

Djordje Leverda

Mrs. Rutan

Creative Writing

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Dragons, butterflies and lies

An educated man in a suit was on a cruise ship. Life was both nice and punishing to Kevin. Growing up in a poor village, his intellect made an even bigger contrast, just as his heart condition made an even bigger problem. People would say he was just too light hearted, but Kevin knew there was more to it.

Fainting was a daily routine. After his successful, broad education, he managed to provide a comfortable world for him and his family. As long as he would take his medication every day, life would be only nice to him. As he was reminiscing about the path that led to the present point in his career, he felt happy to realize that he was on his way to revisit it.

In a week he was supposed to be on the opposite coast of Africa. He intended to visit his family and hometown in Mozambique. The cuisine was quite tasty on the ship, but nothing compared to his mom's homemade *ncima*. He laughed as the "light skinned" people complained about the sunburns they were victims of in the past few days. On May 19th he went to bed at 1am. He liked staying out and enjoying the African fusion of night and water. At exactly 3:57 am, every living soul on the ship heard a roaring explosion. One of the motors caught on fire and blasted the whole back deck which then caused a chain reaction and detonated the other two motors. Since Kevin didn't reach his REM stage of sleep yet, he was quicker to wake up and realize what was going on. He grabbed the essentials and shoved it into a waterproof bag. It's a tragedy that he forgot his medication... He ran out on the main deck – he was one of few souls that were already out. The night was cold and dark, but still beautifully lit up with the fires lights. All throughout the ship, you could hear the tremendous stumbling of thousands of feet pushing towards the deck. Kevin heard the speaker announcement, but couldn't understand it. The screaming and crying concealed the information the captain was giving out. He looked over one of the towers and noticed smoke. Pushing through masses of people, he made it to the railing where he had a better view of an enormous fire that was ripping through the air. He was breathing more heavily now, but he still had hope. Dislocated, he was looking around for answers. Kevin felt enraged because all he could do is run in circles with people that also knew nothing about sinking ships. The lifeboat drill was scheduled for two days from now... It was a slow, horrifying process that you can't influence in any significant way. The main deck was gradually forming a greater angle compared to the water. Kevin was carried by the waves of

people panicking and looking for their children. *Lifeboats, yes!* He sprinted to the other side of the ship where lifeboats were and wanted to reserve an early spot. As he was jumping of the fence into the lifeboats that African night, the condition took him into the icy water.

When he woke up, his body was numb, but it was warm outside, so he fell back asleep. When he woke up the second time - he let out scream. He found himself in a cliché of an adventure movie. On a beach in the middle of nowhere. He wasn't sure yet if it was an island or if it was inhabited or not, but his mind rushed to the worst case scenario. There wasn't enough oxygen to help his brain comprehend what was going on, so gasping, grabbing for air, he started running in the first direction that was available. At first notice, the island seemed thick with exotic trees, only to Kevin they weren't trees, they were monsters and this was all a sick, twisted joke. Pushing vines away and fighting with the spiderweb that was hugging his face, he wasn't finding anything. He stood out of breath with a green pastel painting surrounding him in each direction. Even above him, there was no blue, only more green. The ground was carpeted with tall grass and sticks and logs that have never been touched by a human hand. Everything is green. Light green, dark green, olive green, brown green and blue green with a shade of yellow. He would find strange fruit and strange trees and strange bushes, but nothing that would settle him.

After about four hours of frantic searching for human companions, his fears prevailed. It was certain. He was alone on a soulless island. His small, light blue, waterproof bag was still tied around his left wrist on top of his charm bracelet.

Okay, okay, okay... Lemme think right now...

He walked back through the dark forest of the island, back to the beach he first washed up to. The trees, he noticed, were so green, they were black. He sat down on the sand facing the ever long, blue border.

How did I get here? What went wrong? Am I dreaming right now? Why me?

The thing is, none of that mattered. What mattered was how he was supposed to get out of there. He opened his waterproof bag and found: a flashlight, a lighter (Kevin didn't smoke, but it was good to have it at all times in case one of the more important business partners needed to light a cig during a meeting to amplify his importance) a couple of long sleeved shirts, *Successful thirties* by George Whimpell, *Let's Switch Gears* by A. A. Rutan (a short manual on how to successfully transition from a pleasant to an aggravating activity), a half eaten sandwich, a couple of granola bars, a swiss army knife, a swimsuit (ironic) a bottle of water (16.9 oz), tissues, prescription for the medication, but no medication... NO MEDICATION?! His bedside table stored his meds at the bottom of the ocean.

Now he was scared. Death is not a good thought in this situation, but it is present now more than ever. Blackness. Passing out started to become a form of escape from the brutal reality. Soon, he started looking forward to that.

Kevin started a fire on the beach and would mend it, to keep it going at almost all times... just in case. The next few weeks were taken out of a survival guide. Each day was another struggle. Kevin got familiar with the island and started gathering the wood for a shelter. He decided to build two - one on the beach and another one in the forest.

It's not like I have anything else to do...

