

ETERNAL QUESTIONS

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On Heroes and Daimones

Great Insight #6:
Dream Trance: Evolution

I awoke at 5 AM thinking, "What a clever dream." It was September 18, 2016, and this was a BIG dream, one with several parts clearly remembered. I was in an art class at an unknown college. I could see other students as shadowy figures walking around the room. No details. The teacher had made an assignment for an individual project—to create something in clay. No specific direction, but there was a deadline. The deadline was fast approaching, and I had done nothing. Then, barely a minute before the deadline was up, I quickly sketched a picture on a pad of paper.

I don't know how I got the idea; it just came to me in a rush. With rapid strokes, I sketched a human head, a clay bust mounted on a sculpture pedestal. The bust in my sketch was mostly finished, but more work was needed. I deliberately left it unfinished. Suddenly, the quick sketch turned into a large white room with a floor, no walls, and on the floor around the pedestal were toy animals in plastic, cloth, all kinds of material but none in clay, only the human bust was made of clay.

All these other figures, these other animals were all finished, whole, even polished. There were hundreds of them, and the animals they symbolically

represented in real life had all been here for a long time, even millions of years before humans, such as the dragonfly that was already perfected as a species back in the age of the dinosaurs. All of them had reached the peak of their evolution long ago, while the newest among them in this room, the human being of unfinished clay was still evolving. Who are we? What are human beings?

And, with these images and thoughts deeply embedded, I awoke. I wanted to get up immediately because I wanted to meditate on the dream, perhaps to return to it. I'm almost never in a hurry to meditate; I just do it as part of my daily routine without actually looking forward to it. But I felt different when I awoke. Today, I awoke with the impression that I had come into possession of a great truth, and this great truth was literally, physically heavy. The question that came to me as I was awaking, the *who are we* question, weighted me down. My head and shoulders felt heavy. I was stooped. This was real. This was really happening.

I went through my usual Sunday morning meditations, including making tea, gonging, et cetera, right up to the chanting of "*Naturam Venerans*." But when I began chanting, I realized that not only did my body feel abnormal my voice was really—weird. It broke so much I couldn't make and hold a steady tone. Gravelly. It's difficult to describe. It didn't sound like my voice at all; but, it wasn't too bad after I stopped fighting it. I can only describe it as gravel trying to sing. Singing gravel. With determination I was able to finish the chant.

It was about a half hour later, 5:30 AM, when I actually started meditating, but the dream was still fresh in my consciousness when I began. I immediately went into deep meditation. Then, more gradually, I became immobilized in trance. But nothing happened. I didn't hear voices or see images while I was in this trance. Only darkness frozen in time. There were no words in my mind and no movement in my body for nearly *two hours!* I could think if I wanted to, but I didn't want to, I could move if I wanted to, but I didn't want to. For two hours I sat like a stone—unthinking, unmoving.

Slowly, I opened my eyes and looked at my watch. It was 7:20. I let my eyes return to their slitted position and slowly made the effort to ease out of the trance. It took about 10 minutes. By 7:30 AM the heavy weight that came with the trance was lifted, and I felt completely normal—but puzzled. What was *that* all about? There were times when it seemed similar to Gravitas Ananda. In fact, it was Gravitas Ananda, except there was no orientation to the Dark Side of the God Polarity. [This is a reference to a previous Great Insight.] There was really no orientation at all, just blank without feeling, neither positive nor negative.

But, I liked it, and I had no interest in leaving it while I was there. It felt good and right. The last time I had a similar trance, or any unusual meditation experience at all, was "Gravitas Ananda" on January 28, 2014, but that was more

than 2 1/2 years earlier. There was definitely a sludge-like quality to the experience, but it was not attracting me to the Dark Side, or any side. Frankly, for more than 2 1/2 years I had what could be called very poor quality meditation experiences. No Bliss Ananda ever, and deep meditation only rarely.

When I returned from the trance and gave my usual thank-yous to the iconic images in my sacred space, I had a really strong reaction to one image, my personal daimon, the Oversoul, and almost immediately and effortlessly dropped back down into trance. I consciously, deliberately came out of it after a few minutes, and a powerful thought came into my mind: "The daimon is the key."

