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Whu Shu Jack



Squint Koros UK



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New neighbours & new secrets

Joe, waited behind his mother, with his hands in his pockets, looking at the boy approaching them from across the street. A man was walking before the boy. “He’s not even, English, Mum.” Joe, said. His mother hushed him; the man reached them and knelt down to give, Joe, a hug. Joe, didn’t like it. “You hold me like a girl, let go!.... I’m a man!...”

“Sorry, I thought you were a, boy.” The man replied. Joe’s, mother intervened: “Please, excuse my child, he’s,...” she paused, “boisterous, we’re seeking professional help but he’s not strange. It’s not abnormal these days is it? It’s just natural, my natural, Joe.”

“This is, Won, my son.” The man said. Joe, watched the tidy looking foreigner step forward, almost autonomously, as if by remote command. He was dressed in a shirt and denim on a, Saturday. Joe, felt a red fever throttle and his breath, as if his grandmothers bad fashion impositions had been enforced all over the world.

“Say Hi, Joe.” his mother, said. “This is your new neighbour.” Joe, responded nothing but looked with a guarded desire to play gangster rap and fuck the little foreigners head up. “Well,... dinner is on the table.” Joe’s, mum said. “I made roast duck, especially for the occasion. You’re the first Chinese family to move in on our street.”

“Sounds lovely.” The man said and they walked in.

Outside there was a stir of rising, like a cyclone of heated temper, brimming to a boil of cracking gusts, like hisses; secret and unnoticed. The clouds of, London, were heavy and saturated with other lights of the fleeting day. Drums pounded quietly out the sky from the events on another plain, that was, China.

Li Rong, the aged, Earth Star, of the, Archoshine Shrine, was arriving at the temple throne of, Zhongshan. The black hair on his

head was tied in plats and wrapped formally around his neck, over a white collar and black suit. There was a distasteful dampening around him, being seated, next to a, DReaLEarthHG, progeny skin, of mahogany brown and drawing nature like, a tree root does water. The irregular display of grace was angering to the temple priests, who took the ceremony to despise the possible inauguration of a next, Earth Star, of the shrine, that was not the colour of, Archoshine.

The temple priest was robed in fine red velvet covers and commanded authority from the circle of followers, which knew his rank. Silently, they removed the scroll they were to bind and brought out the puffed airs of conspiracy, a new direction for the ceremony, to protect the shrine and to ruin it. Leaving the new, Earth Star, an evil that would be more reviled than the, Demon Deity, the Temple Priests were secretly calling without the, Sovereign or Li Rong.

Joe and Won, sat opposite each other on a rectangular table in a modern looking spacious living room. It was a white tiled floor with very few cabinets. The chairs and the table were black. There were red pictures, like splashes of paint over the walls. Won, watched, Joe's, mum serve the food. She talked for ages. The more she drank the more she talked. Soon her shoes came off. Then she started to get louder. She was laughing at everything by the time he got to the banana split after the meal. Joe, wondered if his Mum and Won's Dad were going to have sex. He realised she wasn't acting normally and got up to go to his room. Filled with undesired floods of removing, taking control of upsetting unknowing of time; Joe, being an urban child of suburbia philosophy to be independent to democracy, left the table before they did. As he moved off the chair his mum called at him. "Joe, you've had enough?" he didn't answer but stared, despondently, trying to digest the truth about the reason his mum was acting this way, without having a sissy fit. Joe, was very well composed that way. So he said nothing, excused nothing, accepted

nothing but chose to do something else. His mother slurped an inglorious sip of red wine. “Right, well just take, Won, with you. He can spend the night with you in your room.”

“I ... the RPG is one player, he’ll get bored.”

“Amuse him with something else then.”

“I’m tired.”

“You were about to play a video game.”

“Mum, you’re being a bitch!” He said it, the B word. Joe’s, Mum’s face fell to the rim of the glass. She gasped with an icy reproach.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Lee.” She said “He is having anger issues, I think it’s because his father walked out.”

“Why are you telling him that?!” Joe, shouted. “Who’s he?! The next parent candidate! Come round yee men from yonder. Be Joe’s Dad because he hasn’t got one!”

“Joe! Enough! Stop behaving like a monster. Monsters don’t exist in this world. You,... you take my advice and show our guest some respect. Won and his father don’t deserve to be treated like this.” She said.

Mr. Lee, told, Won, to go with, Joe, in a discreet excitement. Eagerness you might see at the rescuing of some baby from a fire. Joe, didn’t understand it. He and Won, walked to his room.

In, Zhongshan Temple, flames from torches flashed down steps leading into a dank cave. There was stillness there, like death, rotting time in the fabric of dirty papers, piled, like bones. The pages were unbound and scattered, liked tiles glowing amber white, as the priests walked over them. At the back of the cave the priests shone the

burning torches over scrolls, locked in cases on racks. “The original has been removed! It is not here, your eminence!”

“There must be something; search the floors, find the elements of end which remain. What beginning can we have with, Li Wrong and the son of a Pop Star?!!”

“Your Eminence, here....” A priest projected, with the torch gently glowing over a tatty scroll page. Pictures of the rampaging creature were mortifying. Drawn like living episodes of insufferable pains; becoming more present with steps of evil, like a turning wind, controlled without rival. To pass murder, massacre, satanic witchcraft, trapping the souls of angelic course to its own. Raped the innocent, to eyes of fake, looking it forgetting the child. Stood, invisible master of masters. The ancestor of evil itself on, Earth. “This was part of the, Whu Shu Jack, Scroll, your Eminence.”

“It was not used after the Zen Dynasty 3000 years ago,... but. Yes I know of it.... but the repercussions were our heads.”

“The Scroll is no longer here! You can use the, Demon and they will not know it, your Eminence.”

“Yes..... yes. Whu Shu Jack, is coming back.” The Elder Priest, said, with dark shadows ringing over the side of his long, dispassionate features. The green eyes, under the ceremonial head ring, glinted with eagerness.

Joe, switched on the console and started to play a single player game. “Don’t expect me to play with you. Amuse yourself weirdo!” Joe, said.

“Please, play with me. You must play with me. I’m afraid.” Won, asked and looked out the window. It was getting dark; he could see the moon curtained behind misty clouds. “Joe.” Won, said. “Please, I

am not popular because I am Chinese, different. I understand but I hate to be bullied.”

“I’m not bullying you.....” Joe, clarified. Won, was more panicked when he watched the clouds sailing over the silver sky, as if he could see something approaching with them.

“Please, Joe.”

“No, it’s my console, I’m playing a game. Do something else.”

“Wu Shu Jack, is coming!”

“Whu who?!!”

“I’m afraid, Joe.” There was a clap of thunder. The computer switched off and the lights blinked. Joe, looked up behind, Won and saw a monstrous ware wolf, dressed in leather with silver studs.

“Wu Shu Jack, is back!” Its overshadowing body blocked the door. Joe, saw, Won, was petrified and the colour leaving his round face. The breath of the beast was falling heavy like mist over their heads. Joe, recalled his life in a few seconds. A long thick run of mucus fell from the beasts jaw. “Ahhh, ahhhh, it’s on my hair!” Won, screamed. Joe, reached into his pocket for his phone and set it to camera as, Won, screamed and whipped hands at the monster’s head. Joe, pressed the button and the beast roared against the flash. A fork of blue lightning broke the Earth outside. The door opened and the passage light flooded the room. Joe, saw his mother’s face.

“It’s a storm, boy.” She said. Joe, didn’t reply seeing, Won, screaming and the beast gone. He was almost convinced he had gone mad. He watched, Won’s, father walk in and pick up his son. Seeing the tears fall down, Won’s, face, he stood away from his mother.

“It wasn’t me.” He said, “It was a monster.”

Mr. Lee, looked at him with a discomforted bewilderment. Not at the state of his son but a reality that in, China, he dreaded. The force, Won, was taught of in the line of their ancestry, that once ruined all life. Mr. Lee, knew, if he and Won, were there, Whu Shu Jack, would find them, fight them, end them and the world, that does not know, would be its slave.

Joe, didn't understand, Mr. Lee's, reply; it was in, Chinese. Like a chant or a prayer. He jumped, as a clap of thunder tremored. Lightning flashed, his mother wiped her hand on, Won's, head. "It's wet." She remarked.

"It was the beast, it's the beast's drool! It tried to eat us." Joe, replied.

"Sweetie, this is no time for jokes! Now get ready for bed, this storm wasn't forecasted."

"Ask, Won." Joe, replied. "He saw it too." Joe's, Mum dismissed him, turning her attentions to Won's father and smiling loftily. He wanted her to believe him but he guessed she wanted to hear something else. He didn't say anything more.

"They must have been playing a game. I'll get the air bed. They'll be fine once they're tucked in." Joe's Mum said, checking with, Mr. Lee and she walked out the room. Joe, watched Won's Dad lower him to the ground, then leave after his mother.

"What was it?" Joe, asked coldly. Won, whimpered, he was moved and distraught. "What was it? What was that drooling monster wolf in my bedroom? Tell me now or I'll never talk to you again and it will eat you alive in your misery for being a lonely, loser, Chinaman."

"You make him come, your fault he so angry and strong!"

"My fault?!"

“You feed him with my suffering! I can’t keep him away because I so sad.”

“Oh and I’m happy? I just witnessed a beast nearly eat me, all because your Dad wants to fuck my Mum and make me his pet pencil pusher. This is my room! This is my family but no one wants me! I’m miserable and now I have to make you happy?!!”

Joe’s, head weakened, his eyes lowered and slowly fell to watch the blue rug. He emptily dragged himself to the console, picked up the controller and started to play. He was cold looking and heavy.

“Please, don’t be sad.” Won, said. “First you are angry, now you are sad. I did not mean to hurt you. I would like to be friends.”

“I don’t want to be friends with you! I’m not hurt! I’m just misplaced! My father lost me and you cannot take my place, so fuck off. Hear me? Hear 2 Pac and suck.” He played music on the computer and danced tauntingly, until his mother came in with the air bed and sheets.

“Turn it off, Joe. Here are sheets and clothes. Goodnight.” She said and closed the door behind her. Joe, breathed conservatively and started to change into his pyjamas, ignoring, Won. He heard, Won, snivel and say:

“If you will no be nice to me, Wu Shu Jack, will return.”

At the temple Ceremony, the fire crackers had started to end. There was a downcast grimacing on the, Earth Star’s, unfamiliar features; lowing like dust. Li Wrong, noticed with slight concern. The court was quieted, letting the air clear of the smoke and simmer to a more humble atmosphere, to follow the changes of time. Though neither, Li Wrong nor the Earth Star of his picking, could know the sedition of the Temple Priests to evoke the end of time forever and rule themselves a new.

The Elder Priest, took the, Whu Shu Jack, paper under the ceremony papers and recited the welcoming of changing time. The words spoke out into the emptied air, like galvanising charges of energy, driving new shapes to form, but these shapes were the ominous fall, Li Wrong, was not expecting there. “What is happening!!!” Li Wrong, yelled with outrage, as dark nimbus circled their temple. The Elder Priest, flung his arm at the, Earth Star, to point, declaring:

“It is the progeny here that has whispered power!! You have brought an evil to us in the protégé you have chosen, Li Wrong! It acts like a spoilt rock star. It is, Satan, come forth by him!!” The Elder Priest, spoke, stayed pointing at the, Earth Star.

“The boy has said nothing! I sit beside him!” Li Wrong, projected aggressively.

“I do not lie! Behold! The evil rises!!” The Elder Priest confirmed, as the dark circles of mist grew dense and heavier, disseminating over their heads, like an apocalyptic storm.

“Where did he go, Won?! Is he real?!” Joe, asked, looking at, Won’s, shivering face. He waited for a moment as still seconds past. Joe, peered deeper into, Won’s, eye’s. He saw a guarded boy, embarrassed and frail. He suddenly sat up, as if by finding some positive authority. He projected a strength that was foreign to, Won and touched, Won’s, ankle that was folded outward.

“Don’t touch me.” Won, said.

“I thought you wanted to be friends.”

“You said you don’t want to be friends! Did you change your mind, Joe?...” Joe, looked up and didn’t answer. Images of the beast flashed, as he remembered what he saw. Ferocious features of a beast dressed in black leather attire and upright like a man. Won, was so small and

delicate, like a mouse and he saw the beast, like a cat chasing after dinner, when it could find it.

“Yes.” Joe, said, bravely. “Now, tell me where he went. Will he come back if I agree to be your friend?” Joe, asked and pierced harder with eyes, until, Won, looked down and willingly answered.

“He won’t come back. He’s gone back to where he resides. I’ve never been there but I see a dark cloud in the sky and lightning, then he appears. I think he lives in the dark cloud, miserable in a torture chamber on a cloth couch that he watches me from.”

“A cloth couch? That’s a pot head, not a Demon. Where’s his horse, his Pegasus, or a Dark Chariot. This demon sounds like a tea drinking, cake eating granny to me.”

“You’re wrong! He is a very powerful manifestation, like a devil, like a god!”

“Why does he sit on a couch then?! How do you know he’s watching you?!!”

“Because he knows when I’m upset and he comes to torment me. It makes me sick and crazy. He’s evil and I hate him. He is so big and,... and I cannot fight him but he watches and I cannot run away. He scares me. You must be my friend or he will come back. He once said, that he would eat my family so I would be upset forever. My Father and my Mother, who is in, Honk Kong. She divorced my Dad; Wu Shu Jack, wants to kill them both! He calls me bad and says I must be tortured.”

“Why don’t you tell them?.... Your parents?”

“Just like your Mother, my Father thinks I’m overacting with imagination when I try to tell him about, Wu Shu Jack, because my father is stronger than I am. He tells me to stop acting. Then I get

afraid I will be more upset, so I am silent and try to be calm so that, Wu Shu Jack, cannot return.”

Joe, took his hands away from, Won and wiped down his pyjamas. He got up and moved towards his own bed.

“I’m not your friend, I’m sorry.” He said. He swivelled ambivalently to face away from, Won. Keeping his eyes looking down, he paused before mounting at where he was going to sleep.

“I understand.” Won, softly spoke.

“I don’t want my family to die. Wu Shu Jack, will kill us all. How can I keep you happy, I’m the most miserable boy in the world. Look at my life,... a middle class urban kid from a broken home. I’ve the potential to go study but I feel obliged to go to jail before I’m 18 because people like you don’t understand, all I want is my family back. Wu Shu Jack, will make that impossible! I’m sorry. Goodnight.”

Won, closed his eyes whilst bowing his head regretfully. He took a deep breath and faintly released a gentle wish that, Joe, should not be hurt and be happy in a choking exhale that took, Won, to sleep.

The storm cloud rolled, spreading like smoke outward from above the house. It was dark and thick, filling the sky like an immense mushroom tower. Inside the cloud was capacious and smoggy but the exterior of the cloud was hard like a wall. In the funnel of the cloud, leading up to the mushroom, solid clouds protruded from the exterior, as if by magic. Huge beasts in tightly bounded belts and leather braces, watched the houses beneath their spell. Howling with frolic pleasure to screams of fear, emerged from the umbrella mushroom of the cloud. The monsters only grew in size as you ascended through the funnel. In the mushroom, three demons worked a chamber of torture devices. Abducted children like, Won,

were strapped to them. The cloud's thunder had no place there, where, these children bound a deeper hurt.

One of the monsters was red like a fox, upright like a man; its beastie head was snappish, hungry looking and drooling. Another was tall and thin with a head like a domestic cat. It frequently struck her whip, to meet her racing heart beat. Only a few children were in the room. However, these creatures came of nightmares and were somehow real. It was, Won's, demon in the cloud. Now, there were many. The largest were the two beasts holding the children in the torture chamber, along with the third, who was like a half man half squirrel. The largest still, was watching Joe's bedroom from the cloud umbrella, in leather garments and drooling on a couch. That was, Wu Shu Jack. None were more ferocious. His fur was rigid just watching the two boys sleep. He howled and roared, then howled and roared again with frustration. As the calm of, Won's, resting heart beckoned him away, his head swivelled with an insane nature to attack and possess. "I wait." He said. "For the sad boy,... the bad boy." And slowly the cloud dissipated, like a clearing storm before the morning. Joe and Won, slept.

Joe's, mum was in the kitchen when she called him for breakfast the next morning. "Boys, its pancakes this morning. I'm sorry but it's been a while since I cooked for more than, Joe and myself. Joe? Won? Where are they?" She asked at, Mr. Lee, who had found the morning paper and was sitting at the table. Joe, walked into the kitchen before, Mr. Lee, could respond. He was silent with a heavy heart, bitterly seeing, Won's, dad sit at the head of the table, reading a paper like his father would. "There you are sweetie, you're awake." His Mum, cheered.

"Of course I'm awake, people have things to do. He should be gone already."

“Joe, Mr. Lee, can stay as long as he wants. It’s Sunday.”

“Are you 16, Mum? No! I’m the child, I’m the son with needs. So what if its, Sunday! I still have a life to lead. This man has nothing to do with us. He shouldn’t be here.”

“Says who?!”

“I do!!”

“Well I say he should!!”

“But...”

“Enough! Enough! You have a problem with that you tell someone else. Mr. Lee, is staying and I’m not arguing with you.”

“You’re being a bitch, Mum.”

“You’re being uncontrollable. Do you remember what your therapist said; anger issues...”

“You slept with him didn’t you!”

A chill seemed to freeze, Joe’s, Mum behind the fire, blue and burning in brief silence. There was a raised disdain, like childishness, which felt abashing until it invited a dangerous gap for depravity, which, she cringed away. It was an uncontrollable hatred that suddenly blazed in, Joe’s heart. He screamed at his mother “I hate you! I hate you all!” and he ran fists clenched towards, Mr. Lee. Won, walked into the room as, Joe, drove fists into, Mr. Lee, with rapid swings and lunges.

“Joe!” His mother cried, distraught and stiffened. Impaled with guilt, she only reached with her hands and cried. Joe, kept swinging at, Mr. Lee, until, Won, screamed:

“Stop hitting my Dad!.. Stop hitting my Dad, Joe!” Mr. Lee, got grip of, Joe’s, hands and fastened them down.

“Joe, I sorry, you right. I no belong here and yes I like your mother very much.”

“Well you fucked her! Now get out!”

His mother felt lashes against her integrity so constant that her arms dropped, “My god!” She gasped.

“No,... not like that.” Mr. Lee, retorted “She no hooker, she girlfriend, she, she lady I love! She lady make me belong. You her son, I no change that!”

“Because of you she hates my father and now I hate her. You’ve ruined my life. Let me go!” Joe, screamed. Mr. Lee, released him.

The pancakes and syrup were on the table. Four plates were set. He sat at a distance on one of the chairs. Boldly, he moved like a hardening corpse, becoming more carless of everyone with each passing second. Joe’s, mother laid a gentle finger, cupping his frown. “It’s the first day of school tomorrow.” She said.

“So what!” Joe, replied.

“You and Won, will be classmates. You can introduce him to your friends.”

“Is that supposed to cheer me up? I hate, Won!... I hate all of you!!!”

Joe, turned his head, as building rolls of thunder suddenly clapped and with a guarded reproach, he looked at, Won and saw, snarling above, Won’s, trembling head, Wu Shu Jack. Joe, was struck still in the focus of the beast’s huge glass eyes. He could hear his mother murmuring behind the wolf man’s heavy breathing and slipping drool. “Why is it looking at me like that?” Joe, asked faintly.

“I’m talking to you, Joe, that’s why!” His Mum answered. Joe, yelled: “Won.”

“It is sensing your hatred and sadness, Joe.” The beast moved blindly towards him leaving a gooey trail. “You must be happy, Joe.”

“But I’m not, my life is not worth living!”

“You just deal with it, Joe! We all have problems.” His Mum’s voice echoed in the background. He saw, Won, put his hands together like a monk, knelt down.

“Now, I must be your friend.” Won said and courageously. The beast sharply changed to snarl and roared.

“Alright, it’s leaving.” Joe, said, relieved.

“No, Joe, Mr. Lee, is not leaving. He’s staying here. End of conversation!” his Mother’s voice echoed again. The demon disappeared.

“Are you alright Won?” Joe, asked.

“I’m fine” Won, replied.

Joe’s Mother, turned the fire off. Joe, soon summoned, Won, like a security measure, pleased that, Won, was seating himself so close to him. “I’m fine.” Won, repeated for Joe’s concerned looking face, with a smile. Joe’s Mum, replied unaware of, Wu Shu Jack’s, existence.

“Good!.. Good, you see we are all friends. Now have some pancakes.” She said and walked behind Joe, to serve plates to them, stepping on the goo which dripped near to her son. “Joe,.. you didn’t buy a dog you’re hiding, did you?..” She asked.

“Auh.. It’s hair gel.” Joe, cleverly replied.

