

**TALES OF  
ENLIGHTENMENT\***

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KIT FENNESSY

BLUE VAPOURS PUBLISHING

\* conditions apply

BLUE VAPOURS PUBLISHING

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Illustrations throughout by the author.



This book is dedicated to my

Mum

Geraldine Ann Fennessy neé McKenzie

... whom I hope to prove wrong (one day).

Special thanks to:

Jane McPhee-Fennessy

Lucy McPhee

and

John Ford

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*Key: Blut (B) | Comix (C) | Channelling (C) | Fiction (F) | Pome (P)  
Real Life (RL) | Science Fiction (SF) | Metaphysics (M)*

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# *Introduction*

Greetings, oh reader from the distant blue horizon. Wherever, and whenever, these words fall beneath your wondering orbs – of whatever colour (or indeed species) your eyes might be (and an extra special hello to our future pukako masters, followed by their cockroach replacements... in distant centuries from now) – welcome, one and all.

I believe it was the noted comedian and towering intellect, Stephen Fry, who famously said:

*Medicina amara, meditatione ignis haustu dulcis.*

Which might be loosely translated as:

*“It is a bitter medicine to swallow,  
When confronted by such sweet musings.”*

His former Latin master (for the story goes they were chatting together at one of the Cambridge Colleges while having a marrow bone and claret, at the end of a rather successful centenary dinner) replied:

*Luce clarius elucescunt diminuere non.*

Or, in modern English:

*“To diminish one light does not make another shine  
more brightly.”*

And how right they both were.

This celebrated exchange was the result of a discussion they were having about the prequel of the very book you hold in your hands (or claws, or antennae) right now.

They were, purportedly, discussing Kit Fennessy's *Tales of the Dark*, his best selling foray into the literary world (before his highly under-rated novel *the Hidden People...* but that is for another article). So wide the impact of the previous collection which is *Tales*, his myriad fans pestered the editor of *the Times*, sent letters to *the New Yorker*, and even some rather terse notes to Santa, all pleading along similar lines – to wit:

“Help! We can't bear the suspense. When will the next one come out? Can you please organise a sequel to *Tales of the Dark*, pleeeceaaaase!”

I am thrilled to announce that relief is at hand. Once more, from the desk of that inscrutable genius, a small farrago of gems doth come. And what a gallery of minute perfection it is. At one moment murder, the next a song, cartoons from the twilight of the subconscious mind, gales of laughter, feats of endurance, vampires, ghosts, the channelling of other authors (some long dead), lascivious adulterers brought to heel by bricks, and oh (!), so much more.

I'm overwhelmed, and humbled, to have been asked to pen once again a short introduction to another of his works, welcoming you this time to *Tales of Enlightenment\** (the marketing department's title, *Tales of the Dark Too*, was rightly rejected). I trust you'll enjoy it. Such chance sweet musings in this torrid life come all too infrequently.

Step into the light.

Literarely yours

*Vern*

Vernghart Hiedlemann AO

Literary Critic, 2019



*“Is that you, honey?”*

## *Explanatory Notes*

Before you launch into the main text, I'd like to explain why I dedicated this book to my mum and then immediately continued – in the dedication – to write that I'd like to prove her wrong one day. It sounds a bit mean, wouldn't you agree? The reason for me writing that inscription is as follows.

When I showed my mum an early draft of this book and asked for an opinion, she said (and I quote):

“Well, I don't think you've written a best seller.”

Thanks Mum. Very encouraging.

But her review got worse:

“It read like a therapy book...”

(An extra note here – this was before I included any material about my father dying!)

“... and my ■■■■, those stories, they're so bloodthirsty,” she said. “Some of those poems, I mean honestly! What were you thinking?”

Here, I believe, she was referring specifically to *Pay Day* and *the Lady Garbage Man*.

One of the real problems I suspect my mum had with this book, however – much like David Sedaris' father<sup>1</sup> – is that she appears as a character in more than one of the stories, a point around which she diplomatically sailed clear.

And for putting you in here, Mum, I am truly sorry, but it was pretty funny, and I DO hope this book is a best seller despite (or because of) that.

