

BOOK SEVEN CHAPTER TEN MISS MARCH

When Ellen March read about the trial in the Hague, she wrote the five defendants, offering to help in any way she could. “If you should ever be in New Jersey or New York, please get in touch. I would very much like to meet you.” She never received a reply.

Ayres the orangutan and Victoria the chimpanzee had equally divided the money they received from the Nobel Peace Prize among Shilli, Asha, Emilie, Julian and Lapis. Remembering the voice in the Bhutan forest, “We are interested in the young and old of your species,” everyone agreed to use some of the funds for a research project to study animal communication. After receiving several hundred applications, their decision was unanimous. A quadri lingual girl from South Korea, Sang-Ah Gohk, and a seventy five year old American woman, Ellen Freeman March, were each awarded a grant to study the Interspecies Internet. The two would not only do extensive research but also work together to spread awareness about an interspecies interface.

Jane Green, (Shilli, Asha, Emilie, Lapis and Julian’s close friend and attorney), had mailed a detailed chronology to Miss March and Sang of what had transpired since the youngsters first met in Australia. After receiving a lengthy phone message from Emilie Lishin, comments and numbers from a notebook belonging to her husband’s father, Rodion, Ellen March contacted Jane Green. Two things caught her attention. The word *lyssa* and the phrase *Don’t tell your parents*. Having studied Greek mythology, Ellen knew *lyssa*, (the name of a virus), meant frenzy or madness, virus in Greek defined as “poison.” A computer virus, a human one, or both?

Ellen March began spending her days at the local library, taking copious notes. Polar bears have blue tongues. Cats (with three eyelids) have a brain ninety percent similar to humans and can’t taste sweets. Bears don’t walk, they slide. With so many fascinating facts about the animal world, an owl’s radar capability, a hummingbird’s sixty meals daily, their ability both to hover and to fly backwards and upside down, she knew the difficulty would be concentrating on animal communication. What was clear was that ninety percent of the world’s food supply came from one hundred different crops, seventy of which depended on bees for pollination. Three billion humans relied on sea food.

Hearing that another grant recipient would be entering Princeton University as a freshmen (at thirteen, the youngest applicant ever to have been accepted), rather than a regular two hour drive to use the University library (and meet occasionally with Sang), Ellen March rented her house in Orange, New Jersey and leased a small cottage on a property near the campus. Not one for useless extravagances, it would fit her needs perfectly for the next twelve months. Sang's orientation was the first week of September. The two spoke briefly, arranging to meet in three weeks. Jane Green (who lived in Virginia) was leaving for two weeks in Denmark to see Emilie and meet Chloe the sloth. She would be in Princeton in mid-November, looking forward to spending time with Ellen and Sang.

The Princeton University Library was a treasure trove of information, rare books, special collections, an extensive digital catalogue. Beginning her animal communication research, mistyping a word, Ellen was intrigued when a William Blake poem appeared on the computer screen. Many years ago she'd read *Songs of Innocence*. The 19th century British painter, poet and engraver lived during a time of political and social upheaval and had, personally, suffered years of severe depression. She'd never read his *Songs of Experience*. The poem "A Poison Tree" depicted with appalling honesty both the hatred of which a human is capable and the cunning which can be used to hide one's destructive anger. Addressing both the positives and the negatives of human behavior, the way things are versus how they ought to be, William Blake didn't approve of the inequities. His unasked question - why isn't happiness universal? Ellen March took a break, went outside for a half hour walk before returning to her research.

Daily news reports of animal behavior were hard to believe. A dog had been photographed breast feeding a human infant abandoned by his parents in a war zone.

Ellen wondered why some people bonded easily with animals and others not. Thinking about physicians and scientists conducting experiments to solve issues of human illness, she didn't understand why humans did experiments on animals to find out about themselves. Like humans, animals have cultures, behavior passed one generation to the next through teaching or watching others. As did humans, same species animals had different personalities and faced stress and illness due to relocation. Chimpanzees moving from one geographical area to another changed their vocal sounds, adopting the accents of others in their new environments. Human animals are the only species who destroys their own habitat. . . and cooks their food.

