

Hallucinations at Hiraschandu

Past Lives Can Not Save You

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- DRAFT -

Chapter 2: Shift 1420, Revulsion 10.11, Click 42

The space station had shrunk to the size of rock, small enough to fit in the palm of a man. But as the transport ship accelerated it kept shrinking until it was but a sparkle of dust among the faintly lit stars. Watching Hiraschandu being engulfed by the nothingness of deep space, always put Philip in a good mood. It was as if the physical distance to the station created objectivity and clarity in his mind. He would have preferred to be alone, but the very reason for leaving the station was sitting next to him, admiring the emptiness of the vista.

'You know,' the old man said and turned to Philip, 'I believe it is the first time that I actually see Hiraschandu. Although I have lived on the fields of La Chorrera all my life, I had yet to see actual space station from outside. And also I was not prepared for the perfection of space. Having lived out my whole life inside the space station and now watching it along with my life, turning into but a flickering of light produces a somewhat harrowing feeling.'

The man nodded his head as though pondering his own words and after careful analysis agreeing to them, 'Had it not been for the extensive training I would probably had experienced fear. As it is now, I am only filled with the deepest sorrow.'

Philip looked with indifference at the man who had turned his gaze yet again towards the black sky. The man was old, rather tall but not croaked. With Philip's towering two meters from head to toe, he was not as tall as Philip though. Except for this they had just about the same body constitution. Equally fit and both moved around with ease.

The greatest difference between us civilians and they the chorintians, Philip thought to himself, *just have to be the eyes of the chorintians.*

They reminded him of his children. It was something about how they seemed to look at the world and take it all in without the slightest rejection. His thoughts carried him back home, all the way back to inner-space and to his family:

Such a long time ago I saw them the last time. How would it feel to embrace them? Can it really be that I have forgotten how it feels? How old could they be... have I forgotten their age?

His snapped out of his daydreaming as he noticed that tears were trickling down the old man's cheeks. It was not an unusual or unexpected reaction. Most of the chorintians were overcome by feelings when they left the station. For Philip it was different. As being one of the civilians and often handling this type of cases, he was quite used to the whole thing. He had come to the conclusion a long time ago, that this emotional response had to be a reaction to the separation from the mentality, in combination with breaking up from family and friends. He did not waste any energy on sympathetic feelings for the old man, who anyhow would be gone in just a few clicks. However it was not as though he took any pleasure in this particular part of his job. No, since it was

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Philip who was going to perform the termination of the subject it would only have made the whole process more complicated and emotional. It simply would not matter, besides being sympathetic was downright unprofessional.

‘I know this is not the end of it all,’ the man said. ‘And I know that I have a long and rich life ahead of me. But having been a part of the sociality my whole life... well this void between me and the mentality, it does feel pretty strange indeed. I feel detached somehow and even though I have prepared myself for this moment of physical separation, it is certainly different from the process of mental detachment I produced while on Hiraschandu.’ The man wrinkled his forehead. ‘The permanent nature of the thing is more. How shall I put it? It feels more permanent – more absolute!’

‘I can only imagine,’ Philip answered truthfully. He handed a handkerchief to the man who accepted his offering with a bowed head. Mindful, without a sign of either shame or disgrace the man wiped his eyes and cheeks dry from tears.

‘But look, here I am wasting valuable time, crying about things that are already history while missing out on the chance to speak freely to a civilian.’

As though he had forgotten all about his sorrows, the man was now beaming of joy and curiosity when he peered at Philip. ‘Please do tell me something about yourself. How does it come that you are here and for how long have you been working with the project?’

Philip was somewhat surprised by the man’s choice of words. The chorintians did not usually refer to the project as the project. That notion was most commonly used by the civilians and was one of those linguistic barriers that served to separate the two groups from each other. The nature of the question was however not as surprising. Most chorintians that he escorted and terminated had this type of questions. While he did not mind satisfying their curiosity it was a double edged sword. On the one hand it increased the intimacy between him and his soon to be dead passenger, on the other hand he could understand and sympathise with their curiosity. After all, most of the interaction between the groups were regulated by strict protocols and to speak freely with one another was strictly prohibit and punishment was harsh. No contamination of the sociality could be tolerated.

In the unlikely case an chorintian broke this code of conduct it would at best result in a psychological evaluation and at worst in excommunication. Excommunication a better suited word then termination, since the chorintians did not know anything about this more wicked side of the project.

If a civilian was reported to a haven broken the code he or she would be demoted, without any hearing or other kind of investigation. A civilian was however rarely excommunicated since that would result in the lengthy process of acquiring a new civilian from inner-space. All civilians were also hand-picked and had gone through minute psychological examinations, so this rarely happened either.

The chorintians were obviously above any kind of deviant behaviour and excommunication, for this reason, had in the history of the project only been carried out a handful of times.

‘You know’, Philip said, ‘a lot of you chorintians ask me this and I must admit that it is kind of hard for me to talk about. Putting it bluntly it has to do with the prosperity of my family back home in inner-space.’

