

SUNDOWNING DIARY

a demential novel

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“ ... In February, an Italian surgeon is to announce updated plans to conduct the world's first human head transplant within the next 2 years. Now, a 30-year-old Russian man is set to become the first person to undergo the procedure. ”

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I

B.R.R.

This is year two thousand twenty. Bored of constant flights, bored of running away from God knows what every single day, gravity pulls me down, but I must fly, literally. Let's say it's my bad luck. They say it's a rather rare psychological phenomenon. I doubt.

Arrogant, spoiled son of a gun. This is how they call me back in my homeland, for uncontrolled, frenzied lifestyle of multi-billionaire, spending the fortune of my Old man at random, fortune that he gained with his “blood and sweat”, I admit that, my father - very respected oil magnate and Timber businessman - very seldom

compromised corruption, but at a times pulled so called “triggers” to fiercely eliminate his potential enemies, you know. Nevertheless I love my father, and ignore what they try to describe him in local and foreign media, those freaken money-thirsty rascals. Not interested interfering his “family business” unless I’m fully sponsored for my daily trips. Yes you heard it. I travel much. Very much. Try to beat the time. No, don’t get me wrong. It’s not like traveling around the world in order to pass time , have fun, spend the money to burn. This is regarding my condition. To be honest I travel every day, constantly. Flying, catching high speed train and all other available faster transportation means – besides driving. Every single day me up to 4-5 hours ahead of a sunset. It has been almost 5 years since I last watched the night sky. My condition is related to the need of daylight. Let’s say I’m addicted to natural light. Yeah....May Allah bless the purportedly medieval man who said “life is not only beers and skittles “

Moscow –Frankfurt, London- New York, Washington DC- California, Honolulu – Tokyo , Beijing – Baku – my homeland, this is routine, everyday flight suit for prevailing on “natural dark”. The faster I fly away from oncoming night, the more time I get for passing time in open air. My most dangerous enemy is travel delays, flight cancellations, bloody staff member strikes . Me already adapted to sleeping during flights, as a man resting on average less than 3- hours a day, I don’t really have a knack for dates, calendars. The only thing concerns me is ship-shape and Bristol fashion watch... Screw the science fiction, I’m the real time traveler. It has all began at the age of twelve. After non-stop headaches, brain-screwing dizziness, late night anxiety, severe kind of insomnia, increased confusion and restlessness – parents decided it was high time to see a doctor, overall check-up and all.

At first, hakim* Nizami (doctor in Azeri) sought it was something natural - biological transition of adolescence he said. Hundred manats *(national currency of

Azerbaijan) goes into the left pocket of his white uniform, he writes down God knows what medication and issue is fixed; at least for my billionaire father who thought he had fulfilled his parental borj * (duty – in Azeri) with dignity. But later pains won't stop. I become more aggressive toward my fellow students at prestigious foreign languages gymnasium in Mardakan, densely populated resort town 40 km to the east of capital city Baku, I even dared to attack my father for giving me some kind a slight pal punch on my shoulder. Did I already mentioned that my father used to be billionaire. 'Cos with my condition I frequently have difficulties remembering things.

Man! What a life. At late afternoons and evenings I become more agitated, more suspicious and upset. Sometimes it get worse, with me hallucinating, losing my orientation.

The results of MRI examination totally shocked my father and mother, who already planned future life for their one and only son, believe it or not they had bought a beachside mansion registered into my name in coastal resort town of Nabran, dark red Chevrolet Corvette C6 – year 2006 in a perfect condition, even driving license was pre-ordered and issued, after he bribed local registration and examination department official. Scan images revealed early signs of dementia--- or to be correct one in a million case of so called sundowning syndrome. Father was totally upset after he heard there was no actual treatment for this case. Money was useless piece of “ass-paper” in this matter. Expensive examinations in Berlin and Tel-Aviv were in vain as well. The only thing they recommended for alleviating my behavioral problems was to help me somehow avoid sunset, let say by cancelling axshaam yemeyi (supper), evening family events, shifting all quality time activities before sun's down, not to allow me napping afternoons, increase indoor lighting and engage in various calming activities ...But unfortunately my dad had taken the doctors call for “evasion of sunlight” literally . He ordered dozens of fastest flight tickets for a week, designed my first worldwide travel route, to beat the sunset and somehow

decrease my pains and see how it affects my condition. To his surprise, outcome was quite decent, quite positive, if you will. Until I celebrated my 16th birthday. It was the most traumatic experience of my life.

