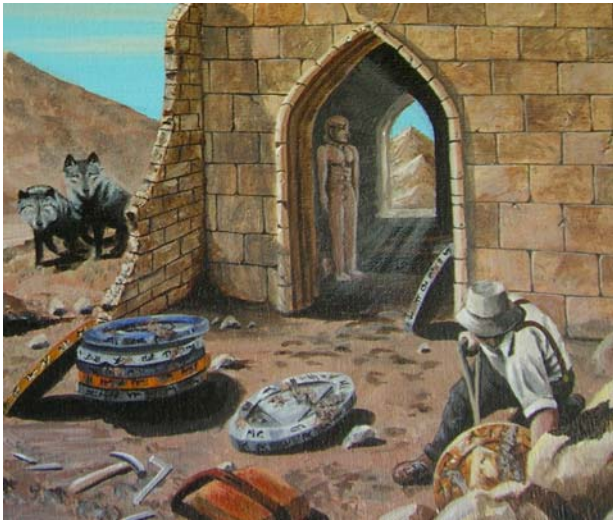


The Return of Gabriel

And the Sheep Shall
Become the Shepherds



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ISBN::978-0-615-19171-3

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When your True Self approaches the Light of the Creator, the purpose of your existence will unfold. And when this occurs, your body itself attracts the Light inward like a magnet. The ripples of time, fate and chance are then victim to this attraction, and as they all pull toward you, strange happenstances manifest in your daily life. You dream of an ex-lover, and you pass them on the street the very next day. You read about a small town in Ohio, and then you see that town name time and again, for no apparent reason – on the side of a bus, in an ad in the paper, on a janitor's name tag. Such is the way of the Design, the Design to assist our spiritual evolution. Skeptics call these "mere coincidences."

*But We know the Truth...
these are all synchronicities that we ourselves, have
created.
And should not ignore.*

“All Men and Women are as God” = 216

Part 1

1

Through Gabriel's eyes, Leonard could see a bright white pebble amidst the soft mound of auburn sand and smooth grey rocks. He was flying gracefully this time, pleasantly overwhelmed with a sense of home. The white pebble stood out like a tribute of love fighting through what had previously been the depths of despair. He would see the white pebble as he floated over it, then not. It would come and go, like seeing a woman in a bright red coat at every complete turn of a merry-go-round. The white pebble would go back and forth, reversing direction each time, like the even sway of a metronome. He was floating, but he was swaying, eyes fixed on the ground. At every complete sway to the left, this remarkable white stone would bless him and make him smile. He could feel the gentle wind blow across his body, the moment surreal and peaceful. Leonard could not completely understand this particular scene, but there was a serene finality to it. The beautiful white pebble would come and go as though he were the eyes at the bottom of a grandfather clock's pendulum. And even though there was only a couple of seconds between seeing the beautiful white stone and not, he longed for its return every moment it was out of sight.

Tick tock, tick tock.

Abruptly, as if plucked by the hand of the devil himself, Leonard began to choke, and the scene began to alter. The white rock sank suddenly into the ground, and Gabriel's filthy, swinging feet entered the view. Leonard woke from this chilling nightmare, choking and spitting, grabbing his neck and grasping for that next breath of air, which to his fortune, was granted.

A droplet of sweat accumulated on his forehead as he inhaled several deep breaths of New York air. Leonard now understood: in his vivid dream, Gabriel had been hanged.

And while part of him felt as though his beating heart had been cleaved from the left side of his chest and presented to him, there was an unsuspected sense of relief. If Gabriel has been executed, perhaps now, the nightmares will stop.

And he was right about that at least. The nightmares would never happen again... while he *slept*.

2

Leonard left the window open while he leapt onto the fire escape overlooking the bustle of Greenwich Village in Manhattan. He would smoke his Menthol Lights and just casually survey the bustle, like a gargoyle perched steadily above the unobservant inhabitants of this active city. He'd see the man in the purple pull-hat walking his lab, and would chuckle to himself when the man would look both ways before

abandoning his dog's poop pile. And the guy who dressed like a lady who dressed like a clown – he, or she rather, would ask for change, but only from women. No rhyme or reason, it just was.

