

## EPILOGUE to DESIRE

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*What revenge is greater than your own suffering?*

Attributed to Claudio Monteverdi

‘When I’m gone you will know what you have lost. It’s the energy that counts. The rest is just the mind, and the mind is full of illusions.’

Those were Aaron’s words when I moved out of paradise, looking for a greater truth than the one we were living. That was in 2006. *Desire* was published in April 2008 in Australia, but it is only now that the true gifts of this relationship have come home to both of us. This addendum is meant to bring the reader up to date, because ... well, read on.

Grief did not end with the ending of my book. In spite of my brave words, there wasn’t another relationship for me. Why would any man take on this dangerously changeable woman?

I filled my days with busyness, developing Vital Body Workshops because I love feeling well and being with others who want to be inspired. But I was alone.

Aaron and I spoke occasionally. Often we had no contact for several months. I learnt that he and Joan saw each other twice before she spat him out without giving him a reason. I only saw Aaron when I dropped into the office, when I needed to meet up with either Clinton or Margot. They are my old friends, and I hug and love them. Aaron would always come last to greet me. Neither of us could fail to notice that when we hugged, the desire to keep on hugging was there, but we pulled away before it became a fact of clear consciousness.

In my aloneness, I had time to review my actions and motives. I was no longer so sure that I had done the right thing. The thought finally came: *I may have made a terrible mistake!* My ego may have been so subtle in its signals that I mistook its plans for the right thing to do. Aaron doesn’t plan. He doesn’t use his head to ask himself what is right — he mistrusts it, and he mistrusted mine. But Aaron would never stand in the way of another person’s decisions. Aaron could see what I was doing, and knew that I couldn’t see it myself. All he could do was warn me and then take care of himself: *Don’t do this, Carla, and You are forcing me to fall out of love with you.*

And so Aaron fell out of love and found satisfaction in the growing prestige DeVere Mining Technologies offered him, where he was being more and more acknowledged for the talented designer and problem solver that he is. *I have gone beyond you* was his reply to an email. Aaron never does things by halves.

And when his energy was completely taken away from me, I finally did know what I had lost, and grieved with a deep sense of the needlessness of that loss: *When I'm gone, you will know what you have lost.*

What had I done? Exactly what Aaron had been trying to warn me about all along: I had allowed my mind to guide my decisions — meaning my delusions — about who I was and he was not, about my superiority and his unsuitability for a woman like me.

Finally, I was without any resistance to the true feelings that had been inside me all along. I loved Aaron, I had hurt him and I had ended what need not have ended, certainly not the way it did — because I listened to my head, which was so sure of all my criteria for a ‘proper relationship’. I had left no window open for an *organic* development. I had made up my mind, and in so doing I discovered that this is like making your bed and having to lie in it. After all, the truth doesn’t have to be made up; it’s only minds that people have to make up.

My mental stance had been a grand illusion. I believed, in 2006, that Aaron wasn’t good enough for me, that I needed someone who could support me in my work — someone with whom I had more in common, who wasn’t as honed to criticism as Aaron was.

Aaron had known that I could only learn the hard way. The hard way involved him backing off, closing his heart so it couldn’t hurt again, grieving to let me go, and going beyond the grief into a new future without me.

The pain I had hidden from myself eventually surfaced. It was the grief of my inevitable and irretrievable loss, but also a deep, keen grief about the hurt I had done. Aaron’s face kept coming before me; especially his surprise at my vicious words of separation: not meant to be hurtful, yet still a trampling on the most devoted love I had ever known in my life. He had been so open at the time, lying in bed, only just awake. Instinctively, he had pulled up the bedsheet over part of his face.

It was my time to weep the bitterness out of the corners of my heart, and to know what I really valued, now that it was too late.

I was completely dishevelled in every way when I asked Aaron to see me. He came to meet me in the little park facing the river, not far from his work. There we sat on a shady bench, and he let me speak my humble sorrow. I was past trying to look good or trying to impress. What I wanted was for Aaron to know that I now realised how much I had hurt him, and that it was breaking my heart. That he had been right: I had been blinded by my pride. Tears rolled down my face as people passed by, and neither of us cared who saw.

Aaron listened with disbelief, then with respect, then with gladness. He was so happy for me that I had found my heart and had realised what I valued most. Yes, it was too late, he confirmed. He was a different person now, with no romantic feelings towards me at all, but he was a friend who could humbly accept the tears of a broken heart and tell me that these tears were for my healing, not for my condemnation.

In the days and weeks that followed, I kept crumbling. I had learnt a home truth — that love is more important than compatibility; that the feeling between two people of innocent, trusting passion is far more important than any other kind of common interest. I had believed that I should have it all or nothing. I didn't realise that I already had it all — all that was real, that is — and that what I thought I wanted was an illusion. *I had smashed what was real in search of an illusion.*

Love is wise; it knows better than human hearts and never gives up. It shows itself truly in the energy between two people who look into each other's eyes and see only a kind of depth that has no ending, no shape, no time. To kiss in this state is to lose yourself or lose your mind, whichever comes first. To hunger for this kind of kiss is to hunger for the annihilation of a judgmental ego.

