

The Parable of the Jewels

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Once upon a time, in an ancient land, a man-child was born who grew up much like other man-children. He was given very much the same training and education that was then given to the others that were born in that land. In due time, he attained young manhood, and sought his niche among the various activities of adult life. During all this time he did not reveal any special qualities or aptitudes that would tend to set him apart from other men except that he had an unusual love for solitude that seemed to grow as the years passed.

It happened one day, in his early manhood, while taking a holiday in a strip of woods bordering a brook of unusually clear water, that he glimpsed a pretty pebble in the bed of the stream. It fascinated him so that he reached down into the water and secured it and took it home with him as a possession. He loved the pretty pebble and was accustomed to gaze upon it with admiration during his leisure hours. It brought him a curious joy. On a later day when doing some work in a field, he chanced to find another stone, almost transparent and of beautiful colors; and this he also took home and placed with his first pebble.

Now, as time went on, his interest in the attractive pebbles grew stronger so that a larger and larger portion of his time was consumed in the contemplation of them. Finally, he began to wonder whether there might not be others also; and so he started definitely to search more and more in the fields and woods and along the streams for other stones that carried this quality of beauty. He soon became successful in his search, and as the years passed by, seemed to acquire a special sense so that he was drawn into the places where attractive stones were to be found. His collection grew until he had a large number of stones of various sizes and varieties. This he had come to regard as his treasure hoard.

One day when in a distant and large town where he had come to make certain purchases, he passed a window where he saw a large collection of crystals cut into various shapes and many of them sparkled with a scintillating brilliance of a much greater attractiveness than that which was to be found in his own pebble collection. But he also saw in the window a number of pebbles like unto those which he already had so that he knew them to be of the same kind. But the most beautiful crystals were strange to him.

He decided to enter the shop of the window of rarely beautiful display to inquire of the shopkeeper the nature and significance of the beautiful stones. He found the shopkeeper a wise and friendly man once he had made known his great love of the stones and crystals, and he learned that day the names and lore of many of them. He found that they were called 'precious' and 'semiprecious' jewels, and that they were valued by some men and women for their beauty. He learned that the stones which he had been collecting were the kind known as semiprecious, and while they had some value, it was not great. He also learned that the extraordinary brilliance brought out in some of the crystals was made manifest through an art of cutting in certain appropriate ways.

When the young man returned to his home and assumed again his accustomed labors, he found that he could not take his thought away from the precious jewels that had been so cut as to

reveal their hidden beauty. He finally became unable to rest because of his desire also to find some of these rare crystals. So one day he prepared for an expedition to last some days. And then when he had a period of freedom, he went forth to search for that which his heart desired. He traveled for many days, always seeking; but while he found many stones like those which he already possessed, yet he had not found that which he sought.

Meanwhile he had come into a region utterly unlike anything he had seen before. In this region there were no green fields, nor forests, nor flowing streams of water. It was a barren and rugged land where only rarely was evidence to be found that other men had been there before him. In time he became quite weary, and his supply of food and water was exhausted. Still, he had not found the object of his search. Finally, when he saw that he must return if he would not perish from hunger and thirst, he reluctantly decided that he must give up his search. This made him very downcast and sad, for his heart had been deeply set upon finding the objects of rare beauty. He decided to make one more examination in the place where he was and then start his return journey, but he now had little hope of success having been disappointed so often.

Then it was that his eye happened to be attracted by a small, bright object reflecting the light of the sun at such an angle that it fell upon his eye. He picked up the object and found that it was a beautiful diamond. Then his sadness left him and a joy and strength filled his being such as he had never known before. With joy in his heart and a song upon his lips, he returned on the long journey to his home. And though he had no more food, yet he was sustained by a strange strength and was unconscious of hunger.

