

CHAOS

or

The promise of a new Millennium

Prologue

Sit back, relax and let your mind flow...

Hydro

Not that particles of this size and form have consciousness, but if that had been the case, this one would nevertheless not have thought very much of what was about to happen.

It was a very simply constructed particle, fully according to the most basic laws of physics—a proton being swarmed around by a tiny electron. Together they formed one of the Universe's most common elements—a hydrogen atom.

This particular little hydrogen atom—which in a very different universe very well could have been christened ... Hydro—would change the life of a relatively complex organism that basically had conquered the planet Earth during the last forty or so millennia—namely Man, Homo Sapiens Sapiens.

Hydro had as mentioned no notion whatsoever of its historical mission.

The Grand Poop

Life hadn't been much fun for many years. Three hundred and thirty-three years to be more exact. Three hundred and thirty-three years ago P.O.O.P, Prophet Of Objective Prophesies—also called G.R.A.N.D, God's Retired And Not Desired—was invented. And life on Earth would never be the same again...

Prior to POOP people had plans! Before GRAND the grass grew greener!

Commonly called the Grand Poop, POOP had changed all that. No more were people leading their lives from day to day, satisfied with not knowing what the future had to offer. Before the Grand Poop people had taken the days as they came, enjoyed the present and speculated over tomorrow. Not so anymore! And that just because of a philosophically based notion that had shown to be correct.

What it was all about was the question of man's free will—was it a myth or a fact? Philosophers had discussed that issue for hundreds of years. Philosophers who didn't believe in free will were called determinists, which indicated that they saw everything that happened as predetermined. As a group they were divided into fractions, but all of them had through the ages been very little listened to—people wanted their free will...!

Philosophy

Determinism had for a long time been just a religious question. If God was as almighty and all knowing as everybody knew that he was—then of course he knew everything that happened in the world. He knew what you did and what you would eventually do. He knew if you would choose coffee or tea for breakfast. He knew what person you would choose to spend the rest of your life with. Now, if God knew all this before *you* even knew that you had a choice, then you really didn't have a choice, did you...? No free will!

Some people had taken this as evidence that God didn't exist, or at least that He wasn't all that mighty. What would be the purpose of God creating an alliance with man—that He demanded obedience in return for heavenly peace—if man once and for all were destined to act in a certain way?

However, determinism had gone from being a solely religious question to being a metaphysical one.

Even the old Greeks had speculated over the question of free will. Democritus had formed a very materialistic determinism—atomism. His theory was that the universe contained emptiness, in a certain degree filled with atoms of different sizes and shapes. The atoms all had their own speed and direction—and they had always existed. They all fell downwards, often bouncing into each other, which resulted in mathematically very predictable changes in their courses.

This view of the universe leads to a mathematically predictable world. Everything could be foretold if you had all atoms' positions, masses, directions and speeds in one certain moment.

A simple example is a ball thrown in the air. You can calculate how far up it travels before it starts falling down—and where it will land. You can calculate how long time it will take. All you need, simply speaking, is the ball's initial speed and direction.

At a later time, Epicurus thought that Democritus' deterministic atomism wasn't particularly fun... He added an unpredictable element to the equation. He said that the atoms sometimes swerved, by no reason whatsoever... This of course led to a non-deterministic world, where no course of events could be foretold.

The discussion went on through the centuries...

Soul Atom

A concern was for a long time the question if determinism applied to man and her thoughts as well as to nature. The fathers of atomism had said that of course it did; a small round atom—the soul atom—reacted as any other atom inside the human body.

Others were not so sure—didn't want to be sure—and if they didn't want to be sure, wasn't that evidence in itself that they had free will? If they, according to the atomists, were destined to think a certain way in every situation, why were they destined to doubt just that? It just wasn't very logical, was it...?

If matters were such that the human brain did not follow the rules of determinism—then it was a *fact* that determinism was *not* a fact... Imagine the example with the ball. If the human brain was *not* governed by determinism and it thereby was *not* predictable what it would do, then the ball's journey *was not* really predictable. A person could happen to stop the ball in mid-air...!