“Alzheimer's disease is a progressive condition that destroys the connections between cells in the brain. Eventually these cells die, which affects how the brain works. Alzheimer's is the most common form of mental decline, or dementia, in older adults.”

II

“Strategic packer”

Thanks to daily flights, I've almost become a strategic packer, if you will. Stuffing my suitcase only most needful things, no liquid no toothpaste or shampoo: just underwear, 2 pairs of jeans, one blue jumper, 2 pairs of Kashmir socks, 3 T-shirts, my lucky hair comb, wireless hair clipper (by the way I've recently noticed that my hairs are falling massively, so in order not to look ridiculous, I completely shave my hair into a glowing bald) etc. Another trick I mastered during this time is to make sure I put identification on my luggage, so not to confuse with other suitcases after arrival, or if other dumb passenger accidentally picks my suitcase, so he can contact me by cell phone number I marked on the sticker. Sounds very much routine.

With modern airliner speed pushing its limits towards 4000 km/hour, I was able to save more day light with flights. Everything was just going pretty fine, until I encountered my first nightmare. Striking security personnel of the Frankfurt airport, that led to cancellation of flights to all directions. They demanded rise of weekly salaries, the local media said.

- *What should we do, chief? It is already half past one PM,* –asked my personal bodyguard holding my luggage in his left hand, and staring at the board, like “a sheep staring at a new gate”. Long journeys made us real friends indeed, though he had always addressed me as his boss. Let me shortly visualize his character for you. Jafar is a tall man with massive body structure just like Shrek, with brown eyes, army style haircut and qoğal – shaped face, he loved to show off his God given genes for a “strong man”, he behaved “heavily” as Azeris say for a stand-up guys. But in real he was a little dumb kid hiding behind those muscles – dumb ,very decent and polite oneI loved him for these traits like a brother I didn’t have.

We saw hell of quarrel going on at registration desk, as I was thinking the way-out of this dilemma. Unsatisfied passengers shouting, swearing , pointing their fingers at poor desk girls, threatening them.

- *Looks like there ’ll be no more peaceful protest today any soon. It smells like riot in here. –*
- *You bet it does, -I said. – Jafar, I spoke with Ata * (Papa in Azeri), he told me to bribe their manager and somehow take an emergency flight intended for diplomats.*
- *You thing these Germans, will accept it. How much did he offer to pay.*
- *He said go with 100 thousand euros, if he rejects I can bid up to one million tops.*

Jafar hesitated a little bit.

- *In cash?*
- *Jafar are you stupid, where we will get such amount of money in cash. I’ll write down a donation cheque.*

- *OK...at least we should try, but I warn you, chief, these Germans are rather stubborn and “man of a word” people, they have every right to put us in jail for this proposal.*
- *I guess not at a time of unrest like this.*

After angry passengers dispersed, me accompanied by Jafar approached the desk. Poor girl after enduring bulk of profanity and threats already looked exhausted and sighed desperately as she saw us standing.

- *Excuse me Miss, when we will be able to catch next flight to New York ?*
- *Oh my God, I want to kill myself. We already announced that all domestic and foreign flights had been cancelled until this major 48 hour strike ends.*
- *OK. Don't get upset. Would you please call your manager...*
- *Just a moment. Her Krule, this young mister wants to talk to you.*

After hearing his name, it had raised our doubts about possible bribery deal. Krule very much sounded that, there'll be bad deal than no deal.

