Prologue

A research student in the astronomy department of a great learning institution created shock waves that rippled through three galaxies. His intent was not to interrupt the flow of life for any creature, but he did. And this is his story.

Brad, the nineteen-year-old student, in his fourth year of training in astrophysics, was a keen researcher with an avid curiosity. He had traveled extensively between galaxies since the age of ten. He loved his home and his studies, in that order.

The science academy was in the city of Iru, capital of the planet Lydo, which lies in the galaxy of Ourano in the third universe. Brad’s research studies focused on the Netherworld’s planet of Dluse, which intersected the human world in the first universe. The Supreme Lord governed all three existing universes.

On the fateful day, Brad was in the classroom to give a short presentation on universal behavioral patterns, a required course for his fourth year oral exams. He stood at the podium with Professor Mikol to present an update on his research.

“It’s all yours Brad,” the professor said. “We’re waiting for your report on the Netherworld.”

“A report on trivia, Professor Mikol. It’s proving more difficult than I expected to obtain useful information on the inhabitants behavioral patterns. Their ruler known as the Head Honcho rebelled against our Supreme Lord in the far distant past. As a result, he and his followers were exiled to the Netherworld.”

“Those facts are historic, and we all know them,” Professor Mikol said.

“Yes, and my other facts, too.” Brad replied. “Our intergalactic journeys bypass the Netherworld. Their inhabitants have no outer contacts except with the human world. I gained permission to view the files of our Lydo security agents, but there is little material on the daily habits of the residents.

“Perhaps you can find more information if you take a field trip to Eyrl.” Professor Mikol suggested.

“I did, but the reference Librarian said no current or past information existed on the social practices of the inhabitants. My trip to Eyrl’s library ended in failure. However, there is one recourse remaining, Professor Mikol. Is a field trip to Dluse possible?”

“A risky venture rarely permitted, Brad. Let me delve into the possibility and get an answer for you.”

During the next month, Professor Mikol consulted with the academic and government authorities on the possibility of inserting Brad into Dluse, the foremost planet, of the Netherworld. The most likely place was

Nofer, a town in Daganland that intersected the human world.

With the plan firmly set, Professor Mikol said, “It bears repeating, Brad. Your memory will be erased, and you will enter Daganland with no mind ties to your home.

In addition, you will have the outer form of the natives who are mostly exiles from the human world. You are crossing into an unknown and dangerous country. Kindly Nofer residents may be in short supply. Are you sure you of this journey to Dluse?”

“I will chance it and use the wits you think I have to navigate the darklands, Professor. I’m ready to go.”

And so, Brad went into the darkness.