



DR BROO  
AND THE DIAKONS





FROM THE STAGE PLAY  
PERFORMED AT SARUMWELLS IN 1983.

30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY NOVELISATION  
BY THE DEAN OF WENCHOSTER

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**IQ**  
**PENTATEUCH**



## SCROLL I

### THE INTERGALACTIC PROPHETS

It was twilight on the planet Laitoss, and the twin suns were slowly sinking behind the dome of the Galactic Temple, bathing the verdant courtyards in a vivid amber glow. Deep inside the complex of buildings, in the Chapel of Visions, John the Burkitt knelt before the Theoscope and breathed deeply of the scented air. Behind him three Intergalactic Ecstatic Prophets swayed on their knees, moving rhythmically from side to side as they mumbled their prayers, groaning every few minutes as the incense smoke moved them into a visionary state. Soft organ music played in the background, and from behind the woven lattice screens the Tabernacle Singers chanted the ancient Hebrew texts of the Khoras tribe. Every so often their voices would rise in unison, and the words “Four Q Florilegium” would be audible before the cadence fell once more to unintelligible murmurings.

John the Burkitt raised his head, and with an unfocused gaze flung his hands skywards. Rolling his milky eyes he cried aloud, “Pssamm!” The prophets stopped their prayers and nervously looked at each other. The eldest of the three, clad in a black cassock with the scarlet piping denoting his years of seniority, looked at John. “Uh?” he queried, nervously. The Burkitt turned to look at him, his eyes now clear and shining. He spat out his reply. “He only said one word!” The prophets lowered their glance and together made the liturgical response, “Say the word. Say the word.” The floor of the chapel began to vibrate, and from deep below in the earth came a voice that seemed to hold within it all the life and meaning of the universe. “Four Q Florilegium!” The choir behind the screens stopped in mid-chant as the pronouncement reverberated through the air. John the Burkitt shook his lithe body and got to his feet. “The Word!” he cried. “The Unseen Synod has spoken The Word!”, and he rapidly strode forth out of the chamber. The prophets threw their hymn sheets on the floor and hastily followed as the organ music rose to a climactic chord and then stopped. Behind the screens the choir melted away to their dormitory, and silence descended on the now empty worship space, faint wisps of incense smoke swirling lazily in the atmosphere.

A few moments later a small figure clad in a brown overall and carrying a broom came into the room. Looking at the discarded hymn sheets he muttered a soft oath and began to sweep them up.

## SCROLL II

### THE COURT OF CANONASKEW THE COSMIC

Colonel Titas reclined in his chair in the carpeted area of the Throne Room and smiled as the Jester finished his song. Trebor Troubadour achieved the high closing note, gave a coy laugh, and bowed. The assembled Regurgital Dance Troupe and the Colonel applauded, and he pulled himself out of the padded cushions. “Oh, that was lovely.” That’s what you call a golden voice. You could make money with a voice like that.” He paused and muttered to himself, “And I could do with some money.” Trebor look at him with a quizzical expression. “You know the reason, fool,” said the Colonel. “That Canonaskew the Cosmic keeps spending it all. I may be the Bursar here but I don’t know how the planet manages to carry on at all.” Trebor jangled his bell-stick. “Ha, ha! I know how Canonaskew carries on.

Ha, ha.” The Colonel’s reply was cut short as a trumpet fanfare sounded. He hurriedly smoothed down his silver uniform and stood stiffly erect. Trebor danced to a standstill beside him, and the courtiers stopped their chattering and fell silent as the great doors were flung back, and with a further trumpet flourish Canonaskew the Cosmic, Ruler of Laitoss and the Diospheres, entered, accompanied by his two favoured acolytes, Rafe and Mickey.

Canonaskew walked to the centre of the room, stopped, and gazed around at the lush furnishings. “Oh, but this is lovely, isn’t it? Haven’t my little bordinands done well painting up the Old Court?” Colonel Titas nodded in agreement. “Yes, they have, Mr. Canonaskew, sir, but it cost a fortune. Regrettably I’ve had to put the annual fees for study in the Scriptorium up yet again.” Canonaskew dismissed his concerns with a wave of his plump hand. “Ah, but they did it for nothing, didn’t they, my little sweetings?” Rafe and Mickey simpered. “They did it just for love, and brotherhood, and, well,” - he looked at the acolytes - “so they could have the Ordinectomy, didn’t they.” The Colonel came forward a few steps. “Oh yes, of course. They’ve done a wonderful job, but I do hope, sir, that you’ve informed all the theological rodents that they’re not on any account to drip anything nasty on the carpets?” The Ruler of the Diospheres looked at the Bursar with mild disdain, and turned his attention to the Jester. “Ahh, Trebor, my old fruit. My little troubadour. How lovely to see you. At least it doesn’t cost us much to keep *you* here.” Trebor smiled and shook his bells. “Are you going to sing us one of your little ditties?” “Yes, yes, I am, I am, I am,” replied the Jester, “but first I wondered whether I could have a word with you about a rise?” Canonaskew’s grin disappeared and his eyes began to wander around the room, looking briefly at the Dance Troupe and the new furnishings. The Jester persisted. “I mean, I don’t mind at all really, it’s just that my wife and sixteen children simply can’t fit into that lovely little potting shed the Colonel gave us, and ...” Trebor’s pleading was interrupted by the Colonel who stepped between him and Canonaskew. “Oh, but that’s a charming property,” he said, smiling. “It’s very desirable. The outside convenience gives it real old world charm, not unlike my own small abode. Many of the rodents would give their right arm for a shed like that.” Trebor nodded his head in eager agreement. “Super! Super! Oh well, that’s alright then.” The Cosmic Ruler moved to the large gilded throne and sat down. “Yes, so, sing your song, or naff off!” The troubadour lifted his mandolin, plucked at a few chords and began.

*Show me the inn that you go to,  
Show me their table so fine;  
And show me the bed where you rest your head.  
What would you give me for mine?*

*All that I ask is a shelter,  
Keeping me dry in the storm;  
A roof overhead, a large double bed,  
Where two friends could always be warm.*

*I ask for a place at your table,  
For gratefully there could I dine;  
Though humble the meal, your thigh I would feel.  
What would you give me for mine?  
Oh, what could you give me ....*

Trebor stopped mid-sentence as Canonaskew harrumphed and got up from the chair. "That's enough for now, my boy. We don't want to parade all our dirty linen in front of these good people here." Trebor laughed nervously as the Dance Troupe averted their eyes and began to look at anything but him. "After all, we might upset the ladies, these lovely, lovely ladies, with their lovely, lovely ... er ... yes ... Isn't it about time we had these ladies do something for us? After all, aren't they 'Legs & Co.?'” The Bursar coughed delicately. "No, sire. That was their name some years ago. It's not that now. They've reformed and are now known as 'Wives & Co.'" "Well," said Canonaskew, "whatever they're called, get them to do something to entertain us." He turned around and sat down on the throne once more. Colonel Titas clapped his hands and beckoned to the Dance Troupe. "Good egg. You heard him, ladies. What he means is, Bring on the Dancing Girls!"

As Canonaskew reseated himself, four ladies detached themselves from the main group and walked to one side and picked up some musical instruments. As they tuned-up the remaining ladies threw off their dresses and stood in formation in the centre of the room, uniformly clad in black leotards. They were a comely bunch, all apart from one taller female who stood at the back, her long hair falling around her thin face on which was the unmistakable shadow of a three-day old beard. The Colonel shuddered as he saw her, and swiftly moved back to his chair. The two acolytes stood either side of the throne, Rafe examining his nails, and Mickey gazing at the Troupe, his eyes wide in anticipation. The music started and the ladies gyrated in unison as they began their Regurgital Prance, the tempo slowly building up. The Cosmic dictator gazed at the writhing forms, his hands gripping the arms of the throne, and a small moan escaped his lips.

### SCROLL III

### THE SAME

The Throne Room was empty and silent, the dance having climaxed several hours before, whereupon the Colonel, Trebor and Canonaskew scurried away to the deeper rooms of the complex to release their passions. The heavy oak door in the vestibule slowly swung open, and four figures entered the gloom. The first was clad in black, with a swirling dark cloak and a shiny black helmet. Second came a bumbling male wearing a smock and grasping two lengths of chain which were attached to iron rings around the necks of the last two figures. He heaved on the chains and the prisoners came stumbling into the centre of the room. The presence of the dark figure seemed to fill the space, and the two captives whimpered. He turned to look at them. "Why are you whimpering like that?" he hissed. "When I was promoted you cheered with everyone else, but now it's all different, eh? Before the accident I was the toast of every social gathering, but now I'm 'persona non grata' wherever I go. I may have scars, but I'm not ugly, am I?" The two figures cowered and mumbled quietly. "What's that? Speak up." The henchman shook the chains. "They said, 'Yes you are', my lord." "Thank you, Jolly," said the menacing figure. He ran his gloved finger down the red indentation in his right cheek. "The trouble is," he mused, "that no-one understands me. I want to save this miserable planet of Laitoss." He gestured at the captives. "I want to save these miserable bordinands. I want to save everyone!" His voice rose in ecstasy. "I want to save you all! Save you from yourselves! Ha ha ha ha ha!" Jolly looked nervously at his master. Canon eNeSeM had been a central figure in the old Governing Body of the Palace, but since his accident he had lost his seat on the Council and there was

no doubt that it had affected his mind. The moments of madness were increasing in length and regularity, and when they struck it was best to lie low and try and keep out of his way until they had passed. The Canon moved up to the bordinands. "The trouble is," he hissed, "that you think you're free, but inwardly you crave obedience." He put out his leather-clad hand and gently stroked the head of the nearest prisoner. "But you find it difficult to obey, don't you, my darlings. I know. I know you do. And that's where I, Canon eNeSeM can help you. That's where Jolly can help you." The smock-wearing jailer nodded in agreement. "We're here to help you, you poor miserable creatures. We of the Southern Diosphere Mind Transfer Scheme have devised a perfectly harmless operation to help you in your search for self-fulfilment, in your struggle to obey." Jolly gave a little jump of pleasure and began softly chanting "SDMTS. SDMTS" "That's right, Jolly," said the Canon. "The SDMTS Ordinectomy! That is what will bring freedom! Freedom to you poor creatures and all the others like you. For obedience is freedom. Soon this whole planet will be free, and this will become Fuller's Earth!"

As Canon eNeSeM said these last words there was a distant rumble and the floor of the chamber vibrated. From deep below came the sonorous voice of the Unseen Synod. "Oh no it won't." The Canon and Jolly looked at each, and there was the briefest pause before they both said in unison, "Oh yes it will." The rumbling faltered and then rapidly faded away. Silence returned to the room and the disturbed dust hung lazily in the air.

"Enough of this," said eNeSeM, and with a small cough he cleared his throat and looked at the bordinands. "How is this batch coming along, Jolly?" Jolly sighed. "Well, my lord, it's difficult. We're short of technicians. We need trained theonectomists, and you know what it's like trying to get money out of the Colonel for anything, let alone new members of staff." He gestured at the bordinand closest to him. "I mean, look at this one." He moved to the figure and pushed his hands together, but they immediately fell limp at his sides. "We can't even get them to put their hands together." The Canon growled in displeasure. "This won't do, Jolly," he said. "I'm going to have to review the situation. All the bordinands have got to be re-done. All our work on their transformation has not produced a single working one. This operation's got to be a successful ordinectomy. We can't have mediocrity as I need a batch immediately, no matter what the cost may be, we must get hold of the technology." Jolly nodded. "That means we better think it out again." The Canon turned on one foot and began to pace about the room, his mind furiously working on new plans. "If we review the situation," he said, "Canonaskew the Cosmic's got to go! We'll burn him with radiation, so in the dark his body will softly glow. And then, I'll take my rightful place as Bishop to all Outer Space. I'll bump off Trebor with my mace and make sure there's no tell-tale trace. I'll dress up in the finest lace and then they'll all adore my face ..." He faltered and looked back at Jolly who was gently shaking his head. "You're right, of course," said the Canon. "I'm going to have to think it out again."