Most determinists probably believed that the same laws as matter governed man and her thoughts as well. Even if they in more recent times didn't believe in the soul atom too literally... They meant that if you knew everything about a person, the positions of her atoms, their weight, and speed and so on, you could calculate that person's thoughts. And then, in the example above, the journey of the ball could still be foretold, by calculating that this particular person would stop the ball in its flight...

The question remained!

Heisenberg

The enlightened age of the twentieth century had continued the discussion and added new dimensions by introducing modern psychology.

Scientists dug deeper and deeper into the smallest parts of matter to study forces and courses—to see what our world was made up of and study the components of the atom.

As a result of this, critics of determinism were given help by a scientific discovery called Heisenberg's principal of uncertainty. It showed that nothing could be observed without having the observer involuntarily in some way influence what was being observed. To foretell a particle's continued course, some information about its present location and state is required. If you want to find both its position and its direction you'll discover a limitation. When observing its speed, you'll notice that by doing so you have altered its position. While finding its position, involuntarily you will alter its speed.

Some people tried to make this into the final proof that uncertainty was built into our world. Others understood better—that it just meant that the

world was unpredictable from *our* point of view, not that *we* were unpredictable from the *worlds'*...

So, the discussion continued...

That is—the discussion continued until the Grand Poop!

The Grand Poop took the philosophical question to an abrupt halt. It made it all too clear to everybody that determinism wasn't a philosophy anymore, but a fact—and more so that man was no exception from that fact!

This was of course a prerequisite for this miracle of a machine to work. It was the first brutal truth of many...

More were still to come!

Developments

The Grand Poop stood ready in the fall of the year of the peace, 2666. It was a joyful year! Around the whole planet people were celebrating the four hundredth jubilee of World Peace III. Finally people started believing in a future for mankind. Maybe man would live on—maybe she could learn to endure—be able to inure...

During the three hundred year long era of prosperity that had followed the rebuilding of the world, much advancement and many discoveries were made—in all areas! Mankind could simply not resist trying to understand everything...

In the year 2497 one man finally proved Einstein right in that the speed of light cannot be surpassed. James T Picard could however not enjoy his fame, since both he and his ship had been transformed into a small black hole and presently enjoyed a planetary orbit between Neptune and Uranus.

That time travels in the strictest meaning were impossible had been proved in a famous thesis by a somewhat odd man named Umbar Umpurri. As a test pilot, Umpurri had been the first to try a revolutionizing new engine system. During his first flight he experienced a temporary blackout due to acceleration. To his surprise, when he landed, he discovered that over eighty years had passed at home—during his two-day journey. Beside himself by grief, by yearning for his family—and his best friend and colleague, Jim Picard—he spent the rest of his life trying to find a way back “home”... He failed; and after publishing his thesis at the age of seventy-eight he took his own life by steering a small space capsule to an orbit in between Neptune and Uranus.

The planets of the solar system had been explored and provided with, initially, research stations, but later on also industries. It had proven extremely difficult to get people to leave their beautiful home planet and live on a desolate and barren place with no direct contact home. With proper salaries this problem had been solved. Since it had shown very difficult for people, after a few years away, to readapt to Earth's gravity and climate, often with death as a result, the salaries had gone sky-high! Now there were

several billionaires enjoying personal orbits around the Earth—retired from a job on Mercury or Ganymede...

The beginning of the third millennium had introduced almost insurmountable problems. The average length of life had increased drastically as a result of medical advancements, and this resulted in a giant blow to the planetary economy. It went so far that some states introduced their—since then condemned—CM clean-ups. Those persons who did not Contribute More to the society than what they cost it, were expelled. This involved transportation to anarchistic islands, far from the rest of civilization. These islands were since long gone due to global warming's effect on sea levels, and they were now only memories of a barbaric era. Some people put no more truth to their stories than to the stories of Atlantis...

The decline of the economy had been turned to an incline when energy had become practically free of charge. It started with development of nuclear power—fusion power became Earth's main power source during the second half of the twenty-first century. A mere one hundred years later, vacuum energy was a fact. A New World act of 2344 made energy free for everybody!

