

***When Cosmic Love Awakens***  
**A Transpersonal Love Story**  
**by Dane Rudhyar**

## Part One - 13 February 1952, 9:00 PM

**What is happening to our climate?** More atomic tests, I wonder! Only February 13, and already the air is warm, as if spring had touched the earth, had asked of her prematurely that she bear forth a new vegetation. Prematurely? An intriguing thought. When does one get "mature" enough? And for what? Isn't maturity for something . . . ?

But what is time, anyway? Being for three years now the editor of *Interplanetary Tales*, and having read more time-machine stories than I care to remember, I shouldn't be too particular about such a small and changeable incident as unseasonable weather . . . or what maturity is, for that matter! But, of course, it's not the season I am really worrying about; even though I feel hot, fagged out. It's the anniversary . . . one year ago.

One year ago the thought of being disturbed by an anniversary — of all things — would have made me laugh. Why, me! Dick Probeck, the sophisticated intellectual, the clever editor! That would have been funny, indeed. Now it's not funny. In one year, what changes can come! What turmoil, what tragedies! And who am I, now? Sophisticated, intellectual? I was not even an editor, really, all this fall . . . One year. February 13, 1951 — the day before St. Valentine's Day. And then . . .

**Well, it seems I must have dreamt** again parts of that whole thing; gazing God only knows where and at what . . . Oh, why this last bitter touch? Jacqueline gone, stupidly, gruesomely — her young body broken on rocks, caught in the ebbing tide, here, in New York, of all places! A lovely body. . . but how loveliness can become bitter! How dark an abyss to slide into, so one might forget and stop asking impossible questions . . . of life, of oneself, of whatever it is that seems to want to answer, when one refuses to listen! How savagely I have refused to listen — and how long!

. . . Oh, the voice again. It must be, it is Emerald's voice: "Dick, you must understand. Dick, Dick, please, try to feel! Don't fight! let go! If you could only listen! If you could only believe! . . . Believe! Believe! It is real. It is the truth. You know it is . . . Why don't you believe?"

Where is Emerald now? Am I dreaming wide awake? Must one believe the incredible? It would be good, if only I could. Perhaps I would become really "new." Perhaps I would no longer be afraid, as it seems I have been. Afraid of what? What is man's greatest fear, today? Somebody should write a story about that! I should know. What else could have made me crave so senselessly to forget?

Yes, the voice is right. I should really sit down and seek to understand. But I am so tired . . . and why is this room so hot? What the hell is the matter with the weather, the steam heat . . . my head? A drink? No; no more. Then what?

The voice again . . . I don't know where I hear it, how I hear it. It seems to beat up from my pulsing blood. My head aches with it. Words pound, pound with the blood-beats. Is it insanity — or reality? Is anybody sure of the difference?

"Dick! Try. Try to remember, to understand! You know it is real. Try to feel. Oh, please, believe . . . believe!"

**All right . . . whatever it is that speaks.** I shall try to remember everything, every word, every glance. It is too warm in my room to sleep — and I could not fall asleep anyway. So I shall call back the memories I have tried to kill. I shall write it all down . . . to be sure I'll remember . . . before it is all gone, or I am gone. I am so weary a little more hurt makes no difference. Perhaps when one hurts so much that there is no greater pain . . . perhaps it becomes bliss, who knows!

## 13 February 1951, 9:00 AM

**A year ago.** The day before St. Valentine's Day. That's easy to remember because I had wanted to give a nice gift, something unusual, to my girl. I thought she was my girl, anyway . . . besides being my secretary.

Our office was rather small; quite by itself in a corner, even if near the suite of rooms occupied by our other magazines on Fourth Avenue. There was Ron — Ron MacNorthland — that is, my assistant, a keen, imaginative young man in his late twenties; then, Emerald . . . dark hair, greenish eyes, Irish — not only an excellent secretary, but besides . . .

As for me; well, I was then 38 plus one month, exactly. Behind that, a marriage gone haywire; I was just getting over the bitterness of what seemed then a senseless failure. I thought then I knew what bitterness was! If only I had know what was coming, what real bitterness can be!

Emerald had come to us, through a distant friend, only the preceding November. Her former employer had sold out; and we had lost our none-too-efficient previous secretary. So she took the job, and in three weeks had made herself indispensable. She was very bright and quick, with a good sense of Irish humor, yet very quiet and rather aloof. For several weeks I did not quite know how she felt about me, this job, science-fiction, and all else — including Ron, whose mind seemed occupied then by a rather mysterious affair with some older women, seemingly intent on mothering him and putting peculiar ideas in his head. But then, peculiar ideas are meat and drink for the kind of writers we are, and Ron's avidity for exotic religions and the supernatural was not at all a bad asset for me. He had dug up some very grand story ideas and seemed ready to produce first-rate stuff. And he was warm, enthusiastic; it was refreshing, after being immersed in so much morbid, sometimes cataclysmic writing.

And Emerald . . . at first I could not quite make her out. She was very friendly, correct, efficient; but behind that there was something I couldn't quite understand. She seemed to have been married when in her teens to a drunkard. I never found out whether he died or there was a divorce. She always changed the subject when I tried to be subtle about finding out! She seemed to have an acute intuition; perhaps more than that. Perhaps she was a "natural" — telepathic, clairvoyant or what have you? She had a puzzling way of looking with her big clear eyes, not at you, but through you; and you felt she had gone away — somewhere inside you, perhaps. It was not unpleasant, but one felt unsure. Some men could have become quite mad because of it; could have wanted to tear down that strange look, hurt her, do anything . . . just so she would be more like other women, more . . . oh, well, more "possessable!"

She had a well-formed, mature body. She dressed well. Nice little touches which sort of stir the imagination — very good taste, always. She seemed to me very close to thirty; I guess about Ron's age. They were very different. Yet, in some rather indefinable way, I had thought them not unlike brother and sister. Brother and sister. It sounds very funny now. Yet, I don't know. Perhaps it is not so wrong. Perhaps things are not what they seem to be. I am sure there was nothing between them, until . . .

**Until that day I will never forget.** Until the thirteenth of February of last year when Ron greeted my arrival at the office with a peculiar kind of bubbling excitement.

"Guess what happened to me?" he said at once.

"I don't know. It must have been good. A flying saucer landing at the U.N.?"

"Oh, no. Not that kind of stuff. I met an extraordinary man. I don't know yet just why he seemed so unusual. Not one thing in particular. But the way he looks, the way he says things . . . There is something that made me feel so strange, so small — and yet as a child . . ."

"Whew! I didn't know you had a father-complex also."

Emerald laughed. "Also? What other kind of complex has Ron?"

"Didn't you know he had a mother-complex? Why . . ."

"Oh, stop it, Dick!" Ron retorted. "Everybody has complexes according to you. Everything

has a nice tag, a nice file to fit in. That must be your librarian background."

I had been a librarian for years; this was correct. It was then that I had become interested in science fiction. My wife thought I was crazy to read all the stuff which came out. She was an intellectual Bostonian with a Bryn Mawr education, some combination! So while she read Toynbee unabridged I, out of spite, started writing space-travel yarns. The end of the story was, nevertheless, that I became editor of *Interplanetary Tales* . . . and "free."

"O.K. Ron, you can have it. I am an intellectual snob. At least I seem to have graduated from the way other people thought of me in the old days. But, for pity's sake, spill it out! What happened with the wonder-man that made you so hot?"

I had hung up my coat and hat. I glanced at Emerald. She seemed puzzled, more serious than usual. On my desk bunches of proofs needed final check-up, a pile of letters waited for answers. I sat down, looking at Ron who was telling his story.

**He lived in a small flat on Long Island.** You couldn't keep him in the city. He said it choked his soul. So as he rode that morning in classic commuter fashion, he had found himself sitting next to a man whom — being a well-bred commuter type — he had barely noticed. As often happens, the train stopped when it was not supposed to. Ron finally took his eyes from the proofs he was correcting on his knees, and glancing to see what was the matter, he saw his neighbor's face for the first time. I remember Ron saying that what struck him most was the light that radiated from the man's eyes. I know; this was my first impression too, later. When I saw him at night they glowed, those eyes — as if there were a light behind them.

The man had spoken a few words, as Ron had shown impatience with the train's delay. It seemed a foreign voice; not so much the accent as the quality, the resonance of it. It was both deep and high. As I think of it now, I can't help thinking of Balinese gongs . . . Ron said that, after looking at the man, he couldn't go on correcting the proofs. The man was smiling kindly, apparently having noticed the "Contents" page of our magazine issue which Ron had spread over his brief-case on his knees.

The train was still held up. Ron found himself talking with the stranger about his work, the magazine, the science fiction field. And Ron had gone off on his favorite subject. "It is time we got some new angle. I am sick and tired of rocketships and time-machines, of wars to destroy earth-civilization, of intergalactic conquest, and all that. There should be other types of material, other ways of thinking of planets and space-travel. Machines, always machines! Pretty well standardized too. Wouldn't it be funny if some scientist turned up with an entirely different type of machine to out-date all the future machines which have not even had the ghost of a chance to materialize! And the glorified male ego, always driving the machine, using evermore fantastic weapons of conquest, blazing the way for space colonization."

Ron had been startled by the way his companion had looked at him. "I felt as if the whole of me was all opened up, skin and flesh. I don't know what was left! But the man saw that too. And he smiled again . . . It was such an extraordinary smile! Something in me seemed to melt. I felt light, happy . . . I couldn't tell why."

The train jerked; resumed speed. It was soon Brooklyn, the tunnel, Penn Station. But the stranger had told Ron that perhaps he could give him a really different angle on planets and going to planets; other things too. Would he come to his studio? Quite soon, as he might be leaving shortly on a trip. Ron could bring friends, if he wished. At the station, the stranger was caught in the crowd surging up the stairs in the usual confusion, increased by the train's delay. But he had written his address and phone number on the envelope holding the magazine proofs. The name: Leon Ramar. An address on Morningside Drive, near Columbia University. The handwriting was strong, open, unusually well- formed. It suggested to me an artist's writing; but then my knowledge of graphology is at best only superficial!

**There was a silence after Ron told his story.** The phone rang. A friend I was to meet for

dinner was apologizing; he had to leave town at once for Chicago. They had some trouble with the printer there; the usual way it seems, for magazine editors. Hardly thinking, I said, after putting down the receiver: "Darn it! I wanted to talk to John tonight about the contest business. He would have to fly to Chicago just when I need him!"

Ron looked at me, saying not a word. Somehow it was not necessary, I turned to Emerald; she was not working. Her eyes were indrawn.

"What are you thinking so hard about?" I couldn't help asking.

She smiled. "Could I go too?"

"Go where?" That was silly. I knew very well, inside, what she was thinking.

Ron popped up excitedly. "Wouldn't it be grand if we could get really hot stuff for the magazine! I trust that man. I feel he knows things we don't know."

"Why so sure?" I was both intrigued and irritated.

"Ron's famous hunches, you know," Emerald answered.

"I don't see what we can lose," Ron added. "Your dinner is off. I'll phone Mr. Ramar. I'm sure he told me he was free this evening. We could all go after taking a bite. I'll treat you to a Longchamps dinner on the way . . . Shall I phone now?"

He did. Mr. Ramar would be delighted to receive him and his friends at 9 o'clock.