In the days that followed, he found that life had come to have new meaning for him and it was not long before he resolved to devote his life to the search for precious jewels. He journeyed often to the rugged and barren land and soon had learned much of its secrets. He came to understand its strange beauty, and in time acquired a deep love for it. He also learned more of the kind of places where jewels were likely to be found so that finally he became quite skilled in finding many kinds of the rarer jewels. He had now a considerable collection of diamonds, emeralds, and rubies and had become known to a few other lovers of these rare objects. Yet though it seemed that he should now be satisfied, for he had as beautiful jewels as any other collectors whom he had come to know, still a strange yearning for something more began to grow in him. Mostly was this the case when he was far out in the barren country in places where other men had only very rarely been. He seemed to be drawn on toward certain distant mountains which could be glimpsed when far out on the barren land. He had no idea what he sought, but yet the yearning grew until he could not resist it. So finally the day came when he decided to go forth and find, if possible, the object of his great but inchoate desire, even though he should lose all, even life itself, in the search.

Having then made the necessary preparations he set forth and after many days and much hardship found himself in the lower passes of great mountains. Here he found greater solitude than he had ever known before; but while there did not seem to be any others anywhere near, yet, strangely, he was not lonely in the solitude. Also he found refreshing water and shrubs that bore edible fruits so that he was no longer dependent upon the resources he had brought with him. He found a cave in a beautiful canyon and made it his home for several days during which he rested.

Meanwhile in the ancient land where once upon a time a man-child was born, who in later days was to be known as the Great Seeker of jewels, those who had grown up with him and knew him waited the return of the seeker. Days and weeks and months rolled by and he had not

returned, but this was to be expected as he was known to be a great wanderer in his searchings for the precious things of beauty; and it was also known that he had planned to go further afield than ever before.

But as the months rolled by and mounted to the full cycle of a year, the old friends began to fear that never again would they greet the seeker. They missed him for they thought him a gentle and harmless soul possessed of a queer passion of seeking for pretty stones and he had always been ready to share his treasure. Some, too, had learned to love the beautiful pebbles and crystals, but most regarded him as possessed by a rather childish passion, though one that did no harm and none could feel any enmity toward him. As men and women met, they occasionally spoke of him and speculated as to whether he would ever return. But by now, much doubt had grown in this matter, so when again the yearly cycle had rolled around, it was generally agreed that he had at last perished, and with a small, kindly thought toward him they turned to other interests and gradually lost active memory of him as is the way with men in this world.

But the seeker had not perished, he had found abundant means to sustain his life in the valleys of the great mountains and the yearning for the unknown grew no less in him. Often had he tried to scale a mountain, but oft as he tried to find a way up the valleys that would lead to the higher reaches of the mountains, just so often would he come to impassable places and would have to return to try again in still other valleys. In this way three years passed, and it seemed that he was no nearer his goal.

However, his search had not been fruitless, for there were many of the precious jewels in the valleys, and he now paused to collect only the rarest among them, great and gorgeous stones the like of which had not been known among men of his land. But most were of the same type that were there known but only of finer grade. However, occasionally he found fragments of strange gems, such as he had never seen before and of which he had never heard and had, so far as he knew, no names. They excelled in beauty and curious inner qualities the diamonds, rubies, and emeralds as the latter excelled the familiar semi-precious pebbles. When on rare occasions he found one of these fragments, it had a strange effect upon him. It seemed to stir in him a sense of something near that was beyond all known values, yet something strangely familiar, like the reminder of an ancient home that had long been forgotten. So the strange yearning grew upon him and he could not abandon the seeking for a way up into the great mountains.

It was in the fourth year, in an almost hidden mountain pass that he discovered by chance one day, that a change came in his fortunes. This valley proved a passable way that led far higher up the mountain than he had ever been before and a new hope and expectancy began to stir in him. There were still difficulties and disappointments as the different courses he tried became, in turn, impassable. But the valley was a veritable maze of various lateral branches and so there were many places where a new trial could be essayed. So in this valley he passed nearly the whole of the fourth year when one day near the end of the year he found a side-passage of special promise. Far up it he traveled, meeting ever severer and severer difficulties, but none of them proved to be beyond his resources.

