

THE LAST WORD



DAVID EDWARDSON

David Edwardson

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This story tells about the power of the word, which radically changed a person's life, and entailed unexpected consequences.

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This story is a fiction of the author's mind and doesn't relate to real life. Any matching names and places of action are no more than coincidences.

I woke up in a George Hotel, one of the best Edinburgh's hotels and the night trip from London made itself felt despite my cheerfulness and elation. The knocking of the train wheels partly continued being heard in my ears... No, please, get me right, I don't mind trains at all but train trips are very tiring. A short while lying on a bed and thinking about train I decided to forget about it: I had to get to the meeting.

The meeting should be held at ten a.m. Looking briefly at the beautiful chandelier hanging above me, I got up and reached my watch, that was lying on the night table next to me. It was ten minutes past eight, though my breakfast should be brought at eight thirty. I went to the window, opened the curtains and saw the picturesque view of moving cars against the backdrop of beautiful buildings. It evoked a sense of interaction between the beautiful past and the breathtaking present.

Without thinking twice I went to the bathroom and entering it I saw dazzling white walls with perfectly engraved patterns. Designers did really great job to surprise the guests with even such trifles.

I took a shower, brushed my teeth and barely had time to get dressed, as I heard a knock on the door.

"Can I enter, sir?" asked the waiter loudly.

"Come in!" I said distinctly.

The door opened and a young waiter came into the room. He was about twenty years old with the trolley where my breakfast and coffee were served.

"I brought your breakfast, sir!" he said with a joy.

"Thank you," I said politely.

"Bon appetit, sir," the waiter said with a smile, closing the door behind him.

For breakfast I got cheese and jam scones flavored with cream. It looked very appetizing so I immediately began to eat them. Wiping the scones with fresh coffee, I felt an aroma I did not know before: it was an espresso, but unlike espresso in other countries – it was famous for using more roasted grains and bigger portion than usual.

After breakfast I went to the mirror to tie a tie. Doing it I was staring into the mirror for a long time in an unfamiliar atmosphere for me. Using a hair gel, I achieved an ideal hairstyle and, finally, had perfumed with scented water and wore a jacket, but when I was going out I thought about the time and almost forgot about my watch lying on the bedside table.

By the way, it was a Blancpain watch which my uncle Richard gave me as a present. It was his farewell gift at the last meeting... Since that I haven't seen him in the UK and couldn't find out where did he go.

I looked up at my watch and saw it was a quarter to nine. I knew that a red car should come for me at exactly eight fifty a.m., so it was impossible to lose a minute. I closed the door behind myself and went to the ground floor to give the key back. Amazingly beautiful walls and ceilings beckoned me to stay, but my time was up. I came right on time: the receptionist was free and could quickly service me.

"I'd like to give the key back," I said.

The receptionist, a young lady with a pleasant appearance raised her head and looked at me.

"What's your name?" she asked softly.

"Arthur... Arthur Phillips," – I introduced myself, giving her my passport.

The receptionist kept looking at me for a long time, then again at the document.

"It's just a hairstyle," I said slowly.

"I get it. Your room is ninety-nine, right?" she asked smiling.

"All right," I responded in a confident tone.

"It costs two hundred and fifty pounds, Mr. Philips."

I opened my purse, took out the money in cash and laid them out in front of her. I spent not more than twelve hours in this hotel but considering the quality of service, I was pleased with the price.

Recounting the money she nodded and handed me the form:

"Your payment is accepted, sign here, please."

I put the signature in front of my surname.

"Thank you for choosing our hotel, we'll be happy to see you again," she said, giving me my passport back.

Taking the document and thanking her in return, I moved to the exit.

When I went out of the hotel, my mouth fell open: a gorgeous red Hudson Hornet, a pure classics straight from the fifties was waiting for me, and it caused an incredible feeling of nostalgia and romance at the same time.

The classic stylish and streamlined look coupled with red coloring demonstrated an amazing work of the designers of that time.

