



Budapest's Mysteries

By Suzanne Vanweddingen

Budapest' Mysteries:

*A fanfiction based on
the TV show « The Librarians »
and
the movies « The Librarian »
on TNT*

written between December 2014 and January 2015.

*Published for general entertainment on
<http://archiveofourown.org>*

Summary:

While visiting an old friend in Budapest, Flynn Carsen the Librarian, is struck with the strangest of hallucination. It will take a Guardian and three Librarians in training to come to his rescue! But things are not always what they appear to be or what one hopes them to be...

*This is a work of fan-fiction, with no affiliation to Electric Entertainment or TNT
who are the rightful owners of the franchise.*

*No profit has been made from this story,
none is intended to be made other than the pleasure to write
about a fictional universe and characters.*

Did I mention that I'm quite fond of the Librarian?

The sound of small bells and a soft humming reached his ears and he stopped to listen. The sounds seemed to come from an alley on his left, calling to him. He could have chosen to ignore them and keep walking but in his experience, it was not the thing to do. Instead, he turned his back on the street full of noises and tourists to enter the dark passage opening between two ancient buildings.

He carefully looked around him. Following an intuition didn't mean that he shouldn't be cautious. For all he knew, he could be walking into a trap. There was nothing special about this alley. It was dark and deserted. There were no windows on the buildings' walls.

He soon reached the end of the passage and raised an eyebrow when he saw the bricked wall. Resting his back on it, he looked towards the street he had just left. Its lights shone towards him. He could make the people passing by, not paying attention to the entrance of the alley. He could still hear the bells, closer now. The humming was a lullaby, it seemed familiar and yet he knew that he had never heard it before. Closing his eyes, he let the music fill his head. He was almost instantly transported into the world of memories. The face of Colonel Baird appeared and he smiled, remembering how fast they bounded. He promised himself to send her a postcard, to let her know that he was fine. He wondered how she was doing, now that she had to look over the librarians in training. Was she getting along with Jenkins? Again, his intuition told him that he made the right decision, leaving her in charge. Still, he missed her. He tried to cast out the lingering feeling of sadness that was within him since he lost Cal. And Judson. And Marlene. The humming was getting louder and he suddenly felt a weakness taking over his mind and body. He fought back, realising that he was unable to open his eyes. A gentle voice whispered him to let go, to trust her, that the life he had known was over and that it was vain to hold on as he was doing. He resisted, realising too late that he had been trapped. He had to jump back into reality, out of its reach. It took him all his will and when he finally broke free, he felt heavily on the ground.

He was still in the dark passage. There was no more bells, no more humming. Just him laying on the floor. He got up, sighed, and walked back into the street, deciding that he wouldn't follow his intuition for the rest of the day.

The bar was highly unusual. It looked as if he had been out of business for quite some time and yet it was still crowded. The dirty wallpaper was coming off, old painting hung next to out of date adverts. Even the furniture seemed to come from various locations if not from the local recycling centre. The wooden floor itself was in serious need for cleaning. The poor light was coming from the window featuring a set of tired curtains.

“Flynn!”

A familiar voice called from the back of the establishment. Of all places, Zoltán Farkas had to choose this one. Yet the Librarian wasn't really surprised. Zoltán spent most of its time in the basement of the Petöfi Literary Museum, in the archives, trying to sort documents accumulated over time. It was only normal that he would choose a bar bearing some similarities with his workplace.

Soon Flynn could see the archivist. He was sitting at a solitary table at the back end of the room. His features were strangely yellow, thanks to the desk lamp casting some light of the same colour. The man stood up as Carsen approached before hugging him in a friendly way. Flynn noted that his gesture was driven more by relief than by joy, which was certainly not a good sign.

The Librarian sat on the chair opposite to Farkas' and watched as the Hungarian ordered two drinks. Zoltán had put on some weight since Carsen last saw him. He had also lost most of his hair, cutting what was left very short. He was wearing a dark grey suit with a white shirt, the perfect outfit for someone willing to get noticed in such a place. Flynn turned and made a group of pretty girls in their twenties, sitting not too far from them.

“Some things never change,” smiled Carsen, while Farkas winked.

Both men were about the same age but the dark circles around the archivist's eyes made him look older. Flynn wondered if his looking so tired was part of the reason why he had given him the call, asking him to travel to Budapest as soon as possible.

As if he had read his mind, Zoltán's smile faded:

“I take it that you wish to know why I asked you to come and visit me in such a short notice. I made a strange discovery and I'm not too sure what to make of it.”

Carsen didn't react, waiting for the archivist to be more specific. Farkas hesitated only a few seconds before he went on:

“As you know, I have been tasked with the Literary archives for the last five years. It's a never-ending work; one I feel great pride in accomplishing. Over the years I have make progresses and was therefore able to free a part of the main

Archives' room. That's where I discovered it."

