

MR CHANGELING 5

The Art of the Mind

"I think this developing of the mind is
driving me mad"

thinks Biker Mike

and he considers perhaps Aesthete Chris is
right in saying all influences are bad
including Chris's own

so Mike decides to put on some gear and his
crash helmet and take his superbike for a ride to
bring him down to earth

ah, the free open road
screaming through the world
pressing the tarmac of backroads
private away from the general traffic
now his mind has to concentrate
he has to think
to focus to drive the machine
through bends
and along straights
gauging speeds

distances
and timing yes timing everything
to stay alive
to challenge himself and see if he's up
to it

course he has to fill up
so he enters his local garage and remaining
seated astride his bike he lowers the fuel feed into
his opened tank and watches the liquid level rise to
the bar marker inside the tank

replacing the nozzle, he closes the tank
dismounts and strides into the shop to pay

having read the fuel cost and noted the
number of the pump

inside the shop

he strolls to the till

unaware of the shock he is about to receive

the guy serving, dealing with the money,

is new to Mike

and Mike is surprised to feel an awakening

of recognition
the guy is actually quite good looking
and even chunky as Mike might describe
It is ages since Mike has ever seen anyone
and felt that twinkle in himself
but wait all is safe
the guy is obviously definitely straight
thank goodness
no need to worry
still the guy does look good and even
interesting
which is rare these days for Biker Mike
he pays
playing it very cool he believes
but suspecting he is deceiving himself
yet Mike doesn't care
he can cope and continues his riding
having a laugh to himself
thinking how funny it is that life can surprise
you

Returning home over the next few days Mike finds himself wanting to escape his thoughts of Chris and development of the mind

he even wants to rest up from the biking and he discovers his thoughts turn to the guy at the garage whom he christens James

over the next few days Mike invites James to come and live with him in the loft room which is added on to his own attic room

James settles in well and soon begins to tell Mike his life story

but to Mike's bogglement there emerge two stories and in fact two James

one James is James 1 (James One)

the other is James 2 (James Two)

James 1 turns out to have been married to Jacqueline

while James 2 was married to Jackie

"I was married to her for over twenty years," says James 1, "twenty four, maybe more, I'd have to work it out...we have two kids, my Jacqueline and me. We were so happy, but she died on me, she passed away last year, and I haven't known what to do with myself. The kids have grown and gone away, a son and a daughter, lovely they are but they've gone, and I don't see them and I don't want to, because I miss Jacqueline so much. I can't cope without her. She was beautiful when I met her. She was so elegant and distinguished you know not like many girls now, vulgar they are. Not Jacqueline.

"Now I'm alone I look for company, your company I think."

The two men settled into a cosy life within the cottage. They had privacy. They came together in the kitchen, the garden and in the drawing rooms.

Mike enjoyed having someone around the place as he had found he was lonely without Felz. Mike found the problem with solitude was that it was so long, it made everything very long. Felz had written and was reporting good things of his journey through the continent; he apologised for not having had much time to think about the great thoughts, and especially the unthought thought as he had promised, but action was keeping him fulfilled for the moment.

Now Mike was finding James 1 was keeping him from loneliness and from over thinking. James 1 liked to talk about himself and his life. It was as if he were on a mission to tell his story before it was too late...too late to tell...?

"When I was a kid, I was a bully to a guy like you, I mean a homo guy like you," James 1 continued one day.

Mike looked at James 1 and smiled raising his eyebrows.

"It's all right," James 1 went on, "you don't have to worry. You don't have to tell me neither. I can always tell right away. I spotted you immediately; all your bike stuff didn't fool me. I don't mind now. I did when I was young. I don't know why. I don't know why I used to bully this guy at school. I found myself wanting to punch him, not hard, not hurt him, you couldn't do that he was soft you see, like you. Well you don't want to hurt soft guys do you, only if they're hard. But I used to go up to him and shake him and slap him. He didn't understand what I was doing. Neither did I. He used to look puzzled and think I was crackers. There was a phase I had of doing it. He was asleep you see. Because he was a poof maybe he didn't seem to notice any of us. He walked about in his world, a dream world, and that annoyed me; that he didn't care about us, he didn't see us, notice us, so I wanted to wake him up.

Didn't work, and after a while I gave it all up. Who cares if he isn't here? Where are any of us anyway?

"Bit pathetic of me in a way, but I forgave myself a long time ago."

Of course this story endeared James 1 to Biker Mike quite a bit.

Over the following weeks Mike took James 1 to see Aesthete Chris over at Merton House, and from there they sometimes went to visit Lord Arthur White and Joanne at Westwich Hall. They all liked and approved of Mike's new friend. They commented how good it was to see Mike smiling and relaxed. Mike had obviously been suffering from the loss of Felz.

Chris in particular was always sorry he had refused to live with Mike on account of his own wife Susan, who had since moved to stay with a

girlfriend in Australia for a time, but this had not changed Chris's mind about living with Mike.

James 1 was a great success with them all. They enjoyed his serious nature and they were very sympathetic to his loss: Jacqueline. James always spoke of her with delight and charm, only rarely commenting on the sadness of the situation. He was never very clear about her illness. It was spoken of as something mysterious, something even magical; something that could not be understood.

Not so with James 2 who spoke of his wife, also called Jacqueline but referred to as Jackie, with gaiety and amusement, a teasing scorn and an admiring resentment.

Jackie had not died, she had run off with the postman.

"Thought he delivered mail not collected it," sneered James 2.

Apparently she had packed a little bag, jumped into the postman's van beside him and allowed him to drive off.

"There was a note left for me saying she loved me, saying she had had a good time, but saying that I had become a bore to her and that that was the end. So I never saw her again.

