

# SOPHIE EDWARDS

I write because I must. I need it. I want to touch hearts and inspire awe and save lives. I want to subvert expectations in the fantasy, thriller and sci-fi genres through innovative worldbuilding and original storytelling, and change the way people view the world.

My dream is to work in the creative industries, and with a steadily-growing list of experience working in publishing, editing and design, and with magazines, I am moving one step closer to achieving my goals.

BA Hons Creative  
Writing

Mr Chauncey Blot  
41 Chancellor Street  
London  
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14.02.23

Dear Chauncey,

I'm sure this letter must come as a surprise. It wasn't planned that we'd communicate again. I get that. Especially after my incarceration. Not that I blame you. You were right to do it. Totally right. I see that now.

That's the reason for this letter. I wanted to reach out. Thank you. It was, after all, you who contacted the mad house. You who had me taken and locked up and strapped in a restraining suit where I couldn't even go to the toilet without permission.

It was you who had me shut away in that cell with mattresses for walls. Mind you, it wasn't that bad. They worked like trampolines. Imagine the fun I had bouncing between them. Because I did have fun, boinging away my anger, my madness, as they called it. 'They're for your protection, Gotya,' they told me. 'They'll keep you safe.'

The anger is gone, you know. Totally gone. I once felt helpless, but I see clearly now. Ask Doctor Ulisci. He helped me see the truth, made me want to mend my ways and put right the hurt that was caused.

I did hurt you, didn't I, Chauncey? Embarrassed you in front of your friends with my *pointless* protest, as you called it. Your retaliation was justified. I deserved to be humiliated. To be dragged away from my friends. My family. My three-year-old son who clung to me, crying. I deserved to lose six months of his life.

Because I hurt you.

I'd hate for you to get hurt again.

Living with that kind of trauma isn't something you deserve. So, to put everything right, I've sent a gift with this letter.

It was marked fragile. You were careful, weren't you, Chauncey? I would hate to find out you didn't get to read this letter. In fact, it's such a special gift that I arranged to have it delivered during your annual family dinner. What better thing than to share a gift with all your loved ones? A gift that will ensure no one hurts you again.

So, thank you, Chauncey. For everything.

Affectionately,

Gotya Back

## Power in Words

The lackeys stared like fish at the food littering the tables. Their excitement about the skewered hog fizzled on my skin. Pointless. The pig was sour as the grapes.

The king lounged on his throne, his robes splayed carelessly across the floor. A blood-red ring gleamed on his curled forefinger.

I spread my arms and dipped in a mock curtsy. “How may I grant you, oh, King?”

His nostrils flared. “You may not.”

My fingers flexed. “You have no wish?” The string around my wrist rubbed when I moved, its edges frayed with age. “You are Lord of War, Destroyer of Worlds, Great and Terrible and Abusive in your power.” I tapped my finger. Narrowed my eyes. “There must be something you want.”

His eyes twitched, too fast for most men to see. But everyone had micro-expressions. No one could stop those. Not even the king.

I slunk closer, my feet silent as socks in sand. “Your ring. It is the Ruby of Convalescence, is it not?”

He swallowed. A dead giveaway.

“Should it not be with your wife?” I asked.

The lackeys fell silent, giving way to the red-head’s mutter, “Fat lot o’ good that’ll do. She’s dead.”

The king didn’t hear. His mind was plagued by grief, by anger, by incomprehensible thoughts that left outside words falling on deaf ears. I could sense his thoughts. Could *feel* his indecision crackling in my bones.

I knelt on stone as hard as his fist. “You wish me to bring her back.”

He stared blankly outward, thumb inching towards the gem. “It can’t be done.”

“It can, oh, King. If you but wish for it.” The phrase seemed to hiss, the word *wish* hanging, snakelike in the air. It hummed with magic. Brimmed with possibilities. Tangled in his mind.

He grimaced. “Did you think I brought you here to wish?” He kicked me away. “Your kind killed *my wife*. You’re riddled with filth and trickery, trapping souls behind bars you paint with desire.”

Rough hands dragged me backwards, smelling of the damp cells they guarded.

“You will rot behind bars,” the king declared. “Until the end of time.”

I struggled to escape. But I had no power. No power without his words. “You wish for your wife!” He had to. My thousandth wish would free me. It’d create a new bond on the wisher. A new genie born.

The king stood, veins bulging, and screamed, “I wish nothing more than your extinction!”

He clamped a hand to his mouth.

But it was too late. The rule had been broken. A wish had been made – for genies’ extinction.

And as the aged rope renewed its lustre and shackled itself to him, my genie-dom washed away in a blast of magic.

No one stopped me leaving. Why would they when a thousand wishes stood before them? And like fools, they pressed in on the dying king.