

# Advent

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## The Light



By  
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## Introduction

I figure I will do one more advent before moving onto something new. I always set out to write 7 stories. This year should have been it, but I drew a black hole last year for inspiration. This year's inspiration happened early fortunately and even though the telling of the story is not assembled the best, I believe it presented a different view; one that portrays the potential of every human being on earth to see spirituality without the guidance of an initiate or teacher, that even though interpreting what this spiritual world is telling us we are receptacles for its experience.

To see a world in a grain of sand,  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
And eternity in an hour.

Wm. Blake: Aquries of Innocence

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## Prologue

For 432,000 years, the earth had been plunged into darkness. It was a selfish darkness; a darkness full of repression and bitterness. Yet light was in the world and was not easily comprehended. There were those gifted with the ability to receive, understand and use the light. They were responsible for leading humanity in the way of the light and bring a chosen few into its mysteries. These initiates and their followers brought light to the world under great resistance.

Greed was rampant and taxation was high. The majority of the world population felt helpless under the great burden placed upon their backs. Personal freedom was repressed. The simple principles of how laws were formed for the “greater good” of humanity became easy prey to a small percentage of individuals who could afford to bend those laws for their benefit. Mankind was imploding in on its self and dangerously close to creating its own extinction.

Then darkness ended and what was once open to an elite few, the light was available to all humanity and humanity knew not how to respond to the new light. Very similar to being locked in a closet then having someone rescue you by throwing the doors open to reveal direct sunlight and being dazzled, almost blinded, you walk into the light uncertain of everything except you are no longer a prisoner of the dark.

All over the world, people walked out of the darkness and into the light yet they could not understand what it was or comprehend what light offered. So used they were to the darkness some would withdraw to find solace of dark places. Others would wander, lost with no direction or calling. The light would cause confusion and make people anxious. Some would want it extinguished, but no matter what the condition of humanity was in, the light had returned.

Chaos will never completely go away, but the promise of harmony is now a reality.



## December 2

It was to be expected. The nights had become long, the days short, the weather cold and miserable. It happened this time every year. Clouds hung in the sky for days, blocking out the sun. Sometimes precipitation would occur, but nothing major would accumulate. High up on the hill, the church steeple glimmered in the streetlight while the rest of the lower village, hidden by the thick abundance maple trees lay in sleeping in the dim evening light.

In the quiet you could hear a dog bark or a mothers yell at her children to come inside. The air was crisp and there was a pungent odor of smoke from the many fires that were burning that night. Lights were visible through the storm covered glass windows of the row houses that lined the village streets, and the parking lots of various stores populated with cars. There were banks and supermarkets, churches and bars... many of the locations emblazoned with small neon signs that declared that they were open that hour. Nearby, a dark park lay in the center of town with statues at each walkway. Benches lined the inner paths but there was nothing very interesting to really attract people to come; the park was there mainly as a place to hold festivals or for older citizens who had nothing better to do than feed the local wildlife or just to sit quietly and reflect.

Quincy was a sleepy town. It had a factory that made mattresses. It had a factory that made textiles which was threatening to close down if stock did not go up. Near each major company was a company bar, devoted to its workers, and a major source of rumors and dis-enchantments. Across from it would be a church. The people of Quincy were very pleasant and hospitable people; Hard working, open to a spontaneous conversation on the corner, making a living on a tight budget but very generous in their devotion.

There were three high schools, three middle schools and four elementary schools. Not like big cities, most of the schools were not hurting for teachers or students. The town also had two hospitals, five banks and had recently been invaded by two big box stores that were threatening to financially impair a number of downtown businesses.

By all appearances, this was hometown: A place where college students visited during vacation and public school students were longing to vacate. Quincy had charm.



## December 3

Macie was walking home from school, her backpack draped over her shoulder heavy with text books and other paraphernalia for her supposedly main focus in her current life. Her saddle shoes pressed against a thin dusting of snow, sending the powder out and away and leaving a bare spot of pavement with each step. She was neither happy nor sad... just kind of “blah”. Nothing important was going on in her head. Her iPod was broken, her music files unplayable. She had a world of homework to do and never enough time to do it in. She wondered why she even bothered. Whatever she did it was never good enough. As she walked, small clouds of vapor streamed from her lips which were quickly eaten by the cold November air around her. Cold tingled in her lungs. She wore no scarf, no gloves, no leggings. Macie acted like it was just another day in September where the leaves were just starting to turn colors and the animals began to prepare for the winter ahead. Her short, jet black hair fluttered gently around her thin sallow face like negative frost on a window. She was not in a hurry to get home.

The town streets were in their usual busy daytime status. “A lot of people going to nowhere for nothing” she thought idly. She came to an intersection where the light was red for crossing, however looking slightly to the left she stepped off the curb and into traffic in such altruistic faith that she would not be hit when in truth she did not really care. Cars slowed. Some stopped. One honked in annoyance, but whizzed by her the moment she was out of the damage path. Macie passed a number of local shops already lit with Christmas decorations and holiday sale signs. She hated this day. It was the Monday after Thanksgiving, or what many retailers called “Cyber Monday”.

“Cyber” she snuffed. As if they had any websites that marked any kind of global presence in Quincy. “Follow the money” she thought in contempt, “They won’t make any difference”. Turning left at the Covert Pharmacy, she headed her way into the residential district where the majority of houses were still absent of Christmas. She walked silently past front yards sporting wrought iron, picket fences and tall boxwood hedges. Many of the mail boxes were embedded in brick tombs to prevent them from being knocked off their post during Halloween. Macie conjured up a song in her head from “Tempest”, a local group that managed to publish one song before they died a horrible ratings death on national radio. She had been friends with the bass player but when the group became more popular, she decided it was better to stop before she got labeled a “groupie”. Problem was, she really didn’t care and just as quickly as it came into her head, it was replaced by something else.



## December 4

Home. It wasn’t a big house, but not in any respect small. Of course it is all relative to your situation, but for Macie, it was not something she wanted to live in anyways. Her parents told her how to live, what she could do with her room, what she could eat in the house, what she could watch on the TV, even where she could visit on the internet. Internet. Damn, they were still using DSL while everyone else had moved over to cable. It was embarrassing. But her dad worked for the company that provided their access, so they got it for free, and being an administrator, he knew how to filter her access so she couldn’t do ANYTHING she wanted. However, she could visit some social network sites and post pictures she took with her little digital camera and make crude comments to other friends.

These were all things that made her life tolerable. Seeing they didn’t have cable, they got local TV listings from over-air antennae which was totally unacceptable and for the most part not worth watching. She had a cell phone, but it had nothing her classmates bragged about. It didn’t even have a camera, but she could at least receive messages from her peers and watch the ridiculous videos that were sent directly to her account. She had a great deal of resentment for her parents who just seemed to not think technology or trends were important enough to buy into them. Well, that was not entirely true: They gave her a new iMac for her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday last year which was a total elation. Even though things were not fast enough internet wise, she was able to do homework, chat and email which was enough at this time. You would only be able to get Macie to admit things were actually pretty good if you asked her directly, but for the most part she behaved pretty much like your average sophomore.

“Can you pullleese clean your bathroom tonight?” her mother Gloria shouted as Macie headed up the stairs to her room, “It’s starting to stink. I can tell it from the kitchen”

At first Macie did not answer, instead opting to head towards her room and close the door. Throwing her backpack on her bed, she styled in place and flipped on the power to her iMac. Logging on, she pulled up her music list and hit play. Bomp bomp bomp.

