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Written by NHA

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[Previously on Beyond TPT: Cinderella has been told by the Fairy Godmother that she can go to the ball, but that if she is not back by midnight, her private parts will turn into a pumpkin. Little does the Godmother know that the local Prince is called Peter the Pumpkin Eater and Cinders will be home @ about 4am. Now read on...]

Beyond the Porcelain Throne

Series 3 /5

Master Yo Dude

Hi Captain!

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We've got the coordinates for Dagobah so we can head off anytime you want to. I know you'll check over all the crew sections before we go because you're sensible like that...we wouldn't want to leave Starbase with half the bridge crew missing, now would we?

I have a link to all properly functional Starships via your own computer, which is why you can still talk to me, so on the way to Dagobah I can tell you how to make quicksand out of custard, okay? –No, listen up; this is important. You'll need some custard powder and just a bit of milk. Or you can use cornflour [corn starch] if you have no custard powder, [but it's not as much fun then because you don't get to eat it afterwards.]

Let's get Vulcan about this and say, 300 grams of custard powder and 250 millilitres of milk. Okay, you mix them together and you'll find the mixture will ripple like water, but poke it hard with your finger and it seems solid. You can sink a finger into it slowly...but then it's hard to pull it out. You can even get a spoonful and roll it into a ball in your hands but if you stop rolling, it will behave like liquid again. If you hit it with a hammer it can even shatter.

Matter in this condition is in the midst of a 'phase shift'; it takes on the properties of both states; in this case liquid and solid, and the reason I'm telling you all this is that you can do a similar thing with your mind. I don't mean you can get it to go all goopy if you mix it with milk, I mean you can get it to understand things all of a sudden from new points of view. [If you add more milk to your mixture now and cook it, you can eat the custard while we run through the landing cycle. If you like, you can pop a bit of honey in it for the Gnomes.]

The space dock is actually quite nice, if small. Glenda points out that it does have a duty free shop, but we don't have time for that right now.

"Yo, dude!" Master Yo Dude has come to meet us. He's dressed pretty much like any Darragdomian, in a sort of robe like thing, with the white rabbit sign on the shoulder. But this guy has dreadlocks, and looks decidedly stoned.

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"Yo dude! Welcome to Dagobah! Come on down to mine, we're jammin." [You can stay in touch with me via your communicator, and remember you can always beam out if you're in trouble by following the rabbit, so I guess it's pretty safe to go with Yo Dude. And if we don't, we won't learn anything, right?]

Yo Dude lives in a big bender, kind of like a Yurt; there's a fire in the middle and all around are shelves. If you look on the shelves you'll see two things –his music collection and some fungi growing in trays. There is also a very large music system, some computers and a home cinema setup.

"Sit down," says Yo Dude, "Make yourself at home. –Now I know you're here to learn about shortcutting, but I don't know whether you're ready for that yet...tell me, do you know how to make quicksand out of custard?"

[Aren't you glad you have me around?] Of course we do know this, so he's quite happy to continue after rolling the most enormous spliff we [or at least I] have ever seen.

"Let me tell you how I came to be here...I've always loved two things in life, music and mysticism, but my folks got mutinied probably before I was even born, and I was brought up to believe I had to go to school, get a job and so on and told that if I did everything right, one day I would be rich and be able to do whatever I wanted. It sounded straightforward enough, and everybody else was doing it so I kind of got dragged in. I was sort of messing about and playing the guitar a bit, and doing a day job in an office, and I got truly stuck in the rut. The Toilet Empire had me; I didn't really even know what I wanted to do, so I couldn't do it. Then one weekend my friends and I got stoned and went to see a movie –Star Wars, it was. And in this movie was the most amazing character, called Master Yoda –right! It just hit me –I want to be living like that guy, y'know? Sitting on my ass fishing all day and telling other dudes about cool stuff I'd learned. Except I'd have music, and I'd grow weed and some veggies and set up a windmill and all. I just couldn't see why I had to work for 40 years in order to get that, when I could be doing it now, so I am. I didn't even see what had been taken away from me, though, until I got it back. The most important thing for any person is freedom. True, autonomous freedom is the only thing that gives us the right state of mind to live a quality life. And the thing you can't get free from; it's not the Government or the Establishment or Society –it's what people will think of you. I stepped away from living in fear of what other people might think, and I found myself in heaven in the here and now.