**It is 9, now. Just one year later.** But then, the night was clear, cold. As we walked up Morningside Drive from the bus — we had time to lose — we could see the stars quite clearly in spite of the lights of the city. Some snow had fallen. The air was crisp, good to breathe. As we stopped before the door of the apartment house, I recall that Emerald looked up to the sky and said softly: "I wonder what the mystery-man will tell us about all that . . . way, way up." I recall the words because I was struck with the tone of her voice. I could feel a queer sense of expectancy. Her face was beautiful in the diffused light, surrounded with a fur collar and hat.

Of course I loved her! I don't even know now if she really knew. I had had a few evenings with her; dinner, theatre, one dance club. One Saturday night, she had asked me and Ron to have supper in her small apartment on East 10th Street. Not far from my place on Washington Square. It was within easy walking distance of the office. Most days I walked up Fifth Avenue; and once or twice we met on the way.

She was a charming hostess. Her studio apartment was simply but beautifully furnished. Her father had for years lived in India, working for a tea importing firm. She had been born at sea, in a monsoon storm, ahead of time, as her American-born mother was returning to London. Later they had moved to New York.

I was indeed increasingly fond of Emerald. Perhaps because she was so different from my first wife. Perhaps I was lonely. Or simply because she was . . . she. I held her arm as we crossed the threshold of Mr. Ramar's house. He lived on the top floor. Probably a studio apartment. Was he an artist, I wondered? None of us knew. The door opened. The "mystery-man" himself was greeting us.

## Part Two - 13 February 1951, 9:00 PM

**Ron was right. He was unusual.** How? I don't know, really. There was something around him, in him, that stopped you feeling the way you felt just before. It was — I still vaguely recall the sensation, a very strange one — as if the whole of me paused for a split second. For a moment it was all quiet, blank. Then, it must have been my imagination, or was it a foreknowing of what came to pass? I could feel a queer pain inside of me, very deep inside; a yearning . . . "Oh, if only it were possible!" How to explain it? But it was real. It is real. I can feel it now. Now, it seems more acute, more poignant. And yet, there is also, yes, a hope. All is not lost . . . Within the pain there is a murmur. Emerald's voice? "Try to believe! Try to feel. Try, please!" I heard no voice then, of course. Emerald was there. I was touching her. She seemed very still. Mr. Ramar helped her with her coat, after Ron had introduced us. He had Old World manners. His body moved like that of a man in easy control of all his muscles. He was obviously strong, well-built, probably in his late forties. Most startling were his eyes. Under arched eyebrows they glowed strangely, gold-brown, luminous. Immensely kind too, I felt.

I was attracted to him; yet, very uneasy. I glanced at Emerald, as she turned toward a large mirror with the typical feminine gesture, straightening her hair over her high forehead. She did not meet my eyes. She seemed to be feeling for something inside.

Ron was talking, as we moved from the small entrance hall to a fairly large studio. A fire was burning in a tall fireplace. Over the mantle hung a rather large disc of what seemed like gold, with conventionalized flames of slightly darker metals; several metals, obviously some sun-symbol. It was fascinating. I asked about it, admiringly. Mr. Ramar smiled and said he had found it Peru some twenty years ago while on a mining expedition on the site of an old ruin, Inca presumably.

What attracted Emerald's attention, however, were two large Tibetan scroll-paintings on either side of the fireplace. One showed, if I remember it right, a group of Buddha-like figures on clouds; the other, some great dragon hovering over a solitary man, in meditation on the rocky ledge of a tortuous mountainside. As she spoke animatedly with our host about the paintings, I kept looking around the studio. The furniture was simple, unobtrusive. A large table and chairs on the side opposite the large studio window, which must have been facing north-east, the way the house was built; an old chest under the window, probably Spanish; and facing the fire, under the lowered ceiling a large alcove with leather chairs and a low table. Over the back of the alcove hung a heavy drapery of some material embroidered with colored metal threads.

**Mr. Ramar presently led us to the alcove** and offered Emerald a chair. The three of us sat down while he moved to the table, on either side of which I noticed, on small shelves, light brown glasses with gilded edges and a few flasks of cut glass. On the table stood a strange modern sculpture of what seemed to be bronze and ivory. Atop its geometrical masses, held by a spiral coil of gold-like metal, a large crystal sphere shone faintly, gathering light from what I supposed to be a tiny spotlight in the ceiling.

Mr. Ramar suggested we might like to taste some quite rare wine made from grapes grown in Greece, on the slopes of the famous Mount Olympus. This seemed to appeal greatly to Ron and Emerald.

"Wine from the gods' vineyard?" she asked in a slightly excited voice. "Made by Dionysian Maenads, I imagine."

Our host nodded and bent to pour a deep golden liquid in a long-stemmed glass for Emerald. "I trust you will find it free of deleterious effects one usually expects from wine."

Turning to me he enquired, "And for you? Do you prefer Scotch, or Cognac, perhaps?"

"How do you know?" I snapped back. For some reason I felt irritation in my voice.

Mr. Ramar smiled. "Tastes differ, after all." I couldn't tell if he had read in thoughts my usual dislike for sweet wine. "Scotch would be fine," I said. He reached for another flacon, opened a side panel of the table from which he took a large glass, water and ice.

"I shall taste the wine." Ron was all eagerness. I could feel him bubbling with expectancy.

This was the kind of meeting he had been longing for, ever since his mind had become caught into the glamour of what he called "higher knowledge."

"It is indeed real nectar." Emerald sounded thrilled. And turning to me, "You don't know what you are missing."

The Scotch was excellent too. This was a find.

"And now," said Mr. Ramar, after having briefly raised his wine glass to his lips, "We should come to what seems to be the object of your visit. Space-travel, interplanetary adventures, isn't it? Our young friend told me this morning that you were eager for new angles. I must say I do not know too much about your science fiction magazine, but I have read a few issues, a couple of anthologies. I recall a story by you, Mr. Probeck. It was very interesting. Very "exciting," should I say also? People must have excitement. Especially today when our everyday kind of excitement is so limited, so brutal, coarse even, perhaps."

"But that's it," interrupted Ron. "We have carried this same kind of atmosphere into so many of our story plots — only in a magnified, more colossal form. We zoom through space in rocket- ships just as we would love to be able to speed on our super- highways in our continental sport cars. We have interplanetary wars and earth cataclysms to dwarf all our past wars and our puny earthquakes or tornadoes. It is still so much the same — and often more hopeless! Return to barbarism. Total extinction; or a mechanized future, which seems to me devastating. I really feel that people are getting tired of it all. They don't know what else they want, of course. That the editor's problem. What else can we give them? With excitement too, but something different."

"Ron seems to have implicit faith in your ability to start him on a new track," I added.

And I remember well how Ramar looked at me searchingly and said, "You have no such faith, I gather?" I was taken aback. I mumbled something about anything being possible; I was always ready for new ideas . . .

**Of the conversation which followed I can, of course, remember only what impressed me most.** Ramar's voice was strangely convincing and I could feel my companions spellbound by the thoughts expressed. Not all of them were new to me. Ron had read me excerpts from writers, ancient and modern, which accepted the same premises. But as Ramar stated the ideas they certainly seemed peculiarly alive, real. Yet, for some reason which I still do not understand, something in me fought against the whole situation. Perhaps it was resentment; perhaps it was fear. Perhaps the man was indeed weaving a hypnotic spell and I did not want to give in. I certainly thought so afterward. But now . . . now, what do I really believe? If only I were sure!

The main points Ramar made were that our modern civilization has placed far too great an emphasis upon machines and the use of gadgets. Modern man has come to think of "power" as something produced by means external to himself, and depending for its release upon some kind of machine. Yet, he pointed out, these machines, however complex, are not comparable in refinement, adaptability and potentiality for growth to the amazingly varied and subtle structures of the human body.

Besides, he said, the human organism actually extends into regions of vibrations transcending the crude realm of molecular matter. We have only recently come to understand the biochemistry of the human body, but even in that field what do we really know about endocrine glands and nerve action? We have just begun to detect electric currents in the heart, the brain and all tissues. But we see them as disconnected fragments, and under average conditions. We do not know man as an organization of forces. Are we blind to the fact that this organization is — or can become — attuned to the infinitely vaster organization of forces playing through the whole solar system, not to mention the entire cosmos.

Ron broke in, enquiring, "This is the idea of the relation between the little unit, man, and the vast whole, the universe, isn't it? Paracelsus' idea, was it not?"

"Paracelsus was a great mind and he had a truly 'cosmic' realization of man's whole nature," answered Mr. Ramar, "but the ideas he expressed were not merely his own."

"Paracelsus?" questioned Emerald.

"He was a great German thinker, and one of the greatest physicians Europe has known — and much more," Ramar went on. "This Western civilization would have been different, indeed, had the men of the seventeenth century accepted his picture of man and the cosmos. But it was not yet the time. Mankind had to concentrate upon the development of its intellectual faculties, and it meant becoming focused altogether upon matter and material energies. It meant analysis, experimentation, a narrow, rigid logic — instead of Paracelsus' cosmic sense of actual identity of man and the universe."

"Microcosm and macrocosm," muttered Ron.

"All very fine," I retorted, as a philosophical ideal. But . . ."

"Not practical, I suppose?" Ramar interrupted.

"I mean, it is a theory which no one can prove. Science proves its facts. It builds machines that work, demonstrating that our knowledge of laws of nature is true."

"True as far as it goes, assuredly. But how far does it go?" questioned our host.

"Well, we are getting ready for flights to the Moon. Soon we shall travel to distant planets."

"Actually? Or in science fiction?" Ramar laughed softly.

I could not suppress a growing sense of irritation. He seemed so sure. Did he really have an extraordinary knowledge, or was it just talk — "occult" talk, as Ron had at times rattled on to me from books he had read?

"Fiction or no fiction," I replied, "what is wrong with our travelling to planets? The very best scientists of the day say it can be done sooner or later."

"Don't you think we will travel to Venus?" queried Emerald.

Ramar looked at her with great fixity for a moment, then softly said, "You are Venus."

"I am?" she was startled.

"Unless I am much mistaken, you were born sometime in May, were you not?" he went on.

"May 10. How did you know?"

He shrugged his shoulders slightly. "There are several kinds of 'knowing.'" He paused. "And



there are various kinds of traveling too — including travel to planets!"

Ron straightened up in his chair. "Other kinds of space- travel? Here is the story you were after, Dick."

I laughed, but my laughter sounded a little forced. No one else laughed. There was a queer sense of expectancy. A silence.

"Won't you tell us?" said Emerald softly.

**Ramar appeared to hesitate a moment.** I was sitting tense, for no particular reason. I happened to look at the crystal toping the modernistic sculpture in front of me. It seemed to shine with a stronger glow, a golden color I had not noticed before.

Ramar started talking. What I remember of his words is probably incomplete and perhaps incorrect. But I recall well the way he began. "Men are very strange. They try so hard to travel to the planets, when the planets are within man."

"Within man?" said Emerald in a startled voice.

For some reason, a sentence of the Gospel ran through my mind. "The kingdom of heaven is within you." A mystic statement obviously, but planets?

Ramar explained what he meant — if it could be called an "explanation!"

