



Moving castle

Stirring her morning coffee again and again, Charlotte was replaying in her mind the drama of last night dream. The emotion she had experienced was still vibrating and seemed more real than her floating waking mood. She had a vivid memory of a huge tapestry displaying a three-master leaving a harbour and also a windmill in the country, and this young man arising suddenly, dressed like a Van Dyck model, and his words still echoing: "By God's will, I am now a renunciant. I leave you!". Her pain was so intense that she woke up with a start, her heart beating hard. After a while, she dropped back and the dream resumed. Standing in front of the tapestry, a man all in black looked at her with arrogance, turned back and... the alarm clock rang.

Charlotte's coffee was cold by now and she realized that she had to rush to get to her company Head Office in Paris in time for the yearly financial report. She spent all morning trying hard to focus on the CEO's presentation with flashes of her dream arising from time to time. After lunch, she felt like escaping from modern life and went straight to the nearby Drouot auction house. A dozen rooms were opened for display. She was wandering absentmindedly from one room to the next when, entering room 8, she had an impression of déjà vu. The atmosphere had something so familiar. Where had she seen that furniture, that chinaware, the paintings, the jewellery, the clothes before? Suddenly, she stopped, in shock, in front of a tapestry. This was her dream tapestry. Her body was shaking, shivering. She stopped moving in disbelief. A woman commented to her: "this is the masterpiece from a Flemish castle, it seems they have emptied the castle for this sale. Beautiful, isn't it?" Charlotte couldn't say if it was beautiful or not. It was more like home.

During the following months, she spent most of her spare-time investigating the castle history. At last, she discovered that in the early XVII^e century, a rich fabric merchant and his wife had inherited the castle. In the local church books, Charlotte found an act of repentance signed by the husband where he related his misdeed. He had abandoned his wife and fled his trading, convinced by a sectarian preacher that wealth and women were supreme evil. After 10 years of a wandering life, he realized that he had been misled and he came back to the castle, full of regrets. The dwelling of old happy days was empty: his wife had died of grief.

Charlotte wondered how she was connected to this story. Was it a case of dream telepathy? Was the castle owner so moved by the removal that he had unconsciously transmitted the message she had received in her dream? She didn't know him, so why her? Was it because of her regular attendance to Drouot auction house? But why did she suffer so intensely in her dream when hearing the words "I leave you!"? Was she concerned at a deeper level? Was it the story of one of her previous lives?

She couldn't prove her assumptions and she nearly forgot about it until one day her husband offered her a tin of Belgian biscuits with a Delft style lid showing a three-master leaving a harbour and also a windmill. Was it time for moving house?

Chantal Ménissier
23.09.2015