

Bereave

Prologue

In the once fair townley of Bereave there lay souls entrapped in woe. Its streets were of a time when construction was taken sternly. The roads were of a long and strenuous kind. The brick of an archaic type, a multitude of differing sorts all mixed into one inbred. Heat was scarce, though when it came, it came through sweltering waves from up above the populace's heads; unawares, boiling their insides. Tensions had never been overt, though, in recent times, as more and more of the villagers suddenly disparaged, their tensivity was on a keen edge. Needing a decisive answer to their prayers, alas, none sought themselves fit to inspect the matter. Therefore, it was left an open investigation to whomever thought themselves worthy.

Tales traversed terrain to distant townleys and towns alike. Upon hearing of this frightful nonsense, an instantaneous aversion to elsewhere was provoked. No one dared be near Bereave - terror and beguilement proved too much. Gossip and talk was detrimental; migration was common amongst the Bereavians. Surrounding villages regarded Bereave as having been plundered by some incurable plague. It was as if Bereave were some infectious, insectoid arachnid, which tapped into the cavernous aspect of one's inmost phobias. In words plainer than white: their abilities to mingle with others had long ceased, thereby their coexistence ceased. They were lonesome creatures, frittering away, sans a single ounce of solace.

Deep below the surface, the faces of the Bereavians were inflamed with fear, engulfed by a self-inflicted grief. Each day, a new soul would be reported as missing, perdu in the world unknown. Each day a mother would be without her babe, a husband without his dame, and a child without a parental figure of some sort to guide him through the maze of this lowly existence.

O' come ye faithful, pray the lord have mercy on thine souls, and repent for any sins committed by intemperament.

Allow me to paint a Munchian painting for ye. Here lies a frieze, suspended upon a Norwegian canvas, crafted by an intellectually unsound mind. On the canvas, we can discern: a woman crying helplessly on her knees, yearning for that ability to cradle her babe once

more, one penultimate cradle to satiate her yearn. Alack, this cradle shall never come, for her babe's hour has been wrung. Ah, how ironic that a mother is born to be utterly complacent to her child, and cemented by adhesive mucus. The moment he is born, she is metamorphosed into his duteous slave, his servant for years hence. When this maternal instinct is excoriated, she no longer knows what her purpose is. That instinctual maternity is what infuses life into her.

Children so torn by loss, and baffled by mysterious spectres, they too know not what lies ahead. They choose to neglect the ominous presence of a great force beyond them, a higher power as they say. Their wont is altered, bent to the will of another masked in a cloak of invisibility. Their inhibition tells them to run, to run as far as they humanly can, alas, all is in vain. Adolescents waned by an inscrutable sense of impending doom. Curfews are set and upheld for the fret of the forsaken looms, leering over their shoulders...waiting to unfurl its graceless horror.

Fliers scattered and strewn all about, contaminating the obsolete architecture with such profundity. Some dishevelled and of a bygone time, due to their wear and tear, the years had flown by them as though they were of such great insignificance. Persons pass these wastes of space each day; they glance and that is all the time they are permitted. It is a sin to glare with vice at mundane atrocity. Desensitised, the cranium begins to develop flits of inward, pathological disturbance, and the veils of those painted faces are devoid of eyes, their mouths are dumbled, dispossessed of any form of individuality.

Morally castrated from the townsfolk they so loved. There is no prejudice for what age one must attain to be spirited away - they welcome all to join their band of calamity. Senseless sentiments maintained in fortament.

A reign of terror began to thrive, like algae atop a lake, throughout the surface of Bereave:
On a frigid morning, with a stream of honey exuding from the pensile Sun, a couple vowed to fidelity, passed a leaflet, and became aghast with angst. The woman stared lifeless, her finger pointing to the informative grave. The burlesque man seized the opportunity, and in futility, he tried to woo her back to patient composure. Tapping, gripping, and affirming his solidarity, his powerful hand grasped her right shoulder blade. He pandered to his youthful mistress. Her skeletal structure wrinkled in dismay, and disapproval, for she believed not his tactless condescension. Disbelief, distrust are all but impossible to negate. Couple's impetus was no longer succinct, and their syntax estranged. The woman strode off, whereas he - a fool - clowned after her. What a farce to be dogged in her feart wake!

Another occurred on a celibate day. The discrepancy was that this occurrence proved to mythicise the maniac virus plaguing Bereave, and solidified the unnaturality in our awful townley. A burly man dubbed John, whose beard was as great as his insanity, rose from the paved concrete. He lurched with abhorrent vacuity in his visage. His gait accentuated an uncanny manner. His wits flailing in the wind, as though he were a strand of decayed hair. A cross, begemmed with insuperable marvels, hung burdensome, worn in the cavity of his chest. God be weak comparative to this evil spectre - his control overshadowed by comparison.

