

## DOWNFALL

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Once upon a night, Karl Benson left the comfort of his estate to go look for it. There is a town, up in the northern regions of a country. Its name deserves no mention here for it will not be helpful to anyone.

It was a cold September's night when it began, or perhaps it was back. From your perspective, there is no real way of knowing, believe me though, there are times when one would regret knowledge and ignorance may truly turn out to be bliss. The town's folk were asleep. Karl too was sleeping. I remember he had the most peculiar dream that night, of a strange stranded place with a barren, lifeless terrain and a fiddling, dilapidated shack in the middle of it. For most people, it would have looked like an awful, infernal place, I suppose, for him though, it somehow resembled some form of a rapture, but not the incorruptible rapture; I wish he were able to be more resilient to its attraction... Me on the other hand, I was different by then; I had no idea what was about to happen, and now I know too much, I know it all, there is no knowledge or information I lack. Yet even I am not completely impeccable; you will see why.

Hypocrisy does not only occur in vile places or during hard times; it is as much part of the human life as sleeping or eating. A man who throws his unfinished cigarette out of his car and proceeds to clean the car's dashboard is a hypocrite to both himself and to the planet, yet he feels no guilt. We take actions based on their future implications for our lives and if the implication is not positive, we try to avoid doing it, at least in most cases. I had no hatred for that driver when he did what he judged to be reasonable; he could not have cleaned his dashboard with a cigarette in his hand, could he? Neither could he have killed the poor lad without the gun under the dashboard.

Too quick? Should I have waited? Were you not ready to hear that?

I am afraid there is not really a method of telling something that happens so swiftly in a gentle way. Yet you want to know, do you not? You accept murder to be tragic, a deceitful inhuman act most of you would say; still, you seek details about it. Don't bother to question your rationalization for it, there can't be any solid reason for that. Perhaps there is if you are

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mad like he was. I wish it were not true though; poor Karl very obediently chose to go mad. Madness, however, had very little to do with the gun and the man and the bullet. Pawns you all are and pawns they both were; what they did was inevitable for both of them, for all of you. All humans are told every day in a silent but persistent way that no man should choose madness over sanity, but he did, and perhaps you'd like to learn why. Don't worry I will tell, but be reminded, I may always deceive you.

Karl is a delivery guy. No. Karl was a delivery guy. People find it very hard to accept the deaths of people they love. I did not know Karl well enough to love him when he was amongst the living. Perhaps if I did, we could have been good friends or perhaps not. In either case, now I know everything about him and all I can think of is how ill-fated he had been. Karl was a delivery guy, he brought people packages and envelopes. He had very few friends for a man who was always meeting people. There was perhaps not a single detail in Karl's life that made him stand out in the public eye, or that even made him noticeable. Then again, it is often the smaller details that make all the difference and those details often are the hardest to spot.

Humans interpret events by dividing them into sections and giving names to these sections according to their significance. It is said this makes it easier to comprehend things, there is no such comprehensive struggle on my behalf anymore, but for your better understanding, I think it would be very sensible to call the following section, the catalyst of all events that came after it.

Karl was running a daily inspection of the newly arrived items before putting them on the delivery list, and even for him, it was a very tedious thing to deal with. How ironic that from such irksome work came the most alluring thing. It was wrapped in straw-coloured sheets of paper. It was small in size and almost weightless, no one could've guessed that such evil would come from such a frail looking thing.

He examined the casing twice, for it had no name, address or any written thing at all, except the little dark insignia unfamiliar to Karl's eyes. It was unusually coincidental that it was him who came across it. To be honest, that's one thing even I do not know but have no doubt, Karl was not a 'chosen one.' He was merely a convict, and soon you will learn of his felony and of yours. Don't be worried, though, for it will do you no good at this point.

