A lush garden scene featuring a pond in the foreground. The pond is surrounded by a variety of flowers, including a large field of orange and yellow tulips in the lower half. In the background, there are several tall, slender trees with dense green foliage and white blossoms. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Erica's
Flower Garden

A love
story

Rolf A. F. Witzsche

Is it possible for a gardener to embrace but one single flower in a vast garden and close the eyes to all the rest of the profusion of life?

It has been said that space is the final frontier. I like to disagree and propose that the final frontier is the Principle of Universal Love. We have reached into space. We have achieved what no other form of life that we know has accomplished, to leave the Earth and return to it. Nevertheless, we still hate and steal from each other and make wars and kill human beings in countless different ways. We can reach to the distant planets while we have not yet discovered how to reach access a table heart to heart. That frontier still lies open to be discovered and its dimension promises to be infinitely more beautiful than the emptiness of space.

The love story, ^Erica's Flower Garden,^ that was created many years ago. It unfolds as a kaleidoscope of discoveries of love shining through all as a universal principle. Sadly, we've been trained by religions and countless teachers to trash the Principle of Universal Love as if it were a great evil, whereby we have narrowed our lives and its joys. Shouldn't our lives be rather like a snowflake that even in its icy crystalline state is exquisite in its symmetry and intricacy? And much more than that, should our lives be like a symphony of living in a vast flower garden? That's what the human potential holds in store for us. Oh, but how to open our eyes? Of course, the first step is always the hardest.

The love story presented here is made of of three chapters of the novel, [Discovering Love](#), the first episode of the series [The Lodging for the Rose](#) by Rolf A. F. Witzsche.

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Part 1 - A Mission that Can't Fail

Before I even accepted the mission to the East, I had been told by my boss that one of the spies, a certain Leroy Anderson, an American, had been in prison there for over six months. He was to be exchanged for one of the 'communist' spies that had worked for East German intelligence, who had been caught in New York. The exchange had already been agreed to in principle by both governments. It was an easy mission. Nothing could possibly go wrong, right? Of course I said yes.

Actually, I met Leroy Anderson only once in all that time, on the day he was released. Leroy had chosen to spend his first night as a free man in a West Berlin 'night club.' I remembered the rhythm and wild music there, and a stripper who greatly impressed him. I remarked to him, casually, that this particular stripper's act was the least boring. To him such a suggestion was sacrilegious. So I said nothing more. After all, he had just spent time in communist jails. Who was I to argue? And who was I anyway, compared to him? He was the hero, the spy whose life had been in a balance. I was only a civil servant, a technician who had worked out the detailed steps for his release. Anyone could have done that. Leroy had risked his life for his country. Diplomats don't get into tough spots like that. Still, I wondered if he knew how little he had asked for himself in return. There was nothing at that strip show for which I would have exchanged a single one of the bright moments that I had experienced in the process of gaining his release.

The 'Strip Palace,' as a neon sign bragged, was a pub off the main road going into Berlin. The hotel's captain, who obviously had never been there, had praised it. None of this, though, mattered to Leroy. He was the happiest man alive.

"Aren't they super!" he would say between bites of bratwurst or munching down sauerkraut, followed by stein after stein of that heavy German beer. "You should come to Pittsburgh," he would add, when he noticed that I wasn't too excited. "It is all right here, but in Pittsburgh, the girls there, I mean, they're absolutely terrific! They've got girls there, I tell you, better than anywhere."

I was glad he didn't know that I came from Pittsburgh, myself. There might have been arguments that would have spoiled his evening.

"In Berlin, Rome, Paris, things are all right," he said, "but not like in Pittsburgh!"

Leroy was a playboy, no doubt, and a person not too keenly aware of the deeper things. Still, in time I saw in him the very person that Heather had accused me of in her letter. Oh, I had thought that I was so much better than he was. Later I felt that the Foreign Service must have made the same mistake regarding me that the CIA had made in hiring him. We were a match in that respect. I wondered if he had realized that.

Ursula Fleischer, from the Internal Security Service in East Germany, had instantly figured him out, as she told me after we met. She had been my contact in the East. She had told me details about Leroy's personality that I'm sure he wasn't aware of himself. It's too bad, I had thought at the moment, that she worked for the opposite side. Fortunately for me, I had come under more honorable circumstances than Leroy had. She had told me that it was his insensitivity towards people's feelings that had caught her attention. She said that he had behaved as though he was still wearing his CIA badge pinned to his shirt. "I just knew," she said.

Negotiating for Leroy's release had been my first real foreign assignment. I was eager. Of course, I hadn't expected a mission of great importance. Still, the thought was a tremendously exiting one, to be sent alone behind the iron curtain. Nobody knew at this time that the curtain would soon fall. Nobody even dared to hope. It appeared to be cast in steel to remain forever.

According to my official career-plan I was to become an assistant to the boss some day soon. He was waiting to be transferred to some consulate in a far off little country. He had been hoping it would be Spain. In preparation, I had taken Spanish courses for three years. Top diplomatic positions in exotic places are often granted as political favors, which made him a candidate. In those cases the responsibility for doing all the detailed work falls on the trained assistants. It was more or less in the same capacity, as an assistant temporarily assigned to the US consul in West Germany, that I was able to qualify for the assignment to cross the line into the East.

"Man, don't worry; it's an easy mission," my boss had said. "We already have an agreement. You simply have to arrange for the steps and execute the exchange. Nothing can go wrong, right?"

"Right!" I had agreed.

He had handed me the papers in an envelope. "You'll be leaving tomorrow," he had said with a handshake.

Excited as I was, I hadn't checked the papers until I was on the plane the next day. That's where I noticed the designation 'junior,' added to my title, which was duly noted in Bonn. I supposed it was customary, but the guy in charge at the embassy didn't like any assistants meddling in his affairs, especially not a greenhorn. And on top of it, he hated to see 'his' embassy involved with the Leroy Anderson affair. He disliked anything connected with the CIA. He was adamant about it.

The mission that I had looked forward to, and was still proud to have been selected for, suddenly unfolded like a badly written spy novel. "So they're sending a baby," the guy in charge remarked acidly after he had given me a good looking over as though the entire mission depended on the quality of my suit. What gall this man had! I knew he wasn't the ambassador, but I wasn't quite clear on whether I outranked him, or he me. It seemed wiser to let him go on until he had enough of it. All I wanted was some transportation.

"So, you want a car?" he grunted and took a puff on his cigar. "Take the train," he added, "they don't like show-offs in the East."

When he was finished giving his 'advice,' he abruptly walked out of the room. This ended our chat.

Of course, as a freshman, I had expected to get a shocking introduction to the real world. The lesson I learned that day is that some people never grow up. I soon found out that this happens to countries as well. Naturally it didn't occur to me that I, too, had a great deal of growing up to do.

I decided not to take the man's advice. Instead of going by train I leased a silver-gray Nissan Micra, the smallest car on the road that I felt comfortable enough to give someone a ride in. I leased it for a whole month. It was cheap enough for that. And so, with a diplomatic identity sticker pasted in the corner of the windshield I set out for East Berlin, entering the walled-in city of a country guarded with machine gun towers, land mines and trip wires that set off shrapnel throwing machines.

All that I knew about my mission within this fortress, were the objective, to get Leroy Anderson out, and the name of my contact with whom the arrangements were to be made.

At the ministry in Berlin I was told that my contact person, Ursula Fleischer, worked in Leipzig, a city some distance away deep inside the fenced-in country. Miraculously, it only took the better part a day to find this out.

In Leipzig, a city with a long cultural history, life was definitely more relaxed than in the capital city. I was told that I had come too late. I was told that Ursula Fleischer was on vacation for a month. It seemed the whole country was on vacation. When I mentioned the Anderson exchange, only a few people knew anything about it and most of them didn't care. I should just wait, I was told repeatedly. I argued at great length with the people at her office after all those hours of trying to find it and gaining access to it. I tried to give them a sense of the importance of the mission, almost pleading with them, suggesting that someone else might handle the case. No, it wasn't possible. Nor would they give me her home address. That was against the rules. They also assured me with a 'smile' that this wasn't an urgent case. They said I should be patient and wait, or come back in a month.

As I left the office, an older man came rushing after me. He took me aside, quietly. "I know how you can locate her, if you're up to it." He spoke in broken English, but excitedly. He told me that on the outskirts of the city a large man-made lake has been created, with sandy beaches. "One of its beaches is reserved for people who want to swim without bathing suits. She often goes there on her days off." The man spoke with a smile. He described her as though he had seen her there himself.

I shook my head. This had all the appearance of a trap, perhaps to embarrass the West.

"Trust me," the man said.

I smiled at him. This was fast becoming a comical situation. Still, I trusted him. There we stood in the middle of a dimly lit corridor in an ancient castle, the air reeking of floor wax mixed with kerosene that kept the aging linoleum from drying out, and he speaks of trust. Worst of all, I responded. What inspired this trust? Was it this foreign place? Trust and diplomacy were opposites on the same scale. Still, the man's eyes sparkled. His face was bright. He was smiling at the idea, as though he would love to trade places. He promised something exciting, something beyond diplomacy. Perhaps that, all by itself, inspired the trust.

I thanked the kind man and told him that I wasn't sure I could follow his advice. I also wasn't sure whether I might yet do it, regardless. Something didn't add up. This was a different kind of diplomacy, with a human touch. I knew one thing for certain, that waiting for

a month wasn't my style, nor would Washington be satisfied with this lack of results.

I parked the Micra on a dirt road at the edge of a field of wheat, far away from the entrance of the nudist beach. I pretended that I set out from there for a hike across the country. If someone were to connect my diplomatic mission with the nudist beach the consequences could be unimaginable. They could spell the end of a career that had barely begun. Naturally the camp was legal, and certainly the public accepted it. The police had assured me of that. But how would it be regarded at the home office if a scandal developed?

The approach I took appeared to be safe enough. No one had followed me. No one was anywhere near to be seen. I was quite alone as I walked back along the dirt road between the wire fence on one side and a field on the other, bathed in the brilliance of the morning sunshine. I stole past the entrance gate like a bank robber preparing a heist. Still, no one took notice. I quickly undressed to merge with the crowd. Now what?

There I sat, stark naked in the sand at the beach, and no one took the least notice of me. Actually, it was rather nice to feel the wind and the sand. Also, there was a certain sense of honesty connected with being totally naked, an honesty with others and myself. There was nothing covered up! And surprisingly, no one stared. Maybe the world should have stared. Ages of tradition had been broken. The clock had been turned back to those ancient times before the tree of knowledge was invented. The tradition of seeing categorical differences in people is the result of false education, but it comes to a halt when the last vestige of artificial identities is shed. There is nothing left to veil, embellish, twist the imagination, or invite hypocrisy! People seemed content to let humanity be as it is: men, women, children, old people, some delicate and slender, some robust, some fat, all together in one group. And they were all beautiful in their way, though not always according to common perception.

