

Robots *of Reality*

- the Story of Élan, Astarte and Shiva

Chp. 1

... and if you don't change now it'll never happen - you'll stay a loser forever. The thought from Visitant was as straight and sharp as a Toledo blade.

Élan thought, *SHUT UP! You're a festering mind lesion... a mental hemorrhoid preventing me from even sitting down to think!*

In reality Élan was sitting down; or more accurately he was practically lying down in a \$22,000 Vincenzo Di Cotiis sofa in the largest of his three man caves. Per colloquial speak he was fast asleep, but as even slow people can be fast asleep, and they aren't doing anything close to the racetrack stage show Élan was currently engaged in, we could call this **dynamic** sleep.

Visitant thought, *Oh, so now I'm a "festering mind lesion hemorrhoid"... didn't realize I was such a colorfully character.*

Ignoring the comment, Élan thought, *And you have no idea who you're talking to. Everybody knows I'm the winner. You're the one that's broken, and you're about to get your loser-ass exorcised.*

Nope. We're past that now; you know I'm real. But you do have an identity issue in confusing me with the character cast in this theater you call a mind. Who the hell do you think *you're talking to?*

Chp. 2

“You come to me complaining, wanting to be free of these things you dislike, yet follow the dictates of the reality you have created into a commanding, all-consuming puppeteer.” -Wakashan shaman

At that moment, on the other side of the fire, as if he'd been sitting there the whole time, sat an impossibly wrinkled Wakashan shaman! It so startled Élan that his mind skipped a couple of beats, tripped over his consciousness and splattered his reality all over his intellect.

How could this possibly be? It was both impossible, and yet somehow, in a way that was just out of reach of his consciousness, predictable. The old man sat cross-legged and was as immobile as a statue, even to his unwavering gaze at Élan, while at the same time radiating animation, leaving no doubt there was ample life in that ancient body.

Élan wondered how he knew he was Wakashan, and a medicine man? No doubt he was old and weathered, but there was more time-wise about him than timeworn. His wrinkles were like the moss on the rocks in a stream, over which fresh, ever-moving water flowed. Or like the constant yet ever-changing flame in an ancient lantern, exuding a vital force from within a symbol.

Chp. 3

After five hours sleep Élan woke with a start. The spinning receded fully as condensed, myopic consciousness tried to access the trumpeting neon elephant in the middle of the room. But something had turned his brain into a mass of slithering electric eels promising electrocution with the merest approach. More aptly, the head resembled a swollen wine cork threatening to crack the bottleneck. Said head had been cured all night in myriad mixtures: rare vintages, exotic ales, elite liqueurs; all competing for the distinction of who could create the most memorable and lasting dysfunction.

As last night's party had progressed, the unholy ones devolved the celebration back to a Medieval Gnostic Festival of the Blessed and the Damned, consecrated with a blend of alcohols so ancient and rare the liquids had to introduce themselves to the modern glass. Then the unholy time travelers traversed earlier to a mystical Mesopotamian Rite of Revelry, conjuring a black sorceress's brew, consisting of one part curse of Gilgamesh, two parts beguilement of Ishtar, with the remainder consisting of a blessing from the grand alien god himself, Marduk.