The total organism of man, he said, could be considered a miniature solar system; not literally so, yet "in essence and in power" — these were his words, I believe. The solar system, he stated, quoting Paracelsus to support his position, was a kind of cosmic organism, an organized — and in a broad sense, a living — whole. The planets, as they moved around the sun, defined electro-magnetic zones, each of which had a rhythm of its own, and characteristic energies streamed from these fields directed by the motion of the planets themselves. The human body is also, he claimed, and electro-magnetic field, somewhat centered around the heart. If we could see this field — he called it the true "aura" — we would notice in it vortices of energies, and streams of forces circulating in a complex, yet basically simple, manner; not only from head to feet, but reaching quite far above and somewhat below the body. These circulating streams of energy were, he claimed, the very substance or foundation of organic life. And they were related to the few basic functions of the body — like breathing, blood circulation, muscular activity, digestive metabolism, reproductive functions.

This, I could more or less accept with a stretch of my imagination. But what stopped me was the statement that these basic circuits of energy in the human body were so closely related to the electro-magnetic zones defined by the orbits of the planets, that it could be said truly Mars or Venus actually were within us. The relation was not only general and symbolic; the planetary zones and their energies were actually and actively expressed in the human body. So much so, Ramar said, that if a person could completely focus his consciousness upon the Mars- type of energy in his body, he would be at once in perfect attunement to the planet Mars. He could experience, if he wished, all there was to experienced on, and in, Mars!

**I think the three of us grasped a little** as Ramar made, simply and as a matter of fact, this last point. Here was indeed a new way of traveling to the planets! Traveling inside of one's own body! How much simpler; and, of course — I am a practical person after all! —

much cheaper.

Silence had fallen, rather heavily. I felt Ramar watching us, our reactions.

I broke the silence. "A most fascinating idea. But . . ."

"A fact also," Ramar interrupted.

"But a fact must be proven, or at least provable, if it is a fact," I exclaimed.

It is provable. . . under certain conditions."

"What are the conditions?" Ron hastened to say, with obvious excitement.

"For one thing, your readiness, my friend." Ramar's voice seemed to take on a solemn quality. It was soft, but so direct, so precise, that you felt it went through you — a challenge. I stood up and took a few steps. Uneasiness mounted up inside of me. I felt tense, disturbed — I couldn't have told why; except . . . yes, that was it. A challenge. The man challenged us to something. But what was involved? One just did not go foolishly into a blank unknown. Was it a joke? We did not know anything about the man, after all.

Ramar looked at me, and standing up asked, "Some more Scotch?"

By God, yes; Scotch would feel good. It was excellent Scotch. I drank quickly. Then, an idea suddenly flashed into my head: What if the drinks were doped?

I looked at my two companions. They were drinking some more of the "wine of the gods," as Emerald had called it. I wished I could have warned her, stopped her. Did Ramar get my thoughts? He came to me, and placing his hand on my shoulder, asked, "Everything all right?" I felt ashamed of my thoughts; yet my irritation kept increasing. His very kindness annoyed me.

"Well," I said rather rudely, "what proof can you give that your theory is a fact? We have the right to ask that, haven't we?"

Emerald looked at me with wide open eyes. She seemed to say, "Oh, please! Please!"

I insisted, almost angrily, "Is there no way you can show us something? What is the price of the trip to Mars?" I tried to laugh, but it did not come out.

### **Part Three - 13 February 1951, 10:30 PM**

**I was making what seemed to be a strenuous effort to quiet my thoughts . . .** or was it feelings? I wanted to appear, and indeed to be, very objective, very detached. If there was to be an "experiment," as Ramar had said, then I could observe as a scientist in his laboratory. The thought gave me for a moment a sense of aloof superiority. "I am the objective witness; I am not involved in whatever will happen . . ."

The thought melted soon into the feeling of anguish. What if Emerald and Ron were to be hurt in some way! I had read, I suppose, too many stories of space-travel and time-displacement with fantastic endings not to be uncomfortably aware of dire possibilities. Both my companions seemed so eager. Had the wine they drank so happily already worked some magic? I dismissed the thought. Ramar did not seem to be that kind of man. And yet? Perhaps I too was being "conditioned," as our writers say in their futuristic stories.

I heard Ramar ask Ron for his birthdate. April 5 was the answer. Ramar nodded. "I knew you had a strong Martian rhythm. You see, the time of birth is important in that the season of your birth — and I am not referring to what has come to be known popularly as "astrology" — establishes a fundamental contact between your organism — your body, your soul, your particular type of consciousness — and one of the planetary fields of forces.

There is no mystery in it at all; simply a matter of resonance. Each season on earth has its own solar keynote of life-energy. Each year is a complete cycle of life on earth; first an outgoing, then an incoming tide of solar energy. This solar energy is both differentiated and focused by the planetary fields, and one of these fields is dominant each month. Your life-rhythms reveals a Mars dominance; the young lady shows clearly a Venus dominance."

"What does it mean, actually?" questioned Ron. "Simply this, that you are basically in tune with the Mars type of vibratory energy, the Mars "phase" of the solar cycle. For this reason you can 'travel' — if you care to use this word — along the tide of Mars energy. This energy is predominant in your body. It animates particularly through your muscular system; it has a strong focus in the adrenals, above the kidneys — also in the generative organs. Likewise Venus is particularly strong in the young lady — may I call her Emerald? It is an interesting coincidence," he added.

I felt something grip me . . . a sense of fatality, of impending events it was too late to stop. I struggled to intervene, knowing well it was futile. I could only say, "Why coincidence?"

"Mars and Venus," Ramar went on, "are, as you know from mythology, polarities — man and woman, you might say. Astronomically, they are the nearest planets; Venus inside the earth's orbit, Mars outside. It so happens, besides, that they are today about to make a conjunction in the sky. You can see them after sunset — very near each other. Conditions in the solar system will make contact easier for our friends."

"Did you know it would be so?" Emerald asked, opening her eyes still more widely.

"I suspected it might be."

"When?" I blurted.

"When I met Ron, this morning."

**There was a silence.** This morning . . . But that was long before he had met Emerald, before I had known about him and my dinner appointment had been unexpectedly canceled! Was this man clairvoyant, or able to manipulate us and our lives? If so, what was his

purpose? What did the whole thing mean?

Ramar opened the drapery hanging against the wall. A narrow glass case was revealed, and on its few shelves a great number of objects of various shapes. The light was too dim for me to see exactly what they were. Quickly Ramar picked up two small chains of metal on which hung two oddly shaped pieces of apparently the same substance. He asked my friends to put these around their necks, explaining that one, for Emerald, was made of copper; the other, for Ron, of iron.

"There is, as Paracelsus, Mesmer and many Greek and older European thinkers knew, a special affinity between the planets' electromagnetic fields and some metals on earth. The metals became thus, easily, 'receiving sets' for planetary energies. If properly magnetized at certain times of the year, pieces of metal like these anchor, as it were, the planetary fields in the body, activating the relationship between the planets and their corresponding centers in the human organism. They draw the force down, and thus the person's consciousness can more easily ascend — you might say — along the path of that force to the planet itself."

"And then?" I couldn't help asking, uneasily.

"Then," answered Ramar, "the Mars force in the body and the Mars force in the planet's orbit vibrate in unison, the consciousness of the person can know and experience Martian existence, not only in his earth-body where it has become immediately more active in a subtle electromagnetic sense, but as it is on the planet itself, where it is primarily effective."

I still could not believe. Not that the whole idea of itself was really any more fantastic than traveling at a speed greater than light to Sirius in a rocketship, or moving about in time while sitting upon some strange mechanical contraption; but this was not science fiction, and not the kind of scientific thinking I was used to. I was there, awake, real. Emerald, the girl I loved, Ron, my assistant, were before me. They were real too. It was no fantasy, no dream. I could feel my heart beating nervously, as my friends hung the thin metal chains around their necks, the pendants reaching down to their hearts. I had to sit down. They too were sitting now, Ramar standing a few feet in front of them.

**Silence — deadly silence**, I thought. Then it started. The crystal on the table was brilliantly glowing; two rays of light, coming seemingly from nowhere, were pulsating through it: one was red, the other green — green! — emerald green. I looked at Ramar. A golden sheen seemed to envelop him. From the side, I could see a golden light condensing around his chest — his heart, it must have been.

I turned my glance to Emerald. She and Ron had closed their eyes. They seemed immensely at peace. And then I saw their bodies change slightly. Not the shapes, but an indefinable something happened inside of the bodies themselves. They filled with vibrations, with colored whirls. Ron's body was glowing with reddish light; Emerald's with an unearthly vibrant green like no green I have ever seen. The light was ebbing and flowing through their bodies, while at the same time it seemed to be condensed in slowly moving eddies of almost solid color at definite points. I noticed especially a strong concentration around Emerald's neck.

As I think of it now, it may have been centered in the thyroid gland. Other condensations were distinguishable in the abdominal region — perhaps in the location of the ovaries. Between these three centers paths of lights suggested the outline of a triangle. I watched

the moving light with a fascination mixed with fear. What was happening? Would the body stand the strain — whatever it was? I wanted to ask questions, but I could not. I felt almost paralyzed, yet extraordinarily alive mentally. I wondered for an instant if I too was showing such a change. But as I tried to look down at my body, Ron's voice came out, very weak, yet distinct — from very far, it seemed.

"Wonderful . . . so wonderful . . . Oh, I feel so strong, so vast . . . great forms moving . . . everything is so intense, so clear — all moving, big waves of motion . . . heaving, like the sea. But it is not the sea — it is power, waves of power. Some are dark, falling back; some like flames . . . no, not flames . . . pure energy. Oh, I understand now. Waves of desire, yes, desire! Everything is pure desire, pure motion. Everything surges with desire . . ."

Ron's voice grew stronger, more excited. "Everything is struggle, conflict of desire. And all these are beings! Some reach up in great brilliant spirals. Others are caught short, break down. What makes them break down? Oh, I see; it is fear. Fear enters. The surging light collapses. Fear . . . Oh, my God!" He breathed heavily, slumped a little. Ramar moved quickly to him, touched him on the forehead. Ron became calm again.

Emerald too had stirred. A peculiar kind of hum seemed to rise from her whole body. Her lips were closed. It was not voice. It was like a breeze in tall pines; the needles quiver, they sing to the wind.

I managed to say "Emerald." I don't think she heard me. Ramar turned to me quickly, his finger on his lips silencing me. Then he looked at me intently. He asked, "Do you want to get a glimpse of what Ron feels? It won't be as real; only the shadow of his experience upon your brain centers."

**Almost before I assented,** I felt his hand touching the back of my head. Something suddenly seemed to snap inside of my brain. The pit of my stomach ached as if it had caved in. Shivers ran up my spine. I was aware of heat, of a tremor through my entire body. I was forced to close my eyes. And suddenly, in front of them there was something like a huge T.V. screen. On it whirls of color were dancing — not really dancing, but surging on, as if deliberately striving, deliberately seeking some goal.

Some of these dynamic forms moved forward; they were red- orange mostly, but with many added hues. Others seemed greenish- blue — perhaps the complementary color of the first ones — and gave the impression of falling or sliding. I watched, amazed; for these whirls seemed alive, sentient — perhaps intelligent, aware of each other, no doubt.

