

# Jon Le Mac

## Book I

(The making of LMLA-ink)

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### SUMMARY

Part one of how Lazoo, Metofeaz, Le Mac and Afamasaga came to notoriety.

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER 01	Page 03
CHAPTER 02	Page 20
CHAPTER 03	Page 35

## CHAPTER 1

### PART 1

#### **LMLA-ink, Ali Lévon**

Under the Miami sun, against the Art deco architecture, we hear music and then we see them on the sidewalk. Two of them are in white singlets while the other two wear silk shirts. All four of them breeze through the humidity wearing light fabrics.

“...I've never known a girl like you before...” Lazoo steps; Metofeaz does too. He turns his head; the smile is real. The Pacifican grins to himself; he has his head down as he also steps. The thirty something model in the convertible, which drives slowly next to them, leans over; her body is barely contained by her orange bikini, which does however blend with her tan, and it does set off her deep blue eyes. The soundtrack is delivered from the SONY Sound System in the blue Pontiac with its top down. The woman lifts her sun visor as she beams a gift of her own and asks, “Are you boys here to party?”

This is Lazoo, Metofeaz, Le Mac & Afamasaga, before they were LMLA-ink. Before Lazoo was charged and tried with the murder of seven men. Even before John Lazoo found Genisis in Central Park and before Ms. Jones found him lying on his back in his Armani suit.

The lingerie model looks at Litigatti and then she looks at the dark guy who lowers his sunglasses. He says, “Hey, baby, you know we come to party; question is why is a lady like yo fine self aksing fo company? Come on, baby; I seen yo body on the infomercial. Denzel himself would turn a trick for some of that shit...” Le Mac’s hands move, then decide to rest on his hips. The woman takes her visor from her head, and she tosses her dark hair as she, introduces herself. “Ali Lévon, I was sent by someone who would like to meet you.”

Naturally the leader of the pack at that time takes the front seat as Lazoo, Feeaz—a name the New York writer has already earned for himself for the absurd amounts of money he demands as his Fee whenever he is required to do work—and the quiet, unassuming one jump into the back of the vehicle. The driver, a Cuban African American with cold German blood running through her veins, turns the stereo up again as she steps on the gas.

The ride is short. No sooner had she expressed urgency to the accelerator than Le Mac notices her foot; each toe with a ring, presented in gold sandals, eases itself onto the brake. The former barman turns around to look at his three friends seated in the backseat. He has a smile he loses as the driver turns to him. “A short trip to a far off place,” she says. Le Mac looks up at the gates to the condominium’s underground car park as he replies, “Hell’s but a hop, skip, and a jump. Heaven’s on a long and narrow path.” As she waits for a reply from the intercom, she asks the quiet one in the back, “Where were you heading?” He looks away from her eyes in the mirror as he tells her, “Somewhere near here.” He says this as he rolls up the sleeves of his orange silk shirt with white polka dots,

which match his canvas shoes and cotton trousers. Lazoo bends his head forward. Understandably the nervous guy, who has only just completed his parole, rubs the arms of his black silk shirt. Metofeaz looks at the two on either side of him, and then Lazoo as the former inmate whispers, “If anything goes wrong, I’m back in that cage.” Metofeaz smiles into the rearview mirror, meeting the driver’s eyes and then locking them as he says out loud, “All’s well that ends well. Who wants to meet us, ah?” Lazoo looks at the writer and then Ali, as she turns around and smiles at Lazoo.

Upstairs overlooking the beach, the four of them take drinks from the gold tray that passes them. The women carrying the platters of champagne glasses are clad minimally, leaving plenty for the men’s eyes gladly to feast upon. The woman who delivered them to the party reappears. This time she is dressed. Ali Lévon moves in and among the guests, her eyes on her special guests.

Le Mac notices the way the hostess has an eye on his friend the writer while she entertains a wealthy looking man; he passes it off as a natural reaction to Feez’s uncontrollable thirst for women. Metofeaz comments on Ms. Lévon, as he swaps his empty flute with another one from the passing tray, “God made her on the eighth day; then he erased it.” Le Mac chuckles to himself, “Hey, you talking to us.” The normally smooth exterior of the one known as the “Capitalist,” for his ability to capitalize on any given situation, seems disturbed for a moment as he shows signs which may be seen as insecurity. It could be just a hint of an opportunity or a gaping hole in a callous plan laid down by some careless clown, and Jon Le Mac will immediately identify the domino to tap, in order to bring about the desired effect, for him and his friends. On the other hand, Metofeaz’s smash and grab approach might work well also, as long as the whimsical one is on hand with all his wits, to front the attack with his smile and charm.

Le Mac says, “John Lazoo,” a name the young guy from Wisconsin uses now. The kid who looks years younger than his presence suggests, answers the African American man with an annoyed look as he instructs him on what he has to achieve this afternoon, “You just have to make the guy like you.” The former inmate looks down at the floor. “And you better get use to dealing with people who aren’t the same as you.” The good-looking boy tries to nod his head, as Le Mac continues, “Yeah, you better nod your head, or you’ll be resting it on some funky ass pillow looking up at the ceiling.”

“Do you remember the 21st night of September?” Le Mac helps the young soldier out as he warms to his task. He snaps his fingers as he puts his back into the way he feels the vibrations from the Earth Wind & Fire classic that offers the backdrop to the humidity swept away by the next southerly breeze from the tropics. Lazoo drops the notion; he could be seen as a victim of society, of his misfortune, and of any number of circumstances he could care to name in his simple single syllable vocabulary—cunt, fool, fake, the list goes on. He pulls the collars of his black silk shirt together, as his heart begins to thump. Le Mac notices the change in the soldier’s body language, “Yeah, TRUFUNK! You’re feeling that shit, now. Ah? I can tell by the way the soldier’s broad shoulders have all of a sudden found time to relax.” Le Mac has a look on his face as he grinds out the moves with slow pelvic thrusts, then turns around in a three sixty move, centered by his hands up above his head. “...Ba de ya—dancing in September...” Maurice White and Philip Bailey, octaves apart, harmonize the situation as Ali Lévon’s

white flowing garment creates a wake of scent, beauty and mystique that scatters in all directions as she moves across the parting floor. She walks to the music toward the balcony's edge where the four figures stand in the hue of a setting sun. They are noticed by the distinguished guests whose eyes follow the graceful movements of their hostess. Ali seems pleased with herself that Lazoo, Metofeaz, Le Mac and Afamasaga, even though they are nobodies, have accepted her invitation on the sidewalk.

Jon Le Mac, an articulate film student from LA, watches his lead character in one of his scenes being lead away by the leading lady of his dreams. He turns to his supporting actor, the fall guy, Metofeaz Litigatti, who is eyeing who else in the party is good to go. "Feeaz!" The restless one seems consumed for the moment until he spots someone else, who immediately turns her head in his direction. Le Mac has to snap his fingers in his face, "click, click, click..." The artist from NYC says, as he is about to walk off, "Le Mac, live and let live." He scoffs at first, but then reminds himself that Litigatti is his own man. Afamasaga faces the water as he looks over his shoulder at the interaction; he chooses to tune in and then out as things get messy when Le Mac tries to direct the indirect, and motivate the immovable objects of design. "Come on; say something in that accent." The pensive, and some say peculiar one, from somewhere in the Pacific is quiet for the moment.

Inside the spacious room, James Elton—the name given to him at birth—checks himself out in the mirror as he waits for Ali to return with what she has promised will be "an easy one." The door opens and the woman in her twenties shows in a male twice her age, and maybe thrice Lazoo's. Lazoo nods his head as he tries to think of the things he is not to think about if he is to go through with this.

Ali lets the rich man's hand go as she walks over to where the poor boy stands, waiting for his chance to make some money of his own. His head is down as Ali stands on his left shoulder. He lets his head fall to the right as her lips touch his neck. She whispers in his ear, "Money makes the world go around; thoughts are for those who think." He looks up to see the woman's head buried in his neck in the mirror. He looks over at the client who waits patiently as the hostess primes her talent.

He deals with the feeling of hopelessness that stirs in his gut by conjuring an image of fear in his mind that alerts his body to act ready, immediately ripping the muscles in his chest and arms as he unbuttons the black shirt. Ali's fingernails scratching his skin trigger the transformation of his aloof gaze into a steely stare; the one with the money can take whatever way he should please...

Outside the room in the hallway of the luxury penthouse, Afamasaga sits, thumbing his way through a glossy magazine. Le Mac leans against the wall watching their reflection in one of the gold ornaments hanging on the frosted walls. The door opens and Ali appears; her hair is now up in a bun. She opens her cigarette case, then closes it. Le Mac leans toward her as she moves in next to him, deciding to lean against the wall too. She turns so her back is up against the wall as Le Mac asks her, "Is he..." but Afamasaga cuts in, "He won't even lay a finger on Lazoo, or James for that matter." His head is still down in the magazine he skims. Ali opens her cigarette case again as she gives her opinion, "I have mine for getting the client through the door. Your boy can do as he

pleases.” Le Mac studies her smile as her exacting face sustains it, careful not to let anyone or anything penetrate the front she presents.

He takes a sip of champagne before throwing back, “Do you love it? How you stay so on top of it all, or do you sometimes wonder what it’d be like to be vulnerable?” As he speaks, he looks around her into the mirror at the Pacifican pretending not to hear the conversation. Ali replies, “I’m a woman, clearly with a use by date; we’re born vulnerable.” He licks his lips in anticipation of her reply to his next probing question, but she is already forming a punch line regardless of what he says next. “Vulnerable where you’re open to being swept off your feet, or by letting someone through the guard from time to time?” She smiles again; this time her lips part to show her perfectly capped teeth. Then her smile fades, but the feeling his attention gives her remains sustained in her eyes. Nevertheless, she keeps up the act that reels them in closer; as she nonchalantly removes his glass from his hand and takes a drink, she is careful not to deflate things already at large. “I’m the damsel who distressed her knight in shining armor.” She takes his hand and makes him wrap his fingers around the glass, then gives it back to him, as she ends her reply, “Let’s just say he tied himself to the tracks.” The way she delivers her answer is more than adequate for the guy who teeters on ecstasy’s edge as he touches her chin, lifting her head so he can see her face once more. The lingerie model unpins her hair, letting the dark mane fall to frame her symmetrically gifted features. Le Mac places his lips on hers, and she responds momentarily, then pulls back, making him stop. He smiles at her as she opens her eyes to see him looking deep into hers. A song in the background begins to play, and she whispers the lyrics, “Someday, we’ll be together...” The orchestra gathers; as the volume increases, she stands upright from her leaning position and begins to walk away with her hand held out for him to take. She walks past the quiet guy seated reading, who looks at the ground she walks on. Le Mac watches her front in the mirror, while he sees the hand she holds out for him. “You’re far away, from me my love...” Diana Ross and the Supremes make the scene Le Mac dreams work. His back still against the wall, he offers commentary for the *Le Mac’s Action Sequencing* he speaks of regularly, “Right about now, the titles appear. In a classic font, saying your name, my name, our names, with hers as the headline.” His friend nods his head slowly...

Out on the balcony, the setting sun is the backdrop to the opening scene of Le Mac’s account of events. For the moment, the one who is mostly responsible for what happened in the end forgets that the illiterate orphan from Wisconsin is still inside the room with a government agent. He is able to overlook that the woman he slow dances with keeps glancing sideways at his friend the writer, Metofeaz Litigatti, who stands watching them with one foot cocked against the wall, as if he is about to cut in at any given moment. He lifts his champagne glass to toast them. “To the setting sun, the moon and its differing reflections.” As if she reads his mind, Ali tightens her arms around his neck, bringing them closer together for Feeaz to see. “...I long for you, every, every night...” He values the words to their song, like tangibles he finds in the heap of indefinable meanings from the coincidental but fateful ways they met. He concentrates on easing into his desire to have more than just a fling, and he is mindful of his conscious and un-conscious transference of those thoughts she may only know in terms of a financial transaction....

The door to the room opens as the last chorus comes around. Lazoo does up the third button of the black silk shirt; as he steps out into the hallway, he smiles and Afamasaga

rises to his feet. “His wife, Mrs. X, works for the bureau,” the kid says. He and Afamasaga lean against the wall, and Lazoo cocks his right foot. He lights a Marlborough, inhales, and then he blows the smoke up into the air before he continues, “He goes by the name Mr. Businessman...” The Pacifican holds out his hand to his protégé; the older one looks more relieved than satisfied with the young man’s effort. “How did it go down?” Lazoo looks to his left; in the mirror he sees himself as he frankly replies, “He wanted to know how I would do Mrs. X, so I told him.” A smile comes to the mentor’s face, and then it becomes a chuckle, which he cannot hold back. He has to take a puff himself as he takes the cigarette from Lazoo’s hand and inhales deeply; the door opens again, this time a man in his fifties, who looks a lot like Tom Hanks with his hair greased back after a shower, is polite as he feels the need to excuse himself, “Excuse me, guys; which way is the door?” Afamasaga looks at the ground as the neat looking guy in his trademark grey suit answers his own question, “It must be that way?” He points in the mirror’s direction as he quickly walks away, holding his briefcase. Not long after he disappears, the remaining two walk toward the mirror.

Outside Metofeaz spots them as they enter the space. Lazoo spots Le Mac and Ali, slow dancing. As he passes Le Mac on his way to the balcony’s edge, Lazoo says to his shoulder, “I get traction from your agitation.” The colored guy next to the white one says to him, “When this shit gets deep, it’s Le Mac you want as your wingman, brother.” Lazoo takes a glass of champagne from a passing tray; as he does, he grabs the waitress’ arm; she looks pleased that he touched her. He stands the vessel in almost a ninety degree angle and empties the crystal. Then the Maestro hands the flute back to the girl, who has a smile from ear to ear; he does not notice as he takes another one and does the same.

Ali looks at Le Mac’s face, as he looks to his left and then to his right, as the body from whence the words came passes them by. The end to their song is like that—it fades, but it does linger.

## PART 2

### Missy Evon

Ali moves the table in the middle of the lounge of her small New York apartment so she can vacuum underneath it. On the radio a song plays its lyric she hears clearly. "...Everyone's got a theory about the bitter one. They're saying mamma never loved her much..." The Hoover cord gets caught behind the refrigerator in the next room; at the same time the phone rings. She yanks the cord as the words continue, "...and Daddy never keeps in touch; that's why she shies away from human affection..." She hums the tune as she taps the switch with her bare foot, turning off the vacuum as she reaches for the phone on the wall. She listens to her agent's instructions about the audition for a bit part in a sitcom; she nods her head. Ms. Evon, her daughter, walks into the room, just when the mother nestles the phone to grab pen and paper, which the pretty eight-year old girl, with her mother's eyes and smile, hands to her. Ali scribbles down details as the girl wanders into the kitchen and sits down at the table for two. Ali hangs up the phone and calls out to her, "Let me finish dusting, Missy, and then we'll look at your homework, ah?"

Ali remembers the muted sounds around her when she was the same age as her daughter, whom she watches write a story. "*In the AmalgaMension Dimension (AMD,) the sun is always warm and the grass is greener...*" It was around the same time she discovered she was adopted by the two women she called "Moms."

Missy's dad, a mediocre playwright, lives where all the imaginary playwrights live in New York. He and Ali parted ways not long after the girl's birth when Ali refused his family's request for a paternity test to confirm the child was eligible for an inheritance. He comes from a wealthy family, so the checks for Missy are always on time. Ali Lévon is sensible; she lives modestly, choosing to save all her earnings from her hostess and modeling work, which is beginning to dry up.