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I've painted myself into a corner and have no way out. Everything I have on the daimon of classical times is obscure, vague, or uncertain. The scholars dissecting the concept are in complete disagreement and appear to rely on personal prejudice to find their tentative answers. It's difficult to know with certainty who or what can be believed about daimones—from the one that followed Socrates around to the many Posidonius, a strong believer and communicator with them, saw flying in the air.¹

The Romans, ever practical, didn't have interest in such flights of fancy and focused on creating the greatest ethical philosophy in human history. While doing so, the metaphysical investigations of the Greek Stoics were left behind and undeveloped. And, with the wholesale destruction of nearly all of the books written by the early Greek Stoics, first by the Christians and later by the Muslims, we only have scholars to pick over the remaining bits and pieces.

Thus, I must resort to my own daimon to explain my beliefs. Later. This is a *deus ex machina* solution, but at least the concept of the "god from the machine" originated in ancient Greek literature—if that's any consolation. In September of 2016, when I experienced Insight #6 above, all I knew about the Daimon was that Socrates had one and Diogenes Laertius wrote this brief passage about them: "Also they [Stoics] hold that there are daemons who are in sympathy with mankind and watch over human affairs. They believe too in heroes, that is, the souls of the righteous that have survived their bodies."²

1 The source for this claim about Posidonius is from the website, "Greatest Greeks ": <https://greatestgreeks.wordpress.com/2016/06/22/poseidonius/> But there was no footnote, so I wrote to the author, Telemachus Odysseides, and he offered two: "The first is Konstantinos Plevris' *Greek Philosophers*, page 107 and the other is Diamantis Koutoulas' *Ancient Greek Religion and Mathematics*, pages 150-151, both of whom state that communication between man and these entities (souls) is possible. Both cite Posidonius' work Περὶ Ἡρώων καὶ Δαιμόνων (On Heroes and Daemons) as the original source."

2 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, VII, 151 (Harvard, 1991)

“Will the *Real* Daimon of Socrates Please Stand Up”

After an exhausting review of many possible ways contemporary scholars conceive of Socrates' daimon, I am left with these findings: Stephano Jedrkiewicz concludes it was only a literary device. He says, “This multiplicity of authorial strategies may confirm that the representation of the Socratic *daimonion* (whatever the “real” thing might have been) could be considered within the Socratic literary tradition as an especially appealing and handy narrative device, apt for adding some bright touch to Socrates' portrayed personality.”³

Gregory Vlastos, Princeton professor of philosophy and preeminent scholar of ancient philosophy “characterized Socrates’ daimonion as “the gravest of the difficulties we all have to face in our effort to make sense of Socrates.”⁴

But before we go on, we need to distinguish between the terms, daimon, daimonion, and daemon, pronounced “demon.” Daimon and daemon are the same phenomenon. Daemon is the Latin translation of the Greek word, daimon. When the Christians came onto the scene in Rome they pronounced it as we do in English, demon. But they added a new description and definition. This pagan demon was a separate entity that was *only* evil, and it was a servant of Satan that tempts people to sin and join them in Hell.⁵ This idea of the demon is the one believed today by virtually everyone in the world except the few Stoics who even bother learning about this entity. The original daimones of classical Greece “who are in sympathy with mankind and watch over human affairs” were twisted into the embodiment of evil by the early Christians.

The difference between daimon and daimonion is more difficult to understand, and after reading various attempts by various scholars to explain the difference, the only explanation I found that made sense to me was one offered by John Uebersax, a biostatistician who reads Greek philosophy as a side interest. He said, “While the two words are etymologically related, *daimonion* conveys a more general sense than that associated with *daimones*, which are entities. The difference is analogous to the distinction we might in English make between “the spiritual” and a “spirit.”⁶

3 Stephano Jedrkiewicz, “How to Represent Socrates' Daimonion,” from *Socrates and the Socratic Dialogue*, edited Stavru and Moore (Brill, 2018. p. 317)

4 John Bussanich, “Socrates and Religious Experience,” Part One, Section II, 12, *A Companion to Socrates*, Edited by Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar (Blackwell Publishing, 2006)

5 Fuller, Hailey Marie, “From Daimon to Demon: The Evolution of the Demon from Antiquity to Early Christianity” (2013). UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones. 1826.