Canon eNeSeM paced across the room to a small cupboard, opened it and drew out a bottle and glass. Taking out the silver stopper he poured a small amount of bright green minty liquor into the glass, raised it to his mouth and swallowed it in one gulp. He wiped his lips with the back of his hand, leaving a faint smear of green on his leather glove. "Medicinal, my dears," he said to the bordinands, as he replaced the items in the cupboard. "Now, let me see how I can review this situation as my evil schemes have only got one aim." He threw wide his arms. "Total domination. The fools will see that it's not just a game. My plans are such that soon they'll see this planet will be truly free and governed by ecstatic

non-stipendiary replacing present ministry. You see, Jolly,” he said, his voice rising in excitement, “There is no in-between for me, and I don’t care who’ll get the chop for me! There’s no-one now can stop me!” The deep rumble of the Unseen Synod resonated through the chamber. “Only one!” Canon eNeSeM paused and looked around as if he was seeing the room for the first time. Then, shaking his head his mouth broke into a triumphant grin. “No-one can stop me, not even Him! And I’ll never have to think it out again!”

The sound of the Canon’s voice had barely stopped echoing around the walls when the Unseen Synod boomed out a new announcement. “Coctor Boo is bombing! Er, no, er ... Boc-tor Coo is drumming! No, wait a minute, let’s try that agin. Doctor Broo is coming!” Canon eNeSeM’s face paled under the black helmet. “Dr. Broo, my arch-enemy, and the only one who can upset my plans. I’ll fix him, the misguided defender of Laitoss. Jolly, we’ve work to do.” The Canon ushered Jolly and the bordinands towards the door, but before they reached it the entrance was blocked by Canonaskew the Cosmic. “Ah, Canon. Have you heard? Dr. Broo is coming! The announcement has just been made by the Unseen Synod Communications Team. I really don’t know what to do. We’re hardly ready for a VIP visit. Gosh, it was like this when the Apostolic Creationist Council Members came. ACCM always find fault. How should we handle this? You know I value your opinion.” Canon eNeSeM smiled. He knew exactly how to play this. “This could ruin your plans, O Great One. You know how Dr. Broo has always persuaded the Unseen Synod to obstruct your enthronement.” Canonaskew nodded. “You have a plan?” “Worry not, Cosmic Master. Leave the Doctor to me, and you shall have your episcopectomy as you so rightfully deserve.” The Ruler of the Diospheres put his arm around the Canon’s shoulder. “Thank you, thank you. I’m sure you’re right. Me. Enthroned! How marvellous! I’ll be able to wear that lovely gold thing, and everybody can ... well, they can kiss my .... er, ring, and it’ll be lovely, lovely.” Canonaskew gave the Canon’s shoulder a squeeze and then left chamber, humming softly to himself. Canon eNeSeM scowled after him and turned to Jolly. “Oh yes, he’ll get his episcopectomy alright, and you, Jolly, will make sure that the operation goes sadly, fatally, wrong! And then, then I’ll be Master of the planet, Grand Ruler of Laitoss!” Ha ha ha ha ha!” Jolly clapped his hands in excitement as the bordinands cowered in fright before the maniacal laughter. The one called Bobbert soiled himself.



2Q  
TARGUM



# SCROLL I

## THE DARK SIDE OF PLANET LAITOSS

The engines of the Turdis squealed like a stuck pig as the craft lurched into existence and landed on the wet soil of Laitoss. Dr. Broo pulled several levers and pushed some brightly-coloured buttons and the glow of the central time and space drive, the heart of the Turdis, slowly dissipated. The Doctor's companion activated the viewscreen and knotted her forehead as it revealed blackness. "Where are we, Miss Widdals?" asked the Doctor, wiping the sweat from his hands on the front of his jacket. "I don't really know," she answered. "It's all black." Dr. Broo sighed. "I knew you shouldn't have had that time off. You've forgotten how to work the thing. Spending all that time with Cyril. I don't know what you see in him. He's so boring." "No he's not," said Miss. Widdals, turning from the viewscreen and facing the Doctor. "He's quite fascinating when you get to know him. He's got lots of little things about him that you can't see at first glance. Even though it's only been a few weeks I feel as if I've been living with him for ages. Every night I get back to our little house and I can't wait. I go straight up to him, pick him up, and snuggle down with all my stuffed bunnies ... " Miss. Widdals looked at the Doctor's expression that was a mixture of pity and disgust. "I know. It's odd, but I can't help it, it's just the way I am." The Doctor snorted. "Oh really! Cyril of Alexandria is so passé. He's from Earth for a start. Hardly a seat of theological excellence. Not like my thing. Now that's really up to date. My work on 4Q Florilegium. That's the meaning of life. The secret of time travel, eschatological, teleological and cosmological." Miss. Widdals turned back to the viewscreen. "It's a load of old scrolls," she said. "The truth be told," said the Doctor, "you're always itching to have a dig at my scrolls." "Never mind that now," said Miss. Widdals. "Look at this viewscreen. Where are we? Why is it dark? What does it mean? Is it?" The Doctor moved across the control room and stood beside her. He pushed a few buttons and twiddled a dial. "It means, er, well,.... It means that we're in the only honest situation for scholars, Anglicans, and 'I-don't-know-anymores' like you. It means ...." He pushed a large green button and the screen flickered and died. "It means we're lost." "Lost?" yelled Miss. Widdals, grabbing his lapels and thrusting her face into his. "Lost?" Call yourself a scholar? How can we be lost?" Dr. Broo shook himself free. "We're not exactly lost. Something's gone wrong with the computer that generates our co-ordinates in the space-time continuum." "Huh!" snorted his companion. "I never had this sort of trouble with my Morris Minor. It might not have had any frills but at least it performed as I wanted it to." The Doctor peered at four small dials and poked a little metal balance arm. "It must be the ball-cock," he declared. "Don't be vulgar!" said Miss. Widdals, colouring a little. "You misunderstand me, my dear," replied the Doctor, adjusting a grub screw with the end of his door key. "I'm getting negative readings on my 2Q Melch, and the CD7 Pathfinder's come off its Targum. Where's the Midrash?" Miss. Widdals flinched and looked uncomfortable. "I don't know, do I?" she said. "You're always saying I've got midrash. It's not true. I just look like that when I eat boiled sweets."

The Doctor fiddled about with the dials a few more times then lifted off the main console's inspection panel. He stuck his head inside but after a few minutes during which time he uttered words that came from an archaic and dead language, he re-emerged. "Well, it can't be fixed from in there. We need to use the access port outside. He handed his screwdriver to Miss. Widdals and pulled a red lever towards him. With a growl the door of the

Turdis opened. "Come on," he said, and together they stepped out onto the planet's surface.

The air was moist, and on the far horizon was the faintest indication of dawn. The Doctor moved to the side of the ship, undid the clasps on a small hatchway and lifted off the cover. "I'm too big to fit in there," he said. "You sort it out." Holding the Doctor's tool Miss Widdals thrust her head and shoulders into the opening, leaving the rest of her torso sticking out. The Doctor looked at his fob watch. "It's seven in the morning already," he said, shaking the timepiece and slipping it back into his waistcoat pocket. "We should be at Canonaskew's court by now. What was it the Unseen Synod said in its message to us? 'Things on this planet have erred and strayed like lost sheep, for they have gone astray and followed the devices and desires of their own heart; they have offended ....' "Shut up!" screamed Miss Widdals from inside the bowels of the craft. "If we say all the Morning Office now we'll never get to Canonaskew's court in time for breakfast."

At that moment there was a loud bang and a flash of light from inside the console. Miss Widdals gave a short cry of pain, and at the same time the Doctor became aware of distant voices. He turned, and in the growing light he could see four figures making their way across the fields towards the Turdis. Their leader was clad in a strange garment made of animal skins whilst the other three wore monastic robes, and all were chanting in unison, "4 Q Florilegium! 4 Q Florilegium!"

John the Burkitt and the three Intergalactic Ecstatic Prophets reached the Turdis and stood looking at the Doctor and the legs of Miss Widdals sticking out of the engine compartment. "Fork you, Florilegium," muttered one of the prophets as their chanting ceased. The Burkitt gazed at the Doctor and then asked, "Are you the One?" Dr. Broo took a step backwards. "I'm not one, but I'm not sure about her," and he indicated the legs. "Widdals!" he cried. "Are you one?" The muffled voice of Miss Widdals came back. "That's no question to ask a lady. Have you been looking?" John the Burkitt ignored this and pointed his bony finger at the Doctor. "But who is the One, the One who is to come? Who is 4 Q Florilegium, and what does she mean?" Dr. Broo raised a quizzical eyebrow at this strange turn of events. "You've heard of my paper then? 4Q Florilegium? That's excellent. What is it you want to know?" The Burkitt sank to his knees and then lay backwards on the ground. The prophets stood around him softly chanting, "Feel the earth move. Feel it. Feel it." "I need to know," said the Burkitt, "the meaning of life, and how to spell it." Doctor Broo knew how to deal with this question. "It's quite simple really," he said, and sitting down next to the prostrate figure he reached into his pocket and drew out several sheets of paper covered in cuneiform script. "Look, it's all on this handout. Pass them round." One of the prophets came forward and took the papers, handing one to each of the other two monks. "It's the blurb on my new book," said the Doctor. "It's a comprehensive analysis of a key exegetical document, including a critical text and translation; an assessment of Qumran exegetical method as a whole and its relationship to contemporary use of ....." "You don't want that rubbish," interrupted Miss Widdals, emerging from the hatchway. "You want Cyril of Alexandria." Dr. Broo threw an oily rag at her. "Will you get on with, Miss Widdals?" John the Burkitt looked at them both and muttered something under his breath and then turned to the prophets. They were busy tearing up sheets the sheets of paper given to them by the Doctor. "Oh, don't worry about them," said Dr. Broo. "I've another copy," and getting up he walked to the Turdis, reached his hand through the open door and came back to the seated prophet carrying a toilet roll. "Each sheet contains one sentence of translation of

the original,” he explained, handing the roll to The Burkitt. John took it and casually tossed it to the prophets. “Follow the Florilegium”, he cried, and the three prophets chased after the roll as it bounced across the ground.. Finally one of them stopped it, picked it up and all three began tearing off sheets and reading them. Dr. Broo sighed. “I don’t know how they get through the Selection Conference these days. I don’t suppose they’ve even attended a decent university.” He looked at his companion’s torso once again wedged in the inspection hatchway. “Have you sorted it yet, Miss. Widdals?” “I think so,” came her muffled voice. She extracted herself and looked at the Doctor. “Let’s try it.” and they both re-entered the Turdis and stood before the main control panel.

Dr. Broo picked up a long stick at one end of which was a silver hand with a pointing index finger. He moved forward and used the metal finger to press a blue button. “Midrash,” he declared. “Check!” said Miss. Widdals. The Doctor pressed a red button with the stick. “Targum,” he said. “Check,” repeated Miss. Widdals. “Ballcock,” said the Doctor, turning a large dial with his other hand and pressing forward a lever. There was the sound of flushing water from the Turdis’s basement. “Oooh!” exclaimed Miss. Widdals. “And off we go!” said the Doctor, and with a noise reminiscent of a kitten tied to a piece of string and whirled around the room, the lights inside the Turdis went out, the blue light on top of the box began to flash, and the craft dematerialised.

