

A JOURNEY TO THE NEW EARTH

VOLUME 1

**THE
UNSUSPECTED
HEROES**

A VISIONARY FICTION NOVEL

ALEX MARCOUX

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ADVANCE REVIEW OF THE UNSUSPECTED HEROES

A doorway into the sacred mysteries and magic of autism opens when one hears the call and steps into a new soul journey, hand in hand with us. For years, Alex has been deep in that journey with me, listening with her heart, and helping me to build my bridge of truth and move it out into the world. Out of our sacred journey together arises *The Unsuspected Heroes*.

I LOVE this book! Why? In this epic fairy tale, Alex reveals a true-to-life side of autism that few have ever been privileged to experience. Through Alex's genius as a master storyteller, readers will be able to hear and feel into "this side" within the comfort and safety of a make-believe experience.

They may even dare to wonder could this actually be true? Only when hearts open, can minds follow! On behalf of all my soul brothers and sisters, we thank you, Alex, for this gift to us, to your readers, and to the planet!

Lyrica Marquez

Nonspeaking Autistic Mystic

Co-Author of *Autism to Ascension* and *AWetizm*:

A Hidden Key to Our Spiritual Magnificence

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*I dedicate this book to all autistics,
the selfless heroes doing the work,
whether knowingly or unknowingly.*

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FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Seeker of Truth,

Many years ago, two exceptional people came into my life, a mother-daughter team. The daughter has severe autism. She is nonspeaking, considered low functioning, severely impaired. At the same time, the mother has Asperger's syndrome, is high functioning, in many ways brilliant, yet considered to be on the low-end of the Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Shortly after we met, they introduced me to two other nonverbal autistics and their families. My friendship with all of them grew, and they permitted me into their world. Without getting into specifics, I learned how gifted these autists are and genuinely pondered if they are angels here to help humanity. Then I discovered that the autistics' parents are also extraordinary people, perhaps angels themselves. Within a couple of years, the autistics asked that I write their journey and share autism from a unique perspective, one that reflects many of their gifts and why they are here at this critical time in humanity's evolution.

We live in an unprecedented time: a rise in the autism rates, an astrological rotation occurring every 26,000 years, and a shift in the collective consciousness. It is no coincidence that all of this is happening together, and *it is no coincidence that you are reading this*.

Within this novel, inspired by real events, I delve into the crystalline grid, the ascension, the New Earth, the Great White Brotherhood, the Anunnaki, Archangels, Ascended Masters, and much more. If you're not familiar with these terms and concepts, I encourage you to refer to my **biography** of the Ascended Masters and Archangels and the **glossary** in the back of this book. I have also published similar material on my website at <https://alexmarcoux.com/ascension-glossary/>.

I call my autistic friends "Autistic Avatars," and I've learned that much of what they share is mythology. Not that

FROM THE AUTHOR

the myth is a lie because it isn't, it is a metaphor to convey profound concepts to explain things where no words exist to do so.

My life changed after meeting these people. I have spent years researching, experiencing, and learning. I approach this book series with the same spirit; there are many Truths in this tale thinly disguised as fiction.

Not all superheroes wear capes and have their stories told on the big screen. Some heroes wear masks to hide who they are. Lyrica Marquez, a nonspeaking autistic, writes, "WE agreed to sit in harsh suits of AUTISM until WE are freed to share our purpose for being here. Our suits of AUTISM are like Halloween masks."

It is time to remove the heroes' masks. I am honored to tell their tale and reveal why they are here. These heroes deserve our honor.

If you're up for a journey into a hidden world, and ready to learn the *truth about who you are*, and why you are here, I invite you into my world and the world of superheroes who are working selflessly behind the scenes to assist humanity in its spiritual evolution and to save the planet.

It is my wish that you awaken and remember because the world needs you.

With Love and Light,
Alex Marcoux

Inspired by Real Events

PROLOGUE: PROJECT LAST-DITCH EFFORT TO SAVE EARTH

**Sometime in Earth's Near Future, and yet,
Time Is an Illusion**



One may think of it as twilight, that soft, glowing diffused light, but that is not quite right. It is the space between nothingness and Oneness, where it appears that there is nothing except the promise of the coming day or night. That is where the Ascended Masters and Archangels of the Cosmic Council meet to discuss the destruction of Earth in the early twenty-first century.

The Divine Father, Master Melchizedek, steps toward the center of the heavenly landscape. “We know the implications of the other failures. This disaster will impede the involved souls even further. It’ll take many, many millennia for the soul scars to heal, if ever.”

