

I swirled my glass of wine around, its stem tightly pursed around my fingers and long nails. Titling my head up, I took a good look at this silhouette in front of me, wanting to gauge his reaction. Every round, every lap I was making with my glass- his eyes were following me. Maybe even counting. I squinted to get a closer look, trying to fight my tired as shit self because I wanted to know if my hallucinations were fucking with me again.

Right off the bat, I could see he was so damn tall. My head started to ache the more I stared, so I shut my eyes and took a long breath. I sighed and opened them to give it another go.

This thing, this silhouette. Somewhat built, with a gaunt jawline, and yellow piercing eyes that nested red irises. A ragged shadow draped over every inch of him, concealing all but part of his face and distinctive scars.

Ugh. I turned away from Him just to be met by my dim kitchen lights, one of the few things that lit up this hellhole of an apartment. Then I heard a soft, ambient whisper.

"Is the wine too strong?"

That thing was talking to me now. It was kinda funny. Once in a while, my hallucinations strike up a conversation. Sometimes I shoot back, and I was feeling rather bored that night.

"You think I can't handle it? I drink three of these every morning."

"No. Not this kind. Taste it again."

What kind of stupid reply was that? Of course I fucking knew what I drank. But it was the time of the night when things got weird, so just to make sure I was still sane, I raised the glass onto my lips and took a sip.

A light, fruity taste. Definitely what I drank all the time. I was pretty sure He was full of shit. But there was something off, because it glowed a bit hot in my mouth. Like a fire flickered for one second, and then just faded away. From wine? So odd. I had to take another sip.

Now, somewhere in my mouthful of wine, I felt something bitter. I slowly swigged it around in my cheeks, trying to chew out the culprit, and the more I chased after it, the warmer it got. And then, it felt that hit again.

That flicker of fire.

I winced. All of a sudden it was like a red hot whip flashed flames twirling through my mouth, and then just instantly vanished. It was something I never- no, I was sure no one ever- felt before in their life. What the hell what this?

"A dragon's drink," the silhouette spoke.

I swallowed whatever was in my mouth and shot back, "You guys have really fucked with me this time. First I was seeing things, and now you've gone after my wine?"

He stayed silent. Though, I wasn't entirely sure. Because things started to get hazy for me. And I was getting uncomfortably warm. I felt pangs poking at and stinging my neck, and I got fucking annoyed. I should've known this would've happened though.

"Yeah, I know I should've spat it out," I said, gritting my teeth, "I just never let good wine go to waste. But none of this is real. It's just my dumb brain imagining it all, and my nerves are just freaking out for no good reason."

A sly smile cut through the black mouth of the silhouette. He replied, "Then why is your apartment on fire?"

"It's what?" I chuckled. Possibly the most ridiculous thing a hallucination has said this week. Still, I did smell smoke. And as I sniffed to try to hunt down where it came from, I turned around to see the pillows on my black velvet couch burning in flames.

"Hey- HEY!" I shouted, frantically jumping from my seat to try to get my extinguisher. I ran towards my closet, my drunk ass stumbling past expensive paintings and slippery marble floors, and once there I slid its mirrored doors open, spotted my canister and grabbed it. I sprinted back and blew whatever I had all over that damn couch, coughing and seething all at once. But when the smoke cleared, I could still see and hear the roars of flames. The golden threads of my pillows were now waving themselves into an ashy death.

As I stood there, canister in my hands in the middle of night, realizing I still had on the black dress I wore to the horribly boring coworker bar run, I began to realize what was happening, and immediately regretted my decisions. I muttered to myself, "Stupid. Dumb. None of this is real. Holy shit."

Near the nape of my neck, a shady voice whispered, "But it is."

I let out a frustrated sigh. "No. Fuck off. I've been through this way too many times before." I firmly put the canister down on the kitchen island. "Weird shadow dude, I've had a long day. It was nice meeting you, but you have got to go."

