

Ethereal - Chapter 7

Cameron rose from his bed feeling refreshed. It was strange that although he had spent his sleeping hours on another planet, he felt as though he had the rejuvenating benefits of a good night's sleep. He checked the time on his phone and saw that it was 6:30 am, which was around the time he normally rose to meet his day.

He showered and dressed and then breakfasted on fruit, toast and tea, after which he watched the television news without paying much attention, just filling in time until he thought it an appropriate hour to call Dr. Kuval.

His mind raced as he went over the events of the previous night, still hardly daring to believe what he had experienced. Part of him wanted to dismiss it as a wild dream, but when he examined the events of the past few weeks in his mind's eye, he was in no doubt that this was actually happening to him, and he could not wait to pour it all out to Dr. Kuval, the only person on Earth he knew who was likely to take him seriously.

He phoned Kuval's office at precisely 8:30 am and recognised the voice of the Doctor's assistant on the other end of the line.

"Good morning this is Doctor Kuval's office, how can I help you?"

"Hello Kerry, its Cameron Gates. I wonder if I could have a quick word with Dr. Kuval."

"I'll just see if he is free Mr. Gates."

Cameron was put on hold momentarily, however it seemed no time before Dr. Kuval came on the line.

"Good morning Cameron. How can I help you?"

"Oh! Good morning Doctor. I have some exciting news regarding my planet. It is very important that I speak to you as soon as possible."

"This sounds mysterious, let me see. I have a cancelation at 10 am. Is this a good time for you?"

"Excellent Doctor, I'll see you then."

Cameron hung up the phone and made ready to go over to Nundah where Kuval's offices were situated. As he pulled the windows shut at the front of the house, he noticed a dark coloured sedan parked across the street, the windows of the car were strongly tinted but he thought he could make out two men seated in the front.

He considered that they may be watching him, but then thought that he was probably being paranoid and closed the windows and went out to the garage and his car.

He arrived at Kuval's rooms just before 10 am and entered the waiting room. Dr. Kuval was standing at the reception desk talking to Kerry as he entered, and turned to greet him with his customary smile.

"Cameron, good to see you. Please come through."

Cameron followed him into his office and stood at the desk as Dr. Kuval closed the door. Once the door was closed he blurted out his news.

"There are people there Doctor, a civilization, an advanced civilization living on the planet. They've been there for thousands of years and the greatest shock is that they are human, they are originally from Earth."

Kuval indicated a chair.

"Please slow down Cameron, take a seat and tell me about this from the beginning."

Cameron sat as requested and took a deep breath. He then related the whole story to Kuval from the time of first contact with Edard.

Kuval did not speak until he finished, sitting back in his chair, his elbows on the armrests, with fingers entwined in front of his face. When Cameron finished he slowly shook his head.

"What an amazing story. I am honoured that you would include me in this. Of course I will travel with you to the planet, once they have a body for me."

Cameron smiled at Dr. Kuval.

"You are in luck Doctor. As with me the Gians extracted a sample of your essence weeks ago and now have a clone ready to go. I know it seems like a violation of sorts, but I'm actually glad they did. It certainly saved time."

Kuval nodded thoughtfully.

"Yes I suppose you are right. But we must insist that they refrain from any further sampling until they gain approval. I could see some people not being as understanding or as excited about it as we are."

Cameron agreed and then had another question for Dr. Kuval.

"We need a place to secure our physical bodies when we travel. I have a lockable room at my house, but do you have any preferences?"

Kuval rose from his chair.

"Follow me."

He lead Cameron through the room in which he had originally introduced him to Binaural Beats, to a door in the back which opened into another room similar to a hospital ward with three medical beds set up across the back wall.

"I am also a medical Doctor, and although I rarely use this room now, it was quite useful when I operated as a GP. We will be quite safe in here for any length of time. We can set up a drip system to nourish our bodies if we wish to stay away for any longer than a day or two. We will have to bring my wife into our confidence, so that she can watch over us. She is also a doctor and an accomplished astral traveller."

"Whatever you think best Doctor. Edard wants us to go back to Gi tonight, to meet with his group of leaders to discuss the next steps. We can leave from here if you like. I can come over at around 6pm?"

Kuval nodded.

"Yes, I will clear my schedule. I must say, I'm very excited Cameron, this is amazing. Come at about 4:30 pm. You can meet my wife and we can take some tea together while we tell her our plan. She is borrowing the Binaural Beats room to instruct a friend in astral projection this afternoon; however they will be finished by then."

Cameron grinned at Kuval and shook his hand before turning for the door.

"It certainly is exciting. I can't wait to see more of the planet. I'll see you tonight at six."

After leaving Kuval's office, Cameron walked out onto the street and around to where he had parked his car at the back of Kuval's rooms. As he was about to unlock his door, he glanced across the street and stopped abruptly. There parked by the opposite curb was the same dark coloured sedan he had noticed outside his house that morning. Now he felt sure that they were watching him.