Music filled the room from the little orbital speakers. In traditional fashion, she brought up her email first, then a web browser in which she hit her favorite social website to check for new posts, all the while pulling at the corners of her hair and absently flipping it around her index finger. She was about to make a remark to someone online when her bedroom door opened and the slender body of her mother came to rest as a dark shadow in a rectangular frame of light.



## December 5

Macie's mother was once young and beautiful. You could see it in Macie. She had a strong jaw but a soft chin; large doe-like eyes of azure; cheeks that could flush white or red depending on her mood that existed on skin of snow white dappled with variously sized freckles. Gloria had once fiery red hair, but unlike most gingers it was straight with a slight wave the longer it went and it fell annoyingly into her eyes if not tended to. Macie had some of these features, but she took more after her father. However, Gloria had lost most of her beauty working as a seamstress in the mattress factory. Her hands were worn and the lower portion of her body displayed the results of sitting for hours in front of an industrial overlock sewing machine. Her azure eyes were now distorted behind a pair of wire frame glasses and the marks of concentration ran across her forehead making her appearance a little apprehensive. She was not a woman to be argued with when she wanted something from you, and bullying even though not a trait she carried with her at birth was now a suitable tool to get things done.

Bracing herself to be yelled at, Macie withdrew into herself at first, looking attentively at her mother but not giving her much room in her head. However, nothing came. A moment later the figure withdrew from the doorway, shadow retreating double time into the darkness. Macie stood up and crossed to the door. There was no one in the hall. Returning to her room she was about to close the door when she second thought her move, turned back and went down the hall the bathroom was located.

“What is she going on about... it doesn’t smell...” Macie thought, “THAT bad”. The problem was she had to share it with a younger brother who lived in favor in the house because he played soccer. There were numerous trophies in the living room and team pictures on the wall where the stairwell ascended. She actually liked her brother for the most part, but just like everything else she did not put a lot of work into showing it. Besides, if cleaning the bathroom, vacuuming every now and then, keeping her room in order and helping out with the occasional kitchen duties if they had guests that night seemed a pretty damn good deal to her. She opened the cabinet under the sink, put on a pair of rubber gloves, then put her elbows to work cleaning the most visible parts of the bathroom. Once done, she went back down the hall and descended the stairs. “Bathroom’s done” she announced, crossing to the refrigerator.

Her mother turned. “And what do I owe to this occasion?”

Pulling out a jug of milk, Macie turned to her mother. “I said the bathroom is clean”

An odd silence ensued.

“You did ask me, right?” Macie asked.

“I mentioned something yesterday that it had to be done by the end of the week, but I didn’t expect you to do it so soon. Thank you!”

“I mean, you did ask me when I came home right? You said it was starting to stink.” Macie said, “You did come to my door and give me that “do it now” glare, right?”

“What are you talking about Mace? All I remember is you coming in and heading up to your room like you do every day when you come home.” Gloria said recalling the arrival of her daughter, “and I did no such thing as go up to your room.” Macie crossed to the counter where she pulled down a plastic cup and filled it with milk. “Huh” she grunted. Putting the milk jug back in the fridge, she went back upstairs.



## December 6

That night when Macie went to sleep, she dreamed.

The whole town was awake and standing outside the doors to the buildings they occupied. They seemed to be waiting for something. Macie wandered down the street. Many of the neighbors were unknown to her but they all stood expectantly outside. Some out on the sidewalk, some just outside the door, families stood together. She walked on. Approaching the city cemetery, she was aware that there were watchful eyes peering into the darkness. The eyes were full of light, but not like the kind of light you would see from a flashlight, but a pale light, a ghostly luminescent light that had no grounding. There were hundreds of lights. Macie found that there was no fear when she looked at the illuminated masses as one would pass strangers in the street. They were not threatening. They seemed pensive, waiting for something that they could not guess.

Macie walked on. She walked Main Street. The stores were abandoned and vacant and dark. Life did not exist here. Proceeding along Main, she turned at Church and followed the winding road slowly north and up. As she climbed, she began to be aware of a light that was not corporeal, but when she looked up and at the Church that was atop the hill, the light did not emanate from that... no, it was behind the church. The grove of trees that flanked her on the left and right were bare of leaves and looked like spider webs in the strange light. She skirted the left of the church with its high single spire and square corners. There was another smaller grave yard to the south of the building, all with eyes watching her as she silently passed them by.

She walked on, past the church and down the slope to the other side. Finding her way into the trees the light seemed to softly encompass her. She was made aware of movement inside this light, movement without any sign of bodies or life, but the movement had no malice to it. To the contrary, it was a warm light, and it seemed good. Macie stood still, closed her eyes and found that even with eyes shut the light still moved around her. Eventually, one of the lights came forward. It was followed by a darker light, the brighter of the two was dazzling with gold and seemed to rain its light on and around Macie. She lifted her hands and the light filled them.

There was a knock. She woke with a start. Looking at the clock she realized there was no way she was going to make it to school in time. Her mother Gloria peered into the darkened room.

“I’m late too” she said through the crack, “I didn’t want to get out of bed. I had the most extraordinary dream! But it will have to wait. Get dressed, I’ll drive you.”

Macie shrugged the covers off and proceeded to dress herself. She grabbed her shoes, but upon lifting them they jingled. She tipped the left shoe and 3 gold coins fell into her palm.



## December 7

In the days to follow there was quite a list of speculations as to why so many people were “gifted” with solid gold coins ranging from them being pure evil awaiting a time in which possess its owner to the thought that the persons in possession of such coins conspired together to rob some secret treasure room. The general idea was that these all had to be stolen. The other side to this was the mere fact that gold was so outrageously expensive there was no single place in the city of Quincy that could even attempt to cash out any of the coins that were “found”. There was already an investigation underway by the F.B.I., local law enforcement, the Treasury department and the C.I.A. Even Homeland security was involved. At first there was a massive attempt to hush up the entire event, but unfortunately Quincy was not the only city involved. Reports were flooding in from remote locations all over the globe; even places of total poverty such as Uganda or rural districts in the foot hills of Tibet or in the ice wastelands of Siberia. The miracle could not pass unnoticed, and seeing that the distribution was worldwide this indeed was a lot of gold!

But for Macie, who always believed nothing was free, the coins were highly suspect. At first, she did not share her new found wealth with anyone in the family. Her brother did not get any, nor did her dad or mom. The morning of the find no one else in the family was the wiser as to what had just occurred. Not wishing to raise suspicions, she hid the coins in her underwear drawer tied up in a red scarf, tight enough to keep the coins from clattering together. She did not bother with any conversations as she breezed through the kitchen, nabbing a couple pieces of toast off the table amidst protest from her mom that “Breakfast was the most important meal of the day”.

“Blaablaablaa” she thought heading out the kitchen door and into the cold November air. Digging her hands deep inside the black leather bomber jacket, she walked stiffly but quickly down the street, teeth chattering from time to time as the wind hit her cheeks. The walk to school was not a long one, and 15 minutes later she was entering through large metal doors placed between the tall concrete columns of the Stephen J. Metts High School. Not free from the penetrating cold, she continued her stiff walk up to the second floor where the 10<sup>th</sup> grade hall was located and unlocked her locker. Just four lockers down a group of girls were gathered together in a close knot and as they murmured excitedly amongst themselves you could hear the clink of metal.



