

THE KEEPIAN

FRANK DESMEDI

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Finally! Yes! I finally met him!

But, let me tell you all about it, from the very beginning.

Yesterday afternoon, at the time everyone shies away from the harshness of the tropical sun, I was walking on one of the narrow streets of the old part of the city.

Amid the suffocating heat, I climbed and descended the steep old staircases of the timeworn sidewalk, the ones that were installed when the town turned into a city.



To make things worse, I was quite annoyed by the eternal callus that I have right here, on this foot. See it?

—Well,— I thought confidently —*I'll soon reach the main avenue and be able to sit on one of the shaded plaza's benches.*



Suddenly, I had the strange feeling that something was following me. Covertly, I turned around to take a look. But... nothing. The darn ups-and-downs of the many staircases could easily hide anyone.

Now, let me clarify that it's not that I had actually seen or heard anything suspicious. No, it was the peculiar feeling, you know, of not being completely alone.

I kept on walking. But just before starting to go down a particularly long and very inclined staircase, I stopped, again turned around furtively, and carefully looked back, and for a second time... nothing!

All that I could see was a fat man, with his shirt rolled up above his big belly. He was comfortably sitting in a chair that was propped against the wall, enjoying the cool and shady hallway of the house on the other side of the street. Shrugging, I continued to descend the old staircase, holding on to the rickety iron railing. Step by step, distressed, enduring the merciless pain caused by my callus, and struggling with the oppressive heat, I kept going on.

I was more or less at the end of the staircase when, unexpectedly, I found a recess in the wall. Impulsively, without thinking twice about it, I ducked into it so as to wait and surprise whoever was following me so stealthily.

While I waited—let be honest with you—I felt a mixture of impatience, fear, and regret. And, unwittingly, I began to reflect on how risky my improvised plan was.

What if I was getting into something that I'd regret later on? What if it was a mugger... or something worse? Added to this, the impassive sun that scorched me and the absence of a compassionate breeze were not making things any easier.

Big drops of sweat rolled down my face and breathing became increasingly difficult. All the while I thought, —*Why the delay? Is all this just my imagination? Ow! How this darn callus hurts! Perhaps it would be better to let it go and be on my way...* But, surmounting my growing anguish, the pain, and the tremendous heat, I resolved to continue my investigation.



As after several long minutes nothing happened, I decided to sneak a quick look and... there he was! Yes, sir! And in broad daylight, too!

At first, I couldn't believe my eyes. But the more I looked, the more convinced I became of his presence! At that moment, like a lightning bolt, many of the half-forgotten moments of my childhood quickly passed through my mind. All of a sudden I remembered the many games and charades with which my grandfather cleverly convinced me to go to bed, owed to the next day being a school-day. Yes, in a flash, I recalled his witty tales regarding the magical inhabitants of the "Edge of Reality." All this welled up in my mind as I

watched —hypnotized— the small figure that was nervously looking for something on the steps that separated us.

Quietly I stepped out of my concealment to place myself in front of the small figure that was coming down the stairs and... Well, what can I say! When he saw me, he was so surprised that he fell seated on the step behind him. He opened his mouth as if to say something, but was dumbstruck, with his big eyes wide open. Several times, he looked me up and down, and finally kept his eyes glued on my shoes.

When I noticed the state of shock the little guy was in, I said very gently, —Don't be afraid. I'm sorry I scared you. I didn't think that...

But, I had to stop in mid-sentence because, to my utter amazement, the little guy had begun to fade —yes, you got it right— *to disappear!* Very quickly, the greyish colors of the steps behind him began to show through his normal features.

—*What was it? What was that phrase!?*— My mind raced at top speed, as I struggled to close the gaps that the years had carved in my memory, —*Was it “super-cali-fragilistic?” No, no. That's from that movie... “Shazam!”? No, that's not it either. Ah, yes... I got it!*— Quickly, I said out loud the strange words and curiously the little guy —instantly— stopped his “fading away” or whatever you can call that.

Wanting to calm him down, in a very serene voice, I told him —Don't be afraid, I'm not going to hurt you. I know of your existence and that of the others of your kind. I'm the grandson of Mr. Baxter. He told me all about you guys, although that was many years ago. That's why I knew about your great ability to slip away and that if I said the special words, you wouldn't be able to go until I gave you permission, right?