I watched — becoming more accustomed to the incredible scene beyond all human dreaming. I sensed that the whirls were far more definite than I had noticed at first. Were they "bodies" of a totally different kind from ours? In some cases, the shape suggested a funnel-like tornado moving capriciously across the plains of Kansas, moving with non-human will. As the scene shifted, I saw what looked almost like Northern Lights shimmering, not in the sky, but on what now seemed to me as "soil" — if one could compare to our soil what appeared to be rather a dead level of effort, a plane of motion. And then these iridescent lights condensed. They looked like an army on march; an army of intensely alive mist-forms. I tried to follow their movements. Then I realized that underneath the seemingly erratic motions there were geometrical patterns of great precision — tides of energy-in-motion, reaching center and radiating out. The blue-green forms seemed to follow particularly clear patterns in their downward (or was it inward?)

motion. The red-orange whirls were freer, bolder, spreading widely, sometimes in mass formations which spread over much of the scene I could see. I felt they spread far and wide in a space which did not appear curved, as ours.

Suddenly, there was stillness. A gathering of effort, will, or whatever it was, among a group of reddish shapes slowly circling around an empty space. One of these light-forms condensed heavily, glittering with many sub-colors. The whole wide vista was sucked down into it. It shot out of space, as if toward my vision, I started, opened my eyes, my body quivering. Ramar was still near me, at my side now — but I could hardly see his face. From the region of his heart a globe of golden light was pulsating, immense. I felt almost enveloped in its radiance.

Ramar spoke, softly, "Look ahead." From the body of Ron a flame-like substance radiated, larger than his body, pervading, yet somehow behind his body. I recognized the form. I was what I had just seen with my eyes closed. Many colors vibrated through it. The form changed; it reached up. It reached . . . Oh, God! From Emerald's body a more geometrical, softer shape of light was joined with the other. Both shapes stood, shimmering. A burst of light seemed to spread from the crystal to my right. Somewhere there was a tone vibrating, deep, gong-like. A deep sigh, almost a cry, made me tremble from head to foot. One thought raced through my dazed mind: Emerald! I must save Emerald. I must take her away.

I tried to move. The lights faded out. I cried aloud, "Emerald! Come! Let's go!" I think I cried aloud . . . perhaps I didn't. In such a state one doesn't know really. What is real? What is dream? What is joy? What is pain?

It must have been pain that gripped my heart. I stumbled over a chair, would have fallen probably, if Ramar hadn't caught me with a steel-like hand. I heard him say, "You must not disturb them. Be calm. There is no danger." I tried to be calm; but my thoughts were in a vast brawl. It became dark, very dark — inside.

How long we hung in the silence, I could not tell. Emerald's voice called me back to awareness. "Ron, are you here?"

"Emerald!" His voice was trembling, as one who wakes up at long last from an incomprehensible shock.

I looked at them. The brilliant light-shapes were gone. Everything was as before.

Everything? Ha! What a joke! Ron and Emerald were staring at each other — bewilderment, ecstasy, tragedy; I could not know. But as long as I live I shall never forget that look.

It is there now in front of me — a year later. It is burnt into the whole of me. Nothing can ever be the same, since I have seen that look — that look in the girl I loved . . .

**I managed to shake myself and get up.** Ramar was standing near Emerald, looking at her steadily. Ron slowly rose from his chair. He seemed dazed. He was frowning, as if desperately trying to keep hold of something which was slipping away.

"How about a drink of water?" Ramar asked; and reaching out to the side of the table, he poured water into glasses. Ron and Emerald drank, as men who have crossed deserts through torrid heat. I hesitated. But my throat felt parched — a strange feverishness forced me to drink. Plain water, apparently. It was cold. It soothed my tense body. I breathed deeply.

I had to say something. The silence had become unbearable to me. I forced myself — I

forced so hard I supposed my words must have exploded. Exploded! Yes, I wanted to shatter something. I wanted to talk loud, to say crazy things. I wanted to rage, to explode. What had been done to us? What had been done to Emerald, to Ron? Oh, that look, that look between them!

"Most interesting, indeed. But what happened, really? Will you explain to us? What did you make me see? What were those forms?" My voice was undoubtedly raspy, tense. I knew that what I said was stupid, meaningless. I knew. But I simply couldn't help it. I had to say something. I had to shatter something. Something. What, exactly? I was not sure. But I felt hollow, deprived. I felt immensely lonely.

Ramar's voice was calm and gentle. He turned to me. I sensed compassion. It hurt me. Why should anyone pity me? "There are experiences, my friend, which cannot bear being explained. What you have seen through Ron's mind — what he and Emerald have experienced — yes, it was real. Some day, perhaps tomorrow, perhaps many years hence, you will understand. They understand . . . or at least they have felt."

"Felt what?" I cried out anxiously, my eyes searching Emerald's. But she avoided me; she was looking self-consciously at the pendant she was still wearing, fingering it.

"Life, power — beyond the narrow limits of their earth-bound egos. An aspect of their total beings, as it exists in true cosmic status; yes, the soul."

"As soul?" I exclaimed. "This is insane. Why, do we have our souls on other planets? What an idea! Who could believe this?"

"I believe." Ron's voice was firm, very quiet, very vibrant. I had never felt him so still, so seemingly in control of himself. Ramar smiled.

"But, look," I said pleadingly, my head bursting, "We came here to find out about space-travel, going to planets, new angles for stories . . . What is this all about? Hypnotism, black magic, enchantment?"

"Oh, Dick, Dick!" Now Emerald looked at me. She seemed ready to cry. She sat down. Her head bent. She held it tight. "Please. Can't you understand? If only you could feel what I have seen, what I know . . ."

Ramar turned to me. "Mr. Probeck, I realize that this is disconcerting to you. You were curious — intellectually curious. Your mind has been accustomed to think of the universe in a certain way; let's say the modern way. It is a very worthwhile way. It pays huge dividends, in physical comfort, in technical skill, in concrete material achievements. I do not criticize or question your beliefs, your attitude. They are those of your time. There are, however," he paused awhile, "a few, a very few who are unwilling to be bound to their time, and their time's philosophy. Something in them calls for vaster knowledge, deeper feelings, love . . . shall I say, more 'cosmic'? And, my friend, did not our great Teacher, Christ, tell us, 'Ask and you shall receive.' No one who calls sincerely, utterly, goes unanswered." Obstinate I clung to my question. "What has it to do with traveling to planets?"

"The planets you study through your telescopes are not the whole planets. You are not merely your flesh and bones, either. Will you concede this?"

I grumbled my acquiescence.

"If this is true here on earth which is the most material planet of the whole system, how much more true of beings on Mars, Venus, or Mercury! These planets are material, of course, but mostly to your eyes and your intellectual understanding. The stuff they are made of, essentially, is quite different. You interpret what you observe and measure astronomically, as if this stuff were as material as the rocks on earth. Why should it be? You

have had a glimpse of how different life, motion, form is on Mars."

"And so I have traveled to Mars, have I." I snapped back.

Ramar shook his head. "Ron has. You only watched the pictures on his brain-consciousness."

"But how can I know it was not a hallucination?" I cried.

Ron had been walking restlessly to and fro. He stopped. "Dick! I know it was real. There never was, in my life, anything more real, more vivid. I know it. I know it in my body, in my mind, in . . ."

"Your soul, I suppose?" I felt angry, bitter, alone. They all "knew," it seemed; I didn't. I was the doubter, the man of the crowd unwilling to become free from the thoughts of the time; the failure, no doubt! Irritation seemed to mount within me. I walked out into the studio. The fire had died down in the fireplace. But the sun-symbol above the mantelpiece was particularly luminous. I drew away from it. I turned and Emerald was facing me. She stretched her hand toward me. I took it. "Oh Emerald! Emerald! What have they done to you? I loved you."

I stopped, stunned. Why had I said "I loved you?" Why the past tense?

Tears had come to her eyes. She said nothing, but her hand was warm, feverish.

Ramar was showing Ron some of the objects behind the curtain of the alcove.

"Emerald! Emerald . . .!" I didn't know what to say. Something had happened. What had happened? What were those great forms of light, reddish and green, which had appeared behind Ron and her, which had become joined, it seemed, incomprehensibly?

In my mind, words formed themselves. "Their soul-essences . . . Each human being is a vast chord of energies . . . each planet is a tone . . . every man a solar system." I thought that I heard Ramar's voice again as he had answered Emerald earlier that evening. "You are Venus." I seemed to know suddenly what he had meant. "You, the essential You, the You that is power, the cosmic You is centered in Venus. There is its home; here, only an outpost in earth-matter." She had found it perhaps, the cosmic self of power, this soul-essence . . . her Venus-being.

How long I stood holding Emerald's hand I have no idea now. I had no idea, then. I am not even sure I thought these thoughts. Now I feel I must have, though many weeks and months afterwards I certainly would have denied it, if anyone had told me. I fought so hard, afterwards. Oh, how bitterly I have fought! I can't fight any longer.

Ron and Ramar joined us. I let go of Emerald's hand. She turned, looked at her wrist-watch. "Oh, how late it is! We must go." It was past one o'clock.

There was nothing to say — nothing I, at least, could say to our host. He helped us with our coats. His hands reached to ours, gently, firmly.

Ron's voice sounded eager, pleading. "Will we see you again? Soon? There is so much . . ."

"Will we?" echoed Emerald.

Ramar smiled. "It is for you to say — but, not now . . ."

**The door closed.** We went mechanically to the elevator. We reached the street. Called a taxi. The sky was still clear. It was cold. I could feel Emerald shivering in her coat. I took her arm. Ron was staring at the sky through the taxi window as we sped south along the Hudson Parkway.

My mind whirled with questions beating at my brain. What had they felt? What had they



seen? Did they notice the luminous forms around them? How could they be sure they had not dreamt an exciting dream?

But I could not form any words. I was desperately angry at myself for not having pressed Ramar, forced him to explain — at least for not having arranged, right then and there, another meeting. I felt hollow, empty, acutely frustrated.

The taxi stopped in front of Emerald's building on East 10th Street. I could only say, "Will you be all right? Do you want us to stay with you?"

She laughed. "All right? Why, of course! I bet I'll reach the office in the morning before you do."

I accompanied her up the outside steps, slippery with thin ice. Ron had remained standing on the sidewalk. Before she went through the door which I held open, I watched her eyes seek Ron's glance, below us. What I felt, I can't explain. Every strand of me, every particle of my brain seemed to know no power on earth could undo what had been sealed. The irrevocable: the fact that will remain fact for all eternity — that not even God could erase . . .

But it is man's nature, it seems, to fight and to beat his ego-will against the unalterable. It is man's nature to make a fool of himself, to slug himself or drug himself into un-remembering. And the wheel turns and turns — the tragic, hopeless turning of the wheel. Even pain feels good, after a while, when happiness has so long been gone.

## Part Four - 14 February 1951, 9:00 AM

**When I reached the office the next morning, after sleepless hours, Emerald was already at work.** "I told you I would be first, didn't I?" she smiled, teasing me. I hardly had time to answer and ask her how she felt when the intercom called me to the publisher's office across the hall. A conference of editors had been hastily summoned. There was news of a general printers' strike.

I was suddenly reminded of the friend with whom I had been supposed to dine the evening before; his being called to Chicago, also by a strike. Was all this fated, or worse still, prearranged? I felt dizzy. Probably lack of sleep, I thought. And I had no chance to think further of the weird events of only a few hours before.