He put it in the transparent, unknown items box, but the seed was planted: he was now curious. He went for delivery later that day and he still had in his mind that small thing. He

returned after four hours twenty-seven minutes and forty-nine seconds. He was supposed to fill the records book to check the delivered items but as soon as he sat down he noticed the one small package inside the unknown items box. There was no way of knowing where it had come from and no way to send it back anywhere. The procedure then was to put it to the depot, a procedure, if it were to be followed, would prevent everything from happening. Unfortunately, Karl, like many other members of his species, was ready to violate the rules when faced with temptation. His eyes gazed at the sheet paper covering his greatest wonder. Humans often fail to see what lies behind sealed doors and that is a very normal thing. To see such things requires qualities far beyond the human potential. Yet they go all the way and try to open those doors, and they don't give up until they succeed, or fail to the level of annihilation. I find it very necessary to say that in the unlikely case of success, what lies behind the doors rarely bring anything good to those who opened them. Therefore, doors are usually considered to have been sealed for a reason. Karl learnt that reason due to his passion, which would be the end of him; soon you will learn it as well.

He used the medium sized carpet knife and cut the tip of the sheet smoothly, almost perfectly. Right at that moment he felt something, something humans often feel instinctively, something even I had felt before: he felt a sudden urge to stop and put the knife on the desk. He looked at the opening he'd just cut on the packet. There, he thought that he was about to go somewhere he was unsure of. It is a good thing that humans still have such instincts. It is bad that those instincts don't last long.

Karl put his hand into the opening he'd just cut and gently grabbed what was inside. It was in his hand then, at least that was all he could see of it, made out of wood, carved in a very detailed fashion, and it had an odd, old odour. The wooden figure had a fleshy body; no garment was visible, but it seemed to be ornamented with jewels, its belly was large and seemed to be with child. Her face was plain but elegant. To Karl, it looked both similar to a human and to something completely different. It was a statue of an ancient Matriarch, long forgotten; only a pre-historian could have identified it, perhaps. Nonetheless, Karl hastily put it in his bag and took it home. And so, it began.

I opened my eyes thousands of years ago. My lifespan is longer than of any creature you know of, yet it is very short compared to many beings that I know of. I'd numerous entities before you came to my attention when I made my visit to your sphere you were at the very beginning of your evolution. I witnessed your maturation and at some point, I decided I could

help you. In no aspect were you better than me, but I thought you could be improved, and I've shown you the courtesy to look and act like one of you. I permit you to praise and adore me. I bore your children because I knew. Even though when they were born they would be more like you and less like me, I wanted some of you to be able to lead the rest to prosperity.

Then when I thought order had been maintained, I looked inside of me and remembered how long it had been since I came into existence. Hence, I went to sleep, and for beings like me, sleep is entirely a different experience which your feeble minds wouldn't comprehend. Now I see that you have failed, that my actions were in vain. Men, who were once fond of worshipping women, have now become ruthless fiends seeking hegemony over this insignificant globe. And women who once were equals, now either sit and live in their silence or put up a fight where only a few are aware of the actual purpose. You have created many things. I do accept some of those were excellently done for the greater good, but you have turned them into monsters too. From this, I can only deduce that you too are monsters, and I don't know any way for you to change something rooted deep inside.

You decline to understand that you have done things that are so despicable. I have not seen such a life-form, superior or inferior to you, that agonized their kin so vulgarly and incessantly. You were supposed to be better, and there have been times as I saw when you, some of you, show an aptitude for progression but it was not adequate. You created things, beautiful things, some of them even impressed me, but all of the good things you have done remain insignificant compared to all the maliciousness. I am sorry to see this, I am sorry for you.

Mighty powers may come and astound you, but do not be fooled. They aim only to take advantage of you and then in your time of great need they won't even take a glance. Poor Karl, he believed in something he had no idea about. It makes perfect sense though; he was one of you and what he did is very typical of your kind.

He was not the first of his species to know me, but he was the first of his species that I saw after I was awoken. Like my sleep, my awakening is a strange process and unless I am not disturbed I can sleep as long as I see fit when I decide to slumber.

To disturb me, however, requires a lot of effort. Luckily or rather unluckily for Karl, most of the work was already done when I came to him. I wish I knew how I had come to him though. In my experience, such encounters usually are results of dire incidents. Even in sleep,

I can lure humans to do things. It is something I have no control over, and it is not my doing after all. Might is a very perceivable thing for you humans, and I must be gleaming with it. If that weren't the case, Karl wouldn't have become so obsessed with me. After the first few days, he started to talk with the statue. As time passed, he stopped going to work and shut himself in his house and began to ask for things. Money was the first thing he thought of. Then he asked for fame, something he'd never had in his life but was able to want it so badly.

