

NOT HIS LAST NIGHT. JUST ANOTHER NIGHT WITH SEABROOK...

NEW YORK CITY, 1945.

WILLIAM SEABROOK IS DRUNK AGAIN...

NOT DRUNK AGAIN, BUT *STILL*
DRUNK, AND *ALWAYS* DRUNK.



BUT DRUNK AS HE IS, HE DECIDES HE IS STILL NOT DRUNK ENOUGH. LIKE HE WROTE IN HIS BIOGRAPHY: "WHAT DO DRUNKARDS DO? THEY DRINK THEMSELVES... TO DEATH."



BUT THAT KIND OF DEATH TAKES LONGER THAN ONE WOULD THINK, AND THE END FEELS LONG OVERDUE...



HOWEVER DILIGENTLY HE WORKS AT IT.



HE'S MAUDLIN TONIGHT. FEELING FORGOTTEN AND UNDERAPPRECIATED, OLD, FAT AND SOFT IN THE MIDDLE.



BUT HE'S NOT PATHETIC ENOUGH TO TRY AND DAZZLE THIS BORED, SMART-ASS BARTENDER.



SO HE DOESN'T SAY, "YOU KNOW WHAT, BUDDY, I INVENTED THE WORD ZOMBIE."







I TRIED TO TELL THEM ABOUT THE DRUSE... THE BEDOUIN, KINGS OF THE DESERT. I LIVED WITH THEM, FRIEND...



HELL, I WAS ONE OF THEM! DID MOM-AND-POP, APPLE-PIE AMERICA GIVE ADAMN ABOUT MY INSIDER'S VIEW?



I DON'T KNOW - I DO KNOW THAT ONE OF MITKHAL PASHA'S SLAVES WAS WORTH TEN OF THEM.



AND DID I EVER GET IT THROUGH THE THICK, HAYSEED READERSHIP OF THE BOOK-CLUB SUBSCRIBERS' HEADS THAT THE "SAVAGES" IN THE IVORY COAST JUNGLE ARE PEOPLE TOO, JUST LIKE THEM?



BETTER THAN THEM! MORE ALIVE AT LEAST...

NO THEY PROBABLY NEVER GOT THAT.



AND YES, I PROBABLY GOT IT WRONG, AND THE PUBLICITY SHILL'S ALWAYS PLAYED UP THE CANNIBALISM AND THE NAKED LADIES IN CHAINS...



AND THEY INEVITABLY PASSED OVER THE GOOD BITS OF WRITING THAT WERE IN THERE. BUT AT LEAST THERE WERE GOOD BITS. I LEFT SOME KIND OF MARK ON THE WALL.

HERE, LET ME DO THAT.



MARJORIE TOLD ME, "YOU WANT TO LEAVE A MARK ON THE WALL, BUT IT'LL BE JUST A SMEAR OF SHIT YOU LEAVE IF YOU DON'T STOP YOUR BONDAGE GAMES WITH THE LADIES IN THE BARN."



AND STOP THE DRINKING, OF COURSE.



BUT MAYBE MY MARK ON THE WALL WAS MY HONESTY, THAT I WROTE OPENLY OF THE FACT THAT I LIKED TO TIE UP LADIES...



...AND THAT, YES, THERE WERE SOME LADIES WHO LIKED TO BE TIED UP. SOME LADIES...

WHY DONTCHA TAKE A PICTURE, OLD-TIMER?

GINO, WHERE'S MY GIN AND TONIC?



AND THAT THERE WAS ONE MAN IN AMERICA WHO WOULD ADMIT, UNLIKE SHAKESPEARE'S LORD ANGELO, THAT "HIS APPETITE IS MORE TO BREAD THAN STONE."



POOR MARJORIE, SHE NEVER GOT MY LADIES IN CHAINS. POOR UP-TIGHT MINK... SHE TRIED SO HARD TO BE A LIBERTINE FOR ME.

I- I'VE MISBEHAVED TERRIBLY. TRULY, I'VE BEEN A-A NAUGHTY GIRL.

IS THAT BETTER, WILLIE?



HEY, BUDDY... YOU ALL RIGHT?



LISTEN, BUDDY... I THINK YOU BETTER CALL IT A DAY.

YEAH? YOU SEE THAT DRINK THERE?

YEAH?



I INVENTED THE WORD ZOMBIE, "BUDDY."

I'M FINE.



WELL, NOT ENTIRELY FINE, TRUTH BE TOLD...



MY SKIN'S A BIT GREEN AND I PISSED BLOOD THE OTHER MORNING. BUT IT'S EASIER SAID THAN DONE, TO KILL YOURSELF WITH BOOZE.



