

ABOUT WIND HILL

<Colorful Version>

PART ONE - a

October 28, 2006. For the first time I sat and listened to an album by a British musician, Mr. GM. I kept listening without knowing where the music was going to take me. But before I talk about it, I need to back up about seven years.

1

One day in January 2000, I was standing in a subway station. A woman in a black sweater passed by. She had a cell phone hanging from her neck. I wondered how it was to live a life wearing a phone like a necklace.

Soon a train came. I sat on a long bench seat. There, something happened. By the time I got off at Kyoto Station and sat in the hotel lobby where I was supposed to meet a friend, I was in a *story*. It had nothing to do with the woman nor had it any relation to my life.

Mr. YS came late and asked me to wait longer for him to finish practicing a tea ceremony lesson. I didn't mind because something strange was happening to me. I just sat in the lobby and "watched" the story until he was finished with the lesson. After a quick visit to the tea ceremony room, we took his car for a meeting at an exhibition site in Osaka.

On the way back from the meeting, the artist was in a very good mood. We had confirmed his large photography show, with posters and flyers, but without

admission fees for the viewers. Mr. YS stopped at my house to chat a little longer. As he left, the story continued.

The next morning, I sat on my usual chair and had some coffee. The story continued. I “watched” the story all day while a CD by Mr. YYM played something baroque on repeat. I did that until the moment a friend, Mr. MI from Osaka, came and rang the doorbell.

On the third day, the story continued on. I sat all day, this time without any music. In the late afternoon, the story ended. I said to myself, “Whatever that was, I enjoyed it!”

With a relief I went upstairs to bed. As I lied down, a song came to mind. It echoed. I went back downstairs to look for the CD in my big round basket where music CDs were randomly kept. I managed to find the song sung in Hindi by a fifteen-year-old Indian girl. It was the song I “heard” in a scene at a club in Fukuoka. I listened to it a couple of times and went back to bed.

2

The next morning, as I sat in my usual chair, *another* story started to fall. The story took place somewhere in Hokkaido. But later that day, as the sun was setting, I was surprised to realize that everyone in the story was speaking in English and I had traveled to America!

The next morning, as I woke up in my bed, and even before I had a chance to look at my clock, the story continued. I went down to the living room and sat in my chair again. By this time, I was filled with different kinds of emotions and was having difficulty eating. Around the time of the sunset, I “was” in Miami. I heard a deep-toned male voice say, “This is the beginning.” I nodded, though it felt it wasn’t

chronologically the beginning.

The third day came. I was feeling weak, because I wasn't eating anything. I just sat and "watched" the story evolve. I spent all day somewhere upon the Andes Mountains. The sunset arrived. The same deep-toned male voice said, "This is the end."

3

KANE SCOT, a young Caucasian man from Los Angeles, travels around South America and eventually finds a place upon a mountain in the Andes. He was in Miami ready to leave America, but forced to go to see his long-separated younger sister, REINA. He ends up getting her out of a boarding school in Georgia and takes her to the Andes with him.

Sounds boring? Well...but...the story captured me so strongly to the degree I couldn't just say, "Whatever that was, I enjoyed it!" and walk off like I did to the first one.

During those three days, the story came scene by scene, starting toward the end. It went back in time and then returned to where it began. It passed that point and went further on to Miami. That was where the deep-toned male voice said on the second day, "This is the beginning." On the third day, I just watched the ending of it where Kane and Reina live upon a mountain in the Andes. The story ended the instant I heard the deep-toned male voice say, "This is the end."

The next morning, all those scenes, randomly but ceaselessly, kept coming back. I heard them talk over and over again. While I was in the midst of it, one scene came back and I "heard" music. I tried to think which album the tune I was "hearing" belonged to. Then I looked for the CD. As I found it, I played it. I listened to the

music while imagining the images from the story. The music and the scene seemed to unite. As I was finished with it, another scene came up and I “heard” another piece of music. I repeated the rest.

The first tune I “heard” was from an album by an American jazz musician, Mr. PM. The music was played by his trio. The second tune I “heard” was from an album played by his duo. The third one was from his solo. And the fourth one was from his group. On the fourth day, I found four pieces of music for four different scenes. The music enriched those scenes. Amazing.

