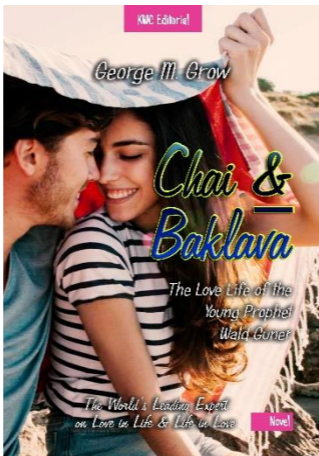


George M. Grow
Chai & Baklava
Romance

"Nobody else brings them
closer to themselves"



From the series
The Books of Life®



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House of Dreamworks

Once again, he is trying to persuade me to record another part of his report; and since he has just a short part in mind in order to span a certain range, I agree and get to know that he has a strange way of sleeping, since he never dreams. For all the innumerable things which keep him busy during the day, he hasn't been dreaming for quite a few years. He explains this by way of his deep sound sleep and this by the fact that he had tidied up in his soul pretty well. Back in the day, before he and Maher had moved in together and his second sight was in its infancy, he dreamt night for night. What he considered of importance was to ask the people he met in his dreams who they were and where they came from. This way, he got to know himself better till, for other reasons, his psyche was neaten up so much that he didn't care anymore when his room was in a mess. He questioned the sense of his dreams not by means of Freud's interpretation of dreams or by means of Jung's archetypes (since he understood dreams not so much as messages coming from a collective unconscious) but as products of his fantasy, as products resulting from the continuation of the cerebrum blocked off from the outside world. This surprises me somewhat, and I ask whether the collective unconscious was not the unity which he refers to so much in my ears as of today and get to hear that the collective unconscious deserves the

aspect “collective” merely for the reason that people’s brains are quite similar and operate quite similarly, that it simply is the brain of the human species. And since he is an attentive young man, who doesn’t miss that my focused eye is gazing at my watch, he takes up this topic: that a good many of the figures who came up in his dreams provided him with excellent ideas. Still, he didn’t know that he was approaching “the great connection”, which was flooding his mind with ideas, improvements, inventions, projects and ventures by using the imaginary figures in his dreams. That way, which he didn’t properly understand at the time he only just had reached legal age, he came up with concepts like the Global Manifest, the Primal Income Tax, with the Plebiscite Catalog, with, as one might call it, Integral Europe, to the WIR (the Department for World Information Research), to the TTT (Turbo-Turbine-Transmission-System), to the multi-exposable celluloid MULTIFLASH, but also to a many of amusing things like his TRICHESS or his wooden cushion against effeminacy or his board game D.C.DENT among innumerable drafts and projects, none of which he realized or tried to by himself. As soon as he heard “project”, he namely felt uncomfortable, since it always made him think of a projection. Then, however, when he was coming closer to the unitas, as we will hear and read about later, he dreamed of a show room, I’d like to say, of an installation that consolidated his ideas as one thing at one place and even solved the issue payment: If the idea is blurted out,

it is not remunerated, and if it isn't blurted out, it's worth is hardly to comprehend.

I remember that he conferred with me about this problem. I urged him to keep his ideas to himself, told him that he won't gain a subsistence from them but was big surprised by his solution and attended the grand opening of his display salon in Vienna Alsergrund myself. I guess he had more than two hundred castles in the air made from cardboard or gesso hanging a bit down the ceiling. This show room, licensed under the name HOUSE OF DREAMWORKS and operated at great advertising expense, was quite well frequented. People looking for business ideas, industrialists developing new niches, managers, PR agents, product developers and artists on the lookout for gimmicks, as well journalists and official were counted among his clients. With lifted eyes and heads, they prowled around, and many of them found something that helped them on. Part of Wald's management was that his castles made of air gave away just enough to keep the money rolling into his desk although their purpose was clearly marked and his soft whisperings prompted his clients' fantasy. Provided with new ideas night for night, extended his regular sleep up to fourteen hours, his business with the castles made of air was such a hit that jealous souls – never the same ones – broke out his shop windows, believe it or not, three times and devastated it so heavily that he parted with it, took stock of himself and the world and finally came to be a mystic and the winner

of two jackpots, then again a partier and again a mystic and to the point, which he remembers to his great amazement, he was dreaming after so many years again in the half hour he has been lying in the creaky bed on the fancy houseboat. The young man in his dream wore grey jeans and a dark blazer. Wald looked into his face and asked, "Who are you?" The young man in answered with a smile, then he gave Wald a blink and handed him over the flower of his hope, the blue flower, which he found on the little island a couple of hours ago. Then the apparition asked him to come along, and Wald followed him into the dark of his dream.