Taking a short sigh, I rubbed my palms together and took in the view of the inferno before me. Orange sparks traveled high, and spiked towards the ceiling like the waves of a hellish EDM song. Somehow, my mind was hallucinating that even the rugs were beginning to catch on fire. But it couldn't have been real. The alarms should be blaring like crazy, right? So it's fake. I clenched my fists and took another short breath.

Even though I knew I was just imagining it all, every time I had to confront my illusions, I got nervous. I knew that once I touched it, contradictions would flood in and my mind would have no choice but to align back into reality. Yet it always felt so real.

"Just do it Katie," I muttered. "Do it to shut Karla up."

I took my first step forward, and though it hurt, before I knew it I was pushing myself into Hell itself. I shut off all my thoughts and plunged my hand towards my fears, and-

The fire sunk its teeth in deep.

I screamed in pain as my hand shot back. And to my horror, the flames were still there. That was also when alarms started going off in both in the apartment and in my demented, fucked up mind.

I felt a cold presence walk near me, the chill of ice wafting to soothe the heat flickering on my skin. The silhouette said, "I told you it was real."

"But it can't be," I replied as I started straight into the orange red void.

"You want it to stop, don't you?"

I clenched my teeth. I tightened my fist. I didn't know what to think now. I guess I should've been panicking over the possibility that my apartment was actually on fire. But regardless of what I thought, He was right- whether it was real or not, I just wanted it to end.

"Please, drink this," the chilled voice hushed.

I looked down towards my right hand, and saw that the silhouette was offering me a glass of a royal blue navy drink. With no other option running through my head, I grabbed it and took a swig.

Almost immediately a marine light crashed through everything I could see and flooded all around me, hitting me with an intense pressure and forcing me to shut my eyes, with my flight or fight bracing myself into a ball. I couldn't breathe; I felt like I was drowning. It was then I realized I was being choked by a liquid ocean, but it wasn't water. Whatever found its way into my mouth tasted like... alcohol.

Suddenly the ocean squeezed out of everything like a collapsing star, flooding into me as I gasped for air. When I opened my eyes, my apartment was soaked, and I was dripping on the floor. But the fire was gone. Though the pillows were still charred.

Coughing, I sputtered out incredulously, "Wha- what the hell?"

A white glove touched my shoulder. I knew it was connected to something larger, something far taller looming behind me. The silhouette, though I dared not look.

He answered: "When you drink, is it your senses being distorted, or everything around you? Do they change to become that which you fear and desire?"

I hated those cryptic words. My hallucinations sometimes speak like that, and it always gets on my nerves.

"Shut up. You think I haven't seen someone else drink before? They might not know they're thinking like an idiot, but everyone else around them does."

I couldn't see Him, but I knew He grinned.

"I didn't say Them. I said You."

His words were now touching on tips of thoughts I'd believed to have been buried deep. Suddenly, I could almost anticipate not just what he was implying, but about to say. I knew it all along, but it was just too crazy to be real.

"You've always known they're not hallucinations," He said.

My brow furrowed in disbelief and I scoffed. "Let's say all this is real. Going by what you're saying, the world's changing to fit how my perception of the world changes. But alcohol doesn't make you imagine that everything's on fire."

"Some do make you feel warm."

I paused. That did make sense. "And the ice?"

"A nice drink that cools you down."

I thought on it some more. Actually, I'd been thinking about this for a while now. Since I was a teen, the shrinks have always told me I was crazy. I'd bought that the strange figures I saw weren't real. Yet there were things I claimed that hidden in my true beliefs, I knew they couldn't dispute. Any time I drank, the world changed around me. That happens for everyone, but it's always just in their head. For me, though, whenever I thought of something differently after drinking, it changed into that even when I became sober.

I stamped those memories back in the vault of my mind. I didn't want to think of them. This time, however, was different. This was just the first time something this dramatic was actually real, instead of just a one time hallucination. It was so crazy that there was only one thing my mind thought of doing.

