

GYPSY

461

By James Collins

It was a dark and gloomy night but only in my head. Outside the sun was bright and shiny and there was a light breeze blowing. People were walking around in shorts and sundresses and I could feel the heat of the sun and the breeze on my skin but my mind wanted an overcoat. Depression I had never previously experienced enveloped me. It all started a couple of hours ago when I was rushing to an important meeting at work. As I rounded a street corner at a rapid pace, I ran into a little old lady in a shawl and sari and knocked her to the ground. I stopped and bent down to aid her and lift her up. She was furious muttering in a foreign language as she gathered up her things. I was shocked to see the paper bag that had broken open and spilled out the chicken head, the chicken claw, and the little straw doll with the pins sticking out of it. It exuded a terrible smell a combination of rotten eggs and death. I quickly backed away from the little scene about two paces. I still wanted to help but the smell repelled me. I gagged. The woman wrapped in multicolored shawls and scarves bent over as she looked at me. She raised a gnarled hand and pointed directly at me.

“You have interfered with me performing a religious curse. If you have done this maliciously, you will be dead by sunset. If this was not malicious, you will not die, but death will visit your home.”

At that instant, a green cloud of gas came out of the little votive offering, rolled over, wrapped itself around my legs and engulfed me. The smell came with it and stayed. I turned and ran.

As I walked into the crowds on the street, I became a pariah. People moved away from me, held their noses and pointed. Depression engulfed me. Everything looked dark. I felt sick. I felt alone. I felt destitute. I had to go home.

The subway was a repetitive experience. I ended up alone on the subway car. Everyone who came in, held their noses and gagged from the smell. Then they rapidly exited to the cars on either side. I was abandoned. I was cursed.

As I reached the door to my apartment, I could hear King, the Great Dane scratching at the inside of the door and barking excitedly. He knew I was home. He was the only being that truly loved me. As I opened the door, he bounced up in the air twice. Then he rushed to me throwing his paws up around my neck. I hugged him. He shuddered. His head became a chicken head. He died. The Gypsy’s words, “You will not die but death will visit your home”, came true. At that instant, the depression faded, the smell left, and I was left alone in sorrow.

THE END