

Jorj X. McKie is a Saboteur Extraordinary, one of the principals of the powerful Bureau of Sabotage, and the only human admitted to practice law before the Gowachin bar. While meditating in a park near BuSab headquarters McKie is mentally contacted by the Caleban named Fanny Mae whose visible manifestation in this universe is the star Thyone in the Pleiades cluster. McKie feels real love toward Fanny Mae, but is unable to have a warm relationship with females of his own species (he has been married more than fifty times). Fannie Mae allows McKie to feel a small fraction of what she feels for him, an experience that leaves him entirely stunned. She warns him that the full power of Caleban "nodal involvement" (her term for love) can destroy human beings.

A secret and illegal experiment was set up with the aid of one of the Caleban. He isolated the entire planet of Dosadi behind an impenetrable barrier called the God Wall. Innocent jump door users of two races, human and Gowachin, were diverted to this world, which is poisonous and deadly except in a narrow valley where nearly 90 million humans and Gowachin are crowded together under terrible conditions. Three times that number crowd the canyon rim. Generations later Senior Liator Keila Jedrik subtly manipulates the Demo-Pol to eliminate the jobs of fifty humans within the bureaucracy of the city of Chu, where both races exist in a precarious balance punctuated by constant violence. This is the opening gambit in a war that will change Dosadi and the Consentency forever.

After the Bureau of Sabotage obtains scattered reports about the existence and circumstances of the world called Dosadi, Jorj X. McKie is tasked to investigate. He prepares the powerful weapons and explosives of his compact sabotage kit while being briefed by an artificial intelligence. Then McKie swallows a bead which will allow a Tapisriot to transmit his final memories to another agent in the very likely event of his death, indicative of the mechanical way BuSab simply gnawed away at its problems.

From her computer terminal Keila Jedrik watches as the small flaw she introduced in the Demo-Pol is snapped up like bait by another bureaucratic functionary. This underling exploits it to add another forty humans to the rolls of the unemployed. Keila herself is fired by the "Mandate of God" and she leaves her office feigning anger. She is inwardly pleased how the events she put into motion were beginning to accelerate, but her face and body language betray none of her true emotions.

The Gowachin practice a harsh weeding-out process on their tadpoles, and demand better and better decisions as members rise toward the very pinnacle of their society. Their legal practices are based upon a healthy disrespect for the law in the courtarena: the losing legum is killed by the winner and his client torn to pieces by angry spectators; judges may have bias ("if I can decide for my side, I will"), but not prejudice ("I will decide for my side, regardless"); any participant in the trial is at risk of summary judgment and even questioning-by-pain, not excepting even the judges. Upon his arrival on Tandaloor, the home world of the Gowachin, McKie is presented with an ancient blue box that contains a knife, a book, and a rock. He is declared legum of Aritch, High Magister of Running Phylum.

The human warlord Gar and his daughter Tria converse with Dosadi's current ruler, the Gowachin Elector Broey, in his high citadel overlooking Chu. Despite Keila Jedrik's great care in covering her own traces Tria has identified her as the one who precipitated the recent change in the Demo-Pol. Broey is wary of embarking on a course of action that cannot be reversed but Tria is resolved to go into the warrens of the city and try to make contact with her. Gar suspects this Jedrik is really an agent for forces outside of Dosadi, beyond the impenetrable God Wall. High Magister Aritch attempts to limit McKie's investigation into Dosadi by intimidating him with the presence of Ceylang, a deadly Wreave under training to become a legum like McKie. At one point Aritch commands her to attack, but McKie, excellent Bureau of Sabotage agent that he is, sabotages this by snatching the sacred book from the blue box and threatening to desecrate it with his own blood drawn by the sacred knife. Such an action would make pariah the entire Running Phylum of Tandaloor.