<sup>1</sup>*David Sedaris' father doesn't have a problem with this book, by the way – as far as I know – and never gets a mention, except for this one, so you can all relax.*

That's the bit I'd like to prove her wrong on, incidentally; so please recommend this book to all your friends (so we can show her!).

Another point of clarification is in response to a question from my former editor (Rob McPhee) on the prequel to this tome, *Tales of the Dark*. He asked me, in a rather confused way, about the first collection:

"Is this supposed to be a children's book?"

"Not really. No," I replied.

But I didn't mean it.

This, and that, book are both for children. Grown up children. Kids who can handle stories of decapitation, drugs, murder, and the paranormal. Those who enjoy a bit of escapism.

YOU, in fact.

Whoever you are, there should be something for you inside these pages. If there's a bit you don't like, just skip ahead and keep reading. You'll find it. There are even comics if you don't like reading too much.

My legal department advised me to make the more adult bits more palatable to censorious parents by blacking out the swear words and blasphemy for "delicate children". I've also tried to help those easily shocked (like my mum) by indicating what to expect from each story with a warning system in the index. See the key on those pages.

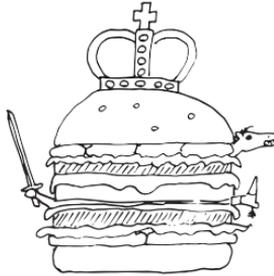
Most of these stories are intended to make you laugh, but not everything is easy on the path to enlightenment. There's some dark woods you'll have to walk through.

But don't worry. I'm here by your side the whole way. You can hold my hand if you like, if you get worried.

I hope you enjoy *Tales of Enlightenment\**.

Or maybe the German boxer in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*

# *Richard III Goes to McDonald's*



*William Shakespeare was an internationally renowned playwright from England, whom I channelled (a sort of spooky transmission) shortly after reading one of his playes (sic). He came to me through the ether holding a rough hewn cup of sac, a sherry-like beverage from England. He was working on a new routine about one of his characters going to McDonald's, which I transcribe for your benefit...*

'Give unto me some burgers, sirrah. Yet make them be of one... in number.'

'Sorry pal? Ya gotta tell me what kind of burgers you want.'

'What doth I fancy? Two all beef patties, sear them well, and place upon them both the "special sauce", mystical of origin and witch-brewed in manner. Add to this some lettuce, crisp in nature, green and crunchy, as grown by good English soil and toil of honest working men. Cheese, also, I doth fancy me. Cheddar, or from Leicester thou should make'st. Of Gloucester we say

NEVER. The house of Sterling shall not be used in this, our consumption. Pickles, ay, and onions too. Place all ingredients goodly, layered about in fit fashion, upon the sweetest of thy breads, nearer to confection than to savour. A second slice placed on the glorious mound to make a cap celestial of passing perfection, allowing one to clutch one's meal and eat at leisure durst filthening fingers or hands, as discovered by the Earl of Sandwich, that great gambler who'st name I never knew. Sprinkle this with seed of sesame.'

'One Big Mac. You want fries with that?'

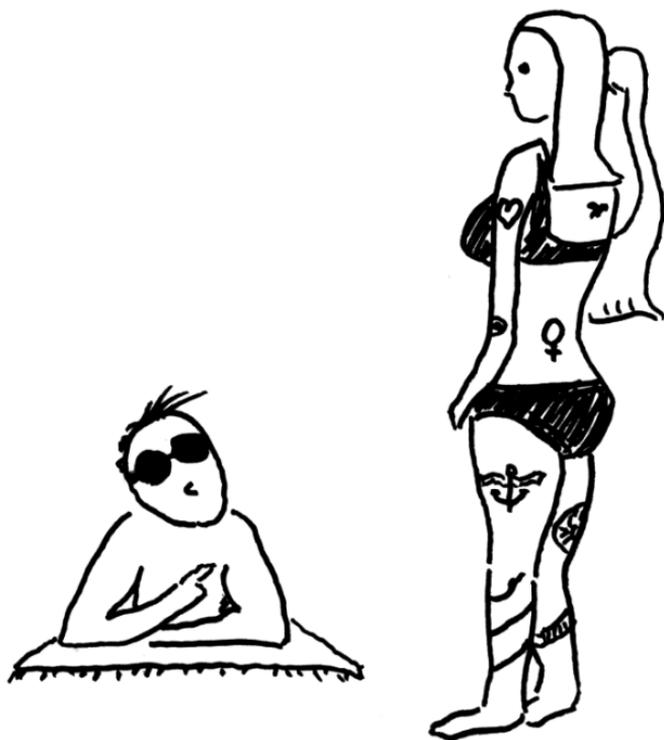
'A starchy side dish doth thou offer? Fricassee, a bubbling torment of boiling oil frying crispy the wonder of the new world, said "po-ta-tee"?' Very well then, divine tempter, lay upon the mat of yor both burger ham and fries of French persuasion... as favoured by the Bastard of Orleans.'

