



## Chapter 2

### “Who Am I?”

It was a crisp, expectant night in late June under a moonless sky blanketed by the Milky Way. Two young soul mates sat apart from the world between a pup tent on a prairie hill and a fire slowly fading to ashes.

“More s'mores!” piped up blonde, exuberant Natasha Harris.

Her sticky fingered partner in reverie, Dawn Wilson, stared intently into the heavens. An ember crackled, rolled from the fire and reflected off her retina like a doomed planet that had just blown asunder. The image slowly faded as her mind pondered the infinite past and the imminent future without a clue about her intent resolve. “Not if I can help it,” she said so seriously.

Tasha laughed. “You don't want a s'mores? I'll eat 'em up, eat 'em up. Why do you always say that, that thing, Dawn?”

“Something ... about ... you.” She stood and moved away while shading her eyes from the fire to better see the stars.

Tasha joined her and stuck a burnt s'mores to Dawn's lips. “Oh, look, a shooting star! Splat! It almost hit Mars.”

Dawn bit into the hot goo without pleasure. “Mars already set,” she stated with authority. “Those three stars are Orion's belt. He has a bow and arrow.”

“You know so much. You should be a stargazer.”

“Sure thing. I'll find God.”

A second meteor streaked down to the left of Orion, giving Tasha a chance to one-up Dawn's ambition. “Me first. There he goes! I saw God first.” The rogue star did not fade at the horizon like the first but seemed to change course and head straight toward them.

Dawn wandered further into the ominous night and Tasha followed. “That star is Sirius, the brightest star in all the sky, but stars can't really ... move.”

They froze, suspended in time and unable to avert their eyes as the twinkle flitted through the heavens like a fairy coming ever closer and growing ever brighter until it became pumpkin size, moon size and finally house size. The inscrutable energy elongated to a towering egg-shaped pillar of light that settled gently to the ground with a crinkle where the ranch house had been. They floated forward through endless fields of wavering grain where none had grown before, beneath a harvest moon that had never risen and flanked by pesky wood nymphs that were so familiar they scarcely noticed. Hand in hand they reached the heavenly spheroid that sparkled with luminescence from some distant ethereal kingdom.

Their images as young women fifteen years in the future reflected off the scintillating surface vibrating with dreams. They accepted the illusion as truth without question. "That's us," Dawn murmured, completely spellbound. She waved timidly and her older self returned the gesture. "You're beautiful, Tasha, just beautiful. Me, I need a little work."

Tasha did not answer but gently slid her left hand into the pulsing screen of energy and in an instant was drawn within. Dawn, holding Tasha's right hand tightly, swished through behind into a dazzling arena of light -- unearthly, heavenly, comforting light. They had never dreamt of such a world whose grandeur eclipsed all fairy tales. Their eyes adjusted until they could see clearly without strain and pierce the veil to infinity.

"I can see forever," Tasha said, "and I'm not afraid."

"We'll never need glasses," Dawn stated more sensibly. She knew in her heart it was true and that was about all she knew. Her spirit soared but she couldn't laugh, not here, not now. She could only wait in breathless anticipation for the coming wonders. A distant singing floated into consciousness, a woman's soprano voice radiating waves of love and trust to prepare them for some impending arrival. Dawn had heard the tune once before, lifetimes ago in dreams or memories, and hummed along in her head.

"Beyond, we have gone far beyond," the voice sang sweetly and hypnotically. "What was known from the first day, that our love will go on. Beyond...."

A white shadow emerged from the brightest recesses and loomed above them nine-feet tall. The ancient figure took the form of a tall, hooded monk who did not speak or threaten, but only stood quietly emanating warm feelings of kindness, wisdom and trust.

"God?" Tasha questioned with awe.

"He's Santa Claus for the animals," Dawn whispered, "but it's not Christmas time. Why did he come all this way from the North Pole?"

Tasha floated fearlessly ahead and vanished with a rustle into a fold of the white specter's

lowing robe. "Come for me, Dawn," echoed back from eternity.

