

Three Black Cats

Written in the form of Elijah Wilmington's Journal Entries (by Tara Bansal)

Day 1: July 12th, 2002

Case: A mere observation

Journal,

It has been quite some time since I last wrote to you. My spark for crime solving has withered and my drive to discover is long gone, just as my old detective career. But today, something rather far from the ordinary, something highly uncanny has occurred, one that sends shivers down my spine. It seems only fitting that I write here to you today. I'll start off by describing my day, which was a rather eerie one.

After I had awoken at 4:00 AM like always, I had just finished my usual cup of tea, prepared by the one and only the Mrs. Wilmington, when she thought it good of me to take a walk around the block. I agreed that it would help an old man like myself stretch his legs for once, and that taking a walk around the neighborhood would help subside the leg pain I had been experiencing frequently for the past few days.

I had always been more of an inside person, but the outside world held mysteries, and I had a knack for solving them. The sky was dark, ominous, with a tiny sliver of the moon illuminating dim streaks of light across the ground.

As I walked out the door with my stick in hand, I was halfway through the neighborhood when rather abruptly, a dark black blur sprinted through the grass, seen through the corner of my eyes. I whipped around, and as my eyes focused, I was pleased to see it was just a small black cat, who now sat stiffly on the ground. But as I looked further into its wide, yellow eyes which sweetly twinkled, there was something highly peculiar about it, something I still can't quite explain. It peered back intently and its figure seemed to almost.. glitch, subtly breaking and reforming, its fur thrashing at the air, slowly stirring. It's quite hard to explain, but I hope my explanation does some good.

Something about that very cat made my blood run cold, made me feel like something bad was going to happen. And so I slowly continued my stroll, and as I turned back around to get a final look at the cat, it had vanished completely, in a matter of seconds. I thought nothing of it, but decided it was best if I returned home.

I continued on with my walk, which passed in a haze, and when I returned home, at 5:07 am(?), Mrs. Wilmington greeted me, asking me if my legs were feeling better or if any of my pain had receded. Pain? What Pain? It took me a few moments to remember that I even had trouble with my legs. After my walk, I hadn't even noticed that my leg

pain had completely perished, but how? A simple walk could do good, but not *that* much good. This was another mystery yet to be solved..

At exactly 6:19 pm, I received a call from the Raintree County Police Department. Something was up. This was when I retrieved you, journal, from the depths of my office, and began to write my conversation with the police, which was the following.

Raintree Police Department: Hello, is this Elijah Wilmington?

Me: Yes, indeed it is. What may I do for you today, er-

Raintree Police Department: Officer Rubes.

Me: Alright then, anything I can do for you, Officer Rubes?

Officer Rubes: Simply, Elijah, we need you back on the team.

Me:May I ask the reason?

Officer Rubes: Lance Miller was found dead 8 hours ago. A quick autopsy was performed, and within 4 hours we concluded that Lance Miller was drugged. I believe he resided in your neighborhood. We need your help, Elijah. If anyone can find out who murdered him, it's you.

Me: I don't know, Officer. Don't get me wrong; I love solving mysteries, but my skill has long expired. I don't know if I'm up for it yet..

Officer Rubes: That's okay, Elijah. Just know that we could really use your help. Please call this number back if you change your mind. Have a nice day.

When I went to sleep that night, I thought long and hard about whether to help Officer Rubes or not, but wasn't able to come up with a definite answer. I fell asleep thinking about the black cat I saw earlier.

Day 2: July 13th, 2002

Case: Murderer following me?

Hello Journal,

Alas, I have decided to take on the case. Frankly, I needed a distraction from sitting around with nothing to do and having to deal with my wife's constant attempts to get me to eat and drink more, constantly worrying about my health. Though I do agree, my health has recently been dwindling.

Like always, I woke up at 4:00 am and instantly called Officer Rubes to accept his offer. After having my morning tea, I once again spotted the strange little cat, with its same

questioning stare, wandering around the corner of Hollis Boulevard and Charlington Station, though I didn't pay it as much attention as before. I would be visiting the house of Lance Miller that day, for my first "interrogation". I looked around the house, but couldn't find much information. Lance Miller was just a few houses down from mine, but he was an odd little man. Never talked much, and I would seldom see him, except for his pale face peeking out from behind the dusty drapes. I decided to visit Anika Pavlov, his next door neighbour, and recorded the conversation we held below.

