**The Spirit and Alien Party Part 3**

Harrari would never be shaken by questioning. Indeed, I shouldn’t question her, ever, but I was almost insane with curiousity. How much of an alien is she?

‘Holly.’ I said as she materialised in her human form. Hakim sat back, pretending to smoke a non-existent pipe, I suppose a little discomfitted by seeing the stuffed Leprechaun.

‘Holly’, I said, I don’t understand’. She, of course, understood what I meant.

‘Do you think we cannot adapt, or will not adapt to our surroundings?’

‘Well...’

‘Because I am who I am, and how I am formed makes it easy for me to pick up on how things work on Earth. It is not just about imagery and representations such as humans tend to concentrate on. Filling in the gaps between now, and how then might, or could be, to engender continuity is something that all my species can do. I do not, however, use trickery, deceit or flummery such as you have just witnessed and been subjected to. Whether, they learnt it from me, or me from them, is not important. The important thing to remember is that as a human you can be manipulated and controlled. They didn’t want me there with you because I can see better than you. For me, it is stark differences. For you, it is a kaleidoscope of attractive colours.’

She was not sorry, and never would be. She had no reason to be apologetic, humble or sheepish. She had done nothing wrong. It was me who was deceitful. Merely by letting my curiousity swell to such a magnitude that I was perplexed meant that I had shown distrust. She went on:

‘When you were living in the wood and realised that you were disturbing the animals, I decided that I like you because you had adapted and realised how negative your actions could be. Before that, I hated you. You charged around, intent only on what was outside the wood; where you were going to be later. But you started to slow down and quietened. That is when I stopped flicking your glasses off your face. I pulled you from the ditch when you fell in and led you back to your tent in the dark. You had changed. You were thinking about the wood and your impact on it; blending in.’

‘I’m sorry’ It was the best I could do. But I knew that I had messed up way worse than I ever had with any living being before. She didn’t care though, she never would.

Hakim ‘finished’ his pipe and came over. Holly faded and I could only feel Harrari there instead; neutral, thank goodness.

‘So, are we going back? I am not comfortable giving a free pass to deceit in any form.’ asked Hakim.

Knowing that I cannot switch Hakim off, and muting him was just plain dangerous, I had to agree that another visit was essential if we were to begin to understand the extent of trickery that might emanate from any kind of union with free spirits. The idea of a union with personal spirits hosted by people did cross my mind; they are safe, but they are limited in their availability.

‘I suppose we will have to. But not through the front door, or let’s say, not by invite.’

I know how to gate-crash the spirit world and I know how to get a ticket as a spectator. Unfortunately, spectators don’t get to interact or ask questions. Entering a fevered state, such as I was in when I found Harrari or when my mind was troubled, but fresh with youth, when I created Hakim is difficult to do safely. I don’t recommend ‘forcing’ anything. As I said before, expect warmonger horned faeries. Hakim, of course, came with me.

I found myself on a lane that looked down on a twee valley. I recognised it as a somewhere I used to live, but I never had. It was familiar to me. Good, I know where I am, I thought. I have made my exit point.

After casually and gently strolling along for a few minutes; Harrari’s words about not charging about clanged in my head; I came across a few thatched cottages and a lovely elderly woman outside one. She was welcoming and smiling. After a few pleasant sentences I noticed her glances at me were lasting longer and longer and were harder and harder. I felt that she was beginning to suspect that I didn’t belong there.

Some time ago, I was as skilled at lying and deceeption as any average person. Deceit is easy; you start by not recognising yourself or hiding what you are ashamed of; and then it goes on from there; not taking responsibility for one’s mistakes, blaming others, making up stuff, and so on. Now though, I am open. If the woman had asked me why I was there I would be compelled to speak the truth. Allowing speculation, on the other hand, is not deceit, but does have to be rectified if harm or untruths are a result of misdirection. Hakim tugged my arm and we left. I couldn’t help thinking that she was a sentry, like one might have found in Communist East Germany before The Wall came down, and she was scribbling down my details.

The lovely village ‘grew’ tall walls and then multiple churches with water-courses running between them and beneath them. These were blackened buildings, tall and imposing; not at all inviting. There would be no kindly vicar standing outside shaking hands, smiling and welcoming visitors. Instead, self-standing iron gargoyle figures, fifteen feet high, stood menacingly all around. Here, one with a sword; there, one with a scimitar. All of them were armed and black, deep black. So black that light almost did not reflect from them. A priest came to stare at me and then another.

‘They know we are here.’ Hakim whispered. I suppose trying to hide a Brownie in a world that would be fine pickling them was a little foolish, which is why I had covered him in a shawl over his head that reached his knees. Of course, Hakim is not a Brownie, he just looks like one. Perhaps this isn’t going to work, I thought.

We walked faster and as we were now ‘charging about’ we attracted more and more attention. Figures that I thought would be, in the human world, casual visitors to, perhaps somewhere like Windsor Castle, were here pointing at us and crowding behind us. We were close to running when after passing, mostly in shade, past over twenty church and cathedral-like buildings we left the grounds. Pursuit stopped. I had learnt something. There are either bailiwicks of concern and proprietory value, or malicious attention quickly wanes. Perhaps, my fear was enough for them. But, I also know that there are spirits that thrive on fear and engender it in the unwary. There are also spirits that feed on metabolised fear. What we know as fear is only the precursor to another feeling we don’t recognise, but that is what they want to enjoy. So, they work in pairs; two spirits feeding on the same thing really.

I, we, found ourselves on an arterial road overlooking open countryside. To one side of the road was a thirty foot wall that almost hid a town. The wall, of course, struck me as a structure that invited curiousity. What is behind it? Knowing what was behind it would, I am certain, have ended the visit. Knowing something negates that feeling of, is it, and isn’t it, and the suspension of rationale is essential for this kind of exploration. There was no chance of meeting a scientist.