## December 8

The bell rang for lunch and classrooms emptied into the halls. Inside the cafeteria Macie found just how stupid her classmates were: A girl at the front of the line was using a gold coin to buy food. Big mistake. The girl opened her snap-wallet and pulled the gold out and handed it to the cashier, who stared at her blankly.

“There ain’t no way I can even figure out what kind of change to make for THAT” the rather large lady said as she inspected the piece, “where the hell you getting this kinda money anyways?” A boy behind her snickered, and looking over her shoulder realized what she was doing, gave her an annoyed shove. “Buy lunch? With that???” he said loudly so all in line would pay attention. He reached over and grabbed the gold from the cashier and held it up in the air. “I think Davy Jones is looking for you.... AND this!” he yelled in delight.

There were some who laughed. One boy yelled “PIRATES!”, others murmured “what the f\_\_\_\_\_”, but a few actually said “I got one like that”. A tall thin boy said he had three. As everything came to a halt in the line a security officer noticed the hold up and went to investigate. Not knowing any procedure for this, he pulled the girl from the line, grabbed the coin from the boy and guided the girl out of the cafeteria. Macie, who was pretty far back gave up on her ambitions for anything to eat and followed the retreat of the officer and his catch out into the hallway.

“Where did you get this???” he barked. By now the girl was hysterical and did not answer. The officer turned the coin over in his hands and felt its weight. “This is real gold, isn’t it?” he said bluntly, “Ohhh kay, calm down. Didn’t mean to upset you, but this is serious stuff. Where did you get this?” Still blubbering, the girl could not answer him. Fixing his eyes on her for what seemed like 2 minutes – which seemed like eternity to Macie, he finally signed resolutely and said “Come along with me. We need to call your parents”. She looked up at him in terror, mascara making trails down her overly blushed

cheeks. “Am I going to jail?” she whimpered, “I didn’t do anything wrong... I found these... found them in the shoes I was going to wear the day I found them!” Her voice trembled with panic.

Macie watched it all from the cafeteria doors with great curiosity. However, she did not step in and qualify the girls’ story with her own. She was apprehensive. She did not know if the officer would tote her to the principal’s office as well. She did feel guilt as she watched them head down the hall and she thought “Well, she’s right you know...”



## December 9

“My question is, where did they come from?” Gloria said chopping up carrots to go into her vegetable stock, “Well, not just that... why didn’t everyone get them? How was that chosen?”

There was no talking about anything else in the house. Macie concluded her mom’s obsession with the questions revolving around the gold was simply that Gloria was resentful she didn’t get any. Actually, Macie was convinced the whole thing was evil yet she wasn’t willing to expose her own part in this puzzle. Steam wafted from the large open pot where a couple of chicken breasts were boiling along with some cut up potatoes, onions, celery, parsley and other herbs that Gloria just threw in and kept sampling until she was satisfied. Earlier she had thrown a couple loaves of bread dough in the oven and the kitchen smelled splendid. It was the unchallenged heart of the house, the kitchen was. Everybody did everything in there from folding clothes to doing homework to sometimes even dancing. The high ceiling only had on light suspended from it with a large metal shade that at night hid most anything above it, included cobwebs. The cabinets were old, painted over lord knows how many times with various colors and where the hinges now resisted doing anything a hinge was supposed to do.

The back door opened and a cold blast of air entered the kitchen along with her father Daniel and younger brother Zak who was toting a large duffle bag sporting a Nike logo emblazoned on the side. As he entered the kitchen he bowled his bag into the far corner and went straight to the fridge. Daniel plopped his backpack on the table and went over to smell what was cooking.

“Soup and grilled sandwiches?” he asked, looking over to the side where a block of cheese was sitting out along with small plastic bag of thick cut ham. “Mmmmmm. I love a frugal meal!” He poked at the chicken part floating in the pot and grabbed a fork. Carefully he pierced the top and peeled the skin off the piece of breast and curled it up on the fork, shaking some salt on the top.

“Ok, mister banker man” Gloria said pushing his out of the way, “I gotta know. You said yesterday that people were trying to cash gold out at the bank. What was the banks response?”

Daniel slurped down the hot piece of skin, in which he exploded with air as it was really too hot to eat. “Ish....” he took a minute holding up a single finger on his left hand, “It’s been...” He took another few gulp of air trying to cool the scalding in his mouth. “They turned it over to the local shops that advertise people to turn in their gold or invest it. I don’t think they were prepared for the flood they were about to receive though. They do not have the resources to handle such a flood. But the bank president said we were not in the business of trading gold. As a matter of fact, there is no one in this city prepared to handle gold for cash.”

He paused. “I kinda feel sorry for them. The gold is real. All the coins that have been examined are pure. I don’t even think Fort Knox has what we have here in this location at the moment.” Daniel went to the refrigerator, grabbed a Yuengling and headed into the living room.





## December 10

A different kind of Christmas was in the air. Suddenly, Macie found that shopping for friends or family, or even herself was becoming extraordinarily expensive. She fancied a new wallet for her brother. It had the Amsterdam Ajax logo on it but it turned out to be over eighty dollars. Who would ever buy a heavy nylon wallet made in China for that price? She wandered over to the cosmetic counters and looked over the perfumes. She picked up a bottle that she knew her mother was fond of and dabbed a drop on her wrist, then rubbed her wrists together as she had seen actresses do in old movies. It wasn't all that offensive, of course her mother never only wore just a fragrance. Gloria had an odd taste in toothpaste which had the scent of cloves, plus her choice in deodorant also didn't help the robustness of the perfume work as it should. The bottle was tiny, but when she turned it over and saw it was going for nearly \$200, she took a deep breath in and quickly put the bottle down as if trying to return stolen merchandise to the shelf. As she wandered the store, she had many such "what the f\_\_\_\_" moments and wondered how anyone would be able to afford anything this Christmas.

"I'd do better at a Buck Saver" she thought.

She headed back into the mall through the millenary section, noticing there was not a bra on sale less than forty dollars. Entering back on the second level of the rather large and elaborate mall where they spared no expense making it look festive, Macie looked more closely at all the various stores. Even the mall stands where you could find booths that sold phone accessories, fake hair add-ons, sunglasses and the like seemed obviously set to profit more money than recollected in previous year. Passing a stall where they sold cheap watches, Macie was taken off guard to see a simple digital watch going for ninety dollars instead of what it was worth, a meager twelve. The display even advertised them as made in China.

"Like everything else in this mall" she muttered, "I can't imagine what something that comes from Germany or even made in the USA would cost." Macie found this out soon enough. Picking up a nice watch with a chronometer made in Switzerland and gawked: \$800. "We have entered a new era of greed" she thought, "I may not be able to buy anyone anything!"



## December 11

"What is the connection?" Gloria said in annoyance into the handset, "There is no rhyme or reason to who got the coins, and I think that is what is confusing the global population." She set the phone to speaker and continued applying makeup to her face.

"I wouldn't mind though if someone dropped a few coins in my purse" said a female voice, "I may not have any children to buy presents for, but I wouldn't say no to a new car... nothing big, maybe a simple Tesla model S or Maserati?" at which point the voice gave a cackle.