The phone on the wall rings again. Ms. Evon's eyes look in that direction. Ali looks at her and then down at the girl's homework. The mother does not get up to answer the call this time; instead she points out an error in her daughter's work. From the bright orange pencil case, the girl produces an eraser; she rubs the words out as the phone rings again. Once the words are gone, the girl takes the book to the waste-basket and empties the dustings. The ringing telephone is part of their lives—sometimes it brings a smile to their faces, sometimes it makes them anxious, and at other times, it can be ignored. Ms. Evon sits back down as the ringing continues, she picks up her pencil and is about to resume writing, but her mother places a hand on her left hand as she gets up from the small table.

In the next room, Missy mimics the way her mother says, "Hi, Ali Lévon here." There is silence as her mother listens. The daughter has a piece of scrap paper ready to record the details for her mother. Ali asks the caller a few of her own questions, "So, wardrobe is something comfortable, okay? Let me see; the part is for a play, a doco, and maybe a movie?" Ali hangs up the phone and scratches her head. "Sounds crazy to me. The money's okay though." By the time she seats herself down at the table next to her daughter, the girl hands her the scrap paper with all the interview details written up neatly



for her; Ali folds the paper in two and holds it down to her right side as she and her daughter continue their quality time together. “Now, where were we?”

In the evening, Ali is seated comfortably on the couch; she hugs a cushion. Standing in front of the television is Missy; she has something behind her back. Ali points to her left side. A smile spreads across the girl’s face as she produces what she held on her right side. She places a video of *The Basketball Diaries*, starring young Leonardo DiCaprio, down on the table as she holds out *The Hunger* with Catherine Deneuve and David Bowie in her left hand.

Ali folds her legs on the couch as Missy places the popcorn down on the coffee table next to the remote control. Then she pushes the tape into the silver VCR. The sound of the machine’s arms, taking the cartridge to where the heads may run along the black film, is in time with the way the girl switches the light off with one hand and reaches to take the receiver from the phone with her other hand. She places the earpiece onto the hook and waits for her mother’s reaction. Instead, the woman reaches for the bowl of popcorn and the girl sighs as if relieved. She takes her seat next to her mother and reaches for the remote control and pushes the Play button...

Monday morning is icy and fresh as Missy watches her mother pack a week’s worth of clothes into a sports bag. Missy is careful not to seem too eager to pack her bag, have breakfast and get going. She looks forward to a week with her father, as much she looked forward to seeing Ali again after the seven-day break, during which time she could almost be a normal eight-year old girl. Her dad lives at SIL HOUSE, an apartment building above a café where many interesting people meet to discuss the interesting things they do. The week before, she and her dad had met a producer and his associate who supposedly was the real life person on whom Quentin Tarantino based his character, Antoine Roccamora, half black, half Samoan minder whom Jules refers to in *Pulp Fiction*.

Missy looks at her mother’s outfit laid out on her bed, opposite to Missy’s own. She wants to comment on the color, but then she decides it goes with her mother’s mood today. “I know, Hon; the purple is so eighties, but hey, I could sense the sleaze over the phone, and if it’s going to get me over the line, I’ll wear it...” The girl nods as she sits down on the bed.

Ali has one eye on the only thing in her life that is uncomplicated as she zips up the bag of clothes. As she leaves the room she reminds Missy, “Breakfast is almost ready.” The sound of the toaster popping awakens the girl, who is seated upright but so often is away in some place where she is alone and distant from her immediate surroundings. The phone rings, and then Ali’s voice kills the stinging sound. She hangs up the phone and calls out, “Your father’s his usual self today, Missy; he’ll be late.”

She looks at the pillows at the head of the bed arranged around her soft toys. She looks across at her mother’s bed and notices the way her mother’s bed is flat with just two pillows, and covered in a thin bedspread unlike her bed dressed in a thick quilt, a present from her grandmother. On the dresser, she counts the items belonging to her mother; about one to every five pieces is hers. At the base of the mirror is the orange envelope—

the mail that arrived when Missy was just five days old according to her mother. Still sealed and without a name, it remains a feature of their humble surroundings. Each time one of them looks in the mirror, their eyes eventually come down to find the unread article after they examine themselves.

Ali stands at the door. She watches the girl deep in thought, a state she has accepted in her child, after consultations with child psychologists. The orange envelope stares at them both. She turns and heads back to the kitchen.

Missy, sensing her mother in the doorway, allows herself time to disconnect from her current state, careful not to sever her connection midway through any meaningful transmission of waves which may leave meant messages lingering in the void, corrupting the content, losing their essence in the spontaneous space. She lowers her heart rate and exhales slowly through her tiny nostrils until she breathes again.

At the table, the cereal is plain, no color and very little additives. The tea is murky, but the leaves beginning to sink to the cup's bottom are still identifiable as individuals prior to their assembling to tell of fortune or misfortune, depending on how one reads their stories. The toast is rough looking; the roughage stands up against the thin layer of honey the knife spreads across the heads of whole-meal grains. Missy watches the shine sink into bread as the tea leaves finally rest at the cup's bottom. She smiles for her mother as she finds her spoon in the bowl of Muesli; the smile freezes when the phone rings...

Missy writes to pass the time and to realize aspirations that would seem wasted in the vapor of her life in this dimension if she dared verbalize them. She is aware of her duty, but her focus and who she is here to guide are still not clear to her. Her hand scripts the words that form modules of an Artificial Language. She delivers part of a narrative through which entities, those deemed TRUFUNK, Shapeshifters, Warlocks and followers communicate their unrealized dreams and nightmares made from the clashing of time and circumstance into which they are hurled as new born babies.

The sounds of the city outside blend with chemicals that flood the girl's body as she invigorates a page with passion. Her mother enters the room dressed for her meeting. The smell of her mother's expensive perfume intensifies the passages. The phone rings, but the girl is too lost somewhere in between the lines that begin to flow to care...

Sometime in the afternoon, she places the pen down beside the pages of work she has created. Standing in the kitchen doorway in her outfit is her mother. Missy clears her throat as she reaches for her glass of water. She has a look of relief on her face which her mother greets with a smile. The girl realizes considerable time has passed, which her mother confirms as she looks at her watch. "Your father called again; he has an important meeting." Ali steps into the room; removing the glass of water from her daughter's hand, she takes a sip. Lipstick marks the glass' rim, which she rubs off. Then she hands the glass back to Missy as she relays the ramifications of Missy's father's actions. "Our meetings were at the same time. He'll call when he's ready for you."

Missy stands the pile of papers on their ends to combine them as her mother exits the room. She puts them away in a manila folder. On the bench is her tea-cup, which her

mother left for her to examine. She looks into the bottom where the tea leaves lay. Today they seem to be magnetized by poles of a globe that has been flipped, turned upside down or downside up. Their formation contradicts their message of chaos; she can sum up their meaning in the term: *Irascible Trepidation*. She muses over the matter for a moment before she turns on the tap to flood out their meaning, and then flushes them down the plug-hole.

Waiting for her father is sometimes like waiting for a train at a station in the middle of nowhere; the train tracks are there, but does the train still come to this place? And will it be today? Or, will it be tomorrow? Or, has it been and gone?

Her mother reappears dressed in her track pants and sweat-shirt. Missy stands with her arms by her side, not deflated but slightly hurt that her mother had missed a meeting that was important to her. Ali knows the posture and drops her shoulders as each of them take small steps toward the center of the small room. The girl doesn't really know what to do with her arms, but her mother wraps hers around the girl anyway. The warmth of her mother's body is transferred without words.

The girl's mind relaxes from the many tasks a child unwillingly assumes from assumptions made when caught up in the totality of two parents afflicting their wills upon the child, for what they believe is best. Ali palms the top of her daughter's strawberry blonde hair, a color neither her nor the child's father shared. Missy loves it best when her mother holds her head to her so she can hear the woman's heartbeat. She closes her eyes and lets herself go, so only her legs are required to work. Her mother's scent is transcendent to her when she is in this state. The images of her mother and her dad, together and then apart, would move her toward a place she refuses to go; in the present closeness to her mother, she chooses to think of them as human beings each with his or her own needs requiring fulfillment and attention to be satisfied.

Ali feels her daughter drop, only for the girl suddenly to find her balance. Standing on her own again, the girl looks to be okay. Ali hides her tears by looking at the ceiling, as if the angle of her head will somehow take the show of emotion back to whence it came. Her daughter's head is bowed as if one should be solemn in the presence of tears. Missy hears the sounds of sniffing, and then even with her head bowed, she sees the smile equaling the sun coming out from behind clouds to color the once grey day.

When Missy returns dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, Ali has transformed the room with candles, a photo album on her lap, a glass of wine on the table, and music by Diana Krall.

"S wonderful! 'S marvelous!" She walks through the raining sound—the work of two Russian Jewish boys from Brooklyn—George's melody and Ira's words. The Gershwin brothers fascinate the girl with Gaelic blood from her handsome father and the most exotic of mixed cocktails from the ever alluring Ali Lévon who sits smiling at her from their couch. "... You've made my life so glamorous, you can't blame me for feeling amorous..." The normally reserved child has enough blood of jest from a line of performers in her naturally to fill the already livened room with a touch of pizzazz by simply lifting the tops of her hands down by her side and snapping the fingers of her right hand twice, and then the ones on her right hand once, which ring in time and in tune with

the drummer's tapping on the rim of his snare drum. She moves her shoulders, making her mother conceal the pleasure she gets from seeing her daughter in a lighter mood; the mother's grin is from ear to ear. As Missy nears her seat, she hops lightly on the spot, and then she bows her head and crosses one leg over the other as she lifts the ends of an imaginary dress to curtsy bashfully to her captive audience. The reception is clapped lightly by her mother as the girl sinks into the seat and lifts her legs while the mother lifts the album for her daughter to stretch her limbs out; once Missy is comfortably seated, Ali places the leather covered book on her daughter's legs. "... 'S wonderful! 'S marvelous! That you should care for me!.."

Missy watches her mother flip the cover of the photo album. The girl patiently waits for the stories behind each picture, which her mother tells her and her only. She knows the pictures so well she no longer has to see the black and white photographs framed in the creaming white borders the plastic cover holds in place according to time. "...My dear, it's four-leaf clover time..."

Diana Krall's fingertips pin point a place in the past: late 1920's, where an African Cuban lady stands beside a grand piano entertaining wealthy gentlemen aboard a ship off the Miami coast. Maybe it was the night Missy's grandmother and namesake was born in the Gulf between Cuba and America? Or, years later when she finally made it to shore to give birth to Ali and then give her up for adoption? Missy pictures Ali's dad as a band-leader conducting an orchestra while his lady sings the hits of the day. She sinks into her dream as her mother's voice feathers her ears with stories she herself has pieced together from relatives and friends and the fading photos she studies.

The song fades from her, as Missy opens her eyes. She sees her mother asleep, holding one of her pillows. She carefully lifts the quilt back and quietly gets out of her warm bed. Standing upright, she stretches her arms as she wonders whether she'll get to see her father today. Her feet find her slippers under her bed, and then she puts on her dressing gown, which lays folded at the bottom of her bed, as she decides she'll surprise Ali by making her breakfast in bed.

### PART 3

#### Alfario Z Sterriozé

“Baby girl, where you at? Got no strings, got men attached...” An R&B track plays, the kind that typifies the New York lifestyle—the hordes of people probably born somewhere else less exciting, less diverse, with more room and zero noise.

Missy steps, mimicing her mother; the woman she looks up to as they catch the fever.

“...Baby girl you da shit, that makes you my equivalent...” Missy looks out for her dad...

The two guys behind the hot dog cart holler, “Ali, you can sting me, baby.” Ace holds out a hotdog. “Kid shouts out; a dog for Missy?” Ali returns the compliment, “When I grow one Ace, you’ll be the first to know. Sorry, Kid, can’t stop; we’re on a time line, babe.” Ali continues to step in between the underpinning melodic bass line beneath the harmonic tune. In her favorite wooly hat, coat and leather gloves, Missy turns around to wave at the friendly guys serving a line of women queued up outside their caravan window. Her mother wears the purple outfit, which brings looks from men, and then the women. She looks across and down the street; through the window of a passing yellow cab, she catches a glimpse of her dad; his attitude keeps him looking young; his disregard for responsibility makes him seem childlike to his daughter.

Born Alfred Stone II, a copy-writer stands on the side of the street. Dressed for the NYC winter, he waits for his daughter. He spots his ex in the crowd. Ali’s hair bounces as her stride widens. Missy skips to keep up with the ex-model. “Alfario”—a name a producer suggested he adopt—says to himself, “Alfario Z Sterriozé, pleased to make your acquaintance...” He repeats himself “The Z is for Zero, the name of my next book, *Chapter Zero...*” The English accent is almost authentic, aristocratic and an absolute no-brainer when picking up.

As Ali and Missy approach, Alfario straightens himself up; he says her name before she can hear it: “Missy.” She reads his lips as her mother communicates to him her displeasure at his irresponsible behaviour. “You cost me a sure thing, honey,” she says as she puts out her cheek for him to kiss. He finds his face in between her sweet smelling hair and the scent of the woman he can always count on to tie his insides in a knot. He tells her in a tone reserved for special occasions like this, “You still do it to me, you know...” Missy looks at them, and then she looks elsewhere as if she is unimpressed with the way he carries on. He notices the girl look away and for a moment he too wants to cringe; then he feels what Ali and his daughter do for him when all of them are together. “Hey, Missy, I used to get embarrassed when my dad shoved his tongue down my mother’s throat in front of me. Hey, guess what; I shoved mine in your mother’s ear; you should be proud of your father’s ingenuity and vulgarity.” It only takes a few seconds for the smile to show on his daughter’s face. Ali watches how he works his way around their daughter’s defenses, and she wonders to herself whether the three of them could one day be together again. But it takes less than a minute for him to set her thinking straight. While looking into their daughter’s eyes, he casually informs his family, “An important

gig has come up for me in LA this week, so I can only have Missy for the next three days.”

Ali swallows the lump in her throat, as he steps back up onto the pavement and out of the path of a cab someone in the background hails. She shrugs her shoulders at the look on her daughter’s face, the same one she has for when she is annoyed or when she is slightly elated at the prospect of something good happening to either of the figures in her life. Ali lowers her head and puckers her lips, and Missy hugs her neck. “Ali, it could be the break he needs to realize his awesome potential,” the concerned child says to ease the weight of her mother’s shoulders. Ali’s eyes close as the girl kisses her mother goodbye. When the woman opens her brown eyes, she sees herself reflected in her daughter’s eyes. “We’ll go out for dinner in Harlem this weekend, ah?” Missy nods her head as she reaches beside her to take her father’s hand.

“Can you hear that?” Missy asks as she looks at her father who looks at Ali walking away. He says, his mind on the woman walking away from him, “Call me, Alfario.” Missy has a puzzled look on her face as she looks at Ali and then a smile breaks out on her face, “Alfario! Can you hear that?” She begins to walk. She imitates the way her mother struts, “The music, Alfario!” He looks at his daughter and then his ex in the distance. Regret shows on his face, but then he decides to get in on the act the two women play for him. “Hey, Missy! Where’s Ali going?” “She’s going to SIL HOUSE. She has an interview there.” His daughter looks up at him as his eyes are still firmly set in the distance. “Did she say what it was for?” Missy claps her hands to the music; he feels he has to do the same. “She’s going for a part in the new *American Dream*.” He watches Ali turn into the doorway of his apartment building as he takes his daughter’s hand she holds out to him.

