



The Golden Orb

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The Golden Orb descended towards the earth. It was smaller than a tennis ball and so came almost unnoticed. It shone in the sun, and its intricate markings glinted as well. It was so small, yet held within it a power that was beyond anything in the world, and it had been here many times before.

There was a voice; deep, low, gentle and true, all about it. It was as if The Orb had been cast out of a mouth, like words. It seemed that the orb *was* words and sounds and syllables, and yet was also very much beyond them. Its essence was powerful and seemed to be all that was past, what now is, and what was to come.

A young lady had spotted The Orb as it had descended, and she had raced over to see it. She heard the words that lingered like an aura around it. She couldn't easily understand the words though, as they were in an old earth tongue. Some words she managed to gather, but did not really understand what all the words were actually saying. If she had, she may have run as fast as she could in the other direction.

As even though the words were beautiful, and a calling to a higher beauty, The Orb also seemed to say, *I come to destroy what is.*

Essence

The Orb hovered above the ground, and as the girl stepped nearer the words changed. It seemed she had crossed a threshold, and as she went to move another step closer she found herself unable to. There was nothing holding her back, she was simply *not able* to move closer. So she stood as close as she could, and strained to hear the words of the old language.

The words '*pure*' and '*ancient*' came clearly to her from amongst the jumble of old words and she understood that a certain purity was required to move closer to The Orb. She felt its ancientness, and somehow knew it was indestructible. It was as if part of her was unconsciously interacting with The Orb as well. It all felt very strange to her, but also quite wonderful.

The young lady's name was Bianca. She had been a bit of a tomboy, but was definitely a young lady. She didn't care for labels anyway. To her she was who she was, and it didn't matter what box someone decided to put her in. She was quite high minded and was the type of person who saw people as they were. Bianca believed very much in basic justice and understanding, especially in how she treated people. Suffice is to say that Bianca was an idealist who did not see why people could not just, get on.

She was still listening to the old words when The Orb began to vibrate and resonate. The resonations built and built, in pitch and in frequency. Bianca felt something was up, and was not hanging around to find out what. She ran for the nearest rise. She ran hard, but just before she reached it, a blast threw her to the ground. When she hit the ground she realised that the ground itself was shaking. Then she felt something physically drawing her back towards it. She tried to hold on, but it was no use. She was drawn backward on her belly. She then looked around and saw a gaping hole in the earth behind her. The Orb was gone and she was being dragged, in pulses, towards a great deep hole.

BIANCA WAS FALLING FAST. As she fell deeper she summoned her courage. Courage is the great power of the human creature that takes us from where we are to where we can be, and from who we are to whom we can be.

She saw The Orb below her, blasting again and again as it went. It was like the blasts were mighty breaths out, followed by little breaths in. She would cover her face with her arms and curl up to protect herself with each blast.

The Orb was increasing its distance from her as she fell, and was now far below her. The compressed air from the blasts slowed her descent. They were like sounds of a trumpet, and there was no dust. It was like they simply changed the nature of things at the atomic level, yet deeper. The Orb blasted its way to the very foundations of the earth.

Her ears were ringing, but strangely the words around The Orb became clearer. It was a strange fact about the nature of The Orb, that the more dire one's predicament the clearer became the words that danced around it. Bianca listened intently as we tend to in times of trouble, and realised a picture in her mind. There was a great waterfall that seemed to touch the sky, and the waters that flowed were fresh and clean, and endless. Bianca knew that the orb could reinvigorate anything. There was a figure behind the waterfall. It seemed to be a woman preparing herself for something. That was all she got, before she hit the floor.

Bianca lay there, badly winded, but not injured. The blasts of air had slowed her decent, and she was very thankful that her mind was on the waterfall when she had landed. She had landed on the huge mushroom that shattered under the force of her landing. She was thankful it had provided the required cushioning, but Bianca couldn't stand mushrooms. She was wincing at the mushroom dust all over her, more than the pain she was in.

ELAN JARD DUSTED HIMSELF OFF. He coughed out the dust he had inhaled, and looked at the destruction around him. He was a strong man who had seen many seasons, yet tears came to his eyes as he stood there stoically. This was not a man who cried for his own predicament. This was a man powerless before the destruction, and in pain from the loss of life about him. The Dark Eyes had come. They had destroyed all about them, and enslaved those that were left. Elan had fought hard, but it had been to no avail. The Dark Eyes had taken the children. The women had fallen to the darkness, so they and the children had been herded away. In time, when the children were old enough they too would be taken to the darkness.

He was tired to his bones from the battles, and he was injured. He wondered why he was spared as he cast his eyes about, but also knew he had leave quickly. He grabbed the

reigns of his mount and jumped on. Pain coursed all through his body as he mounted. He looked about and yelled with resolve and faith at the dark eyes, "I will be back. I will have my children returned. Rest assured of that dark eyes!" With that he rode off, knowing that he was alone, and that he had to leave to heal and prepare again for war. His long hair and his fur skins flowed in the wind as he spurred on his mount to safety.

BIANCA WAS UNSURE WHAT TO DO. She watched The Orb as it now moved off into a natural tunnel. It glowed and its golden light lit the tunnel. The word '*justice*' and the phrase '*...see with thine own eyes...*' came to her. They were clear and crisp, and she realised that she had to follow The Orb. She got to her feet and followed the shafts of light. So many questions danced in her mind as she followed the light. What was this thing that seemed at once, so destructive and so beautiful? Where was she going? How would she get back to the surface?

Despite all these questions and what she had just been through, she felt no fear. She picked up her pace to follow The Orb, as the thoughts in her mind went to what she would see with her own eyes. The essence of those words seemed to buoy her, and in any case The Orb had given her no choice but to follow.

ELAN JARD WOKE IN A STRUCTURE BUILT OF SKINS AND POLES. His wounds had been cared for and he lay there remembering his powerlessness. He remembered his children and it made him sick to his stomach knowing that they were in the hands of the dark eyes. He tried to lift himself up, but pain shooting from all quarters laid him back down with a great wince.

"Ahhh! You are awake. We were not hopeful of your recovery, but we acted in hope anyway, young Jard."

"Thank you. Of what people are you?"

"We are of all peoples, young Jard."

"*All peoples?*"

“The Dark Eyes have cast many from their homelands. This is a place of learning; an encampment of unity.”

“So you mass together to fight the Dark Eyes.”

“There can be no war against the Dark Eyes. This is a new time and the sword is no longer of use.”

“We *must fight*,” pronounced Elan, calmly and strongly.

“Of what use has the sword been. Haven’t you seen enough death?”

“Yes, I have seen enough death and misery. But we cannot fight without the sword.”

“Who has defeated the Dark Eyes with the sword,” challenged the old man. “They must be brought to the New Essence.”

“The New Essence?”

“It was given us some one and a half centuries ago, as The Messenger knew of the coming darkness. It is our only hope against the Dark Eyes. It teaches another way to defeat the darkness.”

“What way?”

“The way of new knowledge,” answered the old man thoughtfully. “The Essence must be taken to the villages and cities as it is the only remedy that can hold back the darkness taking those who are subject to the dark eyes.”

“Then we need take it too them. Teach me, and I will go with it. I do not fear the Dark Eyes.”

“The Jard are warriors. You only know this way. But there are other ways, and there are new ways of The Essence too. First you have to open your eyes to what you carry. You have to learn deeply a new way. Many will not want to know about The New Essence, and you cannot shove it down their throats.”

“Why would someone not want freedom? That is ridiculous.”

“Ridiculous to you, but those who allowed the darkness in did so of their own free will, and young Jard, it will only be with that same free will that they will take The New Essence.”

“Are you saying the darkness is chosen?”

“Yes.”

“But I know *good* people that are captive and lost. They would not have fallen to this darkness.”

“Be assured that they did. As sad as that might make you, you must face it. Fear, want or pride is what took them, or simply ignorance. Some may even believe it is just to be a dark eye. It is best to remember those who died in service to save others from the darkness. They are truly the people of The New Essence, as are you, young Jard.”

“I don’t know any essence. I only know many are gone and many are lost. My aim is to save the children.”

