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Touch me...

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To the smallest
book of all...

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They weren’t but two lovers...

Who were walking slowly at the edge of the road. Who were holding one another softly. Who were talking tenderly...

They weren’t but two lovers walking as the clouds were getting thicker, as the wind was growing stronger, as the leaves, dry, were gathering by their side. Two lovers walking as the rain was falling.

But the rain could never touch them... Rain couldn’t ever touch two lovers...

They were walking slowly towards the end of the road, there, where the road seemed to fade away when the trees seemed to meet. And autumn was blooming around them, dry branches.

They were moving on, to where the road met —I remember— the sea. Walking there, on the wet sand, walking slowly towards the foaming wave.

The wave stood then and said to them:

“Touch me...”

Two hands that moved as one.

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...They were walking now on the calm sea. A sea blue and colourless, fluid and yet solid at the same time. The sky saw them, loved them. The sun saw them and envied them.

So, it said to them...

"Touch me"

Two lips that moved as one...

And the sun descended and stood by their side... The sky then became red like a rose petal. The sea then became red like flames, red like blood.

And earth started dripping blood from which the seas were filled, the blood which once gave birth to the universe. It, fell on the sleeping moon and woke it up.

Still red, all-red, the moon came close to them... Came close to two lovers dancing on a sea like blood.

Two lovers holding each other softly, talking to each other tenderly.

The sun saw the moon and got afraid of it... Saw it and respected it. It rolled peacefully to the brim of the waters and fell into the void, disappeared to infinity...

They remained alone. Two lovers walking at that edge of the world, on a dark sea, on a sea dressed in the shadows of the night.

Two lovers walking as the stars were falling by their side, as the wind was growing stronger, as the moon was dripping its light softly into the sea's endless colour...

Walking as the darkness was falling, as the wind was growing stronger and the stars were gathering to the edge of the universe.

...But darkness could never touch them. But which darkness could ever touch two lovers?

And she said to him:

"Touch me..."

December 15

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They weren't but two flowers.

Two flowers that were blooming timidly by the side of the forest. In the middle of the winter that surrounded them.

They weren't but two flowers rooted at the edge of the forest.

They were showered, I remember, every morning by the same sunbeam. They were woken up by the same blowing of the wind. So close.

So that the one could smell the scent of the other.

So far away. That never before had two flowers been found.

And yet if you asked the animals in the forest they'd tell you that they were side by side.

She said to it then: "Touch me"

It set out to spread its leaves. To stretch its body, in every blow of the wind, towards her. Set out to stretch its petals, to stretch its fibers and the small black handful at the part of the heart.

And she bent her body. She spread her leaves — leaves trembling as the wind was blowing...

* *

...They set out then to spread their roots, to roll them slowly in the soil which was separating them. They felt pain in their every move. But they didn't care. They were only two flowers spreading their leaves into the wind, spreading their roots into the soil...

Two flowers spreading their hearts —two such tiny handfuls of coal— in the winter that was coming, that was all around them...

...

"I can't" it said to her, and a dew drop appeared in the corner of its eyes.

"I can't" it said to her and its petals closed, its leaves wrapped themselves around its stem and its roots pulled themselves timidly back to the soil that was bounding them.

...They were only two flowers so small beside the huge trees, the big grey rocks and the river which was flowing wildly in the middle of the winter...

She said to it then: "Touch me..."

...And a blue petal slipped into the wind. It fell on petals closed — petals that opened. It rolled on leaves wrapped

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around the weak stem. On leaves that opened unexpectedly. And fell on the soil, on tired roots that were about to rise and catch it.

...But the wind had already taken it.

But it had already thrown it in the river which was also flowing —unworriedly— at the edge of the forest.

...And whenever the wind happened to change direction, you could see petals travelling together with it. Held back for a while by leaves sustained by two weak stems, held back by roots foolishly taken out of the soil into a heavy winter, so heavy for two lonely flowers.

