

THE FISSURES BETWEEN WORLDS
TALES BEYOND TIME AND SPACE

By

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This is a work of fiction. Similarities to real people,
places or events are entirely coincidental.

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The discussion of convoluted time originated from the discovery of the fissures between worlds. These fissures can best be described as anomalies that occur all over the Earth and represent themselves as places where time, space and reality are distorted. These are places where time and space phase into each other and they can have utterly devastating consequences. They can be dangerous and disturbing but even so absolutely wonderful and profound. It is our duty to identify these places and protect them and the individuals that may stumble upon their unnatural properties.

*'On the Anomalies of Convoluted Time' – **The book of Aerell***

THE COVENTRY SHADOW FOLK

Elliot my dear friend, I believe the time has come for me to indulge you in all your curiosities about Coventry and its surrounding valleys, of which our discussions often lasted long into the night. As you know, I had never considered Coventry to be anything out of the ordinary. Of course, the town is exceptionally beautiful. Especially now in the Fall, your favorite season, yes I remember, the color of the tree leaves and the low cut grass alongside the mill are absolutely stunning to behold. We are no longer the young spring chickens we used to be, Elliot. I recall our conversation only months ago on how it is vital to stay fit and in motion, so a few months ago I took it upon myself to at least take a small walk along the woodlands or the lakes each day. Mind you, I am nearing my seventy-fifth year very soon, so do not expect me to walk around nature all day. Even in its beauty, I definitely have my limits, as I know you do as well, my friend.

There was, however, one day that I took what I believe to be the longest and furthest journey that I ever took. Oh, it may seem strange to say this now, but believe me, dear Elliot, I will tell you everything. You do remember, I hope, the countless times we had discussed our theories on the native folk that used to wander the wild land that is now called Rhode Island? What would they have been like? What did they do? I remember that evening well, where we sat around the fire marking history books and point out old etchings. We were wondering if the first men of America were indeed the native folk we know of from our history books and their descendants, I try to refrain from using the word *Indians* of course, or if there were folk, tribes or entire cultures that preceded them. Were there? Are they now lost to history? These are the questions that immediately sprang back into my mind, Elliot, after remembering our lively conversation. But let me now get to the heart of the matter and tell you why I remembered that fond evening in the first place.

It was early morning and I sat at my kitchen table, drinking coffee and sifting through the papers. It was like any other morning, the sun had come up not long before and I enjoyed letting my gaze fall upon the road that trails along the house. At this time of day, traffic is still very sparse here, and from my window I can get a fine look across the road towards the edge of the woods. Without further ado I will now tell you that I saw something utterly strange crossing the road that morning. I do not know how to describe the apparition I saw exactly, but I can try. I saw what appeared to be the outline of a human body, merely the shape of

perhaps an adult male of above average height. A thick black border of impenetrable darkness seemed to surround the figure, but was the fact that the inside of the shape was see-through, albeit slightly distorted, that was most disturbing. I could barely catch my breath as I stood up in shock. I was amazed, but likewise frightened by what I saw. With seemingly unnatural speed I saw it sprinting across the pavement of the concrete road and watched it disappear deep into the woods.

Elliot, you and I both know that between us I have always been most rationally minded. One of the reasons why our friendship lasted so long and remains so strong up to this day is our perfect balance in our discussion on topics that seemed more, supernatural in nature. I was the skeptic and you were the believer, but we always learned from each other, and always showed mutual respect for our well thought out, but often conflicting, opinions. My old friend, there is no way to deny what I saw that morning, nor is there any sort of explanation that I could come up with to debunk that strange figure darting across the road. The first time I observed the phenomenon it occurred in June, right around the time of the summer solstice. Yes, friend, you read correctly that I said the *first time* the figure showed itself to me.

