

Destination Unknown

A Short Story By Andreas Ingo

It was the inversion of time.

Two kindred spirits existed in a parallel dimension of odd philosophy, surrealist art and spiritual science of life and survival. Odd philosophy speaking about the meaning of life in an original sense. It took place in a secluded neighbourhood beyond conventional terms. One of these kindred spirits was a young woman called Beatrice Beatle. She was brought up by a small man, Eric Beatle, rigid in his posture and walk. He was wearing a working man's suit.

Beatrice's upbringing was an easy life devoid of pain and emptiness. She was often taking middle-range walks in the shadowy areas of the neighbourhood. It was a black maze of gothic architecture mimicking older times. Eric Beatle was a secretive man of many joys and traits. Working late with art projects.

Somewhere in this gothic backdrop of inverted time Beatrice Beatle shared space with other humans. They came into her world from surrounding areas. Dressed in peculiar styles, wearing wigs and sometimes also canes. Looking like dark intruders from black and white horror films.

"Who is this man Eric Beatle?" One man asked Beatrice Beatle.

"He is my teacher." Beatrice said, "My godfather."

"Can you describe him?"

"Well. He is very kind..." Beatrice said, "Very gentle. But there is a strangeness about him. I can't answer to your question by myself."

Beatrice sometimes wondered about Eric's behaviour. How he sat at the dining table with a secret look. How he smiled and sometimes offered Beatrice small presents. The young woman was happy and she often looked upon her destiny dreamily. These things were almost taken for granted. Beatrice was often collecting dresses which she hung upon hangers. These were found in odd clothing stores, in some people's private homes and on markets close by. Some people had the honour of watching her large collection. They said she was quite spoiled and abnormally happy.

Beatrice rarely reflected upon her situation and reacted strongly upon tragic stories told by other people. She was walking around, playing mind games with keen observation. She was a dreamer. But one day Eric Beatle approached Beatrice with a serious look.

"Please listen." Eric said, "I have to tell you something. The place we live in exists in a parallel dimension. You have had a life of easiness. You have found

great value from the lessons I have taught. But the time is running out for the both of us. The world as we know it is coming to an end.”

Beatrice Beatle stared at the man. As if this was a kind of joke. But she also sensed the seriousness in Eric’s expression.

“You have lived a life in a hollow paradise.” Eric Beatle said, “The world outside our world is not pleasant. It is torn by wars, by boredom and routine. By countless horrors. But it is a destiny you can choose to explore by yourself. As a dark mission. To use the pain as a catalyst to strengthen your initial values. The lessons I have taught you from an early age.”

“Why would I ever want this?” Beatrice said quite horrified.

“You can do it to strengthen your soul.” Eric Beatle said. “To use your bright childhood as a strength to face the world’s true destiny.”

Beatrice was taken from this explanation. She reflected upon how she always had been different from other people. How she was said to be rarely spoiled. How she never had understood Eric’s silence.

And it was as if the broken suspicions finally were coming to the surface.

“I didn’t want this.” Eric said, “But I took your life upon my shoulders. From the beginning. To teach you about another time and place.”

“Why would I ever want this?”

“To find the strength to endure the coming crisis.” Eric said. He looked down upon the floor in a friendly gesture. “It’s all about a personal choice. To find meaning in a hollow void.” He said, “And to endure the coming crisis.”

Beatrice left Eric with a horrified expression. She went up to her private room. Walked up to a window. Stared blankly into the gothic maze.

“Why would I ever want this?” Beatrice asked herself. “Why would I ever escape the horrors of the real world?”

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The journey to the end of inverted time was a heavy burden of uneasiness and fast goodbyes. The young woman was facing the threat of a horrifying future. She thought she never was the one to escape the horrors of the real world. She was a fast walker and quite determined. To find out if the surrounding areas were empty and devoid of life.

In a nearby region there was a huge gathering of people protesting. They had seen the horrors of war, lack of education and constantly increasing prices. Some of them were pushed back by military officers. Bombs with disorienting gas were thrown upon the protesters. Exploding with different shades of grey in the air: Powerful, horrific and beautiful.

“Why are you doing this?” Beatrice asked one of the protesters.