From the outside circle, Archangel Mikael emerges, bowing his head, his sword by his side. His enormous white wings now folded in defeat, and his voice low. “With Gaia gone, the universe is out of balance. Earth was the Divine Feminine. This entire universe and all of its parallel existences are on a course of self-destruction.”

Archangel Metatron moves forward, sacred geometric patterns illuminating his being. He adds, “Yes, we have seen failures in thirteen parallel expressions of Earth already. All will go soon, and we are starting to see the collapse of Earth-616, the New Earth.”

Her Grace, Lady Anna, steps forward with vibrant red robes fluttering out at her feet. She looks around, seeing silhouettes of the council members. “What are we going to do about it? Do we give up on this universe and these souls? This was their chance to ascend.”

A Galactic Being of Light, a master from another universe, steps forward, “This is the fourth planetary destruction in this universe. Avyon, Avalon, Maldek, now Earth. These souls will not recover from this.”

A female voice reverberates from the outside circle. “We can’t fix this. Only humanity can.” The others step back, permitting the Divine Feminine, Master Magdalene, space. She moves slowly from the crowd; a scent of roses lingers as she passes.

A multidimensional embodiment of Magdalene is Mother Gaia. Magdalene’s every step is with pain, from echoes of losing Earth, and the failures in parallel worlds. Those near her form a ring around her. As she moves, they respond, as if an orbit pulled by Mother Gaia.

“Humanity will always destroy Earth until it awakens.” Magdalene waves a hand, and a holographic map forms around and above the group.

The Light Beings respond by falling into a large full circle, eyeing the multidimensional schematic of the moment. One can see all in the moment as it’s connected to every life, every timeline, every parallel existence, every aspect of themselves, including the Source, the most powerful Energy. In the moment, one connects to their Godself.

Standing in the center, Magdalene closes her eyes, pauses, and sets an intention. With a wave of her hand, the holographic map responds. Three specks light up in the projection, revealing a glimmer of hope.

Jesus, the Cosmic Christ, steps forward, his cascading robe illuminated with star systems. He studies the work of

his beloved, Magdalene, and raises a finger toward one of the three specks. As if he has a lasso, he harnesses one bit and hurls it above their heads. Holographic cinematic images stream various tweaks to the timeline, revealing possibilities to averting Earth’s destruction.

Similarly, Jesus facilitates the second and third simulation of changes to the timeline. It is the third recreation that piques the Cosmic Council’s interest.

Mother Ray, Mother Mary steps into the inner circle, a blue cape covering her robe. “This is it!” She points to the third simulation. “This is the one point in time, and one parallel reality that offers the most opportunity to correct the course of history and avert Earth’s destruction.”

There is immediate consensus among the Masters, the inner and outer rings. One Mind. They will plant seeds throughout history. Some of them will embody and walk among humanity before the great cataclysm and plant the seeds that will give humanity a chance to choose differently and save Earth.

The Gatekeeper steps from the outer circle and into the inner ring. This androgynous Light Being had watched the events with great interest, knowing that her time would come. It was her job to identify which Light Beings would return to Earth.

Much like an orchestral conductor, determining the proper balance of trombones to violins to bases, the Gatekeeper sets the intention to identify the precise vibrational patterns needed to achieve the desired results. She works swiftly, using ritualistic hand gestures, though the real magic is in mind. She re-verifies the results, assuring that her feelings weren’t impacting the information. After all, in one of her bodily incarnations, she had turned her back on *him*.

When confident, she speaks, “The Blue Ray vibrational pattern will be the inner circle. It will be the pebble that drops

in the pond, reverberating concentric waves. The other teams will modulate the waves. This plan will only work, however, if Hakathriel joins us. The Dark and the Light must work together.”

To the Gatekeeper, it seems only fitting that the Blue Ray Alliance is on the front line, the pebble in the pond, given that they were indirectly involved in the fall of Atlantis, humanity’s fall in consciousness shortly after its creation. The team had been back to modulate these actions numerous times in ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, the time of Merlin, but the time humanity seems to remember the most, though not accurately, is the time of Jesus.

The Gatekeeper calls out the individual teams in her mind, and correspondingly, each squad takes its position, forming a series of large concentric rings that look much like a bullseye from above.

At the center of the group’s configuration, is the Blue Ray Alliance, where the Gatekeeper looks at her colleagues. She knows this team very well. The last time they had all been together in a timeline, they were all Essenes. The Gatekeeper nods at Lady Anna, Mother Mary, Jesus, Magdalene, Archangel Mikael, and a Galactic Being.

“I told you that this would only work if Hakathriel joins us,” the Gatekeeper says to the Blue Ray Alliance.

The team knows that working with Hakathriel, the fallen archangel would place the project in a bit of uncertainty. But they know it is the only way. Intuitively the group works together. Simultaneously they all back up, creating a larger circle with ample space at its center.