I'm telling you, the only thing the little being did was stay very still, remain semi-transparent, and unsure of what to do next. After a few minutes he said, —Yes, that's right... Now, *release me!*

—All in good time, little one. But please, don't be afraid, I'm not going to harm you. Tell you what, as we can't continue to speak here, in the middle of the street, promise to meet me elsewhere and I'll let you go now. How about it? You could come to my place, at any time you prefer. What do you say?

Maybe it was the sincere tone of my request or the reference made to my charismatic grandfather —who knows why— but the small being began to “un-dissolve” and “fill up” with his own features. Once again he looked me over, up and down, and after a thoughtful moment, he said, —If I go to your place, do you promise to let me leave whenever I wish to? Without trying to restrain me, and without imposing any other condition?

—Yes, of course!— I said hurriedly, barely believing my good luck, —I promise not to hinder your arrival or your departure in any way. You'll be able to leave anytime you want.

—All right, you seem trustworthy enough. Besides, under the present circumstances, I don't have much of a choice. I'll be there tonight. Now, hurry up and say that I can go, *I'm very busy!*

—Yes, yes. Right away. But first, tell me, who do I have the pleasure of speaking to? And wait a minute to give you my address.— I said while I searched my pockets for a pencil and paper.

—You wouldn't be able to pronounce my name, and I know where you live. Now, hurry, *say that I can go!!*

—Okay, okay. Calm down. “You're free to follow your path to wherever you wish to go...”— I hadn't finished the phrase when he vanished —*poof!*— instantly!

Now, let me tell you that I'm not given to hallucinations or to drinking and that I'm not superstitious nor do I believe in fantasies. I'm well aware that all this is a challenge to your credulity; but, I assure you that I'm telling the truth.

Beg your pardon, what did you say? But... no, that can't be! Don't tell me that I didn't tell you! *Alas!* This crazy memory of mine! I was so intent on telling you what happened, that I overlooked the most important part. Please, forgive me. It did seem that I was forgetting something.

Well, now that you ask, I'll say that he was just like my grandfather had described him. A little guy about two feet tall, with his head a bit large for his body. He also had big eyes, yes, *very* big eyes, almost no nose, and a hairline of a mouth. His body was extremely thin, just like his long arms and legs, with very slender fingers.

His outfit was sort of a one-piece suit, quite tight, silver in color, with a black stripe that ran up the front of his right leg, passed over his shoulder, crossed his back diagonally, and then came down the back of his left leg. Well, I know this because my grandfather told me, as at no time did he turn around.

What? Was he a dwarf? No, of course not! A gnome? But, didn't I just tell you that... Oh, my gosh, it seems that I didn't tell you. Please forgive me, again. Well no, it wasn't an elf, a dwarf, or a gnome — nothing of the sort. I'm talking about meeting a genuine KEEPIAN. Yes, siree!

Aw, come on now... Don't tell me that you don't know what a Keepian is. You don't know, do you... I can tell by the look on your face. Well, then let me tell you about him, just like my grandfather told me.

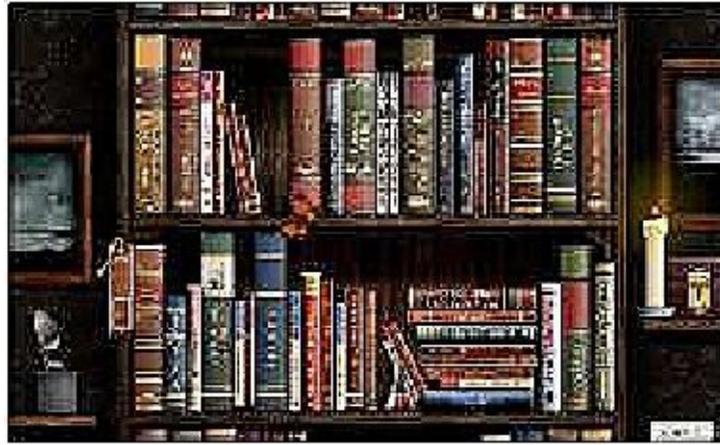
The Keepian is one of the busiest beings of the Pluriverse. His main task is to collect, repair, store, and take care of everything that's not in use, but that'll be put to use again sometime. Indeed, with the Keepians working, nothing is ever lost. I'll tell you more about them a little further on, okay?

