

## Chapter 21: Possessed of Power over the Soul of Things Story of Stanislaw Tomczyk

- Nandor Fodor -

PSYCHIC STUDIES often reveal a deep symbolism in poetic fancy. Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird* is full of ideas for which a factual basis is suggested in psychical research. Tyltill and Mytill turn the diamond and liberate the soul of things. In esoteric philosophy a definite meaning is attached to this incident. It is that there is but one enduring reality, the idea, and not its manifestation in matter. The material shape is ephemeral, the idea lives on. Thoughts are things and, in that sense, things have souls.

Certain queer experiences in psychical research lend vraisemblance to this conception and point to possibilities of definite verification. No one could have been more startled by such a line of research than its originator, Dr. Julien Ochorowicz. While a lecturer of psychology at the University of Lemberg, he had the good fortune to discover in Mlle. Stanislaw Tomczyk, of Wisla, Poland, unknown and thoroughly mystifying powers. She was his patient whom he regularly hypnotized for therapeutic purposes. In the hypnotic sleep the girl disclosed an altered personality which answered to the name of Little Stasia.



Mlle. Tomczyk and Dr. Ochorowicz, lecturer in psychology at the University of Lemberg. With Invisible rigid rays emanating from her fingers Mlle. Tomczyk lifts a pair of scissors.

She was capable of things beyond normal human power. She could stop a clock by looking at it. She could produce movement in objects without contact. She could influence a roulette to the extent that the number chosen by the medium turned up more often than justified by chance.

As a miracle worker she was without peer. As a personality she was full of mischief and played no end of tricks on Mlle. Tomczyk. She did not know who she was. But she did not think she was the spirit of a dead person. As she had to be somebody, and as she suffered not from the limitations of secondary personalities, Dr. Ochorowicz labelled her as the "double" of the medium. His chief reason for doing so was that Little Stasia proved that she had a body. That body was not the physical body of Mlle. Tomczyk.

This is a very startling statement. Fortunately, Ochorowicz presented us with a detailed description of his experiments. The climax came on September 11th, 1911, when he obtained the photograph of an "etheric hand" on a sensitive film rolled up and enclosed in a bottle. The film, as it lay in the bottle, measured about three-quarters of an inch in diameter. The bottle had an orifice of about two-thirds of an inch. It was closed with the palm of Dr. Ochorowicz's right hand. With his left he laid it on his knee and held it there firmly. The medium then placed her two hands on the bottle between his. She seemed excited and exclaimed that she wished that a small hand might appear. Then she said:

"It is strange! The bottle seems to enlarge under my fingers; but perhaps this is an illusion. My hands swell, I cease to feel them."

An attack of cramp ensued, the medium screamed aloud, a moment or two later Dr. Ochorowicz broke the bottle, developed the film and found on it the imprint of a large hand with the thumb posed in line with the index finger, so that it might find room to appear on the film, which was 13 cm wide. The hand had the characteristics of that of the medium. In automatic writing, Little Stasia gave the following explanation:

"I crept in by a chink between your hand and the orifice of the bottle. Then I slipped my hand flat between the folds of the roll, and the light caused itself, I do not know how, I merely took care to make the film opaque."

Dr. Ochorowicz tried to discover the thickness of the "etheric hand". He found indications that it was less than a millimetre. That it was self-luminous. That under the effect of suggestion it could grow or diminish.

The next puzzling stage of his discoveries was reached when in several of these "radiographs" the medium's ring appeared on the finger of her etheric hand. This seemed to indicate to him:

1. That there is a kind of link between the organism and the object it wears,
2. That the occult notion that material objects have an astral body is not limited to living bodies.

The ring did not always appear in the radiographs. Dr. Ochorowicz tried to find out whether objects frequently worn by the sensitive were more easily produced on the plate than others. He chose a thimble which she rarely used. The medium suggested that he should himself retain the thimble on the finger of his left hand, holding her with his right hand.

"Perhaps," she added, "the thimble will pass from your body on to my finger."

The experiment appeared absurd, but Dr. Ochorowicz was willing. He took a plate from his box, marked it, and laid it on the medium's knees. She was seated on his right. With his right hand he held up her left hand about sixteen inches above the plate, the thimble being on the middle finger of his left hand which he kept behind his left knee. A red lamp was burning at a distance of about three feet. After a minute had elapsed, the medium said that she felt a sort of tingling in the direction of her forearm, where their hands met. She exclaimed:

"Oh, how strange. Something is being placed on the tip of my finger... I do not know if it is the thimble; I feel something keeps pressing the end of my finger."

When the plate was developed it showed the hand of the medium, and on the middle finger was what she called jokingly the soul of her thimble.

Dr. Ochorowicz asked in some bewilderment: was the image a "double" of the thimble, or was it a photograph of the idea of the thimble?