Tiredness was overtaking Elan.

“What are you called?”

“Elan. Elan Jard,” said Elan, with pride.

“Rest, young Elan. You have to heal, and in time, much to learn.”

GROTH FELL ON HIS HEAD. This was not new for Groth, as his head was much too large for his very thin frame. His head was like a bowling ball on a broomstick body, with legs and arms even thinner.

He just lay there once again resigned to the reality of his over-sized brain.

“Hi Groth,” said Bianca.

“Hi Bianca,” said Groth, rubbing his sore green forehead.

“You need to build up your muscles, Groth,” she offered.

“I need to shrink my head,” he said, as he very carefully got back onto his feet, and rebalanced his head so his body could carry it.

Bianca chuckled, “Yes, you guys do think too much down here.”

“What else have we got to do down here. I mean the endless dark, well except for that new thing.”

Bianca was stunned at what Groth had called The Orb. These beings were so intelligent yet did not seem to be able to see things. They had lived here in the dark so long they could not really see that well.

“*It’s amazing, Groth. It is not a thing.*”

“A thing is a thing is a thing. That’s what we say.”

“Yes I have heard that. Over and over, *and over* again,” said Bianca, with wide eyes.

“Well, no need to be testy. We have very precious ears, you know. By the way, have you heard some of the words? We haven’t been told anything yet. The think tank is *still* trying to decipher and distil the old language of The Orb.”

“Well. Are you sure you want me to share some of the words? You know what happened last time I shared some of its words with you. You just lost it.”

“Having such a large brain makes things very complex. New stuff can hurt a bit you know.”

“Are you sure?” asked Bianca again, with a funny look on her face.

“Yep! *Sure am,*” said Groth, with all the power of his large brain at the ready.

“Well. The last words I heard were ‘*...ancient eternity of my essence...*’”

Groth immediately bent over double, put the top of his head on the ground, and winced in pain. His feet were still firmly planted on the ground though. Bianca just smiled, thinking it was a little bit better than last time.

Groth turned his head a little, and looked at her upside down and sideways from his new position, with a deep frown; as if to say...*Why are you smiling?!*

Bianca giggled.

BEABLE FLOTTOM DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. He was used to being the one who amazed others. The vibrant apparition that had suddenly appeared before him stunned him. It was a woman in a wedding dress, standing under an archway of light. He reached out to touch the bride, but his hand went through her.

Beable was a magician and a dancer, which were very acceptable professions in his world. He would have loved to have something like this in his act. At that thought he was struck down. It was like a great force struck him from high and the side and drove his head towards the dirt roadway. He was stunned and seeing stars, when some words came to him. Despite the pain he listened to the words, and he just cried. He did not cry from the pain, but in joy and wonderment.

Beable was a happy soul, and delighted at making others feel lighter and happier. To him, his profession was not *really* magic or dance, but the joy they could give to others. Dance set his audience a little freer, and magic allowed them to be amazed.

When the words had come to an end he sat himself up. He felt a strong sense of freedom and astonishment. Not since he was a child had he felt this way. He looked for the apparition, but it had gone. He looked around with a bemused face, as if to say to himself, *"Was all that real?"*

He picked himself up and dusted off his clothes. He had always seen life as magical, but this experience had taken him to a far greater appreciation. The words eluded his memory, but the experience remained. It was as if a great relieving wave of love and understanding had washed through his soul.

Love and Boxes

Groth rose once more from his rather inelegant stance. Again he helped his head regain its position with his hands. His arms quivered with the weight though this time.

“These words are heavy in my head. I don’t know if my frame can hold them,” he complained. “I think I might have to give the words a rest for a while at least.”

“I still think you should strengthen your arms and legs, and your other muscles,” offered Bianca.

“That thought never occurred to me,” said Groth.

“I just suggested it just before,” said Bianca, with that look that says, are you deaf.

“Oh well at that time, I disregarded. We do that you know. Saves room in the old cortex. Maybe I can get back in my box for a while and think on it a little. Are you getting in yours?”

“I don’t have a box Groth.”

“*Everyone* has a box. Don’t *play* with me like that. It can unsteady me, you know.”

“I don’t have a box, Groth,” stated Bianca, with a little concern, as she watched Groth’s head seemingly slip from his shoulders and slide back to the ground once more. His body was required to follow, slowing his head’s descent, while his feet remained, once again, firmly planted.

“You know, you have to stop this, Bianca. It’s just cruel,” he said; which would seem reasonable for someone in Groth’s position.

“I’m not trying to be cruel, Groth. I am just saying things.”

“Oh *it’s me* is it? You *know* we have boxes. Why haven’t you mentioned it before?”

“Well you guys would go off into you boxes, so I would wait until you came out again.”

“Boxes give *stability*, you know, and they are *very* practical.”

“I don’t like boxes. They are cold and disconnected, and couldn’t stand being shut up and constricted in one. They aren’t even colourful.”

“Everybody needs a box. You will soon learn that, young lady.”

He was very serious, but Bianca just wondered how Groth could imagine anyone could take him seriously in the position his head and body were now in.

ELAN JARD RODE OUT OF THE ENCAMPMENT AT FULL PACE. The gates had never been closed in this encampment, and that had made him uneasy from the start. He had heard of a new army that was massing in the south to fight the dark eyes, and he had simply prepared to leave. The old man had seen him preparing, and when he had regarded Elan and his preparations thoughtfully, Elan had said, “I cannot sit idly by old man. I am a warrior.”

The old man had not answered. He nodded his head in respect for Elan’s right to choose his own path. The old man knew it would be of no use to try to stop him, and he had some inkling that this young Jard would be returned safely.

Elan rode hard for two days. He came upon the field when the battle was at its height and he entered it with the confidence and circumspection of a seasoned warrior. He found many dark eyes, and he took their life with no remorse. The battle lasted well into the frozen night.

All that was sure that night was that many died, and that the dark eyes kept coming. Their ways of war were strange to Elan. There were always more of them, and their invention seemed limitless. In this battle Elan finally began to see the futility of the sword. He realised in the numbness of battle the uselessness of any strength he held. While strong and confident, in the end, he was once again proven powerless.

Six of them now ran hard for safety. More had initially retreated, but The Dark Eyes were relentless and came after them, cutting them down.

“*This way, Jard!*” called a Lafod, as five men jumped to safety in what seemed like a frozen pond. Elan watched them jump through. He had heard that the Lafod knew of deeper places, and he knew he would be safe if he followed.

The others looked at him from safety and willed him to jump, but he could not follow. Once in those places beyond, one could not return. Elan just stood there in the rocky frozen wastes knowing he had to find his children, and save the children of others. It was love that did not let him jump. It was thus duty that refused him relief.

Exhausted, cold, alone, and outnumbered he would most probably be outrun and slaughtered by the dark eyes that hounded them, but safety was not an option for him. He turned from the pond, and as he watched the onrushing foe he heard the sound of a horse at full gallop. He strained his eyes and saw his mount coming towards him. A warrior knows his mount. He called to it. It adjusted its bearing, and came to him. He thanked his God as he jumped on, and spurred his mount away from the barking foe.

BEABLE FLOTTAM JUMPED OUT OF THE BOX. There were squeals of delight from children and *ahhhs* from adults. The older young ones laughed. Beable loved this part, where amazement and joy took hold of the faces of his audience, making eyes dance and mouths curl up in smiles. The applause then began. Beable bowed, did a little dance, and bowed again, much to the delight of those who watched.

THE OLD MAN WATCHED ELAN RIDE INTO THE COMPOUND. Elan saw him and rode over to him.

“Teach me your ways, old man. I am ready.”

“It would be my honour to share The Essence, Elan. Love is a greater force, you know. It binds and orders all things. Sinew, muscle, and steel have never been enough when viewed truly. The light of unity *will* rise as *inevitably* is as the sun does on a new day.”

“I am a warrior. I do not know if it is possible for me to learn these ways, but it seems I must for the children.”

“You have already been walking the way of love and unity, Elan. Your intent has most certainly been of both these. The nature of your path is simply changing.”

“I cannot see that old man.”

“We will have you out of your box soon, young Jard, and you will see with your own eyes, not with the eyes you have been given by your tribe.”