This, combined with the new planetary mining industry, had made way for the space elevators that had been built around the equator during the twenty-sixth century. These were transportation rails that stood from ground up through the atmosphere, thirty-six thousand kilometers up to the geostationary orbit and beyond. Imagine a satellite in a geostationary orbit—an orbit where the satellite holds its position over the same location on ground at all time. Imagine the satellite dropping a rope—dropping it all the way to the ground—and we have our space elevator. To prevent being dragged down by the weight of the rope, another rope is thrown out in the other direction of the satellite, the satellite thereby using the centrifugal force to stay in place...

During the first years of the twenty-seventh century these space elevators were given a new and specific task. They were armed with powerful lasers. Laser spheres now fenced the world round in several layers, and they destroyed everything, from smallest particle to largest meteorite. In that way the world was saved from all external interference. The Earth became a totally shielded sphere!

The world was always ready for new discoveries!

Or...?

Sibyl

The Grand Poop was a mistake. The probability that it would work was so incredibly small that it didn't exist! And yet, here it was... And it had been running for close to three and a half centuries!

Physically the Grand Poop was the largest and most advanced super-computer that had ever been created. Semi-biological it required the space of a large house. Its programming had been completed prior to power up, and had since not been altered. No further data was required—the Grand Poop just continued calculating on the data it had acquired during its first week of turned on existence. Thus it calculated the future with a speed four times faster than time itself... That meant that one year after it was turned on; in its database was the future of the Earth for the coming three. The database continued growing to a more and more impressive size!

No one really knew the reason why the Grand Poop actually worked... The best explanation was that it was so much more intelligent than anyone would have thought, that it, when it was powered up and hooked into the global network, scanned the entire planet and made more qualified guesses than anyone thought possible. In a stroke of bad luck its creator was also its first “victim”... Five minutes after the calculating routine had started, the genius Damien Nosferatu gave the Grand Poop a question. He wanted to know his own location fifteen minutes later. The Grand Poop replied with an almost too brutal description of Nosferatu’s crushed body... Gone frantic, he left the room screaming, only to prove the Grand Poop correct when he deliriously stumbled out in the afternoon traffic and got hit by a large transport of fortune cookies.

Somehow the Grand Poop had calculated most particles positions and statuses, and cunningly guessed the rest. That wasn’t a small achievement—which is why many people in the beginning saw the Grand Poop as a Grand Fraud. When it in its initial data acquisition phase apparently had guessed correct regarding all particles on Earth, it just counted from that—put data to data to acquire more data...

One problem, but also a condition for the Grand Poop to continue to predict correctly was the laser spheres around the planet. The problem was of course that just because we don’t want anything unexpected to come through doesn’t necessarily mean we don’t want anything to get out—a spaceship to name an example... This problem actually put a halt to space travels for quite some time. But enormous resources were provided the team of scientists given the task of solving the problem. The funding mostly came from frustrated mining corporations...

The problem was solved in a, for that time, quite unexpected manner. Someone thought of looking to the Grand Poop for information on the science team’s coming achievements. It turned out that the team would eventually solve the problem, and of course the solution was also there to read in the data...

The population of the Earth was given a lesson though, in the unlikely events that resulted in that the solution couldn’t be used until the year, date and exact time predicted by the Grand Poop! Thus it took eighteen whole years before exhausted space travelers could finally come home and see their families. They had been waiting a long time for a change of shifts...

After Damien Nosferatu had been given a proper burial, the Grand Poop was examined more closely. As it was connected to the global network, all inhabitants of the Earth were given access to its enormous amount of data.

After that, nothing was ever the same again...

On-line

During the years after the Grand Poop was turned on, chaos was the name of the game. People had unlimited access to future events and they didn't always use it sensibly...

The first thing that happened was that people gambled. Winners suddenly overcrowded all sorts of gambling institutions. Except for totally collapsing the planetary economy, this also had as effect that all gambling disappeared. In the longer run it also meant that no big sport events were performed. The last year the Olympics held games was the year of its absolute and utter fiasco, 2668...

Similar events happened all over...!

Effects

After extensive tests had proven it absolutely impossible to change future events, melancholy took over...

Presidents were no longer elected democratically. Instead they were put to power by the model given by the Grand Poop's data. A little surprise lightened the mood in 2704, when it came to show that no New World president would be elected. The most surprising thing was that the world continued just like before...