Philip changed position in the chair and began manipulating some controls on the panel in front of him. As he turned of the chemical reaction that propelled the ship and engaged the magnetic drive, a slight difference in the vibration of the deck could be felt. The magnetic drive was far more stable and safe then the rocket, but even as tiny folds in space as this small drive would produce, had the potential of affecting the sociality. For this reason and this reason alone, ancient technology had to be used for first part of the journey.

‘I understand. You do your work to ensure the well being and happiness of your loved ones.

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That is a very good cause.’ The man tapped with a finger on his knee. ‘I know you civilians spend most part of you life, if not all of your life, working on the project. Serving us chorintians, tending to all our needs and without that much of a chance to spend the credits you earn.’

Philip suddenly felt an urge to put on some music. I was not that he was so much affected by the man’s words, but they did nothing to humour him either. He stood up, left the control board and began to search the cabinets. He looked for the music units he had stashed away on the last trip, only to realise that he was not going to find any music. It was not his ship, but Gordon's. His own ship was on repair and would not be up and running for quite a few revulsion's. Inwardly he cursed and sat back down again in the pilot seat, letting out a sigh.

‘I can see how providing for the people you love serves as your motivation,’ the man continued thoughtfully. ‘You know, sometimes I think that maybe we chorintians are spoiled and you civilians are the truly unselfish ones. You give up so much and get so little in return. Even though we also spend all of our life contributing to the development of the sociality, we at least have the chance of becoming enlightened.’

Upon hearing this, Philip could not help but to think of the chores ahead of him. ‘Maybe you are right, but then again maybe we are both in a position in which ones value of life can not be judged,’ he answered.

They were closing in on Waystation. Soon the ship would be ready to dock with the smaller space station orbiting Hiraschandu, at distance of a half light year. The man returned the handkerchief.

‘Thank you very much. I will most likely not have any use for it later on, so I thought I better return it to you. I know resources are scarce at Hiraschandu.’

‘Even though it hardly seems that way on the fields,’ he added.

Philip nodded in agreement and put the cloth away in a disposable bin. Even though he did not consider himself as a weak man, carrying around the handkerchief the man had used to wipe his last tears in life with, was a little to much. Besides he rarely cried himself and had only brought the handkerchief with him because he knew that his passenger would most likely need one. He had done this trip quite a few times and had had time to learn the tricks of the trade.

The transport ship had automatically adjusted its speed to that of Waystation, but Philip now took control of the ship and manoeuvred it manually so as to match the position of the docking bay. He took pride in his work. He also enjoyed doing it. Back in inner-space manually controlled spacecraft's were unheard of and Philip knew how to appreciate the uniqueness of the situation.

He aimed the vessel for the landing lights and let the ship slip through the port and manoeuvred it into the space station. The ship hovered over the hangar deck for a while, extended its landing pads and then slowly sank downwards. Philip activated the control for the bridge and stood up from his chair. The other man had already made his way to the exit. Without waiting for Philip he exited the ship. Philip took a final look at the control panel, making sure that everything was in order, then he too made his way out of the ship.

The man was waiting for him at the end of the bridge, facing the grey steel ship that had served as their vessel and taking it all in. From outside it looked like an enormously old piece of junk. Especially in comparison to the more modern aesthetics of the hangar bay.

The hangar bay was indeed in another league entirely. Where the cold steel bridge from the space ship touched the deck, it almost seemed as though the material was giving away for the pressure, exerting lifelike properties. Walking on the deck, was like walking on obsidian in motion. For the man, who had been born and raised on the fields of La Chorrera, it was the very first time he was exposed to something that came even remotely close to the modern building techniques of inner-space.

‘Back on the fields we have nothing like this!’ he said and walked playfully along the deck, watching his bare feet interact with the floor. ‘It is as though it is solid water but black and it feels

kind of cold.’

‘Yes it is, but do you see the corridor ahead of us? There the floor will be warmer. Here it has not had time to recharge after being exposed to the cold vacuum of space.’

‘Please watch your step so that you do not fall,’ he continued. The man smiled when he heard what Philip said, but did not say anything. For a split second Philip was puzzled by the mans smile, but then he realised his mistake. You would have to put a well trained chorintian through a far greater ordeal then this one, before he or she would loose focus. And if they fell, it would most likely be a controlled fall that would not result in any injury.

They made their way through the corridor, reaching deeper into the heart of space station. As Philip had promised the floor soon became comfortably warm and was not as hard as before. Instead it gently massaged their feats. It gave away when needed and exerted pressure when appropriate. Needles to say walking in Waystation was far more comfortable then walking in the corridors of Hiraschandu or on the fields of La Chorrera.

The man laughed wholeheartedly. ‘It is like the floor is walking for me and I have but to relax and let it do all the effort.’ Then he turned to Philip and asked, ‘Do you think that the environment will be the same at Elysium?’

‘It most likely will,’ Philip lied. ‘What you are seeing is a kind of material that is very common in inner-space. Actually this material is of a less complex kind, since it lacks the self organising properties that most materials posses back home.’

