

ZATHIA'S WAGER

Draft 1 - Love Story Envisioning
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FADE IN:

EXT. TWO-STORY STEEL BUILDING

sits on the edge of a large prairie field and an old forest. A sign waves slightly in the breeze on a post outside of the door with "Above and Beyond, Inc" carved into it.

CRANE SHOT

shows a small group in the field waking towards the building lead by an old man and Jathia. The old man holds his fist up and the group halts.

OLD MAN

This is as far as we can go. You must walk alone from now forward.

Jathia looks behind him at the group of friends and family. CLOSE SHOT on Jathia as he faces the building ten yards away. He takes a step forward only to feel his arm caught on something. He turns and looks down to see his little sister.

LITTLE SISTER

Stay with us, please.

JATHIA

(bends down to be eye-to-eye)

I have to go.

LITTLE SISTER

Why?

YOUNG WOMAN

(voice over)

Silly little boy.

JATHIA

(flinches slightly)

It's my time.

Jathia hugs his little sister and stands. He turns to face the building as he takes a deep breath.

CUT TO Jathia approaching the sign. He runs his fingers over the carved letters before taking a step beyond it. A SOUND of a high pitch screeching drives him to his knees and forces him to

cover his ears. The SOUND ceases suddenly.

MAN

Please state your purpose.

Jathia looks up slowly to see a man in a light brown pants, dark brown jacket, dark brown waistcoat, white shirt, a cravat with light brown spots and a brown bowler hat.

JATHIA

I-I wish to exit.

The man looks beyond Jathia out to the plains.

MAN

You have many friends still here. Once on the path you may never return to them.

JATHIA

The elder already said that.

MAN

A wise man.
(mumbles)
Too wise.

Jathia stands and camera PANS as he glances back at the group.

MAN

Did he also tell you that you will see and experience things beyond your wildest dreams?

JATHIA

He told me it would be different.

Camera PANS back to the man as he smiles at Jathia and motions him towards the building.

MAN

Different? That can hardly explain the beauty and wonder. Nor can words do it justice in general. And sadly, I may not deploy more than words. Thus is be the primary rule.

JATHIA

(shoulders slump)
More rules, I want to escape rules and limits.

MAN

(chuckles)
You may have misunderstand..

JATHIA
(looks up with hope in his eyes)
So there are no limits, no rules, no...

MAN
(shakes his head)
Humans are such bound creatures. The only limits in the future are those you apply to yourself. Once you strip away your biological forms things will be much clearer.

JATHIA
My biological forms?

The two stop at the doorway to the building and camera PANS back to the group in the field. This time the old man is on his knees.

MAN
Humans evolved into its current form. Before that he held other forms. Less evolved ones, less refined. And so you must shed your current shell to advance.

Jathia back at his friends and family one last time. He sees a hazy image of a young woman in a flowing peasant dancing as if floating on air around the old man.

YOUNG WOMAN
(voice over)
You can't go where I'm going.

JATHIA
If being more advanced is so much better then why do you allow us to remain as we are.

MAN
(looks down at Jathia)
Have you ever forced an chicken to hatch? How about a butterfly to leave its cocoon? No of course you haven't. If you did, the result would be a slow and painful death.

CUT TO

INT. INSIDE THE HOUSE

as the door opens the man ushers Jathia through the door and into the house. He leaving the door open behind him.

MAN

Like with all things, time must not be rushed. Even now you may be forcing yourself to transform before you are ready.

JATHIA

What will I become?

MAN

I can not say.

JATHIA

But you must know. You have advanced.

MAN

I have advanced yes, but there are still some above me.

JATHIA

Above you?

MAN

Others have continued evolving. You can stop at any time along the path to grow old and die.

JATHIA

Why did you stop?

The man paused at the foot of the staircase as the camera CUT TO a view up a long stairs with a door at the top.

MAN

(shakes his head)

My reasons are my own. I don't regret my choice. As you shouldn't regret your choices.

JATHIA

What are my choices?

MAN

Too many to even begin to speak of, but your first choice is never fully under your control. However, once there you may have others of your kind that will be able to describe their own experiences which will help you to understand how to progress.

JATHIA

So... There are differences in how one progresses?

