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The Oracle

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He didn't look like much, but he didn't like crowds anyways. Sitting in the back of the room, he dreaded this part.

"Tonight we have a special guest here, Ramsey Miles author of Next Planet!"

The crowd erupted with applause. He stood up and gave a little bow then bit back the urge to bolt. Clenching his teeth he forced himself to move towards the stage. A woman jumped out and shoved one of his books at him and a pen. He quickly signed it.

"Everyone, if you have books, you want autographed, please wait until the end of the presentations."

He stepped up the stairs and walked over to the presenter. Looking out at the hordes of people in front of him he felt fear for a split second as they all looked like zombies to him. He reminded himself it's just his anxiety. Taking a deep breath and releasing it they all appeared normal again. He was asked to talk about his writing, how he got into it and what was next.

Ramsey spent twenty-five minutes talking about the subject he loved the most, science fiction. He was on tv two weeks ago, promoting his latest book. The interviewer was a big fan and the masses thought he was a gifted fortune teller. For which he then reminded her and the rest of the world that his novels were all works of fiction, mostly science fiction. Some of his earlier pieces were making a comeback only because of recent news which have mirrored a few of his story lines. In his opinion that's what made him a great science fiction novelist. He gave his closing, nodded to the man who introduced him, shook his hand and exited the stage.

Sitting back in his seat he got a text message. ‘Great presentation.’ It was from Kat. Katherine McLean was a long-time friend of his and was sitting in the crowd somewhere here in the sea of people.

He texted her back, ‘Thanks.’

It was another forty-five minutes before all the presentations were over with and everyone retired to the lobby where drinks and signing occurred. He found his seat at a table where his latest book was stacked in a pile for readers to purchase on the spot. Kat found him.

She came around and hugged him. “It’s been forever, where have you been hiding?”

“I’ve been working on my next book up at the cabin.”

“I’m hurt you promised me you would take me there.”

“We can still go.”

“Good,” she smiled. “Can I get you a drink?”

“Yes, that would be great.”

Kat disappeared.

He didn’t get up until the last book was signed, it took three hours and it was going on midnight. Kat stood in the corner chatting with another man and laughing. Ramsey wasn’t jealous. She was a looker, and they weren’t a couple. She had hinted many times that she was interested in taking their friendship further, but he didn’t want to ruin a good thing.

Kat patted the man’s arm then came back over to him.

“What happened to that drink?”

She laughed, “It was delicious.”

“You owe me a drink lady.”

“Great, come on there’s a bar across the street that’s still open for a while.”

“I’ll meet you over there. I’m just going to run my things out to the car.”

She nodded. He began packing up his belongings and he was pleased that he didn’t have any books to cart back out to the car. A far cry from when he was first starting out. He was grateful for those lean years. Grateful even now that anyone found his work interesting enough to read from cover to cover. It was a small box of promotional signs. The box was light; he took it out to the parking lot and stuffed it in the trunk. Locking his car, he crossed the street over to the bar.

He found Kat inside easily. She was in the middle of a crowd mostly men. He found a small empty table and the waitress stopped in front of him, “What can I get you?”

“Irish whiskey, neat.”

She smiled and nodded.

“Excuse me are you Ramsey Miles?” a young woman smiled at him when he nodded. She sat down at his table. “Mr. Ramsey where do you get your ideas from?”

“Everyday life.” He shrugged, his drink came and he gave the waitress enough to cover the cost of the drink and a tip.

“Yes, but your books have all came true.”

“Not, all of them,” he laughed.

She blushed, “well, most of them have.”

“Thank you.”

“I have read them all.”

“Oh wow, thank you. I am honoured.”

“No, it’s I am who is honoured. Can I get a picture with you?”

He nodded. She took a selfie with them both smiling.

“My mom is going to love this! She’s a big fan of yours.” The young woman began chatting about his books, he smiled and nodded back. All he wanted was a quiet drink. Kat came over to the rescue.

“Excuse me, I need to borrow Mr. Miles for a few minutes.”

The young woman nodded. Ramsey followed Kat over to the bar. “Damn you are a popular one.”

“I hate nights like these. I should have just went straight home.”

Kat nodded to the bartender for another drink. “Well, you did it again Ramsey. What’s your next book going to be about?”

“Invaders,” he laughed as he took his new drink and waved it up in the air for ‘cheers’ then downed it. “I should be getting home.”