Growing up without adults to teach and guide them, young humans and animals shared the same behavior, the violence, capture without food, death of those around them forever etched in their being. Had this always been the case, or was human exploitation of other animals, inflicting trauma and stress and death, on the rise? In different parts of the world, elephants watched their families being murdered, as humans, across the nearby border, watched their own loved ones slaughtered. Both would suffer from post traumatic stress. Post traumatic growth would take time.

Miss March organized a program at the local Princeton library called Think Out Loud, inviting children under the age of ten to bring an adult (seventy or older) once a week for an hour. Juice and cookies would be served. Logic, the unthinkable, intuition and imagination would be welcome and given equal attention.

Ellen was pleasantly surprised when forty children and adults arrived for the first get together. A conference room had been arranged with tables and chairs, pillows on the floor. No one knew what to expect. Miss March sat next to a small table in the middle of the room. “Thank you for coming. My name is Ellen March. I was given a grant to study animal communication. . . .” “What’s a grant?” “A sum of money given to someone work on a specific project.” “Are you getting paid to have these meetings?” Pleased the Think Out Loud premise was succeeding, “No. I wanted to speak to you as part of my research.”

A small boy raised his hand. “Does Think Out Loud mean we can say anything we want?” “Yes. Often we feel something but don’t say it, for whatever reason. I’ll start with a question. Has anyone ever talked, spoken, or communicated with a dog, cat, bird, horse lizard, cow, a pig or any other animal?” A girl sitting on the floor nearest the door was the first. “I speak to animals all the time. Humans are animals.” Miss March smiled. “Indeed. I should have said non human animals.”

One child after another described how they talked to the animals around them. When Miss March asked “Do they talk with you?” there was only one response. “I’m Paul. My dog, Jim, died last week. Since he was a puppy, he talked to me, without making a sound. I understood what he wanted me to hear.” A bald man was the first adult to speak. “What about you?” Miss March - “I spoke to the animals who lived with me every day. If they ever communicated with me, I never heard it.” The boy seated next to the bald man, his grandfather, took his turn. “You’re old. Is your hearing okay? My grandfather can’t hear a lot of what goes on.” The man and Ellen March led the laughter that filled the room.

Is barking, purring, howling and chirping communication? Animals feel, do they think? As she listened to, and did her best to answer one question after another, Ellen's energy grew. The imagination and excitement was infectious. As the first Think Out Loud meeting drew to a close, a young boy sitting on a floor pillow, the only child who hadn't said anything, stood up, speaking excitedly. "We won't be here next week. It's my 7th birthday. My grandpa is talking me to see a Broadway show. I've never been to New York, An older woman in a wheelchair at the other side of the room began to speak. "I hope you have a wonderful time. I remember my 7th birthday. At the end of the day, I went with my grandmother to do an errand. She went into the store, I waited outside. A man walking by, stopped and said "You look sad." "I am, It's my birthday and I didn't get what I wanted." What did you want?" "Raspberry ice cream."

We walked to the nearby ice cream store where he asked the woman behind the counter "A double raspberry cone, please." I thanked him and went back outside. As he walked away, he smiled at me. "Remember, always ask for what you really want!" Later that night I was told the man was Albert Einstein. I had no idea who Einstein was. Now I do."

A boy seated on the floor next to Miss March got up and approached the woman. I don't know who that is but, smiling at her..."What do you really want?" She didn't hesitate. "A dog, but I live alone and can't do the walks." "Where do you live?" "Brook Drive." "I'm on Gayley, the next street over. I'd love to walk your dog every day. My dad's friend works at the Animal Shelter. He could show you around." The boy hugged the woman and went to sit down. Ask for what you really want.

A boy stood up, shyly bending his head forward. I'm nine. I know some kids whose family tradition is to go hunting every year, When people hold their guns in the air and talk about how wonderful they feel standing over an innocent animal they've killed, it makes me sick. If I had one wish it would be that every person who hunts and kills animals for fun will experience what they are doing to others, know what it feels like to be hunted and killed, for doing nothing other than living their lives peacefully.

After everyone left, Helen March was lost in thought, remembering the first time she'd been to a Broadway musical, *South Pacific*. She had never forgotten the lyrics of one song.

