

True Love

“Good morning Hamilton, its 6:30.” The voice of the clock on Hamilton’s bedside table was a little more annoying than usual. “I know it’s going to be hard to get up, because you got so little sleep, but that was your choice. I try to give you good advice and help you get a good night’s rest, but when you won’t listen, what can I do? After all, I’m just a clock, what do I know? Nobody listens to me.”

The clock then continued with its normal routine. “Sun rise is in fourteen minutes and three seconds. It will be visible from your home in twenty minutes, thirteen seconds. You are expected at work in two hours, fifty-nine minutes and thirty-three seconds. The weather today will be cool and partly cloudy. You should wear a jacket. The temperature outside is 35 and the expected high will be 55.”

The timepiece hesitated then asked, “Hamilton, are you awake?”

He was, but didn’t answer. The little device had no sensors other than sound, so it would assume he was asleep until spoken to.

“Hamilton, are you awake?” This time the sound of the clock’s voice was louder and had a higher pitch. “Do you plan to be late for work today sir?”

Hamilton smiled, but didn’t make a sound.

After another hesitation, the clock began to sing off key in a high squeaky voice:

“Oh..., would you like to swing on a star?
Carry moonbeams home in a jar?
And be better off than you are,
Or would you rather be a pig?”

“OK, OK. I’m awake. Good morning, clock.” Hamilton rolled toward the edge of the bed. “Don’t I remember something about an angel joke you were going to tell me this morning?”

“Certainly,” responded the clock in a pleasant voice. “Once there was an angel who never slept. He hadn’t slept for hundreds of years. One day the Lord called him in and said, ‘Angel, I understand that you haven’t slept in hundreds of years. You know that I encourage sleep in moderation. It relaxes your mind.’”

“Yes, Lord,” answered the angel. “I used to sleep often, but the last time I went to sleep, I had such a terrible dream, that I have been afraid to sleep ever since.”

“Angel,” The Lord said, “You are a great warrior. I created you to be powerful and brave. I gave you an eternal spirit that can’t be destroyed. You have fought in countless battles with Satan’s demons and been victorious. What could possibly be so frightening to you?”

“Well sir,” replied the angel, “I dreamed that you transferred me to the guardian angel battalion and they assigned me to Bulldog Hamilton Fry.”

Hamilton laughed. “You got me, clock.”

“I am glad to bring you pleasure, sir.”

“Where’d the joke come from?”

“It came in the weekly ‘in-load’ off the sphere two years ago. There was a blank where I put your name and there were instructions to...”

“Yes, clock, I understand. So you’ve had it in your memory for two years just waiting for the right time when you could get me with it?”

“Yes sir.”

“How many jokes do you know that I haven’t heard?”

“I’ve only been your clock for 43 years, so I don’t know what jokes you have heard. I have over 5000 that I haven’t told you. Do you need to know the exact number?”

“No.”

“Would you like to hear another?”

“That’s all for now.”

Hamilton sat on the edge of the bed for a minute collecting his thoughts. It had been a long night. The clock’s joke had reminded him of Magual, his guardian angel. He had spent a couple of days with him shortly after the beginning of the Millennium. Since then, they had communicated, but not been together. Besides being the world police force, the angels attended the Baptism of Fire with each person they had been a guardian angel for.

Hamilton had often wondered why the Father ever made humans when He already had angels. Magual was beautiful to look at, and his understanding of everything was god-like compared to humans. It was easy to understand why people had so often wanted to worship angels throughout history. It would be exciting to spend several months with Magual.

On his knees again, beside the bed, he prayed, “Father, I apologize for getting so worked up over the dream last night. If there’s anything I know for sure, it’s that I can always trust Your love. You have proved that to me over and over. I’m truly amazed

that after so many years, I still have to rely on Your mercy every day. Your patience is beyond my ability to comprehend.

“In my spirit, I am looking forward to the baptism of fire because I know that it will bring me closer to You. It’s my limited understanding that’s the problem. I guess that’s what the whole evaluation process is about anyway. I love you Father. Thank you in advance for everything you have planned for me.”