In an instant, the Gatekeeper telepathically summons Hakathriel from beyond the Cosmic Council. She knows he gets the message instantly and yet is not surprised by his delay. She waits, eyes closed with hand stretching upwards, knowing that he will not resist her invitation to talk.

She jolts backward from the sudden rush of air caused by Hakathriel’s magnificent wings. Standing before her is the dark archangel, wings fully expanded, almost touching members of the inner circle.

Mikael responds spontaneously, his wings now enlarged, with his sword in hand, while the other members of the group stand by on alert.

Hakathriel looks around the circle at each of his adversaries. For thousands of years, these beings had been his opponent in the game, including his brother. He looks beyond the initial inner circle and sees the countless Light Beings.

Hakathriel’s wings contract and he steps toward the Gatekeeper. “What is this all about?” his voice echoes.

“The future of Earth,” the Gatekeeper says.

“It does not look very promising,” he glares.

Magdalene steps closer to him. “We’re resetting the timeline to save Gaia.”

Jesus moves forward also. “We want to give humanity a chance to choose differently.”

“You mean, not side with me?” Hakathriel asks with a smile on his face.

Lady Anna moves closer. “Your side’s success ends with planetary collapse. This loop has to stop.”

Mikael contracts his wings and sets down his sword. He approaches. “Let’s give them a chance to ascend. Brother, without it, we both lose.”

To Hakathriel, there may have been logic in that they’d both lose. Maybe it was time to end the match and take the game to a new level. He was tired of being viewed as Satan, Lucifer, and the Devil. He remembered when he was the hero in the game, not the villain. Humanity changed everything for him.

“The dark and the Light working together?” Hakathriel softens. “What do you have in mind?” he asks, though he knows because there is One Mind.

CHAPTER 1: A ROCKY START

April 26, 1978



Rebecca Griffin sits in the waiting area of the doctor's office. She pulls her long brown hair away from her face and glances at her watch; it is 11:11 a.m. George is late. Married six years, and he still apologizes for his tardiness. The physician will call for Ami soon. Ami lies in the car carrier perched on the end table.

She is expressionless and stares at the ceiling with eyes wide open, appearing to look at nothing. She makes no sound.

Rebecca glances at her daughter's medical records stuffed into the two-inch file in her hands. The last eighteen months have been a blur.

They had dreams of building their family.

Rebecca glances at her tiny, eighteen-month-old child with big brown eyes and wavy brown hair. She picks up the baby carrier and places it on the chair beside her, positioning her daughter in such a way that her eyes gaze out. As expected, without expression, the child diverts her gaze.

"What are you thinking, little one? What do you see?" she whispers. She reaches for the little arm and gently strokes it. The child gives no acknowledgment. Still.

The door opens, and George rushes in.

"Sorry I'm late. My meeting ran long." He leans over and kisses his wife lightly on her lips. Then he turns to their child. "How's my little girl this morning?" He waits for some response, and when there is none, he parks on the other side of the carrier, sandwiching Ami between them.

"Which doctor is this?" he asks.

"Hawkins."

"What does he specialize in?"

"Cerebral palsy."

"Do you think that's what's wrong with her?"

"That's why we're here, for a second opinion." She pauses. "I'd like to think there's nothing wrong with her, and she's perfect the way she is."

"We're past that, Rebecca. Perhaps we need to start exploring whether it's genetic. We *are* planning for two."

She shakes her head. "I can't think about having another child without understanding Ami and getting her the help she needs."

Another door opens, and a nurse emerges. She smiles at Rebecca and George and leans over the carrier. "Is this Ami? The doctor is ready to see her."

Dr. Hawkins silently reviews Ami's file in his office, while Rebecca and George sit across from him at his desk. He doesn't say much, from time to time, looks at Ami, who is in the bulky car seat on top of his desk. At some point, he stands, picks up the carrier, and explains that he is taking Ami to the examination room to evaluate her. "Why don't you remain here, this shouldn't take too long."

"Can't we come along?" She asks.

"I'd prefer not. I'd like to see how your daughter responds to the separation."

To George and Rebecca, it feels like their daughter is gone forever. When they finally return, the doctor places the infant carrier on top of his desk and watches the parents reunite with their child. While Ami shows no reaction to seeing her parents, Rebecca lights up, smiling at her child.

"Doctor, do you think it's CP?" George asks.

"Likely. While Ami doesn't seem to be a *classic* case, she indeed appears to be more symptomatic than not. If I were a gambling man, I'd bet it was spastic cerebral palsy.

"CP affects Ami's ability to control her muscles, which explain her stiffness and the occasional fluttering. She may or may not ever walk. She may be destined for a wheelchair.