Tears kept washing my heart, which became so tender that it would feel any pain it encountered, whether on the road, on the TV, in a newspaper, in a shop. I could sense the hearts of people, their longing, and the layers of normality that everyone has put on top of their longing. Only birds, flowers, cats and dogs are simply themselves, it seemed to me. They don't mind just being beautiful, fully alive and loving. We humans pretend all the time that we are alright in our make-believe world of having to do this or be that, all the while just wishing for love, for being wrapped in arms and for being able to hold another.

He smiles. He can see all of it, and says, ‘You have lost nothing, Babe.’ Because to him, losing a love to find a love this great is as nothing. Besides, he is still my friend. We hold hands; he draws me to himself and kisses me on my head with friendly lips. There is no pull between us when he does that. *I have moved on from you, but I still love you.*

It is some other kind of ending, one more substantial than any before. A seal has been set; energies have been rearranged and healed, restored to their rightful place, so we can both be who we are, on our separate paths.

I am open to a new relationship, and so is he. ‘I won’t be chasing anyone,’ he tells me, ‘but if God sends me a woman who wants to love me, I will be there for that.’

As for me, well, I am not just waiting. I join RSVP on the internet, and Spiritual Singles and even pay a subscription to a dating agency. I meet man after man, and learn more about men. It is as if their hearts are so protected that it has become impossible for them to be naturally themselves. They have learnt a role, a way of being that seems right but it misses the mark, and each man is lonelier than a single cormorant on a mooring pile. None of them can look me in the eye for long. None of them are aware that they are still struggling with their feeling selves, and that they wish women to be the ones to make it all better for them.

Months pass from spring to summer to autumn, winter and another spring. Aaron and I meet sometimes to walk and talk — by the beach, in a park; we even see a movie together.

After the movie, he walks me back to my car. ‘My libido is almost non-existent anymore,’ he says. ‘I don’t need sex. I enjoy working and being appreciated at work. It’s enough for me.’

He is telling me not to get my hopes back — always cautious to protect me from a further illusion. I accept that Aaron is a different person now — not one I would ever have imagined, but for now, that’s how it is. He is even a bit lame about hugging me — he can’t feel just now ... or perhaps he can no longer feel at all.

I send Aaron an email.

*Did you know about this discovery about the Galactic Centre, Aaron?*

*I found out it is the rotational centre of the Milky Way Galaxy. It is located about 7.6 kiloparsecs (24,800 light years) away from the Earth in the direction of the constellation Sagittarius, where the Milky Way appears brightest. Scientists hypothesise that there is a super-massive black hole at the Galactic Centre of the Milky Way, and most (if not all) other galaxies.*

Aaron replies.

*Yes, I did.*

*Because as I am an Angel fallen to earth, I saw the black hole from the window of the bus on the way to the planet. I saw the road sign that says 'Milky Way 24,800 LYRs, 7.6 kPSC, that way to Earth'. So I can say with complete confidence that the information provided to you is scientifically correct. And yes, Sagittarius the archer was there, having shots at a bull's eye on the green grass by the celestial byway.*

*There is still love (and the occasional heavy breathing)*

*Also*

*Catchya and holdya and xxxya*

*Aaron*

Aaron's on a cheerful high. He is loved by most of the people he knows, and now receives a respectable wage for his efforts.

He invites me to dinner.

We meet amicably like this a few times. He shares his stories with me, and I tell him I can't find my Prince Charming.

'Don't worry, Carla. You are still a beautiful woman, and men won't be daunted by your rigidity any more; it's gone from your face. You're nice to be with now.'

And then he tells me the most important healing message for my spirit, which is still so tender. 'Don't worry about having made a mistake, Carla. It was a necessary experience for me.'

I am floored. Aaron says some more. 'I needed to come out of in-loveness to find my own Beloved. You taught me that. I was so sore, and I found that looking for another relationship didn't heal the hurt. Only finding my Beloved in myself could do that. I've done that now. It's still

new and not completely settled in me, but for me that has been the gift of our parting.’

This is a generous sharing on Aaron’s part.

‘What is more, Carla, you are still in me, and I am in you. We share the same Beloved. All that we have learnt from one another we can live now and be better people for it. You are more like me now — you trust your feelings much more and you are wary of your mind.

‘I was even inspired by your willingness to be ruthlessly honest. I am dealing better with my reactions to my father. I see him differently now and I take responsibility for what I feel.’

Aaron has been doing the inner work on his reactions. He lives with his parents, who are frail now and need his presence in ways he can appreciate more than they themselves do. He watches how the deterioration of their bodies is making them more humble and more civil to one another. ‘This is what it takes to break down their assertions that they don’t love each other.’

I’m in the office one day and ask one of those questions that can change a person’s life.

‘I wonder, Aaron, what it would be like between us if we removed all the resentments and anger from the past?’

I’ve done my work of forgiveness; has he? When there is love, there is really only one thing that dulls and eventually kills a relationship: it is the resentments that build up and never get fully resolved. I have done so much to release my judgments — how has Aaron really fared with his feelings? How far is it true that he is dealing with the wounds of his childhood?