It was a boring time to live in! Nothing was exciting anymore—nothing was new and unknown. Everyone lead their lives day after day and often looked forward to the releasing day when their lives' monotony would end...

It was a depressing time!

You might think that the frequency of suicides would go up, but one surprising effect of the Grand Poop was that as good as no suicides were committed anymore. Unbelievably enough this was only a small part of the almost complete release from accidents the world now witnessed...

Bad accidents just didn't take place anymore! After an initial phase of very unnatural accidents nothing bad happened anymore... No airplanes crashed, no fires took lives—the average age of living was increased by almost fifteen years!

Somewhat easier to understand was the disappearance of criminality... No thefts, no robberies, no one was ever murdered anymore. Suddenly

there just were no criminals in the world—no one ever really knew where they all went...

These consequences of the Grand Poop were the only reasons that this horrific machine was not turned off. The world valued its newly won miracles more than it valued human happiness... Was it really that awful to be unhappy—when it saved thousands of lives each and every year?

This was initially a hot debate. But as time went by and the Grand Poop calculated further and further into the future the debate cooled down more and more, until after a few years it had disappeared. What happened was that the Grand Poop continued to predict its own existence. Crystal clear it proved day after day that it would remain turned on and calculating as long as anyone possibly might wish—as long as it had come in its predictions. What was then the point of arguing? When it was proven that the opponents of the Grand Poop would not succeed in their quest—well, then there really was no point in continuing, was there? They might as well go and do something useful...

Destinies like this were of course awaiting all debates and discussions. This made the world a more harmonious place for many people, but for most, utterly useless...

Philosophy was one area of debate that did not succumb to this fate. It's commonly accepted that most philosophical questions never will get an answer. Therefor there were no answers to find even in the Grand Poop. That way the discussions could continue almost as if nothing. That is, except for the fact that the world had been proven completely void of free will...!

A new philosophy saw the light of day, namely Poopism.

Poopism

Poopism brought up the question of how it could be that no accidents occurred in a world that could predict the future.

The prevailing theory was a variation of the obvious 'If Seen—Alter, Amend or Change' principle. ISAAC says that if we know that an airplane will crash, we will do all in our power to prevent it. We will fix what is broken; rebook our flights—simply cancel it... This would of course lead to there being no plane crash; hence no accident would occur...!

The problem with ISAAC was quite obvious; thanks to that free will had been proven nonexistent. Many attempts had been made to change what the Grand Poop had predicted, but none of them had ever succeeded—often in consequence of terribly improbable events. This was true, and then ISAAC couldn't be correct, could it...? If you, even though you knew an accident would happen, could not prevent it, then the accident would occur nonetheless. This was the very basis of Poopism.

However, most people maintained that a variation of ISAAC was possible. They introduced the principle of simplicity. The theory said that the

world, traditionally, was full of accidents. If accidents could be foreseen, then man—who still was only human—would do anything in her power to prevent them—even if she knew it would make no difference. If one person knew he would die in a plane crash, and he also knew there was nothing he could do to prevent it—wouldn't he nonetheless try everything he could to survive?

He would—and that would lead to a world full of people all the time trying to prevent various events to no avail. The result would be a world full of complicated cause and effect scenarios—it would also turn the theory of probability on its head! Naturally it would be simpler for the world and the course of nature if such accidents and events just simply never occurred...!

This was ISAAC's principle of simplicity. It had not been proven either right or wrong, but it was the closest thing to an explanation mankind had—and mankind still appreciated explanations...

Reaction

If Hydro *had* been conscious, it might have pondered upon its journey through the Earth's atmosphere. It would have been surprised at how it had succeeded in getting through those layers of laser light that had circled this new and interesting world. Maybe it would have questioned itself if it was good or bad luck when it with a tremendous force crashed into a neon atom's nucleus.

This had as a result that the neon atom's course was changed a tiny fraction. This in turn meant that the coming collision between this neon atom and a similar neon atom would take place at a somewhat different angle than what was planned prior to Hydro joining the scene...

Hydro had no thoughts whatsoever of its actions. Nor did it worry about not being a hydrogen atom anymore... Hydro had lost its electron and was now a lonely little hydrogen nucleus, a simple proton! The electron had decided to become part of a higher alliance and now belonged to an atom quite a few steps up the ladder. Proto continued its course, smashed a little here and a little there, got hold of a new electron, didn't particularly fancy it, and gave it away in still another collision, smashed a little more...

