

# *A Journey To Eden*



By: Dan Ford

I'm not certain why I chose to drive out of the city that bright sunny morning instead of heading directly to work, as I do day after day. I was just following an impulse.

It wasn't exactly that I had no control over this impulse and it seemed that I was somehow given a suggestion and then decided to go along with it after I had settled in behind the steering wheel. But no matter how I came to this juncture, I was on my way out of the city and focused on looking for someplace that was remote and more importantly, free of cityscapes and way, way too many people. It was certainly a better choice than to remain in the general funk I have found myself in lately.

After about two hours had gone by, a little too swiftly it seemed, and the scenery had become devoid of buildings and people, I saw a dirt road slightly ahead on the right that left the highway and immediately started to transcend a heavily treed hill. With no hesitation, I exited the highway and guided the car up and over that incline and saw that there were many more hillocks ahead of me. Up to this point, I was comfortable enough embarking on this rather mild and yet enjoyable highway adventure that I did not fully comprehend what I was doing or where I was going. But now with the view of the country road stretching ahead of me for as far as I could see, and surely far beyond what I could not see, I started to feel a type of excitement that I had not been familiar with up to this point in my life.

As I sped onward along this dirt road at a fast but comfortable clip, I watched in the side rear view mirrors as we created large identical arching plumes of dust billowing on both sides of the car. When I focused ahead on where we were going, the visual sensations suddenly changed for me. It was almost as if I was watching this journey from the perspective of being in a movie and sensing our forward movement as an uninvolved passenger.



When I glanced upward into the rear view mirror, I could still see the dust plumes but not the dirt road we had been passing over. It was just the cloud of dirt particles disappearing into a lush green forest behind me.

This journey continued for a period that seemed not to be composed of time or space. It was just happening. I settled back into this strange sense of not being totally in control but still not feeling out of control either.

And then the car came ever so slowly to a full stop. For an undeterminable amount of time, I sat in the drivers seat and took in the view out of the windows. The car had stopped at the top of a high cliff and ahead I saw a long view into a spectacular valley flanked by the most intense emerald green forests that I had ever seen or even imagined. In the middle of that valley was a

meandering river that sparkled with iridescent blue diamond hues as it traversed rifts and rockeries on its path to an unseen destination. A fine mist was coming up from the depths below the cliff top. This was enough of a lure to pull me out of the car to see where or what that mist was emanating from.

As my shoes touched the grass, I was amazed at how firm, and yet so soft the texture was and each step I took resulted in an upward whiff of fragrance that brought an ever so alluring and delicious sensation of the essence of something green that was fresh and alive. I had an immediate desire to take my shoes off to better experience this sensation and perhaps even throw off all my clothing and immerse my entire being into this strange but wonderful new experience.

I resisted that temptation and walked to the top of the cliff and looked downward. I saw that the mist was coming from a cascade formed by a large volume of water gushing out of an opening in the escarpment wall and falling many hundreds of feet below me, forming that awesome blue river. And to my right, partially obscured by a large flowering red rhododendron, was a stairway cut out of the escarpment boulders. It was gradually descending at many sharp angles along the face of the cliff.

I couldn't resist the impulse to follow this stairway down the cliff walls and as I descended, I passed under the massive waterfall that was so thick and heavy that I didn't get wet when I walked under it. All along the passage downward, I saw spectacular ferns, moss and flowering air plants covering the rocky walls. There were also dry pockets that contained many bird nests with their inhabitants, flying in and out of them without any concern of my passing by near them. The birds were different from any I have ever seen before. They were similar in form and actions to wrens, warblers and sparrows, but their colors were varied and



very intense. Also all of the birds had brilliant blue eyes. Their feathers were iridescent red, blue, green and some even orange, very much like we see on hummingbirds. There were deeper crevices that formed small caves and provided windows into the interior of the escarpment. I could see strands of glowing beads and various bioluminescent creatures that looked like thousands of colored fireflies.