Teachers Pet

It was, Monday morning, that, Joe, was anxious about. The sky was clear and walking to the car with his mother he could hear the pigeons in the trees. It was like waking at the end of a rainbow. Heated with new passions and waiting the old ones like strange strokes of oddness. It was where the animals and his Mother were waiting, to set him free into the wild. Joe, expected to be told something, to do his laces or check he had his homework. The only thing his Mother did that morning was smile. It was like she and the birds shared some secret, so pleasing that it changed the monotonous routine of driving to school, forever. “Did Dad die or something? Why are you so happy?..” Joe, asked.

“I’m just,..... Your father is alive and well.” His Mum replied. She had flowing straight black hair, running to the shoulders of her athletic shape. Joe, could always see a soberness in the quirkiness of her face, like a sense of humour not being confessed. Bubbling cheeks and her sharp nose made her always stand out. There was boldness in her, like the soft tone found of her skin.

“You’re acting like those birds in the nest, all chirpy.”

“Where?”

“Up there.” Joe, pointed to two pigeons nesting in the tree beside their house.

“Oh.. they must have eggs.”

“Yeah, maybe, why do you care? What are you smiling for?”

“People do smile, Joe. I’m not a corpse, I’m breathing with feeling. I do appreciate a little pleasure now and then.”

“Morning..” Mr. Lee, said cheerfully, as he walked out his house across the road. Joe, spotted, Won, walking behind him. He seemed quiet and distracted.

“Hi!” Joe’s, Mum yelled. “We were just goanna get ya.”

“Oh,... yes. Ring my bell. Ring again and again and... Sorry.” Mr. Lee, said, receding, as, the children appeared in the corner of his eye. Joe, saw, Won’s Father look back at them. He had a surge of some hostile resentment pushing, Won, into the back seat of the car before he got in himself. He slammed the door shut.

“Joe.” Won, spoke and reached into a ruck sac to ask: “What’s this?” pulling a rubber item from the zip pocket. It was moist looking and stretched, like a transparent finger bandage. He thought it very strange.

“Where did you find that?” Joe, asked.

“I saw my dad take it off his penis, in the bathroom, last night. He’s been smiling ever since he did it.”

“I tell you something, Won: Wu Shu Jack, may be a Demon but parents are the most bizarre things in the world.”

“OK boy’s!..” His Mum, said, getting the car started. Joe and Won, waited until she turned with an enormous resonating smile. “Your Dad has to get ready for me,... I mean has to get something ready for me,.. So you’ll see him after school. O.K... Let’s go then.” Joe, not wanting to leave, looked out the window. He saw, Mr. Lee, waving acute flicks of the hand accented high above the head. The morning was still unsettling as, Joe, couldn’t accept that his real father might never again be where, Mr. Lee, was, waving goodbye to him in the morning.

Joe, was covered with an equal head of hair, like his mother. The tops were left long and the side kept short. His head was more meaty looking, with plainer features, spongy with clammy, clean pores. His eyes were dark, like grey stones which he threw at his direction of attention.

The car turned into the school car park, as a school bell rang. There were dozens of children running into the building from their

parent's cars. Joe, opened his door and ran out. His mum screamed "Wait for Won, Joe!... Joe!"

"Alright!" He answered and waited at the gate of the school until, Won, caught up with him. "Can't you move any faster, Won?" He sighed.

"Why what for? We no late."

"I'm not going to class." Joe, replied.

"Where are we going then?"

"I'm going to the shed." Joe, said, walking away from the school entrance. "You go to class."

"What's in the shed, Joe? Games, toys, I want to see too." Won, asked with a nervous anticipation. His lighter colour of skin was almost appeared chafing from unease. His eyebrows were crossed, fixed that way from wondering of so much, Won, did not see before. On the rise of his strong cheek bones, brown eyes locked, like missiles to understand what he waited to know.

"I'm not going for toys! If you really want to see... come on." Joe, replied, walking behind the back of the school. They came to an old wooden shelter. It had broken hinges and unbolted locks. Joe, opened the cracked door and they went inside. It was musky and damp. There was no light and it smelt of dry wood. Joe, turned around and could only make out, Won's, silhouette. He took something from his pocket.

"What's that?" Won, asked. Joe, lifted it up in his cupped hands. He moved them to before the shadowed shape of, Won's, face.

"Watch out!" He warned Won and sparked a flame, stirring a lighter flint with his thumb.

"Whaa, don't burn me, please! What are you going to do? I don't want to die on my first day of school." Won, whimpered.

"I'm not going to kill you, Won. I'm just goanna have a smoke." He took a cigarette from his inside jacket pocket and lit it.

“You’re crazy, Joe. You’re only thirteen!”

“Do you want to try?” Joe, taunted sardonically, accepted the recall of such naïve nobility, to prepare the acts about his later arriving years. For which, they would be left without choices of roles. Won, saw the dejection in his eyes, feeling looked down on but was quick to rise with an assertion and refusal of the part. Unaccustomed to the ranks of urban social models, he almost instinctively snapped.

“No! The root of such pleasure reaches no branch for living.”

“Then why did you follow me? Smoke it!! I live with you invading my life, so die escaping my death!!”

“No! You are not dead and without the curses of poison, there is life after it. You blindly accept the arriving condemnation of, Whu Shu Jack!!! We will all be left nothing and....”

“Shhh!! What’s that?” Joe, alerted. A tool fell outside the shed as something large crept around the pots and plants.

“Can you hear that?” Joe, said, as a quick heavy panting drew louder, like a hunting animal. “Wu Shu Jack!” Joe, screamed and Won, whimpered. The shuffling steps approached the door and hot steam fogged through the crack, as a dark large snout pressed in. Joe and Won, embraced each other and screamed. The door opened and a black dog pushed its way inside barking. They screamed and the dog barked until a genitor came in. Joe’s cigarette was still burning on the ground. He watched the genitor put the dog on its lead and pick the burning butt up.

“Busted boy! You felons!!” The genitor said and brought, Joe and Won, to the headmaster.

Joe, watched the genitors heavy dark boots walking ahead of them, down the corridor, stocky and emotionless. It left, Joe, in a shadow of uncertainty. He and Won, only glanced at each other before the choking panic of despair began to swallow them. They were so worried, by the time the genitor came to the headmaster’s office. Wu Shu Jack’s, thunder cloud, could be heard building outside

the school. The pounding power of wet mincing, pulling out their bellies raging waves. The genitor sat them down and walked into the head masters office. Joe and Won, listened with an appealing desperation, fixed on their porous faces, before the headmaster had even seen them. Joe, felt he might be expelled or even arrested and suddenly became very angry. “It’s your fucking fault!! I’d have gotten away if you didn’t hug me!!” He said to, Won.

“I sorry, Joe, please! Wu Shu Jack, is outside!” Won, was stopped by the headmaster’s bellowing voice screaming.

“Bring them in here! Get them in here now!”

A lightning fork struck the ground outside the lobby windows. They were brought in through the doors and behind the headmaster who was sitting at his desk was, Wu Shu Jack. Towering above them, upright and drooling. The headmaster shouted obliviously, at, Joe and Won: “What the genitor has just informed me of is not acceptable! Is it true?! You cannot excuse this kind of behaviour.. Tell me!”

“Wu Shu Jack!!” They screamed, watching the snarling beast breathe, raising its fur as the Headmaster shouted:

“Shoooo, Shooooo!! Such insolence! You dare call me, Jack!!! Sir! You address me as, Sir! You have the audacity to ignore my authority!”

“We’re sorry!!” Joe, whimpered, as the anger in the headmaster’s voice brought a horrifying sense of condemnation crashing over the two boys.

“I should have you committed, handed over to the law and jailed like the juvenile delinquents you are shaping out to be!!” The headmaster stood up, leaning over the desk and blocking, Wu Shu Jack’s, torso. Joe and Won, sank deeper and deeper into despair until the headmaster shouted: “You will be Punished!!!”

They cried watching as, Wu Shu Jack’s claws raised up, sharp and extended by his pointed ears. Joe, quivered and the beast roared swiping one claw down and sending the headmaster screaming into

the bookshelf and unconscious. Joe's head turned, with some unexpected delight, seeing the headmaster dead on the floor. He laughed and then, Won, Laughed. Wu Shu Jack, quietened and soon, without intending to, started to disappear. Joe and Won, were told to leave and go to class by the genitor, who rushed in hearing the headmaster hit the wall. They walked out and they didn't care about, Wu Shu Jack, chasing them because they were happy, so the demon had gone.

Joe, opened a class room door. He walked and past the students to the nearest desk. He left, Won, standing at the front of class. "Who is this? And why are you late, Joe?" their teacher, Mrs Bender said, fetching her attention form the board. Her chalk was still between the pointing index finger and thumb, as she pointed towards, Won. "Spit it out then, one of you. Creeping around like prowlers, looking for something to steel. This is the end of this chapter but you have a lot to learn if you think I give classes for prowlers. Now,... Joe,.. who is this?"

"My new neighbour, Won. Mrs, Bender." The teacher was an uncannily young looking woman. She kept the manner of an old lady though, her figure was shaped with curves of an unnoticed fruit, not bitten and falling close to itself. She kept clear eyes that were blue, watching them under a mousy brown, tied up head of hair. She slipped on her glasses from hanging around her neck, to check, Won.

"Then he should keep a neighbouring desk, until he's accustom to, 'Bark Grammar.' Move over there both of you and let me get on with my class." She clapped a few sharp claps yelping "Quickly, quickly!! Before I forget my sentence." Reapplying her hand to kiss the board with the chalk, she took back her attention and started scribbling.

"I can't see what she's writing." Won, said.

"Who cares what she's writing. I can't believe we got busted. No one ever goes to the shed in the morning." Joe, sighed.

"What do you think will happen to the headmaster?" Won, asked, in deep low breaths of his foreign speaking manner.

“Mr Vendin? Don’t care. He was out cold.” Joe, grudging. The class room door suddenly swung open. The genitor screamed:

“Mr Vendin, is dead!”

“What?!!.... How?!!” Mrs Bender, asked and they ran out the room, leaving the class scuffling away from their tables and chairs. Joe, gave an ambivalent sigh seeing them all rushing out of the class room. He turned towards, Won.

“Well, now we know he’s dead!” Joe, said, to, Won, who became a little whiter from bereft.

“Ohhh, Ohh no, Wu Shu Jack, killed him and it’s our fault.” Won, started to whimper and sink into a deep regret.

“Stop that!!” Joe, said.

“But it’s our fault! We killed him!” Won, said murmuring in a quivering state.

“So what, stop it! He was old anyway.”

“We’re murderers, Joe!! Ohhh No!!!” Won, cried.

“Don’t cry, Won!! Wu Shu Jack will come back if you don’t stop it!!.... Stop it!!” Joe’s, heart beat was getting faster and he could imagine the dark cloud appearing outside. “Stop it!!!” He repeated, as, Won, whimpered but Won, kept sobbing so finally, Joe, lied and said “Mr Vendin, was terminally ill!”

“He was?” Won, asked.

“Yes, he was. The man was goanna die, tomorrow.” Joe, told him.

“But... Wu Shu Jack?”

“His death,... was worthy of laughter, wasn’t it?....” Holding, Won’s shoulders, he stressed in his voice: ”You don’t need to be upset, every ones gone, let’s play with the craft appliances.” Won, reproachfully frowned and replied

“Why you so careless?” Before walking over to the pencils and looking down to draw on the art desk.

Dinner before Counselling

Joe’s Mother, arrived to pick them up not long after they announced, Mr. Vendin’s, death. Joe, saw three police cars in the parking lot. The blue lights were flashing and he saw cops sealing the school off from the students and teachers, with yellow tape. “It’s just awful.” Joe’s Mum said and he smiled ghoulishly.

They drove away from the school to go home. Joe, said nothing. He was settled, pleased that he only had half a day of school. “Do you want to play on my, X Box, Won?” He asked.

“Oh, oh alright.” Won, replied. They arrived at, Joe’s, house early in the afternoon. It was quiet at that time of the day. The pigeons had gone. Coming home after, Mr. Vendin’s, death somehow made the day normal again. It was right up until he got to the front of the house he felt that way. Then, Mr. Lee, was waiting behind the opening door. Joe, felt the world go back to become some movie show he was hating.

“I’m so sorry about your teacher, Joe.” Mr. Lee, said.

“Oh you would be! Get out of my way.” Joe, replied rushing past, Mr. Lee, closely followed by, Won. Joe’s Mum, locked the car door and walked inside to where, Mr Lee, was waiting.

“They must be upset, walking past me like that.” Mr. Lee, said.

“I don’t know? Joe, use to be so predictable but lately, I don’t know why he does the things that he does. He didn’t even stop in the kitchen for a biscuit. Doesn’t that seem strange to you?” Joe’s Mum, said and pondered, looking at, Mr Lee’s, smooth and sober expressions. His features were supporting, like framing sagacity with curved lines, unsharpened and opening. “Augh well,... I’ll get the

dinner ready.” She said determined to get through the day and kissed, Mr. Lee, passionately.

Joe, played on the console against, Won, on a two player game. He strained with tension and exhalations, watching his competing character on the screen and hoping that it wouldn’t lose to, Won’s. Joe, was a vigour bubbling oblivious about appearance of comfort, knowing, Won, was there; the presence of the real person, sitting with him, like an ally. He was playing for most of the afternoon and when, Joe, completed the game against, Won, he wanted to play again. “I’m tired of this.” Won, said.

“I’m not.” Joe, acutely replied.

“Let’s do something else.” Won, suggested.

“Quiet, before, Wu Shu Jack, comes.” Joe, snapped, in an anxious fit.

“It doesn’t work like that... You have to be really upset, not bored. I just want something to do.”

“Alright, Won! I’ll put some music on.”

“Not 2 Pac,... Please don’t fuck my Buddhist head up. Do you have: ‘The moon represents my heart’? It goes:

‘You ask how deep,
I care for you?
How much I love you so?
My affections real,
My deep love is real,
The bright moon represents my heart.’

Joe, was stunned with squirming at a feeling of nausea, worming from the bile of his belly. He turned, stoically with his grey eyes holding the trigger of his thoughts in disgust, to quickly return, with equal inconsideration. “Ok, let me suggest, Boney M. it goes:

‘Ma ma ma ma, Ma Baker,
She taught her four sons.
Ma ma ma ma, Ma Baker,

To handle their guns!’ Bang Bang!!” He projected, pointing his finger like a pistol barrel and then pressing it against the young China lads red lips, to hush them. Won, murmured:

“Who?”

“It’s one of my Mum’s records. Apparently the broad singing is a Dame now. Let’s listen to, Britney Spears, instead.

“Yeah, Britney Spears. I love Britney Spears. ‘Glory, Slumber Party.’ Let’s do it:

‘We got them candles, hanging from the ceiling though.
We use our bodies to make our own videos.
Put on our music, it makes us go crazy though.
Go crazy though! Slumber Party.’

Joe played the CD, reciting the chorus with Won and carried on with his game. Won, slowly started swaying. He turns around feeling the ground tremor. Behind him on the floor space, Won, was break dancing to the music. Joe, could have been in a night club dancing with ladies, grinding and being raunchy. Won, had taken his glasses off and his hair had dropped in front of his eyes. Joe, couldn’t imagine, Won, without his glasses or dancing. He never dreamed he’d imagine, Won, with a woman. It made him laugh. As the song ended and Joe, returned to reality from his imagination, he could hear his mother calling him. Dinner was ready.

In the dining room the table was set and Mr. Lee, was sitting down with a glass of red wine in his hand. Joe, walked in with some disdain, tightening his lips and stiffening his body. He no more than glanced at, Mr. Lee. The smell of food filled the room. Roast duck with potatoes and vegetables. He quickly sat down making a space for, Won, next to him. “Can, Won, stay the night again?” He asked his mother.

“Of course he can.” She answered and continued “But don’t forget you’re seeing, Dr Wilik, tomorrow morning.”

“I don’t need a shrink.” Joe, snapped.

“You do dear! You’re out of control. You’re only 13 and smoking in the School shed?!.... I got a call from, Mrs Bender, who told me. I just,.... I just don’t know any more.”

“But you know him! That Chinaman at the end of our table. You met him a week ago. I’ve been your son for 13 years, you bitch.”

“That’s the problem, Joe! That language has got to go. You didn’t speak like that when your father was here.”

“He’s not here! I don’t care what I did when he was here, he’s not here and he’s never coming back because of you. Fuck your duck and forget you, Lee!” Joe, yelled towards, Won’s, father. He saw out the window behind the shocked looking man a fork of blue lightning strike in the air. “Wu Shu Jack!” He said, then, Won, got up out of his chair panicked and desperate to move his father.

“Daddy we go now! We go now!” Won, shouted. Joe’s, mother become quiet and distressfully covered both sides of her face with the palm of her hands. Thunder bellowed to greater fright.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry!... We’ll eat the duck and remember it. Mr. Lee, please don’t go.” Joe, repentantly pleaded.

Mr. Lee, saw Joe’s teary eyes and felt the presence of a sinister occurring, twisting the boy and mixing these events. “Won, my son, she cooked.” Mr. Lee, said.

“I want to leave!” Won, projected guarding. Joe’s Mother, removed her palms from off of her cheeks and looking with clear reprisal spoke:

“Would you like him to see, Dr Wilik, too? He’s very good with children.”

“No.” Mr. Lee, said.

“Yes!!” Joe, pleaded.

“No!!.. Wu Shu Jack!” Won, expelled from his mouth in protest to, Joe.

“Look!” Joe yelled and pointed out the window. The weather was clear. “We’ll eat the duck, not fuck it.” He said.

“You! You.... will see the, Dr, tomorrow, Joe! With, Won, to witness!” His Mum whelped.

“Fine!” Joe, dared not argue. He sat down and they ate the roast duck.

The Beast, in the shrinking place

It was daylight, a quiet, Tuesday, morning in, Joe’s, home town, Surbiton. There was always the lofting smell of fried foods and pasties wafting sweetly out of the take away restaurants. Outside, the commotion raised, from the University students and traffic, moving through, Kingston Upon Thames and Hampton Court Palace.

Joe, was stirring asleep as, Won, lay still on the air bed. The room was peaceful letting only thin rays of light through the cracks of the blinds. The door opened and in the still air you could feel the breeze come in from the passage. Joe’s Mother, discreetly pushed her head through the door. “Joe, Dr Wilik, is expecting us in 30 minutes.. Wake up.” She whispered. Joe, didn’t answer. “Joe!” She repeated, a little louder and he lifted his head up, flashing open his eyes when his Mother’s voice disrupted his and Won’s gentle breathing.

Joe, got out of bed and walked sober past his Mother to the bathroom. “15 minutes Joe and we’re going.” Joe’s Mother spoke, as he moved over the sink. He looked at his face in the mirror. The toothbrush was on the counter, the face soap was on the soap dish. He felt numb and twitchy; absent of himself. The air was like ice against his skin. It called his smile up but forced it, like a dying man watching an angel call him to heaven. There was every temptation to be revolting, uncared the beauty which the child saw; falling to handle his secret pains. Acting, as if nothing was wrong, glowed radiance in the mirror light and the pain was what his man would bear, silently.

He let the morning ball his eyes open. They were big grey eyes, he hardly ever noticed, still there, every day watching. The cold water wet his face and he got dressed.

Joe's Mother, was waiting in the car. The engine was running for them to leave. Joe, could hear it but he didn't want to go. He had many sessions already and none of them were helping. He was nervous and walked reluctantly to the front door. The engine was getting clearer, as he drew closer to the car. The cold air pulled his face again, emptying the house of his memories. His mother tooted the horn as tears grew behind his eyes. Then he ran across the front lawn, crashing through the hedge. "Joe!" His mum cried, struggling to get out the car seat. "Joe, come back here. Joe!! She screamed loud enough to wake, Mr. Lee.

"What has happened?" He shouted, through the bedroom window.

"He's run away." Joe's, Mum whimpered, still trying to get out the car. She finally unfastened the seat belt and they ran after him. Mr. Lee, was only dressed in, Joe's Mum's pink dressing gown. They tore through the hedge chasing him. Joe, could see them running after him. He was fuelled with a lifting adrenaline, like the angel in the air carrying him faster than he ever thought he could run. Joe, shuttled out of the town, like a dart. He reached the edge of the residential estate of detached houses. He could see the forest in front of him. It was early; he slowed down alerting black crows out of the trees. In the wing smacked emptiness, his Mother's scream echoed: "Joe!" He turned his head for seeing two forgotten faces he did not want to remember. "Come back, Joe!" His Mum screamed, watching him ebb away like her cheap nail varnish, chipping to nothing.

He dashed into the forest, she ran after him. Joe, weaved through bushes and trees. He moved down the forest slope, stepping faster and sliding until rocks protruding out of the earth tripped his footing. He fell forward a few meters and rolled to the bottom of the slope, hitting his head on the stump of a tree.

