

Letter 17

3-3-26

Chaos

An invisible layer of particles covers the surfaces of the cellblock. These particles are the dust of chaos. When they are allowed to rest, the block remains calm. Unfortunately, this body at rest doesn't always stay at rest.

Sometimes there are just too many people within the confines of the space. Once we pass that tipping point, there is just too much happening for the dust to completely settle. There is always a swirl of chaos in the air.

Other times, it's not the overall number that disrupts things. It's a specific agitator that stirs things up. We currently have two of these.

One of them is an old guy that... walks? No. "walks" isn't the right word. If you ask him, he might say he paces. A more accurate description would be that he shambles. Like a chaos zombie, he shambles through the day room. He's a nice enough guy and doesn't start any trouble. Despite this, his steps, shuffling across the floor, stir up eddies of unease that you can feel across the room.

Well, for him in particular, there might be another factor at play: his lack of pockets. None of our orange pants have pockets, and he clearly is missing them. In his head, he may see himself strolling through life with his hands in his pockets, whistling with the birds. Unfortunately, what we see is an old man with both hands down the front of his pants, grumbling as he lurches across the floor.

The second agent of chaos reminds me of an excited dog. Sometimes he is deliberately jumping up for your attention. Other times he is just happily wagging his tail and knocking everything off of the coffee table.

In his human form, here in the cellblock, he alternates between subtly instigating drama and unintentionally disrupting any quiet thought you are trying to have. Intentional or not, the dust never gets the chance to settle in his presence.

If you are trying to have a conversation that does not involve him, his nose suddenly appears anyway. Perhaps he thinks this is only fair, because he strives to have the entire cellblock as the audience for any conversation he is involved in. Whether he is on the phone or in person, in his cell or the day room, you have little choice but to hear his conversations, usually about his abundance of cleverness or how he is the county's best master criminal.

On the bright side, this is the extent of our chaos. Being "mildly annoyed" is probably the best version of jail possible.

Letter 18

3-5-26

I Wish

“Yes, it’s real,” he answered with the annoyance evident in his voice. He was tired of answering the same questions every time. Maybe it was because he is only half Irish that it takes extra work to make people realize that he is indeed a leprechaun.

The inmate across from him still didn’t look convinced. “So, you can grant me any wish?” the inmate asked skeptically.

“Yes, but there is always a price,” Reli stated again, for what must have been the tenth time. He hated that part of his magic. If he was full-blooded, there wouldn’t be a price put on every wish. He would just need to be caught and easily grant the wish. Being born a mudblood half-breed had filled his life with challenges, not the least of which was the price that he had to put on wishes.

Reli put a stubby finger in his mouth and rubbed his gums while the inmate weighed his options. He needed this guy to make a wish so he could grow in a new tooth. He was immortal and his body always healed itself, but it was never as fast as he wanted. Using his magic always sped up the process, though. Not being able to grant his own wishes was a cruel twist of fate.

“Okay, I’ll do it. I will make the wish.”

“Very well, raise your right hand and repeat after me. I (state your name)...” This part wasn’t required for the magic to work, but Reli was terrible with names. He had been talking to this guy for too long to ask what his name was; this seemed like the easiest way to get the guy to repeat it.

“I, David Mullens...”

“I hereby wish for...” Reli made a gesture that indicated Mullens should fill in the blank.

“...hereby wish to get out of jail.”

Of course you do, they always do, thought Reli. Since he started doing this in jail, it’s what they all wished for.

Even though he was only half Irish, he was still pretty clever for this idea. The first condition of granting a wish was that he had to be captured. He had spent years waiting in the woods for idiots to find him. Then, whenever they managed to, their wishes were always harder to grant. After he got himself arrested and locked up here in Rainbow County Jail, he was able to grant any wish that was asked of him; this loophole kept him perpetually captured. The best part was that nobody was wishing for love, money, or resurrected loved ones. It was always the same wish, the same price.

“I, Reli O’Shitagan, hereby grant your wish that, for each enchanted banana you eat, your sentence will be reduced by one day.”

As soon as he spoke the words, he could feel his tooth tear through his gum, a sliver of white sprouting like a crop on a bloody row in the garden of his mouth. The rest of the row was barren. He harvested each tooth as soon as it finished growing.

He could feel the familiar rumble in his stomach as the magic prepared itself. He had never questioned how it worked, and he wasn’t about to now. He led Mullens into his cell and laid a towel out on the bunk.

“How many?” he asked Mullens.

“I have thirty-six days left.”

“Are you going to eat thirty-six bananas in one sitting?” Reli questioned doubtfully.

“I need to get out of here. I will do anything.”

Reli wondered how true that was. He thought to himself, “well, we are about to find out.”

With a flourish of his hand, the leprechaun made three dozen bananas appear out of thin air, covering the towel. He always wondered why they were never peeled. At least the fates could have done him that one favor.

He felt his tooth push a little further through his gum. Why did that damn troll only accept teeth as payment? It didn’t matter, he told himself. He’d pull this tooth soon enough; that crystal would be his.

He handed Mullens a fruit and told him to peel it. While Mullens worked, Reli O’Shitagan pulled off the bottom half of his jailhouse orange uniform. He spread his legs and dropped to a shallow squat. He held out his hand as a wide-eyed Mullens handed him the freshly peeled fruit.

Reli held the banana below himself, squatting over it, making eye contact with Mullens. The eye contact wasn’t required, but Reli enjoyed the look in their eyes as the enchantment process happened.

With a low rumble that started deep within the half-blood leper-con a loud fart was forced out and covered the banana. Reli gave a questioning look to Mullens as he handed him the object of their attention.

“One,” said Reli.

As Mullens raised it to his lips, he wondered to himself why the enchantment had to smell so much like shit.

If you are looking for a deeper metaphor here, don't.

Mike posed this question to Leo "If a leprechaun could somehow get you one day earlier for banana you ate, but they have also farted on, are you eating seven?"

That question inspired this masterpiece.