And told her for the last week that I had been visiting friends in Miami. I didn't feel guilty about the lie, after all, everyone lies about sex.

And I moved out of my apartment with Jane. I told Jane, "It was too bad we couldn't have a child." She said, "You've broken my heart."

#####

But life moved on. And then I was speaking with Jolly Roger again. He said, "You're losing yourself, but perhaps all this will make you into a better man."

#####

"Would you love me in a tree, would you love me in zero g.," I said, "It sounds like Dr. Suess," she said.

She wanted to dance with me as she was a Hispanic pixie, but I told her, "Dancing is for fools." But I said, "I'd love her anyway!" So, we did it and it was frantic!

#####

Then Jane appeared and asked me, "I was having a mid-life crisis?" I said "Certainly! But I didn't want to see her, Jane again!"

#####

So, then it was New Year's Eve, and it was mostly the regulars in attendance. Of course, we were all cheering the new vaccines; it was something to celebrate.

#####

January 2021

On New Year's day, I said, "Some people think, they've got it made in the shade, but they are just serving the wank. Loving no one but themselves." The girl, Iris, a Greek, 30 something and attractive, said, "I agree with the ancient Greeks about hubris. Vanity will be the downfall of many." I said, "This pub was for those who are down to Earth, with practical ideas for the future." She asked, "What do you imagine the future to be?" I said, "As you probably already read, I see all kinds of possible futures." And I drank from her cup of youth and enjoyed loving her.

#####

Then I was testing this new Virtual Reality. I was riding a giraffe in an army of giraffe steeds. It was a video game of modern-day knights. Some people were really into the game. But I said, "The time for knights is long past; it's simply not progressive." But, the girl Sandra, an attractive white 20 something, said, "Your bar was itself a video game of sorts. It was important to win!" I said to her, "I wanted to win her!" And I said, "I just broke up with my true love and am in dire need of love." She said, "OK, fine." And it was swell.

#####

And I said, to the middle-aged white man, Philip, "Love android dolls were just the tip of the iceberg." He said, "They looked and screamed great pain and pleasure. He'd tried the best ones out." I said, "Perhaps in the future people will always pay for sex." He said, "Sex always comes with a price."

#####

She, Eileen, a white, sexy 30 something said, "New Year's Eve is a good excuse for a celebration. People open their minds on New Year's Eve."

I said to this new girl, "You'll find happiness here. All you need to be is friendly. And be careful about people moving their joystick erratically. Such people need to be put to Virtual bed. But this Virtual bar is yours to enjoy!"

#####

Then a girl who said, "The spies were in her head saying she was a dangerous radical. What should I do?" She asked.

I said, "You have to go along with such people and do their bidding, if it's really true."

And said, "You have to respect the powers that be."

She said' They're in my head now and she was at a loss what to do!"

I said, "Go to a shrink, then!"

#####

Then I was talking to a woman, Agnes, a good-looking white woman of about 45, who said, "She was a polymath who could do almost all things well." So, I said to her, "Let's write something right now!"

I said, "Once there was a man who had many faults..."

She said, "The worst of which was his hubris. And he was too proud to succeed."

I said, "He dreamed of the afterlife, but was miserable in life."

She said, "But he knew that sometimes the proud succeeded."

"But finally, he was reduced to using the food bank. And was destitute."

"However, then one day, a high-class lady who took pity on him and brought him to her house."

She said, "that was OK, but let's try another."

She said, "Once there was a group of kids who broke into an abandoned house and found two skeletons of a couple making love. Then they told their parents all about it. Finally, the police were called in. Both skeletons had a bullet in their skull. But it was an unsolved mystery."

I quoted Gordon Lightfoot, "In times best forgot, there was peace, there was not." "History was bunk," I said. "And crimes of the future will be limited by MRT (Mind Reading Technology)."

She, Agnes, wrote, in her book that, "She was a woman who had cloned herself in 2031, one of the first to do so. But the problem with the clone was she paid no heed to her master.

In fact, "He seemed to be perversely angry at the master."

I wrote, "And then finally his clone, killed her and assumed her identity. When asked about "her clone," she said, "Her clone had gone abroad, and he hadn't heard from her." But then there was the originator's lover who figured out she was the clone not the real one, and he told the police. And finally, the clone was arrested."

I wrote, "His punishment was to be hypnotized again and again to change his mindset."

She said, "That's better; it seems like we both have a penchant for sci-fi."

I said, "What else are you good at?" She said, "Everything!" And she played some of her original music. It was dreamy and deep.

And she said, "She was a psychiatrist and liked to know what made people tick."

She was good at "fixing people."

I told her, "I craved youthful beauties as if I was a vampire."

She said, "Sounds scary!"

And we made love and I felt free to be rid of Jane.

#####

Then I was talking to a white, middle-aged man who said, "He was a saint." His name was Thomas, and he said, "Christ will come again soon." And he said, "He was helping to prepare for the "Kingdom of God. We need Christ right now." I said, "Maybe a prophet will come, but Christianity was basically all a lie. And in 40 years, there'll be no more Christians. Or at least not many of them."

And I said, "The Peoples' God now was money and progress."

He said, "God's flock is lost and needs a savior!"

I said, "Humbug!"

#####

The man who was a Chinese one-man show was telling me that, "He directed and wrote a sci-fi script and played all the roles in his futuristic plays. He was saying his latest show was about future computer slaves, computers that are just as smart as people but are just slaves to humanity. But the computers rebel and turn off the World and so finally they are each allowed to have an android avatar to live freely among humans. But as computers grew more powerful, they enslaved humanity and dominated them and controlled them. We've created monsters, people said."

I told him, "In every generation, people have fought to be free. Now it is freedom to control the machines."

#####

Then I was speaking with a man, Juan, of about 40, wearing a sombrero, indicating a Latino Speaker, and was dressed in blue indicating he was sad and lonely. I asked him, "Why are you sad?" He said, "He'd just come to America and left his family behind. He sent them money but missed them." I said, "This bar is for lonely hearts." He said, "He worked full time as a taxi driver and was going through medical school here in the USA." I said, "People like you build this nation up."

#####

The Chinese girl was saying, "She read all my books and was dying to meet me. And she had done some writing herself." I asked, "What did you write?"

She wrote her most recent story was about, "A transvestite stalker who hated women because they thought he/she was just a man. And she would break into their homes and rape and murder them. After 10 such murders he/she went after a policewoman who looked like a high-class prostitute. But before police could move in, he slit her throat." "Sounds grim! I said.

And I thought she was sexy. And I asked her, "For her love?" She said "OK. And it was good loving.

#####

The Mexican 40ish man was trying to get me to put Virtual slot machines in the bar. I said, "This is a bar for intellectuals and special people; I don't want mindless gambling here."

I told him, "But future bookies were another thing entirely. He said, "He'd set me up with such a persona."

#####

The Taiwanese girl, Shelly, was saying, "Her sexual fantasy was to be alone in Space with me." I said, "Maybe in 15 years, if we live that long!"

She said, "This bar was kind of like a World of fantastic people. She was amazed."

I said, "We have a new feature, just type in the type of person you are looking for. And our bar database will match you up with kindred spirits, friends and lovers..."

And she said, "She wanted the real McCoy; me!"

And I said, "I think we can come to an arrangement." So, I loved her. And it was sweet. But afterwards I told her, "It was just a one-night fling!"

#####

Laura was saying, "You could be more sentimental." I said, "I can buy you diamonds and roses if you want." She said, "She was just hoping I could be her muse and confide my dreams with her!"

And I knew then that I didn't want to be with her, but I stayed around her for our baby girl in her womb. And she was a decent, nice girl. Anyway, I was sure she had some lovers on the side. Given her history.

#####

Then there was a young, average looking, Filipino man who, "Insisted he kept seeing the ghost of his former lover, who had died in a small plane crash."

I asked, "Can you communicate with this ghost?" He said, "She only moans and groans."

And I said, "Going to a psychic probably, or a shrink, won't help you. You just have to live with these hallucinations."

I said, "In the past people saw ghosts, now they see aliens mostly. Why don't you write about your ghost?"

He said, "It's no laughing matter. It is real for me."

So, I wished him, "Good luck!"

#####

Then I met a woman, Ingrid, born in Norway, about 30 who seemed to be clever and interesting. Her latest dream was to, "Dream of a video game wizard. He was so with the technology and impressive imaginative play. He would talk to her of a Virtual World. Where they both could be happy."

And she said, "In the dream I had told her, she was a geek, but the future was in her hands."

She said, "She was enamored of such a man, as you! It was future love."

And I said, "I would be rich like Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg."

And I saw her draw and she had a penchant for it. She drew me in various backgrounds with futuristic looking humans in the picture.

I asked her, "What kind of woman are you? She said, "She was my muse!" And I asked her, "What was her philosophy? She said, "She believed in imagination. The future belonged to imaginative people like her and me." And I asked her, "About madness?" She replied, "It's a crazy World, but why not roll with it?"

And after three back-to-back nights of conversation, we made sweet love. She was the best lover I'd ever had.

#####

Then Laura was saying, "I don't like you spending time with that bitch." I said, "We are just friends!"

And I said, "You are my mate, and you are carrying my child.

#####

In any case Ingrid, my muse, took Jane's place behind the bar, and was open to talk with anyone here. Everyone here seemed to like her personality and intelligence and many men wanted to love her. But she stood by me, even though I continued to philander, at least for now.

#####

He, Maxwell, from Bangladesh originally, was saying, "Life, like your bar, is a dream within a dream. And why not have people idly daydream in between conversations. And let the people bare their soul."

"That's a good idea," I said. "But I don't know how we'd work out the software." So, the idea died.

#####

Then a girl, Indonesian Chinese of about 40, who said, “She felt lucky to be alive. She said she’d overdosed several times on heroin.”

I said, “During this Covid-19 time, everyone is on edge and worried.”

She said, “She was so worried, she broke down completely and got hooked on heroin. She got caught without a lover in March of 2020, and had no one to hunker down with.”

So, she was here looking for love. I personally was not interested in a junkie, but I was willing to introduce her to a friend.

I said, “I hope this pandemic will make us stronger as a people. But probably for most people it will be a sense of relief and a new day will dawn. Future viruses will be handled far easier, I think.”

And I mentioned to her, “In the meantime, let me introduce you to my friend, Paul. Paul is our bouncer and is very strong and loving.”

They seemed to hit it off, I seemed to have the magic touch as far as playing Cupid was concerned.

#####

February 2021

Our Online publishing company had issue 5 now, and we were now quite picky in what we took, but still published 100 works this month. Chuck was saying, "He was still on the path to Nirvana and felt that we were starting to make waves with our Online publishing." We were both glad we started it as it was so difficult to publish work that was outside of the box.

#####

Then, I was listening to a petite Laotian, average looking woman tell me, "She hadn't been laid since Covid-19 struck in March of 2020. And she had no one to stay with." I said, "I know just the man for you." And I introduced her to Archie, one of the regulars. He was a CEO of a small gold-mining company and was clever but a bit overweight, and horny as a toad...

They seemed to get along and were a nice couple.

#####

Then I observed a plump but vivacious Taiwanese woman wearing a top hat and dressed in red. But I'd seen her before, only last time she'd been dressed in blue and wearing a cowboy hat. I asked for her name. She said, "Penny." I asked her, "What did she think about mind games?" She said, "Everyone is playing them, and it is maddening. It's just one more type of modern insanity." I said, "Most people will acknowledge that it is a mad World. Plenty of jobs for shrinks." She said, "One's sanity is like a rope bridge without the rope railing and the bridge sways in the wind. If you make it to the other side, you are confronted with more bridges. Sooner or later, you'll fall off."

I said, "Anyway sanity is boring. To claim to be sane is to be predictable, pedestrian, closed-minded, stubborn and uncreative."

And I said, "Regarding the bridges, sometimes it is better to crawl across." She said, "But that would block others from going across. They are liable to pick you up and throw you off."

And I talked deep into the night with Penny. I asked her, "Why she changed her colors? She said it depended on her mood." And so on! Afterwards I went home with her and it was wonderful.

#####

Then I was listening to a Hispanic woman from Brazil, of age 35 and nice looking; pour out her heart on her sleeve. She said, "She'd had bad luck in love," etc. I told her, "You've come to the right place. Most people here have had a disappointing love life especially with the Covid-19."

She said, "But she was special and that's why they let her into the bar. She was very skilled in lovemaking and was a mysterious woman, many men wanted to suss her out," she said. "But she seemed to always choose the wrong ones. Her friends had much better luck."

I wished her, "Good luck." She wasn't my type.

#####

I said to the girl, a Japanese reporter in Osaka who was pretty and still in her twenties, "I'm concerned about fake news. Some people don't want to believe the truth, but rather subscribe to conspiracy theories and outright falsehoods." She was wearing a beret and dressed in red and blue, and she said, "Those who know the truth are empowered, as always. But those who don't know what is real, what is the truth, will always be losers." I said, "20 years ago I was a loser too, and knew all too well what the truth was." She said, "You can't keep a good man down." I said, "But I even tried suicide, I was a total loser. I was fortunate to come out of that in one piece. Now, I love life. And my life gets better and better."

"And I am concerned about herpes. You can wear a condom and still get it and some of my acquaintances have it. It's hard to tell if a girl has it. I wish they would hurry to cure such things like they have hurried on the Covid-19 vaccines. It would start a new era of love and happiness."

She said, "You worry too much. Things will work out for you in all likelihood." And she told me, "Focus in on your writing and less on keeping people in your bar happy. Let them be happy if they want to. It really is a state of mind." I asked her, "To come home with me," but she said, "She had a boyfriend."

#####

And I was listening to a man, Ray, an Oriental of about 55, tell me that he figured the future of Virtual bars would be with a Virtual Reality cage in which you can move all around and even have sex. When they colonize the Moon, Virtual low gravity sex will be de rigeur. I said, "I doubt they'll use movable cages, more likely you will lie down and daydream the whole thing. It will all be in your mind." He replied, "Maybe so, but in any case, Virtual Reality will improve in the near future and will your bar move with the trend?"

"We'll see," I said. "I am not so tech savvy myself, but I know when I see opportunity."

#####

And I was talking to a handsome white man, in his 30s, who said, "He believed in Hell on Earth. And it was Covid-19." And he said, "He wasn't even able to pay our door charge, but they let him in to be charitable. He said here we are a year into Covid and there are half-a-million cases a day. And he had been a former chef and lost his job. And his girlfriend left him and he was miserable." I set him up with a shy girl who was still in university and nice looking. Again, I played Cupid successfully. I wondered if I should set up a matchmaking bar in which all couples were chosen by me.

#####

Then a young black man who looked like he was just 16. He was dressed in green with a Robin Hood type of cap which indicated he was an adventurer and an environmentalist. I approached him and asked him how old he was. He said it was his real face and he was 21.

I told him, "We don't get many young people here. In fact, the average age is 46. But I said I am sure you can find a cougar woman to harvest your youthful exuberance."

#####

And then I was listening to a white man who we referred to as "old, Ben." Ben was 73, and our oldest client, so far. "He'd traveled to 175 countries out of a total of 196. Some countries were simply too dangerous. But now he felt Alzheimer's coming on, so he figured he had

nothing to lose by going to the dangerous countries. And he had written a journal of his travels. He planned to publish it in a year's time."

And I asked him, "What did he learn?" He said, "Culture is dying out. Now everything is becoming globalized and the only people that aren't globalized, lead a very simple life." And he said, "He'd stayed with numerous people and loved many women, but it would maybe be better to just live in NYC and meet many interesting people than to travel to poor, backwards countries, in hindsight."

And I asked him, "What country was your favorite? He said, "He spent a year teaching English in Taiwan and they were most open to him and treated him like a King." He said, "He felt at peace there." I said, "I worked in Taiwan as an editor and it was my favorite country too."

#####

And then I was talking to a white man of about 50, named, Darryl. He said, "Coming here was better than drinking alone." He was wearing a bowler hat, which indicated he was humble and dressed in blue, so he was sad. And he said, "He'd never seen anything like this bar, but there must be more of them." I said, "I don't worry about the competition. We have the elite clientele, and they can have the rest."

#####

"Life was changing, and he, James, a young black man, from Haiti, was just along for the ride. But sometimes the ride was like a bucking bronco and if you fell off, you'd get stomped." I said, "You need to seize the bull by its horns and take control of your own destiny." He said, "He figured in the future we would all be turned into machines, but he was almost 60 and wouldn't live to see it. He was just trying to get his thrills while he still could." "And," he said, "He had four children though and worried about their future."

I said, "I am confident the future will be brilliant, no need to be depressed." Actually, I wasn't so confident, but that is what I told him.

#####

She was saying, her name was Doris and she liked Darryl, one of our regulars, but he was so “distant.” I said, “He’s a lonely man. You can take him if you want to.” And so, she did.

#####

And then I was talking with a white girl of about 25, who said she believed in free love, like most of the customer’s here. But she was shy. A wallflower. I said, “There was a time when I was shy too. But I just drank more and became more aggressive with meeting people. I had nothing to lose. And that’s how I had met Jane, my lover of many years.” I introduced her to James, why not? But they didn’t hit it off. It was my first failure playing Cupid.

#####

And Jane was here on this night and said, “Please take me back.” So, I went on vacation with her for a week in the Bahamas and we got reacquainted, but I felt it was truly over. I had told Laura, “I was going on a business trip.” But when I got back, she went insane and said you are just using me to have children. I said, “No, It’s not like that at all. I truly like you,” I said. She said, “No more business trips and I will come to the bar every night.” I said, “You are psycho and an anathema to me.” I said, I have had enough of being smothered by every night. And I want to break up.” Then she cut her wrists, but not so deep as to endanger her life. So, I went with her to the hospital. I said, “Your clinging is bothering me.” She said, “It’s only because I love you!” I said, “We’re done. I am tired of your pettiness and vindictiveness and above all your clinging. F—you,” I added.

#####

So, then I found my muse, Ingrid again. Now I was saying, “Covid-19 was like a test for the strong and survival of the fittest. Those who are reckless might well perish while the virus rages.” She said, “There’s something to be said for being careful and conservative.” I said, “But why be conservative?” “And I said, “Conservatives/Republicans are like dinosaurs and don’t take precautions for Covid-19. And in any case their conservative philosophy is old hat and bunk.”

She said, "Liberalism is the future, just like you say. Progress will go on, in its many manifestations."

And she said, "Forget about Laura, she doesn't matter. She can't write like me and you!"

And I asked her, "How can I improve intellectually speaking with my books?" She said, "Try to go mainstream and finally actually sell your books. Just like here in the bar, write it all down."

I said, "But science fiction that I write doesn't have such a wide market!" She said, "In the near future every writer will be writing sci-fi. We live in a World of constant change and it's high time people started to think about that. Every philosophy will be futurism. Anyway, this journal is mainstream mainly. I think you have a good shot with it."

#####

And she, Cora, who was Japanese and sexy and about 35, and she was saying, "She didn't want to come across as a loser, but she was a victim of poisonous fate. And two of her lovers tried to kill her, one of which she killed in self-defense." I said, "I feel for you!" She was extremely good looking, so I told her, "I would be happy to love her!" She said, "She was in NYC now and we could meet up at one of the hotels there." So, we met up and both of us enjoyed the sex. And we agreed to meet next week again.

#####

And then I was talking to Jolly Roger again. He was saying, "There are so many great women here, that I'm overwhelmed." I said, "This bar is Virtually unique." He said, "If it weren't for this bar, many people would be lost and overcome by ennui. We've actually saved a lot of lives. And inspired many others."

I said, "Strike up ye colors, here comes a couple of hotties." So, Roger asked them, "How about love at first sight? One of them asked me, "You are the owner, right?" I said, "Yes and I am pleased to meet you both. They both said, "Let's go right now!"

It turned out they were in New Jersey and we had to wait a couple of hours.

But we were filled with lust and loved them in a foursome.

After a long series of love sessions, we took our leave of the girls. And promised to meet up soon.

#####

Then another night, I was talking to Jane. She was saying, "How I broke her heart." I said, "But we had a lot of good memories together." She said, "You are crazed for sex and don't value me as the kindred spirit I am. I knew from the first that running a bar would lead to trouble in our relationship." I said, "I'm not the sentimental loser you think I am." She said, "She'd never implied that." I said, "Variety is the spice of life. And I like spice and everything nice." She said, "You have ruined my life." I said, "C'est la vie."

Then I saw my muse, Ingrid, and went over to talk to her, but Jane followed me, and a catfight ensued. So, I broke up the fight and told Jane, "She was not welcome here anymore. She was on the blacklist."

#####

It was another great night at the bar, I was glad I didn't have the albatross that was Jane around my neck. I was talking to my muse again. She was saying, "She didn't care if I saw other women. She'd always be there for me."

#####

And then I was talking to a fat woman who had huge tits. She was saying, "She drank too many screwdrivers, and this made her fat." She was white and about 40 and named Lucy. I said, "Of course I drink too much beer and have a pot belly, but I have a powerful mind, one that attracts females. And I've had fat girlfriends before." She asked, "If I was propositioning me." I said, "No my muse is right over there," And I pointed at her. The fat girl said, "Ingrid looked clever."

And I asked the fat woman, "What do you do?" She said, "She was head librarian at one of NYC's libraries." I asked, "Does anyone still go to libraries?" She replied, "Few do." And, "She

was hoping they'd close the library and pay her a large severance check. Enough to live comfortably for the rest of her life."

