

Captain Viewpoint and the Grey Death

Captain Viewpoint, a once highly respected submariner, had the terrible misfortune of discovering a heightened sense of mortality somewhere in the depths of the North Atlantic Ocean. The gigantic probability of encountering disaster when traveling aboard a drowned black coffin struck his febrile self and with a yelp, as though a newborn shocked by the ability to burp, he got it. This understanding, a bizarre susceptibility, de-stabilised his wife's sanity and led her into the arms of a clairvoyant who, before eloping with her in tow, prognosticated the Captain's date with death. It may be worthwhile to note that, although he only caught May 12th as the cab pulled away, the ill-fated prediction marked his dive into a disenchantment with the ways of the world.

Each 'x' crossed daily off the calendar now grimaces and goads the Captain from the corner of the musty room, giving him adequate time to fully appreciate the fatal situation he finds himself in. His conduct is positively introverted but he has learnt, this being the ninth May 12th spent under self-inflicted house arrest, how to weave through the traps with relative ease. Blankets and cushions line all sharp edges as he sits, eyes fixed on the tick-tock grandfather clock. Once he even caught Mr. Pottingsworth with lethal secateurs reaching for the rare butterwort beyond the tumbledown fence. After an irate *Go to hell you louse!* the instrument guiltily plummeted to the ground, leaving Mr. P grappling with his own imagination – yes the front garden was empty, not a person in sight, and yes the curtains were all still heavily drawn in 5 Castle Street, if he was even still living! With every death-toll-day they test the Captain, the meddlers. It didn't help when word got round the King of Castle Street picked this spot to hide his treasure yonks and yonks ago. The news brought flocks of curious children to the site. Some tiptoed, some skulked as they braved the garden path before all met his ghostly yells. They imagined spirits of knights long past still guarding, loyal to the bitter end. *Stupid sprogs sticky-beaking*, growls the Captain. *Don't they know anything of centuries and centaurs? That there was never a castle on Castle Street!* Indeed, absurd how a proposal for a building that never was has left a trace equally as monumental as its ruins. And before you ask, no, the Captain could not see a similarity to his predicament. *Hmm...he sighs, how dim and gullible the human race has become, or always was.*

Crackpot dilettante, the angry parents grumble and even the keenest curiosity cannot, on this day, bring him to peek through the slit in his curtain as they line the fence. Instead he's devised a fond way of catching them - extending and contracting the image framed by the curtains, reflected into the gilt mirror hanging opposite him and refracted, magnified, through his brass spyglass. His solution is to gain this great distance over the scene and look upon it. It's the wise saying scratched into the submarine's periscope: *Matter must be trajected to keep some foothold in reality.* The spyglass earnestly taps his eyelobe and the Captain, groaning at the poppycock outside his window, is pleasantly delighted by his confinement. He sits, separated from reality, witnessing it – *ha!* *They're a catoptric theatre multiplying nonsensical representations, all captured in super-macro scale in my glass rim.* He excitedly pops the bubble wrap tied to his ankles. No birds transforming into aviaries or books into libraries in this chamber of mirrors...*the wonders of the world?!... only repeated reflections of nosy faces and bland backdrops.* Somewhat cheered, he sits imagining the grey cornerstones of the chest of mirrors unglue and slowly implode. *The equation is balanced now, just their greyness reflecting this greyness.*

Or is it grayness your highness? murmurs the spyglass. *No*, says the Captain, *it's just grey as a colour and gray as a color and both just segments of this death, not black, not white, just g+e = etc., etc., etc.* He racks his brain as the spyglass sighs; *but admitting limited degrees of darkness would throw unexpected light on the case.* And yes it's true the somewhat square, scientific rational has receded from his thought process. There would be no need for a helmet or bubble wrap gown if the ending weren't so fallibly infallible. And now he admits sometimes he's even adopted stripes of quack colour when recalling memories, despite ample proof of their quackness. It's been over a

year since he dreamt in black and white! The Captain sharply inhales, taking comfort in Snoot's Liquid Law. He cradles the brandy glass closer and with his right hand aims the spyglass at the golden liquid. He doesn't like what Viewpoint sees – at the slightest tap of the glass, sprinting rainbows diverge to break the surface tension. The colour is like a kaleidoscope – so saturated that his eyeball wobbles when focusing on it. *Overhere, overhere! Overthere, overthere!* calls out the spy, watching them lumpily thwock towards the floor. He pauses questioningly *thwarting Snoot's Law. What of the consequences? And consequently, what colour is the daylight poking through my curtains?* Following logical sensibility the weak beam cast should be completely black and impenetrable - granting his invisibility - were it not for the questionable bows of rain now pelting sideways from the toppled glass. The heavy droplets extinguish his pipe resting nearby and sickly green and anaemic grey smoke puffs up. *Invisibility lost!* he gasps. *Would it not be correct to assume the viewed now sees the viewer? But the view is only to be watched, never visited!* He shudders at the thought of being part of both view and observer at the same time, like some incessant after-image fastened to the retina.

What a quandary! The slippage. *Living on the limits of an indiscernible reality* narrates the spyglass. *The mirror is the only truth* he discovers and to confirm he points his right Viewpoint once again at his reflection, this time while raising his left arm. Yes, his mirrored self raises right and not left limb. *Truth* he exhales, shooting from behind the table to grab hold of the curtains. Beams of light rush in, framing the windows of the smoggy room, unveiling his position for all to see, and casting rectangles of lightness onto the walls and mirror. *A gallery of projected exterior images...a spectral gallery of sorts* he muses and relaxes, projecting this idea into space and welcoming the reduced probability of seeing anything in a real state. The Captain edges closer and closer to the light of the mirror, peering one-eyed and watching his pupil dilate until the spyglass is so close there's only muggyness. A true reflection of reality's fault line. It's all shunting now... *The problem encountered when faced with a straight line of grey lining a line of white, painted by the light on the mirror, is only a test when there's a three-foot point at one edge where things drop off or get sucked away. It's so close to reality that it's all abstract anyway,* he mutters glaring again into the haze of the Viewpoint. Blobs, magnified in their oily forms whiz, torque and oscillate on the undulating surface. *Pheww!!* exclaims the spyglass and the Captain sniggers, resting back into his chair; *this close, this abstract, what's the most amount of many things we can see in the world?* And with that the tick-tock of the grandfather clock stops.

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