**The cursed woodpecker**

I had never felt so nervous yet at the same time I was excited. I was about to open an old wooden door from the Victorian ages leading to an unexplored room in a long forgotten castle. After having hacked the iron lock with a crowbar, I penetrated into the dark chamber with only an oil lantern hence my vision was quite restricted as I could only distinguish some odd geometrical shapes in a distant location.

I advanced by sticking myself to the wall as means of guidance. I could feel gooey patches of moss growing on the nearly frosted brick wall. As I continued, I proceeded to bash my head on this damned floating object in mid-air. As I recovered from this terrible manifestation of karma, bad luck or however you want to call it, I realised that it actually was a mural torch. How fortunate I was to stumble upon another potential source of light ! As I lit it up, a sudden burst of fire and the subsequent vivid flame left me in a state of awe.

Satisfied with the outcome of the situation, I whistled a little Japanese folklore chant of which I forgot the lyrics. As I turned back, I was genuinely shocked and scared of what the all so bright torch made me discover. There was in fact, not a single object anywhere. Were those large and barely perceptible blocks of furniture just the fruit of my imagination? Did I eat some hallucinating mushrooms by accident? I was convinced that I still had all my sanity. Then why didn’t I see anything? I precipitated myself without thinking to the middle of the chamber. It was still empty! Though it made me take notice of a narrow corridor connecting this room to what could be another of these mysterious places. This thought gave me a rush of adrenaline and my spine went tingling.

I slowly carved my path amongst all this emptiness towards the corridor then feeling more or less confident, I entered. As I was marching forward, I could feel the heavy humidity making me soaked in sweat. An unexpected wind burst caught me off guard. It filled my lungs with this putrid smell of flesh in decomposition and made me feel deprived of oxygen. It was like my chest was pierced by thousands of needles, the pain was excruciating. I managed to cough out the dreaded air making this even rather evanescent. Nevertheless, amidst this confusion, I was determined to continue. The corridor was becoming larger and larger and ended up my forming a small room.

My attention was immediately caught by this large painting on the wall. It was depicting the 6th heir to the Japanese throne in exile in Britain during the Tokugawa era. I ought to know this fact as I was preparing a thesis on Japan and its medieval History. The man had a long and beautiful white hair ornamented by a golden triple spiked comb, the mark of noblesse. He was wearing an all-black kimono with his katana sword attached on his left. I noticed a poem on the lower right of the painting.

After finishing it, it seemed to me as if I knew it from somewhere. While trying to remember, my eyes crossed those of the nobleman. His callous purple eyes and expressionless face reignited my lost memories. He was nicknamed “The Woodpecker” and this poem was composed as a mean to reflect his tragic life cursed by the omnipresence of bloodsheds. Coincidentally, it also corresponded to the lost lyrics of the chant that I had whistled. I understood in what situation I was gotten into. The chant ended like this:

“Oh poor little woodpecker, you poke holes in trees and destroy forests. The divinity of nature was so angry that he poisoned your beak. Thus when you touched your friends, they all died. Oh poor little woodpecker, things disappear wherever you go, you shall live in your self-created void. Oh poor little woodpecker, feeling ashamed, you drank the potion of amnesia…”