Elan knew not to argue. His pride would be of no use to him now. He loved his people and had been proud of their ways; a pride of love though, not of ego. He loved the simplicity and humour of his culture. He loved its music, and he knew that its stories told to each generation honoured the ears they caressed. But despite all this, Elan could see now that nothing could be the same. He knew that when he found the children and freed them, he would be teaching them some of the old ways and some of this new way. He was not sure how that would be, but he surely knew it would be.

IN FRONT OF BEABLE WAS THE BRIDE. She had her back to him and was walking away from him. Beable knew this experience was not in the material world. She placed each step gently, slowly, and surely. Each step was one of reverence, as she walked toward the village. Beable followed Her respectfully, and at a distance. She took him to a well and then was no longer there. He looked down the well.

He came awake saying words out loud that were not his ‘***...I knew my love for thee, therefore I created thee...***’ The people had crowded about him, and seemed to be in some awe. He was on his back on the village mound where he had been performing his act, and realised he had lost consciousness.

“What manner of wisdom is this?” asked one man.

“Yes! What manner?” added a woman.

“What do you mean?” asked Beable, unaware of what had happened.

“When yeh eyes be closed yeh talked words of beauty. Words we have never heard,” explained an old woman.

“Is that where yeh get yeh magic from?” asked an old man, looking very wise, but showing he was plainly a fool, and some older youth laughed at his way. The old man scowled at them, and then turned his gaze back to Beable, with that look of a person who was definitely onto something.

Beable just looked confused.

“Beable!” called a voice from behind the crowd.

Beable’s heart skipped a beat, as he knew it was her. He had known her from his many visits to this village. She fell down on her knees beside him to see if he was in need of care, and his feelings of love grew. He looked into her face and his heart pounded more. Then Beable Flotham faded from consciousness.

The words once again began to flow from Beable’s unconscious mouth ‘*...therefore I created thee...*’

Light and Knower's

The Orb pulsed brightly and it stunned Bianca. she was semi-conscious when she heard loudly and clearly ‘...*My light is in Thee. Get thou from it thy radiance...*’ She was suddenly aware that there were others in the room with her. She began to rise to her feet to see who they were, but as the flash of light faded, the words and the others faded away too. It was like she had been taken somewhere else. She somehow felt it was a deeper place and yet it was right here somehow. That sense was at once strange and comforting to her.

Just then the think tank rose out of their boxes. “So we have been thinking, and we are sure this Orb is changing the balance of things. It seems to be reorienting the foundations of life.” With that the think tank as a whole melted back into their boxes to digest the reality of such a huge process. Bianca respected their ability immensely, but they seemed intent that they should *know*. If any aspect of something escaped them they just could not handle it.

She wanted them to realise that they would only know in bits, and that was okay somehow. She walked up to one of the boxes and tapped on it. A bleary eyed head rose up under the lid.

“I have a concept that may aid you.”

“*Oh please no!* It’s already much too much.”

ELAN JARD SAT AT THE FIRE, WITH THOSE CHOSEN TO SIT THERE. They were inside the large meeting tent that was open to the stars in the middle. The old man stood and prayed some words that their meeting may be successful and guided. Elan was comfortable with that, as he had always respected The Great Spirit.

“For those of you who have come newly to this council, this is not an arena of self, it is an arena of service. It is a place of courtesy, honesty, passion and spirit. It is not a place of posturing, or power struggles; it is a place of offering, not control. If you cannot be forthright and true, yet free from your ego, then this is not the place for you. We are given the duty to serve the will of The Essence and the wellbeing of those we serve in the encampment. Understand you are as any other person in the encampment is. You hold no authority alone,

only the Council itself as a whole has authority, and even its authority is in that it may serve. If it ceases to serve, it will lose its authority as a matter of course,” explained the old man.

“We have been voted to lead. We are stronger and more capable. The others have made that clear in putting us here. I for one intend to lead,” said one, with clear intent to stamp his place among the group.

“You are a fool to think so,” said Elan, plainly.

The man was taken aback, just as many others around the fire were relieved.

“I am knowledgeable in affairs of governance, and I have led my people. Leaders are required,” answered the man, confidently.

“And who are you that you should lead?”

“I am simply stronger. It has ever been, and is ever, that way.”

“I could end you in an instant.”

“I am not talking of physical strength. The strength of mind is far greater.”

“I know of such power, and have seen it in some, but it is often nothing but posturing and lies. I led my people in honour, and now I know my powerlessness. I see that a new way has come, so if I am to serve those in the encampment then I must *learn*. I see that we all must come to new challenges with humility and hope. We must learn together.”

The old man looked to the other man who had spoken. “Only an inner selflessness, and a clear understanding that all in the encampment are equals, can give the level of strength that will be required of us.”

“So this is to be a council *of equals*?” ventured one lady.

“More than that; love must bind us. Only it can. That is why ego can never have place in this council. For the ego separates us, and love and humility joins us,” answered the old man.

“But we need speak plainly if we are to be of any use,” ventured another.

“Yes. Humility does not ask us to be silent fools. Courage and frankness are essential if we are to serve.”

The proud man who first spoke was named Ormion. He looked at the old man and over to Elan, and said, “So we are to be strong for others by being humble in ourselves.”

Tears rolled from the old man’s eyes. His prayers it seemed were being answered. They were learning and he knew he would learn much too.

Ormion was indeed learning, but sadly of how he might position himself better, still very clear in the knowledge of his obvious superiority.

BEABLE WAS SPEECHLESS. He sat there across from her like a frightened child. It was not like him. He loved the crowd and to play the fool. He was simply smitten and had no idea what to say.

“Beable, unless you say something I will have to leave,” said Rayya, plainly.

Beable very much liked her plain spoken way, but all he had was, “It is a lovely day.”

“*Oh Beable*, show some courage.”

“I am an entertainer, not a warrior.”

“Courage is speaking what is in your heart and mind plainly, Beable. Even if it is not what others want to hear. How otherwise can anything be real and true and strong?”

‘*...My love is in thee, know it, that thou mayest find Me near to thee...*’ came out of Beable’s mouth. He was again unconscious.

“HOW DO WE BEGIN TO FREE THOSE TAKEN BY THE DARK EYES? We can’t know who is with us. It is like no battle before. There is no clear way,” finished Elan, in frustration.

“The New Essence was heard to say, ‘*...within thee I placed the essence of My light...*’ and The Messenger said that it cannot be forgotten. The words of The New Essence, and a little less, our own, will remind them of the light that exists within all of them,” offered the old man.

“This work will be risky,” offered Ormion.

“Yes. Those who volunteer to go out will live through the grace of The Great Spirit. But what oppression is ever lifted without sacrifice?” explained the old man.

“It is not easy getting used to powerlessness,” admitted Elan.

“Yes we are powerless, young Jard, but you are discovering the truth and it is *powerful indeed*. When it comes to you it will be far more powerful than the sword.”

“THE THINK TANK IS SO SMART, but they seem to struggle with accepting that they don’t *know*. No one can just know. It takes *time*, and testing, and it’s a joy to discover,” commented Bianca.

Groth had been very tense while Bianca was speaking, and there was fear in his eyes.

“What’s the matter Groth?”

“Well you just throw out big questions and it scares me. I was just expecting another one.”

“Oh Groth!”

“Oh Bianca!”

Bianca smiled, and Groth, well his face did not change.

“It is just that my poor body can’t carry the weight of some things you say.”

“You know Groth, you don’t have to hold it all up, and maybe if your arms and legs were stronger it wouldn’t be such a problem.”

“Actually, I was just beginning to think that they had outstayed their evolutionary use.”

“What?! Then you couldn’t move.”

“So what, it is always dark down here, and all we do is bump into things.”

“What about the *ewwww* mushrooms?” then asked Bianca, making it clear what she thought about mushrooms. “You have to pick them to survive.”

“Oh. *Of course*, any chance you have to whinge about the mushrooms.”

“We are getting off the point. How can we build up you arms and legs?”

“I won’t fit in my box if I do that!”

“Just make a bigger box.”