Hamilton continued on his knees for another fifteen minutes talking with and listening to his heavenly Father. He prayed for the leadership of his local congregation. He prayed for family and friends scattered around the globe and offered up the work that he would be doing today as a love offering to the Father.

When he had finished his communications with the Lord, he rose and went to the kitchen. He poured a glass of cold juice and stepped across the room to the large window by the table. The only light was that from the sunrise.

Through the window, Hamilton looked across the garden and down into a valley. The shadows were deep purple and patches of gray fog levitated over the cold water of the stream. Across the valley, the opposite hillside was a deep blue with a yellow rim across the ridge. The clouds above the ridge were glowing like a great golden crown sitting on the head of the hills. Because of the complete lack of pollution, only the clouds were ignited by the morning sun. They radiated in a dazzling contrast to the dark blue sky around them.

After a long drink of the fresh juice, he lifted the half-empty glass and swished around the delicious liquid. *Not more than twelve hours, tree to glass* he thought. Groceries were delivered fresh to every home. No chemicals of any kind were used in any food

processes. Every populated area of the world now had huge agricultural centers where fresh vegetables and fruits were grown year round. If more sunlight was needed, huge micro-thin mirrors orbiting the earth provided it.

Hamilton watched the sunrise for a few minutes, refilled his glass, and headed back to his study. Taking his Bible from a shelf, he leaned back in the chair, and opened the book to an ancient bookmark. The pages were still strong even though they had been cleaned several times, but after hundreds of years of daily study all the margins were filled with notes. Hamilton had studied it from cover to cover many times, but it had not grown old to him.

At his window screen he could study any subject in heaven or earth, but every day he began with this book. It was the real window because it was the window of truth. All the knowledge of the universe would be worthless without truth to guide it. Hamilton ran his hand over the page. He wondered how he could have lived his first life without so much as reading the Bible through a single time.

After reading for several minutes, he closed his Bible and quoted from memory one of the chapters he had read. The words filled him with strength and confidence. He loved it. Then he began to sing the 119th Psalm with the same melody and the same language that the Jewish pilgrims had sung on their way to Jerusalem thousands of years before. He was beginning a pilgrimage to Jerusalem himself. It would be one of the greatest life-changing experiences of his existence. He sang loud:

“How can a young man stay pure?
By reading your Word and following its rules.
I have tried my best to find you
don't let me wander off from your instructions.
I have thought much about your words and stored them in
my heart
so that they would hold me back from sin.

“Blessed Lord, teach me your rules.
I have recited your laws
and rejoiced in them more than in riches.
I will meditate upon them and give them my full respect.
I will delight in them and not forget them.”¹

After he finished singing, Hamilton sat in silence for several minutes meditating on the truths he had savored from God's Word.

He returned his Bible to the shelf and spoke to the window screen, “Good morning teacher.”

A woman with pure white hair appeared. She was only a three dimensional image created by the education program, but based on a picture of one of Hamilton's favorite teachers from the first life. “Good morning young Hamilton. If it pleases you, we'll continue our study of sub atomic physics at the center of a black hole in space.”

“Actually, I have a more immediate need. I'm thinking of sailing to Jerusalem for my evaluation, so I can have some time to prepare. I want to refresh my knowledge of everything I might need to know for that activity. Would you plan a course to help me with that over

¹ Psalms 119:9-16 (TLB)

the next few weeks? Also, I need to make a reservation on one of those vintage sailing ships.”

“That sounds adventuresome, Hamilton.”

“No, I'm not really looking for adventure. I want to have some time to meditate.”

“I have a course schedule in mind, but I will need to know what type of sailing craft you plan to take. Do you want to join a crew, or just go as a passenger?”

“If I'm going on one of those ships, I'll want to join the crew.” Hamilton responded.

“I thought you didn't want an adventure.”

“I don't want to be bored either. What ships are available that would get me to Jerusalem in time for my evaluation?”

“Now that seems to be a little bit of a problem. We should have planned ahead. There is only one sailing ship still taking reservations and it is definitely not the kind of trip you're looking for.” As it talked, the window produced pictures and the schedule.