- *Yes , how can I help you.*
- *You see sir, I'm very sick person, yesterday I celebrated my 16th birthday, my name is Tural Hasanov from Azerbaijan, son of famous oil magnate Heydar Hasanov. –*

I made a pause to see whether name made any difference. Nothing just blank and pale face. So, I continued.

- *You see I was born with very acute disease, they call it dementia...*

Suddenly he interrupted.

- *Son, I know what dementia is, not a such disease that would need to deploy whole emergency team for you.... We have one man from Munich with*

broken limbs and old women from England, coughing blood – in a such bad condition – who are awaiting this damned strike end.

- *But you didn't let me finish...Its not about dementia....Its one of the most severe cases of dementia called, sundowning syndrome.... I become very much aggressive after dusk, as I am somehow addicted to natural daylight . I become very dangerous, can attack any person, after sun is down, I cannot bear the night...So you are my last hope. Let's negotiate this issue and you can earn some extra hundreds of thousand euroes. No strings attached... You can whether report it to your company- I'm sure that they 'll happily approve extra quarter a million euro income for just one tiny exclusion. It would be legally –or you can take all this money to yourself – that would be illegally but who would interrogate you for saving young kids life especially in times of such unrest.*

He's eyebrows went up...Seemed like intimidating gesture.

- *Anna, please call Herr Bauchman -- dial his personal mobile phone number.*

Who the hell was the mysterious Herr Bauchman. CEO of airlines, chief of police department, Foreign ministry official? We heard a chit-chat going on between this stubborn manager and mysterious Herr Bauchman in plain german... It was like a miracle to see fading gloom in managers face transform into cheerful smile. I winked at Jafar.

- *You see, money made the difference I guess.*

After a while he hanged the phoned and approached me and whispered.

- *How are you going to make the payment?*
- *You mean legal or illegal one ---- you know what I mean...?*

My words slapped his facial expression

- *No, all money will go to company, I will only get tiny interest.*

- *Ok... I don't have such amount of money in cash so I'll fill out a donation cheque... Don't worry you can verify its authenticity from your bank.*

His pale face glistened with joy as I handed him cheque holding too many zeros within. Out of a sudden I noticed one angry looking, small, heavy mustached man staring at the manager, whilst he give me affirmative nod, that everything has been taken care of and I can now head to terminal No. 6 and get ready for emergency flight. Then “angry-face” whispers something into the unseen ears of mid-age grumpy black women who had been verbally assaulting the registration officials most of all.

- *“What?” – she almost screams. “Screw them,...I'm not gonna let these f...heads bias my ass. F.... the rich people; they are not flying anywhere unless we fly.*

This was something massive, irritating screaming of badass woman alerted the entire terminal, frustrated passengers sitting on the bench, British couple sleeping on the floor after long expectations, even those who made their way fast to a restroom for a “number one” instantly rushed out to check whether airport would decide to resume their flight. Angry crowd stormed to ticket counter, again intimidating the manager. Jafar stepped forward instantly, to protect me from possible smashing or accidental punches as tension escalated. One young thin man with heavy whiskers of wolverine from X-men, wearing ragged jacket and jeans, grabbed the manager from his hair and dragged outside, after badass black women discovered my donation cheque and showed others. There was no one to stop this raged people, as entire security personnel had been striking. Registration girls ran away screaming. Meanwhile, angry crowd beat the German manager half dead, breaking his nose and front teeth, only British pair and Pakistani family were not attending this vandalism. Small protest soon turned into violent riot, passengers smashing the windows, breaking the chairs and benches, shouting various slogans. One of them pointed me with his forefinger.

- *Hey, this is son of bitch who tried to bribe the airlines.*

Scared of circumstances I faced real possibility I was going to die. Jafar firmed his stand, getting ready for the imminent attack. He put me behind him, and took of his black suit jacket, for easily maneuvering his arms while boxing. He did not recognize my voice charged with aggressive intimidation, as my survival instinct stimulated my neurons that used to be passive before.

