

# The Id Lives



By Raymond Howell

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## **A 'Flash' Story**

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(Front plate adapted from a William Blake painting)

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**B**ut I can't write that," Paul protested. "It's..."

But as the bacteria Richard had just released into the laboratory air took effect Paul's objections evaporated and he fell silent. But not to brood. To marvel.

Richard, monitoring Paul's reaction did not laugh at, or take pride in causing his friend's sudden silence. When he subjected himself to the bacteria earlier that morning he was also almost immediately overcome by a sense of disbelief and wonder as he felt something awful leaving him. 'Can it really be this easy to solve humankind's issues?' He had wondered then and since.

From Paul's slowly widening smile, it was obvious he was forming similar ideas. In an almost beatific state, he enthused, "Richard... This will change everything... And it's astonishing how quickly the bacteria worked... It'll change the planet..." And then came the big suggestion which made Richard's smile widen. "Even Humanities soul..."

"It is like the opening of a soul, I agree Paul and we've let out the badness inside. It is exactly as you predicted. And I've not changed fundamentally because of it either," Richard explained. "I'm driven still by ideas and a need to express them, but not at any cost. That part of me has gone. And I'm not jealous that you were right."

Instead of beaming, yes, I was right, Paul's prideful smile was for their joint achievement. It twinkled also with the wonder of exactly what the discovery will mean for humanity. But a little sadness slipped into it as well. If only humankind could have discovered this sooner, he thought, like some 3500

years ago before the likes of the Romans arose. How different our lives and the planet might be today, he reasoned sorrowfully. So many and so much ruined through the wants of that creature Freud named Id. And we've just proven it is a damned creature. It might connect through our mind but in all other ways, Id is independent. Id lives. And over the centuries it's grown into a major force. Invisible, but there, watching and listening. But it's not as the Scientologists believed, an alien living inside us. Id clings parasitic-like to its human host. But now we have the means to control its influence over our minds. And maybe in time, even eradicate its presence. How good will that be? His widening smile suggested. Ego can finally reason without the wants of Id bullying it... And our specie might even start acting rationally.

“Good reasoning and fairness will override those demanding wants in us all. How brilliant is that” Paul finally said.

His words emerged slowly, wrapped in the euphoric awe he felt for the sheer magnitude of their discovery and Richard's clever solution. “Who other than you Richard would have thought that a simple bacteria grown on the skin of a lemon would shrivel Id and make it let go of us?”

“Yes, I admit, that was an amazing discovery,” Richard ventured, as equally awe-struck. “And we can make it happen for others, Paul,” he smiled. “Together,” he added with a jubilant high-five. “And who would have thought it? I guess our silly moments as students weren't wasted after all, despite what my dad believed,” he snorted.

“As did my mum,” Paul acknowledged with a smirk. “But now I guess we need to prepare our papers for publishing.”

“Might I make a suggestion,” Richard ventured a little later as he watched Paul set off the AI assistant to sort through various files on their portable data hub.

“Sure,” Paul mumbled distractedly, his focus seemingly on the information rolling up the screen.

“If we release our findings to the community our work will get buried. Not I suspect by other scientists, but by those desperate to preserve the status quo. And you know,” he offered reflectively, “we might even be in danger because of our knowledge. For all we know Id might be capable of fighting back.”

OK...? Paul ventured warily, but interested. He had just been having very similar thoughts, “Let’s hear your idea.”

“I think we should release the bacteria ourselves. Somewhere high so it will be caught by the wind and spread around the world.”

“We can’t just do that!” Paul spluttered. “We can’t release a life-altering bacteria because we think it’s right.”

“Can’t we?” Richard replied quietly. “Are you so sure?”

“We’ll be jailed!”

“Or general ignorance will stop its release, or needs to preserve the status quo might encourage others to find ways to enhance Id, think about that! And ask yourself, how will they ever know we released it? There’s only you and me here, so who will tell on us?”

Three months later they were in the Himalayas preparing for their last climb. They had already installed the release mechanism. All that was needed were the canisters of bacteria they were both carrying. “And a fair wind,” Richard joked as they left their base to begin the ascent.

Only for their path to be blocked by a gang of armed men. Their guns a good

indication they were not there to wish Paul and Richard well.

“You don’t go any further,” one gruffly announced as he swaggered forward. “We know what you’re up to,” he sneered before coldly shooting them.

Stripping the rucksacks off their dead bodies he ordered his men, “Make sure these sacks are well-weighted before you toss them into the lake.”

“Well done you,” Id whispered into the man’s mind. “As if we wouldn’t know what those fools were up to. How stupid were they? And as for you, feel free to enjoy the moment and gloat... you’ve certainly earned it.”

The End.