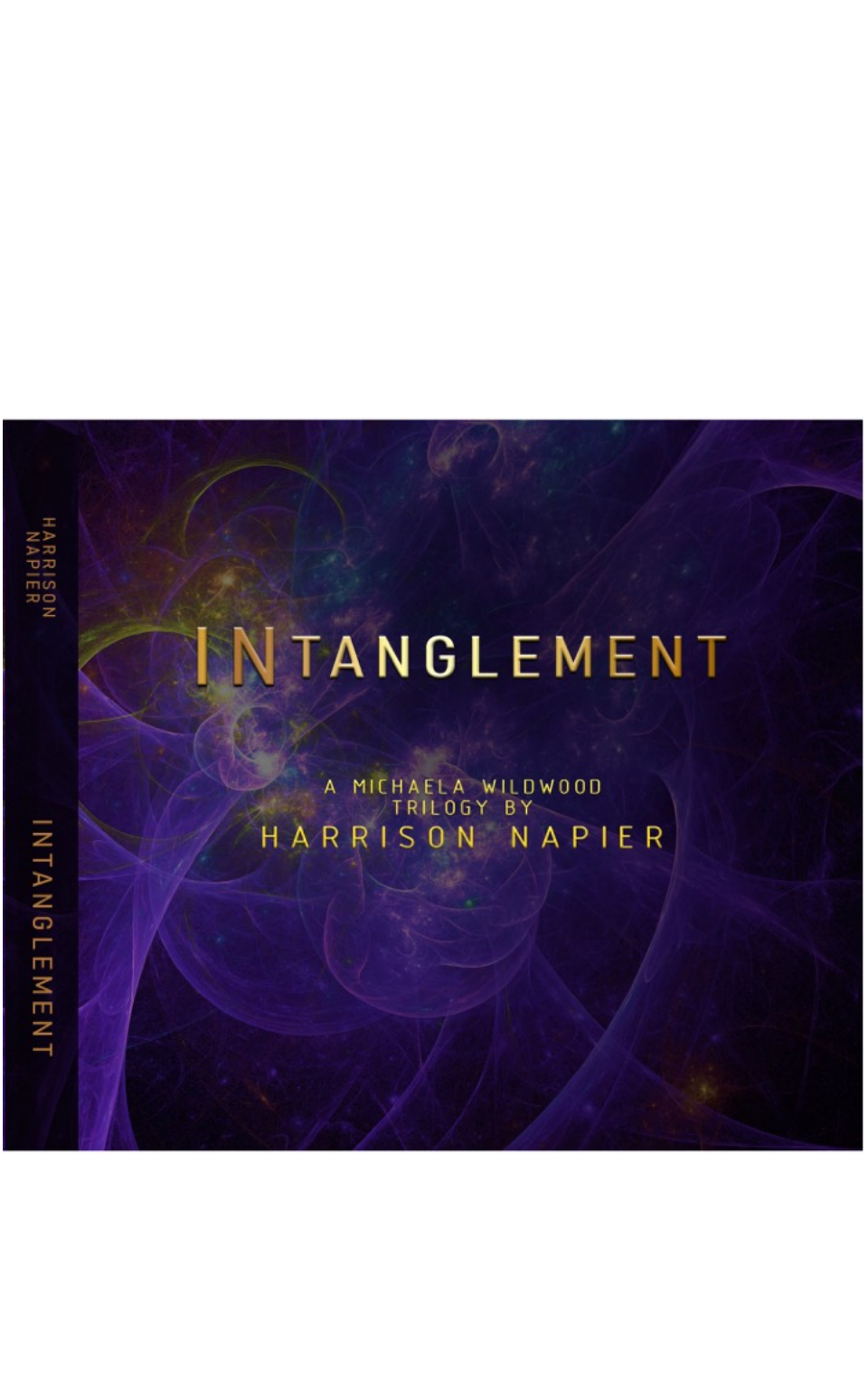




INTANGLEMENT

A MICHAELA WILDWOOD
TRILOGY BY
HARRISON NAPIER

HARRISON
NAPIER

INTANGLEMENT

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A Michaela Wildwood Trilogy



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This book is a work of fiction, and it is based on real events that happened during a time when the world seemed chaotic and imaginary. However, I've taken creative liberties using my own imagination to depict those events, people, places, and names.