You've got to be taught
To hate and fear,
You've got to be taught
From year to year,
It's got to be drummed
In your dear little ear
You've got to be carefully taught.

You've got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
And people whose skin is a different shade,
You've got to be carefully taught.

You've got to be taught before it's too late,
Before you are six or seven or eight,
To hate all the people your relatives hate,
You've got to be carefully taught.

At the second meeting, the number grew from forty to fifty two. A brown haired girl was anxious to speak. "I agree with the boy who talked about hunters last week, especially what he said about wishing hunters could experience being hunted and killed themselves. Last year at school we had an assignment to choose a specific religion to research and write about. For those religions who believe there is one god, I looked up the definition. Creator, supreme being, the almighty, deity, maker, ruler of the universe, lord, source of all moral authority, godhead. Some other religions worship a spirit or superhuman being who has power over humans and nature. I guess its normal for children to be the same religion as their parents. Religions were invented by humans. My parents want me to choose what is right for me."

"Which religion did you write about?" "Many religions believe their god is the only true god. I've heard it many times. Your god is not the real god, mine is. I was intrigued with Buddhism which doesn't believe in a god. Buddhists believe in reincarnation." "Say that word again?" "Reincarnation." "Does it have anything to do with cars?" "No. It means when a person dies their spirit can start a new life in another body. I'm learning about karma." "Does that have anything to do with cars?" No, it's spelled with a k, not a c.

It means that what a person does in their lifetime affects their experiences in the future. The boy asking the questions about cars was angry. “To believe every thing that happens to anyone is because of something they did in the past is horrible. My brother didn’t deserve to get multiple sclerosis. I hate that religion.” A man spoke up. “All we each can do is our best. The woman next to him took her turn. “I think many different religions agree on one thing; treat others like you would like to be treated.” Another child. “Is there a religion that worships animals?” Miss March - “It’s called Zoolatry, tigers, pigs, elephants, goats, snakes, monkeys, wolves, dogs and horses were honored as gods. India worships several animals, the cow above all. Egypt also practices animal worship.”

A young girl started to speak, haltingly. “My dog’s name is NIMBLE. He’s a Border Collie. When my brother did something bad to me, he saw what happened. Now, he’s with me all the time, walks me to school and back, never leaves me. He started looking at me eye to eye, whining softly. He wanted me to tell someone. NIMBLE taught me the most important lesson of my life. Speak up. If one person won’t listen to you, find someone else. My brother lies and makes things up all the time. My parents believe everything he says. When I told my school teacher what happened, she listened.”

A boy at the far side of the room stood up. “My Lab’s name is WAND. He knew something was wrong with my Grandma, kept sniffing and licking her hands and arms. When she got up from her chair, he’d nudge her toward the front door. She thought he wanted to go for a walk. He sat in front of her, staring, not moving. After a few hours, she decided to go to her doctor. She had cancer. WAND saved her life.”

“I’m ninety nine. People think the elderly aren’t willing to explore new experiences, thoughts and ideas. Reliance on technology has changed the way we all think, act and behave, not always for the better. You young people will change the world in ways we can’t even imagine. I have two pieces of advice. Never forget that a person’s *worth*, contrary to public opinion, has nothing to do with finances.”

“I’m nine. Grown ups worship money. They talk about how kids do dumb things when they’re the ones who’re doing stupid things. Is there a religion where god is money? Ever since humans arrived on the earth, they’ve been destroying other animal life, not for their own survival. Nature knows how to work together, humans are way behind. I doubt animals have as many diseases as humans.” His exuberance was infectious.

The third meeting began with everyone sharing their favorite quotation. Kermit the Frog's wisdom started the laughter, "If life were easy, it wouldn't be difficult." "Human beings are the unfinished animal," "Nothing is too wonderful to be true," and "Nature is full of traps for the beast that cannot learn" won second, third and fourth place in the vote taken. Kermit took first prize. A seven year old girl with short curly blond hair set the agenda; each child would ask an adult a question, any question. "What do you think is funny?" "If you could have one wish?" "Do you have a piece of advice?" "What is the dumbest thing you ever did, the most fun thing?" "When was the last time you played?" "If you could do one thing differently, what would it be?" "Describe yourself in one word."