John the Burkitt remained seated on the ground and gazed at the empty space where the craft had been but a few moments before. “Bugger!” he declared, and in annoyance he flung a small rock at the prophets who were intently reading the text of the Florilegium. It hit one of them on the shin. He stopped reading, rubbed his ankle and looked at The Burkitt. “Four Q”, he snarled.

## SCROLL II

### THE COURT OF CANONASKEW (AGAIN)

Canonaskew the Cosmic sat on his throne toying with his bejewelled sceptre as Canon eNe-SeM, Jolly and Colonel Titas paced around on the flagstones in front of him. Whilst Canonaskew was excited about the thought of his coming episcopectomy, there were many logistical challenges in arranging the enthronement ceremony, and the three courtiers were attempting, without much success, to solve some of them. Their deliberations were interrupted by Trebor the Troubadour who wandered into the chamber singing to himself one of the popular ditties about Canonaskew’s personal attributes. “... has two but very small ...” He stopped himself as he realised where he was. The three were looking at him with some visible alarm, whilst the Ruler of the Diospheres thankfully appeared not to have noticed. Trebor coughed nervously and approached the Canon. He was about to apologise when a fanfare of trumpets sounded, and three metallic diakons arrayed in cloth of silver entered. Behind them came the two nervous bordinands, Bobbert and GreyHame. Canonaskew’s face lit up as they approached. “Ah! My new batch of diakons! How lovely you look!” He gestured at the bordinands. “Wouldn’t you like to be dressed in such apparel? Look at their lovely asssocks.” The first of the diakons bowed in symbolic reverence. “Oh, you’re too kind,” he said. The second stepped forward. “Allow us to introduce ourselves. I am 4.” The third diakon inclined his head. “I am Q.” “And I,” said the first diakon, “am Florilegium, but you can call me Flo.” 4 looked at the bordinands. “And you,” he said,

“following us here like lapdogs. Who are you?” The bordinands shifted from one foot to the other. It was GreyHame who answered. “We’re nothing,” he said, “just laymen.” “Not worth your noticing us,” said Bobbert, wishing the floor would open and swallow him up. “Lay-men?” exclaimed Flo. “It’s my lucky day.” Bobbert looked shocked. “Oh no,” he said, “I’m not like *that*. I’m a married man. I had a secure job before I was captured. I was a clerk in the Galactic Banking Corporation. I had an interesting life in the world of industry and commerce. I feel I have a lot to experience to offer this community, and I have done some ordinology with the Asphalt Training Scheme.” 4 raised his right arm in a gesture of contempt. “Be quiet. You have said enough, worm. You are nothing. You are here awaiting ordinectomy. You will not speak out of turn or you will be excommunicated!” This last word seemed to trigger an automatic response from the other diakons, for they both raised their right arms and chanted, “Excommunicate! Excommunicate! Excommunicate!” Canonaskew stood up and gained their attention. “Come, come, my sweetings. All shall be well with you. You’ve all introduced yourselves. Now, hmmm, tell me; who do bordinands say that I am?” The two bordinands glanced at each other and replied in unison, “You are who you are.” Canonaskew beamed jovially. “Yes, yes, that’s lovely, but we don’t use that name here. In olden times that name was thought to be too sacred to be uttered. And wouldn’t it be wonderful if we were to follow the tradition of the elders and say, ‘The Bord’?” GreyHame frowned. “The Bord? I don’t get it. You are who you are, aren’t you?” Canonaskew threw his sceptre at GreyHame, narrowly missing his shaven head. “Aaargh! I am Bord!” Flo let out a small metallic sigh. “So am I,” he murmured. Canon eNeSeM looked at Canonaskew. “Cut off their stipends, I say. Cut them off! Off with them!” Jolly produced a pair of shears out of his voluminous trousers. “Cut!” he repeated. “Cut! Cut!” The Colonel nodded in agreement. “Oh yes, that’ll be a great saving.” Jolly waggled the shears. “Get ‘em off!” he shouted. Canonaskew waved his arms. “No, no. Gently does it, Canon. We must show mercy.” Jolly lowered the shears. “Must we?” Canonaskew the Cosmic looked at the bordinands. “I’ll ask you again. Who do you say that I am?” GreyHame struggled to find the words. “Er... aren’t you what you is, aren’t I?” Bobbert fared no better. “No, he isn’t who he was any more, is he?” GreyHame began to sweat. “No, he’s saying he will be what he wasn’t, aren’t we?” Canon eNeSeM moved across and smacked his tonsure. “No, you fool. He is The One!” Flo’s metal ears twitched. “Oh, not another one?” Canonaskew turned back to his throne and sat down heavily. “These first years will never do, eNeSeM.. You’ll have to do better than this.” eNeSeM turned to Jolly who was still holding the shears in the vague hope that he might be called upon to wield them violently. “Come, Jolly. To the LAVORATORY! And bring that rabble with you” Jolly thrust the shears back down the front of his trousers. “Goodo!” He moved across and shepherded the bordinands and diakons out of the room. As they exited Colonel Titas signalled to Trebor, and the Troubadour broke into extemporary song, his dulcet tones soothing the savage beast that was beating in the breast of the ruler of the Cosmos.

### SCROLL III

#### THE SAME AGAIN (PLEASE)

A few minutes later, as Trebor finished his song, and Canonaskew the Cosmic was leaning back on his throne in a state of mental calm, a faint shimmer of light accompanied by grating engine noises began to manifest itself by the grand fireplace. Slowly the Turdis started

to materialise until at last, with a loud “pop!” and a flatulent noise like that of a bloated cow, it solidified on the marble floor. The blue rotating light on its roof went out, and muffled banging noises could be heard from the ship’s door. “I can’t open the door, Widdals! It’s stuck!” “Here, let me try,” came a woman’s voice, and there was renewed banging from inside. “Wait a minute,” she said. “Let me try this!” There was the screech of metal being torn from its mountings, but the door refused to budge.

Canonaskew rose from his throne, and with the others cautiously approached the Turdis. All looked apprehensive, all except Trebor who gave a little skip of excitement and exclaimed, “Oh! It’s Dr. Broo! Hip, hip, hurrah! He is come here from the Synod! What will the leader say?” Canonaskew silenced him with a slap on the back of his head. “Silence, you fool!” He looked at eNeSeM. “Doctor Broo? Egad. He’s here already? And I haven’t got my Gleeson formals on!” Canon eNeSeM sidled up to the Cosmic Ruler. “Fear not, O Great One. I think the Doctor has come for his ordinectomy. You know how he has resisted you and your great movement all these years, but now he’s playing into our hands. He wants to be done.” eNeSeM turned his head to one side and whispered to Jolly, “And so he shall be. Canonaskew’s too soft. You’ll see that he’s done, won’t you Jolly.” Jolly nodded vigorously and gripped his small weapon.

Trebor approached the Turdis door and tentatively knocked twice on it. The scuffling sounds from inside stopped, and the Doctor’s voice replied, “Who’s there?” “Doctor ...” said Miss Widdals. Canonaskew raised his vice. “Doctor who?” eNeSeM sighed and muttered, “Oh, by the Rings of Orion, it was only a matter of time ... and space ... before that one came up.” He poked Canonaskew’s arm. “No, Great One, Doctor Broo.” Trebor giggled like a little girl. Inside the Turdis the voices resumed. The group heard Miss. Widdals ask, “Where’s the key?” Trebor cocked his head enquiringly. “1p? Who’s got a penny for the slot, eh?” Jolly looked at him. “If it’s a question of money, you need to speak to the Colonel.” Canonaskew smiled ingratiatingly at Colonel Titas. He knew only too well how tightly the Bursar held the purse strings, so in a wheedling voice he taunted him. “Go on, Colonel. Spare a copper, eh? Go on, guv,” and he playfully nudged the Colonel’s money sack that was always attached to his waistband. The Colonel hurriedly pushed the heavy pouch inside his trousers. Fleeting Trebor thought it made him look quite attractive. “Oh. I don’t think I’ve got any on me at the moment,” said Titas. “I must say that it’s very unfair of you to spring financial demands on me and the Trustees at such short notice. These things have to be budgeted for, you know.” Canonaskew grunted. “Oh he’s no good. It’s like getting blood out of a Phrygian bat.” Suddenly he had an idea. “I know,” he exclaimed, and he called out in a loud voice, “Catriona! Catriona!” A small door in the recess of the throne room opened, and an elegant woman entered. She walked purposefully across to Canonaskew and stood in front of him. “Ah, Catriona,” said Canonaskew, “I know I can rely on you. Give me a penny would you?” Without a word the woman took a small coin purse out of her left sleeve, opened it and held out a shiny Galactic penny. “Give it to Trebor, that’s a good girl.” Catriona held her hand out to Trebor who gently took the coin from her, blushing as he did so. “That’s a good girl,” said Canonaskew. “You can naff off now!” Without a sign of emotion the woman turned and walked slowly back to the recess and shut the door behind her. “Wonderful woman,” sighed the Colonel. “Such poise. You take her for granted, Great One. Good staff are hard to find.” Canonaskew shrugged. “I suppose so,” he said, dismissing the subject from his mind. “Now, Trebor, get on with it.” Trebor the Troubadour walked over to the Turdis and inserted the penny in the slot above the

handle. With a click the knob turned and the door opened to reveal Dr. Broo and Miss. Widdals. Canonaskew stepped forward. "Ah, Dr. Broo. How wonderful to see you. To see you, it's wonderful. How are things at the Unseen Synod?" But before the Doctor had a chance to reply Canonaskew had spotted Miss. Widdals. "But who is this pretty little thing you've brought with you? Isn't she lovely? What pretty little, er .. taffetas you have, my dear." However, Miss. Widdals was no fool. She recognised this overture for what it was, and she was taking no prisoners. She idly flicked her tassels, "They're polyester," she replied. But Canonaskew was not so easily deflected. "Oh, yes, charming, quite charming. And what is your name, you little vixen?" "Widdals." said Miss. Widdals. Trebor laughed and jangled his stick. "With all the time you were in there I thought you'd been!" The others ignored him. "But don't you have another name?" enquired Canonaskew. "Miss Widdals," replied Miss. Widdals. "Ah," leered the Cosmic Ruler, "Miss. Widdals?" "Miss," replied Miss. Widdals. Canonaskew pulled himself up to his full height and thrust back his shoulders. "I am Bord," he declared.

Canon eNeSeM had been viewing the proceedings with increasing annoyance, and he decided that now was the time for him to make his move. "We're all bored with this!" he declared. "Enough is enough!" He turned to his sidekick. "Jolly? Seize them! Seize them all!" Jolly drew out his shears and waved them menacingly at the group, forcing them to huddle together. Canonaskew found himself next to Miss. Widdals, which was not at all unpleasant. Dr. Broo was forced into close contact with the Colonel and Trebor, and together they were herded out of the throne room, Canon eNeSeM bringing up the rear. What the Canon had not bargained for was the ineptitude of Jolly, and so, as the bumbling idiot tried to herd the prisoners out of the room the Doctor suddenly cried, "The game's afoot!" and the group scattered in all directions. Jolly chased after the Doctor whilst Canonaskew chased after Miss. Widdals, and eNeSeM chased after him. The Colonel slowly crept away to the recess, opened the door to Catriona's office and swiftly slipped inside. Evading Jolly, Doctor Broo made for the main doors, flung them open and ran out. Miss. Widdals ran after him, Canonaskew in hot pursuit, panting from the unusual exertion. Trebor meanwhile had hidden round the back of the Turdis, and as Canon eNeSeM followed out through the throne room doors he came round the side, saw that the coast was clear, and hurried out.

