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FOREWORD

Way back in the sunny August of 1971 an experiment was begun at the prestigious Stanford University in California; it was an experiment that was destined to become a classic in the field of psychology and to inspire several fictional works in a variety of genres and guises, of which this is one.

The Stanford Experiment, as it became known, had been conceived to investigate to what extent the brutality and oppressive conditions so often associated with the prison system were a manifestation of the interaction of two groups of people of differing innate natures, i.e. the prison guards and the prisoners, rather than due to the prison environment *per se*. So, to put it simply, the question was: do prisoners and guards behave the way they do because they are somehow 'guard-like' or 'prisoner-like' people to begin with or do their respective group behaviours merely reflect the situation within which they find themselves?

To further investigate the latter hypothesis a study was set up wherein student volunteers were randomly assigned to one of two groups, either prison guards or inmates, and as such left to their own devices, although under the observation of the researchers, living together in a mocked-up prison in the university basement.

The original experiment had to be called to a halt after only six days had elapsed, despite the original concept having called for it to run for two weeks. Even over this short period the two groups had been observed to have become increasingly polarised; the guard's behaviour towards their charges was becoming dominant to the verge of sadism and that of the prisoners increasingly apathetic, depressed and submissive to the point whereupon it was feared that to have continued would have been to have risked inflicting permanent psychological damage.

The above study was ostensibly that of the behavioural responses to captivity and its effects on both the inmates and those given authority over them. It may be hypothesised that, in part, the compliant behaviour of the prisoner group is explainable in terms of an extreme manifestation of social compliance. The latter being the tendency for individuals to obey those that they have been primed by society to see as trustworthy and/or in authority even if their received instructions might run counter to their common-sense, ethics, moral sense or innate nature.

Such an affect was classically examined in the so-called 'Milgram experiment', a psychology experiment conducted in the 1960s whereby subjects were instructed to press a button that they understood would inflict a painful electric shock on another research subject in a separate room. Despite hearing what appeared to be the screams of agony emitted by the 'victim' and despite their unease and growing reluctance to inflict further punishment on a fellow human being, such sadistic behaviour being diametrically opposed to their innate nature, the test subjects nevertheless continued to press the button when instructed to do so by an authoritative-looking, white-coated, medical researcher.

In the context of the aforementioned Stanford experiment, it should be noted that even those that objected most vehemently to their treatment would quite docilely return to their cells when instructed to do so by their 'guards'.

But what if...? What if the Stanford experiment had *not* been truncated? What if the guards had *not* been composed of randomly assigned test subjects themselves, what if those guards had in fact been hand-picked, especially selected for certain behavioural and personality traits, psychometrically tested to eliminate any that might find ethical, moral, or emotional conflict in fulfilling such a role? What if none were eliminated based on the grounds of the likelihood of their gaining sexual satisfaction from such a role and the dangers inherent therein, perhaps such even being encouraged and exploited so as to ensure the maintenance of the required research conditions; few motivations being greater than that of sexual gratification.

What if a woman of considerable affluence, influence and resources, a woman of misplaced philanthropic intent, being concerned of the number of homeless young women she sees drifting aimlessly through the city, should have made the acquaintance of a brilliant young female psychologist, her career frustrated by what she perceives as a blinkered lack of academic freedom? And then again, what if our aforementioned philanthropist should be of equally frustrated aspiration?

Consider: Everywhere around her she sees young women seeking independence and finding only the freedom for corruption. Runaways, dreamers, girls of otherwise good character, striving to distance themselves from some domestic upheaval, perhaps, yet finding at the end of the rainbow anything *but* a pot of gold.

Every night she tours the city offering help, every night she sees young women drifting hopelessly, drawn with tragic inevitability towards what she quaintly perceives as 'moral peril', the temptations of the street both sexual and pharmacological. She offers a warm and secure home, a renewed education, some hope for the future and, in return, she asks only that they might adhere to certain standards, learn basic etiquette and manners and obey simple rules; in short, take on board a modicum of *discipline*.

A few have taken up her offer, fewer have remained long; in their misguided way preferring to cling to their freedom and independence. To our philanthropist, though, it is her *duty* to remove from them what she sees as 'that modern and excessive freedom of choice that has allowed for their temptation, allowed them the *flexibility* to be moulded by sin in its own image'.

What if our philanthropist was to fund her new acquaintance's work, what if, in collaboration, the 'Stanford Experiment' was to live again but this time as an end in itself?

To the psychologist is provided the scaffold within which to structure further layers of research, and a secure cache of compliant young subjects.

To the philanthropist, at long last, is gifted the ability to save these young women from their 'freedom'. She would rescue them from the twin dangers of their own vanity and the sinful temptations of the modern world. She can at last provide them with the security that they undoubtedly crave and yet consciously deny. She can provide them with the discipline and the education they so blatantly need.