Most people were darkly tanned, with a few among them as white as snow, and some as pink, as I feared I would soon be. Unquestionably I belonged to the pink category. Suddenly, I had to laugh. What a hypocrite I was! There I was at it again, dividing people into categories. The idea was oddly invalid there.

I stood up and went for a swim, as others did. There was a wide sandy beach at the lake. The people I met were easy going, friendly. They joked, laughed, and greeted each other. After my swim I simply stretched myself onto my blanket on the lawn behind the beach to dry off.

"Hello, Gertrude!" someone called.

One of the boys next to me sat up. I noticed a girl by the edge of the water; she waved at him and came over for a chat. She stood in front of him and his friend and me, naked as she was. The boys didn't bother getting up. It didn't seem expected. They were comfortable where they were, and she remained standing. The conversation strayed over many topics, from university plans to the boy's parents, the weather, and the beach. The girl said that she came to the beach often and wished her mother would come, too. "I'm sure she would love it here."

"Oh, if my mother saw me like this, looking at you," said one of the boys, "I can't imagine what she would say!" He began to laugh.

"Your parents would die worrying about what the public and their precious scholars might think," said the other. "Can you imagine, the gossip, the great Emil Schwarz and his wife coming here? Can you imagine what this would do to the University and his illustrious

career?"

The girl smiled, "it would take all the starch out of it." She burst into laughter before she had finished the sentence.

"Hey, it isn't fair to joke about that," said the older boy.

"No, what isn't fair is that people can be so small-minded, and cruel, and get away with it," replied the other.

"And be so religious about it," added the girl.

The boys agreed.

She was a beautiful girl, exciting to look at. After a while she went on her way and the boys put their heads down and dozed as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened. To me, it was unbelievable that it had happened at all. It was honest, open, and unpretentious.

I closed my eyes for a short snooze, comfortable and satisfied, enjoying the sun. There was something healthy and natural about the way these kids related to one-another.

A while later I went swimming again and followed it up with a long walk around the rest of the beach looking for Ursula Fleischer; someone tall, slender, with hair "almost red" and breasts not too big, as the man had said. I could see at least a dozen contenders. Since this was the holiday season, there was quite a crowd at the beach. I wondered how best to begin my search. I couldn't just ask: "Verzeihen Sie bitte, sind Sie Ursula Fleischer?"

But what else could I do? There was no official etiquette established for such a situation. Diplomacy covered only 'starched' situations, the games where you operate from known backgrounds and stereotyped behavior patterns that you have studied in depth. In a chess game you know exactly how the figures move. But there was no game played at this beach, or at least not one which rules I understood. So I just sat there and enjoyed the day, studying the game that wasn't a game, and swam, slept some, walked around, enjoyed the view. After sunset I got dressed again, rolled up my blanket and journeyed back to the Micra.

The day's entry in the log read: "Ten hour search at Kolkwitzer See, to locate Ursula Fleischer. Unsuccessful!"

The next day I tried again, with equally little success. By midday I must have asked at least a dozen girls, from the far end of the beach all the way to the life guard office, "Verzeihen Sie bitte, sind Sie Ursula Fleischer?"

It was quite frustrating in a way. Also, I got more than one curious reaction.

Part 2 - Erica's Flower Garden

Searching for Ursula Fleischer at the beach, with little to go by, may have been frustrating in terms of the mission, but in real terms, it wasn't a total waste of time. In fact, it became rather interesting later that day.

One of women shook her head and said that she was sorry for having to disappoint me, "I am not Ursula Fleischer," she said in near perfect English, "though I wish I was," she added.

"How did you know I speak English?" I asked.

She pointed at the book in my hand.

"My name is Peter," I introduced myself. "I am supposed to meet someone here by the name of Ursula Fleischer, someone I have never met before."

"Ah, a blind date, is it?" she asked with a grin.

"No, it is not exactly a date," I replied and paused for a moment. "As a matter of fact, I am not even sure that she is here. Also, she won't know that I am looking for her."

I wasn't quite sure if what I said made sense. She was a fascinating woman to look at, which meant that everything else became secondary. There was something wonderful in the way she smiled. She said something about wanting to help me if I could describe the person I was looking for.

"Someone tall," I said, "slender, with hair almost red, and breasts not too big." I explained to her that this was the way the man at the Rathaus had described her.

"The description fits me perfectly," she said, "but it is also quite broad."

"Yes, it fits quite a few other people," I added.

"Is this your first time here?" she asked while she scanned the shore. "By the way, my name is Erica," she added, "I come here often."

"I am from Pittsburgh, I came here yesterday for the first time," I replied mechanically. All this seemed unimportant at the moment. I couldn't help looking at her, drinking in her warm smile and her graceful, beautiful, female shape. "I wish you were Ursula Fleischer," I added, and began to grin now, too.

"You wouldn't say that if your wife was here," she replied, and smiled even more now, "but I love you for saying it."

"Ah, but how did you know that I am married?" I asked.

"You told me."

"Me? I never mentioned anything like that."

"You told me with your eyes. The way you are fascinated by me seems to indicate that you have been a happily married man for a dozen or more years and have never laid eyes on another woman for all that time. You're like someone who has been locked up in prison for a long time, and I am the first person to come your way."

"No, Erica, you are the most beautiful person here, that's why. And yes, I have been married for thirteen years. My wife's name is Sylvia."

"Would she be shocked if she saw us here?" she asked.

I nodded silently.

"But why should she be, Peter?"

"I think she would feel dishonored by it," I said, "or cheated. The concept of marital fidelity is such a convoluted one. It can cause so much pain when it is perceived to be violated. However, even the best husband is still a human being, with human needs, like any other man. Forgive me please for being human, for staring at you. You are right. You fascinate me. You are a woman. Perhaps I shouldn't be looking at you, but to be honest, I am deeply affected by your presence. It feels wonderful to look at someone as beautifully female in every respect, as you are. I hope you're not offended."

She shook her head, "Why don't we sit down? Let's talk for a while. I will tell you how Kolkwitzer See came to be."

"Are you sure?" I asked, "I must warn you, I may not be able to take my eyes off you."

She replied with a beaming smile. "I am honored by your desire to look at me," she said.

"Oh?" I said.

"If you were an artist," she said, "wouldn't I model for you? I would be honored if you would choose me. You would create a painting that would capture the very essence of me. It would tour all the great galleries of the world, and people would come and be moved by what they saw. This would honor me. So, why should I feel less honored that you want to look at me just for being myself?"

I didn't know what to reply to this. I simply nodded. I invited her to sit down on my blanket. We were facing each other and smiled. She asked whether I had been to Sunday School as a child, and if so, if I remembered some of it? She said she remembered a parable by Christ Jesus that had stayed in her mind all these years. The story was about inheriting a kingdom. The king addressed himself to two groups, one on his right side, and one to his left. He praised those on the right and said that they would inherit the kingdom. Then he gave his reasons, addressing those selected. Erica explained that the king's reasons were profound. "I was hungry and you gave me meat, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you took me in, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." She asked if I could remember that story.

I nodded. I replied, that as I recalled the story the selected people said to the king that they never did such a thing. "When did we ever see you hungry, or thirsty, naked, sick, in prison, or as a stranger?"

"Yes," said Erica, "but the king replied that they did these things to him indeed, in as much as they had done them to the least person in his kingdom. Then he condemned those others who were not selected, because they had not done so." Erica added that the story presents a principle, or law, that is rarely recognized, because it goes so totally against the grain of the world's conventions.

She paused for a moment. "If only more people would realize that the law is easily fulfilled," she added, "and how richly rewarding it can be." Then she began to laugh, "All that I have to do to fulfill the law, is to be myself. Nothing more is required, and look it makes you

so happy and I feel richer and more precious at the same time. That's why I said to you that I am honored. I really am. Something beautiful is going on between us, don't you agree that this is so?"

I would have dared for a kiss, but then she started to talk about the history of the lake where the beach was located. She said that the lake was artificially created by flooding a depleted open pit brown coal mine. "It has become a resource for the soul now," she commented.

We talked about many things that afternoon, about Ursula Fleischer, my diplomatic mission, Pittsburgh, my marriage. She said that she was married, too, and that her husband was away on an out of town assignment. Then we talked about the meaning of fidelity, and whether our being together at the beach might be considered a breach of trust, a loss of fidelity. We decided that it wasn't. She asked me to consider what Sylvia and I had sworn to each other at our marriage ceremony: "to love, to respect, to honor, and to support one-another. At least that's what I and Fritz have sworn to each other," she added. "So we never swore that we would not look at another man or woman as a sexual being for the remainder of our life, right? This means that there is room in our marriage agreements to also fulfill the divine demand, which is a demand on each one of us to help meet the human need in whatever form it may exist."

I fully agreed. Her reasoning amazed me. This beach was fast becoming one of the most exiting, beautiful, and interesting places I had been at, for a long time. We stayed till sunset, then I invited her to join me for a dinner fit for the occasion, and to a dance afterwards. I suggested that this, too, would fulfill a deeply seated human need. She agreed.

We went to a fine restaurant in the middle of the city, right as we were coming from the beach. It was daring. This was certainly not customary. I was probably the only man there without a tie. But we didn't care. More important things ruled the day. Sharing ideas was more important than obeying conventions. We talked about many things over dinner, personal things, and sometimes intimate things. One of the things that had puzzled me ever since we met at the beach was her accuracy in perception when she told me that I had been married for a dozen years. "Was it just a lucky guess?" I asked her.

She shook her head and smiled. "You are like someone who lives in a beautiful garden that has hundreds of types of flowers growing in it, but who is bound by some code of ethics to look at only one single flower and none other. Of course, living there, you are aware of the rich profusion in the garden, all the colors and shades of colors, and the delicate forms that have unfolded in the sunshine. Still, you dare not to look at them because of your commitment to the one single flower. You tell yourself that there is no need to look further, because, as the old saying goes, once one has seen one flower one has seen them all. Ah, but out of the corner of your eye you notice that the saying is not true. So, one day you protest against the code of ethics that had narrowed your vision to only one single flower. You open your heart to the rich profusion there is all around you. You kneel down where you stand and admire one of those other flowers that you had not allowed yourself to look at before. Suddenly you find yourself immensely enriched by its fragrance, its shape, and its hues of color. As a consequence of this experience you stop and take it all in, you drink in that beautiful moment, you store it away as a memory for all those other days."

She smiled more sweetly now, a smile brighter than the light at noon. "Most men," she said, "if they are honest with themselves, get to this point in a dozen years. Some take longer, and some never get there. Those who never get there are usually blind to life. They either don't live at all or tend to play cruel games, games that are focused on power, wealth, prestige, rape, murder, crime. Also, there are some who never get married at all, who may be totally blind to the garden, or who, in the other extreme, are so deeply aware of it that they can never shut out anything of the beauty of life. So they remain unmarried, because they can't meet what the conventions demand. But those are few, and few of them are truly happy."

