

REVELATIONS

SHORT SHORT STORY NO.19

Three weeks after Dr Jonathan Mackenzie published his incontrovertible proof that God did not exist, the world had changed more than he had ever thought possible. It was true that he'd expected shock and even a level of distress among the previously religious but it seemed as if everytime he turned on the news, something ridiculous was taking place that made him wonder whether he should ever have published at all.

On this particular afternoon he watched in amazement as the United States Congress ratified a bill to remove the phrase 'In God We Trust' from the back of their dollar bills and replace it with corporate advertising. Coke had taken over sponsorship of the ones, McDonald's were all over the fives, while Donald Trump's quiff was shortly to be placed on the back of every ten. From the Rose Garden, the President swore to hunt down and bring to justice all those who had been involved in what he called "the milleniums old Jesus-fraud"; to do otherwise, he suggested, would be to hand victory to terrorists.

The court system had collapsed, with witnesses promising to tell the truth but having nothing to swear it on anymore.

In Rome, the Pope was at the centre of a two-week struggle to maintain control of the Vatican. He'd been as shocked as everyone else by Dr Mackenzie's proof but didn't see why anything had to change. The people were having none of it however and a scene reminiscent of Revolutionary France was taking place in the city of the Seven Hills.

Dr Rachel Cornell, who sometimes found herself whispering Dr Mackenzie's name in private moments, stopped by his office and was shocked to see him looking so distressed. 'Jonathan,' she said. 'Are you alright?'

'I feel as if I've started a war,' he said, shaking his head. 'The whole planet is falling apart.'

'In fairness, the middle east problem has been solved overnight. And the Catholics and the Protestants aren't at each other's throats anymore.'

'But everyone wants a piece of me,' he said. 'You know I've been awarded a Nobel Prize?'

'I heard. Congratulations. The money will be a God-send for research purposes. It's an answer to all your prayers.'

'Except it's neither, though, is it?' he asked.

She shrugged and considered the matter. 'Well, now that you've figured out who didn't put us here,' she suggested, 'perhaps you could start to work on exactly who did?'

Dr Mackenzie thought about this and realised this wasn't such a bad idea. He had eliminated the idea of a deity from peoples' minds, now he had the opportunity to replace it with something of his own creation. He was young still. He had just become the most famous and highly regarded man on the planet. People would listen to anything he said. He could create and they would follow.

He pulled out a sheet of paper. He wondered what it might be like to wear a crown.