"We were such a good package. We went great together. We had loads of friends. They all liked us. They all said we were just it, we were wonderful. I thought we were wonderful, so much that I never thought about it at all. I didn't think about us, perhaps that is where I went wrong. I lost us. I didn't think, I didn't try nor care anymore and we disappeared. She began to notice and then the postman who came every day he began to notice and off they went leaving me alone searching for friendship, for fun, for someone to talk to because, you see, all my friends left me when Jackie left as if it were my fault. It was I suppose. So I'm alone like you and I want to stay

with you. I like this loft. You'll be all right with me staying here. I can be a laugh, and I like to listen to other people."

Mike did not find this to be true. James 2 was quite the talker and not the listener. But Mike liked James 2 nevertheless. He never understood why but he chose not to take James 2 to Chris and the Whites as he did James 1, instead he very strangely used to take James 2 to see his friends the Diamonds who lived in Merton Hall. The Diamonds were very aristocratic, a very old family. The head of their family was Lord Robert Diamond who lived with his wife, Lady Lauren, by whom he had a son called Ed. It was rumoured, however, that Robert had had the son all by himself, making him a motherman; because Lauren could not have children a Swiss doctor had enabled Robert to have the child himself.

Anyway, James 2 delighted the Diamonds as they were so pleased for their great friend Mike to have a new companion.

Lord Robert had always been a patron of Biker Mike's Art as he had of the art of the late Cesar del Mundo, who was celebrated much in Westwiche and Merton.

"I suppose it's from your paintings that you live," James 2 declared to Mike. "It must be good to make yourself independent with something you create like that."

"It all happened a long time ago, and yes Robert was a big help in my success. He found me commissions and soon I had a fortune."

"Do you still paint?" James 2 asked.

"I do. But I am very selective and rare about it. I do it for myself mostly, though if someone likes something I let them take it away."

"What stuff do you do now?"

"Art of the Mind I call it now. Mind with a capital M."

"Sounds funny," declared James 2," but I guess it could be interesting if you have an interesting mind. Can do a lot with the mind can't you?"

Interview with Robert and James 2

in which Robert explains to James 2 how he Robert gave birth to his son Little Ed Victry when Lauren, Robert's wife, was unable to conceive. Robert feels guilty that he has never told Ed this: what should he do?

James 2 explains that only the truth saves. It need never be feared. Tell Ed and see what he says.

So Robert informs Ed of his origin and Ed is amused and says that he had guessed something like that to be the case.

James 2 is not surprised with the outcome when a happy Robert reports back.

Portrait of Biker Mike

here Little Ed is flexing his artistic skills on a portrait of his great friend Biker Mike.

All goes well until Mike has a look at the painting.

"Super," says Mike, "you have captured what I look like, but you paint the surface. Today we need more. We want what is beneath. To paint what I look like is not enough my young creator. And I'm not talking about painting my soul, no it is my mind you may depict. What colour of a person am I? What temperature am I? What are my desires for life and the world? What do I do to help the sufferings of others? Paint me in shapes of joy and love; that is more who I am. But it's very good, Ed, thank you for troubling. Let's hang it on a wall where I can see it with everyone else."

Little Ed laughed, gave Biker Mike a hug, and they scurried off to find a place for the picture in Merton Cottage.

Interview with Arthur and James 1

now here we have Lord Arthur White, a great favourite of ours, one who has always been happy and easy going, in a state of distress. He is worried and unhappy about his ability to cope with his young Arts Festival that he is planning every summer at Westwich Hall.

Arthur has called on James 1 to explain the difficulties. James 1 listens very patiently to Arthur's details of money, logistics, artists, safety regulations, the public control, and the critics who complain about the content of his festival.

James 1 gets the solution easily enough:

"Laugh at it all, Arthur. You have chewed yourself into knots, you're too close to it all; you

have forgotten it's great, it's wonderful to do, it's fun. Laugh at it all."

"Yes," Arthur timidly agrees, "I can see that but I can't see the direction of my work. I want to create something new with my festival."

"You will if you laugh and enjoy. Take a holiday," James 1 continues.

The point holds and Lord Arthur returns to Westwich reassured rejuvenated and ready for the fray...those lovely critics...think they know anything...good for them...good for me thinks Arthur.

Joanne is delighted to see the change in Arthur. She had begun to have doubts about the festival if it was going to cause her husband distress, but she can tell over the next few days that all will be well, thanks to Biker Mike's advice.

James 1 and 2 being aspects of the mind of Biker Mike

STORMS OF THE MIND

Art is the developer of the mind

to keep joy & pleasure
above sadness

Biker Mike

and the Art of the Mind

to evoke emotion
through picture
word
music

the mind relaxes
into the beauty of life

the mind feels
an appreciation of nature

to depict the mind

not the so-called physical world
not the abstracted
but what the mind presents
changing and emotional

"Live today, be happy now"

a quote from Cesar del Mundo

"do not strive for something

else

be content"

it had been a long day for Biker Mike
two hours riding to the bike racing meeting
a few hours watching the lads
returning to his parked bike
to find a bike next to his
a handsome thing thinks Mike
then the owner of the other bike arrives
the two guys look at each other
and they know they will be together
my name is Grant-am the new biker says
and off they go
to a life
no one knows about
they are free

Felz sends a postcard to Biker
Mike

"coming home
bringing a girl
have found the unthought
thought"

it says

Aesthete Chris moves out to Australia
to join Susan & friend

"spread some goodness
and light there
visit my mind there
relax and enjoy"

he tells everyone

they believe him

With Grant-am every day Mike's mind developed.

It was wonderful for Mike to wake in bed with Grant-am. Their bodies would be naked and warm: the miracle of life. Mike would trail his fingers over Grant-am's back trying to feel him without waking him. Theirs would be a life together of playtime and pleasure. They would create between them their life fulfilment: their Mr Changeling.