“That makes sense. You see Bianca you *do* have the ability to be very practical.”

“It isn’t practical to spend most of your life in a box, Groth. I was just trying to make it more of a process for you.”

“What’s a process?”

“Oh Groth, this is going to be a journey.”

“A journey?! My legs won’t handle a journey.”

Bianca just started giggling again.

BEABLE SPOKE UP, “What do I know? I don’t know. All I can do is wait to see what is happening.”

“You must try to focus on the words, and bring them out,” said the old man, who still had that wise look on his face, while still entertaining a few youth that gathered there.

“I think reflection on the words we have heard is probably of more use. What is the use of more words if we don’t take heed of what has come, or what will come. We need to act on them, or they are just words,” offered Rayya.

Her words made Beable love her more.

“I don’t know,” said the old fool, in a tone that made out he did know.

“No, you *don’t* know,” said a cheeky youth, and most laughed except for a few who did not enjoy the belittling of anyone.

“We don’t know. We can only allow it to come. Someone should write the words down, because I am unconscious when they come,” offered Beable.

“Now we are getting somewhere,” said Rayya

‘*...Be thou content with Me...*’ escaped from Beable’s mouth, as his body slumped in the chair. Once on the ground more words came, ‘*...For none but Me can ever suffice thee...*’

Nobility and Judgement

‘...Noble I have created thee, yet thou hast abased thyself. Rise unto that for which thou wast created...’ read the old man, just as a burnt through log fell into the coals releasing embers upward, and giving the words more power.

All those around the fire reflected in their own way on the words they heard. None spoke up. They simply stared into the fire trusting that the words remembered would guard them from the evil that awaited them. They could feel the mercilessness of the Dark Eyes, and the courage that these words would give them.

The old man had explained that the words of the New Essence had to become part of them, as it was the only thing that could strengthen them, and the only thing that could awaken those taken. Hearts could be changed by these words, not minds. Minds were limited and were only able to aid the process of an understanding heart. The heart comes before, and *inspires*, courage; the *knowing* of the mind only comes after the actions of courage. The old man had given them to understand that the nobility of men is in the understanding heart.

“How long must we sit around this campfire? We need to move to action,” called Ormion.

Some looked up, and Ormion took note. Others did not move their stare from the fire. Elan Jard did, after a time, regard Ormion, and then returned his gaze to the fire. There were questions in his eyes, and Ormion saw them clearly.

“Well, out with it, Jard. Now is as good a time as any,” challenged Ormion.

“You are a child and a manipulator, Ormion. We see you,” said Elan, plainly.

“No. We must do this together or it cannot be done,” stated the old man.

“Yes, Elan. We are in this together. Attacking me is of no use to any of us,” feigned Ormion.

“A snake is a snake, Ormion, no matter how many times it sheds its skin.”

“Elan! Please. We need to see only the good in others, if we are to succeed,” begged the old man.

“Evil lives in the darkness, old man. While we are to be united to succeed, we must not close our eyes to the light in doing so.”

“You do not understand the way of the New Essence, young Jard.”

“I see clearly...”

“Oh please spare us your pride, Elan,” added Ormion, smoothly.

Elan turned to look at the manipulator. He regarded him dispassionately, and left the fire at an easy gait. Others followed him.

Ormion regarded the old man, and then walked off. He was quite proud of his effort. Not only had he left the droning of the old man behind, he had set doubt in the mind of some about Elan.

BEABLE STOOD UP. He was a little unsteady, but Rayya was there to support him. He had a ridiculous look of love on his face, and as Rayya saw it she dropped him. Beable could not believe it. Lying there half dazed on the ground he could not understand why she had dropped him. He lifted his head just enough to see her disappear into a grove of trees by the stream.

“That’s women, for yer,” said that same old man; the one who liked to seem wise. He had become very intent on Beable, and was fast becoming the old man’s life purpose.

Beable sat up, thinking how bad he was at this love stuff. He had never ventured so close to another person before. He had stood up in front of so many, and entertained so many people in his wanderings, yet he was always at a distance; always moving on. He had never faced such a challenge before. He was not a hard man, so he was a little lost at his predicament.

Just then Rayya came out of the grove of trees. Beable thought about running, but thought better of it, as he wasn’t sure whether he could run. In any case part of him needed to stay.

“Be noble, Beable. Don’t swoon over me like some love sick fool!” she shouted, and then disappeared back into the village.

“That’s women for yer,” said the old man, again, very sure of himself.

ELAN SAT BY THE STREAM. Babbling brooks soothed his mind and took from him his cares. He looked up and saw the old man walking along the bank toward him. As he came closer Elan gestured for him to sit beside him.

They sat there for a good while silently together. The old man spoke first.

“I am troubled, Elan.”

“As you must be old man.”

“The New Essence says, ‘...*How couldst thou forget thine own faults and busy thyself with the faults of others. Whoso doeth this is accursed of me...*’ I cannot accord The Word with your actions. I say that as a place to start our consultation, not as a judgement.”

“The wisdom in these words need be regarded with the eyes of wisdom and experience old man. Like a light on each unique situation. Ormion is just *beginning* his games,” explained, Elan.

“I see a man who is a little childish in his way maybe. But none of us are perfect, Elan.”

“I wish not to dwell on this, old man. I will learn the verses, and I will do my duty. You following the Essence so purely is commendable, but foolish if you are not circumscribed in your view of things. I am not judging you, old man. I am seeing. The New Essence tells us clearly that justice requires we see through our own eyes. Ormion is posturing. He seeks power.”

The old man looked down as he pondered these words.

“What has he to gain? Without unity we cannot succeed. And if we do not succeed, he can have nothing.”

“He does not understand that a unity which is not true, is not unity. He believes a seeming unity is enough. He does not see the New Essence or the nature of the darkness that we fight. He has no vision. He will continue his games and this camp will eventually become a bed for the dark eyes.”

“Please Elan, don’t say such things.”

“I have seen the intrigues of little men before. Unity cannot exist when even one seeks power, and others choose to close their eyes. You cannot ignore this, and you need to address it now. It will only grow.”

“I will seek out the answer in the Word.”

“Be swift, old man. I am sure he whispers into many ears as we speak.”

GROTH WAS NOT HAPPY; which was not strange. In fact, it seemed the norm down in this place. It was not lost on Bianca, who tried not to take anything too seriously.

“It hurts in my legs and my chest,” he complained.

“Of course it hurts. If you are going to get strong it will take effort and time.”

“How much time?” asked Groth, as he shakily rose to full height again. His legs quivered, and he supported them with his hands, as he did his second stand up.

“I don’t know Groth. I don’t know your anatomy. I can’t even be sure you will grow.”

“What! So I might be just wasting my time?!”

“Ask your heart what it thinks for a change, Groth.”

“Oh goodness me,” said Groth, in a condescending tone. “Bianca, you know the heart does not think.”

“Ask your heart if it can get stronger, and make you stronger.”

“That’s ridiculous.”

“Just ask it.”

“How?”

“Ask it silently, and just listen to what it says. Don’t think about it. Just accept the answer.”

“I am not good at, not thinking. But I will try.”

Groth shook out his arms and legs as if relaxing himself. His eyes took on a gentle look, and he smiled.

“You just smiled Groth!”

“*I did not!*” disagreed Groth, curtly, and very embarrassed.

“What was the answer?”

“It told me to trust it,” said Groth, smiling again. “It said that I can grow strong.”

“Well, there you go,” said Bianca, with a smile.

“But I still don’t *know*. I mean *really*. Do I?”

“Trust first, then act, and then you will know, Groth.”

Groth’s head hit the floor again from the weight of the words on his mind, but strangely enough, he didn’t seem to mind. Groth could feel himself growing and he liked it very much. Joy filled him and he smiled again.

Bianca stood there watching his smile, and even in his ridiculous posture she saw a noble creature.

BEABLE WAS ON HIS FEET, but he was most definitely not awake. His frame stood upon a meeting mound in a village far from Rayya’s. She had come back to him that day and made it once again clear he was not made of the right stuff. So Beable had thought it best to continue on with his life. He had joy to give. He didn’t understand why she did not see nobility in that? He did not understand how being noble was not being himself.

