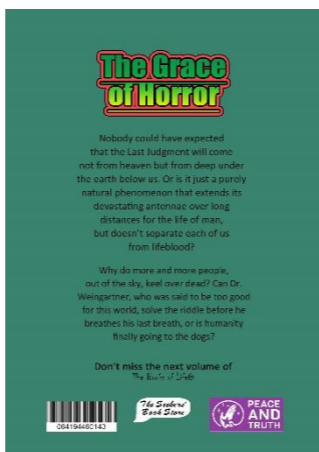


George M. Grow
Honey Fungus
Beast from the Underworld

The Final Days of Humankind



From the series
The Books of Life®



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OLD JOHN. No time for stories, we have three days, if the doctor isn't one of us by then, God knows.

WEINGARTNER (flat on the ground; raises his head and let it sink down again). Uff.

THIRD BROTHER PRIOUS. Three days is a damn short time.

FIRST BROTHER (to old John). Why didn't you ask for a week?

FOURTH BROTHER GOD. A century would have been too short.

WEINGARTNER. Do you want to look at life so trivially, how can murder be a blessing?

OLD JOHN. If mankind doesn't hear, they must feel. If reason fails to appear, nature must take its place.

A LONG DRAWN-OUT BERP FROM THE CHAMBER

OLD JOHN. A turning point in the history of mankind is imminent. The age of slavery is drawing to an end. People won't merely speak but rule. They'll reign democratically. At the expense of efficiency, the unity of states, economy and the elites will be condensed. By the release of plurality and regionality, resilience will be increased. Many will hear the Lord taking to them, and many ideas will be tested and realized in the communes.

WEINGARTNER. But the many deads!

OLD JOHN. We are at eight billion human beings...

FIRST BROTHER PRIOUS. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Look at nature! It doesn't destroy without creating something better. If this is what nature does, God does it all the more. He never destroys anything without creating

something better for it.

OLD JOHN. Before we open the doctor's eyes, we'll need another load of salt. Help me, brothers, we don't want to let our baby starve.

WEINGARTNER (raises his head from the floor). And me?

FOURTH BROTHER DIVINE. There is no me, not yet at least, get used to it! Explain you how it is.

FOURTH BROTHER WISE. The ego is a fact. If it wasn't a fact, I could see from over there exactly the same things I can see from here. If the ego sags away, schizophrenia and paranoia take place. Buddhists call that vision. The ego, therefore, must remain while desire for no matter what and thinking can go.

WEINGARTNER. Forever??

FIRST BROTHER WISE. He speaks about ever and doesn't know a single time, harharharha!

OLD JOHN AND HIS PIOUS BROTHERS (drag a number of bags into the chamber and dump their contents in the shaft. At the same time, they are warbling). The world is full of gaudy colors, green, white, red, but deep inside, it is dark, somber, like death itself...

WEINGARTNER (calls.) Where, inside of what?

OLD JOHN. In yourself, Doctor, in yourself!

OLD JOHN AND HIS PIOUS BROTHERS. The world is full of gaudy colors, green, white, red, but deep inside, it is dark, somber, like death itself...

WEINGARTNER. And if it was not God who spoke to you but Satan?

THIRD BROTHER GOD. Hoho, you won't still believe in the grim reaper, Doctor.

FIRST BROTHER. If we want to talk

about the devil, let us talk about people. (He strikes up the song.)

The world is...

OLD JOHN AND HIS PRIIOUS

BROTHERS. The world is full of gaudy colors, green, white, red, but deep inside, it is dark, somber, like death itself...

WEINGARTNER (joins in singing).

ONE AND ALL. The world is full of gaudy colors, green, white, red, but deep inside, it is dark, somber, like the death itself.

OLD JOHN. *Nowhere but into the hungry maw,*

there, it sinks into his sacred heart and saw,

in the cavings of stomach and socket, while singing for joy the immortal hocket,

partaking something divine and dance

for the holy creeping influence.

Not too free and not too compelled,

not too soft and not too quelled,

soon together, soon together,

without blether, without blether,

not concerned about the place,

fed to the days of grace.

ONE AND ALL. The world is full of gaudy colors, green, white, red, but deep inside, it is dark, somber, like death itself!!

FIRST BROTHER PRIIOUS. Put lip to lip,

go heart to heart,

from hoax to smart,

don't tip, don't tip.

At first the cloth

and then the dress,

at first the dove,

then less and less...

(At the same time, John loads three bags on his shoulder, while his brothers can manage to drag only one bag on the ground behind

them.)

FIRST BROTHER. Get an eyeful of this, boys, isn't John strong like a bear? No one is as strong as he is, and he is not only strong but also wise and just.

WEINGARTNER (with his face towards the floor). But still, his fiancée left him behind.

FIRST BROTHER. Sold down the river.

WEINGARTNER. How did the contract come to be broken, didn't he fight for his right?

OLD JOHN (growls; to his brothers). Tell him how it came about, but don't forget to mention how it made me a different person.

FIRST BROTHER. Kirsten and her father had worked out their plan precisely.

THIRD BROTHER. She summoned John and pretended to give in to his feelings and to return his love.

SECOND BROTHER. "Can any mortal resist you, master of my heart?" the cunning daughter asked him. "Your constancy has won, but I don't want to be just your bride. I want to be your beloved at your side forever." Am I right or am I right, John, isn't that how it was and how you wrote it down?

OLD JOHN. Everybody but the judge knows the story.

FIRST BROTHER. "But one thing oppresses my heart," the beauty said to John. "No woman has the charms of youth forever. She is like a flower that fades away all too soon, my youthful attractions will wane. How can I be sure that you are the tender, loving, pleasant and tolerant man you seem to be while my beauty is still blooming?"

SECOND BROTHER. The beauty

demanded proof of John's favor and loyalty.

OLD JOHN. The bitch betrayed me into signing the document.

THIRD BROTHER. She purported to test his patience in order to judge the strength of his unwavering love.

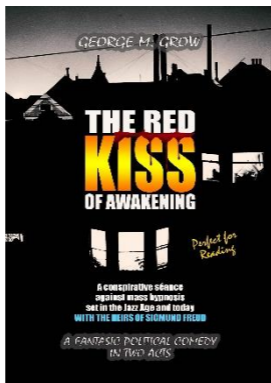
FIRST BROTHER. She said to John, "Go and count the trees in your wood, but take care not to cheat me. Don't miscount a single one, because this is the test by which I want to check your fidelity. If you state the number to me, then I'll be completely yours; but If you miscount, then you lose me and half your lands."

WEINGARTNER (with his cheek on the floor). Who on earth counts the trees in the wood, was it not about turnips?

OLD JOHN. It was about the wood I grew up. I thought I knew every limb, every branch.

End of the reading

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