

The Silver Strand Series  
BOOK TWO

# GIDDEON

G.B. BRULTE

## GIDDEON

*My name is Gideon.*

*It's spelled with two d's because I was only five years old when I named myself. I heard the name when Greg was in church, and I liked it... I just wasn't very good at spelling back then.*

*I'm much better, now.*

*I remember when Greg would look in the mirror and I would see his reflection. I knew it wasn't me. He had dark hair... I was pretty sure mine was light brown. When he was getting ready to go somewhere, and he was brushing his teeth or trying to comb his cowlick down, I would attempt to look inside of his pupils there in the silvered glass. I thought maybe the round black circles were windows into his head. I figured that if I caught just the right angle and just the right light, I would be able to see myself peering out... peering out like an animal in a cave.*

*It never worked, but I did finally get out of that cave.*

*I couldn't stay outside long... at least not at first. And, I couldn't get very far away. It was almost as if there was an unseen tether holding us together. An unseen tether that bound us to each other as surely as the strongest rope. I didn't mind being on a short leash. Being outside was a little scary, anyway.*

*I used to have terrible dreams. Dreams that I was trapped outside and couldn't get back in. I couldn't get back in, and monstrous things could see me and were trying to catch me... and even though their claws and teeth would just go right through my body, it was horrifying for a five year old. Greg would wake up crying and go to his parents' bedroom. They would try to calm him down; sometimes, they would let him sleep between them. His mother would scratch his back and tell him it was just a dream. His dad would pat him on the head and tell him he wouldn't let anything get him.*

*I would pretend they were my parents, and that they were saying those things to me.*

*I still feel bad about causing so much trouble during those early days... it's just that I didn't really have anyone to talk to. Greg couldn't hear me, but he could almost see me, sometimes. He knew I was there. I'm sure his mom and dad were concerned about his imaginary friend; however, since it's fairly common for young children to have such companions, they weren't terribly worried. After a year, or so, he grew out of it... or rather, I did.*

*"Why did you want to talk to us?" asked the therapist.*

*On the videotape, I pushed my hair back from glassy eyes. Gideon answered,*

*"Because, there's a great big asteroid headed our way."*

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## Chapter 2

It was Melody that figured it out. How to talk to Gideon, that is. My wife and I had been married for three years, and when I went to my boat one day, I found the door open and unlocked. That happened, periodically, so I just told Gid 'hello' as I went about my business. The next time I stopped by the boat, there the door was, open, again. I figured he must have been bored and took it in stride. But, it kept happening. Every time I checked on the boat, the door was open. This went on for the better part of four weeks. I finally told Melody about it, and she instantly was alarmed. She knew... she somehow just knew that Gideon was trying to tell us something. That he was trying to warn us of some type of danger or problem.

My wife came home that afternoon with a bottle of tequila.

"Are we having Margarita's?" I queried.

We never drank, for the most part. Little Gid was asleep on the couch; Boris and Samantha were around him like a pair of furry bookends.

"You are. But, it'll probably be easier on you if you just do shots."

"What's the occasion?"

Melody put the bottle down on the coffee table, reached back and pulled her long blonde hair into a loose knot behind her head. Then, she picked the bottle back up and looked it over as if it was of great interest. God, she looks sexy when she does her hair like that.

"You remember how Gideon picked out that stock for you?"

"Yeah..."

"I think he's trying to tell us something. I think if you go to the boat and get drunk enough, he might be able to come through, again."

I scrunched up my face. Tequila has a tendency to make me vomit. "If I have to get drunk, couldn't I just go with vodka, or beer?" I suggested.

"Tequila was what you had that night before the library."

I cringed a bit as I remembered how horrible the aftermath was following that occasion. After thinking it over, I replied, "It's just that... I think I'm allergic to it. I'm afraid I'll break out in handcuffs."

She smiled at my joke. "Don't worry, I'll be with you. Amanda is going to come baby-sit."

"You know, tequila makes me amorous," I said, trying another tack.

"Giddy needs a sister, anyway."

“Tequila, it is!” I exclaimed. A thought then occurred to me, “Hey... that’s what we can name her... Tequila!” I started in on that song... “Dan da, da dan da, dan da... Dan da, da dan da, da...”

She grinned and jumped in my lap, still holding the bottle in her hand.

“We are not naming her Tequila! I already have a name picked out.”

“I like Tequila.”

“That can be her nickname.”

“What could possibly be better than being named after a Mexican Liquor?”

