

Seeing is Believing

By David Radcliff

An Easter reading for one or two readers. Possible entry points for other reader denoted by bold letter at beginning of sentence.

I don't know if you've ever seen anything like it, experienced anything like it—we never had—

Do you know what it's like when everything seems to have gone badly, not at all like it should have gone, and you are left with nothing to hold on to? I think you may have been in a place like this—most of us have, especially when we were young—when we were young and hopeful. **We** believed in things then, we believed in ideas and schemes and impossible dreams. We believed the world was ours to change, that nothing could stand in our way. And we believed in people. That people had the capacity to love and reach and live out their highest ideals.

And then, one day—or perhaps a series of “one-days”—we realized we were mistaken. Things don't change so easily. Carefully planned schemes don't pan out. Dreams don't come true. **And** people—they fail us—perhaps even betray us. That's the real let-down, isn't it? It doesn't matter so much if the dreams or the schemes fail—everyone knows that happens—but when people fail us, leave us—that's when your eyes are opened to the reality of this world. **Or** maybe it's more like our eyes are closed then—closed to the possibilities of working together for something bigger and better. And it's like “the game's over”—and even if you put in another quarter or a roll of quarters or swipe your mom's credit card the game seems to always end the same way...out of time, out of money, out of luck. I think you have been to this place.

I know we were there—exactly there.

Until...

You see, we had let our hopes be raised incredibly high. Everything had gone our way for so long—it was like we could do nothing wrong. The crowds loved us, the kids loved us—maybe it was just my imagination, but it seemed like the birds even loved us—they were always around, singing, circling overhead. It was a magical time—and we thought we were invincible—**yes**, that's what we thought. I'll bet you've been there too—a time when nothing could stand in your way. And you want to think it can last forever...

Until...

Reality intervenes. Some people leave. They can't stand the heat—the heat of dealing with things that can change your life. **Other** people—a few people, powerful people, “important” people—begin grumbling around the edges. They say, “These are great ideas, but we all know the world doesn't work this way;” or they say, “Things are getting out of hand—it can't go on like this.” “It's too much,” they say; “too dangerous,” they say; “it's a threat to security and stability,” they say. **The security and stability of what!... I say?! This world they have so carefully constructed—this world of the few controlling the many; of principles sold out for money; of war in the name of peace; of ideas held back,**

pushed down, turned around; of dreams deferred, denied, derided... They fear *this world* may come crashing down?!—to which I say good riddance! But then, people like me, like you—we don't have the final word on such matters, do we...

There were still some of us left—actually many of us. We weren't the ones with the power—at least we didn't think so—yet, they seemed somehow afraid of us. Afraid of what we might be, of what we might do, of how we might rise up, if given half the chance—or the right leader.

And that's what he was—the right leader. **Courageous. Articulate. Passionate** about things that mattered. **Compassionate**, as if people mattered. **Incredibly focused, yet so easily distracted by a single voice.** You should have seen him with the children. You should have heard him on the mountain. You should have felt the tremor run through the crowd when he'd heal the blind or challenge the critics or feed the hungry crowd without even sending out for pizza. **He had what we had been looking for. We knew it—and we left everything and came along. They knew it—and they were willing to do anything to bring it to an end.**

And they did...almost. They hatched their plot. They had their way. And one dark day all our precocious dreams died on a hill. **Look what they did! How could they...!? Look what he didn't do! Why didn't he...!? Look what we'd never do...now that he was gone...**

The next day was darker still...you know the feeling...the emptiness, the heartache, the absolute loneliness, the sense of betrayal... **Where do you turn when there's no where to go...We thought we were finished...**

Until...

Then came the third day...this is the part I'm wondering if you've experienced, if you've seen anything like it... **before the dawn—last goodbyes—final respects—something amiss—stone rolled back—angels speak up—man nearby—where has he gone—can it be him—**

We saw—we believed—we ran—we told—we cried—we laughed—we dreamed...again

And you...have you...seen him too?

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New Community Project
718 Wilder Street, Elgin, IL 60123•newcommunityproject.org