The room fell silent as the sounds of running footsteps died away. The lights on the Turdis flickered and then went out. From inside came a loud "Pharrp!" and the sound of a small rodent being sick.

3Q  
MIDRASH



# SCROLL I

## THE FOREST – AT NIGHT

The clearing in the forest was bathed in the cold white light of the full moon Zion that had risen to its zenith, whilst the waning crescent of Vilderbest was dipping towards the canopy of ancient timber. The grunts and whistles of the nocturnal wildlife was all that could be heard, the timeless background noise of nature that continued unabated through the rise and fall of empires and dominions.

Suddenly, out of the bushes, a roll of perforated paper bounced into the clearing and came to a stop against a small molehill. It was followed a few moments later by crashing noises in the undergrowth, and into the moonlight came John the Burkitt, followed by the three Intergalactic Ecstatic Prophets. He spied the paper roll and swiftly fell to his knees and crept towards it. The prophets did the same, until they were gathered around the object. They bowed their heads to the ground and began mumbling various incantations and prayers, and they were in this position when Dr. Broo stepped out onto the sward. He was walking nervously backwards, and so he didn't see the other figures until he tripped over John the Burkitt. "4Q!" he ejaculated, stumbling to his feet and looking at his right hand where the flesh still showed the imprint of the Doctor's "Marten" boots. "Cor," exclaimed the older prophet, "Florilegium!" The Doctor looked at him and raised a quizzical eyebrow. "Ah, you're still reading it then?" he asked. "I didn't think anyone could." The Burkitt regained his composure. "Yes, yes," he said. "The Florilegium is the Way. At least I think it is." Dr. Broo watched as one of the prophets reached out for the toilet roll, reverently cradled it in his hands, stood up, and tore off another sheet. He looked back at the Burkitt. "What did you think of the way I handled the Heilsgeschichte?" Burkitt spat onto the grass. "This is no time for your personal fantasies," he said. "Tell us about the salvation history." This brought the other prophets to their feet, and the three of them gathered in a small circle around the Doctor. The older prophet spoke. "I thought that you approached the problem of the textual evidence of 11 Job, *'That they are double to that which is'* with a lamentable post-Bultmannesque hermeneutic." The prophet next to him nodded. "Very liberal Protestant, that was. I only thought I was reading Harnack, didn't I?" The two other prophets nodded, their cowed heads looking as if they were mounted on springs.

Before Dr. Broo could voice his astonishment at their comments, he was interrupted by John the Burkitt, who looked over his shoulder at the bushes. "What was that?" he asked, raising his arm and pointing to the left of a large gnarled tree. Dr. Broo looked at him. "It was nothing," he said, "merely some animal of something. For goodness sake, demythologise yourself, man!" The words were still on his lips when the sound of snapping branches caused him to jump in surprise. He turned to face the undergrowth. The Intergalactic Ecstatic Prophets bunched together behind him. "I'm really, really scared," said the youngest. "I'm really scared," said the middle one. "I'm scared as well," said the eldest. John the Burkitt looked pityingly at them. "We are of the Florilegium," he declared. "Of whom then shall we be afraid?" Just then there was a loud crash as a huge branch fell from the ancient tree. The youngest prophet wailed. "There!" he said, pointing at the dark vegetation. "There's something there! I saw it move!" The Burkitt's eyes rolled up into his head as he began to enter a trance state. "Visions!" he cried. "Visions of the night!" The Doctor turned to face the cowering prophets. "There's only one way to deal with a situation like

this," he said. "Run away?" enquired the middle prophet. "No," declared the Doctor. "When I was faced with the menace of thieves and pickpockets on the planet Heir u'Salem and I felt afraid, I held my head erect and whistled a happy tune, so no-one would know." The prophets looked at him, wonderingly. "While shivering in my shoes," continued the Doctor, "I'd strike a careless pose, and whistle a happy tune, so no-one ever knew I was afraid." The prophets looked at each other, shrugged their shoulders and lifted their heads. Doctor Broo turned to face the bushes. "The result of this deception is very strange to tell," he said, "for when I fool the people, I fool myself as well." The oldest prophet moved to his side. "What you're saying is," he said, "that if you make believe you're brave, the trick will take you far, and you may be as brave as you believe you are?" Doctor Broo smiled and took his hand in his, gripping it firmly. "Absolutely right," he said. "Now, let's see what's out there!" and accompanied by John the Burkitt and the other two Ecstatic Prophets, the party walked off into the undergrowth.

All was quiet for a few moments, and then a chorus of long drawn-out screams echoed through the night air.

## SCROLL II

### A CAMP FIRE – LATER THAT NIGHT

The flames crackled and spat as the damp wood that Clawde had thrown onto the fire began to catch. The grey smoke rose lazily into the cool night air, and the two tramps huddled closer to the warmth, overshadowed by the large hairy bulk that reached forward over their heads and stirred the contents of the blackened cauldron hanging over the hot embers. "Ugggh!" it belched. "More kuppasoup?" The dirtier of the two tramps held up his bowl. "Ta very much, guv," he said. The second tramp also held out his container. "Gawd bless yer." The first tramp watched as Clawde ladled some of the hot broth into his bowl. "It's more than they give you at Canonaskew's place, I can tell yer," he said, drawing his bowl back to his chest and dipping in his spoon. The second tramp sipped the meaty concoction. "A very nice drop o' soup, that is, guv," he said, pausing to pick out a small bone from between his teeth. Clawde looked at his guests appreciatively. "Canonaskew's place?" he said. "They're animals up there, especially that Canon eNeSeM. Look what his blinking experiment did to me! Ruined my life, he did. I felt like a bloomin' guinea pig, whatever one of them is." The older tramp tutted. "Disgusting! That's what I call it, disgusting!" The other tramp drained his mug. "And 'im a man o'the cloth an' all." Clawde arched his shoulders and the tramps heard his bones click. He looked at his unexpected guests. "Ugh. You two did well to get away. I can't get away, not anymore, not since that blinking 'periment. Ruined me chances 'e did, the poncy old naffer. And then 'e kicked us out." The two tramps looked at each other. "Us?" they queried, in unison.

As if in answer to their question there was a great thundering in the bushes, and a loud voice said, "Pardon me." Into the small clearing lumbered two deformed beasts, one with a long mouse-like snout and covered in light-brown fur, and the other a tall mis-shapen blob of long brown hair. Between them were Doctor Broo, the three Intergalactic Ecstatic Prophets, and John the Burkitt who was quietly munching on a large green insect, the juice running down his chin. "Ello, Clawde," said the mouse-like monster. "Got the soup on? We've brought some company." "Ello, Bulgaria, 'ello Bert," said Clawde. "The more the

merrier. What have you picked up in the woods this time?" Bert pushed the captives forward into the firelight. "More strays," he said. He poked the prophets with the long stick he was carrying. "These look alright, but this one," and he poked the Burkitt, "this one was a bit noisy. We 'ad to stuff a lokust grub in 'is gob. As for this one 'ere," and he poked the Doctor, "I don't know about this fancy git. He looks like one of them." Bert's ears, or what passed for ears, twitched at this last comment and he pawed at the Doctor's back. "Ooogh, luvly. I think 'e is one of them. 'Ee's a nice boy, 'e is." Doctor Broo shrugged off Bert's paw and moved closer to the camp fire. Clawde looked at them. "Well," he said, "I s'pose we'd better put 'em up for the night. Are you 'ungry?" The prophets nodded, and Bulgaria pushed them towards the fire. The two tramps picked up some greasy bowls that were lying next to the wood pile, filled them from the cauldron and handed them round. "Ere you are, mates," said the older one, "get this down yer," Dr. Broo took the offered bowl. "Thank you," he said, and he looked at the two itinerants more closely in the flickering light. "I might be mistaken," he said, "but aren't you Bordinands?" The older tramp spat in disgust. "Pah! I should coco!" The younger tramp laughed bitterly. "For all the bleedin' good it does us." Doctor Broo sat down on a fallen tree and gratefully sipped his soup. "What happened?" he asked them, "and how did all this misery come to the once beautiful and peaceful planet of Laitoss?" The older tramp sat down, took out a small leather pouch, extracted what looked like a black beetle from it, popped it into his mouth, and, after chewing vigorously for a few moments, answered him. "Well guv, as you look's like a gent an' all, I'll tell ya." The younger tramp fingered the edge of the Doctor's coat. "I s'pect you only use this fancy thing for sermons and the like, eh?" "Shut up, Alan, and sit down," said the older tramp, and he looked at the Doctor.

"When that Canonaskew git and 'is smooth-talkin' diakons landed, everything seemed triff, know what I mean?" He rolled his eyes in a suggestive manner, picked a piece of beetle carapace out of his mouth, flicked it into the fire and continued. "They said they'd give us adult educashion and fings, take us to the theatre, get us to speak proper like. Sometimes they let us dress up like diakons, you know, just for fun." The younger tramp grinned. "Yeah, that were nice." The older one ignored the interruption. "Only we didn't learn quick enough, so they said we 'ad to have the ordinectomy thing, and that's when things started going orf, in'it? 'Speriments and things." The Doctor looked up from the dregs in his bowl. "Experiments?" The older tramp sniffed. "Yeah, well, that's what oi said. 'Speriments. What's the matter, eh? Don't I speak proper?" The Doctor hastened to calm him down. "No, no, it doesn't matter, really; it doesn't matter. I can understand you perfectly, After all, I am a cunning linguist." Bert moved closer to the Doctor's shoulder and the older tramp ignored the Doctor's comment. "Oi reckon we escaped just in the nick o' time." The younger tramp called Alan waved his fist in the air. "Yeah! In the nick, mate! In the nick!" One of the prophets put down his soup bowl. "It's a sign!" he exclaimed, "A sing!" The other two threw their bowls to the ground and stood up, ecstatically chanting, "Woe! Woe! The end of the world! The end of the world!" "Shut up!" said Bulgaria, and he roughly pushed them back down. The Doctor looked at them. "I don't think you're interpreting that properly. But even so, things are pretty bad here on planet Laitoss. But what can we do? The evil eNeSeM's got Miss. Widdals, and if I'm not mistaken, he plans to bump off that doddering old patriarch Caonaskew first chance he gets. What can we do? It's a real puzzler." John the Burkitt tried to speak, but with the lokust grub still in his mouth all that came out was unintelligible gibberish. Bert looked at him. "Oi fink he's try-

ing to tell us something.” “I wish he would,” said the Doctor, “but I can’t understand a word he’s saying.” The Burkitt struggled to speak once again, but unable to form any words he reluctantly took the lokust out of his mouth. He coughed and cleared his throat. “Listen, listen. I’m getting a massage.” The prophets raised both arms, waved them in the air and cried in chorus, “A massage! A massage!” The Burkitt slapped the nearest round the back of the head. “No, it’s not a massage, or a message! It’s a vision!” Immediately the prophets changed their chant. “A vision! A vision”, and they began ululating wildly. John the Burkitt lay prone on the ground looking upwards at the stars. “I can feel the earth moving!” he cried. “It’s coming! It’s coming!” It really is!” At this the prophets began tearing at their clothes, renting them in two. “It’s coming!” they screamed. “It’s coming!” Then all of them, The Burkitt and the three Intergalactic Ecstatic Prophets, began to make gurgling noises and drool. The Doctor sighed and turned to Clawde. “Is there any more soup in that cauldron?” he asked. “I’m starving.”