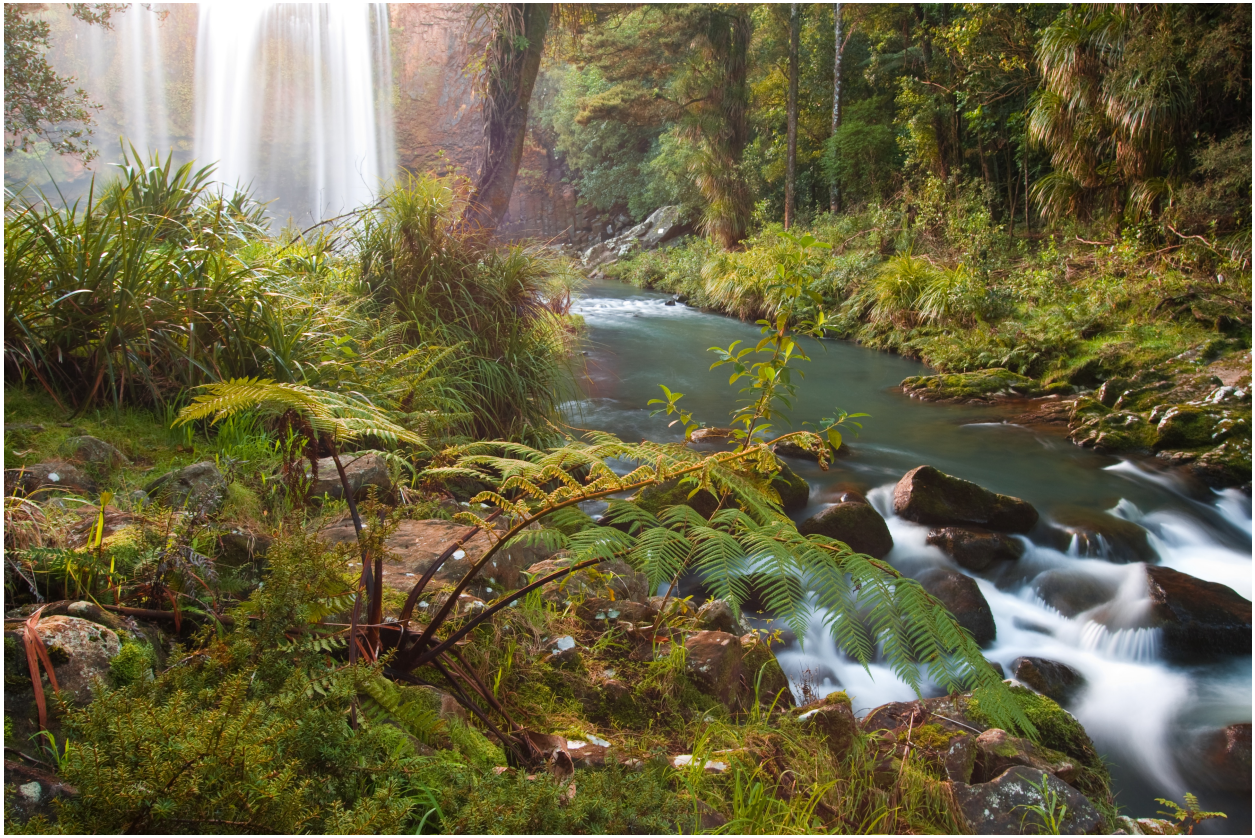
When I arrived into the forest at the base of the wall, I was amazed to see vegetation that was not at all what I would expect to see in our forests. I moved through great drifts of tropical looking foliage that was mixed within the more familiar varieties that I could identify as native to our woods. There were huge multi-colored blooms and bloom clusters everywhere I looked. Hundreds of butterflies and bees were very actively sharing those blossoms and little wonder for that. The fragrance in the air was



emanating more as sensory waves instead of providing a hint of any particular odor.

Not knowing where I was heading, I wandered through the forest until I reached a clearing alongside the river. This waterway was even more beautiful up close than it was from the top of the cliff. I couldn't resist the urge to take my shoes off and wade within the shallow waters of the shoreline.

Just as there were fantastic beautiful creatures and features on the land and in the air, I could see spectacular fish gliding over and around the smooth shiny green and aquamarine pebbles and stones. When they saw my feet, these fish swam over to them and nibbled on my toes ever so nicely. What an unbelievable sensation it was, as those nibbles felt more like caresses than coming from something intent on eating. Because I was next to a



large smooth boulder on the shoreline, I sat down and let the river denizens have their way with my feet. To say that I was content is practicing understatement to a ridiculous extreme.



So there I was, perched on this somehow comfortable boulder with my feet dangling in the river. My eyes, with a clarity I didn't know I even had, were taking in the aerial dances of vibrant birds, bees, dragon flies and even more unrecognizable creatures as they took to the air, while some of my new fishy friends joined with other newcomers in the fondling of my toes. The clear blue sky was busy conjuring up exceptionally cute cartoon characters out of fluffy pure white clouds, with the help of bright sunlight, adding to their contours and definitions. I could focus on a multitude of chirps from the birds, the buzzing of the insects, a slight murmur of the breeze and the beautiful coordinated sounds of water lapping upon the rivers shoreline and splashing over rocks as the water rushed onward to it's destination.

I saw many different animals coming out of the forest and arriving at the river to have a drink. Some were tiny, such as the rabbits and squirrels, and others were very large including a massive black bear and a panther. Both crouched down, side by side to lap up the water. They simply glanced over toward me. I could almost imagine that they smiled, if such a reaction was even possible for these animals.

It occurred to me that the things I was seeing and experiencing were not exactly normal. The colors of the flowers, the birds and everything else were far too intense. The animals were somewhat familiar but definitely enhanced and they were not acting like I would have expected.

And come to think of it my arrival into this environment was certainly suspect. What exactly was happening here? Up to this moment I had been too entranced to even consider that I should question my surroundings.



