

## I SAW HIS FACE AT THE WINDOW

I saw his face at the window. Was it the face of a boy or a man? I couldn't be sure. But the eyes are what I remember most – deep, blue eyes that seem to hold a wisdom far beyond those of a boy – a deep wisdom reaching back in years. And those eyes were so penetrating, as though they could see into your very mind.

“I thought you said the house was empty,” I said to the estate agent.

“So it is,” he replied with, I thought, a slight hint of worry in his voice.

“Well, whose face is that up there?” I asked.

“Where?”

“Up in the bedroom on the right,” I replied turning to him.

But when we both looked up there was no face.

“It must have been a trick of the light, I guess,” he said.

“Yes, I suppose it must have been,” I agreed. But I felt it was not; I was sure I *had* seen a face there.

Sure enough, when he showed me around there was no sign of anyone in the house. It was unfurnished, bare and empty. In that bedroom where I had seen the face, there was no sign that anyone might have been in the room recently.

Later that day my wife asked me about the house. I told her that it seemed to be the sort of thing we had in mind and it had been well maintained. I also mentioned the face at the window.

“Obviously, a trick of the light, as the estate agent said,” she replied. “Or are going to say it has a ghost? Someone murdered there in a most ghastly and horrible way,” she added, laughing.

“No,” I said, a little crossly. “Did I say it was a ghost? I thought it was meant to feel sort of spooky or chilly or something where ghosts are. There was nothing spooky or odd about the bedroom.”

“There you are then,” she said. “It must've been a trick of the light – unless,” she added in a rather mocking tone, “you're hallucinating.”

Nothing more was said on the matter and a few days later we both looked around the house. Did I see that face again? I am not sure; at any rate I did not mention it to my wife. She liked the house, as, indeed, I thought she would. We bought the house and moved in a few weeks later.

Although I did not feel that the figure I had seen (if indeed I had really seen one) was a ghost, during those weeks before we moved in I did find out as much as I could of the history of the house. This was not too difficult as it was only less than 70 years old, having been built in the early 1930s. There appeared to be nothing untoward in its history – certainly no evidence of any ghastly doings.

My wife had the house exorcised before we moved in. She said she was doing for me in case I was still worried about that face, but I had a sneaking feeling that she was doing it as an “insurance policy”, so to speak, just in case I really had seen a ghost or something spooky. But we didn't discuss it. It was, however, somewhat amusing in that the vicar, an earnest and well-meaning young man, was clearly a bit uneasy about the whole business; he had never

performed an exorcism before.

My wife was happy, so too was the vicar, when it was all over. But the face did not go away. It was not there all the time, of course, only very occasionally. It seemed that over the past ten years one or two other people in the village had thought they had seen a face there also and rumours about the house being haunted had circulated among the locals – hence the estate agent’s worry when I mentioned it on my first visit to the house. But word of our exorcism soon got round the village and as no one else besides myself, it seems, saw anything there afterwards it was assumed the haunting was over.

The room concerned was the smallest of the bedrooms and my wife decided it would be ideal as my study. May be, despite the exorcism, she did not want to risk it as a bedroom, though she joked about the exorcism and pooh-poohed all idea of ghosts.

It was not long after we had moved in that *he* began contacting me. This happened only when I was in my study. Suddenly into my thoughts would come another presence. I wondered at first if I was beginning to suffer dissociative identity disorder; but in fact I always remained myself. There was no question of his taking over.

When he wanted to contact it was similar to receiving a telephone signal or a signal as one is computing that some wants to make contact via Skype or MSN Messenger. It was up to me to accept the contact or not; he did not take over and, when contact was made, he always remained a distinctly separate person.

But perhaps at this point I should give him a name. As far as I understood, it was Zarion. I say, as far as I understood, because communication was not auditory. If anyone had come into my study they would not have heard Zarion’s voice, nor my voice unless at any point I muttered my thoughts aloud. The communication was effected by a process of thought transference or telepathy. As I think in words, Zarion’s thoughts were verbalized in my mind. but some words remained ‘fuzzy’ so to speak; I assume this was because they denoted things or concepts unknown to me. Thus his name was transferred to me telepathically and Zarion is the way I verbalized it in my mind. I wonder what he made of my name?

But who was Zarion? It was apparent very early on that he was definitely not a ghost. I remembered having read about a family, a child called Skalumbhi and her parents, who live in the Chambal Valley of central India and who were reported to be in telepathic contact with an extraterrestrial civilization. I assumed that my contact with Zarion was of this nature and I tried to find out where he was. Was he somewhere else in our galaxy or was it possible that he was communicating from some distant galaxy?

He replied that he just did not see how thoughts could be transferred over such distances. He explained that among the Amahu (for that seemed to be what he called his people), thought transference took place only over a restricted area; when one got too far way, the process just failed.

“You mean to say we are close?” I said (or more precisely, I suppose, thought) to him. “But that is not possible.”

“Have your people no concept of parallel universes?” he replied.

“Yes,” i said. “we have of the concept. I even remember reading somewhere that parallel universes may exist less than one millimetre away from us. But I do not understand much about the scientific reasoning behind these ideas.”

He did not know exactly what I meant by a millimetre – the Amahu do not use the metric system! But he got the idea that it was a very small distance

“Yes,” he replied, “it would seem to be the case that some alternate universes are actually extremely close. In fact it seems that ours and yours actually touch and interface one another at a small point near here. I have a window where I look out onto an totally different world to mine; I believe I have seen you through it.”

“I know that window,” i said, “and I guess the face I have seen there is yours.”

“Yes, it would be mine,” he replied. “The window–interface appeared only about eight *limbai* ago. I do not know how long it will remain like this.”

Of course the Amahu measure time differently from us, but it seems that a *limba* is a little longer than an earth year.

I got to know Zarion very well over the past few years and, indeed, have had contact from one or two of his friends. On one occasion, I put a ladder up to the window in order to paint the sill; and, indeed, when I looked through the window I did not see my study; I was looking into a quite different room with alien artefacts.

I once started telling my wife about this; but I could sense from her reactions and replies that she did not believe in any telepathic communications and thought I was talking nonsense. Either I was imagining things or I was just fooling about and trying to wind her up. I have not mentioned the matter again with her nor indeed, until now, have I mentioned it to anyone else in case I get similar reactions.

The worrying thing is, of course, that my wife could be right. Am I experiencing delusion and hallucinations. Are Zarion’s thoughts in fact really auditory hallucinations of the sort experienced by schizophrenics? Is there no Zarion, only my schizophrenia? But I am not experiencing other symptoms of schizophrenia. My thoughts are otherwise quite organized and I am not aware of any chronic behavioural or emotional problems which one would expect with schizophrenia. Indeed if I did exhibit such problems I am certain my wife or other people would have made some reaction to them.

My thinking and cognitive processes, as far as I can tell, are quite ordered. Indeed, my communications with Zarion are all consistent. What he tells me makes sense. So I am left wondering: Am I suffering from a mild schizophrenia which may get worse, or have I made contact with a close, parallel universe? Was that face at the window those years ago really staring at me from a different universe?