

MARA AND THE MANGALA II

THE LIAR



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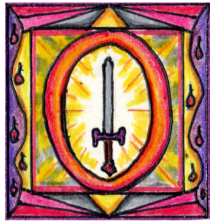
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BEFOREWORD



Once upon a time...

In the time before time – when before and after did not mean what they do now; when here and there were not as they are within this world; when self and other, alive and not alive, overlapped and blurred – there was no good or bad, no light nor dark, no one world or another.

Then as things happen, light came into being. The light was very bright to those who could see, but as soon as it appeared it cast shadows, and they were dark indeed.

The light knew itself at once and it was free and infinite, filled with delight; so the shadows began to enjoy the art of getting in the way. Thus it was that the dance began.

The pulses of the universe took shape as crystal germs of being. The light informed every such seed with the joy of its own reality, but the shadows ever played and took their pleasure in proving themselves stronger than the light – or ever vainly trying to do so.

The deepest of all shadows was the fact of ending, the death that comes to all that has begun. But was Death a single presence? Or did it change, divide? Sometimes it seemed quite solitary, total; at other times it had five faces, flowing, growing out and round each other – now ugly, dim and violent, now reasonable, now bright.

Mara was Death; was one yet also five:

‘I am the Ender, the Killer in the shadow’;

‘I am the Liar, who fulfils all desire’;

‘I am the House-builder, crafting mind and body’;

‘I’m the Thinker, who makes opinions true’;

‘And I am the Holy One, who shines brighter than the heavens.’

‘I am the creeping evil, a snake, a golden deer; I am a goddess; I am your friend, your palace of reason and your nemesis.

‘I am your birth and your certain death. Do you really think you can escape me?’