

The Beginning After The End, Chapter 1: The Light At The End of The Tunnel

I never believed in the whole “light at the end of the tunnel” folly where people, after experiencing near-death experiences, would startle awake in a cold sweat exclaiming, “I saw the light!”

But here I am currently at this so-called “tunnel” facing a glaring light, when the last thing I remember was sleeping in my room (others call it the royal chamber).

Did I die? If so, how? Was I assassinated?

I don't remember wronging anyone, but then again, being a powerful public figure gave others all sorts of reasons to want me dead.

Anyway...

Since it didn't seem like I was going to wake up anytime soon, while I slowly gravitated towards this bright light, I might as well go along with it.

The journey seemed to take an eternity; I half expected a choir of children to be singing an angelic hymn, beckoning me towards what I hoped would be heaven.

Instead, my vision of everything around me turned into a blur of bright red as sounds assaulted my ears. When I tried to say something, the only sound that came out seemed to be a cry.

The muffled voices became clearer and I made out a: “Congratulations Sir and Madam, he's a healthy boy.”

...Wait

I guess normally, I should be thinking along the lines of “S**t, was I just born? Am I a baby now?”

But strangely, the only thought that seemed to pop up in my mind was, ‘So the bright light at the end of the tunnel is the light coming through into the female vag...’

Haha... let's not think about it anymore.

Assessing my situation in rational king-like manner, I noticed, first of all, that wherever this place was, I understood the language. That's always a good sign.

Next, after slowly and painfully opening my eyes, my retinas were bombarded with different colors and figures. It took a bit of time for my infant eyes to get used to the

light. The doctor, or so it seemed, in front of me had a not-so-appealing face with long, greying hair on both head and chin. I swear his glasses were thick enough to be bulletproof. The strange thing was, he wasn't wearing a doctor's gown nor were we even in a hospital room.

I seemed to have been born from some satanic summoning ritual because this room was lit only by a couple of candles and we were on the floor over a bed of straw.

I looked around and saw the female who pushed me out of her tunnel. Calling her mother should be fair. Taking a few more seconds to see what she looked like, I'd have to admit she's a beauty, but that might have been caused by my half blurry eyes. Rather than a glamorous beauty, I would better describe her as lovely, in a very kind and gentle sense, with distinct auburn hair and brown eyes. I couldn't help but notice her long eyelashes and perky nose that made me want to just cling to her. She just permeated this motherly feel. Is this why babies were attracted to their mothers?

I peeled my face away and turned right to barely make out the person who I assumed was my father by the idiotic grin and teary eyes he gazed at me with. Immediately he said, "Hi little Art, I'm your daddy, can you say dada?" I glanced around to see both my mother and the house doctor (for all the certification he seemed to have), roll their eyes as my mother managed to scoff, "Honey, he was just born."

I took a closer look at my father and I can see why my lovely mother was attracted to him. Besides the few loose screws he seemed to have by expecting a newborn to articulate a two-syllable word (I'm just going to give him the benefit of the doubt and think he said that out of the joy of becoming a father), he was a very charismatic-looking man with a cleanly shaven square jaw line that complimented his features. His hair, a very ashy brown color, seemed to be kept trim, while his eyebrows were strong and fierce, extending in a sword-like fashion meeting to a V shape. Yet, his eyes held a gentle quality, whether it was from the way his eyes drooped a bit at the end or from the deep blue, almost sapphire, hue that radiated from his irises.

"Hmm, he isn't crying. Doctor, I thought newborns were supposed to cry when they are born." I heard my mother's voice.

By the time I finished checking ou... I mean observing my parents; the wannabe doctor simply excused himself saying, "There are cases where the infant does not cry. Please continue resting for a couple of days Mrs. Leywin, and let me know if anything happens to Arthur, Mr. Leywin."

The following couple of weeks after my journey out of the tunnel was a new kind of torture for me. I had little to no motor control over my limbs except being able to wave them around, and even that got tiring quickly. I realized all too grudgingly that babies don't really get to control their fingers all that much.