"I'd be afraid to have that much money Shel", pursing her lips together to even out the line of lipstick she had applied, "But I will say this, it would be nice to not have to work every night, or at least find something that is more of what I wanted before I became a mom. Oh, I would like to fix my vision so I didn't have to wear these damn glasses." She pulled a kleenex from the box and put it to her mouth.

"I'd like my car idea, and a nicer house. After that I guess I could give the rest to charities as a write off. You may have a point about having too much money. I guess I could just give it all over to Allen and let him invest it. My thinking though is that with all this gold floating around the world, we haven't seen the worst or the best in mankind yet."

Gloria pondered this for a moment and ended up that was a safe thing to say. There was no knowing how the recent events would ultimately change the direction humanity was taking. At this time, she too was aware that the price for perishable goods had gone up dynamically over the past week. "How are people that make a limited income going to survive in this?" she thought mildly.

“Shel, I got to go. We’ll chat later, k?” She pressed the hang up button on her phone and left it in the bathroom while she went to the closet to get dressed. The closet was in total disarray but it was mostly her own fault. Daniels side was neatly organized, but then again he was a draftsman for an engineering firm and had to always have clean lines. On her side, disaster. The floor along the wall was littered with unpaired shoes thrown hap-hazardly in heaps, while the top of her bureau had stacks of folded clothes that never made it into drawers, while in the corner was a tall basket that was overflowing with clothes to be laundered. She pulled on a pair of wranglers and a deep green v-neck shirt over which she armed her way into a heavy button down sweater. She pawed through the pile of shoes, picking out bright white running shoe. Looking for its mate, she spread the pile of shoes to either side when she stopped suddenly. There was a clinking sound. The mate to the shoes she was planning to wear had turned on its side and just visible was the outline of a bright gold coin.



## December 12

Macie came home from school and went up to her room as usual. She threw her laden backpack to the bed and flipped on her iMac almost with fearsome resemblance of a lab rat being conditioned to slam a button to get a morsel of food. She quickly fired up Pandora and went to her closet to change. At this time in her life, she was not asked to work so most of her time was, in return for not having to work, spent on studying and getting the best possible grades that were achievable. She turned up the volume and stripped, pulling a terri cloth robe off the closet door hook and headed to the bathroom for a quick shower. Macie was not into anything that would make her time at the high school extended. She hated school with a passion. But even despite herself she had made some solid relationships.

Closing the bathroom door and locking it, she threw her bathrobe on the floor and turned the faucet knobs to bring the water temperature to a nice hot stream before redirecting the flow to the shower head. The room quickly filled with steam. She stepped in and started washing herself. It was a quick shower, and once dry she went back to her room, dressed herself in a pair of baggy sweat pants and an army green shirt and headed down the stair again. Coming to the kitchen entry she stopped. The room was empty but on the table there were three gold coins. Her breath became labored and her pulse quickened. The first thought to hit her was “Oh my f\_\_\_\_\_ God, she found them!”. As a compulsory action, she turned right there in the doorway and sprinted up the stairs. Heading directly to her dresser, she yanked open the top drawer and frantically ran her hand across the bottom of the drawer. Her hand hit something heavy. She grabbed it immediately and found that the coins were still securely tied up in the red scarf. Her next thought was one of astonishment.

“Who else got coins?”

No one was in the house. She went back to the kitchen and examined the coins. They were exactly the same as the ones that were in her drawer, but why would someone so stupidly leave them in the open where everyone could come across them? Wouldn’t this cause the finder a moment to pause? The back door leading to the outside may be locked, but there where windows and someone could see for themselves what was in the house. Macie gathered up the coins and went back to her bedroom and added them to the coins she already had. This was a terrible find. One she had no answers for and one she wish she had no prior knowledge.



## December 13

Macie opened her eyes. Every edge in the room, every object hard or soft had gently warm ripples of an ethereal gold light running along them but her eyes went to the dresser. The top drawer was glowing. She got out from under her multiple blankets and a thick comforter but she was not cold in the least. Silently she crossed over to the dresser and pulled the drawer open. Everything in it had a golden glow around it. “How odd” she thought as she started pushing her millenary around until she had uncovered her red scarf, which was no longer red and pulled out all the coins and unwrapped them from her knot. They were warm to the touch, and the moment they were in her hand she was aware of movement around her that seemed very human. She turned around just as she heard a door open and a woman stepped inside. She was in a long gown and her head was shining as brite as the coins in Macies hands.

“Shhhhhhh.” The voice sounded familiar.

“Mom?”

The woman crossed quietly to Macie. “What’s going on?” she asked, “you are all gold, and your face... your face is like a gold moon.”

“Your face is gold too, but I think something important is happening tonight. Remember telling that dream you had? The one where you wandered over Church Hill? I had a very similar dream, and at the end of it light was poured into my hands, but for me that was all that happened until yesterday. I need to ask you: Did you find something in your shoes that morning?”

Macie looked down at her hands, then lifted them up, offering all six coins to her mom.

“Ahh.” Gloria said, “I wondered where those coins went. I’m glad you found them. I didn’t want to bring them up yet to anyone for fear they might think me crazy. However, seeing your brother or father didn’t ask about them, I knew they didn’t have them.” She took one of the bright coins and turned it over in her hands. “Have you figured out how it was we ended up with these?”

“No!” Said Macie “I was scared. They weren’t mine! I didn’t know where they came from!” She looked down into hands then back up to her mother who was smiling serenely. “I found mine yesterday, but I think they were there since the sixth. I just hadn’t found them yet!” She nearly giggled girlishly as if some childhood silent memory struck her.

As they stood there, the door opened wider, and a long procession of spectral beings being entered the room singing softly a pleasant but unfamiliar song. At the head of the procession was a tall slender figure who had long flowing hair and floating just inches above her head were what looked like tiny sprites that flickered and dodged each other as the lead figure moved. Halting by the bed, another one of the figures passed something to her and she promptly slid it under the bed pillow at the foot of the headboard. Moments passed. The procession did not move. Then the lead seemed to float over the bed to the other side and the procession moved out of the room. Gloria’s eye were wide and twinkling with wonder, but she quietly went out of the room to see where the light was going.

Left alone, Macie wrapped the 5 coins back in the scarf and returned them untied to her drawer. She went back to her bed with the intentions of finding out what was left under her pillow, but by the time she arrived the thought was already gone. She slid quietly back under her warm blankets. The golden lights faded. Macie fell into a deep restful sleep.



## December 14

There was a lot to talk about over the next few days. Evidently no one found anything under their pillows but it would appear everyone had some strange phantom dream that they were visited the morning of the thirteenth. However, for Macie and Gloria, there were many glances exchanged during breakfast that did not necessarily mean “we have a secret” but more “should we talk about this with them?”

“There’s a lot of speculation as to how many people got gold, you know that? But no one has a barn owl fart of a notion as to why...” Dan stated from behind his laptop, which was parked at the end of the kitchen table as it was every morning during breakfast. Seemed everyone sitting at the table was absorbed in some kind of cyber activity either with phone or computer. Zak was googling something on his phone, while Macie was texting a friend. The only one really listening was the one scraping eggs being heated in a pan with a large spoon and monitoring the progress of a toaster full of corn muffins.