- *Move back, morons* – I demanded, holding a special gadget intended for working out my palm muscles that resembled very much a detonator of some kind, I also split open my shirt as for showing off imitated explosive vest – which in real was just a thick bulletproof father ordered me to wear all the time, just in case.
- *Are you deaf, move back or I'll blow myself up, tearing your useless limbs f...k away, look I'm all covered with explosives.*
- *Jafar, **kömək elə də, nə qoyun kimi baxırsan** (Help me, don't stare at me like a dumb – i told him in Azeri, as he looked astounded, yet unable to distinguish between bluff and reality.*

Jafar realized the scam after all, began playing supporting role of associate extremist.

- *You heard him, any needless move and you're all dead.*

That day I discovered my acting skill, seriously...looking at their pale face, just like underage children beaten by a stranger in the absence of their parents, pondering on the philosophy of life and death, and gradually stepping backward, no sign of previous rage. False bomb alert proved helpful in this case.

- *Jafar, oynamaq vaxtı deyil, tez ol, çıxış yolu tap, birazdan itlər axışacağ*
(again speaking in Azeri so others don't discover the scam)

I imitated a terrorist trying to pull the trigger, griping my thumb into fist to hundred percent be sure that, they all are afraid to death and won't chase us if we make it 'like

a tree and leave'. Crowd went crazy, some of them instantly lay down, other took refuge under the desk, some ran away from the terminal.

- *Jafar, let's go!*

After escaping the tumultuous area of the terminal, we made a left turn at British airways' ticket counter, encountered a young Asian kid, in the uniform of airline technical employee who very much resembled the "Shorty" from the Temple of Doom, whispering something and indicating to conveyer belt currently devoid of any baggage but still working.

- *You two, come on , lay down on load belt before you get killed...hurry up... it will take you to aircraft after sorting process...just remember, when traveling through screening system make sure to skip or somehow overcome laser rays, I'll direct you to flying airliner from then on.*
- *But why?* –I asked in a blatant tone.
- *All questions after, we are ordered to save your asses, so hurry up and follow my instructions.*

He was right, there was whole army of police heavily equipped and armed, some kind a German special police clearing the crowd and most probably looking for us. I ordered Jafar to help me rest on conveyer as out of something my back started to pain badly. He looked shocked hesitating between choices like a broken robot. After while Jafar himself touched down the belt with his gigantic body, unable to conform to sleeping position of embryo... his long legs now giving him a bad time, he couldn't stretch himself properly. Several seconds later, belt entered through square shaped hole with badly smelling straps touching our faces and all body parts and we found ourselves in labyrinth of baggage pathways which belonged to different airways, yet part of the same moving system. Vibration and irritating noise of conveyer caused strong nausea.

- *Hey boss, beware red laser rays!*

Where I was looking,...Hadn't it been Jafars warning, I would have been misdirected to unidentified baggage department by the automated system. It was the end of the line when some black material pressed my face before I fell onto slippery floor. It was sort of burlap sack put over my head, I couldn't see anything. First I thought it was some kind a packing process, imposed on us exclusively as a result of technical error. But I became suspicious of unknown foul play, after heard some screaming voices from Jafar, who was very much claustrophobic as far as I knew. Seconds later blow to my head out of somewhere and total blackout. The next time I opened my eyes, yet burlap sack over my head, unable to see anything, it happened to me that we had been kidnapped and currently were in a van driving as fast as 120-140 kms/hour.

III

Misdirected

Driving almost 2 hours on the highway nonstop, the van out of a sudden made hasty left turn like running away from pursuit and entered bumpy gravel road, my and Jafars shoulders touching each other after every single rise and fall. I heard him mumbling something like an old grumpy lady.

