

Bhéwonom

Matter 36

Summary

White Dead Rooks

Account by:	Darragh Skerrett, 57. Farmer.
Source:	Transcript of radio interview.
Location:	Galway, Eire.
Event:	9 May 2024.
Report:	11 May 2024.

Report

Interviewer: Unknown presenter (UP).

Interviewee: Darragh Skerrett (DS).

UP: That was, of course, *Under Pressure* by Queen. So, next up we have an intriguing story from Letterdeen, not so far from Clifden. Apparently, a bunch of sixty or seventy white rooks were found dead in a field, arranged in straight lines. We've got the man who found them on the line right now, so welcome to the show, Darragh Skerrett.

- DS: How would you be yourself then?
- UP: Er, I'm doing well thanks, how about you?
- DS: Well I found these white rooks.
- UP: So, cause for alarm then?
- DS: No, rooks don't caw! Rooks sound like this!
(sound of loud, frighteningly-realistic rook call)
- UP: Oh, right, I see what you did there.
- DS: Where? Am I on camera?
- UP: No, no, this is radio. So tell us how you found these rooks. You're a farmer, right?
- DS: Yes, yes I am. I found them when I was out farming.
- UP: And they were white? Not black, like usual rooks.
- DS: Yes, that's correct, but I knew they were rooks.
- UP: How could you tell?
- DS: Well they looked like rooks, except for that they were being white.
- UP: Are there a lot of white rooks out there in Letterdeen?
- DS: Not now.
- UP: Were there before?
- DS: Before when?
- UP: Before you found the dead ones.
- DS: How far before? I can only speak for the past fifty-seven years.
- UP: Well, in the past fifty-seven years, then.
- DS: No, no, there haven't been any white rooks

Bhéwonom

here in the past fifty-seven years. Did you know there's such a thing as a black swan? They're New Zealand natives. I spoke to one once.

UP: You ... spoke to a black swan?

DS: No, swans can't understand human speech! They're not like dogs or parakeets or those machines that answer when you phone your bank, curse their mothers and fathers if they had them. I spoke to a New Zealand native. He needed better boots.

UP: Were you able to help him?

DS: No, he wasn't yet knowing he needed better boots. He was on his way to the standing stone, over by the salt marsh. His boots were no more use than hamsters. Well, maybe hamsters make better pets, I'll concede that.

UP: Right ... so, coming back to these rooks: would you say they were white naturally or dyed?

DS: Both. I'd say they were white naturally and I'd say they died. There were flies feasting on most of them. I wasn't going to eat those.

UP: Those ... rooks?

DS: Well clearly not the flies, haha, who would want to eat flies? Rooks, now rooks, the ones the flies haven't got to yet, those make good pie filler, if you can find them. There aren't so many around nowadays.

- UP: It's probably to do with climate change.
- DS: No, it's because I have a better shotgun that I had before.
- UP: Er, you didn't shoot these white rooks, did you?
- DS: No need, they were already dead. What you do, you see, is you skin them, soak the breasts in milk overnight – for two nights, mind, if it's an adult rook, not like with the little ones – then you can bake them. It's my great-grandmother's recipe from when she was English, God rest her soul.
- UP: OK, well, er, thank you for the tip. Do you have any idea what might have killed these rooks?
- DS: I don't know that they *were* killed.
- UP: Could it have been a lightning strike or something?
- DS: No, no, I don't think it was lightning. I wouldn't be needing to cook them if they'd been struck by lightning.
- UP: That's a fair point, er, yes. So you say the birds were arranged in lines?
- DS: That I do, yes.
- UP: How many lines?
- DS: Well now, let me see, how many. Well there would be nine. Nine lines.
- UP: Were they positioned randomly or in some kind of pattern?
- DS: Oh, some kind of pattern, definitely.
- UP: What pattern?

Bhéwonom

- DS: Well it was as if they were the letters of a word, but they didn't look like letters.
- UP: What did they look like?
- DS: Well there were four groups of them. The first group, made up of two lines, looked like a T.
- UP: T is a letter.
- DS: Oh, so it is! The last two lines were also a T, now I think about it, but a baby one, not like the big fellas you get at the start of a sentence.
- UP: So you mean a lower-case t?
- DS: Yes. Sans-serif.
- UP: The other two symbols?
- DS: Well now, employing retrospection, they were a bit like letters, too. The third one was a big L lying on its back, like so – oh, but you can't see. I'm making an L shape with my fingers then lying it on its back.
(sound of phone being fumbled)
Whoah, what, oho! I should have used the other hand.
- UP: Nevertheless, you paint a vivid picture.
- DS: The second one was the same but with an extra line at, if it hadn't have been lying on its back, the bottom.
- UP: I see. So we have a T, then an L with two base lines rotated ninety degrees anti-clockwise, then a regular L rotated the same way, then a lower-case t.