A close examination of the photograph and comparison with the thimble showed that the two corresponded exactly, the one "was a true copy of the other, precise in details and in dimension". This exactness supports the idea of a direct impression from some object rather than a thought image merely. The finger supporting the thimble is the palest of all the fingers, probably, as Dr. Ochorowicz suggests, because the light by which the radiograph was taken proceeds from it. He leaned to the conclusion that an etheric hand wearing an etheric thimble produced the image, and that mental desire gave the direction to the light which was necessary in order to make the details of the thimble visible on the plate.

When, however, he proceeded to test his conclusion, a strange thing happened. Unknown to the medium he held in his left hand an Austrian five-crown piece. Presently she exclaimed:

"I see behind you a white round object ... it is the moon."

"At the same instant," writes Dr. Ochorowicz, "I saw a faint but distinct light pass near my left hand, which held the coin; it was not round, nor a flash, it was like a little meteor, like a thin ray, lighting up the space round my hand on the side away from the medium."

When the plate was developed it showed an image of a full moon.

"The moon floats," he wrote, "on the background of a less luminous cloud, and is of a rather different form from that in the preceding experiment."

The preceding experiment took place on September 7th, 1911. The medium the night before was much impressed by the superb light of the starry heavens, and particularly by the full moon at which she looked for some time with admiration. On the plate, instead of the little hand which was desired, a full moon appeared against a background of white cloud.

There was something very curious about this photograph of the moon. On April 17th, 1912, the moon was in eclipse. Cinematograph pictures disclosed a slight flattening of the image of the moon in the direction of the axis of rotation. This characteristic appears in the radiograph of September 7th. The impression was double and it looked as if the cloud had not been duplicated. In that case the moon alone must have moved. How can we conceive - asked Dr. Ochorowicz - of this apparent movement of a mental image?

The next surprise which Little Stasia provided was the proof that she was not the double of the entranced medium. While Dr. Ochorowicz was having a lively conversation with Mlle. Tomczyk in her normal state, Little Stasia impressed her picture, as promised, on a photographic plate in a dark and empty adjoining room.

Who Little Stasia was mattered comparatively little. It was her phenomena which puzzled Ochorowicz and the world of science to which she was introduced. Invisible rigid rays appeared to issue from Mme. Tomczyk's finger-tips by the help of which, before a commission of physicians, physiologists and engineers, she could raise a pair of scissors or any other light objects into the air without material support. The rays were threadlike and acted like a line of force.

"I have felt this thread," writes Dr. Ochorowicz, "on my face, on my hair. When the medium separates her hands the thread gets thinner and disappears; it gives the same sensation as a spider's web. If it is cut with scissors its continuity is immediately restored. It seems to be formed of points; it can be photographed and it is then seen to be much thinner than an ordinary thread. It starts from the fingers. Needless to remark that the hands of the medium were carefully examined before every experiment."

When these photographs were thrown enlarged upon a screen the psychic structure became invisible. So much could be determined that there were swellings and nodes along it, like the waves of a vibrating cord.

When Mlle. Tomczyk lifted, supernormally, a ball, a whole number of filaments surrounded it like a net. In a photograph of a balance which was supernormally depressed, fine, hairlike threads are visible.

The cry of fraud is totally untenable. In good light it is a child's play to watch for the introduction of genuine hair. Eusapia Paladino when she tried it was invariably discovered. And then she immediately performed the feat by supernormal power.

The existence of such invisible threads were known before Ochorowicz. There are observations to prove that threads, finer than the spider's, may somewhat in the manner of cobwebs, connect the medium with the objects in the room which are supernormally set in motion. Mme. d'Esperance often complained of a cobwebby feeling on her face. Margery of Boston and many of her sitters had the same experience. Two years ago Professor Karl Blacher, of Riga, reported on his experiments with Frau Ideler, that she spun threads to accomplish telekinetic movements. She seemed to pull them from the inner side of her hand with her finger-tips. The threads seemed to be of a doughy, elastic substance, at first thick, then pulled fine, and felt soft and dry. Even while being handled they diminished perceptibly. A piece was secured and subjected at once to microscopic examination in an adjoining room.

An enlargement of the microscopic photo shows that it is composed not of one strand, but of many fine but not organized threads. In its chemical composition the structure was not that of any known textile fabrics. Curiously, fire had no power over those threads. They made the flame withdraw. But they were conductors of electricity.

Such discoveries divest the phenomena of the seance-room of the miraculous and reduce them to facts of physiology and physics. They leave the psychological side unaffected. though. For the intelligence which so effectively uses the organism of the medium for such purposes, claims to be a spirit. Little Stasia was an exception. But then she did not know what she was. Spiritualists believe that they can offer a key to her riddle. They say she was one of the many who did not yet wake up to the fact that she changed over into another world of existence, in other words she did not know that she was dead.