

A Person Who Do Not Read

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It was seven thirty in the morning. He got off the bed, without any facial expression or body language to show his feeling. He walked toward the window, leaned on the windowsill. The sky today was dark pig-iron gray. He stretched his hand toward the sky, thinking it is within reach. He didn't open the window, but the chilly air had squeezed into his lungs.

He had a dream. He was chased by a nameless demon. The demon killed all his family. He ran, frightened. But the demon ran faster than he, he tried to escape but in vain, and he was caught. Then the demon asked him to write a poem for him, but he was too fearful to let out one word. Angrily, the demon killed him like it did to his family. At the end of his dream, he saw himself lying on the ground. Black blood stains slowly crept over the paper which he was unable to write a poem on.

He walked down the stairs. All of his family were in the dining room.

“Good morning, Daddy,” his son and daughter said together.

“Daddy, will you please read bed time story for me tonight?” asked the boy.

“Hurry, then. The school bus is coming!” his wife said to their children while handing a cup of milk to him.

“Bye, Daddy.”

He knelt down, hugged and kissed them. They ran to the school bus without turning back.

After he finished his breakfast with his wife, he went to the café shop he was used to go, alone. This is his regular schedule every weekday. He would sit on the seat by the corner and had a cup of coffee as usual. He came here every weekday since five years ago. At the beginning, he liked here because it was a tranquil place, no one would bother him for the whole day. And he just sat here and did nothing. Maybe he was thinking, but no one knew. However, one day he asked the waiter for a piece of napkin, and then more napkins. It seemed like the Muse came, and he began to write. A few months later, he published his first book and became a best-seller. The more he wrote, the more famous he became. After that, he still wrote his new stories here, constantly and diligently. But the difference is that, some admirers outside the café would whisper and point at him; it always made him think of an animal in the cage. “Then I am the rarest one,” he thought. And those annoying publishers and reporters went there, trying to grab any pieces of paper he wrote. Sometimes he thought they were all gadflies, but he always smiled, quietly.

This day, he sat on the seat by the corner, without any utensils that a famous writer should be equipped with. He just sat there and did nothing, like the first day he came here.

The air around him was undisturbed and almost condensed. He could not even sense the tiny uproar inside his brain.

“Excuse me, Sir,” a voice broke this silence.

“Sir, I don’t know if I have this pleasure to get some comments from you after reading my work?” a thin and timid young man said.

He responded the young man with his usual gentleness. The young man sat down, and he turned on the first page. Staring at it for a few minutes, only he knew that he had read nothing. The timid young man looked at him nervously, therefore he seemed to be infected with the young man’s anxiety. He tried again and again, but no words jump into his brain through his eyes. He didn’t notice that his hand sweated and the muscle on his face looked taut. Finally, he closed the book, let out a sigh that no one could ever hear. Then he got off his seat, and leave.

After wandering along the street, he entered one bookstore in his town. To his surprise, there were many people inside despite it was a weekday. He found that there were a pile of books with his name on it. Picking one up, he leafed through his book about a traveler and his lover. He was supposed to understand every word, but he didn’t. There was a sudden flash of hesitation in his eyes, because today’s dream came into his mind. He didn’t remember how the nameless demon looked like. Maybe it was faceless. But he felt a great fear that he never had. “Will anyone kill me like that

if I cannot write?" he was thinking and a person walked to him, handing him a book and asking him to sign for it. He did without too much thinking. All the same, all politeness, this is the way he treated people.

He didn't know how this day came to an end. A gloomy day, he thought. The sky was still overcast as he saw this morning. It was so dark and so low that he thought it was within reach. He walked to a park and sat on a bench. There was no one there except him. A flock of doves peck the ground customarily. "Maybe I can write a story of a garden and a dove," he thought.

The pleasurable dinner time became tasteless tonight. He could hardly hear anything his children and wife were talking about. All he thought was about the moment he opened the young writer's work: thousands of signs flew through his eyes, but he couldn't catch any of them. He saw the signs danced, ran, and moved chaotically, but none of them gathered and jumped into his eyes. He went to his room with dinner unfinished, turning over all his books on the shelf, trying to find any words he could understand, but none, he could understand nothing. "None! Nothing! None..." he said desperately and almost madly. At this dreadful moment, his little son came in, with his favorite book in his arms.

"Daddy, let's read bed time story," his son said.

"Let's go, kid." His wild eyes calmed down in one second.

It was the most unpleasant bed time story in the world that he never wanted to recall. But the crying sound vibrates in his head constantly in his later life. He sat by the bed, seeing the sentences on the story book separated into pieces and danced in front of him. Then he was too angry that he lost control. In spite of his son who laid on the bed, blinking his sleepy eyes and waiting for his favorite story, he screamed, yelled and tore the story book apart. He neither noticed the broken pieces flying in the room, nor the panic of his beloved son. Also, he didn't notice the crying sound buffeted his heart mercilessly. The only thing he knew was that his little son never asked him to read any story after that night.

He didn't appear at that café shop the next day, and the day next, either. The young writer didn't receive any comment from him. It is said the person who met him in the bookstore was the latest one who got his autograph, but it meant nothing because he had never published anything or shown up in front of the public since then.

A few years later, in a small town, the person in charge of distributing food tickets for poor families found one familiar name in the lists. He read this name repeatedly; finally he figured out that it was the author of a book, and the book was about a traveler and his lover. It was once his favorite, he thought. This only took him thirty seconds, and then he turned another page, busily.