So, as I was saying, after my brief and unexpected encounter with the Keepian, I remember that when I arrived at the old but well maintained building where I lived, something unusual was going on. I saw a lot of people standing around the door of the janitor's office and that something had upset his wife, a plump Italian lady who never mastered English, although she was a very loving and motherly figure to all of the building's tenants. Well, on that particular evening, I wasn't up for a get-together with my neighbors, so I quietly went up to my apartment.

The entire afternoon I'd been entranced by the thoughts that fluttered in my head, all because of the impatience that overwhelmed me. How wonderful! A meeting with a real Keepian!

After entering my small apartment and as soon as I sat down on my well-worn and comfortable armchair, I heard a familiar voice behind me saying, —Good evening, I've been waiting for you.

I remember having turned around to face my overcrowded bookstand, just in time to see some of the books of the upper shelf begin to “disappear” behind the figure of the Keepian. When he fully “materialized,” he was sitting very comfortably, with his thin legs dangling from the edge of the shelf.



—Hello there, good evening! This time you surprised me. I wasn't expecting you so early, but I'm glad you kept your promise— I said, as I moved to my threadbare sofa, in order to face him.

—I always keep my promises and always arrive on time, as a good Keepian that I am. So, what can I do for you?

Listen, just between you and me —yes, *you*, the reader— I can assure you that I went over a thousand times, here, in my head, what I was going to ask the little Keepian. But at that moment, I forgot it all. Well, you can imagine the thrill of being able to talk, face to face, with a genuine Keepian! You understand, right?

Seeing that I was overwhelmed by my emotions, my little guest “vanished” from the bookstand to instantly “reappear” sitting on the small table where I keep my telephone.

—Hey, you do that really well! You disappear from one place and reappear at another. How do you do it?— I asked in amazement.

—Actually, I can't “disappear,” as you call it. I can only imitate the appearance of something that's close to me. And in this case, I took on the aspect of the air, came down from where I was to sit here, and then regained my normal features. As you can't see the air, you couldn't see me either.— was his mischievous answer.

—A very good trick, indeed. Now tell me something else, is what my grandfather told me true, that you keep everything that's not in use?

—That is correct. We're responsible for keeping a countless number of things working, because, obviously, nothing functions without something that makes it go. I hope you're not one of those people who believe that Creation keeps on running automatically, right?— and without letting me answer, he went on, —Every Keepian has to take on many jobs. You'd be surprised to know all the things we're responsible for.

—Yes, I remember that my grandfather always made up many stories about you...

—Made up? Those are true stories!— he said firmly.

—Come, come now. You don't expect me to believe that you actually receive all the deleted words that someone erases from their...

—Of course it's true! Where do you think all those removed words go? We're in charge of receiving, repairing, and storing them, to then redistribute them to anyone who needs them. What's so strange about that? How do you think you always have on hand all the words you need, either to write or to say

something? But, please, think about it for a moment.— said the Keepian very seriously. —Furthermore, we do something similar with all the numbers that are deleted from the modern electronic calculators. And, if you ever saw all the computer data that we have to save. Wow! That *is* a lot! Whenever there’s an electric blackout or a software glitch, *Bam!* We get swamped up to here with scrapped computer data.

—Hey, give me a minute to digest all that...

—A minute? As many as you need! We have all the minutes of the world, except for the one that’s currently being used. Actually, we only keep them for an instant, because we immediately recycle each one. How many minutes do you want?— he asks, swollen with pride.

—Yes, I do remember my grandfather telling me about that.— I said.

—I’ll have you know that we’re always extremely busy and, all modesty aside, that we’re very careful and precise. Let me tell you about another of our many activities. Can you imagine all the steps that humanity takes on any given day? An uncountable amount, right? And what do you think happens to all the steps taken? Well, we collect and recycle them, so that humanity can continue to walk. Yes, sir!

—That’s an enormous amount of work!— was the only thing that I could utter.

