

THE TEACHER

by

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No one knew who he was, and no one knew from whence he had come. And when he departed, no one knew where the stranger went. But while he was among them, all had felt a presence, and all had known that a cosmic event had taken place.

It was on a cool and hazy autumn day that the stranger appeared in the village; and as a gentle breeze he brushed against the people, kissing each cheek, touching each soul - and then he was gone.

How long did he stay? An hour? A day? A month? A year? No one could remember. What did he look like? No one could recall. Some had vibrated strongly to this "Different Drummer" and they had felt that the stranger had always been there... yet, at the same time, they felt that he had never been there.

Stepping out of the quiet morning mist, the stranger entered a world of lively confusion. The village had spewed forth its populace into a market that had sprouted in the square.

The pulse of life beat strongly through the common humanity, and the stranger smiled upon the scene.

"This lot gets on my bleedin' wick! Why can't they take their noise and stink, and shove off somewhere else?" An irate man approached, and grumbled at the stranger: "I live in this village, and every week I have to put up with this lot's crap!" He thrust an angry chin at the market. "I think it's ridiculous, and something ought to be done, don't you?"

The stranger looked into the irate man's eyes and said, "Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. And as far as possible be on good terms with all persons."

The stranger turned and went on, and the irate man followed. They walked further, and came to the village school which was built of stone. And sitting on the doorstep, with his head in his hands, was a disconsolate pedagogue.

The pedagogue looked up as the stranger approached and said with despair, "The little brats won't listen to me. I've tried everything from bribery to belligerence. I've pleaded, I've screamed - but they still don't pay me any heed. The parents of this crap hole only produce morons and imbeciles. I'm a man with talent and prospects. So what the hell am I doing here? No one ever listens to me... I'm a nothing. I'll never be like the great university dons."

The stranger looked into the teacher's eyes and said, "Speak your truth quietly and clearly, and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant, for they too have their story.

"Avoid loud and aggressive persons, for they are vexations to the spirit.

"If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself."

The stranger turned and went on, and the teacher got up and followed. They walked further, and came to a house of business.

The businessman burst out, and throwing his hands toward the heavens, cried in a voice plagued and bitter, "That's it, enough is enough! Why do I have to do everything myself? Why is the world full of arse-holes? Why me? Why do I have to think for the whole world? And, while I'm thinking for the whole world, why does the whole world screw me."

He counted on his fingers, and continued, "The tax man screws me, clients screw me, and my lousy sponging relatives screw me. Is there no one out there that I can do a decent day's business with? God help me! Maybe I should join the army, and let some other poor sod do the thinking for a change."

The stranger looked into the businessman's eyes and said, "Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested within your own career, however humble, it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

"Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is.

"Many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism."

The stranger turned and went on, and the businessman followed. They walked further, and came to an old wooden bridge spanning a lazy stream. A lover gazed into the slow moving water, and sad tears fell from his eyes, and drowned in the indifferent current.

The lover looked up as the stranger approached, and asked in an imploring voice, "What must I do to find, and understand love?"

The stranger looked into the lover's eyes and said, "Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love. For in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is perennial as the grass."

The stranger turned and went on, and the lover followed. They walked further, and came to a small cottage where an aged one rested against the rustic gate.

The aged one looked up as the stranger approached, and asked with tired amusement, "Where is youth? And what am I supposed to do with age?"

The stranger looked into the aged one's eyes and said, "Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

"Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

"Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself."

The stranger turned and went on, and the aged one followed. They walked further and came to the old stone church that marked the village boundary.

The priest emerged from the building, and strutted purposefully up to the stranger.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"I am reality."

"Do you represent God?"

"No."

"These are of *my* flock... why are they with you?"

"They choose to be."

The priest turned to the group, and commanded with a voice filled with authority, "Leave this evil deceiver at once ... and return to your homes."

"But he TEACHES words of truth, and our hearts burn within," said the pedagogue.

