

Chapter I - The Day That Never Began

It was a half-past a quarter to nine and the sirens outside were blaring waking me up from a temporary doze. I was just waking up to find that no one was inside. Where did they go? It was always their habit to leave without telling me. Don't know why I bothered to ask myself as if it were important where they went anyway. All that matters is that they left without telling me.

The rooms were all dark, only dimly lit from the street lamps outside peeking through the shades. The loneliness might have been a bother to some who would be in this predicament, but since I had grown accustomed to it, it was just another moment of solitary silence and quiet reflection.

Just what do I think of? Well, nothing much really. Maybe there is something sacred about having a whole place to yourself without much noise going around. Or it is just that I hadn't really anything going on in my life to even reflect on. Except for the fact of course that everyone likes to leave me behind for what they'd call a good time. How in the good God's name did they find eating so exciting is beyond me. "It's just food. You can eat at home so who cares if you go out to do it?", I often thought to myself.

So, as usual, without thinking too much about it, I went outside for a stroll just to take the edge off. Did I mention I get a little bit nervous and agitated when alone by myself? Well, after walking around the house with nothing to do I guess you can't help but feel a little restless. Maybe looking at the streets would somehow alleviate the pain of the agitation that started to boil. It's weird to say that agitation is painful. It doesn't even hurt physically.

What's funny is why going outside could help at all. At least after thinking about it now, it seems funny to say that. It helped somehow though. Although my eyes are mostly staring at the pavement never to meet the road or any passersby, if there were ever any. In those moments I simply get lost in thought wondering just what the hell I'm going to do. Do about what? What else? The fact that I'm in my home alone with no one else to talk to.

Who is going to talk to me though? I'm weird, I don't have a job, I never even go out with the family rarely, and I have pretty much nothing interesting to talk about. What a stupid thing it is to say. So because I don't have anything to talk about, I must be really bad company. Yet, no one discounts the asshole who might give them a hard time as company; after all it is still company. I'm pretty much worthless and awkward to be around.

When walking around, I couldn't help but notice that the street lamps started to go out after passing them. At first, it seemed like no big deal. "It must be some kind of electromagnetic reaction or whatever. The lights are just going out because they're dying already.", is how I rationalized it even though I honestly had no idea if this was true. After a while, I start to chuckle to myself. It feels like the world is just screwing with me if it's trying to make me think that means something.

Don't know why I started to feel like that. Like the world is trying to wink at you by making street lamps go out. How absurd is that? Yet it is exactly what I began to feel. With all this going on in my head, I make my way back home. It shouldn't be much longer now until everyone gets back. How strange it is that it makes me feel worse to think they're going to be coming home soon. I don't feel one bit relieved and I feel like a complete asshole for thinking that.

I just need to look busy so no one comes and bothers me. No it isn't that. It's so that I don't have to greet their stupid faces when they talk about how it was so great. With that said, I return to my room and head to the computer by my bed. Maybe turn on some music to drown out their voices and open up a page on the internet pretending to be reading something entertaining.

Already I begin to cringe a bit when I hear them come in and think, "Please don't come

and bother me.". They do anyway and it's to bring me some damn food that I don't care for - especially at this hour. My grandmother hands me the doggie bag telling me how good the food was. I'm tempted to be a smart ass or be crass and cynical, but I just begrudgingly take the box and place it on the computer desk without saying a word.

I started to realize that the website I was pretending to read was actually pretty grotesque. There's talk about some pretty awful activities people actually pay to see. Really, I can't even begin to describe how awful this is. It made me sick to my stomach and my chest is already starting to feel heavy with depression. Just how can something so terrible exist? Without thinking too much about it, I quickly close the website.

It's already getting late and everyone is starting to get ready for bed. Although, after seeing that website, I'm not feeling sleepy at all. I need to take a moment to get it out of my head to help wind down. I decide that I'll head outside again. This time I'm grabbing my black leather jacket because it was just a little windy. That, and it makes me feel secure somehow.