You could see petals leaving from the part of the heart, to touch for a while another heart standing further away. A little further away from where leaves can reach when stretching out, from where roots can reach when spreading in the ground. So far away...

And yet if you asked the animals in the forest they'd tell you that they were side by side.

* *

The seasons went and others came. They aren't but seasons only.

And they, they aren't but flowers only. Two flowers which bloom and wither at the edge of the forest. Two flowers which are always blooming and withering at the edge of the world.

And they are always, I remember, two flowers without petals. Because their petals, once they are filled with colours, travel to the flower facing them. They are always but two flowers naked, I remember, at the edge of the forest.

They are the hearts only —two such tiny handfuls of coal— of two flowers.

...And even to this day, should you pass from there in the middle of the winter, you might hear them whispering to each other:

"Touch me"

December 16

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The sun while rising shone on the silver coin.
That moment, it opened its eyes suddenly and stretched numbly after so many hours of deep sleep. It was so damp up there! Up there, over the tile roof of that two-storeyed cottage at the edge of the village.

“Good morning”, it said gently to its other side.

No answer.

“Good morning!
Wake up, it’s dawn...” it said one more time, even more gently.

But its other side didn’t answer. There was still no answer today.
As there was never any answer for as long as it remembered. No matter how gently it had spoken to her, no matter how many times it had asked for an answer.

It looked up the sun that was rising in the sky and smiled.

“Why don’t you speak to me?” it said again to its other side.
“Talk to me, I am as lonely as you.”
“Talk to me.”

“I know, you may not like my company, but what can we do? We are only the two sides of a coin. And it would be nice to talk from time to time.
Wouldn’t it be nice to have one another?”

But its other side wouldn’t speak. It had asked her so many times. It had asked her in all the ways it knew. But it knew not that many! The single side of a small low-price coin it was. Nothing more.

“Goodnight” it said to her, as the darkness was falling...

* *

“Good morning” it said softly with the first smile of the sun.

No answer. But maybe she was still sleeping! It should wait for a while.

It waited until the sun rose high upon the sky. A golden sun. A sun that was shining on the silver coin over the tile roof of that cottage. And then, it dared to speak to her once again.

“It is a beautiful day today, isn’t it?”

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But she didn't answer. As she had never answered up to this day.

Why?

Wasn't she moved by her other's side interest?

Did she maybe have some reason for not speaking? Was it maybe wrong wanting to know about your other side?

It didn't find it that wrong...

On the other hand of course, what could it possibly know? The single side of a small low-price coin it was.

...

Maybe...

...But sure! Couldn't it have thought of it before? This must be it! It couldn't be anything else. This, as simple as this!

"Maybe you cannot speak", it said to her.

"Maybe you want to, but you cannot speak."

"Then make a move, knock on the tile and I will know."

"If you cannot speak, knock on the tile!"

Nothing.

No move, no sound. And still for a moment it had believed it.

...For a moment only it had believed that it would finally get to know its other side...

With a knock maybe on the grassy tile.

With the slightest move they would communicate opinions, thoughts, feelings. They would find out new ways to talk.

To talk!

The two sides of a coin, on a roof at the edge of the village. Two sides alone, all alone.

Nothing.

No move. No sound. The answer was simple. She did not want to speak to it.

"Good evening" it said, and stayed watching the sun moving slowly towards the west. It wanted so much to cry but it wouldn't. Maybe its other side would know.

She would know perhaps from a slightest move, from a sob that would slip out.

No, it could not cry! Maybe its other side would know. And in no case would it want to upset her.

She was also a side alone, all alone. Maybe lonelier than it was.

But then why wouldn't she speak to it? Why?

Since they were both two sides alone, all alone, on a roof at the edge of the small village.

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* *

It told her no good morning that day.

It started with a question that had tortured it all night. Tortured it as no other side, of any coin, in any village of the world had ever been tortured.

“Do you maybe hate me” it said to her, struggling to keep away a shiver, a tear from the corner of its eyes.

“Do you maybe hate me because I can see the village and the sun?” “Do you maybe hate me because you always face the tile?”

