

An Apology and a Meeting

Description

Dear faithful readers,

It has been a long time since my last post, and for that, I deeply apologize.

While I spend a lot of time reading and writing at work, it becomes a significant effort to sit down afterwards and write a post or even read for pleasure. But, no longer.

The past while has been interesting, filled with family drama, loss, illness, laughter and joy. Time, it seemed, slipped away.

As an apology for leaving so long with little content, I have a treat for you.

A while ago, I wrote a short story while in journalism school. It was the first and last bit of fiction writing we would create, and we were given no instruction except for the title, "The Meeting."

It took me a long time to get an idea, but once I did, I just couldn't stop writing. Everything coalesced perfectly and the story just poured out of me. It was one of the most enjoyable experiences I've had writing.

I was never going to post this on my blog, just hide it away. But, the joy of writing something is for people to read and enjoy it.

Those of you who have been following the progression on my novel "The Black" (yes, it IS still progressing) will see a few similarities in genre, theme and structure. And those who haven't? You'll get to read it soon, I assure you.

Now I won't blabber on, but please leave a comment and let me know what you think of the story below.

May I present "The Meeting!"

"The Meeting!"

The Meeting

Chapter 1 "Awakening"

When the sun shined through my window, and hit my face, I knew it was time to get up. However, like always, I kept my eyes firmly shut until the denotation device that I had programmed sprung to life. It's a silver monster about half the size of a toaster, but so much more annoying. I'm talking, of course, about my alarm clock.

I reached over, still half-asleep, and put my hands over the woman sleeping beside me, and prepared myself for the rude awakening.

Good morning folks, it is precisely 8 am on our clocks, and here is the morning news! Last night, a woman was attacked in her house and kidnapped. The house was locked from the inside, and the alarm was active. Police are baffled how someone could have broken into the house without leaving any evidence or setting off the alarm. In a statement, the police chief said that, "these criminals are smart, but we'll catch them, because we're smarter."

"Joan, turn the radio off, will you?" I said, while placing the pillow over my head. "I don't want to go to work today."

"You may not want to get up to go, John," my wife said, while turning off the radio, "but your boss told you to, and we cannot afford for you to lose your job!"

Meanwhile, a body washed up this morning, which cost one police officer to literally lose his lunch. Sandra Burns has the report! and then the radio voice faded from the background as Joan turned it off.

"I guess I'll get up," I said with a huff, and followed my wife to the bathroom.

I examined my body in the bathroom mirror, and could not help but compare it to my wife's.

My body was thin and lanky, very apropos and stereotypical for a man of my intelligence, while Joan's was svelte, but not disgustingly so. While my hair was greying at the sides and I liked to think it made me look "distinguished," her long red hair cascaded to her shoulders without the slightest change in colour. That sight just made me fall in love with her even more.

"You are gorgeous, you know that? How was I ever lucky enough to marry you?"

"It's a combination of your vast intelligence, your superb wit, and my willingness to settle," she quipped. "Now, shower, shave and shove off! You don't want to be late again!"

"All right, all right. But, where did I leave my razor?"

I mean, I'm a certified genius with multiple degrees in a wide variety of fields; You'd think I would be able to keep track of something as simple as a razor! I'm going to be late because of a stupid!

"Found it!" yelled Joan from the bedroom. "It was on the floor beside your night table. Now hurry up, you're going to be LATE for MENSA!"

"Yeah, I know," I said, while simultaneously running into the bedroom and grabbing my razor from my wife's hands. Turning back to the bathroom with a wink and a smile, I ran to the bathroom to complete my morning ritual.

"But honey," I said while shaving, "we never do anything except sit in lounge chairs and talk about what we could be doing. It's so boring."

“Well, maybe something interesting will happen today,” she said. “You never know, right?”

“Yeah, I suppose,” I said as I finished shaving and washing my face.

“Now come here and give me a kiss before I leave for school,” Joan said in her unique way that made it sound like both a request, and an order. “Someone has to teach these stupid undergrads about string theory, and we all can’t be geniuses sitting around contemplating the world’s problems like you, can we?”

So I walked in, like the ever obedient husband, and gave Joan a kiss on the cheek. Little did I know that was the last time I would ever see her.