His vision was blurred, he couldn't run any more but heard, Mr. Lee and his Mother. He could soon see their shapes. Mr. Lee, lifted

them up. “You’re bleeding!” His mother said, startled and with little composure, she yelled: “How could you do this?! You were suppose to be seeing, Dr. Wilik!”

Mr. Lee, carried him up into his arms. “No!” His mum cried. “No, he’s been a nuisance. He’s going to get himself killed. No,.... we’re not putting this off, there’s a first aid kit in the car. Get him in it. I’m taking him to the councillor, I won’t lose my son to compulsions imposed on his mind to act such foolishness. He doesn’t need a father that ran out on him. His father was crazy to leave us. I won’t watch him do the same, thinking it’s alright. It’s not alright!” Joe’s Mother, started crying and she held his head walking back to the car. “It’s not alright my son.” She said.

Joe, was placed in the back seat and Mr. Lee put a plaster from the first aid kit in the glove box, on his head. Joe, moved with some unfamiliar comfort, reaching with his hand for the plaster on his head. The pain was subsiding, when he sat calmly, trying to ignore the crediting silence he had no choice but to pay his mother and Mr. Lee. The car started, as his breath found the bitter air he was use to again. He wasn’t miserable for running away. It was for getting caught and having to understand he made a mistake that made him miserable and his air bitter again. He wondered if, Mr. Lee, was a better man than his father. The more he thought about it, the more he became fond of the idea that he might be. His mother drove away and he stayed silent and still.

They soon arrived at the councillors office. Joe, looked out the window as the car stopped and saw a building that looked like a palace. It had high walls and many rows of windows. It was unusually busy for a palace but it didn’t feel like a clinic to, Joe. He saw a range of people from elderly to the very young. They were walking around the grounds and in and out of the building. Joe’s, mum opened the door. “Get out, Joe. How is your head?” She asked sternly.

“I’m fine.” He answered, getting out the car. He followed his mother into the clinic. At the reception a lady with grey hair tied up in a bun and wearing a black suit, raised from her desk.

“This must be, Joe. Dr. Wilik, is expecting you. He’s been waiting. That must be, Won, besides you. We’ve been waiting for him too.”

“I’m sorry.” Joe’s Mother, said. “Joe, had an accident and this is our first time coming to, Dr Wilik’s, new office.”

“That’s alright, just go straight through, down the corridor. It’s the 8th door on the left... Oh, no, let me check that.” The receptionist looked behind her desk at a floor map. “The 8th door on the right,.. sorry.” She said. Joe’s Mum, thanked her with a humble nod, smiled pointing to the office and she and Joe, walked to visit, Dr. Wilik.

Joe, was moved into her hands as they came to the 8th door on the right. His mum fixed his hair and jacket “Now, this is only going to benefit you. People are going to respect you and you’ll respect them. You’ll see.” She said, then she opened the door.

“Get out!! I have personal space issues!! You are invading meeee!!! Get out!! Get out!!! Get Out!!!!” Joe’s Mum, closed the door. She guessed it was the wrong room. Joe’s Mum, paused a moment to think about how she had walked into the wrong office. They walked across the corridor and she opened a door. Joe, saw, Dr. Wilik, sitting down. She briskly walked through, with assertive strides pulling, Joe, gently to the large black chair opposite the desk. It was a grand office space, with towering walls of library books and antique artefacts. The tidiness of it made it like an unused home, asking, Joe, to buy it with confidence to stay with pride.

Joe, was prompted to sit by, Dr. Wilik’s, white smooth hands. He sat and saw the, Dr’s hands cup the Dr’s bearded chin, as the Dr, started to speak: “How have you hurt your head, young, Joe?” He asked. Won and Joes Mum, sat attentive on a red waiting couch by the far side of the room.

“I ran away and tripped on a stone” Joe, replied.

“You were angry? With your Mum? With life?” Dr. Wilik, spoke giving little watch of Joe, but keeping a heavy head over a note book, whilst scribbling. The Dr’s grey hair was fine with neatness and kept

contours of dark features behind the window glass at the end of the room.

“I’m not a guinea pig for you to analyse! You’ve asked these questions before. You asked them last week! It doesn’t change anything.” Joe, snapped, defensively.

“We are unravelling the suppressed frustration.” The Dr. Said and looked at, Joe’s Mum. “It can take time for cognitive thinking to re-establish once traumatised. Like walking after breaking a leg.” The Dr. said. Joe’s Mum, nodded with conceding.

“I’m not traumatised!” Joe, shouted. “I’ve told you, I’m miserable here. I don’t want to be here. I don’t want to talk to you!” Joe, shouted.

“Yes, you’ve said this, Joe, a hundred times and I still believe you are in denial. You’re anger, your aggression,.... it’s a vortex within you. I see you child. I see you falling into a black hole. It will possess you like nothing you’ve experienced in school or at home. This darkness, it’s not a burden, no. No Joe, this darkness is evil. I want you to recognise that. I want you to leave the shouting out of your reciprocal from now on.”

“What is reciprocal?! I just talk but no one listens; everyone shouts. Everyone is always shouting! Oh it’s fine for people to shout at me but I can’t shout back!”

“Certainly not, Joe. You’re 13 years old!” Joe’s Mum, said.

“I don’t like being shouted at, you’re shouting at me all the time. Telling me to get ready for school, ready for dinner, ready for bed. It’s like some intensive vocal training performed to hurt me. I just want my life back. None of you can give that to me! Can’t you all just fuck off!”

“Is that what you desire, Joe?” Dr. Wilik, asked. “You know that can never happen. I might prescribe you some medication. You’ll have to get use to the real world. You can’t escape it.”

The Dr. walked around to the front draw of his desk and started writing a prescription. Joe, found a pent up ball of nerves heating his already unsettled mood. “Medication?” He spoke, as his strength plummeted into a desperate shiver.

“Yes.... Two tablets for you to take a day.” Dr Wilik, said.

“I don’t want medication.” Joe, replied. He was seeking reassurance with glances to beck his Mum or Won’s support but received none and found a stupefying despair, like crashing to the bottom of a well and losing sight of the rope.

“Is that thunder?” Dr. Wilik, asked ,focused on writing his prescription. Joe, didn’t respond, he was so numb. He saw, Wu Shu Jack. The beast was appearing in the corner of the room behind, Dr. Wilik. It was massive, like the silhouette of a dark angel, under the yellow glares of sunlight. Won, waited with apprehension while, Joe, said nothing. He watched the immense snarling monster walk behind towards him. He was sure the beast would bring him to the end of his suffering, killing him quickly. Joe, was too disheartened to try escaping. “Here’s your prescription.” The Dr. said, fervently lifting his hand in the air with a joyful flicking of his wrist. It tickled, Wu Shu Jack’s, nose. The beast sneezed drool across the room all over, Joe. Joe’s, Mum and the Dr, froze. An alarmed expression strained and creased their faces with disturbances to quickly rationalise.

Joe, tried to point towards, Wu Shu Jack but the beast grabbed the Dr’s hand, pulling him up into the air. Joe, watched the bushy white eye brows lift startled, unable to explain what was happening because he could not see, Wu Shu Jack. The Dr. wasn’t sad enough but the presence of the Dr. was already the body arrived for it. Joe’s Mother, screamed and the beast threw, Dr. Wilik, sending him crashing out the window. “Oh, my, God!” She screamed. Joe, saw the prescription slowly floating from his hand. It hovered behind the desk. He started to smile when it glided out the window after the, Dr’s, body. Wu Shu Jack, gave a desperate roar, reaching for, Joe with long arms and sharp claws but was restrained by, Joe’s, growing joy and disappeared.

Joe and Won, ran to the window. They watched the prescription blow into the clearing sky. Wu Shu Jack's thunder cloud, floated away from the white cumulus and blue air. Joe, heard people running below him. He could see, Dr. Wilik's stiff body on the ground, dead, with glass sticking out through his skin and blood flowing onto the footpath. His mother pulled him away. "You're not to see it, Joe! The police will take care of it." She said.

The Temple Talk

Joe's Mother, pulled into their driveway and parked. He was biting his nails, undecided about the best way to treat, Wu Shu Jack's, disturbances in his life. His mother told him: "Get out the car, Joe, we're home." The small driveway was tightly packed with gravel, crushed by the parking car. The house was clean looking, with dull walls and white double glazed windows. It was still, like empty with cold absents; fell on it as a plague.

"My head hurts, I don't want to." Joe, Said. Joe's Mum, could sense fatigue in his voice. After he spoke he bit his nails. He never used to do that and his mother noticed the difference in his behaviour.

"I'll warm treacle and pour it on a banana split." She said, with a lightening of manner, caught her upset before being left without handle of warmth to leave him with.

"At lunchtime?" He remarked, brightening at his mother's white smile and walking with greater relief to the house.

"Only today." He heard her reply but he was already half way to the front door. He walked through and into the Kitchen. The tenacity he pursed with in life, sparked, for a brief time and he sat down at the counter, throwing his sac on the floor with regard for nothing but the banana split, which, his mother had promised him.

He waited a moment and then she walked in. The house was quiet. Won, was dropped off with, Mr. Lee, at the neighbouring

address first, before, Joe and his mum returned. Joe's Mum, walked around the counter to the fridge and freezer. "How do you want it?" She asked him. He was moved with anticipation and found images of flavoured ice cream appearing in his troubled mind. Red strawberry, yellow vanilla, green honey and melon lined between a sweet split banana and covered in warm treacle. Then he imagined, Wu Shu Jack, appearing next to him and smashing the food into his face. It was a very distressing prophetic vision; so distressing he couldn't hide it and gave a sharp scream. "Ahhhh!"

"What is it, Joe?" His Mother, asked.

"I'm sorry." He said, displaced and distressed. His head fell to the counter.

"Joe?!.." His mother slowly crept beside him and sat down. They were on the centre red stools of four, pressed against a white counter. He broke in her arms and cried.

"I have a demon who wants to kill every one and torture me."

"Oh Honey!... Mr Wilkin's, death is not your fault."

"It killed, Mr. Vendin, too."

"No, Joe. No let the police take care of it. Don't worry."

"How can the police stop a Demon?" Joe, asked naively.

"They would have to call in a priest or something.... I suppose." His Mother, sighed abjectly. It was by her disapproving the pretence of practising with impalpable characters, she held regret physical characters were not acting the part. As she pressed her son with growing inadequacy, she needled away in her objections. She made more serious considerations, recalling the paranormal of snot sprayed form across, Dr. Wilik's, office before the Dr. was thrown out the window. There, a tightening in her grip of Joe, seeing to possess him entirely herself, however evil, was the greatest protection from her own fears.

"Can we call a priest?" Joe, asked.

“Why, Joe? We haven’t been to a church for years. You said you don’t like being forced to go and miss your gaming club....”

“It’s the Demon, Mum. Someone has to stop it. Won and I keep trying but...” Joe, stopped with an icy spike insensitively rubbing down his back, like a fence of lies. “You don’t believe me do you?... You’re just like, Won’s Dad. He doesn’t believe, Won, either! This is hell!!” He said, stepping out of her hands.

“Joe?... I’m your Mother... I will always be there.”

“Things keep going wrong! Then it appears and.... it doesn’t matter if you’re there or not, it will kill me! I might as well be dead already!”

“Joe! Stop it! Stop being so anxious. There is no Demon!” She shouted, angrily.

Joe’s, mouth tightened, as his mother sharply moved away, leaving him none the less distressed and cross that she wouldn’t listen. He got up and ran angrily to his room, leaving her shout. “Joe!” He wouldn’t reply. He closed the bedroom door and on his bed he closed his eyes to a miserable slumber.

When, Joe, opened his eyes, the mobile phone was ringing next to him. He answered it with a startled motion, to compose his rattled nerves. He didn’t care to and might have left it a missed call if he wasn’t so surprised; it was almost a reflex reaction. “Hello...” He said.

“Hi Joe. It’s, Won.”

“Hi Won, I’m sleeping. Can’t it wait until tomorrow, Won?”

“Did he come back there?” Won, asked, near to trembling.

“It killed, Dr. Wilkin!” Joe, said, with a ghoulish jump of breath.

“I keep thinking he’s coming back, not in my nightmares but in my home, real.”

“There was glass stabbing through his chest on the pavement after, Wu Shu Jack, threw him out the window!” Joe, exclaimed and sat up

in dreaded apprehension. “The police men came and not even they could help.”

“My Father, is a good man. Whu Shu Jack, cannot find my Father’s presence with itself. But my father is angry with me for being weak. It will kill me.” Won, sighed.

“My prescription flew out into the unknown.” Joe said, conclusively, facing the madness of his arrived trial. There was a glint of determination sparked, like flint rock, behind his grey eyes, as he grew to stand it.

“It will possess me, just like, the Dr. Wilkin.” Won, said.

“So you see, I had a good day until my mother refused to believe so.”

“Huh? How’s it a good day, Joe?”

“Well, I’m not crazy am I. You know, Wu Shu Jack, is real. Why should I take pills and talk to shrinks. I’m happy he’s dead for not understanding me. The stupid, Dr.”

“Joe, nothing will ever stop, Wu Shu Jack.”

“We just have to prove he exists, Won.”

“No one can see him and he kills people. He’ll get us. There’s nothing we can do!!!”

“Calm down, Won. Don’t get upset, stay happy. Come over, we’ll talk here. I’ll show you something.”

As, Joe, waited for, Won, he searched for one of his console games. He rapidly rummaged, exerting bursts of desperation, like a mouse looking through sawdust. He looked for something that was invaluable. It wasn’t simply a game, it was the spark of an idea that he thought might stop, Wu Shu Jack. A few moments later he heard the door open. It was, Won. “That was quick.” He said.

“I ran, I was afraid” Won, replied, half panting. Joe, picked up a computer game in its box carton.

“I found it.” He said. “Look.”

Joe, pointed to a Japanese character on the game cover. “That’s a Samurai and he has to destroy the Demon, Ju and its henchmen to complete his destiny.”

“Ju, is not real!” Won, replied. “He cannot kill, Wu Shu Jack, Joe. Wu Shu Jack is real.”

“Yes, I know.” Joe, replied with a restrained enthusiasm, pinching slightly the sardonic projection of his usual voice. He eagerly continued, “All the demons in the game come from somewhere and Ju has to uncover keys to find them.”

“You believe one of the keys in the games will lead us to, Wu Shu Jack? It is, China ware wolf, not Japanese ware wolf.” Won, argued.

“What difference should it make? Why is a, Chinese Demon haunting me in Urban UK, if a Chinese key can lock it in, China?!” He shouted. Won, pleaded:

“Please, Joe,... calm down.”

“I won’t! Its chastising me, I’m miserable enough.... I won’t!!”

“Maybe I have a, Chinese key.” Won, said and Joe held the air behind the last word he spoke. The seconds that passed were silent with, Joe and Won, anticipating, Wu Shu Jack’s, defeat.

“Why didn’t you tell me you have a key?” Joe, smack his own head sharply, feeling it dim.

“I didn’t think it would help.” Won, swiftly retorted.

“Why not?” Joe, asked. Won, sat back on the floor, with his legs crossed. He lifted some heavy weight of air from his gut and sat up to explain:

“1 year ago, I was sent to learn meditations and wisdom of old Chinese Masters. My father was breaking up with my mother. He was very sad. He could not work and take care of me in, China, as he wanted to. He sent me to study in the, Shaolin Temple, the earliest practice place of the, Zen sect of the Buddhism, the birthplace of the, Shaolin Kung Fu. It is located at the foot of, Zhongshan. I was met by

the Monks keeping hundreds of children. Teaching us, showing us the ways of the wise Masters. Every field, every temple court yard, was lined with young students dressed in red, yellow and blue, Qipao. We were learning forms for weapons and without but I did not like the aggression and competition.”

“Why am I not surprised? It sounds amazing though.” Joe, remarked.

“I enjoyed my learning of scholarly material but in training I could never do well. One day we were summoned to fight against a chosen opponent. My teacher knew I was afraid but he chose the largest student in our class to be my opponent. I was forced into the ring and I faced him but as the rushing blood fuelled his stance with power, I fell to my knees in fear. My teacher was very angry and he beat me. He dragged me to a cave vault in the temple and locked me inside. It was dimly lit by holes letting light in from the ceiling. I could make out a wall with racks at the back of the cave but nothing else. It was horrible and I was scared. I could not lift my head but then, I saw pictures on the floor. Animals in armour and with weapons, painted traditionally and very old.

I saw fox’s, bear’s and rat’s all walking, like, Wu Shu Jack. I followed the paintings to the wall. They were very hard to see, no one had swept the floor. I had to use my hands and I found a scroll in the rack. At first I thought the rack was empty, just dust and spider webs. When I saw the scroll I was sad but I opened it thinking it might make me feel better. I thought there might be more pictures in it but I only saw in, Chinese, ‘Wu Shu Jack.’ I read it and there was thunder outside.

A big storm came and the students were screaming; I could hear them. I ran to the door and started to shout for them to let me out. I started to feel worse. I was about to give up and I heard him, breathing. I turned around it was howling in front of the racks where the scroll was. Like the painted animals, he stood like a man but his nose could wet the ceiling. He was dark and heavy, with leather strapped around his body, like, armour sinking in his black and grey hairy coat. It was appearing like a ghost and I screamed. I screamed

until my teacher came to open the door. I was happy when he grabbed me. I turned around and Wu Shu Jack, was gone. A month later the vault was cleared. A British collector bought all of the temple artefacts and Whu Shu Jack scroll. After that, the scholarly Monks were forced to leave and only the Shaolin Monks of the Zen Dynasty, to teach Shaolin Kung Fu, were permitted to stay.

I did not want to stay in, Zhongshan after my tutors left and my father chose to come here to, England. Wu Shu Jack, still follows me but it was the scroll that brought him to me. Perhaps it can send him back, Joe.”

“How much, Kung Fu, do you know, Won? Because I don’t think stealing a scroll from a vault in the Shaolin Temple, would be manageable for, Bruce Lee!! How the fuck are we suppose to get it?”

“It’s here, Joe. The British collector took it. It must be in, England, somewhere. We just have to find it and read it.” Won, said. Joe, gave a perplexed pause, biting his lip and sinking the black of his eyes to their corners.

“No.” Joe, started. “The demon has killed two people in two days, he knows where we are and he wants to torture us in our despair for such miserable lives. There is no just about it, we’ll be lucky to find that Scroll alive.” He gave another perplexed pause and suddenly with a bright assertion smacked, Won’s, head. “At least there’s hope.” He said. “The scroll must have a name, Won. What is it?” Won, had no response in lofty headedness. “Well?” Joe pushed.

“I.... I don’t know, maybe ‘Animal Scroll.’”

“Animal scroll?” Joe, speculated and pushed again for, Won, to recollect.

“I’m not sure. It was in, China! I left long time now!” Won, replied. “I saw the animals on the floor and the scroll by the wall, I didn’t see any writing. I only saw the animals.”

“This could take all night.” Joe, retorted, focused on a monitor screen.

“What are you doing?” Won, asked.

“I’m going to do a very broad search on google and every other search engine on the internet until we find the Scroll from the, Shaolin Temple, we’re looking for.” Joe, waited for the internet to load, ignoring, Won but preparing himself with some guarded love to protect him from, Wu Shu Jack. He trembled at the sight of the huge beast and his insides churned with discomfort remembering the ware wolf drooling over, Won’s, head and face. He’d send the monster back for good and rebuild his own life.

“Every time I put in ‘Animal Scroll,’ I get, Ninja scrolls. Tokyo's Zenshoan Temple ghost Scroll, The Demon Scroll, The Lotus Scroll, The Elemental Scrolls, Scorpion Clan Scroll, The Wolf Clan Scroll. It goes on and on but I don’t see anything on, Wu Shu Jack. It wasn’t a Ninja Scroll, was it?”

“Wu Shu temple scroll.” Won, answered. Joe typed it in, rocking his focus and fighting with impatience. Until a list of the Zhongshan Temple Scrolls, appeared. Joe, started reading them out. “The Crane scroll, The Eagle scroll, The Dragon scroll. Look at this one, Won: Pan Pan Scroll. That sounds like a Peter Pan Spell.” Joe, laughed at the strange looking manuscript, while, Won, looked on, a little red faced with embarrassment.

“That is not the scroll we want, Joe. Try that one, The Wolf Scroll.” Won, said. Joe, clicked on the link. A hope of finding the temple scroll perched them closer to the screen and they waited. The page finally appeared; a picture of a man standing.

“What is it?” Joe, asked.

“Fighting forms for the wolf style Kung Fu, fighting.” Won, read.

“I’ve never heard of that style,” Joe, retorted. Won, desperately smacked his hands together, swallowed in a disabling fear that the temple scroll would never be found and Wu Shu Jack, would torture them. “Don’t get up-set, Won. Wait a minute.” Joe, said and continued “Just because we didn’t find it doesn’t mean it’s not there.” Joe, said, reassuringly.

“But Joe, we will not survive if things keep going wrong. I am already afraid. What if I get too upset and Wu Shu Jack, comes? It’s hopeless.”