6 <https://www.john-uebersax.com/plato/myths/socrates.htm#:~:text=While%20the%20two%20words%20are,%22%20and%20a%20%22spirit.%22>

And we go on. John Bussanich, in his "Socrates' Religious Experiences," states that scholars are divided on the question of whether Socrates daimon was an external, supernatural source or an internal idealization of his reasoning faculty. Here is his analysis of who believes what:⁷

- German philosophy professor R. Van Riel: the daimon is a "purely human" part of Socrates' personality.
- University of Chicago Prof. Martha Nussbaum: Socrates' daimonion is called divine because human reason is divine.
- Berkeley Prof. A.A. Long: Socrates' daimonion was a separate identity.
- University of North Carolina Professor C.D. Reeve agrees with A.A. Long.

I'm sure we both wish I were done, but I'm not. A favorite standby on Stoic theological matters, Prof. Keimpe Algra, had little to say about daimones in his *Cambridge Companion to the Stoics* article. He found the subject illusive but suggested Chrysippus and Posidonius may have believed in them as separate entities, demigods who were not always perfect and there may have had some bad daimones among the good.⁸ Three years later in another publication Algra gets into the subject of daimones with greater enthusiasm.

Algra suggests that the Heraclitus fr. B 119, "a man's character/habitus is his [daimon],"⁹ points away from the daimon as a separate identity. "From Heraclitus onward this notion of an internal god, or of the divinity of (the rational part of) the soul became wide-spread among philosophers."¹⁰ Algra goes on to identify three kinds of [daimones] that various Stoics believed: (1) The "philosophical" [daimon] that was internal as part of his divine reason; (2) The external [daimon] was of non-human origins ; and, (3) The [daimones] who are surviving human souls.¹¹ These were called "heroes" by some Stoics (see DL above), and represented those who were favored by the gods for their righteousness or extraordinary courage and bravery.

Please Read This Important Important Note: According to Algra, the notion that the Stoics believed there were evil daimones of the non-human sort who were used by the gods as messengers or servants was a notion that came from a single source, Plutarch, the neoplatonist. Algra concludes that the evidence is so

⁷ John Bussanich, "Socrates' Religious Experiences," *The Bloomsbury Companion to Socrates*, edited by John Bussanich and Nicholas D. Smith (Bloomsbury Academic, London, 2013). This appears to be a second version of the same article printed 7 years earlier (above).

⁸ Keimpe Algra, "Stoic Theology," *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, edited by Inwood (Cambridge, 2008, pp. 171-2, n. 50)

⁹ Algra uses the term "demon," which I find offensive and misleading to Stoic sensibilities, so I avoid using it

¹⁰ Keimpe Algra, "Stoics on souls and demons: Reconstructing Stoic demonology," in *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity* (Brill, 2011, p. 363)

¹¹ Ibid, p. 364

fragmentary as to make it impossible to be certain.¹²

In this subject uncertainty is abounding, but Algra lists and clearly identifies several Greek Stoic beliefs about daimones—from Chrysippus to Posidonius. The following descriptions are given in direct quotes:¹³

1. [Daimones] are psychic entities.
2. Our own embodied rational soul can be described as an internal [daimon].
3. External [daimones] in the strict sense are non-human in origin; they are separated parts of the divine aetherial pneuma.
4. There are also human disembodied souls, surviving after death and roaming through the air as psychic entities. Strictly speaking they are called heroes, but we may perhaps assume that they were considered to be a subspecies of the genus [‘daimones’]. Probably these heroes are able to perform the same functions as [daimones] in the proper sense.
5. Good external [daimones] or heroes are guardians and overseers experiencing sympatheia with man. They may also play a role in divination.
6. There are also bad external demons, though probably not in the sense of punishing spirits working for God. We may assume, although positive evidence is lacking, that they have not been created bad, but that their badness, as in the case of humans, is due to their own choice, accompanied by a relaxation of their pneumatic tonos.

Deus ex Machina

Zeus has presented to each person a daimon as guardian and committed his safekeeping to this trustee, who does not sleep and cannot be misled. To what better and more careful guardian could he have committed us? So when you have shut your doors and darkened your room, remember never to say that you are alone, because you are not. God is within and your own daimon is within.

Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.14.11-14

Note the last sentence: “God is within and your own daimon is within.” Epictetus, who was actually Greek, *may* have had the standard point of view of the Roman Stoics, but I don't read it that way. He doesn't say that God who is your daimon is within, he says, God is within *and* your own daimon is within. Using the word, “and” makes it appear that God and the daimon are two separate things. But, of course, there will be those who disagree. Perhaps because they *need* to.

In general, there appears to be a consensus about the Roman Stoics: they lean into the side of those who believed the daimon was the divinity within, our portion of God that is our inner sage and advisor of the only true good—the cardinal

¹²Ibid., p. 384

¹³Ibid., p. 385

virtues. But there is more. Not all Stoics believed the same, therefore we can only follow Stoic tradition and choose the position we prefer or find most likely—for whatever reason. As we have seen, Posidonius believed in the separate identity of the daimon, may have communicated with them, and was somehow able to see that “the air was full of them.”¹⁴

Plutarch (born 46 ce, Chaeronea, Boeotia [Greece]—died after 119 ce) was a philosopher, historian, biographer, essayist, and priest at the Temple of Apollo in Delphi. He also gave the best descriptions we have of daimones. Consider this passage:

“Athletes who have given up training because of age are not altogether abandoned by the spirit of competitiveness and concern for the body; they enjoy seeing others training, they encourage them and run beside them. [593E] So those who have retired from the contests of life and, because of the excellence of their soul, have become *daimones*, do not altogether spurn the affairs, arguments, and enthusiasms of this world, but feel well-disposed to those in training for the same goal, and encourage and urge them on in their quest for virtue, when they see that their striving has brought them within touching distance of their hopes.”¹⁵

In a more obscure passage, he uses Plato's characters around Socrates to present his understanding of daimon communication. Simmias, one of these characters, is talking about the actual method of contact of a daimon with its human soul. He speaks of a daimon “shining” into a soul. The scholar Schröder believes is a metaphor indicating contact by pure thought, which is superior to the *sound* of a voice. Simmias says further, “This purely spiritual influencing of the human mind by a superior one may seem quite plausible, considering how the body, too, is steered by the thoughts of the human mind.”¹⁶

The next character Plutarch brings into the discussion is the Pythagorean, Theanor. We already know that metempsychosis (reincarnation) was a belief of the Pythagoreans. There is no historical reason to believe Plato became a Pythagorean,¹⁷ but Plutarch next brings in this remarkable comment by Theanor: “*Daimones* are souls which have passed through the whole cycle of rebirths and become free. These souls feel sympathy with others who have not yet attained the same goal but are very near to it. The souls who have made progress but are

14 See footnote #1.

15 *On the daimonion of Socrates: Human liberation, divine guidance and philosophy*, edited by Heinz-Günther Nesselrath (Mohr Siebeck Publishing—open access, 2010)

16 Stephan Schröder, “Plutarch on oracles and divine inspiration,” *On the daimonion of Socrates* (Mohr Siebeck GmbH and Co. KG, 2010) p. 163.

17 [https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pythagoreanism/#:~:text=\(3\)%20Many%20other%20sixth%2D,Pythagoreans%2C%20with%20no%20historical%20justification.](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pythagoreanism/#:~:text=(3)%20Many%20other%20sixth%2D,Pythagoreans%2C%20with%20no%20historical%20justification.)

still incarnate and still have to make the last steps, are supported by the *daimones* in question with the permission of the god.”¹⁸

But this is what I believe. Long before I read of Plutarch's descriptions I learned about *daimones* from two direct sources. You already know that I have studied, practiced, and experienced shamanic journeys. You may remember that I am a student of the shamanic method created by the renowned anthropologist, Michael Harner. His instructions were based upon a lifetime of research into the most universal and most ancient spiritual practices of humanity. I have confidence in his method by my results. With experience, the journey to the spirit world takes on deeper dimensions. The following are true journeys.