—Something similar happens to the spoken words. We receive them the very next instant after they’ve been said. We keep them in the “Just Spoken Words” section, ready to be used again. This is a delicate job, you know. If they’re not properly classified, maybe the next time you need to talk you’ll only be able to bark... Ja, ja, ja... Or you’ll suddenly find yourself speaking a language that you don’t understand... Je, je, je... We sometimes have problems with certain humans who insist on emitting a constant verbosity. I believe they’re called “politics” or something like that. And thus, as they hoard so many words, sometimes another human can’t find the word he’s looking for. Hasn’t it happened to you?



—Sure, but I never imagined it was caused by that. But tell me, my esteemed Keepian, where do you store everything?

—Generally, we only keep things for a short while and as most of them are immaterial things they don’t take up much space. I can tell you that we keep them in a way that’s similar to how you store your thoughts. I can explain it to you, but I doubt that you’ll understand me, for if you don’t know where or how your

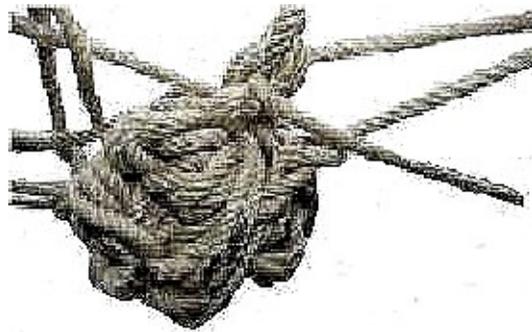
imagination, memory, or emotions are kept, how could you understand something that's much more complicated? No offense meant.

—What do you mean?— I asked with wounded pride, —Of course I know where I keep all that! It's all right here, in my head!

—Excuse me, but all you have in your head is the “mush” that forms your brain. What I'm talking about has nothing to do with that. It's as if you said that a radio has within itself the music or the news it transmits. Don't worry, someday you'll understand it.

But, coming back to the storage issue, I can tell you that, indeed, there are some things that we've had to keep longer than usual. For example, we have most of the Roman numerals that were replaced by the Arabic numbers that you use today. We also have in deep storage the exact position of Atlantis, the other side of the Moëbius strip, and all the philosophy held by the “Philosopher's Stone.”

We also have the true purpose of the Egyptian pyramids, the instructions of how to untie the Gordian Knot, all former time's *etiquette* and good manners that have now fallen into disuse, along with the modesty that is lacking in many of today's young people's attire. But don't worry, we keep everything in excellent condition, until someone wants it and revives it.



—Then, you know where Atlantis was? Please, tell me!

—You don't understand, I can't give you anything that doesn't belong to you, and for this to be the case, you must first find that out for yourself. Thereafter, whenever you require this knowledge again, I'll gladly recycle it to you. You know that there are other beings who can help you with the new things that you want to know or get. Why not ask them? Notice that I'm telling you this only because it's something that you already know. I'm a caretaker, a guardian of what already exists.— says the little fellow, with a solemnity that is several sizes too big for him.

—Hey! Now I get it! That's where your name comes from, right?— I said with undisguised satisfaction, —you're a KEEPer and a guardIAN - a KEEPIAN!

—Very well. See, you're already beginning to think better.— he said laughing softly, —And to keep up the exercise, I'm going to ask if you ever stopped to think what happens to kisses once they've been given, or to furtive glances after they were made. Where do you think all the long forgotten memories, accumulated experiences, and good ideas that were never realized are? Also, consider the fate of the millions of smiles given out, the half-used tantrums, and the tons of energy used to chew gum. Yes, we receive and recycle all that, depending on the demand.

The little Keeperian was now confidently laying full length on the little table, with his head propped up on my phone, legs crossed at his ankles, and his thin fingers interlocked behind his head.

—And that’s just the beginning— he went on, — consider all the natural phenomena we have to recycle, now *that* gives us a lot of work! But, to tell you the truth, it’s a lot more fun. There you have all the raindrops and wind that we must reutilize, along with the colors of the rainbow that now and then paints the sky, the difference in size between a palm tree and a snail. We also store that, so as to use it for something else. Think of the many cosmic cycles that humanity has yet to find, along with those that have been forgotten —yes, we have them all, just waiting for someone to discover them.