“You have approximately one quarter of the population reporting in that they got these.... Mystery coins. That they all got three each, and each coin a little better than one troy ounce. There are no markings on these coins so no one can validate the

origin. Now, understand, this just appears on top of what the world already has processes and not processed.” He pulled up Google and typed “Price of gold troy ounce”. “Ok, cost of gold at this time is a phenominal: One thousand seven hundred and seventy seven dollars per ounce. That means...” Dan bent over his laptop and tapped in some numbers.

“Global population is about seven billion; one quarter that is.... One point seven five billion people got coins. A coin is one point seven k, multiply that by three then by the one point seven....”

Macie had stopped texting as her mother slid a plate of eggs in front of her and her fathers laptop. Zak was almost done with his plate before their father finished his calculations.

“Well, it’s not as outrageous as the national debt, but it’s substantial: Nearly a trillion dollars, American value.” At this conclusion, he snapped the lid of the laptop over the keyboard and pushed it to the side, drawing up his plat and grabbing a corn cake to butter.

“Dad” Macie started, “But no one knows where it came from. Is it legal to use?”

“Don’t be an dork, Mace...” Zak chimed in, “gold is gold whether you dig it up in your back yard or found on the street. Geeze, it’s unclaimed freight! Thing I’d like to know is why I didn’t get any.” Pushing his chair back and grabbing his duffle bag, he got up and went to the door. “You coming” he said staring expectantly at his sister.



## December 15

Across the street someone was putting up lights. This made Macie stop. “Their Jewish.” She thought to herself, but there he was, old man Erenfeld, whistling into the cold December air, his ladder pressed firmly against the front porch roof hanging light. This has never happened before. It wasn’t even Hanukah anymore. She stood there for a moment watching him but became aware that more and more houses along the street seemed more “festive”, something she in her usual mood of pathos had not been noticed. She decided to cross the street and standing in front of the house, she called out.

“Mr. Erenfeld! The lights look wonderful!”

The old man craned his neck to see where the voice was coming from. “Ah... Marcie am I right?” he said in a strong wheezy dialect. “It’s Macie, Mr. Erenfeld! Just drop the R and we would have it right.” Erenfeld waved his hand in acknowledgement and went back to focusing on this next light clip.

“Isn’t Hanukah over now?” she said loudly. Again, Mr. Erenfeld stopped and tried to look with more intent at his conversationalist, but his glove lost its grip and quickly wrapped his arms around the short extension ladder he had climbed. Not wishing to be impolite, he descended the steps and pulled his thick tweed coat around his neck.

“Yes, indeed young lady” he rasped, “but it doesn’t mean lights are just part of a festival!” He waddled over to her and stood beside her and examined his work. “I do think one string will do though for the eaves, and maybe one for the big front window, but it will take a lot more to do the railing” He looked at here inquiringly. “Should I not do this?”

“No!” Macie blurted out emphatically, then taking it back a notch, “I just thought Jews didn’t normally do this kinda stuff.”

“We don’t usually, but I’m just a crazy old man I guess,” he said in a steady voice, “But for some reason, recently...” He leaned into Macie and said in a slyly “this year I feel like lights! Besides, I think the wife might find the change... er, refreshing?” He started moving forward. “Do you need help? I mean, up on a ladder at your age wouldn’t be what a doctor would recommend!”

“Ehh! What do dey know? Exactly. Dey know nothing if they don’t see it!”

“Well, why don’t you work on the window and rail, I think I’m probably ok for ladder climbing.” Mr. Erenfeld lowered his head so he could look at Macie over his thick, black glasses. Giving her a hard measuring stare, he turned and with a wave of his hand, bid her to follow.



## December 16

Lights had gone up everywhere. They many of them weren’t eve colored lights, and their deployment sometimes not thought out very well. After Mr. Erenfeld had finally collapsed his small extension ladder, the house could have been assumed to a house of Christians, but Macie found it very humerous that the old man had said at the end “I mean, you don’t have to be religious to like lights” with his raspy voice, “Although that red fat man at the corner ... oi-vey!” He shook his hand in the air in a farwell and slowly went up the porch stairs. He paused at the landing.

“Thank you, young lady for helping an old man” he rasped gratefully. Macie gave him a warm smile that was so happy it almost twinkled like a light its self. She did walk down the street to where the Santa Balloon was anchored to the ground, wobbling slightly in the wind, one bright light digested internally so you could see him in the dark. It was, in her opinion, ugly and had no joy or spirit of the season to her. However, she knew this family and knew the two young girls that lived there, and she could only guess at their excitement when their dad bought the santa box out of the basement and started steaking it to the frozen turf of Quincy. The fat air filled elf couldn’t rival most of the houses around it, and the internal light of the balloon couldn’t compete with the lights that decorated almost every house and tree around it.

Some of these lights were a little overdone. Macie never understood the need for people to compete during the winter festivals by out-doing their neighbor. She crossed the street and made her way back to the house. The old 4 floor duplex with grey painted brick and white trim, porch and columns was dark on one side, and a small sign was stuck in the small patch of land in the front read “For Rent or Lease”. They had no put up any lights on their house. Daniel wasn’t a big Christmas enthusiast, but he would go through the motions of a tree each year to appease the traditional expectations of the family.

When Macie entered the vestibule and hung her bomber jacket on a peg to the right, she saw there were people sitting around the table in the kitchen. She entered the house from the foyer and proceeded to the back where the kitchen was illuminated by the huge hanging light bleached the walls. Her father Daniel and Zack were sitting at one side, where Gloria was sitting across from them. And there, in the middle was one of her gold coins. All heads turned towards her when she came through the hall.



## December 17

“Mace, bring down your stash” Gloria asked quietly. A look of reticence blew like a cloud across Macies face, but she turned and headed up the stairs. As she climbed, she could hear the voices in the kitchen. Some sounded accusing, some sounded pleading, but it did not promise to be a good confrontation when she returned. Going to her room, she pulled on the handle of her top drawer and removed the scarf and its content. Not bothering to push the drawer back in, she headed back downstairs. There was a cold she had not felt in a long time. It was like she was about to be scolded like she did one time for smoking pot in the basement. She sure as hell caught the wrath of her parent that night, but she rolled with it simply because she had caught traces of the weed on coats or sweaters at one point of another from their wardrobe. She jumped the last two stairs with a bump on the landing. Straightening up, she turned back down the hall by the stairs to the kitchen. Laying the scarf on the table, she pulled the fabric and the contents fell out to joined the other coin.

Again, that silence consumed the room. Macie stared from one face to another inquiringly. “Did mom not tell you?” she said almost in a whisper.

“No” Daniel replied not looking at her, “no, she didn’t.” His eyes shot back to his wife in a way that could only be translated as betrayal. “Maybe it slipped... her mind?” He reached over and gathered the coins into a single stack and held them for a moment in the palm of his hand, feeling the weight of the warm metal.

“Dan...” Gloria started to say, but withdrew as her husband held up his index finger in a sign that she should stop right there. He turned his attention to Macie.

“Your mother says you got your coins days ago, is that correct?” Macie nodded. “And you never bothered to tell us of this event?” Macie nodded again. Dan leaned back in his chair and stared dramatically into the empty space of the kitchen above the table. Macie’s eyes shifted to her mother who made a quick glance at the free chair next to her. Macie obediently walked over and sat down. Zack glowered at the gold in his father’s hand, his face already consumed with thoughts on how this opportunity was going to forward his career. There were no lines of caution or fear in his face; his jaw was set and cold... nothing of the respect or awe of just the gold being there at all.

Dan cleared his throat dramatically to call on everyone’s attention.

