

# Mind, Body, and Soul

Margot sat on a bench overlooking a scenic pond. She felt as though she had been there for a long time while also feeling as though she had just sat down. She once described it as feeling like waking up from a short nap, only to realize that it was now dark outside. Only this time, she could not remember falling asleep. So, she took a breath and chose to observe the things around her in an effort to try and remember.

Around the pond there was a walking path made of dirt and gravel. It appeared to be well worn, and the grass around it was kept short. On the other side of the pond, the trail entered into some woods where it could not be seen again until it came out of the treeline on the opposite side of the pond. Above Margot was a large tree that shaded her. Behind her was a grassy hill. In fact, a moment later she realized that all around this small park was a hill. As if it were in a bowl. And up behind the tree were large snow capped mountains.

An unsettling thing that slowly stole her attention was the stillness. The air itself was sterile. As if she were locked in a room. Panic began to set in. Again, she questioned how she could have gotten there. Slowly, memories came to her. Running through the woods. Tripping over a root. Falling and hitting her head.

“Sophie!” She exclaimed quietly to herself just before seeing Sophia far along the trail, just outside the woods. She appeared lost and searching for something before stepping into the woods along the trail. Margot exclaimed louder, “Sophia!” But her friend did not hear her.

She got up from the bench and took off running down the trail. More than once she stopped to catch her breath. The third time she stopped and dropped to her knees. The forest felt as though it were so far away.

“Hey!” The voice of a young girl startled her. The girl ran past her to another young girl who was playing by the pond. Immediately Margot recognized the two of them, but she did not want to believe what she saw. It was Sophia and herself as young children.

She saw her younger self running ahead of younger Sophia, who struggled to keep up. Eventually the girl gave up trying to reach her. A boy walked by young Sophia and threw her a ball. She caught it, smiled and followed him in the opposite direction. Young Margot did not realize until they were gone. She turned one way and then the other looking for her friend until turning to look older Margot in the eyes. A chill ran down her spine as she looked directly in the eyes of her younger self. It mouthed words silently to her, but she knew what they were.

“She abandoned you.”

The image of her younger self then faded quietly until it was gone. The real Margot was left standing alone on the trail with tears in her eyes, “I have to find her,” She said to herself before taking off down the trail. The shadows of trees began to block out the sunlight above her. Small openings in the treeline around the pond created small, uneven windows that provided views out to the waters and hill beyond. The weather through them changed with each passing glimpse. It transformed from a bright sunny day, to overcast, and quickly into a torrential downpour. Thunder boomed as lightning ripped through the sky. In the wind she could hear the voices of others who she knew. The girls who were spiteful of her.

“She wears such weird stuff.”

“Gosh I wish she would shut up.”

“Ew.”

“She’ll flirt with anyone I guess.”

“No wonder she doesn’t have any friends.”

“Did you hear? It’s probably true knowing her.”

“She’s probably the reason her parents divorced.”

Margot’s pace slowed to a stop. Dropping to her knees she covered her ears, “Just stop it!” The voices went away and a light shone through a large opening to the left. Through it she saw her younger self standing on the water, surrounded by a white cloud. Without caution, she stepped through the trees and across the water. She approached herself, still tearful, “It’s all my fault, isn’t it? My parents? That boy,” She began to hyperventilate, “I knew he was with that girl, but he was just so nice to me and I was alone.”

Her other self reached out and pulled her in for a tight hug, “Yes, but you can fix it. You don’t need anyone else. You were just a victim in all of this. You’ll be okay.”

The hug began to feel suffocating. Her vision went dark and she sank deep into the enveloping darkness. Silence consumed her, and she was asleep.

The children and Amael returned to Lucas’ home just as a small glimmer of light touched the horizon. They were all exhausted and burdened mentally. By the time they had all three made it to Lucas’ room, nothing seemed to matter more than sleep. Isaac and Sophia ignored the burn marks and broken window. They looked at each other, and silently claimed their individual places of sleep. From his closet Lucas produced a spare blanket and pillow for him and Isaac to share while Sophia crawled into the bed. Where she passed into sleep almost immediately. Isaac fell asleep soon after her, and then Lucas. They did not know, but Amael stayed awake as they slept.

He watched outside as several households of people came out to walk the streets. They wandered like a herd of lost sheep. Dogs and cats follow along. As did the birds, who did not sing. Amael shook his head.