The proof is often in the pudding. Aaron has refused to help me with anything since we parted. I moved house, and he didn’t want to help me move a single piece of furniture or as much as one box. He came around to my house once, and when I asked him could he replace the blades on my lawnmower, he did so with bad grace.

Aaron admitted that’s how it is. ‘It’s related to you taking me so much for granted,’ he said, ‘and for refusing what I had to offer.’ True. There is a lot to forgive on his part. But so has there been on mine. And I have made the first move in the forgiveness department.

Another test comes when I really need Aaron’s assistance in retrieving and mailing photographs to a journalist in Holland, and I ask for his help. I am more inept with computers than he realises; he still

believes that I should know certain things that I have no affinity for whatsoever. Instead of just doing the job, he wants me to learn and practise. I do my utter best, and make mistakes. It is here, finally, that Aaron realises that I am not lazy and just taking advantage of him, and that his reaction is unwarranted.

I am at Aaron's office, talking with him, when suddenly I have had enough of talking. We are facing each other on either side of his desk. There is no one else in the office. I get up, bend over to his side and say, 'Come here!' Then I kiss him on the mouth. I kiss him long enough and tenderly enough for him to get the message. He is wanted. Aaron sits down and smiles.

He will let this knowledge digest for a while. It's nice to be wanted. Even so, it takes a few days before the hardness melts. Aaron's memories of being belittled and discredited by those he loved are never far away. He will not easily be close to anyone again.

Aaron comes over for dinner at my place. He likes my food. It's been a busy day for me, though, and I suddenly feel tired.

'I want to go and lie down for a bit, Aaron. Do you want to lie down with me?'

It's a genuine statement. I have no plans. He can see that but he smiles, the devil. Since when have we been able to lie down together without something happening? I'm not referring to the past, though. All I want is his arms around me as I rest. I still remember his words about not having his hormones much anymore.

And so we rest. Until he's had enough of that and takes my clothes off. He smiles wickedly and says nothing. I am wise enough to not resist.

And that is how the ice between us was broken. I found the pleasure of having him with me return sweetly, and Aaron was delighted beyond words.

A week later, and Aaron is back by invitation. I waste no time. It's up to me to show him how I feel, and I don't wait for him to respond. He is to receive. I have no attachment to anything else beyond wanting to express what has been pent up in me and to heal the past for myself and, if possible, for him.

I thought that my kisses would be welcomed, but never expected that they would be returned the same way. Two years of pain were dissolved in four hours of tender togetherness.

'I get that you love me,' says Aaron.

'Good,' is my reply, 'Now I can die,' and part of me means it. The peace I feel is so profound that it seems enough to experience in one lifetime.

The powerful urge to come clean with Aaron had lit up my heart and soul and also my body. Aaron had responded with all his beautiful self, and his hormones had followed with full abandon.

'What are you going to do with me?' is Aaron's first question after the words of appreciation have been said once more in the new space between us. He raises his head from the pillow tucked over his arms. 'We can't go back to the past, Carla.' It's Aaron's way of expressing his dread of attachment and of going back to the unbearable pressures of having to conform to my expectations. He is a free man now and intends to stay that way. Aaron has no apologies for being who he is, and wants to warn me.

I feel the pain briefly in my heart: Aaron is reserving himself because he still so vividly remembers the pain of the past and can't trust me. He doesn't seem to get it that I no longer have any agenda for him whatsoever, even though a few days ago he had commented on how I seemed to have no expectations.

'I'm not going to do anything with you!' I blurt out.

Aaron's head slumps down on his pillow in relief. He just had to hear those words. As for me, I am so clear that though our feelings needed to be honoured in this passionate and honest way, and that though this moment has a real basis in mutual love, it has none in practicality.

We might never be lovers again or we might be lovers just for now, but we would not share enough of our lives to call it a workable relationship. Aaron's fear will hold him back from initiating a move to continue our relationship.

And so, in spite of the bond between us, we will move on.

I have no regrets. The lessons I have learnt are profound. Formerly, I have judged and rejected and I have learnt how destructive this is. I watch Aaron, and realise how destructive the fear of facing the deepest cause of bruised feelings is. Until he can do this, he will have to relive the story of that part of his past.

Forgiveness is not an easy thing. It can't be done with a wish or a will. For Aaron to be able to forgive me, he would have to face and feel the rejection he felt as a young boy. I remember how I would not face my

own fears for decades because I thought that to feel what was in my core would destroy me. When I let go of my story that I was a victim, my ego fought like a titan to retain its position. It took divine strength, given to me at the time, to be able to let go of it. The gift on the other side of the story was my freedom, but no one ever believes this until they do it for themselves.

In the meantime, we can still surprise each other with a love that will be there forever. 'The bond between us will never be broken,' says Aaron. 'What does it matter that we're not together?'

Love between Carla and Aaron could not have been expressed and received more clearly, and what it produced for us was closure.

We have both moved on even as our story continues, but now neither of us can get kicked out of paradise again. We know how to love, and most of all, we have ourselves.

'We made it, Babe,' said Aaron last time I saw him, which was some time ago. 'Yes, in some big ways we did, Aaron. Thank God.'

October 2009