"Discovered what?" asked Flynn, whose scientific curiosity had been triggered.

"The door. You probably are aware of the natural underground running under Budapest..."

The Librarian nodded. He knew quite a good deal about it actually. How the underground was naturally created, how it was used as shelter during WWII and how the Soviets installed a ventilation system in case of a nuclear blast.

"Well, once I opened the door, I discovered a passage to the underground and a room full of old books. Most of them are written in a foreign language which I don't understand, and since I remembered how enthusiastic you can get when faced with a challenge I decided to call you on a hunch."

The archivist grinned comically as he just realised how silly his whole story sounded, how he had lured his friend thousand of kilometres from home. Flynn took a sip from his glass and grinned. The beverage was surprising in taste, unusually strong.

"Don't worry for that," he finally said. "I can always enjoy a change of scenery..."

Or was he?

Zoltán was extremely proud to be in charge of the archives and pointed the engraved plate on a sad door leading to the museum's basement. It had his name on it along with his title "Archivist".

"I don't get that many visitors, but should they search for me, at least they would know where I'm located."

Flynn nodded politely. He was not convinced anyone would ever look for him at all but he kept silent. Instead, he followed Farkas in the staircase behind the door. It led to the basement made of walls of heavy stones, small chambers, not a single window. It was obviously a very old place. Carsen realised that the archivist was probably living in denial. There was absolutely no way the museum cared about his work. Piles of documents and books could be seen everywhere on the floor, there were no bookshelves, and just one single table in the main hallway. The Librarian peered into some of the chambers while they walked past them. They were all similar in size and shape. All were full. Flynn shivered at the thought of the work that still was to be done. As if he had read into his mind, Farkas looked at him:

"Most of those rooms haven't been touched in decades, but I'm a very patient man, I will be successful in reorganising the premises."

Zoltán stopped and pointed one of the rooms:

"This is my office."

It was no different from the other chambers except for the furniture that replaced the usual heap of documents. A metallic desk and a matching closet that dated back to the 1960s. The only modern pieces of material were a laptop, scanner and printer. Flynn was even surprised that the archivist had been allowed to have such tools.

Farkas grabbed one torch and motioned his visitor to follow him. Carsen couldn't help but compare the basement to the Library. Not that it could sustain the comparison of course, but it had become a habit over the years. Whenever he found himself in a place that worshipped knowledge, he would think about his library and its treasure. Only this time, a wave of nostalgia washed through him. In a way, Zoltán was like himself. But unlike him, he hadn't lost his precious archives. His safe haven wasn't threatened by an evil brotherhood either.

The Librarian took a deep breath, bracing himself to focus on Farkas who was walking towards the deep end of the gallery while explaining how he had made his way through the documents, how the basement had scared him at first because of the huge amount of work.

"Mind you, it came to the point where the employees dropped the documents

from the stairs! That's when they decided to hire me. They needed someone to clean the mess before the whole museum would sink in papers!"

"Very Kafkaian indeed," commented Flynn whose vivid imagination had pictured the chaos. "You did a fine job cleaning the gallery."

"Didn't I? But it's far from finished. Trust me, I'll be the archivist until my retirement and maybe even after!"

Carsen smiled at the thought that he would be the Librarian until his death...

The sound of small bells suddenly caught his attention and he frowned.

"Where does that come from?" he asked out loud.

"What?"

"Don't you hear?"

"Hear what?"

"Bells. Small ones..."

Zoltán casted him a puzzled glance and Flynn motioned his colleague to keep going. They soon reached a chamber that had been cleared of its contents.

"All documents have been sorted, scanned, labelled and have been entered in the museum's catalogue. I found the door by accident."

He held the torch towards one of the corner and the Librarian took a step forward to examine the wall. There! A copper ring was coming out of one of the grey stones. He pulled it and a portion of the wall turned towards him, revealing a dark and narrow hallway. Carsen remained still. A soft voice was coming from the darkness, singing a now familiar lullaby.

"Tell me that you hear it..." he whispered to Farkas who, in turn, looked at him with concern.

"Are you alright Flynn? I don't hear anything. And that's the beauty of it. We are about to enter a world of silence, forgotten from everyone."

The Librarian grinned. So much for his promise to ignore his intuition. It was screaming that he shouldn't walk through that door...

There was only space for one person at a time so the archivist decided to go first since he knew what to expect. The Librarian followed suit, trying his best to ignore the music that was now officially an auditive hallucination. He focused on the surroundings instead. The electric torch Farkas was holding provided the only light in the passage. Yet the walls were dry and the air was pure, as if...

"There must be a ventilation system somewhere," Carsen commented out loud.

"My thought exactly when I first discovered the passage. I am pretty sure everything has been set up to fulfil a purpose."

"Which would be?"

"The conservation and protection of Knowledge of course!"