'What drink do you want?'

'Mention not the coke that is of cola made. While passing sweet, is't too much for my poor molar teeth, thereof which become stumped and browned further by mere thought of such entreaty.'

'Ya get a Coke for free if you order a Big Mac and fries.'

'Fie! Damnation, have it thy way then, foul cur. Place the cup of hemlock on my table, and I shall drink it non-complaining.'



*“You have got a really nice set of tatts...”*

## *The Hot Seat*

I was sitting alone after my swim, in the wood-lined “dry” sauna with its parched air that tastes mildly of burning pine and burns you at the back of your throat.

The sauna of which I speak is at the swimming pool. When you go for a swim in winter, it’s a good idea to get really hot before you run out into the cold, grey and usually blustery day to jump in the water to knock out some laps, and an even better idea to warm up again after you’ve climbed out of the pool and been turned into a popsicle.

The sauna at my swimming pool is a bit of a weird place. I’d liken it to a major train station. You never know who you are going to get in there. It might be an Ethiopian fat man, talking about international politics, or it could be a one legged Hebrew woman out visiting from a kibbutz. You can literally meet all types in there.

They all seem to talk to me. Don’t ask me why. Before I know it, someone I’ve never met is confessing stealing bread rolls off a horse drawn carriage, or about their dead grandmother and the gruesome way she died. I guess it’s the intimacy of the place, complete strangers sitting within a few feet of each other dripping wet in their bathing suits. Defences are down.

On this particular day, I was minding my own business (as usual), stretching my neck, when a particularly memorable patron came in. I don’t know his name, but I call him “the Mad Max bald guy”, because that’s who he looks like; the bald cop out of *Mad Max I*.

~ you know, the one who gets chopped up by the plane propeller. He's about six foot four, totally bald on top with a moustache, and he has disfiguring burn scars all over his chest that look like he was once covered in petrol and set alight; a kind of horror-show bouncer.

'G'day mate,' he said, taking a seat.

I allowed a longish pause. I wasn't in a particularly chatty mood.

'There's a bit of heat in it today,' he added.

'Yeah, well, just as well,' I said. 'It's pretty cold outside.'

'Ya know, it got up to ninety five in here the other day.'

'Ya don't say? Ninety five, eh?' I said. 'You could have cooked something...'

'Yep, ninety five. It was three minutes and you were done. It didn't matter if you had a hangover or not, you had to get out.'

He spoke with a strange voice, polite, clipped and a little too high, which didn't really go with his size. It was like listening to an old lady, but there was this deeper level of threat because the voice and the look didn't go together... a subdued potential for berserker violence.

I thought about the last comment he'd made.

'Is a sauna good for hangovers?' I asked.

'I hope so!' He laughed, a deep gravelly sound that didn't go with the voice.

We sat in amiable silence for a while, me stretching my shoulders, him just sitting and sweating.

'Mind you, you can't afford to drink in pubs any more, what with the prices, and then people trying to king-hit you...' he ventured.

'You're right about the prices,' I said. 'Beers being

ten bucks...'

You will note, here, that I passed over the king-hit comment. Tact, you see. That's always been my strong point.

'Ten bucks?' he asked, incredulous.

'Yeah, well, the big ones. Pots are five...'

'Oh sure, sure.'