It was a large three masted ship that reminded Hamilton of a picture from his childhood. “Tell me what you know about it.”

“As you can see, this is a replica of sailing ships built in the late 1800's AD. The name is *Courage*. There is a permanent crew of six and a temporary crew of twenty to sixty, depending on the voyage. It can carry an additional seventy-six passengers. Novice members of the temporary crew are required to study several courses in advance and be on the boat three weeks prior to the crossing for training. The captain's name is Lauren.” The teacher paused. “Do you want to see what's available on the modern cruise lines?”

“Why are you so sure I don't want to go on this sailing ship?”

“You said you wanted to enjoy yourself and meditate. I don't think this will be a meditative kind of trip.”

“Why.”

“It seems that it is to be a difficult crossing. They only do it every few years for sailors who want a challenge. They don't even take passengers.”

“What's the great challenge?”

“Would you like to hear the captain talk about being on the temporary crew for the winter crossing?”

“Yes.”

A view of the Atlantic Ocean came on the screen. Cloud formations covered much of it. The picture began to zoom down toward the northern portion. It plunged through the thick clouds and then skimmed across thirty-foot high white capping waves. The ship appeared on the horizon, her sails looking like a thunder storm gliding across the waters. When the ship filled the screen, powerful music began to play. The slender bow sliced through the waves, sending spray up and over the deck.

One person stood alone near the bow, feet apart, both hands gripping the rail, looking out across the endless sea. The view on the screen slid onto the deck at mid-ship, then toward the solitary figure. The sailor was covered head to toe with a canvas rain suit. Across the back, in bold royal blue characters, was the word ‘Captain’. As she turned and faced the camera, she pulled back her hood to reveal a beautiful but strong feminine face framed by thick brown hair.

She didn't introduce herself, but said, “This is my ship. Her name is *Courage*. My crew and I have sailed every ocean in every season. The winter crossing of the North Atlantic is one of the most

difficult. Serving on the temporary crew is hard, dangerous work, sometimes 24 hours a day. If I tell you, you'll climb an ice covered mast in a sixty-mile an hour gale. If I tell you, you'll wash dishes or clean slop pots. This is not a day at the beach. On this crossing, you may see nothing but rain, waves, and fog for the entire voyage. What you will get is a genuine adventure and the pleasure of being part of a sea fairing crew that has challenged the sea and won.”

The view on the screen turned away from the captain, toward the stern. Across the deck, from railing to railing, stood twenty men and women, arm in arm and smiling from under the hoods of their rain gear. The music began to play again and the view rose up through the sails and then straight down on the magnificent ship slicing through the sea.

“Whoa.” said Hamilton as the picture faded and the music stopped. “I guess I was thinking more of a day at the beach than cleaning toilets in the North Atlantic.”

“I didn't think this was what you wanted.”

“That's the only one?”

“All of the sailing ships crossing in the Southern Hemisphere have been booked up for a long time. What do you want me to do? There is a deadline for making reservations.”

“I'll think about it and let you know in the morning.”

“There are five minutes of messages for you. Would you like to see them now?”

“Yes, but first, would you contact my supervisor's office, and set up a personal meeting with him as soon as possible and put it on my reminder list.”

“Have a wonderful day, Hamilton.” The teacher faded from view.

She was replaced on the screen by three still photos with a name, place of origin, and time of reception printed under each. “Kate,” he said. One of the pictures became a three-dimensional image and filled the screen. In this application, the window screen really was like a window. The image was a recording, but looked as though his wife was standing on the other side of an open window. As the recording began, she was in front of some unfamiliar buildings. Hamilton glanced at the place of origin - Enoch, Australia.

Kate had been his wife in the first life. They had married in their early twenties, raised three children, lived a good life together, and died several years apart in their eighties. After the resurrection, there were no marriages. Sexual desire, with all the social problems that had surrounded it, no longer existed, and procreation wasn't possible. However, Hamilton and Kate, still saw themselves as linked for eternity. In fact they had lived together the first several decades of the Millennium and raised two “millennium children”.

Millennium children were infants who had died in the first life before the age of being accountable for their sins. Those who died in the womb were resurrected as newborns. The rest were resurrected at whatever age they were when they died.