"We don't know how much of her brain is impacted. Let me ask you, Mrs. Griffin, in the medical file it suggests that you had a healthy pregnancy and delivery. Is that accurate?"

"Yes."

"No accidents or illnesses while you were pregnant?"

Rebecca shakes her head, "No."

"No complications in childbirth?"

"No. It was a textbook pregnancy and delivery."

"Any trauma or infections when Ami was a newborn?"

"No," Rebecca answers, looking at George, and he nods. "Except she had jaundice when she was a couple-days-old."

"Ami is still young for a CP diagnosis. But I think you may need to brace yourself for the probability that it *is* cerebral palsy combined with mental retardation. This will not get any easier," Dr. Hawkins says, a bit detached.

"Meaning?" Rebecca asks.

"Meaning...the decisions you make about Ami's care will impact not only her life but also *your* lives."

"We understand that," Rebecca says, glancing at George.

"As harsh as this may sound, you may want to consider institutionalizing Ami."

"Are you serious?" Rebecca stares at the doctor in disbelief. "Ami is our daughter. We aren't going to institutionalize her!"

"Mrs. Griffin, do you have any idea of the difficulty it will be to keep her safe? You'll need to modify your home for special needs, which will be expensive and burdensome. It will impact your life and your family."

"Ami is our family." She glances at George, who is looking at the floor. "Ami is only eighteen-months old. Maybe the medical community has given up on her," she squeaks out the words, "I *never* will."

Outside the Children's Hospital, the couple is silent. They migrate toward the parking lot.

George, carrying Ami in the car seat, spots Rebecca's Pinto and walks toward it. Rebecca keys the passenger-side door and opens it. It is a mild April, in the sixties, the car is warm from the sun. George secures the infant carrier to the passenger seat then rolls down the window. Rebecca opens the window on the driver's side to cool the car.

"Do you have time for lunch before heading back to work?"

"I really shouldn't. I have a full afternoon of appointments." He avoids eye contact. He is a tall man at 6'2", and many would describe him as attractive and charismatic with deep brown eyes and a dark mustache. His mother was Latina.

"We really should talk about this... about Ami."

"What's to talk about?"

"Am I shortsighted to think we can do this?"

"I don't know. I just know that since Ami's come along, we haven't had a life. We're almost thirty, Rebecca. That's not old! When was the last time we had friends visit? Or went on a vacation? Or simply went on a bike ride or hike?"

"Are you serious?"

"Forget I said anything."

"No! You can't put the toothpaste back in the tube. Tell me what's on your mind. You've been so distant lately."

"I've had a lot of pressure at work. That's all. But how do we know Ami should be with us? She has needs that we haven't even figured out, and how are we going to pay for all this?"

"Is *that* what this is about, the money?"

"The expenses are pretty staggering!"

"Money is the least of our worries, George." Rebecca points toward Ami in the car, "That's our daughter. We're not abandoning her. We love her. We'll figure out what help is available." She walks around the car to meet him. At 5'9", she is tall and slim, fit from carrying Ami and choosing to walk most everywhere since she hadn't been able to hike since Ami's birth. "We can do this, George. I'll figure it out. I promise."

A sudden gust of wind blows Rebecca's long hair in her face.

George pushes the hair away so he can see her eyes.

"I will figure everything out," she says. "I'll learn to navigate the system and understand what we can get to pay for these expenditures. I'll manage our expenses better. I promise."

He pulls her to him.

In the safety of his arms, she affirms, "No institution will ever give Ami the love she needs."

Minutes later, Rebecca is behind the wheel, and George is gone, off to sell a copier or two. Ami is beside her. As usual, the toddler stares at seemingly nothing.

What Rebecca does not see is the scaled-down archangel perched on top of the dashboard. She is blind to the sacred geometry in the ethers, and the being's pink and green aura.

Metatron's voice is deep. "Ami, you got this!"

Ami stares at him.

Rebecca starts the car and is ready to back up when she sniffs. "Gosh, Ami, do you smell the chilis?" Certainly not expecting her to answer, she looks in the backseat. Nothing is there.

Metatron smiles. Rebecca senses him.

CHAPTER 2: A GLIMMER OF HOPE

September 23, 1980

One in 5000 children has autism.



Today is like every other day; it is four o'clock, and Rebecca is at the Sewall Child Development Center to pick up Ami from school. Every day she watches the other children reunite with their parents. The children, once eyeing their loved ones, would light up. Big smiles and shouts of excitement would ensue. Those who could do so would run to their parents. Others, on crutches or leg braces, would eagerly plod toward their mother or father and throw themselves into their arms.