My Dedication



U.S. Air Force Photography Specialist, Technical Sargent 2nd Grade, circa 1955

I remember how it was to drive along a gravel road, sitting in the back of my father's 62' Chevy truck with my brother. We'd watch the dust swirl up behind us like a devil wind caught by its ornery tail. Seatbelts were for sissies, as we used both hands to grip the pitted blue rusty sideboards.

By April 1, 1961, every resident from the old town of Dillon was required to be gone. Any buildings not moved or dismantled were burned to the ground, with everything removed and submerged. The old road that led back into my father's favorite fishin' hole was in bad repair, but Dad would shrug it off and say,

"Good, it'll keep the Texans out."

At the end of the road, all three of us would stare down that dusty trail that disappeared into the mighty blue reservoir, wondering if anybody drowned while they filled the dam, or so went the story from my dad.

My father was a patient man back then, holding onto his two fidgety sons; he'd tell us to go look for skeletal remains that floated up from the Boot Hill cemetery – it was his way to escape, if just for a few moments of serenity. He'd scan the flat glass surface, looking for the rippling tell-tale signs of that huge ol' lake trout; he just knew one was nearby and had his name written all over it.

This one's for you, Dad.

Acknowledgments

With heartfelt gratitude, I give thanks to all those who provided me with their knowledge and encouragement. Your names, if not spoken here, are whispered upon the gentle wind that bends the bows of the great red cedar trees.

Thank you to

- My first wife, two daughters, and grandson,
- My younger brother and sister,
- My extended family who lent me their ears to bend,
- My friends whose names somehow made it into this book,
- My teachers and scholars who have taught me how to think, or at least attempted,
- The great learning institutions like MIT, the University of Washington, and my alma mater, the University of Colorado,
- The businesses and restaurants for letting me share your names and delicious tastes,
- The Tlingit people and their stories,
- Those who care for the orphans and the deaf children of the world.

I owe you all at least one stiff drink!



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature, the word "AUTHOR" is printed in a small, sans-serif font.

Prelude

“Michaela, can you count backward from ten for me?”

Her nurse anesthetist patiently watched Stephanie sign to Michaela to begin counting despite her advanced neural implants to treat her congenital deafness; the embedded ultra-micro circuits sent messages directly to her auditory cortex, but they relied on first sending audio signals to an AI-assisted application that translated them into digital signals that her brain could interpret; the app was installed on her iPhone left at the nurse’s station along with all of her clothes.

Michaela took a deep breath; her face was pale as she blinked twice, indicating the countdown had begun.

“Ten.”

Her vitals showed that her blood pressure was much too high. As Michaela’s eyes began to close, a monitor alarm rang out that she never heard, prompting her doctor to declare the urgent need to perform the cesarean delivery. The sterile operating room was overcrowded; her anesthesiologist, her OB-GYN, the on-call surgeon, two

pediatric interns, and an entire team of surgical nurses specializing in newborn deliveries all bustled about.

“Nine.”

Nervously, Stephanie Rodham-Biltmore held Michaela’s hand as she watched the IV drip with the concern of the entire room written across her face. The OB-GYN from the University Hospital had decided that the young mother was at risk from a seizure, stroke, or heart failure, and at any moment, the unborn babies were at serious risk of being starved of their oxygen supply.

“All metallic objects have been removed; she’s ready for surgery.”

“Eight.”

Michaela worried once more about her Quantum system back at the University of Washington, where she had left Paul Loafers to care for the lab as they were in the final throws of resolving their Quantum Entanglement anomaly. She recalled the explosive arguments with Venerous, how he had lied to her face without batting a single eyelash; only his grinning teeth gave away his morality.

“Seven.”

Her heart monitor showed her cardiac arrhythmia had slowed to forty-five beats per minute, and her blood

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pressure climbed with each contraction; she was far above 140 over 90. More alarms sounded as her prenatal monitor registered her contractions lasting nearly sixty seconds, with the next contraction moments away.