While I was absorbed with these thoughts, I felt a gentle tap on my shoulder. Somehow, this did not startle me and I slowly turned to see who or what had done this and I saw the most unusual sight I have ever seen. The shape was humanoid in form and it seemed that I could see through it, ..... or could I? At first I saw a feminine figure with all of the details and proportion of a beautiful woman. Then it immediately changed to a masculine form and here again it demonstrated the characteristics of the ideal male physique. Ideal that is, if you accepted that you could probably pass your hand directly through this form, if you attempted it.

It then settled into a beautiful female form and started transforming into a more solid consistency. Her brilliant hair seemed to be composed of silken strands of silvery blue. She was also totally nude, but when I reacted with a shocked look, a beautiful aqua hued silken dress immediately appeared to drape itself over her body. Her emerald eyes locked on mine and then she completed my capture with a radiant smile.

I stammered, “Who are you?” “What are you?”

“My name is Gaia and I am a part of all that you see here.”

“Your name is familiar to me. Doesn’t Gaia mean Mother of the Earth?”

Still smiling, she replied. “It does mean that and many other things as well. I represent nature and all the elements that manifest upon and within this planet.”

“Well then Gaia, why am I seeing you here and experiencing this awesome place?”



“Because you have the need to do so. Obviously, you have found yourself stuck in a situation that you are not pleased with and have a great need to alter your present existence.”

I didn't have to think very long about her statement. I had been in a semi-depressive state of mind for quite awhile now and it was beginning to wear me down. I was not functioning well in my work as a designer and that affected everything else in my life. I was not interacting with my family, my friends or my co-workers like I used to or most certainly the way I wanted to. I was taking little pleasure in eating, drinking, watching TV, reading books or following sports as I normally did. And to make matters worse, I didn't even know why this state of affairs happened or even considered what to do about it. But, apparently Gaia did and she continued.

“You are a very creative individual. That is a blessing, but that blessing comes with responsibility. You must create or you must suffer the consequences. The act of creativity is aligned with the act of growth and personal expansion. If creation is suppressed, a condition of atrophy is established in both the focus of the creator and the creation alike. Do you understand this?”

I absorbed this idea into my brain for a few seconds before replying. “It’s a new concept to me, but it makes sense. You are actually offering me the reason that I have been feeling really down lately. It’s because I haven’t been putting forth my best creative efforts in my work. Is that right?”

Gaia responded. “That’s it, and it’s not just your work. A creative effort is also essential when dealing with your family, your friends and your associates. And when you deny that creative extension, you are letting yourself, your loved ones, your clients and even the entire world down. Atrophy sets in and then your personal life and various associations become poisoned by it’s degenerative influence.”

I thought about these words for a little bit and then asked. “Well then Gaia, what do I do to remedy this situation?”

Gaia smiled and gently placed her hands on my shoulders. “You do what you are doing right now while sitting here on this boulder at the rivers edge. All that you now see and have seen since you arrived in this dimension has been created by your imagination. All of these flowers and plants. All of the birds, the butterflies and other fantastic animals. The wondrous scents, the bracing breezes and the awesome scenery, and that includes me as well. Your consciousness conjured all of this up to create a reality that was meaningful to you.”

I sat in silence for a few moments and gazed into her sparkling emerald eyes, but finally spoke. “Am I dreaming all of this Gaia? Is any part of what I am experiencing right now a reality?”

She took her hands off of my shoulders and stepped away from me a little as she replied. “There are many realities and in actuality, no limit to how many there can be. You can always visit this reality that you are currently manifesting in, or even create other new ones of your choosing. The reality you are currently most familiar with and involved in is an obstructed form of reality. Because of the inherent laws in that reality, you are somewhat limited in the expression of your imagination, but by no means unable to create wondrous things. In this dimension or reality we are currently in, you merely have to think it in order to manifest it, whereas in your obstructed reality you have to work a little harder to do almost the same thing. Even in an obstructed reality, you only have to imagine it, believe in it and then expend some energy in order to make it relevant within that reality.”

Then Gaia began to become less solid in appearance and her form became a shimmering image of silver light and began to fade, but she still had one more thing to say before leaving. “Come back to this place whenever you wish to or need to, but perhaps you can learn more and benefit the most by using your talents to create something useful in a venue that is a little more difficult to manage. Your present obstructed reality provides very well for that outcome.” And then she vanished.

I was saddened to see Gaia leave, but her thoughts stayed with me and after several minutes of replaying them over in my mind, I looked down at my feet and saw that they were beginning to take on that same silvery sheen as they began to disappear. This

fadeout moved upward and soon my legs and then my torso had



simply vanished and then I closed my eyes.

When I opened them, I was no longer in that magical and beautiful place by the river, but behind the wheel of my car and obviously getting ready to pull out of my garage to drive to my office. I was back in my obstructed reality, but I knew that I was no longer the same depressed person I had been when I first settled into my car some time, or perhaps no time ago.

I would never forget my experience in my own personal Eden and I will never forget Gaia and the lessons she taught me.

I was and am a landscape design professional who now understands that I exist to be a creator and also understand how critical it is that I use my current and future experiences to evolve into the best creator I can be. Perhaps there will be those days when I will start to descend into that dispirited state again, but I know now that I can always use my imagination to leave here and go visit Gaia again.