

Episode 1 - The Shreak for Aldos

20.15 hrs, La Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. Monsieur Aldos Pilfenno gazed at the moonlit sky which hovered amorously over the Gothic construction. Its unravelling marble artwork beamed the essence of some of France's most admired architectural works. Grotesque as it could have been, La Bibliotheque shouldered the responsibility of guarding a nation's history, it's present and possibly the future. Works dating back to the Medieval Ages and comprising those of great minds like Copernicus, Gallileo, Pluto, Newton, Einstein, Leonardo Da Vinci, Shakespeare to the New Age thinkers sniggered behind closed doors expanding into vast spaces of exquisite French-Italian flooring. Those furnished wooden archives had something in store for everyone who entered and always more for those who left.

Aldos was on guard as usual and he knew what the dark respected. It was time to close the freckled iron gates that stood firmly between him and the building's façade. The concierge would handle this alone and was now accustomed to brace the mutinous winds which teasingly unfurled the tips of his moustache. Their chill mingled with the sweat of a hard day's work soothing each of his senses. However the last two months had served night temperatures way below normal and the monsieur would quickly slip his tanned skin under the weight of his overcoat . A pair of leather gloves did more good at times when he remembered packing them up in his rucksack. Well this was one of those days when he did and his hands now covered, Aldos strode towards the 'Electronic Gate Locking Center' which was about a mile away. He never could interpret the idea of making things worse for a caretaker, but the planners had security reasons in mind he believed made more sense than anything else. "But still why" Aldos murmured something to himself as his thoughts trailed off.

The single streak of light from some construction which appeared more like a lighthouse, penetrated his now fading eyes and all that Aldos could perceive were thick encircling spots of bright yellow undulating in pitch black. A peck of French rum aspirited with some soda only made it when driving home, so Aldos was but certain that he was far away from that moment now. The concierge took another stride towards the tower stepping occassionally over rustling leaves that failed to catch his attention. Another few minutes that Aldos ambled seemed to almost cause a limp when he finally reached the 'Advanced Biometric Recognition System'. As mundane as it seemed, Aldos inserted a card he carried in his breastpocket and quickly went through a biometric identification check that permitted the system to prompt for a final password. He then punched in 'D A L O S', an anagram he rather preferred over the others he derived out of his first name.

Next Aldos stooped low, then held an eye on a granular slit into which he stared fixedly for a moment, a quick splash of laser light filtered through his retina and bounced back until finally getting captured behind a centimeter thick coat of stained glass. A door opened inviting Aldos into some kind of a futuristic enclosure with translucent glass

covering underneath his feet and strings of copper coated wires swaying above. Moments later as a high intensity thud caught his ears, Aldos flinched a bit sending an unsolicited humanoid shriek. However he quickly recovered when four metal levers sent into motion sounds of humongous motors churning out an arrangement of ever expanding control terminals. The labyrinthine crisscrossing of highly charged conduits seemed as fascinating to Aldos now as he had seen them swirling for the first time. "Ah, there you are my baby!" said Aldos as he spotted another switch conjuring before his eyes. The concierge made his way towards the terminals as he saw switches corresponding to each of the floors of La Bibliotheque. "One, two...Erm..Thirteen in all" said Aldos as their count was now pictured to perfection in his memory saving him some time to start flipping them in his direction.

One by one he pulled the levers and was over with the thirteenth in no time. "Finally, time for you dragonheads", Aldos said as he could now visualize the iron gates, which sported a vicious looking Draculean Head split in two, slowly closing and he jumping into his Buick to catch that soda aspirited rum He got hold of the final lever for the day which was engineered to have a rotating effect to close the gates. Aldos printed his fingers on the dial and started maneuvering it to see the iron gates on his LCD screen mimicking the same. 5...10...25...45.....7085 degrees of rotation which he read at the bottom of his screen when at 85 he suddenly heard a panicking shrill of such high intensity that he flinched involuntarily, turning his palm counter clockwise to abstain the dragon heads from meeting. The next thing Aldos could think was to escape the place at once and flee hurriedly homewords. Surely his mind had made this up or could that have been for real ???