Day after day, Rebecca hopes that Ami acknowledges her in some small way. Today, she walks into the classroom, and the remaining children glance at the door, hoping to see their parents.

"Ami, it's your mother!" One of the kids eagerly calls out.

Ami is in her wheelchair in the corner of the room. She makes no effort to look at her mother. One of the staff approaches. "Ami had a little incident with lunch." Rebecca sees sauce splattered over Ami's shirt.

"Looks like spaghetti to me!" Rebecca smiles.

"Yes. Ami didn't care for it," the attendant says.

Rebecca approaches Ami. She reaches to embrace her, but Ami's back stiffens with her contact, and she screams. Rebecca patiently lets go of her daughter. Every day she'd tell Ami the same thing, hoping and trusting that one day she'd respond with less disdain.

"Mommy is so happy to see you, Ami. I missed you today! I love you."

Then, ceremoniously, she rises and wheels Ami out of the classroom, with tears streaming down her cheeks. Today is like every other day until she passes the office on the way out.

"Mrs. Griffin?"

Rebecca wipes the tears from her eyes, collects herself, and turns to greet the principal coming toward her. "Mrs. Jacobs, how are you?"

"Busy as usual," she says with a slight smile. "I was wondering if Ami had ever seen Dr. Remington over at Children's Hospital. He seems to be one of the area's leading experts in children's special needs."

"Yes, Scott Remington?"

"That's him."

"He has evaluated Ami, and we have our follow-up visit this Thursday."

"Excellent. I hope the doctor can help. I've heard good things about him from other programs in the area. Gotta run," Mrs. Jacobs says, then ducks into a nearby class.

It had become a full-time job for Rebecca over the years to manage Ami's care. It never seemed to end, between coordinating doctor's appointments, researching programs, filling out applications, writing letters. That was her job, and she took it seriously, while George sold photocopiers, and was quite good at it.

The entire experience of caring for Ami was an inward journey for Rebecca. Their lives had been going to plan until Ami was born, then all their dreams came to a screeching halt. There were times when she missed being a science teacher, her colleagues, and friends. Rebecca missed the dinners, the gatherings, the weekend getaways. When she heard that their friends had planned the annual ski trip without even mentioning it

to her and George, she spiraled into depression, self-pity, and anger. She crumbled. Ami was such a mystery to them and the medical community. Like hitting a lightbulb switch, though, a squeal from her daughter would bring her back.

It wasn't the financial burden that haunted Rebecca; it was the loneliness, even though she wasn't alone. She was Ami's full-time caregiver, but there was no communication between them. Ami never showed any sign that she knew or appreciated what she did for her. It was as if Ami had an impenetrable protective barrier, and no matter what she said or did, Ami never acknowledged her. She might as well have been a piece of furniture. The only time Ami responded to her was one that brought her to tears.

It was like every day. Rebecca was in the kitchen preparing their lunches, and Ami in her wheelchair by the table. "What do you want to do today, dear one?"

Rebecca dressed the table setting in front of her daughter, who stared at the ceiling. She moved into Ami's line of sight, and her daughter looked away. She began humming the tune she had sung to Ami since she was an infant, then followed with singing. "Twinkle, twinkle, little star. How I wonder what you are. Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky." She hummed.

'Certainly one day, Ami will remember the melody with fondness.'

That day, however, Ami didn't even register her voice. When Jordan, their cat, sauntered into the room, intrigued by what Rebecca set on the table, the calico tested her patience. Jordan jumped on the table, and she was there to swiftly sweep her away, but not without lightly brushing against Ami.

It was her daughter's scream that threw her off. How

could it be that the only response she got from her daughter, ever, was screeching out of pain?

That realization brought the tears, and they didn't stop for some time.

Later that week, Rebecca is sitting across the desk from Dr. Remington. A glance around his spacious office boasts degrees from universities, including the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

She is not exactly sure what to expect from this doctor who had come highly recommended by Ami's primary physician three months earlier. It took *way* too much time to get in to see him. The initial meeting was simply a handshake, and Rebecca hopes today's meeting is worth the two months' wait.

"Well, it's so sweet to see you today, Mrs. Griffin," the physician says. "Mr. Griffin was unable to make it?"

"Nice to see you too, Dr. Remington—"

"Scott, you can call me Dr. Scott."

"Certainly, please call me Rebecca, and George is traveling, so he can't make it today."

"And I see Ami is doing well!" He says, looking directly at her.

As usual, Ami acts as if he isn't in the room.

"How are you feeling today, Ami?" He moves to a chair beside her wheelchair. "Don't you think it's time to start walking?" He moves so that he is in Ami's line of vision, and she diverts her eyes quickly.

