

The Birth of a Legend

By Alexei Edwards

People only know him as the judge. His name is uttered so scarcely, his name has been near-enough forgotten. He has obtained this rather impressive nickname on account of his incredible and incomparable judgement on those he meets. I mean, we all know that most people automatically pass judgement on everyone we meet. I do it and I have no doubt you do too. This man however does it with such astonishing accuracy, he has become something of a legend. There is something almost mythical or magical about his ability to stare into someone and with the accuracy of a sniper, he can capture everything they are. It is almost as if he feels everything that makes them up – not in a creepy way. Well, it probably is a little creepy but to be more accurate, he doesn't make any kind of physical content, he just knows. The reason I am telling you this is that I want his name to continue as at this very moment, he is but a matter of metres away from me on a wooden platform and ready to meet his death. He has been punished for passing judgement and spreading his opinion on a man he should not have trifled with. Alas, it is done and there is nothing he can do but stare into the darkness of his inevitable demise.

The man he wronged is a man called Zapato. The name Zapato to an English speaker sounds rather exotic and mysterious but if we are to translate his name, it just means Shoe. For the purposes for this story, I will not refer to this man as Zapato as he does not deserve any reader to think upon him as anything but a scoundrel. I will therefore merely refer to him as Shoe. Decidedly less romantic I hope. So, Shoe was a local criminal. His criminal activities weren't focused on anything particular, he had his dirty hands in many different enterprises. He was known to have trafficked children, women, drugs as well as starting up various businesses in order to funnel his dirty money through. In short, he was a nasty piece of work. Not the kind of man you'd like to see down a dark alley. Shoe was also not blessed in the looks department. He was of average height, only had three teeth in his whole head and had a thick beard to cover

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scarring located across his lip. No one knows how this scarring occurred and no one had the temerity to ask. He spends most of time sat outside of his house, located on the main drag. He would sit on his chair, watching people walk passed. He didn't need to say a word to intimidate those who walked passed him. Most people knew exactly who he was and exactly what he was capable of. There was once an outsider who came into town and didn't like to see so many people intimidated by this man. This naïve do-gooder stepped in and tried to ask him what his problem was. I say tried because he wasn't even allowed to finish his sentence before Shoe had pulled out his gun and shot him right in between the eyes. Shoe was a mightily quick shot you see. That was one of the reasons people were terrified of him. He basically had the running of town. Anyway, do excuse my over willingness to describe Shoe but I do feel it necessary as I want to paint a picture of the man who now has my friend in a rather compromising position.

Rather like the unfortunate do-gooder who crossed Shoe's path, The Judge was also unfortunate in his desire to label this man so fervently when he is usually so cool. You see, The Judge is a man who is so incredibly unflustered and insouciant. He would save his judgement for his friends and confidants. He would share his judgements with those closest to him and then you would very quickly see that he was completely right in his assumptions. I feel now would be a moment to provide an example of this because I fear I may have oversold him to you without qualifying his character. I used to spend quite a lot of time in the circle of people The Judge moved around with. Naturally I would hear everything he had to say. I remember the moment when I realised he was the real deal. A woman walked into the bar. I mean, this woman was absolutely stunning. You would give up all that is good just to spend a night with this woman. No, scratch that, you would give up everything that is good just to watch someone else spend a night with this woman. She was that sexy. Anyway, she walked in and instantly locked eyes on me. She then turned away and walked to the bar to join the group of friends she entered the bar with. The thing that struck me about her was her natural beauty. She did not attract the attention of everyone in the bar. She had a subtle, quiet beauty. One that most wouldn't notice. Now don't get me wrong, if she really went to town and wore a revealing

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dress, every man would be transfixed but as she was clad this night, no man took too much notice. Anyway, I ramble. So she returns to the bar and I cannot keep my eyes off her. There was something in the look that we shared that felt important somehow. I needed to speak to her and see whether there was a reason for my reaction. I then motioned to get up and was then held back by the voice of The Judge addressing me from across the table. He told me not to do it. I asked him what he was talking about. I knew he knew. He also knew that I knew but I still decided to play this little charade. He didn't. He replied by saying 'You know what I'm talking about'.

I then moved towards him and asked him to tell me what was going through his mind. He then spoke. 'You like her. And she likes you. True?' 'Yes, it's true', I said. 'But she is not a good person. On the surface she may seem good for you. You may feel some sort of gravitational pull toward her, but you must not become rapt by its allure. She will ruin your life. She has an inner chaos within her that will destroy anything that comes within her proximity. At the moment, she is not even aware of the rage that is eating away at her.' 'But don't you think that she can change?' 'She can, of course. But she won't. It has become too powerful. Something happened when she was young which has twisted her. If you are to take my advice my old friend, I would steer clear. Sexual attraction is a funny old thing. And it isn't always on your side if you understand what I mean.' When The Judge speaks, you listen and in that moment I did. He was right, sexual attraction is a powerful thing but I resisted. I watched another man from the town approach her and well the rest is history. Her rage drove him mad. He couldn't manage her and eventually in a fit of drunken madness, he strangled her to death. When this news came to me, I knew The Judge was the real deal. I mean I knew before which was why I listened to him, but when you are a part of his divination, there is no turning back. I am now a part of another legend that will be told long after my death. A story that paints the picture of The Judge. This brings us nicely to the rather concerning situation at hand. I am staring at him and he is up on the platform, looking calmer than I have ever seen him. He is honestly the picture of serenity. He is usually incredibly relaxed but this is beyond anything I

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have witnessed from him before. He looks like a man who has accepted his death. Shoe is standing next to him in an attempt to goad him. He wants to see fear in the eyes of The Judge but he refuses to show it. Either because he doesn't feel fear or because he has become very good at hiding it. I know I would be terrified in his situation. Shoe has realized that his attempts are in vain. He holds his gun to The Judge's head. BANG. He even falls to the floor with grace. There is an almighty gasp from everyone around me. There is an overwhelming feeling that the Gods are enraged because of this. Something has changed in the air. We have all witnessed the death of a man and the birth of a Legend.

The End

Alexei Edwards bio: Born and raised in London, England, I've always loved to write mainly as a tool to shed the weight off my mind. I work in adland so there's a fair bit of weight to shed. I jest, of course. I've written plays, poetry, short stories - all mainly for pleasure. I did have a short play performed at a prestigious London theatre which is my proudest writing moment - so far. I intend to extend that list before I expire.