The adults took their time to answer. An elderly man who had difficulty speaking provoked questions with his answer. "One piece of advice is easy. Do what you love. What do I think is funny? We're supposed to believe old people are wise. It's the young who are wise. Memories of my childhood are among my greatest joys."

A woman wearing a pink patch over her right eye followed. "I know competition is human, but I don't understand it. Why do humans give awards to each other all the time? Who is best pretending to be someone else, who can run and swim the fastest, jump the farthest, which animal is the best of their breed? It's always who is the best. Survival depends on food and shelter. Animals deal with it every day. Other than the nearest market, I don't know how to find a food source, or build a shelter. If humans without guns had a contest with animals, I think I know who'd survive. One piece of advice. New ideas are scary. If you have an idea that other people make fun of, believe in yourself and keep working."

A boy sitting across from the lady, got up and walked over to her. "I wanted to learn to play piano, After a few lessons, my teacher said I wasn't any good. I didn't want to enter any contests, just loved playing." "Make me a promise, stick with it. Never mind what your teacher said. If it gives you joy, keep playing. I have a piano. Will you ask your parents if you can come to my house and play for me?"

An Asian woman's advice followed. "Value criticism but, be cautious about being swayed by others, even those with good intentions who want to lead you in a different direction. Listen to your heart and instincts." She followed with a question. "Does anyone know the definition of xenophobia?" Silence. "We need to open a rehabilitation center for xenophobics." The next day, everyone, young and old, knew the word's meaning.

The following week it was the adults' turn to ask the children questions. "What's your favorite animal?" "What do you want to change about your life?" "What did you learn last week in school?" "What food do you like best?" "Do you have a favorite color?" "What are your strengths?" "What scares you the most?" "What excited you in the last few weeks?" "What do you do when you're sad?" "What's the dumbest thing you've done recently?"

"The dumbest thing? I had a *Guess the number of beans in the jar* contest in my neighborhood. I didn't have a prize so I gave the winner something from my Mom's jewelry box. The lady returned it to my Mom. Was I in trouble!" "Walking to school I picked flowers from everyone's front yard to give to my teacher. You think you got in trouble?"

"I won a prize at last year's science fair. Do you know our bodies contain approximately four octillion atoms - the number four followed by twenty seven zeros? I don't believe what I've been taught about the brain, that it can't change. Using light, sound and vibrations, it can change. As a gamer, I've already proved that vibrations can make changes. If they need a brain for an experiment, they can use mine." Miss March - "A professor is visiting the University next week to lecture on exactly that subject. I'll arrange for you to meet him."

A girl seated at Ellen March's left walked over to the boy who'd just spoken. "I want to find a way to replace dying brain cells. My grand parents don't remember things, they don't know who I am. I think loneliness and getting sick are connected. Let's meet afterward."

One after another, the children thought out loud. "I'm autistic. Love to watch movies. Love to watch movies. Love to watch movies." "This morning, finally, I cracked an egg without breaking the yoke." "When I'm sad, I go outside, whatever the weather. It makes me feel better." "I didn't want to come here today. Both my parents work and my school is closed this week for repairs. I don't know why no one at my school likes me." A boy at the other side of the room got up. "No one likes me either. Wanna be friends?" "Does nature have a conscience?"

"I'm eight. Would it be a good idea not to worry about tomorrow, just enjoy what's happening now, play and be silly, instead of spending so much time planning for the future?"

A ten year old had a question. “Were any of you afraid to be born? Why are we all taught to be afraid to die? Is it because we don’t know if death is the end of everything?” “I’m five. My friends and I used to kill ants. After learning how smart they are, we stopped and just blow them away, brush them aside. Every day we’re each going to do one small thing to help nature.” The girl next to her gave her a high five. “Hunting is disgusting! It’s not a sport, it’s just disgusting!”

“I hear people talk about animals’ separation anxiety. I have the same thing but my Mom and Dad seem to care more about their dogs than the do me.” The meeting was drawing to a close when a small voice shouted “I dare all the grownups. Make a funny face! Make us laugh!” What followed couldn’t be described.

