

July 1955

It was an ordinary summer day, with me perched on my grandfather's front porch while he worked on his cars. He had a great old private workshop, filled with dust and old tools, an ancient radio, junk everywhere, just as a grandfather's workshop should be.

This place was every youngster's dream as there has never been a child anywhere in the civilized world who would not have loved to paw and pore through this wonderland of ageless treasures. It not only looked as it should but engaged all the senses, with its musty aromas and the sound of the funny, old person music he played while he worked.

Although the day seemed fairly routine, I had one of my premonitions that something was about to happen that could only occur in the life of Myron Dyal, and I soon learned I was right.

I glanced around to see if I could catch a clue to whatever was coming, but all I saw was a car parked out on the street, a vehicle with red primer on one door. The red splotch against the rest of the paint had the appearance of an offbeat face. I continued looking around and was suddenly struck by the beauty of the flowers in grandfather's garden, their color bearing a resemblance to the primer on the car.

I was enjoying the colorful scene of man-made machinery and God-made flora, when out of stage left came a man walking slowly and easily down the sidewalk, hardly an uncommon event, and I appreciated the normalcy of his appearance, no black garments, no glowing red orbs where regular eyes should have been. Just a man out for a stroll on a summer day.

He halted in front of the house and asked me how things were with me. I told him all was well. Then he asked about Grandpa. I assumed the man knew Grandpa, as he referred to him by his first name, Homer. I told him my grandfather seemed fine and asked if he would like me to call him.

"No," he replied. "I'm really here to see you."

When I asked what I could do for him, he promised there were things he could do for me, and started reciting a litany of intimate details about my life.

Rapt with attention, I wondered how he could possibly have knowledge of my interior life, the creatures I interacted with, the strange worlds to which I was admitted as a privileged guest. He seemed to know everything. I was afraid, I felt violated, intruded upon in the most private areas of my thoughts and feelings. He spoke of the night when I saw the man who held fire in his hands.

Even my brother, with whom I shared the bedroom, had never witnessed any of these things and I certainly had not confided them to him.

This man related the tale of the night I saw the shadow of a body swinging back and forth from the bedroom door in the dim light from outside the house. I had asked my brother to go outside and see what was causing the shadow playing upon the door, although years later when I mentioned this incident, my brother denied all knowledge of it. Apparently it never occurred in the “real world.”

I also was told of the time the room filled with leaves. I was initially mesmerized by the gently falling torrent but when the leaves continued falling with no end in sight, the old fear began to make itself felt as I could see myself drowning in leaves.

I asked him how he could know these things, so private, so unspoken to anyone. He responded that he was my friend, my protector, and if I were ever in need of anything, all I need do was direct my thoughts to him.

He refused to tell me his name, merely repeating his instruction to think of him as a guardian. Then he said something odd, “Be good, little one. I am always near you, protecting you.”

Waving and smiling, he turned to leave, making his way back up the street the same he had had come. Before I could call out to him, he simply vanished from view. There was no natural way he could have outdistanced my eyesight so rapidly.

I then realized I was not at my grandfather’s house but at my own home in my bedroom.

I felt dizzy and my orientation was further muddled by the strange-looking red fog that swirled around the edges of the room. I felt the familiar grip of old friend Fear as I tried to stand, winding up hitting the side of the bed then falling to the floor. Out of the corner of my eye I glimpsed a vision of Grandpa’s house as tears welled up in my eyes and the world faded into darkness.