“No it is not!”

“It is! Tomorrow he will kill us in school, if he hasn’t killed us at the dinner table tonight.”

“No, he won’t.”

“He will! He will!”

Joe, got up and locked the door as, Won, screamed his anxiety. Then he shut the curtains and stood still commandingly looking over, Won. “Then we won’t leave this room until we find the scroll.” He said. “Now, Won, you remember the name of the scroll, the name of the collector or something and write it in the google bar.”

Won, released an ultimate sigh, leading to the surrender of his will or the intake of a dark air. An air that was tight and hard to breath. He turned around to look at the computer and started typing words into the google bar.

“Good.” Joe, said.

“It was a British collector last year in my school. He can’t be that hard to find. He was the only British guy I saw there in the whole year. I’ll just cross reference the rough date he was there with the items he bought and with any luck,.....” They waited for the page to appear. It read: “British archaeologist discovers ancient scrolls in the Shaolin Temple.”

“That’s it!” Joe, yelled.

“Maybe.” Won, replied and clicked on the link. Joe, saw a picture of an English archaeologist appear on the screen and holding a statue.

“Is that the person?” Joe, asked.

“I think so, but it’s not clear photo. He looks too fat.” Won, answered. Joe, took the mouse from, Won’s, hand and started to move the cursor.

“There must be some contact information.” He said and clicked on a link marked, Contact us, and found, an address. “How are we going to contact him? There’s no number!” Joe, said.

“We’ll have to go, there...” Won, said pointing to the address. “...Auh,... Cornwall?... Where that then, Joe?”

“Put it this way, you could fly home in the time it would take for us to drive there. It’s hopeless.”

“I don’t even have a driving licence.” Won, sighed.

“My Mum will never let us go on a school night.”

“Oh my god, it’s over, it’s finished. Let’s have our ‘Last Supper,’ like, the crucified men. I think I’m going to cry. We’re going to meet, God.”

“No, Won! No you mustn’t!” Joe, did beck for his unmoved response. “Now we can get a train, I have a cash card and money on my account.”

“But I don’t.” Won, said.

“I’ll pay for us both, just don’t cry. We’ll get the last train tonight after dinner, then we’ll get a cab. We’ll go to the archaeologist, get the scroll and send, Wu Shu Jack, back to... wherever the fuck he came from.” The room became a more spacious place. It was only a moment later, they both grew light hearted smiles to reside with.

Fast Food

“Dinner is ready!” Joe’s Mum said, anally putting the plates down. Joe, walked into the kitchen followed by, Won, who walked over to where his father was sitting, at the black dining table watching TV.

Joe, stopped before his mother and saw, Won, embrace, Mr. Lee, like, Mr. Lee, was, Santa Clause.

“I guess he’s going to miss his Dad.” Joe, spoke in a dispassionate sigh, finding a forgotten appreciation.

“Why dear? Where is he going, Joe?” His Mother, asked.

“Oh....” Joe, checked for an excuse, his eyes rolled and he attempted to hide his thinking. “Umm...” He continued, “We have to complete a RPG, Won and I, are going to stay in our rooms and play after dinner. He’ll just stay the night. That’s not a problem is it, Mum?” Joe, asked.

“No, no sweetie. Pass me the salad bowl. That’s fine,... yes, Won, can stay.”

Joe brought the salad bowl from the cabinet below the counter to his Mother, who gave a distracted response. Joe, noticed the repeated moistening of her lips before she murmured. “I don’t expect his father will want to leave him here on his own. They are so close.” She said, smiling, with a lascivious swooning of her head.

Joe, didn’t consider, Mr. Lee and Won’s, relationship. He didn’t really care. He left the kitchen area and went to sit down at the dining table. He heard, Mr. Lee, talking and looked up. “You well now, Joe. Look much better and happy.” Mr. Lee, said.

“I’m thinking about all there is to experience in life, like cooking, kissing and travelling. It’s exciting me.” Mr. Lee, laughed

“Yes.” Mr. Lee, said. “Yes, you are young, so much to see.”

“What’s for dinner, Mum?” Joe, asked. His mother came to the table holding a large baked salmon.

“Fish.” She answered and returned to the counter, to get the salad bowl. Joe, could smell the herbs and gravy, lifting into the air with steam from the cooked meat. He hadn’t tried a Salmon like this before. He’d only tried smoked salmon and he’d noticed the smoked salmon didn’t smell of anything like this fish. He watched his mum eat it with crackers but he’d never seen a Salmon cooked like this.

The sweeter smelling dish, found an uplifting distraction from the plummeting attentions to cravings that were more deprave. The stolen candy; visions of tables, which stole the tastes of his own. It was a vigorous drag to ease his pain there. When, he was aided to feel the problem, to the pains resolve. He finally fell, sardonically, over the plate, to eat and run.

The fish was dark, with a black oily skin and when his mother cut it open, it was pink and fleshy. “Are there any bones?” Joe, asked.

“I don’t know...” His Mum, replied. “You should always be careful with these kinds of foods anyway. It’s good for the growing boys.”

“And a growing appetite.” Mr, Lee. Said. Joe’s Mum, blushed with a hedonist giggle and poured, thick slumping red wine, down an empty glass in front of her.

“Do dig in, Mr. Lee.” She forwarded gesturing with an outreached hand.

Joe, was getting use to his mothers unusual friendliness towards, Mr. Lee. It was always the same directed glances, held, past all distractions until pout guided smile that emanated a desired pleasure. Mr, Lee. remained, adequate to supply. Joe’s, attentions were directed somewhere else that evening. The herbs of the fish, lifted in a hot fog, steaming the edge of his glass and cutlery. He divided a few millimetres of the pink meat. More fog lifted and soon it was enveloping him. He imagined a giant piranha, covered in bumpy white salt rocks, green vegetation and dripping with blood, falling from the protruding sharp teeth, like daggers. It was approaching him, like an island floating, becoming clearer and closer. There was nowhere he could go.

He dropped the knife, stricken with fear. “Do you see, Wu Shu Jack Joe?” Won, asked. The pink attractively cooked centre, freshly airing calmness, as the sunset, was quickly suffocating. Moved to the eternal nightmare which, Joe, more wanted to escape. It was not for bread on the table but for life off of it, which the child could find something past his nightmares and Whu Shu Jack, with.

Joe, found the beat of his heart again, blinking back to reality and saw, Won. His mother gulped a mouthful of win, in the process of rubbing down, Mr. Lee's, hand. "I'm fine." He answered "I was seeing things. It.... it wasn't, Wu Shu Jack, don't worry." He said.

"When are we going to pack?" Won, asked quietly.

"We'll be back tomorrow. We don't need luggage." Joe, said. He wasn't loud but his secret reply to Won, was awarded a glance from his Mother, who asked:

"What did you say, dear?" and he, more alerted then she, replied.

"Nothing Mother."

"How is the fish dear? You haven't tasted it." She said.

"I don't want it." Joe, said, reviling.

"You haven't even tried it!"

"I don't like salmon. It looks like moss covered tarmac!!" Joe, said

"This was in, Gordon Ramsey's, cook book. It's fine cuisine."

"Its slop, it looks horrible. I don't want it. It looks horrible! Horrible!!" Joe, whelped agitated with a slight panicking.

"Joe!!!"

"Horrible!!"

He slammed the plate into the table and pushed it away.

"Joe, eat your food!" His Mum, said.

"I don't want it."

"I spent hours preparing this."

"You eat it, you and husband to be." Joe, commanded. He moved from the table with a rage unguided and shouted: "I'm not blind! You're not my Father, Mr. Lee. Not even after your honey moon sex

and your domestic model household!” Then he walked out of the kitchen leaving his mum to protest:

“The wretch ruins everything.”

“Joe, sorry.” Won, told her and got up, stealthily, repeating: “He very sorry...” Walking away, after him, Won, finished whispering: “I sorry too.”

Jo, was sitting on the bed when, Won, found him. Heavy thoughts circled his mind, forcing close his eyes, until, Won, interrupted, asking, Joe: “Why you fight so much?”

“I don’t. You’re the Kung Fu master, with your, Wu Shu, waking Demons like, Wu Shu Jack. Why do you fight so much, Won?”

“I learn, Wu Shu, no use it. If you learn well, sometimes you no need use what you learn; it come, naturally. You fight all the time; not natural.”

“I don’t fight, they fight me. I’m the victim. Why doesn’t anybody see that? Nothing can protect me, everyday I’m ... since my father left, I’m never going to be happy. I don’t even have the right to an opinion because I’m, a boy. You can’t stop fighting, when I’m a man I’ll be fighting. It might look like I can’t win today but when I grow up, you’ll see.”

“At the temple we train many hours in the day, sometimes we fight each other in sport not malice. Why not come to temple with your Mum?” Won, said and Joe, could only sustain a short hesitance before laughing.

“Me?” He said “I’d fit in about as well as you people fit in here, no. Won, I don’t think China holds the solution.”

“China hold many solutions and mysteries, like, Wu Shu Jack Scroll. If Demon possess space here, why no good China men?”

“We must find it, Won.” Joe, stated in an arrested tone. “I want you to stay, and help me, move this fucking Demon, out!”

“I am ready.” Won, said as, Joe, peered through the door. Joe’s eyes were squinted, to be as inconspicuous as he could be, while he watched what his mother was doing. He saw her being lifted in the air and pounded against the walls, with her legs wrapped around, Mr. Lee. He closed the door with a deep disgust wrenching his breathing to knots and pulls.

“That path won’t be clear for a while.” He said. “We’ll have to wait a bit.”

The Bandit Breakout

The clock besides Joe’s bed was reading 10:00pm. The last train would be leaving in the hour. Joe, searched for courage pacing the room with infrequent looks towards, Won. “We have to go. We have to go now, quietly.” He said and picked up a ruck sac. He walked over to the door and swung it open for a narrow space they could walk out through.

The corridor was empty. The house was quiet as they walked slowly to the front door. Joe, was signalling, Won, with his hand waving downward, to tip toe. They were at the door, he was opening it and making a gap for them to squeeze through. He stopped, as a loud cry broke through the house.

“Yes! Yeess!, Oh Oh, the kids, SHhhh Shhh.” It was like, a titillated stage show audience, playing, from outside the house. Joe, listened a moment before a fever of embarrassment drove him to run out the door as his mother screamed: “Don’t wake them, don’t, Shhh. Ohhhh!, yes!. Yes!!!....” Until, Won, closed the door and ran after, Joe, down the street.

The train station was only twenty minutes away. Joe, didn’t want to talk but he glanced behind him a few times, to check that, Won, was alright. They took paths and back yard short cuts that only, Joe, knew. They arrived at the small station as, Won, started pleading

for a rest. His pine looking skin under the street lights was a flowing red glow. "I must rest..." Won, said. Joe, turned around.

"We're here!" He retorted and gave him some water.

The station was the size of a small block of flats, with spaces for six or eight cars, in front of them. It was surrounded by tall, amber glowing street lights. Before the train platform, there was a grey ticket machine. Joe, walked up to it and started typing in their destination, Cornwall, where they planned to find the, British, collector. He typed it in. "It's not here.." He said.

"Well, were then, Joe?" Won, asked without any knowledge of the, British, rail system.

"It must be at another station, a bigger one." Joe, said.

"What station?" Won, asked.

Joe, started to search again. "There's Waterloo." He said. "We could go to, Cornwall, from there or Paddington, Kings Cross and Clapham Junction."

"Which one, Joe?" Won, asked nervously.

"Waterloo, is the closest to here. This is, Surbiton." Joe, said.

He requested two tickets and fed the machine some money. The lights on the note slot blinked and rejected the note. "I must have the Queen's head the wrong way round." Joe, remarked with discreet pride, a little dampened. Turning the money in his fingers, he still maintained a dignifying appearance that his manner was indulging in. The note was swallowed and the change with two tickets was given out. The coins jingled in the dispenser. He was enthusiastic dipping for the tickets, with a sense of dominance, as he realised he was taking, Won, with him.

The train, leaving for, Waterloo, took five or ten minutes to arrive at the platform. A few passengers got off as the trains pumps released pressure. A train conductor blew a whistle. He was a short man. He was dressed in a florescent yellow waistcoat and smart

trousers. He carefully made sure the doors were clear and people disembarked safely.

Joe, found himself being stared at. He saw people probing with concerned frowns and thoughtful eyes onto him and Won. The train conductor walked up to them and Joe discharged a concern he might be told not to travel. Joe and Won, had no parental guardian and neither of them had completed their common entrance exams. Joe, shouted: "I'm headed to, Waterloo, with my friend. We're meeting some other friends."

"Have you got a guardian travelling with you?" The conductor asked.

"We'll be meeting people at, Waterloo." Joe, said.

The conductor scratched his chin and aimlessly commanded boarding passengers onto the train, by making occasional waving signals with his hand. "Can I see your tickets?" The conductor asked. Joe, passed him the two tickets. "You kids keep your belongings with you, watch out for the gangs. They come like fire burning out your pockets dry, your bags, your wallets nothing is safe these days." The conductor spoke and then blew his whistle and made a final aimless wave signalling the remaining passengers onto the train. Joe and Won, walked on, just as the doors started to close.

The quiet platform was slowly left behind. Through the window, Joe, could see the glow of the amber lights on the station getting smaller, as the train hummed, deep indomitable sounds, into darkness. He was pulled away from the window when, Won, asked: "How long will it take us to get to Waterloo?"

"I don't know Won." Joe, said. He didn't have a map and he couldn't remember the last time he travelled by train. An itching frustration began to emerge, making him uneasy about the journey. He had to fidget periodically and every time the train stopped at a station, he'd run out as if he needed to pee but he only checked the station sign. After 20 minutes they had made 4 stops and Joe, was watching through the door window, while the train pulled away again.

"Are you nervous, Joe? This wrong train, Joe?" Won, asked.

“No, it isn’t. No I’m not nervous!” Joe, snapped. He took a sharp protest to Won’s questions with an air of insecurity, while defending his dominance. A little put off, by the numerous stops that weren’t Waterloo he sat down opposite, Won and snatched the tickets, as if he was going to tear them up. “These tickets must be wrong. That machine cheated us!” He shouted. The chime for an announcement sounded and a voice spoke:

“All change at Waterloo. This train terminates at, Waterloo. It’s final destination.”

Joe, stopped with his enthusiasm returning. “Now..” Joe, started handing back the ticket, “Don’t question me, Won.” He said. The train stopped and they walked out onto the large platform of, Waterloo, station. Joe, dipped his head from the pigeons landing on the cold stone floor. The loud flapping wings and nervous rocking heads forward and back, forward and back, surrounded them, briefly. Joe and Won, walked to the hall, under the shadow of the immense steel shell structure of the station covering them. It was mostly filled with pigeons. The shops in the hall were empty and chain grills were being lowered, as the stores and restaurants prepared to close.

A few oddly dressed people stood before a screen with the train schedule. It was a large black screen in front of the train platforms. Joe, walked to the middle of the hall, where he could see the time of the next train leaving for, Cornwall. There were at least twelve trains running from, Waterloo. Joe, read past each one with great self discipline. He found a growing determination to reach the, British, collector and stop, Wu Shu Jack. It was as if every step he made closer to, Cornwall, with, Won, made a greater desire to get there. It was the tenth train on the board he stopped at and read: “Platform 8, Cornwall.”

“What time does it leave?” Won, asked.

“In 2 minutes. Come on!” He said, driven with the excitement before their arrival in, Cornwall. The engine of the train was running, when they reached, Platform 8. Joe, stopped to hit the green glowing button

that opened the sliding doors. “You’ve got the ticket, haven’t you, Won?”

“I’ve got mine. I don’t have yours.”

“No, I’ve got mine. I was just making sure you had yours.” Joe, said and walked onto the train with a light step. The journey was becoming less daunting. It was only going to take them a few hours to reach, Cornwall, from there. It was a long time at first but, Won, had his portable console and Joe had brought food and cartons of orange juice, in his sac. After the train started moving, they felt like they had already arrived and that, Whu Shu Jack, was already returned and sealed away.

Joe and Won, had sat in a large closure of six chairs. The buildings were like brick streams of water with lucent spots, from the building windows. The train was moving quickly. Joe, anticipated arriving, thinking courageously. He maintained the same views of living in his home with his mother. It was like living in a cage. He couldn’t go anywhere or say anything. He never got what he wanted. He hated it. Living like a captured animal wasn’t the life he wanted. It was a selling zoo of evils asking to be bought, which he kept there. He had an attention for more he kept, before his father left. He needed to find a satisfaction for where he stayed, that, he did not yet have.

The train was moving closer to, Cornwall, every second. In each second, Joe, felt more compelled to stay there and never go back home. “Let’s stay in, Cornwall.” He suggested to, Won’s, surprise, who could only ask:

“How, Joe?”

“We’ll stay with the, British collector, tell him, we’re orphans or something. Tell him, our parents just died in,.. Iraq. I don’t know... We can make something up.”

“I, Chinese, Joe. Who believe Chinese boy that say his father dead in, Iraq?”

“We’ll make something else up then. It doesn’t matter it doesn’t matter what we say, but let’s stay in, Cornwall.”

“My father may miss me, Joe.”

“If you don’t stay, I’ll miss you, Won.”

“What about school and I have to run egg and spoon race on sports day next week.”

“Forget all that, Won. This is our chance to be free. You’ve got to come with me. You’ve got to, Won.”

“You sound like, Wu Shu Jack, Joe.”

“You sound like a sap, wake up! We’re about to stop, Wu Shu Jack. Nothing can stop us, together. Nothing... Wake up, Won! You sap, come with me.”

In a controlling manner, projecting outward his chest, sat boldly in front of, Won, Joe, waited for Won’s final response. He kept his eyes locked on, Won’s, troubled head. “Well!” He yelled, until, Won, answered.

“I’ll stay with you, Joe.”

“Good.” Joe, answered rewardingly, satisfying, Won’s, insecure nature. “Let’s celebrate” He followed and took out some money from his pocket and food from his ruck sac.

Joe, started to spread the items of left overs from dinner and money across the chairs. They were hungry. As the food appeared and was unwrapped, the meat and bread was not only feeding their hunger for food but in finding new freedom on the journey, it fed their hunger for life. It was a ravenous hunger and they started eating like blind pigs in the offal, before the slaughter house. They laughed and ate, until the food was almost gone. “Don’t worry, we’ll be fine.” Joe, said.

As he picked up the last pieces of meat to put in his mouth a loud singing came through into the carriage, when a bearded man walked through from another carriage into theirs. Joe, was still

chewing when the man walked towards him, singing with slurs and bellowed: "Sing low, sweet chariot. Sing low, sweet chariot, sing sing, coming to carry me home." The bearded man was large and stocky. He wore a large dark and dirty anorak. As he approached, Joe, could smell a distinct stench of urine, emanating from the bearded man. Joe, moved across the chairs to sit next to, Won, hoping the bearded man would not notice them.

The bearded man was getting closer and the smell of urine grew stronger and stronger. Joe could sense him passing but the man stopped, before reaching the carriage door. Joe, listened hearing no singing and no movement. He started to squint with discomfort, not knowing what the bearded man was doing. He could tell the man was drunk and got a little scared. He lifted his head just as the beady dark eyes of the bearded beggar froze on the money and food across from, Joe and Won, on the chair. Joe, tried to get to food and money, quickly, to pack it away but the bearded man grabbed him. He screamed: "Let me go! Let me go now!"

"Let him go!" Won, screamed sitting down, but the bearded man did nothing. Joe, was in pain as the large man held him and Won, away from the money and food. Picking up and stuffing it into his pockets. Joe, screamed terrified, "That's our money! That's my money!" and started to cry. Won, heard thunder rolling outside the train. He trembled and became scared. A fork of lightning flashed when they saw, Wu Shu Jack, appear on the carriage. Joe, could see it in front of them through his tearful eyes. "Run Won!" He screamed.

"No,... I can't move. I can't get passed."

The bearded man was blocking him and Joe, from escaping but the beggar couldn't see, Wu Shu Jack. The boys whimpered and cried, watching as it approached in the carriage. The lights blinked on and off, as the white of his teeth grew more bold and his deep breathing became louder. Soon it was close enough for them to feel the ebbing heat of its hairy body. They screamed. "I'm sorry." Joe, whelped. "I want to go home!" He screamed. "I want my Mummy! Mummy!"

He closed his eyes preparing to be captured, knowing his mother was not coming and heard a monstrous cry from the bearded man. He opened his eyes as his hands became loose and saw the beggars' throat on the floor. "Won!" He shouted. "Grab his coat." Won, stealthily ripped the coat off the staggering beggar with blood dripping from the neck and they ran out the carriage. Wu Shu Jack, roared, before the bewildered beggar and his sharp claw and powerful arms, ripped the bearded man in two. Joe and Won, were already gone out of the carriage. They kept running through the train until they felt safe. A business man reading a news paper was the only other person on the carriage where they stopped. "Ok , now calm down!" Joe, shouted. "We're safe!" He shouted.