- DS: That sounds about right, yes.
- UP: Do you have any idea what it might mean?
- DS: Well that's the strangest thing.
- UP: What is?
- DS: I don't have any idea. Normally, I have so many ideas I have to beat them off with a stick. Away! Away, ideas! But when it comes to symbols written in white dead rooks, I'm flummoxed.
- UP: Did you take any photographs of the rooks, that we might have a look?
- DS: No, but the young fella from the university might have done so.
- UP: What young fella is this?
- DS: The one who came yesterday. I told my wife about the rooks and she said, "Now then, that's not something you see every day", so she called the university and they sent a fella round to collect them.
- UP: Do you know his name? Maybe we could contact him, get his professional opinion?
- DS: No, I don't know his name. He was a short fella, long hair. Thinking about it, he might have been one of those, er...
- UP: Hippies?
- DS: No. Those, er...
- UP: Goths?
- DS: No, those – women! He might have been one of those women they have there.
- UP: Oh, yes, there are quite a good many women at the university. It all makes sense now.

Bhéwonom

- DS: He didn't take any of the other animals, mind.
- UP: Wait, wait, there were other animals?
- DS: Oh, there were lots. Bats, otters, hedgehogs, stoats – oh, and you wouldn't believe it, but snakes! Snakes! After all the good work Saint Patrick did to purge them from this island!
- UP: These were dead snakes, though? Please tell me they were dead.
- DS: Oh don't worry, they were dead, same as all the other animals. They were probably dead even before they were thrown on the bonfire.
- UP: On the ... there was a bonfire?
- DS: Yes, it was the smoke from the bonfire that drew me to the site in the first place, so it was. I should have been farming, but my curiosity was inflamed. Oh, that's not a good way of putting it. Set ablaze? No, no, that's worse. Well, since I got curious about the smoke and all, anyway.
- UP: Were these partially-incinerated animals white, like the rooks?
- DS: Mostly they were black from the soot.
- UP: But underneath the soot?
- DS: I don't think they were white, I didn't look. Yourself might be the kind of person who goes about scraping soot off the corpses of dead woodland creatures, but I'm not.

- UP: Just to be clear, throwing deceased animals onto a bonfire isn't something that happens very often in Letterdeen townland, is it?
- DS: What do you city folk take us for? Of course not! It only happens after harvesting when we've mowed the rabbits. No, this was as if there'd been a magician, reaching into his top hat and pulling out a series of dead fauna. When he got a white rook, he used it to make a letter or whatever those things are; when he got something else, he chucked it onto a dump pile that he set fire to when he was done with producing the rooks.
- UP: Well I have to say, that's certainly a bizarre story you have there, Mr Skerrett.
- DS: It's not made up, if that's what you're thinking.
- UP: I don't know what I'm thinking, to be perfectly honest.
- DS: Perhaps if you were to play some of that music, you might feel better.
- UP: Yes, yes – excellent idea!
- DS: I told you I usually had no problems with ideas.
- UP: So you did, Mr Skerrett, so you did. Thank you so much for coming on the show and sharing your experience with us. It's not one I'll forget in a hurry. Speaking of which, here's the unforgettable Diana Ross with *It's My turn*.

Notes

The original source of this recording is unknown, but it was widely shared on local amateur radio stations in Eire and the UK, primarily because of Mr Skerrett's engaging personality and the fact that at times his accent was so thick as to be comedically near-impenetrable.

The School of Biological and Chemical Sciences at the University of Galway was contacted regarding Mr Skerrett's discovery. A female PhD student studying avian health confirmed that she had tested the rooks and found them to be genetically identical. She declined to give her name, having been advised by her supervisor that she'd be bombarded with requests for interviews if she did.

Matter 37

Summary

The Living Statue

Account by:	Vincent Bicester, 64. Amateur historian.
Source:	Talk proposal.
Location:	Atapuerca, Spain.
Event:	10 May 2024.
Report:	9 Jul 2024.

Report

Atapuerca, in the province of Burgos in northern Spain, is not a picturesque village. Fewer than two hundred people live there, with the number slowly decreasing year-on-year.