Beable had been doing his act when he suddenly realised his frame and his being were in different places. *He looked about him, and his being saw a strong and stoic warrior*

standing to one side of him and wished so much to be that warrior. He felt so weak and this warrior looked so strong. These words were then heard...

‘...I fear lest bereft of the melody of the dove of heaven, ye will sink back to the shades of utter loss, and, never having gazed upon the beauty of the rose, return to water and clay...’

He woke to the boos and jeers of the crowd. He walked off the mound saying to himself, “*What is happening to me?*” Beable was more than confused.

The words were beautiful; so beautiful. He knew that he had to serve them, but he had no idea how he could. He did not understand what all this meant. He knew so little, and he felt even more powerless than he did with Rayya. He then wandered to the stream that served the village he had begun his act in. He sat beside it, and mused for some time. After a while he felt the struggle making him stronger, which made him feel nobler. Maybe this is what Rayya was talking about. But it was powerlessness, not pride, which was strengthening him.

“How is powerlessness nobility?” he mused aloud.

“THE JUDGEMENT MUST BE MADE. Not for myself, but for the encampment and all we seek to do here,” finished Elan.

“They are ridiculous allegations, Elan,” stated Ormion.

“I would walk away. I would seek no place here, but the New Essence is our only hope. These games will not serve the children. I will not stand down and watch the work here come to nothing,” said Elan.

“I will not stand down, because this is all ridiculous,” stated Ormion, in retort.

There followed much in the way of various minds trying to unravel the truth, while the truth was continually hidden away. There was no answer, as sometimes there can be no answer in words.

“You must both leave the encampment,” said the old man, finally.

Elan regarded him with his brow furrowed, and his head up.

“Even more ridiculous, old man,” said Ormion, not at all expecting such an option to be aired. “We are an important part of this council.”

“A council, and an encampment, disunited is death for us. We will be weaker if you both stay. We have no choice. We will vote. Those in agreement that both men should be cast out from us, please say I.”

The I’s were heard all around, including Elan. The old man did not regard either man. He simply said, “You must leave within the hour. There will be no talking with these men by any in the encampment. It is done.”

Calamity and Providence

“MMMM,” said Beable to himself. “It is so hard to breathe in this nothing place. I have to do something.”

Beable was still a little lost in his predicament. He had risen to the first challenge, but there had been more confusion as to his path from here.

“Can’t do my act any more. Can’t go home, because I don’t even know where that is any more. Would go to Rayya’s village, but what is the point,” he said to himself, out loud.

The words had not been coming to him since he had been away from people. No experiences of other places and he had not blacked out since being alone. But he had had to stay away eventually because he had found could never finish an act without him collapsing. He had nothing against The Bride, or the words that came unbidden, he just couldn’t see the point of not being able to do his act. It had been weeks now since he decided to keep to himself.

“I would rather you hit me again than leave me in this empty place,” he called out to The Bride.

These words then came in the breeze, ‘...*The sign of love is fortitude under my decree, and patience under my trials...*’

ELAN STRUGGLED WITH THE WORDS OF THE NEW ESSENCE. He was not a man of words, but he persevered.

“You are wasting your time, Jard,” commented Ormion.

“I never invited you to my fire. You may leave at any time,” answered Elan.

Ormion had ridden out fast after Elan as he left the encampment. There was no way Ormion could survive for long on his own, and Elan could not, for mercies sake, leave him on his own. Elan was not even sure if they would even survive with his ability to live rough and fight.

“No place is safe. Not even the encampment. That old man is a fool,” sprouted Ormion.

“The encampment is protected, Ormion.”

“What!”

“It is protected,” answered Elan, plainly.

“You know, Jard, I held you in higher esteem than that. I thought you were smart.”

Elan and Ormion had come to know each other over their short time in expulsion from the encampment, and had formed a working relationship. Elan decided to explain himself another way. “In the place of great pain, we may step beyond our limited being. It is a place, a state, where we realise we are more. The dark eyed ones do not know of this reality, and they have no God to guide and protect them. They are powerless against the New Essence, even if they do not know it.”

“You spent too much time in that old man’s company, Jard.”

“When I sought manhood in my tribe, and many times over the years since, I have known pain that should have ended me. In those times I was beyond this place. We are much more, and this place is lesser than we are. It is also these times of seeming destruction that bring us the gift of greater nobility.” With that Elan went back to the words of the New Essence. He did not hear the rantings of Ormion as he read these words to himself for the third time, ‘*...My calamity is my providence, outwardly it is fire and vengeance, but inwardly it is light and mercy...*’ Elan was learning from the words and by the power of his own experiences. He was beginning to see.

GROTH JUMPED OUT HIS BOX...with a headband on. He cut a very dashing figure, for about a half a second, then his legs collapsed in pain.

“I knew this was a bad idea. I’m weaker!”

He looked around and he couldn’t see Bianca. He sure wanted to tell her what he thought of his heart *thinking*, right now.

He tried to get up, but the pain was so great, in both his arms and his legs. He just couldn't believe it. He had felt so good yesterday. He knew he had grown inside as well as outside by pushing himself. Groth was shattered. He started to weep, and then felt angry at Bianca for talking him into it. This made him weep again, and he sat there in the pool of his own tears. Yes, from his tears. You see they cried a lot, his kind. They lived in the dark, strained their minds continually, didn't exercise, and just ate mushrooms, so they were constantly depressed. Their tear ducts had naturally grown in time, over their evolution. Their eyes had actually grown smaller, so everything fitted well. Only crying seemed to relieve their pain.

Groth stayed there all day and all night. His muscles were so sore he could not move. He would have been far more comfortable in his box, but he had no choice. When he woke the next day he tried to get up again. He could not believe it, as he realised the pain was even worse. Enough is to say that the earth beneath him was getting a good watering, and becoming a mud puddle. It was a sad sight; most especially because he was so alive only a few days before.

BEABLE HEARD THE WORDS THIS TIME. They did not come out of his mouth like the words he had heard on the wind. He jumped out of his skin as he jumped to his feet. Then he just stood there looking up at the apparition before him; still wondering about, patience under trials.

“Beable, you are just a man, and as a man you have to learn. All humans are learning creatures. You must understand that there is much beyond your comprehension.”

“I get that, but you take me from what I love.”

“What use are these Words if you do not understand them? Through pain we grow and understand. Through courage we advance. Through experience we come to knowledge of the Words”

“You aren't using the Words?” Beable suddenly said, as he realised her words were normal.

“No Beable, they are not mine. They come from beyond me. They are greater than me, I am just the vehicle.”

With that The Bride was gone. Beable had not heard her words and just felt totally deflated. He sat down on the sand of the riverbank, with his knees up and his head in his hands. He felt like he was back in a game he played as a child. The player was blindfolded and spun around, and pushed from all sides, as he tried to get to the prize. Beable couldn't gain his bearings, and just felt useless and confused.

GROTH WIZZED BY BIANCA. She looked around, and could not believe it. It was only a few days ago that he had begun to exercise. He then turned around and headed back towards her.

“I was done, Bianca. I thought I would never walk again. But it was just my muscles getting stronger. It seems they need to rest a little,” explained Groth, like an excited child as he now jogged on the spot.

Bianca very much liked his head band. Groth just continued on, with an excited look on his face, “Did you know that other things are growing in the surface tunnel. They are very strange, and my eyes are struggling with the light, but wow Bianca, there is so much to discover. It seems that doing things makes your brain grow. I had best measure my head. I don't want it to grow more than my muscles.” He thought about his head size as he continued, “It's not so hard to think either. My mind is starting to fly. You know Bianca, you can learn quicker by doing things, and then thinking about it. I can't believe how I feel. I must go to the think tank. They must know about this. They will be blown away.”

With that, Groth ran off.

ELAN JARD WOKE WITH A SMILE. He got up and started to pack up the camp. Ormion woke to the noises and peered out of his tent, to check that all was safe.

“What are you doing!?” he shouted, when he saw Elan packing. “Are the Dark Eyes coming?!”

“No.”

“Then where are we going?”

“We are returning to the encampment,” answered Elan, in his plain fashion.