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PART ONE – e

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It felt awful writing about myself. “This is dreadful,” I thought many times. I didn’t feel comfortable continuing on. So one night I thought, “I’m going to have to give up on this letter.” I gave up. And then about two hours after I had given up on that night in the spring of 2007, an image of THE EASY CHECK OUT SYSTEM appeared in front of me. I’ll go on writing, but you don’t have to read the whole thing. **JUST FLIP PAGES AND READ THE PARTS IN BLACK INK ONLY.** This way I can free you more quickly from my reality and send you back to yours. Even if you are generous and willing to sacrifice your time to read the whole thing, please just go with the system and read only the black parts first. Once that’s done and if you’re kind enough, please come back here and read the rest with the red ink. Thanks! Okay. Let’s see how it goes...

PART TWO – a

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The very first story I received on the subway had a bit of a rom-com quality. I would have titled it, “Moving.” It involved moving apartments, and I think, “moving,” has another internal meaning. The main figure was a Japanese female and everyone spoke Japanese with different dialects like Fukuoka-ben and Tokyo-ben. I won’t write this story because I don’t feel the urge to.

I love all those different dialects in Japan and I love mine, too. Kyoto-ben is especially beautiful when women speak it. But when it comes to men talking, it’s not very pretty. We speak differently. They end their sentences with “*ke*,” whereas we end our sentences with “*na*.” Ending with “*na*” is much prettier than “*ke*,” don’t you think?

If I were to write *Wind Hill* in Japanese, Kane would have to speak my language. Kyoto-dialect is very different from the English language. He would have to be born and raised in Kyoto in order to speak it. Kane, a Caucasian man from Los Angeles, would become Ken, a Japanese man from Kyoto. Reina would have to come from Kyoto, too. Mary could be Mari and she could come from Fukuoka, speaking Fukuoka-ben. Jim could be Jin from Kamakura and speak something close to Tokyo-ben. Kane would no longer be Kane and everyone else wouldn’t be the same. The results would be different stories than the ones I received.

I did fancy it. I could start from a small *oden* restaurant in downtown Osaka, instead of a small bar on the outskirts of Miami. Both places are uncrowded and have a clock, which reads 8:10. Kane in Miami doesn’t accept an offer for a drink from a

stranger, but Ken in Osaka probably would accept and let a stranger pour some beer to his small empty glass. Kane walks to a pay phone hung on the wall, but Ken probably calls from a pink pay phone set at the end of a small counter.

I am worried that the small bar in Miami doesn't look American. It has clean white plaster walls and a small brown counter behind which a bartender stands. Kane IN A YELLOW FLARE is sitting at a small round table. The bar is small and clean. I've never been to a bar on the outskirts of Miami, so I don't know, but it looks more like a Japanese chic cafe-bar. It looks a bit like our friend's bar in Kyoto, Post Coitus, which we call Posu-koi. Posu-koi is much larger and has rectangle tables. This is the opening scene where the deep-toned male voice told me to start. And I'm a little worried that it doesn't look American.

Japanese Ken takes a local train to Kyoto and gets off at Sanjo Keihan. He stops and hesitates for some moments by a large abstract stone sculpture. Ken enters an old Kyoto-style house on a kimono street downtown. He takes off his shoes and corrects their position. He looks at a beautiful Japanese painting hanging near the entrance and shakes his head. As he sees a long-distant relative sitting on her living room floor, he sits on his legs and bows, his hands flat on the wooden hallway floor. (Kane simply knocks on the open door at the boarding school in Georgia.) Reina in Kyoto comes and sits on her legs and greets her foster parent. As she raises her face, she finds Ken sitting on the *tatami* mats. Here boarding school is so rare. So, it would be more natural for Reina to be living with a relative. Ken can take Reina to Wind Hill, possibly in Nepal, which is closer to us.

I would love to see what sort of changes might occur between the two set-ups, more precisely between American Kane who grew up in the U.S., and Japanese Ken

who grew up in Japan. I would want the story to remain the same. In the future, I'd like to try to write about the Japanese Ken in Japanese. I doubt if I'll ever be able to do that, though. But I really wanted Kane to meet Ken in WH - I. (For that Ken has to take Reina to South America instead of Nepal.) I did write some scenes where they meet at an inn and later at La Paz Airport. But I discarded the scenes. The story could go without it, and it made it long. Nonetheless, I did not receive Ken's stories. I received Kane's stories.