"But Wu Shu Jack, killed that beggar, Joe"

"Who cares! That bum was about to steal our money and food. It was him or us."

"I don't want to run away anymore, Joe. I want to find the British collector and go home."

"Me too, Won." Joe said, with a more prized value of what remained of life that made him joyful. They sat on the train, a little more quietly for the remainder of the trip. It was only another hour before they reached, Cornwall.

The Split

Joe and Won, wandered onto cobble roads, where there were frequent sounds of ship horns and beating waves. The town was connected by vein like paths. They lead to the sea front, passing steep hills and valleys. Joe and Won, past different kinds of high street stores and restaurants. They were all closed. The only places open were pubs and bars. They passed a couple walking through the streets but avoided them, feeling best not to risk any more encounters with drunken men.

The mist was thick and drowning, of heavy, cold clouds. It was like ghosts, creeping onto them, silently blinding their convictions and freezing their passions. It waved over like monsters from the cold sea at the dawn of darkness; wrapping in a fright from the coast, nearly stopping them at the sound of the beach.

They wished they were at home, in Surbiton; enjoying the neon arcades of Kingston Upton Thames. They came to a map which was sign posted next to a Church. He looked for the collectors address. The paper he wrote it on was in his sac. It was a chilly night and late, even bending down was a laborious task. Joe's, determination was slipping to tiredness. He couldn't find the excitement he knew on the train and began to doubt they would succeed. His trembling hand pulled out the piece of paper and he tracked the map for the road, with his freeze burnt finger. "Can you see it, Won?" He asked.

"I don't see it, Joe. Maybe different town." Won, numbly replied.

"Well, we're already in this town. The paper says, this town. We can't go to another town, it's too late." Joe snapped, feeling a tension he refrained in a sad slump.

"I have an idea." Won, said.

"What is it, Won? Tell me."

"We find a taxi, go to the collectors address in the taxi, split with the, Wu Shu Jack Scroll, in the taxi and go home." Won, said.

Joe, grew a feisty expression pressing out his features with an ongoing desire, smugly smirking to the animated idea. He checked the map to find information on, taxi's. He found a number and pressed it into his phone to dial. "It's ringing." He said. There was mist coming out of their mouths and fogging like a cloud around them, while they talked on the phone. Then, in sea gulls echoes, they waited for the taxi.

They waited, watching the stepping feet of people, talking with cans, bottles and some with fish and chips, pasties, Chinese and other types of food. Indulging and recreational club goers; no one was

really interested in, Joe or Won. They both waited in front of the Church. They waited on the narrow footpath leading down to the sea, watching the parties. They waited until the sea they were looking over was quiet and still. Joe, was breathing lightly in the calm and peaceful surrounding. He was cold and tired making his eyes slowly close before he would force them open again.

Just as they were becoming fatigued, they saw the white car to collect them. The horn of the car tooted and it stopped a meter away. An electric window sank down and Joe, could see the drivers face. It was a bald looking young man. With specs of grey and white hair, around the edges of his head and painting stubble around his chin. “Yu rite? Call a taxi did you then, by chance?” The driver asked chirpily, which surprised, Joe, because it was late at night and he was tired.

“Yes I did.” Joe said, loosening up at the thought of getting into the warm cab. He and Won, climbed in and closed the door shut, with some urgency to keep out the cold.

The taxi driver started adjusting the meter to reset it after his last customer. “My name is Bob, I was born on this here rock and can pretty much takes yous anywhere you want to go.” He said. Joe, gave the address to the, taxi driver, Bob, who looked at it and gave a contemplating rub of his stubble with his hand. “Yes, I know where this is. This here is out by the light house, at, Lizard.”

“What’s Lizard?” Joe, asked.

“The place, Lizard Point. Oh it’s a beautiful sight a morning!” Bob, exclaimed.

“How far away?” Joe, asked sternly and continued “We’re goanna split before dawn.” He said.

“This a return journey boys? Bit late for a round trip. It might cost you a bit more, all that waiting on a night like this.”

“Please, just take us there. We have money, so drive.” Joe, demanded coldly.

“You boys must really need to be gettin. Well I won’t argue, like I said....”

“Just drive!” Joe, shouted, projecting a forceful order from the manner in which he spoke. Bob, was stilled like a wooden post and swivelled to face the front like a toy doll. Joe was more determined now to get the scroll than had been. He found no place for talking but sat back quietly once the cab started moving, a little sorry he shouted.

Joe, stayed anticipant of meeting the British Collector. Peering out the window, he saw they passed a few village houses on a country road and pulled up outside a large grey stone house. It resembled a barn, with long walls and very few windows. He could hear the sea crashing against the rock of the coastal cliffs a few hundred yards behind the house. “Is this it?” He asked. With distress unsettling his composure, he threw open the door and got out remarking: “This isn’t a collector’s house, it’s too small! Where are the cars, the gates, the fortified servant quarters, the garage with devises for finding artefact in the regions men have never been to, like in, Lara Croft. You’ve brought us to a gardener’s retirement home.” Joe, said.

“This is the address you gave me. I di no make a mistake.” Bob, answered.

“Yes you did, give us the money back!” Joe, demanded.

“No! I di no, I di no, knock on the door and see.” Bob, insisted.

Joe, took a glance at the door of the house with caution. It was dark and not inviting. The damp air blew against them carrying some sprays of water, like mild explosions. He didn’t move but Won, stepped forward. “No more, Wu Shu Jack, Joe...” Won, said and knocked on the door. There was an ease of the winds, until a flood light fell over them. They heard footsteps and a moment later the door opened.

Joe and Won, felt the warmth of the house roll out, as they looked up towards the breasts of an attractive blonde woman. “Are you, British?” Won, asked the lady.

“Shut up, Won. I told you we were at the wrong address. That’s no old collector.” Joe, said disheartened. He started to head back to the taxi when the woman shouted.

“I am a collector actually. Started when I was your age, collecting, antiques. Somehow, I don’t think you two are interested in antiques; so I’ll ask pensively: What are you here for?” She said. She was tall and athletic with strong features that were mature, tight and feminine to the gentle cried tear of time. Her soft blue eyes burned, like hazel, dimly, like fire in the foyer light.

“It her, Joe. It a woman.” Won, said. Joe, started ranting immediately:

“It was a horrible beast, big, huge and claws. Won, brought it to my bedroom and it appeared, drooling. It wants to kill us, we keep getting sad and it’s killed three people already because Won, read the Scroll in, China and now its killed people here and it wants to kill us...”

“Wait, wait ... slow down.” She said but Joe couldn’t.

“We want to send it back and stop it but we get sad and then it appears to capture us and it will. It will if we can’t win because we need the Scroll.

“What Scroll?!” The woman, exclaimed.

“Won, read it and the beast came. It was taken from the, Shaolin Temple. Now the beast don’t go back. It watches and waits and it wants to take us and torture us and...” The woman interjected with alarm:

“From, The Shaolin Temple? At the foot, Zhongshan?!” She asked, astutely, addressing, Won, who replied within the beat of a heart:

“Yes!!!”

“Look, will you come inside? I’ll pay for the taxi.” It didn’t take any more persuasion. Joe and Won, became drawn to the warmth of the house that gave a more inviting response then they’d expected. “I’m Jill. Just go on through.” She said. They thanked her briefly,

introducing themselves and shaking her hand before they walked through the door into the house.

“Bye Boys!” Bob, shouted.

“Thank you.” Jill, said paying the taxi driver. “I’ll take care of them from here.” She said and the taxi drove away into the dark country roads of the early morning hours.

The house was more spacious than it looked from outside. They walked past tall suits of armour, mantel pieces and vintage artefacts. The passage was lined with at least 5 items, positioned against the walls they passed, before getting to a living room. Wood was burning red flames in the fire place, behind the coffee table. Two large couches, either side of the table, were for lounging on and they went to sit down. “Can I offer you a hot chocolate boys? Its cold out there, at the very least a blanket?”

“We have to get back, soon. So no.” Joe, said. Jill, thought it a strange refusal, she squirmed inside her stomach, trying to imagine, Joe and Won, travelling back at this hour of the night. She herself would never choose to travel at this time, even in better conditions. She glanced at the cindering fire, hearing it popping softly. It was blazing and would burn for at least another hour. There was more wood in the back house but seeing, Joe’s, urgency, she left it and sat down. Her legs crossed and she lit a cigarette from the table, giving in to, Joe and Won’s, assertive request. “Well, I believe I know the Temple you’re talking about.”

“You do, It’s you, hahaha.” Won, excitedly laughed and pointed “Hahah, Joe, it’s the British collector, we’re saved.”

“Yes,... I was there a year ago but how does that affect you? What is, Wu Shu Jack and how are you saved?”

“I Christian/Buddhist.” Won, covertly projected. A moment later, in disdain, Joe, slapped his head.

“Shut up, Won. She’s asking about the Scroll, not, Jesus.”

“Oh sorry.” Won, replied and explained. “In the Shaolin Temple, I find ‘Wu Shu Jack Scroll, when punished for being weak. I not know what, Wu Shu Jack, is and summoned the Demon to space of my fears.”

“Wu Shu Jack, has been haunting us ever since.”

“It is hiding now. Won, saw it watching, moving our visions and dreams for the nightmare it sows to possess men and the world. To the capture of its own evils.” Joe, said. He smacked his hand down on the table. “I want to stop him now, tonight! You have the Scroll. All, Won, has to do is read it and he’ll never come after, Won or I, again.”

“The Dark Deity is real? You’ve seen it manifest, you’ve seen it kill people?!” Jill, questioned. She stood up refrained and startled. An icy buzz chilled silent flame sparks, like, incendiary doom, to light a cigarette. She stood and paced away from, Joe. She was abashed and bereft. “That’s not possible; its legend, myth, fantasy stories told by, Chinese Emperors, to ward off rioting.” Jill, took a deep drag pondering of the possibility, Joe, might be telling the truth. She rolled her eyes away with serendipitous consideration. The thought the monstrous beast was heating her with youthful excitement. She wanted to believe it was true but could not know how, Joe, could contain, Wu Shu Jack, the, Dark Deity and it’s minions.

“How many Demons have you seen?” Jill, asked, Joe.

“Only, Wu Shu Jack.”

“There are dozens you know. You’re lucky to be alive. You must have a damn good therapist or, maybe, you’re imaging things in a paranormal stunt.”

“No, we’re not.” Joe, said, sighing.

“It’s hard to believe you travelled.”

“He killed a man on the train. We escaped.” Joe, said.

“You... escaped?...

Did you kill someone coming here? Intending to hide from the law in my barn? Are you, Whu Shu Jack, Joe!? If this is some psychoactive case of, schizophrenia, I'll know. You won't disguise, Hyde, from me, a, Jackal." Jill, snapped.

"Look for yourself! Turn on the news, there was blood everywhere! Switch it on!" Joe, said, reassuringly standing and throwing his arm towards the TV. He had bold eyes bursting with frustration because of, Jill's, scepticism. Jill, took up the remote with a flighty manner. It appeared she was going to drop it before the TV was switched on. She turned to, Sky News. The headline stories were playing.

"This just in: A senior citizen was murdered today on an express train between North and South Cornwall, Falmouth. This fat pasty, was gruesomely ripped in two after being punctured at the neck by some wild beast."

"Won and I, could not even get away from the length of that guys arms. How could we eat his throat to kill him?" Joe, interjected. There was a trembling displacement, whilst the cigarette did not move from, Jill's lips. The story continued:

"The police are currently searching for two minors who they believe may know the whereabouts of this monster." Jill, heard and collapsed with intrigue onto the velvety dark sofa. In the crackling accompaniment of flames from the cindering wood, Jill cried:

"Oh my God, Joe! Oh my God! We're going to jail, Joe! No, we're going to be killed if it's here! Because it knows men, will kill to it. Impalpable supernatural power, literally on tap!!!"

"Jill, please give us the Temple Scroll." Joe, asked with some urgency. Joe, had to take the remote from her hand and the cigarette from her mouth, to, slap the colour back into her, petrified, white face. "Jill, Jill!" He spoke, trying to find her attention. He waited until she turned and faced him repeating:

"It's real. It's really real. The Dark Deity, will torture us all!.."

Over the roaring sea behind the house, Wu Shu Jack's, mushroom cloud, was rolling in wait. At the edge of the cloud, sitting on the couch, the beast watched, for the moment to seize, Joe and Won. "He seeks the woman with my Scroll. A problem if he finds it." The slender white cat beast moved away from the children being tortured on the smoking apparatus, cracking her whip to her vile compulsions.

"You must not fail to catch them, Jack. Not this time or we'll be gone, trapped in a Demon Dimension, with no children at all. Look at the frenzy of panic and mayhem." She said crashing her lip. "They are mine to play with. I enjoy them, Jack. Don't let that boy take them away from me. I couldn't live! I couldn't! I couldn't, no! No! No!" She spoke, crashing her whip until, Wu Shu Jack, roared:

"His sadness falls, my cloud is being summoned by their fear. Their officers will come in sirens and flashing lights to keep them. It was the woman calling the officers that has made their sadness fall. Come with me, Fila. Sense his pain, like the feline torturer you are."

"Yes, yes, you know I want to. I will and Modie and Balk, will too. We'll take everything. Hahaha, hahaha, hahahaha!"

The cloud drew closer to the house and soon, Won, could hear the thunder approaching. "Please, tell the police not to come." Joe, pleaded but Jill, was smoking another cigarette with pure fear for, Joe and Won's, safety.

"I cannot." She said "You're only children, someone has to protect you. The police will be here in a moment."

"We only need the Scroll." Joe, said. "Please give it to us."

"The Scroll?"

"Wu Shu Jack, is coming!" Won, screamed, hearing another thunder clap outside the house. Joe, shouted:

"The Temple Scroll!" Jill, ran through the house into her kitchen. She smoked the cigarette gazing at an amber covered Scroll, in a, wood

decorated frame on the cabinet shelf. Joe, ran in, after her and saw it. "Is that it, Won?" Joe, asked. Won replied:

"That Temple Scroll!" Holding a knights shield from a suit of armour in the hallway, to guard him from, Whu Shu Jack. "Take it, quick!" Won, shouted. Joe, took it from, Jill. Lightning cracked through the kitchen window and the lights cut out. They screamed.

"Shh... Stay down. Don't move." Jill, told them. They looked out from around the kitchen island. The deep breath of a monster travelled into the house.

"It's here, It's here." Joe, repeated and the monsters heads took shape in the blue flashes of the storm. Modie, the fox beast, Balk, the squirrel and Fila, the beastly feline cracking her whip. Joe, ran screaming into the living room. "There are more Demons! Run! Run!" He shouted.

"Wait Joe!" Jill, screamed, running after him with, Won. "Wait for the police!" Joe, ran to the front of the house almost delirious with fear, gripping the temple scroll without temperance to read it. More blue flashes lit the passage way, he opened the door to find before several bolts of blue electricity the beast, Wu Shu Jack.

"You are mine!" Wu Shu Jack, roared with snarling lips, towering in front of the house.

"Get back Joe!" Jill, screamed and slammed the door closed. They crept back into the living room, pacing against the front wall and moving curtains to get away. The three monsters stepped closer. They heard the door break in. It wasn't possible to escape, they were surrounded and about to be captured. Joe closed his eyes and thought of his mother sleeping with, Mr. Lee, at his house. "Have a nice life without me Mum." He said and waited for the monsters to strike.

The Demons stepped closer, quivering with snapping jaws and snapping sounds, from their excitement. Then, Joe, heard sirens. He opened his eye and looked out the window next to him. "The police! Look, Jill! The police!" He opened the window.

“Go! Go boys.” Jill, projected lifting them out. The Demons, ran to stop them, grabbing, Jill’s foot before she could get out.

“Jill!” Joe, cried, watching the Demon grab her back into the house. The police started to open fire.

“This is the police. You are ordered to release that woman and come out with your hands positioned where we can see them.”

It was quiet a moment besides, Joe’s, sobbing. He was choking with fear that, Jill, was killed by, Wu Shu Jack. He waited as the police approached the house and saw, Jill’s, hand clamber onto the window ledge. “Jill!” He shouted.

“Watch out, Joe!” She, cried, before the three beasts broke through the house walls. The police could only see flying brick. “Run!” Jill, shouted, climbing out the house but it was too late. Fila, threw one of the officers over the roof with her whip. The other dozen police officers turned like dizzy drunks, trying to see what was stalking them. Modie, used his stealth and agility, chasing down the fleeing police men and crushing them in his fox like jaws.

Joe, rushed to an abandoned squad car with, Jill and Won. It started and Jill, reversed out of the village. Balk, looked out from on top of a dead police man in a car. It lifted squirrel like fore hands and gave a breaking cry, signalling to, Wu Shu Jack and the other Demons, of, Joe’s, escape. Wu Shu Jack, broke through the roof of the house and landed before the reversing car, broke into the road. The Demon forced it off the ground, whacking and tearing the metal with razor sharp nails; cracking the roof, like a shredder. “It’s, Wu Shu Jack!” Jill, said. “You can see him?” Joe, asked amazed.

”Yes, I read the scroll before framing it but I haven’t been afraid of anything for years, until now.”

“He’s coming in!” Won, screamed.

“We’re Going! We’re going!!! Right, buckle up!” Jill, said. Spinning the car 180 degrees and tearing through the village. Wu Shu Jack, raced after them, falling onto front legs like a giant wolf. The Demons

leaped on the roads and off of buildings, trying to ram the car into a ditch. Jill, struggled to keep the car on the road. Her energy fuelled with desperation, clean with vigour on the gears of the car, to get away. She cried and tears began to blur her vision. She tried to wipe them clean but was driving too fast. “Where are they?!!” She screamed, driving the car through pavement signs and shrubs on the road islands.

“They’re falling behind us, they’re not keeping up.” Joe, said.

“Thank God.” Jill, whimpered.

Wu Shu Jack’s, cloud started to move away from the house and the Demons couldn’t chase them further. They had escaped. “You’re the pussy that caused this. Snaring at police men with that whip, when it’s the Boy I want to chastise. I’ll have him in my chamber, Fila!” Wu Shu Jack, said, as they disappeared. “Modie, Balk: We will claim the victims of my darkness. They will be sad. The world makes them sad. We will be ready. The world will feed them to us.”

The stirred village came out of their houses finding nothing to explain for the damage of the town. They came out in wonder and baffled before the existence of, Whu Shu Jack.

The Greens Mean Dead, Joe said.

The roads were empty, leading on for miles into the darkness, like skies. The head beams fired in front of the car, grazing over the road and lighting one side of the highway. Joe, was calm and the others were oddly agitated, with tightness shutting their expressions within cramping air. They were edgy under a slowly rising day, that was heavy with penultimate omen of a last.

Joe, noticed, Jill, was distressed. She only watched the road. Joe, tried to find a glance from her eyes and leaned forward slowly. He rested a hand on the side of the empty passenger chair. She noticed and took a glance to drift out melancholy soberness, “How has this

happened? Is this something you learn to do in school? I mean don't they teach you see life without asking Dark Deities to live for you?! How has the Dark Deity appeared before me in real life?! I,... I don't know what to think? To believe, I thought I did a good thing with the scroll. At peace with my evil, which, I should have relieved myself of. The entire village has been destroyed, it brought down the post office!!" Jill, said and began to sob, sadly.

"They'll do anything to capture us, Jill. And if you can see them, they'll do anything to catch you too." Joe, said.

"I can't handle this,... being hunted, by, Demons, from another, Dimension. I'm a, British collector of artefacts, not a, Pop Star. I deal with museums and architects not, Kung Fu Phantoms, with, Religious Issues."

"Jill!.." Joe, barked.

"No!... I'm sorry!..."

"Jill, try to stay calm. Don't bring him back, Jill." Joe, warned.

"I'm sorry, boys. I have to pull over. I need some air."

Jill, stopped the car in the parking lot of a Little Chef, restaurant at a, service by way. She was stiff and shaking. It was undoing her to know how she had driven anywhere. Joe, thought she might be hurt. Her head seemed to hide an agony with vexed frowns, being twisted and released. It was like she was breathing away her pain. She got out the car and trembling, she walked into the, Little Chef, restaurant. Joe, opened his car door anxiously and got out.

"Where's she going?" He asked.

"Maybe the bathroom, Joe" Won, spoke.

"Come on, Won. She might die." He said, and started to walk after her. Won, followed him into the restaurant. It was empty, only a few waiters were working, cleaning the tables and the floors. Joe, could see, Jill, sitting at a table near the back of the room. She appeared like a, Zombie. The living staff mopping the floor, didn't look at her in the

stagnant atmosphere left after the passing night of travellers. Joe, saw no food but could smell the cooking coming from the kitchen. He sat down at a table near, Jill. She was like an ice statue.