Episode 2 - Acheron's Call

Aldos traced back his steps for the third time when that raucous cry almost nailed him against the back wall. He nearly froze to death on the fourth as slow moving vibrations traversed through widely interlocked walls until finally resonating under his spine. But the concierge recovered from a moment's reverie and before his mind could conjure up the next, Aldos knew that he had to get there now. La Bibliotheque Nationale wasmaking a call. Completely oblivious of the fact that the 'Electronic Gate Locking Center' now looked intruded and he the interloper, Aldos cared little for the flash of red that beamed from the top, hitting the back of his head. He never turned around to have a look at what was left behind. The mile of road that seemed so exasperating when he strolled towards the control room now simply vanished under the length of his steps. The chill that drew his skin cold was insidiously rooting inside him. His epinephrin seemed as strong as the aspirited rum he had thought of. Thoughts went wild for he was now to face the unexpected. Then finally appeared the iron gates and Aldos's lean body fitted to perfection into 5 degress of open space left between the dragonheads allowing him to find himself within a range of thirty feet from the façade.

What Aldos never noticed was that the shrills had now stopped but those that reverberated inside his skull carried him another twenty feet until some force brought the concierge to a screeching halt. He swayed for a moment and then observed a moment of inactivity that drew back his pulse rate a bit. Sensing some warm blood flowing back to his brain Aldos stood as calm as he could and inhaled a chunk of fresh air until his breathing resumed normally. His thick eyelashes met intently trying to obliterate any thought that seemed to gush through. Minutes after when everything appeared to fall back in place, Aldos became cognizant of the fact that the shrills were gone. A fleeting relief that he experienced triggered his analytical half to answer all that behavior over the last 25 minutes. Why was he heading towards the Bibliotheque ?... Were those sounds really coming from where he understood them to ?.. What was he supposed to do next ?.... Where would his mind take him now ?

A sudden flow of self drive confidence and aplomb pinched Aldos to act rather than to listen anymore. Surely those shrieks had vanished. It was time that Aldos thought he behaved like the responsible caretaker he had always been. As something like an unfinished job on his hands, the concierge began to stroll across the vast acres of well nurtured grass underneath his leather boots. A step or two to the left, then straight ahead and closer to the structure made Aldos feel very much in his senses. He craned his neck and wheeled from side to side over the breadth of La Bibliotheque to check and counter examine every inch of the gigantic structure. Well everything seemed patched to perfection until”Oh Jesus !No...No... certainly not, that just can't be... That thing's impossible ! “ Was he fading back into momentary reveries he had experienced lately ? But how could he ? He simply couldn't afford that now. Aldos scrubbed his eyes in a moment of sheer panic and then began to refocus on a glimmer of ambered light that originated somewhere from the far left of the building. It made clear to Aldos that he had somehow overlooked the side at the leftmost end resembling a semicircular arc curving a few degrees backwards from its epicenter. The room which he calculated was 7 flights above ground level exhaled an eerie look and made a small patch of yellowish brown grass visible from the far end. However this time the concierge failed to flinch and only attributed all that he saw to some kind of a technical failure back at the control room. Maybe the line that carried a connection to one of the rooms on the seventh floor had snapped. Perhaps an excessive voltage had done the trick.. Perhaps something else had..... he shrugged momentarily for Aldos knew that what he interpreted now certainly made a lot of sense.

His mind reinstated every act he performed at the control center. The retina scan followed by his entry into the control room, the thirteen switches, then the dial which almost had closed the dragon heads and finally his helpless run back to the Bibliotheque. However, amidst the thoughts that pleasingly reverberated, Aldos made a shocking discovery. He had never been so out of his mind. He couldn't explain it but he had faltered. The concierge had moved straight to closing the iron gates missing the lever that controlled the gigantic metal door of La Bibliotheque. A sickening feeling of self curse sniggered under the walls of his guts. Aldos was about to retch when he saw it straight in front of him. The silver stained metal door open to invite the most avid of readers at fifteen past nine. Aldos gaped. His pupils altercation to form images of the amber lit room and the

metal door. Finally as he made a beeline towards the entrance, Aldos popped out a torch that he always carried as a measure of safety and thought of the last time when he had to fix some light out. A year and a half was what he guessed as the concierge drafted a rough emergency plan in his mind. Climb up the seven flights, move approximately towards the 16th room on the right end of the central elevator, flash a card through some security check on the door or else simply turn a knob if the power had to be partially cut out, then straight towards the switch board and finally out of the room seeing the door close behind him. The partial power loss could then be completely restored next morning if it was the case.