“Tell me! Tell me, please...”

No answer.

“But it’s not my fault, you know it... You remember it, don’t you?”
“It was that nasty boy that threw us up on this roof!”

“Tell me. Tell me that you remember it...”

“...Speak to me, please. I am also one side of a small low-price coin. Speak to me! Tell me about you! Tell me anything! I am the other side of you!”

Desperate as it was, it started then describing to her its look.

It was a rather ordinary side. A woman figure with fine features, a pretty little nose and cute little eyes.

A woman imprisoned for ever on the roof of a two-storeyed cottage.

“Tell me about you...”
“Tell me what you look like!”

“We can be friends! If you want we can be best friends! The best friends of all sides, in all coins.

The best friends in the whole village. In the whole country. In the whole world, if you tell me a word.

Just a word!

If you tell me that you want it!”

“And I will then exist only for you! Even if you never speak to me ever again...”

Silence. Absolute silence... But why?

She was also a side alone, all alone, maybe lonelier than all the sides of the world...

...

From that day onwards, it started describing to her what-

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ever it saw.

It didn't ask her to speak. Not any more. It was just talking to her without asking for anything any more.

It was telling her about the village and the forest nearby. It was telling her about the big road across the houses, and the market. It was telling her about the sun and the clouds. About the birds in the sky. About the bells ringing every Sunday.

From that day onwards the life of this side was not the same. It described whatever it saw, and asked for nothing any more.

It didn't know whether it was good or bad not wanting to know about your other side. But its life was more beautiful since that day. And it felt less lonely — less lonely than any other side, in any corner of the village.

It was a less lonely side.

* *

First time since they found themselves up on that roof, that the storm burst. The first storm of the winter.

And it was so happy that the heavy drops fell on it. That it protected its precious other side!

The wind grew so strong.

So strong that the tiles started shaking. They started shaking more, than any other time the tiles of the two-storeyed cottage had ever shaken.

And then disaster struck!

So fast that no other side, in any corner of the world would realize what was happening...

It just felt rolling on the grassy roof.

* *

It was so, so damp down there!

Down there, in the middle of the garden of a small cottage at the edge of the village.

However, it was a side even happier! And yet, it was a side buried in the mud. The side of a woman with fine features, buried in the mud.

And yet, it was so happy!

Its other side could again see the clouds. The carriages and the roads. The bells and the woods.

Its other side, was facing the sun!

Yes, it was so happy. So happy as no other side, of any coin ever was, in the whole village.

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And its other side would surely speak to it. That side that had never spoken to it ever until then.

Now, surely, she would describe everything to it. Whatever she saw.

The mountains and the woods. The village and the houses. The sun and the clouds...

Even if it itself wouldn't be able to hear her. Even if it itself wouldn't be able to speak to her. Even if it was just a side buried in the mud.

They were, however, two sides less lonely. Less lonely than any other sides, in that small village with the cottages.

And then disaster struck!

So fast that no other side, in any corner of the world would realize what was happening.

But unfortunately it had... It had unfortunately realized everything...

* *

...There was no dampness any more.

It was a spotlessly clean side, in a prominent place in the collection of that collector. And this was, truthfully, the most peculiar, the most weird piece of the collection.

It was a coin rare and most expensive.
A coin unique indeed!
A coin that no collector had ever found before!

That coin in the glass case in the middle of the large collection was —and don't ask me how and why— a coin with one side only!

Yes, you've heard right!
A coin with one side only.

...One side so lonely,
as no other side, of any other coin,
in any other part of the world.

December, 17 to 18

“A minimum fixing of the hair...

The fastening of the delicate fabric belt...
Raising the right pad to reduce undulations... And finally the passing of the red silk shawl, so as to embrace the waist and end at her two elbows...

Perfect!

Let’s add some emphasis to the movement...

The right foot just a tiny bit forward to stress her pace, and the left hand slightly more stretched.

Wonderful! I think we’re done!”

...

What a relief. She never liked the entire procedure. It was time to open her eyes...

