

Chess, CK Obsession & Eroto-mania

Of course, 'love' is the answer to all the questions these uniformed imbeciles are asking me.

Why were you carrying a hammer?

Why were you on that particular road, her road?

What is your understanding of why she took out a Restraining Order against you in the first place?

Do you see how patronising that is? Not 'the reason', but 'your understanding'. Police officers, judges, psychiatrists, do they go on some specialist smugness development course? Or are they just born like that?

But of course I won't tell them my answer. I'll tell them the answers they want. These people would never understand my understanding. I'll just humour them. I'm not crazy. Despite what they might want you to believe, with their 'choice' of anti-psychotic medications, their Mental Health Act assessments and their Community Psychiatric Nurses. It's quite the scam they've got going on. 'Observing' you on the ward and 'supervising' you in the community. And *they* have the temerity to talk to *me* about stalking!

And if you stand up to them, tell them to stop prying into your business, guess what? Suddenly *you* are paranoid. *You* are becoming

agitated and verbally aggressive. Off goes that alarm, summoning the burly thugs dressed like psychiatric nurses. Out comes that needle. Another update for the old Risk Assessment document. Their precious secret scripture, that influences your freedom, your future. And now your discharge gets delayed yet again, and they've created more business for themselves. It's actually quite clever when you think about it. Bravo to them.

You see, basically, it's all just a game of chess. But nobody has ever bothered explaining the rules. You have to figure them out yourself, along the way. Which moves work, and which don't. Which choices are really choices, and which masquerade as them. How to respond to their trick questions. Why do I think I am ready for discharge? Do I have any thoughts or intentions of trying to contact her again? Will I take my medication after I've left hospital? Am I still hearing voices? It's easy once you figure out the moves. Blah, blah, blah, remorse, regret, thank you all for your support and for helping me recover. Blah, blah, blah, for giving me the opportunity to reintegrate into society. Checkmate.

Speaking of creating more business for themselves, this morning I had a flashback of that time I told my mum how I thought the tooth fairy must be a scam. I think I was six at the time. Actually, it must have been after the divorce, because we were taking the bus. So, maybe seven. If a kid finds money under their pillow, what'll they spend it on? She didn't say sweets. She didn't say anything. She sat there, scowling. For as long as I can remember, a scowl and excessive make-up have been permanent features of

her face, as much as that mole under her lip. I asked again. She told me to shut up and eat my crisps. I asked again. She slapped me. I didn't ask again. She was hardly the consummate conversationalist, old mother dear. You see my point, though, right? More sweets, equals more rotten teeth. Bravo to the tooth fairy. Quite the scam.

I suppose she was a good teacher, old mother dear. She taught me how to handle people, how to keep them in line. Get them first, before they got you. Much more useful in the real world, than one of these softie mothers that mollycoddle you, with hugs and affection and fairy tales. And she made her own choices. Eventually. Taking the bus, stacking shelves, and having to live in a cramped flat. Rather than relative luxury and having to live with that man.

She was alright, Mum. I almost feel bad about what happened.

Anyway. I'm digressing, aren't I? What I'm trying to say, is that I'm not *actually* crazy. Crazy in love, maybe. Yes, I sound like a sop, but that's the kind of nicety I would convey to her. My beloved. When I finally get the chance. So many hurdles. So many interfering professionals to appease.

Love is also a game of chess. A more delicate one, maybe. But you also have to figure out the rules yourself, along the way. Which moves work, and which don't. More choices. When to approach, and when to stay hidden. What she is saying with her words and her Restraining Order. Versus, what she is *really* saying with her eyes. How she can so elegantly throw you a

clandestine look of love, disguised within a look of neutrality. Or even fear. Sometimes, it's so subtle, it's not even visible. It's more a message. Transmitted by her, my beloved, for my brainwaves only. How can I deny a love like that?

When they ask me if I have any thoughts or intentions of trying to contact her again, can you see what the real answer is? What it always will be?

Recently, though, it feels like we're heading towards stalemate. But I think I've figured it out. I just need to remove her most powerful piece from the board. That, Officer, is why I was carrying a hammer.

But what these people, these interfering professionals, Police Officers with their questions about my hammer, Dr Swami; that obese foreign psychiatrist, my eternally-sucking-a-lemon-faced Probation Officer, what they will never understand is that this is part of our courting ritual. *Our* game of chess. She is testing me. Making me *prove* I love her enough. To go the extra mile. The average man would have given up by now.

But I'm special. I have the ability to see hidden messages. And they are everywhere. On people's faces, even *in* people's faces, in the colour patterns of passing cars, even buried in TV news reports. If you look hard enough. They don't understand it, so they call me crazy. Yeah? Well, when Aristotle proclaimed that the earth is round in 300BC, they called *him* crazy.