A loud noise outside caught everyone’s attention. Ellen March walked over and opened the windows that overlooked a large tree surrounded by flower beds. Sitting on a high branch, after pecking over and over in rapid succession, a bird flew through the window landing on the table. “I am HARBINGER. We are all part of Nature and its complexities. I bang my head thousands of times but don’t get headaches.” The girl with autism shouted “Why not? Why not? Why not?”

Everyone was silent. Some had understood the woodpecker’s communication, others had not. The same held true for his answer. HARBINGER - “Because my brain is organized differently than yours.” Ellen March had understood. The bird flew out the open window. As everyone left the library without speaking, five black crows and three mourning doves were sitting on the lawn under the tree, HARBINGER on a low branch. The discussion was whether or not it was time to make one last attempt to help the human species change their thinking and attitudes.

Turning her car onto the pea gravel driveway leading to the guesthouse, Ellen noticed unusual activity on the property, several large parked trucks filled with lumber and building materials. That she’d understood the communication of a woodpecker confused her, caused her to question and wonder if she was all right. Had she eaten something that could have caused this? Did she imagine she’d heard something? At next week’s meeting, she’d ask others who’d been in the room if they heard anything.

The owner of the estate had opened an animal sanctuary to train service and rescue dogs, a rehabilitation center for those who'd been abused in addition to others suffering from post traumatic stress. The facilities were welcoming, one hundred and forty three acres to roam free, a lake, large enclosures for those needing to transition before being released. Puppies left alone all day weren't considered "abused," but separation anxiety would also be addressed. Three veterinarians and staff were ready for the first animals to arrive the following day.

In Ellen's library research on animal behavior, vocalizations, body language, frequency communication, telepathy, both human to animal and animal to human, had never been mentioned. The Think Out Loud library get together was the highlight of her week. During her interspecies corridor work, Ellen had narrowed her research to concentrate on certain species' use of frequencies to communicate, whales, dolphins, elephants. Having read about "model systems," biologists' jargon for a specific animal species developed over the years to help with their studies...about humans. She arranged a meeting with a professor in the University's Science Department to discuss a long list of questions.

The following week's meeting started when a boy with shoulder length blond hair was the first to speak. I'm tall for my age; people think I'm a teenager, I'm eight. I've learned and had more fun here than at school. I scrubbed some small different shaped rocks and painted letters of the alphabet in colors. They're on the table for anyone who wants one."

A man on crutches, in full military uniform. stood to speak. "My advice is two words - slow down! We're over scheduled, over photographed, over stimulated, over everything." Youngster and adults asked one question after another. "Like humans, plants have evolved. Does anyone know if all flowering plants have a common ancestor?" "I know! It would be angiosperms. . . if they still existed." "Do humans have a common ancestor? If we evolved from chimpanzees, orangutans and gorillas, why are they still here?" "Can 3D printers create human organs?" "How can I learn about slam poetry?" "I know what nature is. What is human nature?" "Why do people think religious texts were written by gods, when, in fact, they were written by humans?" At the end of the hour, a silver haired woman sitting near the door spoke softly. "I like animals better than people. Our cultures define us. History carries many burdens. It's time to challenge things we were taught and have believed since childhood. A pluralist society is not comprised only of humans."

A dark haired boy stood up. Do any of you recognize the words *Changes Free the Hearts of You and Me?*” Every child’s hands went up, one third of the adults. “Lapis Lashin wrote it. He had Synesthesia and heard colors. I’d like to sing what he wrote a few days before he died. All over the world, people in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, North America, South America, Australia, even Antarctica, with less than five thousand habitants, can’t keep themselves from singing.”

His voice was clear. There was something about it, not a tone or a ring, neither resonance nor shimmer, but a frequency creating an indescribable magical sound that touched and transfixed everyone. Those in the main Library were drawn to the conference room to listen.

On the flight from Denmark, Lapis had written *All of Us*, jotting the lyrics and melody on an index card. A few days later, followed by a group of fans, he’d given it to a teenager who put the music and lyrics on social media. In less than forty eight hours the song had circulated world wide, transcending boundaries, making its way to remote regions of the globe. The power of music. *All of Us*.