Finally, after much hardship, and on several occasions putting forth his most extreme effort, he finally surmounted the last obstruction and found himself upon the upper slopes of the great mountains. There were now no more trees, but only a few small herbs bearing a strange, fruit-like substance which he found was edible and supplied an extraordinary strength. The slopes now were easier to scale, but it began to be quite cold and it was not always easy to find

adequate shelters at night. But the strange, fruit-like substance gave strength to endure the cold, although he had to face the discomfort. So he pushed ahead, day after day, up the slopes that seemed now to have no end.

Many of the precious jewels lay all about so that no longer did he collect those that were familiar. Only did he stop to gather the rare and strange ones of which he had already found fragments in the mountain valleys. The specimens were much larger and finer now, and more frequently found as he mounted; but still the yearning for something beyond grew within him, and ever the strange jewels gave him new promise and hope. Again he climbed for days, and the days became weeks, and the weeks became months; still the mountain reached on and on ever upward and ever beyond. It was not long before he reached the region of eternal snow but here and there patches of ground swept clear by the wind and in these places he found still finer treasures from time to time.

It was at the close of the fifth year that he reached the top of the peak, and there he found a place the snow did not cover. And lo and behold, it was all composed of one great jewel-like substance of an indigo blue that filled him with such a glory and joy that he feigned must linger here many months as he thought, fully satisfied and at the end of his quest. The very substance of the peak now supplied him with sustenance he required and so adjusted his organism that he could live attuned to the great cold without feeling it cold, and could breathe something within the rare atmosphere that was different from the air he had known in the valleys and in the great plains.

But as time went by the yearning returned to him so that he needs must search further and one day his vision acquired a new clarity so that he saw far beyond a much greater peak with a golden light radiating from its top of such brilliance that it almost blinded him. The vision persisted but briefly and then disappeared; but now he knew that he must continue the climb. So he left the deep blue peak and sought anew his way.

The climbing was very difficult as something seemed to be happening to his power of sight. The vision of his eyes became dimmer, so that often he could scarcely see at all. After further weeks, there came a time when he was quite blind, but still he continued feeling his way. However, in due time a new power of sight was born in him and he began to see dimly, without the use of his eyes. Gradually this new power became stronger until finally it far transcended all his old power of vision. And now he became aware of a new strangeness, for he had the strength to receive a quality of light that would have utterly blinded him when he used his ordinary eyes. The light grew and grew until he knew it as a veritable golden Substance that penetrated through and through his whole being and he felt light and had no more need of the former kind of strength. Presently he reached the top of the new peak, and was bathed in golden glory. It was as though the very soul of the most precious of all jewels had fused with him and he felt a wonderful compassion and peace quite beyond anything he had ever imagined. So he thought at last I have found it and the end has been reached again.

He lingered here many months and the sixth year had passed; but again, once more the yearning grew, and again he knew he must still journey onward. This came to him as a great surprise as he could not see how there could be anything more, but at last he left the peak of golden glory and climbed out without seeing on what he climbed and not knowing how he climbed. No sense was of any help to him anymore, nor any knowledge, in the sense that men understand knowledge, nor any feeling, yet somehow he realized what to do and so he mounted

upward. Presently he realized that there was no more mountain, nor any form, though he continued to rise with great speed and without effort. The yearning lifting him as would a balloon, a power greater than gravity. As there was no more form, so also was there no more time, and the seventh year passed without his knowing it. He felt himself, or rather realized himself, as in a Space without bounds and that there was no more a formed universe, but this Space was a Substance out of which all universes were formed. He no longer had a body, but a Consciousness identical with the Space; but he continued to know his own identity. He realized himself as being a void that was at the same time the most complete fullness, for now he was no longer a man, but a Divine Consciousness.

At last he had indeed arrived and the yearning was quenched. He lingered what might have been an age and yet what might have been but a moment for there was no more time. But a thought came to him; he remembered his old friends and the thought of how greatly they would value this he had found. So he decided to gather a portion of the Conscious Substance of the void, which also was not other than himself, and return with it to his old friends.