Chapter 2 “Discovery”

As I drove my car to the MENSA head office, all I could think about was how my intelligence had shaped my entire life.

It all begun over 40 years ago, when I took one of those standardized tests every child takes in school, and scored off the charts. From then on, everyone started calling me “genius,” and putting me in special classes and schools, trying to help me put my intelligence to good use.

But, by the time I graduated high school in my early teens, I was fairly ambivalent and bored with people telling me what to do. I was determined to find my own way.

That was when I discovered the MENSA high IQ society, which eagerly accepted me for membership.

It was there I found people able to discuss any and all subjects that interested me, as well as encouragement and support to follow my dreams, changing people’s lives for the better with my intelligence.

I was home.

But, like all good things, they come to an end.

Eventually, my love for MENSA became stagnant and boring. Individuals who were on par or smarter than me began to leave the organization for “greener pastures” across the world, we were told. And then, just a few weeks ago, I realized that all my collaborators and friends I had made were gone. I was alone.

So, I left MENSA, but agreed to stay on their evaluation committee for new applicants that meets every few weeks. It was a selfish choice, because I loved telling people that they were part of an elite club “special.”

Snapping myself out of this melancholy state, I turned on the radio to clear my head.

And for those of you just joining us, it has been a very busy morning. It turns out the woman who was kidnapped from her bed last night, and the woman who washed up on the shore, are one and the same! Police have now released the details of her identity: Dr. Bianca Rose, a researcher at a local hospital. The coroner has said that a cause of death is not known, but the mutilation of the body was

As I took out my phone, I saw I had received a one sentence text from my boss, Dr. Wilton.
"Don't be late" W.

"Sorry," I said to Benford, "but I don't want to upset W, especially on a day like today.
I'll stop by later!" And with that, I took off at a light jog to Wilton's office.

But, as I was leaving, I heard Benford resume his mumbling. I could have sworn he said something that sounded like "I guess I'll need another jar," but I gave it no mind.

When I finally reached the boss's office a few minutes later, I took a deep breath, and opened the door.

Now, Dr. Wilton was a very large man, in every sense of the word. He resembled something out of a weight loss "before" picture. He was BIG. He was so big that he needed to specially order a chair to support his weight. And yet, when he moved, he did not seem to struggle at all "like he walked on a cloud. He also had a very loud voice, as if he had a microphone instead of a larynx.

"JOHN!" he bellowed. "NICE OF YOU TO FINALLY SHOW UP. WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG? THE MEETING HAS ALMOST BEGUN, AND YOU KNOW TODAY'S WAS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT!"

"I know sir, but I just heard about Bianca."

"AHHHH YES, YES. DREADFUL NEWS," he said, as he emerged from behind his desk. After a forgiving squeak from his chair, he lumbered over to me, and placed a large hand on my shoulder.

"IT TRULY IS A SAD, SAD DAY FOR ALL WHO KNEW HER. BUT, SHE WOULD WANT US TO CARRY ON, AND NOT DWELL ON HER DEPARTURE."

"How would you know what she would want? You hardly knew her," I blasted back at him, and moved to the other corner of his office.

"OHH, I KNEW HER BETTER THAN YOU THINK. AND I'M SURE SHE'D WANT US ALL TO BE HAPPY AND AT PEACE, AS SHE IS."

"I suppose you are correct. No sense living in the past, right?" I said with a small smile.

"WHY DON'T WE HAVE A DRINK, TO CELEBRATE LIFE?" said Wilton, and he seemed to lope to his desk and bend down with a grunt. When he emerged, he grasped two small glasses and a large bottle of scotch.

"FIFTY YEAR OLD SCOTCH, MADE IN 1959. SAME AS ME," he said with a smirk.

As he poured the scotch, a knock was at the door, causing my attention to shift from Wilton to the door.

"COME BACK LATER, WE'RE DRINKING TO LIFE!" said Wilton with a booming laugh, as I turned back around. In front of each of us was a glass filled with roughly two fingers of amber scotch.

"To Bianca," I said softly, as I lifted my glass.

“TO THE PRESERVATION OF INTELLIGENCE,” said Wilton, as he raised his.