Its buildings, most of which are in a decrepit condition, are constructed of granite blocks. A scant few have facades adorned with plaster; the traveller is more likely to encounter a wall patched-up with bricks, badly-laid cement and the salvaged ruins of older, already-crumbled houses. The roads are concreted, with barely any footpaths and only the occasional display of greenery. What

Bhéwonom

few public amenities there are do not impress, their plastic chairs and tables sharing space with stacks of bottle crates awaiting either collection, disposal or disintegration from the ravages of time.

The exception is a small plaza to the west of the main road, which EU funding has furnished with a children's playground and a small but pleasant museum that would be pleasanter if any of the staff spoke English.

As for why this nondescript settlement would merit a museum, well I'm certain that the archaeologically-savvy among you will have already surmised the reason. Northeast of the village, half a mile along a blindingly-white but deteriorating road, can be found the oldest known site of human habitation in western Europe. Our ancestors lived there 800,000 years ago, and apparently ate one another there, too, evidence of that grisly practice having been systematically unearthed.

Although it is perhaps a tad ironic that a locale that has been occupied for eight thousand centuries is now depopulating, it's unsurprising. Apart from servicing bus-trippers from Burgos or farming the dry, arid fields that surround the village, there is little for its occupants to do. Their prospects are much better in the city, so that's where they go. Sad though this may be for those who remain, one has to admit that it's a more

civilised solution to ending boredom than is consuming one another's flesh.

I found myself in Atapuerca in May this year, May the tenth to be exact, having cycled along the N1 and BU-V-7012 the ten miles or so from Burgos. I intended, of course, to see what historical wonders had been laid open to the air by the construction in 1964 of a metre-gauge railway through the hills, and in this aim I succeeded. I shan't bore you with the details, because if you've seen one open pit covered in netting you've seen them all; besides, the main artefacts, such as the skull nicknamed Miguelón, are all in the Museo de la Evolución Humana in Burgos anyway.

Instead, I shall regale you with the tale of an encounter I had in Atapuerca itself.

The strange incident occurred when I was approaching what purports to be an eating establishment beside the main road. It was my understanding that I might be able to consume what reckless purchases I made therein beneath three trees that shade a public water fountain in a triangular arrangement. It was there, standing in the middle of the road, that I spotted a young lady.

She looked like neither a local nor a tourist, dressed as she was in an ankle-length gown reminiscent of an Islamic *abaya* but absent a *hijab*. She stood absolutely still, completely motionless.

Her decision to park herself in the middle of the road must only recently have been taken, because some of those Atapuercan residents unfortunate

Bhéwonom

enough to be availing themselves of the grim café's facilities noticed her at roughly the time that I did, and began to make their way towards her in order to establish what she was doing.

Standing for any length of time in the strong Spanish sunshine is not to be recommended, especially without headwear, but it didn't seem to bother the young lady one iota. She stared blankly into space, paying no attention to the world about her.

The locals were as perplexed by her behaviour as I was. They spoke to her, but she didn't answer. They offered her water, but she ignored them. They looked at her from all angles, but she didn't move a muscle.

Had this been a scene in a Hollywood feature film, at this point a small child would have appeared and thrown a stone at the woman to see if she would react. No screenwriter was on hand to enable this, however, and the inhabitants of Atapuerca were too polite to touch her person – as, indeed, was I.

On my travels, I have often come across people who derive an income from standing still for long periods of time while passers-by admire their ability to do so. These living statues, sometimes called human statues, typically adorn themselves in spray paint to create a more statue-like impression, and have a small receptacle nearby to accept donations.

This woman, while exhibiting all the prowess of a professional living statue, made no attempt to imbue her form with the appearance of having been made of bronze – or, given that this was Atapuerca, granite – nor did she have a hat or bowl at her feet for people to show their appreciation of her work in the form of euros. Furthermore, were being a living statue her occupation then she had chosen a very unwise place to engage in it: tourists in this part of Atapuerca are few and far between, and she was blocking the road such that the tractors and other agricultural vehicles that periodically passed by to or from the direction of Burgos were obliged to make a minor detour to avoid an accident.

After several minutes of proximity to her, those of us whose eye she had attracted became increasingly perplexed. She was breathing, and occasionally blinked, so her autonomous nervous system was still functioning. However, it was as if her mind had been switched off. It occurred to me that she might have been under some kind of hypnotic spell, but surely the discomfort of maintaining the same position in baking heat would have snapped her out of it by this point.

On the same small piazza is a medical facility, and one of the café's customers had the wit to ask within if a doctor was present. He reappeared with a woman who may have been a doctor but looked more like a nurse. She examined the living statue, testing her pupil response and her pulse.