Everything that can upset an editor's job happened that morning. I had planned to take Emerald to lunch as a surprise and give her the Valentine I had brought for her, but an emergency luncheon called me uptown. Our West Coast representative had arrived unexpectedly, was on his way to Boston. Urgent business. I just had time to rush through the office at noon. Emerald was putting on her coat to go out. She seemed upset, Ron's desk had apparently not been disturbed.

"Ron didn't come in?" I asked, suddenly worried.

"No," replied Emerald.

"He left me to go to the Greenwich Square Hotel last night. He stays there often, you know, when it's too late to go back to Long Island."

"Yes, I did remember. I phoned there, a moment ago. He left very early, the clerk told me."

"Maybe he had an appointment . . . perhaps he had to get something from his apartment. You might phone there."

She hesitated a moment, then said slowly, "I did. The number was on your list. There was no answer," I searched her eyes, she avoided mine. She was uneasy. Evidently Ron was foremost in her mind. I was going to ask her to wait for me, if I should be detained uptown after five. But the publisher opened the door and shouted, "We'll be late. Come on!" I waved to her. "Don't worry. Ron's all right." Could he have gone to Ramar? I wondered.

**The afternoon was a constant rush.** We had to go to the American News office, discuss figures. Everything tangled up. The boss insisted on cocktails. We had to see our representatives off to Grand Central. It was almost five when I returned to the office, worn out and in a mood to snap at anyone.

No one was in the office. What happened? I wondered. Reaching my desk I saw a package of sheets and proofs, on top of it a note scrawled by Ron. It read — "Forgive me. I asked Emerald to come with me and have a drink. She looked as if she needed one badly. Here are the final proofs, ready to shoot. Please understand . . . Ron."

Then there was an almost illegible P.S., probably written as an afterthought, standing up. "Sorry I was late. I had to be alone. Rode the ferry back and forth to Staten Island. It was wonderful."

"Well, I like the nerve!" I muttered. I was angry. . . Riding the ferry. Taking away my girl. Where did they go? He could at least have asked me to join them!

I opened my desk drawer to put away the pile of proofs. "Nice of him to finish that, anyway," I mumbled sarcastically to myself. Then I slumped back in the chair. I had seen, at the back of the drawer, a small package . . . My Valentine present to Emerald! I had forgotten, in the mad chase of the afternoon, that this was the day. I stared at the calendar on the desk, still reading February 13. Slowly, mechanically, I turned the knob. February 13 went off into the past; so did February 14, Valentine's Day. Very slowly February 15 appeared. For a moment, everything around me seemed cloudy, indistinct. I was so tired! I closed my eyes, tried to think. Fragmentary images of the night before passed before me. Emerald's face as she had seen Ron after . . . whatever it was that had happened. Oh, that look!

**How tired can one feel and still remember faces so vividly?** Ramar's seemed to come before me, his vast luminous eyes gazing at me, into me. I shook myself. The clock on the wall read 5:15. I must have dozed.

I put on my coat and left the office. I remember the sun setting brilliantly as I crossed 14th Street. People were rushing, swallowed greedily by the monstrous jaws of subway entrances, piling into suffocating buses. The whole New York City frenzy functioned as ever. And I . . . I wondered where Emerald and Ron could be, I, alone. And the ruthless, greedy city — its wealth, its poverty, its turmoil, its endless escapes — pressing around me, pressing. I wanted to go away, somewhere. I did not know where.

A strange impulse made me call a taxi. Hardly thinking, I told the driver, "Morningside Drive."

"What number?" asked the driver.

I didn't know. Just go to the Drive. I'll show you the building." Why did I do that? I kept thinking that it made no sense . . . He probably won't be home . . . I didn't even have his phone number to let him know I was coming.

The driver, for some unknown reason, did not take the speedway along the Hudson. Up Eighth Avenue, a traffic jam stopped us at 34th Street. As we paused for a moment, I was startled out of my wits when I saw Mr. Ramar walking among cars to the door of my taxi. I leaned forward excitedly, and opened the door. "You here! Did you know I was coming to see you?"

He smiled in his strange, faintly amused way. "May I join you?" he asked.

"Of course," I answered, completely stunned. "Just another coincidence . . . Does that explanation satisfy you?"

I didn't know what to answer. The driver turned, obviously curiously to see his new passenger. "Same address?" he asked.

"Would you be kind enough to drop me at Grand Central first?" Ramar asked me.

"Yes, of course . . . Driver, Grand Central!"

My nerves were on edge. This really was too much for twenty-four hours! Ramar turned so he could face me directly.

"My friend," he said, "you have outstanding qualities and these could be of greatest value. . . to you and to others. One thing you lack — a rare thing these days, of course — "

"What do I lack?" I snorted.

"I was going to say faith." Ramar went on, "but I should add also, humility. You have much pride; the pride of your insecurity. It is not so?"

I did not answer. I was not actually thinking; I was merely being subjected to something over which I had no control. Ramar's voice was deliberate, it beat upon my mind over and through the street's hellish noises. Confusion in me answered to chaos outside. I don't remember all he said. When he had almost reached the station, I recall well the words he said, "You are hurt too easily, my friend. Try not to be hurt so hard. Try to let go. Take it easy. Being bitter does not pay."

"Bitter? About what?" I felt suddenly very empty and lonely. He did not answer.

As the car stopped, Ramar looked at me with a gentleness that nearly brought tears to my eyes. His large almost golden eyes shone in the semi-dark. "I am going away — very soon," he said softly.

"You are? Where?"

"You will probably know — in due time. The important thing is, try not to be hurt.

Remember, things are not always what they seem to be!"

He got out and walked away rapidly, disappearing into the crowd.

The driver was staring at me with a peculiar look. "Morningside Drive?"

"No, thank you. Drive down to Washington Square."

**15 February 1951, 9:00 AM**

**I must have slept heavily that night**, because I didn't wake up at my usual time. When I reached the office, Emerald was filing letters and manuscripts. She greeted me with a "Hello!" that seemed both distant and somewhat strained. I wondered what had happened to her and Ron last evening.

"How are you this morning?" I enquired. "You seem tired."

"Oh, it's nothing . . . I'll be all right," she answered, keeping on with her work.

I insisted. "I'm sorry I got back after you had gone yesterday. I had a hectic afternoon. How was Ron?"

She came to my desk with a pile of letters. "Ron? Oh, fine. I see he's late again."

"Did you have dinner with him?" The words came out almost compulsively, I was sorry I asked. After all, this was none of my business. I looked intently at Emerald. Her face was pale and drawn — perhaps from lack of sleep . . . perhaps . . . ?

She seemed to hesitate a moment, then replied, "Yes, we had dinner together. We talked . . . There was much to try to understand."

"You mean, what happened at Mr. Ramar's?"

She looked at me uneasily, wondering perhaps. What I had felt, what I had seen — what I thought now of the whole adventure. She nodded. I got up impulsively, took her hands as she placed some letters in front of me. Her hands were feverish. She withdrew slightly — her eyes staring through me, very far. She appeared to be trembling. Was she really ill? Had the whole thing been too much for her?

"Emerald, you're ill! You have a fever. You must go home, take a rest."

She smiled. "Perhaps I caught a cold on my way back from Venus."

I laughed, rather self-consciously. At least, she had not lost her sense of humor.

"You really think you went to Venus?" Perhaps I should not have asked. Her eyes darkened. Her hand played, for a moment, with a ruler lying on my desk.

"You don't believe it, apparently."

I was about to protest mildly, when the phone rang.

It was Ron. "Dick, it's you? How are you? Listen Dick, would you mind if I didn't come in today and tomorrow?"

"Are you sick, too?" Perhaps my voice did sound a bit sarcastic. I didn't want it to.

"What do you mean, 'sick too'?" he asked in a worried tone. "Who is sick? You?"

"Oh, no. Emerald seems feverish and I'm sending her home. Rest will do her good."

Emerald looked at me, shaking her head. I went on, "She doesn't appear to want to go. But I think she should. Are you really ill?"

He seemed to hesitate. "No, not really. Tired. But the main thing is . . . I want to write something. I have to. . . You will see it — next week."

I nearly bit my tongue trying not to ask, "About your trip to Mars?" But Emerald undoubtedly had heard what Ron said. She stood, starting at me. I felt she was protecting him, anxiously. I avoided her eyes, nervously played with a letter covered with unfamiliar stamps. "O.K. Stay home. Write all you want. I guess there's not much to do here. I am mailing the copy to Chicago — and God knows when, or if, it will go to print. The strike looks bad. I must see the boss now. Good luck. See you Monday, then?"

Emerald was sitting at her desk. "Look here," I said, "why don't you go home, and to bed? You have a fever, I'm sure. There is no sense being heroic. If I have urgent letters, Jacqueline can take them." Jacqueline was one of the girls at the switchboard who helped us whenever we were rushed. Very blonde, very "cover girl" and ready to live up to her looks . . . or so I had been told by the editor of our "Sports" magazine. "Come back Monday, and call up before if you feel worse, or need help. Promise?"

**After Emerald had gone**, I sat heavily, my head in my hands. I stared blankly at the

letters on the desk. "What was going on?" I asked myself. I had meant to tell Ron about my encounter with Ramar. But what was the use? Perhaps he had seen Ramar. What had happened between Ron and Emerald last night? I couldn't stop thinking. It was too crazy, the whole thing! Why did it have to happen? Just when I felt happy, warm again towards a woman, a wonderful woman! Was there no happiness for me, ever?

I had to shake myself. Self-pity mixed with anger. "Who is this Ramar, anyway?" But as I thought of him, a strange stillness settled in me. From my brain, words seemed to rise. . . remembered words, no doubt. "Things are not always what they seem . . . Try to let go . . . Try not to be hurt . . ."

It was the last I saw of Emerald. When I phoned her the next day she said she was feeling much better and might go to visit a friend in Connecticut for the weekend, if the weather kept nice. It was much warmer on Saturday, and I expected she had gone. Her phone did not answer Sunday afternoon, when I tried to reach her.

When I came to the office Monday morning, I saw at once a special delivery letter on my desk. Her writing. My hand trembled as I opened it. I had a hollow feeling . . . Bad news? What could have happened.

Sunday, noon

Dear Dick,

What could I say that would make sense now? I don't know how to explain — because there is no explanation that would seem rational, sensible . . . I am just leaving town. I don't know when I shall be back. You must find somebody for my job. It shouldn't be hard. Please, forgive me. You been quite wonderful — as a friend, too. I so wish I could explain. But perhaps you will understand. You will not misjudge me. . . us. I am going with Ron. He will mail you a long letter. Perhaps he can explain. Perhaps he can make you believe . . . that we are not little fools on a love-adventure — a banal affair.

You may refuse to believe that what you saw the other night was real. You may think of Mr. Ramar as a charlatan, or worse. I don't know what you will believe. I hope, oh, I hope you won't feel hurt. Please think of us kindly, warmly. We are going into the totally unknown. It is mad, perhaps. I don't know . . . I only know that there is no other road we can take. And have faith — I have faith.

Please, have faith with us. This is not goodbye! We will meet again. We must . . . Oh, try to understand, Dick. If only you could feel what I have felt!

