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Katkoot

R. J. Davies



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He was meeting with his new friend again for coffee. The woman reached out to him two weeks ago on social media. She told him that she liked his writing style and was writing a paper for a college assignment and she wanted to interview him. Normally he would have blown her off, but he got a nagging feeling that he should go. Struggling with his words on paper, he was stump he didn't know where this new novel was going, he was well passed the deadline, and his editor was chomping at the bit for him to submit it. He needed to concentrate on getting this draft to her. He had written almost all his life, starting when he was a teenager and now at 45 years old, he had published several books and didn't have to worry about where the money came from because he did very well. His series was around a planet that didn't exist in his solar system Planet X on the outer outskirts, out past Pluto. The series was about a race of humanoids who had a longer lifespan than humans and were explorers of the universe. They were called the Guardians. It had gotten to the point where they were in a fight for their lives and if they lost, others would lose too, like the people of Earth who didn't know the Guardians existed.

When he met her at the coffee shop, he was frozen in time when their eyes met. In a matter of seconds, his senses were bombarded with data that he wasn't expecting. She reminded him of one of his characters from his novels. She had the clearest blue eyes and long dark curly hair, her skin soft brown and then she waved at him. Breaking him out of his trance. He quickly regained his senses and berated himself because she looked like she was in her twenties, just a baby.

They sat for three hours talking about novels, aliens, and mankind. She felt like a breath of fresh air on a sunny day. Raya Goodfellow turned out to be the highlight of his week, month, or of his whatever. A small part of him felt like he was destined to meet her, that he had to meet her. Smiling at the thought of her radiant face, she was making Greg Thomas feel like a kid again. After their coffee date he had gone home and began ferociously writing a new novel inspired by their coffee date. He sat at his computer for days and just finished the first draft this morning. He couldn't wait to meet up with her again and tell her about it.

Grabbing a couple of cups of coffee, he sat at the same table they sat at before and waited. Looking down at this phone he noticed she was running a little late. He hoped she was still coming. Checking his messages, nothing from her. She appeared offline.

"Hey there," she pulled out the chair and sat down across from him.

He put his phone down and looked up at her. Pausing, and swallowing hard, he felt his heart racing a bit. There it was again, that familiar knowing but not really knowing. He couldn't place it. He felt like he knew her. "Are you finish writing that paper?"

"Almost," she smiled.

Her eyes looked green, everything else about her was the same. Her eyes had changed colour. How? Probably contacts.

"I hope you don't mind I grabbed you a coffee too."

"Thanks," she grinned then took a sip. "I really needed this."

"I have some exciting news I want to share with you."

"Oh?" she smiled.

“I just finished the 30th book of the Guardians series, well the first draft of it.” He smiled, still feeling that euphoric glow of finishing the first draft of a new novel. It was a rush, a high, like he had just conquered a world, in a way he had.

“Oh, that is amazing!” she squealed, people around them turned and looked their way, she hadn’t noticed. “When do I get to read it?”

“I need to polish it, but you might be able to read it in a few weeks.”

“Wow, that is impressive.”

“What’s impressive is that I was struggling with it until we had coffee, then I went home and have been writing non-stop since we sat here two weeks ago.”

“What? Really? That is very impressive Mr. Thomas.”

“Thank you. I need to thank you for being my muse.”

“Your muse?”

“Yes, you were very inspirational. My muse.”

She laughed, “Well then, I expect to be compensated properly. Next time dinner!”

“Deal.”

“Does Titiana die?”

“No, I couldn’t bring myself to do that. She prevails.”

“Oh, your fans will love that.”

“I think so. Are you available this week?”

“I need to get this report wrapped up. I’m almost done.”

“Is there anything else I can help you with?”

“You have no idea how helpful you have been. I am glad I had reached out to you.”

“When you hand it in, let me take you out to celebrate.”

She looked uncomfortable and looked around the coffee shop. Picking up her cup and taking a sip.

“I am sorry, I just thought we were hitting it off. I get there is a bit of an age difference, I’m 45 and you’re what 29?”

She laughed, “I am actually much older, I have just inherited my mother’s good genes as you would say.”

He chuckled, “how old are you?”

“Well Mr. Goodfellow that is awfully rude, asking a lady how old she is.”

He grinned, “That’s something my mother or aunt would say.”

“I’m older than them.”

“No, you’re not.”

She nodded and grinned at him.

He wasn’t sure what she was getting at, was Raya role playing one of his characters? She couldn’t be more than 29 years old, he normally wouldn’t give her the time of day, but she knew things, and it was like talking to someone much older.

She leaned in closer, motioning for him to do the same. He did. She whispered, “can you keep a secret?”