Red! Her favorite colour!

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And it was indeed a most beautiful dress!

Though, she would have preferred the shawl white...

* *

“It’s time to take off the papers from the glass...”
They unstuck the paper strips, gradually revealing the world behind them.

It was her favorite sight! The most frequented road. Cars, motors, buses, passersby... A multitude of passersby... Dolls in colourful clothes, walking loaded with overfilled plastic bags... Dressed in clothes of doubtful quality, in designs of doubtful aesthetic.

And she among them, beside them! To be gazed at and, why not, envied.
A woman in perfect proportions, dressed in a most expensive, red silk dress! A woman like flame, with the red shawl let to fall on her elbows in a movement full of femininity...

A woman in the center of the shop window!

Yes, there also were —I must admit— other women in that shop window. But she must have had something more.

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There was no other explanation. A woman to be chosen, among so many others, to pose in the center. A woman dressed always in the finest dresses. In the most expensive clothes. In the latest demands of fashion.

Yes, she was indeed a woman of perfection.

Each movement of hers, the outcome of multiple tests and thought. Her every hairstyle, the result of consultations. Nothing unplanned on her. Nothing spontaneous.

Even the decoration, the dresses that spread around her, the lights... Everything was adjusted based on her!

Her!

A woman, incarnation of the eternal woman, at the largest glass window of the store.

Left to look at the dolls in the shop window. Dolls passing before her hurriedly, negligent, untidy. But what can anyone expect from the dolls moving in the streets?

And if a little something was to give them some value, some traces of value, it was that they finally always stopped to look...

No matter how hurried they were, no matter how fast they had to walk to be on time...

They had, in the strangest of ways, always the time to look at a real woman!

A woman dressed for now in a red all-silk dress and a shawl indifferently let to her elbows. A woman behind the window.

A point of reference during the day, lightened to the full at nights.

The woman in the center of the window!

* *

However, even this woman —the model of the everlasting woman— had, I remember, a tiny problem...

Strange, you'll tell me, for such a woman! For a woman made to be gazed at by the dolls in the streets.

And yet there was a tiny problem...

She felt so bad, each time she had to change an outfit. When she removed her previous clothes, to be dressed the next ones, surely in some other colour and design.

Yes, this woman felt such a shame when she was standing naked!

Of course the store's employees did their best so that the people in the shop window wouldn't see her like this.

It would have been so bad if people in the shop window could see her naked! Awful! Tragic! Inconceivable for a woman created as no other to pose in the center of the window, wearing always the latest demands of fashion!

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Employees truly did their very best.

They covered each time the shop window where the dolls in the street lived with large strips of paper. They were conscientiously trying to leave no gap.

As for the side that was behind her —the side towards the shop's interior— that one was continuously covered with a large fabric in the appropriate colour. In a colour befitting her clothes, the colour of her hair, the light of the season...

Everything was related to her. Everything turned around her!

The incarnation of the eternal woman!

...Yet, even so, she didn't feel well.

Even if no passerby was watching her, she knew that some moments, even tiny ones, she stood naked! And she seemed so indifferent naked. So —I am afraid to even say it— ugly.

How intense the gaps at her joints appeared to be! At the points that granted her every movement! How strangely exposed... How uncovered...

No! Not even she herself could stand that sight. She always closed her eyes when changing clothes. She seemed so —how scared am I to say it— fake! And yet she knew well —better that anything— that she was the truest woman in the world...

That she was and she will always be the woman in the center of the window. A woman surely envied by all the dolls in the shop window. Dolls eternally passing by, in front of a woman eternally a model...

...Sometimes she truly felt sorry for them...

* *

Today she was wearing a wonderful long dress out of black velvet.

Tight, closed at the neck, with tight sleeves and ending a little below the ankle. Adorned by two rows, as a belt, of strass at the height of the waist.

Nice she'd say, even if black wasn't exactly what she considered best. Red always suited her better.

Yet this particular dress was fairly flattering to her figure...