After a couple of weeks, he embraced the island as his own demon. He didn't blame it or hate it for its existence. Its greenness didn't cause a gag reflex any more. The island was his own and he was the only one allowed to feel anything towards it. As he was sitting barefoot on the beach, in his Lacoste tee and nice - no more - shorts eating a freshly picked papaya, he noticed a small crab that seemed to be bright pink. It was late at night and there was no explanation for it. Kevin spread his pupils in disbelief. The crab moved in discontinuous motions and in various directions. *But how could it be that pink?* Kevin looked around him as if to check if all of the living around him is witnessing the same thing. When he looked back, the crab was gone. Kevin jumped on his feet. *No, no, no.* Sort of panicking, he was looking around. Nothing. He was still alone, no company... He was ready to sleep. He was ready to sleep and wake up back in his bed.

I'll take the plane next time...

The next morning, around five, Kevin was awoken by the warm rain. There were exactly 17 holes in the roof of his shelter. He knew that because it was the same as the number of beads he had on his bracelet and he would count them every night. Everything seemed grim and depressed. He started his usual routine of searching for food and getting more wood. He hiked through the dense, dark, verdant forest. Step, step, stride, hop, unbalanced step, step, step. Over the wet logs, through the tall grass, he didn't have a reason not to walk slow. No point in getting mad at the rain and cold. Kevin was looking down at his steps and saw them gently stomp on the green.

"Who would listen anyways?" Kevin asked looking down.

"Why would anyone need to listen?" He replied.

"See that tree over there?"

Kevin looked up.

"It's the same as that one, and that one, and that one".

Kevin looked at each one of them and agreed with himself. They were all the same.

"All of them think the same of you. To all of them, you're nothing. You're just—"

In such a dark place, anyone would notice what he did, if it was there. What Kevin saw made him drop his papayas. Somewhere on the tree was a creature... a cat-monkey. Sort of. It had short fur, striped dirty yellow and white lines, with black spots all over. Standing on all four long, thin legs, it had a long tail, about 6 feet long that seemed to be waving at him. It was slim and long. The monkey-cat was looking straight at him with its goggled, black eyes. Its ears were small triangles, pointing straight up into the sky. Suddenly, there was something more interesting than Kevin somewhere else, so the creature rapidly maneuvered through the trees, almost flying, and disappeared in the day's night. Kevin sat down and wept. It was all too much. He was certain there is no such thing as what he just saw. But it was there. He looked at his bracelet. It wasn't a special one, made out of seashells and beads, but it served as a reminder to always have faith in Him.

Deus me ajude.

Kevin took a deep breath and started counting the beads on the bracelet.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen.

Kevin grabbed what he needed and headed back to the beach. The strong smell of a wet jungle overwhelmed him each step he took. If you were to describe what Kevin smelt with a color, it would simply be green. The most natural green you could imagine. It was a much longer hike than it was coming there. He wanted to think about the creature, but his thoughts could not concentrate or, for that matter, narrow down on anything. As he pushed away the big exotic leaves of the last row of trees, they revealed the beach. It was crawling with animals Kevin never saw before. Some were fully white, some dark purple, some covered in feathers, some flying, some big, some small... He stuttered backwards. A bright blue, dog-sized rat let out a screech that ripped through the island.

"WHAT'S HAPPENING?!" Kevin's eyes ran across the scene.

"A party?" a levitating snake responded like it was obvious.

"W-what?"

"We're just enjoying life Kevin..." that last sentence echoed in the empty hallways of Kevin's head as his eyes saw from white, to gray, to black.

He passed out into the sand and buried himself until tomorrow morning.

Kevin dreamt of God. He wasn't respectful and easily questioned His power. In the world of dreams, he was standing on a white field under the blue sky with green dragons flying through the clouds. He would look at them and proudly look down on God and ask Him for His purpose. For each of His answers, Kevin would divulge a mocking laughter.

"Who needs Your service?" grinned Kevin.

"I am the one who created you, YOU need me."

"Look around You, please, take a look. Is this Yours? Have You created this beautiful mess?"

"Have you no shame?" God wondered. "I am inside everything you know!"

Kevin travelled across the silky, white lands, "This is mine, my creation and you will no longer be a part of life."

"As you w—"

An itching sensation went across Kevins right eye. He woke up in tears. He looked around and the creatures were gone, all of them except four bright, pink crabs. They stood in a line, looking at Kevin.

There was no time to waste. He took a deep breath, counted the beads on his bracelet and went to get more wood. The fire needed to be mended... just in case. As he searched through the forest, a seven foot butterfly speared through the trees into the sky. Purple with white dots, it didn't cause much commotion in Kevins world. Light hearted, he continued on, grabbed a couple of papayas, filled up his water bottle and headed back to the beach. He pushed the leaves of the last row of the trees to the side, they revealed the blue water. He walked a little closer to the ocean, he dropped his stuff and sat next to the resting butterfly. They looked at the setting sun.

"It's a nice evening." he said

"Sure is."

It's been two or three months, no one really knows, but Kevin wasn't alone any more. He had his demons around him at all times. Every once in a while he would have the pleasure to talk to God. Kevins dreams were his shelter. It's been a while since they last talked, but this is what Kevin remembers:

"Are you a man of faith now?" asked God.

"Who are you?" Kevin was smiling.

“You had your chance for salvation Kevin.” said God as he was closing his arms, “These creatures, this land, this unsettledness, this solitude — this will be your heaven.”

Kevin did not accept God.

He looked at the ocean, thought of his mother, let out a single tear and lived the rest of his days dreaming.