Always your friend,

Emerald.

**I stood still for a moment — it seemed endless.** I had no thought, no feeling. I was stunned, it was fantastic, incredible. Both of them . . . suddenly . . . like kids eloping! It made no sense.

Why, but why? — I kept asking myself, as I regained some sort of normal consciousness. Why this way? No one would have stopped them if they wanted to have a love affair, get married . . . even take a vacation together! But just like that . . . disappearing. No notice. They had jobs, after all! What kind of a fix did they leave me in? They knew I was having printing trouble. They knew I depended on them. But no, they went. Ron will mail me "a long letter." How considerate of him, the little fool! Did I count for nothing?

I tried to stop my angry thoughts. I re-read the letter. "We are going into the totally unknown . . . I only know that there is no other road we can take . . . have faith in us . . ."

what was she trying to say? What did it mean? I could mean only one thing — Ramar! Ramar had taken them with him. He was about to go away, he had told me so.

Ramar knew, of course. That's what he was trying to tell me. "Don't get hurt. Don't get bitter!" He knew. He must have planned it all from the beginning. But why? What did he want to do with them? It sounded mad . . . I shivered, suddenly. All sorts of horrible ideas rushed to my mind. Science fiction story, all right! That was one to add to the list. But it was real. And I was the dupe, the goat — on top of it all! Or was it all a nightmare, some hypnotic spell from which I would wake . . . they would wake — and return?

Ramar's last words came back to me with a strange intensity. "Things are not always what they seem to be." I seemed to hear his voice again. A hallucination? Was I losing my mind? I walked up and down the office, wondering what I should do next. Yes, I did think of calling the police. But that was childish, obviously. They would think I was crazy. I had only the letter to show. Besides, Ron and Emerald were not teenagers. They should know what they were doing.

There was obviously nothing I could do — only wait for Ron's "long letter," if it came. In the meantime, work harder, take care of the magazine, get someone to take Emerald's place. Jacqueline could do for a while, anyway. I would have to talk to the boss. My god, what would I tell him?

But why not phone Ramar? Perhaps he was still at his apartment. Maybe I was wrong. I never had even taken down his phone number. The name wasn't listed. I didn't even know the exact number of the building. I rushed downstairs, hurried into a taxi. We sped along the parkway, up Morningside Drive. I recognized the building; asked the superintendent, "Is Mr. Ramar home? Or has he already left on a trip?"

"No," the super replied. "He's not here. Moved out on Saturday. Can't say about a trip."

"But where has he gone?"

"I don't know. Didn't leave an address. Sorry, mister."

I rode back to the office. My thoughts whirled around in a hectic, bitter hurt. So, they had all gone — leaving me! I had stuck to Scotch — excellent Scotch! I had clung to what I knew — the familiar, the intellectually obvious. . . perhaps I should say, the safe! I was safe. Sure! Dear old Scotch . . . very safe, very normal.

Or was it? Too much Scotch may not be safe. I found out, soon enough . . .

## Part Five - 20 February 1951, 8:00 AM

**Ron's letter came — air mail, special delivery — two days later,** addressed to my home and postmarked San Francisco. So, they had flown West! It was a long letter.

Dick,

This is very difficult to write. But I must . . . for my sake and Emerald's — as much as for yours. I must try to tell you candidly, honestly, what happened, omitting nothing of which I am aware. You have the right to know. I feel it a solemn duty to do all I can so you can understand why we left — and left you, so suddenly, so discourteously. All I can do now is to write you, not as an apology, but as a gesture of sharing. Perhaps some day I shall be able to do more, granted that I understand correctly the meaning of the events of the last few days and what should be ahead of us, provided we are all strong enough.

I can't be sure of what you were able to observe, and even more to feel, when we were together at Mr. Ramar's studio. I remember you seemed irritated, even hurt in some way; but everything was so strange, so incredibly strange, that I could not follow your reactions. I only seem to recall that in some way, for a while, you were linked with me; I could feel you remotely . . . your agitation, your mind's questioning. But perhaps I imagined it. What I did not imagine, I am sure, is that extraordinary sense of expansion and elation which seized me when I put on the metal chain Mr. Ramar gave me, and his eyes held mine as a magnet of light. I don't know exactly what happened. Emerald did not know either, she told me later, but she must have felt the same, judging from her description.

How can I explain it? It was if my body was a throbbing magnet with myriad electric wires humming. All my muscles ached; they seemed filled and bursting with power, with speed. Yet, I could not have moved an inch — I did try! Power! I don't think we know usually what power is. It is not doing things, feeling big and strong, virile and whatnot. I felt all that . . . in a way, but in an amazing way. A way of extraordinary stillness . . . perhaps I should say, an inevitable manner. Inevitable power — power you do not seek, but rather which seeks you, pervades you, possesses you. It is you, and you are it. There is no conflict, no striving. It is peace; yet enormous activity, movement. . .

I suppose I closed my eyes. I was no longer aware of the room, or anything in it — only of waves of power, of a dance, a rhythm . . . perhaps a tone, I am not sure. Emerald said she was completely absorbed in one immense tone; immense, yet extraordinarily pure and still. I don't think it was quite the same for me. There was a sense of vast movement, and consciousness — it hardly seemed "mine" in the ordinary way — speeding along with a tide that had no shore.

Then, there was a shore, I entered into something. I was something, moving, swaying. Slowly, I could feel myself "it," more precisely, more deliberately. A form of motion, a reaching out. A "desire," a will . . . such words seem so inadequate!

How could I explain? I can only say that gradually consciousness became focused. I distinguished what seemed "myself" from other moving forms that whirled on. There was rhythm, flow, intelligence. An awareness of solidity as steadiness of movement. When water is whirled around very fast, it becomes solid to a bullet which rebounds upon it. Well, this was something like that.

You may ask: Did you know you were on the planet Mars? How did you know?

It is difficult to answer. I was somewhere in a place totally different from the ways of earth existence. It was a place. It had form, solidity, extension. There was power streaming upon it. I tried to reach out to that source of power; but it was almost shattering. Perhaps I should say "blinding." It blinded whatever was consciousness, "I."

In retrospect, I would say it was the light of the sun. It pervaded everything. All the moving forms — of which I was one — were flooded with it. I do not recall any sensation of heat;

but tremendous acceleration as I tried to "look at" it. Whether I had "eyes" or not, I could not say. But something "saw." Seeing, however, was not objective, as we know it here — it was more like "resonating" to forces; but these forces were intelligent. They were beings with will. I sensed communication between us, but of what nature, I could not say. It must all have been so brief! I felt gradually as if I was letting go, as if I could not hold the awareness, so strong was the power, the movement, the waves of desire . . . which were somehow "me!" Then, there was a call. A great sound came from above — perhaps from the sun. It took me, whirled me around, until all was light . . . golden, blinding light! Not only a sound, but a word — a name, perhaps — reverberated through my consciousness. I seem to change. Other forms, to, appeared different; more distinct, more humanly real. Then I was sucked outward, as every form surrounding me fell back. I seemed to race in space, but I could see nothing — only movement. And, suddenly, I stood; I, but not I — far more than I. I stood, very tall, very brilliant, is seemed. And beside me . . . Oh, beside me, she stood!

How can I describe the indescribable! She was light and she was beauty. Her body was a song of shimmering color, more flowing than the most vivid Northern Lights. Here eyes were vast, like the sun-drenched sea, as the tropical sun plays upon the multitudinous waves. A body, did I say? Not a body, but a moulded light, radiant light. She stood. And I knew. I knew with a certainty that nothing can dispel, nothing could dismay. She — and I. A dream? Oh, what reality could ever have been so vivid, that I had ever seen and called real!

Then, darkness — constriction — weight. I saw Ramar holding you. I saw Emerald. I saw . . . within her eyes. I knew that she, too, had seen the I that I am, as I had seen her, the essence, the self of light.

Forgive me, if I could not talk after we left the studio. How could I? How could she? I knew you liked Emerald very much, perhaps loved her. I could not tell. I could not bear hurting you, if you did. I hadn't the courage to talk to you, to tell you in words what I have now written. I could not bear the thought of your arguing, doubting, fighting back. I knew it was inevitable.

I found out you were out of the office, the next day. And I came. Perhaps I still had a few doubts. Perhaps she would not remember — maybe she was not ready — whatever that meant!

But I saw her; and I knew she knew, she would never forget. And I begged her to come with me.

Obviously, she could not work any more that day. And there seemed to be urgency; so much to say, to try to understand together, to consolidate. I had to know what she had felt, seen, while I experienced the strange world which I must call "Mars." Did she have the same realization? Had she seen me as I had seen her, afterwards? And so we went to her apartment.

I can't try to write down all that she told me; I hope she will some day. The world she experienced was indeed different from what I had observed. It seems that it was filled with oval-like shapes of exquisite beauty and perfection, within which could be seen an intricate web of geometrical forms, changing into one another, upon which played iridescent light. She thought it was like an undersea world, for there was a substance which filled the whole space in which the beautiful shapes — "bodies," no doubt — seemed to float and move. But it was not water, not even clouds, she said — rather some kind of magnetic fluid, which was energy even more than substance. Perhaps it is what our telescopes record as an "atmosphere of clouds?" How can we be sure that what our physical eyes see is what is in terms of an other planet's reality?

Emerald said that she felt able to move within this fluid by altering consciously her magnetism, by playing a music of light. Everywhere there was sound. Every shape had its characteristic hum — soft, high or low, but extraordinarily intense, haunting.



As she talked, I sensed myself caught into a strange power that drew, drew irresistibly. She was standing, trying to describe the motions, the feel of this magnetic space . . . And the room seemed to vanish. She and I, we stood. Oh, the beauty of it. The immense beauty! And she became luminous. Her clothes were translucent. Her body no longer stood . . . only radiance, shimmering lights bending upon one another to become form, curved lines of light. It was so beautiful, I fell on my knees before her. Perhaps I sobbed, I don't know. How could I remember anything but that beauty?

The light condensed. I reached to her, as she bent towards me, very human, it seemed — and yet! She took my hands, and we stood, face to face. It must have been a long time. There was nothing to say, nothing to do — only, to be. A vast light seemed to enfold us, stronger and denser between us. Power indescribable, joy, peace. It was so strong, I could hardly stand it.

I saw her sway. . . overcome, perhaps. I took her in my arms, carried her to the sofa. I bent over her, on my knees. I could barely hear her whisper, "I am all right. Don't worry." I bent over her face, oh, so beautiful. And then, then it was as if some extraordinary force had caught me, was holding me motionless, frozen. I could only stare at Emerald, so near, so near; yet I could not move. I watched her whole body relax, as if she had gone out of it. I saw her eyes close, infinitely peaceful. "No, no! I couldn't be!" I was frightened. Yet, I couldn't move. Space, vast spaces swayed between us. I shivered. I was cold.

With an enormous, desperate effort I cried out, "Mr. Ramar, help us! Oh, help us! Please!" I struggled to move. My head fell across her breast. I lay still — totally still.

How long, I don't know. Then I felt a hand on my shoulder. I straightened up, turned. Ramar was standing behind me.

"You, here?" I muttered, stunned for a moment. "How did you come in?"

He smiled, very gently. He took my arm. "Get up. She is all right. Human bodies are not adjusted to stand so much power and retain consciousness. She is resting now. She will return soon. You need not be afraid."