After getting over what I rightfully proclaimed as the initial shock of the encounter, I became fascinated, dare I say, obsessed with what I saw. I quickly took to my library and I must have spent countless hours reading through my books, our research and even the field notes we made during our many historical expeditions all over New England. I have no idea why or what I could possibly expect to uncover but the encounter with the darting figure left me with an insatiable thirst for answers. Elliot, I read and researched everything I could get my hands on. On occasion I would continue deep into the night, far longer than I should have, only heading for bed when my eyes started to hurt so much from exhaustion that I could not do anything else but to mercifully close them. I would then close them just enough so that every morning I could wake up at the cradle of dawn. I would sit at my kitchen table every morning, blankly staring outside towards the road, not daring to even bat an eye to the newspapers that now remained mostly unread. The day I was waiting for was the twenty-first of September, the Fall equinox. It was the only connection I could make in that there was a bigger chance to see the figure again, but alas, once more I stood staring out of my kitchen window, waiting for someone, something to pass by, but it did not. Not that day.

The thirty-first of October. I spent my morning logging some homegrown pumpkins from the patch I keep in the backyard out towards the front garden. It was Halloween. There

weren't many children that were allowed to go trick or treating somewhat further into the Coventry county where I hold residence, but each year I like to indulge into the festivities with those that do come over. Their youthful spirit is a wonderful thing, and something to cherish and encourage. I had all but given up my search for the elusive shadow person, as I now called it, but what I did not do was forget. As I was arranging the pumpkins along the cobbled path leading to my front door, I was startled by a sudden buzzing sensation in my ears and stomach. There was a noise not dissimilar to that of a warm fire in a hearth, the cracking and popping of the wood as the flames quietly absorbed them. I instinctively turned around, not knowing what to expect. I could nearly feel my legs pass from under me as I laid my eyes on my elusive shadowy figure.

I could feel the pressure mounting inside me. What would you have done, Elliot? Would you have tried talking to it? Touching it? Myself, I could do none of these things. Somehow the figure must have noticed me. It was standing still towards my direction, at least as far as I could tell. It seemed to size me up, to figure out who or what it was dealing with. I could feel my heart beating so loudly I was afraid I would drop dead then and there. I jumped as it suddenly lost interest in whatever it saw in me. It then took off with the same inhumane speed as before, towards the same direction into the woods. The direction seemed so random, Elliot, yet in hindsight it was so precise and its actions were so deliberate that I could do nothing else but to quickly head inside and prepare myself for a hike into the woods.

I hope you can forgive an old friend for acting so irrational and impulsively in his old age, but the truth is that, for me at the time, it seemed like the only thing I could do to rid myself of this incredible feeling of uncertainty. When I got back inside the house I quickly sorted my hiking backpack with all of the necessary tools and equipment. I also took the time to arrange an elaborate packed lunch, as I had no idea for how long I would be in the woods. As that thought occurred to me, another soon followed. I actually had no idea where I was heading or even with what goal in mind, what would the chances possibly be of me finding the shadow person in the woods, and even if I did, what would I do? I then dismissed my qualms and re-assured myself that I had spent too much time thinking about this day. Outside, I took a moment to relive my encounter with the apparition and I carefully decided for myself the general vicinity of where the figure was running towards. I held my compass firmly into my hands and wandered off into the sea of trees, in a straight line, towards whatever may cross my path.

The morning was slowly coming to an end and I was making good pace in my hiking when I stopped for a brief moment to take in my surroundings. The morning sun was trying it's best to break through the dense roof of the forest, yet a grey lifeless sky was predominant for most of the trip. The forest was thick and dark here, and I am sure that if I did not have my trusty compass with me, I'd be hopelessly lost. For the entire trip so far, I had not seen as much as a glimpse of the shadow man. At this point I was starting to think that perhaps I'd do better to turn back. I was already thinking about how to describe the things I saw to you in a letter. What I wanted more than anything then was to have my lifelong best friend with me to witness the strangeness that I saw, to experience it together. Something deep inside me however, my dear friend, knew I had to push forward. Not another time, or another day, but there and then, I was sure something was waiting for me.