She kissed me on the lips. It still sent little electric quivers through my skin after all of that time.

“Mia.”

“Okay... Mia. Mia Tequila.”

Boris meowed.

“See... he likes it.”

Melody shook her head ‘no’ and kissed me again.

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### Chapter 3

I don't really like being drunk. After the first little buzz, that's usually enough for me. You know how it was when you were a kid... how waiting for Christmas was actually better than having all the presents and toys? That's the way I am with alcohol. The drink is more fun than the drunk.

When I was six or seven, I was always a little sad when Christmas morning was over and all of the gifts were opened. I didn't really want to play with them. I wanted to wrap them back up, put them under the tree and wait for night to fall so I could go back to sleep and try to listen for the sound of reindeer on the roof, again. I was a strange kid. More into the journey than the destination. I guess that just carried on over into my relationship with booze.

However, Melody had insisted that I get drunk, and, I never could tell her 'no'. If she asked me to get a full body tattoo, I would probably do it.

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That night, after a good portion of the bottle was missing, I called out to my wife who was trying to sleep in the forward bunk.

"Honey... did I ever tell ya I love ya?"

"Yes."

"Just checkin'..."

I was sitting in front of my laptop computer, surfing the web. After a few seconds, a thought occurred to me.

"Hey... do ya think Gideon will pick out anotha shtock for us?"

"We don't need the money."

"Oh, yeah." I mulled over my options for entertainment while being held captive by alcohol on my boat. Then, I had an idea. "Want me to sing ya a song?"

"Whatever melts your butter."

I nodded and grinned. "You melt my butta... yes, you do. Hey! That woul' make a good title." I went over to the couch, grabbed my guitar and started in on an impromptu composition:

"You melt my butter..."





## Chapter 4

"An asteroid?" asked the therapist.

*"Yep... commonly known as a planet killer,"* said Gideon. He gave the coordinates and Dr. Jennifer Evans wrote them down... even though the session was being recorded. *"I don't know why I didn't just spit those out first thing... it's kind of like I'm hypnotized, too, I guess. When you asked about me, I just felt compelled to tell you who I was and about my history."*

The therapist said, "I suppose that's possible."

Gideon continued, *"Anyway... it will hit in 3 years 8 months and 14 days if nothing is done to deflect it. All of the futures have changed over here... most of them, anyway, and show it plowing into the Earth and taking out nearly all of the life, just like the last time."*

"The last time?"

*"65 million years ago."*

"I thought you've been to the future many times, and everything was... okay."

*"Things change."*

"Even the future?"

*"Especially the future."*

The therapist scribbled down something on her pad, then said, "I can see why you wanted to talk to us... this is very important information."

*"It's right up there with who's doing who in Hollywood."*

"Yes..." she answered, a bit flustered. Jennifer Evans wasn't used to Gid's sense of humor, apparently.

*"The only thing is... we've got to keep the source of this hidden. We have to bring those coordinates to an astronomer... I've got one all picked out... just like I picked out you. Let him claim it was his discovery."*

"Why?"

*"Because, I've got lots more to tell you... and, if word gets out where the info is coming from, Greg and Melody will be in quite a bit of danger."*

"Danger? From who?"

Gideon smiled, using my muscles of facial expression. *"From the keepers of the secrets, of course."*

He, or rather, I, looked right in the camera and said, "*Mia says 'hello', Melody.*" Gideon then gave the name and address of the astronomer... a Kevin Ho at the observatory in Hawaii.

After that, the session was over and I was back, blinking and looking confused.

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## Chapter 5

We booked a flight to Hawaii. I had never been to our 50<sup>th</sup> state and was excited about seeing the islands for the first time. Of course, knowing a potentially Earth-shattering asteroid was headed our way took some of the fun out of it, but, I figured there must be a way to remedy the situation or Gideon wouldn't have told us about it. He would have just let us live out as many of our last days in marital bliss as was possible.

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I looked out the window, and I could periodically see the Pacific Ocean below us through the clouds. Little Gid was asleep between me and Melody. He hadn't even fussed or cried like so many young ones do during take off and ascent. I suppose he must have figured out how to pop his ears on his own... he was, after all, a smart little bugger. Took after his mom, in that regard. A flight attendant came by; we ordered iced tea for ourselves and milk for Giddy.

I saw the stewardess looking at us, trying to figure out where she had seen us, before. Melody had her hair up and I was scruffy from not having shaved for three or four days, so maybe it was hard to tell who we were. It had been a while since we had been on television but, still, we were occasionally recognized from time to time.

