

CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS PRESENTS

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3# ARE THERE BEARS IN MALAYSIA

I own a book: a note book from which is always with me, although I only use it when I need guidance from whom I'd call my mentor, Jiri Ivanov. Jiri was a Russian shaman and practitioner of inanimism, which encompasses the belief of spiritual memory from trauma repeated over within the fabrics of inanimate objects. He believed that all inanimate objects that came from nature carried the soul of nature within them. He also managed to touch for memory on animals, his favorite being horses, to which he was rarely seen without.

The story of Jiri would be far too great a tale to express in this, a brief slice of my life, but his words still appear to me when I need them within that one notebook. Nobody else knows of this notebook and I would defy anybody who ever tried to find it, for it had in its own nature the ability to be completely ignored. I had left it in a restaurant once. I came back the same day after the place had been cleaned to find it on the same table in the same spot that I had placed it. A folded napkin overlapped the book by a third. Neither the table layer, nor the cleaner had spotted it there, not to mention the people who had sat there after I made my exit. It was always there waiting for me. I realized however, my luck could run out, so I made sure I never left it for the fear of there being others out there who could peak behind the veil of the unknown and the deliberately ignored. Jiri has his protective hold over it, which makes my understanding of its value to me on a whole new level.

In my hands however, and with the words I write in the pages to which I cite all information I retain about the events I experience, overnight as I sleep, the spirit of Jiri would leave his mark. By morning as I turn to the page where I cunningly ask Jiri for advice, there would always appear, quite mystically for a matter of moments only, a message from Jiri in the white space below my final words.

Since I met Jiri, I had never since filled a page completely, just in case he had something to add below my words. His words would fade as they sank into my memory and into my soul. It's a simple trick in which I believe he does nothing to the paper, but more to me as I sleep. Jiri was not there to provide absolute answers; he could only perceive future events. He filled in the gaps, finding the things I had overlooked. Never had I been told anything that was not of value, somehow. If there was nothing to be told, there would be nothing there to read. Sometimes these were words not of clue to

direction, but of encouragement, and that I was indeed thinking things through both rationally and logically.

Other than ghost writing our way from Ireland all the way back to his home land in chase of a nomadic serial killer, I have no other memory of the man, and even though I found out while spending time in Russia as much as I could to get a full account of the man's life before we met, our living, working relationship was all to brief. One day soon, I hope to chronicle not only his life, but the life experience and the horrors we shared to which he died trying to solve.

Jiri has not exclusively been the only spirit to project words onto the page, as one encounter proved.

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I had just gotten back from Siberia after a very cold 'cold-case' of which I will no doubt cover in the near future. But anyway, for need of familiarity, I returned back to England. The venue: Harrods of London, which is still the largest most well known department store in the world. I would never have gone in there with all the crowds of people had I not gotten a job there as night watchman of the stores basement treasury. I arrived early one evening, feeling pangs of hunger, and not having any sense to eat well, I craved doughnuts for my sweet tooth. The store was getting quiet, or for my lack of love for crowds, it was bearable. I sat and started to eat. To my left on a high stool a young boy, perhaps seven or eight years old, parked up along with his mother. I wasn't sure because he spoke as if he was an adult. He wore a thick sweater and had a plum yet healthy looking glow to his cheeks. He said "good evening" to me and asked what flavour doughnut I had ordered. I answered reluctantly, not wanting to have too much fuss. I looked at his mother. She stayed silent and proud, letting her very eloquent and vocabulary rich son take the floor. After explaining why the caramel doughnuts are far more superior to the strawberry jam variety, and then he changed subjects to living in central London, and how he was looking forward to going on vacation in the coming summer. He asked if I'd ever been to Malaysia. I said no, even though to be honest, I couldn't remember if I had.

"We're going to visit family." He said, "Cousins I think, but I want to see where the bears live." The boy tucked into his doughnut and after a moment of silent contemplation he asked. "Do you know if there are bears in Malaysia?"

I shrugged and said. "I honestly don't know the answer to that."

A dreamy moment passed. "I think there are some bears. I'm not sure where they'd be"

"Well if you find a bear, you let me know, alright." I'd started to wrap up my lousy sweet tooth dinner, wiping away the excess sugar from my mouth when the little boy's face came in close.

“Can I have your phone number, and then I can let you know.”

His mother intervened, telling the child not to bother the man. I smiled, “I shouldn’t worry, I’m sure you’ll find the bears.” I finished. I thanked him for a pleasant conversation, raising my hat to him. He smiled greatly, fondly. It felt important to him to be social, to speak with other adults, to the boy, he seemed to view adults as his peers, his equal. I wished him a pleasant vacation and I went to work.

I truly didn’t give the young boy a second thought... that was until summer came.

I had rented a basement apartment on one of the more gracious parts of the city for that summer. A staircase led up to the communal hallway. Living in the three storey house above was a young couple with a new-born baby; London nightclub owners who seemed to make living in the regular world appear effortless.

My book sat on my night stand, and I watched evening television, but nothing held my attention and I slept with the TV switched on. I awoke a little while later to the sound of footsteps from beyond the bedroom. My TV was still on, and with my attention moved in the direction of the bedroom door. I heard the voice of a little girl.

“Hurry, this way,” the sweet voice said. Immediately, my attention was fixed on the door as it opened. I saw the face of a little girl, complete in white dress; her hair was mousy brown, very long. Her small hand grasped the door frame and behind her hands she gasped in excitement. “He’s in here!”

She ducked out of the way, as it moving to let something else move inside the bedroom. I watched the ghost of the little girl walk over to the staircase where she waited patiently. She looked up the steps and slowly, her head turned as if she was tracking a presence right to my bedside. I couldn’t see it, but whatever or whoever it was, I felt something reach out and touch my face. It was an unmistakable feeling, similar to the itch and irritation you get when you get stung by a nettle. Yes, that’s it, and although I couldn’t see it, I was drawn suddenly to the notebook. I carefully climbed out of the bed and found myself standing over the book. With my hand I could feel warmth, and a subtle vibration. The sensation ceased suddenly, and the little girl on the stairs stood up, and scuttled up without saying another word. I looked down at the book and knew that something was written inside. I knew it ever since the first time Jiri’s ghost letters burned out from the page before fading to nothing. I was half way to expecting it to be him, although he would never have been brought here by escort of a young child. He’d never done before so that assumption didn’t hold any water.

I opened the book, and just past halfway through, words suddenly burned through. The handwriting was not from Jiri. The non-joined writing was childish, somewhat rushed. The words were readable and at first, I didn’t realize what they meant:

The bears are in the zoo.

As the words started to fade, I realized there and then that the familiar spirit of the young boy I had met weeks before had not only visited him, but had left his mark. The saddest part to this revelation came to me. The young boy from Harrods had died since our encounter. His soul was indeed old, as he had been given the status, in the same way as Jiri had when he left this world for the next. This was not to say that the boy had died and was visiting from the realm of the afterlife, nor could I tell if this was one of those cases of remote projection using what could be his guide to deliver a message.

The following day, I sat on the bed staring down at the book, wondering at first if Jiri had actually gone, and that the young boy had now taken his place. I thought for a second, and felt the energy between my hands. I opened the book and I saw Jiri's handwriting. His words brought a slight smile to my face:

James has gone now. I let him reach you. He really needed to tell you something. It was important to him that you knew...

Jiri.