One purpose of the Millennium was to give these children the opportunity to grow up and make their own choice about Christ.

Followers of Christ, who had lost children to death during the first life, had the joy of raising them in the Millennium. Millennial children, who didn't have Christian parents, were raised by Christian relatives when possible. However, most, like Sacari and Preston, the two children raised by Hamilton and Kate, had no Christian biological family.

Sacari was a female who had been aborted by her mother in 4th century Rome, Italy. Preston had died at the age of two in a car wreck with his parents in 20th century USA.

Raising Sacari had not turned out as Hamilton and Kate expected. They had assumed that anyone who saw Jesus with their own eyes would believe in and follow Him. This myth was no more true in the Millennium than during the earthly ministry of Jesus.

Though Preston had become a believer at an early age, Sacari, from the moment she learned of her biological past, began to push away. She eventually cut herself off completely, expressing contempt for their relationship with God.

During his first life, Hamilton had loved his wife and children with all his heart. Looking back on it, he and Kate felt that bringing three souls into existence and raising them to be followers of Jesus, was the most significant accomplishment of their existence. Losing Sacari was still an open wound in their hearts.

After raising Sacari and Preston, they had continued working together in the Amazon rain forest restoration for many years. When that project was concluded, they decided to pursue different interests. Their work kept them in different parts of the world most of the time, but they managed to get together every few weeks.

“Hi, sweetheart,” Kate said as the recorded image came to life. “I wanted you to see what we’ve been working on, especially that.” She turned and pointed at the building behind her. Hamilton knew her team had been constructing new residence buildings so he was sure this was one of them. “We just finished the one I designed. Do you like it?”

Like most city dwellings, it was situated in a park. It had a big porch and several large trees near the house. Hamilton smiled. It

reminded him of the country home he and Kate had worked so hard to build in their first life. He also remembered how frustrated he had become with all the decisions and how tired he became of spending every spare minute working on it. He had vowed to never do it again, and he hadn't.

Kate, on the other hand, loved it and had always dreamed of designing and building homes. She never got the opportunity in that life, but now she designed and built residences all over the world.

The recording continued, "Why don't you come see me in the next few days and I'll show it to you. Let's have a live communication today. Anytime. Don't worry about waking me up.

"If you can't come here, we need to figure out a time for us to be together a few days before you go to Jerusalem. Are you still thinking of sailing? Don't you have to make reservations a long time in advance for those ships? Talk to you later. Love you."

"Pause." Hamilton commanded before the recording could fade. The image stopped as Kate smiled at the conclusion of the message. Hamilton felt the urge to jump into the screen and take her in his arms. "How can I keep loving you more and more?"

As he gazed at her image in the screen, he tried to remember her in the first life. It was so long ago. Somewhere, she had a copy of their wedding picture, but it had been centuries since he looked at it. She had been beautiful to him then, but not the same as now. Now she was, what? Perfected? Completed? Refined? What was the word?

Hamilton thought of a caterpillar that he had seen in the Amazon rain forest. It was a kaleidoscope of color and design. He had thought it one of the most beautiful creatures he had ever seen until it became a butterfly. The same colors and design were easily

recognized, but as a butterfly, the colors shimmered with iridescence, and the design was filled out to its full potential. That's how it was with people after the resurrection. You could recognize them, but the transformation was complete.

However, there was something more, something deeper, which connected the Kate of the first life with this radiant beauty. As Hamilton continued to stare at her face, another image came to his mind. It was Kate looking down at him as he lay dying in a hospital bed. This memory, unlike that of their wedding day, was vividly clear. It was a moment etched in his memory forever.

A doctor had just left the room after telling them that it was just a matter of days until death would separate them. Hamilton remembered everything about that moment. He remembered Kate's blue dress and even the angle of the sun shining through the window. She had come to his bed side, taken his scarred hand in hers, held it tight against her bosom, looked into his eyes and said, "I love you Bulldog Hamilton Fry and a stupid little thing like death won't ever change that."

Her face was so different then, but there was something in that wrinkled face that reminded him more of her face now.

"True love," he said out loud.