

RESURRECTION

by

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FICTION

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The face I hover over is one of a dying man; ashen, drawn, lips of blue pursed open in the slow labor of last breaths. Loved ones gather about. Some are holding the hands and feet of the near corpse, some mutter prayers or cry quietly, others withdraw and avert their eyes. I love them all for their devotion and their care and wish there is some way I can comfort them in this time of grief, but there is nothing I can do, for the face of the dying man is mine.

A murmur rises as my slow respirations cease. Finally, the death rattle escapes my relaxing body and those gathered turn to hold one another. Some sob, some comfort, some reflect. I am part of the reflecting group, though of course a bit detached.

It had been a satisfying life; not perfect by any means, but satisfying. The immediate thing, though, is what to do now? Fortunately, I am not surprised or terrified by my current situation. My death had been assured at the moment of my birth and the idea of it had scared me until the advent of one of life's mixed blessings; a violent accident which so terrified me that I had momentarily found myself, well....outside! Oh, God!!

I was outside my body, but not alone; no, definitely not alone. It was like being wrapped up in the strong, loving arms of a confident parent, cooing softly into my ear, "No matter what happens, you're fine. Nothing is going to harm you. Now, go back, go back...."

Well, I did go back, but I was not the same, for from then on I knew, and I lost my fear of death. Sure, the dying part was no fun, but I knew it was just the body that was dying, not me. What I didn't know, was what next?

That question led me on a great adventure through religion, philosophy, science and myth. Ism's and ology's and their history became my passion. Belief and thought were important, but I was looking for knowledge and experience. In the end, there was much I came to know and a great deal of amazing experience. However, the important things I have as I drift over my dead self and those I love are my beliefs and my thoughts. Now, I hope, it is time to know about them as well.

Many people have a "bucket list" of things they plan to do before they die. I may be one of the few who has a list for afterwards. The A-number one item for me is a tour of the universe. I want to see the planets, the stars, the galaxies, the nebulae and to experience the isolation of deep space. As I think of this, I seem to rise to the ceiling and then through it past the rooftops, soaring above the city, then the country, the oceans and the continents. Soon, I see the Earth, the moon, the planets and the Sun and I have a sudden urge to fly through the Sun. I turn to face it and accelerate like a shot towards its surface, feeling the tug of the solar wind as I dive into the light

I have cut short my tour by going into the Light. I had not planned to go into the Light till after I finished my list, but now I'm here. Maybe next time. Maybe, if there is a next time.

Without a body, perception is a funny thing. This perception is primarily about "being." Now, "being" in the Light is not really being in a place. It is just "being", or existing with awareness. It is not like being in a great and limitless void or in a tiny and crushing confinement. Actually, it is kind of like both at the same time; like being immersed in a limitless sea of molten rock without the heat. In fact, there is no physical sensation really, but there is emotion. I

believed that the Light would be a place of comfort; of welcome; of healing. But it is not!! It is a place of utter isolation, loneliness and despair! I feel so empty...Oh God!!!!

Suddenly, I perceive a presence, like being wrapped up in the strong, loving arms of a confident parent, cooing softly into my ear, "No matter what happens, you're fine. Nothing is going to harm you." The Light goes slowly dark and I sleep.

Sounds of bubbling water and birds singing awaken me. I am lying in soft, fragrant grass under a huge tree, heavy laden with luscious looking fruit of a kind I am not familiar with. A cool breeze caresses my face and I feel marvelously relaxed, yet full of youthful energy.

"All right, young hero, get off your dead butt and on your dying feet. We've got work to do!"

I sit bolt upright in astonishment! The smiling face of my best friend and mentor gazes at me from a stone bench bathed in warm sunlight. A bamboo fishing rod in his right hand waves lazily as a red and white bobber wiggles in an eddy of the nearby stream.

"Gary.... What are you doing here?!"

"Fishin' ...and waiting for you! Glad you took your time, though. There is never any rush here. Anyway, where did you think I'd go?" Gary glared at me with a twinkle in his eyes.

"Ha! Well, yea.... Umm, I'm really sorry about"

"Nothing to be sorry about! You know how much I hate funerals. Well, I arranged it so there wasn't one and the State picked up the tab for the box and the furnace. Worked perfect! Besides, the important thing was, you got my message...even if I did have to send it twice. Humph!"

I chuckled at that. In his later years, Gary had lived alone and a bit reclusively. A few weeks after his body was found in bed, I was awakened by a terrible constricting feeling in my chest and a shortness of breath. I sat up and noticed the time was 1:13AM. I thought I might be having a heart attack, but the feeling quickly passed. I got up to go the bathroom and felt fine, so I went back to bed. The next night, the same thing happened and when I saw the time was again 1:13AM, I suddenly thought, “This is Gary telling me he died in bed of a heart attack at 1:13AM.” With that, the sensation passed immediately. Message received!

“Gary, it is great to see you and fantastic to know you got your wish on your funeral! And,” I grinned, “ I really do appreciate the message, even if it did lack subtlety.”

“Yea, it’s great to see you too,” Gary laughed. “Besides, the funeral thing was your fault anyway. You’re the one who taught me that we create our own future, remember?”

“If you say so, Gary,” I chuckled. “I always thought I was just helping you remember something you already knew.”

“Well, whatever, but that is a great segue into why we’re here. It’s my turn to help you remember. So just rest easy there and close your eyes. Good. Go to the beginning of your last lifetime. Good! Now, go through it, experiencing what is happening as you go along.....”