But it was the fire engine sirens blaring down West 4th Street that woke the Mrs., not the cool draft from the once-again late spring start of March 18th. Spring started late in New York for the past fifteen years or so; no longer were the days of waiting til the spring equinox to expect to see some floral activity. She knew the equinox was in a mere three days from now, but the frosty morning air of Sunday the 18th disputed that fact with vigor. The one thing you could count on though, through all the seasons, was that there was going to be a fire somewhere. Or a heart attack. Or car accident. Or robbery. Rarely a day to go by without the orchestra of finely tuned emergency sirens.

"Leo!", she called in a half slumber. Her shortened name for him was Leo, not Len, because his name was actually pronounced like Leonardo but without the 'o'. "Are you out there again?"

He heard her but it was just too much effort to respond, so he pretended he didn't, hoping that perhaps she would go back to sleep when the sirens digressed. He peered back into the apartment a few moments later, and saw Elisabeth in her green silk robe, stumbling in the kitchen, performing her slumbered coffee ritual. Her nipples complained about the late spring, but she herself didn't seem to mind. Oh yes, she was up for the day.

He slowly edged his way back into the apartment. While halfway in, he said, "Good morning my sweet Lizzie, sorry the sirens woke you."

It was far too much effort to respond to him before her coffee, so she pretended he didn't say anything, and perhaps he would just go away until the coffee circulated in her blood.

It was quite the perfect Sunday so far.

Normally, he was quite understanding about nuances of the coffee ritual, and would keep his mouth shut until at least one of her eyes was fully operational. But today was different. He had news.

"Lizzie, I have good news."

"You do?", she said sweetly and surprised. "That is fantastic, I am so glad to hear it." She was stalling for time; she couldn't accept any news at the moment, good or bad. She just needed a few seconds to catch her bearings. Besides, how great could it have been, she just spoke to him last night in bed. What could have happened between her last orgasm and this morning's coffee?

"Are you paying attention?"

"Yes dear I am," she said with a fake English accent. "I am hanging on your every word." Her sarcasm was a term of absolute endearment; she meant no disrespect. "Do tell", she added.

"I think Gabriel died last night." He said it plainly and cut to the chase. She had been up to date on all his dreams in the past year, and tried her best to analyze

what had been happening in his head. And she was there for him for two therapists and one psychiatrist, all of which yielded no results into the insights of this incredibly detailed continuing dream. The psychiatrist was the least helpful, bordering on wanting to admit him for these sets of unbroken dreams. *A continuous dream is a sign of desperation and often a precursor to a complete nervous breakdown*, he would explain. He tried to blame his parents. Then hers. Then his childhood. Then finally, his wife Elisabeth herself. The day the doctor gave him a prescription for medicine which would suppress his REM sleep, she urged Leonard to leave the psychiatrist and never go back. The prescription was never filled.

"How? Explain... what-" She stumbled over her own words like a drunk, bemused at the implications of this latest dream. This was about to be a very happy day, for they both could assume the best.

"It was three days after Gabriel hid the Discs," he continued. The spies finally caught up to him. They tortured him to find out where the Discs were, but Gabriel would not tell. So they executed everyone of the thirteen, Gabriel last. They hung him from a tree, I saw it clear as day."

"Unbelievable... I don't know what to say." Elisabeth extended a warm smile, so large and full of love. He had cured himself of this nightmarish soap opera. She did well to contain her joy, considering the

anguish she endured for the past year. "So you think this might be it?"

"Well I can't imagine how the story can continue now that he's dead."

Elisabeth could see a little bit of the sadness in his eyes. She could see over time that he had become nurturing toward Gabriel – his alter-ego was like his very own child. While he had no control over what happened in his dreams, Leonard would hope, wish and pray for Gabriel. That he would complete his quest. That he would bury the Discs in the desert and outsmart the following spies. Over the past year, no matter how bad the dreams became, he sometimes longed to go to sleep, in the hopes that this would be the night the dream would continue, and that he could wake up to a new chapter. He didn't dream every night, only sometimes; but the vividness of these nocturnal imaginings were so real and so intense, that he began to BE Gabriel. He began to transcribe his dreams so that he could follow along, in the hopes of unraveling this great mystery. Why had Leonard been chosen to see this man's life? What importance did it have to him, and what was the purpose? The answers to these questions were a year in the making, and never had there been a day, including today, that that question every got remotely answered.

"Are you sad that Gabriel died?"

"I am relieved that this is finally over," he responded, dodging the question.

“Well I hope it is... I mean, I’m sure it is. Like you said, how can the story continue now that Gabriel’s dead?”