“I really am unsure how to proceed with this.” He stated. “There was a time when nothing like this would be left in the dark for even ten minutes but I don’t sense any ill intentions either.”

Zack stared at his father. “Ummmm... This shit represent a huge amount of money, man! They weren’t going to share it with us, short and simple.”

“Shuddup!” glowered Macie, “If you haven’t been watching TV news or the paper, the gold hasn’t exactly had a huge amount of positive impact on the people anywhere.”

“Oh yeeeeeeaaaah!” Zack barked back sarcastically, “I’m sure the gold stores that have popped up are really hurting.”

Macie’s eyes narrowed and bore into her brother. “You don’t get it you lil dipshit! Maybe you didn’t get gold simply because that is the only thing your stupid little narrow mind can come up with! You think mom and I actually asked for these damn things? As you can see they have become more of an illness for people than a remedy. Jeeze... I even think giving this to charities would pollute the organizations.” She slouched back in the chair and crossed her arms across her chest. “and anyways, it feels more like a test... of character. The coins scare me. Nothing comes without a cost.”

All eyes were on here. She felt uncomfortable, but the look her father had on his face was a little sad but understanding some of the demons waging in his daughters head, he put a coin in back on the table and slid it to where it came to rest in front of Macie. “So, as your mother said, these coins came to you... in your shoes?”



## December 18

Daniel had an office with a door. It had his name on it. He had a good sized desk, a very comfortable chair with a couple of leather chairs sitting at the front of the desk. The walls weren’t paneled, but with the wainscoting hitting about 5’ up on the wall it was just as impressive. It was a sparse office though; Daniel loved clean lines. He was convinced that was part of this job. Look simple, stylish but at a very high consideration price. Daniel was the number cruncher organizer, that person that makes sure a bank is making money at minimal risk. He didn’t want a secretary... well, actually he did but his boss thought he could do with just pooling one secretary that took care of 4 rather, in his opinion, whiney executives. However, he only used the secretary in a pinch and preferred a more personal signature on all his dealing with the bank.

Gold? The bank would offer to store your gold in a deposit box but that was about it. Gold. Wasn't the entire economy based on gold? Or was it something no longer something tangible? There were now several generations that have never seen a silver certificate, something you could actually was a voucher for the precious metal. Gold at that time was not even as expensive as platinum, but gold had something wonderful about its luster, something almost of the human character.

And gold was certainly on everyone's minds lately. As Daniel had studied the papers like the Wall Street Journal, he began to see that there were actually 3 parts to the gold distribution: 1. At this time there was no relationship between who got gold and who did; 2. That all the recipients became holders of three coins; 3. For some odd reason, most people that received coins developed a real interest in doing something with their gold only about 4 days ago.

It was true. It would appear that anyone that was gifted with three coins did not simply want to buy things with it. Initially, there was a huge flurry of people who only wanted to sell the coins. This was short lived. As the days progressed into week, there was a gradual increase of people that came forth saying that they had coins but did not know what to do with them or were afraid to bring it out in the open. Only recently many of them wanted to find charities to give them to, or homeless people. The chaos was slowly subsiding, and interest in helping others was on the rise.

"I don't think this is going to benefit the bank as much as predicted" Daniel thought as he read through articles on the various news sites on the internet, "but I think this is good!"



## December 19

Macie answered the door but she wish she didn't. The two clean cut gentlemen in clean, impeccable grey suits turned out to have F.B.I. badges. She had known that many government departments had been called in to investigate the flow of gold, but seeing she never told anyone she felt like a kid holding a dime bag of weed. When she opened the door, she stood there for what seemed like minutes gawking at them as they presented credentials and handed out prepackaged lines to make their interests known. In an act of complete irresponsibility, she first turned around and took a few steps up the stairs, yelling for her mom.

"What do they want, Mace?" was the all unexpected response.

She went back down the stairs into the vestibule. "Umm, what is it you want?"

"We need to discuss with you a situation revolving around some gold coins." Said a tall, thin man in what seemed like a tone that already assumed the family was holding something of this nature.

Going back to the stairs, she yelled "They want to ask us about gold coins mom."

"What gold coins?" Gloria responded from an invisible location

Macie went back to the door and in a somewhat dour voice said: "My mom wants to know what coins you are talking about." The two FBI men stared at each other, then the dark skinned one finally spoke: "Miss. We already know you have in your possession an unknown amount of property that the state is in interest of. We have no intentions of taking said property away but we do have questions that we need to ask if you are willing."

It was a pensive moment of silence that followed. Macie went back to the stairs but before she could broadcast her announcement, she heard her mother say "I'll be down, but let them know we have no idea what they are talking about!" Macie glanced back at the agents on the porch and saw they had already understood the situation and crossed their hands in front of them in a patient gesture. Eventually, Gloria, dressed in a white velour robe drifted down the stair and stopped at the door. Looking curiously at the agents she flatly asked "Yes?"

“Mame, we are inquiring local residents to explain the appearance of certain gold coins that have flooded that market and would like to ask where you came upon your coins.” The dark skinned FBI agent spoke as if reading from a cue card. “I still don’t know what gold coins we have that you are interested in.” Gloria said, “How did you even guess we have these coins because we sure as shit don’t know.” Macie’s eyes widened in surprise when she heard her mom said this. Not willing to be in the middle of the government and her mother, she backed out and quickly stepped up the stairs to her room.

“We have become aware that this house has the very same gold coins that started appearing on the early mornings of the sixth of December this year. We have no intentions of taking your property, mame, but we would like to ask you some questions if you would be so kind”

“They’re seeking” thought Gloria, “They don’t really know!”

“I’m sorry, but there is nothing here that you are looking for.” Gloria answered. “You have the wrong house. Maybe you will have better luck next door.” And with that, she closed the front door and went back upstairs.



## December 20

Daniel tapped his pen on the kitchen table. It was early and no one else was awake and the house was dark. Illuminated by the LCD on his laptop, he was reading the exchange section on Wall Street Journal and as he watched the price of gold drop, the only thing on his mind that morning was to sell the coins. Maybe purchase bonds or play the stock... naa, there were only a few sure shot investments but at the buy in cost the return would take forever to build any equity.

There was a faint smell of hot water boiling but it was dominated by the one cup of mocha-java that remained in Daniels cup. Over to the side was a shadow of a red cereal box, a faint imprint of a cartoon ship captain on the side, next to it a bowl with a spoon sticking out of it but it is only half eaten. However, the more important thing on the table was a very short stack of coins which seemed to be the focus of this morning’s thoughts of selling. Daniel had intentions of taking some unilateral directions for the use of this gold. Unfortunately, that was all these coins meant to him, gold. The wonder of where they came from and how they came to be escaped him. Searching the various exchange sites, he absently pulled a coin from the stack and began to rub it between his middle finger and thumb which he found surprisingly warm to the touch. They always turned the old furnace down to save on costs. It was about 69 in the kitchen even after heating the kettle.

Daniel found himself distracted. Taking a sip of luke warm coffee he looked at the coin in his palm and to his surprise it was giving off a subtle glow. The other coins were not glowing. He pinched the second coin from the stack and found it started to glow too. Wasting no more time, he grabbed the rest of the stack and just held it. As he suspected, the entire stack was now glowing a warm gold in his hand, and not only were they a-light, they were warm as well. The edges were molten but not hot to handle.