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"But that's not the important part...the important part is how I managed to take those steps –because I did it by shortcutting the Orlians. Not many people know how to do that, but you will, because I do.

"You have to get yourself into a state of mind where failure is not an option. –This is what the original little Yoda dude means, when he says "There is no 'try'". It doesn't mean you shouldn't try! It means you should begin your endeavor with the attitude of confidence in the competence of intelligence; with absolute belief in its ability to enter into the unknown, build a bridge of associations, interact, and come back with greater ability. Being in this state of mind changes your chemistry; you take on a brain chemistry that makes you more likely to succeed, more likely to get better quicker, more likely to be competent. Trust and belief in Reality and intelligence are all that is required.

"This superpower is called 'the placebo effect', and it will work pretty well if you put enough trust and belief in anything, but if you actually know what you're doing it works better still. The trick of achieving it is to play –in this case to imagine a character who is utterly competent, competent and together, [for me that was Yoda, right?] then you imagine how that character would behave, and then act as though you are that character. That's how I became Master Yo Dude –by playing at being Yoda, but varying the details a little to suit my own likes and dislikes. I became wiser by pretending to be wise, by imagining what Yoda would say or do, and then doing it. I learned that if you honestly believe in "the Force" it can cure illness, but that's not because the Force exists! It works because a strong conviction and confidence in something –hope, optimism, determination- changes your physiology and boosts your immune system and makes you smarter. The thing you believe in, whatever it is, is just a trigger for a load of hormonal responses. But if the thing you believe in aligns with what's going on in Reality, obviously you're going to get a very fast response. So I'm asking you to believe in the power of Reality. In the power of nature to be really super.

"I'm giving you information here previously labelled either "Top Secret" or "Occult". People blame things they don't understand on all sorts of stuff, but miracles shouldn't be a mystical secret. They're a part of how nature works, if you let it. Stuff about the mind used to be 'occult' because we didn't understand how it worked. Now that we do, why obscure that?

"This is shortcutting via the Orlians. It catapults imagination into Reality, and has caused feats of amazing strength, remarkable healing powers, and other events that people call 'miracles', so that's why this is another superpower, but the only thing miraculous about it is the miracle of nature, and what it can get up to if you work with it, as I've said.

"Now, we mustn't forget the Vulcans... Shortcutting via the Vulcans utilises words. Information that can be written, read or spoken aloud is all you need. Let's say you have an exam coming up and you want to be really on the case for the event...all you have to do is write a glowing report to the Vulcans about someone [real or imaginary] who is an absolute genius at the subject in question. Praise their sharp rationality, their reasoning skills, their memory of facts and figures, their intellectual prowess. A couple of paragraphs will do. Read it back just before the exam, then forget about it. You'll find your own intellectual abilities inexplicably enhanced. If you don't believe me, try it.

"...If you read something like that every day, what might happen? Hmm? Might become permanently smarter, as the Darragdomians widened the route... But don't forget it works the other way round... For example, influence of prior words from anything you've read about dumb people will have a deleterious affect on exam performance. Now you're beginning to see more and more why controlling your input is so important! You watch dumb people, you read about dumb people, you get dumber. Bummer.

"Anyway, don't forgot about the custard, right? The custard-quicksand thingy is one way of seeing a phase shift. A phase shift is when a thing turns into a completely different form, like water into ice or steam. You slowly increase the input in a linear way...you slowly put in more milk...and suddenly the matter undergoes a change in its nature. The change isn't linear, despite the increase being linear. You can do another one, when you heat up your custard mix -the increase in heat is linear, but the custard will all of a sudden get thick. That's a phase shift too. Emergence uses phase shifts like this all the time. And what I am trying to explain here is that it's just the same when you're improving your mind. You keep stirring it a bit and thinking it will never change, and then all of a sudden, whoom! You can do something different, or you're much better at it, whatever it is. Your custard went solid.

"This is because what you are really doing when you're shortcutting is genetic engineering. Oh yeh. Genes, you see, don't turn on slowly -they're either on or off. And often it's the chemicals that your brain releases that turns them on and off. Genes that produce the proteins for repair turn on whenever you're injured -or whenever you think you are. Genes that build more muscle turn on whenever you work out -or whenever they think you are...so, you getting the picture here yet, man? It don't matter what genes you've got, it just matters which ones you can turn on or off. [And you can turn off the ones that make ya fat, too!]