### SCROLL III

## THE CLOUD OF NOT KNOWING

In the ethereal reality that was the debating chamber, the members of the Unseen Synod of Laitoss gathered in session. The room was undergoing re-decoration, and the seating areas were perched unsteadily on top of a massive structure of wooden beams and thick-hewn planks. When each had taken their place in their allotted seats a single note sounded, and standing stiffly erect they began to chant.

*I am S. Y. N. O D. (noddy-noddy)*

*I am S. Y. N. O D. (noddy-noddy)*

*Perhaps I am, perhaps I’m not,*

*I’m S. Y. N. O D.*

As their voices echoed away a deep silence fell, and the members sat down. An aged and grey-bearded sage walked to the dais and stood on the north side of the table. He banged his gavel down and all eyes turned to him. “Dearly beloved brethren, distinguished colleagues of the Unseen Synod in the Sky; the 4Q Florilegium moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess that we manifoldly don’t have a clue what we’re doing stuck up here on this dangerous piece of scaffolding.” “Hear, here!” cried a voice from the back row. KY-BCP, for it was he, looked for the source of the interruption but failed to pinpoint its perpetrator. He returned to his opening address. “Humpf! We are gathered here today in the presence of all these idiots,” and he gestured to the public gallery, “to discuss and decide upon the fate of our servants Dr. Broo, Miss. Widdals, and the planet Laitoss itself.” He gazed myopically at the sea of uncomprehending faces. “What seemeth meet, right and our bounden duty so to do?” A voice from the back shouted, “Form a committee!” “Aye!” came the response from the assembly. “Form a committee! Form a committee!” KY-BCP looked at the representatives and sighed. They were nothing if not predictable. In point of fact, they *were* nothing, and yet they held the power to build and to tear down, to love and to hate, to gather stones and to scatter them. He held up his hand and silence fell.

“Dearly beloved brethren,” he said again. “Oh you sagacious and pot-bellied old duffers. Though time is indeed a relative and unworthy concept, e’en eternity seems too short for a committee, and the needs of our dear brothers and sisters of Laitoss press upon us most

urgently.” Several members of the Unseen Synod began to yawn, and a white-haired Bishop in the front row called out, “I vote KY-BCP sorts it all out. We’re too busy for this. We’ve got to decide the procedure for re-marriage in the lurch.” There were cries of “Here, here” from around the room, and several members waved their ballot papers in an obscene way. Another Bishop stood up and attracted the attention of the room. “Then it’s unanimous. It’s all yours, KY old chap, and you can tell Canonaskew what we agreed at yesterday’s session to do to him while you’re at it. That’ll give the old time-server a shock!” There were cheers from several parts of the chamber, and KY-BCP struggled to maintain his decorum. “Ah, well,” he blustered, “botheration! I mean, well, I am your most humble servant, unworthy, obsequious servant ...” His voice trailed off as the members roared their approval. “Get on with it then!” cried one. “Tell them what to do!” yelled another. “Get’em off!” shouted a short red-faced archdeacon. KY banged his gavel on the table and silence was gradually restored. He cleared his throat. “Hhrrrmph. I hereby declare and pronounce that you, being penitent, should all be nice and tolerant to one another and not eat too quickly because it gives you wind.” He sat down as the chamber began to empty, the members going in search of the bar. When he was sure no-one remained behind, he took out a small stone tablet and began to inscribe on it with a piece of flint: *I will be paying you a visit very shortly. Please put the kettle on. I think that’s all for now. Bye bye.*

In the clearing the Doctor lay awake listening to the snoring of the company. There were occasional dreamy outbursts from the prophets, and the occasional outbreak of wind from Bert, but the his mind was elsewhere. Suddenly he felt a vibration in his coat pocket. He pulled out a small metal object and studied it for a moment. So, he thought, KY-BCP’s coming, eh? He tutted. Fat lot of good that’ll do. He looked at his sleeping companions. He knew the only course of action left open to them was to follow the plan he’d been forming in his mind for the past couple of hours. He put the object back in his coat pocket and drew the blanket around him. He’d tell them all about it in the morning. The embers of the camp fire still glowed red, and within a few minutes the Doctor was fast asleep.



4Q  
THE FLORILEGIUM



# SCROLLS I - XIV

## THE LABORATORY OF CANON ENESEM

### SCROLL I

Black water dripped from the ceiling and formed oily puddles in the corners of the dank room. Strange machinery, seemingly placed haphazardly, stood at different angles on the wooden floor. Thick electrical cables from power panels that hummed and emitted the occasional shower of sparks snaked across the timbers to them. The centre of the room was lit by the dirt-encrusted windows of a large octagonal lantern set high above the laboratory work area, allowing the orange-hue of early morning to flood down. In the semi-darkness behind one of the long wooden tables on which stood a maze of glass tubing, flacons, re-torts and test-tubes, the diakons, 4, Q and Florilegium, were on their hands and knees scrubbing at dark stains on the planks; stains that looked suspiciously like blood. Beside them stood the bordinand, GreyHame, holding a bucket of soapy water which he occasionally sloshed onto the floor, and more occasionally onto the diakons.

On the far side of the room the hinges of the heavy iron door squealed as it opened, and Canon eNeSeM and Jolly entered. The Canon looked across at the four figures and his top lip twisted in disgust. He strode over to them. "Come on!" he barked. "Clean this place up, slaves! There're bits of body and blood all over the place!" His right foot impacted a small piece of gore, flicking it up so that it sailed through the air and hit Q in the face. The diakon wiped the bloody mess from his cheek. "This is monstrence," he muttered, at which 4, Florilegium and GreyHame signed themselves with the mark of a cross. eNeSeM snorted. "Pah! Quiet, menials. The laboratory has to be ready for my guests, Dr. Petel and Mr. Tide. They'll be here any minute, and we don't want them to think that your old uncle eNeSeM's men are just part-timers, do we." Jolly chuckled and walked over to the other side of the room. He bent down and picked up a severed head. He sniffed it. "Ugh! This has gone off!" and he tossed it into a large bin upon the side of which were stencilled the words "FOR INCINERATOR USE ONLY". He moved across to one of the benches and picked up an amputated human leg. "This one's juicy," he said, and holding it over a bucket he squeezed it so that blood ran out. "Mmmm, still fresh," he added, catching some of the blood in his other hand and raising it to his lips. "And tasty. I'll take it down to Aeon at the restaurant at the bottom of the universe. I like goulash." He raised the limb to his mouth and took a small bite from the thigh. eNeSeM snatched up a glass container from the laboratory bench and threw it at him. It missed, but had the desired effect, for Jolly stopped his snacking and looked at the Canon. "Not now, Jolly," said eNeSeM, "not now! Put it down." Jolly reluctantly obeyed and threw the leg at Q who deftly caught it and passed it to Florilegium who studied it for a moment. "Mmm," he said, "nice calves." 4 snorted. "Pshaw! It belonged to a diakoness!" Florilegium's face took on an expression of abject horror and disgust, and he tossed the leg back to Q who, with a balletic twist redirected it across the room to Jolly. Jolly caught it and swiftly took another small bite from the thigh.

### SCROLL II

He was quietly munching, much to Canon eNeSeM's disgust, when Colonel Titas came through the open iron door accompanied by two men in white coats. "Ah, there you are, Canon eNeSeM!" he said, advancing briskly towards the cleric, "I thought I'd find you here."

The Canon turned and eyed the newcomers suspiciously. "Allow me to introduce our two visiting theonectomists," said the Colonel. "Dr. Petel and Mr. Tide." The white-coated men stepped forward. They were similar in appearance and age. The more slightly-built one extended a thin hand. "I'm very glad to meet you, Canon," he said, his voice sounding smooth as silk. His palm was slightly moist, and Canon eNeSeM's usually firm grip met no resistance. He felt slightly nauseous and let go as soon as he could. The other scientist held out his hand. "Mr. Tide," he said, "though really my name is Schneid, but people have so much trouble spelling it I go by the simpler name of Tide." The Colonel beamed. "Dr. Petel and Mr. Tide have just helicoptered in from the Ammerdown International Training Institute," he said. Jolly dropped the half-eaten leg and stumbled forward. "Ugh! Aren't you going to introduce me?" Without turning round the Canon indicated Jolly with a sweep of his arm. "That's Jolly," he said, dismissively. The scientists both looked briefly at the shambolic figure and then turned their attention to their surroundings. The Canon opened his arms in a gesture of welcome. "This," he said, proudly, "is where you'll be working. What you see before you is the nerve-centre of the Southern Diosphere Mind Transfer Scheme!" Jolly clapped his hands and chanted "SDMTS, SDMTS" in excitement. The Colonel broke in. "As you can see, we've bought a great deal of very expensive equipment. I don't see the need for it all myself. If it was up to me I'd just use the good old tried and tested methods we used in the army, back in the good old days of Staff Wars 2; cut their stipends off and have done with it!" Dr. Petel inclined his head to indicate understanding. "I think I hear what you're saying, but I don't quite know what you mean." The Canon sneered. "He says he thinks we're all too soft here on Laitoss these days." Little does he know, he thought. "Indeed," he continued, "we think it only right to maintain a humane approach in all our work. Isn't that right, Jolly?" Unfortunately Jolly was once again munching on the severed limb, and was caught off guard by this question. The Canon didn't usually seek his opinion on anything, and he was unsure how to answer. So, throwing the leg onto the floor once again he bumbled, "Oh, er, yes ... er, the humane approach." Dr. Petel smiled a thin smile. "I'm very pleased to hear you say that," he said, rubbing his hands together, "if that's what you're saying, that is." Canon eNeSeM could see the Doctor's hands glistening with moisture, and he momentarily wondered if this was a fluid that he could harvest and use in his processes. Dr. Petel walked around the laboratory bench and picked up a test tube. He held it to the light and examined its contents. "That was the approach taken by Professor John Carrot in the course of lectures I attended at the Intergalactic Institute for Developmental Alienology a little while back." This announcement galvanised Mr. Tide into action, and he moved up to the bench. "Ah, I missed those," he said. "What did he say?" Dr. Petel put the test tube back into the rack and rubbed his nose with his left forefinger. "Ah, well, er ... well, he was really, um, really saying what he said in a book soon to be published in the United Stars." "And what did he actually say?" pressed Mr. Tide. Dr. Petel prevaricated once again. "Well, er... what he said was, um, well .... I've ordered a copy for the library. You can read it for yourself then." He was saved from further questioning by the Colonel. "Well, well, we can't go on exchanging pleasantries all day, can we? If I may, I'll leave you gentlemen in the good hands of Canon eNeSeM here, while I go off to inspect your rooms. I trust they'll be to your liking. We've had to move two of our rodents into temporary accommodation in the outside convenience. Yours are not the best rooms, I know, but I'm sure you'll find them better than the rooms we offer the domestic staff." The Colonel gave a small wave of his hand and strode from the laboratory.