A moment of wonder passed over him but it was quickly interrupted but the snap of a switch. The overhead light, extinguishing the light from the gold. The hallway door was filled with the shape of his wife, Gloria.

“Put those coins back in Macie’s drawer Dan.” She commanded. “Why? These are worth more on the market than they are in there!” Daniel replied. “Put them BACK” the voice commanded again and in that moment, it turned and headed back down the stairway hall.

Daniel’s initial thought was “Huh... no way” but something was stronger than her nag. Snapping the cover of his laptop back over the keyboard he grabbed the coins and navigated the trip back upstairs in the dark... the coins being of no assistance. Pausing at Macies door, he decided to go ahead and return them to the top drawer of her dresser after which he headed to the master bedroom where he recognized the soft breathing of his wife in the bed.

Knowing he would be up in fourtyfive minutes, he slid in next to Gloria and spooned her.



“I put them back” he said in her ear thinking she was still asleep. Gloria stirred. Pulling his hand under her side she said “What?”



## December 21

The verdicts were not all in. Even now, no one could explain the gold and who got it. Some theologians argued that the gold a divine gift from god, some said it was from satan, some said it was mana, others said it was a plot to destroy organized religion. The economist swore it was a means to bring the global market to its knees, while conspiracy theorist declared it was a government plot to overturn regimes. Psychology called it a cruel prank to pray on the insecurities of the majority and the medical profession just kept their thoughts to themselves hoping it would not affect insurance rates too badly. Everyone had an opinion. It was talked about at bars, church, clubs, events, barber and hair salons... every butcher and garbage collector had an opinion.

However, this changed finally when statistics started appearing in the paper. It would appear that gold did not end up in the hands on one denomination or another, one gender or another, one social order. Small town chatter was everywhere. Everyone who did not have coins wanted them, those who did wanted to get rid of them... for a price. Well, that is how it was seen.

What the statistics did reveal was not in its findings, but more those areas that it could not explain. There were certain “100%” categories that were very curious: 1. All surveyed people who were discovered to have valid coins were first born. 2. All surveyed people with valid coins remember having a similar dreams. 3. All surveyed people found valid coins in some kind of footwear. 4. All surveyed people did not show a pattern for one theological belief or another.

However, this was highly disputed around the long lunch tables at the high school. Much to the chagrin of Macie, her brother Zak took full advantage of these findings to bask in her light as long as she was around. Macie had threatened Zak with bodily and property damage if word got out into the public that she was “holding”. In return, Zak followed her wherever and whenever possible. He never fully harassed her, but he was never without some sort of witty remark to put her on edge. However, they were closer to each other than they had been in years. Once Zak realized fully that there was no favoritism involved, he became quite curious to see how she managed to keep her innocent standing and shed off anything rhetorical about the coins... and of course the hope that she would just cash out the damn things and be done with it.

They were walking home. Zak had no practice that afternoon, Macie didn't have friends going in her direction so it just mutually worked out. Conversationally dead, the pair came around the corner and noticed there was a brown Crown Victoria sitting in front of the house where the Erenfelds lived; actually there was movement at the front door. Macie quickened her pace and came to a stop at the curb directly across from the house now burning brightly with exterior lights. Two men in dark over-coats were helping Mr. Erenfeld out the door and down the steps.

“I told you. You don't listen.” He was explaining in his heavy Yiddish accent, “I don't know nothing. I got coins. I found them in my shoes. I didn't sell them. I didn't buy anything with them. What have I done to desoive this kinda reception?” The men in dark coats did not respond. Walking him to the car, they opened the back door. Finally one spoke up: “We won't keep you long Mr. Erenfeld, we just need a better environment to hear your story.”

“Noooo.... you're lying! You probably want to stick needles in me. They all say that. The FBI sticks needles in everyone they haul off. Well, I'm not tellin you nuthin! Nothing, I tell you!”

“Mr. Erenfeld!” screamed Macie making everyone pause and look up for a second. “Mace, what the fuck are you doing?????” said Zak in a horse whisper. Mr. Erenfeld sighed and smiled. “It's ok, Marcie... They SAY they won't hurt me do you believe that? Anyways, if I'm late getting back, be sure Esther knows where I am, she took a nap of all things!”



## December 22

Weather reports predicted a sunny but very cold days ahead with the temperature remaining steadily in the mid to upper 20's, but around midmorning the wind picked up and changed directions from southeast to the north east. Then came a few thin high clouds. The temperature began to fall even further, surpassing the 20 degree mark and into the teens. Then, if you were standing out in a large parking lot you could see it: A slowly advancing line in the sky, the top of the line highlighted by the cold sun but saturated anything under it in a world of darkness. Gust of up to 30 mph rattled the slender birch trees to the point where rather large leaf fortresses could not endure and came crashing to the ground, taking with it some rather upset squirrels.

By afternoon, all the news channels had changed their tone about the oncoming storm, citing that its approach heralded the possibility of heavy snow accumulations and blizzard like conditions. The town of Quincy went into a Storm Warning alert. The road maintenance yards began receiving truck after truck of "cinder", dumping them in huge piles where the plows could access them easily. Vagrants began to work their ways to the 2 public shelters. Four churches brought out their emergency cots and began stewing up vast quantities of soup for the overflow of refugees that would most certainly come looking for shelter. Supermarkets were purged of certain supplies like bottled water, batteries, candles and the likes just in case the storm was angry enough to interrupt power. The more wealthy had pretty well bought up all the small home generators from local home improvement big box stores as were the smaller electric oil radiators. There was an air of concern, even close enough to panic that gripped the inhabitants. This was their first major storm of the year. It would not be the last, but reports were already coming in: Thirteen inches in one hour.

By evening, there was no one on the streets. It had not begun to snow yet, but there was an eerie greenish yellow light that immersed the city as the sun set behind the thick layer of clouds. The wind had lessened, but the gusts were still strong. All eyes were watching as weathermen attempted to explain and predict, but one thing for certain; this storm seemed to cover almost the whole of north America. The front seems to have swept in from upper north west Canada and pushed it way with a steady growth of swirling clouds to the south by southwest, leaving everything behind it concealed. Most meteorologists had their theories, but most of them could not agree on any particular model to follow. At this point, they all conceded: There's going to be snow and a lot of it.

Both Macie and Zack were sitting on the steps leading up to their row house waiting for all this to unfold. Macie had at least three layers of clothes on to protect her from the bitter wind, but she still found herself trembling and chattering. "There's going to be a lot of money to be made digging people out." Zak said from behind a thick green wool scarf wrapped around his neck and lower face. He turned sideways to look at his sister. "Maybe some people on the block will pay with gold?"

The rub was felt. Not even giving him the benefit of a glare, she simply said "A fool and his money, Zak. It would be their...."

And it started. The sky just opened. It wasn't like a few flakes fell to herald the coming of the storm. It came so sudden and did not waste its time. Five minutes later, there was already enough to throw a snow ball.



## December 23

All night long, snow pounded the northern hemisphere. National news was saying the storm had even put down 4 inches of powder in Miami and the keys. Costa Rica reported snow on the beach, which had never happened before, but for the northern reaches, the snow was relentlessly piling up and drifting. It was like someone had whitewashed the planet.