MAN

(nod)

Everyone has their own path, and they must not stray. Speaking of paths we must continue down yours.

They start up the stairs with the SOUND of their feet echoing up the stairs with the random squeak of boards.

JATHIA

How much farther?

MAN

That is up to you. If you wish it could be over right now.

JATHIA

(frowns)

No, I still have more questions. If I decide not to continue can I return to my family now?

MAN

What is behind you is death, and what is in front of you is life.

JATHIA

(utterly confused look)

Oh. Why are you here?

MAN

I am but a mere teacher. One to help those who can't find their path. With that being said I can never leave the boundaries of this space.

JATHIA

Can I end up like that?

MAN

(shakes his head)

The gates between the primitive worlds and the higher ones are limited, and when I become tired of my life this path will be forever closed.

JATHIA

What about those left?

MAN

They'll find other ways to advance. They did it before, and they'll do it again. In fact, most come to us without our aid.

JATHIA

What was your experience like?

MAN

Lonely. I moved from form to form never seeing another soul. I missed the company of my fellows. Until I felt the others.

JATHIA

Felt?

MAN

It was as if they were part of me. As if we merged into a single being.

JATHIA

Are-Are they still with you?

MAN

Them and many more.

Jathia halts on the stairs trembling slightly as he sees the young woman sitting a few steps above him. The SOUND of her giggling floats down.

JATHIA

I don't want others in my head. What about my privacy? What about my personal thoughts? I don't wish to lose myself within everyone else! Wouldn't I...

MAN

(holds up a hand)

Do you wish to return to your finite life?

The man moves to reveal a door behind him drawing Jathia's attention away from the young woman.

JATHIA

(touches the door with his finger tips and whispers)

Back to...

(shakes his head)

No, I have to...want to progress.

MAN

You aren't doing this under some misguided belief you can take after another?

JATHIA

(shakes his head)

No. No, I really want to expand my understand and progress beyond my current state.

MAN

So be it. Shall we continue?

Jathia turns back and sees the stairs empty again and the door still looming out of reach. He hesitates for a moment.

CROSS FADE to LONG SHOT of a

EXT. TREE IN MIDDLE OF THE PRAIRIE

where a six year old boy and an eight year old girl are playing under the tree. PULLING IN the boy catches the girl and the two come tumbling down to the ground. Both are laughing.

BOY

I'll follow you anywhere.

GIRL

Silly boy, you can't.

BOY

Why not?

GIRL

Because you're not ready.

BOY

(whines)

Ready for what?

GIRL

(puts her finger to his lips)

It's a se-cr-et. I've seen another world. Another life.

BOY

Another world?

He looks up beyond the tree as the camera PANS up to show a blue sky between the branches.

BOY
(points up into the air)
Out there? Through the tell-e-scope?

GIRL
No, here.

BOY
I don't understand.

GIRL
(quietly almost more to herself)
Nor do I.
(louder)
It's your birthday tomorrow. What do you want?

BOY
Don't change the subject. I want to always be with you.

GIRL
(exasperated)
I told you that you can't.

CROSS FADES

INT. STAIR CASE INSIDE THE HOUSE

Jathia continues up the stairs lost in his memory of an old moment.

MAN
If you have no more questions then I need to attend to others that wish to progress.

JATHIA
When do most choose to stop?

MAN
Half after their first transformation, another half on their second, and so on. Even those that continue will still lag behind those that came before.

JATHIA
Oh.
(falls silent for a few steps)
How long does one stay human?

MAN

It depends on the person. Some always retain a vestige of their human form. As humans retain evidence of their lower existences.

JATHIA

So you keep out-skirting the question. What are the other levels like?

MAN

Physical, technological, spiritual, electrical, and mental.

JATHIA

I don't...

CUT TO

EXT. FOREST LINE

where Jathia at the age of ten and the old man are making their rounds of the forest line.

JATHIA

Are there other places?

OLD MAN

There is an other village four days ride south of here deeper in the prairie.

JATHIA

No. I mean right where we are standing. Something that we can't see.

OLD MAN

Some say there are, and some say it's just blasphemy.

JATHIA

And you?

