

THE PATRIOT AND THE CHILD

A short story, by Roy Thomas.

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As with all death, the transition regarding awareness, was seamless.

He found himself in a bedroom sized white room with no windows and just one door. He was sitting on a white bench seat opposite a small child, who was sitting on another white bench seat.

There was no other 'thing', in the room.

"Hi", he said to the child, "where am i, d'you know"

"You just died. So you left your shell on Earth. Now you are back to you; to assess and learn from your experiences".

The man was silent. He began to trace his steps, his last thoughts.

In his mind, images and voices flashed before him. He saw familiar faces. Heard familiar voices. He saw the other 'patients' in their beds. He heard the final tone, the continuous beep of the heart monitor, and then no more.

It was true. He was indeed dead.

A small frown of uncertainty crept onto his forehead.

After a moment, he looked into the eyes of the child, and the frown disappeared.

He felt no panic. No concern. The child seemed to have a calming influence which he 'felt'.

The child smiled. He smiled back.

"Who were you? What did you do?" Asked the child.

"I was a Patriot," said the man, "I was a hero to many". The man wore the biggest smile.

He oozed pride. It came out in waves, so much so that the child stood, and pressed his hands all over his body in a wiping fashion.

The man looked on and forgot his 'successes'. "What are you doing?" he asked the child.

"Im brushing off your projected energies." He answered.

"Why" asked the man.

"Projected Energies affect your own energies, regarding balance. That's why we feel uncomfortable in certain places or situations. Or in the company of those who have different balances in their own energies".

The child finished his 'brushing off', and sat back down on the bench seat. He looked across at the man and smiled.

The man considered the child before him. "i've never heard anyone talk about brushing off energies before. Sounds kinda weird. How d'you know about it?" he asked the child.

The child looked at the man, "I just picked it up i suppose." Then he smiled with a warmth that the man felt, like never before.

"ok" he answered, gently nodding in acceptance.

"How were you a patriot?" asked the child.

"I fought for my fellow Americans..." the man paused.

The child had closed his eyes and was washing the air in front of him in ever increasing circles.

“What are you doing?” asked the man, baffled.

“I’m creating a shield, to save me having to keep brushing off your energies” said the child smiling.

The man, consumed with ‘self’, continued with his story, dismissing the ‘wonder’ of what he didn’t understand.

“...yeah, like i was saying, i’m a hero. Basically, i took out an alien of all things; before they could attack us, you know”. The man was smiling and again nodding gently. He felt pleased with himself.

The child finished his shield and looked at the man, smiled a knowing smile and asked him, “did he attack you, was he ferocious?”

“Jesus NO, i’d be dead i reckon. No, he just stood there...”

“It was a man alien?” interrupted the child.

“... a what, HECK i don’t know, what does it matter they’d all be the same anyway. No, like i said, he just stood there, raised an arm and some sound came out of a mouth thing, so i let ‘im have it. I started shooting and kept on shooting till i blasted that thing to death. I mean you can’t take chances with stuff you don’t, know right?”

The man’s head, tilted slightly and bent forward a tad, seeking agreement from the child.

“If you say so.”

The child smiled a little smile, skilfully avoiding confrontation, while holding the truth within, as the ‘*Silent Power*’ it is.

“Well you take it from me, you can’t be too careful. Where i come from, we shoot first and ask questions later. It’s safer that way.”

The man adjusted his position. He sat bold upright. His position seemed clear.

“How long have you been here?” asked the man.

The child shrugged his shoulders, “Time is of no consequence.” He said.

“What?” The man screwed his face up a little, again baffled by the words.

“This is forever. Always. Unchanging perhaps?” the child smiled with warmth and knowing.

“I saw a lady and a man once. They exploded themselves...”

“God damned Arabs for sure. Should’ve bombed the whole of the middle east; and could’ve bombed Africa and the Chinese, and the Russians. God damned communists.” As he spoke, his head jerked with emotive force, and his eyes widened at all the thoughts in his mind.

“I don’t believe any of them were dammed. The bombers were coerced with pressure and promise, all of which were lies of course. With all the bombing, the Africans, Chinese, the Russians etcetera, would there be anyone left?” Asked the child, smiling.

“Who cares. As long as we’re ok. What else matters, am i right or am i right?” Again, he leaned forward to seek agreement. He sat back instantly feeling the point was made.

“You are indeed a patriot.” Said the child.

The man winked at the child as he cocked his head in one collective movement as an affirmation.

“Why do you dislike the Arabs?” Asked the child.

Religious zealots, nut jobs. Trying to force “ALLAH” down my throat, no thank you sir!” He began to shake his head slowly. He continued. “who has the right to force ideology on anyone anyway; answer me that? We go over there to teach them better ways, civilised ways, christian ways with christian values, that’s what they need. I mean *we* know what’s right, what’s civilised. So, we try to teach the world better ways. It’s our duty as god fearing Americans, to bring the world to order. Stop the bullies of the world, know what i mean?” he looked at the child, to press the point home.

“God fearing? That seems strange to me” said the child.

“Fear of the unknown is healthy. Keeps you safe. Survival, that’s the name of the game”. Again, he winked at the child.

“instead of life and living?” asked the child.

“That is life. Dog eat Dog. It’s a man’s world and that’s the truth. You’ve gotta be strong to survive.” Replied the man.

What is strength?” asked the child.

“A 44 magnum; that’s the only strength you need and that’s the truth.” Again, the reassuring wink.

Again, the child held the *silent power of truth* within.

“What of women?” asked the child.

“Breeders, sorry, i mean mothers, and wives. Housekeepers of course, that sort of thing.”

“I see” said the child. “I once went on a journey to see division for myself, but the journey was cut short, by the division actually.” Again, the child smiled a knowing smile.

“Some people you just can’t trust, you know what i mean?” said the man, feeling comfortable in the ‘conversation’ with the child.

“Usually self” replied the child, knowingly.

“The what?” said the man.

The child continued.

“Division between worlds, division within a single world, between nations.

Divisions through language. Division within nations through political beliefs and conflicting agendas, and greed.

Divisions within peoples through skin colour. Division through religious beliefs. Division between gender. Divisions with age even.

‘Division All Around’ it seems; through unreasonable expectations perhaps? Expectations born of ‘self-interest’ maybe.

Division through intolerance, lack of compassion, empathy, feeding fear. Devoid of love sadly.

Plant Earth. The land of division!

What if we all embraced everything with love?

What if the Alien had come to simply say “hello, i’m here”?”

The child looked at the man as he stood and reached out his hand for his. “Come, let’s go now.”

He looked towards the door. The man stood without question and took the child’s hand. The door opened and all was white beyond.

“i don’t believe the alien was friendly,” said the man, as they walked through doorway.

“I do,” said the child.

“Why,” asked the man, “how would you know?”

The child smiled at the man. “I was the alien”.

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