I don't know how to break it to you guys, but when you place your finger on a baby's palm, they don't grab it because they like you, they grab it because it's like getting hit in the funny bone; it's a reflex. Forget motor control, I can't even excrete my wastes at my discretion. I was not yet the master of my own bladder. It just... came out. Haa...

On the bright side, one of the few perks that I became happily accustomed to was being breastfed by my mother.

Don't get me wrong, I had no ulterior motives whatsoever. It's just that breast milk tasted a lot better than baby formula and has better nutritional value, okay? Er... please believe me.

The Satanic demon-summoning place seemed to be my parent's room and from what I figured, the place that I was currently stuck in was, hopefully, a place in my world from the past, when electricity hadn't yet been invented.

My mother quickly proved my hopes wrong as, one day, she healed a scratch on my leg from when my idiotic father bumped me against a drawer while swinging me around.

No...Not like, band-aid and a kiss heal, but a full blown, shining light with a faint hum from her freaking hands type of healing.

Where the hell am I?

My mother, named Alice Leywin, and my father, named Reynolds Leywin, at least seemed to be good people, hell if not the best. I suspected my mother was an angel because I've never met such a kindhearted, warm person. While being carried on her back by a baby cradle-strap of some sort, I went with her to what she called a town. This town of Ashber was more of a glorified outpost, seeing that there were no roads or buildings. We walked on the main dirt trail where there were tents on both sides with various merchants and salesmen selling all sorts of things—from common, everyday necessities to things I couldn't help but raise a brow at, like weapons, armor, and rocks... shining rocks!

The strangest thing that I couldn't seem to get used to was the people carrying weapons like it was a luxury designer bag. I witnessed a man of around 170cm carrying a gigantic war axe that was larger than him! Anyway, mother kept talking to me, probably to try to get me to learn the language faster, while shopping for the day's groceries, exchanging pleasantries with various people passing by or working in the booths. Meanwhile, my body turned against me once again, and I fell asleep... D**n this useless body.

Sitting on the lap of my mother who was caressing me in her bosom, I was intently focused on my dad who was currently reciting a chant, which sounded like a prayer to the earth, for close to a good minute. I leaned in closer and closer, almost falling off my human seat while expecting some magical phenomenon, like an earthquake splitting the ground or a giant stone golem emerging. After what seemed like an eternity (trust me,

for an infant who has the attention span of a goldfish, it was.) Three adult, human-sized boulders emerged from the ground and slammed against a nearby tree.

What in the name of...that was it?

I flailed my arms in anger, but my idiot father interpreted that into a "WOW" and had a big grin on his face saying, "Your daddy is awesome huh!"

No, my father was a much better fighter. When he put on his two iron gauntlets, even I felt compelled to drop my underwear (or diaper) for him. With quick and firm movements that were surprising for his build, his fists carried enough force to break the sound barrier, but were fluid enough to not leave an opening. In my world, he would have been classed as a high-tier fighter, leading a squad of soldiers, but to me, he was my idiot father.

For what I learned, this world seemed to be a fairly straightforward one filled with magic and warriors; where power and wealth decided one's rank in society. In that sense, it wasn't too different from my old world, except for the lack of technology and the slight difference between magic and ki.

In my old world, wars had become an almost obsolete form of settling disputes between countries. Don't get me wrong, of course there were still smaller scale battles and armies were still needed for the safety of the citizens. However, disputes concerning the wellbeing of a country were based on either a duel between the rulers of the their country, limited to making use of ki and close combat weapons, or a mock battle between platoons, where limited firearms were allowed, for smaller disputes.

Therefore, Kings weren't the typical fat man sitting on the throne ignorantly commanding others, but had to be the strongest fighter to represent his or her country.

Enough about that though.

The currency in this new world seemed pretty straightforward from the exchanges my mother had with the merchants.

Copper was the lowest form of currency, then silver, followed by gold. While I had yet to see anything costing as much as a gold coin, normal families seemed to be able to live off of a couple copper coins a day just fine.

100 Copper = 1 Silver

100 Silver = 1 Gold

Everyday involved honing my new body, mastering the motor functions residing deep within me.

That comfortable regimen soon changed.

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