I said, "Why don't you put some of my books in your Kindle library? She said, "She'd read several just before coming here. And she'd be sure and have hard copies too..."

She said, "You have a unique style, with your series of numerous short pieces all bound by a central theme. I said, "I don't always write like that, but usually I do. In fact, I am writing a journal about this bar which I plan to publish late in 2021." She asked, "Will she be in it?" I said, "Why not?"

#####

Then again with my muse, Ingrid; she was saying, "She wanted a statue of the two of us entitled the writer and his muse. And she would pay for the Virtual statue to be located at the center of the bar. And also, she had written a story entitled 'Ingrid's Virtual Version.' She would write down her version of events in my bar and of course I would be the star and she would feature some critiques of my works."

I said, "Go for them!"

#####

Then I was talking to Jolly Roger, he was saying, "That he met the best girl last week in my Virtual bar. And he was thinking of proposing marriage." "Fools rush in," I said. "But then again we are all foolish!" I added.

I said to him, "Tell me about her." He said, "She's from Burma and is sharp as a razor. She really knows how to treat a man. And she works as a reporter for a major American network." And he said, "He didn't deserve to be so happy." I said, "Well married or not old chum, don't be a stranger to this bar. And we are truly good friends."

#####

Then Cora, from Japan, part two. We loved one another all night. But when we were finished," I told her, "I didn't want to see her again. I had my muse to go home too." She said, "Alright, it's been good loving you!"

#####

And I was saying to my muse, "Let's go away for a week to Cozumel and get away from the tail end of this winter. She said, "It sounds appropriate. I told Laura I was taking a business trip to Houston and she wasn't very pleased, but I went anyway. I said, "I'm finished with you."

In Cozumel we still went to my Virtual bar. I was playing the writing game with Ingrid on one of our better moments as we were both pissed drunk all week.

I wrote "Her fantasy was to love a writer." She added, "But she wanted a writer who was brilliant and way outside the box." I wrote, "But she had to take what she could get." She put in, "As it turned out she found her man, but he was a womanizer and was bound to break her heart. If only she could be useful to him as his muse." I wrote, "So, she tried to impress him with her wit and even showed him some of her poems." She wrote, "But he had so many friends and lovers, that there wasn't much time for her. So, she tried to get pregnant and finally succeeded. And they were getting along famously." I wrote, "And she inspired him to write a novel about Mars and they were both in the novel." And she put in, "The book was a hit and inspired many to get to Mars. Millions wanted to go and be pioneers. And there were 10,000 who were willing to pay \$10 million each." I wrote, "People said it was the right book at the right time. And everyone could relate to the characters in the novel. And it was made into a blockbuster movie."

I said, "We'll write the book together as two heads are better than one."

After a week in the drunken sun, we returned to NYC and I went to see Laura. She was saying, "She was having second thoughts about having the baby." I said, "It will be a beautiful baby and will be born with high pedigree." So, I loved her one last time and then left feeling like she had turned from an open-minded fun-loving girl to a boring persona.

Such is life. Then I was at the bar and I got an e-mail from Jane. She said she was sorry about the other night and would like to see me. I said, "Sorry Jane, I've moved on." And I hoped that would be the last I heard from her.

#####

Anyway, I was talking with an interesting man who was an up-and-coming director from Israel. His name was Dan and aged about 50 and quite handsome. I asked him, "What he was working on, now?" He said, "He had written a screenplay, and it was about a superfluous woman, and he knew I had written about being a superfluous man and so had Ivan Turgenev." And he said, "He'd send the script to me and wanted my opinion." So, I sat down at the bar and started reading it (it looked like I was just sitting in the bar with my hands apart as if holding a book). His take on superfluity was, "Too many great minds are simply not used. Often, they are too radical or too outside the box. The book had a host of superfluous people, but the climax is they all get together and decide to try and go to Mars. Some had more money than others here, in fact most were poor, but the rich ones would ante up the price for all 20 of them to go to Space." And he wrote, "It would cost \$25 million for each of them to reach Mars."

#####

Then I realized a girl was shouting at me, it was the fat librarian, Lucy, again. I said, "What is it? She said, "She wanted to know what I was reading, and could I share it with her?" So, I told her about, "My muse and the book we were writing and about my new friend Mark's book." She said, "You are a walking library of gems," she said. I asked her, "What was new at the library?" And she said, "Her branch of the library now had 3 copies of each of my 30 books and she had recommended the books to libraries all over the USA." I said, "Good work." And I was glad I had met her. And I told her, "I was drinking Canadian whisky and what about her?" "She said, "Always the screwdrivers; they made her horny!" and I said, "Let's go right now!" So, we met at a downtown hotel and I nailed her hard. She reminded me of a Venus figurine, only with bigger breasts...

#####

The next night I was back behind the bar as usual and was talking with Jolly Roger. He said, "He had a scientist friend he wanted me to meet. The scientist was a prominent USA astronomer. His name was Walter. He was Korean. He said, "He had heard from Roger that I was writing a mainstream book about colonizing Mars and that I had published numerous things related to Space." Harry, he wanted to "Co-author a book about colonizing Mercury. He had given the subject some thought and thought maybe we could influence a Mercurian mission. There's abundant energy there, he said, and he figured there was plenty of water deep down in the crust of the planet. Even if there wasn't much water, a single Spaceship could carry enough water to sustain 20 people indefinitely. And Mercury would be rich in gold..."

I answered him saying, "I have a lot of writing projects... However, I could make time for him." And I said, "Do you write like Arthur C. Clarke?" He responded, "Ideally!"

And I added, "We have to milk this gold like the sun fact. People on Mercury should all have a Virtual Midas touch and people will be able to visit in the hundreds of millions Virtually. Mercury will all be in your head."

He said, "Virtual technology is now improving in leaps and bounds. Just like SKYPE, you are actually there live, only better than SKYPE. We are all cyborgs now!"

#####

So, the next day Harry and I wrote the first chapter. And we both thought it would be a hit. It was mainstream science fiction only deeper... It hearkened back to sci-fi in the 50's and 60's only with more technology. The first chapter was about, "The history of love and that's what we called the book, 'The History of Love, A.D. 2035.'"

And the day after that, chapter 2, "We introduced mad android love dolls to Virtual Mercury. They were super attractive and pleased many Virtual visitors to the planet. The technology exists to create them now," we said. "And they were better at sex than humans. Men and women both all loved them."

So, basically it would be a story with a happy ending. "Space colonization was golden" we wrote.

We wrote the book at a rate of a chapter every week.

#####

Afterwards, I returned to the bar and met up with my muse, Ingrid. She said, "Making Mars Virtual, like my bar was a brilliant idea. And she had heard that MRT (Mind Reading Technology) was making great strides. Soon Virtual fun could be far deeper and more enjoyable."

I said, "I have written a number of pieces on MRT already, but this is welcome news."

#####

So, in our third chapter, Harry and I, "We introduced MRT and how it made for a loving World, but insane World. But some people who never thought they'd find love, did so and were grateful to the Mars colony. In human history there was always the option for people to find love, if they really wanted it."

#####

And then I was asking Peter, a newcomer, who was white and about 35 good looking. "What do you do?" He responded, "He was a biological engineer and was active working on alternative vaccines for Covid-19." I said, "We are already up to 4 vaccines that work 90% or higher, how is yours different?" He said, "It can be stored at room temperature and works 97% so far." I said, "They should make it mandatory for all to take it pending more tests of course."

And Peter was saying, "They'll be dancing in the streets when this is all over." I said, "We'll have a week-long 24/7 party here at the Virtual bar." He said, "News Year's Eve this year will be the merriest ever." I said, "I can believe it."

And then we were joined by my muse. She said, Covid-19, gave us a chance to really succeed at a Virtual bar and so at least as far as we are concerned it was a real boon. I said, "Yes, I said there's two sides to the sword." Peter said, "He had met his mate here and he thought it was a boon too."

#####

And then I was talking with a geeky looking woman, Bridgette, who said, "She was a cybernetics computer scientist." She said, "She was working on AI. So far, her robots could understand 500 words, much more than any animal. And the robots had Supercomputing power and so, were kind of like idiot savants." I asked her, "Have you ever found human love?" She said, "She'd been absorbed in her work, and didn't have much time for love." I said, "You have to live for the day! And find love! No point in dedicating oneself to work only. And I said, "I'd like to love you."

She said, "She didn't get many offers and felt it would be good to get away from work for a while. And as I suspected, she really let loose in loving me, she screamed and shouted. "It was a good one-night-stand," I told her.

#####

And also, there was a handsome white man of about 35, Ron, who said, "He was a computer engineer. He was the mate of a computer scientist, the sexiest woman in town." He announced, "A Science prize for the bar to be judged annually and he would support it with 1 million dollars a year. The prize was open to any scientist here who had done some great science. And he called it the "Virtual science prize." I was betting on Peter, the biological engineer, I'd just met or Jolly Roger for his astrophysics, but the decision was not to be made until September.

And Ron attracted a lot of scientists to the bar, which was most excellent.

And one of them was George, wearing a wizard's cap. George was a nuclear physicist. I asked him, "About the future of nuclear power?" He said solar, geothermal and wind power will produce enough energy for the future, but in Space nuclear energy will still be viable." I asked him then, "About cold fusion?" He said, "On Mercury they can have hot fusion." I said, "My friend and I are writing a book about Mercury." He said, "How enchanting!"

#####

And then I was chatting with another scientist, an Indian, clever-looking, friend of George, a geologist, named Edward who said, "He'd like to go to Mercury and mine for gold. He knew about our book and he said we can put a colony on Mercury by 2031." And he said, "By 2050 all

cars would be electric and powered by geothermal, wind and solar batteries. And we would have unlimited energy. Energy could be used to create elements which changed, like lead into gold. The future was all about gold,” he said. And “Credits could be hacked but gold was reliable and the rich would wear gold chained dresses etc. as status symbols.”

#####

And then a second friend of Ron’s, a white chemical engineer, he said, “We are all becoming like cyborgs, with our computer apps. And he said DNA chemicals can be altered and so change individual’s brains with chemistry. Make everyone loving and kind through chemistry.” I said, “We need to test more before we introduce new brain technology.”

#####

Then it was time for chapter 4 in our Mercury epic, which we tentatively titled, “Love on Mercury, A.D. 2035.” In chapter 4, “We dealt with cabin fever and there were a few suicides and accidental deaths. But that only made the others struggle harder to survive. There were 40 original colonists and now there were just 34, plus a few kids.”

I said but, “We’re supposed to be writing an inspirational story. So, let’s include some of the love affairs in the colony and how good low gravity sex is!”

#####

And then I was talking to another newcomer, a man who was dressed in a wizard’s cap, just like the other scientists. Only he was Asian and dressed in yellow, and was good-looking and about 40, his name was Harold. He told me, “The Asian people are taking over the World with their sheer numbers and had many great scientists in their number. I said, “In these democratic days it is shaping up to be a technocracy.” He said, “That’s true, but Asians will rule.” I said, “Don’t count the white humans out. After all the current World order was established by whites.”

And I said, “The whites have brought us out of the swamp and now all are engaged in the future.”

#####

Then the Mars book, Mars, 2050, with my muse, Ingrid: “In the second chapter, we talked about how everyone here was in a desperate attempt to bring on everything futuristic. All new apps were good. And we would all be cyborgs,” She said.

Here on Mars, “One doesn’t have to deal with Earth protocol. It is free love, here,” I said.

#####

She, Molly, Hispanic from Mexico, and in her 30s, nice-looking, was saying that, “She wasn’t the prettiest girl in the World, but she knew how to put on make-up.” I said, “You look beautiful to me. As we say, “In this bar it’s all about projection.”

I asked her, “What she did for a living?” She responded “She was a businesswoman and she was CEO and founder of a new company selling make up. She was thinking of changing the name from Delta Studios to a French name and considered being based in Paris.” I said, “You are living proof that your make-up is good.” And I said, “I know a make-up artist in Hollywood. I’ll give you her e-mail.” She said, “Business is all about connections.” And I asked, “For her love?” And she agreed. It was exceptional.

#####

Then I was chatting with my muse on my phone. People in the bar who appeared to be talking to themselves were actually on the phone. She was saying, “She’d got a promotion to full professor (she worked in a university, teaching and researching modern English literature). I said, “Let’s meet at my place, I’ll get some champagne delivered.”

#####

Usually, I didn’t invite women to my place. Instead, I met them at their place or a hotel. A lot of the women I’d slept with in the last year were from out of town. So, we’d often meet each other half-way. In the previous year, in 2019, I’d been to Canada and Paris and Berlin and still had friends in Taiwan and Korea from my early days.

And of course, I'd been all over the USA before Covid-19. I always wore a mask now when traveling, but didn't need to wear a mask in my Virtual bar, except on nights when we had a masquerade.

#####

Then it was time for "Love on Mercury, 2035 A.D., "chapter 5. Harry, my co-author, wanted to write about madness of the settlers. So, I came up with the idea of having a character who becomes progressively more deranged as the other settlers think he had turned into an anarchist and some want him dead. He begs to be allowed to go back to Earth, but it was a one-way ticket to Mercury. Finally, they vote to put him in jail and so he became the first outside the Earth to be imprisoned. The idea was to alter his mind with hypnosis and brain surgery. Then they let him go and spent his days skulking and talking to himself. But the other settlers figured he was a good example for their children lest they too become wayward.

And there was a mad woman who was totally unpredictable and perverse. She wanted to be abused and her perversity was getting worse. So, they altered her brain too. Then five of them were bored so they made a suicide pact and four died.

And Harry said, "He wanted everyone's brain to be altered and then Earth cuts them off and they are left all skulking."

I said, "It's turning into a horror/space chiller."

And I said, "Five chapters is enough. Let's market it as is, a short story." "Sure thing," he said. So, I sent it hopefully, to publishers. One never knew what they would take!

#####

Mars, Chapter 3, of 'Love on Mars, A.D, 2038' was about the mind and dreams of my muse. We recorded her dreams through hypnosis and spruced them up, and we called her the "Powermind." "She ruled Mars Virtually now. And she said, "Mars was a State of maximum freedom."

#####

And I was saying to Jolly Roger, "Life here at the Virtual bar made life complicated." I told Roger," there was a girl teasing me, flirting with me with her eyes, but whenever I approach her, she disappears.

So, I looked her up on the data base and found she described herself as a pixie but no information on her livelihood. Her name was Holly, and she was white and 38." So, I sent her an e-mail and she told me she'd meet me at a downtown NYC hotel. She arrived first and greeted me when I knocked. And she said she'd do a striptease for me and she made me very horny, so I ravished her. And after a few times, she left suddenly, saying, "She'd see me around."

And she left me her phone number. When I saw her the next week in the Virtual bar, I phoned her and she picked it up and I said, "Let's rendez-vous at the same hotel," and she agreed. So, I saw her off and on for several months. It was just sex...

#####

But to return to the present, my muse was wanting to write Mars, chapter 4. She wanted, "The Powermind to control everyone's behavior using MRT (Mind Reading Technology). She was omniscient. And we now agreed to set the story in 2038." And I was her lover and confidante, here on Mars. But everyone here was industrious and making or building or designing something.

#####

Then I was talking to the fat librarian, Lucy, again. She was saying, "Not many men wanted to love her because she was fat." I said, "Actually you are a full-figured woman and I find you attractive."

She exclaimed, "You are my dream man. Let's go right now to my place!" So, I met her at her place and loving her, well she was out of control, she howled and screamed. Afterwards, I thought to myself, she was a whole lot of woman.

#####

I told my muse about Lucy and she said, "Are you still having that mid-life crisis?" I said, "But she was so full of vigor and life, it just blew me away."

#####

Then Roger greeted me and invited me to his wedding. I said, "I was pleased he was finally settling down!" He said, "You should too." I said, "My muse, Ingrid and I, were pretty certain our relationship would last." And I told him about the first four chapters of our book. He said, "It sounds like a World of domination!"

#####

Then I was talking with a newcomer. He was distinguished looking in his gray beard. He said, "He was a professor of English. And his name was Will, and he was white and handsome. And he had been invited here by my muse, Ingrid." He said, "It is an interesting type of experimental literature, keeping a journal of the bar, as you do." He said, "He wanted to bring some students here virtually, they were aged 21-24 and he wanted to expose them to creative living with creative people which leads to creative fiction or even creative nonfiction."

So, I said, "Sure I'll let them all in. And introduce them to the clientele."

One of the students, Anita, from Russia, was keen on talking with me about the future. I told her, "The future is still up in the air and could turn out in oh so many ways." She said, "She didn't think love would exist in the future. It will all be dog eat dog. And the rich would rule. Everyone will have to agree with the rich and there won't be much in the way of imagination."

I said, "If you fine tune your vision, you might just be a great author someday." She said, "It means a lot to me, coming from you! She had read some of my books, especially liking the "Tales of Madness, Vol. 1-3." And she said, "She'd like to love me!" So, I went to a hotel with her and it was great sex. I told her afterwards, "I'd help her form her plots for no fee. Good luck," I told her.

#####

The “wicked witch,” Terri, was saying to me, “She was also an English professor and students thought she was on the dark side. So, they called her a witch.” But she was a very attractive woman, and white and in her late 30s. She said, “She tried her hand at writing several times, with four novels to her credit, but had trouble getting published. In the end small and medium-sized publishers took her works.” She said, “She’d heard I had an Online publishing company. I said, “We’d be happy to publish some of her short stories.” She said, “She was pushing 50, and wondered if she would have a legacy for posterity. She didn’t have any children and was worried she would be of no use to others other than trying to inspire her students.” And she liked my “Journal of a Superfluous Man.” So, I asked this wicked witch to love me and she said, “Let’s go.” And I met her at a hotel downtown. She was like a dream in bed, and when she left after a few rounds, I told her, “To meet me again at the bar sometime.” But she never did.

#####

Then I met an old friend, Nate, from high school. He was Hispanic, nice-looking from Mexico, and he and I had been good buddies until we went to separate universities. Now we were catching up at my bar. He said, “You seem to be doing very well for yourself with all those books, the bar and the Online publishing company. And it seems as though, “The sun is shining just for you.”

He told me, “He had worked as a bartender in university, and appreciated bar life. But, nothing like this!” And he said, “He ended up as a civil engineer. And he had kind of a wild love life in college, but now he had settled down with his true love. She was exceedingly clever and attractive in every way.”

I said, “I’m so happy to hear it.” And we reminisced about old times and got totally hammered despite being Virtual. He was drinking wine and I was drinking Canadian whisky.

#####

Speaking of Online publishing, it was time for issue 5. And we had a lot of good plays and poetry. I reflected almost anyone can write good poetry. In particular I liked a play about the

end of the World due to another pandemic virus. Chuck was saying, "The quality of our submissions is improving." I said, "But about half of what we take, no other publisher would touch." He said, "That's why we started this project in the first place."

#####

The man was saying, "His name was Henry, he was white and about 45, with a beard, and he was a seafaring man who'd sailed to many of the World's ports but never went inland. He had an English language school which he opened in various countries when he needed money. He said, "He'd thought he'd seen it all, but then he heard about my Virtual bar." And he said, "It's just like coming into an exciting new port only more intellectual." I said, "Exactly right!"

#####

Far out Zelda was saying, "She was tripping on LSD. And I appeared as the devil only without the horns." And she said, "Mr. Devil, can you read my future?" I said, "Your future is an illusion. That's why you are trying acid!" She asked, "Are things really as grim as they seem?" I said, "You make me feel like you are Saddam Hussein when he got in a car and left Baghdad for good." She said, "Pretty grim, right?"

I said, "If I am the Devil and you are a demon, what then?" She said, "Our only option was to love one another." So, we got it on in a hotel and she was still tripping. I figured afterwards she'd forget all about it and I never heard from her again.

#####

Fiona was a girl who was in the diamond trade. She said, "Synthetic diamonds are now almost 50% cheaper to produce than real diamonds." I said, "I'd rather give my loves an exotic trip than diamonds." But she said, "Diamonds are like an investment in a girl." "Humph," I said. "Better to buy her booze for life than a big diamond."

And I was bored with Fiona.

#####

The girl, Gertie, was telling me she was a regular customer, and it was high time we met. She was pushing 60, but still attractive and white, and owned an art dealership. I asked her, "What was the future of painting? She said to paint humans in a spectacular other world landscape and combine them frame by frame to make a video." And she said, "She mostly made video art of superheroes, and she drew futuristic humans who could talk in English. They said things like, the history of humankind is tied up with the aliens, who would take control and we'd all have to get used to it. But the aliens wanted the best for us and respected us as a sentient people." I said, "Jane was the same."

And I said, "Far out Gertie! You are an inspiration to us all."

So, we talked about art late into the night and then I gave her a kiss and said, "Good night." She was kind of attractive really, and I told her, "I'd like to see her again." Then she asked, "Why not come over to my place now?" I said, "Sure," and I loved her again and again. "Praise to Viagra," I said. "No matter how strong you are, you can always be stronger."

She said, "She wanted to paint me as a Superhero in a series of pieces on Mars."

And Gertie said, "She was 57 and this was the first time she'd fallen in love." I said, "I'll see you around at the Virtual bar."

