

Acheron - River of Sadness

The Rivers of Hades

PART VII

by Adrian Șinca

Translation by Victoria Sara Dazin

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 Șinca

Laura

The hospital had a special unit for patients with two diagnoses. The first diagnosis that had to be mandatory was the psychiatric one. The second had to be one related to alcohol or the chronic abuse of one or more drugs (Cocaine, LSD, Acid).

Once admitted, the patient was "stabilized" and obliged to participate in intensive therapy in groups of alcoholics anonymous, narcotics anonymous, etc. These groups met daily, in addition, there were groups led by social workers and sisters specializing in the treatment of alcohol abuse and other hallucinogenic substances. Upon admission, the patient was administered a

series of tests to determine the degree of severity of alcohol abuse, drug use, number of arrests, record status, and the patient's legal obligations. The screening and psychiatric diagnosis questionnaires are standard, and the staff authorized to apply them must have certificates attesting that they have been trained and that their knowledge of these tests has been checked in detail.

In addition, every three months, the staff participates in special symposia where they gain new knowledge and receive accreditation certificates.

In principle, alcoholism and mental illnesses are hereditary, or at least the child comes from a family of alcoholics; even if he is not born with physical and mental problems, he is prone to have the same problems later. This is a scientifically proven truth.



One of these days, we receive a new patient... Laura. Beautiful woman, 38 years old, black hair, height 1.60 and 60 kg, lawyer by profession.

I have always tried to make an honest living in addition to my profession. I worked temporarily for different agencies that sent waiters, for example to parties. On one occasion I was sent to a golf club where a lawyer was having a party to celebrate her candidacy for district judge. The good world is out there. When the girl gave a short speech to thank the participants for their support, I looked at her carefully, more admiringly.

But, to come back... The patient seemed vaguely familiar to me. I carefully read her medical record and it shocks me that she is a lawyer by profession. Suddenly, I fell in love, it was the woman who had thrown the party at that club! Um, he didn't become a judge! The file shows that he had several diagnoses, including alcohol, cocaine abuse, and acute depression. During individual

therapy sessions, I learn that he used to inject cocaine between his toes to avoid marks on his arms.

After a few days, of being at home and watching TV, a commercial ad for a law firm appears. In that ad, there is a lawyer listing all the services offered by the firm. Laura was watching me on the TV screen. That's right, it used to look a lot better than it does now.

As she told me, meanwhile, Laura decided to work for free as a lawyer, representing various poor clients who were accused of various crimes. Two years ago, he had taken over the case of a twenty-two-year-old man, accused of drug trafficking, theft, burglary of houses and shops, etc.

In addition, the young man decided to break into a pharmacy, steal various narcotic drugs and sell them on the street. While she was representing him, the lawyer and the young man began a torrid sexual relationship. He moved into her apartment on 5 Ave. It was the beginning of the end, Laura continued to take more and more drugs. He began to lose weight, to hallucinate, to tremble constantly and uncontrollably.

She lost the opportunity to be appointed a district judge, and her lawyer's license was withdrawn.

A few months passed, meanwhile, two of those injured by Laura met their end, radically changing the game; the accusations brought to the lawyer become much more serious, and now being accused of murder. One day, she managed to enter the window of a restaurant with her jaguar, injuring three people quite seriously. An arrest followed. After the analysis ordered by the police, drugs, and alcohol were found in his blood, and thus he ended up in the hospital as a result of a court decision due to imprudence under the influence of alcohol and drugs. She is regularly visited by her lawyer who manages to postpone the start of the trial. But Laura knows that the due date will come soon and being a lawyer, she has no illusions about the punishment that will follow.

Laura is granted restricted privileges and is allowed to participate, escorted, in the rallies of the "alcoholics and drug addicts anonymous" groups that were organized in the basement of the building.



o you also want to sanctify yourself?

I walk over to the staff room window and light a cigarette by the open window. In my exodus to the office, I pass by the medicine room. Through the open door, I see nurse Virginia sipping from the metal bottle. Virginia is an alcoholic but has a body that forgives her of all her sins.

She sees me too and motions for me to enter the medicine room. Virginia hands me the metal bottle with a conspiratorial smile.

"Do you also want to sanctify yourself? As you look, you need it more than I do."

I signal to her that I don't want to and continue:

? "It's only 10 in the morning, isn't that early"

"I have no idea, we can be dead at 11... dear "

Suddenly we hear noises and screams from the living room and we both start a race in the direction of the commotion. We see a patient, bare-chested, who was shining... She rubbed oil all over her body... The rest of the patients had fled and were now huddled in a corner of the salon like a herd of sheep.

I hear the naked patient: "I'm teaching you to stop stealing my cigarettes...".

Instantly I rush in front of her and throw my pack of cigarettes at her feet. "And calm down, you'll end up in the ultra-isolation ward and you'll still be smoking in five years!" I scream like a man... She obediently listens to me while smoking cigarettes:

"Can you give me fire"

A normal day in an abnormal world. Everyone was on edge now.

It would be time to clarify... The hospital has a directory, but so far nothing special. The headmistress is a lesbian, that wouldn't be special either. But love is blind and the director has developed a crush on a patient... and coincidentally, the patient in question is this girl who is currently naked, glistening with oil, and smoking my cigarettes...

Virginia trickles out of the medicine room and makes her appearance in the salon...

"Vivi, please keep an eye on the herd, I want to get down to get my food from the car, okay?"



Virginia was the only one who called me "VIVI", the abbreviation for Vlad the Vampire, a reference to my Romanian origin and the fact that I can collect blood from any vein without having been specially trained and in discrepancy with my official position... but what does it matter in a big house?

I say in my mind that Virginia must have run out of "Holy Water" from the metal bottle or she would have had a craving for other chemicals or polymers hidden under the steering wheel of the car. The fact is that I had learned to stop hammering nails in my head, especially since I didn't have a pair of pliers available in case I changed my mind.

On the way back, Virginia reminded me of Eminescu's poem: "What do you swing in the woods, without rain without wind" ... But as I said, I liked Virginia and I couldn't find any reason to make her life an ordeal. Plus, not seeing her using drugs with my own eyes, was all just a guess on my part...

SAGA PUBLISHING