Bhéwonom

Next, the nurse raised the living statue's hand, which caused the arm to bend at the elbow. When she let go, the arm returned to its previous position, but slowly rather than flopping. The living statue was not poseable, nor was she rigid. I took these signs together as indicators that she was not in a trance.

A local woman offered the nurse a straw hat, which the nurse accepted and placed on the living statue's head to protect her from the worst excesses of the sun's rays. There was quite a crowd gathered now, although it was respectful. People did take photographs of the living statue, but they stopped short of standing next to her for the full, selfie experience. I myself rejected the opportunity to capture the moment for posterity, regarding it as inappropriate behaviour. There was clearly something not quite right about the situation and I did not wish to embarrass the young lady should she suddenly come to and regain awareness of her environment.

The nurse tried to help the living statue to walk, but to no avail; it was apparent that she would fall over rather than move a limb of her own accord. After some discussion with the owner of the café, a sack barrow was brought forth and the living statue was carefully manoeuvred onto it. She was then conveyed to the *consultorio local* for examination, away from prying eyes and, more appositely, the unrelenting heat of the sun.

The crowd, which must by then have numbered some fifteen people, myself included, waited in the shade by the water fountain in anticipation of news. The café owner reappeared with his sack barrow, the transfer of the patient to an examination bed having been successfully achieved.

We waited awhile, but time was getting on and people had things to do, so the crowd began to disperse. When the door to the surgery opened, those of us who remained were expecting to be updated with information concerning the living statue's condition. Instead, the nurse appeared to be in a state of some distress and confusion. She began to babble away in Spanish, which caused those who could make sense of her to shrug, look around at each other, and shake their heads while replying with sentences beginning with the word "no".

I managed to find a man in the crowd with sufficient a level of education to explain to me what had happened in something approximating English. It seemed that the nurse had turned her back to retrieve from a cupboard a cream for the treatment of sunburn, only to find when her attention returned to her patient that the young lady was nowhere to be found. She hadn't heard her move, she hadn't seen her move, and there was no sign of her within the single-storey building. The only way out was through the front door, but none of those outside, myself included, had seen

Bhéwonom

her use it. Her disappearance could not be explained and was a complete mystery.

Several people went into the surgery to help look for her, and others checked possible exits through windows and the like. I presume that none of these yielded any information of use. I myself did not participate in this hunt, but waited outside lest she make a reappearance on the street.

After half an hour or so, I decided that the search was going nowhere and determined to cycle back to Burgos. I'd have preferred to have stayed and eaten something, because the sun was still high and my journey would have been easier had I felt able to depart an hour or so later, but the mood in the village had changed.

I'm not a believer in ghosts, particularly physically-present ones opaque to light who manifest in the middle of the day. Neither am I one to accept that fifteen people and a nurse could all simultaneously suffer sunstroke with the same hallucinatory effects. Nonetheless, the tale of the living statue is a strangely inexplicable one. I hope you have enjoyed my relating of it.

Notes

This proposal for a talk was submitted to the Portsmouth Hispanic Society, but rejected because

of its condescending tone and the fact that its substance had little to do with Spain.

Bhéwonom

Matter 38

Summary

Gracelet Reincarnated

Account by:	Grace 'Gracelet' Letterby, 34. World-builder.
Source:	Email.
Location:	Austin, United States.
Event:	11 May 2024.
Report:	25 May 2024 – 26 May 2024.

Report

Email #1

From: gracelet@npchard.com
Sent: 25 May 2024 22:16
To: david__scott@europe.com
Subject: Juliana asked

Oh hi, David.

I was given your email by Juliana Meep. OK, someone claiming to be Juliana Meep. I didn't believe her. Who believes in magic, right?

She came to me because I'm trans. She wanted to find out, you know, how to act. I'm a girl who used to be a boy. Juliana said she was the same. She wanted advice. I said no. She was intruding. I'm sensitive about my privacy. She gave me your email. She said you'd explain. I asked her to leave. This was back in April.

I need a different explanation. Something happened. It's shaken me. It's delighted me. I've lost almost all my friends. It's all I ever wanted. How can that be?

Couple of weeks ago, people started knocking on my door. Weird people. Maybe Iranian, maybe Turkish. All in robes, like a religion. They spoke with English accents. Said they wanted to see me. I said no. They ignored me. Stood next to me like they were taking selfies. No phones, no cameras. Unnatural.

They said I knew Juliana, but they couldn't find her. I was the next-best thing.

I know, right? Way to crush a girl's ego, weird people.

