

Notes on Roses and Lions (or the Echoes of a Bygone Empire)

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20/6

It's fascinating how some people are willing to waste their money so readily. Why pay for a psychologist when clearly a meteorologist is what you're looking for? He isn't the first reticent patient and he won't be the last, but this is simply ridiculous. It's my fault for letting him meander with his weather talk, but I'd much rather have that than the polite silences in between. Thankfully, he at least was exceedingly punctual, both to arrive and to leave.

27/6

We've actually made some progress this time, though it was less about himself and more about his neighbours. His complaints ranged from sound arguments to simply petty excuses, but certainly most of them felt as though they had a history behind them that could easily fill three entire university courses. His latest grievance was caused by a football match of all things (and for a second I did genuinely wonder, why bother coming here with problems like that?), but he sometimes made offhanded references to events that seemed far more interesting. Something about a tremendous sailing victory against a Spaniard, though he talked about it as though I were supposed to know all about it. I must say though, he must live in a very diverse neighbourhood. He basically kept complaining about every country in the world.

4/7

He called me earlier in the week to notify me of today's absence. He made a quick allusion to this date being the anniversary of a great personal loss. Even if it's my job to pry, I relented just this once. Better to leave it for another time.

11/7

Almost as if it were his coping mechanism, weather talk was once again the topic of the day, with a few clipped (though polite) answers to my incessant digging. Eventually, I did hit gold (even if it was closer to a nugget than an ingot). Of all my questions, the one he did answer was about his love life, more specifically, his marriage. He spoke fondly of one woman, though his words were more aligned with the description of a rose-tinted memory than of a current relationship. He described her as strong-willed, a good leader, and very dependable (not quite the words I would use to describe a spouse). He did make a confusing comment at one point: he said that the marriage had been a great political tool and one of the smartest decisions she had ever made. Before I could ask for an explanation (and I didn't know where to begin), he left just on time, punctual as ever.

18/7

Family seems to be a sour topic as well. Though I guess it's only natural in families where every sibling is from a different origin. When the underlying connection is already thin enough, any of those pesky family-dinner arguments (such as those on religion, politics, or football) can completely corrode any remaining trace of goodwill. Everyone will take their side (some more justified than others) and with no shared father figure to set things straight, they all simply dig their trenches deeper. From what I can deduce, this was his exact family situation. What's harder to deduce is whether he's willing to bury the hatchet or simply build higher walls.

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And today marks a month from the first session, though in reality it's just the start. I mean, you can never get to know any patient in just 4 sessions, but I never imagined I'd be able to decipher this man even after years of meetups. From the glint in his eye, I can tell he was once on top of the world, only to be succeeded by his deadly counterpart. At times, when speaking of some colleagues, he harbours the tone that old money reserves only for the nouveau riche; condescending, patronising, and subtly seething at being regarded as an equal. But keeping this distaste in the personal sphere shows a sense of honour. Many could loudly complain that their time in the spotlight is over, but silently retreating from the centre of attention is far more respectable. So, although he carries the pride of a king, at the end of the day what rings true is 'noblesse oblige'. Though, he could try to stop raining on his own parade so much, but this is a work in progress.