As the boy finished singing, Miss March again thought about *frequency*. Joining whales, dolphins and elephants, his voice had a unique and undefinable sound. At the end of the meeting, a librarian told Ellen March that young and old alike had begun to come to the library several times a week to work together, begin projects and study groups, help one another with errands, teach new languages, exchange skills. Children were mentoring adults. Two days ago, a six year old had taught a seventy three year old man how to pick up and scruff his grand daughter’s cat.

At twilight on Halloween, those who were attending Think Out Loud gathered outside the Library to go trick or treating. Dressed in hilarious costumes, they had decided to do something different. Knocking on doors, instead of asking for candy, they handed out a single sheet of paper, the music and lyrics of *All Of Us*.

For their first meeting, Ellen March and Sang Ah Gohk decided on a day trip to the beach in Belmar, an hour’s drive from Princeton. On a clear fall afternoon, they walked along the boardwalk talking about their backgrounds, their shared joy of discovery with their initial research on interspecies communication.

With no boundaries about conversation, spending time with someone raised in a very different culture delighted them both. Sang talked about how South Korea was the plastic surgery capital of the world. Ellen shared her thoughts that some Americans questioned the need to preserve their lives at all costs, whatever their age and circumstances. Was the ability to write, to put down your thoughts clearly, as important as knowing how to think? How important was reading? Why was it easier for some people to do uncomfortable things? As they talked about their own unconscious biases, the growing connection between the new friends was obvious.

After dinner in a local restaurant, taking a final stroll to the water, they noticed a small figure washed up on the shore. Walking closer, Ellen took off her cardigan, gently picking up the animal. The dappled coated otter looked into her eyes. "I'm TYPO. Though elusive and nocturnal, I'm having a hard time staying alive. My family was killed by fur traders. Competing with fishermen for shell fish is nearly impossible. I'm scared, tired, hungry." Within an hour TYPO would arrive at his new home at the Princeton Sanctuary, to be fed, cared for and loved. It would be up to him, alone, to decide if and when he wanted to return to the wild.

As the car left the beach parking lot, Ellen's asked Sang "Did you hear anything." Sang replied. "*Scared, tired, hungry.* What did you hear?" For the remainder of drive, as TYPO slept nestled on a blanket in the back seat, Ellen told Sang how a woodpecker had flown through a library window to explain how, because his brain was organized differently than a human's, he could bang his head over and over and not get a headache. Other than one girl in the room who'd talked back to the bird, Ellen had no idea if anyone else had understood the communication.

After dropping Sang at Wilson, the residential college she's been assigned, Ellen drove to the wildlife Sanctuary. The veterinarian had just completed stem cell surgery on an arthritic cat who was having difficulty walking. Explaining how she'd found the otter exhausted on the shore, Ellen noticed a glistening black Labrador standing in the distance, tilting his head to one side. listening. Softly stroking the otter, Ellen communicated she'd return to visit him every day. As she handed him, gently, to the doctor, both saw the look of relief in his eyes.

As the Labrador walked outside, Ellen followed. "I am TAR. Things are about to change. Do you understand?"

“Yes, What can I do to help?” TAR - “Suggest the young ones talk with their parents and teachers about their homes and schools contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. Use less water, recycle, change light bulbs. Ask them to play a part in seeing their community uses clean and renewable energy to help reach the goal of becoming carbon neutral. Did you know Thomas Edison predicted climate change?”

As Ellen March walked to the guesthouse, she thought about how often the word frequency was used regarding animal communication. In her upcoming meeting with two renowned university science professors, she decided to ask what might be considered a naive question about the gravity of carbon dioxide levels in the air. Why didn't humans follow Nature's example? Plants produce billions of tons of carbon dioxide each year, process it, taking it out of the air to store in the ground. Photosynthesis.

Since she'd not given anyone her Princeton address, to see a letter taped to the guesthouse front door was a surprise. The envelope had only her name. The return address (engraved stationary now a rarity) was THE WHITE HOUSE Washington, D.C. 20502. Inside was a single sheet of ivory paper with a phone number. The letter was signed The Office of Presidential Correspondence.

