

Zvonko Džokić

WHO'S NEXT

ISBN

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Translated by
Ilinka Crvenkovska

Proofread by
Matthew Jones

Cover design by
Natali Nikolovska & Zvonko Dzokic

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SCENE 1

The office of a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist is alone, sitting on his chair in front of the desk. He's leaning over his notebook and writing something in it. There's a notebook, an appointment book and a typewriter on the desk. Near the desk there's a little table on top of which we see a telephone and some travel advertisements with exotic beaches pictured on them. One of the office walls is a bookshelf full of medical and psychiatric books and magazines. On the other side of the desk we can see another chair and a sofa beside it. The office door is ajar; it leads to the waiting room, which is empty at the moment. The waiting room is furnished with light furniture, a few chairs, a sofa and a couple of small tables. Next to the entrance and the door which leads to the psychiatrist's office there is a third door, which at the moment is ajar; this leads to another doctor's office. Suddenly, the silence is interrupted by the sound of the phone ringing.

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

(Picking up the receiver) Yes...

A VOICE:

(From the other end) Hello, doctor.

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

Hello.

A VOICE:

It's me, doctor... Sarah!

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

(Remains silent for a moment while trying to remember) Oh... Sarah, it's you. I haven't heard from you in a long time.

SARAH:

Well... yes... but *(She stops. Both of them remain silent for some time.)*

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

(Carefully) And how are you feeling now, Sarah? Any news since your last call, several months ago?

SARAH:

Yes, doctor. That's the reason why I'm calling you...
(Silence)

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

Go ahead, Sarah. *(Expectantly)*

SARAH:

(Quietly) Something happened, doctor, last night...

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

(He stops his writing, becomes more attentive.) Something happened to you last night?

SARAH:

(Speaks loudly and with tension.) You know it did! Why do you pretend that you don't?!

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

What is going on with you, Sarah?

SARAH:

You mean, what is going on with us, doctor?! *(The psychiatrist remains silent, worried, thinking fast and trying to understand the situation.)* You're not saying anything! Are you still there?!

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

Of course... But, to be honest with you, I can't understand what it is that you're trying to tell me.

SARAH:

(With audible disturbance in her voice, which gradually becomes quiet and more personal.) Last night, didn't we... we had an encounter...

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

(He's surprised, but remains calm.) You're saying that we had an encounter? You and I?

SARAH:

Yes. We were together, you know... in that way. And it was so beautiful... We were so close. *(Her voice becomes louder)*

and aggressive.) Why are you acting as if you know nothing of this?! I had intercourse with you last night! And now I'm carrying your child! That's why I'm calling! I have conceived!

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

(Amazed, he's silent for a moment) Sarah! As far as I can remember, and as far as you can remember, too, I believe, the two of us haven't had an encounter for several months back. And that was on a professional basis, about your mother's problems. Do you think that my memory is true and based on reality?

SARAH:

Yes. But it's true only as far as that kind of "encounter" is concerned.

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

What other kind can there be, Sarah?

SARAH:

(With unhidden passion in her voice.) The encounter we had last night was different from the other, ordinary, regular ones. It was something special. Just like you and I are special, unique...

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

I'm afraid that this experience that you're talking about, of being special, is something outside the limits of real-

ity. The same as your experience of an encounter, which you have described.

SARAH:

(The tension turns into aggression.) But, doctor! It has to be real... It happened!

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

Calm down, Sarah. I'm trying to give you the right explanation of the condition you're in and of the experiences which have caused it.

SARAH:

What is this supposed to mean?!

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

I'm trying to help you understand your current condition... First, let us try and differentiate whether the encounter took place in your mind or in some actual place?

SARAH:

No... Well, in my mind... of course. You know that I have great power and can do anything I want with my thoughts! And last night... Suddenly, you somehow appeared in my house... And, it happened... that... you know what. The important thing is that now I'm pregnant with your child! *(Short pause)* When am I going to see you?

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

I believe that, because of the condition you're currently in, you should receive psychiatric help as soon as possible.

SARAH:

(Begins to shout in anger.) Psychiatric help! For this?! This has nothing to do with psychiatry! This is only yours and mine! You're just trying to avoid your responsibility, for what you've done. You want to abandon me and your child?! In that case, if that's how things are, I'm going to have it on my own! How can you do this to me?! You got me pregnant, and now you want to run away.

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

(His voice remains calm.) Sarah, you're becoming aggressive. And that is your reaction to the events which take place inside your imagination, isn't that so?

SARAH:

Yes... But, no! I'm pregnant! It doesn't matter if the event took place in my imagination. Besides, **ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE TODAY!!**

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

I have to ask you, once again, to focus on the fact which you have confirmed, that the event took place in your mind, and not in actual physical reality.

SARAH:

Yes. So what? What are you trying to say?

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

When the fantasies overwhelm the mind, the person whom this is happening to begins to identify his or her fantasy with reality. That person becomes convinced that whatever he or she thinks is reality, and whatever he or she wishes for, can be fulfilled in reality. That is the basis for your feeling of omnipotence... but, Sarah, let me ask you this: Is it possible that everything one imagines and wishes for can be really, actually fulfilled?

SARAH:

(Confused, but only for a moment.) Well... The others certainly can't do that. But I can! I'm special. I have reached the power to be able to touch and create what others can't, through my brain waves...

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

(Interrupts her.) As for this feeling you have, I have to tell you that you're not the only one. *(Pause)* As a matter of fact, there are a lot of other people who feel themselves to be just as capable as you... Unfortunately, when that sort of feeling becomes their permanent conviction and belief, they usually end up in mental institutions.

SARAH:

(Upset) What? You want to put me in a lunatic asylum? You're trying to say that I belong among those people, over there?

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

Calm down, Sarah! I'm only a psychiatrist responsible for the mental health of the people who come to me for help. I only give my professional opinion and I treat people. My role is not to put people in lunatic asylums, as you call them, or to be someone's prison guard... That is up to the government.

SARAH:

I don't have a problem! I'm pregnant! You're the father of my child! You can't convince me that it's not true!

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

(He's already tired and exasperated.) Sarah, maybe it would be better if you came here with your mother so we could discuss this problem again, together?

SARAH:

Is tomorrow all right?

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

(Opens his appointment book and briefly goes through it.) Yes. Tomorrow at noon is fine.

SARAH:

See you tomorrow, then.

THE PSYCHIATRIST:

Good-bye. (*He lays down the receiver. His hand remains in that position for a long time, until the phone rings one more time. He lifts up the receiver again.*) Yes?

END OF SCENE ONE