

Friday, November 26, 2021

Dear Diary

The events of the present day raised within me some kind of necessity to share my odd dream. But was it really a dream? There are days when the border between reality and dreams blur and, therefore, one cannot tell whether they are anymore. Well, if you think it's an outline of my day, I have to bum you out. It would be a *huge* understatement.

The day started quite simply: after another sleepless night and absorbing a whole lot of coffee, I was staring blankly at the screen of my laptop, trying to keep my exhausted eyes open, but the radiating whiteness of a very empty page didn't want to cooperate.

My literary agent could drop by at any time and if he sees that I still have no idea for my newest book... well, I may just as well dress up as a cat and go play with my neighbor's rottweiler. With each passing second I felt even more awful, and a dark cloud of unpleasant thoughts like "It's not a job for you", "You're terrible" was everlastingly brewing above my mind.

A bitter foreboding was clenching my chest. My brain was so worn out by trying to hit on some brilliant idea, that I eventually dropped off.

Some pushy knocking woke me up. Leaping to my feet, I peeked at the clock, knowing it must've been him. Trying to keep calm, I breathed deeply and opened the door.

Only nobody was there.

I looked around and puzzled retreated to my flat. *It's just my imagination or maybe my brain eternally eager for caffeine*, I thought. And then something weird happened. I was almost certain that the knocking was coming from a closet. I don't know why I didn't consider it suspicious at the time, but I walked forward it and cracked it open. I noticed a small note on the ground so I picked the finding up. While straightening up, I caught something out of

the corner of my eye. A glimpse of a tall, lanky figure in a bizarre chapeau or rather its shadow. My forehead is still reeling from the attitude my eyebrows rose up then.

I shook my head and closed the closet, then walked up to the table with the laptop and reached out for my cup of coffee only to find it empty. I groaned, but suddenly my attention was captured by a notification of an incoming e-mail. It wouldn't be so disturbing if not the unknown sender and a message containing only one sentence:

*Read the note.*

I frowned. Yeah, I've frowned a lot this day. But I obeyed and unfolded the earlier found leaf, not expecting another instructions. However, there it was. "Meet me in the Public Library", it said. The most reasonable explanation was my agent playing tricks on me. I didn't consider it amusing but what could I do? He was sort of my boss.

When a taxi finally dropped me off at the mentioned place, I climbed up the stairs and walked in to a large hall. For such a heavily visited place it was quite deserted. *Too* deserted, actually. I heard a cacophony of voices coming from the higher floors, so I followed it; still no spirit to be seen. The strange sounds led me to Main Reading Room and I came to a halt in a doorway.

It had to be a dream. There was a chaos of scattered, broken desks swept aside in order to kindle a huge bonfire casting haunting shadows on the walls. Its flames were rising higher and higher as some colorful flying creatures were stoking books, while other small things, reminding gremlins, were yanking the pages and laughing dementedly. No, not a dream. A nightmare.

All of sudden something long and sharp cut into a door frame, brushing my arm. It was a thick, black arrow stained with blood. My blood, as I came to a realization. I needed to leave that place immediately but froze when I saw a figure before me. It felt like I knew him, that tall, muscular body hidden

behind dark clothes, that graceful, lethal moves. The spiky, crystal crown on his forehead, in which seemed to swirl the fumes of the darkness.

He put another arrow on his bow, ready to release it, and abruptly someone's hand caught mine, pulling me out of that hall. I remember running, but I was so dazed, that when I finally got my bearings, we were in a small chamber, maybe a coatroom. Gasping - well, the gym has never been my best friend - I looked around. In the dim light emerged another unfamiliar couple and I was about to scream as a girl pressed her finger to her lips, trying to calm me down. Overall, they saved me but what if they were some kind of cannibals and didn't want somebody else to eat me alive? Frankly speaking, I was too scared to consider this and perhaps too naive at the time. I don't remember our exact words, yet I'll try to recapture our little conversation.

"What's going on?" I whispered, trying to stay as far away from these strangers as I could. "I know my agent is involved but can please somebody tell him it *is not* funny? And who was that guy?"

The girl responded. "Not everyone is happy with the world that you created... uh... similarly those gremlins and fairies..."

"We don't have enough time so I'll epitomize it to you. Maybe you don't recognize us, but we are the ones you brought into life. Yeah, don't give me that look. You remember the Dark Prince? If you were more... sensitive while writing his story, he wouldn't be trying to kill you. Anyway, somehow he found the gates to your dimension and we are here to protect you, Master."

"Master? Dimension? Say I believe you, which I truly don't, but I will tell you this so that I don't have to bother about your frantic minds any longer", I think they exchanged annoyed looks. "Besides, his story wasn't that bad, right? Or maybe it was. But, hey, nobody's life's perfect!"

"What would you do if your Master told you that?", asked the girl I was slowly beginning to recognize. Her red hair...

"My Master? I am not a fictional character!". This conversation was getting even more weird. I wanted to get out of that craziness and go home. But they stopped me, their eyes pleading and running out of patience.

The girl continued in a soft voice, her name still on the edge of my mind. "Every book, every tale and story was created by someone. A dream or a nightmare, each made up in our heads forges a new world. We are here not only because of the Dark Prince. We...", she hesitated and glanced at the solemn boy by her side, "were informed that our Creator needs our help to believe. Look at us. *You* made us. Human's imagination is an incredible gift but yours is rare and you can be proud of what you've created."

"Uh, wait. I have not written anything about you meeting me in a New York Public Library", I said quite reasonably.

The boy sighed. "Haven't you heard about 'reading between the lines'?" The girl poked him. "I know it doesn't mean what you think I think it mean... What I'm trying to say is that not everything has to be written down on a page."

Suddenly, I heard some quiet footsteps behind the door. My companions jerked and winced, then pulled me away to the far corner. I nearly lost my balance as I caught my leg on something in the shady chamber.

The redheaded girl stood behind me and placed her hands on my shoulders, shifting me towards a big mirror, reflecting me and creepy shadows around. "You stopped writing, waiting for an inspiration. Find it yourself. Look at this. Beneath the surface there is hiding everything you need. Find a way to see through this veil."

"A mirror?" I asked her, a dread creeping in my shaky voice. "A-are you telling me that the key to my afflatus is behind this mirror?"

Then a lot of things happened in the same time. The door burst into open, followed by whistle of the rapid arrows. I wanted to hide, but all of sudden something tough hit my head, and I felt overwhelming darkness threatening to swallow me whole.

Some impatient knocking into my door woke me up. I lifted my aching head from the keyboard, and a quick glance at the clock told me that I was in trouble. I looked in the mirror to smooth my hair and then I recalled the dream I had had. I was staring in my tired but shining eyes. *Beneath the surface*, the girl said. Not the mirror's surface but...

I ran up to my closet and gripped my jacket. As I was about to close it, I noticed that bizarre chapeau I'd seen before. Snatching it, I opened the door, hurriedly putting my jacket on. I smiled to the man before me, tossing the hat to him.

"Very funny", I said. "But one weird chapeau isn't going to scare me. Now let's go to the library, I need to tell you about an idea for my newest book."

My agent looked at me innocently, but I saw a smile playing on his lips.

Postscript from the evening that day:

At the time, however, I was not aware of the ink slowly drying on a small sheet of paper, hidden safely in the depths of his pocket.