"Oh dear, look at that," he shouts in surprise sitting up in bed. "That was a dream!"

Wald jumps to his feet and walks well-dressed along the narrow corridor, hides behind a curtain and peers through the window in order to inspect the area after the prophet makers. "Nothing, but really nothing to see," he utters to himself. His one-eyed view through the window is like gazing into a deep, black hole. Just the durga, the restaurant boat a few steps from his nose, is silhouetted against the void, otherwise not even a light in the distance. And since he isn't sure whether he is not observed by the basically quite lovely bunch, whether his pursuers are not lying in wait for him a door and whether the stars can be seen again, though, he, in the feeling something is awaiting him, has grit and reasons enough for creeping into the salon, over the porch and the improvised gangplank to the firepit where the embers are still

glowing. And as soon as he has sat down on a brick, there is a call under the veil of darkness.

“Mr. Wittman, there you are! I've some news of importance for you!”

“Who is it?” Wald exclaims jumped up into the gloom. The voice that has called him by name replies in a pleasant tone,

“Here, Mr. Wittman, here, right in front of your nose!”

Wald is still unable to see the man. Only then the darkness discloses an approaching silhouette. The outlines of a guy in grey jeans and a dark blazer grow visible. Is that the man from his dream? Wald can remember every word. He asks,

“Have you brought along a flower for me?”

“I have an invitation for you,” the beardless fellow responds stopping on the other side of the firepit. He puts out his hand and says that his name was Christian.

“Christian,” Wald asks the man who is roughly in his age. “Guess this is still your worst joke, isn't it?”

“Follow me, Mr. Smith,” the man with the trendy, glossy leather shoes, which were certainly not cheap, asks. “You shall know that my master has sent me to pick you up!”

That he calls Wald “Smith” tells him that the stranger is animated by good intentions. He could either have introduced himself as Ali or Mohammed, and for what reason otherwise does he call Wald “Smith” if not in order to give him the hint that he will put his cards on the table when the moment has come. Aside from this, Wald knows to be well led and guided again since he left his uncle's manor five

days ago, that it was not by chance that Maher's pursuers took up his trail, drove him on the manor and lastly to this distant place, that he met Craig, the writer, the blue flower ... and the man in his dream that shall be continued here, in reality. And because he just has to mind the profane affair yet, he asks the young man with a chain and a key on it he lets dangle through his fingers,

"And if I come along, what would be in it for me?"

Christian slinks around the firepit, puts his hand on Wald's shoulder and says,

"My master is very influential and highly generous. Pay him the honor, and it will be to your advantage!"

Wald holds his watch close to his eye and reads five past nine. "Know that my master is used to work at night, by day, he sleeps a lot," the messenger adds. "He's very interested in your view of things. Our nights are lonesome; we sit together after the women have gone to bed. My car is ready!"

"Car?" Wald asks with sensational eyes. "Hem, well well," he utters since he himself has not exactly learned to trust the signs. And in order to convince him of his good intentions, the fellow with the key says,

"Take it!"

Wald is thunderstruck.

"It's for you," the stranger says holding the pistol from his pocket closer to him.

Wald quickly takes hold of the pistol, and, indeed, it's not the first time he has held a gun in his hand. Susan's father is a man of less than five and a half feet but for that he is

great in sport shooting and karate. He is holder of the sixth Dan and is aiming at the state champion title in sport shooting. That he insists on being addressed as Sir for all these years seems innocuous to Wald as against the fact that the small man changed to first-name basis as soon as they were at the firing range.

Wald calls out,

“Bang.” That my prove Christian that Wald is quite good at arms. Then he opens the clip and says, “Aha, six beans.” At that, “Unlocked, locked, unlocked.” Finally he puts the gun in his waistband and asks how long the ride will take.

“You’ll see that it isn’t far. At the end of the valley, there is the camp where my master is enthroned.”

“Enthroned?”

“You have understood well,” the young man responds for the avoidance of doubt. “My leader is an Arab prince. Now get a move on, such an opportunity isn’t given to you all days!”

