

The Veil of Aging

by Jason Page

A short story

I woke up sweating, sheets soaked from my back and my hands shaking. Tomorrow we are celebrating my birthday and I am getting married to Evelon. Today is six months after my conception in this world of 574 years; I may be the most fortunate to not have died by fate alone. Call me a late bloomer. most folks get married before they reach 200 years. Well, I am meek in my years; most do not reach the apex of their wisdom until 800 years, if only they make it that long.

She is just 100 years younger. physically no different than the photograph she shared with me at 26 years. I do not think I have changed much in appearance either.

Well my palms are still sweating and I am feeling a fever creep up upon me. I do not recall my dream. What ever it was it put a shock to my system. Though maybe it was something late the prior night.

I ate an apple and some lentils; and also some dried figs and nuts before bed.

It is interesting how the plants that bear fruit stay vital until they drop and then they perish if not consumed soon enough. I was explaining to Evelon how at one time humans and the animal kingdom shared a similar fate. It had been written then that a curse was imposed on humans for their destructive nature not to live past 120 years. Despite the curses best efforts, some thousands of years later humans detonated an atomic bomb and not much more was known between then and when the Earth eventually became scorched in nuclear fire and fallout. Evelon asked me "how many Earths are there?" I told her "there were seven in this galaxy at the time and now there is eight." She responded "you are all sweaty and shaking. What did you dream?"

At that moment the dream flashed before me: I revisited the story my grandfather told me though in his living perception of the events that lead to his rescue.

"Darling, my grandfather was rescued from the 7th Earth before it became engulfed in flames. The humans that remained suited themselves deep inside the Earth and that they would have no chances of being rescued. Their world economy had collapsed, then the world's leaders attempt to falsify unjust wars thinking that such weapon sales would revive the economy of their union, that the Earth and all life on the surface was destroyed."

I saw human life from alpha to omega on Earth number 7 in a moment's flash. Not something I was able to fully capture however the sentiment of it has changed me. I can now understand what went wrong.

Evelon shrugged and then gave me a hug. She told me that she felt a shiver down her spine as indication what I spoke to her was more than absorbed. It was felt as truth and somehow she connected and that sentiment was transmutable. I know this because she was able to see the dream in more detail.

She expressed: "I can see your grandfather. He was only about 32 years. It was the folks from a galaxy in Andromeda that rescued him. Particularly one was named Gabriel. He fought with his ability to communicate, yet many were so deceived that their mental senses could not be revived and instead sought shelter down below the Earth's crust. Your grandfather however saw beyond the veil of the mass deception. There was a lot going on at the time. People were busy with their lives and accepted information from a deceptive authority. There was a plague that soon later was silenced; everyone was led to look the other way while unexplained deaths increased among all age groups. Attention soon drew to nuclear war over tensions of not just resources but more importantly over a need perceived among the few to cull the world's population to a controllable number.

I started getting flash backs of the dream as she told me more. I was feeling much better. I had portaled in my grandfather for just a moment, and the impression of a thousand years.

My grandfather was an earlier settler for Earth number 8, among many others who chose to wait. It was difficult work to build our new civilization though we had help. Especially help to eat from what they called the tree of life. Now I remember my grandpa telling me more about this process called aging. He had aged, too though not much while at the cusp of 32. Aging was the process where the cell growth exceeded by cell death in a steady but slow process, where eventually a critical life support organ becomes too weak to support the rest of the body. It was considered then death by natural causes rather than fate or curse.

Well tomorrow is another chapter into the future. Till death do us all part.