Genghis Khan

17 NOV 17: Friday: 0625-0648: UW—5:

Genghis was there in the garden. There were other figures moving about, but they ignored us. I had been thinking about the Greek concept of the *daimon* and my *Daimon*. These are the questions I asked:

“Do *daimones* exist? If so, what are they, and do they have an objective existence apart from us? And, are there both good and bad *daimones* as Diogenes Laertius said?”¹⁹

“Yes, they exist,” Genghis said. Then he explained how it all goes back to evolution again.

“With experience comes increased understanding. As understanding increases life forms evolve. With evolution comes increased awareness, an expanding consciousness that includes more than the single individual self. We ascend the evolutionary levels of increasing consciousness until we become God, all consciousness. Thus, there is a decreasing sense of individuality as we evolve, because we become more like God until we become God. A *daimon* is the existence of a larger number of life forms becoming God—all life. This is how something as vast and impersonal can at the same time be a personal god—the *Daimon*.

“No, there are no evil *daimones*. Such a thing is impossible. The *daimon* is a being of greatness, because it can exist as multiple life forms with increasing consciousness. So, the higher we go in awareness the fewer in number or *separate* entities we are. The *daimon* is both separate from you and is your consciousness—your consciousness and that of an eagle in the sky and a whale in the sea. It communicates its thoughts on occasion and it protects you, really itself, when it's not time for you to be sick, injured, or die. It allows suicide and terrorism when that is the lesson being learned. That could be the source of the Greek idea that there are both good and bad *daimones*....

18 Stephan Schröder, “Plutarch on oracles and divine inspiration,” *On the daimonion of Socrates* (Mohr Siebeck GmbH and Co. KG, 2010) p. 165.

19 DL, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* vol. II, VII. 150-151

“Ultimately our awareness field increases until it becomes the awareness of God. It's as if all is darkness, then a small light shines on a tiny segment of primitive life. The light becomes larger, stronger, and more and more of life is seen as consciousness and awareness grow and grow. We are never really separate from anything, only we think we are. And, so it is with daimones. We are part of that older and greater conscious awareness that began at the beginning and continues until we are no longer a part, but the Whole.”

^^^

Kwafumi

Although I tried *not* to have any expectations, I more or less expected Black Eagle, the old American Indian man of my Lower World experiences, to be my daimon. I was honestly surprised to see what I saw. (This is a key element of what makes a true journey a *true* journey.) It was six months since I spoke with Genghis Khan about daimones, and I believed it was time for me to become acquainted with my daimon, my teacher and guardian. That was when I met Kwafumi.

10 MAY 18: Thursday: 0615-0630: Step One—STM:

INTENT: Step Two: officially meet my daimon.

REALIZATION: I didn't go very deeply into trance, and just about the time I concluded I would need to try again tomorrow, I saw her—the back of her from the shoulders up. I only saw a faint outline—a bald head, necklaces, native African clothing. I wanted her to turn around so I could see her better. She did. She was wearing a traditional, presumably African dress, reddish with some pattern, silver colored, flat necklaces, and she was completely shaved bald. She was very attractive, maybe in her twenties or thirty, tall and slender, maybe of the Masai tribe.

“Are you my daimon?”

“Yes. I am as I appeared in one of my incarnations.”

With her answer, she told me 1) that she existed, and 2) that she had an existence, a personal history apart from my own, although that may be an assumption. In fact, there's no reason why she couldn't be me in a former life, except that it didn't feel like it.

“What is your name?”

I was pleased to see that she actually talked to me, lips moving, not just telepathic words. But, getting her name out was not easy or immediate. She started with “Kwa...mumble, then Kwa...mumble, then fumi. Kwafumi.”

I don't know why the name didn't just roll off her tongue, but it could be my unfamiliarity with African names. Until she appeared as my daimon, I did not expect to see an African or a woman. In fact, I didn't have any expectation other than the possibility it would be Black Eagle, an old Native American. I had

prepared my mind to accept it in any way, shape or form—human or nonhuman. I didn't know if I would see anything at all. I don't remember Socrates ever spoke of *seeing* his daimon, only of *hearing* its instruction or cautions.