Just about halfway down the sidewalk from the house, I notice there is a girl sitting on a bench on the other side of the sidewalk. She's a little tomboyish looking; short hair, freckles, dark brown eyes, flannel shirt, and a pair of blue jeans. There's a feeling that she's going to notice me and I desperately want to avoid this. I keep my eyes fixed on the pavement and continue walking as if I didn't notice her.

"Hey", she shouts, "why don't come over here and chat?", she asks with a bit of an assertive tone. It would be rude to say no and it doesn't seem like she's the type to take no for an answer. I walk over to the other side and just sort of stand there for a second smiling faintly. "So... are you going to sit down?", she says playfully but with a hint of being annoyed. I sit and have no clue what to say at all so I just sort of nod and say, "Hey".

Just what does she want anyway, this can't last too long. "You know, you're really cute.", she says and it's to my dismay. It's nice to get a compliment, but unfortunately I have no interest in her like that. I can't help to feel a little bad, but also a little happy; which in turn makes me feel bad some more. Hopefully, that's not why she's called me over! I tell her, "Thanks." while smiling a little.

She clears the air a little when she gets a little personal, "Tell me, why did you go outside at this hour anyway. Something bothering you?". Well, should I really tell her about that horrid website or just tell her that I couldn't sleep? Without giving me a chance to answer she shocks me with what she says next, "You know there are websites where people pay to have people killed?".

Already I'm beside myself here. Just what an unusual thing for her to say so suddenly and of all the things! How could I even respond to that? Should I be nervous thinking that this might be a 'fun' topic for her? I didn't want to tell her that I had just happened upon such a thing myself so I pretended to be stunned, "What? Are you serious?". All that is going through my head isn't the subject so much as it is the fact that she's chosen this of all subjects.

"I think people are pretty screwed up. They all need some kind of stimulation or excitement like that to get them going. We're all just animals.", she says with a little confidence like she's got it all figured out. I'm pretty annoyed at this point because she says that we're animals yet here we are conversating and not hurting anyone. I'm not too good with arguing so I continue to keep quiet. Probably this would annoy her if I keep remaining silent so I just respond as best as I know how, "This is pretty heavy to talk about at this hour".

After readjusting herself to get comfortable she changes the topic to ask again, "Why exactly are you up at this hour anyway?". Now I can answer this and hopefully get home soon without much fuss. I tell her the easy answer, "I can't sleep. Sometimes I go for a walk to unwind is all.". She seemed a bit satisfied with that answer. Just how can I slip away though without

seeming rude?

Contemplating what I'm going to say next, I'm trying not to seem too distant at the same time. It isn't selling too well though I can see since she begins to look uneasy and lets out a sigh. "Are you okay?", I ask her. She tells me, "There's just nothing to talk about. Some people are just so lame.". This is really becoming uncomfortable for me at this point and now I've got another frustration building up inside. "You can go now since you got nothing to talk about." she adds with some obvious passive aggressiveness.

I don't waste a second, I get up from the bench and walk away. Of all the nerve! Not only did she invite me over into an unsettling conversation she clearly had it in for me! It wasn't my fault that the topic was too serious for me to add anything to. Nor should I feel bad about it since I'm not much of a conversationalist anyhow. I'm not some personal jester here to make sure everyone in the world is entertained all the time.

Now where would I go? Back home or just go on as planned as if this piss poor exchange hadn't happened at all. If I should run into her again, I'll have to have something to say this time. Something that would get rid of any animosity between us, if it should still linger. With that said, I decided to return home and try to sleep this off.

As I'm laying in bed thoughts are starting to eat away at me. For one, I don't remember how I ran into that website. It just sort of happened with a lapse in memory between the time I got on the computer and when the website was opened. Of course the second thing running through my head was the strange coincidence of her picking the subject which was in my thoughts already. Then feeling awful that I had nothing to say to her.