“We can’t win by any means.” The man said, “And a fight without government cooperation is impossible.” He said, “This is a chance to leave this world without government intrusion.”

Beatrice saw that several military officers were shooting bullets on the demonstrators. A strong display of power. The people were screaming. Some of them were falling to the ground with shuddering movements. Beatrice left this group of protesters with great disillusionment. And she found dull factories. Grey areas of concrete and painted walls with graffiti.

Here she joined some youngsters in the art of creation. Painting war heroes that were highly spoken of. Future men of power and courage. To lead the fight for themselves.

“But you are not only painting war heroes but also government officers?”
Beatrice said to the boys.

“We are surely painting them as the enemy must be understood in time.” One of the boys said, “He is not the enemy to regular survivors. He is the enemy to creative work which he thinks enslaves the population.”

Beatrice continued to a high area of the global city. The whole area of the earth had become an interconnected city. From this viewpoint, many levels above the ground, Beatrice could watch parts of the city from a higher perspective. It was like a black and white painting. A stained landscape cut in charcoal. In certain places the black had given room for the white. Leftover places not touched by the charcoal, not touched by human invention.

Beatrice decided that the right path was to seek a job fitting her own interest. That meant clothing work. Working as a clothing store assistant or even designer. She read newspapers with job offers. She walked pathways hovering in the air to different regions of the city.

Thousands of glowing lights were seen close to the horizon. Endless city oscillations. Light glimmering as on a starry sky.

When Beatrice found her first job she was instantly put in the background as an anonymous helper. She was getting her work quite arranged but the details were cumbersome. Cutting clothes out from their delivered packages. And quite boring clothes too. Some of them were cheap, others more expensive.

Her deep understanding of clothing made it easy for her to keep her job. But her knowledge was also quite intrusive.

“You talk too much.” Beatrice employer said to the young woman, “Work easy and with silence. You see, we don’t have many customers in this business anyway. You work too fast, you put too much pressure on yourself.”

“But I already take it easy.” Beatrice said.

“Relax more.” The manager said.

Beatrice first job was just one job among others. She worked as a clothing designer, seamstress and package deliverer. She was around the adjacent part of the city. But the lack of smiles and the negative thinking patterns of the store owners made the quest quite depressing. Beatrice came to see the wisdom of Eric Beatle. How the world truly looked to come to an end.

She later decided to take Eric’s words more seriously. She had been given a positive mind set from birth. Eric could attest it. She was initially found lying in a random hospital close to the gothic district. But she had had a radiating energy, a mental predestination of someone growing beyond that happiness.

And the faculties necessary to use this energy for transformation.

What was needed was hard struggle. To confront the hard path of the mind voyager. Confronting his/her largest fears and limitations. To use that resistance as a force to overcome the relative weakness of the untrained mind.

Creating meaning in an intellectual void.

Beatrice sought a job contrary to her interests. This was like a car mechanic. Later a builder of many mechanical parts. She worked in heavy industry, in the car paint business. And even working along the railway. This ongoing process of negating her inner power became something fleeting. Something that on the one hand made her stronger (Pulling herself over the taste of boredom) and also something destructive.

It was the people. The nihilistic citizens and leaders. They were thinking in terms of peace but they created nightmare scenarios in a quest of a well needed rest. To stop the ticking clock of the nuclear bomb.

Beatrice stopped to ponder in a beautiful park surrounding a centre of high-rises. It was a surreal park with a bright touch of despair. An oscillating pond cut against a greyish background of separate reflections and images. A group of middle-age citizens were walking this park. But their face expressions were cut like a random screen of static. Static face expressions enlarged by the environment at display. Beatrice's heart cried out in a desperate gesture. To warn these souls of the coming annihilation.

But there was no way to reach them. The citizens knew about the war, they knew about the end time scenario. To warn them would be to amplify their own convictions. To erase what hope still was breathing inside.

So Beatrice had to give it a rest. She was a strange warrior of beauty and power. But human society had put a hold on this power. A power to disrupt the harmony of the caring soul.

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Beatrice found her way back to the gothic district. She watched the surroundings, the silent horrors of the dark intruders. The black maze of strange horrors. The clothing stores. The strange sense of old times in the air. But something had changed in this familiar surrounding. Big excavators had turned the neighbourhood into a construction zone.