"Walking?" Rebecca asks with more hope than she prefers.

"I don't think Ami has CP," Dr. Scott says unexpectedly. He turns to Rebecca. "Have you heard of autism?"

"Autism? No, can't say I have."

"Autism is a bit of a mystery," he says, still observing Ami.

"And you think Ami has it?" Rebecca retrieves a small pad and pen from her purse and begins writing. "How do you spell it?"

"A-U-T-I-S-M."

"I don't know anything about autism."

"It's a developmental disorder that impairs a person's ability to communicate. It impacts the nervous system. Unfortunately, it's chronic, it's manageable, though, and there are some treatments."

Rebecca feels her heart skip a beat. "Are you telling me that she will improve with treatment?"

"With treatment, her symptoms can be *managed*."

"You mean, we may be able to communicate with each other?"

"There aren't many treatments, Rebecca. Autism is not common, so there hasn't been as much research as other disorders. CP, for example, affects one in every 325 children, but only one in every 5000 kids has autism."

"What are the treatments?"

"Unfortunately, the treatments sound barbaric. Institutionalized children have received electroconvulsive therapy, behavioral therapy using punishment, and even LSD."

"Are you serious?"

"Regrettably, yes, the treatments are indeed archaic, but things may be changing a bit. There's some discussion that the next Diagnostic and Statistical Manual will include autism. That will encourage the research community to seek more treatments. Until then, there are some communication tools, cue cards that may prove helpful. But first, I think we need to do some physical therapy to help Ami walk and be more mobile."

"You think she can?"

"Yes, I do." Dr. Scott pulls a paper from his desk. "I have a list of books that may be helpful to understand autism."

Referring to some paperwork, "Also, I see that Ami attends the Sewell school?"

"Yes."

"How is it going there?"

"I'm not sure what to say. It feels like a daycare center."

He hands Rebecca a large envelope. "I believe when the school knows what they are dealing with, things will improve. Lastly, I want Ami to be evaluated by our Physical Therapy Department so we can put together a program to get her mobile."

Rebecca leaves her appointment feeling something she hasn't felt in years. She can't put her finger on it, and then it hits her, 'It's hope.' She excitedly brings Ami to her class at the school, but before she leaves, she goes to the principal's office, and the door is open. She knocks gently, announcing herself.

"Come on in," Mrs. Jacobs says.

Rebecca can't hold back, "Ami and I met with Dr. Scott this morning."

"Dr. Scott?"

Rebecca smiles. "Dr. Scott Remington."

"Oh, and how did it go?"

"He thinks Ami has autism. I'm heading out to the library now to pick up some books on it. Are you familiar with it?"

"I can't say I've had anyone in my school that was autistic, but I am aware that some schools have used picture cards for communication. That is encouraging. I'll talk to Ms. Stephens about introducing cards in the classroom."

"Thank you."

When George returns from his business trip to Connecticut later that week, Rebecca greets him at the backdoor of their Denver Park Hill home. She hugs him. "I have encouraging news about Ami."

George sets down his briefcase, eyeing Ami in the nearby wheelchair. He also sees a stack of books on the kitchen table.

"What is it?"

"Ami had her follow up with Dr. Scott Remington today. He doesn't think Ami has CP. He thinks it's autism."

After a welcomed discussion about Ami, George is grinning from ear to ear. "This is excellent news. He thinks she'll even be able to walk?"

"Yes! PT begins next week."

"Wow! What a switch." Excitedly he pulls Rebecca to him, and they kiss. "I know this gives us some hope for Ami. Do you think we can consider having another child? Ami is now four."

Rebecca knows that was their initial dream. They wanted at least two children, two years apart; then, she would return to teaching when both children were in school.

'How can I think of having another child, when there's so much uncertainty with Ami?' Rebecca ponders. She knew so little about autism, and apparently, the medical community was also ignorant of it.

Rebecca looks over at her daughter, who is now drooling on her shirt. She moves to her, and with the bandana tied loosely around Ami's neck, she gently wipes the dribble from her face and clothing.

But, Rebecca can't imagine taking her energy away from her daughter at this point. "I don't think it'd be fair to Ami. We may be able to communicate with her! Don't you believe that we should devote our energy to her?"

She sees the disappointment in her husband's eyes. How can she explain that she's Ami's advocate? She needs to be her daughter's voice. After four years of being in the darkness, there appears to be a glimmer of hope.

"George, let's see how she responds to physical therapy and school. Then we can revisit this."

CHAPTER 3: CARE FOR MILK OR JUICE?