'After you've had five pints, that's fifty bucks,' I said. 'You could have bought a slab for that. And had change.'

'Precisely,' he agreed. 'Exactly what I meant. Ya know, I was having some beers with me mates down at the pub just down the road here, at the Royal, and there's these guys out the back, and they're swearing. It's effing this, and effing that, and [REDACTED] this and [REDACTED] that,' (which made me wonder what the effing was), 'and what with political correctness today, you can't call anyone black, yellow, pink or whatever, but the swearing! So I said to them, "Listen fellas, I don't mind you swearing. Everybody swears. But when there's ladies present, I mean, they probably don't mind, they'd probably tell you to go [REDACTED] yourself, but you know, when there's ladies present, if you could just not say the "c" word. Ya know, don't say "[REDACTED]".'

He looked to me for support. I nodded, and he went on.

'So this guy, he says to me "[REDACTED] off you [REDACTED]!" Now I was twenty two years a copper, so I'm not taking that. So I grab this guy by the throat like that, and I say: "Right, this can go one of two ways, either I tear your throat out, or I poke you in the eye, which one is it going to be?" And he's this Maori [REDACTED], in his twenties, with the fluoro vest on, and he says (putting on a strangled voice): "Let me go, let me go", and I say, "Alright, I will

let you go, but first you are going to apologise, not just to me, but to all these nice people here,” and he says “I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” so I let him go. Anyway, I go to walk out of the beer garden to go inside and take a [redacted], and I hear this sound... phew.’

He indicated something going past his ear with one hand.

‘This [redacted] has thrown his pot glass at me and it’s just missed my head by this much. So I turned around and said, “No wonder your country can’t play cricket for [redacted].”’

‘Anyway,’ he continued, ‘not long after that I told me mates I was going home. I mean, what am I going to do? There are six of them, and you always go for the biggest one who has got a lip on him, but I’m fifty three and these guys are in their twenties... I mean, I’m not going to start a fight.’

# *The Long Black Fingers Of Night*



The long black fingers of night  
 Creep out and clutch at my house.  
 The wind blows, the rain blatters  
 And the trees lash, beaten by the air.  
 The blanket of depression draws around  
 Dark dark dark, it is the end of light.  
 Think on soups, think on toast,  
 Hope to get a gravied roast.  
 But food and fires are all a panacea  
 Against  
 The long black fingers of night.  
 More night than day  
 Comes our way.  
 Mwah ha ha ha ha (sinister like).

## *Blue is the Night*

Gargoyles surrounded a carved stone statue of St Blaise. He was mounted on the crumbling stonework of battlement walls, his eyes filled with pathos and seeming to follow the figure of a thin stooped figure crossing a drawbridge to enter the gateway beneath his feet. Passing through another thick battlement wall, the skinny man in a striped t-shirt turned out of a passage and looked over the top of a pair of sunglasses at what was to be his hunting ground for the next eight weeks. Dubrovnik's Old Town.

The sun had already dipped behind the western hills and restaurant lights reflected off the white polished marble streets that stretched ahead. The sound of a church bell tolled, then another, as a security guard locked the entrance to the walk around the battlement tops and began his long tour around the city.

The thin man exhaled cigarette smoke slowly from under a fringe cut in a longish bob, his stripey t-shirt flexing slightly. He was skinny. Boy, was he skinny. All bones, surviving on cigarettes almost exclusively. Almost. There'd be something to drink later. You could depend on it.

As he continued through the town, a flabby man in baggy checked shorts blocked his way. He wore a baseball cap, sunglasses, half squatting in the middle of the street, aiming the massive lens of his camera at a church tower.

"Hang on a minute honey, I just gotta get a shot of this..."

*How did I know he was going to be American?* The skinny man with the thick dark hair walked around the photographer and continued down the white marble streets, thinking in his own language. From Macedonia every year he came here to Croatia to play to the summer crowds.

*It's like going to stay in a museum. A damn retirement village.*

The restaurant looked the same as the year before. The piano had already been wheeled out into the square and was covered with a tarpaulin. One of the waiters gave a cheery hello as he walked in to drop his bag in the room that would be his home for the next couple of months. 'Ciao ciao Seimon!'