The cascading hill paved the way for all to observe John's outcry, with feverous dishonour. All knew his sayings were truthful, yet rueful behaviour had become prehistoric. His shirt left in ruins, his jeans of an antecedent tattering, and his features appalled with flaming rage.

His cry bellowed, resonating along the quaint hill:

"COME COME, HEAR ME! "His tone broke his virile urethra. As his tempo augmented, his legs seemed to slide, breaking in an abrupt silence. The dawn of time could not have predicted his decrying of malevolence. John cried of fabulous, incredible happenings. The Bereavians, his fellow brethren, ignored, and neutered the syllables sailing toward them as unfounded nonsense.

His vocal chords, however, curdled the very blood keeping them adroit. To and fro his nays alarmed any who were in close proximity. The poor soul of John, embroiled in a constrictive solitude. The oceanic plane drowning his breaths, like wild billows entempesting.

All the Bereavians returned his outroar with looks of scornful disgust, repressing their empathy. Showing so would be a form of weakness. Weaklings cannot strive in a place haunted thus.

John was catholic in his philosophy, a man who swore to never adhere to tiresome beliefs. Nevertheless, on this memorable day, his frown was shunned to Hell. He refused to speak of the proceedings afterwards, declaring it would be unholy of him, for the sight he beheld was one which clung to his bone structure. This grim event made our community chafe to the crotch. This man had clearly seen the Hellhounds, he was a thoroughbred Hellraiser.

Ye have been witness to the damnable sight thyselfes.

After the mania of John had heralded across Bereave, the obloquy defamed and pilloried his reputation. Bereavians forsook him, and, from what little faculty was left within him, John complied with indifference. His compliance, however, arrested not the tenacious fire seething throughout. Balderdash, trifles, hearsay, and wives tales disseminated throughout Bereave, jumping like calumnious fleas from villager to villager, and spread as a contagion - as is wont

with the disowned and rural outlands, adrift upon a keel of pity. These rumours were bruited from the larynxes of fainéant mothers, irksome fathers, and uncouth youngsters akin. It brought a respite from the georgic tedium of Bereave.

A Man's Quest to be UnBereft

In the valley of the shadow of morality there lies our protagonist, christened Brune. A benign man in nature, though this nature had long been flipped on its rear, as now, he could not decipher what emotions he wished to portray - he was a series of misleading sentiments. His face was a withered piece of bark - skeletal from the inability to satiate his stomach's needs. Cheeks as hollow as the Grim Reaper: if one were to touch them, they would feel the pulpy texture of his mouth. When he drank - liquor, of course - one could see the malleable substance roil, bashing against his gaunt dental structure, as though it were a whirlpool of destruction. Beneath his eyes lay dark, soot-riddled circles of mayhem. He bore Death's insomnolence; the phantom's mask. Brune was not well-matured, though, this was attributable to his dejection and vices, which had aged him severely - a stress-induced, facial coma was transparent. His veins battered, running coarsely along his bodily structure as if they were a steam-train transporting absinthe across the American plains. The build of these veins were a protruding violet-blue, likened to a virulent, Neptunian moon. The toxic waste had demolished their modesty. His ribs bled through the very skin he wore; his human attire cracked open, revealing what lies beneath us all. Coughing had begun to inflict malice, as his carcass could no longer withstand wheezes or hacks. His spine arched ever so slightly forward, malpositions had led to a Notre Dame effect. He stooped, hunching over whatever he so endearingly sat atop. In turn, making Brune twofold more alien - an abstract masterpiece, begot by an unearthly womb.

Neighbours looked down upon him with a contemptuous air, pertained only by the upper echelons of the French bourgeoisie. Derisive chatter of his outlandish appearance was common amongst talebearers, since it kept their non-cancerous and meaningless atmosphere evermore exhilarating.

Each morning, evening, and morrow, Brune sat by his dictaphone, which whispered a treacly ballad to him. His wife's penultimate syllables replayed over and over to him, entranced by a voice not from this world.

"I may be late this evening my love, I am going out with some companions. Do not wait for me. I love you." her chords were of a damask flaccidity.