“Well. About time you came to your senses. We’ll only die out here; unprotected.”

“It is not that Ormion. I can unite with the ways of The Essence now, and I see why the old man walks with its wisdom so closely.”

“Nothing has changed, Jard. You know that.”

“Everything has changed Ormion,” said Elan, as he turned away and focused on the preparations.

Ormion stood there and watched Elan for a short time. He seemed a little unsure at first. The way Elan talked to him had changed. It was respectful in the nature of his speech. Ormion was not used to any respect from this man. Something had indeed changed. He thought back over their time in exile. They had worked together, even if grudgingly, and this man had not cast him aside. This meant a good deal to Ormion as he knew he could always count on this man’s integrity. Elan was suddenly no longer the enemy. Something moved inside Ormion’s chest. It was a new feeling to him, and it felt good.

BEABLE WALKED ALONG THE RIVER BANK. The walk allowed him to think more clearly. He started reflecting on what had happened to him from the start. It was very clear to him that the words were not just something on their own. They were to be given. To bear the weight of them he had to get stronger, and from what he had been through he did feel stronger. A greater realisation of what he had to do, and become, was forming.

He had finally heard The Bride’s words and realised that he needed to spend time on The Words. He also saw that effort and reflection would take him where he needed to go; now knowing that he simply needed take a step, reflect and take the next step, really helped. Right or wrong, it did not matter, because he would learn from each step. The only failure was not acting at all.

Somehow he knew he had to go to Rayya’s village first. Beyond that, he could not be sure, but knew each step would become clear in time. Beable was not a wise man, but his struggle was changing him. It felt good in his heart and his back straightened a little.

ELAN STOPPED AND DISMOUNTED IN VIEW OF THE ENCAMPMENT.

“What are you doing? Let’s go and see the old man,” said Ormion, unsure of why Elan was dismounting.

Elan silently sat down in front of his mount. He watched the guards pointing and one running into the camp. He heard the sounds of Ormion’s words, but not their meaning. They were like background noise, as he had things to share with the old man and his mind was intent only on that.

The old man raced out like an excited child. Like an old man in his run, but a child in his excitement. Elan Jard’s eyes filled with love and tears as the old man eventually slowed and came up to the two men.

“I *see* you old man,” said Elan

“What *do* you see, Elan?”

“I see that The Essence only asks us to see good, because evil is only a lack of good. I see only the good in Ormion. I am blind to all else, as light cannot be built from focus on darkness. To concentrate on darkness only brings darkness. I see I brought darkness to this encampment. I see that I cannot fight the Dark Eyes with darkness.”

Ormion looked at Elan. He was actually taken by what Elan had said.

The old man said, “And you Ormion?”

“I am here old man. Simply that. Yet this day is one like I have never experienced,” admitted Ormion, not understanding what he was feeling.

The old man proffered with his hand for the men to enter the encampment.

Elan began to walk his mount forward with Ormion, and then he turned to the old man now walking beside him. “This is about *all* of us; the struggle within *each* of us, the struggle within the encampment, and the struggle with the freeing others from the dark eyes.”

“I have learned with you Elan,” said the old man.

Ormion burst out laughing.

The two of them looked at him sadly.

“Don’t look at me like that. It’s not what you think. I don’t mock you. I just cannot believe how I am thinking. I laugh because I just do not think this way, but, my heart is with you, and it is good. I have *never* been this way.” With that Ormion cast his eyes down as they were tearing. Public displays of such weakness were always forbidden for a noble like him. He then remembered himself as a young child thinking this way, and the pain it had caused up against the anger of his father. He sighed as he saw it.

The three men walked back to the encampment as one. Such is the nature of the hearts of men.

Eyes and Vision

“MMMMM” “GGGRRRRR” “MMMMGRRRR”

Bianca made her way out into the light very cautiously as she looked around the corner. There was Groth rubbing his now grown belly, and it seemed like he was belching.

“Groth!”

“Bianca. Man this fruit is great,” and with that Groth’s eyes grew, and somehow stayed bigger.

“*Your eyes, Groth. They’re almost normal.*”

“It seems everything is growing, except my head,” said Groth, with a silly smile.

“What brought you into the light?”

“I wanted to keep running and I had already been through all the tunnels. I felt no fear strangely enough, so I ran out here. Then as I ran past the fruits they seemed to call to me. I wanted them, and when I ate one I just couldn’t stop. And I am *so* sick of mushrooms.”

“Groth, you are changing,” said Bianca.

Groth just smiled, and then closed his eyes in deep contentment as he went off to sleep.

ELAN WALKED THE CITY OF THE DARK EYES. His eyes were shaded by his hood. As he walked, he remembered the words of the old man.

He had said “We must not be cloistered. In the past we sat together in ignorance, happily agreeing with each other as this threat grew. It is time to go out.”

Elan had wondered at that. He had seen no threat growing among his people before the dark ones came, but he knew action was required. The spreading of The New Essence would never be done by monks or zealots who sat with each other in cloistered places.

A group of children now took him away from his thoughts. He slowly changed direction and followed them. In time they entered a building that looked like a central hall. He had seen a number of these halls all through this huge city. The city was amazing. Some things he had seen defied his mind's ability to comprehend. Elan watched the children enter as he walked along the side of the building and sat himself down on a bench outside one of its windows.

"The bright eyes had ruled long enough," said the man in front of the children. "It came time to strike. We took the freedom we had sought for so long. The bright eyes had lost their power, but didn't know it. They went on with their lives, seeing us, but not fearing us. We slowly grew in power. Strangely they seemed to ignore us....FOOLS!"

The children cheered and danced around the classroom.

"They will *never* regain this world. We can *see* them now. We can see how they threatened us, and told us how to be. They derided us, and saw us as flawed. They ignored new learning and we have gained ascendancy through learning. We will give you learning."

Elan was shocked. "*New learning? What was all this? Elaborate lies? I have to find out more.*"

"Do you think we that do not see you bright eyes?" said the dark eyed warrior, now standing before Elan.

Elan went to rise, but there was quickly a sword at his throat. The sword at his throat belonged to another warrior to Elan's left. There was another dark eye warrior to his right."

"You have a steady gaze, and no fear. You are not like others of your kind bright eyes," accused the warrior directly in front of him, as he looked at Elan.

Elan's gaze went to the ground, and in humility said '*...you have suffered my enemy to enter my house and have cast out my friend...*'

The eyes of the Dark Eye warrior narrowed. There seemed some interest in those dark eyes, and he said to his men, "Take him to my ward. I will be there in the eve."

Elan rose, and threw back his hood as he did. The people around him gasped to see a bright eye. As he looked at them, some cast their eyes down, while others looked at him with disgust. It was clear to Elan the disgust on those faces were ones of justice sought. Their eyes

did not show pride. Their eyes showed that they had a just right to stare at him so. He was shattered by this, and the warrior noticed.

“You seem blind to much bright eyes. We will help you open them.”

As the dark eyed warrior turned away, leaving his men to take Elan, he too had unsure eyes. The words he had heard from Elan had affected him. He would not let any see, and most definitely not this Jard.

“I TOLD THEM, AND THEY LOOKED AT ME AS IF I WAS MAD. They just went back into their boxes.”

“It’s hard to see things before others do, Groth, and you can’t make anyone see. You just have to allow time and live true to what you know. Show them by who you are and what you are doing.

“Have you heard anything from the Orb that I can take to them?”

“I heard this today, ‘...*Wherefore have you turned away from My holy and immortal wine unto evanescent water?...*’

Groth did not fall, and his eyes got bigger again. “There is obviously much more to our existence. I can take that to them and maybe they will begin to see.”

“Meditate on it yourself, Groth. There is wisdom hidden deep in these words, and maybe when you see that you can take it to them. But, mostly, I think you need to think for yourself.”

“They are the think tank. That is *their* job. They do the thinking.”

“You can too.”

“It’s their duty, and nobody makes a move down here without the think tank.”

“You did make a move, Groth. You made courageous *moves*.”

“Yes! I have big eyes,” said Groth proudly. “And my legs are strong. If they see me running and growing they will have questions, so eventually the think tank will *have to* think on it. Now, how do we get the light on down here so they can see me?”