She immediately drew the glances upon her.

She realized it from the very first moment they took off the paper strips, revealing gradually the dolls in the shop window.

Sometimes they baffled her too the dolls in the shop window. Even if they were in a hurry, they always stopped to admire her. Even if they didn't suit them, they always bought

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the clothes she was wearing. Even if they had so many things to talk about, they always talked about her in the end.

And yet they were so different! She often wondered how they could see themselves in her place...

She, was standing. They, were passing by.

She, was selling. They, were merely shopping.

They admired her and she was gazing at them!

She was a woman, and they were mere dolls in the shop window!

She was in the center, and they were lost at the edge of the world...

Pathetic dolls!

So glad they did not belong to her world! So glad they could never belong to her world...

That someone thought of placing that glass...

...

A strange glass, indeed.

Transparent, and yet it was hiding behind it a different world. It was separating two worlds completely alien. Such a relief! Imagine if that glass didn't exist.

A disaster! Every casual passerby could see her up close. Peer at her, examine her and —I am so ashamed to even say it— touch her! Her second greatest nightmare!

No, someone must have known something when placing

that glass. It was protecting the model-woman well. A woman like her, always dressed in most expensive dresses, capable of following the most recent of fashion's demands, capable —why not?— of even leading it.

A woman born different. Different from the dolls that crawl continuously in the streets. That move among others. Dolls that always live lost in the crowd. Pitiful dolls!

Yes, someone must have known something when placing that glass!

Touch her? She wouldn't like to even think about it.

* *

One more time! One more time, the eyes closed, shut.

And if she would half-open them for a moment it was to ensure that no part of the shop window was forgotten uncovered.

Of course she trusted them completely.

She knew that they were taking care of her better than she could ever take care of herself.

They would always cover the shop window with the dolls.

They would always dress her in the best clothes.

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Do her hair with care.
Lighten her up, so as to bring out the beauty of the woman in the center of the window.

Yes, she completely trusted their touch. They were perhaps her best friends.

...Yet, the very feeling of her being naked caused her panic!
She shouldn't logically ever stay naked. She had the largest wardrobe in the world!
Thousands of hats and dresses, only for her. Thousands of colours and designs to highlight her, to show off her beauty, to turn her into a symbol.

Everything for her! Everything for the woman! The truest of all the women in the world. The everlasting woman!
The truest, undoubtedly, of all the dolls moving in the streets.

She opened her eyes...

Another beautiful dress.
Loose —she should every now and then wear something simpler they had said— with a strange brooch on the right side of the waist, that replaced equally any belt, giving a distinct finesse at the same time.

"A sense of freedom of movement...
Her look indifferently turned to the shop-window's edge...
Perfect!

The hands now...
Crossed? No, they'll be hiding the brooch...
Maybe turned behind the back?

But she has such beautiful hands!

In front of her then, almost stretched, in a movement parallel with the slight leaning of the body...

Yes, it is good like this..."

"Very nice! Time to remove the paper strips..."

* *

That day —I remember— started beautifully. Beautifully like all the other days.
It was a sunny spring morning.

Once more she drew the glances.
Immediately she drew the glances.

No matter what colour she wore, purple in this case, no matter what movement she made, they would always watch her, always admire her.

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A non-ageing woman, designed in the perfect proportions, in the center of the window. A woman in the center of the world!

To be admired and —why not?— be envied.
To be imitated, without ever being able to be reached.

To be desired, without ever being able to be touched.

A woman dressed for now in a purple loose spring dress, with a strange brooch at the right side of the waist...

...

...No one understood from where the fire started, that day...

A day like all the others.
A day which the sun was filling with colours...

Turmoil, screams, panic behind her back. People who were running...
She could see them from her window fleeing.

Her friends were pulling along with them metal stands with her precious wardrobe.
Yes, she trusted them! She always trusted them. They knew their job well.
Yet shouldn't they logically take her out first?

It didn't matter. There was still time...