The cyclical sound would churn itself in a rotary motion. Each time the sentence "I love you" whispered, Brune would pause, cherishing it. He adorned it as though it were a painting from an artist of inexplicable talent. An artist one can but envy for his prowess crafts up things of wonderment. What the widowed man truly cared for was the vow...the unadulterated vow. This was the last time he had heard it being said - being reaffirmed. He tread upon a fine seam of reality and fiction. At times, illusioning his brain into disbelieving she had ever loved his pathetic person.

Images flashed of her gorgeous countenance - back, forth, back, forth. He, in desperation, wanted to touch, feel, caress and kiss her supple lips. Just one final kiss, was this so much to wish for? It is one thing to have the taste of your beloved one's appearance, yet her voice, her voice be liquid gold.

This audio requiem came to a halt when, on a fair day in the thick of summertime's annual decay, and when in the midst of performing his habitual mourning, it all crumbled into a sour tart. Brune spun, wove, and entwined Saturn's silky voice, reliving the primal time he heard "I love you". Sensing her lips pressed against his own, when, by misfortune, his finger slipped into the nest of the beast, expunging the tender message. It was promptly lost in an irreversible mist. It was not only physically lost, but it seemed to have been obliterated, in his own internal void. It was as if Hiroshima's nuclear waste seeped in, and dismartyred the halcyon maiden's reputation. The reiterating, therefore, ceased to coexist.

The distant churn of a heart in a fit of palpitation was audible.

Overwrought with grief Brune, mitts in his dandruff hair, trembled with reverence. In utter dismay and confusion, he wept aloud. His tone so forte, it pierced his horrid battlement. Brune was in his meagre pants, nighing on being nude to our voyeuristic sights. His bulging ego deflated. The cherished memory provoked his bladder to weep withal. It keened in a funereal type of fashion, as his puerile bladder was helpless. In these sterile seconds, all Brune entreated for was a woman to cradle him, comfort him with her extraordinary, invincible strength. Alas, some wishes are to never be materialised.

Brune bellowed, in the most stupendous manner, all his ireful vindication:

“WHY, WHY O’ WHY! THIS CANNOT BE TRUE! MY LOVE! WITHOUT YOUR VOICE I AM NOTHING!”

He was correct - what was Brune to do sans his dame’s claim to fame? His mental fortitude had depended upon the lithe tenor of this final recording. Deserted by the comfort and solace of the voice message, he no longer had someone to abide by. He was a stray cat who wished not to strut on its lonesome. The infant dripped jaundiced substance from his crotch, oceanic droplets ran down his haggard, pallid cheeks and his pride vanquished all in the matter of a hapless instant. Since her departure from Middle Earth, he had greatly lost his appetite. Many days he quenched his hunger with liquor, engendering an inebriate disorder. It became as clear as the word of our Father above - whom we must query as to why he neglects such a genteel race as the Bereavians? Why must he deracinate the luckless lot of 49? Our Father doth sin in like manner to his kin.

Fair Brune had been betrothed to Juliette since they were but mere students undergoing their scholarly education. Both had similar interests, and had kindled their flints as though they were an enormous flaming sphere of lustre. It did not take him long to get on his knees, and implore for Juliette to join him in winsome matrimony. The town’s custom was not of a grandiose nature, therefore, the affair was small. They were content for a period of five years, enough to tighten Brune’s emotional rope, enough to smite him with footling reveries. They, for prolapsed whiles, swayed to and fro in the amicable townley of Bereave; perturbations, interim, had always flown here and there of what lurked beneath Bereave’s merry surface, though superstitions are oft overlooked in society - when they can disjoin humble civilisations.

After the effacement of Juliette’s voice on the dictaphone, a series of all the more cataclysmic events ensued. No more could Brune lift his mind from the mistake he had so foolishly committed. His indulgence in legal vice transgressed from common alcoholism to a credo of life. No more did he eat - although, in all honesty, scant had he ever eaten much. He starved himself, from morning to eve. He awoke to a bottle of pellucid gin by his bedside, and slept with a bottle emptied of any liquor in his embraceful arms. The bottle allotted Brune a nugatory sedative.

There was one time when he tried to gorge upon comestibles, forcing his brittle dentures to masticate down on some briny fish and oily chips. In preparation, he went to the townley’s finest establishment for so, though, he later uncovered it as unavailing. As upon his palate being hit with the javelin of nutritious matter, and not liquid calories, Brune became struck with a bout of acidulous potency. All his bile purged up into a pit of volcanic mesh. The

green viscosity corroding his bowl of sewer water, as of Nagasaki's aftermath in a minute china bowl, from being whited and sickened Brune.