Bianca wasn't as sure about the think tank as Groth was, but she smiled at his excitement. He was really coming alive.

BEABLE HAD WALKED TWO DAYS BACK TO THE VILLAGE. His time walking had allowed him to gather more of what his experiences had meant. His eyes were opening. He could see that it was not about his life. It was not about his struggle. He knew he had to allow others to '*...gaze upon the beauty of the rose...*' It was about what the Words could do for others, just like his singing and silliness. It was what *they gave*, and not what he seemed to lose.

Beable knew this work he was given would not be for a fool, or a for feint hearted soul. Then he realised that he may be both. He could see now that he had to be made stronger, and the challenges he had met so far were just the beginning. He could see that there would be much more struggle and hardship. But it didn't matter. He was ready to walk the road ahead of him.

He was buoyed by his thoughts and he started to sing a happy tune he knew.

"Oh Beable!"

He looked and saw Rayya coming up from the river. She had been washing and had a disgusted look on her face.

"What now!" asked Beable, strangely confident. As he stood there waiting for her response these words came out of his mouth, '*...the tongue I have designed for the mention of Me, defile it not with detraction...*'

Beable was not conscious of the words that passed his lips, but he remained standing. Rayya just looked at him. She was stunned, and Beable, still unconscious, turned away and headed toward the village.

ELAN HEARD MOVEMENT AND VOICES BEYOND THE DOOR. The guard watched Elan almost hoping he would now try something. The guard had waited the whole time with him, wishing that. The confidence in the Dark Eye warrior's eyes was almost sickening to Elan.

“I could end you in a *blink*, dark eye,” stated Elan, very gently, as he looked away to show his lack of fear. Elan had no intention of taking this man’s life; but if he decided to act, to escape, he needed this guard off balance. The warrior in Elan still lived, but it was subservient to the New Essence. He now trusted the deeper plan of destiny, and was sure he could no longer take a life.

“Ahh, Jard. You have not honoured yourself. I would have expected at least two dead and you gone by now,” said the leader, as he entered the room.

“There is no dishonour *in me*,” replied Elan, making obvious his thoughts of the warrior now before him.

The warrior smiled and dismissed the guard. The guard seemed to hesitate. “He has survived many battles. I dare say your resistance would make no difference if he decided to fight his way out of here. Go!”

Elan looked at the leader, relaxed back in his chair and asked, “So why the mercy dark eyes? I have only seen a single minded will to kill and dominate from your kind.”

“Really! Where *have you been*, Jard! What *backward* place do you come from?”

“My people are hill tribes, away to the north. You know us.”

“Yes, I do. You fought like no others. And the Lafod to your west, they were like magicians.”

“They were cowards in the end,” stated Elan.

“No Jard, *they* were smart. They knew there was no good end, and that we were something you had never known before. We have science, and it raises us far beyond your ability to defeat. You never stood a chance, but still you fought.”

“Would you give no resistance if a superior army came to your gate this day? I don’t think so,” said Elan, confidently.

“We would fight. But that is not the point, Jard. Ignorant peoples like you attacked us many times. We would grow and learn and so other tribes would fear us and join to decimate us. We would build again, and again we would be attacked. The ignorance and fear of those tribes disallowed them the advances we could share with them, and we were time and again

brought low. So we waited, and we planned. In time we went wide and hard, and we brought to bear all the science and passion we could muster, and we took this kingdom from the hands of the ignorant, *for good.*”

“I did not even know of your people. I had no malice toward you. Why destroy my life and home, when you know so well what that is like. *You* have become the fearful; the ignorant.”

The dark eye was taken aback by that view. He could see its truth, and Elan could see that he could see it.

“It is true. But I know that if we defeated our aggressors only, you would have come after us in time. People fear that which is greater.”

“You have *little* understanding of my people.”

“Your people *are here*. You have seen them. *Many* live in my ward. Most of them revile you. I saw that you did not understand why, and so I needed to educate you; to offer you a chance to use those bright eyes of yours finally.”

“What! You will educate me! You are deluded.”

“Say all you like, *Jard*. You and I know you need the answer to their disgust. That’s why you have not fought your way to freedom.”

Elan looked down, a little humbled. “Then why?”

“You held back knowledge, by your councils and your leaders, and all other ignorant fearful people. There was only tribal ways to you, and too many others like you. You stopped knowledge. Your ignorance hurt those who could take you forward. Your traditions were like a wall that shut you out from evolution, and have now damned you to extinction. You, *Jard*, have created this.”

“I have created nothing. You have decided, and you have acted. They have decided, and they have acted. I only stood in defence of my people.”

“No, you stood in defence of your *ignorance*, so the thinkers, the humble, the women and the children, all walked away from you.”

“You twist reality.”

“You do not *see* reality!”

BEABLE WOKE STANDING IN THE VILLAGE. The old man stood in front of him, and looked upon him with all the mental intent his eyes could muster. Beable was a kind soul and could not treat the old man badly, but the young ones copied him with great joy. They stood before each other looking just as intently as the old man, and laughing loudly.

The old man was not oblivious to the games going on behind his back; he just saw ignorance in their game. Rayya caught up with Beable, and said from behind him, “I am sorry Beable. The words speak the truth. I have been proud.”

“We walk the path we walk, and we learn as we do,” offered Beable, in humility, and from his own experiences.

The old man nodded his head, as if hearing the words of the apparition and approving. Beable then said, “They are *my* words old man; from what I have learnt in my struggle.”

The young ones laughed.

“Would you come to our house, Beable? You look as if you have not had a good meal, or a wash, in some time,” requested Rayya.

“I would like that, Rayya.”

The old man turned away with that thoughtful look of one who must now seek answers in himself; a heroic turn it was, and his stride away adding to the power of the intense look on his face. Once again the youth took pleasure in their imitations of him as they followed him through the village to his home.

It seemed that they were so intent on their fun, and their judgement, that they did not spend time seeking The Words or their meaning, or at the least, ask questions.

Beauty and Deeds

Rayya regarded Beable from afar, as if questioning the change she had seen in him, as well as how her view of him had changed. She realised he had always been Beable, and was special before all this. She had liked his joyful ways. She could see that she had been a little hard, and not noble herself, even though her challenges were honest and in hope of him becoming more. Sometimes that is good, and sometimes it is destructive. She could not be sure if hers had been or not, because this process had challenged them all to become more.

Beable felt her eyes on him, more than all the others that now waited with him, as he stood on the village mound. Then the bride struck Beable down again, and these words dashed out his mouth, ‘*...Though art even as finely tempered sword, hidden in the darkness of its sheath...*’

“GROTH!” EXCLAIMED BIANCA

“Oh! You frightened me Bianca,” he replied, as he munched on the fruit in the sunlit shaft.

“*Groth*. Your arms and legs are growing.”

“And my head is still shrinking.” Which was his stock answer to Bianca’s continued comments on his growth. It was a regular joke between friends. Bianca laughed gently, as did Groth.

“Jokes aside, B, I don’t have to think so much. My heart and gut are much quicker anyway. I was stuck in a hard, complicated, dark place. The rock walls and the darkness, and my box, hid me away from myself. In this sunlit place, I feel free.”

“Yes, it is like The Orb said, ‘*...let not the defilement of the world eclipse thy splendour...*’”

“It is so nice to hear the words now too. They were like a hammer on my head when you and The Orb came here. Now they are a breeze in my heart.”

Groth had transformed. He was peaceful and stronger. He was not as funny, but Bianca would always treasure those memories, and he had become so much more than she ever would have thought. He had taken the risk to come out of his box and push himself to grow his eyes and limbs. Even his ears were less sensitive.

“You have certainly changed, Groth.”

“Yes, and maybe no. Maybe we are just hidden away from ourselves a bit, like The Orb said.”

Bianca nodded, as both dipped their head in thought and reflection.

ELAN JARD AND THE DARK EYE LEADER WALKED THE CITY. Elan was given time to talk with some women and children of his clan, and his nation. He did not see his own children, but he trusted he would in time. During this day he also talked to many of the old men, but his time with the young ones was a complete revelation to him. They saw life so differently to the way he did, and he realised much of what the dark eye had shared was true. These were not broken fearful prisoners. It shocked him to his core, but he was feeling an acceptance.