After the attendant left, Melody reached her hand over and scratched me on the neck at my hairline. Of all the things she does, I think that is my favorite. Just little touches, so comfortable and natural. Her long, elegant fingers and clear keratin tips worked back and forth in a ritual as old as all of primate history. It was at the same time both calming and exciting to my central nervous system.

I looked down at our progeny between us. I don't know how a kid could be any cuter. His skin was flawless and his hair was getting so long that it curled up in little rivulets of tarnished gold around his face and ears. His eyelashes were ridiculously thick and slightly darker than his locks. They had his green eyes covered over for the moment. When he opened them, his orbs would be like astonished windows, taking in the world around him with wonder... so much like his mother in that respect that it made my heart ache with love. Melody saw me looking at him, and she smiled and ran her fingers through my hair, some more. I didn't know what I did to deserve those two, but, whatever it was, I wasn't going to question it.

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We dropped through the clouds, and the islands were below us like some type of forgotten world. They resembled pearls of dark green strung loosely together in the blue Pacific waters. As we got closer to our destination, the sands of 'The Big Island' could be seen, with hotels standing like sentinels behind the silicon border. Giddy, who for part of the flight had been awake in my lap and looking out of the window with obvious fascination, strained to see from his middle seat. He would alternate between sucking his fingers and pointing to the window with wet digits. Melody smiled at his curiosity and attempted to adjust his curls, which pretty much had a mind of their own.

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The plane touched down so lightly that it was almost hard to tell when we were connected with the earth, again. We taxied to our proper terminal, and, after some time, made our way into the concourse. A pretty Hawaiian greeter put a plastic, yellow leis around Giddy's neck and he took to inspecting it with a fascinated grin on his chubby little face. I snapped a picture of him and showed it to Melody; she said that maybe she would make a painting from it when we got back.

The air outside was warm and more humid than we were accustomed to in San Diego. I could smell the water, even though we were quite a distance from the beach. My olfactory sense had stayed on the enhanced side since the coma. That was great when it came to restaurants. Not so great when it came to changing diapers. I thanked goodness that that part of our son's training was almost complete. I still don't know how such a little creature can have such a tremendous output. It seemed like more came out than went in. Maybe he raided the refrigerator when we were asleep... even though he could barely walk at the time, I wouldn't have put it past him... he was born smart.

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When I said I'd never been to our 50th state, before, I meant during my normal, waking life. Big Gid and I had been to all of the islands because he loves Blue Hawaiian's and the local seafood. Plus, he loves to surf. I even got proficient enough to tackle some of the curls on the North Shore when the waves weren't crazy big.

Melody and I loaded our bags into the rental car and Giddy into the car seat, which was already in place in the back. He began to smile and babble, then laugh and point at nothing in particular. That was normal behavior for him... God only knows what he was seeing or hearing. Probably my Gid or his own

'Gid', or maybe Mia. I suspected he had his own crew of babysitters. Maybe that's why he hardly ever cried or fussed when he was little.

He was never alone.

Sometimes, back then, I got the feeling that he could see the 'other worlds' as clearly as I could when I was in my coma. That's probably why he and the cats got along so well... you know, *birds of a feather*. Or, maybe, I should say *felines of a fur*, or, *cats of a coat*.

Whenever we had visitors, and they would pick up Giddy and hold him, he would look them over with interest. Our son would shift his focus to the right or the left of the person involved, and would reach out into the air and finger the empty space beside them. Then, he would move his hand over to touch the solid person before him. Sometimes, I swear that he would look to the cats for confirmation that what he was seeing was actually there. Invariably, he would smile and gurgle and shake his head back and forth in glee... almost giddy with happiness. So, you see... his name really fit. Sort of a double meaning... or a supposition of meanings.

Kind of like quantum physics : )

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## Chapter 6

I know Gideon says everything is in the same place, but it sure is nice when it doesn't look that way. Watching Melody walk towards me from the water in her turquoise one-piece swimsuit was one of those occasions that was exceptionally nice. As she perfectly traversed the three dimensions in feminine slow motion, it really made me appreciate time and distance. With the backdrop of the Pacific Ocean and the sapphire sky against her skin, she looked like a beautiful illusion against an excellent reality. Momentarily, I wished for a camera, but then realized that I didn't need one. There was no way that image would ever leave my soul. It will always be a part of me... just like she is... forever entwined.

