

Bourne toWrite...

creative writing
workshops

Universal Truth

by Rosalyn St Pierre

Friday, an auspicious Friday. The cull would begin to reduce, to offer survival for others. It was the final day before the city left the sinister shadow cast by Jupiter.

On this Friday, all citizens gathered and when the count was completed,, the Mayor and councillors assembled on the balcony. The silence was shattered when, screaming, wailing, sobbing, the prisoners were brought before the central plaza.

The Mayor addressed the captives who were being stripped of their meagre clothing, 'It is time for you, according to eternal truths, to be cast out, naked, into the everlasting darkness, to be vapourised into the nothingness of space!'

One by one, men and women were shoved, were dragged, to the huge black door, carved with faces of demons. The airlocks were heard opening and shutting and gradually the screams diminished, and when silence returned, the citizens left the Plaza.

Only Adhara wept, silently, unable to save her colleagues, those who guarded the archives were always in danger for the citizens should not know, should not be aware and certainly should not have access to the most secret files and yet the ancient order was the data must be preserved. Did one of her colleagues dissent, try to spread the hidden messages the in the ancient manuscripts of the High Priestess Bridget?

Saturday the day of rejoicing. The city returned to light and the blue planet of Paradise came over the horizon.

The citizens gathered again in the Plaza, wearing their best clothing, laughing joking.

Glass capsules were wheeled in containing those prepared for the final journey.: the elderly waving to their families, the disabled, especially those babies with five fingers and toes, what disfigurement, were looking puzzled, searching for their mothers.

The Mayor spoke. 'Now is a time for celebration, a time to rejoice to celebrate the life of our parents, the elderly and the very sick, for today they will journey to paradise, to glide through the clouds of our promised land, to join those who have gone before. We have now reduced our demands on the city, over 200 will depart today.'

As the citizens clapped and cheered, the capsules left the Plaza to the airlocks. Like a show of tiny meteors they headed through space towards Paradise. There was a murmur from the crowd, just one word, Home.

'What nonsense,' Adhara muttered, but was overheard by a student pastor who turned and confronted the young woman.

'Do you question the scriptures our eternal truths? Have you forgotten the lessons taught, did you not attend young adult seminars on the spirituality of the cosmos?'

Adhara tried a more conciliatory tone,

'I'm an archivist in the central library and have permission to study the ancient manuscripts, it is obvious that the people in earthly heaven are looking up, travelling upwards, not downwards. It was thought that Paradise was above the clouds, not below.'

The student pastor stiffened, studied Adhara with the venomous intent of any hellish viper, 'heretic, witch', he spat, then with the robotic movement of any bigot, carved a path through the crowd to the doors beneath the balcony calling the guards as he went.

In the melee that followed guards stormed into the crowd but unsure who grab, Adhara fled, up through the sterile corridors, into the silent Institute of Studies of Classical Theology, to the hidden small door to her domain where in lay the forbidden texts of the Apocrypha, the descriptions of the Paradise beneath the clouds, so very different to the current orthodoxy, in her view a place of mixed experiences, though music, leisure, lions that lay down with lambs might exist.

With utmost care, she opened the fragile pages of the ancient book, the life of the high priestess, Bridget, and found the most profound, spiritual and appropriate sentence in a forbidden text .so often found in references so many hundreds of years after the original

manuscript. A voice called to her across the voids of outer space that offered comfort, that offered understanding.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that when one part of your life starts going okay, another falls spectacularly to pieces.

‘That’s me,’ she thought, ‘had a perfect job hidden away and I had to say something.’

Adhara covered the book with reverence and laid the embroidered cloth over the cover, giving Bridget one last sad smile, as she heard the guards pouring on the door.

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