

# ***Magenta Zephyr & The Universe Bender***

*EXCERPT #3  
From the Novel by Tim Storm*

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“Because something *can* be done, is not reason enough that it *should* be done.”  
- *The Great Cosmic Book* -

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The work of Doctor Lunden Fogg advanced the field of genetic engineering to the point where virtually anything was possible, but his path to greatness was marred by many failures. As is the career of many great men, his was a long and lonely road paved with adversity; however his persistence paid off, and he is considered to be one of mankind’s greatest scientific geniuses. It is a testament to the strength of his character that one of his most memorable failures preceded some of his most ingenious discoveries.

Doctor Fogg achieved success and renown in the field of pharmaceutical genetics when he was a young man. He had earned his fame as a researcher by developing a method of stimulating the human immune system to defeat a wide range of viral infections. His discoveries led to a revolution in health care and garnered him a fortune with which to continue his research work unhindered by the restrictions of corporate oversight. With his own sizable fortune and the contributions of enthusiastic investors, he formed a private research firm and began earnestly to find the answers to some of the most complex questions posed by the science of genetic engineering. He built a research facility on an autonomous, isolated island off the coast of Australia and retired there with a small staff to focus on experimental research that would have been subject to restrictive laws if it had taken place under the auspices of regulating authorities.

He became reclusive and disappeared from the public eye for many years, but he eventually came under pressure from his financial backers to account for their investments. During his seclusion, there had been wild rumors and speculation in the press about the types of experimentation that might be taking place on Doctor Fogg’s island. So, it was an event of worldwide public interest when major news outlets were finally invited to the island for a presentation that would showcase Doctor Fogg’s latest discoveries.

A great number of guests arrived on the island for the unveiling of the anticipated advances in genetic engineering. On the day of the presentation, the grandstands were filled with

members of the press, esteemed scientists, government officials, and anxious investors. Hundreds of cameras and microphones belonging to the major international news outlets surrounded the stage. The world would be watching with eager anticipation to see the wonders Doctor Fogg had prepared for them.

The gathered crowd was buzzing with speculation, but when Doctor Fogg arrived unceremoniously at center stage and began speaking in his mellow, measured tones, the voices grew suddenly silent.

“Welcome,” he said as he pulled a note card out of the pocket of his blazer. His head was cleanly shaven, his face was lean and haggard, and he seemed much older than his thirty-nine years. He was a frail man of unremarkable appearance and unimposing presence, yet he commanded the absolute attention of everyone who was present on this historic occasion.

He began reading from the card. “Due to a request from the board of investors and because of increasing public interest, I have decided to present some of my developments in genetic engineering.” He nervously cleared his throat. “Naturally, the board of investors will be presented with a more complete presentation later, but I felt it important to present some of my discoveries in a public forum.”

There was a burst of light applause from the gathered guests, and Doctor Fogg smiled with humble pleasure.

“I gather that there has been much anticipation, so I will get right down to business.” He motioned to a group of assistants waiting near a tented structure beside the stage and they went into action. From within the tent they retrieved a large box mounted on wheels and rolled it to rest in front of the stage where Doctor Fogg stood.

The crate began to rock and teeter, and loud squealing and grunting sounds erupted from within. Members of the audience strained forward in their seats and some stood to get a better view as the good doctor continued reading from his note card.

“First, to illustrate my point that all things might be possible through the miracles of genetic engineering, I have successfully accomplished something that most people have thought would never happen.”

The covered crate began to move violently and the grunting noises coming from within became loud and obscene, but Doctor Fogg seemed not to notice as he continued with his presentation.

“In fact, it has long been quoted about anything that is thought to be improbable; ‘It will happen when pigs can fly.’” He motioned grandly to the crate as the sides fell away revealing its contents. “Well, that day has come!”

The pen swayed and careened back and forth as the restrained creature bucked furiously, banging against the walls of its cage. It was a huge boar, normal in every aspect except for its enormous leathery wings, which were flailing wildly about for all the spectators to clearly see. The animal was obviously distraught, as was the crowd, which groaned with shock and disbelief at the sight. Doctor Fogg remained unaffected by the spectacle as he smiled proudly and pointed a remote control unit at the cage. The container’s top rolled away and the bizarre beast lifted off the floor in clumsy bursts as it flapped its wings ever more furiously, rising above the confines of its pen.

The beast was obviously a miracle of genetic science, but not a perfect specimen in regard to the specifics of biological design. Though its wings had enough strength to lift its massive body to a reasonable height, its torso hung awkwardly low and its legs thrashed helplessly. It had very little control over its flight path and it rose ever higher, floundering

erratically around the airspace above the crowd. Panic-stricken and confused, it circled aimlessly over the heads of the dismayed audience members and emptied its nervous bowels, showering the crowd with a putrid spray of urine and crap.

Doctor Fogg's satisfied grin faded to grim consternation as he realized that perhaps this had not been such a brilliant idea after all.

However, many of his other endeavors turned out to be remarkable discoveries; advances in genetic engineering that rivaled his previous accomplishments. His financial backers were delighted, and they were eventually well rewarded for their patience and faith in Doctor Lunden Fogg.

In the following years, Doctor Fogg more than redeemed himself by producing a wealth of innovative advances in genetic engineering. His disastrous public relations blunder was a comparatively minor smudge on his reputation as the most renowned human geneticist of all time. Doctor Fogg retired to his lab, occasionally revealing to the world wondrous scientific miracles, furthering his studies until the day he simply vanished off the face of the Earth.

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to learn more about Magenta Zephyr and the full-length novel  
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