3

Leo woke on Monday morning with no recollection of any dreams. It was his first day of freedom, and he could just sense, that this continuous dream was now over. He fully intended however, to review his notes over the next few months, and make some sense of it. He still felt entitled to an explanation for this mindless nocturnal torture, living this ancient man’s life by night, delving into the tribulations of this man’s quest. He wondered in a way, if Gabriel had really existed. Elisabeth was sure of it; she was very metaphysical and her interpretation was that he was most likely experiencing a past life. He was open to the idea, but coming from a more mathematically, logic-oriented mind, was more comfortable investigating the situation from a psychological perspective. Something in his life caused him to dream up this alternate life, and he needed to understand it. But the research into this anomalous night-time saga would begin in the proverbial ‘tomorrow’, for today he was too busy enjoying his first day as a free man.

Leo donned his work clothes, packed his banana, retrieved his kiss, and then headed on the M-3 bus uptown where he worked as an actuary for the ninth

largest insurance company. Ninth is really no place to be, but when you're small, you find the motto befitting a kingly empire.

Leo sauntered onto the Manhattan bus when it arrived, reading his newspaper while he walked like every other blooded New Yorker. He knew how to fold the New York Times into eighths in order to read just the article he needed, and could flip it around like a Rubick's cube to find the rest of the article. The art was to read the New York Times in a crowded area and not bump into anyone. Leo was the reigning master.

The bus driver waited impatiently as the patrons boarded, tapping his fingers and looking out the far window, trusting that each person would pay their fare. And if they didn't, he knew some upset paying-customer would rat them out anyway. You can't treat a New Yorker unfairly. You can raise their taxes, their rents, and their bus fares, but you better do it across the board. These people will pay ten times the going price per square foot to live, but if the guy in front of you doesn't pay his two lousy dollars, there's going to be a situation. It is the unspoken word. The law.

Leo smiled to himself when he saw the bus driver's name tag: Gabriel. An affirmation, he supposed, that this was all over. He boarded the bus and stationed himself in the middle, holding the handlebar above his head.

He held the paper above the head of a sleeping red-headed woman in her fifties, and read the through

the front page in the first seven minutes. His daily goal was to finish past page A3 before his stop at work, and then throughout the day, he would try and read more if time allowed during lunch and break.

While panning through page A2, an article caught his eye and surprised him. *Serial Killer Gabriel Jennings hanged in Washington State*. He read the article with intensity, as though this may have something to do with his dreams. He'd been following the Jennings case like everyone else, but the timing of the coincidence was a bit much to bear. He finished the article and could see no other similarity to his dreams, so he passed it off as a bizarre coincidence. That was, until he saw the next article, which was unrelated to the first, *FBI Seizes Secret Stolen Discs*.

Amazed and confused, he read this article with fervor, hanging on to every line. But again, there were no similarities whatsoever to his dreams. Nor any connection whatsoever to that serial killer Gabriel Jennings in Washington. Besides, in his dream, the Discs were metal or stone; in the article, they were computer disks. And his dream took place in ancient times, in France and in Asia Minor, and the Discs in his dream were hidden in the desert sands. However, his mind was spinning with this second unfathomable synchronicity; he was not one to experience multiple coincidences.

By the time Leo got home, he was bursting to share his synchronistic day with Elisabeth. He greeted

her with “You’re never going to believe this” as he stormed into the apartment. She hadn’t even finished setting down her handwriting samples and removing her glasses before he began to tell his tales of happenstance. And not just the two articles that twisted his mind early that morning, but the six others that left him in complete awe.

4

“I think you should meet my friend Tala after all,” Elisabeth said. Tala was a Native American spiritualist, the best of her kind; despite her somewhat young age, she is regarded as a scholar of sorts, well versed in American Tribal Folklore, the metaphysics of Hebrew mysticism, ancient Egyptian rituals and even Hindu lore. Tala was part of Elisabeth’s “Order of the Moon” assembly that exhibited a special admiration for the ancient Egyptian Divine Mother, Isis: Goddess of Magic and Life. They convened slightly less than once a month, for ceremonies and meditations on special dates that contained no significance to Leo. But it was a positive social activity for Elisabeth, and she met many new friends that Leo would only describe as “whacky but nice.”

“I really think Tala could help give you some insight into this, it can’t hurt. Come with me on Wednesday night, we’re having the equinox meditation.

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Gabriel*

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