The priest fixed his gaze onto the speaker and said with conceit, "Nonsense! I am the only person in THIS town that teaches the words of truth. I tell you, this man is the spawn of hell, and is the brother of Satan, and has come here to deceive you." He continued before he could be interrupted: "You, pedagogue, like the rest of this community are under my care and jurisdiction. What I say is what God says; and for your eternal well being, you would do well to learn that!"

"But you haven't heard this stranger speak," said the man of business.

"I don't need to," sneered the priest. "Unlike you, my life is not filled with gain, filthy lucre, and the evil things of this world. Unlike you, I have a clear conscience and clean ears to hear the voice of God. And I have been saved. Furthermore, unlike you, I can detect Satan when he appears; and I see that he is in you, as well as in this stranger."

He continued in a satisfied voice, "Also, worldly one, you would do well to repent and give yourself to God, because if you don't, you will lift up your eyes in hell, and I won't be there to help you!"

"But the stranger speaks of love," said the lover.

"And of peace and hope!" added the aged one.

"You are all little children who are ignorant of the ways of life, and are very, very, gullible," said the priest with condescending patience. "You know that I, and I alone, am the only person that speaks of love, peace, and hope. God loves me, and I love you." Jabbing his finger at the stranger, the priest continued, "This man wants to take away your free-agency, to bind you, and to rob you of your souls.

"Only if you obey the teachings of the church, repent of your filthy sins, pay your tithes and offerings, and attend your meetings, can you be saved in the kingdom of God!"

The priest pulled himself up to his full height and pointed to the road that left the village. He then addressed the stranger in a voice charged with piety and sobriety, "In the name of God, I having authority... rebuke thee, Satan, and command that ye be bound, and that ye depart from within our midst, and walk here no more. Get thee hence Satan!"

"You get on my bleedin' wick! Why can't you take your self-righteous bleating, and shove off somewhere else?" The irate man had approached, and had thrust his presence into the face of the priest. "I live in this village, and every week I have to put up with your crap!"

"How come you, and you alone have a monopoly on God?" He shook his head, and turning to the stranger said, "I think it's ridiculous, and something ought to be done about it, don't you?"

The stranger looked into the irate man's eyes, smiled and said, "Be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be.

"And whatever your labours and aspirations in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace with your soul.

"With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world."

The stranger turned and went on, but the priest did not follow.

The group walked further, and came to a place in the road which was hidden from the village. The mist was thicker there, and had gathered into a bank that was impassable to mortal flesh. They stopped, and the stranger turned to face them.

"Who are you?" asked the aged one gently. "I feel I've met you before."

"I am your reality," answered the stranger.

"Then who are we?" asked the lover with trembling voice.

The stranger looked into the group's questioning eyes, held out his open hands, and said, "You are children of the universe. No less than the trees and the stars, you have a right to be here.

"And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should."

He turned and walked to the bank of mist, and as he entered, he turned and lifted his right hand in salute.

He looked on the group with eyes of love ... he smiled, and said, 'Be cheerful.'

For an instant the mist swirled and the stranger was gone.

The pedagogue stepped forward, and called, "If you must go, then leave with us the key to life."

The sun filled the swirling air with an iridescent light, and the stranger's soft voice echoed back - filling their hearts with understanding - "The key to life is: *STRIVE TO BE HAPPY.*"

Silence fell, and the group looked at each other through new eyes... eyes born of illumination.

They nodded... turned... and started back to the village.

Though the stranger never returned, and though many generations have passed, his words still echo - locked in the mists of the Akashic Records. And even today, with all its sophistication and modern living, our etheric-selves continue to vibrate to the ageless words of The Teacher:

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. And as far as possible be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly, and listen to others - even the dull and ignorant, for they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, for they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter - for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested within your own career, however humble, it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is. Many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love. For in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe. No less than the trees and the stars. You have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labours and aspirations in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

Be cheerful.

Strive to be happy.

As the words sigh, and fade into the mist, a voice deep within the Quester confirms everything - "After all," it whispers, "are you not that teacher?"

So it is, and so it shall be.

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