EVEN IN THIS OLD MAN'S, FAT-GUTTED SAUSAGE-FINGERED BODY, IT'S A DAMN SIGHT HARDER THAN YOU'D IMAGINE, THIS DEATH BY ALCOHOL.



THANK YOU FOR EXPLORING IN THE TIKI LOUNGE.

THAT'S OKAY, MARLENE, HE'S LEAVING.



WHOOPS! CAREFUL, SIR!



...I'M FINE.



WHOOPS! WHOA! CAREFUL, SIR!



YEAH, CAREFUL THERE, OLD-TIMER.



OLD-TIMER? GET YOUR DAMN HAN'S OFFA ME!!





GREENWICH VILLAGE... IT'S STUPID FOR ME TO BE STAYING HERE AGAIN.



REMINDS ME HOW OLD I AM. HOW MUCH I AM NOT THAT YOUNG LION HOLDING COURT IN THE VILLAGE WHEN I LIVED HERE.



SINCLAIR LEWIS, THEODORE DREISER, DASH HAMMETT - HOLLYWOOD STARS - AND ALL OF THEM LISTENING, RAPT. ALL OF THEM SEEING ME IN HAITI, OR IN THE DESERT, OR IN THE JUNGLE WITH THE CANNIBALS, EATING "LONG PIG."



WELL, THE CANNIBALISM WASN'T EXACTLY TRUE, BUT, BY GOD, I MADE IT TRUE LATER, DIDN'T I? I ATE MY POUND OF FLESH FOR REAL IN THE KITCHEN OF GABBY DES HONS' CHIC PARISIAN APARTMENT.



OH, YES, I'M ALSO THAT SEABROOK. SEABROOK THE CANNIBAL.



OH... I GUESS CONNIE REALLY DID TAKE HERSELF AND THE LITTLE GUY BACK TO RHINEBECK.



THE POOR KID. POOR CONNIE... POOR ALL OF THE WOMEN I'VE KNOWN...

ALL THE POOR "LIZZIES IN CHAINS." MY POOR MOTHER.

NO...

POOR KATIE. POOR MARJORIE...

MAYBE NOT POOR MOTHER, NO. PROBABLY NOT POOR CONNIE EITHER - HEH! - SHE HOLDS HER OWN.

MAYBE IT'S MORE POOR WILLIE WITH THOSE TWO...



I OFTEN THINK ABOUT MY GRANDMA PINY.



SIX YEARS OLD AND THEY LEFT ME TO WANDER THE WOODS AROUND MARYLAND WITH A MADWOMAN WITCH, HALF-CRAZY WITH LAUDANUM.



SOMETIMES I THINK I WAS INTOXICATED BY PROXIMITY TO HER, OR BY OSMOSIS, OPIUM DISTILLATE SEEPING BETWEEN OUR SKIN AS PINY HELD MY SMALL HAND AND LED ME THROUGH THOSE WOODS.



REVEALING HER HALLUCINATIONS TO ME - OR PERHAPS THEY WERE REAL. I BELIEVE I SAW THEM.



I DID SEE THEM. THE WOMAN IN GREEN, BOUND TO HER CHAIR... EVERY DETAIL... GRANDMA PINY MAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DRUNKEN DREAMER I AM TODAY.



OH, I CAN'T COMPLAIN. THOSE WERE MY HAPPIEST MOMENTS. ESCAPE WAS ALWAYS PREFERABLE TO REAL LIFE.



I'VE SPENT A LIFETIME RUNNING. MAYBE I'VE ALWAYS BEEN STRIVING BACK TO THAT LOST DREAMLAND OF MY GRANDMOTHER.



HOW TO GET BACK THERE? I TALK ABOUT SUICIDE, LIKE I'M A HYSTERICAL HOUSEWIFE, YET I ONLY EVER TAKE HESITANT, INDIRECT STEPS.



RUNNING IS COWARDLY, BUT IT'S BETTER THAN FACING ALL OF THE PEOPLE YOU INEVITABLY LET DOWN.



AND RUNNING IS THE SOLE
CONSISTENT BEHAVIOUR
OF MY LIFE.



SO WHY STOP RUNNING?
WILLIAM B. SEABROOK IS
NO QUITTER.



YOU CAN DO THIS.



OR...

OR, YOU CAN TAKE THE OVER-
NIGHT BACK TO RHINEBECK,
SURPRISE CONNIE IN THE
MORNING - SOBER - WITH
FLOWERS FOR HER AND A TOY
FOR THE BOY.



YOU CAN ALWAYS RUN LATER.



YOU ALWAYS RUN EVENTUALLY.