February 25, 1984



George is on his knees on the hardwood floors of the spare bedroom directly across from Ami's bedroom. There are large corrugated boxes scattered around the small room, and as he opens each and removes the content, he becomes more excited. "This is going to be an excellent opportunity for us," he shouts to Rebecca, who is with Ami in the kitchen.

He knows she can hear him, as the two main-floor bedrooms feed into the dining room, which is next to the kitchen. "It means that rather than going to the office to schedule my appointments on Mondays, I can do it here, from home!" He picks up a clunky monitor and sets it on a desk.

"That's great, George!" She calls out from the kitchen.

"It's all part of a study the company is conducting on telecommuting. The only thing is, I need to do my reports. No more secretary."

Rebecca doesn't sound so sincere, "Poor baby," she smiles and winks at Ami, who is sitting at the kitchen table.

"This machine costs \$4,000! It's an IBM personal computer." George places the keyboard and mouse in front of the monitor. "It has two gigabytes of storage and includes 256 kB of RAM." He then feeds the cords behind the furniture and connects them to the PC beneath the desk.

When he's satisfied that everything is correct, he begins tidying the area. He combines a couple of cartons and picks up another in the dining room. With the boxes in hand, he goes into the kitchen where Rebecca prepares lunch, and Ami sits

at the table playing with her favorite saltshaker.

"And," he continues as he approaches the back door to dispose of the trash, "we get to write off the expense of a home office!"

"Daddy is very excited," she says to Ami.

Ami gets up from the table and waddles slowly to the back window. She turns and shuffles to the dining room entry, where the floor changes from tile to hardwood. Here, she turns around and walks back to the window, bumping into one of the chairs.

Her walking improved over the years, although her gait was unusual. She was unsteady on her feet, and at times, she walked on her toes. She would repeat her footpath, sometimes for an hour.

George comes back inside, "Hello princess," he says as he squeezes by Ami to return to his new office. Here he picks up another load.

"I almost have lunch ready."

"I'll grab something later!" he says as he passes through the kitchen with more boxes.

"You will not. We need to demonstrate consistent meal patterns for Ami. Please sit with us for at least fifteen minutes."

Ami is a very picky eater and objects to specific colors, smells, textures, and temperatures. There seems to be no rhyme or reason for what she likes, and meals had become a dreaded time to him.

"Okay!" He complies. "Do you have a minute to see the office?"

She stirs the contents of a pot on the stove, lowers the temperature, and turns, "Sure."

George leads Rebecca out of the kitchen, and she notices that Ami is following them. Rebecca slows at the threshold to the dining room, where the floor transitions from tile to hardwood. She knows Ami will struggle here and waits

for her. When Ami reaches her, she takes her daughter's forearm and leads her around the dining table, then into an alcove where she lets go, and Ami follows George into the small room.

The spare bedroom is no longer a guestroom. There is a desk, file cabinet, and futon.

"Isn't it cool?" George says as he approaches the computer. He pushes a button and waits for it to turn on.

To Rebecca, it looks clunky. Having a computer in their home is unusual. "You know how to work this thing?"

"The company is arranging classes for the program's participants. I know how to turn it on and get past the DOS prompt."

"The what?"

"DOS is the operating system." At that moment, the computer monitor comes alive with a black screen and white letters ending with C:_. He tries to impress his wife, types something, and the display changes colors, and moments later, a white screen appears. "This is a new word processing program called Microsoft Word."

A clicking noise comes from Ami's throat. She had seemed disinterested in what they were doing until the monitor displays colors. Now she approaches looking at the screen.

"Want to see the computer, Ami?" George asks. He guides her to the machine. With his index finger, he presses the keys.

"It's like a word processor?" Rebecca asks.

"Yes, but much more powerful. Have you used a word processor before?"

"Of course! All the time, when I was a teacher."

"Maybe you can teach me a thing or two," he suggests.

"You know, it would be beneficial for writing my correspondences about Ami with it. That way, I don't have to type all the letters from the beginning each time."

"I don't see any reason why you couldn't do that," he offers. "The printer should be in next week. Let me get trained on it, and I'll teach you."

Moments later, the family is in the kitchen, and Ami sits at the table, moving her fingers in front of her eyes. She seems intrigued by the motion of her hands dangling and fixated on the repetitive movements of her fingers.

Rebecca brings a large picture card to the table and sets it by Ami. There is a grid with images of different food and beverages on the cardstock.

"What would you like to drink?" she asks Ami. "Milk or juice?" She gestures toward the card and repeats the question while pointing to the corresponding pictures. "Milk or Juice?"

Ami's hands awkwardly try to aim at an image, but she points to a picture of pizza instead.

Rebecca takes Ami's right forearm to steady it. Patiently, she asks again. "Milk or Juice?"

This time, while Rebecca stabilizes Ami's arm, she points to a picture of juice.