As they near the doorway she can hear the same music, “Hear that, Alfario?” He looks down at her, “Yeah, babe.” He reaches out and pulls the door back for the girl to enter where the music is loud. Inside, the bass is a mood altering mechanism. Behind the counter, Simon Campbell, a red-haired Canadian, smiles at her; his belly in the tight t-shirt is the only rounded object in this place. At the middle table beneath the arced logo is her mother; opposite her is an African American guy dressed casually—sneakers and hoody with just a hint of bling; their body language concerns Missy for a moment as her dad calls out to her, “Here, babe.” He sits at a table against the far wall looking through the menu. Missy makes her way to the table and slides into the seat next to Alfario so she can see the room. She makes eye contact with Ali, who then refocuses her attention on the interviewer. Missy notices the way her father’s lips are thin and his jaw is almost clenched. When she points at pancakes, he looks down at her; his eyes have a puffed appearance about them, but still he manages to question her choice; his voice is stern and quiet, but she can hear the tension in it, “What would your mother say if she saw that, Missy?” Missy shrugs her shoulders as she meshes her fingers together, then decides to take off her gloves. She places them beside her as she notices three guys outside the window looking in on her mother and her interview. One of them smiles at Ali, and her reaction is noticeable, so noticeable the guy interviewing her has to ask her something to regain her attention. Missy waits for the three guys to enter the room.

The guy interviewing her mother is Jon Le Mac, the producer; some say “Le Mac” was a name given to him by one of the three men walking into the room now. They wear black—wool, leather, denim and cotton, with flashes of white that show off their varying complexions in their five o’clock shadows. The one who distracted Missy’s mom is Metofeaz Litigatti, a graffiti poet. The one who bows his head to avoid eye contact is John Reyer, who gave everyone their names. And then there is the one they call Lazoo—John Lazoo. All three guys seat themselves at the table where Ali is being questioned.

He’s at odds with everything and for that matter everyone within his sight. He studies what Ali does and listens to the way she replies to Le Mac’s questions. He may have a smile on his face, but he’s pondering ways to take away the person’s ability to make him smile. He doesn’t read words, he reads people, Lazoo does.

Alfario waves Simon over and says to his daughter who watches on, “Time to eat, Missy; how about them pancakes, ah?”

Le Mac asks Ali about her commitment to the project. “This is like a documentary meets a play set on a stage that starts at this table the moment you sign on the line. That stage reaches your home; it reaches your friend’s and family’s place; everywhere you are there’s the stage.” Ali looks at the table where Le Mac’s hands rest; he displays the authenticity of the ROLEX on his wrist by taking it off and lobbing it for her to catch. She catches it and lifts it in the air, weighing it in her hand; then she gently places it on the table. She looks over at the wall where Missy and her father order food from the portly waiter. Then taking Le Mac’s left hand, she slides the time piece back on as she looks him in the eye. Then she turns away again to look at her daughter, making him look there too. “That’s my child, here on stage; that’s how serious I am.”

Missy notices how Lazoo responds to the quiet one’s signals. The country boy moves forward when John Reyer clears his throat and asks her mother. “Excuse me; it’s not my place to say, but when we pay you, we want to know how is it you can so easily use your kid as a prop in this scene?” Ali has a look of astonishment on her face, “What?” she says. She watches his boyish good looks all of sudden become stern; he smiles at her as he continues, “Where’s the line for you, ah?” Ali looks at Le Mac who stares straight back at her. She looks at Metofeaz who reaches for the *New York Times*. She has a smirk on her face, but the look in her eyes says how she feels. “I thought he was your boy,” she says as she looks at Le Mac, who lifts his hand in the air, waving it side to side as if she should stop immediately. Ali begins to move, letting Metofeaz know to move out of her way so she can leave. “Fuck this shit; how dare you low lives judge me!” she says. Lazoo has one more thing to add, “Ali!” She is on her feet and moves around the table to stare down on him with one hand on her hip. He looks up at her, as the rest of them look at him, and says, “It’s an interview Ali, not a trial!” She doesn’t have the time to express what she thinks. She looks at each of them and then back to Lazoo and smiles as she says, “Fuck you!” Ali walks over to where her daughter sits; she puts out her face, which Missy kisses. Then the proud mother leaves SIL HOUSE café.

Excerpt from website [www.LMLA-ink.net](http://www.LMLA-ink.net):

Saturday May 11th, 1996

Contact: execproducer@afamasaga.net

MOVIE EXTRAS WANTED

Extras of all ages required to be vital background for reenactments in Docudrama about the new American dream. Backpackers welcome, healthy hourly rate and nourishment provided.

EX-CONVICT ACTORS WANTED

Actors with a past required for interviews in Docudrama about the new American dream. Please bring newspaper clippings, court documents, and police records.

ACTOR WANTED

Male between 21-31 years of age to do reenactments in Docudrama about the new American dream.

ACTOR WANTED

Female between 18-26 years of age to do reenactments in Docudrama about the new American dream.

FINANCIER WANTED \$500,000.00 Minimum

Instant Producer Title in Docudrama about the new American dream. Global distribution deal already stitched with major media group.

WRITER WANTED

A distinct voice is sought. One that is neither angry nor content with the state of affairs, but sees the irony in the degeneration of the core to the portable, fast and reusable generations post World War II and the deterioration of the planet on which we now only just exist.

There were two main reasons why people came upon LMLA-ink around the time Missy's dad and Ali did. You either wanted to belong to something, which had the potential to be something great that others would want to be part of later when it became popular. Or, you were lost; lost from being on the outside for the first time in a while, or lost because you hadn't found what you were looking for.

The carefully crafted inexpensive ads John Reyer Afamasaga placed in the *New York Times* and on the Internet since arriving in New York about one year ago had attracted a list of candidates with the credentials he was looking for, but only one candidate so far had that something special that it takes to charm the world. It didn't matter that the character who became known as the Maestro couldn't read or write a word. It didn't even matter that his name was really James Elton, born a country boy who through misfortune had grown up behind bars. The same advertisements caught the eye of Ali Lévon.

Since moving into SIL HOUSE, Le Mac and Afamasaga had quickly created a group of acquaintances who frequented the rundown café. Their table and the ones around it were always full, so the owner Simon was happy to keep the lights on as long as they were drinking and eating. The sessions would sometimes go until late at night when they moved on to Mr. Pink's night-club and then resume in the early hours when they returned sometimes with enough of a crowd to pack the place.

It was during these sessions that Alfred Stone II became acquainted with LMLA and its story, which Afamasaga, after a few drops of ale, told in his accent as he read and explained the *POEMBOOK* and the *STORYBOOK*, two "hand-bound leather books" which he claimed the *POEMBOOK* was gifted to him by a World War II soldier who traveled the world around that time, using his uniform as his ticket to many ports. The premise for LMLA being here in New York City was to find the guy who, Afamasaga



points to, John Lazoo; whose mother Janine the Poet Soldier had met on his journeys, and who read to Lazoo from the STORYBOOK when she was alive.”

For Alfred, an aspiring writer whose father’s connections had landed him a job as copywriter in a top New York Agency, it was the fulfillment of his dream. The story was endearing of how the members of LMLA had managed to find the benefactor of the precious books, whose mother had died of a broken heart. But also the political statement the Poet made by choosing to pass himself off as soldier to travel the world, and instead of warring, to write of Love, thus redefining for the book’s readers the term ”soldier.”

Excerpt from: POEMBOOK <http://etfiction.com/downloads/POEMBOOK.pdf>:

### *TRUFUNKSOLDIER*

*TRU:*

*The truth about LOVE, TRUST, HONESTY & RESPECT*

*FUNK:*

*To give off...e.g. smoke, smell, sound, stuff, etc*

*SOLDIER:*

*One of a type of worker ants distinguished by an exceptionally large head and jaws*

*IS:*

*An individual who works hard in a collective to find and give freely the truth*

The one they also refer to as the Pacifican would always end his address with a challenge as he closed the books and placed them on the cloth and wrapped them up and placed them back in the same knapsack the vagabond carried. “If there’s someone in this room who hears these words and who has that voice, I will want to know, soon, very soon.”

The newspaper and Internet ads, and the *books* brought them the attention—from the cons, the money men, the artists, and the law.

Missy smiles up at her mother and then she looks down at the table. Only the music can be heard, then Ali’s heels as they make their way across the wooden floor, and then the sounds from outside as Ali opens the door and steps out onto the street. Her dad confirms the order he points to for Simon, “The pancakes, Simon, a pot of tea for two, and mineral water.”

“My man! Alfario Z Sterriozé!” When Jon Le Mac said the name, Missy could see why her dad wanted it. Jon Le Mac faces their way; his smile is genuine maybe because of her, in light of what had just happened, but he seems to like her dad. Metofeaz casually excuses himself, casting a glance their way to acknowledge them both as he offers his

excuse for leaving, “Got to find some inspiration; sitting here with you lot maketh a man consider alternatives to life.” Lazoo stares somewhere down at the ground as Le Mac nudges him to move so he can get out. Lazoo moves around to where Metofeaz sat as Le Mac makes his way across the floor. Lazoo leans forward on the table to say something to Afamasaga who looks over at them and nods his head with a tight-lipped smile that gives away nothing. Lazoo looks their way without any reaction as he talks to Afamasaga.

If most people could channel their thoughts of what they unconsciously said into a book that formulated their ideas and annunciated their truth, this world would be a quiet and meaningful place. But thank goodness, such is not the case, especially for individuals like Le Mac. Whether or not his talk was dialogued, he made people feel welcome. Somewhere in between the hitman and the poet—the extremes of LMLA-ink’s public persona that they had already begun to portray successfully to those around them—sat a personable character, in whose company after a decent amount of time helped to convince people the group had standards. Le Mac felt confident enough to speak his mind even among the company they kept in order to achieve the notoriety desired to affect the long-term change even he was not aware he would help to implement.

Le Mac’s spin on the story differs slightly from Afamasaga’s, and naturally so, his having grown up on the streets of South LA watching the evolvement of Africans from American slaves to tormentors whom capitalism had already dealt with and which had anticipated their imminent outrage by cordoning them off in areas like Compton. However, the character in the *Books* was still a white kid.

When Le Mac sits down opposite father and daughter, he immediately wipes the slate clean by smiling at both of them and carrying on the conversation he has had with Missy’s father. “So, where’s the stuff?” His eagerness is earnest, and it energizes Missy’s dad. “Come on, Alfario!” He looks down at his daughter; the awkwardness of the moment is gone as he asks, “Hey, babe, I have something to show Mr. Le Mac; do you mind if I pop upstairs to grab it?” Missy shakes her head as she stares at a spot on the table. Alfario pushes himself out of the café seat and to his feet. He leaves Missy at the table with Jon Le Mac.

Missy has a quiet way about her. Looking at her, it would seem if a person didn’t have an occupation to remunerate him on a set day of the week, from an employer whose business and address can be found in the Whitepages, Missy will not speak a word to him. Or it could be that in her life, her dad is the only person she knows who works for someone, and he is also the only person who can make the girl talk. Le Mac looks at the plate of pancakes Simon places down on the table as he figures out something to say. “Do you know where the Maple syrup comes from?” He pauses as he thinks, and then he continues, “Can I call you...?” She helps him out, “You can call me Ms. Evon, Mr. Le Mac.”

The words are loud enough to make Lazoo and Afamasaga turn their heads in Missy’s direction. Le Mac feels he has accomplished something, and he is careful not to burst the ballooning bubble, “Simon would you please inform Ms. Evon where the liquid delight emanates from.” Missy has her finger in the air. “Mr. Le Mac, it’s a substance, not a

vapor or feeling, and it's harvested and does not come freely." Le Mac's smile becomes a look of satisfaction as the girl looks at the plate of food that sits in front of her. The shadow that moves about on top of the steaming stack of pancakes is Lazoo's. Missy's voice has caught his attention, a mean feat taking into account the importance of the work in which he and Afamasaga are absorbed. He looks at the child until she guesses someone is staring. "Did anyone ever tell you, John, that it is rude to stare?" There's silence. Simon wipes his fingers on his apron and retreats to where he can be seen and not heard. When the door leading to the foyer opens, Alfario steps into the dense atmos. Lazoo looks at the seat next to Alfario's daughter as Missy looks there too before she looks at the person who had riled her mother, making her curse, something Missy had never witnessed her mother do before. Lazoo looks over his shoulder at her father, a philanderer who stands holding pieces of paper with dog-ears. He asks Missy, "What does the Maple tree mean to you, Missy?" Alfario squares his shoulders and then coughs to let his daughter know he is back. She picks up her utensils and studies where she will make an incision in the food; as she is about to poke her fork into it, her dad walks to the table and sits down. He places his papers on the table and tries to flatten their curled up ends with his hand as he begins to talk. "Okay then." Lazoo interrupts him. "Alfario, your daughter was about to explain an important concept to me." He pretends he doesn't hear Lazoo as he looks at Le Mac, who sits back with hands up on the back of the seat. "I thought we'd take a look at the story from a roving reporter's perspective." Lazoo's look is one of bewilderment. He looks over at the Pacifican, who looks out the window as Alfario continues, "Like Jimmy Olsen without Superman. Like Jimmy catches wind of this marvelous heartwarming tale and goes to Wisconsin and does this feature story on all of the characters in Little Lazoo's life." Alfario pauses to put the food his daughter has cut for him onto his plate. As he uses his knife to slide the food from her plate to his, Missy says, "When the wind is weak from all the blowing, it comes to this tree to sleep and snore sweet." Lazoo looks at Afamasaga, who now looks at the salt and pepper shakers in front of him. Alfario freezes; his jaw is clenched as he looks at the food he was about to enjoy; he closes his eyes as his daughter wipes her hands on a napkin and gets up from beside him to walk over to the table by the window. On her way, she says to Lazoo, "In the *POEMBOOK* in 'The wind's words and a flower Part 1,' the poet substitutes the Maple for a Willow. In the *STORYBOOK* it is definitely a Maple Tree outside Flower's window..."

## CHAPTER 2

### PRELUDE

Slime from some sort of Gastropoda having slid up the wide leaf seems to glaze everything according to the young woman in the final stages of her pregnancy, as she brushes her equally greasy forehead with the back of her hand. She is angry as opposed to being frightened when she turns her hand and sees a spider covering her palm; it must've dropped from the Malaysian jungle canopy. She throws the ugly insect into the air and uses her machete to slice the hairy thing in two...

Seven years later. Smoke is rising into the sky and coast guard boats race to where the smoke emanates. The sinking vessel is snapped in two, and debris drifts on the currents of the waters off the coast of America. Closer to shore is a wake, a small one. Making that wake is a boy who calmly applies a stroke he has developed since the boat aboard which he came to America exploded when an Irishman, one of the pirates, turned around to confirm where he was aiming the bazooka the pirates were using to dynamite fish.

### PART 1

#### Hariss Clariss

Simon stands behind the counter; his smile and his red hair are all the introduction and reason one needs to escape New York at the thought of the imminent winter that comes right after the orangey autumn Missy feels ho-hum about. As the Linda Ronstadt classic "Blue Bayou" begins to warm the place, the young girl reminds herself she is privileged to be there. She feels the depth of the bass notes, relative to each other. Their roundness warms her like the gasoline heaters she looks at while she pulls her father's arm closer and clings to it.