The black maze had been cleared up for easy navigation. And Eric Beatle was not found at home.

Beatrice asked the locals what had happened. She had been away for a long time and nothing certain could be spoken about the man. Nobody understood the mystery of Mr. Beatle. He was found walking one day, the next day he was gone. Some people said he had been killed by the workers. Or by secret police realizing the danger of the quarter.

Beatrice was terrified. Shocked from the eventful realization. That she might have to walk her walk alone.

The apartment was still in shape. But dusty. Beatrice took up an old newspaper to date the departure of her lost companion. According to the date his departure must have happened some time ago. It was a matter of easy calculations. But concerning Eric Beatle also quite suspicious.

She looked at the other newspapers along the table. No paper was found with a later date. Not on the table. Not in the rooms.

Not in Eric's drawers.

Beatrice was taken by anger. She had always kept Eric in the distance. To find inner strength to evolve by her own means. As decided. But now her only support channel had disappeared without a trace.

Beatrice was angry. She still couldn't know if the man was alive. If he still was friendly and possibly doing well.

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Beatrice decided to enlist in the war of the protestants. These people were people of many ages and types. Some of them were really old. Some of them were civil servants. Most of the young ones were escape artists.

They were using game tactics to oppose the superior enemy.

Beatrice was horrified. She couldn't think of meaning and purpose. She was taken by suspicion and surprise. She began to doubt the value of her own mission. To forget herself and to adjust to the teaching given by Eric Beatle: To forget victory and concentrate on the journey instead.

This was a teaching that was taught in the parallel dimension. Silently preparing Beatrice for the coming end: Odd philosophy, art and science of life and survival. It was not taught as a way to disorient the mind of the happy ones. It was a necessity. A path walked by countless others.

Leaving the young ones with the strength of a deep impression.

In a dirty trench protesters crawled to bypass a tank procession. To bypass the tanks with an attack from the other side. They were silently crawling, rearranging behind walls after the sneak movement. They were looking for easy targets. Suddenly hitting fire from all accounts. The soldiers were caught by surprise and many were killed by the machine guns.

Some of the turrets turned around to face the enemy. But most of the government forces were defeated in a temporal victory.

After the battle there were talk about the possibility of victory. Most of the protestants were negative. They didn't look at the battle as a means to secure their own survival. They looked upon it as a simple distraction: A distraction to escape the futility of their own lives.

Beatrice come to think about the teachings she heard from young age. About the playfulness of Eric Beatle's calm voice. She didn't consider the exact words to great extent. But small hints were connected to a larger picture of destiny.

Things lacking in average people's lives.

It was not a matter of being religious in any conventional sense. It was rather about a life *without* religion, *without* happiness and true meaning. To create ones own values transcending the world. Transcending the moment to consider the illusions of past times.

Fuelling a vision of future decay.

Beatrice joined the protesters in an attack on the government headquarters months later. A build-up of remaining forces. A suicide mission. Greyish fire entering a wardrobe of black and white cloths. People were turning upon each other. A surrealistic nightmare. As the protestants were finding ways to end their lives the government troops defeated the enemy.

Beatrice Beatle escaped contrary to chance.

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Beatrice found herself lying in an abandoned apartment later. The war drums had come and gone. She was a deserter. An outlaw existing in the space between the nihilists and the government forces. She used left over food to raise energy in her tormented body.

The fight for closure had taken to her mind.

She ate food from unwashed plates. She slept for days in a state of paralysis. She couldn't think. She could feel anything but numbness. Energy was coming low and she wept for the world's final end.

It was absurd: To think of opportunities. To create meaning in a world of total emptiness. Beatrice was almost dying as a man approached Beatrice with a black cloak.

"So you seek shelter in an abandoned apartment?" The man asked.

"I'm not seeking shelter." Beatrice said, "I have abandoned my mission."

"You're brave." The man said.

The man stood in silence to inspect the thin shape of Beatrice Beatle. A young woman now in a state of decay. He silently watched Beatrice's shape and removed his black cloak to reveal his face.

The man was looking like Eric Beatle.