Sometimes, I don't even know where I end and she begins.

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Melody tells me she feels the same way, and I hope that that's true... but, sometimes, I don't think it's possible when I look in the mirror and see her part of this equation. All I know is that I'm hopelessly in love. It just gets worse and worse each day. Or, maybe, I should say, better and better.

Yes, she's beautiful, but sometimes I don't really see that. Sometimes I just see a gliding light that comes in my direction, takes me by the hand and kisses me on the cheek, lips or forehead. I always want to throw myself into that light and be surrounded by it. Be surrounded by it and enveloped in its brilliance.

Enveloped in her illumination, forever and ever.

I am still the moth to her flame, but the flame is warm and soft and nurturing... it doesn't burn at all.

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Even if it did burn, I don't think I would mind. I've felt the worst pain there is, and it's not that bad when you know what's on the other side.

This.

Her. These moments are forever... it's pain that's temporary and alone.

If I've learned one thing from Gideon, it's that reality isn't real unless you have someone to help make it real. You see, that's when reality truly gains permanence... when someone is with you. Observation

makes the electron go through one slit or the other. Love makes the heart also choose a path. And, I've found that the path with her is everywhere the same...

Together.

She and I flow in concert like a wave, hand in hand, and the universe opens softly around us. And, always, there is eternal beauty and symmetry as far as the eye can see... as far as the eye can see, and, beyond. To the ends of space and time and on out into forever.

It's amazing, and I can perceive it all because I focus through the immortal lens of her essence.

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## Chapter 7

We were at the beach because Kevin Ho wasn't available to meet with us until the next day. He thought that we would be getting together for a lunch interview, and that my wife and I were hopeful founders for a soon-to-be published astronomy magazine. Using information provided by Gideon, Melody had arranged everything by telephone, and Dr. Ho had no idea that the Mr. and Mrs. 'Knox' he was to meet with were not who they were supposed to be.

I admit, listening to my wife spin such a convincing fabrication over the telephone to the astronomer gave me a bit of a pause, but when I thought about what was at stake, I was very proud of her acting ability. Besides, I had always known she had that capability within her. When she would look at me with loving eyes, after outfitting me in a new suit or casual wardrobe, and would tell me how handsome I was and how she was such a lucky girl to have ended up with me... well, it didn't take an Einstein to figure out she could have won an award or two at the Golden Globes if she had put her mind to it.

On the other hand... maybe she just has a problem with her vision. Kind of like being color-blind, except her impairment obscures gentle shades of ugly. I'm not gonna change optometrists, though... let her see what she sees. I don't mind.

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We were already seated at the outdoor table of the restaurant when Dr. Ho arrived. The pool, complete with a waterfall and a swim-up bar, was adjacent to us, and the sound of the cascading liquid provided a white noise backdrop that would keep our conversation private. I later learned that the area also had no surveillance camera coverage, as they were on the blink that day... Gideon could be very thorough with such details.

Melody waved and Dr. Ho came over, dapper in his white, open collared shirt, navy blazer and dress pants. He was a young-looking forty, trim, with jet black hair and intelligent eyes. His Asian ancestry was evident, and he appeared to be a mix of Japanese and Polynesian heritages. Little Gid, who was sitting in his high chair, lit up like a Christmas tree when Kevin came in our direction. He began smiling, giggling and banging a hand on his tray... all the while pointing at the astronomer with his other hand. Or maybe, he was pointing at what was 'around' the astronomer. It was hard to tell since Gid was so animated. Dr. Ho, my wife and I laughed at the reaction. A waiter came and took our drink orders.

Introductions were made all around. Kevin even shook little Gid's hand. I could have sworn I saw filaments of light connect those two appendages before they touched. On closer inspection, I could see an aura of blue radiating out from around the head and shoulders of the scientist as he had himself a seat between my son and my wife. I was seated across from the doctor at the table for four, and the

beach and the clouds behind him provided the perfect contrast that was needed for me to visualize the phenomenon.

I didn't tell you about that, yet, did I? Another thing, other than my sense of smell, that I had brought back with me. It was something that I had been able to do, on occasion, since I came out of the coma. See auras, that is.