A picture of the Library came instantly to Flynn's mind while the song grew louder as if that particular thought had triggered something. The Librarian rested for a moment, eyes closed, emptying his mind. The music faded as he did so.

"Here we are," finally said Zoltán, before stepping aside to allow his companion to stand next to him.

He pointed the torch in front of him and the Librarian could see what looked like a cave.

"Hold that for me, please," ordered Farkas, before he gave Carsen the torch.

He then clapped into his hands twice and turned towards Flynn to witness his reaction.

The cave's ceiling had started to glow. Soon Flynn could make out constellations, also meant to light the circular cave beneath. The Librarian instantly knew that they were standing in a cartographer's lair. A map of the world had been opened on the big table set in the middle of the room. A wooden closet with dozens of drawers probably welcomed more maps. Flynn also recognised famous atlases in the nearby bookshelf as well as various tools in display cases.

"Most interesting indeed," he noted with admiration. "Were you able to identify the owner of this room?"

"Sadly no," admitted Zoltán with disappointment. "That's why I wanted to show it to you. I thought that you might be of assistance."

Flynn walked in and started looking around. The amount of dust covering the map on the table as well as the bookshelves indicated that no human soul had set

foot in the cave for quite a long time.

“If what you said about the archives is true, and if we consider that the door you found is the only way in, then we can assume that it’s been decades since someone went here.”

Farkas agreed from the other side of the room. He was examining the content of a table display case.

“You should come and see that, Flynn.”

Something in his voice didn’t sound quite right. Even his posture was funny. The Librarian crossed the room to join him, but didn’t dare looking down at the table. Instead he put his hand on his colleague’s shoulder:

“Zoltán? What is so interesting about...”

He couldn’t finish his sentence. Before he realised what was happening, Farkas had straightened and grabbed him by the back of the neck applying a strength the Librarian never imagined he would possess.

“You shall look for yourself.”

Tendrils of fear reached to Flynn when he noticed that the archivist’s eyes had turned black. He wasn’t himself anymore...

“Let me go!” yelled Carsen, while trying to free himself.

It was of no use. The other forced him to bend over the display case but the Librarian closed his eyes shut, his mind racing. He had no idea what was on that table and he couldn’t afford the luxury of checking if he didn’t want to end up like the archivist. Using the table as leverage, he pressed his palms against it and tried to push himself away. But the other tightened his grip on his neck. Flynn let out a cry of pain.

“Stop struggling, Librarian.”

The voice was no longer belonging to Zoltán. It was deep in tone, dangerous even. Carsen couldn’t see a way out, unless... He forced himself to think about the Library. Instantly the lullaby grew stronger. Flynn kept thinking about his home, with all his heart. The song was now so loud that it was starting to be painful. The Librarian called memories to him: Judson, Charlene, Excalibur and Eve. His Guardian, the woman he missed so dearly... Bells were now ringing in his ears, the music was deafening. He mentally called Eve for help. He could see her so clearly in his mind that he wanted to reach for her. But as both were about to hold hands, the bells turned into a piercing sound and Flynn fell unconscious.

A few weeks ago, Colonel Eve Baird wouldn't have taken a dream so seriously. But now that she knew that magic was for real, things were a little different. She was sound asleep when she heard Flynn's voice. That's when the dream, or rather the nightmare, started. She found herself in a cold cave. At first, she thought that it was a part of the Library. The place looked familiar while very different at the same time. Then she saw a bald man holding Carsen by the neck, pushing him towards a table display case. Even in her sleep, Eve felt the urge to protect the Librarian. She ran towards him, but started to fly instead. Next thing she knew, she was in the air, against the wall behind the display case. From her position, she could see the stranger pressing Flynn against the table. Carsen was trying to free himself from his grasp, with no luck. His eyes were shut as if he didn't want to look at what was in the display case. The colonel looked down, but the glass was covered in dust, preventing her from seeing what was underneath. Then she heard it again. The Librarian was calling her name. She looked at him and realised that he was staring at her. He extended his hand. Her heartbeats went faster as she tried to grab him. But just as she was about to succeed, the Librarian's face turned pale and he passed out.

"Nooo!"

Her own scream woke her up and she sat on the bed, heart racing. Seconds later, Jenkins burst into his room and put on the lights. He was holding a candlestick in the hand as an improvised weapon. He was wearing old-fashioned pyjamas and a nightcap with a fluffy bobble. The sight was so grotesque that Eve remained speechless. Jake, Cassandra and Ezekiel were right behind him. All shared the same look of fear and concern.

"What is going on? Why on Earth did you scream like that? Do you want me to have a heart attack?" fired Jenkins.

She jumped out of bed and faced him.

"Flynn. He is in trouble," she said.

Jenkins raised an eyebrow and, remembering that he was still holding the candlestick, lowered it.