Day one, two showed up. Day two, a half-dozen. Day three, maybe ten or more? I didn't let them in. They got in anyway. They shimmied in, through the door. I saw one do it. Freaked me out! I called 911, no signal. There's always signal. Freaked me out some more.

I'm anti-gun, but this really scared me. I thought, maybe I should buy one. For protection.

Bhéwonom

Protection from what, though? Bizarre people who thought I was a minor celebrity?

They asked questions. I didn't answer. Made no difference. They kept asking. They were like kids. Didn't understand trans as a concept. Wanted to know all about it. Gender dysphoria? Not in their vocabulary. Asked me if I wanted to be a pony. Or a duck.

They weren't aggressive or angry. They were curious. Way, way too curious. Prodding and poking. Asking about deeply personal matters.

Day four is when it happened. Two weeks ago. There must have been twenty of them blew in. Talking among themselves, my doorbell camera picked it all up. Opaque topics, like from Iran or Turkey or wherever. Made no sense to me.

One of them was acting differently. Like he was pretending to be American? He wasn't in robes. He was more office worker. Suit, tie, shiny shoes. He was clueless. Kept at it like he was role-playing in character. Crazy.

He bugged one of the other visitors. Started an argument. He was insisting he worked in my home. She told him he was making it all up. Other people got involved. They kept rubbing their faces with their hands. Must be a Middle-Eastern thing. I didn't intervene, they weren't violent. I just wanted them to go away.

Suddenly, a guy appeared. Head to toe in furs. Immediately, everyone stopped. He asked what

was going on. Someone explained. He said to take it elsewhere, I wasn't anyone special.

They obeyed him and left.

OK, so a little self-esteem damage but no more weird people. I count that as a win.

The fur guy made sure everyone had gone. Then, he apologised. He said that Juliana was famous, but even he couldn't find her.

Yes, OK, I understand why she'd want to disappear. Existence is a new experience for her.

He noticed I wear glasses. He seemed pleased with himself, you know? Pleased he understood what glasses were. Asked me if I wanted my eyesight fixing. I think he was trying to be kind.

I said sure, if it wouldn't hurt. What's the worst that could happen, right?

Always humour loco people. That's my motto.

He assured me it was painless. Then, he did his thing.

I don't know what happened next. I mean, I know, but I don't know.

Yes, he fixed my eyesight. He fixed the rest of me too.

I dropped three inches in height. My hips widened. I felt my insides convolve. My throat tightened. My head, my hands, my feet – all of them changed.

It was insanely disorienting. Like the world's worst rollercoaster ride.

I fell to my knees, threw up.

Bhéwonom

The guy seemed surprised. Asked me how my eyes were.

I asked him what the fuck he'd done.

Jesus, I had a girl voice!

He didn't seem to know. "I thought I'd fixed your eyes", he said. He was kind of panicking.

I was beginning to reorient my senses. My body wasn't my own. Only, it was my own. It was my own as it should have been, but never was.

It was incredible!

Shit-level scary – but incredible!

The guy in the furs was rubbing the backs of his hands together. This wasn't what he'd planned.

He seemed to disengage for a few seconds.

Then, he came back.

"This is wrong", he told me.

"Wrong? Are you mad? This is a hundred times right!"

This was when I took off my glasses. I think it must have been.

The door to my neighbour's apartment opened. A woman stepped out. She was beautiful. Stunning. Not a femme fatale. *Definitely* not my neighbour. Just naturally, dazzlingly gorgeous-to-look-at. Like some kind of goddess.

"What's the problem?" she asked.

"Nothing", I stammered.

"Something's gone wrong", said the guy.

She looked me up and down. "What?"

"I fixed her eyesight."

She nodded. "It's perfect."

"She's a woman."

"That makes no difference."

"She wasn't a woman before I fixed her eyes."

"Yes I was!" I protested.

She frowned. She still looked beautiful.

"Are you sure?" she asked.

"Yes", we both replied.

She addressed me. "Have you always had a womb?"

"I have a womb?!" Oh my god!

"You have one now."

She turned to the guy. "This shouldn't be possible."

He agreed. He asked if someone else could do it. I don't know. A name beginning 'Weg'.

She said she'd fixed a woman's eyesight only yesterday. This didn't happen every time.

He said he'd fixed two people's that morning. You know, before me.

She was thinking hard.

"This is a fault", she announced. "This is because of the update."

The guy stared at her. Not like that. Like she was some kind of awesome genius.

I asked. Was my change only temporary?

She answered. Not even Weg-person could change it on purpose. Maybe unfixing my eyesight might do something.