### SCROLL III

Canon eNeSeM turned to the two scientists. "You'd better have a look round and get used to the equipment. We've got one or two routine ordinectomies to run through before we attempt the episcopectomy on our great and rheumatic leader." Mr. Tide pushed his glasses up his nose. "Yes," he said, "we've been looking forward to that. I saw this wonderful blue nasty recording of an episcopectomy the other day. Dame Sydney Evans played the Bishop-to-be, and he met this really nasty end when this horrible old crone of a shop-lifter, played by Matrix somebody or other.." "Ah, yes," broke in Jolly, appearing from behind another bench where he had been scavenging for any operation left-overs. "I know her. She's been around in the Jupiter Bravo system for aeons. You can tell she's had the eternal youth operation." "Yes," agreed Mr. Tide, "and it must have been one of the earliest attempts on record." Jolly chuckled and resumed his search for more tasty scraps on the floor. "We, anyway," continued the scientist, "she was telling Dame Sydney to hold his head high ready for his episcopectomy, and then it came off in her hands! Terrific, it was. All blood and huts and gore and death. In 4D as well!" Dr. Petel tugged at the collar of his white coat to straighten it. "I hear what you're saying, Tide," he said, "but I don't think that I want to know what you mean." Canon eNeSeM wondered for a moment if he had hired the right men for the job, but it was too late now to change his plans. He moved towards the door. "Quite. Well, I've got to go now." He pointed to the diakons who were still scrubbing the floor. "You can use those old diakons for practice if you like," and he left, shutting the iron door behind him and leaving a faint smell of sulphur in the air.

### SCROLL IV

Florilegium look up from his scrubbing. "Ooh, I don't mind being used," he said, "but not just for practice." 4 threw his wet rag at him. "Shut up, you old queen, and take what you're offered." Mr. Tide walked over to the bickering diakons and took hold of Q's right arm. He pulled, expecting Q to get up, but instead the metallic material of Q's coat extended, and with the minimum of resistance, came free, and he was left holding an empty sleeve. Dr. Petel came over. "Look what you've done, Tide," he said. "You've disabled him." Mr. Tide scowled. "Rubbish!" he exclaimed. "There's no arm in it." and he turned round and tossed the sleeve onto the nearby bench. Florilegium snarled quietly into his bucket. "The bitch! He didn't lay even a finger on me!" Mr. Tide paid no attention to the snivelling creature. Instead he was staring at GreyHame who had put down his bucket of water and was now sitting in a nearby wooden chair. "Ah, look," he said to Dr. Petel, "what have we here?" Jolly lumbered over. "This is a bordinand," he explained to the two scientists, who were now closely examining the nervous creature. "We thought he might be of some use to you." he said. "He hasn't been done yet. If you'd like to have a go with him, we can stick one of these old diakons in the machine afterwards, and you'll be able to see the difference." Jolly grabbed hold of a nearby trolley on which lay a large bronze machine and wheeled it over to the scientists. "Let's just flash his thoughts up on the Ordinectomy Holographic Projector." "Ah," said Dr. Petel, "an OHP. I haven't seen one of those for years. They were all the rage back in my training days, but now they've been superseded by Diakon Virtual Decoders." "It may be old," said Jolly, "but it still works. Here, attach these leads to his head." Mr. Tide took the cables from Jolly, and as GreyHame began to get up from the chair, Dr. Petel held him down and snapped two metal restraints across his wrists. Mr. Tide expertly fixed the wires onto Greyhame's skull using sticky tape, holding

everything in place with a large woolly hat. "Good," said Jolly, and he turned on the machine. GreyHame's expression of apprehension was replaced by a blank stare, and slowly the screen on the top of the machine began to glow. Faint images appeared, and Mr. Tide smiled. "Ah, it's working. Great. I like a good movie." Dr. Petel nodded. "Yes, I do approve of visual aids." The three of them watched the images for a moment or two. "You can see what a state he's in," said Jolly, adjusting one of the knobs so that the image came more into focus. Dr. Petel's eyes widened. "Oh, it's disgusting. We've got to enable him to think theonectomally." "I think it's fascinating," said Mr. Tide, looking at the scenes of wild bacchanalia. "I could watch this all day." Jolly turned another control and the screen went dark. He removed the hat and wires from GreyHame's head and helped him out of the chair. The bordinand staggered weakly to the table and held on to it for support. Dr. Petel looked questioningly at Jolly. "Oh, he'll be alright," said Jolly. "It just takes a bit of energy out of people, that's all. Now," he said, grabbing Mr. Tide and seating him in the chair. "Let's compare him with this one." Mr. Tide struggled under Jolly's firm grip. "Take your hands off me!" he cried, "This ... is ...my .... body!" Jolly jumped back. "Oh! Sorry! My apologies. I got a bit carried away there. I meant to get this diakon," and he grabbed hold of Florilegium and sat him down, swiftly fixing the wrist restraints. "Now," he said, returning to the machine and switching it on, "this is what they're like after the ordinectomy. I think you'll find it pretty impressive. The screen flickered and then pastoral images of flora and fauna appeared, with small animals gambolling merrily in the sunshine. Mr. Tide gasped. "That's incredible!" he said. "What is that rabbit doing with that cucumber?" Dr. Petel pursed his lips. "I think I've got a book about that somewhere," he said. The images on the small screen grew ever more suggestive, and Jolly began to look concerned. "Actually," he said, "I don't think it should be like this," and he turned more dials and pushed several buttons, but they made no difference to what the group were seeing. Florilegium began to moan, and white foam appeared on his lips. "I think something's gone wrong," said Jolly, and he moved across and ripped the wires from the diakon's head. The screen went blank, and Florilegium's eyes opened. Jolly undid the restraints and pulled the diakon from the chair. "I think we need to see if there's any damage to the system." He turned and grabbed hold of GreyHame and guided him back to the seat. This time the bordinand offered no resistance, and Jolly didn't bother to shackle him. He taped on the wires and returned to the machine. "I'll have a go at transferring that recording of the ordinectomied mind into this pagan bordinand." He turned some dials and the screen once again showed writhing bodies and flowing wine. He pushed a lever forward and a red light on the front of the machine began to flash. "It doesn't seem to be working," he said, and he wound a large dial right round to its full limit. Faint wisps of smoke began to come out of GreyHame's ears, and Dr. Petel tapped Jolly on the shoulder to draw his attention to the increasingly agitated bordinand. Jolly turned the machine off and went over to the chair. GreyHame's eyes were closed, and there was the acrid smell of singed flesh. He reached for the wires and pulled, but instead of the wires coming away, the bordinand's neck split open like a ripe cheese and Jolly was left holding the head. "Ooops!" he exclaimed. "That's torn it."

## SCROLL V

As Jolly stood there, the head in his hands, the iron door opened and Canonaskew the Cosmic, accompanied by Miss, Widdals, Canon eNeSeM and Trebor the Troubadour entered. Trebor danced across the room and took the head out of Jolly's grasp.. He held it out in

front of him, the blood still dripping onto the floor, and gazed into the lifeless eyes. "Alas, poor Bord," he declaimed, "I knew him well, Horatio." He turned to Canonaskew and offered him gory remains. The Ruler of Laitoss ignored him and turned to eNeSeM. "What's he on about?" he demanded. Canon eNeSeM stepped forward and knocked the head from Trebor's hands. It bounced once and rolled away under a nearby table. Jolly's eyes followed it. "He's quoting the ancient bard of Laitoss, O Great One," he explained. Canonaskew looked at his Jester. "Naff off, Trebor!" he said. "Naffing off," said Trebor, and he slunk away into the background. Canonaskew advanced towards Dr. Petel and Mr. Tide. "Ah, how lovely to see you. You must be ... er ..." "Dr. Petel and Mr. Tide" interjected eNeSeM. "Ah, yes, yes, of course." He looked at Canon eNeSeM. "And you are?" he asked. The old duffer's losing it, thought the Canon. "The Cauliflower Polonaise" he replied. "Yes, of course, the Cauliflower Polonaise," repeated Canonaskew. "And you're here to do what precisely?" "The Mass on Wednesday lunchtime," said eNeSeM. Jolly stifled a giggle whilst Miss. Widdals looked from one to the other in complete disbelief. "Ah, the Mass," said the Cosmic ruler. "Yes, on Wednesday lunchtime. Of course." he paused and looked at eNeSeM. "But not the er ..." "Not the Chilean Rite," said eNeSeM. "Oh, what a shame," said Canonaskew. "I like the Chilean Rite."

## SCROLL VI

"We've got a right one here," muttered Mr. Tide to his fellow scientist. "The sooner we get him episcopated the better." Dr. Petel nodded and addressed the Ruler of Laitoss and the Diospheres. "I think there must be some confusion here, Your Eminence. We've come about the episcopectomy." The glorious and benevolent cleric beamed. "The episcopectomy! Of course! How wonderful that will be! I can wear one of those funny hats like the baker next door. I've got one in the cupboard in my throne room. In my family we used to play a little game with one." Canonaskew's eyes glazed with tears as he recalled those carefree times. "My little daughter thought up a name for it. She used to call it a 'Condhomme', and all the family used to dance round with it in a circle shouting, 'Condhomme! Condhomme!' and then, as if that were not wonderful enough, little robotic Runcie would come bounding in shouting, 'fairy tales', and leap into the Condhomme ..." Canonaskew paused. "Which probably explains why my Condhomme is all bent and squashed, doesn't it?" Trebor pranced back from his corner, laughing merrily. "Ha ha! Ha ha!" "Shut up!" hissed eNeSeM, and Trebor shut up. "Yes, it probably does, your purple sprouting broccoliness," said eNeSeM, "but do not forget the little matter of Dr. Broo and Miss. Widdals here." Canonaskew the Cosmic looked with pity at Miss. Widdals. "Are you sure we have to operate on Miss. Widdals?" he asked the Canon. "After all, we've never done a proper ordinectomy on a lady before. This isn't the United Stars as you well know." At this thought the phlegm rose in the Canon's throat, and he coughed to release it, spitting it out in the direction of the bucket standing between the diakons. "I'm not sure how the Unseen Synod would like it," continued Canonaskew. "The Spikons could leave the Communion you know, and then the Funless Mentals would run riot and set up Prayonanonanon Meetings all over the galaxy." "Oh no!" screamed the diakons in unison. "This is the eschaton!" Canon eNeSeM hastened to allay Canonaskew's fears. "No, no, O Hero of the Cosmos. We won't really ordinectomate her. It wouldn't be valid anyway. This is just a little trick to lure Doctor Broo into our clutches. He's such a goody. No, the whole point about the Doctor is his high standard of ethics. He's bound to turn up and do something moral like try and rescue her. And remember, O thrice magnificent Being, we have to get

Doctor Broo out of the way before your great and long deserved episcopectomy." Canonaskew smiled and nodded. "You're right, of course, whoever you are." eNeSeM turned to Dr. Petel and Mr. Tide. "Come on, you two. Let's get a move on."

## SCROLL VII

Doctor Petel approached Miss. Widdals. "Excuse me, Miss. I don't want to appear directive, but as one human being to another, would you care to sit over here in this nice comfy wooden chair?" Miss. Widdals shot him a withering glance. "Yes!" she ejaculated, "I would care." Mr. Tide looked scathingly at Dr. Petel. "So much for your inter-personal skills. You watch me, I've seen it on the training films." He moved closer to Miss. Widdals and slid his glasses down to the end of his nose so that his beady eyes were peering at her heaving bosom. "Here's looking at you, kid, you great big beautiful doll. Take a seat and I'll come up and see you sometime." Miss. Widdals hardly gave him a second glance. "No," she said. Mr. Tide came back to Dr. Petel somewhat crestfallen. "I don't understand it," he said. "It always works with Suzie, my wife."

## SCROLL VIII

Canon eNeSeM had been watching the ineffectual advances of the scientists with some disbelief. He turned to his sidekick. "Take over, Jolly," he commanded. "Sure thing, boss," said Jolly, giving his crotch a hitch. Seizing Miss. Widdals he manhandled her over to the chair and pushed her roughly down, snapping the wrist restraints before she had a chance to wriggle free. She strained to release herself, but finding it impossible she screamed out, "Help! Help! Doctor! Cyril! Pooh bear! Save me!"