“I’m going to order a salad, Joe. Do you want one?” Jill asked, with a reservation of composer to seek sane continuity.

“You,... OK, Jill.?” He asked.

“They’ve stopped serving hot food, Joe. Only Salad and hot drinks.”

“Maybe if I read, The Scroll, it will....”

“It will not work. That won’t work.”

“Why?!” Joe, asked.

“The.... the, Dark Deity, arrived, through darkness; You’re sad it comes. In accord, my dear, Joe: You have to be sad it’s leaving, to send it back.”

“That’s bullshit! That’s bullshit! I’ll read it now, watch me! I don’t need to be sad a Demon is being forced to another dimension!”

“You’ll find he’ll come back if you’re not, and if you think he’s gone, he’ll surprise your ignorance of what you determine to be just a bad day and he’ll capture you. You’ll be tortured and not even know.”

“Then what are we going to do, Jill?! Won, what are we going to do?!” Joe, asked with such reservation he almost guised his fear from bravery.

“Have a salad.” Jill, said.

A waiter brought three Salads to the table while she was speaking. “I’ve ordered you both a Caesar Salad. It’s the only one with a little meat.”

“Thank you.” Won, said and started eating to, Joe’s, clear bemusement. Joe’s eyebrows stretched skin of his head with concern, before he shouted:

“Don’t eat the greens, Won! The greens mean dead. The greens always mean dead, even at my Mothers table. You mustn’t eat here, Won. We have to escape.”

“Is good, Joe.” Won, said, smiling.

“Then we’ll take it with us, Won. Jill, lets go..” Joe, said. He watched, Jill, remain at the table and eat the salad like a petrified mute. Slowly putting the lettuce into her mouth and quickly chewing it. “Fine, Jill. We’re leaving you here then. We’ll find our own way. I only hope you find yours. I can tell you,... it ain’t in that bowl.” He said, impetuously, galvanised with innocent spring.

“I know the way! I told you how to send it back. I know the way, Joe! You don’t understand. This is not possible. The existence of the, Dark Deities, were always disputed. They gave me the Scrolls because they had never been evoked before. Dupes, and make believe ghost stories over 5000 years old. Why,.... what made it happen now?”

“I don’t know, Jill, but it’s happened!”

“You happened, you miserable brats!! You were so spoilt so, so miserable and twisted the beast felt you both. You’re made for each other. I tell you what I’ll do!! I’ll send it back and send you both with it!!”

“It’s not, Joe, fault!! Only I read, Scroll, Jill.” Won, said.

“You’re delirious! Jill, how can you blame, Won, for this? It’s not his fault he got locked in the basement of the,... whatever, Wu Shu Temple.”

“Locked in the basement?!! You’re saying, he didn’t perform a ceremony?!!” Jill asked, with hesitance and retraction of her composure.

“No!! I was punished and found the Scroll in punishment and read it in punishment.” Won, explained.

“Then,... Then the ceremonies might not fail, when sending him back. If,.. if it was not a ceremony, Won, performed in a compulsive fit to satisfy his own pleasures!”

“What?” Joe, questioned, playing in ridicule with a crossed brow from, Jill’s home.

“It’s like a funeral, the Ceremony. You cannot perform the ceremony, wanting the, Dark Deity, to arrive and you must be Sad for the, Dark Deity, to go back. We must hold a funeral, for a manner of speaking.” Jill, Said.

“How?” He asked.

“Where, Jill?” Won asked.

“Forget the salad, let’s go!” Jill, said and she scrambled from the chair forcing both the kids up and headed for the car. “I’m taking you home.”

“Why?!” Joe, asked.

“Because, you need to pack for the earliest flight we can get to, China.”

“China?!”

“I go home, oh, oh.” Won said, smiling.

Morning Glory and China Flights

The police car, rattling with loose parts, slowly stopped outside, Joe’s Mother’s, house. Joe, could see dim lights emanating. He waited for, Jill, to park the car. A burst of power woke him from a drifting consciousness. He could feel the moment, like a tablet easing a strong headache. He was finally home and alive. He opened the door to get out but Jill, told him to wait.

“It’s only dawn. Will your Mother be awake?” Jill, asked.

“Yeah, Mr. Lee, is home. Won’s, Dad. They weren’t sleeping,.. last we checked.” Joe, snidely remarked.

“Oh... right. You’re brothers?” Jill, asked.

“We’re not brothers. We’re not related in any way. My Mum is just fucking his Dad.”

“Must you use that language? It’s not necessary you know.”

“My Mum is just having sex with his dad. O.K., Jill.”

“Go on then, I’m right behind you, Joe.” She replied.

Joe, left before her to open the front door. She thought of her village and the Demons that had tried to capture them. It was her most tense moment which brought unforgettable images of horror. She was never so frightened but in sight of, Joe, walking to the house, she was relaxed and was encouraged that they could succeed in stopping, Whu Shu Jack.

She looked at the two boys and felt an uplifting revival of her strength. Helping the boys wasn’t an obligation; it was beside an unfailing passion, blazing to feel in the living. She realised she liked, Joe and Won, more than she would confess. Joe’s, Mum opened the door and she saw him, like a hero destined to face the, Dark Deity. He shouted:

“Jill!” and she got out the car. “Jill, this is my Mum.” Joe, shouted. “Good morning, I’m, Jill, nice to meet you.” Jill, said and kissed her cheek embracing. “You have a very strong boy there.” She said, watching, Joe and Won, run into the house. Joe’s mum replied,

“Thank you, and thank you for bringing them home.”

“It’s no problem.” Jill, replied loftily and found a gratified smile shrinking on, Joe’s Mum’s face, whilst, hearing the loose items on the car falling off.

“Can you tell me where you’ve been?” Joe’s Mother, asked. Glancing over them in a perturbed but cheery tone and saw the dis-bodied vehicle.

Joe, ran into his bedroom, followed by, Won. He started to drag clothes out of his wardrobe and throw them onto the bed. He moved frantically, as if he was upset. He hurled and kicked items out of the way.

“What are you doing, Joe?” Won asked.

“I’m packing.” Joe, said. “Why aren’t you?” He asked. Won, took a considering laps of seconds, turned away from his frantic friend and ran to the master bedroom to get his father. He opened the door and startled, Mr. Lee, who was holding a gold pointy vibrating device in his hand that he had to quickly discard and draw exposed parts of his naked body under covers.

“Won, what are you doing up so early?!!” Mr. Lee, exclaimed.

“I must prepare for, China flight.”

“China flight?”

“We go stop, Wu Shu Jack, with, British Collector.”

“No more, Wu Shu Jack! There is no, Wu Shu Jack!!”

“Yes, Wu Shu Jack, real. From, Shaolin Temple. We go back, Zhongshan, to stop him.” Won, said. Mr. Lee, Shouted:

“Enough, Won! You behave badly with no punishment but if you keep behaving this way. I will punish you.”

Joe, could hear, Mr. Lee, from the corridor. He saw his Mum with Jill, in the kitchen. There was no way to get out the house without one of them knowing. He pushed back with a desire to give up, knocking his head against the wall and dropping his luggage. He was afraid he might get upset. He was afraid, Wu Shu Jack, would appear before they could stop him.

“It’s real!!!” He shouted, loud enough for everyone in the house to hear. Mr Lee and Joe’s Mum, moved from where they were to see him. “Why won’t you listen!” He said and with his eyes balling nervously at their figures, turning to one and then the other, he finished, stating: “The Demon, is real. It kills and wants to torture us.

You are not afraid begging for lives that already possess you and forgetting what it is to possess life. This demon is preparing to take everyone to their final end.”

“Well!... I just don’t know how to take this.” Joe’s Mum, said and after a short pause she continued. “After spending so much money on mental health treatments designed to stabilise these kinds of erratic fits in your behaviour. I’d expect a little more. Mr. Lee, something is very wrong here. I think we have to discipline these children the old fashioned way!!”

“You want to beat me, Mum?!! I’ve done nothing! I’m trying to protect you! You kick my father out the house, stuff pills down my throat and weak as I am, now you threaten to start beating me?!”

“Your father was a cheat, a selfish bastard you should not hold in such high standing young man!”

“He’s my father!”

“He hates you! He’s done nothing to help you! He’s done nothing to help me and neither have you!” Joe’s Mum, started to cry. “You!!..... You are not going anywhere. I am your Mother. Before you respect anyone, you’ll learn to respect me!!”

She grabbed his wrist and started pulling him into his room. “For better or worse!” She cried. “Whether I love you or hate you, you’re goanna learn right now!” Joe, felt her grip tightening on his wrist. He was horrified sensing his Mother’s anger. She brought him into the room and beat him violently around the face. Joe, cried a breaking shout from pain. He covered his burning cheek and cried on the bed. He heard a welcomed roll of thunder as the tears fell down and his mother speaking:

“Now. Mr. Lee, I suggest you teach, Won and don’t save the whip. These children are, Satan Spawn. I don’t doubt they’re Demon possessed, they’re jealous. Just because we’re together and they’re alone. It’s time we stopped giving light to their problems and just beat the shit out of them.”

“Wu Shu Jack!” Joe, screamed seeing the beast appear in the doorway behind his Mother, looking down at him and dripping drool. His Mother, who couldn’t see, Wu Shu Jack, turned around to reprimand, Joe:

“You must want me to use a cane now, boy!” She yelled, then started to approach him and walked straight into, Wu Shu Jack’s, large claws. “Ohh Agghh.” She screamed, being lifted into the air. Joe, saw, Won, run to, Jill, in the kitchen and Mr. Lee, dash to grab his Mum by the ankle. He moved away from the bed, as the beast crushed his Mother’s rib cages, forcing blood to spray out of her mouth. He heard, Jill, shout.

“Run Joe!” and tried to dash past but Mr. Lee, grabbed him, “What you, Demon? You evil?” Mr. Lee, said to, Joe.

“Let me go!” Joe, shouted before, Wu Shu Jack, sank his massive claws into, Mr. Lee’s, skull and squeezed his brains out of his eye sockets and ear holes. Joe, ran towards, Jill, grabbing his luggage and they dashed to the car.

“My father dead! Why he no listen?!! Now dead!! I alone!!” Won, said crying as, Jill, started the car. The tyres screeched and they drove onto the street. Wu Shu Jack, broke through the walls of the house after them.

“He coming! Jill, we no survive!!” Won, said distraught. Joe, compassionately grabbed his head.

“We will survive, we’re together.” Joe, said.

“My papa dead!” Won, sighed.

“He was wrong! You tried to help him, it’s not your fault. You’ve got to pick yourself up, Won!” Joe, said. The speeding car took a sharp bend throwing them against the door.

“Where is it?!” Jill, shouted. The ominous cloud was above them but they couldn’t see any Demons. “Have you got your passports?! Won?!”

“Yes, I pack for seeing you in, Cornwall, but no clothes!!”

“That’s alright we’ll pick some up in, China.” Jill, said.

“The cloud looks like its going.” Joe said, watching it blow away, like fire smoke. The airport was a half hour drive away. The squad car they had taken was rattling so much, it might not have driven to the terminal gate. The roads were empty and the sun was rising, painting the sky pink on the horizon, before lightening the dark blue. It was a calm moment in the glory of their departing that could not be obstructed anymore, before their China flight.

Scroll Recitation and Action Heights

They were outside, Hutton Bus Station, when the car stopped. White smoke hissed through the engine. Joe, didn’t know where they were. It was covered under roads passing traffic in and out of the city, London. On the skirts of the motorways, where they stopped, rush hour carried a chaotic atmosphere filled with horrifying tumult raged drivers.

“Are we far from the airport? Can we still make it?” Joe, asked, Jill. She was braced, with a tense manner and didn’t answer before tying her hear up and walking out to lift the hood of the car. It was grey outside. It looked as though it was going to rain. The roads were still empty. He saw a red double decker bus drive past them and pull into the station. Only a handful of people were waiting outside the bus stops. The men and women; colourfully dressed and luggage being pulled by a few of them. He became alerted by, Jill’s, voice shouting:

“It’s no use, we’re not going anywhere in this!”

“What about the bus?” Joe, shouted.

“I don’t have a bus, Joe.” Jill, replied.

“One of those buses, Jill.” Joe, said, pointing to the Bus Station. It was a few hundred yards away, between the roads and council estate houses. It was like a fair ground of tram rides. There were kids in school clothes running past swings and slides, through a park, to get their buses to school.

Joe, didn’t get a response. He was waiting but not able to reach her. She looked distant, more far away than when they first met each other. He noticed her hands fiddling with the hair band over her head. He saw her movements as captivating as the rising sun behind them. He saw her hair fall down as she took the band and wrapped it around her wrist. Then, with perfectly paced steps within a ready composure, her free hand shook loose the stress tangles of her blonde hair.

She asked the station manager a question. It looked like the officer was happy talking to her. Joe, grew eager to know what was happening. He felt so close to finally stopping, Wu Shu Jack. He saw her signal them and they ran out the car, lifting their luggage and bringing it with them. “Can we get a bus? Can we use one of them to get to the airport?!” Joe, asked excitedly, rushing to the station.

“Yes.” Jill, replied. “The X26 should take us to the terminal we’ll be flying from.” Jill, said.

“How long before it comes?” Won, asked. Joe, checked the board behind the bus stop and heard, Jill, tell, Won:

“It should be here any minute now, Won. When we get to the airport, I’ll purchase the tickets, we’ll be fine, don’t worry.”

Joe, lifted his head hearing a bus coming into the station. It was a long low red bus, smaller than a double decker bus. The yellow number at the front read, X26. He pulled the luggage on and boarded before, Jill and Won. The bus stopped a few minutes later on the road. The airport wasn’t in sight. He wondered where they were but no one

was willing to talk to him to let him know. It was congested on the bus, like a blocked vent, without the pouring of excitement which became pent up with preservation. At the rising of their chances also came the fear of their losses.

He didn't ask any questions, so he wouldn't have to ask for an answer when no one replied. It was comforting, for this reason, when he saw the airport appearing, as they entered an amber lit tunnel. A minute later the bus was stopping outside their terminal of, Heathrow. "Is this it, Jill?" Joe, asked in an un-expecting tone. He was elated with brightened eyes when she finally replied:

"Yes." The bus stopped and Jill, started rummaging through her bag. "Get your passports out, boys. I'll need them to check in." She said. Joe, brought out his passport to give to her and found the scroll in its wooden frame in his Ruck Sac. He pulled it out with his Passport. It was the size of a large pad, brown and with tattered edges. He turned it to see scribbling on both sides of the framed artefact. He gave the passport to, Jill and asked.

"Will we be performing the ritual or just watching the, Temple Priests, Jill?"

"Are you worried?" She asked and they walked into the airport terminal.

It was quiet on the check in floor, with ladies preparing logs and itinerary on computer screens. Most of the people in the airport at that time were from the bus. As they came to a check in desk, Jill, stopped. There was a short queue of no more than half a dozen people. "I don't want you to worry." Jill, said. "The ceremony isn't too complicated, I think. It was practised a few times in past four hundred years. None successfully, however."

"What did they do?" Joe, asked.

“Well,... the most detailed record refers to a the Last Emperor’s adviser, taking it upon himself to summon the, Dark Deity, for his own justification. Then not even God could judge him through the instruments of men. The Temple Priests, were subject to his position when he commanded them to paint the flaming star. He told the Temple Priests: The Emperor, was wicked and thought blessed with power that surpassed his own to protect the kingdom. The advisor told them the Emperor was using that power for evil. He wanted to evoke the, Dark Deities, to capture and torture the Emperor, in riot to supersede the evil with greater evil force. The Temple Priests agreed.

The Emperor’s adviser was desperate to overthrow his ruler and disillusioned the priests so they became happy about helping him. History records the ceremony failed. 3000 BC, in the, Zen Dynasty, people were too happy to meet the Demon. The records did not explain however; the Demon, might have been there waiting to an Earth Star that would prove the World was miserable enough to meet it of a new Sovereign. I don’t know of any Earth Star and I’ve looked for the safety of my fears but.. perhaps the time has arrived upon Earth itself.

How easily we overlook our keys to salvation, searching for other doors. It was only after the ceremony failed the, Temple Priests, informed the, Emperor and the Emperor himself, killed his adviser. Being an event that took place in the court, it was thoroughly documented and later used as a parable to deter sedition against the throne.”

“Wow.... So if, Won, summoned the Demon. Does he have to send it back?” Joe, asked.

“I think so, Joe. He and what opened courts with the creature that a Sovereign need keep closed. But it’s not a science, these are issues older than time. Found in Zoroastrianism, Greek Mythology,

Christianity and many more texts; unanswered.” Jill, said. Joe looked at, Won, who gave a refraining wave with his hand saying:

“No, no... Won, no good at performing. No, no can do.” Won, said. The lady at the check in desk signalled for the next in line and Jill, was next.

“Well, Won, will have to practise reciting the words. We won’t have much time after we land. I have to check us in on last minute cancellation seats. Just wait there.” Jill, said and left, Joe, to take care of, Won, who was smacking his head nervously.

“Its O.K. Won, don’t panic! We’ll practise on the plane. It’s at least a 5 hour flight. You’ll be a pro by the time we land.”

They left the check in desk after, Jill, had checked in. Joe, took his passport back from her and they rushed to catch a boarding flight that was soon going to leave. The departure lounge was empty and the steward was ready to close the gate. “May I see your boarding passes, please.” The steward asked. Joe, gave, Jill, his passport and boarding pass. The steward was stern looking with a round tilting face. He seemed reluctant to let them on the plane, displeased to the point of camp and snappish gestures about their late arrival.

“Board quickly please, this gate should be closed already.” He said, and Joe, followed, Jill, onto the plane. They were directed to seats in the 1st class cabin. It was humming with the sounds of the turning engine either side of the wings. The seats were large and reclined into beds. A television descended from the luggage compartments above them. Joe, saw people preparing to close a curtain behind them. He could see it was incommodious up from the door where they boarded. He didn’t know why they had so much space and the people behind the curtain had so little. He asked Jill:

“Why don’t they have seats like us?”

“That’s coach... They,.. they had no available tickets.” She started and stopped sensing the naivety of his question. “Look.... Won, can practise his recitation here. He needs the space.” She said.

Joe, took the scroll and passed it to, Won. “Here, Won.” He said, handing him the framed artefact. Won, took it, with an uncertain assurance that even with all that space to practise, he could perform the ceremony.

Joe, fastened his seat belt, his head was pinned back against the chair as the plane accelerated quickly, picking up speed and tearing down the run way. The drag squashed the contents of his belly, making him cringe with discomfort, as the plane took off into the air. The pressure didn’t change, until they were high enough for the plane to level out onto a straight.

Joe, heard the seat belt sign go off, with a short ping. He opened his eyes sensing the throws against his belly were stopping. The cabin window was letting clear sunlight throw. He was sitting above a sea of white clouds and could almost see into space through the clear blue skies. “Are you going to start practising then?” He asked, Won.

“Yes.” Won, replied reassured in, Joe’s, sight of their heights. Joe, heard, Won’s, safety belt buckle unfasten, a stewardess walked past him. He could smell fish and hot food coming from the cabin behind him. The stewardess placed a tray next to his seat. It was silver and arched like a Prince’s dinner plate. The television cartoons didn’t amuse him as much. He lifted the silver dome cover and anticipating a fine meal of royal sorts, he saw a Salmon, just like his mother had made. He was struck by a remorse stripping his hunger and jerking regretful feelings. “I don’t want it.” He said and the stewardess took it away with only a cold shrug.

“Dark Dog, Creature King in the dark realm, Hear me.” Won, recited as, Joe, painfully closed his eyes and fell asleep.

An Elder Adviser

There was a jolt and the plane shook violently. Joe, was startled and reacted to the vibrations with rattling. In a shocked panic, he opened his eyes, quickly and wide. He heard the jet engines start to whistle and the plane started to slow down. It was pulling into the gate of the airport in, China.

Joe, followed, Jill, off the plane. He noticed, Won put away the Scroll. “Did you learn it?” He asked.

“Learn what?” Won, replied. Joe, found a smirk starting to stain his on looking face with an unmentionable discouragement. He was awake, startled by the landing and ready to fight, come, Wu Shu Jack or any Demon. The thought that, Won, had not learnt the ceremony, sent a nervousness twitching many of the parts of his body.

“The recitation for the ceremony. You did learn it, didn’t you, Won?” Joe, asked again, almost pleading for a specific answer that he wanted to hear.

“Didn’t you, Won?” Jill, asked, a moment later.

“I did,... a little.” Won, said humbly “But... I might make mistakes.”

Joe, sighed that he understood, Won’s, lack of confidence, waiting to recite and recapture a Demon the entire world was preparing to blindly meet, ending at apathy to be none. It was a weight, Joe, could imagine lifting himself, only for his own uncontainable desire to pass the invitation of afterlife and win life, he would be denied.