Phoning the number, Ellen March was puzzled when her brother Paul answered. He asked if he could meet her tomorrow in Princeton to “catch up.” He arrived at the guesthouse early the next morning, driving the classic car (he affectionately called Plushmobile), which he'd purchased and renovated over fifty years ago.

Since he was a boy, Ellen's younger brother, Paul, had loved science, tirelessly working on one experiment after another in his basement laboratory. Never married, he was a professor of environmental engineering (and Department chair) at New York University. Attending one of his lectures a few years ago, his big sister wasn't at all surprised to see how enthralled his students were with his enthusiasm for science. Everyone knew his motto. Creative courage!

The official explanation offered for the cause of the first outage in Australia was an electromagnetic pulse caused by solar flares. With the onset of a second outage in Prague, a year later, world governments took notice. Intelligence gathering and assessment were thrown into overtime.

The lawsuit in the Hague, the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to an orangutan and a chimpanzee, the successful conclusion of an international agreement including non human participants, a first in human history, had captured worldwide attention.

When the White House contacted Princeton University regarding both the outages and animal behavior, Paul was one of five professors asked to participate. Several disciplines would be involved: computer technology and electronics, environmental studies, ethology, anatomy, biology, astrophysics, zoology, behavioral evolution, animal cognition and sensation, genetics, neuro biology, bioethics. Were the outages staged by a government attempting to destabilize a region, by hackers to show their strength? Would countries agree to share their intelligence? He knew about his sister's grant to study the possibility of an Interspecies Corridor. He did not know about her recent communications with TYPO the river otter and TAR the Labrador.

After reading, editing and coordinating what seemed like endless amounts of material, Paul made several additions to the final report to be given to the President. He didn't expect to receive a call a few weeks later asking he come to The White House.

After chatting with Paul for a few minutes in the oval office, the President suggested they take a walk around the grounds. Was this request prompted by a wish their conversation not be recorded? The President questioned Paul about the conclusion he'd reached - that prior outages had not been caused by a government, hackers or a cyber attack, but by Nature, the natural world. Explaining he didn't feel comfortable releasing his "source," Paul told the President another outage would begin before the end of the year.

The half hour walk ended with the President thanking Paul, telling him the First Lady, due to give a lecture at Princeton (her alma mater) the following week, was now arranging a meeting with Jane Green and Ellen March. Not being a *beltway insider*, Paul didn't begin to realize what high level last minute changes had been made in POTUS' schedule in order to accommodate their meeting.

As Paul brought Ellen up to date, she shared her own news. She had understood the communications of a river otter and a Labrador. Ellen didn't lie. Brother and sister promised to touch base with each other weekly.

For the first time in history, an attorney had represented two non human clients in their legal action against the human race. As a result, a seventy five year old woman and thirteen year old girl were awarded grants to study the inter species corridor. Jane Green, Ellen March and Sang Ah Gohk were soon to meet the First Lady of the United States.

During Ellen's daily visits to the Sanctuary, TYPO the river otter appeared healthy and happy. He communicated he'd prefer to stay at the Sanctuary rather than return to the wild. TYPO - "This is where I belong. Follow me. I'd like you to meet my friend, ARI." Ellen was intrigued to see a cat, who could be TYPO's twin, a long slender body, short legs, dappled coat, a small flat head. "Hello, Ari." TYPO - "ARI is a Jaguarundi. We look alike. He's wild like me, but they tried to domesticate him. His first human abandoned him because he scratched their furniture. His second human had him declawed, amputating his toes at the last joint, severing the tendons, nerves and ligaments that enable him to balance, climb and defend himself, then took him to a shelter because he was moving to another state. His third human hit him all the time so he ran away. A kind person saw him on the street and brought him here." ARI - "I'm home, where I belong."

Ellen had no way of knowing that Typo and Ari planned to attend (without an invitation) her upcoming meeting with Jane Green, Sang and the First Lady. Following in the footsteps of Chopper the English bulldog and Chloe the sloth, the river otter and jaguarundi cat had begun a friendship that would provoke a turning point in human history.