## SCROLL IX

Canonaskew stirred himself and moved over to the chair. "It's alright, Miss. It won't hurt. It's all just a little game, isn't it. Just like my condhomme." Miss. Widdals spat at him. "Don't you 'condhomme' me. That's not allowed where I come from. eNeSeM turned to Jolly. "The cap, Jolly, the cap! Fit the Dutch Reformed Cap!" Jolly picked up a large flat black leather headpiece from the table and holding Miss Widdals by the throat to stop her moving, placed it on her head. "It's on," he said, stepping back. Miss Widdals shook her head. "It's off," said Jolly. Picking it up from the floor Jolly once more placed the cap on Miss. Widdals' head and, holding it in position, attached it with a length of sticky brown tape. Miss Widdals shook her head violently, but this time the cap stayed in place. "Right," said the Canon, "plug it in!" Jolly turned to the machine and picked up the cables. "Help! Help!" screamed the captive. "Doctor! Male hairy, show yer face! The Bord is with me!"

## SCROLL X

With a pulsating whining noise the Turdis materialised in the far corner of the laboratory. The doors opened, there was the sound of crashing china, a muffled curse, and Doctor Broo leapt out into the room brandishing a small glowing stick. "Ha ha!" he cried. All except Miss. Widdals immediately replied, "Ha ha!" "Ha ha!" cried the Doctor again, and this time it was Trebor alone who responded "Ha ha!" 4, Q and Florilegium moved towards the Doctor, arms outstretched, their metallic suits glistening. "Ah-ha-ha-ah," they said in unison. "Extrapolate! You will be redacted!" Meanwhile, in the confusion, Jolly had manoeuvred himself behind the Turdis, and he now rushed out and grabbed Dr. Broo from behind, pinning his arms to his side. The glow stick fell to the floor, and aided by the diakons, Jolly

swiftly fastened Dr. Broo in another wooden chair and heaved it next to the one holding Miss. Widdals. "Ha ha!" he cried. "Fuga Mundi!" said the Doctor.

## SCROLL XI

Canon eNeSeM was going to enjoy his moment of triumph. He pushed his shoulders back, thrust out his chest, adjusted his black helmet and stood in front of his two prisoners. "Well done, Jolly," he said. "Wire them both up. We've got them now, oh yes we have." Trebor thought about replying 'Oh no you haven't,' but thought better of it. Instead he concentrated on tuning his small instrument. Jolly wired up the cap on Miss. Widdals and then turned to Dr. Broo. He paused for a moment and turned to the Canon. "There's only one cap, my lord. What shall we use instead?" "Let's see how he likes the Collar!" replied eNeSeM, throwing a black leather collar encrusted with metal studs over to his assistant. Jolly fastened the collar around Dr. Broo's neck and then attached the wires. Dr. Petel and Mr. Tide watched with interest, unsure as to what was going to happen. Doctor Broo looked at the Canon. "You haven't won yet, eNeSem. You haven't got my mind. In all these years nobody's ever caught anything that's come out of my mind. You'll have to fight for it in a battle of wills." "That suits me, you exegetical bookworm!" replied the Canon, moving towards the chair. "Alright then, you part-timer!" responded the Doctor. "You'll regret that remark," said the Canon. "The contest begins!" and he bent forward until he was looking directly into the Doctor's eyes. Each held the others gaze without blinking. Sweat began to break out on their foreheads, and their breathing became more and more rapid. The Canon gripped the arm of the chair to support himself. "You're getting old, Doctor," he said, his breath coming in short bursts. "Your will is weak." "You've forgotten one thing, Canon," replied the Doctor, narrowing his eyes. "Travelling in the Turdis has given me extra reserves that I can call on, and I choose to do so NOW!" At that the restraints fell from the Doctor's wrists and he rose up from the chair, pushing the Canon backwards. eNeSeM reeled against the laboratory bench. Tearing the wires free from the collar, Dr. Broo reached into his coat pocket, pulled out a glowing remote control and waved it round his head. His nemesis backed away, producing a small wooden stick from a hidden pocket inside his cloak. "Exegesis!" he cried, pointing the stick at the Doctor. A burst of purple light flashed forth which the Doctor deflected with his remote. "Methodism!" he responded, and a wavy band of white light issued forth and bounced off eNeSeM's helmet. Suddenly the iron door to the laboratory burst open, and John the Burkitt, accompanied by the three Intergalactic Ecstatic Prophets, Bobbert the bordinand, the monsters Clawde, Bulgaria and Bert, Mickey and Rafe the acolytes, and the two tramps ran in, brandishing an assortment of weaponry. In his right hand John the Burkitt held an ancient scroll, whilst in his left, a half-eaten green insect. The diakons turned to meet them, arms flailing. Jolly lurched towards the group, whilst Dr. Petel and Mr. Tide crouched down and hid behind one of the wooden benches. Canonaskew the Cosmic stood aloof and unswerving amidst the mayhem, seemingly protected by some invisible force, though in reality he was so ineffectual that no-one saw him as a threat. Trebor clung to his cassock for protection.

The fight was bloody but brief. The diakons soon expended their batteries and came to a halt, heads bowed and arms hanging limply by their sides. Jolly was embraced in a bear-hug by Bert, whilst the acolytes and the tramps surrounded Canonaskew and Trebor. Canon eNeSeM's incantations proved inferior to Doctor Broo's remote, and he was soon disarmed and firmly held by Clawde and Bulgaria. Dr. Broo turned to Miss. Widdals, tore

off the Dutch Reformed Cap and released the wrist restraints. He turned round and stated at the far corner where the Turdis had been standing. It was no longer there. "Oops!" he said. "I must have set it on Auto-return, and when I used my remote it activated it." "Where has it gone?" asked Miss. Widdals. "Back to the throne room I suspect," said the Doctor. "Don't worry about that now, we can find it later." He looked at his victorious army. "Well done, lads!" he cried. "What shall we do with them?" "Cut off their stipends!" roared the tramps and the acolytes. "Cut them off!" Canonaskew looked at Mickey. "But, but you were one of my favourites," he said. "That didn't help GreyHame, did it," replied Mickey, waving a small incense spoon under Canonaskew's nose. "But he's over there," said Canonaskew, pointing to a figure lying under one of the tables. "Part of him might be," said Mickey. "That's him alright, but," and he pointed to another corner of the room, "his head's over there." Bobbert let out a scream on anguish, ran over and hugged the lifeless corpse to his bosom.

## SCROLL XII

"Blood! Blood! Blood! Blood!" chanted the monsters. Canonaskew, who had been watching Miss. Widdals, saw her suddenly turn deathly pale and stumble against the table. Before she had time to fall to the floor in a dead faint he strode forward and caught her in his strong arms. Trebor twanged some chords on his mandolin and sang, "Waste places of the world break forth with joy, she has been claimed, been claimed; see eye to eye, the look of love is on his face, our lord reigns, our lord ...ow!" Trebor stopped singing as a well-aimed Missal hit him on the forehead. Pleased with his aim Dr. Broo looked at Miss. Widdals cradled in Canonaskew's arms. "Don't worry," he said, "she'll Qum-ran." Canonaskew glared at him. "But look what you've done. You've upset my little Missykins, you miscreants, felons, footpads, bounders, scoundrels, rapsallions, mutant mutandes, aliens, ragamuffins ...." "Oh naff off you old clown!" snarled eNeSeM. Canonaskew held the limp form of Miss. Widdals closer to his chest. "Canon eNeSeM, I thought you were my brother. I don't understand. This is lamentable." A tear began to flow from one eye and run down the cosmic ruler's cheek. "What's going to happen to my bishopric now?" At this the monsters changed their chant. "Cut it off! Cut it off! Cut it off!" John the Burkitt stepped forward and raised his hand, the one holding the ancient scroll and not the one with the dead insect in it. The monsters fell silent. "Wait!" he cried. "I may be a voice in the wilderness, but we must consult the scroll!" The Ecstatic Prophets fell to their knees. "The scroll!" they wailed. "The scroll!" The monsters looked at each other and then began to chant, "4Q, 4Q, 4Q Florilegium! 4Q, 4Q, 4Q Florilegium!" Slowly the prophets began to join in, and John the Burkitt waved his arms as if conducting the Tabernacle Singers. Canonaskew took charge. "Shh!" he said, and the chanting ceased immediately. Dr. Broo nodded an acknowledgement. "Thank you." He looked at all assembled there. "The call has been made to consult the 4Q Florilegium, and we must obey." He closed his eyes for a moment as if recalling ancient lore and then spoke. "In the Talmudic redaction of Midrash, 1 QP Habakkuk, the scrolls prescribe that the community take the offenders to a place of audience, and there expose and humiliate their Forsgeschichte, cut off their stipends and spread them out over the heads of the assembled peoples, as food for vultures, hyenas, Spikons, and Funless Mentals, taking care to sacrificially wash our hands before and after the ritual." John the Burkitt raised the half-eaten insect to the skies. "As is written," he cried out, "so let it be!" The Doctor looked at Canonaskew who was supporting the trembling Miss. Widdals. "Let us proceed with the punishment." he said, and he moved across and gently led Miss. Wid-

dals out of Canonaskew's arms. She wailed. "No! Please! This is too awful!" and collapsed into the ordinectomy chair. The monsters began another chant. "Guts, guts, guts, guts, guts," and pushed eNeSeM, Canonaskew and Jolly into a space in the centre of the room. Dr. Broo stood behind them wielding a large sabre he had conveniently found lying on one of the laboratory tables. He raised it high and was about to strike when a loud voice boomed into the room. "ABRAHAM! ABRAHAM!"

### SCROLL XIII

Canonaskew's face lit up at the sound. "It works!" he cried. "It really works!" Trebor struck a chord on his instrument and laughed. "Ha ha! It's not Abraham. It's KY-BCP from the Unseen Synod!" Dr. Broo lowered his weapon and looked towards the door. An angelic fanfare sounded and into the laboratory walked the aged traditionalist clad in cassock and surplice, and wearing on his head a Canterbury cap. The two acolytes ran to meet him, kissed his hands and then took up positions of servitude on either side. Everyone else bowed in greeting and then waited to hear what he would say. The cleric looked around him. "Dearly beloved brethren," he began, and then paused, as if struggling to recall the ritual. "Er..." He began again. "Dearly beloved brethren .... oh dear ... er..." He patted his pockets without result. "I've forgotten it," he said. "What?" asked Rafe. "My BCP," answered the representative and mouthpiece of the galactic church. "I must have left it at Calvin's Institute. I'm lost without rubrics." He looked at Dr. Broo. "Aren't you?" The Doctor nodded, but Miss. Widdals, who had no time for restrictive practices, just looked at him and muttered, "Oh shut up, KY." Dr. Petel looked at Canon eNeSeM. "Do you have a BCP anywhere here?" he asked. The Canon shook his head. There was silence for a few seconds as they puzzled what to do, and then Canonaskew spoke up. "I know," he said, brightly. "I'll ask Catriona to get one." He moved to the large bench and pushed the small green communicator button. A loudspeaker crackled into life and a woman's voice asked, "Yes, my Lord?" "Catriona, my dear," said Canonaskew. "Would you bring a copy of the BCP down to eNeSeM's laboratory for me?" "Right away, sire," she replied, and the speaker clicked off. "She's on her way," said Canonaskew. "Catriona has great assets." "I know," muttered Jolly. "I've seen them."