The local corner shop knew of his saddening tale, and often let him off paying his incalculable dues, since his increasingly evident state of hysteria inveigled sympathy. Brune would stroll in with the confidence of a bull, and demand for bitter gin. This seemed to become his choice of cyanide. Upon payment, he would hand the convivial merchant useless buttons and amber pennies. Brune, every instance of so, was in earnest confuddlement as to why these jewels were renounced, terminating the purchase. Soon pity got the better of our kind merchant, as he let this slip, condoning his comedical Bereavian, acquaintance, and philistine to have what he so yearned for.

Brune, when in the bowels of Bereavians thronging, was aflame with angst. In frequency, he redoubled his perusal of people's faces, for he was convinced the defamers were out for homicide. They wanted his quietus upon a barbed stake. Brune heard inner voices belittling, and bartering his every step, every choice, and every time he erred. The wretched babe's in the wavering streets would wail for their mothers, affrighting Brune, provoking his assumptions to trust that they were some knavish ghosts, hired to murder him. The delusional prey felt enclosed in a realm of hunters, whose speciality resided in the mercenary. The paved walkways jagged to and fro, as his peripheral vision was a flit of macro-lensed photographs, disorientated atilt. He, when evenfall dusked, recoiled for he saw nothing, save sinister terrors of his past.

He was left with no respite lest he slept; though even in inertia, his mind struggled to compromise, and form a blockage against the incoming eddies of mutilation. The cycle rotated, the pendulum swung, and our man's time had been wrung.

On an unfortunate whim, tormenting dreams began to hail down upon his unease. Heretofore, Brune's mind had seldom wandered to dreamlike realms. He had possessed a coherence, and no fantastical dread. The vulture, however, had in recent times begun to feast off his dormant carrion. A wreck lay in its wake. He would shake upwards from a dream of nightmarish nature. Each night, as his head reclined, encapsulated in a feathery hay, with his nape sturdily sunken in, his psyche would travel to passageways dissimilar to any other. He would see Juliette's wondrous visage, her liquid amber eyes melting away - her eyes were always a subject of much admiration for Brune. They would twinkle in the gleaming streaks of our star above, rending him into a cosmic moonscape. He rebounded upon her brown liquor, glistening ever so vehement. Twinkle, Twinkle Brightest Star, how I wish you

foreknew of his devoir. In dreams, her bewinged spine grew, and her figure mesmerised in the residual spark of lovestruck lust.

So prominent was her lore in dreams, that on one occasion, whilst in this paralytic stupor, Brune witnessed an emerald forestry, and before him was that sodomised, curst lake of Bereave. Reposing by the lakeside was his mistress, his divinity, Juliette, who had been anticipating his arrival. Her cankerous lips were a metallic blue, a washed out brew. With Brune agog, he stuttered from being overwhelmed. A cunning simper arose from Juliette, reaping sedation. In a swift exhalation, all detrimental purity drifted into an abyss. His mouth constricted any verbose dialect, hindering gaudish communication. He contemplated walking toward her; credulity wreathed our masculine Cheshire, as though a fisherman had dug his hooks so profound into his cranium, that all hopes of removal were now eradicated. The maiden's coiling finger pleaded for a pillage. Brune abided by her biddings, by commencing his voyage over to her.

He frisked toward Juliette, besotted with elegiac woe, as tears pooled, as if God himself wept at such unusual awe. Traversing through crackling, fallen branches, her forepaw twirled him forth. Comporting a grimace of sincerity, she endeared him onwards. Attaining solidarity by once more being in her succouring-arms, she whetted his visage's left cheek.

Stupefied with unguarded reservation, Brune was prepared to propel himself into Hell like Orpheus, shackling his torso to ironclads to have but a mere touch, as if Prometheus, with choleric anger, wanting an acquittal.

Prizing his feeble hands, she raked both into the cesspool of damnation: the flexuous shores of Bereave's lake. Brune, still dumbfounded by her reincarnation, uttered no syllables - he was a monosyllabic imbecile, as dumb as a dodo. Crystalline aqua girded their corpses. Hooking their structures into the medial of overbearing stupefaction, and they gazed at one another.

Brune gusted a wire backwards, and honing in all his senses, he scented her enthralling stench, sized seraphic curves, which fecundated his libido. A long extinct sentiment which now appeased him. This pleasurable reenactment resembled a perpetual purgatory, indiscernible, as if it were veiled with gloomy compassion.

Leaning toward Juliette, Brune whispered golden laudations, whilst fondling his confidence. Distress regressed into hibernation, no man's land digressed from his ineptitude. He contrived a downright dependency upon this spectre.

