

Ethereal - Chapter 6

Cameron stared at the silent shape, he wasn't afraid; he had encountered the spectre twice now up close and felt no evil intent. On the contrary, he sensed good will and an eagerness to communicate. He was the first to break the silence.

"Who are you? Do I know you?"

The entity answered immediately, almost over the top of Cameron's last word.

"Hello Dr. Gates I'm Edard, from the world you know as Gliese 581g. We have connected before, firstly when you were above my world, when we were interrupted, and again today, in the park when you were attacked."

"Yes Edard, thank you for your help today. We caught my attackers. The police have them in custody."

"It is not by accident that I have contacted you, I sort you out to ask your assistance in a situation concerning our two worlds. We call our home Gi, which in some of your ancient languages means Earth. You see, we are of your world, from a time beyond your recorded history."

Cameron could only stare at the entity in wonder for a long moment before responding.

"Of our world? What can that mean?"

"Would you care to travel with me to my world? I can explain it more accurately when I can show you. Don't be afraid, you will be safe."

Cameron considered the offer for a moment, but only for a moment. As a scientist, he felt great excitement at making this contact with someone from another world, and particularly in this fashion, on another plane of existence. What could this mean for science and human belief systems? It was astonishing. He couldn't see what this being looked like, but he felt he could trust him.

"Yes Edard, I would be honoured to travel to your world with you. Do you wish to go now?"

Edard extended his hand to Cameron.

"If you will, I'll lead; we'll go to my laboratory where all will be explained to you."

Suddenly they were hovering above Gi. Edard indicated a continent on the left hemisphere of the world.

"That is the land mass where my home is. It is called Gi-Ana. There are three other land masses, Gi-Ora, Gi-Une, and Gi-Ese. There are cities and towns on all of them, much like on your Earth. But unlike Earth, we enjoy peace and freedom of travel across our world. Our history tells us of past conflict; however there has been none in over one thousand years. Let us go down to the surface now and I will further explain our history."

In an instant they were in a large room. It was a laboratory of some kind with benches and strange apparatus, while at one end there was a separate room, toward which Edard lead Cameron.

On entering the room Cameron could see a person lying on a bed. Edard indicated the inert body, a body very much human in its appearance.

"This is my physical form. As you can see we are much like people on Earth."

He then moved to a glass enclosed crib at the other end of the room and indicated another body in the crib.

Cameron peered in and was shocked at what he saw. The body under the glass was him. The sleeping form he was staring down at was his. How could this be? He was at home, on Earth, in his bed.

He turned to Edard, whose features he could now distinguish clearly, due no doubt, to the fact that he now was familiar with his physical likeness. Edard smiled at Cameron's reaction.

"Don't be alarmed Dr. Gates. We have perfected the process by which to produce a perfect clone from your essence. We are able to extract similar genetic building blocks to DNA from the ethereal cord which connects you to your physical body when you project. When I saw that you were interested in our world, and our panel decided that you were the one we would choose to communicate with, I came to you while you slept and took the liberty of borrowing some of your essence. I did this so as to have a physical body ready for you when you finally travelled here, as I knew you would. I apologise if you feel violated in any way, but as it takes many weeks to prepare a clone, I thought it would save time to start the process when you were first aware of your astral projection abilities."

Cameron was too stunned to feel violated, his indignation completely eclipsed by his scientific excitement. This amazing technology could be the answer to exploration of the universe, and all from the comparative safety of a bed at home. He was eager to learn more.

"It was a bit presumptuous Edard, but I'll get over it. How does it work, what do I have to do?"

"You already have the skills, it is no different to your normal projection process, your astral cord will connect to your alternate body, it will attach to any physical form with the appropriate DNA markers. Just will yourself into it and you will join with your new body."

He turned back to his new clone and went through his re-entry process, waking inside the glass crib. Edard was standing outside in his physical form pointing to a heads-up screen on the roof of the glass dome, motioning to Cameron to wave his hand across it.

Cameron did this and the dome retracted into the crib.

Edard was inside Cameron's head again.

"Even though we are in our physical selves now, we will still have to communicate mentally. Although our language originated on your Earth, it was thousands of years ago; it is derived from an unrecorded language which you would not recognise."

Cameron exited the crib and nodded, as he proceeded to inspect his body. Apart from a mole here and a scar there, it was perfect. He turned back to Edard with his major concern.

"What's happening to my body back on Earth?"

Edard shook his head.

"For now nothing, however if you were to stay here for any length of time, you would need to make arrangements for your body to be nourished while you remained in your astral coma. Also if someone tried to wake you while you were in this body, they would be unsuccessful. You need to be in your astral form to return directly to your body. If you wish to visit our world for an extended period, and I hope you do at some point, it would be wise to sequester your physical self somewhere safe until you intend returning."