She reached across the table at this point and put her hand on mine. "You are one of those honest married men, who after a dozen years or so recognize the paradox that they have gotten themselves into, who then struggle to resolve it, courageously. It is a beautiful and exiting experience to be able to witness this awakening in another person, and to be a part of it, to experience the unfolding appreciation of the beauty of life. This is much more rewarding than struggling alone. And, Peter, I am honored that you chose me to be involved in your awakening."

I don't know what touched me the most about her. Her speech, her tone of voice, her smile, the way her hair hung loosely, the way it complemented her complexion and the dark yellow of her dress. They all added to the magic of the moment, the kind of magic that one hopes will never end. But mostly it was what she said that made the moment special. She had said that she felt honored by me sharing my awakening with her. Wow!

"And so am I that you are here with me," I said to her somewhat bewildered. I took hold of her hand, "Yes," I said quietly, "our life should be like living in a garden; your life and mine."

"Of course it takes a lot of effort to cultivate a garden," she replied.

"This also means that we can have a great life ahead of us in our individual worlds if we take care to tend that garden well, provided we awake to it more fully," I added with a smile.

Perhaps it was the vase with three small roses on our table that inspired the analogy.

I said that all of this was like a fairy tale coming true. Except, fairy tales don't exist in the real world.

"I would like to suggest to you that you've got the world upside down," said Erica with a smile. "What you call the real world is a world of fairy tales, and they don't come true as you have admitted yourself."

I just nodded in agreement.

"Tell me," she said, "if you can figure out an answer, why it is that most married men dream about having an intimate relationship with other women, and women with men?"

"The answer is obvious, isn't it?" I replied, "but why don't we accept the obvious? I suppose the reason is that we have become slaves to a mythology that has nothing to do with reality. We think like slaves. We behave like slaves. We dream of freedom, but we live like slaves to that mythology."

"Welcome to Disneyland," said Erica. "Welcome to our fairy tale world where nothing is real and never will be." Then she stood up and kissed me right across the table. "That was

real," she added, "it reflects my love for you."

We had soup that evening, Wiener Schnitzel, and later, Black Forest cake, the finest in German tradition, but none of that measured up to the feast for the heart that she provided with her smiles, with the grandeur of her ideas, and the love of her sharing.

"I find everything extraordinarily beautiful that is happening tonight. Do you feel the same way?" I asked her.

She nodded. "It is beautiful, yes," she agreed, "but the sad part about it is that this beautiful happening is perceived to be extraordinary. It shouldn't be that way. It should be happening all the time. It should be commonplace. We have learned to travel to the moon and back. We have done this in an almost routine fashion, but we haven't yet learned to freely cross the bridge between two human hearts except on extraordinary occasions. Also, we find it easier to sit at our radio telescopes and study galaxies that are billions of light years away, than to look at each other across the barriers we have created between us. In a sense, we're hypocrites, Peter. We have made all these advances in understanding, even to understand the inner spaces of atomic physics and microbiology, but we haven't made a significant step in almost two thousand years towards understanding the strengths, the beauty, and the needs of our human Soul. In fact, we have become more and more isolated from one-another. Only on extraordinarily rare occasions, as this one, do we dare to take a tiny step in the right direction, if we dare at all. This is a paradox that must be resolved, but how is one to do that?"

I shook my head. I had no idea. I had never made these comparisons that she had so easily presented, and with such clear and simple logic. "You are a genius," I said in utter amazement. "Where do you get these ideas from? What do you do for a living? How...."

"I work at the university," she cut me off. "I do advanced research in organic chemistry for microbiological engineering and bacteriological processing, that sort of thing. I think this is the most exciting field that is on the move today. It is amazing what you can do by rearranging the long carbon chains of organic molecules. And what is more amazing, Peter, we can create bacteria that will do this rearranging work for us. This is more exiting than nuclear physics that I lost interest in some years ago when the funding was canceled for the necessary labs. My new research is inexpensive compared to that, and is highly promising. There is even evidence coming to the surface now that the gasoline in your car had its origin in a bacteriological process that goes on naturally deep inside the Earth. It has been noticed by some of our researchers that several big oil fields in the world are actually getting bigger, even while the oil is being pumped out. Also, they have found that the new oil is from an earlier biological age than the original pools. It may well be that oil is a renewable resource, created by bacteria deep inside the Earth."

As she spoke I nearly 'melted' away. This didn't seem real. This couldn't happen. Here I was, an insignificant junior diplomat, sitting across an exquisitely beautiful woman with two doctoral degrees who is engaged in leading edge research, and this woman has chosen to take some time out for me! I felt so tiny, so infinitesimally small, and yet so deeply honored. I asked cautiously if she was working at the leading edge of this rich new frontier. She answered that she was. She said that her favorite field in organic engineering was more advanced than nuclear physics, although nuclear physics has also a great potential for benefiting mankind.

She pointed out that nuclear power is our energy resource for the future. "Nuclear physics and its branch of engineering haven't even begun to be developed," she added, "but when it takes off, watch out!"

While talking about these things, she asked me if I knew that the entire mantle of the Earth is made up of metallic silicates of magnesium and iron, and that these silicates constitute a body of high-grade ore for two of the most useful metals known. She said that this resource is unimaginably huge, that it extends right around the Earth in a layer that is 2900 Km thick at any given place. I had to admit that I had no awareness of this. She suggested that with a few advances in nuclear engineering these metals could be released from their molecular bonds and be utilized to develop the world.

"We have riches at our feet that we have never dreamed of," she added. "With this infinite resource of materials we can easily build anything we can imagine. We can create fifty story buildings thousands of acres wide and grow our food indoors in totally controlled environments, safely, without the use of pesticides that kill the microbes in the soil. Soil microbes are crucial to human health, you know. They make our food rich in minerals and make it nutritious...."

"Wait," I interrupted, "I thought that the research funds for this kind of research has been cut, together with the funding cuts for nuclear-energy-related development work."

"Of course, they have," said Erica. This time she didn't smile. "Funding for this has been cut all over the world, especially in the West where you live. They want to starve humanity to death. It's the same old story all over again. They want us to focus our gaze onto the most primitive energy resources, and onto the most limited mineral resources for our economy and for our nutrition."

She paused as if she was searching for an answer. "I see the same narrow kind of thinking in the field of science, Peter, which I see also restricting the focus of a married person onto only one single flower amidst the rich profusion of fragrance and color and delicate shapes that abound in the garden of life. I see an enforcement of poverty in both cases. They want humanity to close its eyes and minds to the infinite riches that lie at its feet in the physical world. Nuclear fission, all by itself, can power the world with existing resources for as long as the Earth exists, not to mention nuclear fusion power, which promises to be two magnitudes greater and more efficient. But we aren't even allowed to think about that. The people who rule the minds of humanity want to shut down this notion and get us to focus on the smallest and the most primitive energy resource, like windmills."

Erica sighed. "Unfortunately, these people have a great deal of political power to pursue their destructive demands," she said. "It's become risky to even talk about nuclear power development. They want to steal humanity's future. It's more desirable for them to rule a poverty stricken world, than to exist in an advanced and developing world in which they would have no power over society. They need to spread poverty in order to be able to continue their game of looting the world. Nuclear power would put an end to that chain of poverty. That's why they aim to shut it down forever. They know that nuclear power is humanity's future. They just don't want us to have a future, and most of all, they don't want the public to know that. Every advance in civilization depends on expanding energy production. If nuclear energy is fully developed we have a resource for energy production that will last us a billion

years. This estimate doesn't even take under consideration the vastly greater potential that nuclear fusion power opens up."

I just stared at her in disbelief. It was beautiful to see her so intensely excited about the brightness of a human future that stood like a beacon in the darkness of a war-torn world. She spoke of a world that seemed like a beautiful dream, but which had the potential of becoming reality if....

"Peter, we stand at the threshold, today, to the brightest future imaginable," she interrupted my dreamscape that I had begun to build up in my mind. "This future needs not to be a dream," she said emphatically, "we have this truly infinite potential within us, but we refuse it. We have our eyes trained onto poverty. We cling to poverty, we are forced to accept it, and what is worse, people are prepared to sacrifice their lives for it."

"Are you saying that this is the same type of paradox that limits a person's focus?" I asked. "Are you saying this is the same kind of paradox than that which puts out of reach all, but that one single flower in the garden of life, as you had put it?"

"Yes, but is this really true?" she asked. "It seems that a lot of people are not inclined to play this game as it has been designed. Some break the imposed rules, Peter. Sexually, countless people look across the fence and dream. Some people even make that dream, reality. Most married people do so. Only the dreams for human development are still rigidly shut down. Those dreams have been killed. We talk about conservation instead of development. We talk about poverty, even recycling garbage to conserve, rather than about creating new resources."

"If we can protest socially, we should also be protesting scientifically," I suggested.

She agreed with me and smiled, but then she shook her head. "Love is fast becoming unfashionable, too," she added. "The protests are being ruled out."

She predicted that if this paradoxical trend weren't resolved soon, humanity would collapse itself into a New Dark Age, even while it has infinite resources at its feet with which to create the brightest future imaginable.

"Nevertheless, this commitment to poverty doesn't take anything away from the potential that exists," I suggested to her. "This means that the bright future can be initiated at any time during the present cycles of collapse."

She smiled again, but shook her head slightly. "No, Peter, this won't likely happen," she countered, gently. "Vast economic infrastructures are required to develop those infinite resources. If civilization collapses into a New Dark Age, which is more likely than not, these infrastructures will not be built and the existing ones will be destroyed."

She suggested that this doesn't have to happen, since we, ourselves, were proof that a change can be brought about. "We delivered the proof today," said Erica, "that it is possible to abandon a platform of poverty and embrace the riches that are literally lying at our feet. All it took was a grain of love and an honest response."

I agreed with her, fully.

We went to a different place after our dinner, to a place for dancing. A small band provided the music. No disco music could be heard there. The mood was romantic, and quiet enough for conversations. We spoke about different things now.

One of the more urgent topics that came to the forefront as the night wore on, was related

to the problem of parting. The question arose what the next logical step would be in the unfolding of our affair.

"I should invite you to my home for the night," said Erica, "or we should go to your hotel and spend the night there. This would certainly meet one more deeply seated human need. This would also make our affair complete, but I can't go that far. I just can't," she added. "The foundation for this next step has not been built. You must forgive me for having to disappoint you."

"My God, how can you say such a thing?" I replied. "Our getting together has been a miracle, every last bit of it. It is something that shouldn't have been possible at all, but it happened. It should have stopped right after the first few minutes when we were speaking to each other, but your love has allowed it to go on. My day has been so rich, Erica, that if it ends here, this day remains a miracle. I am not disappointed. Does one need more than one miracle a day?"

She began to laugh. "I think you will agree, though, that a part of it remains incomplete," she replied.

