

Scriptum

Prologue

Nothing calms me down more than flames carried by the wind of a mountain reflected by the walls of my ridiculously small tent. Sadly, my poor writing abilities decided to let me drown in the ocean of never-will-be-known authors, but that's okay. I never really wanted anyone to read those uncreative stories that were brought to paper with a pen of endless frustration. However, this frustration didn't come from my lack of creativity or motivation. Let's just say that I'm kind of a weird special snowflake.

I grew up like anyone else. Except that I neither went to school, nor did I have parents, who would have taken care of me as I stumbled on a rock, cut my head open and bursted in tears until the first person walking by told me to shut the hell up. My parents had given up on me in my young years. Okay, it was in my young days. Apparently they couldn't settle with the idea of having a daughter. And as far as my memories can reach I've always been this little girl sitting in the emptiest corner of a room full of people I didn't regard as family. Always enriching the pages of my cute little old-fashioned notepad. Those thoughts of mine, which my writings were full of altogether created a well functioning pillar that helped me through the worst times of my life. Ironically, I've never again had my mind as colorful and my thoughts as vivid as I had back then. Seldom did my attention escape the imaginary worlds in my head. Although as time passed I became more aware of my surroundings. Especially of the neverending pitiful routines everyone around me seemed to be caught in without realising it. Soon after that I became so sick of watching people chasing things others expect them to have that I got in a train and left. Without knowing where to go or if I would survive, leaving only a single note for people, who thought of me as of their real daughter: "I'm batman." By the way, my name is Noel.

Chapter one: Seeking purpose

The long way brought a lot of fascinating adventures with it. If you consider being caught and thrown out of the coal wagon I smuggled my way onto three times in a row an adventure. On the other hand I met a few interesting personalities. Since the beginning of my purposeless journey a grown female white cat came up with the plan to follow me on my way to nowhere. What a poor destiny it chose to go towards and what a poor companion it decided to be part of. Some say true happiness is when you can share it with others. I hope it applies to cats as well.

And so we were travelling through small villages avoiding other people as much as possible, and we were pretty good at it. We would travel taking side roads and walking through forests stealing food from local farmers. As soon as someone became aware of our presence in their storage room, I would promise to pay for all the food and harm that we caused. Then I would throw the cat in my bag and run as fast as I can. Another example of the fascinating adventures I mentioned before.

One cold evening I started wondering in what odds this journey, both physical and spiritual, would result. I was lying in a corn field covered by a dirty, dusty coat, which I had luck to find on one of the train stations some nice men introduced me to after some misunderstood train

situations. I guess it was previously inhabited by that homeless man I saw chillin' a few streets away. Judging by the lack of motion of his excessively hairy body I assume that he was dead. He also had a huge machete stuck in his chest and people were crowding around him. Probably not to admire his naked torso.

I was about to start shaping the story of my new book from scratch when I heard a nearly aggressive howl of the wind. The next moment I realized that it decided to blow away all of the pages that were already getting loose from being carried around for so long. I rapidly jumped up to get them back. Desperately catching the pages floating in the mid air one after another overcame me with a vague feeling of nostalgia for something I had never experienced.

I saw myself hopping and dancing on a green flowerful meadow chasing butterflies as if they were of incomprehensible value. The problem is that I've never seen a real butterfly before. According to conversations I overheard from my gossip-driven "parents",

The unreasonably fast development of industry was having so much impact on the already neglected environment that many species, which were not significant for any kind of production faced distinction. Unfortunately, one of them were butterflies, which now could only be seen in some locked out areas.

Before I noticed, I managed to climb all the way up to the peak of the hill that was located next to us. What I saw next punched the breath out of my exhausted lungs. In the middle of the monotonous toneless landscape, a mountain was situated far away in the back of the visible horizon. It was breathtaking. The way it didn't fit in its more or less - rather less - natural environment was like a mirror reflection of myself. It had something mystical per se. I couldn't explain it but that mountain appealed to me in a peculiar way. Somehow compelling me to go in its direction and I couldn't suppress the idea of taking a closer look.