As I approached the car, I noticed a waiting driver. Opening the back door, I saw a comfortable white-coloured car interior. I sat on a backseat and closed the door. The driver was sitting ahead the wheel in front of me. His beard and hat prevented seeing face completely, but it looked like he was already older than forty.

"Good morning," I said joyfully.

The driver remained all the same and did not say a word.

For a moment I thought he was deaf, but I decided to clarify it.

"We need to go to Dunfermline. Do you know about it?" I asked him loudly.

The driver turned his head to me and nodded.

"Let's go then, we need to be there by ten!" – I haven't even finished as the car started off and we set off.

The road to Dunfermline was twenty-one mile long and according to my calculations we had to arrive there in a little over forty minutes with minimal traffic.

Judging by the movement, the speed of the car haven't reached even forty miles. We turned towards Queen Street, passing by the beautiful Queen Street Garden park. The car was incredibly quiet, when suddenly the silent driver turned on the radio and at that very moment The Beatles was playing my favorite song "Yesterday".

Oh yeah, rarely there is a chance to see the neighborhood of Edinburgh with your favorite song. The Beatles really made a splash: who would have thought that a few Liverpool guys would conquer the world. By the way, I haven't ever been to Liverpool but I always wanted to visit that town.

Having left on the main road, we passed "Dean Gardens". The incredible beauty of the park and the buildings caused me delight. For a moment I wished my eyes were a camera and I could save photos with my every blink to print them right away.

Moving along the road, we were coming closer to the Fort Road Bridge located above the Firth of Forth bay. The music from the radio was the same but with songs of the great John Lennon and I could see the railway Fort Bridge from the car window. Its length was more than one and a half miles, and the construction was fully completed in the distant 1890. This bridge can rightfully be considered one of the outstanding structures created on Earth.

Despite these beautiful views and my favourite music I felt tired of the trip so I've decided to take a nap before arriving at the destination, completely trusting the silent driver.

I was awakened by the car signal. I opened my eyes and saw the driver letting me know that we've arrived. I nodded and left the car. Looking around I saw an enormous white castle. There were many guests in front of it. Huge round pillars on the sides made the grandeur of this building. Two arc-shaped ladders sent guests to the central entrance of the building. Coming closer I looked around, admiring beautifully made flower beds and tiny fountains, located on both sides of the castle. This, verily, was that same estate of the Tweedie family. Ronald Tweedy, none other than the most famous building magnate, who made the company almost from scratch. He survived a lot of misery and suffering but he didn't despair and today, on his son's birthday, he have to make an important statement. In the meantime, I'm just one of the guests who came to this event.

Two men in suits from private security inspected the guests. When it was my turn I was asked to raise my hands and turn around. The man with a metal detector checked my body, said that everything was all right and wished a good party. I was in the building and perfumed ladies with their men were everywhere; they were all dressed in a pretty classical style and it seemed I was in the nineteenth century in the Victorian era.

A huge long buffet table for guests was richly covered with various dishes. Suddenly a waiter came up to me and offered me some wines to test. I asked for a red semisweet. The waiter handed me the glass and went to the other guests.

With a glass in my hand, I was looking at musicians playing classical compositions. The violinist was so skillfully playing the Antonio Vivaldi's violin composition "The Seasons", so for a moment the noise ceased: I closed my eyes, as if I was plunging into a trance, and heard only him playing.

Accidentally the music stopped and I saw Ronald Tweedy standing on a stage in front of all the guests.

He was quite old and his bright red hair hardly combined with his wrinkles and his thick brows gave him a formidable look. His height was above average and elegant gray suit perfectly combined with his manner of speech and emphasized his charisma.

He greeted everyone and was pleased with such a large company of guests gathered in his house. I wasn't sure about the exact number of guests, but there were quite a lot of them, considering on how huge was only the first floor of his castle.

He called his only son on a stage. Slowly moving, a young man moved closer to his father. That was a skinny tall guy, even taller than his father but they were still alike, in particular with red hair and thick eyebrows. But some kind of uncertainty was felt in him which seemed quite strange to me due to his father's greatness and the day of his own birth.

