

George looked down to the village below. It didn't look like much was happening. A cluster of ramshackle dwellings centered around some impressive looking lighthouses. Smoke rose from morning breakfast fires. Peaceful.

Looking beyond to the east, he scanned across the broad valley to the direction of his goal. Small holdings randomly scattered about with everyone having a few domestic animals in residence. Probably a comparatively well-off community. Could be a lot of people here, George figured maybe three or four hundred throughout. It made George nervous because he had never been around so many people before. And his quantum powers were becoming less effective the further east he traveled. Then he reminded himself that he was as strong as eight or ten people. He had consumed his horse a few days ago and was now carrying the load of furs on his own back. Four hundred pounds of pelts. He hardly noticed.

He had been seeing increasing signs of human activity as he moved east. Trees being cut down. Firewood being stacked. Dogs barking. The dogs avoided him. Everything avoided him. As they should. George was always ready for a snack. But now, looking down over the valley, he was nervous. A lot of people and he wasn't used to crowds.

His mother broke into his thoughts. It had been a while. "Hatchling, do a sending. Communicate to your tribe back on their island prison. Give them hope. Tell them that their Queen is still strong and well."

George had not tried a long-distance soul-journey to his mother's people yet. But he knew he could do it without too much effort. He just hadn't felt like talking to them and he had no real information to impart. Besides, these others were just as strange to him as the humans were. He only knew them by the heroic stories his mother had imparted to him. How they had conquered and consumed planet after planet, killing billions. It all sounded like great fun, but he wasn't sure how heroic it was. But, whatever. He supposed it was, after all, time to make contact with the old crowd. Maybe meet some relatives or make some new friends. That mildly interested him, so he put down his load and sat under the shade of a large flowering tree and went deep into trance and left his body.

A rushing of time and space, his mother showing him the way across miles of ocean to a rocky shore, where shortly after he was in an intense conversation with masses of frantic Voth. They were enmeshed in wave after wave of roiling anxiety of being trapped on the island with a rapidly diminishing food supply.

While George sat there trying to keep on top of all this, a young man from the village walked by and noticed George, in what looked like to him, a state of deep spiritual meditation. So he sat down in front of George and, it being spring under a beautiful blossoming cherry tree and with nothing else to do anyway, he observed George.

Strong big body, strong big face. The young man felt that women probably thought that face attractive, but to the young man, that face was that of a kindly and sublimely wise teacher. One who could show him the Way. One who would demand fealty and absolute love. True love, from the heart and soul, from one who would understand him. And the young man sat down and, rather strangely and quickly, began to fall in love with George, the meditating teacher and probable savior of this young man's troubled soul.

So in the shade, under the blossoms on a calm spring morning, romance bloomed.