As the sad expression turned into laughter, she added. "It must be that way, Peter, because neither of us is prepared to deal with the consequences if we allow the next steps to unfold. The foundation has not been built upon which we can justify to our spouses what the next logical steps involve. We would both face agonies that would overshadow what we have shared. That's why we must stop here. Don't you think we owe that much consideration to our spouses, and to each other? We cannot force our spouses to accept what they are not able to comprehend. It would devastate my husband. His name is Fritz. He is a proud, selfish, and possessive man."

"We will hold back for his sake," I answered, "but I can't see Sylvia in this light. I think, if I were to explain the principle of being honest with oneself, which brought us together, and the imperative of that principle in the context of your flower garden metaphor, I believe Sylvia would understand the logic involved and its logical conclusion. It maybe difficult, but I believe she would see our being together as a response to this principle of being honest with oneself, rather than as an act of dishonesty towards her. I think I can trust her to reach up that high in perception, even when others might not."

"You really mean this, or are just saying this because it's hypothetical anyway," she interrupted me surprised.

"Maybe, it being hypothetical takes the pressure off," I answered quietly. "Still, I honestly think I might dishonor her more by assuming that she is incapable of this kind of principle-oriented perception. Look, Erica, even I can understand the principle behind your metaphor, and I'm not a great genius by any means."

"In this case, we are responding to two different situations. As for me, this has something to do with accepting responsibility," she replied. "Do you know what my definition for responsibility is?" she asked. "Taking responsibility means: To bless all, and to injure none. I cannot cause injury to Fritz even if this means that I have to stand before the Lord and confess that I could not fully comply with the divine demand to meet the human need of my fellow man."

"I think you are speaking for me, too," I answered. "I never had to think about taking

responsibility for such a thing, because it had never been required of me. Forgive me, because I have only considered Sylvia in this equation, and not its impact on your husband, Fritz. I had been faithful all my life to the boundaries that the narrow focus had imposed, according to our social codes. But now that the flower garden opens up a new territory for us, new responsibilities come to light with the new territory. We have to be careful not to tread on anything in the garden. This means that the Lord will have to pardon us both for not being able to achieve the ultimate," I suggested.

"No, a pardon won't be possible," she said, sadly. "Someone told me, 'Divine Love never pardons our sins until they are corrected.' This means, there will be no reprieve until the work is complete. And so it should be, because we cannot benefit from the riches that we do not create. The simple fact is, Peter, we won't experience the riches that these final steps might have brought into our lives. We will never be able to experience the wonders of these steps unfolding, until they actually unfold and our love becomes complete. Only then will the last of the human needs be met and the task of love become fulfilled. But until that is possible we have a long road still to travel, discoveries to make, complexities to understand, infrastructures to build. Of course when we finally take the last step, it won't be anything extraordinary. It will be just another beautiful expression of our humanity."

"Perhaps this will happen some day," I suggested.

"But it has not happened, yet," she said. "We are not ready for this new land. We can't survive there until we are ready. This is why we must draw a line for now, why we must close the gate as it were, beyond which we cannot go. This means that the single flower in our garden still controls the dimensions of our existence. This also means to me that the goal of freedom has not yet been won, though it must be won. The point is, Peter, that the freedom that we must seek, must be won on a responsible basis. Freedom must never be destructive, but be enriching; it must never be imposing, but be uplifting; it must never be irresponsible, but be a blessing to all."

"You are asking a lot, Erica," I said quietly. Deep down inside, I knew that she was right.

"No, to the contrary, Peter, I am not asking for much. This is the most minimal request that I must make. Anything less than this won't do. There can be no freedom without responsibility. Each increment of freedom that we allow ourselves to experience requires more than its equivalent in taking responsibility, and in scientifically understanding the truth on which that freedom rests. It has to be that way. We are not in a war where freedom must be won by the sword. We are in love where freedom must be won by our scientific understanding of the truth of our humanity. This understanding needs yet to be developed."

I wanted to shake my head, but who was I to argue. She was the scientist. Who was I compared to that? I was like somebody who had just been shaken out of a long sleep, still drowsy from the night. Nevertheless, I also realized that I was a human being with the same scientific capacity that she had, as a human being.

"Let me illustrate the point," she said patiently. "For many years there had been no speed limit on the autobahn. The drivers had total freedom, but they lacked responsibility. Speeds of 200 Km/hr, and greater, were observed, rain or shine, sometimes even in fog. Many times 50 to 80 cars would pile into each other when an accident occurred. This freedom to embrace insanity had to be curtailed to protect the public. Limits had to be imposed, because people

hadn't cared enough about one-another to act responsibly. Now, the autobahn is safer. It is rare now, that more than ten cars pile into each other."

With this said, she expanded the illustration into all kinds of areas where people claimed more and more freedoms without the slightest care about the consequences. She spoke of children becoming engaged in violence against each other as they see it acted out on TV, even to the point of committing murder. She further expanded the scope, speaking of wars being rushed into for political goals without the slightest thought by anyone about the dimension of human suffering. She expanded the scope even further than that, speaking about the world's financial games of speculative profiteering, without anyone having the slightest regard for who foots the bill for the profits that are demanded. She was adamant that the shuffling of paper, from one hand to another, doesn't produce anything tangible in real terms that could be counted as profit, which means that the profits that are taken, are stolen. She was also adamant that the real economy, the physical economy that alone produces things that profit society in real terms, is being collapsed by this process of irresponsibility, by which the investment funds are channeled into the dream world of financial profiteering. The end result is that the societies suffer, which tolerate such insanity. She said, "It is irresponsible for people to steal from one-another and from the industries that support society. But we do it to the point that these industries are being collapsed thereby."

Of course she blamed America for this utter irresponsibility and insanity. But the worst example, she said, was the depopulation game that the old British Empire and its modern assets around the world were pushing upon humanity. "They want to cut the world population back to the two billion mark, or less. They want to rid the world of four thousand million people," she said, "by which, they say the Earth is overpopulated. And you better believe that they've got plans for carrying out whatever their policies call for." She said that the principle of taking responsibility goes very deep and should not be thrown out of the window for any reason.

Once Erica got going she spoke like a crusader that finally caught up with a patient listener, someone who understood her, who didn't disagree. And, how could I disagree? She was right on every point. The most despicable act of irresponsibility that I have ever recognized is humanity's own lack of taking responsibility for its continued existence in the face of the most terrible attacks against it, such as the threat of a nuclear war, economic disintegration, and those calls for depopulation. I told Erica that I totally agreed with her. "It's ironic that nobody gives a damn while humanity is facing what may be the greatest crisis in its history, even as all these threats are coming together," I said to her.

"You mean things can still get worse?" she answered perplexed.

I nodded my head. "Everything that our existence depends on is falling apart. It doesn't take a genius to figure out what the end result will be."

I told her that I was quite aware of the need for living responsibly. "I just hadn't seen it in the social context," I added. "Someone like you had to draw these realms together for me."

I paused and smiled at her, for what seemed like a long time, searching for how I might continue this train of thought. "I mean to tell you that I agree with you totally," I said in a serious tone of voice. "Fritz will not be hurt by us. However, does this not conflict with the still greater responsibility that we all have for being honest with ourselves? This kind of

responsibility imposes no limits, but imposes the demand to overcome all limits. Therefore, there should be no limits between us. Do you agree?"

She blushed in response, searched for words. "This takes time," she said quietly. "What you suggest is correct, but it also makes a very strong demand on Fritz that he grow up. Of course, this is ultimately his responsibility. Still, my task is to help him. Taking responsibility means that we find a way by which we will all end up richer. Fritz is not a rich man when it comes to love. If he saw us together as we are now he would explode with anger. I am like a trophy to him that he owns, a specimen of his private zoo. He proudly shows me off to his friends, as though he was saying, see what I bagged in the hunt! He treats himself like a trophy, too. His status is a trophy to him. He brags to people about where he was able to go on vacation with his higher salary, and mine added to it, to places that most people can only dream about. That's not love, Peter. It deepens the separation. I wish I could get him to understand that. I almost hate vacations because of that. But you are not like that. You must have been all over the world and done many great things, but you said nothing. You probably have a beautiful house and a beautiful wife, and a job that many would envy, but you said not a word, one word that would make me feel small. That's love, Peter. At least I think that's what love is."

I blushed, but deep inside I had to agree with her. I felt proud of myself that I could agree with her on that. I also was ashamed of myself that I wasn't more nicely dressed. Being touched by her love had made me more proud of myself. This had raised the standard. I was ashamed to meet her so shabbily dressed. I should have worn a spiffier shirt, rather than the raggedy dress-shirt that I wore, which had a stained color. The stain hadn't bothered me before. Now it did. It wasn't that I would have loved to impress her. It was more that I wanted to honor her for the pride she had inspired in me for taking time out of her life to talk to me. She had made me more proud of myself, which had set a new standard for me against which I would judge myself from this time on, and I couldn't live up to that new standard. I wanted to honor her properly for her love, but couldn't in my ragged beach-clothes. I had to find another way.

"What makes us so special as human beings," I said her a while later when we danced once again, "is our ability to do all these things that we have talked about. We have the power to take daring steps, and we have the power to draw a line when we can go no further. We can go to the moon and we can dare to reach out a hand across the table. We have the ability to test all limits, even those we draw as a line in the sand. We can, and we will, redraw those lines when a higher perception unfolds. We are not computers that derive at predictable results. I see us human beings as explorers, Erica. We grow with the discoveries we make. We have the power to look at the world with as wide a vision as we dare and enrich our lives and our world by it and enrich one-another. We can also be so sensitive at the same time that not a blade of grass be harmed as we forge ahead."

I added that these qualities are some of the many fine qualities that make us special as human beings, especially her. "You are exceedingly precious to me, because of that," I said. "Did you know that? Humanity is a miracle, Erica, and you and I are a part of that miracle. With wonderful people like you around, I think we are beginning to become aware of the miracle that we truly are. At least I am. Being touched by your kindness and openness creates a wonderful feeling. Have you ever felt such a feeling when the whole sky becomes pink? If

you have, won't you agree?"

She said that she didn't agree fully, because so little of our human capacity is actually being utilized. She confessed that the entire day had been a profound experiment for her from the moment we met. She said that she had never before allowed herself to test the waters, as I had put it, of this wider vision. It was a mixture of daring and of taking responsibility, a daring to push back the limits to freedom, and a taking responsibility to cause no harm to anyone. So, in a way, she said, she did agree with me.

We left the dance floor both happy and satisfied. The sadness for having to part soon, without ever seeing each other again, had vanished. Also, as I had suggested that we human beings could, she did redraw the line in the sand. She allowed me to drive her home.

Earlier she had insisted that she would go home by streetcar, as she was used to. She had felt that I shouldn't know where she lived. She had said that the temptation would be too great for me to restart our affair the next day, and that we then might go beyond the line that we agreed should not be crossed. But all this changed. Our dancing had changed things. It had become possible for her to accept my offer to drive her home.