Tears welling in her eyes, Dawn strained to follow but was frozen in place. The truth that Natasha would be taken away struck suddenly. She screamed, "You're not God, not God! You can't have her! Take me instead!" The figure lifted a bony hand and with the slightest gesture Dawn whooshed backward through the energy screen into the field of grain in Montana. Alone and panicked, she whimpered softly, "Come back, Tasha. I love you." The imposing presence took shape in the field before Dawn, observed that she was distressed but unafraid and gently touched her forehead with two fingers until her tears calmed and her face relaxed.

The visage spoke in a melodious voice that reverberated to her soul so she would remember his message to forget. "I am a watcher," the being began. "Always seek and the way will open, but you must stay for now, child, and forget tonight. Awaken when the stars fall into place. You, you, you," the hypnotic voice droned on, etching an impossible to forget message about forgetting, "will forget, forget. Remember later, when the stars are right. Forget, forget, but know this in your heart, now and forever, life without end that you, you, you ... are the Known."

As the egg of light ascended majestically into the heavens and took flight to worlds unknown, young Dawn forgot the watcher and the ship and she forgot Tasha. She forgot the endless questions over the disappearance of Tasha, the desperate counseling and years of exile that had scarred her childhood. She forgot the tale she had just told as her mind returned to Ahman Dorian and the uncertain present. With a blank expression, she inquired meekly, "So I forgot something big when I was a child. What was it? Do you know?"

"You will remember again as we go along," Dorian promised. "The process of remembering will begin a deeper awakening to who you really are."

"Who am I?"

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Transfixed, Dawn mulled over Dorian's words. Of course she knew who she was but could there be some deeper secret? How could this strange being know anything about her? Again she shrugged off the grim notion of being in a coma or worse. She didn't believe in telepathy but it seemed like a more healthy explanation. Since no reply to her big question seemed to be forthcoming she said, "Excuse my impatience. I do need to remember, so let's get on with the process you mentioned. Where do we start?"

Dorian said, "The truth will become evident in time. I can help guide the story. Do you recall anything unusual in your life?"

“Everything about Jeff. He's my husband. We fell in love at first sight. That was strange since we didn't exactly have the same interests, and I was really too young to get married. I was only 21.”

“Years matter so little.”

“We met when I was a senior majoring in anthropology. That's not a practical career but I wanted to figure people out, learn where we came from and where we are going next and that kind of thing. I got a scholarship to New York University in New York, which was odd in itself since my parents could never remember applying.”

“You had to go there in order to meet him, and he needed to meet you.”

“Kind of like destiny? Well, I never thought of it that way but I'm glad we met. It was so cold that day....”

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A sleet storm presaging a January blizzard blew Dawn into Rufus Smith Hall just off the Commons on the first day of spring semester. She threw back her hood and shook the gritty snow off her cape in sheets. The limp class assignment sheet clutched in her glove was unreadable. “Now where would a linguistics class live?” she mused aloud, as she blundered ahead in a daze. “Whatever that is. I could use some help.” An elderly figure in a black graduation robe took her arm and led her down a narrow hallway she would have missed with a google map, a guide dog and a talking horse. She loved horses, had six back at the ranch and a special one from childhood that once talked to her.

“This is your way,” the scholar stated with authority as he pointed with an antique lantern while prodding her into a dimly lit, deserted classroom.

She turned with a “Thanks” on her lips, but the guide had vanished. Startled, she backed away, tripped over a chair and sprawled into the arms of a gawky grad student a few years older than her. Not too old and not too shy, he flashed a hopeful smile, set her upright and re-buttoned his burnt orange jacket that almost matched her hair.

“Are you lost?” the slender white knight with gentle hands and long dark hair inquired.

“Not anymore, unless this isn't Linguistic Anthropology.”

“It's nothing until next hour when it's Archaeo-Anthro 220. I'm the teacher. What are you doing here?”

“Meeting you? Uh, I mean, I didn't know where my class was so a man in a graduation gown pushed me in here. He said this was my way.”

“A man in a gown? You're kidding! He's my watcher.”

“You have one too? Maybe it's destiny ... for us to....” She blushed. He hadn't caught the childish flirting that suddenly seemed far from funny but closer to possible.