Seated at the window table are Afamasaga, next to the window, and Lazoo who faces them. Missy sees her reflection in the window and in the mirror across the back wall that she, her dad and Mr. Clarenta sit facing.

Missy listens as Mr. Clarenta tells of his coming to America. His sparkling blue eyes dart about the faces of his captive audience, and predictably, they end up looking at John Lazoo, who feels uncomfortable about the parallels that the wealthy man, who made his name and fortune in New York Real Estate, draws to the fore about their lives.

He lifts his right hand, unashamedly laden with jewels, and then he points all of his fingers somewhere down at the table, where his cigar burns in the ashtray, to illustrate the efficiency of the swimming stroke he was forced to learn when he was hurled sky high from the exploding ship, which carried weapons from Thailand bound for Cuba.

Headlights from a vehicle shine into the girl's eyes, making her squint and making Lazoo look outside at the Yellow cab, out of which Jon Le Mac and Metofeaz emerge.

Jon Le Mac opens the door to SIL HOUSE café, interrupting the story being told.

One of only a few black skinned characters in this story steps into the room; the surrounding tables are filled with med students, graduates and posers claiming to be artists. Le Mac walks to the counter as Metofeaz checks out the room and its inhabitants for the evening. From the window table a remark is made, "I've never heard of a servant who dines at his master's table."

John Reyer only speaks when he has to. And it's always a chore for the islander a colored from a small island somewhere in the Pacific. He looks at Lazoo next to him and then at their guest sitting opposite them. "I'm sorry, Mr. Clarenta, but I'm going to have to ask you to leave." His smile undermines his seriousness as he calls out to Le Mac, "Come; escort Mr. Clarenta to his vehicle." There is silence as the debonair man studies the guy dressed smartly who just ordered him to leave the meeting they had arranged to discuss a sizable investment in what he termed the "The New American Dream." The guy with a foreign accent says, as if reminding someone he already knows well, "The new dream is in technicolor, Mr Clarenta; it seems you still have a black and white set." Mr. Clarenta takes his time to regain some composure; eventually, he smiles at Lazoo and then Afamasaga. Then he looks at Missy and Alfario as he takes his cigar from the ashtray to suck deeply on it; he looks at the expensive item as he says, "Those who pay dearly for what they have adopt the ways of those who make them pay." Jon Le Mac is standing at the end of the table; he fans the thick smoke from his face as he gestures to the man to get up. He doesn't move; instead, he calls out, "Mr. Campbell, how much do you want for this shit hole?" As he speaks, his eyes focus on Lazoo. As Lazoo slides out of his seat to stand next to Le Mac, Le Mac grabs the big shot by the arm and pulls him to his feet. Lazoo pushes the big man forward causing him almost to trip; as he regains his footing, he says, "I like you; that's why I'll buy this place; so we can hang out together."

Missy watches Lazoo and Le Mac within reach, but on the other side of the glass as three figures jump from a Limousine. One guy whose arms are covered in tattoos runs up to where Mr. Clarenta is being manhandled; Lazoo holds Clarenta's arm in his left, and with his right hand on his blind side, he lets fly with a no look jab to the throat, which puts the one called "Haze" flat on his back. Le Mac looks at the ground as the tall figure of Tait Stevenson, the ex-crooked cop, comes close and with his left hand Le Mac grabs the scum by the neck tie and introduces him to the footpath face first. The one called Jimmy Afra has his hands up in the air as Mr. Clarenta looks at his boys on the ground.

Missy puts her legs up on the seat as Alfario puts his arm around his daughter. She watches the way Afamasaga's face is expressionless. His only reaction to the scene outside the window is when he names them, "Clowns." He looks around the café for someone; when he spots Simon, he waves him to come over as Metofeaz slides into the seat next to Alfario.

Whether or not they were aware of the drives they were feeding, the men of LMLA-ink, as a collective, have just initiated a sadomasochistic relationship with a twisted masochist, who has money, power and an undying lust for John Lazoo, which in the end will swing this story around in unimaginable directions...

The next day, Harry Clarenta walks into SIL HOUSE café and signs the papers, making him the new owner of the place where the possible fugitive back west lived and ran his business. Never mind if any truth exists in the rumor that the former rent boy who swam to America had already bought the contract for the hit on LMLA-ink's boss from Marsellus Wallace.

Outside SIL HOUSE, Missy peers through the glass window under her hand shielding light as she waits for her dad who hails them a cab to leave a scene which could turn ugly. She sees Afamasaga, who looks solemn as usual; next to him are Lazoo and then Le Mac. Alfario tugs at her arm, "Missy, stop staring." Seated across from LMLA is Mr. Clarenta. In front of him on the table is a 9mm Semi Automatic Handgun. At the next table are Mr. Clarenta's thugs. Missy sees a smile on Mr. Clarenta's face as he points at the weapon on the table.

Inside, Simon makes coffees using his new coffee machine. "Wow, I've wanted one of these babies for a while," he says. Metofeaz leans on the counter watching him with one eye in the mirror to observe the goings on at the table under the arched logo, where the new landlord and owner of the joint negotiate terms with his tenants.

Today, Clarenta wears a fur heightening his standing in the clown stakes in the eyes of Afamasaga and Lazoo. Le Mac comments on his silver rimmed Elvis Presley sunglasses. "They're fly, Harry; here, let me try them on for size, ah?" He takes the glasses off and hands them over to Le Mac who puts them on and then looks at Lazoo before he pokes his tongue at Missy, peering through the window, making the girl giggle. As he pulls faces at Missy, he tells the new landlord, "Four rooms for free; you invest 500k and drop the grudge, and no guns on site as you requested." Clarenta looks Lazoo in the eye as Afamasaga reaches into his jacket, pulls out a 40 caliber Glock, and places it next to the 9mm. Alfario looks through the window; he looks at Afamasaga and then turns his daughter around and walks toward the curb hailing a cab. Lazoo reaches into his cowboy boot and produces a revolver; the man opposite him shows his approval by nodding his head. Clarenta looks at the next table; the bruised faces and busted bones of his men look more agonizing as they too place their weapons on the table. Le Mac calls out to Metofeaz, "Feeaz, round this shit up." Metofeaz holds a hand out to Simon, who passes him a bag. Once he is done collecting the metal, he immediately leaves the café for the pawn shop.

Le Mac waves to Missy, who returns the wave from the cab, which leaves from the front of SIL HOUSE. Mr. Clarenta notices Le Mac's left leg, which is extended out the side of the table. Le Mac looks to where Clarenta and his three thugs at the next table look. He hits the side of his leg twice to confirm there's a reason why his leg is straightened. Le Mac smiles as he takes off the glasses and hands them back to their owner, who looks at his crew; by the looks on their faces, they let him know they are powerless. Clarenta re-runs the events in his head and discovers the moment he and his useless team of meatheads were conned. He looks at Afamasaga and realizes the character's influence and nods his head at how his relinquishing his piece caused a domino effect, which now leaves him at the mercy of his new tenants.

Harry Clarenta looks at Afamasaga who stares him in the eye, and then he looks to Lazoo. Le Mac's voice is in the background as the Pacifican leans forward, smiles at him, and says "Look, we like those who like us. We know our place; you're now our financier. The shot gun story never needs to be told around the campfire. I even have a name for you." The sound of the words is hypnotizing; Clarenta's pupils dilate, and he has to shake his head to make himself believe how he has been truly fucked by the same person twice in twenty-four hours.

In the days that followed, the relationship between the tenants and their landlord—which almost never happened due to LMLA-ink announcing they were leaving SIL HOUSE when Clarenta took ownership—began to flourish. Each morning at 10 a.m., breakfast was served in the form of a briefcase in the middle of the table. Inside the briefcase—\$100,000.00 in twenty dollar bills that Afamasaga would count and fill a pillowcase with; then he'd hand it to Le Mac who'd disappear with the cash.

In return for his money, Clarenta was now a producer, renamed as, "Hariss Clariss the Camp King. Executive Producer of 'The New American Dream'..." Le Mac told him, "Lazoo comes to New York, an orphan, illiterate, lost, and you give him his shot at the 'Dream'." Clariss only had to look across the table at the star of his new production to believe this was his most worthwhile investment. Lazoo meanwhile felt he was up to the task. He had seen how Afamasaga and Le Mac had engaged the wealthy client without having had a finger laid on them, so he smiled at Clariss, and once in a while he would even let his hand linger on the table when the hefty character would conveniently flop his paw on it.

It was a while since Missy had been back to SIL HOUSE. Lazoo, Metofeaz, Le Mac and Afamasaga all had grown beards. Gaiety had set in, and the power bestowed by LMLA on Clariss afforded him the right to orchestrate his version of the story. The three months they were in was in remembrance of when Metofeaz Litigatti, the writer of the story, was homeless in Central Park, where the kind-hearted millionaire brought him food each day and would read to him from the *STORYBOOK*. This meant the whole crew, including extras made up of other tenants, would go for picnics to the Park where Clariss would act out his part, requesting that Lazoo be Metofeaz's stand in, which was not a problem since Metofeaz was never around as he was too busy writing the story.

Alfario too had a beard, and with Le Mac, was writing their version of the events. Afamasaga and Lazoo were in constant discussion about the stories and poems when Lazoo was not play acting or working his new job as an interior designer for SIL HOUSE, which was undergoing a transformation. Harry Clarenta had started as a talented interior designer and wanted to pass on all his knowledge to the young man to whom he wanted to be close.

It was obvious Clariss did not like children. Whenever Missy showed up, he'd either leave or begin to tell horrid stories of things that happened to him as a child.

Missy's head is down as her hand moves across the page. "Alfario..." The name stuck. A young nurse is passing the table where he and his daughter sit opposite each other, both in the midst of their stories. Missy can see the nurse as she asks, "Must be the new book,

Alfario?” Missy can now see how he squirms and gives signals that say, “Now’s not a good time.” In the background, the young author can hear Clariss elaborate on how he was born under a cloud of terror, created by guerilla soldiers who took his tourist mother hostage. Missy looks up at her dad who shrugs his shoulders; then she keeps writing as Le Mac places a hand over his mouth and Afamasaga shakes his head while looking out the window; Lazoo covers his face with a cup of coffee.

As Hariss Clariss leaves for his mansion somewhere in Manhattan, he reminds them of his connections. “I know publishers and Broadway producers; make me memorable, and I’ll make us immorally immortal.” Le Mac says, “You’ll be remembered, Clariss.” And as Clariss waves to them from outside while entering his limo, Alfario adds in his English accent, “Yeah, like chewing gum stuck to the seat my pants.” Simon brings them lunch as Metofeaz Litigatti strolls by the window; he looks in at everyone and then smiles at his reflection in the mirror as he plays with his beard. He lights a cigarette and smokes it as he watches people passing and glances over his shoulder at them every once in while.

All of us have a story. Some people choose to tell their stories every step of the way while some people choose to forget the stories of the unfulfilled lives they live out. But a few of us are fortunate enough to have the opportunity and the gift to provide the world a story by which we live our lives.

Le Mac chews his food before he reads out loud what Alfario has written. He reads for everyone at his and the surrounding tables the latest edition.

Afamasaga has Missy’s pad in his hand; he reads to himself what she has written. Missy watches the look on his face, which does not change save for the eyes smiling before returning to their calm look.

Lazoo is more interested in Afamasaga’s response to the girl’s work than her dad’s, which is an account of the day’s events and the coming days in the story of the illiterate orphan who was locked up till he was a man, who came to NYC, and made a name as a Broadway Director.

John Reyer Afamasaga places the pad down on the table; he takes his cup of tea and holds it up to Missy. Le Mac stops reading as Alfario looks at his daughter and then Lazoo. Alfario doesn’t look at Afamasaga as he does a looping motion with his hand for Le Mac to continue.

Le Mac reads on as the door opens and Metofeaz walks in.

Afamasaga holds out his hand to Missy for the pen she hands him. He jots down a few things: “MindMorph...Dimension...SenFenide Dimension...ENTITIES...Afanasy...”

He leans forward. Lazoo leans forward. Missy, feeling she is part of the group now, sits forward, placing her elbows on the table with her head close to the huddle.

After a few moments, Lazoo takes the pad and pen to draw three stick figures in a triangle formation. He connects each of their heads with a dashed line. Missy looks down



at the simplistic drawing and nods her head. Afamasaga takes the pen from Lazoo and writes in the middle of the triangle “F3QuenZor.”

Le Mac operates at a level that the Morons, Idiots, Clowns, Extras and Retards—“*MICERs*,” a name LMLA-ink has for all those who hang around doing and saying random and meaningless things within earshot or view of them—can relate to. But most importantly, doing things at this level kept the Biggest and Scariest Clown, Hariss Clariss, interested. By doing so, Jon Le Mac ensured that in the end there was a story to tell.

## PART 2

### Mr. & Mrs. X

Lazoo steps through the foyer of the plush hotel. The song in his head is loud. “I never met a girl like you before.” Afamasaga, Le Mac and Metofeaz exit the spinning doors; John Reyer looks at the sleeves of the Armani Suit and then his boots. Metofeaz smiles at him as the distorted guitar carries them away. “Now that’s a LeaderLoop, ah?” Le Mac lowers his sunglasses as a group of air hostesses enter the foyer with luggage. The music fills the marbled floor space where LMLA-ink step. “...You've made me acknowledge the devil in me...” The three of them bend their knees as Lazoo’s support crew passes by. “...I hope to God I'm talkin' metaphorically...” Metofeaz plays with his beard as he confirms, “Yeah!” Lazoo looks over the counter; in the monitors, he sees Litigatti, Le Mac and Afamasaga begin to climb the stairs as he says to the pretty girl who looks like someone’s sister, “The White Room, please.”

Once inside The White Room, the pristine room looks less sterile in the orange hue and the purple haze Lazoo sees through; Ali’s negligee waves in the evening breeze as he leans back with his arms on the sofa’s back. The Rolling Stones sing about the view from the window “...I’ve been walking in Central Park, singing after dark. People think I’m crazy...” Her figure is cosine’d by his angle of her; and then her hips sway this way and then that way as Mick Jagger and all of the Stones agree:

Oooh oooh oooh oooh oooh oooh oooh  
Oooh oooh oooh oooh oooh oooh oooh  
Oooh oooh oooh

The meager thing that disappears in between her perfect buttocks is also purple. Her feet, in high heels, shuffle; the purple painted toe nails shine as she shimmies. Her breasts behind the thin and see-through veil protrude, beginning with her erect nipple. Then, when Ali Lévon feels the need, she pulls down on her costume, almost ripping it, and making the material slingshot her bosom into full view, giving her instant gratification on their full exposure to the air and her audience of Lazoo and Mrs. X.

