

# PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

## Homeless guy has a familiar face

MIRANDA was sitting on a bench on University Avenue, reading the local newspaper, catching up on how things had changed in Palo Alto since she was a girl growing up in this small, quiet university town.

A homeless guy suddenly materialized in front of her.

“Hi, Miranda,” he said.

Miranda looked up, startled. The disheveled man had a long red beard. He was shabbily dressed, in torn and stained clothes. He did not smell good. But as Miranda looked more closely, she felt that the man was familiar. With a shock, she realized that it was Eddie, her brother’s friend from elementary school.

“Eddie?” Miranda asked.

This is part 2 of a 24-part fictionalized serial appearing in the Daily Post, written by John Angell Grant with illustrations by Steve Curl.

“That’s me,” said Eddie, a big grin on his face.

“Oh, my gosh,” exclaimed Miranda. She did not know what to say. She remembered her brother’s story that Eddie had taken 50 hits of acid one night as a sophomore at Stanford and, in her brother Tom’s words, “had never made it back.”

“Wow, how long has it been?” she finally asked.

“How long?” repeated Eddie, “Time, what does time mean? Time is a human construct, a function of the

rational mind. And the rational mind itself is a mere evolutionary construct. Like a piece of clothing, or a hat. If you look at the evolution of life, going back to the first cell; and put that cell at one end of the scale; and then if you put humans today at the other end of the scale; to make a continuum; and then scale it all as a 24-hour period; it turns out that human reason evolved only in the last few seconds. Know what I mean?”



MIRANDA

Miranda didn’t know what he meant.

“And it’s with that tool of reason that we have constructed the notion of time,” continued Eddie. “It’s in our imaginations. None of the other animals use it. So, how have you been?”

“I’ve been well,” said Miranda. “How have you been?”

“Oh, you know,” said Eddie. “Up and down. Some days better than others.”

Eddie’s cell phone rang. He took it out of his shirt pocket.

“Dude, I’m in a meeting,” he said into the phone. “I’ll call you back.”

“Do you have a dollar?” Eddie asked Miranda.

“I do,” said Miranda. She gave him a twenty, and then wondered immediately if that was a mistake. If he would spend it on drugs or alcohol.

“Sweet,” said Eddie. “You always were a good person, Miranda.” He stuck the twenty in his back pocket.