The band idea had been an inspiration of his some years earlier, the perfect cover for his... nefarious activities. He could play all night, be around people drinking, his audience getting relaxed, tired, feeling that they had a rapport with him – even if they'd never spoken.

It was the ideal way to select his targets.

The sun had fully gone down and he cleared a space on a coffee table in his new room. Reaching into the back pocket of his black stretch jeans, he pulled out a small plastic bag wrapped into a roll. The pinkish white powder clumped as he poured it onto the timber veneer. He crushed the lumps out with the back of his thumbnail and licked it clean. He took a cardboard business card out and chopped a couple of lines. Rolling a twenty Euro bill into a straw, he snorted them down, sitting up holding his nose. It was a hot batch. Too chemically. He rubbed his tongue over his gums and hoped that his contacts here would have something better.

In a way, he hated himself for taking amphetamines,

but other drugs didn't work – they put him outside himself, dulled the clarity of his mind. And when he was playing the one thing he needed most of all was clarity. Quick hands, sure, but also the ability to watch the crowds. Who'd be alone? Who'd really like the music? Who'd be... vulnerable.

The first night was like every other gig he'd played there, and he looked at the crowd with bored eyes. Fat sixty-plus year-old couples, a big group of girls who were in each other's pockets and would be impossible to break into. They all clapped politely to the jazz standards; 'Fly Me to the Moon', 'Take Five', 'The Girl from Ipanema'... the list went on.

The cigarettes never left his lips as he played. And how he played. His hands flowed like water over stones. He'd had plenty of practice and had met a few of the jazz greats – once he'd decided to go down that path. Talent like his didn't come overnight. It came from years and years of practice.

He crashed his fingers down in a final chord, taken up for a moment in the music, the smoke briefly burning his eyes under his fringe. He should have been starving hungry, but the drugs had taken the edge off. He smiled, looking up. And that was when he saw her.

She wasn't just good. She couldn't have been better. Sitting at a table beside the door into the restaurant, by herself. She had a large glass of white wine in her hand and a nearly empty bottle beside her. Their eyes met and she smiled quickly, before looking down submissively, then returning the look, attracted. He nodded and started playing again, keeping an eye on what pleased her, playing to her tastes, trying to make sure she wouldn't leave before the end of his set.

He could almost taste the sweat on her skin. This would be his first woman in weeks.

He needed a drink. Badly.

‘Ciao,’ he said to her during a break, wandering over between sets.

‘Hello,’ the girl replied, looking up with a smile.

‘Oh, you speak English? That is very good. I am speaking English too, you see?’ There was a pause, a five beat count as they stood awkwardly. ‘Do you like the music?’

‘Very much,’ she replied.

‘Good. Dobro, dobro. I am Seimon.’

‘Simon?’

‘No. Seimon. I am from Macedonia. What is your name?’

‘Tracey.’

‘Tray-si.’ He tried out the foreign sound of the name.

‘How do you spell Seimon?’ Tracey asked, spinning the wine in her glass.

‘You would not be able to do it. It is in the Cyrillic script. And how to spell my name, it is not being of any importance. Do you know what is important?’ Seimon leant on the table and looked deep into Tracey’s eyes. ‘Why you are here, by yourself.’

‘My boyfriend...’

‘Your boyfriend?’ Seimon asked with a blink.

‘Well, ex-boyfriend.’ Tracey blushed. ‘He told me he wanted to work for his “heavenly father”. As if the church thing every morning wasn’t enough, now he wants to become a missionary. We broke up in Split.’

She shook her head at the irony; splitting up with somebody in a town called Split.

‘He’s gone back to stay with his grandmother,’

Tracey added.

‘I’m sorry, Tray-si. You like to come to another jazz bar? This gig, it is nearly over. There’s a great band. I take you, yes?’

‘That’d be nice.’ Tracey smiled.

Later that night, outside the town’s old walls, a tent at the base of the fortifications sold beer and cocktails. Black water crashed on the rocks as a jazz band combo played under a floodlight. A trumpeter stood on a giant concrete cube sticking out of the ocean, playing to the moon, while audience members climbed down steel ladders and swam in the moonlight. Seimon only kept half an eye on his find once they arrived, muscling his way in to join the band for a jam.

