EVE’S VISION

 Adam and Eve were dwelling in the Garden of Eden, in perfect health, immortality, and happiness. They were innocent of anything dark or impure -- living instead in God’s eternal light of love and compassion. They were in blissful harmony with all of the forms of life that God had created.

 God asked nothing of them except for obedience to one command: They were forbidden to eat the fruit of -- or even to touch -- a single tree which grew in the center of the Garden. This was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

 But the mystery of this Tree disturbed Eve so much that she awoke one night and went alone to contemplate the Tree. While Adam slept, she quietly made her way to the center of the Garden.

 As she approached the Tree, she heard a voice calling softly to her. A strange being appeared to be obscured in its branches, but she could not clearly see who it was in the darkness of the night. The voice spoke boldly to her.

 “Eve, if you would but taste this fruit, your mind would be opened, and you would behold the Knowledge of all Good and all Evil such as only God knows, and hence you will become as only God is. Come…taste…see…”

 The woman hesitated at first, but the being coaxed her again with the same enticing words. Seeing a single low-hanging fruit on the nearby Tree, she reached out her hand and plucked it. Eve turned it around in her fingers, then took a timid bite. It was incredibly delicious, much to her surprise.

 Her mind went immediately into a maelstrom of flashing images and emotions. One after another, new objects, new people, and new scenes cavalcaded before her eyes.

 At first, everything that Eve saw was pleasant and re-assuring.

 She saw smiling, laughing children. Lovers falling in love. Great cities throughout history. Jesus healing the sick, and preaching to others. Great artworks in painting and sculpture. Schools and hospitals. Cathedrals, temples, and mosques. Happy families together. Choirs singing sweetly. Symphonies playing at concerts. Joyous dancing. Jesus rising from the dead. Thankful people in prayer, or in contemplative meditation. Panoramas of the magnificent beauties and varieties of nature. Stunning sunrises and sunsets. Noah’s ark resting on Ararat, with a rainbow in the sky. Abundant creatures enjoying the land, the sea, and the air. Farmers planting, nurturing, and harvesting their plentiful crops. People reading and writing books. Airplanes soaring through blue skies. Space crafts being launched atop mighty rockets. Astronauts walking on the Moon. Distant galaxies and planets. All was positive and life-enhancing, the images and scenes bathed in a peaceful, glowing light.

 But then a chilling darkness swirled and descended over the warmth of the Good, totally eclipsing it.

 Eve was horrified and even gasped when she beheld Evil for the first time. She saw an endless parade of bloody wars and senseless killings. Cain slaying his brother, Abel. Millions of people in poverty and starvation. Rampant pollution of the land, air, and water of the Earth. Dictators down through the Ages. Massacres. Assassinations. Every imaginable sexual perversion. Satan and devil worship. The crucifixion of Jesus. Atomic bombs obliterating entire cities. Riots, murders, and unrestrained violence. Looting and robberies. Arson. The ravages of drug addiction and alcoholism. Jews and others sent into Nazi concentration camp ovens for extermination. Terrorist attacks. Deaths and tortures from competing religions.

 The woman saw the conflicting scenarios pass before her eyes in mere moments, but the extreme quantity of the details she beheld made the time – such as it existed then -- seem a lot longer. Eve collapsed to the ground, exhausted, but somehow still clutched the Forbidden Fruit.

 When Eve regained consciousness from her dual vision, she saw that Adam was standing over her, looking down and puzzled. He explained to her that he had awoken and found her missing, so he searched for her. She shyly offered him the fruit to taste, for her fear of her disobedience to God was too great for her to bear alone. He eventually touched the fruit and pressed it to his lips. And he beheld what she did, and was ashamed at what he had done.

 Then the pair heard the angry voice of Almighty God:

 “My children, what is this great wrong you have done?”

 In fear, Adam and Eve tried to hide in nearby foliage, and did not answer.

 “I provided you with Paradise, but you defied me and have broken my only commandment,” God proclaimed. “Come forth and explain this gravest of sins to me.”

 The woman and the man came out of hiding, and Eve explained how the unknown being in the Tree had tempted her, and confessed that she in turn then tempted Adam by offering him the Forbidden Fruit.

 God then instantly cast the Tempter into a serpent, saying: “Thou shalt crawl on your belly in the dust – you and your descendants – for the rest of your days. And men will fear you and even try to kill you whenever you emerge from hiding.”

 “As for Adam and Eve, as punishment for your disobedience, your nakedness is revealed unto you, and you will be driven out from the Garden. My Garden of Eden --and any memory of it in your minds -- will then vanish from the face of the Earth.”

 God continued His pronouncements:

 “Eve, you and every woman after you shall bear all descendants in pain and suffering. Your body will lose its beauty, and wither, and become feeble. Your emotions will confuse and torment you. You will encounter diseases, and then proceed to old age and die.”

 “Adam, you and every man after you will earn your daily bread by the sweat of your brow and by the painful toil of your muscles. You will likewise know disease, heartache, bitterness, disappointment, weakness, old age, and death. You will even wonder every day of your life if your watchful and caring God even exists, but the answer to that ultimate question will never be revealed to any man or woman while they are yet still alive.”

 “Now that you both have had a glimpse of Good and Evil, all future humanity will have a choice: Will you protect and save and use the Earth as I created it, or will you destroy it through greed, selfishness, and hatred? I hereby give to all people a Free Will to decide mankind’s fate. Will your final choice be for Good or Evil, my children?”

 Adam and Eve sadly listened with downcast eyes to Almighty God, then silently gathered fig leaves and fashioned them into girdles to cover their nakedness, after which they were driven out of the Garden. A powerful angel of God blocked and guarded the entrance from them until the Garden of Eden itself was made to vanish forever…

 THE END

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