I didn't know what to say. I tried to feel my arms, my legs, to move about — simply to assure myself that I was not dreaming. Ramar did not appear to notice me; he was carefully fingering a small Tibetan bronze Dorje which stood on a table — a symbol of power and authority used by high Lamas in ceremonies, and once given to Emerald's father. She remained absolutely still; I could not see her breathe at all. I paused, wondering . . . waiting for something.

Finally, Ramar turned to me and looking intently said, "And now, Ronald, now that you have met your greater love — can you stand the greatness of it? Can you love as planets do, as the cosmic tides of power love . . . the love that is . . . that does not spend itself in small gestures, within the narrow borders of materiality? Can you accept that love, and what that love points to, reflects, prefigures? Can you take your love as a path upon which you and she will come to know . . . shall I say God? The God that is not made in man's image, to suit man's small yearning — but the cosmic God of Whom you are the image and likeness, if you choose to be so!"

My heart was pounding. I sensed before me space, infinite space. No familiar shape to recognize, nothing to orient myself to, only space! It was so still. Frightening still. I tried to think, but I knew very well it was not a matter of thinking. What was asked of me, then? Will, faith, love?

As if answering my thoughts, Ramar said softly, "All this, and more. It is You. Can you experience You? The true, the real You?"

Some power seemed to seize me, to straighten me up like a rod; like a throbbing, flaming rod. My lips moved, and I heard the words they pronounced, slowly, distinctly, "I am."

Ramar's eyes grew until they seemed like vast suns in space. His lips smiled. And, beyond myself, beyond my thoughts and even my will, I smiled back.

And then a wave that was feeling, thinking, pain and joy all in one, raced through me, and I cried, "But Emerald? What of her? She must . . ."

"She will." Ramar's voice was firm, intent. "It was your move, for you kept awake. She will follow you. It is for you to awaken her."

I bent over the sofa. With the whole of me, with far more than I knew myself to be, I called, "Emerald! Emerald!" I saw her stir. "Wake up! Arise! I am here. Do you hear me?" Her eyes opened. She saw me. She smiled. "What happened?" she whispered. "Where am I?" "In your apartment. Mr. Ramar . . ." I turned. There was no one in the room.

I returned to my place on Long Island before midnight. It's a wonder I found my way. I was still dazed. The next morning, the mailman woke me up. A special delivery letter. It read: "If you choose to join me at the airport Sunday at 2:00 PM there will be two reservations on the plane for San Francisco, Eastern Airlines, in your names. Decide as you both see best. You are entirely free. Should you come, do not expect an early return. Peace be with you. R.M.R."

It was then that I phoned you. What could I have said? I knew at once there could be only one answer. I knew also that Emerald should be free to make her own decision. I came to her that afternoon, as you had sent her home. I was afraid she was ill. But she seemed all right. I showed her the letter. She became very pale, then said, as she looked straight into my eyes, "If you go, I go."

"We shall go, then." It was inevitable. It was also irrevocable.

There was the excitement of what to do next about the multitude of details of our complex living today. What to pack, what to do about our apartments and things — and what to tell you, above all. I wanted to phone you, to explain. But what could I have said in a few minutes? I knew what you probably would have told us — arguments, entreaties, hours passing away. We were both in no condition to discuss, to persuade, or answer your logic. Of course, everyone we knew would think us completely insane. You might have done anything to stop us, to stop her, anyway. It simply could not be. There was no other way. I am sorry. I can only hope this letter will help you to understand and, if need be, to forgive. We met Ramar at the airport. He greeted us simply with these words, "I am glad you came."

I am closing this long letter. What is ahead? I cannot tell.

We shall not forget you — if only because you brought us together. Destinies weave themselves into strange and wondrous patterns. Only the Great Weaver knows the purpose — and only That within us which is He, in human form and limits, can decide what shall be the end. We go in faith. We have nothing else, absolutely nothing.

Please think of us kindly. We will need your support, because in a sense you are part of us. And I know we shall return. This is not the end, Dick. This is the beginning. You, to, are in this beginning. Do not fight it. One can never fight facts. One can never change the inevitable, the irrevocable.

Always your friend,

Ron.

The same day an official letter came from Ron to the office, stating that a close relative had suddenly died on the West Coast and he was obliged to go and remain. He therefore had to give up his position as my assistant.

## Part Six - November-December 1951

**I am trying to recall what was my first feeling after I read the long letter.** I think it was, "This is madness . . . sheer madness!" For a long time, I had neither thoughts nor feelings. And out of the blankness there grew pain, and bitterness . . . and anger. Darkness pounded at me, trying to choke me. Perhaps it was self-pity turned aggressive, a violent rebellion against my fate, in which old memories piled up, re-awakened, in disarray. Was it my love of Emerald, broken, smashed, that hurt so? There was that, of course. Was it anger toward Ron, my friend? Yes, that too. But there was something still more poignant, still more bitter and devastating — I know it well now. I had failed. I had been called, and had not answered. Maybe it was all madness, Ramar was insane, an impostor, or worse — I tried to tell myself. But I couldn't believe it, try as I might. I fought. I rebelled. I hated. Still, when I remember his eyes, I knew . . . what? I could not tell. To know and still not to know — and feel defeated. This was unbearable.

Because I could not bear it, I tried desperately to forget everything. I tried hard. I struggled to remain angry and resentful, to lash my bitter thoughts against Ron and Emerald, to sneer at their ghostly presences in my mind. I dared their memories within my heart. Jacqueline came into my office as my secretary — and more! She was willing, too willing. I tortured myself, after hectic evenings in night clubs, of drinking and lust, to see her in the chair Emerald had occupied. I watched her pretty face become sunken and sallow from sleeplessness and excesses.

I had to buy and write stories for the magazine. The man who replaced Ron was ineffectual. I worked harder. I resorted to chemical stimulants — "pep pills" — to keep up the crazy pace. I sought weird inspiration in artificially induced dreams which progressively filled up with erotic, sadistic scenes — unusable material. I was even called down to the publisher's office for printing "borderline" stories. "One must not go too far, you should know! What's the matter with you, anyway. You look wornout. Take it easy, for heaven's sake!"

**One day, during a hot October spell,** at an endless business meeting after a particularly insane night in Harlem, I blanked out completely. I was rushed to the hospital. The doctors prescribed complete rest, said something about my kidneys, my heart. I was full of toxins, worn down to the bones, it seemed.

The publisher sent me to Florida for recovery. Another editor in the company temporarily filled in for me. I heard Jacqueline had been fired; the poor girl had too much of the fast life as well. It didn't help to make me feel at peace. Yet, I was so tired, I finally lapsed into a state of vegetative torpor, helped by sedatives. I lay on the warm sands of the beach. I did not think, did not feel . . .

It was then that I began to hear, very distant yet clear, what seemed to be Emerald's voice. "Please, Dick, try to understand! Let go . . . Try to believe. Try to feel!" It would come especially in the late afternoon as I watched the sun drop into the waters of the Gulf, a ball of orange shrouded in mist.

One day, the sky was extraordinarily clear. I was staring at the sun, as it touched the sea, far, far away. I watched the big golden circle. It seemed like a consecrated host, held by an invisible priest who now placed it slowly back into the chalice of space rimmed by the horizon. I watched — the disc was nearly gone. . . it disappeared. Suddenly a flame of brilliant green flashed from the sea where the golden sun had been laid to rest. Green

flame. . . Emerald! And I saw her vividly, standing in the paling sky, smiling. Our present age would call this a hallucination, I am sure. Perhaps it was. And yet, in that moment, something indescribable happened inside of me. It was as if something turned over, and nothing after that was quite the same. A peace which I had not known for so many months settled in me with the gathering dusk. I stood, very still, facing the western sky — and lo! an evening star grew brilliant some distance above the horizon. I felt sure it was Venus. And wasn't that Mars, that reddish star, still farther up in the sky? A coincidence?

The evening chill made me shiver. I hurried back to my room, fell on my bed and slept — a very long time.

**It was a couple of days later.** I was sitting in the hotel lobby after dinner when a middle-aged woman approached me.

"You are Dick Probeck, the editor of *Interplanetary Tales*, are you not?" she asked. Her voice, her face, were quite lovely, with a rather unusual quality — a foreigner perhaps; yet she had no accent. She went on, "I heard your name called by the clerk a few days ago, and I have thought of speaking to you ever since, but did not wish to intrude. Then, last night, I had a vivid dream. I was asked to speak to you . . . by Ron."

I was started. "By Ron? Do you know him? Where is he?"

"You might have heard him speak of me. I am the friend he saw a good deal of, before . . . before he left . . . us." She smiled. "My name is Sonia Ladonin."

I remembered the name. So this was the woman who had interested Ron in mysterious things, "occult ideas!" I had never met her, but she fitted his description well. Born of Russian parents, I recalled, somewhere in South America. Her father was an archaeologist; had been killed in the Andes while exploring some ruins, just after World War I. Her mother had taken her to California, where she grew up.

I offered her a seat. I felt an inner excitement grow. I asked, "You spoke of a dream?"

"Yes," she answered, looking far away, as if seeking to recall a half-forgotten scene. "It was a dream, but a very intense one. I saw Ron's face clearly. He was looking intently at me, and he was saying: 'Talk to Dick Probeck. Talk to him. Tell him we are well. Tell him . . . I woke up suddenly. It seemed so strange that I had heard your name just a few days before! I had known the name, of course. Ron often spoke of you . . . I am not sure what this means, but I am certain it is a real communication. You may think, of course, what you wish, if you don't believe in dreams."

"I believe, and I don't believe!" I said, with some hesitation. "I wish I could be sure . . . sure of so many things. But tell me, have you heard from Ron since he left? Did you know he was leaving? Did he tell you all that happened just before?" I looked at Sonia Ladonin eagerly. Was the mystery to be solved? Could she have known Ramar? Did she know where they went, and why they went? So many questions rushed through my mind!

She spoke lowly, looking straight into my eyes. I felt she was trying to sound me out; to find out how much I knew, how much, perhaps, she was to say.

"I have not heard from Ron. At least, there has been no letter. I do not know where he is. But I feel sure he is well, and on a great task. I have faith in him."

"Did you ever meet a Mr. Ramar?" I asked. I was not sure it was right of me to mention his name to her, but I had to know, to try to understand.

"The day before he left," she said, "Ron phoned me. He told me he had met an

extraordinary person. He said wonderful things had happened to him — so wonderful they could not be told casually; not then, for he had to leave at once. He asked me to have faith . . . assured me I would know, in time."

"Did he mention anyone else?" I had to say it.

She looked at me even more intently. Then her face became very quiet. She smiled a little.

"Yes, Mr. Probeck. He did say he was not going alone. I think I understood what he did not say. But, I believe you know far more than I do?"

I didn't answer. She said, "Perhaps you will tell me? I think I could understand. You may know that I am not unaware of things which most people today dismiss as fairy tales, superstitions or impossibilities. Of course, I was upset at first by Ron's departure. We had been very close. I loved him . . . I still do. But real love is not possessive, is it? I am glad for him if he has found what his heart and his spirit were seeking so eagerly. I am glad . . . for them. I find happiness in the thought that I may have help him, possibly, in being more ready for what I somehow feel has happened."

