

The Grandma and The Mountain Spirit

Grandma:

The time now is 9:29pm. It is a Sunday night. He should come soon. My name is Maybelle Gabriel. Every Sunday for the past 3 weeks a man has appeared outside my window. But I live on the 17th floor of my HDB near Upper Thomson. Very close to Bukit Brown Cemetery. Near MacRitchie.

He has a deep mysterious voice, but I can never really understand what he is saying. I can only make out some words. He doesn't have a name. I am recording this so people will believe me.

9:30pm. He should be here anytime now. I don't know why he comes here and I can't tell if he is evil. His shape is ghostly and threatening. Almost like a black hole. But his eyes are different. At a glance they look bloody and haunting. The kind of eyes that you would fear peeping out of your closet as a child. Eyes that should have sent me into a cardiac arrest. But I live here alone, so I was willing to entertain the company even if there is chance it might kill me.

I think I have lived enough so death doesn't really scare me. But when I looked deep into his eyes, I saw fear. He was scared. Like he was crying out for help and I am the one who doesn't feel frightened.

[*Sounds of thunder*]

9:31pm. The day I decide to record is the day he doesn't show. Typical man. Some more I am using this new iPad that my son bought me. Good present. I use it to play Scrabble. He is a doctor, and I am very proud. When you are a young mother, you dream of your child being successful and rich, doing well in life. But when you're old, you wish that maybe they just have a simple job, so they had more time to give. But aiya – I'm grateful for my iPad. But it's very difficult to use lah. All the different apps and the Facebook. Headache! And I often get logged out of this and I do not know how to....

[She is interrupted with a ghostly harsh sound. Moaning of sorts]

Grandma:

He's here!

Bukit Spirit:

May....belle... Maybelle..

Grandma:

Yes??

Bukit Spirit:

How are you?

Grandma:

I can understand you! HAHAAH! You are speaking. I'm good, don't be scared.

Bukit Spirit:

I could always speak. I just chose not to. But now I know for sure that you are a friend.

Grandma:

Yes yes, I am your friend.

Bukit Spirit:

My friend.

Grandma:

Yes, your friend. What is your name?

Bukit Spirit:

Name? I have no name. I am a Bukit Spirit- I live in the hills.

Grandma:

Can I give you a name?

Bukit Spirit:

Maybelle.

Grandma:

No that's my name.

Bukit Spirit:

Maybelle

Grandma:

What about Semangat?

Bukit Spirit:

MAYBELLE!!!!

Grandma:

Okay okay! Your name can be Maybelle.

[*Bukit Spirit laughs*]

Bukit Spirit:

I am tired and I need your help. I cannot sleep anymore. The drilling keeps waking me up. I think I am going to disappear soon.

Grandma:

The MRTs. They are building the trains. The brown line.

Bukit Spirit:

All my friends have disappeared. They have all left me alone in the world. Now there's so many buildings and metal birds and loud noises. Everything is changing.

Grandma:

All my friends have disappeared too.

Bukit Spirit:

Your friends?

Grandma:

Yes, I also had friends like you.

Bukit Spirit:

You are kind. I see you walking in MacRitchie every morning. You used to sing for my friends. You care about us. The land is changing and the people are changing. They don't care about us anymore! Last time I used to play with the children and bless the people with good weather. They respected us then, now everything is different. I am going to disappear.

Grandma:

How can you say that?

Bukit Spirit:

I am losing my power and growing weak. No one cares about the mountains anymore.

Grandma:

I care.

Bukit Spirit:

People come but they aren't here to be with us. They just take pictures and make noises and throw their rubbish around. We are not wanted anymore. I wish I was a shopping mall spirit, or a MRT spirit - people would still have love for me.

Grandma:

Why don't you leave this land and go somewhere that will make you happy?

Bukit Spirit:

Why don't you leave this house and go somewhere that will make you happy?

Grandma:

Let's leave together then?

Bukit Spirit:

Where shall we go?

Grandma:

Japan. I've always wanted to go to Japan. There are so many mountains there, you will have friends.

Bukit Spirit:

I like the sound of that. I love ramen.

Grandma:

Woah you can eat?

Bukit Spirit:

No... but I can smell. Ramen smells good.

Grandma:

Shall we leave tomorrow? I can book my flight now. But do I book for you as well?

Bukit Spirit:

You know that I am floating right outside your window? I can fly and I can take you with me.

Grandma:

Where have you been all my life?

Bukit Spirit:

In the mountains!

Grandma:

That was rhetorical.

Bukit Spirit:

Oh...Shall we leave now?

Grandma:

Should I tell my children...

Bukit Spirit:

That is up to you. I was born out of the energies from the mountains here. What if I can't leave?

Grandma:

We can try.

Bukit Spirit:

Okay! Come! Hop onto my back.

Grandma:

I need to pack.

Bukit Spirit:

For what?

Grandma:

I don't know.

Bukit Spirit:

Just take some clothes.

Grandma:

Okay. Are you ready for adventure..Maybelle?

Bukit Spirit:

Always. Maybelle.

Written by Krish Natarajan, and performed by Krish Natarajan and Grace Kalaiselvi