

*The HMPD will impact the world; for better or worse.*

## **Essence**

by David Patch

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## **Dedication**

To my friend and editor, Kelly Lynne Schaub,  
your wisdom and enthusiasm encourage me greatly, thank you  
so much for both.

## **Chapter 7**

Collin's Apple Vari-phone beeped, waking him out of a sound sleep. He fumbled around in the dark, knocking over the lamp next to his bed. "Shit. Where's—" He groped around on the floor in the darkness. "Ah...here it is." He gripped his phone. Next he felt for the lamp, and then he slowly pulled it up, feeling for the cord behind it. When he was sure he had it propped up on the drawer near his bed, he clicked on its switch. "Finally some light. Now let's see what fruit my surveillance bore." Speaking to the phone, he gave it a government code that unlocked access to a secret scanning feature that came standard on all government-issued Apple Vari-phones. "Well, well, our lady makes her entrance." The phone screen displayed Madilyn Hunt's hidden phone call to the Landon Grey Medical center. Because Collin's phone used a special code and channel, it could detect the signal sent by Hunt's equipment. "I'll let them play out the scene for me. I won't reveal myself unless I need to."

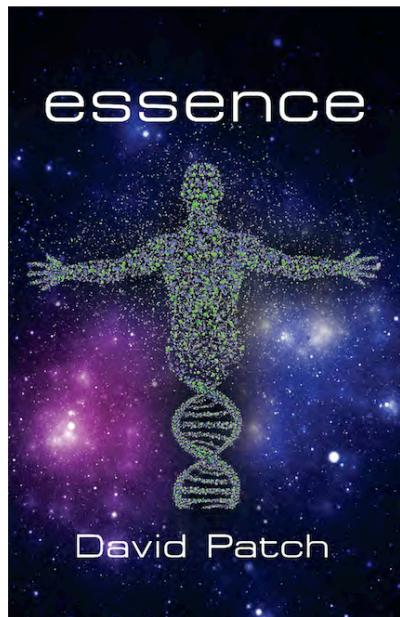
## **Chapter 10**

Russell Burk stood at the window watching some children play across the street. He smiled and then lurched back. “Whoa. Those damned drugs haven’t gotten outta my system yet. Need to...lie down.” Russell gently lay back on the bed, letting himself drift off to sleep. He was still exhausted.

A figure quietly entered the room.. The person let down the blinds, and silently approached Russell’s bed.

His world became a dark tomb. Russell struggled to breathe; his air drained; he was being suffocated. He tried to fight, but was too weak. Russell’s hand went limp on the right side of the bed.

The mysterious figure moved on.



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