

## Aurora's Story

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As a child, I often dreamed of the Wizard, for so I named him upon his first appearance. His sartorial elegance emanated a refined aristocracy, not of this world, but Olympian, Apollo-like, an incarnation of the demiurge on a journey to inhabit dreams.

His black tuxedo fit him perfectly, the pearl studs on his white shirt glittered, he sported jade cufflinks shaped as mermaids, a black bow tie, and his black patent shoes shone to a gleaming. Godlike and Gatsbyesque in one, he'd intermittently glittered through my dreams for years.

His first actual appearance occurred just after my eighteenth birthday. Dressed exactly as my dreams envisioned, he sat comfortably in the green armchair that graced our living room. I'd just hurtled down the steps and the sight of him stopped me in mid stride, leaving me momentarily breathless. Perhaps I should have been frightened, but his blue eyes radiated mystery,

tenderness, and wisdom. Somehow, without a word, he put me at ease.

“Are you my Wizard come to life?” I was more curious than concerned about a stranger in our living room.

“The Wizard of your dreams. I like that immensely. But to cryptically answer your question: I exist within your dreams, yet as a separate entity; I fulfill a unique purpose, but only for individuals with unique needs.”

“What do I need?”

“What all gifted people need. Stories. Stories that reflect and distill your own reality. Stories that contain answers that can emerge in no other way but metaphorically and symbolically. Stories that provide passageways into dimensions that render the sordid bearable. Stories that will transport you to worlds that no longer exist, to dimensions of the heroic and pathetic, to wonders available only through me, but only when you need them.”

“Why are you here now?”

“Is the world treating you well?”

“No.”

“Are you angry?”

“Yes.”

“Afraid.”

“Sometimes.”

“Do you find men one dimensional and women petty and jealous?”

“90% of the time, yes.”

“Do the powers that be seem unreasonable, stupid, and arbitrary?”

“More often than not, yes.”

“Do you try to please them, win them over, act as you think they would like you to?”

“Most of the time.”

“Does that make you happy?”

“No.”

“Does that make you even more angry?”

“Yes.”

“That is why I am here.”

“But what can you do about it?”

“What did I promise you?”

“Stories.”

“Are you agreeable to my presenting stories, or would you rather continue on your current path?”

“How are these stories going to help me?”

“They will help only if you allow them to enter your soul.”

“Your story must achieve that.”

“Coupled with your ability to understand and process the multiplicity of dimensions, then make them relevant to your own circumstances. Shall we try?”

“What have I got to lose?”

“Time, temerity, and terror.” He gestured for me to sit in the armchair opposite him, and so I did. “Will you open

both hands, palms up, place them on your lap, and close your eyes?”

I acquiesced and immediately felt an object resting against my palms, “May I open my eyes?”

“Please.”

I looked down at a red leather-bound book, approximately one quarter of an inch thick. “May I open it?”

“Of course.” I did so and found the first page blank. I leafed through the remaining pages and found every one blank.

“This is hardly a story to pierce my soul.” I closed the book.

“Sometimes, to begin a story, or to begin any great quest, one must erase or limit the imprints of multiple forces.”

“What sort of forces?”

“Destructive ones that emerge in many forms: ideas that have been promoted by people with vested interests,

governments that serve a rigid philosophy, religions that do the same thing, teachers who fail to understand the deadly implications of their teaching, systems of thought, behavior and even fashion that control millions of people who lack the power to comprehend they are being controlled.”

“Sounds like a rambling philosophy rather than a story. When does my story start?”

“Now,” he said. “Open the book.” I did so, and to my shock, the following picture gazed up at me.”



“How?” I said.

“Matter is easy; thought presents the challenge.”

“How?”

“I refuse to reveal my secrets, but all my talents combine to produce unique presentations.”

“You have a unique presentation, alright: no main character, no plot, no setting, not even the basic building blocks of fiction--words. All you have presented is a magic trick of sorts that somehow made a wordless book appear, and now a picture of a woman.”

“Given your extraordinary vocabulary, I’m sure you’d like to believe that words are the basic building blocks of fiction, but they are not”

“What are you talking about? What is?”

“What are words made of?”

“Letters.”

“Yes, letters are the basic building blocks of what you called the basic building blocks.”

“So what?”

“So this: if you don’t understand the basic building blocks, you will never understand their creative applications.”

“I understand what a letter is. There are 26 of them that make words. What else is there?”

“Are words the only product of letters?”

“I don’t follow.”

“Pick a letter.”

“Why should I? I want the magical story you promised.”

“Well, like it or not, this is the beginning of your story. Pick a letter.”

“T.”

“What is a ‘T’?”

“A letter.”

“What does it do?”

“It just sits there and looks black.”

“A ‘T’ does not sit; It stands. What does a ‘T’ do?”

"I told you, I don't know."

"When you see "T", what happens?"

"I wait for a word."

"What does a "T" do?"

"*Stands* on the corner all day looking for a vowel?"

"Creative, but wrong."

"Nothing, I don't know."

"You don't know because you refuse to think. What does a "T" do?"

"I told you, I don't know."

"When you see a "T," what happens?"

"I wait for a word?"

"Try again. What happens when you see a "T"?"

"It makes a sound, I guess."

"What sound?"

"'T' as in top, "T" as in tea, "T" as in tipsy."

"Do you hear it?"

“When someone says it, of course.”

“What about when you read it?”

“Then I hear it in my brain.”

“Is it a sound in your brain or an idea?”

“Both.” (*Damn him. I was becoming interested.*)

“Is there a tone to the sound?”

“You lost me.”

“You said you hear it, so there must be a tone.”

“Wouldn’t that depend on who says the word or the context?”

“Bravo! Finally, a significant insight! So, according to the context, the sound a letter makes could be loud, muted, soft, with the gradations stretching to infinity.”

“And the other twenty-five letters do the same thing?”

“Yes, depending on the context, just like the “T”, a multitude of different possible tones exist for each letter. Now, let’s attempt an imaginative leap. When you

combine letters, what are you creating on a building block level?"

"Words?"

"Think about what we have discussed. What are you creating?"

"Are the letters like piano notes?"

"Glorious! A three-dimensional leap I never expected so early!"

"Is that a yes?"

"Yes! An absolute yes! Letters are indeed unique notes of music and meaning, and sometimes, in the hands of a poet like Shakespeare, the words blend into magical symphonies, so rich they flood the soul with wonder, 'We are such things as dreams are made on/And our little life is rounded with a sleep!' But I drift. Before your story continues, keep in mind that all words contain a degree of magic. Magicians use fake magic words like 'abracadabra' or 'open sesame' to draw in their audiences, but each word in the universe, down to every

single letter, holds within it an undefinable source of wonder. I am content now to continue your story in what you would term 'conventional' form. Shall we proceed?"

*"Yes." (Damn him. He had opened an entire new dimension of meaning for me with a story about, of all things, letters! I wondered what his next magic trick would be.)*

"My next magic trick," he said. "Relates to the woman pictured in your book." *(No! He couldn't have read my mind!)* "Look at her and tell me what you think?"

I did so, "Pretty woman, pretty dress."

"She is over a hundred years old."

"Why am I looking at a picture of a dead woman and why do I still have a story that contains no words?"

"You just received a primer on letters. Do you think you are ready for words?"