

The Evil Eyes



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Short Stories

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Dedicated
to
my co-travellers
on
The Life Train
who
made the journey
despite all the ups and downs
so pleasurable, so memorable
Those
who stepped off at their destinations
My gratitude, for their memories
Those
who are fellow companions
My thanks, for their nearness
Those
who are yet to board the train
Welcome, let us enjoy the ride

The Fourth Magus

The three of them had come out of the O'Learys and rushed to my cab. One settled on the front seat and the other two disappeared in the back.

“Follow that star!” said the one wearing a yellow shroud.

“Which one?” I asked.

“The blinking one, moving towards the north,” said the one who carried an Afro on his head, and pointed upwards.

“It is not a star. It is an aeroplane on its way to Arlanda airport,” I replied.

“Never mind that, follow it anyway!” came the command from the bearded one.

I started the cab, put the meter on and took the road to Arlanda.

“How far is it to this airport?”

“About forty kilometres.”

Thereafter silence prevailed.

They appeared to be rather confused about their destination, so I enquired: “What are you chasing?”

“A belief, hoping to see it turn into reality!” replied the Shroud, and added, “I am called Magus G.”

“Nice to meet you Mr. Magus!” I replied.

“Beside you is Magus M and behind you is sitting Magus B,” Magus G completed the introduction.

“You don’t look like brothers, or even related?” I could not hold my curiosity.

“But we are, we are brothers in deeds; if not by blood,” said Magus M.

“And what deeds are they? Taking a sip in O’Learys and following fake stars?” I wish I could hold my tongue, but people rushing into my cab and telling me to “Follow that ...” were not among my favourites. This was Stockholm not New York.

“Well, we want to be there when He arrives,” replied the bearded Magus.

“He *who*?”

“The one we are all waiting for,” said Magus B enthusiastically.

“I am not waiting for anyone other than those who come

into my cab, pay their bills at their destination and leave quietly,” I elucidated my position.

“No, no, no! We are not looking for any ordinary being. We are searching for the one who would remove all evil in this world and take us to our *home*.”

“Evil I know nothing of, but taking you home is no problem. That is what I do.... I mean professionally! Where is *your* home?”

Magus M in the front seat looked at the other two, then at me and said: “Mister, a taxi driver you might be but you look more lost than anyone we have met lately. Haven’t you heard of the great men who prophesied the coming of the greater one who would fulfil their promises?”

“All the great men I know who prophesied the coming of another one in the future were those who messed up things in their own time and took refuge behind a figure that would accomplish the feats that they had expected to do themselves.” I commented and then asked, “By the way, what does the B, G and M stands for in your names?”

“You don’t want to know them!”

“Why not?” I persisted

“You will end up ironing your tongue by the time you utter them correctly!”

I thought better of it and deleted the question from my list, and continued the journey.

We had just passed Kista and were nearing Sollentuna, when Magus B behind me saw the sign for McDonald’s and instructed me to get down there.

“Great men are seldom in a hurry, so there is no need for us to haste either. A little food for the stomach might stimulate the mind for better thinking,” was the assertion by him.

The other two seem to agree with him. As I parked the taxi I informed them, “The meter keeps running while you look after your stomach and your mind.”

“No problem! I hope you accept Master’s Card,” Magus M asked me

“You mean MASTERCARD, issued by a bank?” I was not taking any chances. People with their masters lurking in the distant past or expected in some unspecified future gave me creeps.

“Yes man, yes!” affirmed the Afro bearer, and added
“Do you want something to keep you running?”

“A Mcfeast would do nicely, and a cup of coffee,” I
was beginning to like Magus G.

“Why don’t you come in as well and give us
company?” he asked me.

“With the meter running!”

“Of course.”

We found an empty corner in the back of the large
restaurant in Akalla. Magus G and B went away to
purchase the food while I sat next to Magus M.

“The last time I heard about the three Magi it was
referred to a period some two thousand years ago,” I
very carefully probed Magus M in a friendly tone.

“That’s it – we are the same.” He replied me
confidently.

“Magi from year 0001?”

“Yes, haven’t you heard of intellectual cloning?” he
stared at me.

“You mean a sort of intellectual re-cycling with one’s
thoughts retained at the level of an alleged original
donor?”

“Of course, we have been doing it for centuries. Year after year, and batches after batches of infants who, from the moment of their birth, have their grey matter programmed after total deletion of what nature might have put on their hard discs ... I mean brains. Later on, you could show them whatever you like, teach them whatever you can and nothing goes in. We like to remain there where it all started. Neither the change in time nor any sort of so called progress is relevant to us. We have batches that are affixed to the era 1500 BC, era 0030 and 0700. Each of them equally confident of *their* truth and totally oblivious to any change that time may incur. *Thou shall not learn, knowledge is thy enemy*, is our motto.”

The other two Magi returned with overloaded trays and placed the burgers on the table.

“I could see that you have been briefing him!” said G to M.

Magus M eyed me suspiciously and said, “I have tried but he appears to be one of those freaks who is

resistant to our coaching. Well, well! What do we have here?”

Then, with a voracity that I would never have associated with an Indian Guru he attacked the burgers with his grinders, while he shook his head in some pleasant anticipation. I hoped that it wasn't *my* programming he planned. To avert his strike I decided to ask him some simple questions.

“Are you telling me that you believe that all that could be thought by a human being today has already been conceived several centuries ago?”

They nodded in affirmation, and then added, “We have a long list of A & Qs – answers and questions – that covers everything.”

“You meant a list of *questions* and *answers*?”

“No, no! Answers and questions he said. We have all the answers and it is up to you to formulate the correct questions!” Magus B smiled maliciously.

“And what happens if I ask a question that is outside the limits of your answers?”

“There is no *proper* question that is outside such limits.”

“Let us talk about an *improper* hypothetical question.”

“That would be blasphemy and and that is never treated kindly!”

We were back on square one. Sitting with those three clones in the back corner of a restaurant made me feel uneasy.

“The meter is still running. It is 6.35 kronor per minute, in case you are curious.” I informed.

“That does not matter. We have Visa and American Express too.”

“With appropriate expiry date as well as coverage in an acceptable currency?”

They nodded again in affirmative, but for some strange reason I remained doubtful about the validity of their credentials.

“Could I ask you to participate in a simple experiment?” I enquired.

They looked at me with alarm and then Magus G said, “It is *we* who do the necessary programming.”