Events like these continued, and shamelessly didn't care a bit about the Grand Poop who had calculated a different course of events almost two hundred and fifty years earlier...

The people who stood watching the first minutes of the New Year—2999—did not have the slightest idea of what was going on inside the neon tubes that formed the border of the new year's sign...

Nor did they have any knowledge of the fact that the first non-terrestrial substance to come close to earth in three hundred and thirty-three years had just visited them!

New Year

The New Year was celebrated, as usual, with the pomp and circumstance that belongs to all new years. And just as usual no one was really excited about the new year—everyone already knew what it would bring. It would be a moderately warm summer following a much too long spring. It would rain on most festival days, which is why they of course had been moved to nicer days, all according to the Grand Poop...

The most surprising thing the Grand Poop had to offer this year was a new festival day. The new festival day was the first festival day ever introduced to celebrate something that was going to happen... And this year it was a fifty-year jubilee! The year of 3049 would be the year when the Inverted Poop would eventually calculate its way back to the year zero!

The Inverted Poop was a new and faster computer that had been given the Grand Poops' initial data and started its calculations of what had happened in the world prior to the year 2666. Much had already been revealed—most of the great mysteries proved not to be such great mysteries as many had hoped. Revealing who had murdered certain presidents through the years usually only had a negative effect on their several generations' younger families...

Of course, everybody already knew what had happened the year zero, and what would prove to have happened even before then. The Grand Poop's calculations were much more than fifty years ahead of time and had thus a long time ago predicted all the news the Inverted Poop would have today... That was the reason why nobody took much notice of the Inverted Poop—but it was kept running. Since the Grand Poop predicted the Inverted Poops turned on existence for almost a thousand years into the future, nobody even tried to turn it off...

The celebration of the year zero would happen, as so much else this year would happen—and no one could do a thing to stop it. It was like it had always been... No one was now alive who could remember anything different! Of course people knew that the world had once lived under the appearance of free will, but they couldn't really imagine such a world. They could not understand what it would feel like not to know what would happen—today, tomorrow, next year... Wouldn't it feel ... unsafe?

Who knows...?

Changes

Something was happening!

Slowly but surely the world was changing... Of course the world was continually changing all the time, but this time it was somewhat different. The changes made such slow progress that no one noticed them at first. Nobody noticed the tiny changes that in greater and greater degree gave

way into the human world. People were so used to putting their trust in the Grand Poop that they never lingered over small details. It was now hundreds of years ago that anyone had really tried to look into the Grand Poop's predictions in detail. Now when it would have given results, no one was there to look...

That in the middle of a storm two raindrops fell on a certain leaf instead of one was maybe not so odd that no one noticed. But when a while later a bird started to sing when it wasn't supposed to—wasn't it strange that it unnoticed went by. And that no one noticed the odd about a street lamp suddenly failing a warm evening in June was in fact absurd!

Not until a popular news anchor in live VR happened to get an unexpected lock of hair in his eye did someone react on an official level... Prior to that various peculiarities had occurred locally, and had evoked diverse reactions—both of astonished surprise and of unmasked fear.

One day prior to the fateful newscast, an old lady in a suburb of New Prague had a heart attack. Her cat had jumped into her lap and scared her so utterly that one day later she was dead. The cat had decided to long for company two minutes earlier than what was said...

Youth

Like most youth, Timor and Filur were curious about trying their lack of free will. They were sitting at Skuter's house an evening in September and didn't have very much to do. An early fall rain were passing by outside and made the boys feel even more depressed than they were. Timor and Filur, as most people, probably thought that Skuter was an odd boy. And of course, a little odd he was...

"Is it true Skuter," asked Timor, "that you have never checked what will happen to you?"

Skuter sighed and started his explanation as so many times before:

"I don't want to know what will happen to me! It would ruin so much... I have dreams you see."

"Dreams?" wondered Filur.

"Dreams, yes! I don't expect that you would understand..."

"But..." started Timor, "but, you could get in a terrible accident without knowing about it! You know that it has happened to people that don't check..."