Not always. Just sometimes and with certain people. Different colors with different folks, and sometimes the colors change with their moods. Red for angry; blue for calm and purpose. Green when connected with nature and the world. Yellow and pink when happy or tickled... Giddy radiated that a lot... white for love. Melody always has traces of white... along with beautiful blues and a plethora of other pastel hues. The auras are usually easier to see when I am tired, and I wonder sometimes if it's just a function of retinal fatigue. But, that day, I was quite awake having had two cups of coffee, earlier.

"We're so glad to meet you," said Melody.

"The pleasure is all mine," responded Dr. Ho.

Gid began blowing spit bubbles and let out a squeal that went out of our register and into the auditory realm of dolphins and dogs.

"Not all of it," I laughed. "Looks like Giddy is happy to meet you, too."

"He's a cutie," said Kevin. "My wife is pregnant with our first."

Melody lit up much like Giddy, upon hearing that news. Her aura changed to a deep emerald with streaks of oscillating alabaster and yellow embedded in the emanation. "Oh, you must be so excited! When's the due date?"

The waiter came out with our drinks... three Blue Hawaiians... and menus. We told him it would be a few minutes before we ordered. He left, and Kevin said, "Exactly two months from today... August 21st."

"Boy or a girl?" we both asked at the same time.

Kevin Ho shook his head. "I don't know... we want it to be a surprise."

Melody clapped her hands, and Giddy imitated the motions. "That makes it even more exciting! And, what a beautiful place to start a family... we love Hawaii."

The scientist smiled, and his face seemed accustomed to the expression. "So do we... I don't think I could live anywhere else. Having the observatory here is pretty much perfect, to top it all off." He motioned to the ocean and glanced around at the scenery before turning back to us. "So... how did you two get so interested in Astronomy? Not a lot of publications dedicated to the subject."

"Well..." I began, but then Melody interrupted.

“Before we answer that, I want to show you something.” She reached down and pulled an iPad out of her bag, which was next to her chair, and set it on the table. After pressing a few icons, she turned the tablet to Dr. Ho.

“Do you recognize this?” my beautiful wife asked.

Giddy leaned over as if he wanted to look, too.

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On the screen, the YouTube video of me and my bare backside rolling down the aisle of the Catholic church came to life. Kevin watched with curiosity as Melody, on the iPad’s display, cradled my head in her hands. Then, we witnessed Father McCreely fainting dead away. As the silent clip was playing, I saw Dr. Ho look to Melody, then to me, and then back to the screen.

Realization dawned on him like the Hawaiian sun, and I could have sworn that I saw just the faintest outline of Gideon over his shoulder. I think my subconscious had on a gaudy shirt and sunglasses. Little Gid blew another spit bubble and reached out in that direction. Kevin finished watching the clip and leaned back in his chair.

“You’re not starting a magazine, are you?”

Melody, shook her head.

The astronomer nodded and was silent for a moment. Then, “You’re the couple that got married... after you,” he looked in my direction, “came out of a coma and stopped her wedding.”

I nodded.

He looked back to Melody, as if suddenly remembering something important. “I... dreamed about you guys.”

I think I saw just the faintest outline of Gideon, again... it looked like he gave a high five to someone beside him... someone with long, dark, curling hair. Our Gid threw a hand in the air, too.

Melody reached out and touched the scientist on the back of the hand. “I’m sorry we had to come to you under false pretenses, but, it’s important... as important as it gets. What did you dream?”

Kevin ran his hand through his thick black hair and then looked off into the distance as if seeing the dream, again. “You were trying to tell me something... we were at my observatory... both of you kept trying to get me to look through the telescope...”

“At what?” asked my wife.

He shook his head. "I don't remember. I just recall it being a very unsettling dream." Kevin bit gently into his lower lip, and then shrugged his shoulders.

I took a folded piece of paper out of my front shirt pocket, opened it and set it before him. On the white rectangle were some coordinates and times that would only make sense to an astronomer. Dr. Ho picked the sheet up with his manicured fingers and looked the figures over. Finally, he said, "Is this where I'm supposed to look?"

Melody and I both nodded. Giddy leaned over, took a spoon from off the table and began pointing at the paper. "Rock... rock... rock..."

"What will I see, there?" queried Kevin.

I took the spoon from my progeny and placed it out of his reach. Then, I answered, although my son had beaten me to it.

"A rock... a great, big rock."