At noon, my progress became slow and weary. Not long after my initial pause, rain started to slightly drizzle from the sky. It wasn't before long that it unfortunately became less like a small annoyance and more like a genuine setback as the rain turned into a steady downpour. The dense woods became eerie and claustrophobic and the lightly humid soil became a mud-sink that could easily ensnare inexperienced passerby's or even swallow smaller critters whole. Now with each step I took further into the woods I felt my energy gushing out of my body. Yes indeed, my friend, the days of endless vitality and dexterous feats are all but over for us, and I should have known too. To think I simply went in without giving this as much as a second thought, I cursed myself for it and I felt my determination leaving me completely. Still I felt this, I don't know how else to describe it, unnatural attraction to move forward, Elliot. It is now that my story will become truly fantastical, and if I did not know you as well as I do believe me, I would not share this with anyone else in the entire world.

I had lost track of some time, but I managed to push myself forward through the woods and ended up in what at first seemed like a calm forest clearing. I quickly noticed however that where I ended up was even more beautiful than I could have imagined. An immense valley stretched out in front of me. It was the most strangest thing I'd ever seen. There are no big hills, let alone mountains, near Coventry, the New England Uplands were still miles away. Yet here I stood at the edge of a thick, gnarled forest, with a downwards slope towards a large open field below me. Before I could properly get my bearings there was something else which was perhaps even more alarming. The rain had died down and it was then that I noticed that the valley was unnaturally quiet. Even during the heavy rain in the

woods there was an abundance of sounds from all directions. Birds chattering, frogs croaking and the wind howling in the tree tops. There was absolutely no sound at all, and it had me on edge in a way that I had never experienced before.

I quickly pulled the compass out of my coat pocket to at least try and get some sense of direction when I saw, to my shock, that the compass needle was going completely haywire. Gods, Elliot, you would not believe the fear that crept up to me right then. Here I stood in a totally unknown place, a place I did not even know how I could've possibly missed in all my years of travel. Here of all places my trusty old compass got the better of me and broke down, the needle spinning around crazily without any logic. It was then that I started to feel icy cold, and, even though I almost dare not say it, it was then that I initially thought I would not escape this bizarre trip with my life. My survival instincts then took over, and I decided to carefully maneuver down the slope. I sought shelter behind an enormous rock sticking out of the ground. It was covered in slippery moss, and as I took a look around, it was but one of many. Yes, Elliot, more and more things simply stopped making sense there and then. But nothing could prepare me for what came next.

A sharp, enormously painful ringing sensation pierced my ears. I cried out in vain as I covered them as best as I could but it was to no avail. I dropped to the ground and curled up in a ball, hoping that my suffering would come to an end soon when I beheld the most amazing thing I had ever seen in my entire life. In the center of the valley, was a perfect circle of rocks that, I swear this Elliot, were not there earlier on. Eight rocks there were in total, and with each rock there stood, like statues, a shadow person. Eight of them, Gods Elliot, can you believe it? I may have tried to scream there, but I am certain no sound would've come out.

I could not do anything, I could not say anything, all I could do was merely watch as the scene unfolded. There was what appeared to be some sort of primitive sundial in the middle of the stone circle. The shadow figures simply stood there as if frozen in time and space, staring at the peculiar device. What was this ancient ritual I stumbled upon, I wish I knew, I wish I knew where I was, or how I ended up there. But I didn't, and I still do not know Elliot. But I remember feeling the sensation as if time had suddenly stopped altogether. The whole valley was surrounded in this unbelievable stillness. There was this glow, it seemed to emanate from the rocks themselves. I do not know, Elliot, it is impossible for me to describe what I saw.

I remember feeling peaceful. An extreme calm washed over my body, it was as if I was drifting all alone, naked and free in the serene stillness of the ocean. The shadow folk