As much as the municipals tried, they could not keep up with the accumulations. Already on the few main access roads that passed through Quincy had been closed. Trucks with huge scoop shaped plows had already sent snow to the side to nearly the

height of a small house. Cars and trucks had pulled off to the sides of the interstate, admitting the futility of trying to make their destinations that night. Thought the densely populated forests on either side of the highway provided some solace, the wind would not and send snow drifting over the tops of many cars. Most radios were now broadcasted emergency information to the people in transit that roads had closed and if they had to pull over to leave their car engines running and wait for assistance.

However, there were many already taking advantage of the huge accumulations to use their snow mobiles to assist people that were stranded, picking drivers and passengers up and transporting them to the closest shelter or motel, according to the wishes of the person who was stranded. By about ten p.m., there was a state of emergency issued for the entire of county.

Helicopters were called in to airlift as many people stranded on roads. There were already indications of people not surviving.

On top of this was the amazing silence that accompanied a heavy fall of snow. A voice may only travel three feet and be lost. The quiet was literally deafening. It was like being shoved in a closet with thick cotton stuffed in your ears. If you had a strong voice, you may be heard for ten feet, but the sound would fail at the eleventh. There were other sides to this though: visibility was pretty much the same unless you had a street light, then you would see the dance of the snowflakes from a distance. Snow also has a definite smell to it. None of this mattered of course if you were one of many stranded on the streets slowly being buried by plows and spreaders.

If you had a warm cozy house, looking out into the night was nothing short of magic. It was a time of a warm fire on the hearth; the smell of cookies being baked in the kitchen by a mother who had learned how to make cookies from her mother; hot chocolate; stringing popcorn and cranberry garland; the lights of the tree softly twinkling in the living room; carols being sung a-capella outside the front door by a troupe of minstrels; mittens and soft scarves; a cozy bed with lots of blankets on it. This is Macie's life. There was nothing hard about it. But that night when she stripped and jumped under her covers for the night having turned off the lights, light was still there. At first she did not recognize it, but as her eyes slowly got used to the dark she found light was in it. She peered over her blankets and realized the light was once again shining from inside the top drawer of her dresser.



## December 24

Gloria opened the door to Macie's room with a look of wonder on her face. She did not have to say anything. What was more amazing to Macie is that in moments, Daniel and Zak's face were visible behind her. Gloria entered the room, drawn by the reflection of the gold light that beamed now from the drawer edges. Looking first to her daughter, then back to the dressed, then back to her daughter again in quick succession, she crossed the room to the bed where she sat down. Slowly Daniel and Zak entered, a little doubtful of what they were doing.

"What is this?" Daniel whispered. All Gloria could do is shake her head, and nod in the direction of the dresser. Rooted to where they were, all eyes were turned in the direction of the light. Macie slid to the side of her bed and pushed herself off the mattress. Going to the window she looked out over the front porch to the ever building snow beyond. She unlatched the top and pulled up on the sash. Snow blew into the room with an arctic blast but Macie stuck her head out into the brittle winter cold and looked down the street.

What she saw was all the Christmas lights that had illuminated the block were no longer lit, it was like something had snuffed them out like candles. There was, however, many houses that had windows in them that were glowing a gold light. Waving for her family to join her at the window, they all stared out into the snow. Zak, who at first wanted to dismiss it all for candles in a blackout began to change his tone. The gold was growing, and the snow was responding as a conductor of light. As they watched, the light bled out into the streets.

Not all houses were hosts to the golden light and were black holes in what would be generalized as a base of light. As time passed, people started entering into the streets, eventually lining the sidewalks. Macie looked around and saw that her mother was exiting the room and heading down the hall. She followed.

"Put your coats on" she heard her say, "it will be cold outside."

Macie followed her mother's advice and pulled her bomber jacket over her shoulders and zipped it up. Grabbing a thick scarf, she followed her mother out into the street. By this time, almost every house was awake, even the ones without any gold light. Macie turned to look at the house again and saw that her bedroom seemed to be a beacon that slowly filled the window where she looked out into the city, and passed through the wall. Zak gasped. Lights of gold moved into the streets bathing the entire neighborhood; the light from each house pausing in front.

The snow stopped. Everything became illuminated. Macie found it amazing how many houses were host still to gold, or at least that was the conclusion she drew because there were six tokens of light lining the front of their house. She side-stepped her way over to her mother, who was staring down the street under the arm of her husband, Daniel. No one needed to say anything, but it would appear everyone that now lined the streets were expecting something more to happen. A sense of anticipation was growing. Gloria expelled a deep breath: "Look, the light is starting to pulsate..."



## December 25

That night all the inhabitants of the little planet could not deny they had experienced something dramatic and that their lives would never be the same. Macie did not see a pulsation as her mother suggested, but she did see movement inside the lights, and the movement seemed to be inflating as if someone were blowing air into a fire. She looked over at Zak, who had a very puzzled expression on his face, then to her father who for some reason seemed to just be taking everything in stride. For Macie though, this was not new, but it was also very different.

The lights were indeed growing, slowly converging with other lights and the light they emitted was growing too. By now the whole city was illuminated. There were no street lights, no emergency lights, nothing that would suggest electricity was being used anywhere. There were no emergency broadcasts, no sirens, no panic, but the people of Quincy had all gathered in the streets this night to bear witness. As time passed into early morning, there was a building tension in the light that was felt by all. No one moved. The light seemed to tighten in on humanity and for a moment in global time, no one breathed.

When the light released, it was an explosion of light that blasted out from the Earth's surface, and with it came the most beautiful music, the most wonderful feeling, and a genuine feeling of a rebirth. The light was no longer just golden, but shards of crimsons, ultramarines, emerald, violets and magentas. For that brief shining moment all of humanity found themselves lifted from the burden of their human form and becoming their own source of light. The elation was immense. They joined together and found they all formed a union with each other, exchanging light and joy.

Then it was over.

Accounts varied as of that night. Some said it was like coming up for air after being submersed in something intangible nearly drowned. Some said the light exploded into the sky and the earth pulsed so brightly it could be seen galaxies away. At the moment of the explosion not a single human on earth had their eyes focused anywhere else than up into the sky, where for that brief moment the celestial bodies were washed of their own personal light.

Macie found herself back, breathing shallow, pulse quickened and sweating lightly under her jacket. She put her hands to her face. It was cold now. She looked around her and saw neighbors slowly retreating to their houses or forming groups to discuss what it was they just were part of. Macie smiled. She knew. She found that the experience was a fresh and alive in her as a morning sunrise. She did not need to explain herself. She did not feel burdened; she had experienced something extraordinarily enlightening. She felt a peace and a quiet she had never had before in her life. For the first time in her life she felt grateful, truly grateful for living, and for her parents, and even for her annoying brother. She did not miss the coins. She never assumed they were hers to begin with. She felt... special. She had been a witness.

The light of gold had gone. The power grid for Quincy came back on line. Street lights flickered on. Stop lights began blinking. There was movement around the neighborhood as people began to resume their lives. Zak took a deep breath but Gloria stood still in contemplation.

"You all right?" came the gentle voice of Macie's father. Gloria stirred as if coming out of a dream. She turned and looked at her daughter and smiled. "I'm good, Dan" she said. "It's cold out here, let's get inside."

Macie followed her family retreat retreat back to the house with her eyes, but then looked back up into the sky. It seemed washed of its glory by the ambient light of the city, but the memory of what had happened was strong in her.

“Damn” she thought, “I hope I wasn’t the only one to see that...”