

Everything to Nothing

Part 2

A novel by Mark Henthorne.

Sequel coming soon!

www.everythingtonothing.co.uk

Follow on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Everything-to-Nothing/290085217675838>

Follow on Twitter: @Everything2Noth

© Mark Henthorne, 2021

ISBN: 979-8766147367

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the author.

All characters in this publication are fictitious and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Chapter 1

I could not believe the pain. I could not believe that such pain existed. I could not believe that a person could endure such pain both physical and mental. Yet I did, and now, as I think about those dark days in the hospital, my face bandaged and the dressing covering my eyes for what seemed like an eternity, tears roll down my scarred face.

While I lay there in the dark, drifting in and out of consciousness there was that smell, so familiar but in my confused, bewildered and sometimes delirious state I could not remember what that smell reminded me of. It would eventually all come flooding back to me.

When I entered the darkest hours of delirium I would scratch frantically at the bandages desperate to see the damage that had been done to my once beautiful face which had graced the front cover of many of the top fashion magazines. The nurses had only one choice when this happened and that was to inject me full of sedatives and place me in restraints until I fell into an unnatural sleep.

It was during these sleeps that I would dream of him; sometimes I would dream of the good times. Mostly though I would dream of those last moments outside the school gates when I turned to see him approaching, the manic look in his eyes, a man clearly not sane. Then I would see his hand move, but instead of his hand throwing highly corrosive acid into my face, the hand would turn into a hideous black claw and it would rip at my face, tearing the flesh off my bones. Usually at this point I would wake up screaming, causing the nurses to rush in and administer more of the sedative.

Eventually though the sedative would wear off and I would slowly awake but not feel refreshed, in fact I would feel exhausted. It was not a natural sleep that I was having while under the influence of the powerful drugs. Although I could not see them, I could feel the nurses tentatively approach my bed and carefully remove the straps, occasionally spending some time massaging my wrists to allow the blood to flow when in the frantic action of restraining me they fastened the straps too tightly.

Usually at this time, while I was still a little woozy, they would take the opportunity to clean and feed me. I detested this. It made me feel helpless, like a baby, and when the nurse roughly cleansed my most intimate parts I felt nauseous and this, combined with the lingering effects of the drugs, would lead me to vomit causing the nurse to mutter and curse under her breath while she cleaned me again.

I lost all track of time. Sometimes it felt like hours between the nurses coming to feed and clean me, other times it felt like minutes and always that lingering smell which I probably would not notice in normal circumstances, but all my senses seemed heightened while I could not see.

Slowly but surely though my mind readjusted and the descents into delirium along with the attempts to remove the bandages stopped. When I went through twenty-four hours without needing to be restrained, I was not given any sedatives and for the first time in what felt like an age I slept naturally, deeply, and dreamed.

*

The memories of that day had stayed with me for a long time. I was ten years old and I was given my first ever pony. The night before there had been a massive storm and I ran panicked from my room, scared by the huge booms and flash of lights that I did not understand, through the long, dark corridors of the mansion into my father's study. I leapt into his lap as he sat at his mammoth desk smoking a cigar, burying my head in his chest smelling his cologne as he ran his fingers through my black hair consoling me, telling me not to worry.

He eventually carried his young sleeping daughter back to her bed and even though he had been working non-stop for thirty-six hours, he stayed with me all through that night and he was the first thing I saw as I opened my eyes the next morning.

He always spoke to me like an adult and while I snuggled my head into his chest on his knee again, he explained what a storm was, how it was caused and what made the booms and flash of lights. As always his explanation put me at my ease and made me feel silly and embarrassed that I was so scared. It then seemed only natural to me when introduced to my first pony that I would call her Storm.

I awoke suddenly from this dream with a scream which I managed to quickly subdue. The dream had at last triggered the memory and it made me realise that he had been here, in this room watching me so many times without me knowing, the man I now hated with a hate that I did not believe was possible.

Chapter 2

‘Who’s there?’

I remember the smell was back but it was strong now, fresh, and I remember the conversation we had like it was yesterday.

There was no reply. ‘Who is there?!’

‘It breaks my heart to see you like this.’

My heart skipped a beat. ‘You. I knew it was you. You’ve never changed your cologne or brand of cigars. How long have you been spying on me?’ I turned my covered face to the direction I thought the voice was coming from.

‘Spying? I’ve been openly visiting you every day for the last three weeks.’

‘Why have you never said anything?’

‘Because when I visited you were usually sedated or sleeping. I understand you haven’t had any sedatives. Do you know where you are?’

‘A fucking hospital dad, a fucking hospital thanks to you.’

‘Thanks to me?! I think you’ll find it is because of that psycho partner of yours! I think you’ll remember that I warned you about him!’

I did not have to see his face to know he was surprised that I had sworn at him. As far as I can remember that was the first time I had ever said an expletive directly meant for him. ‘He was fine until you ruined his life!’

‘Again, I think you’ll find he ruined his own life.’

‘No, Sarah ruined all our lives.’

‘Ah, yes. It always comes back to this mystical Sarah...’

‘There is *nothing* mystical about her! Why the fuck would David take crystal meth?! She spiked his drink!’