After two months, three days, four hours, thirty-two minutes, and twenty seconds of malnutrition, he asked for health because he'd become sick. None of the things he asked for did he ever receive. He grew weaker every day and looked paler and shivered very often, but he knew some sort of power lied in the figure and he intended to get it. He didn't care about himself anymore. He didn't care about anything, but the potency he could obtain from the statue. It is paradoxical to me that one would be willing to give all he's got when he aims to have all he can have. He was aware of the irrationality in his mind, but he wanted to carry on. He believed that he needed to travel to another place to obtain what he wanted from the little piece of wood. People tend to think that journeys will lead to positive consequences in the end, at least when they're at the beginning of their journey. So that night came, and Karl Benson left the comfort of his estate to go look for it. He took the statue and got in his barely working car. He started the engine and drove without knowing where he was going.

He drove for five hours thirty-four minutes and sixteen seconds until he stopped at the lights and looked into the eyes of that man. Fear conquered Karl's heart and within seconds his bleary eyes grew as much as they could. As the man threw his cigarette to the ground, Karl drove away. The man cleaned the car's dashboard and followed him as if Karl had something he wanted. Karl used roads he'd never heard of before and when he believed he was no longer being chased, he stopped the car near a forest. He ran into the woods. He just ran: he was no longer able to gather his thoughts together, so he didn't stop until he was out of breath, which was longer than one would expect, considering his decreasing physical and mental health. He took the statue out of his jacket and looked at it in confusion. He then started begging it; he begged for help. It didn't take long once he realized it wasn't working. He shouted at the figure; he swore at it and slammed it against rocks around. Then he fell down on his knees and dropped the statue, looked at his hands, and he saw his sanity slipping through his fingers. He closed his eyes and dropped asleep.

He was woken by a jab on his shoulder. He saw a dark clothed figure towering over his head with the statue at his hands. Karl grew furious all of a sudden and assaulted the man quickly with a punch to his chest. He grabbed the statue from his hand as the man shrieked with shock. They looked at each other. Karl held the figure by its legs tightly, the man drew his gun and demanded the figure. Karl wasn't capable of giving an answer anymore and the man ran out of patience very quickly as if something was forcing him to take it from Karl. He pulled the trigger without hesitation; the bullet went through the statue splitting it into two pieces. It reached Karl's neck, forcing him to fall on his back as blood squirted from his neck and suffocated him to death with me still in his hands.

I was woken. I was in the hands of a dead man. I wasn't woken by the bullet; it broke my shell but what woke me was what it hit next. Karl, you went to an eternal sleep right next to me. It was a disturbance, and through the disturbance, I returned. Through your blood, I learnt everything you knew. I saw everything you saw and thus I recognized the beast I once knew: this foul and ferocious beast was none other than the humankind I wanted help long ago. A sort of trickery, I'd hoped, but no; it was all very real, and it gave me sorrow at first. As aforementioned, I lost my sympathy for you and I am very disinclined to leave quietly.

I only have a few more things left to recite. I am to depart very soon, sooner than you. I wanted you to be aware of the doom you've brought upon yourselves. I didn't want it to happen: what Karl did, that man did, and you did, all of you. I am not accusing Karl, nor would I accuse you if it were someone else. You weren't meant to be better and I can't judge you for that, no being can. You were given a fair share of warnings during your reign over this simple Planet, though. It is such a misfortune that you never paid attention to them, then again even if you were to evade my storm, at some point you would come to the same conclusion. I have seen it happen many times to beings greater than you and to civilizations superior to yours. So, sooner or later you were going to face the consequences of existence. Everything in the universe, even omnipotence, lasts only for a limited time and since you used yours very negligently. I see no reason you should fade away in peace. Try to fear as little as possible, for it will not help. There is no need to delay this anymore. In a hundred or two hundred years at most, you will perish. Such a short time, but I have less than that; in fact, I must very hastily bid you farewell. And although chances are so very low, a day may come, and I might be proven wrong. And although like the most of this was, it is highly unlikely. Till we meet again in a different life, verse, or time; fare thee well.