It felt strange having another woman in the car beside me in the dark of night, coming from a dance. It also felt strangely exiting. For a moment I wished I had rented a more respectable car instead of the smallest thing on four wheels that I could find.

"Was your day satisfactory?" I asked cautiously. This was meant as a diversion to draw the focus away from this obviously too primitive form of transport for such an occasion.

Her answer startled me. "Are you asking me as a researcher or as a woman?"

"A researcher of what?" I heard myself say in this moment of confusion.

"A researcher of love," she replied. She explained, as though it was an excuse, that love is the most essential force in the universe.

Here I was startled again. She didn't say it was the most powerful force, or the most enriching force. She called it the most essential force. What made it that?

"What do you mean?" I asked cautiously. "Why is it essential?"

"It's actually more than essential," she said with a smile. "It's absolutely essential. It took me a long time to realize that." She said that she started out studying nuclear physics because she wanted to help build a rich future for us all, which she said, won't be possible without nuclear power. Later, when nuclear research became virtually eliminated, she said that she realized that humanity needs richer food resources almost more urgently than it needs nuclear power, since our foods had become nutritionally hollow. This prompted her to make the tremendous shift from nuclear physics to microbiology. Then, while working in this arena, she said that she realized one day that there is something still more fundamental to our civilization and to human life. "This," she said, "is love."

She paused and looked at me to judge my reactions. "I have begun to research love," she added most earnestly. "Nothing is more crucial to human life. Our civilization, as primitive as it still is, and riddled with turmoil, would not exist without love, and as a consequence neither would we, at least not many of us would be living."

"You are serious about that," I said astonished. I couldn't argue her point. It struck me that she could be right about this, too. The apartment buildings that lined the street, the street lantern at the corner, the stores that faced the sidewalk, the pub on the other side of the street,

all were manifests of people working together in some fashion to enrich one-another's life. The driving force was clearly an element of love, though it is barely ever defined as such. Perhaps she was correct in calling it that. I asked her about it.

"Actually, Peter, I have taken it deeper than that," was her answer. "At the absolute level I recognize love to be a fundamental standard, to be God's standard, if you will accept that. God is Love. If you take away love, there is very little left that defines our humanity. I am concerned that if love dies in the human heart, civilization disintegrates, and most of us die with it. That is why I must research love more than anything else, and yes, in this respect, this day has been a grand day."

She smiled at me while she waited for a reaction.

I pondered what she said. "God's standard is Love!" What did she mean by that? Eventually I nodded.

"It has also been a grand day for me as a woman," she added moments later, as in response to my uncertainty. "But that is not so important," she said, "even though the two aspects go hand in hand."

"Why would you say that?" I asked.

"I think, Peter, love is more important at the universal level than at the personal level," said Erica. "If love unfolds at the universal level it pervades all, including our personal lives."

"I can see that, Erica."

"Can you really, Peter? Take AIDS, for instance. AIDS would not exist if the kind of research that I am doing had been done sooner and by the global society."

"AIDS?" I replied. I stopped the car. "You are not talking about yourself?" I asked.

"No, Peter! It's not that." She began to laugh momentarily at my reaction. "AIDS is the outcome of artificially created poverty. They wanted to destroy the population of Africa to a large degree. So they did..."

"Who did what?" I interrupted.

"Your people did that, your own government, Peter. They created the conditions for the kind of poverty that virtually assured a biological holocaust. They are not stupid, you know. The interrelationship between poverty and the potential for a biological holocaust is well understood. Poverty is the most potent mass killer there is. AIDS is your people's creation, Peter, by means of policy. Your government may not have financed biological labs to create the AIDS virus, as some people insist. They didn't have to do that. They did it by policy, gradually, step by step. On the other hand one mustn't forget that the whole world stood idly by and did nothing while the holocaust was set up and finally unfolded on schedule. Nobody gave a damn, as if love was already dead in the human heart."

I shook my head. "How did you come to know all that? You couldn't possibly have had access to US National Security Memorandum 200 that had laid the groundwork for what you just described. Are your secret service spies that good?"

Almost before I had those words spoken she put her hand over my mouth. "Do you want to have a beer?" she asked.

I nodded, since I couldn't speak. She was right. If my car was bugged, this could mean trouble. As she withdrew her hand, cautiously, I started the car up to go back to the pub I had

seen earlier, the one at the corner across the street. I made no more attempts at speaking, except to ask if they still made that famous malt beer that I had heard so much about from an ex-GI that had served in Germany after the war.

The pub was mostly dark, noisy, with a few still darker corners where we could be more private.

"What was your reaction in the car about?" I asked, as we sat down facing each other.

"Your car might have been wired by our state security people. It's routinely done when diplomatic visitors arrive. I didn't want you to get into trouble revealing your national security secrets."

"You mean you didn't know about NSSM200? The way you were talking about the development of AIDS, you spoke with such confidence? How else could you have known?"

"I have seen the results, Peter. You were merely confirming that my extrapolation was correct."

"You were more on the mark than you may realize. This document, that I won't mention again, calls for policies of depopulation, targeting Africa and other third world nations. It calls for controlled depopulation for the purpose of conserving the natural resources of these countries. These people were set up to be killed by policy so that they won't use up the natural resources of their own countries which the USA might require itself in the future. That is what the document states, in essence. It doesn't say it directly, but it spells it out clearly enough across a hundred-twenty pages."

"Oh my God! You saw this spelled out in black and white?" she replied, putting her hands over her face. "Couldn't you have...?"

"No," I interrupted her. "I didn't know anything about this document until recently when it became declassified. It's part of history now. Only a few people knew of its existence when it became the centerpiece of our foreign policy from 1975 on. Unfortunately, the document is very real. It's not an imaginary document of a 007-spy fantasy tale. I saw the document."

"You are telling me that it became the official policy of the most powerful country on the planet to setup conditions for the depopulation of an entire continent for imperial reasons? That's monstrous."

She buried her face again in her hands.

"I told you about the document because I thought you already knew and understood the reason why these things happened the way they happened. It seemed right to tell you, because of your research in biology."

She didn't reply anything for a long time. When her hands came down I saw her smile again. "Thank you my friend," she said quietly, "I am honored by your courage and the risk you have taken to reveal a secret that was not known to me. It will remain safe with me."

I reached out my hands. "It was for your research, Erica. I also know that I have risked nothing. I know you won't abuse the information. Besides, nobody would believe you anyway. I can barely believe it myself that human beings can stoop so low, but I saw the evidence with my own eyes."

"I have seen the evidence, too, in Kenya and Tanzania," she added quietly. "I have also seen a different kind of evidence today, tonight. I have seen evidence of an unfolding love. That

evidence is more important. It pertains to our future."

Part 3 - A Dream About Love.

"The past cannot be altered, but the future can be determined," said Erica. "This is the reason why I have taken up the research of love."

"Really?" I asked. "Or was a part of the reason the potential it holds for wonderful things to happen? Maybe I should take up the study myself."

"I would have recommended that you do, if you hadn't started that research already," she answered and laughed. "Once you have started, you cannot break away from it; and believe me, you really have started, possibly for that reason. I took up the study of love for a different reason. An incident happened some months ago, which literally forced me into it. It wasn't the kind of incident you might suspect. Peter, I came close to being raped."

I shook my head in disbelief. It took a long time to absorb that shock. "I am terribly sorry," I said quietly when the shock wore off. "There shouldn't be men like that."

Erica agreed. "But don't be sorry for me," she added. "I am not sorry that it happened. It was an eye-opener for me."

She told me that she was on her way home, walking from the mathematics building to the streetcar-stop. It was late. It was dark. She said that she suddenly realized that there was someone behind her. She turned around. It was a man. She walked faster. So did he. She told me that as he was about to pass, he grabbed her and held her mouth shut from behind. He said he needed her and pushed her towards a doorway. Once inside the building he told her not to make a sound, then slowly pulled his hand away from her face. She said that he turned her around, towards him and held her tight. She said she felt like screaming, but was too scared. "Then, as if someone spoke to me," she added, "the idea came: Don't struggle. Don't resist. If he wants sex, give it to him. That way you won't get hurt. So, instead of waiting for him to force the issue I kissed the man quickly. It wasn't easy to do that. Still, I even allowed him to kiss me back. I was resigned to let it happen for as long as he needed it. But it only lasted for a few seconds, then the man exploded into his pants. Moments later he sighed and apologized."

Erica said that he apologized profusely, saying again and again that he didn't know what had come over him. She said that he even asked her for a date at the end, in a very quiet tone of voice. She said she turned him down, of course. She told him that friendships couldn't be established by force, but by kindness and by enriching one-another's life. She told him that he looked like an intelligent person and that he therefore should be able to establish a proper relationship with someone. She said that she told him that he didn't need her. She paused and looked at me with a sad expression. "He replied to me, 'I know, I know, but I find all the doors closed. For people on the outside life is difficult, lonely, and often desperate. You don't know how lucky you married folks are to have someone to be with.'"

Erica told me that she felt sorry afterwards, when she was in the streetcar, that she hadn't given the man a chance to have a date with her. She said, "emotionally, he was like a beggar

who hadn't eaten for a month, who needed something, anything, even if it was just a kiss."

"You felt compassion for the man who attacked you," I said quietly, "that's remarkable, Erica. Not many people are able to do that. So far I know only one such person who would do this, and that's you. That shows what a remarkable person you really are."

"Thanks for the flattery, Peter," she said and smiled. "To me, that incident tells me what a rotten society we have become. What a world have we created in which such beggars are commonplace among such riches as we hold in ourselves? The man spoke of closed doors, Peter, and he said please, and I answered him with a harsh, no! Why couldn't I respond to his need and say yes?"

She asked me what it would have cost her to give the man a date in a public place, for a chat, for a kiss, or even a date at the beach. "It would have cost me nothing," she said. "In fact I would have gained a little self-respect by being able to help someone in need."

She told me that if a student had asked her for a date to discuss microbiologic engineering, she would have gladly helped. But the man had asked for so much less and needed help badly. "What a person am I that I closed the door in the man's face as probably everyone else had done before me? Was he not a human being? That's when I began my research of love, Peter. That's what prompted it."

"But you couldn't have responded to the man's need, as a married woman," I said to her. "If anyone had seen you kissing, all hell might have broken loose between you and your husband. That's probably why you couldn't respond. I also would venture to guess that you never had a close boyfriend, or any boyfriend at all, since you were married."

"Of course not," she replied. "Obviously, neither did you ever have a girl friend, especially not one that you could be close to. That's plain to see. But why haven't you? What crime have you committed that you may never in your entire life be permitted to call another woman a friend, and have a close association with that woman as would be natural for human beings? You people in the West cry like hell about the Iron Curtain that divides the East and West, and believe me we do too, while each of us impose a much more impregnable division against one-another in our private worlds. We impose a division in our own life that goes deeper and is wider than all the political and religious divisions. For this we trash our humanity and our civilization without batting an eye. In fact, we do it in the name of love. We are a bunch of hypocrites, really. Are we not?"