As a senior liaitor Keila Jedrik merited a driver. While she is driven home by Havvy, he bargains with her for information about Jorj X. McKie which he thinks is valuable. After much bluffing he is reduced to giving up his information and accepting whatever coin she deems it is worth. The information is simply that "McKie comes from beyond the God Wall." She dismisses the information as the garbage she knew it had to be. Jedrik is well aware of McKie's non-Dosadi origins, for she has already discerned that Havvy himself comes from beyond Dosadi. With Ceylang dismissed, Aritch answers the questions of his legum as he is required to do under Gowachin Law. The primary thrust of the Dosadi experiment was to subject sentient beings to the worst conditions and see what behaviors and instincts developed as a response. The surviving Dosadi have become terrifying creatures with heightened perceptions, intelligence, and an enhanced drive to survive and prosper. If they were to be loosed upon the ConSentiency (even after memory erasure) they would quickly conquer it. Aritch will destroy Dosadi rather than allow them to escape. By intense probing, McKie finds a line of questioning that Aritch refuses to answer: What benefits were expected to accrue from conducting the Dosadi Experiment? At length Aritch proposes that McKie himself travel to Dosadi to learn the answer directly. Elector Broey communes with the Caleban who maintains the God Wall barrier above Dosadi and poses as the deity of that world. High Magister Aritch holds the contract with this Caleban and orders him to inform Broey that McKie is soon to arrive on Dosadi. Aritch wants Broey to capture McKie before he falls into the hands of Keila Jedrik. Elector Broey assures his deity that he will obey and takes pride in being a pure servant of God who knows by direct experience what it is to be both human and Gowachin. McKie arrives on Dosadi by way of a jump-door and waits for his contact to arrive. It is local noon and he can see the tallest towers of Chu some distance away in the haze. He clears his mind and finds he can still contact his Caleban friend Fannie Mae through the shimmering God Wall overhead. Doubting that his Tapisiriot contract will be similarly efficacious he asks that Fanny Mae help the Bureau obtain his final memories in the event of his death on Dosadi. She refuses, citing the terms of the Gowachin contract, but she does offer to remove him from Dosadi immediately, since very soon McKie will not be permitted to leave in his own "body/node". This is an answer that completely confuses McKie. Fanny Mae refuses to elaborate, again constrained by the contract. Tria and a squad of lieutenants foray into the warrens of Chu searching for Jedrik at her last known residence. The streets are wet with fresh red and green blood. The first race-riots

between human and Gowachin have occurred, triggered by Jedrik's adjustment of the Demo-Pol. Tria herself kills the night watchman in Jedrik's building, but when she arrives at Jedrik's apartment she finds her quarry is gone and her own agent has been murdered. This makes Tria sufficiently nervous to call for an extraction.

McKie makes contact with a Gowachin named Bahrank. They drive an armored military vehicle through a no-man's land on the rim to the city of Chu, dodging mortar and heavy gun fire all the way. The hulks of burned out vehicles litter the side of the road amid corpses of human and Gowachin alike. Bahrank manages to evade Broey's forces and enter the city through Gate Nine. McKie, raised in a society where any inhabited world can be reached by simply walking through a Caleban jumpdoor, is overwhelmed by the crowding, stink and the poverty of the inhabitants of Dosadi. Bahrank leaves him standing in the street and drives away, cutting off McKie's last link to the ConSentiency.

The riots in the warrens of Chu continue to worsen. Elector Broey is still hoping for the situation to become less ambiguous, but Gar insists Broey is reacting exactly as Jedrik has anticipated. Broey begins to distrust Gar and expects him to just leave. Gar is forced to reveal that his forces have begun a second City on the Rim with its own sources of manufactured food, a blasphemy which astonishes Broey in its audacity. Gar proposes a permanent separation of the two species, but his continued obsession with Jedrik leads Broey to realize Gar is not part of her plot after all. Broey permits him to remain as his advisor, if only to have him and Tria remain under observation.

After McKie is taken on a twisting path through the maze-like warrens of the city he is left in a room where he finally makes contact with Keila Jedrik. She says, "Welcome to Dosadi, McKie." He had been told in no uncertain terms that the Dosadi-born did not suspect his off-world origins and warned him it would be fatal to knowingly or unknowingly give this secret away. Realizing he has been betrayed by Aritch, McKie becomes utterly submissive. Jedrik orders him to hand over his BuSab toolkit and begins to interrogate him. McKie, knowing he is defeated, holds nothing back.

On the second day of rioting in Chu Elector Broey meets with his Gowachin aides, with Gar conspicuously absent. He angrily demands they search for the hidden cache of food and the blasphemous second city on the Rim, even if it means angering the humans in the warrens and accelerating the unrest. Broey begins to admire Jedrik's disposition as a warlord, as no Gowachin female could possibly compare to her, and he is puzzled why the god of Dosadi failed to warn him about her bid for power.

Keila Jedrik takes McKie to meet a very old Gowachin named Pcharky who lives in an enormous cage made with bars of shimmering energy. Jedrik says Pcharky has helped many people escape Dosadi, but when Pcharky begins to question McKie she cuts him off and terminates the interview. Later in her protected quarters they make love in a way that borders on violence. Jedrik undertakes to make McKie understand Dosadi "one lesson at a time."