The flames were wrapping the curtains and the dresses that had been left behind. They were licking the walls at the back of the store, destroying the paper posters.
She was waiting for them any minute now. Her friends would remember her in the end. She had no doubt about it.

The people in the shop window had gathered far, so far away from the glass! The people that were once touching it. That were bending near it to watch her closer.
She could now see them standing and looking towards her. No one was passing by. They were all standing. They had all stopped, looking at her window.
Even then...
Even now the woman in the center.

...

At last!

She saw them running towards her...
She felt them enter the store. Pulling away with force the fabric behind her. Hands that were moving fast... That were pulling the cloths fixed on the side walls. That were mindlessly gathering the dresses left on the floor...

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Hands that quickly undid the big brooch at the side of her waist...
That removed suddenly a loose spring dress, while parts of a woman in the center were falling on the ground.

A woman who was looking silently at them running away.
Who was gazing at them uniting hastily with the crowd that was looking, that was observing quietly, indifferently behind the shop window...

Pieces of a woman naked, thrown in the center of a window lightened by the reaching flames...
Of a woman naked that could no longer close her eyes...
That could no longer cover that glass.

Of a woman alone with the gaze turned towards a crowd that was looking, that was looking indifferently at a woman naked, so naked, thrown in the center.

...

Never until today have I understood how she could find such strength.

And yet that woman —perhaps the truest woman in the world— found the strength to turn her gaze away from the

dolls in the shop window...

A woman alone.
A woman naked, so naked, that spring sunny morning, in the center of the world.

A woman in pieces, with eyes open, wide open, left to watch calmly the flames that were melting her...

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* *

“A minimum fixing of the hair...

The fastening of the delicate fabric belt...
Raising the right pad to reduce undulations... And finally the passing of the red silk shawl, so as to embrace the waist and end at her two elbows...

Perfect!

Let’s add some emphasis to the movement...
The right foot just a tiny bit forward to stress her pace, and the left hand slightly more stretched.

Wonderful! I think we’re done!”

...

What a relief. She never liked the entire procedure. It was time to open her eyes...

Green! Her favorite colour!
And it was indeed a most beautiful dress!

Though,
she would have preferred the shawl light-blue...

December 23

Never before was such a creature born.
Never before.
So beautiful as no painter could ever draw! As no writer could describe! As I couldn’t, unfortunately, ever tell you in words... A figure my friends that surpassed images and phrases.

And if I had to choose something on her that made her really unique, that made her unprecedented, something that offered her perfection... This then would be her lips!
Two lips that surpassed imagination itself...

Two lips in the center of the world!

...

They were two lips, I remember, that I once tasted, that touched mine for a while... And it was to my lips they entrusted their secret.

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* *

They had understood it from the first moment they touched them but confessed it much later, when I couldn't perhaps do anything. But my lips were always as weird as this...
When they should have, it took them so long to speak!

So they led things there where they wanted, and waited patiently from me to make the beginning...
It was around the middle, of some morning...

"Tell me, what did they say to you?" I asked them.

They smiled, pleased.
They cleared then their throat with a relatively slight cough, they prolonged my suspense adding some moments of silence, and finally started with their familiar riddles:

"They told us what two lips had never told other lips!" they replied.

"Meaning what?"

"They told us the truth!"

I realized, helpless, that tonight the conversation would last long... That once more they had set their goal to torment

me. Besides, I always was their favorite toy.
"But...", I tried to concentrate, "don't lips usually tell the truth?"

They didn't answer immediately.
They only smiled cunningly again — with a smile that, I don't know how, but only they can achieve. As if they were hiding something that no one knew...
"We usually say, whatever we were told to say...", whispered then my upper lip!
"Or even what they want to hear!", added the other without thinking.

"It's weird..." I mumbled.

"Why is it weird?" they wondered, slightly suspicious.

"I don't know...
So it sounds..."
(At this point I must ask you to also forgive my little, hurried lie, but as you know truths from time to time complicate things so much more! And everything seemed already complicated enough...)

