

insect
an entomological fairy tale
by David J. Keffer

Ethnographers travel to distant lands to collect and study fables in order to better understand a people. "insect" is just such a fairy tale, a cultural treasure of untold rarity and significance, the sole remnant of a civilization now otherwise forgotten, its very existence only a discounted rumor. Even this story was hard to procure; its molecules had been dispersed to the far corners of the Earth. The author of "insect" scoured the globe and collected those molecules. He assembled them into an ordered sequence of words that seemed best to him, though there can be little doubt that they correspond only peripherally to the original fairy tale. It is the best that can be done, since the culture that created the fairy tale is both absent and perhaps imagined.

Trapped within a palace following a holocaust, the inhabitants—two queens, one dysfunctional and the other petulant, an angry gardener, a lovelorn soldier, a jester, a court magician, a distraught minstrel and an oracle hiding behind the boiler—seek to survive in their post-apocalyptic isolation. The memory of the King haunts the palace and animates its denizens, including 33 gargoyles, a cove of dryads, a stone goat named Degtyaryov, and a wishing well minnow named Hieronymus. If the aftermath of the apocalypse doesn't consume the palace inhabitants, then perhaps the ambiguous haunting of the King will suffice.



About the Author

David Keffer is a professor at the University of Tennessee and an autodidact in the realm of world literature. He has currently published 8 novels and 3 illustrated stories at the Poison Pie Publishing House.

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