Aldos entered the mammoth hallway which resembled more like an underground tunnel if anything else, stark black and grisly in all its dimensions. The chill that it retained could easily trick anyone in there to find some Artic ice. The glow in Aldos's right fist travelled lengths of extensive marbled flooring and then took a parabolic shape to unravel elephantine chandeliers that hung like stalactites from the ceiling above. As the conceirge took cautious strides, examining pieces of what seemed like a gigantic maze, serpentine structures of adjacently rising stairways formulated before his eyes one step at a time. One lead directly to the main library terminating on the 2nd floor while the second encapsulated the entire height of the building. His strides drifted to the left and covered half the circumference of a centered fountain before landing in front of the tarnished balustrade. Ten minutes later and now literally panting, Aldos stood on the carpet landing and faced a sign which displayed 7 in the beam of his torch. This had to be somewhere between ten to fifteen feet from where the concierge stood as the direction of his high intensity beam moved slightly to the left. There in the dark stood elevator doors interjecting a passage that extended as equally to the left as to the right.

Taking a hint from what Aldos had pictured while standing outside on the lawn, he quickly took a few steps forward until finally turning left. Stoned walls bounding another passage of nothingness and eclipsing glass doors that fitted perfectly in metal frames rose on either sides. Before that thought occurred, Aldos was convinced why the ambered room could be easily spotted. A glow of faint yellow interspersed with red, spilling over the edges of glass and spreading into the the wall like a halo beamed over the corner of his eyes. At a distance of twenty feet to his right, the amber room appeared like the light at the end of a long tunnel. As Aldos had prematurely feared, a partial power cut had indeed taken place. The glass door to room no.707 needed nothing but the twist of a golden knob to reveal everything it held inside. Aldos entered and the door swayed back to fit in its metal frame. Even though the concierge had never been in this room before, his experience told him that the switchboard would be anywhere to the wall on his right. It took him just over a minute to locate the board which carried a slotted arrangement of ten identical switches. He quickly switched off each one of them and finally traced his steps back to the glass door. Aldos turned the knob now in the reverse direction and was about to close the door on his back when he heard a voice ...a cryand then convulsive sobs of a child weeping....

The blood in his veins froze when he turned to see the silhoutte of a young child shivering against the front wall and sitting cross-legged amidst piles of books and

scattered parchments. The image that had conjured up drew Aldos inwards as the white glow on the boy's face began spreading towards his neck, then over his arms and finally all over his bare body. Every pixel of his skin appeared to be freezing against the cold that flew in from the window just above his deserted skull. The glass that fitted in the pane made a crackling sound with every gush of the swooping wind, until it finally exploded and fell scattered into pieces all over the pale white body. His frost-bitten and now glass pricked lips supported the weight of a book as wide as the breadth between his shoulders. But then unexpectedly Aldos saw the body rise up, the tears had vanished as the child peered fixedly through the glass that stuck between his eyelids. His lips twitched momentarily and then stretched into an affrighted smile. The monsieur stood transfixed for all this time as if something gruesome was reeling right before his eyes.

The body moved, then stooped to build a pile of books against the wall which held the shattered glass. He stepped over the pile with his back now facing Aldos and eyes reaching outside. He stood motionless for a second, raised his arms sideways to form a cross and then there was the discharge. Horrific at it seemed, the concierge stepped forward to discover squirts of solid white trinklets resembling miniature hailstones which fell at fluctuating angles out over the lawn. What occurred next caused Aldos to make a run towards the child. Arms raised and palms glued as if praying heavenly, the child leapt over and his body disappeared in the darkness. Aldos ran as hard as he could, but his steps never took him further. He wanted to see outside the window, but whatever he did seemed rather futile.

The body lay there against the grass and