George watches amusingly. "We don't have much juice left. There's plenty of milk, though."

Rebecca goes to the fridge and removes a bottle of orange juice and empties it into a glass. "But she wants juice."

"Rebecca, you guided her hand to the picture."

"I did not! I keep telling you this," she says a bit miffed. "When are you going to listen to me? I don't guide her. I provide resistance. I've been trying to show you this for a week now. Do you think you can get over your bad self and just listen to me for a moment?"

"You have my attention," he says.

Rebecca positions herself beside Ami, who seems disinterested in what her parents are discussing. "Ami, Mommy wants to show Daddy that you understand the cards—and that

I am not guiding you." She places another card beside Ami. "Can you tell me what you want for dessert?"

Ami's hand moves uncontrollably and clumsily slams down on the visual cue card.

Rebecca places her left hand on Ami's right shoulder. "I see that you want something, for sure," she says calmly to Ami while looking at George. "I take Ami's arm in my hand," she explains, "I can feel her movements now, and I'm not holding her back or guiding her. I am just feeling her motion. Much of her movement is spastic and seems to have no intention. That's the only way I can explain it. So, I feel her natural movements that seem uncontrollable."

"Kind of like monitoring?" He asks.

"I guess so. Then, I pose a question and *feel* a difference in Ami's motions, but if I allow her strength to move without providing resistance, she will lunge uncontrollably. It's as if her motor skills are off, and there's only one speed, fast. So, I slow her hand down by applying ever so slight resistance, *not guidance*."

Rebecca asks, "What do you want for dessert?"

Immediately, Rebecca feels the forward motion of Ami's hand. She applies slight resistance against the forward movement, which changes Ami's hand from oscillating back and forth to an intentional calm and pointing motion. Ami's index finger moves to an image of pudding.

George watches amused, yet still in disbelief. "Repeat that, without looking, and you'll have my attention."

"Why are you such a doubting Thomas?" Rebecca places her left hand back on Ami's shoulder and retakes her arm. She looks at Ami. "Sweetheart, can you point to the pudding again?"

Ami doesn't make a move. George waits, impatiently.

Rebecca realizes that she had not asked the right question. Of course, Ami can point to the pudding. Still looking at Ami,

she says, "What would you like for dessert?"

Rebecca stares at her husband. She senses a movement of Ami's arm and provides slight resistance, resulting in Ami pointing at the pudding while she facilitates blindly.

"My God!" George whispers. "She did it!" He says excitedly. "Why didn't you tell me?"

Rebecca faces her husband, "Are you kidding? I've been trying to tell you this for a week!"

"You know what this means?" he asks.

"What?"

"This is the first time we are communicating with her."

The parents look at Ami, who is babbling and repeating gibberish, nothing that makes any sense. As usual, Ami expresses no emotion nor interest in her parents.

Rebecca smiles at her daughter. Somehow, she feels they are on the precipice of something much bigger than communicating with picture cards. This journey with Ami had been a lesson in unconditional love. After Ami's diagnosis with autism, it hit her that her daughter was alone. It was her job to protect her, and something changed over the years. She went from feeling obligated to care for her, to loving to care for her. When it hit her that it didn't matter to her if Ami even knew she existed, she knew it was unconditional love.

Rebecca knew there was something inside Ami that ran deep, though she couldn't explain it. Most of the time, Ami wouldn't make eye contact with anyone, but from time-to-time, Rebecca had held the gaze of her child, and she saw something that she couldn't explain. While the doctors had ruled out the CP diagnosis four years earlier, they never eliminated the diagnosis of mental retardation. But, she sensed there was awareness. Could it be that Ami wasn't retarded, yet lived in a body that just didn't cooperate? Could it be that Ami was captive because her brain wasn't communicating with her body? Or, was Ami wired differently?

Those early years were the most challenging, yet she vowed, early on, to be an advocate for her daughter because Ami had no voice of her own.

George, on the other hand, has more challenges seeing hope for his daughter. He, of course, loves her, but he loathes the situation. George feels the weight of the world on his shoulders. Where his wife sees promise, he worries about making them comfortable. He knows his daughter will require assistance for the rest of her life and knows she will never live on her own. His deepest fear, though, is that Rebecca will not want more children.

Consequently, George had thrown himself into his work. He knew his outgoing personality, resilient nature, and tenacity was the perfect combination to excel at Xerox.

Now, as he sees his daughter's finger point at the picture of pudding, he must do whatever he can do to support her growth. 'But what? What can I do?'

"This is encouraging news," he says. "I have a couple of proposals to write." And, he retreats to his new office, where he sets out to help where he can, selling photocopiers.

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