So, I asked them to share with me what they were hiding.
They hesitated, but I know that deep inside them they also wanted the same. But so surly they were since the first day I met them...
Someone had to plead with them a thousand times and promise them a thousand things, for a tiny truth!

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— Should we trust you?
— Yes, I will never betray it!

* *

It was a truth, it is true, that I didn't expect to hear from any mouth... Especially from a mouth like mine...

"Sit down" they suggested politely to me pointing to their small stool, and then they ascended and laid lazily on my couch.

I sat, in any way I could.
They remained idle, looking at me from above. Both of them very serious and silent.

"Those lips that you once loved, never truly loved you", said then my lower lip without a prologue. So simply!
"...Neither you, nor us...", added the other one equally sharply, with such apathy as if they weren't saying anything of great importance.
And they set to arrange their pillows right afterwards!

Here, forgive me, but I must again add something of considerable significance about them, because I really wouldn't ever want you to misjudge them for their sudden change of

attitude. When lips decide to tell the truth, it's good to know that they can become unbelievably rough and cynical.
We continue...

"But this isn't what they told me!" I complained, and jolted upright.

"Sit down", both of them shouted together.
I obeyed.

"Those lips", they continued afterwards, coughing slightly to clear their voice, "never loved anyone! Besides, they couldn't love anyone...
They were always telling you what the figure wanted to tell you!"
"...And you, for so long, you didn't understand anything", they added without pity.
"You would only hear what your ears wanted to hear!"

"I'm sorry."
"...But how is it possible?" "Why?"

They returned to their familiar silence.
"It is a peculiar, rather unhappy case...", they finally answered.
"Those lips you met some day, were...
...Were, we're afraid, two sad lips."

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* *

...I should —now I see it clearly— probably expect something like that. I should have seen that things would lead there... When you get down to truths everything usually turns out dangerously serious. Anyway.

"It cannot be!" I said quietly, not wanting to accept it.
"They were the most beautiful lips, on the most beautiful creature.
The most desirable in the whole world! No way..."

"They were two sad lips", they interrupted me with an attitude that took no controversy. An attitude that I wouldn't say I haven't seen again, without of course ever gotten used to it.

"...Do you know why?", I asked in a similar tone.
"We understood it."
"What was it?"

Between you and me, it was something I didn't expect to hear from a human's lips.
They took a deep breath as if they wanted to say at once all that they had. They paused for a moment, searching perhaps for the way to start. And then they spoke. Hesitatingly.
Knowing already perhaps how their words would sound...

"They themselves, once told us that they were two aged

lips..." they replied.
And they united. As if they felt remorse. Or as if they had nothing to say any more. It seemed, nevertheless, to still linger in their ears, the remembrance of that phrase.

I moved uncomfortably on my small stool while they were sinking slowly in their pillows.
"Meaning what?" I said startled.
— It is very difficult for anyone to understand it... It seems to have no logic... Maybe it is also of no importance.
— Try me.

"They were two aged lips..." they went on calmly.
"Two fleshy lips... Remember?
Two wrinkled lips on the most beautiful, on the freshest body. On a body without flaw...
On the most youthful skin..."

"So what?" I wondered. "What's wrong in that?"
"They were for this, I guess, the most beautiful lips of all.
Two perfect lips, on a perfect body."

"You don't understand..." they insisted.
"Two aged lips we tell you again, on the most youthful skin in the world..."
"And appearance, you should know, was so very important to them."

...I don't know what you understood so far, but I, till then, I wouldn't say I had quite understood... My lips were also to

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blame which, despite of the seriousness of the case, having risen they were walking continuously up and down on their small pillows.

"So what?"
"...Aren't all the lips 'aged'?"

Once again they didn't answer. Nor did they move. Now that it seemed necessary to say more... They only silenced.

And when my lips silence, as long as I remember, they either think or give you the time to think.

So, little by little, I started by myself to understand something more; perhaps —who knows— the truth! After so much time only since I first met them...

They were always perhaps two lips alone, all alone, sad in the center of the world. Without ever anyone else to know.