- *Bunlar düzgün deyil, plana görə belə olmamamlydı (Something went wrong, it didn't go the way it was planned)- he said slamming backside of his head to the left side .*
- *What plan Jafar, what are you talking about ?*
- *Hmm...*
- *Don't act like a stupid, you just uttered the word "plan"*
- *I must...I thing...Damn it!...O.K... I think we are now being kidnapped, I mean you are being kidnapped.*

- *So what, it's already obvious*
- *I mean your father didn't plan your abduction.*
- *What!*
- *Just take it easy... I'll tell you everything... We all know that you have this condition of yours, regarding the sunset*
- *Yes*
- *So all these traveling thing going on for several years has been part of great scam, mastermind of which is your billionaire father... Your daily flights all around the world for avoiding sundowning have all been invented to somehow help you relax. Don't get it wrong. It doesn't mean that your father, couldn't afford to undertake your traveling expenses. The main issue was your being safe and sound. He couldn't allow you to travel around the world on your own. He was concerned about your safety. Therefore instead of ordering at least 3 tickets daily and putting you on jeopardy, he hired best reality show producers and directors from France, the best designers, technicians and all, and constructed an enormous glass-enclosed studio along the river Kura, within hectares of unsettled lands, involved local and international artists, actors and actresses to make this scam more realistic and persuasive. You have never flown an inch on a plain. The thing about, takeoff and landing have been nothing but pitch-perfect balance of sound effects and vibrationAre you following me? –he asked to be sure if I was taking in this news all right.*
- *What about flying planes in the sky?*
- *Visual effects and only.*
- *What about you, Jafar, you say I befriended imposter playing the role of my bodyguard. What about this strike in airport, those raged passengers beating the hell out of manager, what about the bribery thing?*

- *As I'm saying, well designed plan, I'm sorry to say, but my real name is Tofiq Arslanov, 29 years old actor from Azerbaijan Drama Theatre , people fighting amid strike are well-trained stunt-men and nobody was hurt, I assure you.*

Too much for me for just one day. My heart pounded in my chest after what I heard. With my hands tied behind my back, I could only strike his leg with good kick, which I did.

- *All those years, I've been f...n deceived, misled and you didn't even give a sign, or somehow told me, what a junkie person you are Jafar...or whatever your name is?.*

He bended towards leg to somehow relieve his pain.

- *I totally understand your anger.... But you must also understand me. I'm professional actor paid to keep my mouse shut and do what I've been told to. I signed affidavit for not disclosing this scam to you or any third person, thus mass media and other agencies. It can sound insensitive , but to be honest, I think your father idea was brilliant, it very much helped your condition, by the way lighting has also been fake, I' don't know if you remember but in 90's there was similar Hollywood movie "Truman show" where exchanging from daytime to nighttime was only the matter of one click of a button. I'm pretty sure your father was inspired by its screenplay when coming out with this plan.*
- *Now what? We are trapped in a van and most probably taken hostage by unknown people. I think they will hold us hostage for multi-million dollar ransom.*

Van suddenly stopped. We heard two men getting out of car, speaking to each other in unknown language , grunting in a harsh tone. Crank of a backdoor latchet and they

are in. I was scared to death as they climbed in. Also was my imposter bodyguard who appeared to be a junkie actor.

- *Move away your fu....en legs, or I'll smash your face open with this hammer.*
– one of them told, shoving my feet aside, God knows for what. But after they grabbed “Jafar” ‘s shoulder and pulled him out of the car, it became apparent to me what was this all about

As they put gun on his head, he began to whine and beg like a poor baby.

- *Please don't kill my. No matter who you are, I'm pretty sure they'll pay ransom for me and the ...* - very loud gunshot and they didn't even give him a chance to complete his last words

After what I heard, I felt my limbs numb, so shocked I was. Two of them kept on muttering something, and this time they climbed in for me. There are two kinds of people in terms of facing something extraordinary, force –majeure if you will. The one whose brain is stormed with ideas, making him as agile as a monkey, as fast as a NASCAR, and overall active. Unfortunately I belong to second group of people, who become motionless like an Egyptian mummy or Caspian shrimp caught out of seabed whilst facing unforeseen circumstances. Therefore I didn't even bother to resist my kidnappers who gently took me from hands and legs, making me feel like dead body of a saint pilgrim killed by a sandstorm.