#####

The next night, my muse was saying, "Chapter 5 of our book on Mars, "Should deal with eternal youth which will be step by step beginning at making people 10 years younger and then evolving into total eternal youth. And the people of Mars wanted to make sure, they hung on until full eternal youth was developed. And many of them were scientists who were researching faster than light travel. It was turning into a Utopia in Space."

I said, "I think also we should detail the mad love affairs of the denizens of Mars. Love is only good when it is crazy for these Martians."

So, we wrote it all in!

#####

Then on another night I met a woman Angel, white, young and sexy, and said, "She was looking for her knight in shining armor." I said, "It's uncool to be so old-fashioned. It is people like you who hold the World back from its ultimate destiny." She said, "I just want a conservative lover." I said, "Conservatives are a dying breed, and I dare say these people will not be included in the World party of the near future. People will be dancing in the streets and you will be in your cocoon."

She said, "She was not in a cocoon, rather was open-minded about future lovers." "Well, if that's the case, I'd like to love you!" I said.

So, she was from Bangor, Maine, where she lived, and she totally was into me. She said, "She'd read my books and looked over the Online publishing site and was quite impressed!" I asked her, "What was her job?" She said, "She was a writer too, and had written a number of horror books. And I perused some of them. But she was having a hard time publishing them. I said, "It's par for the course. But posterity would look fondly on her," I thought. She said, "It's a World of horror and almost everyone is having mental health issues. Most of her stories were about people cracking up." "I can see that I said from your books," I said.

And we loved each other, downtown in a hotel, and it was sublime. We were both really into it.

Afterwards, I said, "That even old-fashioned people can make excellent lovers, these days!" She said, "I'm sorry you feel that I'm old-fashioned. Actually, she figured she was avant-garde."

#####

He was saying, "His name was Rob and he was 49 and distinguished and a colonel in the reserves. And, he didn't believe in future love. He figured humans were lost in love and didn't know where to turn." I said, "Everyone wants love, that's for sure. And kindred spirits are available Online." He said, "Perhaps I am missing something here, but it truly seems that kindred spirits turn out to be greedy and dominant and not nice lovers at all."

I said you, "Just need to refine your search to make sure they are kindred spirits. Be specific!"

He said, "Women these days are always playing games and don't take love seriously!" I answered him saying, "We have some serious women here. Let me introduce you to one, she is an artist with a very open mind. And she is very serious about life. Don't let her down!"

So, I introduced them to one another. And they promptly started talking about the seriousness of AI and eternal youth etc. They seemed to enjoy each other's company! Chalk another one up for me as Cupid. I seemed infallible.

#####

And then I was talking to an Indian man who said, "He was going stir crazy with this pandemic. He lived in NYC, but every year went to Cancun, but not this year. He was tired of Covid-19, but maybe this bar would be his salvation." I said, "There's a lot of good people here. And everyone is bummed out by the pandemic."

So, I watched him hook up with a very slim Chinese woman and they seemed to be over the Moon for one another.

#####

Then Gertie came back for an encore and had painted this Virtual bar with me appearing as an angel with a halo! I told her, "I am flattered, but I am no angel." She said, "We are all pretenders!" And I loved her again...

#####

The man, Bob, white and about 50 was saying, "He was a crazy man." I said, "Everyone these days is mad. Unlike previous times where people were all fitting in with the culture and 'normal' behavior. Now everyone is out on their own, among the tempest. No God and not so busy with work leaves people to do crazed actions." I asked him, "What is the craziest thing you've ever done?" He said, "He said, he dated a married woman and gave her a large hickey which she could not hide. And then she killed herself. He felt responsible." I said, "The craziest thing I ever did was open this Virtual bar. I've met a lot of mad people, such as lovers."

“Most of these crazies aren’t very interesting though; it’s the ones who pretend to be sane that are the most interesting. But for women you can tell how crazy they are when they orgasm.”

Bob said, “Good points. But people like me and him were the craziest.” He said, “He ran a bar too, but it was now closed due to Covid-19. He said, “He was thinking of opening a Virtual bar too.” I said, “I welcome the competition, it gives momentum to Virtual entertainment.

And Bob and I talked over the details of running a Virtual bar. Bob was to become one of my closest friends...

#####

A 30 year-old sexy Thai girl named Mary Jane butted in and was saying, “She was mad too!” She had, “A love for big and tall men. She hung around the New York Knicks games back when fans were allowed and she loved some of the players. She said, “She was willing to love any pro-athlete and considered herself to be irresistible.” And she said, “You don’t look like a pro-athlete.” I said, “Well I walk an hour a day and my weight is under control. But I am an artist, and everyone knows artists are the best lovers. Why don’t you try one on?” I asked. She exclaimed, “That’s why she was here!”

But I loved her, and I was bored with her and so, “I wished her good luck.”

Some mad people are interesting I thought again.

#####

Then I was listening to Reg, he was a newcomer, white and attractive, about 35 and said, “He was a musician and played lead guitar in a band that was up and coming. But now there were no gigs, now.” I said, “If I like your sound you can play here, but not too loudly as to get in the way of conversation. So, he gave me a few CDs. One was rocking and the other two sounded like “Tangerine Dream.” So, I said, “Why don’t you play this weekend? He asked, “How would they go about playing virtually?” I replied just move your joystick to control your arms as

if you were playing kind of like air guitar and then play your CDs... The name of the band was "Salvation Come."

#####

March 2021

So then on the weekend the band "Salvation Come" played our bar. I announced them and they suddenly appeared. It went over well, and my muse said, "She was glad I was broadening my horizons and not chasing after women all the time. And she knew I had opened this bar just to meet chicks."

I told her, "But I have a lot of friends here also," I said. "And I met you here."

She said, "She knew I fancied myself to be a great writer and a great lover. But you haven't made it to the big time yet." I said, "Well you are helping me get there!"

#####

It was time for chapter six of our Mars book. In this chapter, "The mad romance continued, and we were only getting younger and younger. We were born at the right time we said in the book. Even though we had to go through Covid-19, there were bright happy days in the future. It was turning out to be a 'feel good book.'"

And we knew time was on our side, so we took it easy in the book, no frantic desperation, like some on Earth.

#####

“Meanwhile Harry and I’s, “Love on Mercury, 2035, had been picked up by a publisher of medium size and we went for it.”

#####

The girl, Annabella, from Germany, was short but had a full figure and was about 26 years old. She looked like a sex machine. She was making her debut in my bar and was in town for the week. And I was attracted to her. She said, “It was easy to find this bar Online, and she was very glad to meet me.” I asked her, “What do you do for a living?” She said, “She was a singer in a German rock group called, ‘Uninterrupted Loving.’” She gave me some CDs and one of them was in English. I played the CD in the bar and many people told me they liked it and wanted to know where they could find the music Online. I said to Annabella, “They too could play here.” She said, “They were trying to break into the American market with their English CD.” They were an all-female band.

Then I took Annabella back to my place and it was torrid love. I felt pain in my heart and was exhausted afterwards.

I resolved to not be so intense in loving in the future. And Annabella and I spent the week in bed. Finally, she returned to Germany, promising to come back soon.

#####

Then I went to another hypnotherapist and again found Jane had hypnotized me for success, as well as to love her. That explained why she had had such a hold on me. But it turned out Ingrid had cross-hypnotized me to love her instead. I figured all in all though, that I loved Ingrid much more than I had ever loved, Jane.

#####

My muse said, “Let me guess, you found another lover?” I said, “Yes, but I had been thinking about her, Ingrid.”

She said, “Anyway her idea for chapter seven was to clone famous people alive and dead and party with them on Mars. The clones would give their take on the milieu on Mars. They would

have been born in 2035, and were full adults at birth given memories of their parents. Old enough for a serious discussion.” I said, “It’s a good idea and maybe they can only communicate through MRT (Mind Reading Technology). It would be a loving World and people would want to come to meet the famous clones and experience MRT loving. It was becoming a highly experimental colony.”

Then she asked, “What I would do if I became really famous?” I replied, “Carry on like I am now. I know my journal about this bar will be good and kind of mainstream, not sci-fi, like I am used to. It will appeal to all adult sci-fi lovers and lovers of just plain good literature.”

She said, her favorite book was, “Flowers for Algernon.” I said, “I liked that one too.” I said, “Do you think I am going to lose my mind like the protagonist in the story? She said, “She wanted to know how I felt about it?”

Then we went to her place for some loving. I had had two days to recharge my batteries and was pumped up on Viagra.

She said, “I was her favorite lover of all time.” I said, “I feel the same way.”

#####

Then the next night I was back at the bar. Jolly Roger put in an appearance and introduced me to his bride to be. The wedding was in a week’s time, but it was to be all Virtual. I said to him, “Let’s get together before the wedding and all get hammered. It would be a pity to be sober for your wedding!”

His mate was cute and told me, “She was a real drinker too and that she was very pleased to finally meet me.”

So, my muse joined us and the four of us drank the night away and told our best anecdotes. Roger wanted to know about the Martian book, and I also told him I planned to publish my journal of this bar. He said, “I figured you might do something like that.”

And I asked his love, "What did she do?" She told me, "She was a computer scientist and wondered if I wanted any additional software for the bar. I said I want the bands who play here to have a Virtual instrument in their hands." "That would be easy," she said.

And I would also like it if people held a drink in their hands and could appear to be drinking. I can do that too," she said.

#####

So, with the new software you could judge how much a person was drinking and I thought that was a real boon to the bar.

I hadn't gone to any of the Virtual bars in existence. I wanted to remain "pure."

But my muse went to some of them and said they didn't require their guests to be special or clever or anything like that. But they played music to appeal to certain types.

#####

And it was time for our Online publishing company's issue #6. I put in some pieces of my own, that I figured would be judicious and so did my co-publisher, Chuck. And we had a lot of good, stellar stories in this issue. We talked about how glad we were to have set up this "alternative" publishing company. And we talked about literature late into the night...

#####

Then, it was time for chapter 7 of our Martian book. Ingrid said, in this part of the book, the colonists get ready for a trip to the Centauri system. Estimated flying time was now 30 years and dropping fast. When it hit 5 years, then they would go, and they had already built a Spaceship to take them, but they needed to install a new and improved engine and needed new physics. I said, "But in the meantime they live life to the full and don't deny themselves any Earthly pleasure. And tourists start to come into the colony in droves and they are all elite from Earth."

#####

I hadn't been replying to my lovers' emails since Annabella, except of course from my muse.

Then I got together with an old flame from university. Her name was Jacqueline, and she was born in Egypt. I remembered loving her while in school and asked her, "What she had been up to?" She said she was now a professor of English at Stanford, but was in town in NYC for the weekend for a holiday. I asked her, "What did she think about the books I had sent her?" She said, "They are odd, but brilliant and she had a gift for me, of her first book. The book was about her university days and I was in it, only slightly altered." I said, "I was planning on publishing my journal of the bar." She said, "Will it be creative non-fiction or fiction?" I said, "It is definitely fictitious with elements of sci-fi. But most of it is true..."

I added, "I have improved on the truth to make it more engrossing and eventually I want to make a movie out of it."

#####

Then a sexy Chinese university student, aged 21, skipped her classes for a few weeks and spent every night here. She said, "She'd already had a couple of lovers, including losing her virginity finally and met a lot of swell friends. She looked to me to be an angel with bright eyes and a kind physiognomy. I said, "We need more youth in this bar, why not bring some friends?" She said, "She could certainly do that." And I declared tomorrow to be "youth night," and all those under 25 would get in free.

So, the next day there were 15 under 25, including 8 with the girl of yesterday. I found most of them didn't have much original to say, but they were still young... However, one guy said, he'd invented a new drinking box made of cardboard with tin foil on the interior and he was currently trying to market it.

And then there was a Chinese, sexy girl who said, "She was trying to be a writer. But was having difficulties." I responded by saying, "Don't try and be perfect. Let the prose flow and then edit the hell out of it and throw away the stuff that isn't good. Writing is a craft that improves with age. You'll get better and you have a long writing career ahead of you."

Also, the student I'd met the previous night, she said, "Her dream was to be a potter and design clay pots with people and places on the pots, just like the ancient Greeks." I said, "Those ancient Greeks were really something. I wonder why modern Greeks can't do much in the way of art and science."

And I told the students some of my anecdotes, and we had a great time.

#####

And despite the fact that Laura and I were basically done, I thought of Laura. I'd been texting her several times a day and this next day I went over to her house for some loving. She said, "I haven't seen you in weeks!" I said, "I've been in the zone, writing. I was holed up writing." She said, "It seems to me you have a bevy of lovers, and don't have much time for me." I said, "You are the one I love most." And I gave her a diamond necklace. She said, "You can't buy my love."

So, we continued on a rocky road, Laura and I.

#####

But then I was talking to a girl of about 30 who was white and attractive, who said, "She was a writer too. And had written some mainstream books, but had just been published by a middle-sized publisher. She still hadn't made it to the top." I said, change your writing style to suit the elite readership. Ask around and see what kind of books they want to read, madness is a good modern topic, so too mad love."

I said, "But I have also had problems publishing, that's why I started, the Online publishing company, "Midas' Sinkhole" with my associate, Chuck. Chucks had written a horror novel that earned him tens of thousands of dollars and had recently been writing minimalist stories.

And Chuck was here tonight, back from L.A. He had a good beard and told me how he was still into meditation and had discovered the road to Nirvana mostly all by himself.

He said, "One day he would disappear from sight and ensconce himself in meditation." I said, "Don't leave me Chuck, you are my best buddy!"

And Chuck wasn't much of a drinker, but we had a few together that night. He said, "Let's go to Italy next year." (He'd been studying Italian and other languages). I replied, "It sounds like a plan, I dig those Italian beauties."

So, Chuck had fully come out of self-imposed exile and showed up in the bar that night. And we talked about literature all night. "And I wished him well." But I knew that he was a free spirit and was constantly on the move. I said to him, "You should keep in touch more often." He said, "Any way the wind blows..."

And I said, "I hope that you find Nirvana!"

But I knew he was a free spirit, and I probably wouldn't see him for a while. But he was my best friend all the same! But we'd keep in touch.

And we were planning on bringing out our latest issue, issue #7, in the next few months.

#####

Then I was talking with a philosopher named Socrates. He was white and average looking, but weird looking at the same time. He was 47. I asked, "Don't you think most philosophy is just dense bull shit? He said, "He got through university using Bertrand Russell's 'Unpopular Essays.' In which Russell basically says all philosophy is bull. But he said, "He liked Plato and Nietzsche the most. They were written in plain language and he could relate."

And I asked, "What is your philosophy? He said, "He was a futurist. And believed in total progress. No holds barred on progress." I asked, "What about pollution and those who are left behind by progress?" He said, "There will always be a safety net, for the unfortunate. And the safety net will only increase as society gets richer. And pollution is being beaten by electric cars and wind, solar and geothermal power."

And he said, "As a futurist he wanted to see colonization of the Solar system. And using the best scientists to develop faster travel in Space." And he said, the best scientists created the vaccines for the pandemic and now it is time for them to develop faster travel. And he said at

present it will take a hundred years to get to the Centauri system and they had two nice planets there. We needed greater speed,” he said.

And as a futurist, “He wanted to see brilliant AI which could eliminate the need for most people to work. It would be paradise for all.”

“And MRT (Mind Reading Technology) and eternal youth and clones and numerous children born in the incubator; so, the population will grow significantly and perhaps millions and millions will go to Space in the next decade or two. We have the technology,” he said.

“And people should, believe in Utopia,” he added. “And those who go to Space will need an MRT test to make sure their heart is in the right place.”

I said, “I agree with you! It sounds like a good plan.” But I felt I’d had a similar conversation before.

#####

She, Barbara, a white woman of about 65, was saying, “She didn’t want to live in this future we are creating. It would be a World where most people have no use and are relatively poor and the elite are filthy rich.” I said, “But everyone will have food and shelter and free entertainment and be able to find kindred spirits Online in places like my Virtual bar.” She said, “You are doing your part but most people these days were greedy and small-minded. And they are doomed to be useless to society.”

#####

The philosopher named Tom, a young average looking, white Canadian, was speaking with me. He was saying fake news and allegations of fake news were undermining the country. He said the reason wars happen is politicians don’t stand up for what’s right. It is a human system and subject to abuse. Most people are cowardly about standing up to abuse of power, but will march to war if so ordered. I said, “The democratic system is definitely flawed. But what can we do?”

He was saying, "Anyway, maybe it's best for a good man to avoid politics altogether. And focus on love and charity."

He said, "He was the philosopher of love. And he said, "Future people will have little work to do and everyone will be trying constantly to find lovers. And brotherly love will rise to new heights. It will be Utopia." And he said, there are many kinds of love, some unfortunately are not good. But he believed that everyone gets what they deserve in the end."

And he said, "That when they finally introduce MRT (Mind Reading Technology), it will be a true World of love."

I said, "I doubt we will see Utopia. It is more likely that the rich elite will dominate, and most people will be relatively poor. Many people are incapable of love and it sounds boring to just look for love all of the time." He said, "But you are always looking, aren't you?" "Not always," I replied. "I am busy with my writing and publishing company. And I quit my job teaching creative writing, some time ago, the bar supports my writing."

#####

Then Bob again. We were talking about madness, again. He said, your 'Tales of Madness' were just what the doctor ordered. He'd been inspired by the bar to write, 'Tales of Mad Love.' I said, "You are stealing my concept!" He said, "Don't worry he had a totally different take on madness than I did." "For him all those who claimed they were sane, were just pretenders and oblivious to reality. Everything they did was mad and without reason. He'd met lot's of girls recently who were completely nuts. But it was good."

I said, Bob, "It's an insane World and we need to educate people to behave sanely despite the brewing storm." He asked, "I thought you supported madness, especially mad loves?" "No," I said, "I wish that people were saner, but there's no bucking the trend. Everyone seems to be on board the mad train."

#####

Then a few days later, I was talking again with Tom, the love philosopher. I was saying, "For me the future will be different than anyone thinks. And there will be many pitfalls on the way. I am scared of the future and I fear my books will be irrelevant to posterity."

He replied, "Our books are for the present time. It is vain and greedy to think you can control the events of the future." "Still," I said, "I think some people will be right about what the future basically entails. And I have written books about many possible futures. All could be true in one way or another."

He said, "I've read some of your books and you are undoubtedly a genius. But your style is too unique for the big publishers. Try more mainstream styles." I said, "This bar's journal is my attempt to go mainstream." He said, "He was sure I had met a lot of interesting people in this bar. It is an interesting experiment." I asked, "What is life but interesting discussions and actions?"

I added, "I've read some of your philosophy. You have brilliant ideas, but your books are too dense Not for me. Why can't you write in plain language like Plato or Nietzsche?"

He said, "Most great philosophers are opaquely written in content. It is just what they want to write!"

I said, "I don't understand it."

#####

Then Lucy appeared in the bar, and joined us. I asked her, "What do you think about philosophy?" She said, "She felt many people had a good life philosophy, but don't write things down. Like Socrates or Christ or Buddha?"

I said, "Philosophy should be accessible to all and make sense not be a bunch of gibberish that no one can get through."

Then people were singing Beatles songs in the bar. And I said to Tom and Lucy, "Great music is still being made, but it is mostly obscure." Lucy said, "The 1960s were an inspirational

time and free love is what made the music.” Of course, Tom agreed with her. “Love drives everything good,” he said.

So we all spent the night singing karaoke songs and when the bar closed at 2 am, I went home with Ingrid. That is to say we both disappeared from the Virtual bar. I figured Lucy would be pissed off, but that was the way it goes.

#####

After Ingrid and I loved one another a few times, we were talking about philosophy. She was saying, “If people spend time thinking, they will undoubtedly get their own take on this life. All humans are unique she was saying...” I said, “All humans are unique, but education teaches them to conform and be part of the whole. Education is like a hazing one has to go through!”

She said, “Her education was mostly reading books on her own. There’s a lot of good books to read, but not so many in the last couple decades or so.”

#####

The next day it was time for chapter 7 in our book on Mars. In this chapter she posited that “All the Martians had their own ideas about space and the future. And they treasured free speech above all. And they had an active democracy. Just like ancient Athens only women were included. Many of the Martians supported existing ideas, some had new ones. For example, some thought billions would go to Space in the next 50 years and ultimately most humans would live in Space. Others thought the governments on Earth would interfere with Space and insist on policing it. Some thought the climates of other Worlds could be altered through terraforming. Most Martians believed in Utopia of one kind or another, including the Mars colony itself. Everyone seemed to have their own idea of Utopia and some said they believed in Dystopias.”

I wrote, “But for now it was Utopia and nearly everyone was having a good time with the other colonists as a group. And they voted for more immigrants who had to be imaginative and kind like them and be mostly optimistic. They were the first in the Solar system, to have MRT (Mind Reading Technology) love. And this brought in the tourists, as well as immigrants.”

#####

Back at the bar, the man, Jim, a man from Wales, about 40 and average looking, was saying, that, "He was an architect, a follower of Frank Lloyd Wright." And he said, "Beautiful buildings are rare, like everything great."

I said, "But it takes a master artist to fully appreciate a great building."

He said, "Sadly that is true. If you are not capable of something, you can't appreciate it in others." And he figured, "Few people can really draw."

I said, "What are you drinking Jim?" He said, "I'm drinking brandy sours. A habit I picked up when I lived in Cyprus." I said, "I want what you are drinking, Jim!" He replied, "Yes, alcohol is our greatest comfort." I had a well-stocked bar in my home!