He saw clearly that the women of his nation had not been equals as they were here; and while they felt safe in his clans at least, they were kept back. Science and change too had been held back, as he saw many machines created by his own clansman. He could see clearly that the development of civilisation was held back by the disregard for new ideas. But he could also see some emptiness in these people. They were free, but they had lost some of their heart connection to others. The strength of those bonds were once strong in them, and this unnatural place did take something unseen from them.

Elan and the dark eye returned to the dark eye's ward, and now walked into his personal living room.

“Mead, Jard?”

“I no longer take part in that which separates my soul from me.”

“A Jard who does not drink; I would have thought today would make you want some lifting of spirit.”

“The Essence is my spirit. I have no need of drink.”

“Well, Jard. Have I educated you?”

“Yes, but your new ways hold no true spirit. I see emptiness. If science has made you barbaric and you live in this emptiness, then you *too* are lost. We all are, more of spirit, essentially.”

“Spirit or superstition?”

“*Spirit*,” answered Elan. “What I have learned today is that both spirit and science are required. It is very clear to me.”

“Oh please, we have heard it all before. Old religions and superstitions only hold us back.”

“What I have seen today and the New Essence, hand in hand, can make a great civilisation.”

“We have a great civilisation now, Jard.”

“Let me share with you the words of The New Essence. I have no argument greater.”

The dark eye was curious. He had not asked about the words that had moved him in the street, as he did not want to give advantage to this man. He feigned indignance and said, “Very well, Jard. Please waste my time a little longer.”

‘*...For a fleeting sovereignty ye have abandoned my imperishable dominion...*’, shared Elan. He saw the dark eye’s hidden reaction. “*It moves you. You feel the lack of meaning around you. You feel the power of these words.*”

“I feel something, but I will need much more than that.”

“There *is* much more,” answered Elan.

That night much of the New Essence was shared, and many perceptions of it and life too. After the men shared a meal Elan was taken to a cell. He lay back on the stretcher in that small cold room, and he went off to sleep easily, knowing it had begun. A deep satisfaction in that easily removed his discomfort in this small cold space. This night he realised that he could save the women and children, but it was not as he had imagined. This day had given

him the certitude to teach the New Essence to the young of all clans; all nations. Elan Jard slept soundly that night.

GROTH WENT BEFORE THE THINK TANK. They had called him before them; as way too much 'head falling' and 'box staying' was going on in the colony because of his change. It was shaking the order of things.

When they saw him they could scarcely believe their small eyes. There in front of them stood Groth. There in front of them was a human. Although he was still green and probably a bit skinny by human standards, he was indeed human. That meant immediately that they were human, or had been once. They were creatures of science, so they could not ignore that which was apparent. But, sadly, this clear understanding and Groth's transformation was too much for most of them. Most just retreated to their boxes, some actually got angry, but a few with larger eyes just sat there looking at him. They could never be the same again; for although they lived in the dark, and cried and thought a lot, information could not be ignored.

“Do you see what Bianca has shown me?”

Even the wider eyed were having trouble and could not answer yet. Groth stood there in very vulnerable stance. Hoping against hope something good would be said. Then one said, “You have given us much to think about, Groth. Words are not enough to encompass what we are going through with the Orb; and now you. We know change is here, but as to the rest, well there is much to think on. The think tank must all retire for a time, and digest this. Thank you, Groth.”

With that, those who were still out of their boxes returned gratefully to a safe place in their boxes. Groth looked a little sad.

“One step at a time Groth,” said Bianca.

Groth turned and smiled, “Yes,” he said from his heart.

BEABLE WOKE IN A COT OUTSIDE RAYYA'S home.

“You spoke again after we carried you from the mound,” said Rayya gently to Beable, as she offered him a mug of water.

“What were they?” asked Beable.

“I hope I remember them well; the words were ‘...*Guidance hath ever been given by words, and now it is given by deeds...*’

“Time to begin to use the words,” offered Beable.

“Maybe more so, to become more, and show the way of spirit in how we live,” suggested Rayya.

“Yes. Maybe there is much more in these words. They should be shared.”

“Yes,” answered Rayya.

He was coming to realise why life had created his bond with Rayya. He loved the way she saw the words, and there was strength and kindness in her that he knew was there but had not found in her attitude towards him. He could see that he needed the light of a woman, a friend, to fulfil what life had asked of him; or at least support his new path.

Beable smiled, and his eyes closed to unconsciousness again. These words then came ‘...*words are the property of all alike...*’ He sighed in his unconscious state and more words came ‘...*Strive with heart and soul to distinguish yourselves by your deeds...*’

Beable did not wake soon, and seemed in good rest. Rayya was glad for this time of rest for him. She did not know what was ahead of them, but she was glad to be exactly where she had found herself.

The Glory

THE ORB GLOWED BRIGHTER IN THE GREAT CAVERN, and seemed to beckon Bianca. She walked up to it, and became aware of two others regarding the globe. It was like she was in the cavern, and somewhere else at the same time.

The light was different somehow and the love pouring into her heart was wonderful. Beable could now see the Bride, Bianca the Orb, and Elan Jard The New Essence. Understanding flowed with the love that came, yet these words came also...

‘...O Children of The Divine and Invisible Essence! Ye shall be hindered from loving Me. For minds cannot grasp Me nor hearts contain Me...’

They all regarded each other, as they stood at equal points apart, and at a distance around the Golden Orb. They were there together, and yet they stood in worlds far apart.

They somehow all knew that this glimpse would be only this short window. Elan was taken by the young age of Bianca, and the seeming weakness of Beable. Then he saw their hearts clearly, and so better understood his own. He began to understand that true strength was in purity of the heart. Only pure hearts could hold a pure essence. He was humbled, yet a little more, and was thankful for it.

“My goodness. What an Honour,” spoke Beable.

“Who are you?” Bianca asked the two men.

“I am Elan Jard, young one.”

“I am called Beable Flottam. I am an entertainer, turned crazy man. At least that’s what I thought. Now I really understand. Now I can see clearly.”

“Why have we been picked to see, do you think?” she asked.

The love, the light, and understanding then became one thing, and they all understood it to be Glory. They were given to see that only this Glory could unite all, and nurture all. They had to go to their work in His service. Everything was shared instantly and without

effort, in this place, so as they realised each other's inner being and story, their respect for each other grew; with this so grew their love for each other.

“You are both special people,” gasped Bianca.

“None of us are special, we are simply honoured, and now we are responsible.” With that Elan was gone.

“We are learning creatures. We have to follow the spirit that comes to our world. It was nice to meet you, Bianca.” And then Beable was gone.

Bianca realised she still had a search on her hands, to find the Word in her world. But she now had a clear compass.

WHEN BIANCA WOKE FROM THE GLIMPSE, she returned to the world of light. She was now very tired of the dark, and felt strong enough to climb back to the surface. She had been quite taken by the nobility of Elan Jard and knew that she would always remember their meeting. Groth followed her out of the darkness, as his muscles were stronger now and his head had shrunk quite considerably.

Beable woke on his cot and got up immediately, keen to share his experience with Rayya. He saw clearly Elan's strength of purpose and wanted to emulate it. He knew he had much to find and learn, and much to do. That journey he wished to take with Rayya. He could clearly see her heart now, and he was sure.

Elan Jard had woken with the faith of a mountain. He would teach the children and the youth the way of the New Essence. He smiled at the manner of Beable Flotham, and at the strength of character that lay in the young woman. He realised the way of women, and men, was changing.

That rather odd old man, from Rayya's village...well...he still watched over things with his eagle eye and his looks of knowing, much to the delight and sport of the youth.

REFERENCE

All the words '*in bold italics*' within single inverted commas, are quoted from, *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*⁽¹⁾

1. Bahá'u'lláh. (1999) *The Hidden Words and Selected Holy Writings*. Kuala Lumpur. Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Malaysia. Phrases and words gleaned from The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh; Part 1, From the Arabic; Part 2, From the Persian.