“Six.”

Michaela felt the next contraction and focused on time; soon, she would be holding her twins, and time couldn't move any faster as her abdomen began to constrict and with ever-increasing pain.

“Five.”

At the height of her contraction, she recalled the past memory of the Professor's frozen face; his frost-covered gray, lifeless pupils stared into the abyss. Michaela instinctively turned her head away, and her eyes opened wildly; looking at the monitor, her body began to release from her absolute pain.

“How are you feeling, Michaela?”

The nurse anesthetist looked at Michaela, her eyes now fully closed, she was watching Stephanie sign in Michaela's closed hand.

“Four.”

Michaela wondered, what was the question? Where the hell is Bob Regent? Why can't I feel my contractions? Is it

three or two now? What am I forgetting now? Why didn't Bob reply to her last text message? Her mind was trapped, a whirlpool of rotating thoughts whose scale expanded with each second. A torrent of emotions cried out in pain, yet no one heard her screams.

"Three."

Stephanie looked at the young mother-to-be, wondering why she had just signed the letters "B," "O," and "B" into her hand.

The nurse stroked the bottom of Michaela's feet with a tongue depressor, and there was no autonomic reaction.

"Two."

"Ok, she's under, her breathing is good, but her blood pressure is 154 over 90, and her heart rate is slowing. We need to hurry; these babies are starting to show signs of stress; we have elevated heart rates. We're clear for the emergency C-section."

There was a flurry of activity as Michaela's swollen abdomen was swabbed in a povidone-iodine solution; the purple solution filled the air with the sterile odor of an antiseptic spray. Whatever personal fears Michaela may have had of public nudity were stripped from her frame as her gown was tugged off her pregnant frame. Stephanie

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was quickly moved behind a surgical screen as she lost visual contact with Michaela but still held tightly onto her companion's open hand.

Michaela's final thoughts were mixed with a whirlwind of sensations; she thought it was odd as she smelled a brief whiff of alcohol, but she could no longer recall which number she was counting down. Her hands twitched in Stephanie's grasp while recalling her last text message to the President's Secret Service Agent, Bob Regent; it simply read,

"Stay!"

"Why can't I feel my babies?"

Her eyes couldn't find Stephanie,

"You promised to keep my babies safe; you promised!"

"One."

Yet, the only answer she found was the darkness folding over her as the bright surgical room disappeared into the complete quiet of an ebony coffin.

The Quantum space-time wave began to collapse, trapping twenty-two minutes of a wandering pulse laser broadcast originating from someone on Earth that found itself wandering through space, but this signal was thirty days into the future. The Quantum network transmission error was logged, its data was still in the Quantum memory, and a link to its contents was written to a message file for post-mortem analysis and then broadcasted to everyone on the Quantum support team. Michaela had designed her Quantum Network to use artificial intelligence for error recovery, automatically cataloging, analyzing, and even self-correcting any transmission fault.

One of the key concepts behind Quantum Networking was their ability to instantly detect an issue or transmission interruption; thus, the system could immediately detect and recover while always ensuring unbreakable transportation of sensitive data. By the very nature of the Laws of Quantum Physics, her system knew instantaneously when an intrusion occurred, termed a quantum wave collapse. Network interruptions and instantaneous corrections between the hidden QuLink

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satellite in low earth orbit and the lab in Redmond had become almost commonplace.

Quantum teleportation of data was real, but there still were issues, like in the early Star Trek series, where teleportation sometimes went askew. Quantum Networks were still in their infancy, and wandering pulse-laser broadcast signals from Earth to space made the checklist for future error recovery mechanisms in her AI learning system.

Just after the Thanksgiving holiday, Michaela Wildwood was the only tenured Professor who had come into the campus offices to work the weekend; most researchers and students were on the extended holiday or worked remotely. Quite honestly, she preferred the social isolation to the office congestion because wearing those pesky surgical masks was not required when no one else was in the lab.