“Nonsense, you just got here.”

“I’ve been here for an hour.”

“Oh, look your little fan looks sad that you are leaving.”

He didn’t look. “Kat this was fun, but I really should get going I have a meeting with my publisher tomorrow at eleven.”

“Alright, let me walk you out.” She grabbed her purse and coat. He held the door open for her.

“Did you bring your car? I can give you a ride if you like?”

“Sure, I’ll take the ride. I think I have had a little too much to drink anyways. Do you remember where I live?”

“Pandora?”

She nodded.

After dropping Kat off he went home. He locked the doors behind him he felt relaxed for the first time all evening. Getting a drink from his liquor cabinet. He sat on his sofa and stared up at the ceiling. This last book he had published, was book 44, they all had a futuristic theme. Every single one of them had an element that became a reality. That had to be a record of some kind. It just didn't make sense. How was he doing this?

Waking up he heard the doorbell ring first. Jumping he looked around at the room he woke up in. It is his living room. He remembered last night. The doorbell rang again. Looking at the clock, it was just after eight in the morning. Stretching, he got up.

The doorbell rang again. "Keep your pants on!" he called to the person who was invading his privacy.

He opened the door to find Kat standing there, looking fresh and vibrant.

"Kat! What are you doing here?"

"Well, I thought I would come by with breakfast," she held up a brown bag and coffee.

"Mmm, coffee," he moved out of the way to let her in. "Please do come in. You have my attention." He closed the door behind her and followed her out to the kitchen.

"Do you even cook in this room?" she asked looking around. It was clean, super clean. Just the way he liked it.

"What do I owe the honours to this visit."

"Well, you drove me home last night."

"Free breakfast, I'll have to do that more often." He took a bite of croissants she brought with her.

“You have everyone talking about your latest work.”

“Yeah, my 12 seconds of fame.”

“I think it’s more than that.”

“What would that be?”

“What do I do for a living?”

He paused and looked at her, “You’re still a historian, aren’t you?”

She smiled. “I am. At least on paper.”

He took another bite, raising an eyebrow. “What do you mean?”

She chuckled. “Ramsey, do you think there are people like in your books, creatures that aren’t human?”

“They are fiction Kat, fiction for a reason it sells.”

“Well, they do. What if I told you I have found out that there are angels that are real.”

“Angels that are real? I think they exist in another universe. Like a different plane.”

“They walk around us all the time.”

“What kind of proof do you have?”

“I thought with your last book you would have proof.”

“I don’t. My books are fictional.” Could Kat be losing her marbles? He took a big drink of his coffee, it was delicious, it felt like heaven. He smiled.

“No Ramsey I am not losing my marbles. I am like one of your main characters in your recent book.”

He laughed and choked on a piece of croissant. Recovering quickly, he looked at her and was surprised to see the look on her face. “You believe that?”

“I know that.”

“Alright, well let’s have dinner tonight and discuss it further I have a meeting with my publisher.” He stood up to show her out.

She slowly stood up in front of him. “No, Ramsey I don’t think you understand. Let me show you.”

A bright light burst from her chest; he closed his eyes and shielded his face. “What the hell, Kat!”

The light receded. He opened his eyes to see her standing in front of him. It was Kat but with big white feathery wings. His eyes went wide. There were questions that he wanted to ask but his voice escaped him.

“I am sorry to tell you this Ramsey. I don’t think you were aware of this, but you are an oracle.”

He whispered, “What?”

“An oracle, a prophecy, someone who is a vessel, the gods talk to you, and you communicate with the mortals of this world. It worked out well enough, but you have too many people who are following you. We can’t have that. We know about the new book that you are presenting to your publisher this morning. We just want to take a moment and thank you for your work.” She walked over to him and kissed him on the cheek. “Your time is up.”

He felt something cut him in the chest and warm sticky liquid spill out of him. She helped ease him down to the floor. “There are good angels and bad ones. The bad ones have white feathers too. You are no longer needed. You will be remembered for your contributions.”

She stood above him and then just disappeared. He reached for his phone in his pocket and dialed 9-1-1.

“Hello, 9-1-1 what is your emergency. Hello? If you can’t speak press a button on your phone.” He pressed a couple of buttons; the room began to fade. It was unfortunate, the day he learned that his writing was based on real messages was the day that he took his last breath.