‘Sally, I remember a few years ago that we had a similar conversation. I am a very wealthy man with vast resources at my disposal and I could not find any trace of this Sarah...’

‘She was a homeless drug addict with no address. People like that are difficult to find!’

‘Well I for one am not having this conversation again. As far as I’m concerned your partner was a drug taking imbecile who attacked my best friend and slumped into a cycle of destruction and now look at you...’

‘Yes, now look at me! Your fault. All your fault. We were doing well until you sent that letter to David! He had a good job. Why did you do that?!’

‘To try and protect you.’

‘Protect me? Protect me from what exactly?!’

‘From him of course. I knew exactly what would happen when I sent that letter. He would slump and you’d leave him, get away from his poisonous personality and then you’d see that I was right all along. I’d then be able to influence my heirs’ lives, get them in decent schools and prepare them for succeeding me.’

‘I’ve said this to you before and I mean it more now than I did then. They will never, ever, *ever* be your heirs!’

‘We’ll see. They’re at my home now. They seem quite content.’

‘You bastard. If you try and take them from me...’

‘I won’t do that. I want you to come back without me forcing you.’

‘Never.’

‘Sally, you’re gravely injured, physically and mentally. Let me help you, please.’

‘Never. I want you to leave right now and then I’m going to get out of this hospital and get *my* children right now!’

‘You may find that a little difficult.’

‘What do you mean? I’ll just get a taxi or something. Nurse! Nurse! He’s leaving and so am I! Nurse!’ I heard the door open and he stood up. I heard them whispering. ‘What? What are you talking about? I want these bandages off now!’

The door then closed and he sat back down. ‘The nurse has gone to get the doctor. He needs to speak to you.’

‘Good. He’ll let me go home straight away. I want you to leave.’

‘Sally, you really don’t know where you are?’

‘Well I presume in a hospital in England.’

‘Do you not find it slightly curious that all your nurses don’t sound English?’

‘I just thought they were all from overseas?’ Now as I look back I realise how silly I had been but I blame the drugs and the overall confusion about my situation.

‘You’re in Switzerland.’

‘What?! Oh for fuck’s sake! Why the hell am I in Switzerland?!’

‘We sedated you and brought you here because the best facial plastic surgeon in the world is based here and I’ve organised for him to look after you.’

‘I don’t want this! I don’t want anything from you! I’d rather be in an N.H.S. hospital back in England!’

‘Well you’re here so please let me help you.’

‘No, never! I want to go back to England!’

I jumped out of bed sending a table flying and started to take off the bandages and he made no attempt to stop me. I had no idea I was facing a mirror.

Quickly I peeled off the bandages from around my eyes until I could see using my right eye; my left eye had a patch off thick dressings over it. I blinked numerous times and closed my right eye as I tried to adjust to the light and I carried on removing the bandages and the dressings on the left side of my face.

Gradually I opened my right eye and I froze in shock as I stared at my damaged face in the mirror.

Instantly I started to shake and then an inhuman scream left my body and I slumped to the floor in a dead faint.

Chapter 3

Even though I blamed him for everything, a very small part of me was thankful to my father though I would never have admitted that to him. After that day I knew he had returned occasionally because of the smell yet he never spoke to me. I am pretty sure he was in the room when I was awake, but he never said anything and when I thought he was there I would roll over showing him my back.

My surgeon was young, handsome and British which added to my earlier confusion about where I was. He had studied at Oxford and had graduated only a few years before I arrived to study there. After the day when I removed the bandages he came to talk to me for the first time in any depth. We had spoken before however only to confirm my comfort after the three operations that had already been carried out.

‘Sally, it’s William.’

‘Yes, I know. I recognise your aftershave.’

‘That was a very silly thing you did. You could have damaged your face even more and irreversibly undone all the work I have done.’

‘I know. I’m sorry.’

‘Promise me you won’t do that again.’

‘I’m sorry. I promise.’

‘Good. Right, so, you’ve seen the damage to your face?’

‘Yes.’

‘Well, I know it doesn’t look good...’

‘You can say that again.’

‘But I can make it better. I don’t think you’ll ever be on the front cover of *Vogue* again...’

‘You think?!’

‘But with some more operations I can reduce the damage. Right now you haven’t had any plastic surgery done. Shall we say all I’ve done so far is damage limitation? I’ve been preparing your face for what is going to happen over the next few months.’

‘Months?!’

‘Yes. You’re going to be here for a while.’

‘I need to get home, back to my children.’

‘I understand your children are being well looked after.’

‘Nobody is well looked after by my father. All he cares about is himself. It wouldn’t surprise me that when I see them again he’s brainwashed them so they don’t even know who I am.’

‘I doubt that very much. Your father has asked me to ask whether he can speak to you again.’

‘No. No way. I do not want to speak to him.’

‘He said that would be your response so he told me to say that what he has to say concerns David.’

I contemplated William’s words for a few moments. Before now I had not thought about the fact that he was still out there somewhere, alive and free while I lay here with my hideous face and hideous memories for company. I hoped that

my father would inform me that he had been caught but unfortunately I was sorely mistaken.