
1. SIX FEET UNDER

The angel was in her dream again; however, this time her steel face was that of an old and angry man. The eyes were filled with hate, and the voice with the sound of vengeance¹.

But it was just a dream.

Except this dream seemed to be so much more real than any other. This dream felt cold. This dream was dark. This dream was hard against her back and head.

No, she did not like this dream; so she forced her eyes open.


Normally, her room was light, even at night, because for many years now, she had hated being in places where she could not see. Yet tonight the room was filled with an impenetrable² darkness, and she felt a sudden stab of fear.

She quickly tried to move her arm to reach the lamp on the bedside cabinet, but instead her elbow banged³ against something hard, and she cried out.

Confused, she tried to sit up, but this time her head struck⁴ something.

Panic spread over her. The type of panic you feel when you wake in the middle of the night, sweat covering your body, your heart beating, your mind still half-convinced that the monster of the nightmare is a reality.

She kicked her legs, but they too seemed to be trapped. Only then did she begin to form an image in her mind of where she was.

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- 1 **vengeance** - *bosszú*
 - 2 **impenetrable** - *áthatolhatatlan*
 - 3 **to bang against sth.** - *nekimegy vminek*
 - 4 **to strike sth.** - *beleüt vmibe*

An image of a small space, enclosed on all sides, virtually¹ no bigger than the length² and width³ of a person.

The image of a coffin⁴.

The sound that escaped from her lips was horrendous⁵ to hear. It did not sound like a woman at all. It sounded like a wounded⁶ animal. It sounded like fear itself.

“Help me!” she screamed, her voice muted by the small space. “For God’s sake, somebody help me! Help me! There’s been a mistake! Get me out of here! Get me the hell out of here!”

After several minutes of screaming and kicking and trying to hit her hands against the wood, she stopped. Slowly she managed to regain some control of herself, to stop the tears that were falling down her face, to slow her breathing and to start thinking.

The first thing she did was check her clothes. They seemed to be the same suit and blouse that she had been wearing when she left the restaurant.

The restaurant. Was that the last thing she could remember? No, she could remember walking home through the city of Newcastle.

So what had happened? An accident?

Despite her fear she was still an intelligent woman. No, there had been no accident. At least, not of the physical kind. The cut on her head was the only part of her that hurt right now.

Right now? What time was it right now?

Her watch, it had luminous hands⁷! If she could...

But before she moved her arm, she knew that the watch was not there. For more than ten years she had worn that watch. Now its very absence⁸ made her begin sobbing again.

1 **virtually** - *gyakorlatilag*

2 **length** - *hossz*

3 **width** - *szélesség*

4 **coffin** - *koporsó*

5 **horrendous** - *iszonyú*

6 **wounded** - *sebesült*

7 **luminous hands** - *világító számlap*

8 **its very absence** - *nagyon hiányzik a jelenléte*

“Damn it, Jean!” she told herself. “Pull yourself together¹. You can get out of this. Think!”

Her watch was gone. That could only mean one thing.

That someone had placed her in this coffin in spite of the fact² they knew she was still alive.

Her heart began to race³ again, but this time it was anger that drove it. “You cowards!” she screamed.

Her phone? No, if they had taken her watch, they would have certainly taken that.

So she was alone.

Her family would never know what had happened to her, though they would be full of the suspicions⁴ that had tormented them for years. It was the fear of every judge’s family: the fear that one day a criminal would take revenge⁵ upon the person who had delivered their justice.

In the dark she began to cry again, and this time she made no attempt to stop herself.

“Judge Grey?” a quiet voice whispered. “Can you hear me?”

Judge Jean Grey jumped in shock, her head banging against the wood once more. The voice was quiet and muted, but it seemed to be very near to her. “Who is that? Where are you?” she shouted.

“Judge Grey, if you can hear me, you have to find the walkie-talkie. Can you do that? Can you reach down and find it? Somewhere near to your right leg.”

The judge’s right hand quickly searched in the dark and found something. It was a thick plastic square, and she could feel large buttons on it.

“Press the first button if you want to speak.”

1 **to pull oneself together** - összeszedi magát

2 **in spite of the fact** - a tény ellenére

3 **to race** - hevesen ver

4 **suspicion** - gyanú, bizalmatlanság

5 **to take revenge upon sb.** - bosszút áll vkin

For a moment the judge waited. She tried to compose¹ herself, to remove the fear and tears from her voice. When she finally pushed the button, it was the voice of the famous crown-court² judge that spoke. The judge who had brought to justice more criminals than any other in the north of England. The judge who was famous for her tough sentences and iron rulings³. “Listen to me. Listen very carefully. I don't know who you are. I don't know why you are doing this. I only know that you are making a very big mistake. Do you really believe that you will not be found? I'm a crown-court judge. Someone will have seen you take me. Someone will be looking for you even now. Let the authorities know where I am, and I'll call for them⁴ to be lenient⁵. Fail to alert them, and I'll make sure you suffer for this.”

