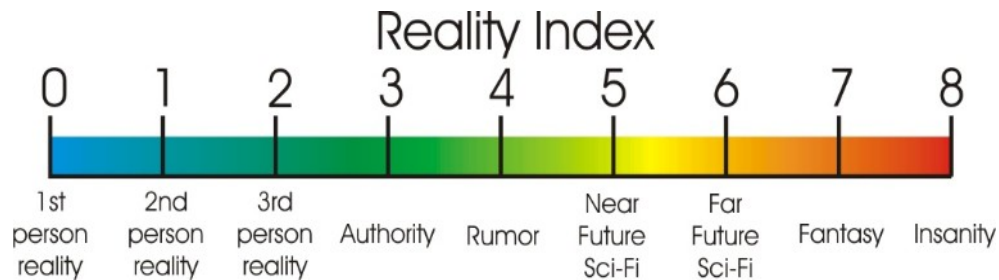


The Guardians of Br'thn

Foreword



Understanding Guardians means understanding the above Reality Index. An “RI” of zero is one that you yourself have experienced. You have seen it, touched it, smelt, heard it or even tasted it. You know without a doubt that it is true. You were there. As we progress along the scale the reality presented become more and more unbelievable until we end in insanity, a reality that only an insane person would ever believe is, or could ever be real, even in ones dreams. In other words, incomprehensible to a “normal” person. That would be some kind of book. Ah, maybe not.

Near Future Sci-Fi is very close to believable, it is as if the author was clairvoyant and able to see a true future in a believable way. We don't have to stretch our imaginations too far to say to ourselves, “Yeh, I could see that happening.”

After a brief encounter in the far past, most of the first book takes place at RI 5. Later volumes get closer to RI 6, but never stray so far as to be anything one might describe as RI 7. Given the conditions of the reality presented and the science described to explain it, one could say, “Yeh, maybe that could happen.”

In the forward it is traditional to describe the set up and a little about it. How much to say without giving away the fun is the hard part. Maybe if I just stick to the believable stuff. The gap between the rich and the poor has grown immense. Yep, that's easy to believe, maybe too easy. The economy of the USA has collapsed. Not a hard stretch given current conditions and the first statement. The Chinese science of “Chi” has been shown to be true. A little harder to believe, but given all the New Age thought, well, maybe. Don't forget at the time of this writing the US was producing 70,000 engineers a year while China was producing 600,000. It is likely the next breakthroughs are going to come from China, so why not from their own experiences? Hey, we did not know about radio waves a very short while ago. Next comes a harder one to believe. There exist sentient life forms that are solid state. Given our own lack of progress in “Artificial Intelligence” this might be a stretch, but then again, we have only been doing solid state ourselves for less than a hundred years. Given a few million more

To say more really starts to tell the story in the foreword. The story will seem confusing at times. Think of yourself as the character speaking. They, as would be the case in your own life, don't know everything that is going on. The story is unfolding for them as well. Another potential problem is dialog. It will not always be clear who is saying what. Do you always remember everything that everyone said in a conversation with ten people? In most cases the person who said something is not as important as the fact that someone did. Let go and enjoy the story.

Glossary

'thn – the name given to the sentient solid state life forms. Example: Br'thn is the name of the primary 'thn character as you can see from the titles.

APES – a group of hackers who try and disrupt the plans of pears. Got their name because a broadcast once describing them as acting like apes. Short for “American Pear Exterminator Service”. Generally the group is against violence, preferring to do their work unnoticed till the trap is sprung. An APE symbol evolved to let people know they were there and responsible. Usually cheered by the saps even when it makes their lives harder.

Armstrong Unit – an underground city set up by our paranoid government to act as a sort of warehouse of knowledge in the event of a total war, collapse of civilization or plague. These units would “hatch” when the danger had passed. Of course, who gets to decide who resides there and what knowledge is to be shared can get sticky. Does anyone actually believe these things don't already exist?

Fluidic – bags of mostly water. Biological life forms as we understand it. See solidic.

Level – sometimes this is in reference to psiotic ability, see TK [two isolated groups are unlikely to come up with the same vocabulary term for a new experience]. Later this will be in reference to the level of technological understanding a culture has obtained or the level of tech a particular device is. Level 0 would be the most primitive “animal” tool use. Level 2 an agricultural society, Level 3 roughly equivalent to the tech a normal person might experience in the 19th century and so on. We are currently at about level 5. Higher levels combine psiotic tech along with conventional.

Pear – a rich person, a parasite, because they don't work themselves, but reap the labor of others, mainly the saps. Called specifically a “pear” because the only good pear is one hanging in/on a tree. A common enough fate for a pear going into a saps area alone. See saps.

Pod – a self contained virtual reality environment. How training simulations are done and movies can be experienced if one has enough credits.

Psiotic – western name given to the Chinese energy called Chi.

Saps – short for “severe acute poverty syndrome” and generally used as a derogatory term by the saps themselves. See pear.

Solidic – solid state life forms, such as the 'thn.

TK – starts out meaning telekinetic, one of the psiotic abilities, the ability to move objects with one's mind. Later this evolves into a scale, the TK scale. The Fluidics are limited to TK9, whereas the solidics can progress to TK12. This scale is different for different species and will be spelled out where necessary. The TK scale is logarithmic. Each whole number is approximately a ten fold increase. Actually closer to pi squared, but that would be picking nits. No one can achieve TK13 without causing a great deal of trouble. In the human experience an abbreviation is used for the abilities at each TK level.

Of course there are many other terms, but context will generally give you the meaning easy enough.