

ROBERT RILEY

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The Messenger Arc: Fools Company (part 1)

A messenger can come in many forms, from that of a child, a teacher or even a spiritual follower. They can be builders, mothers, doctors... and sometimes, but not often, they arrive in the form of a madman.

I can understand that.

I've been the latter myself. As I write this, I am sitting on the roof of an outback pub overlooking the horizon waiting for such a madman. He has something important I need to know before I make a vital decision out here. As I wait, I can't help but remember the situation that shaped this current situation. The following is about the final reemergence of the symbol: the circle, curved line and "x". It's about the madness inside and how it is reflected outwards to another self. That other self is an opposite as much as they are a reflection of who we are, and where we've been.

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I was in a meltdown after too much activity and too many voices demanding my attention. In the final months of my being in England, I had allowed myself to be open to anything and everything. It got to a critical point where I couldn't take it anymore. I went into hiding, and after three long months staying away, shouting out in my sleep for the visitors to just leave me alone... they finally got the message to "leave me be..." ...

The thing is, for people like me, there's a curiosity for experiencing the extremes, to see what is out there. After the case with the Japanese boy, Akio, I thought I had a purpose to help not just anybody, but everybody I encountered. I wanted to know what would happen if I said yes to everything. I didn't want to miss anything and started to stack up requests and I really started to pay attention to silly everyday entities who just wanted attention. It was all too much. I lived out of thin air and lost a lot of weight, but they didn't care. It didn't matter to them. I was on the other side, the side of the living and I was their conduit, their outreach representative to the living world.

I started to ignore the shadows more and more. Going into my reclusive state, I even turned my back on the journal, and ignored all messages from Jiri Ivanov. I didn't know anything about Jiri back then, other than the fact that he was wounded by a gunshot in that underground setting where I found that journal he was forced to abandon. He told me things I needed to know, and told me places where I had to put myself into. After a while, I noticed that he too went silent – probably realizing I had to go through my own crisis of faith and in my own time. Sometimes I think he was just waiting for me to realize my mistake in opening myself up like a beacon for all dead to absorb. Instead of going back to the realm of the shadows I decided to give it up completely. I put the book of Jiri underneath my bed and tried my best to forget about it.

No less than a month later, I received a call from none other than D.C. Harvey. First thoughts: I'm in trouble again.

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When Company's relocate their offices, three factors come into play: First, it's cost, and second, it's location. The third only comes into view if the building the move into has a history with significance. For the Rock Deveron administration team, the history of the Old Brows Tower building should have been on the top of their list.

The building in the north west of England used to be a clothing factory in the early 1920s. In 1977, the factory closed its doors, and the lower deck became a traders market, while the upstairs were refitted into offices. In 1989, a freak fire broke out. It took out a good half of the building. As a historic building, there was an obligation to restore it soon after the dust settled, but funds were held back and the good half of the building was neatened up leaving the burnt end of the building left as an abandoned shell.

To the authorities' knowledge, nobody was in the building when the fire started. The origin of the fire was never determined, but you have it. Half a building was made available for use. To look at it on the outside, it appeared as a complete building. With the offices open and the nights on at night, the abandoned side was disturbingly dark. Some described it as "the house with two faces".

For Rock Deveron's newly established administration group, it seemed like great place to work. Close to rain, and town centre, secure car park and great food places nearby. It ticked every box.

Moving into the building late summer 1999, Sean Best joined his co-workers and was given their office on the fifth floor, right against the inner wall that divided the two sides of the building. Sean was an anorak type with thick rimmed glasses and a typical mushroom with curtains haircut. Sharing the office with him was his nerd colleague Eric Pen, whose obsession with Star Trek was like no other, Clara Davies, the gum chewing brunette who believed she was the pin up dream girl for any man, and Gareth Thomas, nicknamed "Wazza" for his boisterous and immature sensibility.

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So how did I get involved with this little group? Well, I didn't... no yet. When D.C. Harvey called me up, we met and talked about the underground case a little while over coffee. He had a confession or two for me. He was visited by a ghost of a man in a hat, that matched the description of Jiri Ivanov, prior to my running into him during the Underground tunnel investigation which was what prompted him to involve me in that particular case. I was relieved in a way. I had something of a confidant in D.C. Harvey that was not only living, but in a position to grant certain things should I never need it. He told me was a true believer, but never felt the need to tell me. He said he felt embarrassed. Sitting with him over coffee, D.C. Harvey came a long way that night. It shames me still that I never found out his first name.

It was after his London Underground revelation that he told me about a strange double murder at the Old Brows Tower in 1991: *Note that was after the Rock Deveron group had moved in after the building got its "two face" nickname.*

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The D.C. asked if I could go with him to a detention centre where a madman was spending his life sentence for the murders. I asked the D.C. why he wanted me to come with him and he gave me the lowdown.

'The killer refuses to say anything to us about what happened.' D.C. Harvey said, 'Turned out he was a perfectly ordinary guy when he started working in the building. Within a month of his working in that building he murdered his first: A co-worker who shared an office with him in the Old Brows Tower. He went on to kill one other co-worker before he was caught trying to murder the third.'

Again I asked why he wanted to involve me to which he replied.

'I had another visit in my dream from the man in the hat. He told me you were ignoring him.' D.C. Harvey seemed somewhat nervous. 'To be honest, I don't like seeing him, so I would hope you could just get on top of it for me. This is your playing field, not mine. Get back in contact with your friend on the other side, and please, come with me to visit Sean Best.'

After a little more discussion, I agreed to sleep on it, and get over my ignorance of the journal that was hidden under my bed, and read what Jiri has to say. I also agreed to join D.C. Harvey in meeting Sean, to see what I could get out of him.

If Jiri Ivanov went to D.C. Harvey to get me involved, it had to be important.

(To be continued...)

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