"Have you ever hoped," I asked her, "that it was possible for you to have a man, or several men, as very close friends that you might go out with once in a while to the movies, or for a dinner, or for a chat and a dance, someone to share your innermost thoughts with, even a smile with a kiss and a sexual embrace?"

"You must be dreaming," she said and began to grin. "You obviously had similar dreams. That too, is plain to see, but is the grass really greener on the opposite side of the fence?"

"That's an invalid question," I interrupted her. "As a scientist studying love, you should have asked, do we love one-another more as human beings by creating an institution that radically prevents us from loving one-another on a wider scale? Does the separation and isolation that we practice make us richer as a society, or does it make us very much poorer? Do we even know how to love unconditionally and universally? I would say that we don't. Yes, Erica, I have been dreaming such dreams as you suggest. I would love to have a few girl

friends. I have far too few friends as it is, except on a superficial basis. The only basis on which those dreams could ever be fulfilled, would be on a basis of concealing, hiding, scheming, and plain lying to one-another. I haven't succumbed to that yet and never will, Erica. Still, the tragedy cannot be ignored that we call this tragedy that we have created, civilized living. And it is a tragedy. The man that you spoke of, who was desperate enough that he nearly raped you, was caught up in this tragedy. But who was more honest in his reaction, he or I?"

"You cannot quantify dishonesty," said Erica. "Dishonesty is absolute. We are all champions of it. I would have loved to give that man a chance to turn his life around, but I didn't respond to that love. You did the same thing for most of your life in a different manner. You would have loved to have a close, intelligent association with a few women in your life, the very thing that I have accused that man of for not being able to establish. We all have the same need, so it seems. We merely respond differently in our individual dishonesty. He tried to rape me; you tried to rape yourself; and I saw the man's need and didn't respond, as I wanted to. Which of these three would you say is worse?"

"I think we should form a club," I said to her and began to laugh. "But what shall we call it? We can't call it the Flat Earth Society. That name has already been taken, though it would fit. I'm also certain that this club would have a wider membership today under this parameter, than the original Flat Earth Society had in the past."

"Indeed it would," said Erica and began to grin. "That membership would include every man who dreams about honest, close, and intelligent associations with women, and women with men, the kind that we are not allowed to have. But who really prevents us from fulfilling our hopes, except ourselves? No one, I think. Still, we do it, Peter, and so we built more and more iron curtains. How silly of us! Except, is this process of isolating and dividing ourselves from one-another just silly, or is it infinitely tragic? Tell me Peter, will you ever be able to quit your membership in that club, and build for you an honest and close friendship relationship with other women?"

I just shook my head. "I don't know Erica," I replied in an uncertain tone. "I may die dreaming that dream, trying to find a solution for it, without ever finding one. Of course, I am also a hypocrite, as you said we all are. If I ever had an honest to goodness real girlfriend with a close, even intimate relationship, I wouldn't know what to do. I have so little time left after work as it is, which I owe to my family."

"Thus, love becomes a duty for us all, doesn't it?" said Erica. "But don't we have a paradox here? Love and duty negate each other. If you think in terms of duty, love is already put out of your sight. Also why does everything have to be quantified? Do you have any idea of how little time it takes to love a person? I fell in love once with a man in less than a minute. This minute gave me a fuzzy warm feeling that lasted for days. It brightened my life. Whenever we spoke afterwards, this fuzzy feeling was renewed. I think we were both affected that way. We were both in a tizzy."

"But it did stop, I take it. Didn't it, Erica?"

Erica nodded silently.

"That's what I am afraid would inevitably happen in my case too," I said. "The truth is, I don't have the financial resources for a fantastic involvement with another person, like dinners, movies, theaters. I barely have enough left to take my own family to the movies, not

to mention dinners and theaters. A junior diplomat is a gopher. That puts me at the lowest rank on the pay scale. I'm afraid Erica, love as we have defined it, will likely always remain a dream for this very reason, even if it might magically become a possibility."

"And that is why it remains a dream," she interrupted me. "But why do you have to quantify everything?" she almost scolded me. "How much does it cost, Peter, to share a cup of coffee? And who says that you have to foot the bill? What about sharing the cost? What about accepting a gift if another is better provided for, financially, than you are? In my love affair, I paid for the coffee. I always did. I was the big income earner. It was natural to do that. Apart from that, it simply wasn't important who paid the bill. And what about going for walks? That costs absolutely nothing at all. Or what about spending an hour at the beach? That's what we did now and then. We were close enough to one-another that this was enough. This wonderful relationship lasted for almost two years. It wouldn't have ended if he hadn't been sent to the other end of the world and died there in one of those wars our country got dragged into, to support. Of course, this was in the days before Fritz came along. Nothing of that sort would be possible anymore."

"But suppose it were possible, Erica. Wouldn't it enrich your marriage?" I said quietly. "If only obligation and duty rules, which take the place of love as you say, wouldn't your rediscovery of love outside of your marriage bring a new light and life into it, by flooding it with a new sense of love that apparently needs to be always renewed?"

Erica nodded and grinned. "You got me on this one," she said. "You are totally right. We do the absolute worst to ourselves. We prevent love by all possible means. And then we are glum, because life isn't as bright anymore as it once was. Of course we blame each other for it in our marriage, and so we should, because we both play this game that has isolated us from the universal principle of love that should be embraced rather than be diminished. Our marriages should be buoyant with love instead of being glum and filled with want, tensions, expectations, fears, jealousy, frustrations, to the point that most of them fall apart. We seem to be doing better politically, in spite of our tens of thousands of nuclear bombs and our many wars, and threats, and large scale looting."

I nodded. "Considering what we do to each other in our private world, it's probably amazing that we haven't blown up the world yet, militarily. However, don't hold your breath, this may yet happen," I said. "But what about you? How do you deal with that? You are an intelligent person. You live in a world that seems to be more open than ours. Are you able to follow your own advice?"

Erica just laughed. "We are more open to the truth, politically, in this country than you are in the West. Our system is so rotten that its stench cannot be concealed anymore with brainwashing tricks. But socially, Peter, we share a common mythology with you that started long before the East/West division began. That deeper mythology was born in distant ages and probably for much more sinister purposes. It has kept us divided against one-another ever since, and was probably meant to do that. The tragedy is that we are not even allowed to talk about the paradox that our isolation and division represents. That's already deemed treason. We shouldn't even be talking to one-another, you and I, as two unrelated married persons of the opposite sex. That is why studying love is so difficult, Peter. It's easier to study nuclear physics. Everybody respects me for that. Nuclear physics is good for society. Bridging social

isolation and sexual division, that's bad, unless it is a part of the officially sanctioned game that gets us isolated more deeply than any other form of division that we've come up with. And it's all done in the name of love."

She explained that nuclear physics is an important field of research for society, and so is microbiology, but she added that love is the field that makes us human, which should therefore be deemed far more important. "What do all these other fields matter if we can't treat each other like human beings with respect and love, and compassion?" She paused and looked at me as if she was about to say something that may sound silly. "I realize now before my research in physics and biology can have any meaning to me," she said, "I must first research how to become a human being."

"I remember a lesson from my Sunday school days," I replied to Erica, "a parable, actually." A man had entered a temple to offer gifts for atonement, but the priest asked him if he had a brother in need of reconciliation. Since the man answered affirmatively, the priest told him to take his gift and reconcile with his brother first. Afterwards he could come and present gifts, for only then would the gift be acceptable. "Maybe you are following that advice," I said to Erica. "Are you?"

She nodded. "But what about yourself?" she asked.

"Maybe I am at the stage at which the man stares at the priest in amazement, asking, 'what did you just say?'" I told her that I realized that there is a whole world out there that needs to be uplifted, but I also told her that I simply didn't know how to begin. "That is why we go to peace marches and protest the stupid policies of governments that lead to war, so that we can blame someone for our own failure. That makes us feel good. I think the parable relates to that. I see the priest in the parable say to the peace-marchers, 'go home and don't come back until you can come with peace in your heart.' And he would be right in saying this, Erica. We go to peace marches, but privately we treat each other like enemies, except for some narrowly defined circumstances. I think we don't know what love is, because we don't allow ourselves to experience it. We raise barriers upon barriers, obediently as we have been told to do, and for reasons we have long forgotten or never understood in the first place. My point is that the way we treat each other makes no sense. Why can't we treat each other as human beings with respect, generosity, and love?"

"So you agree that love is the most important subject we can study?" Erica answered. "I believe, all the rest that we do gains its value from that."

I agreed. "But now I must give you an exam question," I added. "If your previous rape incident happened today, how would you respond to it?"

"No, Peter, you tell me," she replied. "If a similar thing happened to you, how would you react?"

I said that would be like a blind leading the blind. I said that I would allow a date, but that would be to explore together of how to open those doors that are closed, and how to do it in a manner by which everyone becomes uplifted and enriched.

"That would be quite an experience," said Erica.

"I think this a terribly hard thing to do. That may be the reason why we have not achieved anything along this line in five thousand years. I'm afraid that I would probably end up to be the learner in this case, which really isn't all that hypothetical," I suggested and laughed.

"You would probably have the kind of conversation that we are having right now, Peter."

"I should be so lucky," I replied, "but that's unlikely to happen."

"How do you know that, Peter? We can't know that. You can never know what will happen in such a situation unless you close the door on it and say, no! That's what I did. But if it happened again, I think I would be wiser, this time. I really owe this to myself. The study of love has become important to me. I even dream about it. I have seen an unfolding of love the kind of which one finds only in dreams."

"Do you have many dreams about love?" I dared to ask.

She didn't answer. Her expression changed as if something suddenly troubled her. I could see tension. Instead of answering, she nodded. "Actually it was the other way around," she added moments later. "My research of love became rather interesting, because of a dream, but I am not sure if I should tell you about it."

"I understand, Erica," was my reply. "Dreams are too personal."

She shook her head. "Sometimes our dreams have a higher source than ones own conscience. I will tell you the dream if you promise not to judge me by it."

I raised my hand, "I swear I won't. How can I judge you by something you have no control over? Who knows where dreams come from? We collect information that gets stored away and gets compiled into the strangest constructs."

"The dream was strange and profound, Peter. I was visiting an oriental village located in a valley between two canyons. The village was isolated from the outside world by steep mountains surrounding it, and by tall cliffs rising out of the depth of a fast flowing river that flowed through the canyons. The village that I found myself in was built on a hillside. I found it to be a beautiful place of flowers, lush vegetation, and terraced gardens everywhere that cascaded right down to the river. On a rocky outcropping near the village, overlooking the river, was a temple.