He began to look at the foreign land they had landed upon. He saw reading in English, Guangzhou Baiyun International airport. It was dark and must have been late in the evening but the airport was

bustling with travellers. Joe, followed, Jill, through the corridor, seeking comfort from her confident strides. He knew she had been there before and it dawned on him, that he would not have wanted to be there without her.

It was around, 22:00pm, when they got to the arrivals lounge. There was a crowd of people waiting to collect important looking clients. They had signs with strange looking writing that reminded, Joe, of a knots and crosses game. Joe, didn't think that anyone was waiting for them. The kind of people being picked up were dressed in suits and wearing dark glasses. He saw one man being escorted by guards on a small buggy through the air port. He thought it might have been a King or a Celebrity.

Joe, saw another strange man on a buggy but he wore robes and was without hair or sun glasses. Joe, wondered; what a man like that was doing on a buggy like all of those important people he saw leaving the airport. He sank into a frump, puffing with upset and looked at, Jill. "How are we going to get to the temple?" He asked, angrily. He imagined walking like a back packer or taking the bus like a tourist. Tourists, were not popular, they had no friends; like the man in robes he saw on the buggy.

"We might have to get the bus." Jill, said.

"Why does that man have a buggy?! He's bald and in robes, like a tourist but he's not getting the bus like a tourist!" Joe, shouted, loud enough for the robed man to hear.

"I didn't say you were, but we don't have a car waiting." Jill, said.

"I'm not taking the bus like a tourist loser!" He huffed with vehemence.

The man in robes got off the buggy and walked over towards him. Joe, felt a sharp refrain shutter through him, seeing the bald man

approaching him from the corner of his eye. He didn't want to get told off and took Jill's hand, hoping she might prevent the older man from talking to him. "Is that your boy?" The bald man asked, Jill. She gave an exclaiming look of embarrassment explaining.

"No,.... I'm sorry, he isn't. He's had a long flight and the boy is pressed by spiritually challenging matters that we are here to try and remedy." Jill, said, hiding their squirming abashment.

"Oh, I see..." The man started: "Then maybe I can help, as I am Monk and spiritual challenges are what I'm good at. It sounded like he had bad influences, by,... his, descriptive expressions. I believe the words: 'tourist loser, were what he used to describe me.'"

"Yes,... He's embarrassed."

"I see, and also very spirited. My name is, Hoi li. Can I ask the boy his?"

Joe, took a deep unfocused breath. "I'm, Joe." He said and the Monk took his hand to shake it.

"You have a powerful energy, Joe. Tell me what are you intending to use it for?"

"I'm about to shove a Demon back to the backward dimension it came from." Joe, said. Holding up the Scroll.

"That's a Temple Scroll, isn't it." The Monk said.

"Yup, the, Wu Shu Jack, spell. Won, read it."

"But that spell doesn't work." The Monk said, to, Won's repentance:

"It woke him, it did. It didn't mean wake the Demon to human sight. It has been watching us. Now I must recite spell to amend." Won, explained.

“You, awoke, Wu Shu Jack! In this reality. The evil of such a Demon could surmount is catastrophic! The destruction of light, the end of days lies within such dark manifestations as the, Dark Deities. How have you survived?” Hoi Li, asked in astute bewilderment.

“Barely” Jill, said. “We’re about to get a bus to the, Shaolin Temple Zhongshan. Against little, Joe’s will, if we take the bus like a tourist, I’m afraid.”

”He is young for such a heavy burden. This journey will take you very long hours, yet in such good human responses we can seek a Godly outcome. I would like to accompany you on this journey. As a, Temple Monk, I have authority in the, Shaolin Temple. They will permit you to perform the ceremony if I concede to allow it.”

“Oh,... You’ve saved the day, your Eminence?” Jill, said.

“Just, Hoi Li. And Joe, you might also be pleased to know: I have a car waiting outside.”

“Thank God.” Joe, said feeling more empowered for the task he wanted more and more to complete.

Guangzhou Terror

Outside the airport, the tropical climate hit, Joe. He was dressed warmly and needed to remove his hoody or he might have fainted. “It’s so hot!” He said. Hoi Li replied:

“Don’t worry. Most places in, Guangzhou have air conditioning.”

“Does the car?” Joe, asked.

He watched, Hoi Li, walk before an escort and Jill, to a strange looking round car. It was like a large moving apple. “Never mind the air conditioning! How are we all going to fit in that?” He asked.

“Easily, there’s room for my driver, myself and three spaces in the back for all of you.”

“It’s too small.” Joe, exclaimed. “We’ll be squashed, I’m not that tiny.” He said.

“All right.... We will stop for walks to stretch our legs and for food on the way.” Hoi Li, replied, in an understanding manner.

Joe, resentfully fell to submission at, Hoi li, knowing that he was going to get hungry and willing to exchange comfort for food. The engine started like an electric lawn mower, slowly spinning more powerfully. He got in between, Jill and Won and the car started driving like a little shuttle. It moved on to large black roads, parted by narrow greenery. Amidst the shrubbery were ponds of water. It was like a painting and boasted sterile beauty, before a heavenly utopia; more changing when they reached the city.

The paved paths replaced wide roads and the poster lights, hanging on the sides of buildings, stolen the attention from any small shrub or patch of grass that grew. Joe, could see people walking in and out of stores and congregating in crowds around the paths. The car stopped and he could hear drums beating, like the shooting of little rockets firing into some enemy camp.

The people moved towards the centre, in the broad pathway. Joe, couldn’t see past them, there must have been hundreds of men and woman, playing with small drum kits and talking. Joe, got out the car and was told not to move by the driver. “Hoi!” He shouted to get the Monk’s attention before he walked into the crowd. “Hoi!” He shouted louder until he was heard.

“Hoi Li!” The Monk responded, explaining “My name is, Hoi Li, Joe son.”

“Sorry, I’m sorry, whatever. What are that crowd of people doing? Why are you going there?” He asked.

“They are celebrating the, Golden Dragon, I am going to get us some food.”

“Take me with you.” Joe, asked.

He stepped forward assertively, pushing out his chest a little. The children from the town ran around him giggling for short moments, before running back into the crowds. Joe, was feeling out of place but he enjoyed the smells of roasting meat and the sounds of cheerful natter. It was so gentle, he didn’t feel afraid by it. “I want to see the Celebration.” He said. He waited for, Hoi Li’s, concerned squirms to be ceased and was made to understand.

“You are too young to see the danger, but I must be cautious about what comes after you. These people should not be subject to it.” Hoi Li, told him. Joe, cried in, Jill’s, lowered hand.

“I’m not afraid anymore, I’m not even sad, I’m happy. There is no shouting, no curfew, no Dr’s. I’m not sad. It’s dead already. Wu Shu Jack, is dead already. I can fucking go.” He sobbed at, Jill, who intuitively grew worried about what would happen if he didn’t.

“Hoi Li!” She shouted for the Monk to stop. “Hoi Li, I think, Joe, is going to cry.”

It was soon agreed that everyone would go to the restaurant to get food before the journey ahead. Joe, listened, as, Won translated the signs on the building walls. He noticed a strength breaking out the words and propelling, Won’s, movement that he hadn’t recognised in, Won, before. Joe, was use to, Won, being deflated and almost

slumping. It was only after they came into the city, Joe, could see a greeting smile with every shop and restaurant they passed, coming from, Won's, small, golden face. He didn't remember seeing as much joy emanating everywhere, in his own life before. He wasn't sure whether to feel guilty for that or not. He decided to enjoy it and requested to eat something.

A small restaurant was open not far from the, Golden Dragon, dancing in the paved courtyard. They followed the driver inside and sat down at a table. There were only a few free and Joe, found it small for public restaurant. With simple brown tables and plain stools, like in a barn. He didn't complain, as the food arrived soon after they were seated. Five bowls of soup and some rice were brought out by an elderly looking lady. She hadn't finished it before he heard, Hoi Li, ordering some, Pork. "I thought holy men didn't eat, Pork?" Joe, said.

Hoi Li, paused in the midst of his order, swallowing, Joe's, statement with as much dignity as he could muster. Joe, received a short glance, before, Hoi Li, returned to his rice telling him: "We don't mock the hype in, Britain, for being, Tourists, in, China, do we.... So, why mock a Monk from the Temple, for being a hungry man in the restaurant?"

The driver and Jill, laughed but Joe, was brightening red in the face. "I am not a tourist!" He shouted. "I never was... I never ever will be! Not even to reach the Temple in that shitty little car, with you!" Joe, said before storming out of the restaurant. The driver was the only person sitting next to him but Joe, left too quickly for the driver to stop him. By the time everyone was loose from the table, Joe, had vanished in the celebrating crowd.

He could only see beating of sticks on little drums hanging from people's necks, at first. He didn't care where he was going, while the rage shocked his mind. His humiliation swelled, like a rubber balloon

being blown up to explode. He hated that they teased him. He felt no one was seeing who he was and how he only wanted to make things better. His efforts only left him plummeting, like a rising fish, being pulled to the bed of the river.

He ran through the parading Dragon and into the narrow street behind. He stopped in the shadow against the wall and cried the pitiful of sadness his misery had conjured. He only saw his pain and couldn't consider the cloud coming in to shape above the parade.

The roar broke, with little warning. "BOooooYyy!" He heard bellowed out, like thunder, with the rising screams of the crowd being hurled and torn to pieces into the air. The Demons surrounded the parade and started snatching the children. Fila, snapped the, Golden Dragon, in two, with her whip and hissed, kicking down the men that tried to stop her. Joe, began to feel a new grief; it was certain guilt for what he had allowed to happen. He watched from around the corner of the street. He heard, Jill, scream his name from the entrance of the public path, near where they had left the car.

"Jill, I'm over here!" He screamed, horrified that she might be hurt. Before, Jill, could reply Hoi Li, yelled:

"Stay where you are!" and ran through the panicked crowd to find him. Joe, saw him approaching and leaped out of the shadow to meet the Monk. He dashed with rapid short breaths, afraid, Wu Shu Jack, would snatch him before he found himself in, Hoi Li's, embrace. He heard, petrifying and near:

"Bboooooyyy!" and sensed, Wu Shu Jack, behind him dripping drool over his head. Joe, knew, Hoi Li, could not see the Demon but he saw the drool sliding down, Joe's, head. The Monk, focused his prayer, forcing power, with such determination it lifted the base of the robes like the wind. As, Whu Shu Jack, moved in for the final blows, they were left undone, like ghosts falling through the Monk and the boy.

“Run Joe!” Hoi Li, commanded and they ran through the escaping crowds to the car. They heard a loud cry behind them. It was angry and monstrous but leaving.

“I’m so sorry, I only wanted to help.” Joe, said almost whimpering but less sad for escaping. He fell into, Jill’s, lap as the car raced out of the city.

“It’s alright.” He heard. “We’re sorry too.” Hoi Li, said, holding the marred features of guilt, from centuries before the Monk.

Dongguan Jail Birds

It was late at night. There wasn’t much to see on the roads, driving through the darkening of the hour. The streets were open and black. Joe, imagined being in a little boat on a river because they stayed hushed and smooth. He was a little down after leaving the city. He wanted to make it up to, Hoi Li and felt indebted to the Monk, after being rescued. The thoughts of, Wu Shu Jack, were in his head. He could still feel the drool from the ends of his hair. It made him sit coldly, looking straight ahead through the front of the windscreen. He didn’t close his eyes and only listened to the sleepy breathing of, Jill and Won.

The driver turned off the motorway and Joe, could see a sign reading, Dongguan. “Is the, Temple, here?” Joe, said, slurring his speech a little and lifting his head up after it would drop unintentionally.

“Are you tired?” Hoi Li, asked.

“No!” Joe, sparked and then yawned: “I’m just wondering because I saw a sign.”

“Oh, this Dongguan, we still have far to go. Zhongshan is south, the Temple is there.”

“Zhongshan,... Oh...” Joe sighed. He couldn’t keep his eyes open much longer. It felt like he had been sitting down for hours. He could feel his limbs going numb, they were aching and cramped. He had no room in the little car to stretch them. He had to keep them propped up and bent. He accidentally kicked, Hoi Li and apologised. He heard the monk say something in Chinese to the driver and the car almost immediately pulled off onto a side road.

“I said I was sorry.” Joe, said fearfully unable to imagine why they would be slowing down if not to shout at him, tell him off and maybe even beat him. “I’m sorry!” He repeated, as he started to imagine being left to walk to the temple on his own. “Please, Hoi Li, I’m sorry.” He then said, obsequious with repent. “I didn’t mean to kick you. I had to stretch my legs. I’m not upset anymore and I apologise for being upset before.”

“It’s alright Joe.” Hoi Li, said, cheerfully and pointed ahead, to a large circular looking building.

“That is, Royal Lagoon Hotel. We get room, you rest, I pose in swimming pool.” Hoi Li, said. It was a bright building, lit with amber and white lights. Joe, thought it resembled a shell. The car pulled up into a grand entrance, the most grand entrance he had ever seen. It was so grand, a line of cars with badges he recognised from, Top Gear, parked in front of it, looked small, like his match box toys. He was so excited, he forgot his legs were numb and jumped out the car to nearly fall over.

“Careful, Joe.” Jill, said and asked, Hoi Li, if they were staying at the hotel. “A hot shower and a warm bed would be sanitary.” Jill, said.

“I get two room,” Hoi Li, replied. “One for the driver and I and one for the boys and you.”

“Well, that’s alright. I’ll pay for our room.”

“No, no. You honour, Hoi Li. Your purpose is great.”

“But how can you afford two rooms here, for people you’ve only known a few hours?! These rooms must cost a fortune. I’m.... bedazzled and you’re,... a Monk.”

“Yes, I am a Monk but I am a rich Monk.”

“A what?! I don’t understand.”

“Wealth in this Monk soul, come after, wealth in this countries shit. I break it down, invest one type of wealth and reject the other.” Hoi Li, explained.

“Oh, right... So, a wealthy Monk. Praise God, thank Heaven,.... great.” Jill, said, conceding at mixed considerations to let, Hoi Li, pay for the room.

Joe, ran inside the hotel to see what it was like. He heard, Won, who followed behind him, awe at the majesty of the floors and walls. “It’s nice.” Joe, said coyly.

“It so amazing.” Won, said.

“I think it’s too expensive.” Jill, said, walking with, Hoi Li, to the reception. “Wait there, we’ll be right back.” She said. Joe, could see blue water through the window ahead of them. It looked like a cartoon paradise. The hotel was like a heaven. Joe, could imagine angels flying down from the roof and greeting them.

He didn’t feel relaxed, even with all the amenities. He was actually feeling distracted and caged. It was slowly becoming clear that the pleasure and life he was winning, in the conditions of his own

spirit, were a containment denying a part of him. The sadness he knew naturally to know joy, was dead to a sterile perfection. He needed freedom or the freedom of others to fill with more. He took his concern, realising, Whu Shu Jack, had trapped them all from either resolve.

Hoi Li and Jill, came back with the card keys for the room. Joe, took his key and was told to go to his room when he was ready. He waited in the Lobby for a while, after they all had gone. Most of the people he saw around him were old and quiet. He guessed it was because it was so late but didn't want to go up to the room. He had a new lease of curiosity, spawned by the foreign sights and sounds in the hotel. As no one told him not to, he walked to the entrance and boldly passing the concierge, carried on down the street outside.

He passed low grey and white buildings, with flat rooves. He thought they were garages for cars or sheds, at first. He walked to soon realise that they were actually houses. He noticed washing lines draped with wet clothes from roof to roof. Outside the houses, people were playing cards & dominoes. He saw three men at a table, laughing loudly and clapping until one of them noticed him and leaped forward shouting to scare him. He was scared; the man had no teeth in his mouth, under amber coloured, soot patched skin and in dirty clothes. The man, stumbled, as if he was drunk, taking only one step. Joe, sprinted away down the road, until he came to a large factory.

He heard children inside and climbed up onto a bin, to look through the window. Dozens of young girls and boys were handling fabrics. The factory floor was covered in racks of dirty looking dresses. The children were dressed in tattered clothes and their skin was grubby. The girls took the dirty linen off the racks and threw them into buckets of water. He saw the boys scrubbing the floors and bringing in more Linen.

Joe, wondered if it was school. He knocked on the window, tapping it a few times and got a boys attention. He smiled and the boy laughed back and opened the glass. “You a funny lookin slave.” The boy said lifting Joe’s hoody and gently clasping his face. “You have grey eyes like the thunder cloud.”

“Please don’t mention thunder clouds.” Joe, said, in a perturbed manner stemmed from, Whu Shu Jack’s, haunting him. “I don’t like thunder clouds, they carry fucking nasty Demons.”

“Such pretty eyes could not carry such things. Funny slave,... so sad.”

“I am not a slave. First tourist, now slave?! I’m, an, Urban Legend. What the fuck are you?” Joe, spoke.

“A slave, sold for slave labour.” The boy replied.

“Slavery was abolished. I learnt that in school. And they were black! You’re Chinese!!”

“Lie. Here there is, slavery. It has been popular to sell children to be slaves in the last decade. Nobody care no more. I no know why.” The boy was almost carless about what he was saying; letting the words pass through his mouth without objection. Joe, could sense another interest in the boys gestures. It was the hoody that the boys hand passed over and over. Joe, felt like a cat.

“Do you like my hoody?” Joe, asked, avoiding more talk of, Whu Shu Jack, knowing it would leave slave trade everywhere in the Demons possession.

“Yes.” The boy replied.

“What’s your name?” Joe, asked.

“Sung.”

“Well, you can have it, Sung.” Joe, said and started to take it off but was stopped. Sung, shook his head and refused, explaining:

“If you are not a slave, the master will know I am wearing someone else’s clothe’s but he will not know who’s and I will be beat. We are not allowed to talk to people.”

“That’s bullshit. It’s your human right to speak to whomever you please; just maybe not however you please.” Joe said, recollecting.

“What is your name?” Sung, asked.

“Joe.”

“You a good kid, Joe. Go home.” Sung, said and walked back to the other children. Joe, didn’t want to leave. It was like hearing a whisper from the hall floor itself. A pleading whimper, like the squeaks and scrapes in a jail prison cell wishing to be torn down. Joe, didn’t leave but took steps forward and stopped when the other children could see him. He started talking a moment after, Sung, turned around to see what the other child slave labourers were looking at.

“I’m a kid too!” Joe, started saying: “But I’d refuse to do this. You don’t have to be here, even if they say you do, you don’t. Even if they force you to stay you can escape. You’re not slaves, you have choices. Being a slave takes that away but as soon as you’re born you make choices. Fighting a Demon to China, teaches you; even death is a choice. So,.. you’ve been sold. Don’t choose to live like this. You like my hoody. I earned it with money I’m paid.”

“Slaves aren’t paid.” Sung, said.

“People are. You’re a person, Sung. A human being, like me. You just need to learn to live like one.”

The children started to murmur to each other and slowly began dropping the linen. The murmuring became louder and Joe, heard footsteps walking onto the factory floor from the back.

“Come with me, Joe. We must escape!” Sung, said. The children started to scream and break through the windows. The shouts of old men echoed behind them. Joe, followed, Sung, past the factory and down a bushy path. They didn’t stop running until they crossed a field and came to a small stream. Joe, had to catch his breath. It was only their heavy breathing breaking the quiet of the place.

“You an, Urban Legend, now, Sung.” Joe, said. “I’m staying in the, Royal Lagoon Hotel. We have to go to Zhongshan to stop a Demon.”

“Like in thunder cloud?”

“Yup... You wanna come with us?” Joe, asked, staring into, Sung’s dirty face, with an awareness of due praise for both their parts. He had his eyes fixed on the water contently, until hearing, Sung, say

“Yes.” And turn to shake his hand.

Joe, had made a new friend. He walked, carrying pride with strong steps, up to the entrance of the hotel. He sparked heated looks at the door man, feeling glorified in having, Sung’s, trust and companionship for the rest of their journey. They were welcomed into the hotel and Joe, brought him through into the lobby.

The guests ceased from moving and even talking. All dressed in smart clothes and fine jewellery, skin of lips and fingers, pushed to their graces and to gawk at, Sung, who was dirty and dressed poorly. The concierge recognised, Joe and put his head back down indifferently to see when they were checking out. Joe, started to sink from his height of glory and soon looked embarrassed to be with, Sung. He saw the pool at the end of the lobby and feeling it necessary

to hold a man's hand for the first time; he brought, Sung, out to the, Lagoon.

“Wow!” he heard, Sung, repeating over and over, while he took, Sung, to the deep end of the pool until, Joe, let go of him and said: “Hold your breath.” Before pushing him into the water. There was a loud splash and Joe, waited for, Sung, to surface, before telling him to clean the dirt off so the guests would stop laughing. He went over to a deck chair, sat down and watched, Sung, slipping out of the rags and wiping himself clean.

The poolside was empty. Joe, was getting tired and was waiting for, Sung, before he went up to the room. He heard, Hoi Li's, voice emerge from behind him and checked to see if he was there.