Ah! Yes! The discipline; they might not appreciate the wisdom or advantage of her intervention but nevertheless, in her view, they must be helped and, in her view, the first step, logically, has to be the curtailment of that sin-nourishing freedom, to be quickly followed by the curbing of those lesser, but related, nourishments of vanity and over-inflated self-belief.

And the girls will stay, this time they shall stay; the depersonalising institutional environment, the staff uniforms and the power of social compliance will see to it that they do. To our philanthropist, then, incarceration is the only option if she is to truly help these girls, it's all for their own good after all.

This, then, is our scenario: a psychology experiment in private hands and out-of-control. Attractive, feminine, inmates whose only sin, in truth, has been to strive for independence; and to have been attractive to certain eyes. A staff of amoral, dominant, women, skilled in psychiatric nursing and have a strong predilection towards young girls. A world of Strict discipline and punishment, both physical and psychological.

Into this maelstrom let's now toss two or three young women, thought by those around them to be better incarcerated than interfering in business and financial affairs beyond their ken, pass over their strings to a corrupt solicitor, and be assured that they are now free of interference through any ethical constraint or mediation and most certainly will *not* be returning home after a mere six days. This, then, is our premise, our story. *This*, then, is *beyond* the Stanford experiment.

It should be pointed out that this is a work finding inspiration through a multiplicity of paths, some far beyond the aforementioned. Among these stands, notably, the work carried out in the 1950s by Dr. D. Ewen Cameron of the Allan Memorial Institute, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. His work, backed by the CIA it might be added, towards the depatterning of subjects, the latter meaning to break up existing patterns of behaviour so as to leave the subject more amenable to attitudinal change, was likened at the time to 'the creation of a vegetable' (The reader is directed to the book: *A Father, a Son and the CIA* by Harvey Weinstein. (James Lorimer & Company, Publishers. Toronto, 1988)).

It should be obvious to all, but it must be stated nevertheless, that the following is a work of fiction. The characters that inhabit these pages are themselves fictional, i.e. they do not exist and any resemblance to *any* person living or dead, whether by name or by description, is purely coincidental and unintentional.

It should go without saying that the author does not condone behaviour such as exhibited within these pages and believes that corporal and psychological punishment, such as depicted herein, should neither be applied nor suffered at any time, by anybody under any circumstances, other than in a world of pure fantasy.

The author believes that paedophilic behaviour is deplorable, it is neither depicted nor implied in any way within these pages; nothing here pertains to anything that should in any way be construed as childhood. Where the term 'girl' is used it is as a denigrating label applied to an adult woman not in control of her own affairs i.e. that is under the authority of those around her; throughout, the terms 'girl' and 'young woman' are used quite interchangeably therefore.

A few other terms have been used herein that may be unfamiliar or of ambiguous meaning to some and for this reason there has been provided a short glossary, positioned towards the back of this book.

Now, notwithstanding the above disclaimer, to those of you who would question the plausibility of such a scenario, who might deny that such corrupting perversion of power could ever twist its way through professional echelons, who might balk at the suggestion that such misguided philanthropy could exist or have existed I leave you with this: In the 19th-century the Rescue Movement came into being. Its founding aim being to tackle the problem of the number of women forced to fall back on prostitution, enabling their rehabilitation by way of the provision of a number of sheltered refuges.

These homes or asylums came to be administered by various orders of the Catholic Church, to be called after St. Mary Magdalene and subsequently, much funding being raised by way of their taking in of laundry work, to become known as Magdalene Laundries.

Originally conceptualised as short-term shelters, these asylums, over time, metamorphosed into long-term institutions taking on an increasingly prison-like character as they did so. At the same time their intake demographic broadened considerably to provide for any woman deemed likely to be in moral danger, a subjective judgement made easily by anyone in their sphere and based on anything from having become pregnant out of wedlock to merely being judged too flirtatious or wayward. They might be sent to such an asylum, often against their will, by their own families, on the word of a guardian or carer or perhaps through the concerned diligence of the local squire, some slighted suitor or -who knows- a catty young stepmother perhaps?

There can be little doubt that discipline was strict; there have been allegations that inmates were abused sexually, psychologically and physically. Isolated behind high walls for an indefinite period the inmates suffered social isolation *within* those walls also, talking was not allowed during work time and was severely limited the rest of the time; the nuns believed silence to be an important part of penance. Corporal punishment was commonplace and by all accounts was often applied with no little hypocrisy; that corruption was rife sexually is anecdotal, that it was financially may be judged by the suggestion, once made, that "the advent of the washing machine has been as instrumental in closing these laundries as have changing attitudes".

Therein lies the shock, with the modernity inherent in the latter quote: It is sobering to reflect that, despite there being reported historically little more extreme in terms of misguided philanthropy than that outlined above, the last Magdalene Asylum was only finally closed down in 1996.