Me: "Good morning, Ms. Pavlov."

Anika Pavlov: "Elijah? Oh, hello there! To what do I owe the pleasure of?" Upon glancing at my somber expression, she brought a hand to her heart and her eyebrows arched. "Oh no, has something happened?" Carefully, I nodded. "Let us talk inside."

I do not remember the exact questions I asked her, but it does not matter. She was of no use, and I knew for a fact she was innocent. During the murder of Lance she had been visiting her friend in Gollistown.

Later that night, after planning my inquisitions for the day after, I got another call from Officer Rubes. Right away, he reported that there had been another murder. Anika Pavlov.

She had been found stabbed to death on her living room carpet, and the perpetrator had escaped through the front window.

I was shocked. Why, I had just been visiting her that day. The only plausible explanation was that the perpetrator had been following me. I would have to track my steps the next day and keep careful watch of the shadows behind me. I was almost certain that tomorrow would be eventful.

Day 3: July 14th, 2002

Case: Finding the murderer....Black cat connection?

Another dreadful morning of tea, which has started to turn bitter, and that horrible black cat. Today, I visited Miki Gambole, the front neighbor of Ms. Pavlov. She must have seen something.

"Hello Ms. Gambole."

"Hello, Elijah. How may I help you?"

"Have you seen any suspicious activity in Ms. Pavlov's front yard?"

And so it went. As she talked, I glanced out the window, suddenly meeting the eyes of Miina Kim, my neighbor, who was waiting by the front steps of Miki's house. I nearly dropped the glass of water I held in my hand with surprise. What better suspect than a neighbor? It would be an easy kill, and hardly anyone would suspect a friendly neighbor walking by a victim's house.

And so I have narrowed my list down to 2 people living in the neighborhood. Miina Kim, the curious onlooker, and Kaela Patel, who wore a heavy sweater in the terrible summer heat today...possibly to cover cuts?

Day 4: July 15th, 2002

Case: No clue

I skipped tea today in my rush to Ms. Gambole's house. She had been beaten to death just the night before. No black cat today.

Slowly, I creaked open her front door, eyeing the bloodstained kitchen table as I took a step forward, wincing at the pain that shot through my leg. Strange, I hadn't felt it for the past 3 days. Slowly, I walked forward, examining the table as I spotted a strand of short white hair. Bingo. I leaned down to grab it, but recoiled as a sharp, stinging pain shot through my right arm. Carefully, I pulled up my sleeve to reveal a long, slender scar running from my hand to my elbow and still raw from the making. Now, when did I get that?

Suddenly, my eyes widened as a possibility struck me. I began to piece together the recent events of the past few days. Running home, my left arm clutched by my right, I headed straight to the medicine cabinet. My hands shook as I ripped open the cabinets, searching for...found it. A receipt for Westman's pharmacy. Now, where was the medication for my knee pain? Carefully, I traced my finger down the list until I stopped at...Liragus Acid. No. It couldn't be. I ran to the computer.

Day 5: July 16th, 2002

It is rare for one to foresee turning one's wife into the police station. But alas, this was the case for me.

Lucy Wilmington had given her husband Liragus Acid in his tea every morning for 3 days. Why? Nobody knows but her, and she will not talk to me from the prison cell she sits in now. But I do know that Liragus Acid is a depressant of both the nervous system and the brain. It causes hallucinations...the glitching cat. It numbs pain...the disappearance of knee pain. It is untraceable, and its effects wear off after just one day. The person to whom the drug was given would only remember foggy traces of what had happened in those 24 hours.

She had drugged me...but I had done the killing.

My hands are the ones that tipped drugs into Mr. Cooper's drink, stabbed Ms. Pavlov, and beat Ms. Gambole.

My hands are stained with blood that no amount of washing will ever remove.

They shook as I placed them onto the table, looking across the street to where a black cat sat, perfectly still, on the sidewalk right in front of my house.