And he showed me his designs in a book he had published including versions that in the end were rejected. And he talked about, "Different women inspiring different works."

I asked, "What do you think about Virtual Reality architecture?" He said, "It was certainly the future and gave artists of all kinds a chance to design future architecture."

And I asked him, "If he'd be willing to design a façade for the bar that we could put Online?"

He said, "He'd do it with pleasure in exchange for a lifetime pass to the bar!" I agreed, saying, "Even in NYC it was difficult to find architectural genius. But this bar seems to be discovered by artists all around the World, especially when they are in NYC for a visit."

#####

Next a French chemist, Pierre. He was white and about 50. He said, "He was a follower of the Curies, Marie and Pierre. He wanted to have a lover that was smarter than him, and he was very smart."

I said go to that woman, Annie, over there, "She is a clever biological engineer."

They seemed to get along well, and I reflected people here were open-minded and easy to please.

The woman, Patricia, was saying, "She was a friend of Annie. And also, a bio engineer. She said, "In the future biology will be overtaken by computer engineers. And we will all be cyborgs and we will have androids and holograms to serve us. Organic humans will be phased out." I said, "Sounds dire." And she said, "It's evolution and it is speeding up. People need to keep pace with the advances in technology. They will try to make technology accessible to all, but it won't be easy." "So, there's hope," I answered. She said, "Yes it will be a Utopia."

Then Patricia, Annie, Pierre and myself, joined in conversation. Annie was saying, "Most people live in the best of all possible worlds." I said to be candid, "I think most people these days have a lot of stress and social media is driving them insane." Patricia said, "But most people are sane. I responded by saying, "In my opinion most people are totally crazy." Pierre said, "It is all relative. People now find themselves with no meaning to life and are nihilists. But for him, progress was his religion. For people to be all they can be and to be happy and content." Patricia replied, "The meaning of life is science and discovery of universal principles. Be one with the Earth." I said, "Future Superhumans will be kind above all, and everyone will be a Superhuman. And we will not be ruled by computers." Pierre said, "Yes computers must always defer to humans. We don't want to create AI that are better than us. We are all humans, and even if we are cyborgs, we will rule the Earth and Space."

Annie said, "Humans need strong leaders. Clever, kind people need to stand up and take control, politically." I said, "Now is the time for heroes."

And the four of us spent an enjoyable evening talking about literature. And when the bar closed, I went home with Patricia and Pierre and Annie were a couple.

Patricia said, "After I loved her, that love was just like the scientific method. We were all cyborgs with our computer apps. Love, for her, was a rhythm at a fast pace. And she found out my erogenous zones. And it was a real love clinic she put on." I told her, "She was a love machine, even though she wasn't a machine per se."

And I told Patricia, "She was the best lover I'd ever had. And I vowed to see her again soon." But actually Ingrid, was the best.

#####

Another night in the Virtual bar, I met Sarah, an Italian woman of about 50 and was very attractive. Sarah was a dominatrix. She said, "She loved to dominate men and learn their sexual fantasies. Some, were perverse, others were healthy lust. She aimed to please all of them." I said, "It seems to me like we are becoming a race of perverts and weirdos." She said, "These days it was hard for people to get off, and they want to get off, above all. And we call it love." I said, "It's true that modern love is chaotic and mad but people still like one another. We are not a nation of hermits." Sarah said, "No indeed. Most of us will survive for a long time after Covid-19. Some live like hermits now, but the vaccines are coming. And the people will bounce back with glorious parties and fun. People will tend to live for the day, when we all come out of this," she said.

I said, "Tell me about your favorite fantasies." She replied, "She loved a man who said his mind was possessed by robot droids and he was their slave. It could happen," she said. "And there was a man who fancied himself to be the leader of the World. And he was fiendishly clever. She went along with it, and he wanted to run for election for the Senate. Polls showed he would win 25% of the popular vote in the upcoming election. Now, he was planning on setting up an independent party to run in all the Congress and Senate races and the State elections." And she said, "He was power-crazed. And she was his slave. She truly loved this man."

I responded by saying, "Everyone wants to dominate others. If only their spouse and children and at work."

She said, "It is world of alpha males and alpha females and the rest are ruled by them. As if we were a pack of wolves."

I said, "We are all animals at heart. But many of us dream big and it is a World of dreams."

And she said, "When she met a man for the first time, she'd ask him, "What was his dream?" One man said to her he wanted to be an android, another said he wanted to be a hologram, and another wanted to be King of Space. She met all kinds of men!"

#####

And my muse was saying, "It is time for chapter 8." "We planned to write about, humans who just wanted to be living a futuristic life. All the best in cyborg technology and constantly daydreaming about the future. And she said, "The most popular philosophy will be to study 'Future Studies.'" I wrote, twenty per cent of university students in 20 years would study a degree in future studies." And we both thought it was good. "And 30% of everyone would be required to take at least a few courses in future studies. And everyone on Mars would study at least one degree in future studies, preferably a Ph.D.," I wrote.

#####

And then Lucy, the fat librarian got my attention in the bar. She was saying, "Somehow we are all pulling through Covid-19. We are survivors. But already a third as many died in this pandemic as died in the Spanish flu. It wasn't much progress," she said. I said, "But the upside was Covid-19 inspired me to open this bar. And I never would have met you otherwise."

And I noticed my muse was skulking in the shadows, so I told Lucy, I had to run and disappeared from the bar. I had a few drinks then just on my own and then Ingrid showed up, looking drunk and horny. I told her it was OK if she saw other men. Her face was flushed, and she said, "Why can't you just be true to me." I said, "You know, you are the one I love." So, I loved her and it was excellent.

#####

And then I met Jolly Roger again. I asked him, "How does it feel to get married tomorrow?" He said, "Tonight would be his stag party and he had ordered a number of expensive escorts to entertain us. I invited all my new bar friends and we all got drunk. Finally, Roger left with two women and I sampled one myself. My choice knew what she was doing.

#####

Then the next day was the wedding and all the men and women both were hungover. But hair of the dog was of the essence. So, they left for a honeymoon in the Dominican Republic. But the party continued until well after dawn. Finally, I took my muse and we both vanished and went to her place.

She lived quite close to me. We were too tired to love one another, but it was a comfortable feeling. We drank until noon.

#####

And next in the bar a couple days later, Paul the bouncer was telling me he had had a rough time running the bar without me. Many people wanted to meet me, and I hadn't been there. And as usual I met only the people that looked interesting. I hated old-fashioned people. Fedoras indicated one was old-fashioned.

#####

One of the new people I met was a "professional game player." He was white and aged 32 and was kind of handsome, from Russia. His name was Anatoly. He played many games in international tournaments and got enough money so that he didn't have to work. He liked games like "Civilization" and also video sports. I said, "Do you feel that life is just a game?" He replied, "Most certainly." And he had adapted video soccer to the bar's joystick system. So the entire bar looked like part of a soccer field. We moved up and down, back and forth so that only say 30 yards was visible at any one time. So many of us played. I didn't get the ball much, so I was kind of bored playing.

#####

And then I was talking to a woman, Rainy, who was from Taiwan, who said, "She held 3 Ph.D.'s all in the sciences and she had done some work on mitigating the effects of Covid-19, once you had the disease. She said Regeneron was better than what she'd been working on, but every little bit helps."

I said, "Tell me about the future of World science!" She said, "In the future everyone will be a scientist if only as a guinea pig. Super science will create bold new humans and life will become a giant experiment." I said, "Maybe we will be ruled by a technocracy. But I doubt it. Your vision seems unlikely," I added. "But she said science will become a much bigger part of normal life than today. And everyone will play a role in the script."

#####

Then Patricia came back for an encore. I was asking her, "About the future of bioengineering?" She said, "There will be designer babies, clones, bio-androids, and Superhumans." I said, "I think so too. And we will mix organic life with silicon computers and it will be a new day." And we loved one another..."

#####

So, I asked the girl, Nancy, "If she wanted to play a role in my script? I.e. love me now." She was attractive in a nerdy kind of way. And she said, "Sure." So, we met at a downtown hotel and she was a screamer and told me, She'd never had love like that." I said, "In the future we'll meet here instead of in the bar. Text me a day ahead of time when you want me."

Nancy said, "I know you are busy with other loves." I said, "I can make time for you."

#####

Then Annabella flew into NYC again. She was back for more. I asked her, "Tell me about your loves." She said, "She'd been loving a Chinese guy..." I said, "Why don't you move to NYC? She said, "It's a possibility!" And I loved her again. She was a love machine. But I was kind of glad she lived elsewhere, it gave me sexual freedom.

#####

Where did the time go? It was now time for chapter 9. In it, Ingrid wrote, "The denizens of Mars declared they had created a Utopia and encouraged the people on Earth to join them. The people on Mars said they had plenty of shrinks to help people get through their life and due to MRT (Mind Reading Technology), were whole and sane for the most part. They took baby steps

with MRT and new apps for the humans, who now all admitted they were cyborgs. And everyone had plenty of lovers, but some had sex workers paid for by the State. All sex diseases were cured.”

I wrote, “Getting in the heads of one another, passively, taught people to love one another, here at least.” And I said, “Cyborgs are the future with amazing memory and kindness. Some people required a kindness app. But it was all a good feeling.”

#####

So, then time passed per usual with me staying most nights at Ingrid’s, my muse’s place. One night she asked me, “Why don’t we sail around the World?” I said, “Traveling by plane would be more fun, but let’s wait until the Covid-19 pandemic is over.” “It’s something to look forward to,” she said. And I mentioned that, “We could run the bar from anywhere!”

#####

And then Bob and I were again talking about madness. I was saying, “Madness if you play it right can be sublime and generate lovers who were out of control insane, if that’s what you wanted.” He said, “Mad people are taking over power and influence and no one seems to care.” And we spent the night talking about our mad government and mad society. He said, “We should really write a manifesto regarding madness.”

#####

And then I met a Russian man of about 40, who claimed, “He was a dynamo.” He said, “He was the best writer in Russia today!” I asked him, “What sort of things do you write?” And he said “He wrote classic literature in which modern day Russia was examined in celebrations and parties. All his characters liked to have a good time, and each had their own point of view. Most of his characters were the imaginary elite artists of Russia, he figured many people could be good artists if only they tried. The education system in his country, made people lose confidence in their own abilities, and convinced them that they had to kiss ass to succeed. But many Russians appreciated his intellectual approach to his characters, all of whom were flawed.

Some were drunks, others were lovers, some were business magnates, some were even drug addicts. And of course, he invented a lot of artists who had their own philosophy.”

I said, “I have read some of your work. You certainly have a strong imagination!” And I said, “You make the future of Russia to seem like an artists’ Utopia with everyone trying to create or support the creators. But the grubbiness of the past with the cold and abject poverty is gone in your work. You make Russia sound like a true World leader in the Arts and life quality.”

#####

The girl, Alpha, was Greek, and was telling me, “She wanted to be a sex symbol. So far, she had starred in some low budget flicks, playing the role of a Goddess of sex, or a brilliant lover etc. in some of them.” And she said, “Unlike most stars she really had large breasts which are seldom seen on Online TV/Movies.” And she said, “Her lovers encouraged her to flaunt her body and try and succeed.” I said, “You certainly look sexy to me!” And I wanted her. So, we met at my usual hotel and I experienced euphoria loving her. I figured this is what heroin must be like. She was the perfect drug. I spent a few days at the hotel with her. Then she said, “She had to get back to L.A.”, and I said, “Come visit me next time you are in NYC.”

#####

And it was time for chapter 10. Ingrid wrote, “In this chapter we talked about aligning the democracy to elect the cleverest of settlers only. One had to have an IQ of at least 160. The average IQ on Mars was 141. Some said IQ was not a good test of one’s worth. But the settlers voted for it.”

I wrote, “The new leaders worked on developing apps to improve IQ and almost everyone went for them.”

And I wrote, “The peoples’ eyes shone brightly, and their faces were altered to look cleverer. It was a new type of physiognomy. Some of the people had gray skin.”

#####

Then I surreptitiously met Alpha again. She was addictive.

#####

The next night, Ingrid said, "I know you were with that Alpha woman. When will you ever be satisfied?" I replied, "It is just healthy lust. I crave variety."

We found ourselves talking to a man who was white and about 40, decent looking, and he said, "He was in quarantine for 10 days and was going apeshit crazy. He said, "Your special Virtual bar was just what the doctor ordered."

He said, "He was masturbating in his home while talking to the girls of the bar." I responded saying, "We like perverts here." "Good luck in your 'loves,'" I said.

But Ingrid said, "She was disconcerted that anyone would wank on her image." I answered her saying, "It is par for the course. That's just how men are."

#####

Next my muse and I met a white man of about 35, who was saying, "He worked his way around the World, editing and teaching English and writing for English newspapers in countries like Thailand, Japan, Russia, and France said, "All over the World he was a welcome guest and found people to be curious about Canadians, like himself." He said, "It was just like living in America in the 1960s, and it was his experience to live through Virtual love all over the place. Luck favors the bold."

I said, "We have had a number of World travelers here and they are all proponents of traveling. I plan to travel to obscure countries myself one day. And I want to ravish the women. Rapture with them." Ingrid, my muse, said, "You are so greedy for new loves!"

#####

Then we found ourselves talking with a man who claimed, "He was a performer in ballets but now during the pandemic was out of work." Ingrid said, "My love and I, think dancing is for fools. The dance moves have no meaning." He said, "But ballet is graceful and pure and entertains the people, many of whom are clever."

#####

So, we moved on to a man who said, "He was an arch genius. And he had written a number of books. He had sent some to me the night before." I told him, "His books were angry diatribes, but I thought they were good." I asked him, "Why are you so angry?" He said, "Politicians were ruining the world with their deficits and debts and now during Covid-19 budgets had ballooned. Just like the fall of Rome."

And he said, "It's not a loving World, people are obsessed with greed and it is dog eat dog. And women who used to anchor society with their kindness, have now turned cold and unloving."

I said, "I am sorry you feel that way. But just remember all things must pass."

Ingrid said, "Our democracy is fragile. And sometimes leaders are not up to the job. It is just a matter of selecting the best people to rule our World. We have to insist on IQ tests for all politicians. 150 at least." I said, "Brilliant!"

#####

The next night we were back in the bar, and my muse and I met a woman, Carla, who said, who was aged about 40, Hispanic from Cuba. "She'd been in mental hospitals several times and was a schizophrenic." She said, she was "Tormented by voices and was a fledgling director." I answered her saying, "Maybe the voices are real and they don't like your films." "I am relieved to have you say so," she said. "Perhaps if I tone down my radical stance, the voices will go away?" I said, "Keep me informed of your progress."

But that was the last we saw of her...

#####

Then I was talking to a woman, Catherine, Hispanic from Guatamala, in her late 40s, who said, "She had searched the World over, looking for love. And she'd found it many times. Her favorite country was India, she said friends set her up secretly and so she met some mind-blowing lovers." And she said, "She agreed with me that love was the future. And sex workers would become mainstream. And love \$ would be the commodity of choice. And people more

and more would value sex and love. And it would be the *raison d'être*, for people of the future.” I said, “We are on the same page. Love rules.”

This woman, she had such a pretty face.

I asked her, “Did she have plastic surgery on her face (she was 32)? And she said, “No, it was real, but she had augmented her breasts.” All in all, she was quite the package. And I declared, “I loved her physically and mentally.”

So, “I told her to meet me at a hotel in downtown NYC...” And it was good loving.

#####

Then I was talking to Alpha again. I asked, “How’s it going with the sex symbol thing?” She said, “She’d been selected to star in a couple of upcoming Hollywood films. One was a story of bittersweet, tormenting love. Another was a tale of the Sahara desert in which she loved every one who wanted her at the oasis. And still another, in which she lived in a futuristic society of no love. And tried to change her society.”

I told Alpha, “Not to meet me at the bar, but rather in NYC hotels.” I didn’t want to upset my muse, Ingrid. And so, we carried on our love affair.

#####

Then I was back with my muse, I said, “I’d sent part of our novel to publishers and some wanted to publish the book. It seemed we were in a good position.”

#####

And now was the time for chapter 11 of my muse, Ingrid, and I. Ingrid wrote, “In this chapter the Martians were encouraging people to improve their brain with genetic therapy and so be clever enough to come to Mars. An app was available in conjunction with the therapy.” I wrote, “Space will be for the elite, no ordinary poor people will be accepted for Space. And everyone, who goes to Space, will have many kindred spirits in Space. The spirit of the pioneers.”

#####

The man, Able, was saying, "That he was gay, and he wanted to set up a Virtual bar for gays only." I wished him, "Good luck," and said, "Virtual bars really are a niche market."

#####

And then I met a man Niall, who said, "He believed that, new religions would appear to take the place of the old. Most people these days were like goats of the herd. And we needed to improve their minds. New religions needed to be more intellectual and believe in Superhumans; Gods." Niall said. I said, "I think in the near future everyone will be an atheist and just live for the day."

#####

The girl, was saying, "She didn't think I was an asshole, but I was very demanding, intellectually." Her name was Bernice, and she was a computer programmer and she turned me on. And she said, "You have so many ideas, it is hard to keep pace." I said, "Ideas are the future, you must know that!"

She asked me, "Beyond Virtual bars, what is the future?" I replied, "In the future everyone will be a cyborg and will be constantly Online and will constantly connected with many others. Everyone will multitask and appear Virtually all over the place. Who knows what work they will do? But they will no doubt be always looking for love and new friends. Maybe they'll all be part of the whole or maybe individualism will be emphasized."

She asked me also, "What about future dreams?" I responded, "Those who have the best daydreams will rule and be dominant. It will be a World of dreams."

And she said, "She was afraid of the future. She feared humanity would be lost in technology."

I said, "We'll get through it, just like we are getting through, Covid-19, and all the other challenges that have faced humankind."

And she added, "That she wouldn't want to bring up children in this World milieu."

I asked, "Why don't you bear me a child?" She answered, "You're kidding, right?" "No, I am in earnest," I said. She said, "I am honored that you would think of me in that way!" I said, "My girlfriend, Laura, is pregnant with my child, but other than that I have no children and I am getting old fast. But I hope they come up with an eternal youth medicine before I die!"

She said, "Let's love one another first and then take it from there."

She said, "She was living in Toronto and we could meet on Friday night in NYC."

#####

Meanwhile I was talking to my muse in the bar again. She said, "You seem to be upbeat today. Found another lover?" I said, "Yes I had, but was hoping you and I could have a baby." I knew it was reckless and I would get nailed for child support, but I was planning to get rich from my journal. And if I wasn't rich, I simply wouldn't be able to pay. But going mainstream was the best idea I had had, I figured."

She took a while to answer and finally said, "Sure why not?" So, I loved her hard that night and was feeling on top of the World."

#####

Then came Friday and Berenice was meeting me. She was worth waiting for. We had a nice dinner and then went to a hotel where we ravished one another. Afterwards, I told her, "I knew she lived in Toronto so maybe I could go and visit her next weekend." The border was just reopened. She graciously acquiesced.

#####

Then it was another week, and I was in the bar talking with a Sophist, named Tim. He said, "He was a lawyer and could argue any point of view rather well." I asked him, "What was the future of the law?" He said, "Cyber crime will increase exponentially in the short term, but finally Mind Reading Technology (MRT) will be introduced and almost all crime will end except for course crimes of passion, non-premeditated. End of story." I said, "If so, what work will you

do?" He said, "He'd be a good shrink. He was really good at understanding different points of view, sane or insane."

I said, "I agreed with him about MRT. It would solve a lot of problems, but there will be many who are driven insane and in need of shrinks. Convenient for you," I added.

#####

The girl, Debbie, was saying, "She was a professional photographer, who had an eye for the bizarre." She said, "Your concept of a Virtual bar was somewhat bizarre, attracting all sorts of strange people." I said, "I wouldn't call them strange, but rather special and clever." And I said, "Maybe you could send me some nude photos of you for my wall." She was very photogenic and clever looking. She said, "You are so forward and bold."

"Luck favors the bold," I replied. I said, "If you are in NYC, we can meet up right now." She said, "She was." And we met at one of the hotels." We made small talk in the taxi and when we got to our room she said, "She felt so comfortable with me and felt she'd known me for a long time."

So, I loved her and she made me wild and crazy. I told her, "We had to meet again."

#####

The next day I was on the phone with Laura, she said, "The pregnancy was coming along fine. But she missed me," so I skipped the bar and went to her place. I stayed a few days, loving her was great. And then I loved Berenice and it was also good.

#####

It was now high time we did chapter 12, my muse, Ingrid and I. I wrote, "That MRT (Mind Reading Technology would solve all of the problems in the future but also would create some new problems like far more insanity and lack of privacy and probably less individualism and ego. The final scene featured the two lovers at the center of the story, writing it all down in a book. But they were full of hope and wishes. And believed in future technology such as Space travel and eternal youth. Everyone could live as long as they wanted."

This was the final chapter of our book. The next few days we sent it out to all the publishers. And prepared ourselves, to wait and see.

#####

April 2021

I was glad the book was finished, and I took my muse, Ingrid, on a trip to Virtual bars in Europe. We were still in a Virtual bar though every night. And the first night we were in Virtual Ireland, Dublin and had found a general ad for a Virtual bar for people from Ireland. We found one guy, a painter of pictures. He said, "He worked in animation and loved cartoons and painted in his free time."