Said this, Christian turns about and goes down the path, and after he has shortly vanished in the darkness, the headlights of a four-wheel-drive motor vehicle car go on. Once again he calls through the window. Then, finally, Wald gives in, walks over and gets on. Fasten the seat belt, in the beginning of his fateful ride, he says to the driver,

“Awesome ride, all along, I wanted to have one like that.” Then he skims along the dashboard covered in black leather, and Christian starts. With a howling engine, he turns into the main road towards the north and drives with the throttle full open past the last row of houses into a darkness that seems

to dominate everything except the four headlights. After few minutes, they reach the mountains. The rising street is narrow but for the most part good to drive. At first, a couple of vehicles come their way, then it seems, as if the road belongs just to them. After they have gained height and the woods lay below them, the Himalaya shows his nocturnal face. Fascinating are the snow-covered peaks flanked by summits which shine golden yellow into the nighttime sky. Christian names the peaks one by one while the road is deteriorating. The costly car is shaking and rattling wildly up and down and a cloud of dust and foul air is accompanying them. And since Christian doesn't let the bad condition of the road, then of the track reduce the speed, Wald begins to doubt whether it was wise to get on this car which back axle does not skid over the grid for the first time now. He takes his jacket from the back-seat and puts it on his lap. So it can serve as an airbag, and Christian lights a cigarette, a good opportunity to have a closer look at him:

The eyes with the yellowish tinge in the white of the orb, obviously always a bit too moist as if they were about to cry at any moment, stare like suckers blankly at the roadway. In his posture, especially the way he holds his head, and in the motions of his small but nervous hands, there is a charming madness, which doesn't appear at all threatening. His back, curving like a cat's arched back in front of sharp curves, and his rather slim shoulders support his long neck wrapped by a brown, fringed scarf. If one wants to caricature him as an animal, then a male

squirrel would be seated on the leather seat next to Wald, a rodent, turning a cigarette instead of a nut in his hasty fore-paws in order to gnaw at it from time to time. Reduced to a grotesque picture, to him, Christian is a soft heart with sharp teeth. He, therefore, seems completely harmless, which cannot be said about the way he drives: After recklessly careening over a bump in the road, Wald asks whether it's necessary to race, at which a click resounds by activating a switch on the steering wheel, and a minibar in the place of the glove box opens. "Glen Fiddich, Cointreau, Grand Marnier," the race driver asks, concentrating on the road ahead.

"I'd rather you slow down," Wald, wedged with arms and legs in all directions, responds, shuts the bar and tilts forward as the car sharply stops at a unsignposted fork in the road. Wald hollers,

"Turn this bitch around, turn it around right now and bring me back to Srinagar!"

"Sorry, but that is not possible," Christian replies, hardly impressed by Wald's emphatic insistence, before he spits the butt out of the window and Wald breaks out in laughter. He is laughing at himself since he was as foolish as to get on that car. And in order to get his way, he puts his hand around the gun between his thighs and says to the driver on his right,

"Obey, or shall I take extreme measures!"

Christian, also hardly impressed by this threat, pulls back his jacket and presents Wald a second gun he is wearing in his breast holster.

Then he holds his hand out flat and says in a low voice as if he wants to say he has nothing to fear from him, "Give me the gun and cover your head with this cloth."

"Cloth," Wald utters having a short look at the thing in his hand. "That's no cloth," he says slipped in horror, "that's a sack!" Then the mysterious fellow briefly gnaws at his thumb, puts his hands on the wheel, engages a gear and says with his foot on the clutch,

"Put it over, it's for your own safety, too. My boss is a highly influential person, and this area is not at all harmless. Now, follow the rules and put it on!"

Wald now seems to understand. What reason do they have to harm him? He hasn't even one cent in his pockets, he holds no position, has no wife and no child, he has nothing to lose. And so he puts his destiny and the gun back into Christian's hands, pulls the sack over his head and says through the cloth to the smoker as he picks up the pace,

"You needn't have bothered, there was nothing to see but the headlight, anyway! How much longer, are we still in Pakistan?"

Christian snickers audibly and says,

"I guess actually nobody can say where the borders run up here." Then there is silence till the ride goes on creaking axles very slowly uphill and the luxurious car splutteringly stops. Christian gets out, opens the passenger door and pulls the sack from Wald's head. The first things he can see are three frame tents illuminated from inside. Between them are parked four off-road vehicles of an expensive make.

Apart of that, there is just an eerie darkness and a hand on his shoulder.

“This way in, my boss is waiting for you,” Christian says shining his flashlight at the entrance of the first and biggest tent, wants to know if Wald would like some tea or some coffee with his meal, and disappears into the somewhat smaller tent, which is full of men, as it is to infer from the shadows. Having reached this point, I break off and say to him...

End of the reading

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