The guy stared agog. The thought can't have occurred to him.

Bhéwonom

I said no thanks, I was good.

The woman paused. Like she was receiving a call.

"I'll make sure nobody bothers you", she said.

Then, she walked next door, out of sight.

The guy looked relieved. He apologised to me for the mistake. Then he disappeared. Not like *Star Trek* beaming-up disappeared. Like potion of invisibility disappeared. Gone.

I was excited. Category A excited. Checked out my body. Full feminisation. Absolutely. Every detail. Impossible – but who cares?

I called my friends. They wouldn't believe it!

They didn't believe it. They thought I was losing my mind.

I called my parents at work. Mom first, then Dad. Both were deeply concerned. Both said the same thing. Call my therapist right now.

I called my therapist. He figured it was an emergency. Like I was cracking up. Told me to go straight there. He'd fit me in.

I went to see him. Told him what I've just told you. He wasn't buying it. Took some measurements. Called a nurse. Had her do an examination. Took some blood. Charged me fifteen hundred dollars.

He said I had a female phenotype. He was worried, tried to hide it. Thought I'd been lying

about being trans. I could see it in his eyes.

Thought I'd been female all along.

Well yes, I had been. Just not in a female body.

He told me to come again next day. Not to tell anyone about it yet.

I know how therapists think. Seen enough of them. He'd guessed I'd had a crisis. Wanted to see if I was suicidal. Saw I wasn't, wanted to put me on hold. Wanted to think about it first. Wanted to ask colleagues, the Internet. Unknown territory for him.

I didn't want to harm myself, that's all that mattered. He needed time to make a diagnosis, shoehorn me into it. Told me to write everything down, something to occupy myself. Keep quiet about it.

Too late for that. Too late for any of that. I'd already told people. Friends, family. The word was out.

Next morning, I got a call. Nice woman from the fertility clinic. She was sorry. My frozen gametes were spoiled. Apologetic, but she was cagey. She knew something. She'd been told not to tell me. She wanted to tell me, but she wasn't allowed. I could feel it.

I pushed, I cajoled. I threatened lawyers.

She buckled. My sperm was eggs. The container had burst. Whoever had taken the sample was in serious trouble. No way should this have happened. Humouring patients like that. Heads would roll.

Bhéwonom

Me, I needed treatment. She urged me to call a shrink. Pleaded with me not to sue.

I was staggered. Still am.

No making myself pregnant, then.

I visited my therapist in the afternoon. He said the blood tests confirmed it. Chromosome 23, XX.

I'd had blood tests before. I asked him what they said.

He told me XY. I told him to check his records. He told me XX.

He couldn't take it. Told me he didn't want me as a patient. Didn't have the expertise. Told me to get out.

Every damned psychotherapist is flaky. I swear.

Next few days, similar story. Friends thought I'd lied to them. Thought I'd pretended to be trans for kicks. Thought I'd betrayed their trust. Thought I'd used them.

Not all. Some were sympathetic. Wanted to help me through this.

None believed my story. Can I blame them? I didn't believe Juliana.

People in my circle are too rational.

Still seem to think I could have lied about my height, though.

There are believable miracles. There are unbelievable miracles. Mine was an unbelievable miracle.

I'm still trans. Started out male, now female.

Too female? No way!

If I'd been given the option. If I'd been told in advance. Have the body I want. Price to pay: most of my support group, deep worries for the remainder. Would I have taken it? Given the option?

Hell, yes!

I may be lonely. By myself on Memorial Day weekend. I may be losing those few friends I have left.

I'm me, though.

I'm finally *me*.

I'm not emailing you to ask for help.

I'm not emailing you to ask for an explanation.

I'm emailing you to ask to be *believed*.

Gracelet

Email #2

From: gracelet@npchard.com
Sent: 26 May 2024 22:30
To: david__scott@europe.com
Subject: Re: Juliana asked

Hi again, David.

You believed me.

So, I believe you.

We're NPCs in a game. It figures. Reality sucks too much to be real.

Don't worry, I won't tell.

Bhéwonom

Life's a mess right now. Big explosion, dust has yet to settle. Lots of people angry with me.

Fewer people supportive, but there *are* some. They like me for *who* I am, not *what* I am. Good friends.

Still hurts. An outcast among outcasts. Now cast out by them.

Some New Age types, want to believe in magic. Want me to cast the spell on them. Like, I would if I could, but I can't. Takes more than healing crystals, Tarot cards.

Lots to process. Email me maybe next year, if you want to see how I've done?