Sifting through her rubbish for receipts. Her favourite perfume is CK Obsession. A bit too musky for me at first, but after several weeks on my pillow, I've grown to love it. Like she will with me. Checking out what dishes she likes to orders, so I know what to cook for her, when I finally get a chance. Admittedly, this got trickier after she changed pubs for her Friday lunch outing with her colleagues. I *knew* she spotted me from the other side of Harvester! I would, I will, go above and beyond. Not like that prick, her so-called husband. He's just an errant nail. A problem I could fix in a few seconds with my hammer. That's my next move. Remove her most powerful piece from the board.

And no, it's not about sex! Control your filthy mind. Of course, I can't control my dreams. Last night, her purple silk nightie slipping off her porcelain shoulders. The one that prick bought for her from Anne Summers for Valentine's Day two years ago. £29.99.

'Eroto-mania'.

That is what the obese foreign Dr Swami calls it. I'm not too fond of the doctor's definition, but I quite like the sound of the phrase. It poetically describes the passion I feel for my beloved. Though Dr Swami would probably only focus on my so-called anger. And force me to talk about it, again. Of course, she would. Creating more business for herself. Quite the scam. But what is anger if not the cousin of passion?

“A delusional belief that a person is in love with the affected individual.”

Do you see how clunky, how clinical, the doctor’s definition is? Dr Swami’s husband is also foreign but looks about ten years younger and ten kilos lighter than her. She lives in Hampstead and on Sunday mornings goes to a café in the park with her kids, reads her Guardian (of course) and orders a skinny cappuccino with sugar-free hazelnut syrup. Know thy enemy. *She* must harbour a delusional belief that a person is in love with *her*, as opposed to that whopping salary a consultant doctor gets. *She* is the affected individual. Let’s just say the skinny and sugar-free is too little too late.

Last year, on the ward, Dr Swami told me that I had a choice. Oh yeah? Then, why did she telling me, whilst standing between two burly thugs dressed like psychiatric nurses? Does that sound like a choice to you?

Have you ever been to a psychiatric ward? Have you ever had the pleasure of a Mental Health Act assessment? *‘My home away from home’*. That’s what that chirpy Occupational Therapist used to say. Constantly smiling, even when surrounded by those shuffling zombies. She even made that poor schizophrenic schmuck, Mikey, embroider it onto a rag, and then frame it and hang it above the entrance to Jupiter Ward. We all applauded him at the Patients’ Daily Planning Meeting the next morning. All inane smiles and enthusiastic claps from the staff, and drooling indifference from

the patients. I clapped as well. Obviously. Playing their game. Acquiescing, for now.

I looked out for Mikey on the ward. Crashing him the odd fag, making him cups of tea. Even though I knew I would never get a return on my investment. *Real* empathy. In private, away from the glamour of the Patients' Daily Planning Meeting. Not pumping him full of chemicals, turning him into a shuffling zombie. Poor schmuck. Must be hard to be *actually* crazy. Thinking he is the illegitimate son of Jesus. How is he supposed to figure out the rules as he goes along?

Jupiter Ward was more like a prison away from prison. Trust me. I would know. If I ever end up back there, perhaps I can get that chirpy Occupational Therapist to support me in embroidering *that* onto a rag.

I'm digressing again, aren't I? As I said, Dr Swami offered me a choice. Either anti-psychotic tablets, or depot injections. Does that sound like a choice to you? She even tried to appease me with options for the brand of poison; Olanzapine, Risperidone or Quetiapine. That's like telling me I could choose between gonorrhoea, syphilis or chlamydia. Handing me a Patient Information Leaflet like a menu, and hanging around with a polite waiter-like bow, waiting for my order.

But I knew that there was also one other option. I could force that needle out of the hands of her minions and shove it into the doctor's obese

foreign face. But there's no point wasting another few years at Her Majesty's pleasure. Not for that, anyway.

I figured out the right move. The right choice. Take the oral medication while you're on the ward, and wait for discharge. And just pray that you get released before they've turned you into a shuffling zombie. Once you're out, the Community Psychiatric Nurse will know if you don't turn up for your monthly depot injection. But nobody knows if you're taking tablets at home. Prying into your business, 'supervising' you in the community. They're not as slick as they think. Checkmate.

And now here I am. Caught carrying a hammer. On my way to remove her most powerful piece from the board. On that particular road, her road. I'll need to be more careful next time. These uniformed imbeciles are asking me these questions. It's my move, and I need to be careful now. To give them the answers they want. To humour them.

I'll have to sacrifice some time now. Hopefully months at Dr Swami's pleasure, rather than years at Her Majesty's. It's not ideal, but it's okay. Patience is part of this courting process. What they don't understand, what maybe you don't understand, is that time is just another sacrifice I'm willing to make for her. For us.

Why? you may ask. And you should ask. It's an important question.

Once again, 'love' is the answer.