"The Librarian is always in trouble. It's part of his job. Or his curse."

"No, I mean, he is in serious danger. I saw *him*."

"What do you mean, you saw him?" intervened Jake.

"He called for help in my dream..."

Eve realised how crazy this sounded but she couldn't shake the feeling of

urgency still within her. Ezekiel sneered. Cassandra had him stop with a menacing glance. Jenkins was strangely silent. He contemplated the woman in front of him. He knew that she was telling the truth; the only problem was that he didn't know what to make of it. The Librarian had been seen in Budapest, but it was only hearsay and even if his location was accurate, they had no way of figuring out where exactly.

"You believe me, don't you?" whispered Baird.

"I do," admitted Jenkins. "It has happened before. Only usually the Librarian gets the message, they don't deliver it to their Guardian... But I guess that he would probably pretend that it was the old way, that things have change, blah blah..."

"Is he making fun of Flynn?" wondered Jake.

Ezekiel and Cassandra simply nodded in reply.

"O.K., great. Get the magical portal thingy ready while I'm get dressed," Eve ordered.

Jenkins didn't move.

"Oh, oh..." whispered Ezekiel. "Word of wisdom: let's vanish and let the two of them discuss adult matters..."

Silently, the three librarians stepped back into the safety of the corridor.

"It is not that easy," cautiously said Jenkins. "As I keep repeating – not that anyone listens or cares anyway – it is not safe to use that device. And I'm only talking about a standard use, when we know which location to input. We don't even know where Flynn is!"

Baird's eyes shone with anger:

"Are you telling me that you *don't want to help him?*"

"We *can't* help him, that's different."

"The least we can do is *try* at least!" She shouted back.

Jenkins gave in to her argument, realising that nothing he would say would make her change her mind.

"Alright... I'll prepare everything. I just hope that you realise how dangerous it is..."

"I do. But I know what I'm doing. You need to trust me on that," said Eve with confidence.

They were waiting for her downstairs, everyone expressing the same concern, except Jenkins who was preparing the travel device. He was still wearing his pyjamas. The young librarians weren't. Jake didn't give Eve a chance to argue.

"We have decided that it's far too dangerous for you to go there alone. You need us on your side."

"I don't think so," retorted the colonel. "This is a rescue mission, I can't put you at risk, nor can I insure your safety."

"Oh, come on, you trained us, we are ready," argued Ezekiel.

"We promise, we won't stay in your way," added Cassandra.

"I simply hope that you know what you're doing," grumbled Jenkins, a way of letting her know everything was ready.

"I do," said firmly Baird.

"I have set Budapest's coordinates. This is all I can do. It is up to you now."

Eve nodded before approaching the artefact. She rested a hand on it and focused on Flynn. The link between the Library and its Librarian was so strong that she had little doubt about her mission. She was the Guardian. Her job was to protect Flynn and the Library would help her find him. When she felt that she was ready, she went straight to the door to open it.

Cassandra's cry, dictated both by surprise and fear didn't slow the colonel's resolution.

"Oh my," whispered Jake.

"It's bad..." replied Jones.

Even Jenkins looked worried.

The door had opened in a cave full of bookshelves and display cases. But what had attracted the Librarians' attention was the man holding in a rather menacing way an unconscious Flynn Carsen near a table display case.

"Keep the door open, I'm right back!" shouted Eve before running in the cave.

The remaining trio simply shared a glance before rushing behind her while Jenkins sighed heavily.

"Do I really look like a doorman?" he mumbled to himself.

Eve hadn't really thought her plan through. But one thing was sure: she was

determined to get Flynn back by any means necessary. She rushed into the cave straight to the man threatening the Librarian, crashing into him. Not the most delicate approach, but a very effective one. The shock forced the assailant to let go of Flynn who fell on the concrete floor. The colonel noticed two things when the unknown man turned to face her. One, he wasn't the usual "bad guy" type. He was more of the scholar type, with his almost bald head and his old suit. Two, his eyes were totally black.

"He has been possessed!" Shouted Eve to the trio of Librarians who was keeping out of the way as they had promised. "Take Flynn and get the hell out of here while I keep him busy!"

She looked around but there was nothing she could use as a weapon. In her short experience as well in her not so short imagination, possessed people had the annoying habit of being both stronger and tougher than your average hero. The man was closing to her, apparently upset that he had been distracted.

"Alright, it's now or never," whispered Baird to herself before punching him violently in the face.

To her great surprise, he fell back, knocked out.

"Wow," admired Stones.

He and Jones had stopped midway of their escape towards the door, carrying Flynn. Both seemed equally astonished that a bad guy could be beaten so easily.

"Let's not waste any more time," ordered Eve. "Go, go, go!"

She was about to join them when she realised that Cassandra was still standing near the display table. Actually she had her back turned on it and was looking at it through a small compact mirror.

