

Sidney Sheldon 著 「The Other Side of Me - A Memoir - 」 Warner Books 2005 年刊を読む

The Other Side of Me

I had never been inside a bus depot before my trip to New York in 1936. The Greyhound bus station has an air of excitement, with people going to and coming from cities all over the country. My bus seemed huge, with a washroom and comfortable seats. It was a four-and-a-half-day trip to New York. The long ride would have been tedious, but I was too busy dreaming about my fantastic future to mind.

When we pulled into the bus station in New York, I had thirty dollars in my pocket-money that I was sure Natalie and Otto could not spare.

I had telephoned ahead to the YMCA to reserve a room. It turned out to be small and drab, but it was only four dollars a week. Even so, I knew that the thirty dollars was not going to last very long.

I asked to see the the manager of the YMCA.

“ I need a job, ” I told him, “ and I need it right away. Do you know anyone who - ? ”

“ We have an employment service for our guests, ” he informed me.

“ Great Is there anything available now? ”

He reached for a sheet of paper behind the desk and scanned it. “ There's an opening for an usher at the RKO Jefferson Thestre on Fourteenth Street. Are you interested? ”

Interested? At that moment my sole ambition in life was to be an usher at the RKO Jefferson on Fouteenth Street. “ That's just what I was looking forl ” I told him.

The manager wrote something on a piece of paper and handed it to me. “ Take this to the theater in the morning. ”

I had been in New York for less than one day and I already had a job. I phoned Natalie and Otto to tell them the news.

“ That's a good omen, ” Natalie said. “ You're going to be a big success. ”

I spent the first afternoon and evening exploring New York. It was a magical place, a bustling city that made Chicago seem provincial and drab. Everyting city that made Chicago seem provincial and drab. Everything was larger-the buildings, the marquees, the streets, the signs, the traffic, the crowds. My career.

The RKO Jefferson Theater on Fourteenth Street, once a vaudeville house, was a old, two-story structure RKO theaters. Double features were common -patrons could see two movies back-to-back for the price of one.

I walked thirty-nine blocks from the YMCA to the theater and handed the note I had ben give to the theater manager.

He looked me over and said, “ Have you ever ushered before? ”

“ No, sie. ”

He shrugged. “ Doesn't matter, Can you walk? ”

“ Yes, sir. ”

“ Aand you know how to turn on a flashlight? ”

“ Yes, sir. ”

“ Then you can usher. Your salary is fourteen-forty a week. You'll work six days. Your hours are from fourtwenty to midnight. ”

“ That's fine. ” It meant that I was free to have the whole morning and part of the afternoon to spend at the Brill Building, where the headquatyers of the music business was.

“ Go into the staff changing room, and see if you can find a uniform that fits you. ”

“ Yes, sir. ”

I tried on an usher's uniform and the manager looked at me and said, “ That's fine. Be sure to keep an eye on the balcony. ”

“ The balcony? ”

“ You'll see. You'll start tomorrow. ”

“ Yes, sir. ” And tomorrow I will begin my career as a songwriter.

[コメント]

アメリカは何とフランクでチャレンジャブルな国なのだろうと思わずひきこまれてしまう素晴らしい文章。シドニー・シェルダンの伝記は実に読みやすく、また、面白いシドニー・シェルダンファンは必読。できれば、英語でどうぞ。

- 2009年10月24日 林明夫記 -