

Shadow & Light Afterword

Aug 2020

I originally wrote this story as part of a short story competition I learned about from my college at the time (Technological University Dublin) I was limited to a maximum of 2000 words.

Originally the entire story was going to be a philosophical dialogue between two strangers, our main protagonist Diana and an unnamed man. I changed it into a short story format as I don't think the organisers of the competition would have accepted a purely philosophical dialogue (or understood it for that matter :P) I was reading some ancient Greek mythology/philosophy at the time of writing and decided to cast Artemis in the starring role; now Artemis is quite an unusual name so when I found that the ancient Roman pantheon had a similar figure by the name of Diana I used that name instead as it sounded more natural for my purposes, less likely to rouse suspicion.

Shadow and light were the focus points of the story with the character Diana's original qualities reflecting a dry and sombre outlook on things (She has been associated with the moon, so moon-shadow, you get the implication.) and the stranger's personality reflecting that of optimism, wisdom, and cheerfulness, hence Shadow & Light.

I only learned afterwards that the Roman mythological goddess Diana (Greek Artemis) is also associated with childcare and nature, which ended up fitting quite nicely with the story as we first see her journey through a forest and then take on an orphan child, (funny coincidence.)

For the character of the child; Cairbre (Pronounced Kahr-bra) is a name of ancient Gaelic descent which means either "One who rides in chariot" or "Chariot driver", I thought this was a nice touch as it coincides with his first appearance and the commitment Diana makes to him. Otherwise I use a very stereotypical "Oliver Twist" type of demeanor for him.

I based the stranger on the brother of the Greek god Artemis, Apollo (God of the sun, light, wisdom etc.) and initially our protagonist was going to have some problem or other and the stranger was going to give her some (cryptic) well thought out advice. This ended up taking the form of the advice given in respect to Cairbre near the end. The name "Aeiballon" is another, not-so-obvious name for Apollo.

References:

"Something wicked this way comes..." – Macbeth, Shakespeare

"There are more things in Heaven and Earth..." – More Shakespeare

"Heaven's Night..." – 2121 Carroll Street, South Vale.

"... close your eyes, I'll be here in the morning." – Townes Van Zandt Song

Stuff I was reading while writing this:

Aesop's Fables

Anthem – Ayn Rand

The Island of Doctor Moreau – H. G. Wells

Heart of Darkness – Joseph Conrad

The Philosophy of Epictetus