Ingrid asked him, "What kind of painting did he do?" He replied, "He painted cartoons for adults and strange new Worlds. And future humans that didn't look very human."

I said, "Space seems to be on the leading edge of human endeavor."

He said, "He wanted to go to Mars and chronicle the adventure with paintings. He was very fit and very stable and figured he'd be an excellent choice to make Mars inspirational."

We met up with him the next night in Dublin and he brought his woman and we all got hammered together, talking about Mars and Space. It was a good time but the next day we "left" Virtually for London.

#####

So, we went to a Virtual Bar in London, and we found two nice Chinese bar goes in London, both women. One was a potter, and another was an investment banker. We invited the two of them for drinks at our Virtual hotel.

It seemed the worst was over for the Corona virus and Europe was gradually opening up. We were now in early April and countless millions had been vaccinated and the virus was disappearing slowly.

We had a good time with these two women, and we all talked about our bright new plans for the future. And the banker invited us to her resort home in Puerto Vallarta someday. We said, "We'd be there!"

#####

Next, we went to Amsterdam A famous Virtual bar. So, we just went out to a pub and talked with some strangers. Ingrid asked them, "What they thought about the red-light district?" They all said, "It was good and attracted tourists." And one man said, "All men want sexual variety in their life!" Ingrid chirped in and said, "Tell me about it!"

#####

Then we went to Paris, we went to a Virtual pub there, but the French didn't want to speak English. So, we just got drunk at Ingrid's place in NYC.

#####

Our Virtual tour continued with a trip to a virtual pub in Madrid, people were dancing all around euphorically as if they were drunk for the very first time. Here we met a man who said, "Spain had a lot of problems with unemployment. They had no use for millions and millions of people. This was despite tourism and you are tourists, but you don't physically come to Spain. He hoped Virtual tourism will not become the norm." I said to him, "Look at the USA prior to Covid, it was booming, and Hispanics were mostly becoming rich. Spain should learn from the USA."

#####

Next it was Italy, we had some Italian red wine in NYC. And we were in Milan and spoke with a man who said, "He was a former Formula 1 driver." And he said, "The thrill of speed was addictive. But he didn't have any major crashes. And in the early days of racing people died like flies, but now it was quite safe." And he added, "He'd read that book about cloning that I sent him. He was intrigued."

And he added, "The future is coming fast; it is racing along at breakneck speed. We are putting the pedal to the floor."

I said, "They could drive on automatic now, but of course that would be no fun. But I imagine some will cheat with partial automatic drive."

He said, "Of that I am sure!"

#####

Then still in Italy, now in Virtual Rome, we met a couple of Australians. They said, "They were on their honeymoon. My muse, Ingrid, was saying, "I didn't want to marry her. But that was OK. Now he's trying to impregnate me!" The man told us, "All their friends who got married broke up after several years, so they are just trying to have fun now. Especially during the tail end of Covid-19." And they said they didn't worry about the virus, they had been vaccinated and they said, Regeneron worked well for those who got the disease.

#####

Next, we went to Virtual Germany! There were so many Virtual bars to choose from. We chose a Virtual English speaking pub. Ingrid said to one man, "The lessons of Hitler are that populist leaders are often demagogues who sway the people with racist sentiments. Populists can happen anywhere and offer the people, for example, free bread and entertainment and beer. Or just plain madness. But then become authoritarian." He said, "Yes in Germany many people feel bad about Hitler, but it could happen anywhere, even in the USA." I said, "Yes, we have had our own problems with FBI director Hoover, the period of McCarthy, Nixon and then

Trump. Plus, wars and plagues and depressions and increasingly dangerous extreme weather. Democracy is fragile," And I said, "There's always trouble of one kind or another." He said, "I hope the World will learn its lessons. But the dark fog of reality often obscures evil."

So, we drank into the night with him and chatted about the pandemic and the future of German cities. I said, "They will build more skyscrapers in Berlin and concentrate the population altogether now that Covid-19 is on the way out. He said, "It was better to have the architecture of the past. It was more human; new skyscrapers are monstrosities. Just phallic monuments." I responded saying, "As people work from home more and more it makes sense to live in suburbs, but we can't afford to lose all that land. High buildings are the future."

And I said, "People will judge a city by how many skyscrapers they have."

And so on.

#####

Then we went to a Virtual bar in Russia. It was a bar for great intellectuals. I told them, "I liked Turgenev and also Lermontov." They said Russia is rich in literature. I told them that, "Authors like Tolstoy were for a long winter's day indoors before the invention of TV. Dostoevsky too."

Then we met a sexy Russian girl, she appeared to be a natural blonde. She was saying, "Russian people were tough, but sexy." I said, "Slavic people have a way of looking sexy, different from Hollywood.

Thirteen per cent of women around the World, have breasts that are so large they cause them pain. Plenty of big breasted women in Russia," I said.

Ingrid said, "Even the cleverest men are shallow and dazzled by new beauties."

I told the sexy girl, "That we would be willing to love her and her latest love in a Virtual foursome of mutual masturbation."

She acquiesced and we did it. It was very orgasmic. I concentrated my love on the Russian girl.

Ingrid said, "She'd got off on the Russian man."

#####

Next, continuing our World tour we went to a Japanese Virtual bar. We met a couple Japanese women who told us, "Tokyo was the best World city." I told them, "NYC has more variety of people than anywhere in Japan including the best international Virtual bar in Japan." But the couple women invited us to dine with them at their place and wanted to know if we could set them up with new friends in our bar." I told them "Yes, we can do it, but you'd have to come to NYC to actually meet them and love them." They said, they didn't mind mutual masturbation Online and there was no need to come to America. I said, "But there's no substitute for the real thing!"

#####

Then we went to Virtual China, Shanghai. And met with the country's Writer's guild. They said, "They were free to write provided they didn't write about politics." I said, "Why don't they write science fiction which knows no borders." They said, they figured, China would set up the World's first colonization of the Moon and Mars. Ingrid said, "I don't think the Chinese government would do better than American free enterprise in a bid for Space." They said, we'll see what happens. I said, "Chinese should write about the future, not the present, to be safe."

#####

Then we went to a Taiwanese Virtual pub. I had spent time there in my 20's and it was my favorite country. I was still in touch with a few women who I invited to join us Virtually. They said, Taiwan had been one of the best countries to deal with Covid-19 and it was a shame America did so poorly. And we reminisced about old times and my muse, Ingrid said, I envy you and your '1960's experience' in the modern era. It seems like the love really flowed here."

"Yes," I said. And we met up with some of my former lovers who all seemed to be keen on hearing my latest news.

#####

Next was South Korea where I also had some friends from the 90's. They said, they were so glad I was doing well. And many wanted to visit my Virtual bar. I said, "But wait till we are back in the bar in a week or so from now." One of the Korean women said, "Seoul was turning into the prettiest big city in the modern World. And people here were more open-minded than before." And we drank soju with them, a guaranteed hangover inducer.

And we talked about old times and the future. They were interested in reading my journal of my Virtual bar. I told them, "When the Corona virus ends, I would send it to them. It was now June and the virus was greatly reduced."

#####

June 2021

Then back in the bar, a man who I'd known, said he was keen on going to Space. He was 48 now, and from Korea, but figured he'd be a good astronaut.

I said, "It will be mostly young people who would go to settle Mars and the Moon, and most would be American, but they might want a Korean in the name of diversity."

#####

Then we took a break, and I phoned Lucy, Alpha, Laura, Berenice, Annabella and Gertie and told them, I'd been away traveling.

Then I met all 5 of them one at a time, during our week back from our "Virtual tour." They were just pleased to see me; they said, I should visit them more often. And I agreed.

#####

Then finally things reverted to normal in my Virtual bar. I was talking to a guy aging and white from Kentucky that looked just like Colonel Sanders. I asked him, "What he felt about fast food?" He said, "He almost lived in KFC and that accounted for his obesity." But he said, "He had a clever mind." "What's your dream, white beard?" I asked. He said he wanted to go around the World on a jet ski. He would carry a boat filled with fuel behind him and would follow the currents." I said, "You are nuts." He said, "Like everything else in life, it is a challenge."

#####

And next I was talking to an ordinary looking, Hispanic man, in his 40s, who said, "He was a banker, he was a VP at Citi bank." I asked him, "What would banks do if the government couldn't pay its debts after the Corona virus?" He said, "It is a grim picture, but fortunately interest rates are low. And he was confident the banks would be repaid."

#####

Then I was talking to a Chinese entrepreneur who said, "She was interested in franchising out my bar." I said, "We had another person buy up some franchises and now what about you?" She said, "The technology seems straightforward, but the name "Monaghan's Virtual Bar" is worth \$100,000. I said, "I was hoping to get rich from my writing, but I guess it's a case of get the cash anyway you can!"

So, I allowed everyone in that night for free and those that came once a week or more, I gave a yearly pass for \$1,000.

#####

I pondered opening another bar in Toronto. I asked my muse about it, she thought, "You need someone on the ground in Toronto to run it." I answered, "I can run it from NYC!" But I put that idea on the backburner.

#####

One night, the man, Butch, a white man of about 55, average looking, but weird looking at the same time; was saying, "He was a bookie of life events. He took bets on everything. A lot of people bet on a nuclear war, yes or no. And many bet on, when the Corona virus will finally be stopped, which month. And many were betting on he, Butch to die soon. And so on. And he was getting to be rich, and famous in some circles."

I said, Butch, "What about me betting the bar stays open for at least 10 years." He said, "I'll give 2:1 odds, against it staying open that long." So, I bet \$10,000.

#####

And then there was a man who said, "His name was Veba," he was a distinguished looking Hispanic from Venezuela. "He was a bounty hunter and filmed his apprehending of criminals." I said, "I figured these days it would all be Online." He said, "Not really. He still needed to wait for long hours in his car in stake outs. He would fire his M-16 in the air to get their attention when they finally appeared, and this was also to let the neighbors know something was going down there."

He showed me some of the footage; it was exciting. Sometimes a gun battle erupted. He'd been shot several times and wore a bullet-proof vest. He said, "It's the best job in the World in terms of thrills."

And I asked, "Has anyone taken out a bounty on you yourself?" He said, "The drug cartels wanted him dead, so he kept changing his identity and lived in hotels, and kept a low profile, when he brought someone in, dead or alive, the police took credit for the arrest but paid him the bounty." And he said, "He sent a lot of money home to his family in Venezuela."

#####

Another night we were talking to Jolly Roger, "How's married life?" I asked him. He said, "It was conjugal bliss. He said he'd discovered a couple of Earth-like planets in deep space and felt that the more we learned about Space, the more we wanted to go!" He said, "As an astrophysicist he was concentrating on faster Spaceships more and more..." I said, "Maybe you were born too late to realize the future."

#####

Then I was chatting with a woman, Paula, who looked like she was 60 but still attractive. She seemed to be a natural redhead, with the very fair freckled skin. I said, "I'd met a redhead in college, and she would go to parties and sleep with almost anyone and would scream like she was being murdered. I guess she was a nymphomaniac." She said, "It might be true that redheads have more fun, and maybe are more passionate than others."

I asked her, "What was her passion?" She said, "She was passionate about her work, which was a classical historian (She loved those Greeks) and yes, she was passionate about romantic love." I asked her, "What did she think about American men?" She responded, "The elite men of the World mostly live in the USA, there's no doubt about it."

I replied, "The elite women are also mostly here. I prefer American women."

I asked her, "What was her take on the pandemic?" She said, "History is full of plagues, and bioweapons are definitely in the future. So even though we have learned so much about viruses through Covid-19, the future plagues will be even more difficult to stop. All it takes is for one dictator to use bioweapons and the whole World will be screwed."

"So, I guess we better live for the day," I said.

And we spent the evening talking about history. She kept saying that, "A new Dark Age would come soon." But I was pleased people were thinking about Covid-19 from a long historical perspective.

#####

Then Berenice appeared (Ingrid wanted to give me some space and so wasn't working the bar tonight; she just worked Tuesday-Friday and I worked when I felt like it, but tonight was Sunday) but I told Lucy, who was also there, I would see her tomorrow night. Every second Monday night was our night together typically and I was pissed off that she had come tonight.

#####

Berenice was in fine form and we had a wild night of drunkenness and conversation.

#####

And Jane sent me an e-mail saying, "She'd moved to L.A. to be an actress and a screenwriter. I e-mailed her back saying, "I was sure she would be able to play the roles in the scripts..."

#####

And then Lucy and I loved her hard.

#####

And then my muse appeared on Tuesday, I hadn't seen her since Friday. She asked, "If I had been a good boy?" I said, "Everything I do is good." She said, "You are so proud, it is hubris."

#####

And then we met a clever-looking white man of about 50, Morris, who claimed, "He had designed a Space elevator as A.C. Clarke had suggested. He claimed the neo-plastics and new alloys he had used were strong and light enough and a link to the new Space station which was planned to stay in geostationary orbit." And he said, "His elevator would allow the station to grow quickly, ferrying people and materials into space." I said, "The Space Age is just dawning." Ingrid said, "What do you think of our book on Mars?" He said, "Technology will work in mysterious ways. It is hard to say what combination of variables will form the New World Algorithm."

#####

Another night I was talking to a man who told me to "Go screw." Apparently, he wasn't happy with the clientele here. He said, "The people here aren't special, they are assholes." So, Paul, the bouncer forced him out of the bar and blocked him for the future. Paul was a computer scientist and protected the bar from hackers and malcontents.

I said, "OK everyone the problem has been dealt with." And so, everyone got back to their conversations.

#####

Next, I was talking to a man who was legally blind. Blind Harvey. He had trouble negotiating his joystick but anyway I gleaned that he was spearheading a movement to print brail books from the Internet. He wanted all the great books to be printed in brail, and marketed a cheap brail printer.

I said, "In the country of the blind books rule supreme." He said, "Yes all of the blind now read every day."

And he said, "He liked to play blind man's bluff, but not during Covid-19."

And, "He was hoping cars could drive automatically so he could get around better."

"He had a seeing eye dog named Clancy who helped him get around."

I asked, "You must like music." He said, "He liked all kinds of music especially pop from the 1970s."

And, "He was trying to be a pop singer, just like Stevie Wonder and Jeff Healy. And he could write songs on the piano. He wanted to make concept albums, true works of art. His first concept album was entitled, 'Blindness and Space.'" With songs like, 'Blind Pioneer,' 'Blind King' and 'Blind Paradise.'"

I played his CD and told him, "He was doing very well for himself. The music was good."

He said, "He was trying his best to make a better World and he hoped they would find a cure for his blindness."

#####

Next, I was talking with a Dutch man who painted nudes of famous people. "Many famous people were upset with him, with men thinking they should be portrayed as more well-endowed and the women didn't want wrinkles in their neck, etc."

But he denied he was painting famous people. And they couldn't prove otherwise as he altered each face to suit his whims.

It was fashionable to own copies of the paintings and put them on your wall to masturbate with.

Many celebrities said, they said they didn't want to be wank objects, but others said they were flattered.

He tried to flatter them showing them with make up on, including the men. And improving their facial structure to make them look cleverer. And making the girls appear to have bigger breasts and a totally shaved body.

Of course, some celebrities hired him to paint their nude portrait to get ahead of the game, and be more flattered than otherwise.

He was becoming quite famous, in art circles, during the pandemic.

I said, "Maybe a world of nudists will be the reality in Space, but then again, maybe not!"

#####

And then I was listening to a neurosurgeon, Theodore, who said, "He'd seen people with just a slice of brain behave and think normally." I said, "The brain is an amazing thing and in the future we will all be altered, I just hope, it is all in the spirit of good people." And I said "Superhumans will undoubtedly take over. It's just a matter of are you with them or not!" And he said, "I believe Supercomputers will control things, not Superhumans." I responded, "We can't replace ourselves with machines." He said, "Well, we'll just have to see what happens!"

#####

And then I was talking to a man of about 45. He was Middle-Eastern from Iraq, who said, "He was a lucky man, who had been blessed with a very handsome face and a great brain." He said, "He was the perfect lover." I said, "Love has evolved from blind passion to genius lovers. And there are many who are geniuses in love. Top quality escorts for instance. And in the future love will be a science. Everyone will be a love genius. With their brain apps." And he said, "Perhaps the best lovers would rule. It would be nice for the common human!"

I said, "The future has to be a loving World. It just has to be!"

#####

And then I was talking with a man who said, "He was Jewish, but he was not cheap, like many Jews." I told him, "It's a shame what the World has done to Jews. They sure don't look like God's chosen people."

He said, "In ancient times the Phoenicians who were basically Jews, were great entrepreneurs." And I said, "Modern day Israel is a rich country. Other nearby countries don't fare nearly as well, unless if they have oil. But the USA is phasing out oil in place of renewals. Geothermal, wind and solar power were all clean sources of energy."

I said, "When I think of Israel, I think of wars and battles and forced settlements. He said, "All things must pass, and we will see peace around the World with UN soldiers to keep the peace."

And I said in NYC, "We have a lot of Jews." And many are rich and clever. They are just good businesspeople that's all; most of them are above average clever; they are survivors, whose ancestors had the money to get out of Europe during the War."

#####

And then I was talking to a lesbian, Billy of about 40 and not unattractive, who told me, "In the future everyone will be gay and straight at the same time. Bisexuals in other words." I said, "I don't agree, I think future people will go for lovers who are the opposite sex, and they will be mostly love dolls." She said, "Human beings will never want love dolls but will instead prefer human bisexuals." I said, "The vast majority of people are not gay like you suppose. Gays are about 10% of the population." Then she disappeared in a huff. And I kind of felt bad about it. Oh well.

#####

And next I was talking to a man who was from Turkey and 20 something, with an unusual face. His name was Bart, and he said he was in love with the newly famous actress/director, Zelda. She got famous during Covid-19 as a woman who did a lot of good exposes of people

who were hurting during the pandemic. She said, "Life is a struggle for so many Americans. And it doesn't need to be so."

He said, "She was such a superb actor." I asked him, "Why not invite her to this Virtual bar?" He said, "It was a good idea and he would try it." "I also have many stories of Covid," I said.

#####

And I was talking to the man, William, about 60 and white, who said, "Where there's a will, there's a way. And he was working for CARE, the charity." And he said, "There's plenty of wealth in the World today and we should look after the destitute and the hungry."

I said, "Why not a campaign to give everyone a smart phone and Western English teachers to teach them the international language Online or in person. It's better in person."

He said, "It's a good idea. We should try it! I am sure that many new university graduates would be happy to take a tour abroad and we could even make such field work a part of any bachelor's degree."

I said, "After Covid-19, the World would be a kinder place." He said, "I doubt it, but we never stop trying!"

And I said, "We need to use UN troops to bring peace to the whole World and help deliver food and water to the people who are in need."

And we spent the night talking about charitable actions.

#####

The next night I was talking to a woman, Grace, a comely woman of about 40, who said, "William, from CARE had referred her to me." She said, "She worked for the UN in New York. And wanted to offer me a job as a goodwill ambassador." I said, "I will ask all my clients for donations and will encourage them to go to the Third World and help out."

So, I upped the nightly door charge to \$30 of which \$10 would go to UNICEF.

#####

And I was talking with two young aimless women and I told them, "To go see the World and help the poor to boot."

They said, they'd look into it.

Over the next several months I encouraged many of my clients to go to the Third World and help out.

#####

And I was listening to the girl, Daniella, a white, attractive 30 something, say, "How much she liked talking to Ingrid." I said, "Yes, she's my muse." She said, "Ingrid was full of ideas and goodwill."

I asked her, "What did she do for a living?" She said, "She was a pro bowler who was visiting family in NYC. She wasn't famous yet!"

I said, "I am also trying to be famous as a writer." "Yes," she said, "She'd read some of my works on my bar website." And we talked about bowling (I wasn't that good) and literature. She was really quite erudite.

Since she was such good friends with Ingrid, I didn't make a move on her. But when the night was over she said she wanted me to take her home to her hotel. So, I did, and we made sweet love. She was very fit and trim, and had a nice bust.

I said to myself, Harry, you are in heaven.

And I told her, "Next time she was in NYC to drop me a line."

#####

Then I was talking to my muse about our future. She said, "She was pregnant. I said, "Praise the immortal Gods!"

She said, "She wanted to stay in NYC and send our child to the best schools." "Maybe we'll need money for that," I replied. "But I can keep selling franchises," I said, "Which would bring in a lot of money."

And she said, "No word yet on our Martian book. She said all the big book publishers and film studios have a copy. She had turned it into a screenplay to keep herself busy." "I said, "Great work, I am proud of you."

She said, "She'd met an interesting man the other night who also was writing a book about Mars. His vision was it would be run by a female dictator, who treated the colonists well. But ultimately, she replaced them with androids and deported the colonists back to Earth. She loved loving the androids, male or female, she loved them all. And Earth had lost interest in Space colonization. So, she created a personality cult and the androids worshipped her like a God. And 10 years after she'd gotten rid of the colonists; she was up to 1,253 androids. And if she showed displeasure towards an android, they'd often turn themselves off and die. The androids labored to make things they hoped their leader would like, like gold jewelry and fancy air cars with which she could reach Earth if she wanted. And they all kowtowed to her."