She paused at her office door and marveled at the newly printed sign that was taped to the door, "Professor Michaela Wildwood-McClure, Ph.D.; Quantum Principles 401 Lectures: Monday and Wednesday 9 AM, Labs:

Thursday 1 PM; Student Advisement: Pre-Scheduled Only.” She decided they needed to revise her posting and add the name of her Lab Assistant, thinking Paul Loafers should share the headline billing, as he would be covering for her while she was out on parental leave absence that began next week.

She smiled at her constant companion, Gomer, and then clapped twice, pointing to the door handle. The yellow lab wearing his service vest wagged his entire body, pulled himself up even with the door, and looked into the Eye Recognition screen; a low hum was followed by a brief pause as the locking mechanism retreated, and the door moved open with a “swoosh.” Michaela laughed at how she took advantage of the security restrictions by using her dog to unlock her doors. Of course, Michaela played the ADA handicap card since her canine companion was a hearing dog specially bred and trained to alert their human partner. The University administrator relented rather than arguing with her over the correct usage of service animals.

Michaela stood behind her elevated desk while Gomer piled in underneath, swirling around three times in his Orvis dog bed before plopping down next to his collection

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of tennis balls and a chewed-up frisbee emblazoned with a Volvo hood emblem. Her daily routine began by opening up the QuLink Tableau dashboard on her MAC and quickly scanning all the monitors; everything was nominal, with less than a dozen exception reports from transmission recoveries and one message tagged as an 'unrecoverable error'. She paused, clicked on her file explorer, and opened the event log.

“Well now, Gomer, this is something new.” Gomer looked up, expecting a treat, but her empty hand rubbed the fur on his head, and he was content with life even though he still preferred his dog treats.

The error transmission from this weekend had a link to her Quantum Computer's memory system where a file awaited her analysis, which was unusual in itself, as the system was built upon the basic Quantum features of Superposition, meaning that memory had no final state until it was measured or viewed. Capturing a video wasn't new, but storing a file in Quantum memory would be more complex than if it had been written to a standard Unix file system, and the file metadata of the video appeared to be out of whack.

Michaela laughed at her canine companion as he snored, and she puzzled at the values on the screen. The file size was fine, consuming a little over twenty-two gigabytes of quantum data storage. The original creator's name on the video was someone with an obscure login name of "bbrgnt," and Michaela initiated a secured internet finger search on the username. The file origin had a coordinate location of 38.8899° N, 77.0091° W, and she dropped the values into Google; the map displayed the bleached white marble dome of the Capital building in Washington, D.C. However, the dates were all off. The issue was that the file capture date was November 26th, 2020, but the upload date was wrong; it showed "January 6th, 2021".

Michaela pinged Paul Loafers on her Teams chat; it took several seconds before his icon flashed green, meaning Paul acknowledged her connection instead of a flashing yellow yield sign,

"I'm on the can, don't bother me now."

"Hey Paul, I hope I didn't interrupt you while dropping off your kids at the pool."

This was their inside joke that someone was preoccupied with a private session on the toilet.

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“And a howdy doody to you too, Michaela; everything is coming out just fine here. When are you taking maternity leave?”

“Soon, sorry Paul, but I’ve got a problem.”

“Of course, you do; it’s a holiday weekend, everyone is at home watching college football games, and there you are, in your office, working for sweater-man and that nimrod Neal Bläcke; hell, you’re probably carrying his twins. What other diagnosis might I advise you with?”

“Hmm, yes. I haven’t seen either of them for a while, and Sweater-man doesn’t really care about the lab, just the frequency and size of my expense reports. But Neal is probably monitoring my keystrokes to ensure I’m in the office; we both know these are not his babies. There’s no way I would let him put his logo on their foreheads despite his repeated requests.”

Michaela studied her screen again and probed the issue further with Paul,

“But that’s not why I pinged you; Paul, you’re an engineer. Perhaps you can take a few minutes and explain to me exactly how a video file has a download date that occurs before its file creation date. Typically, I would expect that I needed to create the file first with the earlier date associated to the moment the file write completed,

and then the second date would be much later, allowing time between file creation and file download. Did I miss something?”