A few hours passed and the children awoke. They gathered on the edge of the bed, side by side, facing Amael who was seated on the window. He purred and squinted his eyes in the warm sunlight, preparing himself to hear their questions.

“I don’t understand,” Said Lucas, “Why the flies and the aliens? Are they the same thing?”

“No,” Said Amael, “The ‘aliens’ as you call them are the Thrawn. A once great civilization that destroyed itself. Before they destroyed themselves in a great war, their way of life destroyed the planet they lived on, and their morality waned so that there was no return from their consequences. Not to say that there were individuals who did not learn. One of them being Malsifus. He and his leader have brought a few of their military so come and assimilate to Earth. The Dissonance directed them here with the intention of causing distress. They cannot assimilate, not the way they want to. They will clone their captives to create shells for their alien minds to take control of.”

“So what is the Dissonance doing? What does it have to do with all the stuff we’re seeing?” Asked Sophia.

“The Dissonance knows that it cannot completely claim the souls of this earth. So in their act of rebellion against my Lord, they will use the Thrawn cloning technology to replace the population of earth. It will give them dominion over everything, but we are on the attack. If we act quickly, they will not be able to withstand our offense.”

“And what about my brother?” Her expression was on the verge of hopelessness.

“We can save him. The Thrawn will keep him and study him. Undoubtedly once they understand human physiology and psychology then they will have everything they need to create the false bodies. What the Thrawn don’t understand is that the Dissonance is not just another lifeform, but something that takes the form of various creatures.”

“This is a lot to take in. I still have so many questions about the light, and why I feel so much stronger than usual,” Said Isaac, scratching his head.

“Your strength, dexterity, and vitality have increased. You are not the same since the pact you made with the light. Not only that, you will notice special abilities beyond human understanding grow from you,” Amael licked his paw.

“And you’re here to help us master these new abilities?” Asked Lucas.

“Precisely. I will begin first by analyzing you to gauge where your strengths lie. Sophia, come close,” Amael beckoned with his paw. Sophia approached carefully, feeling somewhat confused. When she was close enough, Amael lifted his left paw and protracted a claw. He hovered it between her eyes, just above the skin. A few quiet seconds passed.

“Is something supposed to happen?” Asked Sophia.

“Interesting,” Amael mused, “You have a gift of the mind. The ability to communicate and hear people’s thoughts. On a surface level.”

“What does that mean?”

“Every sentient being has thoughts that are more present than others. Some thoughts are buried deep in a murky lake of emotions. Those can be listened to, but it takes greater concentration and time to determine whether or not they are the truth. After all, intrusive thoughts are thoughts as well, but they are not always a person’s true intentions. I would suggest you never go that deep with anyone. Especially those you love,” Amael stated grimly.

“I understand. And how do I use this power?” Replied Sophia quizzically.

“My dear, you already have been.”

Sophia turned to look at the boys.

“Well?” Said Isaac with intense interest, “What is it? What’s her gift?”

Sophia turned her head back to Arael, who nodded at her, then looked back at Isaac,  
“Telepathy, apparently.”

“Wow!” Exclaimed Isaac.

“Interesting,” Stated Lucas.

Arael reached out his claw at Isaac this time, who leaned his head in toward it without hesitation. Again, silence. Isaac felt his skin tingle right between his eyes. The room around them seemed to melt away, replaced by a lush field with emerald green grass. The sky above them was a deep blue, with waves like water. This was the best that Isaac could do to describe his memory of the sky. Pearly white clouds hovered all around him and Arael, and in the distance he could see a bright source of pure light. He could not look at it for long, but he felt something there watching him. It spoke but was too far away to hear.

“Isaac?” Lucas put a hand on his shoulder.

“You have an interesting gift. The practical use would be your ability to manifest light. You can project what you feel inside the heart and mind of a person. This will have many other practical uses as well since it can be manifested into denser physical matter. This is a gift of the soul.” Arael purred, “Now for young Lucas.”

Lucas leaned in and felt a strong jolt that pushed Arael’s paw back, “I’m sorry! I don’t know what that was!” He said frantically.

“No, that was very good! Yours is a gift of the soul as well. The power to manifest a dense protective barrier of light. Not unlike my own gift,” Stated Arael proudly, “Now, to begin practicing use of these gifts.”