“I don't know why I said that. What's a watcher?” He paused for her answer while she waited for the punch line. Their eyes connected silently for ages before he spoke again. “Dawn ... it's a lovely name. I love it. I'm a guest professor from the Courant Institute. That's why you haven't seen me over here before. I'm a student too, like you, finishing up my third PhD, this one in math. I get asked that a lot because I don't look like a professor.”

“I didn't ask anything, Jeff, and I didn't tell you my name.”

“Sure you did, but I didn't mention mine.”

“You must be awfully smart to get three degrees and a fourth in mind reading.”

“I'm not trying to show off. I bet you could keep up with me anyway. Would you like to try over a cup of coffee?”

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With the taste of that first shared coffee, her mind slowly returned to the bizarre audience with Ahman Dorian. “So that was Jeff and that was that. I kept up with him.” Dawn waited for a response but the specter only nodded solemnly with teary eyes. “Why are you sad? It was a happy meeting for both of us.”

“Your story reminds me ... of myself,” Dorian replied wistfully. “It's been such a long time. Memories are like that.”

“I guess so.” Dawn shook her head. She was here now but had felt she was actually back in the classroom meeting Jeff for the first time. Had she told Dorian the story with words or by some kind of mental process and how might that work? Was she just having a lucid dream? The annoying tape on her wrists implied she was awake and here, or was she dreaming that as well? She had no choice but to keep talking to a compassionate ghost who was either real or really in her head.

“Please proceed at your own pace.”

“Jeff was a certified genius with an I.Q. off the charts. He got PhDs in math, computers and archaeology. One project was finding ancient sites to excavate on his computer from aerial photos or something like that. I didn't understand or care much, but we were good together outside of his work. We liked to ... you know, together, and well, that was that.”

“You were in love.”

“Yes, very much. We got married when school let out in June. That would be about a year ago this week, maybe even tomorrow. I don't know what day today is. Then something odd happened when he got a call to work for NASA. That's our outer space agency.”

“Pause a moment,” said Dorian, whose stately demeanor had returned. “I can help fill in the story. There is a universal consciousness that flows around each spirit in their time and place. Many events you are unaware of touched your life, and those links remain with you still.”

“I heard something like that in philosophy class, but I didn't quite get it.”

“The device before you can access relevant incidents so you understand for the first time. The pyramid can draw them from your subconscious if you but touch it.”

“This thing that you came out of? I should touch it?”

“I think of the shaft as our link through time. It has many purposes as you will see.”

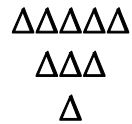
Dawn hesitantly touched the facet facing her and the clouded triangle cleared. The image of a deserted office at night appeared like a television broadcast and expanded quickly to fill her mind. She looked around the room wherever she wanted and noted on the glass door 'NASA Personnel.' Every cranny was filled with boring computers, desks, filing cabinets and papers. She had no doubt the place existed, but why was she exploring an empty office? A lamp flickered on over one desk drawing her attention to a pile of papers that appeared to be filled out employment forms. A shadow paused at the desk and passed a phantom hand over the documents. An application near the bottom floated out and settled in the only clear area on the desktop. While she watched, the word 'Approved' appeared rubber stamped in bright red on the paper. The shadow vanished. Her presence drifted closer until she could clearly read: 'Application for Employment -- Jeffrey King.'

In a flash the vision flooded from her mind back into the obelisk leaving a fleeting blur on the facet. She snapped back to the present more confused than ever and stammered out, “Jeff, he, he did have a kind of ... thing watching out for him.”

“Both of you,” Dorian echoed without enlightening.

“Well, I don't know what that is all about, but nothing much happened for a year. Jeff got that job at NASA's Glenn Research Center looking at data from space probes, so we moved to Cleveland. I took a part-time job in a boutique to meet people. There weren't any real jobs. I felt I was just killing time until...” Unable to finish the thought she plowed ahead. “Jeff was kind of a freelance genius who followed clues and solved puzzles. NASA sure paid him enough, so we settled into a trendy house in the suburbs. That's when he unpacked his terrible hobby.”

That she remembered.



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“The Eye on the Moon”