Thanks for the story. Really helped.

Gracelet

On Sun, 26 May 2024 at 07:48, Scott, David
< david__scott@europe.com > wrote

Dear Miss Letterby,

I do believe you.

I know you didn't ask for an explanation, but it might help reassure you were I to furnish one all the same. I shall try to keep it brief.

I do have evidence to support all that I shall relate, but given your recent experience I rather suspect that you'll be willing to take my

statements at face value. If you would like to know more, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Our world is a game. The people who visited you were players of that game, from a higher reality. Many of them seek out those of us with whom they are already familiar through repute. Juliana Meep is such an individual, but she is in hiding; this because a small number of visitors to our reality are ill-intentioned.

Children who visit Disney theme parks invariably hope to meet Mickey Mouse (the big cheese, so to speak). If they don't encounter him, they have to be satisfied with one of his acquaintances – Goofy, say, or a lesser character such as Prince Charming or Lady Tremaine (Cinderella's wicked stepmother). Because you were one of the few people Juliana met following her resurrection, this raised you to the level of "perhaps worth seeing".

The individual in the fur suit is akin to a customer service representative. He has higher privileges than regular visitors and can make certain changes to our world and to the people within it. Correcting minor physical problems such as poor eyesight is one of the tools available to him.

Bhéwonom

The beautiful woman he called in is Ansnā; I, too, have met her (in Erwā). You may have noticed the hummingbird brooch she wears on her left sleeve. Ansnā is now the lead CSR for our reality. I'm afraid I don't know the name of the subordinate who summoned her aid, but from your description he seems to be one of the more competent members of Ansnā's team.

While the unexpected side-effect of correcting your vision was a wondrous boon for you, it comes with serious implications. Ansnā is one of the few people from the higher reality in possession of sufficient experience and perceptiveness to realise this; strange though it may seem, most of them aren't bright enough to make the necessary conceptual leaps.

In October last year, our reality was patched so as to eliminate a problem to do with copying simple objects (an ability all visitors from the higher reality possess). Only Ansnā's intervention had prevented an incident at an Indian nuclear power plant from crashing the universe, so the update (designed to prevent any repeat) was welcome. Unfortunately, it would appear that fixing one bug introduced another. I'm told by my wife, who is a capable programmer, that this is a depressingly common occurrence.

The new bug seems to accompany the creation of matter by our visitors. Its appearance is intermittent and its effects sporadic. In all likelihood, some minor matter-creation was a factor in treating your long-sightedness; this invoked the bug, which then caused a cascade that corrected your rather more pervasive medical problem.

I don't know what the full extent of this cascade might be, but judging by previous, controlled adjustments to our reality, it could be very wide-ranging indeed. You have already discovered that it changed your therapist's files, but even childhood photographs of you could now reflect your new condition. It's entirely possible that all non-obfuscated evidence that you were once deemed to be male may have been altered. Only the memories of people and perhaps of higher animals are immune to such retroactive modification.

It is my firm belief that you will remain as you are indefinitely. I am aware of a man who had his eyesight righted by Ansnā in 1976 and its perfection endures to this day. Your transformation may have been caused by a fault in the universe, but correcting that fault will no more reverse the process than filling in a pothole would mend a burst tyre.

Bhéwonom

Enjoy your new life. Your old friends who are true will remain true, and as your confidence grows you'll make new friends as well. You're no longer bound by circumstance to bind yourself to a subculture.

I expect that you'll be confused as to your place in society for a while. After all, you've identified yourself as outside the mainstream for much of your life and are now in the unfamiliar position of being embraced by it. Whether you accept your fate or rebel is for you to decide; I can only recommend that you take your time deciding.

I hope this information has been of some use, and apologise in advance if I have inadvertently caused offence through any clumsy misuse of nuanced terms I don't fully understand.

Before I free you to click the delete button, I should mention that this email address expires at the end of the month. Please contact me before then if you wish me to elucidate on these matters further.

With best wishes,

David Scott

Matter 38

GRR

Notes

None.

Bhéwonom

Matter 39

Summary

Strange and Enigmatic

Account by:	Emeraldiana, age unknown. Retired.
Source:	Tripadvisor.
Location:	Petra, Jordan.
Event:	May 2024.
Report:	19 May 2024.

Report



emeraldiana

Dublin, Eire · 211 contributions



Strange and Enigmatic

"The hues of youth upon a brow of woe,
which Man deemed old two thousand years ago"

- John William Burgon

Petra is enormous. It was a city, after all. You need at least two days. I was there for three.