There was a long silence; then the quiet voice spoke again.

“You don't like the dark, do you? You don't like small dark places?”

It was horrible to hear her phobia on the lips of this man, but she was determined to be strong. “What do you want? Money? I have money, but the only way you can get it is to get me out of here now. You may have my wallet, but I'll never tell you the pin code.”

“9784,” the voice said quietly. “I know all of your secrets, Judge Grey. I know it all. I know where you hide the cigarettes that you tell your husband you don't smoke. I even know why you're scared of the dark, but I want to hear you say it.”

The judge's blood turned to ice. This was not the voice of a petty criminal⁶. This was the voice of a madman⁷. “Look, you

1 **to compose oneself** - összekapja magát

2 **crown court** - koronabíróság

3 **ruling** - ítélet

4 **to call for sb. to do sth.** - felszólít vkit, hogy csináljon vmit

5 **lenient** - elnéző

6 **petty criminal** - pitiáner bűnöző

7 **madman** -őrült

have to listen to me. I'm a good person. I've done my job for the good of society. If I've sentenced you or one of your family, it was in the name of the law."

Another silence. "Yes, you've been a good person. Not all your life, but for the last fifteen years. Before that, though..."

"So why are you doing this to me?" she shouted.

"Judge Jean Grey," the voice said. And suddenly the judge remembered hearing the voice as she walked past an alley on her way home. She had turned and seen the face of an old man, but then a needle had pressed into her neck, and she had felt herself falling.

"You drugged me!"

"Yes. I learnt all about drugs just for this day. Like I learnt all about you. I watched you. I followed you, for nearly fifteen years. I could have killed you a hundred times. In a way I became you. I became your judge. And this... this is your sentence."

"Who are you?" the judge screamed. And she banged her head against the wood of the coffin and felt soil falling between the gaps, soil that made her realise how real this was. How there really was no escape.

"No. Maybe not a judge," the voice said. "Something else. Maybe an angel."

The angel. Every day for fifteen years she had thought about that angel. Every time she had driven past the statue she had tried to look away.

"No. Please, not this."

"Yes, this," the voice hissed. "Fifteen years ago you were leaving your golf club after another extravagant dinner, and you were drunk. You crashed your car on the Durham road, hitting another car and killing the driver. You were trapped in your car, in the dark, alone. I don't know if you could see it: the Angel of the North, the statue looking down on you as you

cried and begged for mercy¹. I only know that when the family of the dead driver asked for justice from the courts they found none. You used your power and influence² to cover it all up. You never confessed that it was your fault. The other driver, a young woman, was dead, but you were never punished. Now this is your punishment, Judge Grey.”

The judge screamed and shouted and hit her fists against the wood. “I’m sorry! It’s true! It’s all true. It was my fault. That poor girl. I killed her! God forgive me! But please, don’t leave me here! I’ve tried to make things better, I’ve tried to be a good person.”

When she stopped speaking, there was a quiet sigh, and then the voice spoke for the final time. “That’s all I ever wanted to hear you say. Ever since the day you killed my daughter.”


For a moment there were no other sounds than the judge’s sobbing, but then there was a strange noise above her, and the wood seemed to creak³.

Tentatively she raised her hands and pushed the lid⁴ of the coffin, soil and dirt falling into the gaps and covering her. She screamed in fear, fear that the soil would suffocate⁵ her; then she pushed harder, and this time the lid fell back, and the early morning sky was revealed.

Slowly she tried to stand, her legs weak, and her eyes unbelieving⁶.

Her coffin was buried in no more than half a foot of soil; the large stone that had been on top of it was lying on the grass.

And the giant statue of the Angel of the North was standing above her, justice and vengeance on her steel face.

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- 1 **mercy** - *kegyelem*
 - 2 **influence** - *befolyás*
 - 3 **to creak** - *recseg*
 - 4 **lid** - *vminek a teteje*
 - 5 **to suffocate** - *megfojt*
 - 6 **unbelieving** - *hitetlen*



→ Az észak-angliai **Gateshead**-ben 1998 óta egy 20 méter magas angyal-szobor ékeskedik. Az Észak Angyalának, amelyet Antony Gormley tervezett, 50 méter hosszú szárnyai vannak, amelyet még azok is remekül láthatnak, akik London és Edinburgh között a keleti parti vasútvonalon utaznak. A művész azt mondja a szoborról, hogy azokra a bányászokra emlékeztet, akik 200 éven keresztül a sötétségben dolgoztak. Éppen ezért az angyal feladata, hogy nyugalmat és oltalmazó hatást keltsen, amiben a szárnyainak tartása is segítenek: finoman előre borulnak, és ezzel ölelést fejeznek ki.