

## 5. Out of Africa

Back from shopping, I passed by Urbie's room and heard what sounded like yelling and shouting coming from his TV. He met us in the kitchen for lunch. I asked him what he was just watching. Urbie grabbed a slice of pepperoni, floated off his high chair and pointed the pepperoni in the direction of his room. "Step into my office and I will show you a fascinating journey of a group of humans traveling thousands of miles on foot over a period of thousands of years."

We assembled in "Urbie's office" and sat down in our loveseat while Urbie sat next to Mary on the arm of the couch. He turned on the TV. A primitive mini war was raging. There were a couple of hundred men fighting with spears and clubs. Some were naked while others wore leather loincloths. The men were decorated with war paint, each side with different color and artwork. The side with red and blue stripes on their bodies were outnumbered 2 to 1 by the group with the white painted faces. The striped ones were losing.

Urbie began explaining, "This is East Africa, you call it the Horn of Africa, it is 40 thousand years ago. Wait a minute and see what happens next."

We waited and soon archers showed up on the side of the striped fighters. They used simple stick bows but it was enough to turn the tide against their enemy. After only three men were struck down with stone pointed arrows, the battle was over. The white-faced tribe quit fighting, picked up their spears and carried away their dead. The striped men helped the men they just fought by retrieving their spears and giving them back to the white-faced men. The striped men picked up their own spears and arrows and left the battle scene.

I had to cut in, "Urbie, what happens next? What are you getting at?"

"These two tribes have been fighting for generations. Keep watching, Ray."

The striped fighters reached their village and got a hero's welcome. They celebrated all day. The next day the entire village packed up and left. There were maybe 300 men, women and children. We watched as they loaded up a pack of donkeys with their belongings. Those who could not walk were either riding the donkeys or were on sleds pulled by the donkeys.

Urbie began explaining. "These are one of many tribes that participated in a great migration out of Africa. They spread out into Europe and Asia. Humans from this particular tribe were something special. They were the most advanced and peaceful people that lived at that time. They were one of the first to have invented the bow, the first to domesticate the donkey but most important, they abhorred violence."

"Is that why they left Africa, to avoid violence?"

“Yes, Mary, it was one of the reasons. After many unsuccessful attempts to make peace with their neighbors, these advanced people gave up and left looking for places to settle where they could provide for themselves and raise their children in peace. They were a restless adventurous lot. Succeeding generations pushed further north, they intermarried and settled the continents to the east and to the west.”

“What were the other reasons?” Mary wanted to know.

“Another reason was worldwide warming. It affected Africa in the worst way. Drought persisted for centuries, making for vary harsh living conditions. Food shortages causing famine and fighting for available food was constant. People of Africa began pushing north looking for cooler weather and better food sources. Some tribes succeeded and flourished while others failed and perished.”

“I sense a lesson coming up. Where are you going with this, Urbie?”

“Whenever a species rises to dominance, there within its population emerge groups of beings a little more rational then the average species. These humans were such special people. Wherever they settled, these descendants from the original tribe, great and wonderful things happened: the wheel is invented, better methods of farming are discovered, philosophy of reason is embraced, beautiful art is created, the electric light bulb is invented.”

I said, “You seem to be saying this was some kind of a superior tribe and everyone else was dumb.”

“Not the tribe as a whole, just some within the tribe who were extraordinary, who achieved some breakthrough and as a result carried the rest of the tribe to a higher level of achievement. Humans are not the only ones with this characteristic. The emergence of extraordinary individuals is also a universal biological constant.”

“So you began in Africa 40,000 years ago tracing these humans, and where did you end up?” Mary asked.

“I did not start with the African tribe. They were the ending of my search. I started with Greece from 1000 BC. We admired the ancient Greek civilization and I wanted to find out from where their ancestors originated.”