As the liquid gold touched my tongue, I immediately felt more relaxed. I downed the entire glass and felt warmth rush into my stomach.

“Thanks,” I said with a large exhale. “That was exactly what the doctor ordered.”

But Wilton didn’t say anything; he just stared with a large Cheshire cat-like smile, which began to drift in and out of focus.

“Wha! what’s going on?” I said alarmingly. “Wilton, something’s wrong. The room, it’s become all blurry, and I’m getting very dizzy and disoriented. What was in that scotch?”

“What! what did you do?” I asked weakly, as I began to sink to the carpeted floor. The last thing I remember was the squeak of Wilton’s chair, the buzz of an intercom and the words: “prep him.”

Chapter 4 “The Meeting”

I awoke with a start, with the mother of all hangovers.

I tried to open my eyes but nothing happened. I tried to speak, but my mouth did not respond. I tried to move, but I was too weak.

“WELCOME JOHN,” a voice boomed from the distance. It was the voice from the last man I had seen before I passed out. “OPEN YOUR EYES, SO YOU CAN SEE WHERE YOU ARE. OHH, I FORGOT. BENFORD, HELP THE POOR LAD.”

Benford?

There was the sound of switches flickering, followed by a loud hum. And then my eyes shot open and my vision was filled with a cacophony of yellow light in some sort of liquid.

“The experience will be shocking to your system at first,” said Benford weakly. “Just relax, and let your eyes adjust to the intensity of the light and the consistency of the water.”

After a few seconds, I could make out shapes through the yellow-tinted liquid. One very large, and the other fairly skinny, beside what appeared to be several yellow lamps.

“AHHH, THERE YOU GO. WELCOME!” said Wilton, with a large amount of glee in his voice. “IT’S ABOUT TIME YOU WOKE UP, AS I WAS BEGINNING TO DOUBT BENFORD’S SKILL AS A SURGEON UNDER PRESSURE.”

“I did what you asked,” said Benford. “I did everything. Now please, let me go.”

“VERY WELL, YOU DID WELL, DOCTOR. YOU MAY GO HOME, BUT MENTION THIS TO NO ONE,” boomed Wilton with an air of authority. “OR, YOU WILL END UP NO BETTER THAN YOUR FRIEND HERE!”

And with that, Benford left, leaving me alone with Wilton.

“Good, I’m glad he finally left,” said Wilton, in a voice much lower than what I was used to. “All that shouting was beginning to hurt my throat.”

“I know you must have questions, but I’ll answer the two that must be at the forefront of your mind.” The first: Where am I?

“You’re still in MENSA,” he said, “but in the sub-sub basement I had constructed for this specific purpose. And, according to everyone above, you just jumped out a window and killed yourself over what happened to Bianca. But don’t worry, John. I’ll console your wife,” said Wilton with a large smile.

This can’t be true. How could I have died?

I mean, I was drugged and woke up here. I swear, if he touches my wife, I’ll kill him! I don’t know how I’ll get out of here, but I will!

“And the second question,” said Wilton, “What happened?”

“Well, I drugged you, which I bet you figured out already, and I brought you here. I had Benford perform some ‘elective’ surgery, before I literally threw you out the window. You died, you see, plain and simple. Your entire body was liquefied,” he said, as he picked up one of the lamps and began walking to my location.

“And what was that surgery, you ask? Well, take a look.”

And with that, he held up a lamp so I could see, and if I could have screamed, I would have.

It was a large capped jar, filled with yellow liquid. At the bottom of the jar, was a tag that said, “B. Rose.”

And what was inside, I would never forget.

There was nothing but a brain, and two hovering eyes.

“Say hi to Bianca!” laughed Wilton, as he placed down Bianca’s jar and held up a mirror.

What was staring back at me?

My piercing blue eyes, submerged in my own jar of yellow liquid, attached by nerves to my brain. And a little tag at the bottom, which said, “J. Davis.”

“Welcome John,” said Wilton, “to where you will spend eternity thinking about ways to better the world. Isn’t that what you always wanted, to help people?”

Well, now you will. Welcome to the real MENSA!

“Welcome, to the Meeting of the Minds!”

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