Slowly, I pushed myself up with a deadpan expression, walked to the kitchen island, eyed the bottle of vodka and grabbed its neck. As I swung the bottle in my drunken stupor towards the counter to grab a glass, the silhouette man said, "Don't. You wouldn't like Her."

I didn't even glance at him. All I remembered was that damned drink of fire. "What did you do this my vodka?"

"Dragon's drink is an ancient brew that modern society has forgotten. But the vodka you have is nothing special. However, something in you has changed. You will find that your reactions to vodka will change, too."

I was beginning to consider taking this seriously. Playing along, I asked, "All right then. What's the deal with all this?"

The silhouette answered, "Alcoholic drinks have a rather jester-like role in modern society. In ancient times, there were those who could use them for something much more potent. Kings would call upon their courts to prepare special drinks for important rituals. Some turned good, some turned bad. In all cases, they were used for one purpose: to stir things up. To cause chaos. We called them the Harbingers of Bad Decisions."

For a second, he made some sense. But it didn't last long, and I burst out laughing. "Okay, okay," I laughed, "So what you're saying is: 'Alcohol is Magic.' "

"Only in the hands of a special few. For you, your passions become uninhibited, and things start to distort.

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Passages to piece together:

You truly gain the strength to fight a lion, if you believe it to be so.

Those who are unattractive become attractive

“Spin the wheel, and you’ll find out what happens. As you spin, the world will spin around you, too. And it’s not just you who changes.”

“Why did it take so long for the alarm to ring?”

“The changes in reality ripple slowly. They don’t happen because of physical laws from the universe, they happen to accommodate your shift in perception.”

Whatever you feel, happens

“Then how come all of a sudden this happened?”

“Do you remember what happened this night?”

“Others like you?”

“There’s many ways to prepare alcohol.”

Each one has a different effect

And on the face of the bottle was Him.

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lighthearted, not violent, but still with deaths, etc. Not a tragedy. fantasy/mystery/comedy

the alcohols/lust are the harbingers of bad decisions

the drink is also a demon, but doesnt speak, ever. dark and humorous.

mysterious drinks that suddenly appear

alcoholic mixing potions and alcohol at work.

'this is the worst. i hate it.'

Susan comes home from work alone, and sits bored in front of a tv

she used to hang out with her friend Karla back in HS. karla was like an angry chihuahua. she hadnt seen her in years; only on

and off during and after college

Susan was now 28, working in an office job.

she swirled her glass while sitting in front of the genie, in her darkened, well furnished apartment

"So you can grant wishes?"

bartender teaches her the basics of mixing drinks

she uses it to mix potions with drinks

long brown hair in a ponytail

multiple 'drinks' have appeared. Susan investigates this mystery. it seems the drinks are cursed deities, monkey paws

Susan wrangles the neck of the bottle "WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME"

somehow, the genies are connected to the drinks

susan learns how to induce trances and other things that 'bring things out of peoples personalities' using the potions shes a rabid alcohol and deadpan just mixes things to try to kill herself. shes not curious and is usually just yoloing

however, bc she is so bored, she wants to solve the mystery

she is warned about the drinks that have been appearing only all around the city. someone has cursed the deities; some want

revenge, others want to party. never personified.

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to write in 1st person, envision yourself as the character and speak thru them. let them share some of your personalities or try to think like other people IRL. if you were that person, how would you tell your story to other people in a way that oozes your personality?

have two narrators- one that is more sophisticated, the other is more casual/colloquial and is the protag's inner thoughts. separate the two by paragraph breaks.

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For most of the harbingers of bad decisions, the alcohol demons are idiots, like in fairy odd parents. Only very few are sophisticated like the one at the start of the story.

Though the alcohol can change the world, these changes are influenced by one's delusions and stupidity. So even though one does make things in favor of them, unintended side effects due to ignoring or not seeing one's flaws make things worse off in the long run. And the protagonist learns slow or just doesn't want to deal with her flaws. Wacky hijinks ensure.

Each drink ramps up certain delusions that are in responses to flaws. These delusions cause both the drinker and the world around them to behave in crazy ways.