"I saw one of the villagers coming by. I asked the villager to whom the temple was dedicated. He didn't understand the question. He looked puzzled. Then he began to smile. He asked me to sit down with him on the nearby rocky ledge overlooking the river. Evidently, he felt that my question could not be answered without me first understanding the history of the village. He said that the original builders of the village had arrived a long time ago. They had escaped when their land became surrounded by war. Hastily they had put together a flotilla of makeshift rafts, piled their belongings on them and set out into an uncertain future. That's how they survived the war. The valley became their place of refuge. Unable to go back, the valley became their new home, a place where they could live in peace. But it presented challenges."

Here, Erica paused as though she was searching for a way to continue the story. Suddenly she smiled and went on.

"My dream about the village became a series of fragments of those earlier times that the villager was relating to me. The settlers found life hard when they arrived, but they had each other. They also understood that if they supported one-another to the fullest extent possible, they would survive and prosper once again. In order to assure that this would happen they developed a code of honor that they all committed themselves to. The code required that the whole community should meet the individuals' most basic needs, with everyone supporting and enriching one-another to the fullest extent possible. The goal wasn't to support a

community as an entity in itself, which then would dominate everybody. Instead, their goal was to develop a commitment to support one-another, and thereby enrich one-another's life, and the life of the community as a consequence. The code of honor that they all had committed themselves to, assured that not a single person would be left out, and no one ever ruled over them."

Here Erica paused once more, then continued softly, "To my surprise the requirement of the code was understood to also apply to the villager's sexual needs. Under this code no one owned another person. Neither did any lord or king own their lives as the royal rulers had before. They had escaped this scourge. It had become repulsive to them on any level. Still the human need had to be met. In celebration of their newfound freedom they vowed to purge every last vestige of the old notion of ownership of another person from their conscience. They continued to honor the bonds they had established before, but not the ownership notion, which had created boundaries. So, they made a commitment to eradicate the boundaries and extend the principle of their bonds so that these bonds would embrace everyone in whatever form that appeared appropriate according to the individual needs. This code of honor was their commitment to assure that there would be no abuse within the framework of their newly established freedom. They felt that this would result in a higher form of civilized living, built on principles rather than on duty expressed in the enforcement of formal boundaries."

She explained that the villagers appeared to have recognized a principle that is rarely recognized, even today. "They seem to have recognized that the solution to a problem must always be sought on a higher level platform than the platform on which the problem is defined. They extended this recognition even into the sexual domain and found a principle that elevated the entire sexual scene to a higher level of perception than the one that had prevailed before."

Erica said that she found their approach revolutionary, because it enabled them to approach the sexual question in a human manner. She explained that there exists only one major aspect that sets the human being apart from the world of animals and other forms of life. "We call this element our cognitive powers. We have the ability to see with the mind what the physical eyes cannot see," said Erica. "This gives us the ability to discover principles, and the discovering of principles, in turn, raises our platform of living to a higher level. For example, in very early times someone may have observed that it easier to move a heavy object by placing something round beneath it, over which it can roll. Evidently the human mind extended that idea by 'seeing' the operating principle that was involved, which became the foundation for the technology of building wheels. That technology uplifted the entire civilization of mankind. That process of seeing with the mind, of 'seeing' the principles of the universe that no eye can see, is a uniquely human quality. No animal has yet created the technology for building wheels. Humanity alone has this ability to uplift its platform of living to a higher level by discovering and utilizing universal principles."

Erica paused as if she was searching for words. "In my dream the villagers approached the sexual dimension within this framework," she said. "In the animal world, sex is for procreation, period. But we are human beings. We can uplift any idea to a higher level by recognizing associated principles that the eye cannot see. We see a unique beauty in our

diversity, a lot of which is sexually defined. We cherish that beauty, enrich it and embrace it, and in this framework of enriching and embracing, our love becomes defined. With this discovered principle of enriching and embracing the elements of beauty that define our world, we enrich our lives. And with it we enrich the world in which we live. In this context the human dimension of sex is no longer just an element for procreation, but pertains to principles that enrich our existence. You said as much yourself on the beach, when you warned me that you wouldn't be able to keep your eyes of me, which really was an acknowledgment of that principle. It appears that the villagers in my dream understood this. They made sure that this higher level aspect of embracing their humanity, which defines them as human beings, would not be hindered, but be advanced by honoring one-another. They mad sure that this principle would be acknowledged by all possible means.

I leaned back and 'drank' it all in. Her beautiful dream was about a world akin to a spiritual Eldorado, but it was real as far as I could tell. It was obviously an image of her discoveries in scientific research. It also seemed to be something incredibly daring for her to commit to, and yet, it was also the safest position from a scientific standpoint. She said that once the commitment was made in her dream, by the villagers to enrich one-another's life, individual safety would be assured as a matter of that principle, or still higher principles built on that principle. The code of honor that she spoke of, became essentially a commitment to that higher principle, a commitment to integrity, without which the lower principle cannot be implemented. Yes, I loved her beautiful dream. It was a scientific dream.

I said to Erica that this was an incredibly beautiful dream because of those higher dimensions. I also agreed that these higher dimensions cannot be found in the animal world, but are uniquely human. I suggested that we should celebrate all those higher dimensions in which our humanity is defined.

She smiled and continued her story. "The villagers did that. They were bound together by this code of honor," she said. "I found it reflected in many small ways, but also in profound happenings, especially their sexual sharing of one-another. It appears that on many occasions, before their sexual needs were satisfied, the individual partners would conduct a private ritual in which they exchanged gifts. In my dream I saw gifts of food presented, or gifts they made for each other, useful items to honor one-another with and to honor the unfolding bond. No formal system appeared to have been set up to assure fairness in this complex interrelationship of the people, nor did it appear that such a formal system was needed as no one was left out in the cold, wanting."

"How else could it work?" was my reaction. "Who would administer a formal system of this kind? Who would choose for another? Would it be the one who honors the others the most? In this case one would attempt to quantify the absolute by which its principle becomes overturned. As you said yourself, such things cannot be quantified."

"This is also the foundation for drawing a line in the sand, as we have done," Erica replied.

"How did the people in your dream deal with situations of conflicting desires and conflicting needs?" I asked.

"As in the case of you inviting me to your room, and me saying that I can't, or the other

way around? In such a case one has to dig deeper to the principle involved in enriching one-another's experience. If the process involves causing harm, then it won't reflect the principle of enriching one-another's life, will it? Unfortunately, not all cases are as clear cut as this. That's when we are prone to make mistakes and are tormented by the outcome. That's also when we need one-another's support the most. Doors can open in surprising ways, Peter, sometimes by way of a long detour. In my dreams I only saw the end results. I couldn't even imagine what might have led up to some of what I have witnessed. Dreams tend to be that way. Unfortunately, the details are no longer as clear in my memory as they were. I do remember, however, that the details were all extraordinary. This aspect may have been the only real element in the dream, because meeting a deeply seated human need, when we manage to actually do this, can be extraordinarily beautiful."

"Was this the effect on the village in your dream? Where the founder's expectations realized? Did the village prosper?"

She nodded and smiled as if this was an answer in itself. "In its closely knit environment the village was constructed into a virtual paradise," she said. "Everyone was committed to the building for the good that they all shared. The hillsides had been terraced into gardens that the whole village cared for. Silt, that accumulated where the river had widened its course across the valley was dredged up and used as soil. Some of their former food-plants had been found at the edge of the river. Apparently upstream-flooding had uprooted the plants. This bounty became their planting stock. Obviously they all shared in the harvest. The entire village economy appeared to operate on the platform of honor and integrity that everyone had become committed to. Evidently, the village was maintained that way.

"When the temple reappeared in my dream I understood its significance. I also understood why my earlier question couldn't be answered. The villagers had built the temple as a monument to the commitment on which their forbears' existence had depended, which they still understood and remained committed to. I saw the temple being used as a meeting place for village events, as well as for quiet contemplation. The temple had no walls, only a delicately crafted roof supported by carved pillars. Without walls, it was open on all sides from where one could behold the beauty of the gardens that surrounded it, and the river below.

While I pondered in the temple, in order to fully comprehend its significance, I awoke."

"What you have witnessed was a deeply honest commitment to the General Welfare Principle," I said in response to her magical story.

She shook her head and grinned. "I would say, it was much more than that. It was far more advanced than what you have enshrined in your American constitution. It was something deeper that should be enshrined in our very lives."

"You were referring to the Preamble to our Federal Constitution," I corrected her. "A preamble sets the stage for a beginning. It doesn't create a commitment. The commitment has to come from within. There were a few isolated periods in American history when this principle meant something to the people. Those were the great periods of prosperity when America became the envy of the world."

"Would you also say that those were periods of love?" she asked. "Do you realize, that what

I saw in my dream is a perfect platform for exploring the roots of love? Love isn't a shallow abstraction that one trots out in a parade of emotions. There is a principle behind it, and unless one understands that principle one doesn't understand what love is. Herein do we find its mystery."

"And the magic of it," I added.

Erica agreed. She agreed with me on many things. Also she was a fascinating person to listen to.

We exchanged thoughts for almost an hour on this subject, and on the worlds upon worlds that it encompasses.

It all seemed magical to me. What went on between us, what we said to each other and what came out of our conversation, was almost unbelievable. What we shared totally defied our surroundings. We were in a dark corner of a dark pub, but with perceptions unfolding that made this ending of our day into a brighter event than we ourselves could have imagined. The evidence for that became apparent when we stood up to leave. We suddenly realized to our surprise that we had forgotten to order anything from the bar. "Who needs beer in times like these?" was my comment.

We left happy that night, far happier even than we were after our dancing. Naturally, she allowed me to drive her all the way to her house.

It was near midnight when we left the pub.

When we arrived, she asked me to stop as we came to the block where she lived. The street was empty, the night-breeze still warm. It was quiet, now. We, too, had become quiet. We got out of the car. She pointed to her house, down the middle of the block, but asked me not to follow her there. She said that she needed that space to become herself again. After our final embrace and a kiss she turned away without either of us saying another word. Those words would have been too difficult to say. I watched her silently. She never turned back until she reached her house.

I felt sad for this 'failed' ending to such a brilliant day as it had been. I felt sad, because I felt that deep in her heart she had wanted this ending to be different. She drew the line in the sand to prevent the sexual intimacy that she spoke of and evidently wanted, but couldn't allow. If she had commented that sex isn't such a big thing in comparison to this day of light that had unfolded between us, I would have accepted her answer with joy. It would have reflected the truth. Our day together had been pervaded with a most wondrous glow of joy from beginning to end. This glow had lasted for hours upon hours. No sexual intimacy, elation, excitement, or whatever, has ever measured up to the splendor of our 'endless' day and the memories of it that were now lodged in my heart. She had denied herself the realization by experience that very little would have been added by sexual sharing, to what we had already established. I was sad to see her walk away, realizing for what little thing she forced herself to close the door to the brighter things that also mattered.

I watched her silently until she reached her house. Only then did she turn around. She turned back to me and waved, happily so it seemed. Now we spoke those words that had been impossible to say for either of us, earlier. Those words rang loud and clear for all the world to

hear them. "Have a wonderful life, Peter," she called back. Her words cut through the stillness and echoed in thought.