Hours pass and I look at the time on the clock and it reads 2:45 A.M.. Regardless, I try to sleep whether or not I'm tired enough for it. I keep my eyes closed and all through the night I continue wake up until morning comes. Still I lay there trying to get more sleep before facing the day. The noise of everyone else being up already makes it harder to fall back asleep for awhile. After tossing and turning, drifting in and out of sleep, it's now 10:12 A.M. and I decide to finally get out of bed.

First thing in the morning is to take a much needed trip to the bathroom. I subconsciously try to avoid the mirror considering how poorly I slept. Of course I look anyway and think to myself, "Ugh! And I'm going to be tired all day on top of this!". I just stare for a little while making adjustments to my hair thinking I might as well look as good as I can.

There are no words to describe how I felt about the other night. It's all still going through my head and I decide I'd rest on the recliner in the living room while sorting it out. Grandma is already watching the usual on television which is the news. It's a neverending negative loop of believing that everything in the world is going to shit. I swear she watches not to be informed, but for the sheer entertainment value that she doesn't realize that it's become for her.

"Did you sleep okay?", she asks me with a tone which doesn't sound at all genuine. Just seeing that I'm laying here on the recliner with my eyes closed should make it obvious enough. I don't even answer her, I just let out a grunt. It's just another consistency of the household to get asked questions that I never answer. Another fact in a life of the day of, so to speak.

All that is going on on the T.V. is starting to drive me nuts with annoyance. It isn't ritualistic for me to tell her this but I tell her, "Just turn that off! It's all nonsense!". It doesn't get a response though since she has grown used to me saying it every now and then. Rather than continue to listen to that drivel, I get up from the recliner to go to the kitchen for a cup of coffee.

While the coffee cup maker is brewing me a cup, I begin to wonder what I would say to the girl should I run into her. It dawns on me though just what I should do. It's simple, I'll just ask

her name, give her mine and tell her I'd like to start over. If I just let the conversation flow then it should be easier to make amends without really trying. No need for any pretense or expected conversation since it may not go as I'd like to think anyway.

I take my cup of coffee and head to my lair - I mean my room of course - and settle in on the computer to listen to some music. I decide to listen to one of my favorite songs, Optimistic by Radiohead, to kick things off. It's a great tune to me because it seems to capture perfectly how I feel often with its chorus.

"You can try the best you can.
You can try the best you can.
The best you can is good enough."

Something comforting about that even when things aren't going so well. Like everyday may not seem to be the greatest, but you should try anyway. That you try at all is good enough, it doesn't have to be "perfect". It's kind of a relief and even a little uplifting. It's like everything is somehow okay even when it seems it's not.

It comes to midday and I get asked to go out for a ride with mother to the grocery store. Why not right? It's better than sitting around waiting for the day to end just by listening to music. Need to do a little walking to get the blood flowing a bit too, I guess. There's little conversation between me and mother as usual on the ride to the store. Just the typical question asked and one line responses which come from me.

We walk around the grocery store and still there is a stiff silence between us. I head into the cereal aisle to pick out my choice of cereal. The song playing changes around this time to a song I never really quite liked, "Every Breath You Take". All I can think of is how eerie that song is now. After picking out my cereal of choice I look for mother to put it up in the basket. The rest of the stroll through the store was uneventful.

After returning home and helping to put away all the groceries I return to the lair. I need something funny to watch to take away the weirdness of that creepy song still echoing in my head. There's a whole assortment of videos to watch on the internet. What catches my eye is a video of a prank. I click on it only to find myself silently shocked again. The prank involved using the song, "Every Breath You Take" as a means of annoying someone whose speakers were hacked.

This is it. There is an inkling of a doubt that this is pure coincidence alone. That is what I'm writing this off as for now though - just mere coincidence. Should something occur yet again, then maybe that might dispel the doubt. At the same time, I can't really say just what it means if it even does mean anything. It is just an eerie feeling that somehow I'm being setup. Could be bad or could be good, who knows?