My daimon, Kwafumi, appeared in the environment of an African village with round mud huts and thatched roofs. I have no idea if Masai lived this way or if I simply saw what I remembered of a photo of an African village I may have seen in an old "National Geographic" magazine. Anyway, as I drummed my way back to Middle World and Kwafumi receded from view, she swooped down and picked up a small child, a toddler, cradling it in her right arm.

11 MAY 18: Friday: 0600-0630: SW: Kwafumi:

INTENT: To return to my Daimon as Kwafumi and ask about proofs—something, anything— that makes the journeying experience real.

REALIZATION: I first saw the African village, then I saw Kwafumi in considerable detail, much more than I usually do of inhabitants of my journeys. I saw her shaved head and face in profile. Very clear. There was a lazy river by the village, and we went there to talk.

"How can I know if you are real," I asked?

"Proofs and evidence are material world conditions. The Spirit World (SW) is another dimension of reality. The human mind is part of Middle World (MW) and only operates in that dimension. But, the more time you spend in SW the better you will understand it—or intuit how it works."

"What about the reality of the journey I'm seeing right this moment—the river flowing by on my left, mountains in the distance, you sitting on a rock in front and slightly above me?"

"I inspire the idea, and your memory and imagination create the "reality" of the journey. How could it be otherwise? We can only perceive what we know from our material world consciousness. This has always been so for shamans of every time and place."

The thought came to mind that if the shamans of the past could have imagined the construction of formidable weapons superior to their enemies, then tribal worlds would never have been destroyed by every culture that had slightly better weapons and wanted their land or gold. It appears that shamans are restricted to their time and place precisely because their MW minds were limited not only by their construction but by their cultural paradigm. Memory and imagination are limited by MW consciousness.

14 MAY 18: Monday: 0634-0704: SW: Kwafumi:

INTENT: Learn more about the relationship of the Daimon and the person to whom they are connected.

REALIZATION: I met Kwafumi in some pasture land near the same village. She was minding a herd of cattle grazing nearby. We sat face-to-face under some scrubby umbrella-shaped tree, and there was a small campfire between us. She poked at the fire with a stick while we talked.

First I asked about calling her a Daimon. Was that correct; or was she a Spirit Guide or a Guardian Angel? She said it didn't matter, that different cultures had different names for it, just as they have different names and attributes for their gods. These differences are the product of the many ways we humans learn about and explain the world to each other.

"Are you a separate entity?"

"Yes."

"Then, how are we connected."

"Through the subconscious mind." She went on to explain that after many lives as human souls, the external world becomes less interesting, less attractive, and the internal world becomes more so. This is the direction of the individual's evolution as a soul. At some point, the individual no longer wishes to incarnate in MW, and they become the Daimon or Spirit Guide. The Daimon's final connection to corporeality, the physical plane, MW, is through the lives of those they "guide." They can see and know the human's life lesson and time here in this dimension.

"Is there a difference between a Daimon and an Oversoul?"

"The Daimon is a highly evolved soul who has become spirit but with a connection to the physical plane through those who are still living here. The Oversoul is a term that can be used to describe the soul of the human at birth. Before birth we have a knowledge of our origins and connection to the divine, which we never entirely lose.

"All this hierarchy works like evolution, both in the physical and soul of life. Everything evolves to the One, because it is the One. When you no longer need or want to incarnate into MW, you still have a thread connecting your soul to the old, and that thread is observing, guiding, and guarding souls that remain. I am no longer incarnating, but I'm still connected to the material world through you."

When I left, I looked back and could see her not as a beautiful young woman, but as an wrinkled, wizened old woman near the end of her life. She was in the same place before the little fire, poking at the embers with a stick.

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The next issue of Eternal Questions will be the last—at least for a while. In the middle of April, I will be sending issue #15, "The Right to Believe." That issue will state my beliefs and why I believe them. It will be a summary of everything we have learned. It will not be a complete summary, because that would be unnecessarily exhausting for everyone. It will be just enough. I believe it is the right and privilege of everyone, especially Stoics, to design and know their own metaphysical vision of God and the Soul at this time in our eternity. And in the next and final issue I will present mine.

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QUOTE OF THE DAY. . . .

“What could be greater than a king? A hero. A king fights only for his own nation; a hero fights for everyone.”

Queen Atlanna, mother of Aquaman

For the Readers

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