"Oh yes, sure I know that! But that's part of the whole thing. It brings a certain everyday excitement that you two will never know. Furthermore, I don't want to end up like old Bluetooth!"

"Old Bluetooth...?" asked Filur.

"Come on, you remember old Bluetooth?" said Timor. "He was the one who fell down the stairs and broke his back. They said that he lay alone on the floor for several days before he died. It was awful!"

“Yes!” remarked Skuter. “It was terrible! But do you know what the most terrible thing about it was?”

“Mmm, no...” answered Timor and Filur in unison.

“Well,” continued Skuter dramatically, “old Bluetooth was like me... He didn’t want to know what was going to happen to him—he wanted to keep his dreams... And he did, until one day some friends of his tempted him into looking just one day into the future. And do you know what old Bluetooth did?”

“Noo,” they answered anew.

“He did it! He looked one day into the future and was very confused by what he saw.”

“What did he see?”

“He saw himself being very depressed. And you must understand that old Bluetooth was one of the happiest people alive! He had never experienced even one day of the blues. What he saw now was himself in a worse mood than he had ever seen anybody else...”

“How come? How could that be?”

“That’s just what Bluetooth asked himself. Had it not been so late in the evening maybe he would have been stronger, but right now he just had to know. He read the next day, and the day after that, and then several weeks—his friends were terrified by his frenzy.

“It of course ended with him seeing his own death... After that day old Bluetooth was never the same again. He walked around like a living dead and never was his laughter heard again...”

They sat for a moment in silence...

“Now do you understand what I mean?” asked Skuter.

“Yeah,” answered Timor, “I guess that maybe I do. Do you understand Filur?” He turned to face his friend.

“Hmm, what!?” Filur jerked and embarrassedly looked at the other two. He had been lost in his terminal, examining what was going on in Linja’s bedroom at nights. He had just invested money in a new interface for his terminal and could now read the Grand Poop’s data in VR. It gave a whole new dimension to his romantic fantasies of his wife to be—Linja. He knew that they would eventually get married, but he also knew that it would be four more years until he would have guts enough to ask her out on a first date...

“Oh forget it!” said Skuter.

Experiment

“You wanna see something fun?” asked Timor.

“Yeah, I guess so,” answered Skuter. He was getting tired of his friends’ only passion—the Grand Poop.

“The best would be if you did it yourself, it’s never the same watching someone else do it.”

“Do what?”

“What we will do is following.” Timor put two cans on the table in front of them, one green and one red. He looked at his watch. “It’s now ten minutes to seven. At precisely seven, I will grab one of these cans. Here Skuter, you take the watch and tell me when it’s seven.” He gave his watch to Skuter who looked at him with a puzzled look.

“Filur! Hand me the terminal,” demanded Timor.

He was given the terminal and keyed in a few commands. He called his own database and used Filur’s new interface to show what was going to happen.

The screen clearly showed the three friends in the sofa with the two cans in front of them. The time was shown at the top left corner of the screen. When the digits turned to seven Timor’s hand was seen reaching out and grabbing the red can.

“There we have it!” he yelled. “The red can! I will take the red can!”

“So!?” wondered Skuter unappreciatively.

“Don’t you understand?” answered Filur. “He will take the red can! Whatever he does to prevent it, he *will* take the red can!”

“When its seven o’clock,” continued Timor, “I will do everything in my power to grab the green can. But I will not succeed! My hand will grab the red can, however much I order it to take the green one!”

“I see,” said Skuter. “However I don’t see the amusement in such a task. Why don’t you simply walk out of here? Run out the door and continue on home!”

“I tried that once,” Filur bolted in. “It was actually the same experiment. I rose and went to the kitchen for a bite to eat when I was predicted to grab the can. I’ll never do that experiment again!”

“Why not?” asked Skuter. “What happened?”

“On my way to the kitchen suddenly the window blew open, a wind blew in and made me turn around. Just then I tripped over my brother’s miniature robot and lost balance. I tried my best to fall away from the sofa and the table with the cans, but still I ended up in the sofa with a clear view of the cans in my eyes. I felt dizzy and noticed that one of the cans was filled with wads of money! Suddenly I wanted nothing but the money in my hand. So, I grabbed the expected can at the exact moment I was supposed to! Afterwards I just sat there, shaking for several minutes. Like I said, I’ll never do it again! It’ll make you hallucinate!”