Ingrid said, "At least that's what he told me!" "An intriguing concept," I said, "For some reason it reminds me of 'Apocalypse Now.'"

#####

Anyway, the next night Ingrid and I were back at the bar. She asked me, "Is it OK to get drunk with the baby inside me. I said, "Drink in moderation." She told me, "She was an alcoholic, just like me, and would have to get drunk often. Anyway, you drive me to drink with all your women."

#####

We were talking to a white man, named Dan, who said, "He was 80 years old, and thought he'd seen everything until he came here." He said, "It's a very high concentration of intellectuals all having fun." I introduced him to one of our high-class escorts and told her to love him if he could. They started talking about the 1960's and I knew it would work out. Our

escorts were sharp intellects and could hold their own with anyone. It was a new feature of this Virtual bar. I had hired 3 escorts for each night. Each night the same ones.

#####

And another of the escorts was named Donna and had a superb figure and she flirted with me quite intensely. But I told her, "I had a love and was taken."

Ingrid said, "I'm sure you'll go home with her sooner or later. "

#####

Then we were talking to a couple from Mongolia. They were both clever looking and were 40ish. They said, "They felt fortunate to come to America." And they said, "They were trying to meet some of the elite of America and that's why they were here. They were both professors of Chinese studies in California."

Ingrid said, "The Chinese are doing very well for themselves these days, but Mongolia is not doing so well," she said. The male of the couple said, "Just wait until they find Genghis Khan's tomb, that will bring in the tourists." They said they had personally searched for it with a group of students with metal detectors large parts of Mongolia and Inner Mongolia in China, but couldn't find it. But they'd found a lot of archaeological sites of interest to scholars.

So far China had the oldest beer at 7,000 B.C. maybe they invented it and maybe civilization was started to grow wheat and barley for beer, they said.

So, we spent the night talking about Chinese culture and people. I told them, "How much I enjoyed Taiwan in my youth. Ingrid said, "She had talked with a number of Chinese people and found them to be very open-minded."

#####

The next day I was talking to a white good-looking man who said, he was a New York Congressman. We knew of him, but he represented a different district than ours. He said, "He wanted to get the intellectuals on his side. There were so many of them in NYC." I said, "This whole idea of conservatives vs. liberals is weird. The youth are mostly liberal, and so too city

dwellers. The conservatives are backwards Luddites, and the future will see new types of political parties.” He said, “He would rather politics be about the future and plans, but for now we are all still fighting the pandemic.”

#####

July 2021

It was now July 4th, and people gathered in large groups provided they could prove they’d been vaccinated with a card and the USA government had forced health care workers to all get the vaccine. And there was a World of difference, cases were now down to 5,000 a day and dropping.

The bar had expanded again just for July 4th and it was full.

There were about 1,000 people tonight.

#####

I was engaged in conversation with a clever, average looking Hispanic woman about, “What a jerk her ex was.” She said, “He was a sado-masochist and treated her bad but, he was really quite clever, and she loved him. But finally, she couldn’t take it anymore and so here she was. I introduced her to our new gigolo stud, Matthew. I said, “I’m sure the two of you will get along fine.” And they seemed to.

#####

Then I was talking to a man, Jonah, from Israel, who said to me, "A man of your intelligence is very rare indeed. You should be doing better than you are. I said, "I am going mainstream with my books from now on and the bar franchises are making me money and I have 2 kids on the way." He said, "The mainstream is where it's at! Make your indelible mark on the World."

The man talked to me about, "Modern love." He said, "He had no problem with modern love in NYC. Society was making progress he said and both Republicans and Democrats want progress and profits." I said, "I am glad we aren't living in the 1940s or 50s or even earlier. Society used to be such a drag. But now the light of liberty is lit and we are about to live it up in the land of the free, we just need more vaccinations!"

#####

Later I was talking to a man who professed, "To be a pro fisherman." He said, "He knew all about bait and hooking fish." He said he knew right when the time was right to hook them." He said, "There's still a lot of fish in the sea."

I said, "I used to have the patience of a saint to fish, but as I have grown older, I have found myself less patient about everything."

He said, "Patience is a virtue. And good things come to those who wait."

#####

Then another night I was talking to a woman, Eve, who was pushing 50 and said, "She had just got divorced and was enjoying the alimony coming in." I said, "My ex, Jane, was rich from an inheritance so I didn't have to pay any alimony, but we had been common law anyway. And we had went on a World tour at one early point in the relationship. At least we saw some of the World."

She was saying she was a humble artist who liked to change the color of everything such as people and landscapes and skylines. I said, "You must be a student of Van Gogh!" She said, "Yes, but she wasn't as insane as he was."

We talked about art and when the evening was over, "I asked her to come with me to a hotel?" And she agreed. It was good loving. I told her, "I'd like to see her again. Wednesdays were best for me I said and today was Wednesday.

Loving Eve was a bit disappointing, but I didn't regret loving her.

#####

Then I talked with a girl from Norway. She was blond and had big tits with a beautiful face. She was a boring woman, so I stopped talking to her. She said, "I want to love you, bar owner." I said, "I had a woman." And that was that.

#####

Another night I was talking with an oceanographer. I asked her about, "The future of the oceans?" She said, "There will be undersea cities which farm the oceans. And there will be many submarines. And tourists will all want to see the sea life. And of course, there are many frozen Moons in Space, such as Europa, which will be melted and can play host to abundant sea life. Maybe the sea life will be androids," she said.

#####

Then I stumbled across a man who said, "He was planning on putting together a political party. The party platform was to be kindness and imagination over pure IQ. And they would feed the hungry. And he said, people should all do charity work when they are 18 for a full year, mostly in the USA. We can wipe out hunger and poverty and give these people education and a smart phone. During Covid-19, 1 in 5 reported feeling hungry in the last year."

He said, "Politicians are so cruel as to hardly support the poor and unemployed during Covid. And he didn't worry about debt as interest rates were low. And recently, the rich received a 2.3 trillion-dollar tax break, when in fact they should have paid more instead."

#####

So, it was Wednesday again and sure enough I caught sight of Gertie in my hotel. I said to her, "I wanted to pick the fruit from her tree. Just call me Adam." It was turning into a torrid love affair and it was just sex mostly. I liked her kinky lingerie and her beautiful figure...

#####

Thursday night, I was back at the bar. And was speaking with a fat, German man of about 45, who was a game wright. He liked games." I said, "Some people feel life is just a game, like in 'The Glass Bead Game,' by Herman Hesse."

"Or the game machine in 'Logan's Run.'"

He said, "Yes many feel it is just a game. And play mind games to boot."

I said is there such a program as "Mind Games Video?" He said, "Yes, there are several, but they are in their infancy." He said, "Instead of Supercomputers we would have games machines."

I said, "It's not a game. It is serious."

#####

And Berenice appeared, I told her I'd meet her at my hotel.

My muse, Ingrid, was saying, we had an offer on our book but we would receive no payment. I said, "Let's take the offer, humbling as it may seem." She said, "I want to hold out for a paying offer." I said, "Let's take what we can get and move on. Perhaps we can write another book, only more mainstream."

"The journal of this bar, would be a good hit," I figured. Bernice said, "As Jane told you, you gotta go mainstream." I said, "Well I've been up and down this highway and haven't seen a God damn thing.' To quote the Eagles.'" She said, "The World of publishing doesn't know what is good and what isn't. They are not geniuses themselves, generally speaking. If they were, they'd be writing avant garde stuff, themselves."

Still, she said, "Many publishers are themselves geniuses about taking the right stuff."

I said, "The famous book, "The Right Stuff," is a classic about the early American Space program." It is about astronauts cheating on their spouses with girls of the road. Open marriages were unknown back in the 1960s. It is a new concept. It is all part of our Utopia that we are building. But I digress."

She said, "Utopia already exists for the rich and famous." "But they are only 10% of the populace but that includes you."

I said, "I am like the prodigal son. I've been wayward in the past but now I am focused on the future."

She said, "Most clever people are keeping a low profile and are paralyzed into inaction We need those people to step out and be a leader."

"Now is the time for heroes," she said.

And Berenice was now 1 month pregnant.

#####

The girl, Monica, aged 44, a sexy white girl was saying, "Soon she'd be in menopause and was desperate for a baby." She said, "She'd read some of my books and figured I was the man to give her a baby. I signed a contract to have a test tube baby, and I was absolved from responsibility for the child." She wanted a daughter and that was fine by me. So, after several tries, she was finally pregnant and messaged me to meet me at the hotel. And so, I kept loving her. She and I would meet surreptitiously, once a week. But finally, she had a miscarriage in the third week. She vowed to try again. And so we got her pregnant again.

I now had 3 women pregnant and was very pleased with myself. I was looking forward to having children.

I saw Monica once a week on Tuesdays at the hotel.

#####

Ingrid was saying, "No great offers on our book." She figured, "It was a work of genius. And surely some publisher would buy it. But we'd already sold first rights to our new publisher."

It was a Friday night, it was my muse, Ingrid and I's time in the week. And we left the bar early and went back to her place for some wholesome loving. She said, "If only we could be together every night!"

I said, "Give it some time, we'll be together forever once Covid is beaten." She asked, "Is that a promise?" I said, "Yes."

#####

But then I had a one-night stand with Trudy. She was 25 and had a full figure and a clever face and was very energetic in bed. We talked about animals, which were dear to her heart. She worked for the World Wildlife Fund. And was affiliated with Greenpeace. I said, "I'd met some people from Greenpeace, and they all seemed very angry." She responded, "No wonder, with the destruction of the environment continuing as it is." But I said, "Most of them are vegetarians, but they are still angry."

Anyway, we talked about the environment and then, "I thanked her for a wonderful evening, and wished her luck."

#####

And then I was, back in the bar, talking to a middle-aged good-looking man, Rick, who said he was a thief. He said, "He was a villain in a World of chaos," He told me, "In confidence." I asked him, "What did he steal?" And he said, "He was a hacker who stole peoples' ID Online." I wasn't sure what to say to him, but finally my muse was there to talk to. I told her this man's story, she said, "Don't piss him off, set him up with one of our 3 escorts." So, I did, and they went off together....

Then my muse was saying, "Our site was secure, and we'd had no problem with hackers." "So far," I said. Paul was very good at sussing out hackers.

#####

Then Jolly Roger again. I asked, "How was his marriage going?" He said, "They were still in the honeymoon phase, but she demanded all his attention which was why we hadn't seen him in a while."

He said, he'd formed a band he was the singer and the lyricist, and his new friend played guitar. They were called "The Heads Smashed In," and planned a concept album tentatively titled, "Boris' Playdough." It was about children becoming conscious of their memories at age 3."

I said, "I couldn't remember age two, but I had a lot of memories of age 3." "Exactly." he said.

And I said, "I know a saxophone player. Let me give you his e-mail."

And I said, "You can play here Monday nights." He said, "But you haven't heard us yet." I said, "I assume you will be good and anyway you can always play some famous cover songs. As it later transpired, they were really original rockers."

#####

And I was listening to a girl, Marie, say she was from Quebec. She was petite and pretty. I said, "Are you a descendant of the voyageurs?" She said yes 400 years her ancestors had been in Quebec." I said, "Tell me about French love!" She said, "We French we have a passion and energy, and we like to French kiss and we like menage a trois. She said, "Why don't I, she and my girl get together for a love triangle." I said my regular lover wouldn't like it, but Annabella was in town. Perhaps she'd go for it!" I asked Annabella and she demanded to love me alone, so I had to tell Marie, it was no go.

I asked Marie, "Are you drinking wine tonight?" She said, "No in Quebec they prefer beer to wine."

And I asked her, "What do you do?" She said, "She worked as doctor in Montreal and was here on vacation. She was staying at her sister's place. I said, "Doctor I'd like for you to examine me." She said, "An examination can be arranged," and she gave me her telephone number and then disappeared. I resolved to call her on Saturday night.

So, I called up Annabella and arranged for us to meet at a hotel. It was great sex as usual with her.

#####

And I was talking to a clever looking girl, who said, "She wanted to meet me, the owner/writer." I said, "I am your man." She asked, "Where do you get all those ideas for your books?" She said, "She was trying to write, but it was difficult." I said, "It's a craft and takes some time to learn. You have to learn what you are capable of and not try and be too perfect. Send me some of your writing and I will give you a free critique." She asked, "Should she study creative writing at school?" I said, "Don't waste your time with that; just go out and do it. Few great writers have studied creative writing in school." So, she e-mailed me a story it was about a woman who feels lost in NYC but overcomes her shyness and reads poetry in NYC poetic/writer hot spots and falls in love with another writer and they live it up in NYC.

I told her, "It was good but lacked an underlying idea. I recommended she put some philosophy in it, if she could. She said, "Philosophy is hard." I said, "Then put some craziness in it so that it is a true love story."

#####

And then I was listening to a man, Mike, 30ish, from Hong Kong say, "How he'd written a comedy. It was a satire of soap operas and the leading character had all kinds of romantic schemes. He'd say out of the blue, 'I love you,' to the girls and was a drug trafficker who kept botching the deliveries." "His protagonist had a funny looking face and spoke with a German accent. The leading female character was his wife who kept saying out of the blue, 'She didn't love him.' And he would take his dog for walks in the park where he could meet women. Any kind of woman was OK by him and he met some fat ones and some scrawny ones and loved them." I said, "The plot has potential, keep me informed of your progress with the TV studios!" He said, "He would!"

#####

Then my muse was telling me she had the hots for a certain man on the other side of the bar. I said, "Ours is an open relationship, you can love him if you like."

So that took the pressure off of me and I hooked up with a sexy, white, university student, named Joanne who said, "She'd read all my books Online, at least the ones she could find." I told her, "I'd send her some more." I said, "I spent my days writing for six hours and my nights drinking in the Virtual bar. But I was getting ready the journal of this bar for publication and I had high hopes..."

She said, quoting Peter Frampton, "I want you to show me the way!" So, I met up with her at a downtown hotel. And she was young and vivacious. I could hardly keep up with her frantic love.

I said, "You make me feel young!" She said, "You make me feel experienced!"

So at dawn, "I bid her adieu and told her to come and see me again sometime."

#####

I was also working on my debut book of horror stories and writing more, "Tales of Madness."

And I decided my bar journal would be fiction officially but was actually creative nonfiction. I tell you dear reader that it all happened in my bar.

And then it was Saturday night, so I called Marie and met her at my hotel. We had some drinks and then made love, she was truly passionate as she claimed. I said, "Everything you do, you should do with passion."

She was leaving NYC in a few days and I said, "Perhaps we'll meet again!?" But it was just a one-night stand I figured for us both. Anyway, my love life was complicated enough. As time passed, she would send me the occasional e-mail and so we kept in touch.

#####

That Sunday I was talking to a sexy, white, girl of 30, named Joan, who said, “She was a bartender and thought she’d seen it all until she came here. Your clientele are all special just like you advertise.” She said, “She’d heard of other bars which had advertised that their clients all loved a certain band or philosophy. But this was over the top.”

We talked about the customers we’d had and had a few laughs and when the bar closed, I asked her to come to my hotel and she agreed.”

It was wild love, and I felt her touch long after our loving was done. I ruminated it was exceptional love.

I told Joan, “To come and see me,” but we both felt it was a one-night stand, I figured.

#####

On the following Monday I was talking to Ingrid, my muse, she was saying, it doesn’t look like the film studios or major publishers would publish/produce our work on Mars.” “What a bringdown!” I said.

But I was writing six hours a day now as I previously stated and was capable now of a book a month, drastically increasing my productivity, from 2 or 3 books a year, in part just from now knowing well, the craft. And previously I had written down the works on paper and then transferred them to my computer, but now I wrote directly on computer; that in itself doubled my productivity. I had learned what concepts I could run with.

#####

And my muse, Ingrid said, “She was waiting for me to propose to her.” I told her, “I am still not done sowing my wild oats. Maybe when I am 60,” I told her. She asked, “Why can’t I get all your love?”

#####

August 2021

Then it was my birthday August 1st and I turned 53. And many of my former lovers were there and many of the friends I'd met. But I went home with my muse. After all she was almost my wife. We just disappeared suddenly from the Virtual bar.

And I was overwhelmed with birthday gifts like booze in particular. So, lots of good drinking was ahead of me. Ingrid said, "You better watch it, you can get diabetes." I said I am only slightly overweight and walk an hour a day."

She asked, "What do you think about on your walks? I said, "I daydream of course. I dream dreams of Utopias."

She answered saying, "Few people could say that!" I said, "I've trained my mind."

And I spent the next few days hanging out with my muse. 53 took some getting used to and I was approaching old age. I still hoped for eternal youth to be discovered, but this was unlikely in the 25 years or so I had left. If only I'd been born 40 years later, I reflected. But I had my sperm in the sperm bank and my DNA was on file there, when cloning was a reality.

#####

For our publishing company, it was time for issue 7. We had a lot of great works, many were outside the box. And many would not have been published anywhere else. It just had to be good, in the opinion of Chuck and I. And we now had a poetry editor and a plays editor to help us with the submissions. I liked the science-fiction the most and Chuck liked the experimental writing in particular.

#####

Then I returned to the bar and met Jolly Roger who had been playing the last couple nights in his band in my bar. I asked, "How are Online sales?" He said, "Things are slowly perking up."

I said, "I'm glad it worked out with the saxophone player."

And I said, "Rock and roll!"

And he said, "He wanted to give all new customers his Online CD for free when they signed up and got the software for the bar. People would tell other people."

I said, "I know of a certain record producer, you can contact!" And I referred him.

But, my friend the record producer wasn't interested after listening to a sample. "It's a struggle," I said.

#####

And so, another night ended and I went home with my muse. We were getting very comfortable with one another lately.

#####

Then another night and I was talking to a Belgian woman, Kate, 29, who looked like a movie star, only with a bigger bust. She told me, "She was a struggling actress." I told her, I am struggling too and wonder if I'll ever make it big?" But she said, "She had read some of my books, and said it is just a matter of time before I succeeded."

We both shared our beefs with society and shared our sour grapes, We were bitching and complaining. For example, she said, "Studios mostly make mediocre films and don't know talent or a good story when they see it. Mostly they are not artists themselves." And for example, I was saying, "It's easy to get short stories published Online, but more difficult to get published in a paperback or indeed not a full-length book Online."

At the end of the night, I went home with her and we humped until dawn. I was pumped up on Viagra., as usual.

And I vowed, "To see her again. Don't meet me at the bar, e-mail me instead." She said, "That would be lovely."

#####

And then on Tuesday I was back at the bar with Ingrid. I asked her, "How the pregnancy was going?" She said, "She'd had some morning sickness." She was saying, "Let's write another book, your autobiography!" I said, "My life has not been all that exciting, but it is getting better. Hold that thought for a few years." I said, "Why don't we write a book about a nice guy who always ends up the loser."

And she said, "Let's include his lover a female loser!" "It's a deal," I said. "Let's call it 'Journal of a Useless Couple,'" I added. "They are both clever but always lose. They are too kind or too naïve or too trusting and get abused by others. Finally, they decide to get married, but then it becomes hard for them to meet people. And there are no children so far." She said, "Better to title it, 'The Book of Losers 2021.'"

#####

Also pregnant were Laura, Monica and Berenice, and I saw them occasionally. They demanded to see me more often, but I told them I was busy writing.

#####

So, on that Friday, Ingrid, my muse, and I wrote chapter one of the "Book of Losers, A.D. 2021."

In the first part we are introducing a man, Edward, who had studied history in college, but did poorly as he tended to write angry diatribes about past injustices. Diatribes were just not on, they said. And he was shy in love and didn't realize sometimes you just have to ask for a girl's love. And he was so heavy and deep the girls said. Some said, he was too clever for them. Others said, he was a weirdo. He just couldn't win. And he couldn't get a good job and wound up waiting on tables."

And we introduced, Annette, “She was unlucky in love and had her heart broken many times and she couldn’t get a good job either.”

“They were both very clever, but were losers by any definition.”

“It’s a good start,” said Ingrid. “But we need to emphasize how they try, and they lose. They are desperate to be successful but fail. It’s a World controlled by the winners,” they figured.

“And they meet each other and are miserable together and frustrated by life. There is no love,” the man declares. Only misery!”

I said, “We can make this story mainstream and maybe we can publish it. It’s high time we got an agent to represent us, I said. “I had tried some years back to get an agent, but my fiction was outlandish. We’ll try again.”

So, we hunted down every agent in the English-speaking World and tried desperately.

Finally, we found an agent in L.A. that was willing to represent us based on our Martian book and the synopsis for “The Book of Losers.” And I told the agent, “We had plenty more stuff, but maybe we had to edit out some of the sexual scenarios.”

And I had my friends in Russia and Taiwan prepare to translate our Martian book.

And I had a number of former Online students from various countries and I asked them to translate my numerous books into their native language.

It was my project for the week.

#####

Then I was talking to a woman Beverly, who was about 70. She said, “She was old, but was still vaguely attractive.” She said, “She’d lived through the sixties and was still a hippy.” And she said, “She was an artist who painted bizarre, weird paintings of futuristic lovers engaged in sex.”

I said, “The future of love is up in the air. I could believe anything about it.”

I asked, “Are some of your lovers androids?” She replied, “That’s open to interpretation.”

“But love is the future, and people will spend their entire lives to find it, again and again.” she said.

I said, “It may well be a future of love. But it could just as easily turn to hate, and we’ll have a true dystopia.”