This was a relief to Cameron, but when he reflected on what he had encountered since being woken by Edard a short time before, his head swam.

When he had considered travelling to Gliese 581g after discovering astral projection, all he dared hope for was to find that the planet maybe had liquid water, and perhaps some primitive life forms. Not in his wildest dreams could he have imagined a world with an advanced civilization and the means for him to enter a new body so as to actually, physically explore this new world.

He now looked Edard up and down, and realised that, physically he was human and apart from the style of clothing he wore, which Cameron now also wore, he wouldn't warrant a second glance on the streets of Brisbane. Even the clothing wasn't that different, that is if you were on safari in Kenya.

His host again communicated with him.

"Before I show you my city I will give you a brief history of our civilization and our connection with your world. Please take a seat, would you like some nourishment, a beverage perhaps?"

Cameron was much too excited to think about food or drink; he shook his head as he took a chair at a nearby table.

"Thank you no Edard, please continue with your story, it's fascinating."

Edard took a chair across the table from Cameron before continuing.

"Our story begins many thousands of years ago when a great spiritual leader, Ragnar, who lived with his people in an area you now know as Iceland, discovered the secrets of astral projection. Through his travels among the stars he made contact with a race which our people call *Asgard*. Even then their civilization was millions of years old and had the technologies to colonise worlds across the universe. Ours was one such world."

Cameron could only listen in wonder as Edard continued.

"The Asgard did not share their advanced technology with us, they helped us colonise this world and looked over us until we established the rudiments of a new civilization, then they left us to our own devices. Now many thousands of years later we evolved this technology on our own. The first world we sort out naturally was Earth, and have been observing your technological advancements for many years. We are no doubt the reason for some of the reports of alien abduction on your world. The *victims* were never *abducted*. We would often examine people while they were in their astral state, and at times they would become aware of us. Because they had a picture in their mind of what an alien should look like, from television and film, thin body, big head and big eyes, they assigned those features to our astral shape, and believed they were being probed by aliens, which I guess they were in effect. However we meant no harm, we were just assessing the viability of our cloning program, and as you can see, it was worthwhile."

Cameron finally found his voice.

"Why wait until now to make contact, and why me?"

"We have been searching for a suitable scientist to connect with since 2010, when your fellow astronomers discovered the possibility that our world existed, however it wasn't until you started to project onto the astral plane that we found someone with your combination of skills and knowledge. Now we very much hope that you may be able to facilitate collaboration between our scientists and yours, to expand our connections and allies across the galaxy and maybe, in time, the universe. You see, we have discovered other, violent worlds out there and as a peaceful civilization for thousands of years now, we have not developed sophisticated defensive weaponry as your world has, and the time may come in the near future when we will need them."

Cameron couldn't believe he was actually having this conversation. For a moment he thought he may be dreaming, but then remembered all of the incidents which had taken place since the car accident, and decided that this was a real situation, even if it seemed improbable.

"I am more than willing to help, but be careful what you wish for. However this technology does not lie in my area of expertise. How do you suggest I may be able to help?"

"We need you to convince eminent leaders and physicists of the process of astral travel, and then we need you to train them in that process. Once we can show them what can be achieved, we hope they will agree to join us."

Cameron thought for a few seconds before answering.

"I can do that; it won't be easy, but I believe I can do it. However we would have to be very careful whom we choose initially. As you know there is great competition on our world between countries and also big business. Some of them would do anything to gain the advantage that this technology could potentially give them. It could bring problems for your people as well as ours."

Edard smiled and nodded.

"Yes Dr. Gates, we had considered this very carefully and may I say your consideration of this fact is another reason you were an excellent choice for our first contact. I would like you to meet with the small group which has been gathered for this project, they are representative of all regions of our world, and have definite ideas on who we should initially approach."

Cameron felt honoured to be chosen and was already searching his memory for scientists who he would consider candidates for the project.

"The first person I would suggest we take into our confidence is Doctor Mahajan Kuval. He is the person responsible for teaching me my astral projection skills."

Edard nodded.

"Yes we are aware of Dr. Kuval, he would be a fine choice, and as you say, should no doubt be the first person we bring into our confidence, he will be invaluable in the training of the other scientists for this project. Now, perhaps you should return home and take time to absorb all you have learned. We can meet again tomorrow at about this time with my colleges and plan our next actions."

Cameron was about to protest as he was very keen to explore Gi, however he realised how fast everything was moving, and decided that Edard was right. He would take the day to meet with Dr. Kuval to brief him on what he had learned, and hopefully convince him to join the adventure.