

The two men were hunched over a strange looking device as they sat in the gloom of the musty, ramshackle old house. It was a crystal ball-like structure, and it hummed slightly and gave off a luminescent glow that reflected off of their faces. It appeared to be a monitor of some sort, and the conversation of the two men indicated that it was some type of electronic ticker tape machine.

They were very interested in the gains or losses of some kind of "index", but it was not a typical stock exchange measure. They discussed good and bad investments, but seemed to be on opposite sides of the fence with respect to their philosophy and strategy. As they watched the index fluctuate, one of them would show great joy when it went up, while the other showed his displeasure. It was not obvious, though, that they were talking about the financial realm.

What became clear was that in this isolated old house out in the middle of nowhere, something very important was going on. World-shaping events were being considered as these two men struggled to bring the index under their control. Each was trying to reap the most benefits for themselves.

It was referred to as the G/E index, possibly because the names of the two men were Gordon and Evan. It's purpose became more clear as a loss of 109 was linked to a terrible storm off the coast of Honduras, while a gain of 113 was caused by the outpouring of aid to that country in response to the disaster. But something with much more impact was just about to happen.

A kaleidoscope of swirling color indicated a major news update. Terrorists had in a few short minutes taken down the World Trade Center twin towers in New York City. Thousands of people were feared dead. The Pentagon had also been viciously attacked and was in flames. Evan was thrilled as he watched the index dip sharply as an entire nation began to slip into shock.

Gordon did not show much emotion when this disaster occurred. He seemed to be biding his time, not yet committing himself too much. It was as if he has confidence in this market. Evan looked at him smugly and urged him to sell immediately and at least get his principal back. Of course Evan was hoping to profit greatly from all of this. But Gordon just waited with an enigmatic smile on his face.

Incredibly, the index began to come back up! Evan could only wonder how it was possible. Gordon laughed and showed him that people come together in times of great disaster. Goodness flows out where there was none before; where people didn't have time for each other they are now devoting their days to helping the injured and searching for the lost. There is great concern shown for one's fellow man. As the two men watch, the index crept back up to a point higher than it was before. Evan simply couldn't believe his eyes. He kept his hope alive and waited for the next time. But Gordon knew that Evan would never win.

Gordon reminded Evan that there had also been a transient drop in the index to a dangerously low level when his son was killed. It was down for three days before it rose again. With the strength of what his son had built, it continues to climb. It has grown so much now that the dip has been totally overshadowed.

The two men leaned back from the monitor and began to discuss things on a much larger scale. There was a lot of discussion about what worlds to "invest" in. Gordon considered where he might send his son to get a real return on his investment; it could be a nation or even individual people which satisfied his requirements. Evan was just as concerned about his own plans. It was clear that the battle would continue on for a long time.