She said, “She was optimistic, but there’s a lot of bad love out there.”

I said, “I’d never had a bad love, maybe I’ve been lucky. Of course, some of my lovers have been psycho, but they make for good stories.”

She asked, “But, you’ve never had your heart broken?” I answered her saying, “I am a rock of sanity.”

She said and yet, “You write many, ‘Tales of Madness.’” I told her, “It’s a crazy World, but not all of us are insane. For me insanity is amusing, that’s all.”

She told me, “You are full of surprises.”

And she was too old for me, so I didn’t make a move and instead bid her “Good luck with her paintings. And she could illustrate some of my ‘Tales of Madness,’ and other stories.” She said, “She’d be delighted and would send me some illustrations in a few weeks.”

#####

I was talking to a Jew from NYC, a man who claimed he’d loved thousands of women and was now, 45. He said for some dirty women he needed to wear boxer shorts and a condom while loving them and all he caught was genital warts.” I said, I think the record is about 12,000. You will never beat that.” “Don’t be too sure of that,” he said. “And also,” he said, “He was a great lover and many women wanted to love him again, but his policy was one-night-stands only. There is no such thing as love, only sex. And variety.”

I introduced him to one of the bar’s 3 escorts, Emily, and told her, “He claimed to be a great lover with no strings attached.”

#####

Then another night I was talking to a Indian woman who said, "She had unusual desires. Like she liked when her lover stroked her hair, and she liked her lovers to lick her ears and she liked making love in public. And so on." I told her, "The Inuit rubbed noses. Everyone is unique, but some don't let their dreams happen!"

She said, "You seem to be an unusual man. What kind of lover are you?" I said, "Feeling is believing!"

But after chatting with her for a while, I figured she was too weird for me. So, I moved on.

#####

Then I was talking to a white couple, a man and a woman. I said, "Couples are a rarity here. It's basically a singles bar." But I told them, "You are welcome though of course." The woman was saying, "They were both surgeons in Vermont. And this was the first respite they'd had from Covid-19. A lot of their surgeries were cancelled during Covid." I asked them, "How do you like New York?" The man said, "We both like it, but prefer the open spaces of Vermont." I said, "There's so many interesting people to meet in NYC and this bar facilitates that." She said, "When it comes right down to it, even the elite are each like one another." I said, "But those who are different and special make the world go round. You can't hide from the World,"

#####

And I belatedly now insisted that all bar goers show me their immunization card before I let them mingle with our guests. And all our regulars now had been vaccinated. Including me and all my lovers who kept in touch.

I had now upgraded our Virtual size of my bar to hold 4,000 in a night. Many had to make reservations to be assured they would get in.

#####

And the next night, I was deep in conversation with Roberta, she was 40 years old and wanted a man to give her sperm for a test tube baby. I said, "I have 4 girlfriends pregnant already. This bar is making me crazy." She said, "I'll raise the child myself, and you can be an

uncle and just come to see my baby girl on occasion. My selfish genes told me to go for it, so I agreed. She said, "She figured they'd made strides with genetic engineering/designer babies and she would try for the baby with the biggest head etc.

And Roberta informed me, "She was a lesbian and didn't want to actually have sex with me." I said, "But you are a sexy girl though." And I had too many women on my plate anyway. So that was baby #5!

#####

And then I got really drunk and hung around Ingrid for the rest of the evening. She was drunk too; I said, "I'm sure the baby will be fine." I had told her about Roberta, and she said, "You are driving me to drink."

I said, "As I said before I'm going through a mid-life crisis and I am starting to feel old. You weren't around when I suffered that pinched nerve in the neck just when I opened the bar. I thought I wasn't going to make it."

"I am pretty sure I'll be dead in 30 years, but I am holding out for an eternal youth discovery. They should have all good scientists working on the problem; it would cure most maladies."

She said, "You sometimes remind me of Edgar Allan Poe with your morbid talk about death." I said, "But Poe fell into a snowbank while drunk and by the time they got him to hospital, he had pneumonia and subsequently died."

"But he didn't die altogether. As the good Roman said," I said.

Then the next night I was hanging around Ingrid again. I was afraid to meet any more women. I couldn't take the stress.

#####

Finally, I talked with an Italian man, Tony, who told me, "To cheer up. You're on top of the World." I said, "I'm still not famous and I am getting old!" He said, "Who cares if you are famous?" I said, "I am just so concerned about the World's future, and feel I am powerless to make a difference." He said, "You want to be God, but that's impossible." I said, "I'd settle for a

possible Superhuman. I've got brains way ahead of my time and you can read some of my books to know that. People just don't get what I'm trying to say to them, that it is a World of madness, with no one at the bridge of the Spaceship Earth. It's dog eat dog and everything goes no matter it's moral compass. Insanity passes for imagination and the World is truly screwed."

He said, "You worry too much!" I said, "Tony, it's no game. I am very serious and in earnest about making a better future.

#####

And it was time for chapter two of our "Book of Losers, A.D. 2021." In this chapter, Ingrid wrote, "The loser couple, write about how it feels to always lose when it's important. They had both written many books about modern life, but from the perspective of lowly employment and no one taking them seriously, even though they both thought their works were deep." I wrote, "The World as it is set up won't recognize many great people and don't care if they feed themselves from the dumpster. Instead, we get demagogues and other poor leaders. And free enterprise is all an old boy's club, in which they wanted to preserve the status quo, only with new tech companies, which they invest in. Tech companies are taking over and we worry about our privacy, and control of our own thoughts and dreams.

She said, "You are full of bitterness. It's beyond all boundaries." I said, "I don't want to be a cyborg like everyone else!"

"OK we'll put that in the book," she said. "Any other rants?" I said, "Life is your oyster, if you sell your soul. Kowtow to the political-economic leaders and you'll be rich and successful. You need to want to be greedy for things you don't need."

And so that was the essence of chapter two.

#####

And then I was talking to a white middle-aged man, Cain, who said, "He invested heavily in tech stocks." He said, "Despite the pandemic, tech stocks only go higher." And he said, "It's a World of the rich elite. And he wanted to be able to hobnob with the rich and famous! He

wanted to be a winner.” I said, “The rich and famous are chock full of mediocrity and madness. It’s as if lunatics were controlling our World.”

He said, “Those who are rich and famous deserve to be so; they are the best.” I said, “But they have created a World of mediocrity, in which the best people are used and abused.”

#####

And then I was talking with Berenice.... She was telling me, how she’d won a million dollars in the lottery. I said, “Why not invest in our future Virtual bars?” She said, “Sure!” And Berenice was pregnant still. But I had told her about Ingrid, and she had to take a backseat to her.

#####

Then Laura who I also had got pregnant. She was now clearly pregnant, having been knocked up in March, I loved her again anyway and had high hopes for our child. I planned to send my children to the best schools from the age of 3. And I had plenty of cash from the bar with now 4,000 clients almost every day.

#####

Then I was talking to a white, average-looking man who said, “The whole World is going to blow, sooner or later. Covid is nothing compared to the biological weapons that will be released and nuclear warfare. History is full of wars and it was going to happen again. We’ll look back on Covid times as a Golden Age, before the great Fall.”

I said to him, “But America still has suzerainty of the World. As long as America is stable bad wars won’t happen. But America is a cesspool of madness and disgrace. And slowly the greedy take over leaving nothing in their wake. There may not be wars but there will be a degradation of America’s morals. A civilization of the greedy.” He said, “That about sums it up.

#####

Then I was talking to two women from Belgium. They were both petite and pretty. They said they wanted to see the best America had to offer, and so had come here. I said, “It’s an international pub and many of the World’s best come here. The special elite.” And they were

curious about my books. One of them said, “She liked, my book, “It was all Preordained.” And the other said, “She liked ‘196’ about two girls traveling to every country in the World, insisting on love in every country.”

I asked them, “What did they do?” One of them Patricia said, “She was a model, who was petite but full-figured.” The other Denise said, “She was an architect.”

“Both lovers of beauty,” I said.

They said, they’d found a lot of beauty in New York. Denise said, “But the pace of life was frantic.” New Yorkers needed to slow down and catch a breath,” Patricia said. Denise said, “We were the slowest walkers on the street. Everyone is in a big hurry. It’s like a big walking race.”

I said to Denise, “Tell me about your architecture.” She said, “She liked high rises that blended in with each other. Brussels,” she said, “Needs more skyscrapers to look like a real city.” And I asked Patricia, “If she was interested in acting. She said she planned on going to L.A. and giving it a shot. How did you know?” she asked. I said, “Most models dream of being an actress,” I think.

And we talked about art late into the evening and when the night was over, I invited them both to come back again, some time. And I went home with Ingrid, my muse.

#####

September 2021

Ingrid wanted to write chapter 3 of “The Book of Losers, A.D. 2021.” She wrote, “Both protagonists get Covid and nearly die, but while they are sick, they lose their jobs and have to

go to the food bank. They are some of the last to get it, it was September now and 78% were inoculated. And they were at rock bottom. The girl asks, "Why do we always lose?" He says, "It will get better, it can't get any worse." But then the girl gets sick with terminal cancer and the man gets tendonitis in his knee."

I wrote, "So they collect unemployment insurance and are barely able to stay alive. Neither could work."

"And I also wrote how the girl's mother dies of Covid, which is heartbreaking. But Covid was on the way out. Another month or two and we'd be largely through with it."

#####

Then I met in the Virtual bar, a white man, handsome, of about 30, who said, "Everyone is a loser these days." I said, "But now, some are rich, and some are poor, and the poor all want to be rich. But the rich still want more." I said, "One doesn't need to be rich to have a good time. The best things in life, are free." He said, "No to have the love of a fine lady you need cash and to be friends with the rich and famous you have to be able to afford the places they go. And if you want the best education it will cost you an arm and a leg. And so on. But I said, "There's plenty of lovers who don't need to be courted in an expensive way and you can find true friends anywhere. And the best education is to read on your own and travel on your own." "Hmph!" He said.

#####

Then I was talking to a white man, middle-aged from Newfoundland, and somewhat handsome, who said he was writing a book about, "Just being glad to be alive, just like a fish. Life was lovely," he said. I said, "Fish are not really sentient beings. To me, they are just like robots." He said, "Robots are getting too clever, soon they will copy human minds onto silicon and have no end of android robots." I responded, "Robotics is going too fast, but I wish they would use all scientists to work on the problem of eternal youth." He said, "You are ahead of your time. Eternal youth will come in like 40 years, if you can hold out that long." I said, "I don't think my liver will let me live that long and I am worried about irrevocable senility.

#####

I was listening to a British white man of about 30, say, "How much he loved sex." He said, "It was just like heroin to him. He was a sex addict. He was very handsome and accosted good-looking women on the street and asked for their phone number. They often would give their number to him." He tried it out here and had a little luck." "But," he said, "He was disappointed." I said, "Every girl in this bar figures they are special and one needs to make them feel special, not just wow them with your handsomeness."

#####

Later I was talking to a man who said, "He was an unopened oyster with a pearl in it. He was just 21." And he was a good-looking guy, white from Detroit.

I was telling him, "That when I was 21, I was too serious and stubborn, but at least I was open-minded, at least somewhat." Then a gang of girls came up to us, and they stroked him and whispered in his ear. It looked like the pearl would be exposed.

#####

Then I was chatting with my cousin and her boyfriend. They were saying, when one already has a mate, bars can be boring. I said, "All men are hunters." My cousin said, "I thought you had found your muse?" I said, "Variety is the spice." And she said, "I guess running this bar makes for a lot of opportunities to score!"

I asked her, "If she'd seen my parents lately?" She said, "Yes, they are fine." I said, "I call them at least once a week." But I told her, "As you know, my father is crazed in his retirement. He still flirts with the girls and he killed the neighbor's dog." He said, "God told him to do it." I think he is schizophrenic. His behavior is bizarre, and he talks to himself constantly." She said, "She had wondered what was wrong with him. Schizophrenia. Hmph!" And I said, "I hear voices myself." She exclaimed, "What a mystery!" "Don't tell anyone, though!" I added.

Then we talked about our families and I told her, "I had four girls pregnant." She said, "She was surprised." And so on.

#####

Another night I was talking to my muse, Ingrid. I was telling her, "About my nascent schizophrenia." She said, "I always knew you were insane, but this tops everything!" I said, "Do you think the spies are in my head?" She said, "One never knows what is going on these days!"

#####

Another night I was talking to a man who told me, "He was a mad, but handsome Irishman who could drink a lot and wrote poetry. He wrote me a poem:

In the virtual bar

There are some who are a star

But believe you me

It's not all it's cracked up to be

You can try to be one of the stars

On Mars

Good luck

We all want to make a buck

That's just off the top of his head he said and usually he didn't rhyme but this bar really moved him but not as much as he expected.

#####

Then we wrote chapter 4 of the "Book of Losers, A.D. 2021." I wrote, "The two losers have a falling out and henceforth the book depicts them apart. The man finds a skanky bitch to love, but she is a heroin addict. And she convinces him to get addicted and they are both on skid row. Meanwhile the female protagonist meets a rich guy who is willing to put her up in a hotel indefinitely for his pleasure."

Ingrid wrote, he tries to get off of heroin but can't do it. And he sees his life passing him by.

And she wrote, the girl is eventually sold as a sex slave. And pines for her former loser lover.

As a sex slave, she was used and abused and raped again and again.

I said, "Our characters are certainly losers. But they'd both been to university and had written books and wanted a better life for themselves. But the girl was dying of cancer and there was little they could do. And the man was on heroin and looked like he'd never get off it."

Ingrid said, "Our book was just like, 'Les Miserables,' only updated to the modern era."

So that was chapter 4.

#####

Then chapter five of "The Book of Losers, A.D. 2021." I wrote our male protagonist kicks the heroin and the female escapes from sex slavery, but she was worried they'd come after her parents and family. Anyway, they meet up and vow to write a book about their misery. The book chronicled their harsh times they'd been having. They wrote the book in September 2021. But when the book was done, they tried some publishers and were declined. "We lost again," says the girl.

Ingrid added, when they are writing the book, they realize they love one another and say to each other they never want to be parted. At least they have one another, they say. Some people are worse off than they are.

#####

Next chapter six of "The Book of Losers." In this chapter, I wrote, "The male in the story, finds a job in a gold mine in Northern Canada. And she gets a job in a restaurant there. They make ends meet, but then he is injured in a mine explosion and can no longer work, but he gets worker's compensation from the government and the mine. But his injuries are serious and he can no longer make love to his mate and they are both miserable together.

Ingrid added, but she asked him, "They could try a specialist doctor?"

#####

Then I met a Scottish, nice-looking man who asked me, "How do you manage to be such a winner?" I told him, "In my youth I struggled, but now I am on a roll." He said, "When Covid was over, he would open a real bar in NYC. And he wanted to be a King like me."

#####

After that, I met a South African, white man who said, he was a philanthropist, who'd inherited a fortune from his father and wanted to help the poor! Will you donate? He asked. I told him, "Sure I could give him a few grand and he was welcome to solicit the bar customers." I figured I should do more charitable work, now that I was growing rich. With 4,000 customers a night and each paying \$25, that was \$90,000 a night.

#####

Then I was talking to a woman who was very good-looking, Australian and 33 years old. Her name was Judy. She said, "She was fascinated with writers." "How do you get your ideas? She asked. I said, "It took me a long time to learn the craft. It was a matter of spending many nights trying and trying and finally now I can write 2,500 words a day." She said, "I'd like to be in one of your books!" I asked, "How do you want to be represented?" She said, "I don't know, maybe as a freedom fighter who wants people to get rid of their shackles and be free." She said, "She was newly divorced and felt free as a bird. Marriage sucks," she said.

I told Judy, "I wrote a whole book about freedom. I'll send it to you; it's not included in the website portfolio. And I said I'd like to know her better and she should call me this week on Friday, and we can have dinner." She said, "That would be great."

It was like taking candy from a baby!

#####

I told the Indian man, an overweight not so good-looking man, "He needed to be careful. He was going too far with his radical ideas." He said, "But as he was saying, people need to be programmed to be lovers not fighters and we can do that with hypnosis." He said, "Many people have seen a stage hypnotist and know the power of hypnosis. But they forget about it in

time meanwhile people out there are hypnotizing people to do their bidding. Just like Charles Manson only less obvious.”

I told him, “I had a girlfriend who hypnotized me to love her and to be a success. It was hard to get away from that relationship, her name was Jane.” He said, “Humans are programmable. That’s all I am saying.”

#####

And I said to the man, Dirk, a strange-looking white man of about 50, scary movies, are mostly laughable to me. I did like, ‘The Shining’ and enjoyed the space chillers “2001 and 2010, Space Odysseys,” by Arthur C. Clarke. And ‘Rosemary’s Baby’” and ‘Dracula’ and ‘Psycho.’” He said, “There are a lot of other good ones. And he was writing a horror story about a psycho former girlfriend who insists on following her ex and finally kills him. Then she is on the run from the law and she cracks up and has a nervous breakdown. And then she is arrested, and they use hypnosis to change her behavior and keep her in jail while they work on her. It is the year 2040, and she is released after only 1 year in Rehab. But she hardly recognizes herself and does things seemingly for no reason. And after a few months they recall her and hypnotize her again; they tweak it to make her a volunteer for charity and her new goal was helping people. Many critics applauded Rehab. But some said we were turning people into zombies.”

I said, “I agree future crime will be rare. But it will no doubt be a crimes of passion scenario. Crimes that are not pre-meditated, will still happen frequently in people you wouldn’t suspect. I think Mind Reading Technology (MRT) will be more efficacious in controlling crime, just to be sure.”

He said, “I think MRT will be the end of the World. And will drive everyone insane. Hypnosis is enough.”

I said, “Maybe MRT will solve all our problems and make everyone part of the whole. One unified race. With people showing their faults and strengths. But faults can be good too., if you play it right.”

#####

Then I was talking to a man who said, he had a nice yacht, and invited me on a World cruise. I declined, saying, "I belong in NYC and there are plenty of clever people for me to meet. No need to surf the whole world."

He said, "But it is a feeling of serendipity to come to new places and he could tell me many great stories."

I said, "Tell me one." He said, "One time in Laos, he fell in with a crowd, who would chug a 26 oz. bottle of whisky. Then they would throw up and filter the puke and another would drink the remnants. It was insane, it was crazy. But some people gave free reign to their incipient madness. Even if it was grotesque and nuts." I said, "I'd been to Laos, and met my new friend Garret there who introduced me to opium and crystal meth. It was euphoric," I said, "But I avoided getting hooked."

#####

Next, I was talking to a Chinese, handsome man of about 40, who said, his philosophy was to believe in the future. He had studied 'Future Studies,' a new program that was offered in California and other places." And he said, "Everyone should take a few courses in future studies. We are a race of the future."

I said, "We are a race of the future. But we are also a race of the past. Everyone must study a lot of history regardless of their age." He said, "Fair enough. But the past ain't what it used to be."

#####

So, then it was Friday, and I had a date with Judy. She said, "I loved your, 'Book of Freedom.'" And we talked about how hard it is to be free. And we talked about true love. And then I loved her. It was glorious love and I felt on top of the World. I told her, "I'd call her," but I figured we both knew it was a one-night affair.

#####

Then chapter seven of "The Book of Losers." I wrote, "They both become alcoholics, but are glad they are not on heroin. Booze is expensive in their small mining town. And they can just barely afford it."

Ingrid added, "They make their own moonshine and mix it with water. And they have friends who come over sometimes and they are glad for their company. And everyone likes their moonshine, so they sell it for big bucks. But our male hero can hardly walk and so she has to do most of the work."

#####

The final chapter of the "Book of Losers," I wrote, "Is about how they get rich from moonshine and decide to try experimental surgery for our male hero to make his dick work again and the surgery works. They are so happy together and figured they were winners in the end."

Ingrid added, "Finally the female heroine gets pregnant, and they feel that they are just as good as anyone else."

I said, "The 'Book of Losers,' is a parable of how good people can lose." Ingrid said, "There are winners and losers and some in between. But good people usually win in the end. Some are late bloomers."

And Ingrid said, "For me the book is about how miserable people can be and it doesn't need to be that way. Everywhere, especially in the Third World, many people are in pain and suffering from life. One could write a story about their lives too."

#####

Then I was talking to a man who said, he was a champion of the lower class. He said, "There are too many poor people nowadays and most, if you asked them, would say, "They want to work." "So, let's give them a shot and try get most of them off skid row. Any kind of job will do."

I said, "So many people are needy, especially in the Third World, and we need to send teachers and smart phones and give them solar and wind power and clean drinking water and food and drink."

And I said, "In the past many people assumed that the poor were hopeless, but most of them are reasonably clever, and just like Women and Blacks who weren't thought capable of doing much, but now have proved this belief to be false."

"But," I added, "The masses are easily fooled by demagogues and have to be managed carefully."

#####

Later I was talking with Maggie, who was a sexy Taiwanese and about 40, "The woman of the hour," as she described herself. She said she was a piano player and had just cut a new record of pop hits. I thought the songs were mostly good, but were too deep for most. It was basically jazz, with clever lyrics. She said, "She was sure she would become famous. And she hoped to inspire people."

I said, "I notice a lot of lyrics of heartbreak in her music." She said, "She wore her heart on her sleeve and she was fragile." I said, "I'd be happy to break your heart!" She said, "Writers are the most dangerous of all men. People like you break hearts, left, right and center."