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## Chapter 8

Mia

*I'll never forget the first time I saw him. I suppose 'saw him' isn't the correct term... felt him, would be more accurate.*

Kevin Ho had gone back to his observatory to wait for nightfall. With him were a set of detailed instructions dictated by Gideon and typewritten by our therapist. Melody and Giddy were asleep, and I was on the hotel bed reading in one of the notebooks that Melody now kept handy for those times when Mia had something to say. It was something that my wife had learned to do after my hypnosis sessions with the therapist... sit there and let Mia guide the pen in her hand, that is... Gideon had suggested it. The most bizarre thing I have ever seen... well, almost. The odd thing is, she writes it all down left-handed, in perfect cursive, even though she can barely manage to scratch out her name like that, normally. This passage was written while we were on the airplane:

*He was at the table, behind Greg, at Seaport Village. I knew he was there, even though I couldn't make him out. There was just the slightest difference in the air near the chair, and my heart seemed like it leaped in that direction. I walked over close and tried to get a better look, but it didn't really help. When I reached out my hand to where I knew he was, the strangest thing happened... I could feel his heartbeat. It was in perfect synch with mine. I pulled my hand back away from him and the sensation disappeared. When I reached back out, I could feel it again, this time even stronger... along with something else.*

*Warmth.*

*98.6 degrees, to be exact. And there was this aroma... a smell like cinnamon and chocolate and sweat. Not icky sweat, but a kind of light musk that, I have to admit, had quite an effect on me. I had never experienced anything like that, before, and my heart picked up its pace. His matched it beat for beat, so I think he was aware of me even though he didn't really know it at the time.*

*I looked down and I saw Greg looking at you. My hand was still in the warm space behind him when I actually heard the words 'Go talk to her!' come from nearby. It was a plea and a command, all rolled up into one, and obviously directed at your future husband.*

*Then, I could have sworn I saw what I now know was Gideon pulling on Greg's arm and pushing on his back. It must have worked, because Greg almost knocked over his chair when he stood up so quickly. I watched him hesitantly walk over to you, with that little card in one hand and a pen in his other one, to ask for your autograph.*

I turned the page, intrigued as always by the left-handed script.

*When he asked you for your signature, I have to admit I let loose a giggle and covered my mouth. I knew he couldn't hear me, but I wasn't so sure about the cinnamon and sweat-covered chocolate behind him... after all, I had heard 'Go talk to her!' as plain as day. To your credit, you didn't immediately blow him off... you had a knack for letting guys down easy because you had to do it so often. When I realized that that was what you had planned for this particular admirer, my giggle suddenly caught in my throat. I couldn't let that happen... this one was different. He had a sweet-smelling shadow with a heartbeat of its own. I sat quickly down beside you.*

*"Mel... give him your number," I implored.*

*"I'm not a celebrity," you had just said to Greg. I then heard him stammering on, so I tried, again.*

*"Mel... give him your number."*

*"Six numbers?" you queried.*

*I looked up, and felt sorry for the guy who was so obviously out of his comfort zone.*

*"Mel... please give him your number." The smell of cinnamon, chocolate and sweat definitely began to tilt more into the sweat category. Oddly, that made me even more sure of my decision. I heard your conversation go awkwardly back and forth, and then, finally, saw Greg turn dejectedly away.*

*"For God's sake, Mel... give him your number!!!" I screamed. For perhaps the first time in my life, I got through to you.*

*"You forgot your numbers," you called out. I saw them being scribbled down underneath your name. I sighed in satisfaction and fell back, almost limp, in my chair. I noticed that I was sweating, too.*

*You two had lunch together and seemed to hit it off. Then, there was that walk beside the bay where sunlight danced off the ripples in a most awesome effect. A dolphin surfaced just beyond the shore, and that's when you and Greg held hands. I was in heaven, because Mr. CCS (cinnamon/chocolate/sweat) was right behind him... I could sometimes make out his outline if I squinted. When your hands were together, I saw that sweet-smelling shadow join with Greg's body and fall in step. I did the same thing with you... and, for the first time in my life, I felt like I was actually touching someone.*

*It made me cry.*

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## Chapter 9

My wife and child were still asleep in the late afternoon... jet lagged, I suppose. As far as myself, I don't really need that much sleep, anymore. I suppose I still have some stored up from those 4 years in a hospital bed. I pulled out my smart phone and checked for messages. Nothing. Then I checked my email. Just spam. So I did what I often do in such situations... I opened the virtual folder that held Melody's prose and poetry.