“Ah!” escaped Skuter.

“That’s not the worst though,” remarked Timor.

“What!? What then is worst?” wondered an irritated Filur.

“Have you ever tried to think differently than you would?”

“What do you mean?”

"I mean, have you ever checked with the Grand Poop what you will think and then tried to think something else?"

"I have never even thought of that," answered Filur.

"Then I have the privilege of telling you that I have!" continued Timor.

"How?"

"Well, I borrowed a brainwave reader from my dad and read my mind when I thought of a beautiful girl and then when I thought of a brutal murder. I received two distinctly different patterns. Then I decided on a certain time interval when I would think of one of the two things—and after that I checked with the Grand Poop. I used a brainwave interface I also borrowed from my dad and examined myself through the Grand Poop during my decided time interval..." He took a dramatic pause to have a sip of coke.

"And then...?" urged Skuter.

"Well, it was very clear that during that time I would think of the beautiful girl. When the time came I tried all I could to think of the murder. I just couldn't! How I tried there was only one thing in my mind—the beautiful girl..."

"Sounds like a pretty normal day to me..." joked Filur and received an angry eye from Timor.

"I'm telling you that it was awful! Imagine not being able to think! It felt like someone else took over my brain and steered my thoughts where I didn't want them!"

"I, for one, think that I *would* want them there." Filur just couldn't resist...

"Enough!" Timor shoved Filur who shoved back. "It really was the scariest thing I've ever experienced..."

"Yeah, yeah!" Timor calmed down. "That *is* how it is after all. We cannot really think! Our thoughts are only an illusion, you know that!?"

"You be quiet!" murmured Timor while dragging his hands through his hair.

"Hear hear!" said Skuter. "No more philosophical depressing bull! Besides, it's only twenty seconds left until seven."

"Just say when." Timor made himself ready.

"When!"

Timor extended his arm and grabbed the green can.

"There you see!" he said. "I couldn't avoid grabbing the re-e-e..." He looked at his friends dropped jaws and looked back at his own hand. He lowered his eyes and saw...

"The green can! I'm holding the green can!" He hesitated and turned to the terminal. "Surely it must have been the green can I was supposed to grab..." The terminal once again clearly showed Timor grabbing the red can.

"How...! Where...! Ahh! ... Umm...!"

A New World

A shocking week later the event with the news anchor's hair happened and the news was all over the net.

After that, things started to happen fast! People reacted shockingly to the news, and the Grand Poop predicted none of these shocked behaviors. Therefore reality started to differ more and more from the world generated by the Grand Poop. Soon everyday events started to degenerate in all kinds of directions—wherever, however, whenever... Many embarrassing episodes took place! It took quite a while before people started getting used to the unexpected...

It was a tumultuous time. People experienced accidents for the first time in their lives and didn't know how to handle them. Some *couldn't* handle them—they never got used to this new way of life. Some choose to take their own lives, which also was a new phenomenon in this strange world. Much old stuff had to be dug up. The world was in many ways discovered anew...

It was a time of terrible accidents, much suffering—but also a time of dreams—a time of hope!

Mankind lived again!

A new millennium

The new millennium promised a New World...

The Grand Poop was left alone. And it continued to predict what could have happened in a different world.

The Inverted Poop stood also left by itself, unaffected! Nothing could ever change what had once been... A funny thing was that the Grand Poop continued to predict correctly in what it calculated that the Inverted Poop would report.

This meant—and many people were looking forward to this—that in just a little more than one and a half million years, mankind would once and for all get black on white information on why the dinosaurs died out...

Imagine what a mess a tiny atom can make...

Written by Ola Magnusson, August 4, 1997.

Afterword:

I have written this story as a funny story to make you think.

Don't get hung up on small details that make the story less believable—if from any perspective the story could be said to *be* believable...

Don't mind wondering over how space travels could exist. Don't mind remarking that the sun, moon, comets and stars always influence mankind or that the Inverted Poop could not work because there were no laser spheres in the past.

There's no way of writing a story like this if everything has to be beyond all doubt correct. Suspend your disbelief!

/Ola.