—Nowadays— he continued, —we have to hold on to a tremendous amount of lush greenery that we can’t reprocess, because you humans have destroyed the vegetation that used to manifest it. We also have a huge number of exotic and fascinating combinations of shapes and colors that were once displayed by the billions of insects, birds, and flowers that mankind has wiped out. And what about the many natural processes that were used to keep the balance of vast and marvelous ecosystems, which we can’t recycle any more, for they have been devastated? Where will we keep all the fresh air that, for the moment, we can’t help to be reutilized?

And, I ask you, why is all this happening? I’ll tell you why, because a few so-called “big shots” insist on seeing how fast they can extinguish nature just to make more money?

Think about the unique qualities of the now extinct species that we can NEVER recycle again: the romping of their playful youngsters, their dazzling colors, and the majestic appearance of the adults. In short, I fear that many of these things will have to be kept in storage *forever*. What a pity.

—To tell you the truth, I’d never thought about it in this way,— I said, overwhelmed by the enormity of the truth stated by the little Keepian.

—Don’t grieve, my friend. There’s little you can do by yourself. This’ll go on until humanity —as a whole— decides to do something to stop the abuse of those “power groups.” However, in the mean time I’m afraid that we’ll just have to make more room in our warehouses.

Frankly, I couldn't think of anything else to say, and for a while he also seemed to be somewhat lost in his own thoughts.

After a while, I noticed that my little friend was looking furtively at the antique cut-crystal bowl that was on my coffee table. That’s where I kept my chocolate bonbons. I said to him, —Go ahead, help yourself.



This offer makes his contagious smile reappear, while he says to me, —I believe that I'll accept your kind invitation. Thank you very much!

—Yes, please, help yourself. Take as many as you like. And while you “recycle” to yourself something sweet, how about if you let me tell you about some of your own activities, as I remember having heard from my grandfather, okay?

After hearing this, he “faded” from the telephone stand to immediately “rematerialize” seated on the soft cushion that I always have on my sofa —right in front of the candy bowl!

—Ok, it'll be interesting to hear a human talk about our affairs. Go ahead, I'm listening.— he said, as he eagerly removed the shiny wrapper from the bonbon.

—Actually, I must confess that I've never forgotten the enchanting stories... Oh, sorry... *histories*, that my grandfather used to tell me about the magic Keepians. Ahh... such fond memories!

How he enjoyed my childish laughter when he told me that you were responsible for storing the knots of all the shoelaces that became untied, and that you also had the sharpness of all the blunted knives of the world. Ho, ho, ho...

He loved to see my expression when he told me that you were about to take away the flame of the candle, but that you'd let us use it again the following night. It was great the time when he explained, with a straight face, that you collected and kept all the bubbles of the soda pop that I was drinking, just to put them back into my next bottle. Ha, ha, ha... And every time he saw me with a serious face, he'd copy my seriousness and ask me if the Keepian had taken away my smile, which, of course, would immediately make me smile, and then he'd say, “See? He already gave it back to you!” The cunning old fox!

I also remember the last time I saw him, lying there on his bed. He looked so thin and pale. When he saw me, he whispered, “Come on, son, what's the matter? Change that face. Look, I asked the Keepian to give you — but only to you— all of the youth that I enjoyed. I'm giving it to you because I know that you'll make good use of it.” After that night, I never saw him again...— I said to the little Keepian, all the while fighting the lump in my throat.

—Come, come now. Don't be upset. I'm sure you made very good use of the youth he left you. Let me “recycle” some good humor to you, all right?— said the friendly and impish Keepian.

Look, I'm telling you —yes, *you*, the person who's reading this story— that in the very next instant, I felt so much better!

After seeing the little fellow eat his third chocolate bonbon, I said jestingly, —Hey, be careful, lest you have to give yourself an unwanted belly-ache.

—Ah... but, they're delicious! I love them! But you're right, it's enough.— he said as he leaned back on the cushion. —Hey, I think it was me who took away the hardness from this very soft cushion. However, returning to the subject of your grandfather, I see that Mr. Baxter knew us very well. Rarely have I heard of any human who has appreciated us so much. But tell me, what was his occupation?