“You are still awake then?.. I thought you have fallen asleep there.” Hoi Li, said.

“I'm waiting for my friend in the pool.” Joe, replied.

“Oh you have new friend. Who he?”

“It doesn't matter. He wants to help. I want him to come with us.”

“But.... no space in car for new friend.”

“He said he wants to go to, Zhongshan. He does not want to stay here.” Joe said, traumatically. He heard, Sung, getting out of the pool and running towards them with a towel around his shoulders.

“UP, up up, now! Sung and Joe, must leave now.” Sung, said, with urgency.

“Why?!” Joe asked, seeing, Sung's, clean smooth face for the first time.

“Slave driver in the lobby, will take Sung back to factory.”

“You’re a slave?” Hoi Li, asked. Peering at a fragile and radiant looking strong boned boy.

“Not any more, Hoi Li. I freed him and I told him he can go with us.” Joe said and guarded, Sung, with a pious expectation that, Hoi Li, would let them go to the room. He was firmly stood like a planted tree but uprooted when, Hoi Li, grabbed his arm and pulled him into the lobby. Sung, tip toed behind him, bare foot and timid, seeing the slave driver in front of them. Hoi Li, walked up to the menacing looking man, who was dressed in a white fur coat and smoking a cigarette.

“Did you purchase this child to be a slave?” Hoi Li, asked, by the authority of measure in conduct within his robes.

“That’s a Dongguan boy, who the fuck are you, ass wipe?”

“I am a Monk and I have taken authority over the well being of these children. You have no protest of this I’m sure; upstanding business man of society. You no want boy with no future; so rude, ugly, little, stupid, filthy, ungrateful, useless, crying, whining, spoilt, evil, hurtful, horrible, inconsiderate, thoughtless, disloyal, hateful, imposing, destructive, unsocial, disrespectful, snivelling, sore, demonic wretched; to do with as you please, do you? ” Hoi Li, asked the man, who stood with a developing morose expression that was wiped as the pigmentation turned red before the reply:

“Fine! Of course not.”

Joe, felt heat of the ash rocks flown off the cigarette the man flew to the ground and heard him shout: “Fine! I am a business man. Get out of my way!” The man walked out of the hotel into a limousine. Joe, made a high five breaking out the happiness he found for, Sung, before the on looking guests in the hotel.

“I think we can get a train south to Foshan. The boy can stay with you but you must get some rest, Joe,” Hoi Li, said. Joe, agreed.

He took, Sung, upstairs to the room where, Won, was already sleeping, leaving, Hoi Li, to make the travel arrangement for the next morning.

The Foshan Masters

Joe, walked outside the hotel and saw, Jill, standing with, Hoi Li, ready to go. “Good morning, why didn’t I see you at breakfast boys?” She said. Joe, checking, Sung, behind him, answered:

“It was a late night. We needed sleep.”

“Who dat?” Won, asked, standing beside, Jill and pointing to, Sung.”

“This is, Sung. He’s travelling with us.” Joe, replied. Won, felt a bizarre repression that kept him from further speaking his mind. It was like finding a puppy under a, Christmas Tree, that you didn’t want but knowing it had to be considered before you. Before any kind of despair emerged, Joe, was called to a van that stopped behind them.

“We have to take van now, to, Train Station. You must get in. We go now!” Hoi Li, said, climbing into the parked van.

It was only a quick ride to the station. The van was more comfortable than, Hoi Li’s, little car. Joe, asked: “Why can’t we take this to, Foshan, or the, Shaolin Temple, even.” He was sitting in a large leather seat on the front row and naturally felt it was foolish to get out and take a train.

“Train faster and you see more through bigger window.” Hoi Li, answered, getting out the van, before the, Train Station. A whistle was blowing; “Quickly now, we must catch our train. Leaving now!” Hoi Li, said and Jill, shouted:

“Don’t miss it! Hurry boys, it’s about to leave.” Stepping quickly, like a tap dancer, in new looking brown heels. She had changed into a light white frock that morning.

The train door started to close and Joe, slammed against the button for them to stay open. He climbed in followed by, Won and the rest of the group. “That was close!” He said, catching his breath looking for a place to sit down. The train was simple and laid out with little amenities. He saw partitions for a couple and small groups, to sit on bland, tan cushion seats. He manoeuvred past silver poles to an empty group partition, in the carriage. The rest of the group followed and sat down heavily, into the economy space.

Joe, would have preferred driving to, Foshan. He liked the idea of being in an automobile. He thought it probable that all, British, Urban kids did because that’s what Urban British kids travelled in. He remembered travelling with his mother to school. She would always ask him if he had packed for lunch properly and she would tell him to come straight back home after classes. He hated not being free enough to do what he wanted to do but sitting by the window, looking at the floor in the carriage, he missed driving with her. During the journey they ate and laughed but he was still missing her when they got to, Foshan.

He was happy to see a driver waiting for them at the station. If there was a driver there would have to be a car he was driving. The train was very smooth but Joe, wanted to travel in a car. He didn’t confess his preference but waited patiently for, Hoi Li, to finish greeting with the driver, to find the outcome he most desired. “Give me your council and protection.” He heard, Hoi Li, saying to the man. Joe, thought the driver was some kind of a hit man, by appearance. It was when the driver looked at them, Joe, saw the Buddhist praying beads dangling from the man’s neck and wrist.

It was hard to make out his facial features behind thick sunglasses he was wearing but he didn't appear an attractive man. He was large and stocky, needing little signal to command, Joe and the group to the van that was waiting outside the Train Station.

The rush of blowing leaves and invisible pollen was as uplifting for, Joe, as whisky to cold man. He saw strange flowers, hills of a green shade that he'd not imagined before. The simple houses around the station were clean looking and preserved within them, a serenity he had never been guided to. England and its racing motorways, under screaming skyscrapers, was always his strength and sanctuary. For the first time he was seeing his difference was being willing to face a world that was only ever opposing him.

He knew he didn't do anything wrong by performing this. Then seeing the landscape of, Foshan, he decided to thank himself for not letting his homes landscape crumble, by, becoming a tourist he hated to be. Then, for not letting, Demons, like, Wu Shu Jack, posses him and capture all the children of, England and then, Foshan, until it had the world.

The van came to a river front and Joe, felt as tranquil as the calm water top dividing small islands and parting garden rockery. Joe, found it perturbing when they started slowing down, after only driving a short while. The van stopped outside a low Temple, built on the waterfront. "Are we already there?" Joe, asked.

"Yes, Sanshui Ancestors Temple." Hoi Li, said.

"It doesn't look like, The Shaolin Temple." Joe, said.

"No, Shaolin Temple, in, Zhongshan."

"Then what are we stopping here for?! I want to keep going. We have to stop, Wu Shu Jack! He'll kill everything in this, hut village, Hoi Li." Joe, said, expressing his concern without refrain. His skin

whitened with tension and Hoi Li, gently cupped his face with his smooth pearl like hand.

“We well guarded against Demon, but not so guarded against you, strong, Joe. Be calm. Tonight we pray and tomorrow we go, Zhongshan, to perform ceremony.” Hoi Li, said.

“But...”

“Tomorrow. My brothers will go with us, tomorrow.” Hoi Li, said. Joe, wanted to plead for them to go but saw, Sung, beck next to him:

“I had faith in you. Now you must have faith, Joe.” Sung, said. Joe, dipped his head swallowing his breath, like he was digesting, Sung’s, words. He sat back and accordingly became ready to get out the car.

Hoi Li, joined a host of Monks, that had come together outside the Temple, to greet him. Joe, could not distract himself, even in his disagreeable condition, from the clapping hands being exercised to express thanks and gratitude. He was thankful only a moment. Then the Monks stopped and gathered around the car. Dozens of round heads came against the windows and peered into the van. Joe, walked out as, Hoi Li, guided them into the court of the temple. It was a modest building, concealing a discrete grandeur by the thick walls and augmented chambers. It was not high or fortified but walking to the water front, before the entrance, Joe, felt safe. He was warmly welcomed by the loving Temple Monks and found the surrounding water and tree’s, embracing the land, somehow shielding.

He followed, Jill, into the Temple. “This is so cool.” He said.

“You’re so right, Joe. These walls date back centuries. This temple isn’t on the map, at least not mine. I haven’t seen one like it. That looks like, a, Labourite Alter.” Jill, said and she walked away from him. Joe, rested against the wall, waiting for the Monks to stop clapping. “Joe, this is incredible... The resonant potential of an alter

like this, would usually make it a very unstable artifice applicable for prayer. Yet,... the work here proves preservation of a peaceful social structure. I wonder if the chambers somehow?" Jill, held her frock high to turn sharply, quickly moving to ask: "..... Hoi Li?"

"Jill, we will feast." Hoi Li, said.

"Can you tell me about these walls?"

"Cold, much warmer walls in, Sanshui Daqitou Village."

"Oh, right, I see." Jill, said, like she was abandoning something important she would need to return to. The heels clicked perkily across the dusty, stone floor. The light was opaque coming through the entrance. She was delicate walking back to the others.

"Come, Joe!" Hoi Li, commanded. Joe, walked beside the two young boys along the paths leading to the house, where the food was prepared. It was warm and sunny. Joe, almost believed he was on a holiday. There were children flying kites beside the banks of the river. Men and woman, were cycling and walking, with shopping bags. He saw very few cars but the town was a busy network of people moving around. The air was clammy and clean, like washed with dew drops. The atmosphere was almost purging, itself.

He was brought to a large house in comparison to the others in the village. Outside he could smell the shrimp and soups that had been made for him and the group. The Monks took the slippers off on the porch of the house, before moving quickly inside. Joe, didn't want to but was so hungry for the fine smelling cooking, he slipped out of his shoes and dashed inside to join, Won and Sung, who were already sitting down.

Joe, had to cross his legs and wait for the Monks to bow their heads in gratitude and respect, before he could eat from the table. It was a bright and plentiful spread. Delicate rolls, fine meats and other

foods, were laid down and there was more food being prepared in the kitchen. Joe, was eating for almost an hour. “You are happy, Joe?” Hoi Li, asked.

“Yes, but I want to get to the, Shaolin Temple. You’re all so nice. I would hate to see, Wu Shu Jack, kill you.”

“You, must not worry.” Hoi Li, said and the Monks started ‘aaauhhhing,’ in meditative prayer. “Sleep now, all of you. Tomorrow, we will stop, Wu Shu Jack.”

Jack Trials

Thousands of miles above the group, Wu Shu Jack, sat in the heart of whirling black clouds; moving and made of dark vapours, like fish and containing him. He stood and watched, as if staring out a veranda, on the edge of his, hurtful, Kingdom. The cries of children ran with the racing breeze moving under him. He looked without legs and crossed his arms. The massive yellow eyes in his skull were pointed down, with complete control of the power behind him.

The Red Fox, Modie, flew like a flaming torch in the stormy cloud. The white Cat Demon, Fila, snapped a crack like thunder to appear, hissing, appearing and disappearing. The grey squirrel, Balk, twitched with maniacal laughter in the dark mist. “Silence!” Wu Shu Jack, shouted. “The boy has found a village with priests!”

“Then we will kill them all!” Modie, said, flying near the Demon, with evil, red trails.

“You will do nothing! The village is a sanctuary. The boys sadness will not surrender them to us from there.”

“What? Sanctuary? My lord we are free, there is no sanctuary from our power.”

“The release of, Dark Demons, is only the crack of the sphere that light has created. Until I hold all the light and kill it so it can never be restored, the sphere will not be smashed and my rein of darkness will be opposed. I want the boy for his light, his power. The world has already surrendered him to me. My darkness must consume him forever, to be tortured in my dark cloud.”

“Then how will we do this evil one?”

“We will possess the light which has released such darkness.”

“How is that possible, evil one? Darkness was first without it. I do not know to possess it.”

“I am, Wu Shu Jack, Modie!

Conjured of destructive flares of red, are you not? I possess you. I will possess the boy, should I face the very light of an angel itself.”

Behind the demon a growing volume of laughter hackled and stirred, whisking the black vapours, into a lascivious dance.

The Shaolin Temple Tantrum

The next morning, Joe, was woken up by the horn of a half dozen automobiles outside the house. He heard voices and movement indicating that the vans were being checked for the journey to, Zhongshan. He quickly got up out of bed to wake his two friends. “Our transport is here, we can go now. Wake up, Won. Sung, wake

up.” He said and stirred them, aggressively, knowing that day was going to be one of the most challenging days he would ever know.

He feared that, Wu Shu Jack, would be uncontrollable and capture them all. He could still picture the death of his Mother and Mr. Lee, in his mind; the massacre of the man on the train and the manslaughter of his doctor and the headmaster. “Get the fuck up! Get the fuck up now, you bitches!” He screamed, startling, Jill, who was in another room.

She raced into where the boys were sleeping to find, Joe. “What’s happening?” She screamed opening the door and finding, Joe, screaming at the others to an abrupt attention. “Stop, Jo!” She spoke, bending down to embrace him. “Stop, Joe, it’s alright! Shhh, we’re going to win....” She whimpered. He slowly calmed down, fearing only that he wasn’t strong enough to protect his friends. He was reassured by, Jill and boldly stepped up to face the terrifying day ahead of him.

Joe, found his shoes where he left them on the porch outside the house. The Monks were boarding the vans. He waited sombrely, appreciating the scenery of the village for one last time. Sung, was standing by the waterfront, at the end of a small pier. Joe, sensed, Sung, might have wanted to jump off it. He saw, Sung, watching the stillness, like it was the end. “What are you doing?” Joe, asked, when he reached him on the boat dock.

“I’m seeing my freedom..... and I am seeking to respect yours.”

“I don’t understand, you’re not making sense.”

“You are ready for the Shaolin Temple but not for me, Joe.”

“You’re crazy, I freed you!”

“With actions at your disposal, that, trap you, here. You must be free for the task ahead of you. Come back and you will find me in this village always, my friend.”

“I’m sorry for shouting this morning.... Will you come with me now?” Joe, said but Sung, shook his head by the convictions of his heart. Joe, saw the strain pressing a vex expression on, Sung’s, face and understood it was for the best. “Well I’ll come back for dinner some time.” He said and shared a momentary sadness with his staying friend. He hugged, Sung, before the drivers sounded the van horns, to tell the group they were leaving. He said a final goodbye and ran to board the leading vehicle with, Hoi Li, Won and Jill, already inside.

Joe and the group of Monks didn’t stop on the Journey to, Zhongshan. The serene landscape was sometimes difficult for the vehicles to cross. There were moments when, Joe, was frightened a car might topple over or fall into a ditch. They drove for a hundred miles or more before they reached the foot of, Zhongshan, mountain. The Shaolin Temple, was at the peak of cascading walls. Joe and the group had to get out and walk up narrow steps and cliff edges.

They formed a long line. Joe, was in the midst of the Monks with Won, Hoi Li and Jill. The higher they got, the more narrow the steps became. It was as if the mountain was telling them to go back, more loudly, the closer they got to the peak. He began trembling, walking on steps that were easy to slide off, causing you to lose your balance, in the high altitude air.

He felt exposed and out of his natural environment. He thought he might fall over the cliff edges and die. Joe, was taking every step with diligence. He had to reach the top for, Sung, to avenge his family and to be free. He didn’t want to be haunted by, Wu Shu Jack but he discovered with the help of his friends, he wanted to be free from doubting himself, even more.

He found, Jill's, hand gripping his, as, he came to the final steps and then, he saw the, Shaolin Temple. It was like a palace, with rocks and garden courts leading to the building itself. A large stone Buddha stood at the front, before, the Temple Court Yard. The group of Monks, walked forward on the cobble path leading ahead. Joe, followed them, composing himself with every step. He filled his chest with the mountain air and played with his hand clenching and unclenching his fists.

There were, Kung Fu, students training in the yards they past. Joe, was perturbed by the way they fought without even glancing at him or the Monks. He pulled his hoodie to check it was still there, as so many people had noticed it before, even if they didn't notice him. In this place, no one paid attention to anything about him or the group he was with. Not until they came to the, Temple Court Yard.

Two large, Temple Priests, dressed in red robes and holding long spear like weapons, were standing at attention, like guards. "We are the Monks to perform the transfer ceremony. To contain the, Dark Deities, by the authorities of light." Hoi Li, said.

"Which one has released the Demon?"

"It is, He." Hoi Li, said, bringing, Won, gently closer.

"He will be prepared to recite the scroll. Bring him." The Temple Priest, spoke. Won, was handed to the guards and bravely looked back with champions brightness at, Joe. The guards were covered in clothes, like ninja samurai. The white material was laced with red braces and belts.

"He will be alright." Hoi Li, said. "We must prepare the burning star." He said and the Monks started taking equipment from their sacs, to create the floor for the ceremony.

At sun set, Joe, was perched on a rock, watching the Monks descend, with their legs crossed to pray. Hoi Li, was ready to do the same, knowing he would have to lose contact with, Joe, to chant such a strong protection prayer over them. Joe, was summoned with, Jill, for, Hoi Li, to talk to them. “You will have to watch and act without me, should something go wrong.” Hoi Li, said, tranquilly.

“I don’t understand it was only the principle sadness related to performing such a ceremony that was misunderstood before. It shouldn’t be doubted that the ceremony will be successful this time, now that we know.” Jill, said.

“There is always risk. I need you to take caution because I cannot help you when I am chanting.”

“Alright.” Jill, responded but Hoi Li, moved down, crouching, for, Joe, to acknowledge his concern, until, he too snapped:

“Alright!” Before he watched, Hoi Li, join the other, Monks, to descend with his legs crossed in a circle. A moment later, Won, was escorted out of the temple in flamboyant red clothing, like a costume night gown. Joe, thought, Won, was hypnotised. He imagined something pulling Won, with a chain to the centre of the circle because Won, looked so focused.

The burning star was lit a blaze between the Monks. Won, was in the centre of the floor performing calculated movements, sending shapes of heat to form. Joe, heard the beginnings of the recitation: “Dark Dog, Creature King in the dark realm, Hear me.” And saw the flames shrink to the ground. The star shape started to glow a deep red and Won, moved the heat, in a spell, with acrobatics, summoning blankets of white hot light. In the last part of the form, Won’s, anger and sadness domed his actions. He spun with his arms out in a releasing fashion so the, Demon Cloud, appeared above him.

Blue bolts forked and collected over the light and Whu Shu Jack, appeared upon the star. Joe, stood up alerted and sensing foreboding malice, before the Demon's intentions. The beast, Wu Shu Jack, appeared over, Won, like a massive building. It pointed towards, Joe: "Youuuuu! You cannot escape!" It said. Jill, screamed feeling a burning struggle. The Demon's eyes burned yellow and possessed, Won's, body, shrinking through, Won's, closed mind. It summoned all the light pulled down onto the star, to invade, Won.

Joe, didn't know what was happening. He watched with bewilderment as, Won, broke out an agonising scream, falling to knees and covering a head in duress, as if suffering from some insanity. The temple guards, holding their spears ran, forcefully, at, Won. "They're going to kill him!!" Joe, said helplessly.

"No don't touch him! You fools!" Jill, screamed but it was too late, the spears were directed at, Won's, head and a moment later, Won, would be dead.

"Noooo!" Joe, shouted vehemently, seeing that he hadn't done enough to protect them and then, Won, moved silently, to catch the spears with hand.

Won, stopped screaming and forced the guardian hurtling back. A few seconds passed when, Won, stood up with yellow glowing eyes, possessed by, Wu Shu Jack. The Temple Guardians got up and started fighting the boy. Joe, could see, Won, was stronger and faster. The guardians couldn't defeat Won but Joe, knew; it wasn't, Won.

He reached into his sac and pulled out the framed Scroll. "What are you going to do?" Jill, asked. Joe, smashed the frame on the ground and removed the scroll.

"I'm stopping the fucking Demon, before it hurts, Won and kills us all." He ran into the flaming star as, Won, ran the spear through the

throat of the last standing, Temple Guardian and Joe, tackled, Won, from behind, pinning, Won and reciting the Scroll with all the principle sadness he felt for himself, having to live such an opposed and miserable existence. The white dome started to reappear and Won's screams returned. The light grew around them until the Demons were sunk through the glowing star, back into the dark dimension.

The Monks broke free of the chant, as the glowing star and the white light vanished. "You've done it!" Jill, screamed, jumping with joy.

Joe & Won's House, in, Cornwall. A week later.

Joe, was by a boat house, getting out of a canoe in front of, Won. "Why don't you try, Won?" He asked.

"I no like water." Won, replied.

"What are you doing here then?"

"Jill, say, she goes, Russia and you no can canoe until she come back."

"So the house is ours. All fixed and party accessible."

"We only two kids in village. Who go party now? I miserable, Joe. Want movies, bowling, arcade.

"How about some pot?" Joe, answered putting the small canoe out the water onto the back yard. The tides were changing gentler splashes at the clear sea breeze, blowing them back to a new home.

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Squint Koros UK, Thank you.