“Well, that sounds like you got pregnant before you had sex.” Paul was always quick with his humor,

“No, I am asking you about the inception date of my video file, not how babies are made.”

“Then you have a problem; either you downloaded a file that hasn’t been created yet, or the sweater-guy’s software is getting ready to blue screen?”

“No, I downloaded a file with a date created on the ...”

Michaela paused; she saw the pattern Paul was referring to.

“Paul, how can I download something before it was created?”

“You could either have the Grand Wizard, Neal Bläcke Venerous, step out from behind the curtain and reveal that he modified the system date on the QuLink satellite, or somehow, your quantum entanglement stepped into a puddle in space-time and plucked out something lucky. Kind of akin to opening a box that holds

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billions of fortune cookie messages, but in space-time, each fortune cookie has multiple superpositions. What you have is a box of fortune cookies. Each cookie can have more than one message, and it is only known to you at a specific moment in time, when you've collapsed the quantum wave, and only then will you know precisely which fortune is yours."

Paul paused for effect,

"Let's be honest; it is much simpler to modify the system settings than finding multiple dimensions in spacetime; however, the damn thing is circling one hundred and fifty miles above the earth, moving at seventeen thousand miles per hour; I don't think anyone just bumped the satellite that sent its operating system into a frenzy. On the other hand, you're now suggesting that time from another dimension has leaked into your Quantum IA error trap; I'd go with the former, but I know you, Michaela, it will always be the latter."

Michaela stared intently at her screen; opening the file with her mind, she began to probe its contents. Her hand waved quickly over the trackpad, clipping the encrypted video file and dropping it into an icon resembling an ancient Greek box with black and emerald engravings. The icon grew brighter and began to spin on its axis; behind

Michaela, the router activity lights all spun bright red, creating a hue like the sun had risen from the Mediterranean seas; her Quantum IA system named Pandora was open.

An SMS message appeared on her screen, the AES 256-bit decryption process was initiated with a hidden key, and 2054 Quantum streams linked to virtualized containers were created instantly; the entire operation took .012 seconds. Michaela smiled; her Quantum Computing system built on the sweater guy's cloud was simply astonishing.

“Ok, Paul, let's see what the future holds.”

Michaela double-clicked on the QuickTime icon and dropped the link with its Quantum location in memory. She shared her desktop screen with Paul so that they could observe and sat motionless for what seemed an eternity.

No one on Earth had ever seen the news clip snagged from space during a Quantum Network transmission, but in less than forty days, the whole world would hold its breath and gasp at the utter darkness about to unfurl.

“We fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have the greatest country in the world; the simple fact is, if you let them steal this election, we won't have anything at all.”

He pointed to the gallows and shouted over the top of the mob that had followed him up Pennsylvania Avenue.

“I have had all the patience in the world with these two animals. As the rightfully elected leader of the greatest nation in the world, I am your judge, and you are my jury. We have held our trial and found these two cowards guilty of the death of your democracy! They are the principal murderers of our once great nation, dealing out votes as if they were free drugs, and to whom?”

Tubbs pointed at the female who was shackled and hooded; her business attire was askew as if she had been roughly handled by four men dressed in black, standing directly behind the prostrated victim.

“Senator Rosa D’España, the once great speaker of the house, she’s a rose no more; she would steal your babies just as she stole votes, only to feed them to the criminals and force you to use her un-proven drug formulas that they say will stop the China plague.”

He then moved his pointed finger, wagging at times, at the male captive, who also was shackled and hooded. The prone prisoner no longer wore his tailored suit jacket, and his tie was pulled behind him like a leash. There was blood from his face that had been smeared onto his white Oxford shirt, and he, too, kneeled before the roaring mob.

“Then there’s my ex-vice-president, Charles-Chip-Chucky-Charmer; his greatest contribution was hiding under his desk when his country needed him the most.”

Now pointing at two Civil War era flags, the Confederate Dixie and a Union Jack with only thirty-four stars had been crudely raised atop the scaffolding that suspended dual nooses swaying in the cold January winds.