‘For you back home is inner-space. For me back home is the fields,’ the man commented. ‘But you know, wherever I go I will always be at home, because I have been with the universe itself. And where the universe is, I have been.’

For the first time since meeting the man, Philip's curiosity arose. ‘I know I should not be asking this, but how does it feel?’ he inquired.

‘You mean converging?’

They came to a crossing and took a turn to the left.

‘Yes, whatever you call it. I mean when you do the things you do and merge will the mentality.’

‘Oh, well as you know the mentality is not really developed yet. So it is more a concentration, a focal point then an established structure. It is hard to put in terms that you civilian use. We chorintians have through several hundreds of shifts of practise developed a set of notions that as accurately as possible describe and define the non everyday experiences. Since we grow up with the societality we can relate to these words. Never the less I will try and do my best to explain how it feels.’

The man had Philip’s full attention.

‘First you feel nothing special, then the bond you have with the world seems to change. Without any sense of movement, without any physical noticeable change at all, you feel that something has changed. You can not pinpoint exactly what it is that is happening, but that is understandable since nothing really has changed. The only thing that is different compared to how it was before, is that your relationship to your environment and to yourself has changed.’

The corridor took a turn upwards, but as the floor silently helped the two men to walk, it was hardly noticeable. The man must however have noticed the change because he slowed down the pace.

It is as though he is experimenting with the different senestaions that the floor gives him, Philip thought. What do he gain from it? Why are they like that?

‘So while the change in the relationship does not actually produce any special feelings at all, it is the result of the change that you feel. The mind quickly adapts, but just before that, there is this moment where the difference between the two states of mind can be weighted and judged by your mind. It compares the way of experiencing with the kind of relationship it had to the world before the convergence. It is this experience that produces the feeling that something has changed. You

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see? It is sort of the difference between the two, that you experience as the change!

Philip had heard all of this before but did not want to rush the man. 'And what happens then?' he asked patiently.

The man laughed. 'Well that depends on what you have set out to do!'

They had reached the end of a corridor and Philip gestured to the man to step through the wall into a room on the other side of the seemingly solid material. Without the slightest hesitation the man stepped through the wall which gave away and gently pushed the man to the other side. This phenomenon always puzzled Philip. While most chorintians showed a childish interest in the floor, no one showed the slightest reluctance towards walking through a solid wall.

Could it be that they had have similar experiences during their chamra chambrá reduction exercises?

Philip had never bothered to ask any chorintian before and decided that he was not curious enough to ask this time either. He simply shrugged the question of and followed the man through the wall.

'You are now standing in a dedicated waiting area', Philip informed the man. 'Could you for the record please state your incarnation, name and purpose for being here?' He gestured for the man to answer.

'My name is Rick, I am the tenth incarnation descending from discrete Rick. The purpose for my departure from La Chorrera is, as previously reported, that I have detected a deviant behaviour in past life. It stretches back to that of the seventh incarnation of discrete Rick. Accordingly to the protocol for chambrá reduction I will now be transferred to Elysium for help that is not acquirable on La Chorrera, or so I am told.'

'Could you please confirm the manner in which this discovery was made?'

'I made the discovery when emerging from the light. When going through the singularity re-composition, I was attracted to memories from past lives. I was propelled towards reliving the events that produced the negatively charged chambrá. Upon finding that I was unable to work my way through this nexus, this dense emotional material on my own, I initiated contact with the management through the proper channels.'

Philip concluded the hearing. 'Let the record show that the management have examined the case of discrete Rick and his descendants. The records clearly shows that the reported events, are valid and actual events that took place 315.360.000 revolutions and 25 clicks ago.'

Philip shook hands with the man and wished him good luck, turned around and exited through the wall. He melted quickly through the wall, but the final words of Rick did not escape him. 'Thank you for your kindness. I will pray for you; that you will see your family in this life.'

Arriving at the corridor Philip turned to face the room.

'He seemed to be happy enough,' Philip grunted to himself. 'They sure play the easy part in the project. Nothing like our lot...' his voice trailed off.

Rick could barely be seen through the refracting properties of the material. It was if though his body had been dissolved by the material and then scattered throughout the wall. Philip engaged the airlock and watched the refraction of the old man's body fade away from the wall, finally to be replaced by familiar mosaic of the empty room. Just to make sure he re-entered the airlock to check it had been cleared. He took pride in being meticulous, even in situations he knew no one else were.

The body was gone. Since it had been expelled from the upper part of the space station, its trajectory was that of away from Hiraschandú. The management certainly did not want to have corpses returning to orbit the station. The whole point of terminating deviants such a far away from the station, was to ensure that the sociality did not get affected by the trauma one probably had to

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go through when dying. This was especially true for deviants who were contaminated with the kind of chambrá that Rick had been.

Having them shipped of to inner-space would not do either, since it was feared that they would be brainwashed and used by competing corporations. That would have caused some serious doubt about the management among investors, not to mention what it would do to the stocks. Thinking of the immense re-precautions that this would have put the smile back on Philip's lips.