“Today’s a special day for my son that’s also important for me and gathered in here,” said Mr. Tweedy.

“Many of those present here are members of my family and part of my part of my friends and, of course, are interested in promotions,” Ronald grinned.

There were heard cheers among the guests, photographers were taking pictures from different angles. I wasn’t a fan of the paparazzi, so I stayed behind the guests not to get into the camera lenses.

“Today I want to congratulate my boy Alan, who became a man... I wish you sincere love, great victories and that your way in Tweedy Industrial was clean and correct.”

The guests were amazed, the sea of applause overwhelmed the audience. Ronald embraced his surprised son and handed him the microphone.

It was incredible: a huge building empire since then was in the hands of an eighteen-year-old boy! His eyes twinkled and his face looked lost. Holding the microphone in his hand, Alan was speechless.

Everything looked really believable, as if the son really didn’t know about it and his father didn’t prepare him at all.

“I’m grateful to you, father... It’s a great honor for me and I’ll do everything for the company development and for the pride of our family,” Alan again embraced his father and thanked everyone, wishing to have a good time.

I was touched. I’m sure for many of them it was a historic moment. Guests one after another rose on the stage, congratulating and hugging the father and the son.

Music started again and the stormy joy of the guests was accompanied by dancing and singing.

Alan was sitting at a table surrounded by his partners and friends, happily leading the conversation. By the way, his father was his only close person. I heard that his mother and sister had a tragic death but the details are unknown until now.

Having tasted a dessert, I watched the celebration. Mr. Tweedie was passing by, chatting with the guests. Later he went up to the second floor, most likely to rest from noisy guests.

I left the table and moved to the stairs, as a waiter came to meet me. I asked him:

“Excuse me, where do you have the restroom?”

“The restroom is on the left in the corridor but now it’s quite crowded. You can use the restroom on the second floor, having passed same on the left side of the second floor,” – the waiter answered hastily.

“Thank you a lot,” I said.

The waiter nodded and moved forward.

Slowly going upstairs the marble steps, I looked at the snow-white outcroppings of the walls near which there were talking to each other guests. Unlike the ground floor, the first one was an observation point. Having risen on the first floor I turned left, moving to the toilet. A maid passed by me, holding an interesting vase in her hands.

I went to the restroom entrance and slowly opened the door.

White tiles completely covered the walls, the floor was made of marble with a bluish tint. I entered and closed the door behind me, in front of me stood a toilet, I leaned in and saw a pistol with a silencer and leather black gloves.

I put on those leather gloves and picked up the gun. It was ParaOrdnance R 18.9. In simpler terms, that was a Canadian copy of the Colt with a slightly low-profile design and a silencer.

Holding the gun in my hand, I turned to the mirror that was hanging over the sink. I looked at my face – it was no longer my face, but the face of a murderer, an executioner who takes life from the victim. Looking at my own reflection, I saw only a deep darkness that concealed true intentions. And only the mirror was a witness to the future action, but it was only a moment, accompanied by an absolute emptiness.

Behind the colored lenses, painted hair and an overhead nose, a completely different person was hiding, unwilling to look at his own face, he was hidden deep in his mind, far from this place and future actions. Now the role was assigned to the cold-blooded killer and those moments of thoughts were not necessary to him.

I hid the weapon in my jacket, put my hands in my pockets and went out from the restroom. Moving along the corridor, I was looking at the paintings hanging on walls, dark-red walls perfectly combined with creations of great artists. The corridor was surprisingly deserted. Moving more and more slowly, I listened to the presence of noise behind the door, but everything was very quiet. Really, who is interested in walking along the empty corridor in the midst of a holiday?.. Approaching the end of the corridor I saw a slightly opened door to the library, behind where there were rustling. Perhaps the old man was turning the pages of an old book from childhood, or archives of the company, perhaps even family album with photos of a young son. However, it didn't matter for me. It was important that it was him.

Quietly entering, I saw huge bookshelves. The shelves were filled with books, some of them were so old that even the names on their roots were erased.

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