OLD MAN

The creator has produced many things, and even after science had explained all of them it still didn't change everyone's beliefs. What I believe isn't important.

(turns to Jathia and places his hand on Jathia's heart)

It is what you believe.

The two stand there in silence before the old man turns back and continues walking. Jathia

remains motionless for TWO BEATS and then breaks into a fast walk to catch up.

JATHIA

Umm... Those that do... umm.. find their way to the other place.
Do we see them again?

OLD MAN

Only in our dreams. Only when we aren't looking for them.

JATHIA

Is going there like dying?

OLD MAN

Only in the way that you leave love ones behind when you progress. Now, what has caused this to come up?

JATHIA

(scuffs at the ground with his foot)

Nothing really.

(walks in silents for another few steps)

Do they meet the creator when they...

OLD MAN

Only way is to pass beyond this world, this universe and enter into the spiritual world.

CUT TO

INT. STAIRCASE

Jathia pauses again as he stares down at the floor, and the man takes a few steps farther up before turning to face Jathia.

JATHIA

Will it hurt?

MAN

Growing beyond one's self is always painful, but forcing one's self to stagnate can be even more painful.

JATHIA

I think I'm ready.

(looking up to see the door right behind the man)

MAN

You are ready to step beyond. If you are ready to evolve is a matter I can't speak to. This door is for you, and you alone. You will not walk in other's path and no one will walk in yours. Once used you can never return to your friends and family.

CUT TO a behind the shoulder shot of the man looking down at Jathia. There are only ten steps visible to the main floor.

MAN

You still have two choices, and the final decision is yours.

Jathia watches as the man fades out of view leaving Jathia alone to stare at the door. He reaches out and touches the door as the camera

CUT TO a shot from the bottom of the staircase looking up. He grasps the knob, gives it a turn and pushes the door open. Inky blackness awaits inside.

CROSS FADE to

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

where Jathia, at the age of thirteen, is being restrained by the old man. As the young woman in a simple peasant dress is standing in the middle of an unruly mob.

MOB MALE 1

She's destroying our way of life. She is a heretic, a witch, and worse yet a disruptive influence. Kill her.

JATHIA

(struggles to break free)

No! Leave her.

MOB MALE 2

Leave her to corrupt our way of life? She needs to be made an example of. What she is doing is immoral, unholy...

Other mob members break in and start an uproar with their comments.

YOUNG WOMAN

Jathia, I'm leaving. I will no longer cause this village trouble. I will no longer cause you trouble. It's my time.

JATHIA

No. I want to go with you.

YOUNG WOMAN

You can't go where I'm going.
(smiles weakly)
I told you that already, silly boy.

JATHIA

I promise you I will follow you to the ends of the Earth, to the stars
and back. Or even the spaces in-between. I promise you that.

Crowd starts to close in on the young woman as she takes on a glowing appearance. Jathia
breaks free of the old man and rushes forward only to find nothing but empty space where she
stood. He slumps to his knees.

JATHIA

(whispers)
I swear I will. Even if I must give up my soul in exchange to
follow you. I will gladly wager it.

CUT TO

INT. INSIDE THE HOUSE

just as Jathia steps into the darkness and the door shuts behind him.

JATHIA

(voice over)
I promised I would come Mahan.

PANS to see the man closing the front door shaking his head.

MAN

Some progress even when they are not ready. Those that do risk all
on something they can't understand.

CUT TO

EXT. OUT IN THE FIELD

where the old man rocks on his feet sing softly to himself. He looks up and touches his cheek as
if something brushed up against it.

LITTLE GIRL

Grandpa?

OLD MAN

He is now beyond my vision. He has gone to chase after her.

LITTLE GIRL

Will you chase after him?

OLD MAN

No, I wish to return home. My days here are nearly spent, and I wish to sleep forever.

LITTLE GIRL

Will I?

OLD MAN

You may try it if you are quiet and open yourself up to places beyond. Places most have deafen themselves to. Places where only the creator has seen into before man stumbled upon them.

(looks up at the little girl in front of him)

But the real question is do you want to go?

LITTLE GIRL

(looks up into the air as the camera PANS upwards)

There are still many things here I will wish to know before I move on.