By the time the music finished, it was after four in the morning.

‘Can I walk you home?’ Seimon asked.

‘There’s no more places left for us to go?’

‘No. I told you this town was full of old people. I should take you home. It will be daylight soon.’

They walked down cobblestone alleys, the early light of pre-dawn in the east just beginning to show on the horizon, drawing the outlines of buildings and walls in stark black against a pale blue. They walked down past the cathedral, then up a set of steps to an old wooden door.

‘Well, this is it.’ Tracey said.

‘Yes,’ Seimon replied, crossing his fingers behind his back.

‘Would you like to come up for a drink?’

‘That would be very nice, Tray-si.’ He could smell her. Sweat, perfume, wine, cigarettes and adrenaline.

He followed her up the spiral stairs from the lobby, looking at her rump, running his tongue over sharp teeth. He wondered where exactly he'd take his first bite. The neck was the best, you could immobilise the victim with your hands, there was a strong artery running just below the ear. And you could pass it off as a sexual advance if they got flighty.

'Take a seat,' Tracey said, throwing her bag on the bed. 'Vodka OK?'

'Dobro, dobro.'

Tracey poured them both a drink and walked toward Seimon as he reclined on the couch. 'Here.'

She sat beside Seimon and leant on his shoulder.

Seimon smiled. It was going to be too easy. *Come my little lamb.* Her face rubbed against his, then she kissed him tenderly on the ear. Her mouth moved lower to his neck...

Seimon experienced a searing, unbelievable pain. Her teeth were tearing into flesh. The flesh of his throat. He tried to push her away. She held him hard around the shoulders. She drank with an animalistic grunt, gulping greedily. Seimon beat her on the top of the head with his fists, but she held on. His blows grew weaker, with the loss of his lifeblood, and – as darkness overcame his sight – he saw Tracey pull away moments before he lost consciousness. She pushed her hair back and wiped the blood from her lips as she looked down at him in disgust.

'█. Have you been taking speed?' she snarled, spitting out some of his blood. 'Now I'll never get to sleep...'

## *I Can't Seem to Get Any "Likes"*



*(with thanks to Flanders and Swann)*

When I started out on Facebook  
 It had me in a thrall  
 Friends of mine were all out there  
 And I soon took up the call.  
 But as I go on it each day  
 There seems something amiss  
 Cause anything I have to say  
 Never gets that many hits.

Nobody seems to like my posts on Facebook  
 I've tried everything to have them like me so  
 I've posted shots of pussy cats  
 Playing guitar on the screen  
 But it always seems I'm three months late  
 When I hit on a meme...

Nobody seems to like my posts on Facebook  
I've had kids with food, and car crashes galore.  
I wrote about my latest win  
Fluttering on the Melbourne Cup  
But at best I got one like (with grin)  
So I may as well shut up.

It really is the worst-est thing there is  
When nobody like your posts it is a chiz.  
I've tried to have them like me  
But it seems I've got a gall  
So I'm leaving them for another sphere  
Taking home my bat and ball.

Next I tried my tappy hand at Twitter  
I stalk all of the celebrities out there.  
Rob Brydon has two million fans,  
And I cannot say I'm bitter  
But he does not follow me, to my despair.  
Even that children's author JK Rowling  
Has sixteen million followers today.  
But I may as well give myself a ritual disembowelling;  
I do Quidditch quotes and no one looks my way.

I've tried Blogger, Youtube, Pinterest  
Instagram and all the rest  
It seemed I was unpopular, I guess.  
Until an accidental shot  
Of me on the loo at the squat  
Made me a huge international success.

*(oh, thangyewewerymuch...)*



*'I believe you will find that all dips are "smooshy", Sir..'*



*The author: before his hair fell out.*

Kit Fennessy lives on the Bass Coast in Victoria, Australia, with his wife Jane and whippet Liam. Other books he's written include 'Tales of the Dark', 'the Hidden People', and 'the Floatation Tank'. If you liked this, you might like them too.

To find out more, visit:

[kitfennessy.com](http://kitfennessy.com)