"I love you, Erica," I called back to her and waved. "Have a great life, too."

"I love you likewise, dearest," she replied in a happy voice and disappeared into her house.

It seemed that those happy sounding words were also the hardest words that were spoken that night. They even caused me to have some bitter regrets. I, too, have had the urge to call her, dearest. This would have been honest. Except, a deep lying fear stood in the way that it would be misunderstood. This fear had blocked the admission. Consequently the admission was not made. Now the opportunity to do so was gone, possibly forever. I shuddered, realizing how sadly we had both failed to treat each other as human beings, even though we had moved so far, and so daringly. I felt a great sense of compassion at this moment for the whole of mankind that faced still greater challenges and greater obstacles. I felt this compassion, because two of mankind's most promising soldiers in its struggle for freedom and humanity had suddenly quit and thrown in the towel for the sake of one little thing.

The street suddenly felt emptier as I turned back to the car. It was emptier by one person. The world had become silent. I felt chilly in the night-breeze, though in my thoughts her warmth was still with me. I could feel the warmth our last kiss and our final embrace, and my desire to call her, dearest, which would now never be fulfilled.

I stepped back into the car and started to drive away. I drove away sadly. I should have been happy for this wonderful day that we had had together. That's when I shuddered at the thought that the most advanced thinker that I had encountered, with whom I had made a daring step forward into the realm of love, had found it nevertheless impossible to take the last step that would have challenged the world's conventions more fully and dethroned their poverty. I shuddered for realizing that if this daring pioneer and scientist, and I who had become rather daring myself, who were aware of the world's self-imposed poverty and its implications, couldn't free ourselves from its stranglehold, what chance did poor humanity have to do this with a much lesser scientific background? I realized that we had both succumbed to the world's ingrained poverty, to its near universal dishonesty, so that we both couldn't move honestly in respect to the truth in the final moments when it really counted for taking that one last radical step. Some heroes we were! She was right. Humanity is more than ignorant of its own focus on poverty, and I had to admit that I wasn't much farther out of that hole than she was or everyone else.

That's why humanity doesn't see the riches that lie at its feet, I reasoned. Indeed, no one can see what lies outside one's field of vision? Erica was right on that point. She was right about so many things. I felt grateful eventually, as I drove back into town, for the miracle to have met her at all. I felt grateful for her sharing and for the wondrous day that we have had together. In this way, gradually, the happiness that I had felt earlier was finally breaking through again. I knew that the love she had shared would likely remain as an echo in my thoughts, and would slowly change my life. Higher perceptions do tend to have this effect. Yes indeed, I welcomed this effect. I was looking forward to its unfolding.

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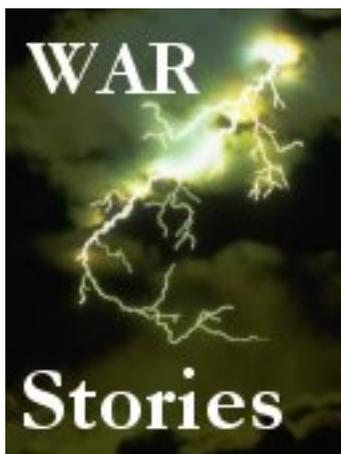
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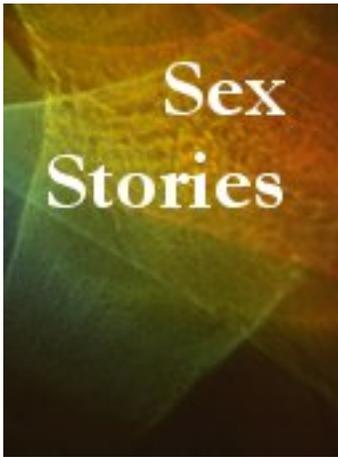
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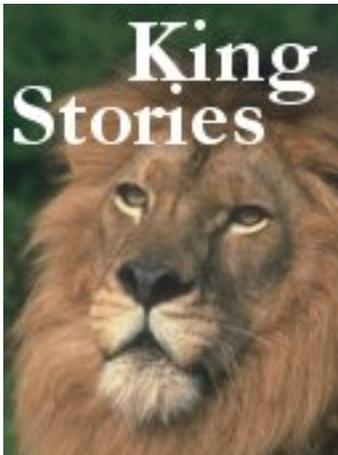
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There are many types of wars being fought with the ferocity of lightning that flashes brilliantly until the driving energy is spent. Then peace resumes.



Stories about sex

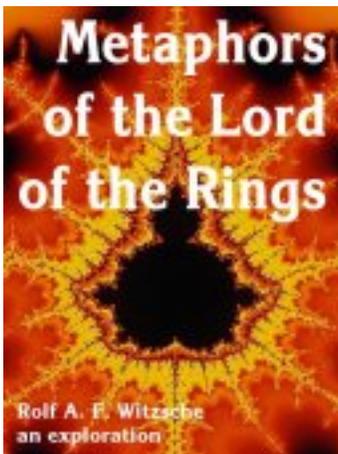
While the focus is on sex, the explorations focus on a passion for love in a higher sense than erotica, opening to the Principle of Universal Soul reflected in the brotherhood of all mankind as human beings.



Oh, to be King for a day!

If we had the power to change the world, how would we change it? But don't we have that power already in our hand?

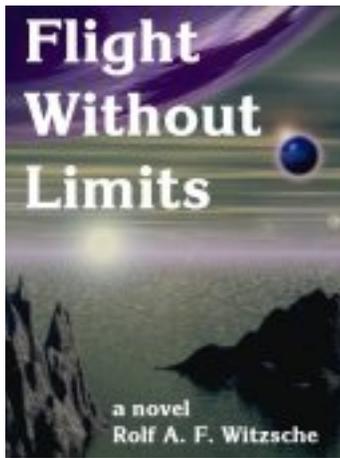
Political exploration



The Lord of the Rings' Metaphors

It is a rare thing in literature that one finds a tale written a long time ago that is reflected in the present to such an extent, that it seems the writer had created a script for the future and the future has obeyed. Such a thing can be said about the story of J.R.R. Tolkien's mythical tale, The Lord of the Rings.

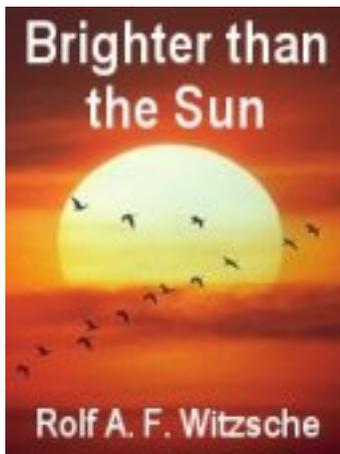
Novels



[Flight Without Limits](#)

(science fiction)

The novel is a science fiction work with a touch of reality. It is about a space voyage to Alpha Centauri, the nearest solar system to our own. But in metaphor, the novel is really about being able to move mentally without limits. Physically we may never be able to overcome all limits, but what would hinder us to break all limits mentally?

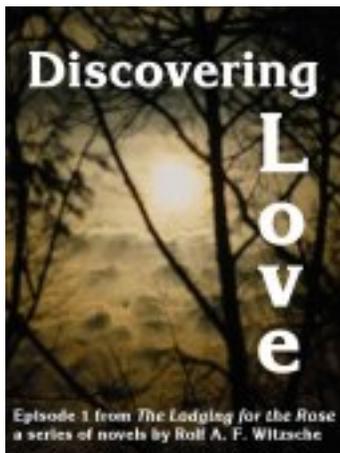


[Brighter than the Sun](#)

(playing with nuclear matches)

This novel has two opposite centers. One reflects the tragic domain of our nuclear armed world, and the second the domain of spiritual freedom where old axioms become discredited and fall away while love unfolds its universal face. Will the latter prevail?

The Lodging for the Rose a series of nine novels



* Episode 1 - [Discovering Love](#)

Here begins an epic story that spans eight novels. The subject is freedom powered by universal love, the largely unexplored 'country.' Few people have dared to cross its borders and travel its landscape.



* Episode 2A - [The Ice Age Challenge](#)

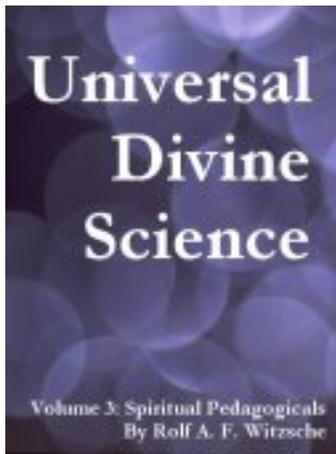
"The Ice Age Challenge" refers to the challenge that we face to create a new foundation for living when the coming Ice Age climate shuts down most of the world's agriculture. The resumption of the Ice Age could happen possibly 100 to 150 years from now. It may take that long to build the vast facilities that will be needed to feed the world from indoor agriculture. But is our love big enough that we can achieve the physically near impossible in order to assure a future for mankind beyond the space of our time? What limits would we put on the dimension of universal love? It appears we are in a triple race to meet all of these challenges. The big question is, do we have the skills to stay the course?



* Episode 2B - [Roses at Dawn in an Ice Age World](#)

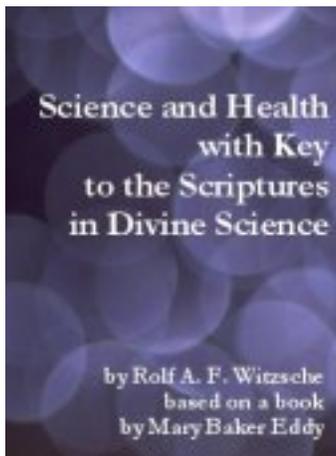
With the Ice Age resuming 100 to 150 years from now we are challenged to embrace the still rejected renaissance principle, the Principle of Universal Love, without which mankind may not survive. But will we be able to upgrade our human dimension sufficiently to accept the Principle of Universal Love and to reflect it in our daily living? God is Love, universal divine Principle. Do we dare to love universally in the social domain? Or do we pretend that the divine Principle of Universal Love doesn't apply there, especially when it comes to our personal loved ones and friends?

Spirituality and Healing - research,
exploration, pedagogicals



[Universal Divine Science - Spiritual Pedagogicals](#)

Unknown to the world, Mary Baker Eddy created a scientific monument in the form of a vast pedagogical structure for the advance of universal Divine Science. The pedagogical structure is so large that she made all of her major works a part of it, and so far-reaching that it may have been a contributor to the rare period of nearly 50 years of peace in the world between 1866 and 1914



[Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures in Divine Science](#)

A special Divine Science exploration of Mary Baker Eddy's book, **Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures**, in a unique presentation interwoven with editorial notes and research into Mary Baker Eddy's pedagogical structure for what she hinted may be termed Divine Science.

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