Although cats have brains very similar to humans, they have an ability to hear ultrasonic frequencies. Ellen had cared for two feral cats for several years. knowing how well they hide their illnesses, and never complain. Over time she'd learned they have a strong sense of smell, can't taste sweets and disliked the odor of citrus. She often wondered if a cat's purrs could help heal those around them.

As she walked to the Think Out Loud meeting, Ellen was deciding on her favorite recipes. Having invited Sang, Jane Green, the Sanctuary's veterinarian, his two assistants and their families, for Thanksgiving dinner, it was the first time in a long while she'd cooked for more than one person. Sang was planning to come to today's meeting.

Arriving at the meeting, Ellen marveled at how the adults had begun to relearn how to see the world through a child's eyes. An elderly woman with white hair had dyed it bright purple. The man sitting beside her was wearing a pair of giant rabbit ears. The woman in a wheelchair was moving around the room handing out T shirts, all colors and sizes, GO OUTSIDE printed on the front. Her smile was ear to ear as she gave Ellen her unique lace collared navy blue shirt with the words *Old School to New School* on the front in unique calligraphy. Another man was handing out miniature donuts with different colored sprinkles.

A small girl, dressed in a pink tutu, danced around Ellen, handing her a banana skin. "My dog asked me to give you this." The dark spots on the yellow skin roughly formed the letters J A S L E M S. Having no idea what the letters meant, she would start by asking Jane Green. The girl danced away. "Did you know that elephants have a gene that fights cancer?"

Several people on one side of the room were talking about eating habits, their favorite foods and the current gun culture in the United States. "A man was murdered in India the other day for eating a cow." "Cows are holy in India. People in China eat dogs, like we eat cows and chickens. What's the difference?" "South Korea is the only country in the world to commercially farm dogs." The subject turned to guns. "A gun is used for one reason, to kill. My parents told me we were going on a hunting trip over Thanksgiving. I told them I didn't want to go. I'd never kill a deer, a bird, any animal. I'm staying with my Nana instead." "Do you think people who go hunting for sport are proud of themselves when they kill an innocent animal?" "I'm glad I don't know anyone like that."

The woman who had passed out T shirts asked the children. "In the future, when they look back at today, what do you think they'll laugh at the most?" Answers were shouted one after the other. "Bottled water." "Language will be over. Telepathy rules!" "War will be obsolete." "There won't be any more money." "That people cared about what color your skin was." A six year asked the adults "What scares you the most?" After a long silence a man stood up. "Artificial intelligence."

Jane Green arrived in Princeton on November 21st, the day before the outage began. All technology, including solar powered phone networks, radio frequency energy, digital signals, wireless fidelity, would not function. Humans could not control, or alter in any way, what was about to happen.

In the weeks that followed, neither scientists nor ethologists had an explanation. A contagious and positive virus was released into the air, affecting a part of the human brain never before used. No one was immune. Because it was often difficult for homo sapiens to understand the consequences of their actions, they would now be obvious and without judgment. Both fragile and resilient, the human race was endangered and at risk. The message was clear. Nature is not humanity. Animals are not like human beings.

Would fear of the unknown be replaced by group reliance and a personal connection to nature? Would violent thoughts and actions be replaced by reasons to care, distinct for each individual? Would manipulations to justify immoral actions be undisputably understood by all involved for what they were? Manipulations. The misconceptions and preconceptions of the human species were about to face a daunting challenge.

Regarding humans as a prey species, the imperiled natural world joined collectively in their efforts to make one final attempt to help the human species. All over the globe, humans were bitten by mosquitos, tsetse flies, snakes, scorpions, bees, wasps, hornets, six eyed brown recluse spiders, jellyfish, bullet ants, fire ants and blue dart frogs. Following the bite, there was no pain, swelling or mark of any kind. Malaria, a mosquito borne disease, can cause illusions. Was every member of the human species, (experiencing being on the receiving end of the human species' behavior) having illusions? Animals began to redirect any and all human aggression to positive action.

How would the human species react to a world without illness or disease, without cancer, dementia, cardiovascular disease, mental illness, addiction, substance abuse? Other than the displeasure of the pharmaceutical industry, was an entrenched part of human reality ready to change?

The rare blood moon coinciding with a total lunar eclipse projected a shadowy image that provoked a specific memory, unique for every witness.