"But what? What has happened, besides love? I loved Emerald too?"

"Emerald? A beautiful name. I see you have been greatly hurt. Pain too can be a path, as can love."

"A path?"

"If you do not know that love is a path to God, then you have not really loved — nor understood what we name God." Her voice was very soft, very gentle. I bent my head.

There was a long silence.

Finally, she rose and said, "I had better leave you now. If you wish to see me tomorrow, I would be happy to talk with you. It was very good to meet you. I think I understand now why I had the dream."

I was confused. I felt weak, like someone getting out of bed for the first time after a long illness. All I managed was a muttered "Good night."

**I returned to my room,** I imagined myself in the midst of a desert, walking among dry shrubs, where roads which look impressive on the map are just faint marks of tires and hoofs. And the imprints of men and beast fork out, as they come to a waterless river. Which is the way? One cannot be sure. It was so difficult to know. There is no one to ask.

I sat down heavily. I stared through the large window, into the night. "Pain and love," she had said, "paths to God." I never thought of God. "Intelligent people" don't do that anymore in big cities — or should I say, "intellectuals?" Pain and love. Very romantic, wasn't it? What did I know about love, anyway? And pain. Hadn't I nearly killed myself to escape pain, the pain of seeing myself as I was?

I knew, at last, that there is never any escape. I knew that somehow the new beginning I had shrunk from making would confront me again . . . in this life, perhaps in others, who can tell? . . . if I chose the wrong path, the path of "Escape." There is no escape. Even time is no escape, it turns and bites you, scorpion-like, with its tail!

Sonia Ladonin was right. Perhaps she knew a great deal.

## Part Seven - January 1952, 9:00 AM

**The next day I walked with Sonia to a cluster of palms overlooking the sea.** We sat, leaning against the trees. It was quiet and warm. Life seemed kind. It did not force you to stare at your own face in the mirror and watch yourself mauled by time and your own folly. The only mirror was the sea, and it was too big to look into — so big, that only suns, moons and stars could watch themselves pass and go, always young, flowing into the vast stream of time.

Sonia listened without interrupting me while I told her as much as I could remember of the days before Ron's leaving. She was so still, I felt I was talking to the wind; and my words floated quietly among the trees bathed in light. When I finished telling of Ron's letter, I glanced at her. Her eyes were closed. Silence was unhurried. It, too, flowed along with time.

Then she opened her eyes, and I saw in them much peace and great faith.

"I am so glad," she said, "so glad for them. I do not know Mr. Ramar, of course, but it was as if his presence enfolded us both while you were talking. He must be a very great being . . . I wonder where they went . . . But it does not matter. I feel sure all is well. They must be living what others can only talk about." She turned to me, suddenly. "Are you not glad also — for them?"

I dared not answer . . . not quite, as yet. My feelings were still raw from too many self-inflicted tortures. I was only beginning to know they were self-inflicted. "Do you know, then," I finally asked, "that Ron and Emerald really did go to their planets? Has anyone described anything like what they apparently saw, or experienced?"

"I have no right to say," she answered, "whether or not they did. All I can say is that what you reported of Mr. Ramar's words about the solar system and man's cosmic personality fits in quite well with what many sages and seers of old have tried to say. Of course, they told it in symbols, rather than in terms of the kind of facts which our civilization prizes so exclusively that it has only scorn for all others. Today, we try to go from objective sensations and experiments to subjective psychological realizations. Other races went from subjective experiences to the world of material objects, which they saw as the mere reflections of inner psychological realities. Perhaps some men still live who have retained this kind of knowledge and are adepts at it, as our engineers are master mechanics. Perhaps there are beings among us who came from other planets, solar men, perhaps? Didn't you speak several times of gold — golden light, golden brown eyes — of a sun-symbol in Mr. Ramar's studio. Perhaps he is, in some sense which we cannot fathom, a being from the sun? But why should I go on imagining? I believe that Ron knows now. And I have faith he will return . . . in some way. And I too shall know, at least a little more. You also, Mr Probeck — if you can stop being afraid, and being bitter, as you appear to have been."

"I suppose I was afraid. But why, why?"

"Never ask why," she interrupted me emphatically, "in such a way! What do you think is asking in you? Only your ego, your poor little ego, which gets hurt, resentful, lost."

I looked at her, wondering, still uncertain. Something in me wanted to fight back, to sneer bitterly: "And suppose they are merely having an exciting affair, glamour or no glamour?" But I couldn't say it out loud. Maybe my look revealed the still bleeding wound to my pride, for Sonia's expression became stern, "If only you could stop fighting your real self, your greater self." She rose and we walked back to the hotel in silence . . . but the silence was not kind any longer. The wind was gathering force. It blew now from the north. It was still winter. It was still uncertain.

I saw Sonia only two or three more times, briefly. January had come, bringing many visitors. She had friends, and very soon she left for Arizona. She worked every winter in Phoenix, in an art shop. But she promised to phone me on her return to New York in the spring.

My time of rest also was coming to an end; the three months leave I had been given to recuperate were about over. I flew back to New York — and resumed my work as an editor.

### **13 February 1952**

**Now, two weeks of that time have passed, and St. Valentine's Day is ahead, once more.**

Two hectic, exhausting weeks of reorganization, conferences, interviews and manuscript reading. My head has been nearly bursting, after the long idleness. And the return to the familiar offices, the desks with new figures occupying them! It is hard. Am I also "new" perhaps? How new, I wonder. Am I still "afraid of my greater self?" Yesterday the pressure became almost unbearable. Ghost of yesteryear. Old bitterness, old fears, old guilt. Some chance acquaintance told me Jacqueline died. A car accident — racing with drunken men on the Hudson Parkway. The car turned over and plunged into the river. Help came to late. I had not been the first one to push her toward that end, of course. And yet, I felt some responsibility. My very fresh (too fresh and tender!) sense of assurance was being shattered, it seemed, overpowered by the leftovers of the past. Was it hopeless? Was I to sink back into the quicksands of my upsurging subconscious? No. No, I cannot! I must not.

The day had turned prematurely warm, as I wrote earlier. I had struggled in vain to write a brief story, to fill some empty pages in the magazine where nothing of the right length would fit. A stupid way of doing things! Then, when I came home, tired of the office people, I thought of an editorial. An elusive idea floated around my brain, something about the psychological value of fantasy in an age left with so little faith. I should know! Wasn't I struggling desperately to find a substitute for the faith I dared not have? Faith in the inner growth of man, faith in something, within man, one could call "divine?" Couldn't such faith be renewed by our creative imagination, if religion, as we know it today, could not arouse us any longer into being more than what we see ourselves to be, in the chaos of our cities, of our ghastly wards?

It would have to be written very simply, convincingly. And though I tried hard, I couldn't. The past intruded. It was then that Emerald's voice seemed to come to me, again — the first time since I had come back to the city. And I started writing all these pages which now litter the desk.

**I wrote for hours**, stopping only twice to make some strong coffee and munch some chocolate. I have just re-read the whole story. I feel very strange, should I say, disassociated? — a nice psychological term, anyway. All these pages, little bits of mirror. And me, broken up in as many small pieces! But somehow there is more to me than these. There is the writer, the watcher, the witness. He, perhaps, is I. He, perhaps, knows, is secure, has faith!

It must be. There must be something. There must be "he." How can I be sure, beyond all doubting, beyond all fears? There must be a way. Who will show me the way? Through the east window, over Washington Square, dawn comes. Is it an answer? But when one is as tired as I am, one looks everywhere for an answer. If one looks intently enough, isn't that creative imagination? Isn't that faith, a living faith? There are so many questions unanswered. They dance around me. Me, the ego — involved, so tightly involved in them; for they are the stuff of myself, the stuff of my everyday, which has been challenged . . . and could not respond, expect by flight, by escape. Who will answer the un-answerable? God, if there is God, will you answer . . . ?

### **14 February 1952, Dawn**

**Hours later . . .** Every story must have an end, even if that end is only a beginning wrapped in an exclamation point! And so, this tells about the end which I knew — yes, I know — is only a beginning.

When I wrote the last words above, I felt so weary I could only reach my studio couch and drop down on it. I must have slept a few hours. And I dreamt, if one could call it a dream. I don't recall much of it. All the beginning is lost. But there was a sense of climbing a sharp mountain slope, a sense of effort and of great fatigue. I don't remember how I came into a large room — perhaps dug into the rock, perhaps a cave — but there was light, a high ceiling. I walked on something resilient. I don't know if it was wood; carpeting, perhaps. Everything is vague in my memory, except this: In the room stood majestic men and women, simply dressed. They walked slowly, almost luminous in their motions. Somehow they drew me into their midst, though I remember no one speaking. There may have been twenty or more of them. Their rank parted as I came closer. And my heart nearly stopped as I saw, standing very still, Ron and Emerald.

Facing them was Mr. Ramar, more radiant than ever. And on the wall behind him I could see an immense metallic form. It was like the sun-symbol I had seen in his studio — but much larger. Ramar was saying something, but I could not hear the words. The tall men around me were now standing still. Their eyes, I felt, were fixed intently upon the golden sun-disc which was hanging on the wall.

Ramar moved forward. Two men stood in back of Ron, a youth stood near Emerald. As Emerald bent her head, I saw Ramar put one hand on Ron's shoulder, the other on Emerald's head. There was an extraordinary hum filling the whole room, pervading me as I stood, transfixed. A tremendous light seemed to pour through the sun-disc — as if it were translucent, a window in some mysterious space beyond space itself. And within the miraculous light, I saw vast, incredibly deep tender Eyes condense. A Face which no words can describe. As I write, I can still see It faintly, very faintly. . . Now, It is gone.

The light pervaded everything, everyone, but I think it focused upon Ramar. He was lost in the light. His arms were streams of light. And the light poured into Ron and Emerald.

**Then it all faded out.** I was in another room, very bare. Sunlight poured through a high window. There was a plain couch, a table and chair. Emerald was standing, facing me, her hands outstretched. Her face was glowing. She said, and her voice was singing with joy, "Oh, Dick! You have come. How wonderful!"

I stared at her . . . the room, she herself, were vanishing in a golden mist. Almost desperate, I cried, "Emerald! Emerald! Is it a dream? How can I be sure? How can I remember?"

For a moment, the mist held still. It condensed. Emerald was smiling. In her right hand she held a golden object, gave it to me. I recognized it. It was the small Tibetan bronze Dorje which I had noticed in her room when I had visited her. She had explained its sacred meaning.

I woke up, suddenly. Warm sunlight was streaming from the window of my study. I rose quickly, wondering . . . trying to recall the dream. "I must have dreamt," I thought. "Why must it be only a dream?"

I felt dazed. It was very light, it must be nearly noon, I thought. My eyes wandered around the room. My desk, papers. Yes, of course, I had written all night. I walked to the desk. I stopped.

On the sheets I had filled with memories during the night lay Emerald's Dorje. I bent over it, my heart beating wildly, my head swimming. I touched it . . . it was real. It was real! I dropped to the floor. I knelt. Tears were bursting forth, uncontrollably, Joy, ecstasy. Oh, what can I call this that tore through me like a flood of inexpressible happiness! Awkwardly, I hit my head upon the desk. Words raced through my mind. "I believe . . . I know!"

**The End**