

Brick Throwing Type

By Holly Lowe

As I walked past the elephant at the zoo, I couldn't help imagine what that might be like, a life in a pen. I'm not being cynical. I would appreciate people adoring me, having three square meals a day, children smiling, perhaps even a monkey dancing in vibrant yellow tutu. The monkey might be taking it a bit far; I'm beginning to sound like my old Uncle Sergei, and his incident with the breathalyzer.

Maybe the monkeys wouldn't have tutus, but the thought makes me smile. Now an elephant in a yellow tutu would be down right hilarious.

Realizing I had been standing in front of the elephants daydreaming, one of my favorite past times, I hurriedly started walking. I was supposed to meet my Uncle Anton fifteen minutes ago. He was going to be cross with me or he may have even left.

I sped past the cheetahs and was just nearing the edge of the park. I could see my Uncle talking to a woman. I wouldn't have thought much of this except she carried a very peculiar purse. As I moved closer towards them, I wasn't sure if I should run, grabbing my Uncle my by the hand, dragging him away or ask the woman "What is that?" That being her purse.

The weirdest part is that my Uncle was casually talking to her, as though that purse were not alive. But it was. Now from a distance, I'm not sure how I knew this, I just did. But as I came closer, I was confident, that purse was breathing.

The look on my face did not seem to register in Uncle Anton's mind, and I gazed carefully into the woman's face. She gave me a look, as to say, "I notice you seeing this purse."

Anton finished what he was saying and greeted me with his familiar "Hey kiddo, want a lollipop?"

I took the lollipop, grape I think, but it could have been flavored for all I knew at that moment. I couldn't stop staring at the purse. Uncle Anton then introduced me to the woman. "Elena, let me introduce you to Ms. Grimoire. Ms. Grimoire, this is my niece Elena."

"Please Elena, call me Celeste."

I looked at her, wanting to demand, wanting to scream, "What is that thing?" but I held back. This was very difficult for me. I was the candid one in my family. Some might say I'm the loud, obnoxious, brick throwing type. I prefer to think of myself as the one who lives life to the fullest. Or the fullest I'm allowed to live in my twelve-year-old life.

As I met her eyes, I realized that this woman might have more in common with me than I originally thought. Maybe it wasn't something in common, but it was like I knew her. Her eyes, blue with yellow flecks, twinkled at me. I'm not just being cute, those goddamn eyes actually twinkled. She smiled at me, as if she had known me since my baptism, liked she had changed my dirty diaper when I was a baby. And I began to wonder if perhaps we did know each other.

"Anton" she said, "she looks just like your Aunt Alina, it's remarkable."

Great Aunt Alina, I thought to myself. She looks like a shriveled up wombat. How could she compare Great Aunt Alina to me?

“When she was a young woman,” Celeste continued “ she was quite a beauty.”

So here we are, three people, chatting carelessly about old people, while sitting right in front of our eyes, was a live, breathing purse. I couldn’t help staring at it, the breathing purse. Could you help yourself from staring at it?

Celeste noticed me, noticing her purse and she said, “ Well Anton, I think you were right about this little one. She does have the sight as you have suspected.”

Anton stared at me, wide-eyed, curious, with wonder. “You can see it, Elena?”

Now I was just freaking out. What did they want me to say? That I could see this purse, or whatever it was, breathing. That I knew it was alive. They would think I was crazy.

Celeste tenderly gazed at me “It’s ok Elena, we’re not going to think you’re mad. Tell Anton what you see.”

I shook my head, confused, waiting, and wondering if this was really happening. This day had gone from a grape lollipop, or was it beer flavored, to twinkly eyes and purses that breath.

“Really it’s fine, Elena” Celeste urged me on.

Do I dare say what I could see?

Uncle Anton, contemplating me with the most wondrous look on his face. I don't think I've seen that sight on his face since before my Aunt got sick and died three years ago. His eyes intently searching my face, appearing as though he had a thousand things to say but wasn't saying any of them. He reached out, and touched me cheek kindly and said, "Tell me Doll, you can tell Uncle Anton."

And with that, knowing it would be received; I said those four beautiful little words that would change my life forever, in all ways that I could never imagine. "The purse is alive."

Uncle Anton cheered, and grabbed me tightly in his arms, proclaiming, "I knew it, I knew it".

I stood breathlessly, and allowing this hug but really wanted to shout "You knew what?"

Wait a minute; I'm the boisterous one in my family, why hold back now. "Uncle Anton, what are you talking ABOUT? WHAT DID YOU KNOW?"

He bent over, a gleam in his eyes, and with the most love, exhilaration and glee I have ever seen on his face, he said, " You, my dear Elena, are magical. You have been born with a great gift that has a dear purpose in this life. And that goddamn breathing purse is just the beginning. Hold on tight, Doll."