What a privilege it is to review a lifetime in detail! What a sobering experience it can be. From the moment of my transmutation into the fetus of my recently expired body to this last exteriorization, I relive everything; all the joys and sorrows, victories and defeats, loves and heartbreaks. Everything! As a bonus, though, not only do I experience these things from my own viewpoint, but I also experience the joys and sorrows, victories and defeats, loves and

heartbreaks that I caused for others, from their viewpoint. I was so unaware of the impact I had, both good and evil! The evil times are like a descent into Hell, but the good times...well, they're heavenly.

As I open my eyes by the stream, I feel only great thankfulness for the privilege of living this life just past and great humility for my lack of understanding of the power freely given to me that I have wasted. Tears of joy and sorrow mingle hotly on my cheeks.

Gary sits next to me now, a serious but kindly look on his face. The fishing pole is gone. "So," he sighs, "how did it go?"

"How...how long has it been?" I stammer. It seemed like, well...a lifetime!

"Geez!! You're beginning to worry me! We are outside of time here, remember? The only moment here is NOW! I had you close your eyes NOW! I put my rod away NOW! You opened your eyes NOW! NOW, answer the question!"

Stifling a laugh, I blurt out, "It was wonderful and ...and terrible. I did a lot of good, but there was so much more I could have done, so much I could have done differently."

"Ah, yes. I understand."

As I stare up at the tree, I ask, "What kind of fruit is that?"

Gary's mouth drops open in astonishment. "What?! You just complete the most incredible experience available to a being and you're hungry?! I don't believe you. You're nuts, crazy, insane!"

"Yea, I know. Finally, though, I think I understand," I am grinning as I respond.

"Really?! What do you understand?"

“I understand that we are arguing in the Garden of Eden, looking up at the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. I understand that we are living beings created by the breath of life (called by some the Holy Spirit) in the likeness of our Creator. That Creator is a being of infinite power and infinite love, and, as offspring, so are we. Our natural home is the Light, a void populated by an awareness of being aware and nothing else; a lonely existence in a confining infinity; a home, not for things, but for the creators of things. The Garden was brought forth by The Creator to give us a place to share our existence thru our creations.

“I understand, since we are imbued with the likeness of The Creator, we received many gifts including free will, the ability to create and to destroy, and a fateful choice; to live forever in the tranquility of the Garden, or to eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and become like The Creator.

“I understand this second choice carried a grave consequence, for in gaining the knowledge of good and evil, we would surely die. Nevertheless, we chose the fruit and at the instant of that choice the Big Bang that spawned our physical universe occurred. In many ways it resembled Eden; there were the heavens and the earth, plants and animals, and people; there was light, love and life, and all the things we think of as good. But there was also darkness, hatred and death, and all the things we think of as evil. And there was space-time. Space enough to be or not to be and time enough to live and to die. Of course, this too was our choice.

“I understand that none of this was a surprise, for it is part of the plan for The Creator to reside once again with us in the Garden. Yet the plan is not without risk, for as we strive to obtain the knowledge of good and evil, we would need to die and be born again and again, both

of the water of our earthly mother's womb, and of the breath of life, the Holy Spirit that is each of us. For that which is flesh is flesh and that which is spirit is spirit.

"I understand that as we live and die in the physical universe, the temptation is to become more and more flesh and less and less spirit. But a spirit who disavows his spirituality would be separated from the Garden; separated from The Creator, for the Garden must be entered through the spirit. I understand that this would become the only unforgivable sin, to blaspheme the Holy Spirit in each of us, not because it would not be forgiven, but because it could not, for the free will of each of us is a gift which will not be taken back.

"How am I doing?"

"Uhhh...very interesting! Anything else?"

"Yea. I understand that to counteract this risk, a single Commandment was given; that we should love The Creator with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength, and love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Really, it is all the same thing. Exercising love, an attribute of The Creator and of ourselves as the Holy Spirit, would remind us who we really are and keep open the way to the Garden. Not loving would move us to believing we are merely flesh and unworthy, or even unaware, of the Garden. We could end up stuck in the Light, unable to share ourselves or our creations and forever separated from The Creator. Aware of being aware. Alone, forever."

"Whew....sounds like Hell to me."

"Yea, me too."

"What about the Son?"

“I understand that we are all Sons, Daughters, children of The Creator, but we have forgotten. So, from time to time, The Creator comes into this world to remind us to have faith in ourselves and to show us the miracles we can accomplish.

“I understand that it is time for us to pick up that responsibility. The Creator should not have to die again.”

“Mmm... Yes, so what next?”

“Toss me one of those fruits, will you?”

“You don’t have to, you know,” Gary says, as he reaches for a low hanging fruit. “You can create your own future.”

“Yea. I seem to remember that,” I grinned. “The future I want is to help others remember. It’s time I started acting like a good Son. After all, faith without works is dead. See you around.”

I take a bite of the fruit and hand it back to Gary. It’s not like an apple at all! Very juicy and bittersweet. It’s making me drowsy....just before I sleep, I hear Gary murmur, “Ah, hell!” Looking wistfully at the laughing stream, he too takes a bite.

I am awakened in pitch black and I am being crushed! I see the light far ahead, then my sight is blurred by the pressure. The pain is unbearable and I am afraid. Oh, there is the light again...its closer, but the pressure is pushing me towards unconsciousness.....I feel the urge to breath, but I can’tsuddenly the light is blinding and I am being jerked upside down and struck on my backside.....

“.....AHHHHHHHHIIIIIIIMMMMMMMBBBBBAAAAAACCCCKKKKKK!!!!”

The Beginning