In the next room, the lights are bright and the air is clean. Mr. Business Man sits alone on the sofa. The man's briefcase is acutely parallel to his black lace-up shoes, and the neat crease of his grey suit trousers are perfectly aligned at an equal distance. Metofeaz Litigatti blows his smoke out the window as Afamasaga sits with his arms on the back of a chair turned around facing their client. Le Mac pours whiskey at the bar as the man in his fifties asks, “When can I see what’s happening?” Le Mac walks over with a glass and hands it to him. “You don’t really want to see what your beautiful loving wife is up to, do you?” Mr. Business Man’s nervous smile gets in the way of his nodding head, making him shake it as he has to say what he wants, “Yes, I mean I don’t want to, but I have to.” Le Mac turns his back on the flustered man and asks Afamasaga, “Do you think Mr. Business Man, or should I say ‘Mr. X,’ really wants to see what Mrs. X is doing in the next room?” Afamasaga shrugs his shoulders. Le Mac does a left turn to face Metofeaz as he requests, “Litigatti, verbalize a visual for our esteemed guest of the goings on in the next room, please.”

Afamasaga puts his arm out to move Le Mac to the side so he can see the man. Then he holds his hand in the air for Metofeaz to wait.

Mr. Business Man becomes even more nervous as he looks where the man seated opposite him looks—down at the briefcase.

Imagine a world without nervousness. There'd be no movement that was without purpose. A tic—each and everyone us of has some sort of habitual spasmodic motion, or an unconscious quirk of behavior or speech. Mr. Business Man's left eye begins to spasm, causing him to favour that side of his body. Afamasaga stretches his neck to the left as his eyes remain on the briefcase. He then clears his throat as Metofeaz smiles from the window, making Le Mac smirk; he has to look into his whiskey to straighten out his face. Mr. Business Man moves his right arm; he does it ever so slowly, bringing it out in front of him about shoulder high. In between his worsening twitch, he manages to let them know, "It's...my...medication...it's in my left pocket of the suit...don't worry...I wear my holster...on the right..."

Afamasaga stands up and walks over to the guy who is fighting to control his condition. Afamasaga hand clamps the convulsing man under his left armpit and grabs the shaking man's arm, which he pulls around so to free the contracting muscles; then he uses a leg to lift the ailing man's legs in the opposite direction and pushes them back onto the couch. Afamasaga then reaches into Mr. Business Man's jacket and unclips the man's weapon; he pulls it out and puts it into his own jacket. Then Afamasaga reaches into the man's other pocket to retrieve the medication. He pries the man's mouth open with his fingers and tells him, "Don't bite." As Afamasaga places his thumb down on the man's tongue, he says, "Nod how many." The patient nods three times as Afamasaga tosses Le Mac the container. Le Mac undoes the cap and spills twice the amount of pills required, which he then hands to John Reyer.

In a matter of minutes, the man on the couch falls into slumber.

Le Mac throws the bottle of medication to Metofeaz who holds out his hand. He catches it and studies the label.

Afamasaga watches over Mr. Business Man for a while before he returns to his chair.

An hour or so later...

Mr. Business Man lies on his side, looking at the floor, as Afamasaga closes the briefcase he has on the table.

Meanwhile, in the room next-door...

BOWIE, the Thin White Duke, proclaims FAME! "...it's not your brain; it's just the flame..." Lazoo takes the joint Ali hands him. He mouths the words "...Is it any wonder I reject you first?..." He inhales wasted smoke, rising from the cannabis cigarette, up his nostrils as the chameleon's voice backs the scale voicing value of an illness most suffer

from but only few contract, “Fame, fame, fame, fame...” Lazoo ignores her question again as a door closes, and Mrs. X appears in a bathrobe with a towel around her head. Ali pulls her legs up onto the sofa under her bathrobe as the woman’s voice cuts through the music. “Ali, the shower would’ve capped off a great night, you know.” Her eyes smile at the pair as she unravels her hair from the towel around her head. Lazoo still dressed, only his jacket removed, says, “Ali would like to know...if presented with the opportunity, how famous would you like to be?” As she steps into her heels, she bends over to do up the strap and then looks up at them. “Probably as famous as one would be having brought in a fish the size of Harry Clarenta.” She stands up and undoes her robe, letting it drop to the floor. Lazoo stands up to walk over to her. He walks around behind her; he lifts strands of her red hair from her neck and shoulder as he reaches for the phone, and then he says as he waits for the reply, “You will be infamous, Mrs. X.”

In the adjacent space where infamy is being created concurrently, Le Mac picks up the receiver as Mr. Business Man sits up from his fetal position. “Hey, the man has been waiting...” Mr. Business Man shakes his head, hoping to rid himself of his cloudy vision as Le Mac says into the mouthpiece, “Mr X. had a conniption at the thought of you making his wife whole again.” Afamasaga walks over to where the guy now sits back in the seat; he still stares at the floor, but something stirs within him as Le Mac continues, “You have her there?” Afamasaga hands Mr. Business Man a glass of water, which he only looks at. Afamasaga takes it from him and sips it himself. The guest reaches out for it after seeing Afamasaga drink it.

He hands Afamasaga the water after downing it in a gulp. Then he takes the phone Le Mac holds out for him. He coughs to clear his throat and then a smile comes across his face. “You have Mrs. X?”

Behind the wall that Mr. Business Man looks at with his head bowed, Lazoo looks the middle-aged woman up and down; meanwhile, she looks at Ali, who has let her robe fall so Mrs. X can find inspiration.

Lazoo says, “You really should come and get her, sir; she is extremely wet.”

As one door closes, another opens; Mr. & Mrs. X leave as the door to the adjoining apartment opens and Le Mac pokes his head into the room. Ali is dressed; her dress, a two-piece that reveals her midriff, she quickly covers with her coat as she is about to leave. Lazoo looks at the sound system; he selects a funk track LMLA’s members appreciate as they relax after a “Sequence” Le Mac mentions because he wants Ali to stay for a drink. “It was Sequential, baby; truly in order. Now it’s time to refresh.” She does up her coat and waves goodbye to Lazoo. “Nice working with you again; just don’t go lecturing me on motherhood and we’ll be fine.” Lazoo looks at her as he leans on the wall, presses play on the stereo, and says, “You should stay a while; we pay well even when you’re not playing.” Le Mac watches her face as her lips turn down to ponder the meaning of his words. As she turns her head, she smiles the smile for which he was waiting. As she undoes her coat and drops her arms, Le Mac lifts the collars of the garment from her shoulders. Metofeaz and then Afamasaga appear through the door.

They head over to where Lazoo stands; John Reyer looks at the bottle of Hennessy under his arm as he says to Metofeaz and then Lazoo, “This should warm us up after dealing those two cold fishes, ah?” Lazoo adds, as he rubs his hands, “The apartments are part of the deal. As long as we can get the Clown here, all is admissible.” Afamasaga looks at him as Metofeaz hands him a balloon for the cognac. “You do know the difference between rat bastard informants, bounty hunters, and a confidence man, don’t you?” The way Afamasaga says it in his honest accent silences the young guy. Lazoo watches the liquor fill the bottom of his glass; then he holds it up in front of his face as Afamasaga pours Metofeaz a glass. The writer watches the vessel fill, and as the pour thins, he says with his head bowed, “Why should we? The rats in the sewers drown themselves at the thought of us.” Afamasaga looks down at the floor as he says, “Sewer rats drown themselves at the thought of us?” Metofeaz throws back his drink like it was a shot. “Then the rats are detracted from the enormity of their habitat; another dimension—the sewer?” he asks as he uses the back of his hand to wipe his lips. Then he holds out his glass for more. Lazoo looks at both of them as he swirls the liquor in his glass and says, “Fucking blah-blah—fucking blah.” Afamasaga has a smile on his face as he pours Metofeaz another shot while Lazoo walks away. He says over his shoulder as he walks “Like a rat, he hugged sidewalks till he had amassed the miles of ten thousand street hookers.” Afamasaga watches the young guy sit down where Le Mac and Ali are deep in conversation. Metofeaz throws back another one as Le Mac comes over to join them, leaving Lazoo to entertain Ali. Metofeaz picks up another balloon and lobs it in the air for Le Mac to catch; his smile is from how smooth the Action Sequence played out tonight. “Doesn’t even need to be touched like in the book ‘Unproofed and uncut by the knife in the hands of an editor.’”

To Le Mac, life is a movie; every interaction is a scene or “Sequence.” For Metofeaz, it’s a music video clip; every engagement is within a frame. For Afamasaga, it’s a story, and for Lazoo it’s a poem, thus far in his newfound life.

LMLA-ink—a pseudo-incorporated business. The name was a move by Afamasaga and Le Mac that ensured no contract could bind them to any deal, but on hearing the company name, one would assume they were an entity to be reckoned with—not that they dealt with people who requested signed documents. Plus the “ink” on the end was in keeping with the Artist-Storyteller theme they wanted people to think of them as.

The three senior partners of the creative co-op discuss the events of the evening and their ramifications on creative and strategic business direction moving forward.

“He’s willful,” Le Mac says of the guy he watches engaging Ali. “Huge call, dragging the company into a criminal investigation,” Metofeaz says as he takes the bottle from Afamasaga. “Lazoo’s on his own,” Afamasaga lets them know, and then he adds, “A good thing, going by tonight’s performance. He didn’t need us. He’s neat; his move was definitive, like an exclamation mark. Right from the start in Miami, he could see the big picture.” Le Mac looks at both of them, “He even offered his co-star a job.” Afamasaga’s reply is his standard one, “You bring in that sort of money like he did on his own tonight, and you can fucking hire me as your driver.” As he takes the bottle from Metofeaz, he advises Le Mac, “Speaking of which, you’ve got to get in with Clariss.” He goes to tip the bottle but finds it to be empty; he looks at the bottle and then smiles at Metofeaz.

“And you, you fuck, reach out to the powers that be; get the okay for Lazoo to do the job.”

The inexpensive ads yielded many responses and replies from a diverse cross-section of the community. Each candidate was treated with the utmost respect. Afamasaga made sure each phony, before he or she crumbled under investigation, was given the opportunity to become the character he or she dreamt of being. He spent in total six months talking with Mr. & Mrs. X. He met often with Mr. Business Man face to face, and with Mrs. X over the phone. At first, he swore they were just your average middle-aged swingers looking for a twist to their spicy kink-filled world. Mr. Business Man’s job as an insurance investigator, which took him overseas to the many places stamped on his passport, made it believable he could be some sort of agent, but for which government agency? LMLA-ink didn’t really care; it was sellable. What sealed their relationship was Afamasaga’s ability simply to tell Mr. Business Man what he wanted to hear. And it wasn’t your run of the mill stuff you read in the “Reader’s Wives” section of a stick magazine. Mr. Business Man even started turning up for their meetings dressed in the grey suit armed with the briefcase Afamasaga talked about. Up until tonight, all of their expenses and standard fee of \$5,000.00 per scenario was easy work and a side gig to the “New American Dream,” which Mrs. X genuinely seemed interested in. Whether or not Mrs. X’s offer was real, the huge sum of money from company Mr. & Mrs. X was.

Le Mac makes a call as Metofeaz and Afamasaga open a new bottle.

Afamasaga looks at the writer, “You can still be the one.” Metofeaz fumbles with the cork, which takes all of his powers to extricate before he says, “I am the one; can’t go past the boy’s performance tonight though, can we?” Afamasaga watches him free the aromatic enchantment from the bottle; Metofeaz closes his eyes to smell as he gives his thought on the matter. “The story’s about self-realization; when the Poet Soldier realizes his mistakes, he entrusted us to right the wrongs and write the outcome.” Afamasaga holds out his glass. “It’s beyond that; self-actualization is the present phase. All the awareness in the fucking world will not bring about change.” Metofeaz holds up his glass in one hand and holds the bottle out in his other hand; he is obviously intoxicated, but he is still coherent. “I salute you, TRUFUNKSOLDIER, or should I hold up my glass and toast you?”

Le Mac watches the two carry on as he dials Harry Clarenta’s number. He admires Afamasaga’s capacity to cater for the needs of each individual in the crew. His call is answered, “Clariss, here.” The tone is superb; Le Mac waves to the two closest to him to be quiet. “Clariss, can I call you that?” The answer is obviously favorable as Le Mac continues. “Clariss, things are a bit tight right now; the money you invested, most of it went on gambling debts. I was thinking I might be useful to you, driving the limousine and looking after differences between you and debtors, you know? General stuff.” Le Mac listens to Clarris’ favorable reply as he watches Ali respond to the charms of Lazoo; a talent he Metofeaz and Afamasaga have unearthed.

Lazoo looks around at his surroundings as he presses his foot down on the shag pile carpet. Through the leather sole of his Italian made boot, he feels the fabric’s soft resistance to his foot’s force. He grabs the back of the sofa; he squeezes the cushion until

he feels his fingers hurt the palm of his hand. He looks at the woman who sits next to him; she turns to face him. She covers the inside of her upper thigh with her hand, making him almost euphoric at the sight of her hand touching her olive skin. Lazoo already knows the words to the Mary J. Blige song, "I'm in Love." He looks at Le Mac talking on the phone; he lip-reads the name, "Clariss." Then he looks at Afamasaga and Metofeaz, and then back at Ali as the chorus comes around, "...I'm in love with you; I'm in love with you..." She smiles at him as she asks, "So, is it all true? You and the sorry story?" Her soft tone is like caramel melting over her lips, which move to ask him an honest question. He flashes his smile, which he offers in times of need, and nullifies her approach with a question of his own, "So, who's the one who holds the interest of a woman so unobtainable?" He looks at Afamasaga; she looks at him and shakes her head, "That guy's much too focused to see life." He takes the bottle of champagne from the cooler and tops her glass and then his as he prods further, "Metofeaz?" She looks down at her champagne as she answers, "Feeaz is like your favorite bad food; every now and again I get weak, and afterwards, I regret it." She looks at Le Mac, who notices her midway through his conversation. "My mother would love Le Mac, and he would love me." Lazoo looks at the man she feels emotional about as he holds the phone out for him to take. Lazoo turns himself to face forward; he places his hands on his legs and turns his head to look at Ali whose head is still bowed looking at her champagne. Le Mac walks toward them as Lazoo stands up. As Le Mac nears, Lazoo looks down at her.

Lazoo's smile fades as he nears the phone. Afamasaga looks at him as Lazoo clears his throat and stretches his neck left and then right. Lazoo looks at Metofeaz and holds out the phone, making Metofeaz smile sarcastically, and in a southern drawl, taunt him, "You do it, Jimmy James; make the money man want to donate to the Wisconsin foundation for the orphaned, illiterate, imprisoned, and impoverished." Lazoo covers the mouthpiece with his hand as he looks at the ground and then Afamasaga again, who whispers, "Don't mind, Litigatti; he's fucking pissed, and so am I. Just say, "Thy will be done, in the lavatory." Lazoo holds the phone to his stomach as he bows his head, trying hard not to laugh; he looks away from John Reyer and down at his cowboy boots, firmly planted on the soft shag pile carpet. He coughs out loud as he puts the phone to his ear.

When he hears the voice, he zones out like he would when the inmates, the juveniles, and the guards would come near him, or when he could hear the noises and voices they forcibly evoked through their random behaviour.

## PART 3

### PRELUDE

A flax basket rocks; then it cries. It floats on a lip upon the careful currents of a Venice street, which safely carry the smiling baby.

A young fellow of Gentry class bends his knees at the water's edge to reach out to the baby. The baby smiles as the kind lad reaches down and lifts him from the cocoon.

Years later...

The fiber of two materials join as a young boy waits patiently. A hand-bound leather books sit on top of the wooden table.

The Parisian musicians who finish their work for the night take their wages and bottles from the bar and then gather around the table where the Poet Soldier, an intriguing character, and his son, Metofeaz, are about to entertain them with their story.