He got into his car and started the engine, all the time watching the dark sedan. Backing around and exiting the car park, he turned into Sandgate Road and drove east, glancing in his rear-view mirrors periodically to see if the strange car followed. He got all the way to the Hamilton Road lights and turned north without seeing the dark vehicle and with a sigh of relief he gunned the car toward home, calling in to get bread and milk on the way, taking the opportunity to scan the area for anything that may suggest he was still being pursued.

There was no sign of the car on the way to his house and he was starting to think it had been paranoia on his part to think that he was being followed, that was until he turned into his street. There parked opposite and down the street a little from his driveway, was the dark sedan; however this time there was nobody seated inside it.

His eyes combed the street and his neighbour's yards for any sign of strangers. There didn't seem to be anything out of the ordinary, so he garaged the car and exited quickly into the house, closing and locking the door to the garage behind him.

With great relief, he dropped his keys on the hall stand and went through to the kitchen; however his feeling of safety was only momentary. A deep voice with a strong Russian accent shattered his relief.

"Good morning Doctor Gates. We seem to have beaten you home."

Cameron spun around to see two men in suits standing in his dining room.

"Who the hell are you? What are you doing in my house?"

The two moved toward him.

"Who we are is not important. The information we need from you is however. Already we know you have perfected astral projection and we also know you have travelled to the planet Gliese 581g. You have been observed descending to the surface with another wraith, and we know also that your companion wasn't Dr. Kuval. It is suspected that it was a wraith from the planet. Is this correct?"

Cameron backed away from the men, edging toward the drawers in the kitchen which held the kitchen knives, the only means of protection he could think of.

"Yes, I have travelled to Gliese 581g, but you are wrong about my companion, he was another colleague of mine. We have been learning astral projection from Dr. Kuval and travelled to the planet to see if it supported life, its part of our research."

The agent who seemed to be in charge moved quickly to cut off Cameron's path to the drawers.

"Do not insult our intelligence Dr. Gates. We have had a program of astral projection for many years and know much about the civilization on Gliese 581g. As yet we have had no contact with them; however we suspect that you have. We have been observing you since you first travelled to the planet."

Cameron's mind was racing, they didn't seem to know about the Gians' cloning program, nor did they seem to have observed any of their astral activity. But, if they had seen him go down to the planet, how had they not followed and observed him connecting with his clone? He was determined not to give anything away; however he would try to learn all he could about what they knew.

"I don't know what to tell you. Yes my colleague and I did observe the people of Gliese 581g; however we have had no contact. We intent to travel back to see if they are capable of astral projection so as to attempt contact. If you have known about them for years, why haven't you been able to make contact?"

The Russian grabbed his shirt front.

"There are buildings that we are unable to enter, even in the astral state. You were seen entering one of those buildings. How was this achieved?"

"You are mistaken, we could not enter those buildings either. Some sort of shield prevented our entry."

He was making it up as he went along now and hoped he was convincing.

The larger man, who seemed to be in charge, moved quickly to him and smashed his fist into Cameron's stomach, doubling him over in agony.

"Don't play games with us Dr. Gates. You were seen entering the building. Now you will tell us what you know or things will go very badly for you."

Cameron recovered from the blow and decided to act.

He straightened up suddenly and grabbed up the breakfast stool in front of him, swinging it at the head of his interrogator, catching him a glancing blow and knocking him to the floor. He spun around and made for the door through which he had just entered the house.

Two shots rang out and he felt searing pain to his head and then there was nothing.

The interrogator picked himself up from the floor and shouted at this companion, who was now standing over Cameron's inert body, blood spilling from a head wound.

"You idiot, you have killed him. How will we get the information now?"

The other man defended his actions.

"He was getting away; he would have raised an alarm."

The first man shoved his companion toward the front door.

"Instead you raise the alarm with gunshots. Quickly we must get out of here; people would surely have heard your stupidity and called the authorities."

They exited the house via the front door and took hurried steps to their car across the street. They quickly got into the vehicle and gunning the engine, sped away from the house.

Cameron suddenly found himself floating above the scene in the kitchen. He watched as his attackers argued and ran from the house, and then his attention was drawn to his body on the floor.

It seemed that they had killed him; he looked around, *what happened next? Was he supposed to go somewhere? Nothing seemed to be happening; there was no light to go toward. What should he do?* He had heard all sorts of stories about what was supposed to happen when you died. He didn't know what the connection was between death and astral travel. All he knew from Dr. Kuval was that they were part of the same thing but different.

He wasn't frightened or apprehensive, he was a little anxious and then suddenly hopeful.

He thought about the incident with his family at the scene of the car accident. He looked around, would they be there to greet him? Would he be able to connect with them again?

He waited and searched. There was nothing.

Cameron considered his situation for a time and then decided that he would go back to Dr.

Kuval. He would know what to do or what should be happening to him. Anyway, regardless of whether he could help him or not, he had to warn Kuval about his attackers.