“Well, this is how we stop them, show the world we have earned our rightful place, to have your greatest leader of all time represent you today, tomorrow, and for as long as our flag shall wave; today, we take back what is rightly yours.”

Tubbs turned to face his adoring mob; he continued unabashed with all the fervor of a Baptist preacher,

“Our proud, enduring American heritage is the one thing you great people, and you are truly great. You are so great; we have this in common: our greatness.”

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His hands clasped about his chest, hugging himself, and then, with the menace of a hanging judge, shouted,

“We can no longer afford these cowards to murder our country. We will no longer let the fake news sell their seditious lies, we will no longer bow to the cowardice of our courts, and we, the people, sentence these criminals to hang from the neck until they are dead! Then and only then will our freedom be restored.”

Tubbs swirled in a circle, waving at the mass of people below him on the Capital steps. In true Emperor animations, he raised his hands high in the air and then signaled with the Roman salute of thumbs down. Standing behind his wall of warriors, he waited for the crowd’s roar.

“In the great words of our brothers who have died for our cause, it’s high time they paid their debt to the American Republic.”

His hand jerked in the air, invisibly yanking at the nooses about his victim’s neck,

“String them up!!!”

His speech had fired up the mob, and they roared in unison,

“String them up! String them up!”

Dwayne Richard Tubbs smirked and spun about; his aggressive two-tone cowlick made from corn silk waved in the stiff wind like an empty bag of Cheetos stapled to a flagpole. He was surrounded by three dozen paramilitary men dressed in desert camo and a single Secret Service agent who looked like he had seen a ghost. They all moved in unison, emulating the great Spartan fighters surrounding King Leonidas. Their Damascus interlocking riot shields that stood four feet tall formed an impenetrable wall as they retreated back up the blood-stained steps into the Capital's west doors, leaving behind them two hooded corpses dangling from the scaffolding that was intended for the inaugural crowds.

The video abruptly stopped, the captioning halted, and Michaela shook in silent horror in her nearly empty lab. Her grand experiment using Quantum Entanglement created a vortex in multiple dimensions of space-time, with the after-effect foretelling the future of humankind.

Looking at the blinking QuickTime icon as it patiently waited to be replayed had the effect of staring directly

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into Medusa's eyes; she was petrified with fear and unable to move. Despite Gomer's constant nudging with his wet nose to move along, Michaela stood motionless. Like all dogs, his unwavering concern was for her; he just wanted her to flee for her life... again.

Paul cautiously broke the silence,

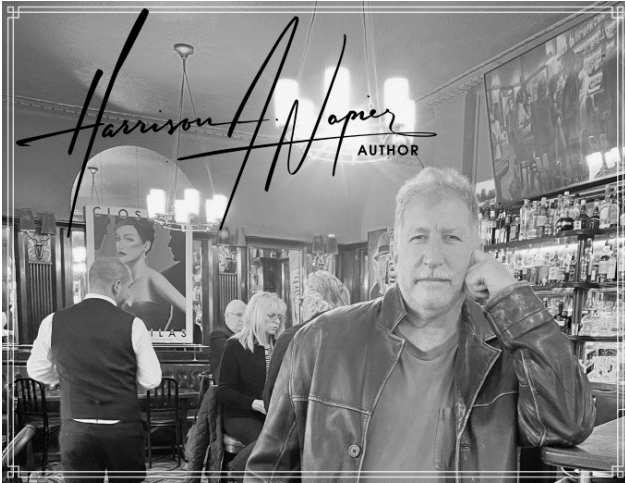
“Michaela, what the hell was that?”

Michaela replied sternly,

“No, Paul, not what; but when.”

About the Author

Harrison Napier



Author, Data Scientist, Architect, Compassionate Man

This is Harrison Napier's second published work of fiction. He has been a data science and data engineering visionary for over 30 years as a global IT leader, a CTO, a Senior Data Scientist, a Principal Architect, and a Chief Engineer. Harrison has built a lifelong career in all things data. His passion is making the misunderstood, under-estimated, and out-of-focus absolutely clear. To read more about Harrison or the first novel, go to

<https://www.hyooristik.com>