*...Lilies, lilac, and lavender grow lovely and wild around her ankles, knees, and thighs as her feet walk her body across another field, finding new feelings and forwarding them onto what she now believes to be nowhere. Still, she ponders areas she may have lacked in providing comforting and conversation. Only she and the flowers are treated to what lies uncovered beneath her sheer white cotton dress. The sun is perfect in its role, vitalizing and shining, and when it is hot enough to melt the thought of him, a cloud comes over the scene to shadow the brightness with bits of doubt...*

From eBook: *Illicit Blade of Grass*

### **Metofeaz Litigatti**

Today, everyone has turned out for the picnic. Metofeaz sits under the tree he used to sleep under. Lazoo stands next to him, bearded and bare-chested, listening to a story from the *STORYBOOK*, as he tightens his singlet around his head. Le Mac sits cross-legged across from Ali, who hands him a sandwich.

In the background, Afamasaga talks to a grey-haired man dressed in an expensive looking dark-colored suit. In the foreground, Hariss Clariss sits in his beach chair; around him on the ground are a group of young men applying lotion to each other. Alfario walks over to Le Mac and sits down; they touch fists. Ali hands him a sandwich too.

Missy gets carried away by the story of Rozelle Zofen and wildflowers. Sitting away from the group allows her to watch them while not being affected by their presence, or the "atmos." She has notes next to each of their names, except for when it comes to Metofeaz Litigatti. The many names, places, and occupations alone fill lines.

Metofeaz met her mother back in the day when Ali was a croupier in Vegas; when he worked the floors of the casinos for small money. Metofeaz has a knack for being in the right place at the right time. On the right day, his swinging moods can work wonders for



him, showing his different sides to as many people, all of them thinking he is someone with whom they have a connection.

He was spotted by a television commercial director as a youngster on a news item about Graffiti artists—not that he was a bomber, but he appeared in a handful of adverts posing as one. He lived off this for years.

Metofeaz is a poet. His words, crudely sprayed across brick walls when he was disillusioned and without money, are mumbled by the homeless as they stumble about the alleyways.

Of late the “Mogul,” a music producer, an applicant to the “New American Dream,” commissioned the tattooing of Litigatti’s work on three of his girlfriends, and since then, a number of other music videos have seen his lines on bodies of models.

Some months earlier...

Jon Le Mac crouches down to see whether the person under the heap of dirty blankets is the one for whom they are searching. Afamasaga lowers his sunglasses to let him know, “It’s him; let him sleep.” Le Mac stands up; he pushes his sunglasses back; his shiny long black leather coat contrasts the dirty brown heap he looks down on. Afamasaga’s black leather jacket is zipped to his neck; he undoes it to produce a bottle of liquor. Le Mac notices someone in the distance—a white guy with a knapsack who has been skirting the parameter of the area they can see. The guy now stands still watching them under the tree where they stand over Metofeaz Litigatti, who sleeps soundly on a winter’s day.

Half an hour later, the guy returns. This time the knapsack is gone, but he has a brown paper bag in his hand. Le Mac mentions to Afamasaga, “Must be some fucking weirdo.” Afamasaga uncorks the bottle and crouches down to place it against the tree. The white guy begins to walk toward them slowly. No sooner has Afamasaga stood back up than the body on the ground moves.

The guy comes closer; he’s a fresh-faced kid you’d believe was born into a wealthy family from his preppy attire and perfect smile. He holds his hands up as he shakes the bag in his left hand—a sign he’s experienced the likes of Le Mac and Afamasaga before. “It’s food for the homeless guy.”

The blankets are flung back, and as if he were waiting for them, Metofeaz sits up. The sleep in his eyes says he wasn’t waiting; he’s just that excitable. Afamasaga looks around for the bottle that he can’t see. Metofeaz sits up against the tree with his arms folded; he unfolds them to let Afamasaga know he has the bottle.

“Like 2Pac says, ‘It’s just me against the world, baby,’” Metofeaz says, and then he looks at the bottle in his hand before he takes a decent swig from it. “Ahh!” he wipes his lips as Le Mac shovels the wet blankets to the side with his sneaker. When the blue synthetic ground sheet is uncovered, Le Mac takes a seat next to the man they have managed to track down to this tree. Afamasaga holds his hand out, and Metofeaz shakes it. “Good to see you, mate,” Metofeaz says mimicking his accent. The young guy nears them; he is

cautious as he stands back looking away from the three friends at something in the distance. Afamasaga takes a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and lights one, from which he takes a puff; then Metofeaz takes it from his mouth. Afamasaga blows the smoke as he advises Metofeaz, “Transmutation is again stalled by everyday responsibilities.” Metofeaz takes a deep puff on the cigarette; he then blows his smoke up in the air and replies, “Hey, now you see why I live in isolation.” Afamasaga begins to laugh, “It depends on whether you see walking away from the mainstream as your input to the cause, Metofeaz.” The young guy has a look on his face; he places the paper bag on the ground and politely says, “Here’s some sandwiches, Metofeaz; I’ll catch you later in the day, ah?” Then he walks away. Le Mac asks, “Who’s the faggot?” Metofeaz replies, “That’s Lazoo.” Afamasaga nods his head as he watches the young guy leave. Le Mac smirks, “Rolling around in your urine, Litigatti, has affected you in the most serious way.” Metofeaz shouts out to the guy, “Bring the *STORYBOOK* tomorrow, and I’ll read it to you.” The guy turns around as he keeps walking, “Deal!”

Today, Missy stalls over the crucial and pivotal point of the books—the *POEMBOOK* and the *STORYBOOK*, their relevance and their “spell.”

Lazoo is well versed in the content of both books; he recites a poem; then he relays the story with the poise and passion of a seasoned narrator. Hariss Clariss claps loudest as the rest of the gathering are spellbound by Lazoo’s story and choose to cherish the moment.

Missy recalls Afamasaga’s explanation, “One voice, coherent, can bind them. When we hear that voice, we’ll know a New Global Realm is possible. There are twenty points to the new paradigm. The cornerstones are within each individual...” No one questions John Reyer, maybe because of his reputation, or maybe because he created them—in the sense that if you take away their fictitious names, they’re just Harry, Alfred, or James, looking in on his story.

Metofeaz—reared by the Poet Soldier, one time holder of the works, who either wrote or added to the books—believed that the “Voice” could be a collaboration of entities, or a whole with equal parts attributing to the sound of its message. Litigatti wrote tirelessly in the hope the stories—all of them about human development and growth—would one day come true once the “Voice” was found. Although viewed as whimsical, egocentric and a narcissist, the passionate writer elaborated on the stories, realizing the many possibilities that lay in between the covers of the hand-bound leather books.

## CHAPTER 3

### PART 1

#### Gene Reyer

“It’s not what you know; it’s who you know.”

Le Mac, the dependable one, is also personable. A well-rounded character scales the classes with his charisma he had caught from preachers he listened to and watched in church growing up. LMLA-ink’s front man for now does a loop in the air with his hand, signaling to the leggy waitress to bring a fresh round of drinks for him and his crew.

The New American Dream had caught on, and as it gathered momentum, it gained LMLA-ink entry to another exclusive hangout for the wealthy, rich and the famous—International, Inc.

On stage, the Mogul and Sting, the Exclusive Superstar, exclaim in a sad and ghetto way Ali’s reality. “...Roxanne, you don’t have to wear that dress tonight, walk the streets for money...” Ali pulls Le Mac’s hand as she begins to walk to the floor. Le Mac pulls her close to him. He tells her, “Gene, here, would like this dance, baby.” Ali looks at him, and then at the lawyer—a player distinguished by his good looks, grey hair and expensive suits. She tosses her hair back to do away with her disappointment at Le Mac’s suggestion.

Lazoo, Metofeaz and Afamasaga talk at the bar as Le Mac and Alfario watch Ali disappear into the crowd.

Le Mac and Alfario, who was desperate to get in, work the front of house.

Alfario grew up in the Hamptons, so he mixes in well with most of the successful applicants Afamasaga has accepted. He even applied himself, but was told, “Your passive-aggressive way obstructs you from change, and it stifles the growth of those around you.” To add insult to injury, Lazoo the illiterate gave him LMLA-ink’s assessment of his inability to grow within an “Evolving Concept.”

Le Mac feels for Alfario and his broken home—Ali on the dance floor and Missy. He also reminds Le Mac of his younger brother who had died at a young age.

In the boiler room, Afamasaga works on piecing together profiles of the successful applicants, favoring the bad side of the dreamer. This is no mean feat at all, since one of the requisites was a “past.” Most were more than generous in what they divulged and what they were willing to invest in their dream.

More lawyers than any other profession applied to take part. And Afamasaga tried a few of them. One of them even made the *New York Times*, in a cleverly disguised advert by Hariss Clariss’ Real Estate marketing department—a picture of Lazoo and some lifeless

money bag posing as the real deal leaving court. The headline read, “Chairman receives suspended sentence.”

As they file down the narrow staircase to the Dungeon Red Room, a figure makes his way up the stairs. He passes Afamasaga, Metofeaz and Lazoo, who all stand aside to let him pass. Ali smiles at him, making him flash a smile. The person behind Ali stops as the Assistant District Attorney of New York City says to him, “Gene, I’ve never seen you in better company.” As he speaks, he looks down the stairs at Ali who, not sure what to do, waves. The defense lawyer looks at Jack Shack, and then down at his hand he holds out. Le Mac, standing further up the stairs looks at the ground as Jack Shack’s smile fades as Gene Reyer finally shakes his hand. The music from upstairs plays through the tense scene. Le Mac looks down to where he wants to go; in his way are real players he had not considered in his script. Jack Shack passes him; the look he gives is what Jon Le Mac expected.

When Ali and Gene Reyer, the real life character whom LMLA-ink calls the “Argumentor,” enter the room, they find the rest of them are seated, trying to look like they belong. Le Mac snaps his fingers all over the place as he loosens up, in an attempt to relax the team. When a waitress appears, he orders champagne. Gene Reyer, the notorious defense lawyer, a genuine big shot, who was at best a long shot even with Clariss’ clout, was here in the room with them, just after having bumped into his friend, Assistant DA Jack Shack. Gene has his back faced to Afamasaga as he whispers in Ali’s ear; he then looks up at Le Mac standing in the middle of the room with red walls lined with dark leather couches and asks, “Where’s the bubbly?”

LMLA-ink knew Ali Lévon. Gene Reyer knew the Assistant District Attorney of New York City.

## PART 2

### Motives

Means, motive, and opportunity.

Jon Le Mac and John Reyer Afamasaga had by now achieved the means to implicate or credit a host of names in whatever it was they were planning. Their intentions of turning the “New American Dream” into a book, a play, and ultimately a film, was still a fair way off. But at least they now had an ensemble cast of characters who would make for an interesting cover—an illiterate stage director, a high-class hooker, a famous defense lawyer, the assistant DA, and a gay wealthy businessman with underworld connections.

Ali smiles at the Assistant District Attorney, one of the distinguished guests she will dance with tonight, during the gala opening of the “COMPOUND.” Inside of the heart of the monstrosity is the “AUDITORIUM.” The walls are six curved screens, each one three times the size of a normal cinema screen. Three of them have pictures and footage of Lazoo; the other three relay live pictures of the game. On the fourth screen, Lazoo smiles at himself in the mirror as he looks at the door. The door opens slowly. Lazoo turns around, his jacket on the back of the seat facing the mirror; he unhooks it and walks toward the camera. Within a second, the jacket is hung on some hook, which blocks the view of his dressing room. “Booo...” comes from the crowd as Le Mac switches on the spotlight; beneath it is the host for the evening, Gene Reyer.

The kick drum is a thud in one’s center, or a woman’s deepest and most resonate place. The bass is synthetic and hypnotic. Three of the screens retract slowly back into the ceiling to reveal two levels. The first level balcony has Hariss Clariss seated in the middle. He acknowledges the thousand plus crowd on the floor of the Auditorium, and the Master of Ceremonies, Gene Reyer, on stage in front of the three screens of Lazoo. Above Clariss are young men, some dressed, others barely. The Camp King smiles at the image of himself that now appears on screen one. Then a glazed look comes over his face from a close up shot on screen three of all the hard bodies above him.

Alfario is down in the crowd, which surrounds the round stage at the end of the twenty-meter runway. Ali is on the other side of the stage opposite him. When Jack Shack says something in her ear, the stunning woman looks around at him. She looks to where her dance partner is staring and sees Alfario, who lifts his drink toward them as Gene Reyer announces the opening of Hariss Clariss’s new home.

Backstage in Lazoo the director’s changing room, Missy is busy writing; she sits on one of the couches that span a wall of the large room. The door closes as someone leaves and Lazoo pulls out the seat from in front of the mirror. Afamasaga pours hot water into the three cups and then passes one to Metofeaz and Lazoo. Afamasaga holds a cup up to Missy who shakes her head and then puts it back down into her work, which is now a major point of interest for the entire crew. Afamasaga then announces “After the show, we’ll unwind with a reading, Missy.” The girl’s head nods as she continues to look down at the page.

Missy knew the meaning of the word the very first time she heard it out loud. She had seen it written, but when Afamasaga said it, “F3quenZor” (F3QZ), pronounced Free-kwen-Zor, she saw the connection—the dashed line Lazoo had drawn connecting the three stick figures by their heads.

Inside the room at this time were four Shells, the term for the human bodies, entities inhabited in order to dwell in the MindMorph dimension. LAZOO an entity from the SenFenide Dimension, his shell James Elton from Wisconsin...John Reyer the shell in which twin entities reside AFAMASAGA and the PACIFICAN...METOFEAZ, who housed the shell named Feeaz, and EVON who lived inside Missy Evon, the luckiest little girl in the world. Her mum and dad are out there dressed to the nines, guests at one of the year’s social events. And she is backstage with the creative team responsible for designing the elaborate show about to be performed. And to make her feel even more special if it were possible, Afamasaga, and therefore LMLA-ink, has taken to her story. At every chance Afamasaga refers to members of the crew by their entity names; the speech marks he’d make in the air when announcing the line or movement would be made by LAZOO; therefore, it would be fierce and not meaningful as if it were delivered by Lazoo, Janine’s boy James Elton, her importance to them made Missy starry-eyed.

“The F3quenZor; it’s like Dumbass in ‘Dumb as in no tongue’”—A character and his story from the *STORYBOOK*. “It’s the same thing. It’s actually a dynamic that we’re moving toward in the way we view ourselves as a race, with more connectivity achieved through computer systems. A group of thinkers can see itself as a network. Clusters of like-minded people can have a protocol...” When Afamasaga says it, people want it or they imagine being a part of it. Afamasaga goes quiet for a moment as he stares at a spot on the ground, and then he smiles at everyone as he continues.

