

FOTIS DOUSOS

chimera

Short Stories & Tall Tales



SAITA BOOKS



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From 2005 to 2008 he worked as a theatre pedagogue in various elementary schools.

He is one of the founding members of the music group “Darnakes”, which has recorded two albums: *Virgo* (2005) by AnoKato Records, and *Libra: The Arranged Marriage of Antigone* (2010) by Parousia Records. He has also given many concerts in Greece and abroad.

In 2009 he co-founded, together with Alexis Raptis and Fenia Mayou, the drama group *Hippo* which specialises in children’s theatre and educational drama.

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Short Stories and Tall Tales

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The Trail

I followed my teacher's trail. I walked through forests and desert lands, until all trail disappeared. I forgot who my teacher is, what he taught me, the reason why I underwent this apprenticeship.

However, I know that when my teacher was in his thirties he got lost too. As they say: *Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita...*

Knights of the Rueful Countenance

Don Quixote died and was hardly mourned by anyone. His grave became overgrown until it disappeared over the years. Nowadays, his very few followers keep spreading his Word. They are dispersed amid the various classes of the social pyramid (although, to be more exact, they usually belong to the lower stratifications), and can be found in every corner of the world.

I once met one of them very far away from my homeland. He saw in me signs of audacity, genuineness and pure intentions, which is why he imprudently asked me to become his squire.

What was I thinking when I said 'yes'? We both got into a vicious circle of perpetual quests. Besides, the abundant illusions and prejudice of our times favour misconception.

So, while we believed to be devoting ourselves to bravery and eradicating all evil of humanity, we ended up wearing ourselves out by vague circular motions, vain strikes, vacillating steps and inarticulate cries.

The only good thing this adventure brought us was that each delirium made the children gather around and stare at us in awe, as if they were watching a nice theatrical play.

The Labyrinth

I heard that the old man living by the sea had once entered the Labyrinth managing to come out of it unharmed. So, since I was about to go in, I decided to ask him how he did it.

He was in his office studying the structure of seashells and taking notes. I wondered in which way I could pose my question, even though all ways seemed ridiculous. I assumed that he was going to belittle the importance of the luck factor – which we all know is decisive in attempting to exit the Labyrinth – in order to extol his own action.

To my surprise, the old man took a top from his pocket and started spinning it in front of me. Again, I tried to read his mind; he would definitely open the conversation with his theories on angular momentum or the law of probabilities. Yet, I was proven wrong once again. His next move was just as enigmatic: he burst into a sarcastic laughter.

I left thinking about what the old man had offered me.

My way into the Labyrinth was about to happen while equipped with three things: studies on seashells, a top play, and laughter exercises. My chances to survive did not seem particularly great...

Apocalypse

All the Gates opened. And air poured into reality. A lot of scholars have spoken about this phenomenon but were treated by the scientific community as quaint folks before being gradually marginalised.

The phenomenon of winds is not due to barometrical fluctuations but to invisible dimensional gates, that open up erratically across any geographical longitude and latitude on earth, releasing winds that rush out through their nozzles.

During the most recent European congress of “Meteorology, Clouds and Winds”, unable to put up with this plot against truth anymore, I dedicated my speech to the analysis of the aforementioned allegation. Needless to say, the audience showered me with derision.

Not that the laughter and mockeries of my colleagues cause me any trouble whatsoever; I just fear that one day, instead of air, the numerous scattered gates could release dirt, fire, or water into the world. Certain prophets ignoring a rational way of thinking have called this possibility “Apocalypse”.

The Snowman

... When the snow melted away the Snowman with its carrot nose, the funny hat and the button eyes, revealed underneath itself a statue. It had been covered with snow so tenderly that it resembled a snowman for a little while, until some children accidentally passing by added the eyes, the nose and the mouth.

Perhaps, after thousands of years, when the rocks will have melted away, they might reveal that the statue as well is something different than what we think it is. Tenderly covered by matter, it may have assumed a random form which does not correspond to its deep and latent essence.

Three Doors Leading Outside the Dark Room

The exit was closed. But there were three options: three other doors allowing me to leave the room. I assumed that one door would take me to my childhood; how much I yearned to go there to fix some of the numerous mistakes of my past...

The second one would lead me to the present. However, that door ought to be avoided since, as I alluded to, my present imposed to remain trapped in one room while having to choose among three escape doors. If I chose the door of the present I would fall into a vicious circle, into the snare of an endless circular now.

Of course, the last door belonged to the future. How many times did I dream of going through it, of skipping with a leap the current troubles to find myself at once at the bright threshold of tomorrow...?

So, I had to pick either the gate of the past or that of the future. I stood there pondering, not knowing what to do. And then, I realised that unconsciously I had already passed through the door of the present...

Antimatter

I always gave my son the same advice: *“If you ever meet your anti-self, meaning a creature made of antimatter carrying exactly the opposite electric charge from you, resist shaking hands with him as you will both cease to exist as matter at once”*.

My son’s anti-self, however, was a woman... And not only did he fail to resist touching her hand, but he kissed her nonetheless. As a result, happened exactly what modern physics describes so vividly...

“This is how true love looks like”, commented my wife sorrowfully. Indeed, at the time an epidemic of true love seemed to have hit the entire world leading everyone to seek their anti-selves and then dissolve.

Chronicle of Prohibition of Extreme Emotions

The princess suffered from a rare illness: she should never laugh or she would die from an instant cardiac arrest. For this reason, the King ordered to slay all jesters in the kingdom. In my opinion, though, he should have executed the medics who came up with this inexplicable diagnosis... He only kept alive one: the court's fool. Nevertheless, he had him locked into a dungeon to prevent any random encounter with his daughter. Needless to say, during that period any jokes, jester songs, or pranks were banned in the kingdom without discretion. Laughter had become almost illegal, whereas whoever was funny ran the risk of being arrested. In those times even the writers of chronicles, like us – with an inclination towards a light and spicy style – minded not to let anything funny creep into our prose. As a result, not only our texts did resemble essays – they were cold, heavy, undigested – they also made us lose our very few readers.

One day, despite the security measures, while the jester was heading to the master reception hall where the King was having a silent, quiet feast with important foreign guests, in one of the many rambling arcades of the palace he crossed paths with the princess. As it usually happens in similar circumstances, the two young people fell madly in love. From that moment on they did not miss a chance to see each other, although always in a secretive and prudent way. And the feeling of love inside them would grow under the weight of prohibition that shadowed their relationship.

To cut a long story short, at some point the jester confessed to the young lady that he had composed a comic sonnet about

love; in her turn, not wishing to arrest the creative inspiration of her beloved, she insisted that he recite it. In spite of his firm refusal due to the princess' health condition, after quite some begging and nagging, he was convinced to interpret the sonnet before her. The first verses revealed the cheerful style of the sonnet and the princess, who was not accustomed to any fun, got really excited. Soon, she started laughing hysterically and, before hearing the end of the poem, she expired.

When the jester realised what he had done he burst into sobbing. As he had never cried before, in his devastation, he thought that crying too reserves a hedonistic aspect. However, before being able to complete his consideration, he passed away. He suffered from a rare illness too: he should not cry because he had a weak heart. That is why his mother, who intended him to be a jester, had raised him amongst jokes and funny faces.

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