

Brave Rabbit in the U.S.

Written by Jaroslav Bednárík

Thursday, 19 November 2009 16:24 - Last Updated Saturday, 21 November 2009 13:24



>From: "Me" < jerry@bestofliterature.com >

>To: editor < editor@bestofliterature.com >

>Subject: The Brave Rabbit

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No human being makes a move if it does not desire something or it does not try to avoid something if, of course, we exclude a forced movement.

Aristotle

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>Attachment

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by Jaroslav (Jerry) Bednarik

John was standing by a road leading out of Santa Fe and thinking what to do next. He only had enough money for the bus fare to take him from Denver to Santa Fe where he had just got stuck, but he also needed to go to Phoenix. He was afraid that the police would nab him and his trip would be over. He wrote on a chunk of a carton: "Decent young man without money need to get to Phoenix." Then he took a stance at an intersection while holding the sign in front. A couple of drivers just waved at him to say hello. After about twenty minutes, a big blue Buick stopped by him. A dark curly-haired head of a young lady leaned out of the window.

"Are you headed for Phoenix?"

"Yes, I am."

"So hop in! Throw the luggage in the trunk."

He stepped up to the car and the trunk opened with a click. He threw his luggage inside, shut the trunk and got in on the front seat.

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"Hi, I'm Jane," said the young lady with a smile. She had dark eyes, and she was wearing a light make-up and red lipstick.

"I am John," he introduced himself trying to hide his accent.

"A foreigner?" Apparently just three words gave him away as a non-native.

"Yes, foreigner," confirmed John.

"Where are you from? Europe?"

"From Europe. From Slovakia. Before was Czechoslovakia," he added as he was accustomed.

"Czechoslovakia? Is that in Russia?"

"No, is in middle Europe. But Czechoslovakia don't exist no more. It was divided to two countries."

"Aha," she thought for a moment. "You had a war, didn't you?"

"No, we didn't have war. War was in Yugoslavia. But Yugoslavia don't exist no more too."

She was tuning the radio for a while. She ended up at a song by Britney Spears. She started singing along.

"D'you know Britney Spears?"

"Yes, I do."

"Or some other American singers? What do they play on the radio in your country? D'you have radios?"

"Yes, we have. And they play songs in it like here."

"Aha. And have you got TVs too?"

"No, what is it?" he asked jestingly with a straight face. This kind of American women, weary of good life, who believe that there is nothing else except themselves, were already getting on his nerves. Jane took a deep breath and started to think feverishly.

"It's a box showing pictures in motion. Haven't you ever seen one? Not even here in the US?"

"No, but one time I was in hall with screen and many people and moving pictures on screen."

"That was the cinema," she concluded. "That's something else."

The ride was smooth, and the V-8 Buick could hardly be heard. Jane looked at John through the corner of her eye. John was a handsome man. Like a Slovak Johnny Depp.

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"I'm kidding," he said. "Of course I know what is television. We don't live on trees, baby."

"I almost thought so too. But I wasn't sure. So I figured I'd rather ask."

"It is OK. I'm used to it."

"Are there terrorists in your country?"

"Not really. We have politicians. And those are not so much terrorists like thieves."

She laughed.

"We have those here too. You speak good English. Where did you learn it?"

"We have language schools too, where native Americans teach."

"Would you care for a hamburger?"

Close to Albuquerque, they stopped at a gas station. For an American woman, Jane looked quite pretty. Her T-shirt was revealing her cute salacious belly-button above the jeans barely above her pelvic region. For the last five dollars John had, he bought a hamburger and cola in a covered cup from which a straw was provocatively sticking out. They finished the meal in the car and continued on their way.

"Look," she said after a while pointing at the sky where a brain was flying. And then a cow. And pooh-bears. And a camel. And a cigar. It was a balloon show. There were more and more

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balloons of different colors and shapes. John has never seen anything like that before. As far as he could see, the lovely clear blue sky was covered with colorful balloons. He felt like in a dream. Looking at flying balloons can lighten up one's mind.

"Have you ever made love to a woman after meeting her for the first time?" Jane asked all of a sudden.

"No, I don't do it."

"Why not?"

"I afraid of AIDS."

"I don't have AIDS."

"I can't know it. And what if I have AIDS?"

"And do you?"

"No, I have not. They don't admit nobody in the US who have AIDS."

"Have you been tested?"

"Of course."

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"When?"

"Before two months."

"Have you made love to anyone since then?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"American women are very self-important. Only dollars interest them. And besides that, our women are more nice."

"Do I look ugly?"

"I didn't tell that."

"Do you want to get to Phoenix?"

"Yes, I want it."

"OK."

Jane got off from the expressway onto a highway. They were passing by houses hidden among

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trees. After the next turn-off from the highway they got on a country road and continued farther and farther away from residential areas until they completely lost the sight of them. They were still pretty far from Phoenix. John felt anxious. This woman must definitely be crazy, he thought. Who knows what she is up to.

"Are you afraid?" asked Jane with tightened lips.

"Maybe yes, maybe no. Where are we going?"

"You're going to Phoenix. What did ya come to the US for? To have a better life?"

"Yes, that too."

"Many people come here to have a better life. The US is the best country on earth, isn't it?"

"I don't know if it's best."

"But there are opportunities here which don't exist elsewhere."

"Maybe yes."

Jane tossed her curly-haired head. She stopped the car somewhere in the middle of a field.

"Opportunities that should be taken advantage of. But you mustn't be afraid to do so."

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John was waiting what will come out of it. He had already cursed the moment he entered into the blue car with red leather seats.

The woman leaned her head over the steering wheel while grasping it by both of her hands so hard that her knuckles were turning white.

"People should never be afraid," she mumbled under her nose. "If I had the power to change just one thing in this world, I would eliminate all fear. Fuck it, to hell with fear!" she yelled out so loud that John shook. She leaned over his knees toward the glove compartment in front of him and pulled out a revolver. She pointed it at his head. John got stiff.

"D'you wanna make love to me?" she asked.

John shook his head.

"Why not?"

"I'm afraid," he conceded at last.

"Of what? AIDS or this here?" and she twirled the revolver.

"This and that."

"Oh, double fear! O.K., get out!" she ordered him.

John got out in front of the car with his hands up.

"You got any money?" Jane asked passing her tongue over the lips.

"No, I really don't have."

"O.K., now you go and sit behind the steering wheel!"

John obediently sat down.

"You've got five thousand dollars in the compartment. Start the car and get lost with it!"

"I don't understand," he managed to utter the words quietly.

"Start the car and get lost. There are five thousand dollars and they are yours," she repeated slowly emphasizing each word. "Do you understand what I'm saying?"

John nodded. "I understand your words, but I don't understand what it mean."

She laughed with a burbling sound in her throat.

"Are you afraid?"

"Little."

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"Well, then step on it motherfucker and stop being afraid so much!" and she pointed the gun at him.

John, scared like a rabbit, stepped on the gas pedal. The V-8 Buick took off with a low-pitched noise, and after burning rubber a couple of times it disappeared in a distance. Jane waited until the yellow dust settled down, blew into the gun barrel and stuck the gun behind her belt.