He nodded.

“No, you have to say it out loud.”

“Yes, I can keep a secret.” He smiled; he really liked this playful side of her.

“I’m actually 4,801 years old.”

He laughed. She didn’t. She leaned back in her chair and watched him with a knowing grin.

He chuckled, “yeah right.”

She nodded and gave him a wink.

“What?” Damn was she crazy? His brain began racing through all their conversation, she didn’t once seem like she was crazy.

“Let’s go for a walk, and I’ll tell you a little story that you will find hard to believe but every word will be the truth.” She stood up and nodded to him to follow her.

Outside they walked towards the park and began walking along the trail. The sun shone through the leaves; a cool breeze teased them. A couple dog walkers were out.

“Well, I’m from Katkoot. I should say my ancestors are from Katkoot. I had never step foot on the place before the war.”

“Never heard of it, where’s that.”

She smiled and pointed up towards the skies. “It was a planet that was between Jupiter and Mars.”

“The asteroid belt?”

“That is what is left of Katkoot. We were a race that was advanced beyond your imagination. We were explorers and scientists. We had our opinions and got into a few fights in our travels. One particular disagreement ended with war between planets. We pissed off the wrong people as you humans would say. It ended with Katkoot being destroyed, and the only remnants left are the dust and rocks in the asteroid belt.”

He was waiting for the punchline, but she seemed dead serious about everything she was telling him. Was she crazy? His gut was telling him to pay attention and maybe she was a bit crazy.

She paused and he stopped. Looking up at him she grinned. He looked down at her and began to smile. She was pulling his leg. Because he's a science fiction author. Good one, he thought.

"I'm sorry this must all sound a little out there."

"Yeah, a bit."

"I wasn't supposed to tell you about any of this, but I like you. If we had met under different circumstance I imagine we would have been hot lovers." She chuckled.

"Ok," he nodded. "I like you too."

"You are a nice guy, Greg. Earth is on the table for destruction. The board has sent a few surveyors to come and conduct interviews with the inhabitants. It's to determine if your species deserves to be relocated or just suffer the consequences of what is going to come."

"What's going to come?"

"Destruction of Earth. Much like Katkoot."

"But Katkoot offended another race of beings."

"Yes, we did."

"Who did we offend?"

"The board."

"What board?"

"Doesn't really matter."

"Okay do we merit relocating?"

"I think so."

"What are the next steps?"

“Well, I’ll present my findings to the board. They will look over everything, my report and the others. Then they will make their decision.”

“How long is this process?”

“In Earth years, perhaps 40-50 years from now.”

“What will happen then?”

“If you warrant relocation, we will come and introduce ourselves and those who want to relocate will be allowed to.”

“And those who don’t?”

“They will stay here and try to defend this planet.”

“They will die?”

She nodded.

He couldn’t believe this story she was weaving. Maybe she should be writing science fiction?

“When will I see you again?” he heard him asking for another date.

She chuckled. “If you’re lucky in 40 years. I hate to take off like this, but I really need to submit this report as soon as possible. This baby bird won’t wait.”

“Okay, well it was nice meeting you Raya.”

“I really enjoyed meeting you as well Greg. I hope to see you around in 40 years.” She smiled and gave him a hug.

“Thanks,” he felt awkward. It was the first blow-off that he got that made him feel a bit weird. She stepped back and waved at him. Then disappeared before his eyes. She was standing in front of him one minute and gone the next. He waved his hand around in the air that her body had just occupied.

A young woman touched him on the arm. “Where did she go?”

“Did you see her here too?”

The young mother with a baby stroller nodded. And was staring at him wide eyed.

“Where did she go?”

“I don’t know,” he looked at the young mother and then back at the empty space that Raya had occupied. Stepping back, he looked at the young woman. “But you did see the woman I was with, standing here with me one minute and then she just vanished.”

“Yes! Where did she go? How did you do that?”

“I don’t know.”

“Who was she?”

“I don’t know.”

“Okay that was weird.”

He nodded. “Tell me about it.”

The young woman took her baby stroller and walked away.

Greg stood there for a long few minutes and tried to take it in. Walking away, he started taking inventory of their conversations they had, the last time they met and then today, he ran them over in his mind. What the hell just happened?

Katkoot? What was that? He went home and began writing their conversation down, and everything about her that he could remember. Then he googled ‘Katkoot’ it was a name of a wine. No that didn’t make sense. He thought about it. then googled the name of planets and discovered some of their origins were roman references in some cases. He checked ‘Katkoot’ baby chick? Baby bird? It was weird in forty years he would find out if she was real or a figment of his imagination.