

#### Chapter 4

The boy noticed the body lying still on the grass. It seemed odd to him and he wondered why someone was lying there in the cemetery. The man didn't seem to move so much as a muscle as the boy stood on the sidewalk debating whether he should walk over and check on him. He looked up and down the sidewalk to see if anyone might have noticed him standing there. Seeing no one, he slowly walked over to where the body lay.

As he approached he still didn't detect any hint of movement and feared the worse that he might have stumbled upon a dead body then thought what a convenient place to die. But as he got to within a few feet he could see the

rise and fall of the body's diaphragm as it inhaled and exhaled air.

He stopped to where he stood directly over the body. He could see it was a young man perhaps in his twenties. He wore some kind of tee-shirt and a pair of straight cut blue jeans with sneakers. His hair was cut rather short which considering how he was dressed the boy would have expected something longer.

He bent down and placed a hand on his shoulder and gave a slight push.

"Hey, mister. You all right?" He asked cautiously.

The boy was poised to high tail it out of there should the man be playing possum and suddenly reach out to grab him.

"Mister. You all right?" He said again shaking the man a little harder.

The man began to stir. He opened his eyes slightly and blinked a number of times as he tried to bring this person into focus. He wore a look of confusion on his face.

"You all right, man?" The boy asked one more time. The man, having the boy in focus, began to sit up. He ran a hand through his hair, inhaled deeply then exhaling

slowly replied, "Yeah, Yeah, I'm all right. I just, wow, I must have fallen asleep."

Then the man looked to his right and saw that everything was out of place. *What the heck* I thought to myself as I noticed the absence of a certain headstone. I looked at the boy then back at the empty space. I pointed to the spot where the headstone should have been and started to say something then stopped. I looked back at the boy.

"So, like dig man, why you sleeping here, anyhow. Like, don't you have your own pad or something?"

I looked at the boy. He actually seemed to be about sixteen years old, slim with long, shoulder length brown hair. He wore a Jimi Hendrix Experience tee-shirt and a dirty pair of jeans that were long enough to almost cover his brown sandals.

I shook my head as if trying to clear the cobwebs from my mind and comprehend what was happening. I looked at the boy and asked, "What happened to the headstone that was here?"

The boy knelt down on one knee and gave me a curious look. He nodded his head and smiled.

"I get it, man. I know this dude that dropped a line of acid and he said he saw a whole stinking cemetery and

everyone was screaming, *Let me out, let me out.* And that was just one line. Man, did you drop some acid last night or something?"

I gave the boy a puzzled look.

"Acid?"

"Hey, it's cool man. I ain't gonna rat on you. Hell, just last week I was tripping on some bad ass LCD and let me tell you what I saw."

"I don't think I want to know."

"No man, it was totally far out. I saw Snow White, man, and she was like doing all seven of those dwarfs. Can you dig it, man? All seven. Now that was some bad ass shit I'm telling ya."

"I'm sure it was." I said with a slight chuckle at this apparent dope head.

"So man, like, if you weren't tripping, then why were you sleeping in the cemetery? Don't you have your own pad or something?"

Duplicity. Didn't he already ask me that? Then I quickly conjured up some story; the first thing I could think of.

"Yeah, man, I've got my own pad. But you see, I was out drinking last night with some buddies and I guess I passed out and they dropped me here instead of taking me

back to my pad." I adlibbed, not sure why I felt the sudden need to talk the talk, as it were. Something was definitely a few degrees off course but I wasn't sure what.

"I can dig it, man. So you OK now?"

"Yeah, I'm good." I replied then looking at the boy's tee-shirt I said, "So, you're into Hendrix, huh?"

"Hendrix kicks some major ass, man. You dig him?"

"Yeah, he rocks." I replied.

"I'm hip, man. No one plays the Stratocaster like Hendrix. I've been groovin' to his new stuff on Electric Ladyland."

Then the boy leaned in closer to me and asked quietly, "You ever smoke weed and listen to *And the Gods Made Love*?"

"No I can't say that I have."

"Do it, man. It takes you to a whole new high away from talking corpses and Snow White banging dwarves."

"I'll have to keep that in mind." I replied trying to process "his new stuff on Electric Ladyland".

"Well, man, if you're ok, I gotta split. You be cool, now."

"Yeah, hey, you too. And thanks for waking me up."

The boy nodded, turned and retreated for the sidewalk where he hung a left and disappeared to who knows where.

I still sat on the ground watching the strange dope head of a kid walk off then looked over at where there was supposed to be a headstone. *His new stuff on Electric Ladyland* I kept thinking. What the heck was that all about? And what happened to Melanie's headstone?