He says to Lazoo, “You can just about do whatever you want to the Morons, Idiots, Clowns, Extras, Retards you meet or who seem randomly to cross your line of sight, and come into ear shot.” Metofeaz chimes in, “In the game, you’re being setup against your knowledge; whatever they say or do is part of an act; therefore, anything you say or do in reply is good to go, as long as they bring it to you, brother.” Missy waves her pen in the air. “Yes, Missy,” Lazoo acknowledges the kid. She clears her throat, “But you can be penalized if you react to a previous act, with an ill deed, or response in the present act.” Lazoo nods his head as Afamasaga continues, “Self-defense is a valid defense for murder only if the attacker or attackers are found to have played the game, which will be difficult since you’re the only one who doesn’t know what’s going on. Even I believe you don’t know —something you’re going to have to believe too, for the whole concept to work. And a plea of insanity is probably acceptable after you’ve been in the game as the lead character for probably a year or more, and the tormentors can be identified, regardless of whom your victims are. Meaning the MICERs can be, at the very least, an accessory to murder, if murder is your way of reacting to the constant, day by day, minute to minute harassment you’ll receive at the hands of people who have nothing better to do, who just want to see you lose it.” Lazoo takes a sip of his tea as he turns around to face himself in the mirror. Afamasaga takes the jacket and hands it to him; the sound of the crowd next door can be heard through the concrete walls as Metofeaz sticks a middle finger to where he imagines the pin-hole camera to be.

Missy wondered how long such a game would last. And how long James Elton could keep up the act under constant pressure from desperate people who themselves dreamed of being in his shoes but were not chosen, and who, if they were, would render a performance no one would care to watch even if paid. She guessed maybe a family member would step forward and slap James in the face to wake him. But he had no family.

Missy gets an idea of how immense the experience would be listening to Afamasaga recall a scenario he was involved in, one played out in Life Form Reproduction (LFR)—the “inverted inferred” of the MindMorph Dimension pre-created in the SenFenide Dimension. He is animated as he tells of the ordeal, as if he had experienced it himself, “Seven years the guy absorbed the hate, and the mocking. Seven long years; it probably rates among the cruelest of acts on a human not deemed to be criminal. He was stuck in a horrible place surrounded by racism; I think it was the worse thing he had to endure...”

Lazoo looks at Afamasaga in the mirror as a knock on the door interrupts his story. He nods for Lazoo to go.

Outside in the auditorium, Lazoo performs his one-man play onstage. Afamasaga and Metofez keep an eye on the monitor as Missy queries the meaning of the term “Game.”

Metofez pours wine into the cup he’s just emptied of tea. He holds the bottle up to Afamasaga, who reaches for a wine glass he holds out so Metofez may pour the red wine. Then Afamasaga explains, “It’s a metaphor for life. Or in the case Afamasaga referred to, it was a parody by the MICERs in which one player, who was supposed to be a loser, never let himself be victimized, and in the end, he produced a body of work which won the hearts of the world.” Afamasaga takes a sip of the wine before saying, “Don’t forget the reason why he did it.” The applause from next door is in stereo; it comes from the monitor and through the wall Missy sits against. Afamasaga throws the wine back and says, “That’s another story, however.” Missy flicks her pen as she thinks about the story of the guy in the game. Afamasaga stands up and Metofez says something to him, but she only makes out, “...six, the bio 2013.” Afamasaga pats him on the back and says jokingly, “You’ve got to be around to be a part my friend.” Missy jots down what she heard, then closes her book as the door opens and a sweating Lazoo pops his head in to say, “Hey, I did it!” His smile is infectious as he steps into the room. The applause coming through the open door is a measure of the young man’s performance. Afamasaga shakes his hand as Lazoo grabs him and hugs him. “You have a hungry and captive audience, James; get back out there, ah?”

Missy watches the screen as Lazoo runs down the runway, the crowd cheering him.

The door opens and in walks her dad. He has a bottle of champagne in his hand, which he waves around until Metofez holds out his cup. “Here, gimme some of that.” “Alfario is...” Alfario stutters as he tries to say his own name, and then as if he were reminded of it, he declares, “I have a new job as a freelance journalist.” He stops pouring Metofez a drink and takes a look through the glass at the drink, “Damn, you wino; you made my champagne disappear.” Missy laughs at Metofez’s remark to Alfario’s announcement, “Wow, you can be Jimmy Olsen now, Fred!” Missy opens her book and clicks her pen as

her drunken father continues, “You better mention me in that crap you write, and it better be in a good light.” Missy ignores him as Metofeaz takes a good look at the guy trying hard to stand up straight. “Or, am I one of those redneck MICERs?” Missy corrects him, “Alfario, a MICER is one who tries to play the game but who has no *Entitlement because* the lead character has not acknowledged him or her. There were rednecks in the game, but not all of them were MICERs.” He stumbles around a bit. “How does one receive *Entitlement?*” Missy pauses, and then she looks at Metofeaz before saying “*Entitlement* is bestowed upon birth. But in the game, it’s upon completion when everyone finds out. It’s according to the winner’s account. Best bet for anyone around the lead character is to be as normal as possible and ignore the fact that he’s a Superstar. Treat him as normal as possible, let him do what he was born to do.” Alfario laughs, “You lot are crazy.” Now he gets a self-conscious look on his face as the door opens and in steps Afamasaga, “He nailed it, the performance and with meaning.” He looks at Alfario, “How come you have a dry eye, ah?” Alfario looks at the bottle he holds in the air and pointed at his mouth; he is about to answer when Missy advises him, “I don’t think he actually wants an answer.” Alfario becomes agitated, “Hold on, I want to tell why I don’t fall for your bullshit, you.” He points at Metofeaz, and then Afamasaga, “And yours, the *POEMBOOK* is far too brilliant for you to know its creator...” Afamasaga looks at the ground as Metofeaz studies his drink. Neither one says a word. And then the door opens and in steps Jon Le Mac. He immediately senses the tension and wants to know what’s going on; he flicks his fingers, before saying, “Come on, guys. Missy, what’s been happening?” Alfario answers, “These two and Lazoo continue to poison my daughter’s mind...” Alfario drops the champagne bottle, but Missy calmly uses her foot to catch it. Le Mac looks down at the bottle balancing on its side on top of Missy’s shoe. Afamasaga and Metofeaz stare at Alfario, pretending not to notice what just happened. Alfario is too busy wallowing in his drunken misery to notice as Le Mac tries to comfort him. “You’re a real writer now Alfario. These two are just jealous, aren’t you? Jealous that you’re Jimmy Olsen now.” Missy takes the bottle from her shoe and leaves the room. Le Mac stands with his arm around Alfario’s shoulder.

Once the door is shut, it is open forum for the boys left in the room. Metofeaz is first. “Le Mac, if you don’t get that sack of shit out of here, I’ll peel it with a broken champagne bottle.” Alfario begins to sob as it Afamasaga’s turn, “Le Mac, the fuck is truly a bitch. Give him to Clariss.”

The door opens and Lazoo walks in. Metofeaz is about to let Alfario know more of how they feel about him when Missy returns. “Alfario,” she says, and then there’s a pause as Missy looks at him, “Feeaz, play nice.” Metofeaz shakes Lazoo’s hand as he completes his statement, “You can WIPE blood and tears, but you can’t erase ink. Go mess up the pages of news, young Alfred.” Lazoo is equally unimpressed with Alfario, who uses the sleeves of his tuxedo to dry his eyes as Missy sits down. Now the young person holds out her hand to her father, “Come here; sit down; you’re a real writer now, one who gets paid by the word. Not someone wishing for something to happen.” The adult looks at his daughter as Lazoo sits down on an adjacent couch; as soon as he is seated, he looks at the ground and calls out loud, “Okay, Alfario. I will save your miserable day; fetch quench for thirst and all disillusionment will subside, allowing you to know you are truly being messed with. However, if you don’t pull yourself together, this will be a lasting memory for your daughter of her weak and wet parent.”



Le Mac is not ready for when Alfario lunges toward Lazoo, pinning him down on the couch. Then with a crazed look in his eyes, Alfario continually pulls Lazoo up by the lapels of his dinner suit and then pushes him down into the soft couch. Lazoo starts to laugh as Alfario begins to cry again. Soon everyone in the room, including Missy, is laughing at what Alfario is doing to Lazoo. It resembles two children play-fighting rather than one extremely mad adult beating up on another. In between his laughter, Lazoo manages to say, "...I am...Alfario...truly...sorry..."

When the father is done with his crazy outburst, Missy is next to him. The two of them, father and daughter, look down at Lazoo who has a look of satisfaction on his face from witnessing what has just gone down. "Look at him, Alfario; he has no mom or dad. He has to be paid to be nice to people." Lazoo's face changes as Missy continues. Lazoo lets out a scream, "Aaahh!" as Alfario's mucus falls from his nose. Lazoo sees it coming and moves out of the way, in the process throwing Alfario off of him and onto the couch. Now standing, Lazoo checks himself in the mirror as Missy continues, "Alfario, he cannot write let alone read." Lazoo looks at Missy, who concentrates on Alfario. "That's my whole fucking point! Why him?" Alfario says as he reaches into his pocket and produces a packet of cigarettes. Metofeaz holds his hand out for the packet, as Lazoo reminds them by pointing at the "NO SMOKING" sign. "Ha ha. Very fucking funny, Lazoo," Alfario says as Le Mac stands up and announces "Time to go, I'll drop you off in the Limo." He looks at Missy and her dad. Afamasaga holds his hand out to Alfario, who looks at it, and then he puts his out in front of Metofeaz, who takes the packet of smokes from his pocket and places it in the immature man's hand.

Outside in the auditorium, small tables with people chatting over coffee and wine now fill the floor. On stage, Gene Reyer cuts in on the Assistant DA and Ali dancing, as Missy, almost propping up her drunken father, comes out from backstage. Afamasaga, Metofeaz, and Lazoo walk straight past the scene about to happen to where Clariss points to chairs at his table at the end of the stage.

Clariss talks to them about his plans for Lazoo's one man play. Lazoo pretends to listen as Metofeaz pulls out the seat next to him for one of Clariss' female servants dressed as Cleopatra.

Afamasaga watches Missy interrupt her mother at work as Le Mac walks in on the scenario.

A piano player begins to close down the evening which has spilled over into the wee hours. Lazoo smiles at the player as his music drowns out all else.

Afamasaga notices how the little storyteller hears the music in her head like he, Lazoo and Metofeaz do.

Le Mac looks down at the little girl as the bass player seated next to the grand piano puts down his drink and straps on his instrument. The drummer, sitting behind a bass drum, a snare and hi-hat, begins to tap his sticks as the bass player begins to feel the perpetual notion. Missy says "... 'cause we're into ideas..." like the vocalist in the F3quenZor; "We

walk, if it goes wrong...” She holds the ends of her dress as if she’s about to curtsy, but then she does a twirl she finds difficult to stop, stumbling and almost tripping over her untrained feet. The girl’s head is bowed as the commotion above her escalates.

Afamasaga pretends not to notice as Lazoo nods his head at Hariss Clariss as he lip-reads the Financier’s plan, “Let’s do my story...” he says. Another member of the band picks up his axe as the piano player changes the song. The beginning of the TOTO classic is repeated as the guitar player runs through the solo.

Missy blocks out the fiasco by focusing on her feet which begin to move as the song comes strongly into her head, the only place where it mattered to her. With her head still bowed, her eyes look and see Afamasaga who glances at her sideways, his eyes looking up at Le Mac, letting her know she is safe.

Alfario would’ve just been himself, not meaning to affect or dent anything or anyone’s pride. But now hands shoving each other get in the way of what needs to be said, or who needs a decent smack in the head. Ali Lévon’s mouth is moving as she smiles sarcastically at something the Assistant DA has said. Gene Reyer is almost on tip-toes, trying to stand up to the man taller and bigger than him. Alfario’s mouth is moving as he starts pointing a finger at the Defense Lawyer.

“...Hold the line, love isn't always on time, oh oh oh...” Missy moves a little to the left because Le Mac has to move in between the adults. She sees the way their legs move about; someone’s knees bend as someone else steps backwards. Ali’s feet remain in the same spot while she has her right hand on her hip. Alfario’s right foot steps back to balance his body, and then both his feet come together before his legs part ways and he lands on his backside. Missy wants to stop the jig she dances while she looks at the floor, but she is scared the music may also stop, and she may have to hear all the shouting going on. She looks for Afamasaga, who signals for her to come over. The little girl still holds her father’s hand, although he is knocked out cold. She looks at his hand, and then she calmly places it down on the ground and walks quickly over to the table and sits next to Metofeaz, facing Afamasaga.

Ali notices the girl’s sudden reaction. She is torn between fulfilling the contractual obligation she is tied to by this evening’s earlier transaction, standing her ground in and among the egos and testosterone being sprayed in every direction, and going to Missy, who is obviously shaken by the escalating scenario.

Afamasaga talks to Missy as if to distract her from the scene which has become a concern. Le Mac is unsure what to do as the Gene Reyer and Jack Shack become serious. “Missy, when things get strange, understand that you can control the middle ground or you can let it slip away from you. The middle ground is where you stand, and the distance between you and the disharmony is the distance between you and the source of the disturbance, measured by how much effect the disturbance’s energy or radiated effect affects your energy level.” The young thinker nods her head as the voices begin to become audible, “Missy, when you can hear them, you cannot hear yourself.” The girl has to shake her head until she can hear what she wants, “Can you hear them?” She shakes her head and then she nods. Lazoo produces pen and paper. He slides them in

front of the seemingly confused child, who takes the pen as she looks to John Reyer again. “Missy, a place on the F3quenZor is a gift and not guaranteed by right. A weak entity or a leaky shell exposes the entire Semi-System to anyone channeling via the unsecured node.”

The terms and their meanings just seemed to make sense to the girl who has begun writing...

>>MONTAGE:

### POLINA RADA

The voice in her head sounds familiar. Polina gets ready to write; her hand in the air she slowly puts to the page. It begins to be cursive on its own, angled to the right, italic and as lyrical as the words to the song.

She begins to hum Bowie’s melody...

*...Said you sailed a big ship  
Said you sailed away  
Didn't know the right thing to say...*

The Mistress lowers her spectacles to look at the model student in the class of orphans. Today’s assignment is an application to “The New American Dream.”

*Dear Mr. John Reyer Afamasaga,*

*My name is Polina Rada...*

*...Everyone says hi  
Everyone says hi  
Everyone says...*

### ALEXVALE ROKOV III

*Dear New American Dream Maker,*

*I'm Alexvale Rokov III of London, England.*

*My father is a pilot, and he could probably fly the Silverspoon, given a chance....*

<<MONTAGE:

Next day early in the afternoon, the doors to the auditorium are open, leading out into the garden paradise. The lavish greenery has enough walkways to fill an hour and make for a refreshing experience. Le Mac and Afamasaga have been looking for offices; in the interim, they have decided between the newly refurbished SIL HOUSE, Lazoo’s WHITEROOM at the Hilton, and here at the COMPOUND. They were in no hurry to

sign a lease on the well preserved bar down in Chinatown with gold Aztec etchings on the mirrors above the plush velvet booths.

On stage, Lazoo rehearses with Le Mac on the turntables. At the table there's Metofeaz, who gets the mail and places the applications he thinks are worthy of their time in another pile, which Afamasaga takes from to read them out loud.

Le Mac walks over to the table, grabs a snack and a bottle of water, and says, "Feeaz, my turn to sit down. The next two tracks are cued ready to go." Metofeaz finishes reading the letter in his hand, and then he crumbles it up and chucks it on the floor to Le Mac's disappointment. "Fuck, man; how the fuck are we going to reply to that person, ah?" Metofeaz looks at the balls of paper on the floor. "Get Missy to go through them when she comes in."

Once, maybe two times a week, Afamasaga, a frugal guy, folds a letter up and places it in his jacket pocket. Today, two candidates make the small pile—a rather small number considering the amount of mail—both letters end up in Afamasaga's pocket.

