

Earthwoman visits utopian society hundreds of years in future .

Cassandra

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CASSANDRA

Sequel to *Troubadour*

Don Fenn

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Science Fiction

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Preface

Cassandra felt used up. She'd lost her mentor, Peter Icarus, two years before, after spending the last ten years learning from him, participating in his study group. Along the way she'd gotten a PhD in Philosophy. But in his absence these long years of dedication to learning had become increasingly empty.

She believed that Peter Icarus had actually visited another planet. Troubadour is what he called it. Of all the thirty or so students in his ongoing graduate study groups, she was the only one who believed him. So when he died she was left believing the impossible about somebody no longer there. Like her mythological namesake she felt discredited. The other students often made fun of her assumption after Peter was gone. The group still met as everyone tried to keep the inspiration of those ten years alive, but it wasn't the same.

The problem was she felt like they were right to give her a bad time, and she was angry with them. She also felt increasingly way out on a limb by herself in life. Her belief about Peter Icarus didn't waver, but she often wanted it to leave. Over the ten years with Peter her life had become built upon the premise that he had brought back from Troubadour great wisdom

that was the foundation of his remarkable new ideas. The other students were as deeply impressed with his vision or they wouldn't have followed him. But they fully intended to pursue his ideas in their own direction now that he was dead. But her future was based upon a single spectacular remark Peter had once made.

“Maybe they will invite you to visit someday,” he said one afternoon. “I’ve told Rain they ought to.”

Peter always talked about Rain as if he'd just had a conversation with him yesterday, when it had been over thirty years since he was on Troubadour. For Peter, Rain was the Leonardo DiVinci of Troubadour, a profoundly wise old man whose favorite hobby was to kid around. What's more he preferred to joke in rhyming couplets.

Ever since this chance remark of Peter's, Cassandra had emotionally built her life's future expectations upon the fulfillment of that possibility—which over time had become a cherished dream. She desperately wanted to visit Troubadour to have her own major transformative life experience as Peter had done. Now two years later and nothing was happening. She began to despair that it ever would. She started to give up the

idea as well as some of her belief in Peter in order to find a new foundation upon which to have a life.

Then three days later when she turned on her television it all happened. A very unusual picture suddenly stared back at her.

An Invitation To Visit Troubadour

You are hereby cordially invited to visit the
planet Troubadour

That is if you believe that Peter Icarus, your
mentor preceded you to our planet. Push the
select button to read more.

Instantly nervous and ambivalent Cassandra stumbled for
several moments trying desperately to push the 'select' button
before the chance to say 'yes' disappeared from the screen.

When she'd finally succeed in pushing 'select', and read the added message that appeared on her screen—"You will be hearing from us in the morning"—she realized how gullible she was in believing what the message said. What if in the morning the study group showed up dressed in alien costume, shouting "April Fool", turning her dream into a foolish wish. Her hope of a lifetime would instantly shatter.

Conviction prevailed. She had to take the chance that it was real—and believe it.

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