—Occupation? He never had a particular trade. He knew a little about everything: repair old roofs and walls, paint houses and shops, he was a self-made barber and mechanic, he knew how to apply injections, till the land, and raise animals. Like I said, a little of everything. But what he enjoyed most and what he did best was telling stories. I still remember that my classmates were always eager to walk home with me after school, in order to hear the great stories of Mr. Baxter. Ah, those were the days!

—Yes, he must have been quite a character. You know, I also feel a little nostalgic about former times— said the Keepian in a somewhat sad tone.

—You? With all the interesting things you do? Why? Please, tell me.

—For example, early this morning I was assigned to the section “Slow Recycling Objects.” This sector always makes me sad.— said the Keepian in a downcast voice.

—And why is that? Tell me, what's kept there?

—That part of the warehouse, as the name implies, is the place used to put things whose recycling rate is extremely slow. If you could only see how full of useful things it is. And all because of the low demand they have today.

—But, tell me. What do you keep there?— I ask again.



—One of the things that occupies a lot of space is “Goodness.” Yes. There are enormous cases of gleaming “Goodness.” Beside them, there are countless boxes full of “Generosity,” most of it brand new. Further inside, you’ll find lots of bags labeled “Inner Peace” and behind these, a little to the left, there are plenty of packets full of intangible “Sincerity.” Then, on the other side of the room, there are many barrels with labels that say: “100% Pure Tolerance.” Please note that all these items are practically new and of a very good quality. Tell me, my friend, why is it that humans don’t want these wonderful things? Why don’t they want to recycle them anymore?

After taking a deep breath, I pondered on the importance of what the Keepian said. —*Truly*,— I thought, —*these things are now rarely used. What happened to us? We're always in such a hurry, always so fearful of everything, and so busy with our own affairs, that... Yes, indeed, I could imagine the enormous size of the warehouse that stored all these items.*— Coming out of my contemplation, I said, —I really don't know. I must admit that I do not know. Maybe it's because humanity is not aware of this any more. What do *you* think?

Recovering his characteristic eloquence, he said, —Analyzing the situation, I think that today's human being is a little *unbalanced*...

—Just a little?— I interrupted wryly.

—Wait, I didn't mean it that way. I'm referring to another kind of imbalance. The poor humans are so engrossed in their material world, in the "hard cash" they can get, in everything that's *outside* of themselves, that they've sacrificed their *inner* world. That's the imbalance I'm talking about. Many of them are not aware of their inner potential and thus, they don't know how to use the most powerful part of themselves. They're totally disoriented and confused. Do you understand me now? Can you imagine all the work that brings us? We have almost no time to properly repair or redistribute the enormous amounts of fear, anxiety, worry, violence, deceit, and despair that the current human insists on using so feverishly. This, naturally, represents a huge problem for us and for them as well. And it's so easy to apply the proper solution.— said the Keepian.

—Easy? Excuse me, but I don't find it easy.

—Of course it's easy. If each human expressed just a little more kindness, tolerance, or any of the things that I just mentioned, that section of the warehouse would be emptied in a flash and then we'd have more space. — he concluded brightly.

—Oh, you're talking about your storage problem. For a moment I thought you were referring to the imbalance of the human being.

—Isn't it one and the same thing? The same solution benefits both of us, don't you think so?— said the Keepian, with simulated candor.

—*Geez*,— I thought, —*The little guy's right.*

—I hope that the humans will reconsider their behavior. Perhaps recycling to them a little "Reconsideration"..?— thought the Keepian out loud.

Suddenly, a noise down in the street startled us, jolting the Keepian out of his rapture. He then said, —Ooh! It's already morning! I have to go!

Taking a quick look out the window, I saw the early dawn's light. Incredibly, we had talked all night!

—Yes, I know it's time for you to begin your activities. But, will I see you again?

—Anyone can see us, if they make an effort. If you're one of the people who stops to wonder where the bounces of a rebounding ball go, where do the turns of the countless wheels that humanity uses go, what happens to the *ring-ring-ring* of the phone after it has sounded, where are the images of the mirrors stored when no one is looking in them, then you'll eventually see us.

Yes, straining a little your senses and your imagination, it's possible that some of you will perceive us while we work. Maybe you'll spot us as we pick up your used footsteps, like what happened to you yesterday

afternoon when we first met. Well, it's time for me to go. Please, say that I can go. Thanks for your hospitality and... Farewell!