I stood up and looked around. My eyes rolled around in my head as I took in the scenery. Not only was Melanie's headstone missing but so were a lot of others. In fact the cemetery looked more like a park than a cemetery. *What the hell is going on here?*

I rubbed my hands up and down my face then moved them to the side of my head and rubbed my temples. Something strange was going on, something really strange. *His new stuff on Electric Ladyland.*

I walked down the grassy slope to where the Gates of Heaven was - last night. I was definitely in a dazed and confused state. Everything looked different but yet somewhat the same. I noticed the parked cars along the street were much bigger and older than what was there yesterday. I felt as if I had slipped back into time but knew that was impossible. Then I turned around to look back at the cemetery. *What happened to Melanie's headstone?* I bit on a hangnail on my thumb with a continued perplexed look on my face.

I reached into my pocket and pulled out my cell phone. I smiled at the sight of something normal, something familiar. I opened the phone and checked the signal indicator. None. Not even a hint of a signal. Nothing.

I checked my phone directory. All the numbers were there. Even the last text message I received two days ago was there. Everything was as it should be except for the signal. There simply was no signal. I started walking down the sidewalk towards the center of town watching the signal bar. Nothing. I held it in the air and did a complete 360. Still nothing. *What the hell was going on?*

I proceeded to walk further into town approaching a diner and some small shops. There was a Millers newsstand on the corner two doors down from Millies Diner. Millies was something familiar because I had eaten there just last evening.

I approached the entrance and opening the door I walked inside. As familiar as it looked it was just as different. The whole counter area was different. The stools lining the counter were round with a sort of red vinyl covering with no backs. I was sure there were backs on them yesterday. And the booths had some strange looking carousel thing on them. I walked closer to an empty booth

to have a closer look. It was some kind of music juke box or something but it was unlike anything I had seen before.

I looked at the songs that were listed. It was my kind of music all right but they were all oldies. Jefferson Airplane, The Doors, The Beatles, Janis Joplin and the like. A puzzled look came over my face. As I stood to turn a woman, obviously an employee, was standing before me.

"Can I help you?" She asked with a hint of suspicion in her voice and look.

I stared at her closely. It couldn't be.

"Are you Millie?"

"That's right. Are you a customer?" She said with a bit of a smirk.

Millie was a tough one. She was clearly in charge of this place and it was Millie's way or the highway. I learned that real quick yesterday.

"Ummm, sure. Yeah, I'd like to have a cheeseburger and a chocolate shake."

Millie directed me to have a seat as she arranged a place serving in front of me.

"How do want that burger cooked?" She asked with her pad and pencil in hand writing my order.

"Medium."

Millie nodded and turned to leave when I got her attention.

"Excuse me, but do you have a newspaper?"

Millie looked him over then turned and pulled one that was lying on the counter and offered it to him.

"Here you go. Educate yourself a while" as she handed me a copy of the Harrisburg Patriot News.

I wasn't sure how to take Millie. As the owner of a diner she came across as a bit of a smart ass, like she owned the world and everyone should bow at her feet and kiss her ass.

I turned my attention to the newspaper and almost immediately my jaw about fell to the table. The front page banner said May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1969. My eyes got wide as I gazed dumbfounded at the date. I scanned the front page and saw a news report of the secret bombing of Cambodia where President Nixon orders FBI wiretaps on the telephones of four journalists, along with 13 government officials to determine the source of the news leak.

"What the hell?" I muttered to myself.

Then I turned to the movie section only to see advertised at the Colonial Theatre, in its fourth big week, Ali MacGraw in *Goodbye, Columbus*. I quickly turned to the sports page and right there on the front page was an

article on how the Phillies wasted a five RBI effort by Dick Allen and blew a 7-3 lead to lowly Houston and losing the game 9-7.

"Dick Allen? As in Richie Allen?" I said to myself. About that time Millie returned with my cheeseburger and milk shake.

"There you go sport. Anything else you need?"

I thought for a moment then asked, "Is this today's paper?"

Millie looked at it for a moment.

"May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1969. Yep, I'd say that was today's paper."

Millie noticed the puzzled look on my face and took a more serious tone.

"You ok sport? You look a bit flushed."

"Yeah, I'm fine. Thanks."

Millie then handed me my check, turned and left.

I looked back at the newspaper then down at my sandwich. Why did I even order this? I wasn't even hungry. I picked it up anyhow and took a bite all the while not taking my eyes off the Patriot News.

"How can this be 1969?" I thought to myself.

"How can I be in 1969? How the hell did I get here?"

Then a thought hit me. If this really was May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1969, then Melanie Beaumont was still alive.

"Holy shit" I thought to myself.

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