"Cassandra?"

"I think I know what happened to that poor man!" Said the young Librarian, quite happily. "The only problem is... I don't know how to retrieve it without looking at it directly."

Eve looked down at the scholar. He was still out, allowing them a few more precious minutes to spend in the cave.

"O.K., here is what we are going to do. You will be my eyes while I get the artefact."

She walked to the table, turning her head so she wouldn't make eyes contact with it.

"Open the case, and look for a round object. It's a pendant. It should feel very cold, I guess. Try a little more on your left, no, I mean on your right. Sorry, it's confusing with the mirror."

Eve was growing impatient. She had her back on the assailant, was pretty much defenceless should he come to his senses...

“This was a stupid...”

Her hand rested on a round, cold thing.

“I have it!”

“Just put it in your pocket and don’t look at it!”

Baird obeyed. She and Cassandra then raced to the door, just as the man was getting up again. As both women were closing the door shut, they saw that his eyes were back to a more normal colour. He also seemed quite disoriented...

“May I simply point out that this is a table and not a bed?” Jenkins sighed.

Flynn was resting on the Annex’ main room table. The rest of the group was gathered next to it.

“First things first,” said firmly the Guardian. “Jenkins...?”

“I know. Tea. On my way.”

He seemed almost too happy to leave the room.

“Now, can someone explain to me what this is?”

She plunged her hand in her coat’s pocket.

“NO!”

The frightened look on Cassandra’s face was quite scary and Eve suspended her move.

“Alright...” She commented slowly. “You mind telling me a little more about that reaction of yours?”

“I need a handkerchief.”

“Excuse me?”

“Seriously, I need a handkerchief.”

Ezekiel, who seemed to enjoy himself very much, handed one to the young Librarian who, in turn, gave it to Baird:

“Put the stone in the handkerchief and then you can pull it out. But it must be entirely protected by the fabric, otherwise we will be in trouble.”

“We will be in trouble because...?” Asked the Guardian.

“Because it’s Medusa. Or at least a part of her.”

Eve carefully put the artefact in the handkerchief and took it out of her pocket, her fingers clenched around it. She glanced at Flynn on the table. He was still out, making her wonder if the stone was somehow responsible for his condition.

“If I remember correctly,” said Baird, “Medusa was turning whoever looked at her directly into stone. Perseus was the one who finally defeated her. I think that he decapitated her.”

“Indeed,” agreed Jake. “But it was also said that he tricked her into looking into her own reflexion and that she turned into stone.”

“That’s why I’m now holding a piece of Medusa. And that’s also why we can’t look at the stone, otherwise we... what? Fall into a coma? Get possessed?”

“I think that Medusa reaches to everyone looking at that stone in the way we witnessed in Budapest.”

It was Jenkins who had answered. He had returned carrying a tray.

“Mmh, winter tea. Just what we need to cheer us up,” whispered Cassandra while the others ignored her.

“Yeah, Medusa turns people into zombies,” continued Ezekiel.

“But it didn’t work with Flynn,” noted Eve.

“No, it didn’t.”

Jenkins put the tray on an empty spot on the table then held his palm.

“Can I have the stone? I think it would be preferable to have it out of the way.”

The colonel nodded. The handkerchief changed hands. Eve then focused on her second matter. She walked to the table and shook Flynn. She had the strange feeling to play with a puppet, a body without a soul. She didn’t like that sensation at all and shook the Librarian even more violently. The trio had retreated to a corner of the room, a cup of tea in their hands.

“Why doesn’t he wake up?” Asked Baird to no one in particular.

She took a deep breath before slapping Carsen in the face.

“Ooch,” whispered Stone. “That’s gonna leave a mark.”

Jones and Cillian kept quiet. The Librarian was still not reacting. Eve felt the anger fade away. She gently stroke Flynn’s hair when she realised that his condition was indeed serious and that it was not one of his usual tricks.

“I was right. He was in trouble,” she said softly to Jenkins who had come back and was now standing next to her.

“Yes, you were right.”

“I came too late. I couldn’t save him...”

Her voice trailed off. Jenkins’ was firm when he spoke:

“You did save him. Now all you need to do is to save him again.”

“How?”

“Find a way to reach him.”

#JeSuisCharlie

He was drifting, swallowed by what seemed to be the void. He couldn't help but compare his experience to an astronaut lost in space. Of course, he had never been in that situation, but he was quite sure there were some similarities. He could make out stars here and there, in the darkness. It wasn't cold either. Silence was everywhere.

At first, Flynn had been close to a panic state. Disoriented, unable to walk or stand, he had fought against the very existence of what looked like a different dimension before remembering that he was the Librarian and that there was a strong possibility that the Twilight Zone existed. Once he calmed down, he realised that he was in no immediate danger.

"Wait and see," he whispered.