A few minutes later, during which time the party and rearranged themselves so that all were facing KY-BCP on an equal footing, and no-one was holding anyone else prisoner, Catriona entered the room carrying a large brown leather altar copy of the BCP. She handed it to Canonaskew who blew the dust off it and then handed it to one of the Prophets who opened it and held it in front of KY. The ancient of days cleared his throat. "I do not presume to come to this as a finale, but the Unseen Synod in the Sky have asked me to sort out situational ethics and bring justice to all." "But KY, you old hooker," interjected Dr. Broo, "I've already sorted that out. You're just in time to see the punishment. Now, stand back and I'll show you what ten-point exegesis can do." The feelings of frustration that had been gnawing at Miss. Widdals for the past few minutes finally burst forth. "Oh shut up! Shut up! Shut up!" she screamed. "I can't stand it! I can't stand it anymore!" and she sprang out of the chair and began to tear wildly at her clothing. KY-BCP was taken completely by surprise at this outburst and stood there perplexed. "Oh dear, oh dear. What shall we do? Oh dear." Miss. Widdals stopped her frantic grasping and stood utterly still and looked at him. "Oh do stop fussing," she said, in a calm and perfectly controlled voice. KY smiled knowingly. He'd seen the effects of Post-Mindcontrol-Transfer before, and given her re-

cent experiences, her outbursts were perfectly understandable. He decided the best course of action was to carry on as if they had never happened. "Yes, dear Miss," he said. "And Doctor, please put that knife down. We're not doing ancient Judaic initiation rites. Now, dearly beloved brethren ..." "Get on with it!" chorused everyone.

## SCROLL XIV

"Scroll fourteen of the 4Q Florilegium, part the last," and the leader of the Unseen Synod took the small scroll offered him by John the Burkitt. He unrolled it and read, "Here beginneth the Kontakion according to Luke Heavenly Rambler: *"And KY-BCP ... oh, that's me! ... saith unto them, Bring forth Canonaskew the Cosmic."* Canonaskew blanched and his lower lips began to quiver. "Oh!" he cried, "'ave mercy on my, guv, 'ave mercy! I'm just an old scapegrace and highwayman. Just a bandit and a trickster, and a scoundrel and a buccaneer; a smash-and-grab man, a filcher, picklock; a poacher, a coin clipper, and a scallywag." KY beckoned him forward. "Yes, I believe your repentance is sincere. How about the rest of you?" To a man, including Miss. Widdals, the yelled response came: "Oh no it's not!" KY shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, fair enough." Canonaskew faced the mutinous crowd. "If you don't all naff off, I won't ordain you!" At this threat the united voices began to falter. There were murmurings of "Oh, well, perhaps he's changed," and "He's not such a bad sort really." KY looked again at the chastened ruler. "Yes. I'll believe you, though I don't know what else to believe anymore." He sighed. "T'was ever thus, I suppose." Shaking himself as if to dispel a bad dream, KY-BCP looked intently at Canonaskew. "I am instructed to pass on to you the decision of the Unseen Synod in the Sky. In view of your having been to Harrow and Cambridge, though I don't have a clue where in the known universe those places may be, you are no longer to be known as Canonaskew the Cosmic, but as Bishopaskew the Beatific!" The new bishop's face lit up with undisguised elation. "Oh!" he cried. "I'm overcome! I thought I'd be condemned, but now I'm to be condhomed after all!" He turned and raised his arms to give the blessing, but a cough from KY stopped him. "Ahem. I haven't finished yet." "Sorry," apologised the new ecclesiarch. "I got a bit carried away there."

KY-BCP turned to Miss Widdals. "Miss. Widdals," he said. The lady in question let go of the bench, brushed down her front, straightened her dress and walked over to him. As she passed Dr. Broo she whispered, "I knew he was a gentleman all along, even in that black frock he's wearing. It takes all sorts." Ky waved his right hand over her head. "Your reward shall be that your new little house becomes a tied cottage." Bishopaskew clapped excitedly. "Good girl!" he chortled. "And may you one day finish your thesis!"

KY looked at Dr. Broo. "Doctor, you have been and are our hero, the embodiment of four-cuteitude. We have found you a publisher. The Intergalactic Visionary Press have agreed to print your work on 4Q as a forward to the Living Libel, Inclusive edition." For once the Doctor was speechless, and he coloured with embarrassment.

"Where are Dr. Petal and Mr. Tide?" asked KY. "Here, your lordship," said the two scientists, coming out of the shadows. "Gentlemen," said KY, "I believe you to be basically honest and decent men whose only fault has been to let your scientific curiosity overwhelm your faith. I am minded to let you off with a caution." "That's very kind of you, your holiness," said Dr. Petel. "We're very grateful, I'm sure," said Mr. Tide, and they swiftly slunk back into the surrounding gloom.

KY then turned to Canon eNeSeM. "And now 4 U," he said. The words were hardly out of

his mouth when John the Burkitt and the Intergalactic Ecstatic Prophets fell to their knees and chanted, "4U, 4U, 4U!" The Burkitt threw his half-eaten insect in KY's direction and lurched face down to the ground. KY caught the grub, looked at it and then tossed it into a nearby bucket. The Burkitt crawled forward and held on to KY's ankles. "You must be The One!" he cried, and then, looking upward at the billowing black cassock he exclaimed, "You are One!" KY-BCP attempted to shake him free, but without success. "I'm not One!" he declared, "I'm 42." "Forty-two?" shouted The Burkitt. "The meaning of life!" The Ecstatic Prophets ululated their approval and chanted, "Four Two; Four Two Flo; Four Two Florilegium!" KY reached down and pushed The Burkitt off his ankles. Straightening the cassock's crumpled fringes he looked at him with pity. "Strange person. He should have gone to the sanctuary at Oake Heel." He looked around. "Bring forth the evil eNeSeM and that depraved imbecile, Jolly!" The monsters Clawde, Bert and Bulgaria roughly shoved the two cowering figures in front of the Synodical spokesman. "You have programmed others," he declared. "We shall now programme you!" eNeSeM moaned softly whilst Jolly nervously chewed his fingernails. KY laughed and clapped his hands. "That is, unless you leave Laitoss for ever and never return!" Jolly whimpered. "Banished, we is, banished for ever!" "Shut up, you fool," snapped the Canon. "It's bad enough having to leave with all my plans in ruins. I don't want you moaning and groaning the whole time as well." KY gestured with his fingers. "Go!" he cried. "Now! Unless you want to be ordinectomied, and take your diakons with you!" eNeSeM and Jolly moved over to the three diakons and pushed the restart buttons on each of them. They whirred into life and stood blinking and waiting for their new holy orders. eNeSeM looked back. "I'll get you yet," he cried. "I'll have you all! All of you, my pretties!" and turning to the diakons he said, "Follow me," and they left all that they had and followed him and Jolly out of the door.

KY looked around the room. "There's someone missing! Ah yes! The Colonel. Where is Colonel Titas?" Suddenly a loud whining noise filled the room, and the Turdis materialised next to the monsters. They jumped out of the way as the corrugated sheeting of the time ship solidified. There was a sound like that of a cat being neutered and the door opened and the Colonel stepped out. "Oh," he exclaimed. "I've landed in the wrong place! I've just made a deposit in my off-planet savings account." From inside the Turdis came the sound of a flushing lavatory. "It sounds like money down the drain," commented Miss. Widdals. The Colonel looked at the assembled company and then noticed KY-BCP. KY beckoned to him. "Come hither, Colonel." The Colonel swiftly summed up the situation and walked boldly up to KY. "Colonel Titas," said KY. "I know that you always have lots of money on you." The Colonel looked as if he was going to deny it, but something in KY's gaze made him keep silent. "Now this dreadful incident is all over," said KY, "I decree that you shall buy everyone a drink in the Bar at the World's End." "But," blustered the Colonel, "I've already spent a fortune on the wine for tomorrow's dinner! It's the Feast of St. Sarum of Wells, and I ...." "It is written! You shall pay!" thundered KY-BCP. The Colonel tuned green, clutched at his chest and fell to the floor and lay there occasionally twitching. Bishopaskew broke the shocked silence. "I think it's time for a party!" he announced. Let us leave this laboratory and retire to my Palace. We shall have wine and Regurgital Prance to while away the day, and after Evensong, meditation in the Old Chapel. It will be wonderful, won't it!"



# THE APOCRYPHA



## DANK HELL, THE BELL, AND THE DIAKON

High above the planet Laitoss, in a standard orbit, circled a small spaceship. Looking at his viewscreen Canon eNeSeM watched the continents pass beneath them, the double penumbras slowly bringing night to the cities and countryside. Jolly was in the workshop in the bowels of the craft working on the diakons and attempting to reboot their theological systems, but with little success. eNeSeM had spent the past two lunar months reviewing the situation and trying to work out the precise moment his plans had begun to unravel and the present dank hell of exile had begun. There was the Colonel, who had spent all the funds on a party. He had received news that his heart attack that day in the laboratory had not been fatal, and he had spent the last few weeks recuperating in the Episcopal infirmary. Then there had been Miss. Widdals. Her feminine charms had made his whole scheme unpredictable. Her knowledge of Hippolytus had allowed her to influence several vital decisions. Trebor the Troubadour was just a fool. True, he'd been to the research facilities at NeuPorrt Pargnell, and also to the Collegiate Symposium at Aeton, but he'd shown no signs of superior intelligence, and he dismissed his as being of any relevance to his current train of thought. Canonaskew, or Bishopaskew as he now had to call him, was a different kettle of fish. Not as stupid as he seemed, he decided. Looking back on events he was now not sure that the man had ever been under his control. Yes, he'd wanted the episcopectomy, but maybe his ethics would have prevented him from forcibly grasping the condhomme that had to be a gift. He shifted in his seat as he continued to evaluate the dramatis personae in his little opera. The arrival of KY-BCP had been unforeseen. He had never anticipated that the Unseen Synod would actually put into operation anything they decided. In fact, he had banked on them never deciding anything. It was unknown in the annals of the Galaxy for the Unseen Synod in the Sky to come to any decision, let alone enact it. And then there was Dr. Broo.

Canon eNeSeM felt sick. The Doctor and his 4Q Florilegium lay at the heart of his downfall. His theological exegesis of the ancient scrolls had undermined every action he had taken. His grasp of the ancient cabbalistic languages had allowed him to gather all sorts of people to his cause. 4Q, he thought. 4Q Dr. Broo. "Just you wait and see," he said out loud. "Just you wait. Things might have gone awry for me for a while, but I'll be back, and you won't know what's hit you."

A small bell on the control panel began to chime, and eNeSeM pushed the button next to it. The adjacent viewscreen flickered into life and Jolly's face appeared. "Well?" said the Canon. "What is it?" "News, master," answered Jolly. "One of the diakons is active again and is awaiting orders." "Excellent!" said the Canon. "Put him on charge and I'll be down right away." He flicked a switch, pushed the auto-glide control forward and stood up. He adjusted his black metallic helmet and tightened his belt. "I'll give you 4Q, Doctor," he muttered. "4Q was nothing. It's all 4U now. The upgrade is complete. The revelation is begun, and the apocalypse is on your threshold. A new age! A new age of eNeSeM! Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the chapel!" As he entered the incense lift, eNeSeM's eyes were aflame. It was not over. It never would be over. Laitoss would fall, and it would only be the first of hundreds, thousands across the galaxy. It was all going to be his. The lift doors shut and Canon eNeSeM hurtled down into the darkness.



## AFTERWORD

A small red light began to flash on the control panel of the cockpit and the needle on a dial labelled "Core Engine Temp" began to climb inexorably towards the danger zone. A steam valve opened, and the engines of the escape pods began to ignite. A few minutes later as the meltdown klaxon began to sound, five small pods broke away from the ship and headed for the planet's surface. The last words that came over the ship's communications system before the craft exploded in a fireball that lit the planet's surface for a few brief minutes were, "4Q 4U!"

