

## Visited by a Phantom

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No river flowed when I met Edward Albee.

My life stopped from River

(refers to a piece I once wrote about childhood)

April 1962 to November 1966,

I had no brain. He affected me like a tremendous narcotic... his eyes... his voice... fame... his wealth, his fierce celebrated work, I was spellbound from the moment I stepped into his workshop January 1962 at Circle in the Square until I left or London in November 1966.

It is hard to understand but during that time in which included the productions of Funnyhouse, I was in a stupor. His attention pulled me to the edge of sanity. He praised my work. And I almost went berserk.

I wrote him countless hundreds of letters before Funnyhouse opened and after it closed. He became the center of the Earth, his promise to produce Funnyhouse (it took two years) made me as crazy as anything had before or has since. It was a madness that I think now had little to do with him. But when I recovered from this illness in 1966, I never wanted to see Edward Albee again. I went to England, but during those previous months, these many months in which I seldom saw him I was dreaming of being with him in places that I read in the evening Post that he was in. I'd read his play was in Germany and I'd have a terrible agonized day dream about being in Germany with him. I remember reading a long article about the making of Virginia Woolf (film) and sitting in the apt at 400 CPW, becoming sick with hopeless fantasy. I never ever want to be in that state again.

He gave a party for me at 27 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street for the opening of Funnyhouse. I had a blue dress. As the curtain went down on the play he told me he had an opening night present. It was an emerald brooch that he said he brought from Russia and it belonged to a countess, he pinned it on my blue dress.

It was January 4, 1964 at the East End Theatre. I believed at that moment that my life would unfold into eons, never-ending, and I would be the object of his love and he would be the object of mine.

I did not know that for the rest of my life I would see him only a very few times. But the next time I saw him after the opening was late January.

He called to say Funnyhouse would close, they were losing too much money. He said he was leaving for London and invited me to come to the ship United States for a breakfast before he sailed.

(I had travelled on the United States from Le Havre with my family in returning from Rome)

I arrived at the stateroom to a room filled with people.

I had fever.

I was in a stupor.

Crowds were talking around me.

All I knew is that he was leaving. And the play had opened and it had closed.

In the following months after the closing of Funnyhouse I must have written another hundreds of letters to Edward... 27 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street... I never saw him. Once a friend went with me and we rang his doorbell and sat on the steps.

I moved to the Village for a few months just to be near him. I only saw him twice on the street. He seemed faraway, formal, as if he barely knew me.

Finally, I went to London. He had affected me as no other person ever had. It was catastrophic for me. Fifty years later, today, I wonder why I did not kill myself, I was so despairing.

An actress asked once, "Did you have an affair?" "No not even a kiss."

He praised me: and he praised me publicly to people and to famous people. And I went crazy.

It was as if Clark Gable (my childhood Gable in It Happened One Night) walked down from the screen and we had a grand wedding, and then disappeared.

I see now it was as if I were visited by a phantom for a spell.