African sounding gunmen, put me on tough, arid and warm soil, outside the van, untied my arms with a sharp razor, removed the burlap sack, that badly scrubbed skin out of my nose amid total silence around. What I did see first was endless desert, destitute of any vegetation, on a pale background of fading daylight , and nothing but high and low dunes of monotone and tedious sand. Darkness is quickly beginning to fall,... the first sunset I watched in a years. I even temporally forgot about my fake bodyguard ‘Jafar’ – executed just minutes before. My God, Sundowning starts pressing me already. Just like a soul of person leaving for night-float while dreaming,

I began gradually losing my rationality, fibril chill advancing from toes to head, I feel terrible nausea with strong inclination to vomit – the last time I remember to experience after have eaten two plates of **Bozbash**, bouillon with handful of beef meatballs. Here they are, in fade sunlight and gradually glowing moonlight I see my captors who stare at me, very much surprised of my condition. But to be honest , I'm the one –who is surprised most of all, because who stand in front of my, my captors or terrorists whoever they are, happened to be men in make-up of a funny clowns Bim-bom and Batatinha. I literally loath the clowns, because they used to give me bad time back when I was a kid. Not like they abused or assaulted me in kindergarten parties, just a fear which had grown to colossal level after I watched a particular horror movie with clown antagonist, after my 7th birthday. So in order to kill my fear I was going through a therapy of watching documentaries of friendly clowns, and those two rascals very much resembled aforementioned famous clowns of Portugal and Russia.

I couldn't see them holding any weapons. Standing in front of me, me kneeled, unable to distinguish between their clownish gloomy makeup and real face expression. Batatinha – the one with black hat and bushy moustache, gave me a strong shake, to check my consciousness , whether I was aware and responsive to my surroundings. He reached for a small bottle of water in his pocket and handed it to me without saying a word. Bim-bom – the second one, instead uttered some angry words with African-English creole as if commenting the actions of his associate, hardly comprehended. Now image of sun completely vanished below the western horizon, my body and soul was invaded by heavy dizziness.

- *Hey , I asked Yuu....Du yu speak English?*
- *Yes – I bearily uttered.*
- *Then fokin... drink this, boy.. its not water, it's a remedy that will help your condition.*

I did as I was told to. Sweetish, blue colored liquid instantly removed my dizziness and nausea. What was that, I wondered. I felt like completely cured of dementia after finishing the last drop of this magic sherbet. View of an evening sky cheered me up instead of previous desperation. As far as I knew, my father had invested millions of dollars to develop a unique scam system, hoping to somehow alleviate my pains, but couldn't afford to find a proper scientist who can design this 'God-bestowed' formula....

- *Don't even ask! – Luk streyt*, - out of somewhere, a pink walkie –talkie appeared in his hand and he spoke to someone in his own language but with less aggressive tone, just like speaking to his superior – *Now they'll give you a sign with lantern blink two time...*
- *Yes I see....*- it was at least 3-5 kilometers away from where we were standing in empty desert. After second light signal had gone, I tried to concentrate my eyes on source of unknown message. With reddish-brownish pale color and cone shape, it utterly resembled wooden house with a red roof. But dark could be misleading, as my eyes were almost virgin to nighttime after all those years with my dementia. After several seconds of visual reconnaissance, I turned back to check whether kidnappers changed their minds. "Whatta...? You must be kidding me". There was no sign of my captors, they vanished without giving me further instructions and they took the car as well, I guess. It was shocking to see the van gradually disappear in vast desert where I was left with no food and water to survive. After several minutes of deliberating, I threw off the empty bottle of this magic remedy, exhaled, got up to my feet and navigated myself across the dunes of high sands. The closer I get to the house, the stranger it becomes to experience the state of perplexity, the object i thought of as a little house on desert, actually was some kind of installation serving the entrance to a massive and endless passage leading God knows where.

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