

# Truth Or Consequence - 4

by J. Mykell Collinz

Without the intrusion of a work schedule, Gertrude had time to lay in bed, reflect upon her dreams, and talk to herself: "This should become a regular ritual. Leave mornings free as much as possible. And get to bed earlier. Plus, stop drinking so much." She didn't become fully awake until standing in the shower with cold water pouring over her body. It was noon by the time she entered the kitchen.

She cooked oatmeal on the stove, boiled water for her coffee press, and then switched on the overhead television. A media throng in front of her house appeared on the screen, with a woman's voice saying: "We have been here waiting all morning for professor Gertrude Goethe to make an appearance. No sign of her as yet. Back to you in the studio."

Gertrude vowed to remain silent no matter what they said about her. If they couldn't understand her conduct during the debate, it was their problem, not hers.

With coffee cup in hand, she watched the weather channel and the travel channel, even the commercials, feeling exhilarated by the freedom to do nothing more than that. "You should have taken a leave of absence sooner," she told herself.

While unpacking her office material, she found notes which she had been preparing for a lecture:

"When we say something is good, beautiful, pious, or brave, what idea or image do we hold in our mind? A philosophical theory has developed around the fact that we do, somehow, look at something indefinable when making such statements. According to this theory, all things perceived by our senses are imperfect copies of eternal ideas. Our knowledge may begin with sensory perceptions, but we can ascend from there to a higher realm, approachable to the human mind through contemplation."

Gertrude stopped reading, closed her eyes, and allowed her imagination to freely ascend. The notes went on to contrast Plato's

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idealism with modern positivism but, enraptured with Plato's inspiration, Gertrude indulged herself in blissful contemplation, something for which she did not have time when originally preparing the notes.

The doorbell rang but she wasn't going to answer it until she heard Ron's voice, saying: "I can see you in there, Gerta. Are you all right?" With her life flashing before her, she held her breath, thinking about the inevitability of dying. Then she opened her eyes, and shouted: "I'll be right there, Ron." But she didn't get up immediately. Instead, she looked around at the house, at all the things. And she realized like never before how the ideal world in her mind was one of her most important possessions.

