

About the Slave Who Folds on Himself

I had a slave. He was someone so dull that I wouldn't like or pitied. I didn't even know his name. I didn't need to use his name since I was the only one who called and talked to him. He was always dirty, he was always stupid. It seemed to me that he didn't even know what was going on. He carried out my orders slowly. Always the same expressionless face. Like a sleep-walker. As if he lived in a dream world.

He knew me; I had no doubt of that. No one but me tried to use him anyway. Maybe he would obey whoever. The relationship between us had no personal dimensions I guess. He wasn't even aware of such a notion called "to obey". He was so stupid. He didn't even know he was my slave. At times I didn't order around, he looked like a free person lying down and taking a nap at a sunny place with a smile on his face. In fact, he just carried out my orders and lived in a calm imaginary world far from the real one. A man who found reason in the ignorance that is lying in the sun all day. I, on the other hand, lived in tension like a guardian who is trying to keep him out of the world.

Getting bored of watching his stupid happiness every day, I decided to teach him how to read and write. He listened to the lectures with the same dull expression at first. He became a good student once he learned how to read. He read books instead of taking a nap in his free time. Whenever I looked at him, I saw him taking a book out of his pocket, the drawer, under the arm chairs. Reading was another form of living in dreams for him. He spent so much time with his writing that things came to halt. Then it appeared that the reason for his clumsiness wasn't that he was carried away by other worlds, it was because he had defect of vision. I gave him my extra pair of glasses. He became a slave with glasses wearing rags. It wouldn't be appropriate to make a man who is so sophisticated and read almost my whole library work as my slave. First, I set him free, and then hired him as my assistant. I told him to wear one of my old clothes instead of the rags. I gave him permission to talk to me whenever he wishes not only when I ask him something. He was content and approved my words.

He was a good assistant. In fact, he was better than any other assistant. I began to have him do most of the work. In the beginning, I was making him proofread my writings, asking him to copy them. Later on, I began to make him write the articles too. It was sufficient to give him subject headings and hints. When I saw they were as good as the articles I would write, I made him do all my correspondence as well. I wasn't wasting my life reading all those boring letters any more. He was replying in earnest. Silent, just like once upon a time he used to peel boiled potatoes. He had a command of the subjects as much as me. All I needed to do was read what he wrote and approve. I began to spend all my time taking a nap under the sun. I had become a free and happy man.

A little while after, (or quite a while after... I wasn't counting the tick tucks anyway) I turned to a ghost who wandered in dreams. First, he warned me as my assistant. Then, he told me he wanted to warn me as my friend. I didn't get what he was talking about. One day he got really mad. One of the articles had received a bad comment I suppose. He started shouting at me. I couldn't help but wonder if I used to be the same way before. How terrible it was to lay one self out and take the fleeting things of the world so seriously. One can turn to someone else. When I look at him I saw a robot of that boring institutional humanity. No, nonetheless, I hadn't got so carried away. Furthermore, he didn't look like me in the least even though he had my clothes on. I wasn't able to understand how the people who telephoned couldn't tell he wasn't me. Maybe they wanted to hear what I needed to say not my voice. He kept saying I had gone insane. I was waiting in silence. I couldn't find anything to say. What was it to him anyway? It was my life. I lived the way I wanted. Carelessly.

But he didn't stop. He took out the whip that I used to beat him once upon a time from the drawer. He smacked it twice on the floor. He started telling me things to do referring to my unemployment. I pretended to accept the situation to avoid trouble. I thought he was embarrassed about his past. Furthermore, he wasn't even aware of that. Madness must have gotten him stupid. Maybe his mind was so busy with the issues of the world which I taught him that he had no strength left to think that. Forgetting I was the one who set him free once, he only remembered the days that I

was his master.

I pitied him. The only reason that I accepted to do the work placidly wasn't maybe just that I wanted to continue to live my carefree life selfishly. I must have been suffering a pang of conscience; for that I had imposed burden upon him. I felt relieved, purified, peeling the potatoes which were hot as apples in hell.

Now while I was serving tea, dragging, he is writing this text you are reading. He pities me, I suppose. I don't mind. I am content with watching what he writes from a distance. A lot more time is needed before he recognizes that writing is a labyrinth.

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