Diving downward, Juliette submerged herself, as Brune idled and prohibited his naivety to worst him. Awaiting her resurgence, he stared into the translucent waves, pondering on when

and where she might resurrect. The water, however, was stiller than a statue, and unruffled. Wary premonitions stole over Brune, and a disheartenment bestirred upon him.

Behind him, resurrection had been reborn: our treacherous Juliette resurfaced, this time, she did not appear to be beautified. Far from so, she was cloned as a fraudulence of Juliette. Her face fragmented, fractured, and fissured into a contortion of horror. Horror, horror, horror was all that also lay atop Brune. His facial expressions failed him, the incoming missile to which was a sodden, black hand drawing itself inwards. The missile headed forth, with zestful speed. In an instant he was underwater, for the false idol had played a game of lust and trick, and now Brune paid reparations for so. Swallowing gulps of brine fuddled water, he struggled for oxygen. His breath diminishing, bubbles of fading respiration floated upward, where they squealed in splashes. Built up ire could be seen from beneath the mirror of this diaphanous liquid. It made Brune's fear ghastly. The last bubbles rose, scampering from dear avail from below depths, and all Brune could demystify was a foggy infinitude; blacker than a winter's night, darker than any panther's coat of arms.

Aroused, Brune thereon heaved down a pellet of intoxication, prising a gargle of liquor. A rumbling roar cleaved itself from his malcontent stomach. His hand would lend maternal guidance, as if a cradle could sate its ruckus. Acidic sulphur hazarded him to micturate his bed. His resilience thawed with each sequent day. The sole, audible concern from Brune, upon remarking of his urination abed, was to retort by bemoans and frail plains. The mendacious remembrance, seen in his quixotic nightmares, recurred through cyclical pirouettes, and further desponded Brune. They emerged from the execrable smog of fate, predating upon the already assailable Brune.

These slumbersome trepidations took a particular toll upon his sanity, more so than his hollow existence whilst awake. Why? Well, it reminded him of how tiny and malleable a person can be. The revenant of his hallucinations, manipulated his unmeaning survival in the drabdest of meadows. The threnodic abyss above and below watches us, awaiting for an impromptu thwart to pounce, and devour us. Grieving melancholy cannibalises its host by embowelling the reliquaries of one's lucidity. Brune knew this all too well - he was fluent, one might even say.

By this stage, Brune's figure had devolved the more, into a shell of bones. It was as though Death himself had been bewitched through Brune. A slender jab at his ribs would instigate an avalanche of boney-broth. A rudimentary scythe at his shoulder blades would disperse them from their sockets. His complexion carved inwards, like a Grecian sculptor who had chosen to depict the impertinent bodice of an Ethiopian neonate. Brune's cheeks were a vermillion

from the threshold of vice, which reddened him with an egregious kiss. The gates of his eyes were often half vapid, and encumbering his periphery was a layer of clouds, blockading between his cornea and his macula. A rickety walk bemocked as apparent, for he would stumble with the blow of a heavenly zephyr. His shoes no longer fit, not due to any growth in this area of expertise, yet rather due to their disfigurement. Not an inch of subcutaneous fat resided within, and not an inch of insulation was present, either. Moreover, little muscle remained steadfast.

Brune revoked the concept of bathing himself; at first, his bodily cologne reeked, like a gangrenous gash festering, through the canals of his nostrils, though soon he was accustomed to it, and thus Brune forgot that he never cleansed. His entrails released scents unthinkable to the human conscious: they were of feculence, putrefying and faecal miasma, as of the smell of green cariosity. The vestments upon which clothed him were bedraggled, flyblown, and ripped at the seams from hallowed abuse; domestic by ordination. They, too, had absorbed Death's inherency, and proclivity for pungent rot. At haphazard, moths writhed about his disused garments. His pallid skin crusted and flaked groundward, for the lack of vitamins being absorbed. In all sincerity, Brune transfigured into the embodiment of a cacodemon. One's monocles would shatter, and shiver, from the prospect of confronting this odious wretch.

Woodlice and cockroaches lived amongst one another, since Brune's house purposed rife the influx of unwanted cretins. They were affably blithe with each other's company - no arguments, nor disputes over who defecated where. Brune had no qualms over their insolence for he was rapt by his banishment. The entirety of his house was these vermin's noisome oyster, where they could be free from persecution and pesticides.

At times, these vermin conversed with Brune, when he attained the luminosity of prolonged drinking. These impish creatures thought Brune to be pitiful, however, they bore a contumely to their own hideosity. Brune's famine maddened them, for he, by inadvertence, incarcerated them also. How sacrilegious of Brune to scourge these pests through his self-flagellation.