But he couldn't hear the sound of his own voice. After a while, he simply closed his eyes, allowing his thoughts to drift as well. They brought him instantly to the Annex. Now that he was obviously lost forever, he convinced himself that he had made the right decision by enrolling the young Librarians. As for Eve... she would manage. He trusted her.

It was only when he opened his eyes that he realised that he had fallen asleep. Above him, the sky was of a dark blue. The moon shone brightly. He could hear the sound of water nearby. Was it the sea? Was it a river? He wasn't floating anymore, he was laying on a hard surface, except for his head that was resting on something soft. Carsen felt a hand gently striking his hair before he saw the smiling face. Flynn's eyes opened wide with astonishment.

"Bonjour, Librarian. How do you feel?"

The shock had him jump on his feet.

"No, it can't be. It can't be!" He shouted frantically as he started to pace around, taking mental notes of the surroundings.

They were in a park, on its main walkway that wasn't too brightly lighted, preventing Flynn from deciding whether the park was big or not.

"You are not real!" Decided the Librarian while pointing a finger at the woman who was sitting on a bench. "You're not real because you're dead. I saw you, remember? We were together when... when..."

"The sun rose," finished Simone quietly. "At least that's a good argument. The one before was rather dull. I'm not real because I'm dead? Seriously, Flynn? You could do better than that. Remember that I was already dead when we first met?"

Does it mean that I wasn't real then?"

She was clearly making fun out of him, but he wasn't in the mood for jokes. He was still pacing in front of the bench while the woman considered him with amusement in her eyes.

"It's good to see you again," she finally said.

He instantly froze.

"Why am I here? And were am I? Why are you here? What happened?" He fired.

"So many questions!" Simone laughed. "You haven't changed a bit!"

The Librarian starred at her. She was as he remembered her, beautiful and attractive. He sat next to her and before he even realised what he was doing, he was holding her hand. It was cold.

"In seven years, I certainly changed a little."

Her smile revealed white and perfect teeth. With her free hand, she followed the lines on his face.

"Yes, you look more mature now. It suits you well."

He looked down, suddenly embarrassed.

"You should know that..."

"Yes. Colonel Baird. She is quite a strong woman as well as the perfect Guardian for you. You need to go back to her. You can't stay here."

There was something about the way she said it that made him look up. She was sad. He gently squeezed her hand and whispered:

"I never forgot you."

"I know. That's why I'm here."

Memories rushed in his mind, a mixture of joy and disillusion. He remembered vividly that morning when she had left him, leaving only her ring as a token of her time with him. He didn't wish to go away. Not now. Not like she did.

"You need to leave. It's time," she insisted before their lips joined for one last kiss.

Eve Baird was standing alone in the room, surrounded by silence.

Cassandra, Ezekiel and Jake had left her with Jenkins a little while ago.

"We should give them some privacy. There is nothing we can do anyway," had whispered the red haired girl.

"Too bad we don't know what caused Flynn's coma," Jake whispered back. "We could have undergone some research, find a cure."

"You heard Jenkins, it's the colonel's job, not ours."

Jones' words didn't really convince Cassandra, but she finally admitted that he was right and the three Librarians quietly left.

"Take the time you need," Jenkins advised Eve after they were gone. "You will figure out a way to reach him, Guardians always do."

"If only I knew what provoked this coma..." sighed Eve.

"I can already tell you what didn't cause it. That artefact you retrieved, the one that possessed the poor man you knocked out. It didn't influence the Librarian. He was fighting against it. That's all I can tell. Now I better leave you to your thoughts."

After he was gone, Eve carefully examined Flynn. He didn't seem hurt, except for the bruise on his neck where the man had held him. It wasn't life threatening and didn't explain why the Librarian was still unconscious. He didn't seem to be in pain though, his features were relaxed as if he was into a deep sleep. Could it be that he had been drugged? She recalled her dream and then suddenly, she realised what was going on with him.

She pulled a chair and sat next to the still body resting on the table. She gently took Flynn's hand and held it into hers. It wasn't really warm but it wasn't cold either. A strange feeling started creeping inside her. It was fear. She had been so close to lose him once and now it was starting all over again. She squeezed the hand, trying to get hold of herself, forcing herself to think clearly.

"Alright," she said out loud. "I know that you called me for help, in my dream. Somehow you manage to contact me, but since Jenkins said that it was usually the other way round, my guess is that you're not used to it and that it probably costed you a lot of energy. Since the Library is gone, one can also suppose that your link to it is weakened and therefore it cannot give you the full amount of magic or powers you need for such a stunt. Either your body failed you, or your mind couldn't keep up."

She didn't like the implication of her own reasoning.