Get a Jordan Pass. Buy it online, it's good value. It's only officially valid for one entry to Petra. No-one checks, though. No-one cares.

Wear proper shoes. Don't be unfit, it's a hike. Take plenty of water. Wear a hat. Remember suntan lotion. Don't trust a map, they're all useless.

Go first thing. Tourist buses arrive around 10-11, then it gets busy. This was my second visit. I first went in the 1990s. It's become commercialised. There are too many visitors. The paths are eroding. There are shops selling tourist tat everywhere, which spoil the experience. Expect low-level sales harassment. Expect litter. Expect ruined photos.

People constantly ask if you want to ride their camel/horse/pony/donkey/mule. Don't do it! Animals are routinely mistreated. They have sores on their backs from saddles. Also, wild dogs roam the place in packs. Be careful.

I saw something unusual. Maybe thirty men were fighting, south of the Wadi al Farasa. There were no other tourists there, it's not on any trail. They looked to be locals, they were dressed in robes. They didn't cover their heads. They all wore backpacks. They were using swords, which were

Bhéwonom

huge. They weren't like typical Arab swords. They looked real, not dummies. People were being chopped and stabbed. They seemed to lose limbs. They seemed to die! Yet they got right back up again when they fell. There was blood but they acted unharmed. It was weird. It was frightening.

There was no-one else watching. I saw no film unit. I saw no support staff. There were just thirty men fighting. They were enjoying it. I took photos, but they're too gruesome to upload.

I watched for five or ten minutes. Then, one of the men managed to slice off another's backpack. A third man ran the second one through. There was a brief light show. When it ended, the defeated man had disappeared. Fighting stopped at this point. The men slapped each other on the back. It looked as if they were congratulating themselves. Then, they walked to a tomb. I think it was that of a Roman soldier, it may have been older. They went inside, but I didn't see them come out. I walked so I could see where they'd gone, but the tomb was empty.

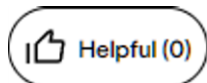
I thought I must have imagined it. I thought I must have had heatstroke. There was blood on the rocks, though. I think they must have been rehearsing for a display. My advice: don't attend the event itself. It's too realistic.

Petra is a strange and enigmatic place in many ways, but tourism is degrading it. That's why I only gave it a four. Visit before it gets worse? Don't visit so it doesn't get worse? Your choice.

Match me such marvel save in Eastern clime,
a rose-red city half as old as time.

- John William Burgon

Visited **May 2024** • Travelled solo



Written 19 May 2024

This review is the subjective opinion of a Tripadvisor member and not of Tripadvisor LLC. Tripadvisor performs checks on reviews as part of our industry-leading trust & safety standards. Read our transparency report to learn more.

Notes

Emeraldiana did not respond to requests from Tripadvisor users to upload her photos.

Bhéwonom

Matter 40

Summary

Male Charged in Connection with Murder

Account by:	SB, age unknown. Police community support officer.
Source:	Thames Valley Police web site.
Location:	Oxford, England.
Event:	11 May 2024.
Report:	12 May 2024.

Report

Male Charged in Connection with Murder – Oxford

Oxfordshire

✓ Published 16:42 12/05/2024

Following an investigation by Thames Valley Police's Major Crime Unit, a male has been charged in connection with a murder in Oxford.

The 17-year-old, who can't be named for legal reasons, was charged with one count of murder, possession of a bladed article and possession of a class A drug this afternoon (12/5).

The charge is in connection with an incident in Bainton Road, at about 1.20am this morning when officers received reports a man had been stabbed.

Despite best efforts of paramedics, retired school-teacher Clive Phillips, of Bainton Road, Oxford, was pronounced dead at the scene.

A post-mortem examination is due to take place tomorrow morning (13/5), however it is believed he was stabbed in a targeted attack.

The 17-year-old was remanded in custody is due to appear at Oxford Magistrates' Court tomorrow (13/5).

SB

Notes

The 17-year-old, a heroin addict, confessed to all three charges, claiming he had been engaged by a blue, three-eyed man and a woman with feathered arms to kill Mr Phillips. As payment, they

Bhéwonom

duplicated a 10-gram parcel of heroin over a hundred times out of thin air. Police recovered these from the 17-year-old's house in Slough.

The 17-year-old died in the early hours of 13 May of a heroin overdose. Before his arrest, he had concealed a number of packets of heroin by wrapping them in condoms and swallowing them. The packaging proved to be of insufficient robustness and the bags split open.

The murder victim, Clive Phillips, is no relation to Emeritus Professor Clive Phillips, also of Oxford.