

Visit from Cassandra

I was alone that evening, working upon my internet-news to dig up some more details upon the American government's attack upon its own citizens on Sept. 11, 2001. This activity has torn me away from many friends who do not realize what this was just the beginning of – and perhaps me on the other side who overestimates this in growing paranoia. Nevertheless, my investigations have uncovered much more evidence that, in turn, has only further deepened the cleft between my friends and me. Worse, even my family seems to have got enough, tonight they went together to the cinema, leaving me home alone to complete my research.

I must really have been a nuisance these last months, considering which kind of weather my family was challenging on their way to the cinema. "There's no bad weather, just bad clothing," a neighbour once said, quoting an old German saying. There must have been a lot of bad clothing tonight, failing to keep out the cold, stormy wind and the heavy rain. I had worked for about half an hour and rose to throw another piece of wood on the fire. Suddenly, the doorbell rang. I did not expect any disturbance and considered not to answer it, but then I thought of somebody standing freezing in the rain, seeing the lights in the house and smelling the smoke which came out of the chimney. How could I not open? After all, we are living in a peaceful part of the World.

So I opened the door, just to see a strange creature standing outside. It was an old woman – which I know now, but then I could only see a small person, really dressed for the current climate. I saw no face and no hands, no single area of human flesh. A long scarf, then some dark glasses and a hat covered her face. 'Not the time of the day, nor that of the year to wear sunglasses,' I thought. I decided not to open the door completely to the stranger.

"Can I help you?" I started.

"You are James Smith," she said with a dark, hollow voice.

"Thanks for this information. I believe you are right."

Surprisingly, these harmless words seemed to upset the old lady: "No, nobody believes me!" she almost screamed.

"All right, I don't want to quarrel about it. I am not James Smith, try next door, and have a nice evening further on." I wanted to close the main entrance door but the old lady pulled herself together and continued.

"Stop, I have something important to say to Mr. Smith, and I know you are him."

Fortunately, I had closed the door to the entrance, keeping the living room warm. I already longed back there but certainly felt no inspiration to invite my anonymous guest to join me. "OK, let's get it over, I shall not comment on my identity. Please deliver your information, if it is that important."

In a very commanding manner, she spoke it right out: "Stop your investigation immediately, or you shall get killed."

"Are you the one who is going to kill me?"

"No, I am simply warning you. Stop working against the inevitable, which shall occur whatever you small citizen is thinking and doing to affect its proceeding. You have already angered leading persons and if you continue, it shall cost you your life.

I laughed: "So many people have raised their voice against the Worlds downward course – it would be quite manslaughter to deal with them all."

"Yes," the visitor added thoughtful, "that is what they all think. Simultaneously, nobody wants to hear the warnings. It was the same in Germany in 1934, 35 and even 36: They all thought that it was just a transitional era, soon the game would be over and happy days return. I warned them then, too, and nobody would believe it."

"But you cannot compare 2004 with 1934; civilization has improved a lot since then. There are no mass genocides – except ...," I made a thoughtful intermission, then continued in another direction, "but at least people are not being kept in large concentration camps nowadays."

"No, they use a different term for it. I guess you have found a lot of other incredible things in the course of your intense study of the World. Are you politically a leftist, Mr. Smith?"

"I do not think that opposing crime should be considered a left-wing political activity. At least, I do not consider myself anything the like."

"But listen to my warning, I shall not repeat it: stop working with all these various news or you shall let your life. Please *believe* me!" Strange that she used this word, at least I knew that I should deny."

"No, I don't believe you. Was that all?"

Although I could not see her face, her voice betrayed that she was now smiling. "Yes, that was all. Goodbye Mr. Smith." She turned around. Her voice had not been very sad; it was as if she had just delivered a message as an item of duty, expecting my negative response from the beginning.

"Sorry, you know my name – which is yours?"

She did not turn, and ghostlike, a trembling voice sounded from all directions: "Cassandra." Then she was gone.

I went back to the fireplace and warmed my hands. Then I rewarded myself with a large glass of an old whisky – should I soon die, I did not want to leave this bottle behind. I reconsidered what had happened: Cassandra, she was the mythological figure of Troy, who was cursed by Apollo so that she would always know the future and nobody would ever believe her warnings. And after roughly 3,000 years, she should suddenly turn up at my door. Ridiculous, how many other people would then have reported that they had been warned and only later realized that Cassandra had been right? On the other hand, I thought, if most of these people now were dead? And there may be other reasons not to report that you had been warned. Probably, thousands of people had been warned not to go to work at the World Trade Center on 9/11 and still, only a few have admitted so. Probably the others are simply ashamed of their absence that day?

Cassandra the ghost – what a brilliant illusion! I shall recommend this whisky – but I only started drinking after returning, and my sleeves are still wet, so I must have been at the door. Even if it is a dream, it is an interesting one, so I had better write it down before the dream completely vaporizes.

It took me an hour, and then I returned to my Internet search upon the New World Order. Now the doorbell rings again. Perhaps my wife forgot her keys? Okay, don't chime so impatiently, I shall open the door right away.

The police found this story on the victim's computer but later denied having done so. However, it was mailed to his friend, who prefers to stay anonymous. Apparently, Apollo has never heard of eMails.