Aritch and Ceylang discuss the possibility that the Dosadi Affair will come to trial in the courtarena. Ceylang assures Aritch that McKie dares not draw her blood, or worse, publicly shame her, lest the entire Wreave universe come hunting for him with "death in their mandibles." Aritch suddenly explodes with anger because Ceylang has failed to observe that McKie *adapts*, and he will find a way to defeat her *in such a way* that her Wreave universe would "shower him with adulation". That cannot be permitted.

Jedrik takes McKie to a training facility where some of her commandos are learning to use new weapons. McKie is shocked to discover they are really just larger copies of the miniaturized tools in his sabotage kit. The speed with which they have been copied and mass-produced gives McKie a new appreciation as to why Aritch fears the escape of the Dosadi-born. By the third day after Jedrik's move the unrest in Chu has passed from the level of mere rioting to full-scale urban warfare. More than a hundred battles now rage between the species across the entire city. Broey anticipates things will get worse and orders the sequestration of a number of Gowachin females in bastions within the areas under his control. He suspects his associates among the frog-people will come to appreciate his foresight during the days to come. McKie reflects on his life and equates his personal loneliness with the solitude of the entire world of Dosadi. He finds his loyalties subtly shifting to side with Dosadi. With BuSub and unknown power centers among the Gowachin uniting to keep Dosadi cut off from the ConSentiency, McKie realizes that the planet's freedom and the subsequent diaspora of its remarkable inhabitants could be the greatest cleansing force the universe had ever experienced.

The fourth day of the Battle for Chu finds Tria and Gar in possession of only one-eighth of the warren area, but with a population density triple the norm. They have many salients that are dangerously exposed but they know any attempt to straighten their lines will lead to mutiny as it would necessarily reduce their territory even further. Jedrik has effectively cleaved them from any alliance with Broey. At this point Tria asserts herself over her father and decides to surrender to Jedrik.

On the fifth day of the Battle for Chu McKie interrogates a captive Tria and Gar. Drawing on his BuSab experience he suspects that Tria was trained by the Pan-Spechi race to establish certain instincts, then she was subject to memory erasure, a variation of the experiment. Gar's account of her early life supports this. During his questioning of Tria and her father Jedrik sees McKie transformed into a full Dosadi before her very eyes. Immediately she makes McKie her chief lieutenant and sends him back with Gar and Tria to observe their enclave.

Elector Broey recognizes that unless Jedrik makes a stupid mistake, which is incredibly unlikely, it is only a matter of time until she defeats him. He admits to himself that she is more Dosadi than he is and therefore deserves the victory, but he dispatches suicide bombers to make her inevitable victory as costly as possible: a hundred of hers for every one of his.

On the front lines of the battle McKie takes captive a Gowachin named Grinik who reveals that his orders from Mrreg are to get his people out of Dosadi before it is destroyed in just sixty hours. McKie has also captured Havvy, who reveals the actual purpose of the Dosadi

Experiment is to perfect ego transfer. New Dosadi-honed bodies for old ConSentiency ones. Havvy alerts McKie to the fact that Jedrik plans to swap bodies with him and escape Dosadi, because the Caleban contract specifies that no one may leave Dosadi in their original body. McKie realizes that Aritch is observing through Havvy's senses. McKie admonishes Aritch to honor the sacred relationship between legum and client.

Not a single one of Broey's people have left the city. McKie recognizes that Broey has sequestered their females somewhere. Reproductive imperatives are much stronger among the Gowachin. Jedrik plans to use Gar's shock troops to gain entrance to that place, blow the creche walls and release the water. Even a few would be enough, if they were armed with the new weapons, and Broey would be compelled to yield. Dosadi is riddled with hidden cameras that the experiment may be monitored at all times. Ceylang is obsessed with her observations of McKie, knowing that her life will soon be at stake in the courtarena. That now seems inevitable. When the cameras are suddenly shut down Aritch speculates that Jedrik ordered it. This makes Ceylang shudder at the implication that Jedrik is playing all of them like a fine instrument. By perfecting ego transfer, the power brokers behind the Dosadi Experiment have achieved immortality: As they near death, they switch egos with a young person from Dosadi, taking on a new body and extending their ego lifespan through several generations, theoretically forever. Pcharky mediates this through the power of the God Wall Caleban. But Jedrik has left Pcharky as the sole surviving such intermediary. He will do this exchange one more time, and in return Jedrik will provide a body for Pcharky himself to escape Dosadi. Jedrik admits that it was her plan for McKie all along but now he agrees it is the only way out of their dilemma.

Ceylang seems to be fascinated by the possibilities inherent in ego-transfer, but Aritch warns her it could mean infiltration into one species by another, which many races including her fellow Wreaves would certainly never tolerate. He considers her fascination to be the early sign of a kind of psychological infection that could spread out of control if the Dosadi Affair comes to the Courtarena.