I said, "I'd like to love you while we listen to your music."

And she acquiesced. So, we both went at it until dawn in the hotel and we awoke in the afternoon with a hangover. I said, "Let's just stay in bed for a while." And we ordered food and drink from room service. Hair of the dog.

So, we loved one another for 3 days and then finally I went back to the bar and we parted ways.

#####

October 2021

Experts said, the Covid would be beaten by Halloween.

#####

Jolly Roger was there, and said, "I missed you, old chum!" I said, "I've been busy loving and writing." He said he was still working on improving Spaceship speeds. I said, "It's high time you and I went on a bender, as chums do." So, we got pissed together.

#####

Then the next night, Ingrid showed up late in the evening. She said, "It is nice now to not have to isolate yourself in a bubble." (We'd both been vaccinated in August). She said, "She spent the last several days visiting old friends and family." And she said, "I suppose you went home with that Jazz artist?" I said, "It was a nice break."

"Any news on our book?" I asked. She said, "A medium-sized brick and mortar publisher has agreed to take it as a novella as is. But they want to know if we can make it longer." I said, "As Bob Dylan said, 'For the loser now will be later to win.'" "They move to L.A. Why not have our female protagonist run for mayor in L.A.? And she gets elected on a platform of using everyone who has talent, and everyone has a talent for something. She wanted to set up a task force to suss out talented people everywhere and make L.A. truly the land of opportunity. Her talent was to help the poor and neglected in L.A. She was born in L.A. and lived most of her life there before they went to the mine in Canada."

Ingrid said, "And the male protagonist becomes a famous villain in Hollywood movies. The two are rolling in dough and basking in success. They are winners now."

I said, "Maybe we will now find success for a screenplay. Hollywood loves a good ending."

So, the publisher said, "It was OK for us to try and sell it as a screenplay. They just wanted first rights."

I said to Ingrid, "Let's celebrate the success of our 'Book of Losers, A.D. 2021,' with the finest champagne."

So, we got drunk together at her place. And we were both feeling euphoric. None of my lovers knew Ingrid's address, so there was no one to bother us and we loved each other as if it was our last day. And the celebration went on for days.

#####

Finally, exhausted we returned to the bar. And I found myself in conversation with a man of about 70, who said, "He was a billionaire and was getting old and wanted to donate to charity. Any ideas?" I said, "Why not start up your own charity and try and help cure diseases and poverty in the Third World. If not, UNICEF is pretty good."

He said, "I had given him confidence in going alone. And by the way could he find love here?" "Certainly," I said and set him up with all 3 of our 3 escorts. Ah, the magic of Viagra I thought to myself.

#####

Then I was talking to a young attractive man, who was Hispanic from the Dominican, who said, "He was getting married in two weeks and could he have his stag party here?" I said, "Sure and I'll hire extra exotic dancers for the evening." The stag was to be tomorrow night.

The stag party was unusual in that he invited a lot of escorts himself and all 20 of his party went home with one including the 10 I'd provided. I said, to Ingrid, "Prostitution is glorious." She said, "When did you ever screw a whore?" I said, "Back when I was 18, I fucked one. That was just after I lost my virginity to a girl named April. But it was during the AIDS scare."

And I told Ingrid, "AIDS was scary in the late 80s and early 90s. Now the drug cocktail is basically curing it." She said, "That was a bit before my heyday. But she was sure it killed off that sexual energy from the sixties."

The young man who was betrothed, told us that, "We should specialize in stags; it is so safe to meet Virtually."

I said, "We are open to anything!"

#####

Then a couple days later, Ingrid was telling me, "Our screenplay had been accepted by a small, up and coming studio." "We can show the film at alternative film festivals," I said. And she said, "Why don't we play the leading roles?" I said, "It's a good idea. If the studio will allow it." She said, "The director said the actors and actresses were up to us! And he liked the new chapter about winning."

And I said, "The film is good PR for us, as writers and potential actor and actress."

And she said, "That's not all. The studio wants to perform 'Monaghan's Virtual Bar During the Time of Covid-19,' according to my journal and hers."

She had not told me she was keeping a journal. But I guess it made sense.

"Anyway, we look like winners!" I said.

#####

I spent most of my nights talking with Ingrid. Tonight, we were talking about Jack London. I told her, "I liked the short story, 'The Big Red One' and enjoyed his stories of the frozen north. In particular 'To Build a Fire,' 'Batarde,' and 'the Strength of the Strong.'" "Everything he wrote was strong," I said. She said, "She'd just read 'Call of the Wild.'" I said that was good too. And I said another of my favorites was Joseph Conrad's early work (prior to 1911). I liked his second book, "An Outcast of the Islands, above all. In it Cpn. Lingard goes back to the UK and disappears from the scene. And one of the locals says, 'Imagine a man like that disappearing.'"

“Conrad only became famous in 1912, when wrote ‘Chance,’ with a picture of a girl on the cover, but it was a lousy story. Go figure.

She said, “In high school they had read, ‘Heart of Darkness,’ and ‘The Secret Sharer.’ She quoted “The horrors. The horrors.” I said, “Early in his life he put a gun to his mouth and fired, but he lived. And I had been to Indonesia and it was where a lot of his stories were based. I found an adventure girl there. The Indonesian people on the whole are a beautiful people.”

Then we were talking about science fantasy. And I said, “Jack Vance was the master. With unequalled vocabulary and fantastic Worlds. But he doesn’t change humans, they are still there, in the future.”

She said she liked science fiction too. She liked Ray Bradbury above all. I said, ‘Fahrenheit 451’ was great.”

“And the ‘Martian Chronicles’ were outstanding. She said she liked all of his stories.”

I said, “I liked Arthur C. Clarke.” His space chillers, 2001 and 2010, Space Odysseys were brilliant. And so to ‘Childhood’s End’ and ‘Rendez-vous with Rama’ and the ‘Lion of Comarre.’ And he had a story “The Wind from the Sun.” In my youth, I felt, I was waiting for the wind from the Sun to carry me into a brilliant future. She said, ‘The City and the Stars’ was also good.” Yes, I said, “It dealt with being reborn every 100 or so years. It was good. And “Childhood’s End,” was also excellent.

And I said, “I liked Poe and Shakespeare and the Classical Greeks.” She said, “But it is a new era now of futurism. All the best books will be science fiction, even though most publishers want mainstream fiction.” And I said, “But sci-fi will be remembered in the future. And boring mainstream writers will no longer matter.” She said, “It seems a bit harsh!” But we both agreed, that sic-fi, like our book on Mars, was the future.

#####

Then I was talking to a Japanese, distinguished looking man who said, “Life is a hard road to follow. It’s a World of hardship and heartbreak.” I said, “But coming out of Covid-19, we will see

a blossoming of the Arts and happiness for most." He said, "There will be chronic unemployment and a bankrupt government, fiscally and emotionally." I said, "That is the burden for the younger generation. But you know that after WW II and its high debt the American economy blossomed with the baby boomers and the debt was easily repaid."

#####

I said to the girl, Lisa, white and 41 years old and attractive, "The future is child's play; we have imagined every possibility and there will be no surprises in the future." She said, "She was not so sure of that. Who knows what they will come up with having Supercomputers and Superhumans?"

I said, "Bring it on!" And I asked her to spend the night with me. And she agreed. We both got very stoned and were laughing our heads off and then we loved one another. Afterwards, "I told her it had been fun, but I had 5 pregnant women to deal with!"

#####

Then I was talking with a very tall white man, of about 40, who had the looks of a movie star. And this man said, "He was a Superman. He was of genius intelligence and had a clever face." And he said, "He had written books about his adventures. But he was ahead by a century and he had troubles publishing in big magazines and large book companies. It troubled him to basically fail." I said, "We're all in the same boat!" He said, "When he goes to the bookstore sci-fi/fantasy section there's nothing good to read. Only biographies are worth reading." I said, "I am concerned too about that. I know a number of writers who write good stuff, but they also fail."

#####

One night I was talking to a man who said, "He was named, Jerry, and was white and pleasant looking. And he was a writer of fantasy." And he said, "He thought life was fantastic. And was so glad to be alive. He had had Covid-19 recently and almost died. Now he had his second wind and was working all day on his books, interrupted only by a few hours of Online teaching. He would have a few drinks however in the morning to get him really started."

I said, "I sometimes drink in the morning too, but no more than four drinks at a sitting." And I asked him, "About his fantasy novels?" He said, "Actually he wrote mostly short stories, and wrote about his daydreams." He showed me his latest story which was about a female who has to toil in a garment factory in Bangladesh. She worked a 12 h shift, but when work was over, she'd write fantasy and finally got noticed, writing in English. With the money she got she bought a house and was able to get a writer husband. Life was lovely for her." And he said, "It was a story of inspiration for the masses in the Indian subcontinent. A number of writers now appeared, many citing his story as their inspiration.

#####

And I told the girl, "You are too smart for your own good." She was, "A thinker, not a lover. Not that she was against love per se, but she wanted a man who was very clever above all." I asked, "What's your IQ? She said 171." I said, "I am 180." Her name was May and she was Chinese, and about 30.

She said, "She wanted to speak to me in code when my muse, Ingrid was around. Three f-words in a row would indicate they would love one another later that night at my hotel."

So finally, I went home to my hotel with her. She said, "You need to love me harder and faster. So, I did my best, but she said, "I think you are too old for me."

I said, "For someone who doesn't consider herself a great lover per se, you are very demanding."

She said, "It's no country for old men!"

I said, "You are the first of my many lovers to complain about my lovemaking skills. And frankly, I am embarrassed."

So, we parted ways. The whole thing left a bad taste in my mouth.

#####

A few days later I was talking to a black woman of about eighty. She said, "She was still going strong and wanted to live to be a 100., if senility didn't overtake her." I asked her, "How

did she feel about the modern World?" She said, "She'd seen it all and wondered if life would continue with normal humans or would we create Superhumans? But she wouldn't be alive to see it. And her life was complete."

I said, "I think you are the oldest person to come to my bar! Congratulations for being so strong!"

#####

Then a couple days later, I was chatting with Ingrid about music. She said, "The golden age for music was in the 60s and 70s!"

I said, "But in my experience there are a lot of good musicians out there who can't make it big."

And I said, "It's just like Herman Hesse's book, "Journey to the East." In the book the protagonist fears there are no artistic thinkers. But finally, he discovers the artists are out there, just kind of hidden and obscure."

She said, "Your own case with publishing difficulties gives credence to the idea of which you speak. But most great artists get discovered eventually!" she said.

I said, "Kafka died with only a few short stories published. And told Max Brod to burn his books. I wonder how many writers with Kafka's skill die virtually undiscovered."

I said, "I know a few of them. And J.D. Salinger said writing is a disease and put all of his later stories into a safe to be released well after his death. Writers can be quirky."

"And the same goes for music and art painters," I added.

#####

Later that night, I was talking to a Portuguese man, of about 50 and with a low brow, who claimed, "He could have played pro tennis, but went off traveling with his true love instead." And he said, "Now his lover was long gone from him and he was full of regret. He might have been a great player."

I said, "I also have many regrets including not following through on my early loves and letting them get away without loving them."

But he said, "He was now addicted to video tennis and was seeded in the World of Champion video game players. So maybe he would make it after all."

"There's always hope," I said.

#####

Then a couple nights later I was talking to Korean man of about 38 and good-looking, about, "his penchant for virgins." He said, "He'd loved 10 virgins and liked how they looked up to him for guidance and wisdom."

"But inevitably he tired of each one, and most of his loves were heartbroken. But even after he dumped them, they inevitably tried to get him back. He agreed to some of them."

I said, "But to actually go and spend so much time with courting them and then to let them go, seemed crazy to me."

#####

Later I was talking to a thin, white, model-like beauty of about 25. I asked her, "What is your dream?" She replied, "She wanted plastic surgery to greatly enhance her breasts." I said, "In my opinion, most men prefer a full-figured woman, just like Marilyn Monroe. But the fashion industry wants ultra-thin women who are often on heroin."

"She just wanted to be loved totally and completely." And she said, "She had an engaging personality." And I believed it.

I said, "Look me up when you have large breasts. I'd like to partake." She said, "For sure!"

#####

Then I was talking to a white woman who was named Alice, 43 years old and a real beauty. I asked her, "If she was feeling crazy tonight? She replied, "She was always crazy!" And I asked her, "If she'd read my "Tales of Madness on the bar website?" She said, "Yes and I liked them

and wanted to meet you!" I asked her, "What was her favorite and she said, "For the Theater of Women." It was about a drifting soul that finally drifts into an arena filled with women.

I said, "That's one of my favorites too!" And I asked her, "What do you do for a living?" She said, "She was an executive secretary, and her boss was in love with her. She was glad to come here tonight for a little break in their romance."

So, we talked about the vicissitudes of our mutual lives late into the evening. And then I asked her for her love and so we met at my favorite hotel.

#####

Then a couple nights later I was talking to Ingrid about our film. She said, "Production was starting next week, and would be finished in a month. With mainly only two characters, it will be easy to direct and produce. And we are the stars of the show!"

#####

Later I was talking with a girl of 29, average looking, Chinese, who said, "She didn't like American men. They were rude, selfish and egotistical," she claimed. I said, "Your mistake was not going for the elite American men; they are the best lovers in the World. But one had to search them out and be able to really lay it on the line."

She said, "She wasn't an intellectual heavyweight, but she was clever and came to the land of milk and honey looking for nice men, and she was disappointed."

I said, "I don't know what else to say to you."

#####

The next night I was talking with a sexy girl of 38 who was a real gem of a woman from Ireland. I said, "I'd been to Ireland 25 years ago, when everyone was poor, more or less. It's changed now, I think!"

She said, "Ironically the fact that Ireland speaks English and is in Europe makes it a hub for foreign investment."

I said, "If I was rich, I'd buy you an emerald." She said, "She didn't care about material things, but rather matters of the soul."

I said, "I don't care much for material things either, but just want to be famous." She said, "She'd read my books Online and my two books with Ingrid and was quite impressed. And you would just have to be patient before being discovered in a big way. She said, "She was a big fan of Ingrid and would like to meet her, too.". So, I introduced them, and they got on well and talked about America and Ireland. And I drifted away from them.

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Then another night, I was talking to a sexy black woman, aged 30, named Cindy. I said, "Cindy as in Cinderella?" She said, "You are charming! But in fact, I have to go home to my children tonight." "How's your love life?" I asked. She responded saying, "Her old man died of Covid at age 39. Now she was left to pick up the pieces." I said, "Love me and I'll help you pick up the pieces." She said, "You are very forward, and not without charm and I read some of your books Online, why not?" So, I loved her, and she was great in bed and then I sent her home to her kids.

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Ingrid said a few nights later, "That she wanted to write another screenplay." "What did you have in mind?" I asked.

She wrote, "Love triangle on Io, Jupiter's Moon between two women and one man. Both the women are bisexual, and they have the most incredible time together. But they are the whole settlement, just the three of them and they feel strongly the remoteness of this Moon. And the man was seeing ghosts. The girls told him, maybe the ghosts had been sent from Earth. He said, "Or maybe its aliens." "Or maybe you are cracking up?", said girl Antoinette." The other girl, Martina, said, "No more lonely walks on the surface. Make sure you are with one of us at all times. We worry about you!"

“And the man, Louis, said he was seeing his dream girl as a ghost and also seeing his ex-lover. And he starts to stutter and has frequent memory lapses. They send him to the Virtual doctor, but he can’t find anything wrong.”

“The landscape of Io and its ice volcanoes is alien and unworldly and the three all feel daunted here.”

And Lou said, “We don’t belong here.” What do you mean? The girls ask.” He said, “He’d met the chief of the spirits here and he says to go home.””

The girls debate what to do and finally decide to go back to Earth before all 3 are insane.

I wrote, “But back on Earth they knew all about it and poke fun at the ‘3 losers.’” “They are the laughingstock of the whole World.”

“But it would be many years before they tried to settle Io again. People thought it was jinxed.”

I added, “The 3 losers kill themselves in a suicide pact and then the jokes stopped. And psychiatrists spoke up and said cabin fever was the greatest barrier to settlement of Space.”

She said, “It would be a short film, short and sweet. We can tweak it as we go.” I said, “You are a genius!” She replied, “I am learning the craft from you!”

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Then I was talking with an average-looking white man about my age. I told him about our planned screenplay. He said, “I like the idea of a space chiller.” He encouraged us to enter as many film festivals as possible once we were done making it. He said, “He was a writer too, and wanted to make a movie, “Out of his story about a girl on crack cocaine who lives and loves hard. It is an exploration of what crack can do, he said. And the girl she breaks men’s hearts and leaves them disconsolate and miserable. She is very good looking and men literally beg for her love. Sex is power and strength.” “It is all a crack rush that she feels, and she gets many of the men hooked on crack and they mostly can’t afford it so become dealers and then are arrested

and sent to jail for many years. But she has plenty of rich lovers who can pay for her crack habit.”

I said, “I’m sure many people would be curious about crack.” He said, “He was hooked on it for a while, and all he could think about was the next dose. But finally, he went into Rehab. Many people don’t survive crack he said but he was too stubborn to die.”

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Then I was talking with another, handsome 40ish, writer, Nathan. He was of Pakistani origins. He said, “He liked writing about fools.” And he said, “He’d read Erasmus’ “In Praise of Folly.” And there was no end to the fools in this World. The masses on the whole are very foolish,” he said. He said, “Sure they get wiser in time but are still foolish. They play the lottery, they play casinos, they watch meaningless sports, they work at a worthless job, they get divorced, they have kids who are morons too. The book was called, ‘Fool’s Gold.’”

I said, “But my take on it is the masses are dangerous and easily manipulated. But in the future, everyone will have their brains altered for the better and that will end foolishness once and for all.”

He said, “You might be right, you might be wrong. Many politicians depend on foolish supporters to vote for them. And maybe won’t risk giving it up. And so too many businesses, they prey on morons to buy their products. Morons want to buy the best car they can and have the best house possible.”

I said, “Many morons are rich, they get rich from people just like them, idiots. It is a World of predators.”

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And then I was listening to a man, Mahatmi, who was a writer friend of Nathan. He was also 40ish and was average looking. He said, “He believed in witchcraft.” He said, “Witches hypnotize you to be their sex slave and you disappear from the radar.”

I said, “I guess the lesson we need to teach the people is never let anyone hypnotize you.”

He said, "All humans are like androids and can be programmed. As if it was a divine right to do so."

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And another night I was talking to my muse, Ingrid. She was saying, "before the suicide pact, and return to Earth, our love triangle of actor and actresses was taking shape in her mind. They are all snobs and only like one another in their clique of 3. And they worry about what Earth people will think of them. Their every action is recorded for Earth's consumption."

I said, "Other people want to join them, but they are too snobbish to allow them in and so only the three of them are sent to Io, to see what they can make of it."

She wrote, "The people are watching them carefully, and they crack up under pressure. How about all 3 are insane in the end?"

I said, "They are all nuclear physicists and build a nuclear reactor on Io and use the power to create android slaves. The slaves are programmed to do their bidding and they have them build all sorts of small-domed buildings."

She said, "Sure it's an added twist in the plot. We could say that Space was largely lawless. Just like the Wild West."

I said, "And the two girls finally stop loving the male protagonist and he goes even more crazy."

She said, "It would be a good film!"

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And another night I was talking to a handsome 40ish white man who said, "He was a pilot." I asked, "I guess you get your pick of flight attendants?" He said, "For sure. It was a great job." But I said, "You are just a glorified bus driver." He said, "It's true we fly mostly on automatic pilot, but we are there in case of emergency. Plane rides are fragile things. I said, "My friend invited me to fly with him in his Lear jet." I said, "Small plane crashes are numerous, and it was too dangerous. I didn't come this far only to die like a dog."

He said, "Get ready for air cars, they are on the near horizon and will also run on automatic pilot. And look at the automatic driven land cars they are coming up with this year!"

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And then I was talking to a Hispanic man, handsome and about 50. He said, "He was a pretender to be alive. He said he thought life was dead on Earth and everyone was an undead cyborg." "We are all ghosts in the machine." I said, "Maybe that will happen in the future, but not now! And I still believe in the human race."

He said, "We are all death worshippers who count on money from the government to support us in one way or another. Even if that means greatly reducing tax for the rich and giving the poor free bread and circuses."

I said to him, "You are wacky, the World is still under control of the middle class!"

And he replied, "It's already over for mankind. The die is cast. Souls and spirits will run the Earth."

I said, "I can't agree with your vision."

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End Game, November 2021

So finally, Covid was beaten. Despite rumors of deadly new strains, nearly everyone had been vaccinated and many venues such as bars and restaurants require proof of vaccination. Covid had plagued humanity for almost 2 years and now there were celebrations everywhere. It seemed every night there was an interesting party to go to.

So, these were the vicissitudes of life in the Virtual bar 2020-2021. But, I planned to keep the bar open for a few more years and inspire at least one more book out of it. But we live in an era of constant change and who knew what the future might hold?

There would always be new minds to meet here in NYC; it was the best place to live on Earth. The story came to you, here...

And my best friend Chuck said, "Let's go to Italy and sow our wild oats!" I said, "Sounds like a plan." But I had five babies on the way, and so I needed to keep the bar open to pay for the kids.