"But to produce these chemicals, to quote my hero -"You have to let it all go -fear, doubt,

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disbelief...don't think you are, KNOW you are."- That's the art and skill of playing really hard; pretending really well. Don't get me wrong -you're not deluded –you don't think you're super-strong, or super-agile, or super-fit...You quite deliberately choose to believe that you are, to "Know" that you are; because you know that your body goes through beneficial changes towards being those things whenever you do. Chemicals and genes don't mind if its fact or fiction; they'll respond to whatever they think is out there. If whatever's out there requires superpowers, they'll be provided. Then your Vulcans can remind you that it was all a game, and you can stop playing but still get to keep the powers. Pretty cool, huh?

"Now I'll tell you something intriguing... These shortcutting techniques can even work for helping other people, as long as they have sufficient crew in the relevant places. That means, if someone truly believes that you can help them, you'll be more likely to be able to help them. If someone genuinely believed that you could heal their wounds, you would in fact be able to speed up the healing process in that other person. This is not magic and there is nothing mysterious about it; it's just the way brains work.

"Now I have to say right here, I'm thinking that you maybe came here looking for a great warrior, and all you got was me, and you're thinking, 'so who's the DJ Shaman?', but if you still believe I might know something you might want to know, I can still teach you stuff. And there's only one more thing about shortcutting to tell you, so don't you worry about a thing, cos every little thing's gonna be alright, Bob Marley said so.

"It may have occurred to you already to wonder what happens if we shortcut more than one section at a time...and you may have guessed right –it's more powerful and you get results faster. You shouldn't try it, however, unless you can already shortcut individual sections and are used to your mind's responses to doing this. Otherwise it's a bit like taking way too much LSD on your first trip. But when you've played with all these ideas for a while, give it a go. It isn't hard to work out how; you just combine the signals. So you need something sensory motor & spatial for the Gnomes & Cakdons, something intellectual in words for the Vulcans, arty & imaginative for the Orlians & Darragdomians.

"You may notice that the traditional idea of shamanic 'ritual' fulfils these criteria –dancing, music, drugs, decoration, material ritual objects and ritual words, light, incense –signals address every part of the brain at once, and you can design your own mixes of input based around anything that means anything to you. That's why I'm the DJ Shaman –I mix rituals. What you can do with them is multiple shortcutting. Many modern religious 'rituals' have lost their impact because one or more component is missed out; people may no longer understand what the words mean, for example, or physical movement may have been omitted, or objects. Also, for

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this kind of shortcutting to work you need to be in a safe space, comfortable, alone or with close allies, and that rarely happens in churches. It sometimes happens in gigs, but the 'safe space' factor affects the vibe. A good gig though, in a known safe place with allies, can be a very uplifting spiritual experience. A good gig is a ritual. So is a good meditation, but the Vulcans' signals are often missed out in Western society because people don't understand the real meanings of the words they chant. This simple factor, one thing missing, slows it down. Correctly done meditation should initiate the relaxation response, in which your unconscious brain can learn really fast. If you were brought up in Western tradition with a western language, simply chanting "One" is more likely to succeed for you than chanting stuff like "Na moo myo rengo kyo" ["None of my cows is orange, okay"?]

To summarize: To do a full multiple mix shortcut you need [a] something for the guys up front –words, artwork, shapes, light- [b] something for the guys out back –movement, material objects, baths, clothing- and [c] something for the guys in the middle –fantasy and stories. You have to capture the imagination, make sense to the Vulcans, inspire the Orlians and keep the body guys occupied. Dancing to music that has meaningful lyrics is a pretty good method, so I mix rituals. That's what you came here to learn.

"One of the other ingredients for ritual I listed above was of course drugs. You don't have to use drugs in shortcutting [although of course the choice is yours], but you might find you're in for a few nice surprises. I'm not saying you can do shortcutting either straight or stoned, I'm saying that doing it is likely to get you stoned. You can use various different techniques to get stoned, you see, and some of them are entirely drug-free. Your brain in fact can produce some of the best highs ever all on its own. Excuse me while I go and get my stash and then I'll meet you in the next chapter and tell you all about why you won't need any of it.

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