“It’s not your body... if it was, then you would simply need to rest. A lot maybe, but still, Jenkins wouldn’t insist on me reaching to you. It’s your mind. What happened to it? I know that you didn’t want to comply and become Medusa’s pet. You probably closed your eyes and called for me. You were resisting while trying to get to me. And then suddenly, you were gone...”

She let that last word hanging in the air, before adding:

“... like the Library.”

She paused and then spoke again a little louder:

“You’re gone like the Library!”

Eve couldn’t explain it, but she knew that she was right. Flynn had escaped in an uncanny but yet very logical way, for a Librarian that is. All she needed to do was to anchor him in her reality. And she knew exactly how.

Letting go of Carsen’s hand, she stood up and contemplated the sleeping man, her own features expressing both hope and anxiety.

“I hope it will work,” she whispered as a good luck spell before leaning over Flynn to kiss him.

Her lips gently made contact with his, but he didn’t react to the soft caress. Eve closed her eyes, calling all her memories of the Librarian, from their first encounter to their first kiss. The emotions almost overwhelmed her and she refrained from sending them back to the shadows of her trained and sharp mind.

And then, she felt as Flynn was giving in the kiss, answering to it, before his arms closed around Baird in an attempt to hold her tight. As if... he was afraid to lose her.

Reluctantly, Eve broke the kiss to get some air. Instantly Flynn’s face contracted as if he was in pain.

“Simone...” He moaned before opening his eyes.

"Simone?"

Eve couldn't believe her ears. She straightened up, surprised by the sudden burst of anger that washed through her body. While she had been worrying sick about the Librarian, he had been thinking about another woman? Unless he *had* been with another one while he was searching for the Library.

"Eve. Of course I meant Eve. I'm so glad to see you Guardian," he quickly said, trying obviously to make amends for his mistake.

Flynn was now fully awake. It had taken him only a second to realise where he was, who was kissing him, and how awfully wrong things looked right now.

He sat and, noting that he was on the table, jumped down to face the colonel whose glance was now ice cold.

"I can explain everything... if... you give me a chance?" promised Flynn with a smile he hope would appear as apologetic as he meant it to be.

"You got only one before I slap you, Librarian."

"Fair enough," replied Carsen.

Unable to keep still, he started pacing in the room while telling Baird about the auditive hallucination, his meeting with Zoltán, the visit to the museum and the archivist's attack.

The Librarian stopped walking around as a thought stroke him:

"By the way, since I woke up here, I guess that I have to thank you for that. How is my poor bald friend?"

"Last time I saw him, he was knocked out... I suspect he must wonder what happened to him."

"The artefact?"

"A Medusa stone. We collected it along with yourself."

"Oh... well, good. Fine."

Carsen seemed somehow lost in his narration, but Baird had no intention of making it easy for him:

"Simone?"

The Librarian sighed and a shadow of smile crossed his lips.

"When I begged the Library to let me reach you by thought, I was in a very

difficult situation."

"Yes, I know, the archivist was trying to force you to look at the stone."

"Oh, so the message actually went through?"

"It did," answered shortly the colonel. "But you had already passed out."

Carsen nodded and went on:

"The effort had weakened me and the hallucination was not too far away so I decided to give it a try. I mean, I chose what I considered was the less evil thing."

"From what I can gather, it was indeed the very least evil," snorted Baird.

"Actually, it wasn't very pleasant at first..."

He caught Eve's angry glance and quickly added:

"... but then, I saw Simone Renoir, who I met seven years ago in New Orleans. She is the one who kind of taught me that messages could be conveyed through dreams. So in a way, she is the one I have to thank for... whatever. Simone was a vampire. She was dedicated to ensure that the Judas Chalice wouldn't fall in the wrong hands. Once it was secured again... she..."

His voice trailed off and he fell silent. His guardian had noticed the change of tone when he spoke about Simone. Her intuition told her that now was not the time to insist, she needed to be patient. Indeed, after a few seconds, Flynn went on, his voice strangely low.

"She wanted to see the sun rise. I was with her until... the end. To see her again, to talk to her, it was... really nice. I probably shouldn't say that, but... I do miss her."

"I understand," said Baird whose anger was gone. "But you do realise that it rises a few questions. Even the Library cannot bring dead people to life again, although technically, Simone was already dead when she died. Oh my, that's such a nonsense!"

Her joke attempt failed. Flynn was deep in his thoughts. Eve had an idea about their topic and she suddenly felt sad for the lonely Librarian. She joined him and put a comforting hand on his shoulder.

"Those questions can wait. You still owe me an apology."

He turned his attention to her and smiled:

"Yes I do. What could I do to earn your forgiveness?"

"Well, you could set the score right by giving me a kiss, so I would stop being jealous of a hot vampire."

Baird was happy to see the usual sparkle back in Flynn's eyes when he complied.