Now, again he discovered something which formerly he would have regarded the most strange of all; but now he knew it is the natural and familiar order of things which indeed he had always known in a sense that was not like knowing. The wish to return to his friends was sufficient to return him there without passing over the long and laborious journey of his search. He was simply once more among men and had with him all his new collection of jewels and the portion of the Substance that had been taken unto him for the return. But this Substance now appeared as the Master Jewel of all—a Light which contained all light and the very essence of light and consciousness itself. When one looked into this Jewel he could see his own soul, and likewise the soul of worlds and the beginning and end of time, and could feel the power that was master over all other powers including birth and death.

He went forth among men to offer to them the great and the lesser jewels; for these precious things could be given to others and yet always remain renewed so that the store never grew less. Old friends recognized him and yet felt that they no longer knew him. They came to see his possessions out of curiosity and some of them they were willing to receive, but they almost always selected the lesser and familiar jewels; a few received some of the strange ones; but all feared the Master Jewel that gave life beyond the power of death, and could reveal the soul of men and things, and was master even over time and all form. The Great Seeker could not understand this, and was somewhat saddened, for he knew the Great Jewel was the best friend of man, for it made of him who received to become more than a man, to be such as men call ‘gods’, and this is the greatest good that can possibly come to mankind.

So the seeker journeyed far and wide offering the store of jewels, letting men take what they would, but continuing to seek for those who would accept the Great Jewel. So it was that as he wandered over the world for a long lifetime, and yet he found none who did not fear the Great Jewel, while admiring many of the lesser ones. But one day, when he was very old and near unto death, as men understand death, but which was no death to the Great Seeker, he at last came upon one who did not fear the Great Jewel and was happy to accept it. Then it was that the Great Seeker gave forth the blessing of the greatest of all treasures to the one who proved himself worthy, because he did not fear, but loved the great mystery of the Supreme Jewel.

Then the Great Seeker passed away and was no more seen among men nor moved any more in the cycle-bound worlds. But a tradition has come down from that ancient land where

once upon a time a man-child was born who had seemed much like other men-children, and this tradition tells a wondrous tale. It says that the Great Seeker has never departed but that he only seemed to do so; that, in fact, he is to be found everywhere and that he abides at the central core of all creatures and all worlds and spreads as far as Space itself.

The Parable of Him Who Received the Great Jewel

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It is related in the ancient land where once lived the Great Seeker who had found the Supreme Jewel, at the close of his life the Seeker had found one who was not afraid of the Supreme Jewel and was willing and glad to accept it. Then it was that the Great Seeker vanished from among men and was never any more seen, though tradition says that he still lingers close to the inner core of all creatures; but he who received the Great Jewel continued among men for many years carrying the blessing of this Jewel wherever he went. We will now tell the story of the receiver of the Great Jewel.

Unlike the Great Seeker, the receiver had always lived among men, understanding them in their weaknesses, and always loving them. And so a close rapport had grown between him and the people so that they had no fear of him and felt his understanding and sympathy for them. Thus it came about as the receiver of the Great Jewel went forth, seeking those who would receive its blessing, he found a greater readiness to receive than the Great Seeker had ever known. And although there were very few who dared to take the Great Jewel in their own hands and gaze within its depths, still there were several who would accept the Light of the Jewel when the receiver had placed over it a veil woven from the threads of his own understanding. This veiled Light proved to be not too great for many to receive it. And so the mission of the Jewel of bringing joy, release, and understanding to men was proving at last to be effective.

Now, for many years, the receiver of the Great Jewel continued his work faithfully so that when the end of his cycle of life had at last reached its fulfillment, he had gathered about him a large following and a small body of disciples who had been willing and able to hold the Jewel in their own hands to gaze upon it unveiled.

But none even among these disciples could hold the Jewel for more than a brief time, for they could not resist a tendency in it that seemed to make them dissolve. So when finally the receiver of the Great Jewel came to the hour when he, too, was about to be taken into the Great Space of the Liberated, he journeyed forth to the lower reaches of the great mountains and there found a hiding place where he placed the Great Jewel against the time when some other might come in search of it.