The next few hours I was sitting there, on the highest point of the hill, watching the mountain slowly falling asleep as I did, too. And somewhere deep in my subconsciousness I already knew: I've finally found my butterfly to chase.

Early the next morning I woke up to the view of Ren - that's how I named the cat - biting and chewing on pages that were still lying on the ground. Apparently, the absorbing sight of the mountain made me forget about the reason I got up here in the first place. But it didn't matter anymore, because now I knew where to go. I packed my bag and soon we set off.

Chapter two: At the fireplace

And there I was, sitting on a self-made wood bench, watching the rustling fire piercing my warm face with peace. I was truly amazed by the mountain as it appeared to be even more magical as it seemed from the distance. I kept getting the impression of its unexplainable support towards me. For instance, I managed to walk for hours exploring the seemingly limitless areas full of forests and lakes and not getting notice of anything edible. But as soon as I got hungry and headed back to the tent an apple tree or a blueberry bush would happen to appear right in front of me. As if it was waiting for me to look away and sneakily get in my way trying to say "I've been here all the time".

Ren turned out to be a perfect guide. I'd never be able to move this freely around the mountain without her showing me the way back all the time. After all these troubles we had

ran away from together and all these places filled with various memories we had left behind, I think we must've built some sort of a connection. Therefore I wanted to appreciate every second I get to spend with Ren on this mountain because I knew that, like everything else in life, it wouldn't last forever. Back then I didn't realize how right I was.

Chapter three: A flash in the woods

Normally, I lose myself in writing so much that I stop paying attention to everything else. Forgetting the time passing by and the air around me getting colder. I would sit for hours writing without noticing that I haven't eaten for ages. But this time something shook me out of my trance. I was surrounded by dancing shadows of trees lit by the fireplace. I found it magical. The impression that they were actually alive wanting to have a little dance. It was purely surreal and imaginary, until I heard steps behind me. They were fast and getting closer and more intrusive with each and every step. Before I had the chance to turn around in fear, I could feel its breath on my neck, whatever it was. I could feel it, but I didn't hear the sound of breathing. Just a smooth stream of warm air constantly hitting the back of my head. And there was silence. I was paralyzed to death and was unable to move a single muscle. The recently rustling trees calmed down and watched us. The fireplace has shrunk itself to half its previous size. At that moment, I knew for certain: It's death knocking on my door. However, the silence was suddenly broken by Ren meowing around like crazy, probably crying for food - this unthankful beast. Everything around us got louder again and soon after that I could get the nerve to slowly look behind me. Nothing was there. "It's not my time to go yet. Not until I discover every little secret of this paradise" - I thought to myself while slowly lying down and drifting off to sleep.

Chapter four: Shiver for me

It's dark. I better get the pumpkin lamp with me while I go look for Ren. She went crazy and ran away after the incident last night. I haven't seen her since then. I wonder what could possibly motivate her to behave this unreasonable. She ran away from the warm fireplace, the canned tuna, which she absolutely loves, and of course, away from me. I imagine her chasing some rats or mice, just seeking fun. What bothers me is what she might have run into in the woods.

It's been about an hour I left the fireplace. With every step that I made the surroundings became more and more lustrous and charming. It was as if I was walking my way into a dream. I felt like everything was limited just by my imagination. I came to a shallow passage between two massive forests. They were utterly overwhelming and differed from each other merely by the color of their trees' leaves. On the left the leaves were blindingly orange and on the right side of the passage they were dark green, almost turquoise. A narrow path lead my way between these two magical forests. The deeper I walked into the unknown the narrower and stranger the path got. Not only was I worried about the lost cat but about myself as well. Suddenly, I heard some growly purr far away in front of me. It must've been Ren crying of pain or fear.

Full of hope and regardless of the path getting tighter by bushes of sharp stems I kept pushing my way towards the noise. Branches of trees were hitting my face and my arms as I kept bending them forward to be able to continue. I could feel the spikes tearing my skin

open leaving long red cut wounds. At one point I realized that I was deep into the forest with no path or any other trace behind me. I was lost.