It was all originally recorded in her right-handed script. Over the years, I had scanned hundreds of pages and then transcribed them into type using Word. Melody still sometimes writes down her thoughts (not so much since Giddy arrived on the scene), and I have to badger her to let me see them... she's funny that way. The paintings are for all the world to see, but anything that comes in the form of words, she tends to protect. I tell her that she shouldn't be shy... I think everything she puts on either paper or canvas is beautiful, whether it's in the shape of brush strokes, charcoal swirls or script. I'm not sure she believes me, but, it's true. Assuming she doesn't edit this out, I'll let you be the judge:

*When I close my eyes, I can see your face.*

*If I close my heart, would I lose my place?*

*I felt your hand,*

*Where is it now?*

*A phantom touch,*

*A feathered vow.*

She wrote that in her journal a few days after I didn't call. It still hurts. Little Gid stirred for a moment, reminding me that all was well. For some reason, the knowledge I had of the asteroid didn't bother me. I scrolled through some more of Melody's folder. Prose, then:

*I breathe slowly in the air beside the ocean, and wonder whose lungs have held the same. Whose words were made using these atoms? Were they words of love? Of comfort? Of despair? Were they once part of a baby's cry, bringing a mother to a small room in a foreign land to soothe the little one's soul? Will the nomadic molecules ever come back around and visit me when I am an old woman? When I am an old woman and walk beside the water one last time. Will some of them be carried into the heavens, brushed from our atmosphere to wander forever in the blackness of space? I should think it better to reside here, near the greens and blues, and sometimes within the pink of lungs. I hold my breath for as long as I can, to give them refuge, at least for a while.*

I love the way she writes. More:

*Dappled sunlight makes its way through the branches of the Eucalyptus and dances lightly on my skin. The illumination seems almost joyful as it is reflected to my eyes, and also to the grass and trees near to me. It is as if the journey from the sun, just a hop, a skip and a jump for the nimble little packets of brightness, was simply a race for children to find out who would arrive first... to see who would win the contest, and just what it was on Earth that they would tag. The energy they all bring is absorbed by me and my silent green companions. We soak up the day, and smile.*

Now, onto Giddy:

*Oh, my God... did you really come from me? You, with your perfectly formed fingers, toes and belly? So soft and warm and trusting, you lie against my breast and I feel your heart... a heart that was for so long within my womb, and now is out in the world. I want to shield that heart from pain and sorrow and sadness, but, I know that I cannot. I want to always be your guardian, but, I know that eventually I will not. For the time being, though, I will hold you, and the world will be as it should be.*

I looked over at them on the other bed, smiled, shut off the phone and then actually fell asleep, myself.

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## Chapter 10

Kevin Ho peered into his telescope, a furrow in his brow. He had checked and rechecked the coordinates and times. The scientist had the field of view on the highest resolution currently available... the frames per second recording, likewise, was at the machine's maximum. An audio timer was counting the seconds in his headphones, and his focus was glued to a star that was over 300 light years away. The automated voice droned out the seconds with military precision, and as it got closer and closer to the first set of numbers written on his paper, he held his breath and tried not to blink.

24... 25... 26... 27... 28

And, there it was... the faintest flicker, a shadow of a shadow that briefly obscured the star's light. At least it looked like something had done that. He would have to go over the tape and subject it to a detailed analysis, but, he believed it would prove to be exactly what his new friends from San Diego had said...

A rock. A great, big rock.

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## Chapter 11

How fragile are our lives?

How fragile is the crystalline dream that encases us all? Like brittle amber that shatters with just the slightest touch, it scatters into a thousand pieces that quickly begin to form again, just as fragile, just as delicate. I know that worlds upon worlds are born each and every second, but, somehow, I wonder if they are just the same world. The same world with different facets. Some are so similar that just a mere whisper of a difference is all that is between them. They run in parallel, and if superimposed one over another, a difference can barely be discerned. Yes, they eventually diverge, but like a river, sometimes they reconnect and flow together.

When a group of people gather at a mesmerizing performance, such as an opera or a play, you can feel it. All of the realities are separating, but, yet, the worlds stay together, focused upon the event. There is no better place to be, and the universal doppelgangers step in concert with one another. You can feel it, can't you? That hush in the crowd as everyone takes in what is before them. That keen anticipation to see what is next, together. It's like everyone is of the same mind, and you know who it is that sits next to you because they are an extension of yourself. All of the realities spinning off of you and the people around you stay and sit, contented in the chairs. You can almost feel the weight as more and more similarities perfectly overlap and add one to another.