Just as I finished saying the words that freed the Keepian, my small friend "disappeared," that is, he disguised himself as air. I saw the curtain move a little and I knew that he was gone.

I sat down for a long time on my comfortable, if somewhat shabby sofa, thinking about my conversation with the Keepian.

And you, my dear reader, *now* do you understand my excitement? Yes, that of a while ago, when I first told you that I'd met a Keepian. What do you think about that now, huh? Meeting, just like that, a full-fledged Keepian! Well, who knows, maybe you'll meet one yourself. I know that children see them all the time and even play with them. But then, kids don't worry as much as we do, right?

What's that? Ah, you want me to continue with the story. Sure thing, my pleasure!

Later that morning, I heard a commotion in the hallway. You'll have to excuse me, but I don't remember this part very well. Through the door, I heard people talking.

—The old gentleman? Poor man, always so courteous and kind.— said the easily recognizable voice of the janitor's wife.

—What? The one with the white beard? Oh, how terrible...— said the young wife of the newly graduated accountant.

Suddenly, I see the door of my apartment open, probably with the key that I gave the janitor's wife, who once a week came in to do a bit of housekeeping. Then, two Police officers came in, followed by the mortified Italian matron, while the other neighbors stayed in the doorway.



—Yes, ma'am. He was found on one of the staircases of the old part of the city... A heart attack, we were told. With your permission, we have to make our routine inspection.— said one of the Policemen.

—*Tan buono!!*— mumbled the weeping matron.

My young neighbor, coming over and hugging the old lady, said, —Resignation, Mrs. Ricardi, resignation. Consider that he was over eighty-five years old. The truth is that he shouldn't have been going out on those long walks he insisted on taking.

Well, as I said before, I don't quite remember this part. That happened this morning and now it's a little fuzzy.

What? You're asking me if I died? But, how can you even think that I'm dead! Can't you see that I'm talking to you? Oh, you think that it's macabre? Well, with all due respect, I must say that it's all in your mind. I'm fine! Better than ever!

A while ago I was told that I'd be moving to a much larger and brighter place. How about that, huh? And you asking me if I'm dead, no way!

You know, now I understand why the Keepian looked me up and down several times when we first met, back on that old staircase, remember? Yeah, he wasn't looking at my shoes but was very surprised to see my worn old body, there, lying on the ground, and at the same time, seeing me like this, in my new way of being, in my radiant "suit." Poor little guy, what a tremendous impression that must have made! Surely one of his colleagues didn't have the chance to continue "recycling" the beats of my old heart.

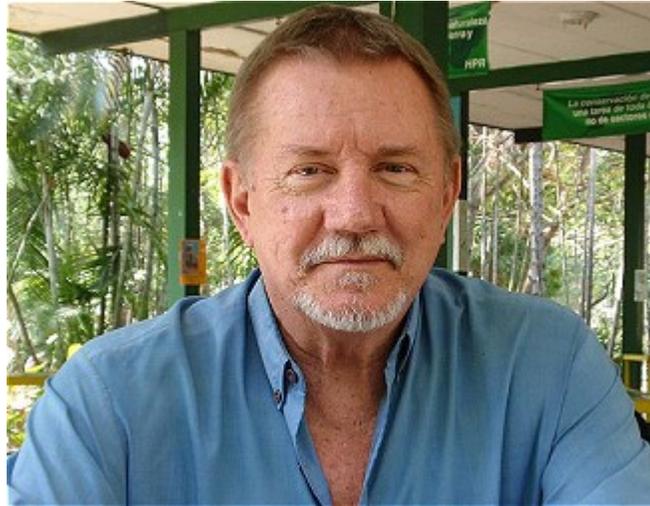


Well, you'll have to excuse me, but I have to go now. My new friends have come to get me!

You want to know something else, that blasted callus doesn't hurt anymore!

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About the Author



A three-way mixture, that's what I am. My childhood was definitely European (Belgian), my pre-teen years were pleasantly influenced by the American way of life (in Glendale, California), at the start of the *Rock 'n Roll* era, and the rest of my life exposed me to the fast-paced Latin American culture (in Venezuela and several Caribbean Islands). This fixed in me with the order and discipline of a Northern European, the modern vision and progressive imagination of an American, and the animated soul of a Latino.