Jedrik and McKie swap bodies, but something goes wrong. Perhaps it has to do with McKie's intimate relationship with a living star, or Jedrik being the result of many generations of deliberate breeding just for this moment. The union awakens a "sleeper" deep in their cells that terrifies them and kills the ancient Gowachin who is mediating the exchange. Following the death of Pcharky the sleeping monster with its soundless question and its threat of annihilation recedes but Jedrik and McKie discover they can swap egos and bodies at will. A frightened Broey appears alone at Jedrik's headquarters to surrender because the sky of Dosadi has gone entirely black. The Caleban playing God has completely sealed off the planet to conceal the final explosion. In Jedrik's body McKie contacts Fannie Mae one more time and asks the Caleban to remove both him and Jedrik through the God Wall, which she promptly does, since neither one presently occupies their original body/node. From the home of the Dry Heads Phylum on Tandaloor McKie contacts six trusted BuSab agents using his Tapisriot contract and does a contingency memory dump of everything he learned on Dosadi. Then he contacts Aritch and acting as his legum orders him to cancel the Caleban contract and remove the God Wall. Dosadi is free.

After making a number of Tapisriot inquiries with his contacts in the Bureau, McKie confirms the complicity of BuSab chief Bildoan in the Dosadi Affair. He had been bought off by the shadowy High Command with the promise of a new body to permanently fix his ego before it migrated to one of the other four members of his creche. To contrive that is the greatest crime among the Pan-Spechi race. On Tandaloor McKie maneuvers to have only three judges on the Courtarena bench, and one of them must be Elector Broey.

During pre-trial motions McKie stubbornly asserts that he is the legum for "that Gowachin who made the decision to launch the Dosadi Experiment" which puts the High Command on notice that McKie is fully aware of the immortality scheme. Eventually he is put into video contact with a Gowachin named Mrreg. The alien wistfully answers his queries while he is prepared for a ritual unfamiliar to McKie called Laupuk which turns out to be a kind of hari-kari. After Mrreg dies, Aritch is elevated to the position of Mrreg and resumes his role as McKie's client.

Safe on McKie's private island floating on the oceanic world of Tutalsee, Jedrik contacts McKie mind-to-mind to tell him Aritch's plans did not extend beyond the uses of outrage and injustice and how to turn those things to his own personal advantage. But such actions always call forth a greater counter-reaction. This was occurring even as she spoke, with escaping Dosadi-born infiltrating every power niche of the ConSentiency.

Broey and Bildoan are judges but the third, Moredes Parando, has the look of the Dosadi Rim. McKie knows he gives advice on Gowachin Law. Legalists are absolutely forbidden from serving. Ceylang calls Jedrik as a witness. She testifies that she is McKie's lover, but this is not enough to exclude her as a witness. However, Ceylang proposes the exclusion and it is accepted. After McKie calls a recess, they make love once more, and Jedrik confesses that she is in love with McKie. She finds the sensation of admitting it openly very odd. In the morning Jedrik returns to Tutalsee, but she is killed by an explosion that destroys the island. Jedrik has removed herself as a potential hostage to hold over McKie's head. Eight conspirators arrive to gloat, addressing him as Jedrik. Nothing in their experience permits them to believe it is McKie in his own body: the Caleban contract was clear. So they are surprised when Broey's people pounce on them.

The eight shackled conspirators are dumped on the arena floor. McKie names them his client, and maneuvers Ceylang into being their prosecutor. In so doing, she affirms Aritch's innocence and her life is forfeit. McKie suggests the eight be handed over to ConSentient jurisdiction for trial, and Broey so orders it. McKie picks up a spear, reveals Parando to be a legalist, and kills him with a single thrust. Bildoan's ego, overcome by the stress of the Courtarena, has already fled to the creche leaving Bildoan himself a lifeless corpse. Broey finds for the defense, and Aritch is declared innocent. In the strange, inverted system of Gowachin Law, that means his life could be taken by the court observers. He walks out of the Courtarena to his doom. McKie uses the sacred knife to make a single pockmark in Ceylang's flesh, as a lover would. The Wreaves stand down, accepting this as a token of honor that satisfies Gowachin law. McKie will not be hunted down. Jedrik's ego awakens in McKie's mind then, and both of them must now share his one body. They look at Broey, knowing that he was moving to seize the reins of power in the

ConSentiency. Jedrik/McKie find it humorous that Broey is doing their work for them, presenting a single target for their ministrations as the new head of BuSab.