

**Pyriphlégéthon - The River of Fire**

**PART II**

*The Rivers of Hades*

by Adrian Șinca

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## **Prologue**

"The Rivers of Hades were born out of necessity; the book is the result of the countless years that I spent in various psychiatric hospitals and clinics, the result of direct observation of the daily life and structure of the hospital, of the patients as well as of the treatment during hospitalization and post-hospitalization. The idea of crossing the rivers of Hades represents the break between the two worlds, the world in which we live and the separate world in which those who are affected by mental illnesses live. Being a book based on reality, it was necessary to make some changes to protect the identity of patients and medical staff." Adrian Şinca

## **Ladybug**

Yesterday we had a new admission. A patient escorted by two policemen who couldn't wait to deposit her already.

An interview of the patient followed, for the drawing up of the file. From the beginning I was certain that it was an interesting case. She seemed lucid, knew where she was and had no refractory reaction. The interview lasted about an hour, but during that hour she had two suffered epileptic-like episodes. That is, she became catatonic for ten minutes, her facial muscles and eyelids recording a series of rapid contractions. In those moments' communication became impossible. She told me that she has a driver's license, but in her life, driving the car, she never turned left.

After about a week in the salon, she got the nickname "Ladybug" and that's because her whole chest was covered with black dots. These black dots were the result of the fact that her husband (a doctor by profession) shot her with his hunting weapon, a shotgun. The two met on a "dating site" and as she recounted, she offered the doctor thirty thousand dollars for the marriage so that she could remain with rights in the country.

He had already had two failed marriages and had taken to drinking with real aptitude. As such, when the opportunity arose, the doctor saw the chance to recover. Unfortunately, the two could not be more different, from every point of view. He was an educated, elegant guy with a sharp mind (when he wasn't drunk). In recent years he had trouble controlling his impulses. The two ex-wives accusing him of periods of physical and moral abuse. This being recorded in the divorce documents. Finally, as I mentioned, after the last scandal he shot her...

Sometimes the patient is not the central character... After the shooting incident, the husband was arrested and charged with attempted murder. Being an honorable member of society, the doctor had many friends. His friends contributed and collected forty thousand dollars which represented the amount needed for the bail, after paying the bail the doctor was released pending trial. And time passed...on Monday, every day the day of the trial approached, the day when he had to appear. Only...No, the doctor didn't run away, he didn't disappear. Instead, he had a heart attack in front of the apartment door and died. That is, he also escaped from the hands of justice.

But history continues. The guy who initially collected the money for the bail, presented himself at the bail office and asked for the restitution of the deposited money. I remember that the amount was collected through the community's effort. After receiving the money, the individual fled the country... (with money and everything)

### **Don't stay here...!!!**

I don't know its relevance yet, it obsesses me, I will mention the incident. A holiday is approaching, three days before we are in the living room and playing cards. After a while, the boredom subsided, and the card game stopped. We spread around the salon, deep in the routine.

A colleague from Haiti remains at the table, reading thoughtful books. Finishing what I had to do, I sit at the table in front of her. Without thinking too much, I touch his books with my finger. She, without looking up from the books, begins to string them in front of me, in a strange order.

When she finishes, she shakes herself, as if seized by the cold, suddenly gets up from the table and murmurs:

"Don't stay here... go home today!!"

I half answer him:

"Well, I'm not leaving, because I'm staying on guard..., why should I leave?"

She shakes, as if she's caught cold again...:

"Go away! And in general, take care...".

### **A "small" celebration**

Today is a "holiday", it's not a "big" holiday...When we worked on a holiday, for that day he paid us more than for a normal day. For a "big" holiday he paid us double what we get on a normal day, if I was working on a "small" holiday (like today's), he pays us one and a half times what we receive on a working day. As I mentioned, today is not a "big" holiday.

I didn't feel like working today, but I kind of had to. In the middle of the day, I was informed that the person who was supposed to change me and work at night fell ill, so I will stay at work overnight.

Hooray!!!

Being a "dedicated" employee, I pull an armchair into my office and prepare to become "productive". I do a final inspection of the salon and make a mental note of where each patient and employee are...

On this occasion I notice that Laura, the doctor and the twins have not returned to the salon. As for "where it is"...I have not the faintest idea.

I make a mental note that the next morning I will have to fill in a bunch of papers related to the absence of the four. I take out the pile of necessary papers and spread them on my desk to complete them in the morning.

I find a clean sheet, take off my shoes and prepare to be "productive" until morning.

### **Digitus Impudicus**

In the middle of the night, I wake up from "production", feeling an infernal heat. I open the office door but a wall of flames pushes me inside the office, there is a kind of explosion that also takes the window out of the wall...

I see monkeys and people in white protective suits with face masks.

From the ceiling I see the tarantula coming down the wires and running on my chest. I close my eyes trying to banish the image...in vain...I feel the spider running on my chest with its hairy leg...I fall asleep surrounded by spiders...suddenly I collapse into a dark hole and fall...I wake up walking in a tunnel, I fall and start crawling on all fours, feeling that my life depends on it... if I stop, I die.

A milky light surrounds me, I open my eyes, I'm in an oxygen tent, plastic tubes have sprouted from my whole body, medical devices are whirring and beeping around me, I'm staring at the transparent plastic sheet on the right.

A group of parrots and they stare at me like a circus, I try to move my right hand, I try to extend my middle finger in a phallic gesture as a "sign of approval"...useless, they tied my hands and some kind of plastic pipes shoot out of my veins...I'm perfectly aware, I fix my gaze again on the group of "French knights of Philip VI at Azincourt"...a man starts talking looking at me, I read lips: "I bet this one will be shaking hands with St. Peter by Monday...who's participating?"

I try the obscene raised digitus impudicus gesture again...no use...