Professionally, I'm a Computer Systems Engineer, who specialized in setting up the Data Processing System for large, high-rise hotels in Latin America.

For the past 30+ years, after having looked into several controversial fields and rejecting a lot of ineffectual data, I've been designing a system that I named ASTRONICA (which has very little in common with classic Astrology). In a nutshell, it's a technique that anyone can use to (1) know their inborn attributes, qualities and skills, and (2) to evaluate the various astrophysical events (exocauses) that inevitably influence us and our environment. You can test the efficiency of Astronica for yourself, by visiting the Astronica website ([Astronica](#), in Spanish and English - online since 1997). Try out any of the free and user-friendly apps that you'll find there—they're all based on Astronical algorithms. You can go there either with a desk PC or a laptop. But if you're mostly on the go, feel free to use your smartphone or tablet. No registration, no cost, no hype—the apps work just fine!

After retiring from the Hotel Computer field, and having put together the Astronica system, I began to write in two different fields: fiction and non-fiction. In the non-fiction section, I've written several books that have an Astronical undercurrent.

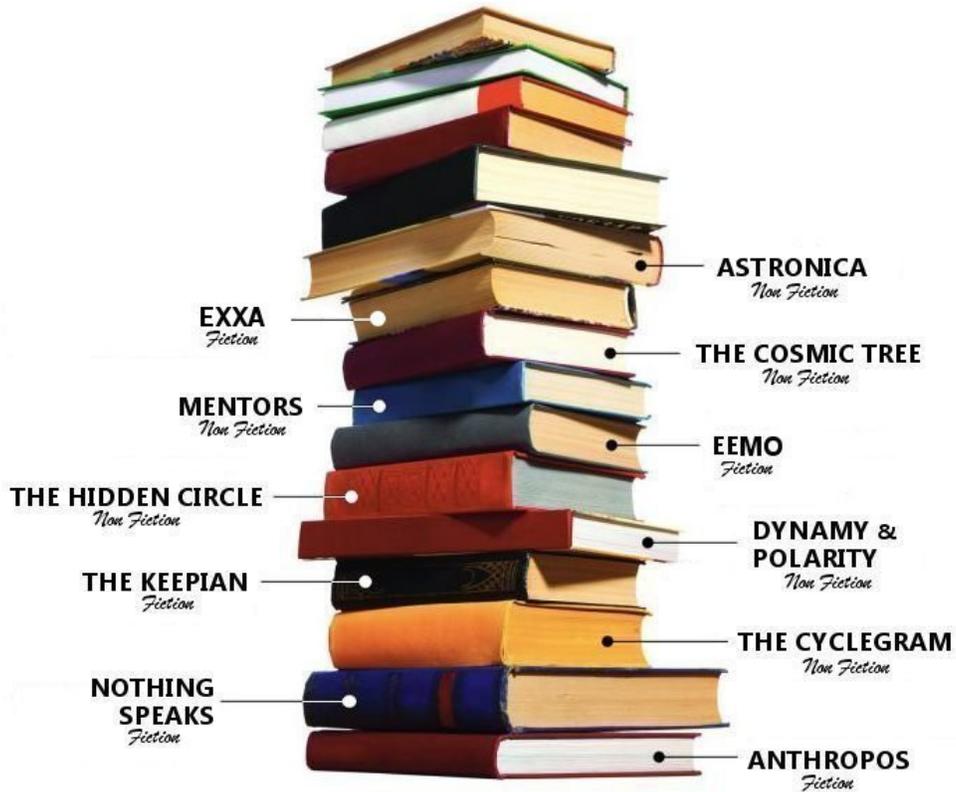
My writings in the fiction section usually include characters that live in the imperceptible setting that exists between our everyday reality and the rest of the Pluriverse. I like to call this genre *MetaFiction*: the Reality that lies beyond reality.

Now and then, when my Muse prods me, I take another shot at story writing, so feel free to look me up.

Hope you liked the story as much as I enjoyed writing it. Thanks for taking the time to read it.

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My Other Books



Contact: astronicat@gmail.com

Astronica's Website: <http://astronica.free.nf/index.php>