If Jenkins was happy to see the Librarian awake, he didn't show it. The young Librarians, on the other hand, seemed quite relieved to see that Flynn was fine. They had gathered around the table in the main room and Eve had insisted that they all should know what had happened to Carsen. He told his story a second time, leaving out a few details such as the kiss with Simone. Silence greeted his conclusion.

"What do you think?" Asked Baird.

"It stinks," simply said Ezekiel.

"Oh, thank you. This is so helpful right now," reacted the Librarian with annoyance.

Eve couldn't help but notice that Jenkins seemed worried at best, concerned at least.

"You should indeed take this very seriously," he suddenly said.

The way he spoke made the colonel shiver.

"What do you mean?" Jake wanted to know.

"Isn't it obvious?"

"No, not really," sighed Jones.

"And you call yourself Librarians? Never heard of the power of deduction?"

"Enough!" Intervened Baird. "Jenkins, please just tell us what you think happened to Flynn."

"Alright. We already know that it is not connected to the Medusa stone. From what the Librarian told us, the first hallucination occurred before he even met his friend."

"O.K., so you're saying that it has nothing to do with the meeting, the museum, etc. We know that already," pointed Ezekiel out.

"I know what he means!" Suddenly reacted Cassandra who had been quiet the whole time. "Something or someone has managed to reach Flynn without him even noticing."

"Like a spell you mean?" Asked Stone.

"No," replied Jenkins. "Since the Apple of Discord episode, I've set a few sensors designed to warn me in case of any magical intervention of any sort in here."

“And you intended on telling us exactly when?” Frowned Eve.

“Ideally, never, but that’s not the point. The point is that our Librarian hasn’t been under any influence, except for his link with the Library.”

Carsen smiled apologetically:

“You’re saying that I’m the only one responsible for those hallucinations.”

“I’m sorry Flynn.”

Baird and the young Librarians shared a glance. While Carsen and Jenkins seemed to know what they were talking about, the rest of the group was still in the dark.

“Care to explain for the ignorant? Not everyone had a 10 years experience with the Library.”

Ezekiel had voiced the others’ thought. Jenkins looked at Flynn for approval. The Librarian nodded.

“Sometimes, a Librarian gets emotionally weakened. Over the years, he can strengthen, he can overcome hard times more easily, but... once in a while, a Librarian reaches his limits. I’m sorry Flynn, but despite what you might think, you’ve been suffering a lot lately.”

“I know,” agreed Carsen. “I should have recognised the signs myself. That wasn’t very professional.”

“What do you mean?” Urged the colonel.

“He means that I’m suffering from depression.”

“I’m sorry?”

“Librarians can react to stress very differently,” added Jenkins. “While some snap and run away, others take refuge in hallucinations. That’s what happened to Flynn. He escaped in a... let’s say... more relaxing environment.”

“Yeah, with a vampire. How relaxing can that be?” Grumbled Eve.

“What is the cure?” Asked Cassandra. “Will he be alright?”

“Sure,” said Jenkins with confidence. “All he needs is some rest. A lot of rest. So I suggest that we let him take it. And while he gets better, why don’t we ease his work by checking the book for some magic gone wrong?”

The trio immediately agreed that it was an excellent idea. Eve Baird wasn’t that convinced. She could feel in her gut that the very man she was supposed to protect had played her. Yet, she didn’t have the start of a proof to comfort her feeling. She watched as Flynn left the room, without looking back, promising

herself that she would eventually shed some light on what she called the Budapest's Mysteries.

- Epilogue -

They were facing each other in another part of the Annex, where they knew that they wouldn't be disturbed. Sitting comfortably in an armchair, a cup of tea in their hands, they had meet in secret.

"She is suspicious," said the first man, known as Flynn Carsen.

"She is a Guardian, it's in her nature to know when you're lying," replied Jenkins casually.

"I don't like lying to her."

"Then, tell her the truth and see how she will react."

The Librarian kept silent. Somewhere in the room, a clock started ticking.

"Can you hear that?" Asked Carsen.

He already knew the answer. Jenkins couldn't hear the clock.

"You need to find the Library," insisted the caretaker.

"I know that. What I didn't know was that our link was so powerful. Nobody told me! Why didn't Judson or Charlene warn me!"

"Maybe because... they didn't know? You're the first Librarian lasting that long. Nobody could know that the Library would like you *that* much."

"So much that it's actually trying to kill me. Great, just great. Being killed by a Library, that's a first."

Flynn Carsen took a sip from his tea while his companion smiled:

"Ah well, there is a first for everything. Plus, there is something almost romantic about the situation."

"I'm sure Eve would agree. You didn't see the look on her face when I called her Simone."

He winced at the memory while Jenkins laughed.

"And to think that I missed that!"

But as quickly as his laughter started, it stopped and the man was serious again:

"You should consider telling her. She might help you. You need her support."

"I do. Yes. But not now. I cannot tell her that... I'm dying. *Again.*"