And, finally, at the end, applause erupts. The clapping of hands mimics the wings of birds and releases all of the worlds into the night sky. If you look closely, you can almost see them hanging there briefly like diamonds... diamonds that become stars, and then galaxies, nebulas and quasars in the universe of life.

The velvet backdrop upon which they shine is a void, but I know that within that void are connections that hold it all together.

Some call it dark matter, but, I know that it isn't really dark.

It's silver.

Silver strands.

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## Chapter 12

Melody, Giddy and I went out to supper when we were rested. I ordered a Blue Hawaiian in honor of my subconscious, and I'm sure he enjoyed it. The night air was cool in comparison to the daytime atmosphere, and the Tiki torches scattered around the outside tables reminded us that we weren't on Coronado, anymore. Hawaiian dancers put on a show for the guests, and one of the performers really took to little Gid. She picked him up and held him close as she gyrated in her grass skirt and skimpy top. He was smiling and laughing the whole time, and all of the guests pretty much fell in love with him... especially the women. Looks like I'm gonna have a ladies' man on my hands.

When Giddy was returned to us, our meal came. The butter-soaked shrimp and scallops were extraordinary, and the salad was crisp and delightful. Melody was beyond description with the firelight dancing off of her face, her hair and her eyes. Giddy, with his curls swirling ever so slightly in the warm summer breeze, was on his best behavior... as if he wanted everything to be perfect on this special night.

I didn't tell you that, either, did I? It was our Anniversary : ) Three years. Almost as long as I had been in the coma. Compared to my unconscious life, it seemed like only three days... I guess time does fly when you're having fun. That kind of worries me. If we're married for a hundred years, will it seem to be just a few short months?

I want to slow it down. I try to focus on each little thing, no matter how mundane. The way she holds her fork. The shape of her lips as she kisses Giddy on the cheek. The way she absently pets Samantha or Boris when they are in her lap.

The love in her eyes as she looks up at me on the dance floor.

I don't let anything slip by. I catch it all and try to store it in my mind. If she would let me, I would install cameras all over the house (not in our bedroom or bathroom, of course) to record her every move. Like a reality show just for me.

I suppose the movie theatre of the future beat me to it. I wondered if they were still using my eyes to take it all in... or Giddy's eyes... or for that matter, the cats'?

Melody looked up, almost as if she was reading my thoughts, and smiled.

I'm a lucky man.

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## Chapter 13

*Have you ever heard of the Butterfly Effect?*

*It doesn't just apply to the atmosphere, you know? Little things can have big effects over time out in the deep of space, too. Do you remember the anti-satellite tests they had a while back? The U.S. and Russia and China? We took turns blowing targets out of orbit. The rationale for all of that destruction was that in the event of war, one country would be able to disable another's orbiting eyes. Some feared that such tactics could be used prior to a pre-emptive strike, which resulted in even more tests. And, the tests we heard about weren't the first... all three countries had all been at it in one form or another for quite some time... that's one reason why there's so much space junk in low earth orbit.*

*But not all of the nuts and bolts and pieces and parts stayed in close orbit. Some made their way out near the edge of our planet's gravitational field. You wouldn't think that would be a problem in the vastness of space, but one of those little scraps of metal happened to ricochet off of a passing meteor years ago. That meteor was in an elliptical orbit around our sun, and the tiny nudge was enough of an event so that the second object just happened to strike another small meteor a few years later. That rock eventually impacted a large asteroid dead center in a game of cosmic billiards. The lump of nickel and minerals was travelling at such a high rate of speed that it buried itself deep into the cortex of the porous traveler. A huge pocket of ice then had an opening to the surface, and when the gigantic, dark object turned in its natural rotation toward the sun, steam shot from the vent and changed its trajectory over a period of weeks until, finally, all of the ice was expended.*

*The odds against that sequence of events was astronomical, but lotteries are won every day... it works both ways, you know? Both positive and negative. The steam put the projected track of the large asteroid onto a collision course with our planet.*

Gideon looked into the camera, using Greg's eyes. The therapist had seen this video five times, before, but for some reason felt compelled to watch it a sixth time.

*Some might call this an unintended consequence of those tests so many years ago, but I wonder about that. I wonder if we brought this upon ourselves? Maybe the Butterfly Effect just multiplies energy, and in this case, it was negative energy. The amplified intent of our warlike nature might be coming back on us like malevolent ripples in a pond.*

*Karma in the form of an asteroid.*

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This is the end of the sample. I hope you enjoyed it!  
Please consider downloading the rest of the book.