For the past two months, reading and responding to applications has become a fulltime job for LMLA-ink...

LMLA-ink's rejection of Alfario also became his contribution to the cause. Today he delivers his daughter to where he dumps her off in the care of a former inmate and his associates for the evening while he does what he does, which no one really knows or really cares about.

Today's entrance is less dramatic than last night's backstage scene, but just as entertaining...

Metofeaz lets the record go; George Clinton's "Hey, Good Looking."

A camera-man backs in followed by Alfario, wearing sunglasses. Next to him is a pretty woman with a microphone...

Onstage, Lazoo sees the procession and stops to watch by leaning on his microphone stand. Missy, some distance behind her dad and his new friends, waves at the actor on stage who points at Alfario and then shrugs his shoulders in disbelief. Missy does the same as she leaves the line and heads for the table where Afamasaga and Le Mac are at work.

"Hi, Missy," Le Mac says as the girl places her books on the table and her bag on the ground. "Hi." Afamasaga's head is bowed as he says, "Hi, what the...?" Missy watches her dad, who has almost done a lap of the auditorium with his camera crew in tow. "It's an idea of his. The camera crew doesn't really exist." Now she waves out. Afamasaga points to the tray of food, "So he just likes to walk around in circles, ah?" Le Mac nods as he points to a pile of flattened crumpled letters, "Reply to each one with a 'Sorry, but' letter." Missy lifts the cover to the snacks as Afamasaga pulls letters from his jacket. "We have two more." Missy's favorite job is picking applications good enough to make the

final three; from those applications they will pick one name to be the “Wild Card” entry into the competition which has now gone international.

“The scene.” Missy was fully exposed to it and had been all her life, prior to this; the affects of growing up with a mother, who was a prostitute, and with a dad who was one of her mother’s very first clients. And now she was in the midst of it herself.

Her father stands in front of them in his sunglasses; on either side of him are spaced out looking characters holding props. A fish pole with hairy mic slowly falls down in front of Alfario’s face as he goes to speak. He mumbles tight-lipped to the guy who holds one nostril as he snorts out loud, “Will you get that thing out of my face.” The camera-man points his lens at the table. The lighting guy with bulb now turns, almost blinding Alfario who has to say, “Cut!”

Missy looks down at the table and then along it to Afamasaga, who puts his hands behind his head. Le Mac smiles at Alfario, “Where ya heading?” Alfario takes off his glasses to reveal a shiner. “I’m going for the intrepid reporter meets Dick Tracy; Jimmy Olsen and Orson Welles have a love child spawning a mutant fungal media type character.” Missy, reaching for a bottle of water, says, “Dad, I think he means where are you going tonight, and when will you be back to pick me up?” He has to push the mic out of his face as he smiles at the three people seated behind the table. “Oh, that? Sometime around 10ish?”

Missy watches him lead his crew out and away from their sight as another character enters. “I like it!” Clariss declares as he passes Alfario. Le Mac clears the space in front of him as Clariss takes a seat and summons Lazoo.

While Clariss explains what he expects in return for introducing them to interested parties from off-Broadway, who had seen the one man show the previous night, Missy has her own questions for Afamasaga about the guy in the game, which the play is about.

Clariss glances at her as she disturbs the silence he expects. “When did he realize he was being set up?” she whispers.

Clariss raises his voice, “The next one should have a cast, and you already know what the story will be...”

Afamasaga smiles at Missy as he answers her question, “Right from day one.” Missy has another question, “What did it mean to him?”

Clariss is clearly angered by the girl and by Afamasaga who encourages her by answering her questions. “His responsibility was to uphold the TRUTH. If he gave in, history would show that man, for all his brain and his so called progress and its advancements, is still just an animal—weak, without will or a worthy endeavour of his own other than that forced upon him by churches, media, and industry. In losing, he had no right to stand upright, above any of the other captive species in the domain or this dimension the MMD, Missy.”

“Did they kill him?” Afamasaga looks at the ground as he replies, “He was always ready to die for TRUTH Missy, that’s why he was incorruptible.”

Lazoo looks at him as does Le Mac. Clariss is clearly annoyed and leaves as Missy asks another question. “How did it end?”

Afamasaga calls out to Clariss, “Your story is the greatest, Clariss.” And then he looks at Lazoo. “Do it; give him his story.”

Whenever he senses any doubt, John Reyer sits back and lets the germ come out, and then he brings out the books, targeting the catalyst where the deadly rot may settle and begin to breed a strain among those who have to be strong in the face of a “lie”—his reference to the game Lazoo is reenacting, in which he is one of the voices.

Ali walks in during the reading as he compares texts.

First, he reads from the *POEMBOOK*, and then in refrain, he supplies the opening to the story from the *STORYBOOK* that Lazoo then seamlessly takes over; within a sentence, the voices morph, and the illiterate, who has yet to read a word, is standing in his place.

The mother notices the inflatable bed on the edge of the stage. Under the blankets is Missy, who seems to be asleep. Ali looks for someone in the small group of about twenty to thirty seated beneath four stage lights which fence them in. Among them are Alfario and his crew. She makes her way over to Le Mac, who lies on the thick mat on a bean bag. She makes room for herself by gently using her foot to nudge Alfario, curled up on his side, in the back.

Missy turns onto her back and looks into the sky beyond the Perspex dome. Lazoo’s voice resonates as someone’s phone rings. A shooting star dives in an arc, falling in between one of the heavens in this dimension.

The girl turns her head to the side to see Metofeaz get up and walk away from the gathering so he can take the call. He ends up standing and leaning against the stage a few feet from where she lays.

“Shit, you’ve just got out, ah?” he says and then he holds the phone above his head. Afamasaga notices, so he gets up and carefully steps through the bodies excusing himself. “Oops; sorry,” he says as he steps on someone’s shoes.

He takes the phone from Feeaz. “It’s Page; he’s out.” The Pacifican finally has something to smile about, as he takes the phone. “Sole, how’s it?” “Tell him this is the gig to end all gigs,” Metofeaz starts to rattle off a list of things to tell the hacker who has just completed his six-month prison term. Afamasaga notices Missy and puts a finger to his lips “Shhh.” He taps Metofeaz on the shoulder and then points to Missy behind him.

A “walk up to the terminal” type hacker gains physical access to where the loot or information is, which means he’s technically not guilty if charged with unlawfully gaining access to government information. But John Page wasn’t; espionage was the

charge, which was laughable, and the six-month term he served was at a holiday camp just outside of Vegas, in the Nevada desert, a place famous for inhabitations.

In order for an entity to inhabit a shell, the shell's Biorhythm physical, emotional and intellectual cycles had to be in their overlapping phase, one which lasts for three days out of every thirty-three days, and within that window, a three minute period exists when the process can happen, causing nil side effects to the shell or human being inhabited.

PAGE1, an entity and PointSlayer—which means he has the full array of Dimensional Artillery, (*r*) ability to send EDM via the F3quenZor—was from the SenFenide Dimension, where he was not gainfully employed as a clerk; he had been to the Dimension Fork or the Valley of Dimension War many times and returned a hero. John Page, the shell he housed in the MMD, was a loser with nothing to lose.

The Controller of a Semi-System is granted control of the communication channel much like a broadcaster is issued a frequency on a radio band or a satellite feed. The PACIFICAN held the license mark a (*c*) next to his name. The F3quenZor was the ether that wrapped the light sent from Receptor to SatteLyst, which translates without bias or memory the meanings, feelings and intent of what was sent.

Afamasaga looks at Missy and says, "I'm sorry; it's an important call." He holds the phone to his chest. "PLANTOM-ZERO and HEXV'L." Missy hears the names through the phone. And immediately Lazoo's drawing of stickmen from SIL HOUSE is explained. PAGE1, PLANTOM-ZERO and HEXV'L; all three names were aliases, purposely masking their true identities.

Afamasaga, now aware Missy is awake, is brief in his responses. As he talks, he reaches into his jacket pocket. Missy has an idea of what he is going to produce—the letters. Metofeaz takes them from his hand and quickly glances over them, as Afamasaga elbows him to pass the applications to Missy for her approval.

Off in the distance, Ali notices Missy sit up to read the letters Metofeaz finally hands her. The mother uses Le Mac's shoulder to push herself to her feet and walks over to the edge of the stage.

Missy explains to her mother, "A girl of my age from Russia, and an orphan—Polina Rada." Then she hands the woman the letter as she looks at the last application. "And here's Alexvale Rokov, a real little dreamer from London who has an imaginary Father. He thinks the Silver spoon is some sort of aircraft."

Missy is treated with a second shooting star falling from the heavens. Her mother looks at her and then at her wristwatch as Metofeaz and Afamasaga talk in the background, "WIPE... The Inaugural GUIOPERA it will be..." Missy grabs her mother's wrist. As the woman looks into the sky where her daughter gazed, Missy realizes, "It was 3 a.m. when we discovered the three Pillars of the PACIFICAN's F3quenZor, says EVON to the woman who bared her in the MindMorph Dimension."

**John Page**  
(PAGE1)

PRELUDE

The intake of mothers to be includes one without a lump in her front. She sits crying, bent in two, as if she has lost her baby; her tears drop as she utters, “James.” The man in the white coat at the end of the corridor calls out “Janine” and the young woman uses her cardigan to WIPE her tears. Page Boy, as everyone calls the kid, hands Janine a handkerchief. She takes it and smiles at the boy through the tears; then she gets up and walks to where the man in the white coat holds a folder with papers hanging out; their dog ears make John Page laugh as he calls out to, “Watch out; there’s a dog in them papers, Janine.” The woman looks around at the boy, who stands watching her walk away. He is empathetic and enlightening to her as she looks where she walks. “Watch out for the slippery floors and the cold hands too, Janine...” Ali, an older girl, appears from around the corner. “Is that what your mother looked like, Page Boy?” He waves out as the doors swing shut. “That is my mom; she’s just forgot. Just plain forgot Janine has.”

PART 3

The piano part plays as John Page stands on the pavement. He watches the traffic waiting for a gap in between headlight and taillight. The rain subsides, but still, there’s no sign of sunshine as he looks across the road.

Under the arc of SIL HOUSE Café, Metofeaz, Lazoo, Le Mac, and Afamasaga watch the hard-edge vagabond as T-Bone Walker’s backing singers suggest, “Some people said it was cocaine; some people claim it was gin...”

His foot kicks the space before his brain has time to say, “Unsafe” as the lean lad careers his way across the road. Drivers and their horns herald the unseemly one’s arrival in New York City as the lead singer confesses, “I know the name of the man that done my brother in...”

The guy with hair to his shoulders who reminds everyone of Johnny Depp stands at the window; he plays with a moustache as he looks in the window at his reflection and then down at the four who wait for his entrance. Eventually, the music dies and he gets cold. He shivers, making him fold his arms; he then looks inside the café one more time at the diners and then at himself.

Missy ponders his entry into their midst as the door opens and the peculiar person takes something from the insides of his leather jacket and places it on his head—a skull cap for his nut. He ensures it covers his head, warming him to possible cranial quakes he may have to endure, as he now has to deal with people face to face, people whom he likes and who like him—a rarity in his everyday life. He slides into a seat at the table next to the one where LMLA-ink waits for him to take stock of his surroundings. He pushes down on the headgear, ensuring it’s close to his head.



He looks scared. The waitress, who appears next to him, makes him cower. He takes the menu and points to something, which the waitress repeats, “Bacon and eggs.” And then he points at something else. “Coffee,” the girl says as she writes the order on her pad.

Straight ahead, he notices Missy, who writes. Then he looks to his left and sees Lazoo, who nods at him once. He frowns back at Janine’s boy as Metofeaz calls out to Simon, “Hastily Simon! He’s famished is John Page of nowhere really.”

He whispers something; Le Mac looks at Afamasaga. Metofeaz puts his head forward for the other three to do the same. “He wants to know who the other suits belong to?”

Afamasaga reaches into his pocket, bringing a glance from John Page, who has to stretch his neck so it looks natural. Afamasaga produces his mobile phone which he dials.

John Page looks at his jacket as the phone inside it begins to ring.

Missy realizes she has a smirk on her face as she looks up to see John Page’s dark eyes looking directly at her. “Someone’s calling you; could be London, Mr. Page.” Missy’s handwriting becomes less cursive at speed.

When he places his hand on his chest and presses it, the ringing stops.

Afamasaga looks at his phone and then he puts it away.

“The cornerstones are set; the Pillars are next. A LawMonger from your neck of the woods is here...”

The awkward character looks to his left again and then straight ahead at Missy. As if dictating to her, he says, “I’m looking for two entities; both must have entitlement...”

He delivers his line and then he looks at the floor. The sound of plates being stacked and then utensils clanging cover whispers from the packed café as all eyes remain on the latest addition to the SIL HOUSE troupe, as it has become known to locals and tenants who themselves have to dine elsewhere due to a linequeue to get into the Improvised Playhouse come Opera LMLA is responsible for creating. The performance is confirmed by the applause and then the standing ovation as Simon and a waitress bring out the Guest performer’s meal. Metofeaz puts fingers in his mouth and whistles loud as Lazoo announces, “My brother’s shell; John Page, ladies and gentlemen.”

“Page Boy,” Ali Lévon calls out to him as she closes the door. She spots Missy, “Missy, come I want you to meet John.” The song that now plays says, “I never met a girl like you before.” Page lifts himself to greet his friend. “Ali, I’m beginning to worry about you as the rest of us grow old.” Then he kisses her. Lazoo moves along the seat to be opposite him as he too moves along so Ali can sit down. Missy sits down as Afamasaga calls out “James.” John Page looks over to where the boss of LMLA-ink sits with a middle-aged couple. Lazoo lowers his head; he whispers, “Damn, Mr. and Mrs. X...”

Just then the door opens, and into the cozy café steps a woman. The cool air makes Page look and see her; he has to collect himself. He grabs the top of his skull cap and slowly pulls it down. Lazoo looks to where Afamasaga waves him over. “Damn, I have to go,” Lazoo says, and then he does a double take at the gorgeous creature who waves to Mrs. X, smiles at him as she passes. She wears Milton Glaser’s handiwork—“I” then symbol “NY”—seems painted on, punctuated by a body beneath thin white material. The heart is upon the mark Cupid’s arrow would have to find and then penetrate, discoloring the garment; hopefully, it wasn’t of any sentimental value, just something she and a boyfriend bought at some marketplace on a day like today—a lazy Sunday. John Page ponders this, as Missy advises him, “SWF, in LEVI’S 501 beware; stay clear or be ready for some luggage.” Then she puts her head down and continues to write. “Santina San Fé, pleased to meet you finally...”

The woman’s southern accent cuts through the thick local dialect that hurls commentary on everything from, “My neighbor’s dawg...” to “The price of Miok roises fauster than it keeps...” around the room. The girl with piercing eyes glances over when Mrs. X points out Ali, who waves back at Mrs. X. Missy puts her pen down. “Pleased to meet you, Page Boy. Ali tells me you and she discovered some of life’s mysteries together as youngsters. Do tell.” He looks at his plate of food, and then he offers a smile for the young person seated opposite him. As he answers her, he lets Ms. San Fe know her attention is noted...

That day Missy got her money’s worth of stories. As Lazoo, Le Mac and Afamasaga were embroiled in meetings with Ms. San Fe and others, John Page caught up with Metofeaz and Ali...

To be continued in Jon Le Mac – Book 2: The Mathematics of an Aftermath

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