And my eyes, as everyone's, were once seeing, what they simply wanted to see.

"But... Why?"

"There is no why" they answered in a low voice.

"They were, they believed, two ugly lips — perhaps uglier than all the lips..."

"And appearance was so important to them" they whispered, as if they were speaking only to themselves.

"...So they didn't want, they probably couldn't love anyone any more...

Them themselves... You... Us..."

"That's why we didn't say it to you then...

Tell you what?"

What should they tell me... And I, how could I understand. So big and foolish as I was.

"There was unfortunately nothing you could do..."

"...There isn't anyone", they went on, "no matter how strange it might sound, who really can feel those lips. Help them — even a little!"

"No one —they said, and at last stopped their annoying cough— that can or ever will touch them."

* *

I didn't speak; I said nothing. Nothing at all! Even if it was their first time my lips revealed to me so much... Even if I so wanted to have something to say, I didn't finally find a single thing to pronounce.

For many days, however, I was thinking about it.

Days and nights.

Normally, there should still be something to be done, even now. Or was it too late perhaps and I was just tormenting myself?

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Well, I say it here, for you to know it, there are times that lips make me furious! In general!

They say whatever they have to tell you, and then they fall blissfully to sleep! And you stay afterwards wondering again what did they really mean to tell you, and if it was truth what they had said!

...The only thing I knew without a doubt, was that those lips I loved one day, once were to me the most beautiful I ever met. Perhaps indeed they were even more beautiful now... Even if I never really understood the source of their beauty! What made them differ from all the other.

Even if they themselves believed that there are no beautiful lips, that all of them are aged, that... I don't even know what!

But what could I do indeed? Could I do anything?

Somewhere —I felt it— there must have been some kind of a mistake. But where?

And which one?

Since they themselves didn't see their beauty, their very beauty!

And still, whatever they were, beautiful or not, weren't they always in reality like all the other lips? Tell me... I know it. I know it well, somewhere inside me...

...Two lips always as beautiful, as all the other lips.

...Two lips —in truth— so beautiful...

* *

...I nudged slightly my little betrayers. It was around the middle of some night. A night, like every other...

"Wake up", I whispered to them...

"I too have a secret to share."

I'd say they rather woke up roughly! They jumped up in that moment from their tiny bed and rubbed with force their sleepy eyes.

Even though they usually sleep heavily, contrary to me...

"Sit down", I told them.

They sat, in any way they could...

"What secret?" they asked impatiently at once. (Lips —apart from aged— you should always remember, are curious as well...

And bubbling as well! And gossiping as well! And betraying!

...And a thousand other things that there is no reason to analyze here, 'cause we will lose the essence of the matter.)

— Should I trust you?

— Yes, we will never betray it.

— And yet... It is a secret that must not be kept secret!

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— Meaning what?
— A secret that must be spread to all lips. That must reach those someday.

They silenced for a while. And when my lips silence there is a case —a rare case of course— of not having anything to say!
"...You should only tell them", I said and coughed, "that they are like all the lips in the world...
That they are truly beautiful like all the lips in the world..."

"You come second", they replied smiling ironically. (With a smile that —I don't know how— but this also, only lips can achieve.
If you haven't discussed that much with your lips, there's a slight chance you might dislike them at first sight!)

"We also told them so", they went on, "but they replied that they are ugly.
That there simply aren't any beautiful lips!"

"You must tell them that they are beautiful like all the lips in the world", I repeated.
"That if they search deep inside them they will see that they don't really differ in anything than all the other lips..."

"But don't you hear?" they shouted to me! (...So loudly indeed, that I thought that, at times, my ears know what they do when hearing what they want to hear.)

"We told them!" they continued shouting.
"And they replied that there are no beautiful lips! That they simply are equally, perhaps even more ugly, than all the lips they had met!"

(...When lips don't understand what you say to them, they can become extremely nervous, as you must also know from yours...
And bad! And sour! And grumpy! And unbearable!
...And two thousand other things that there is no need, as we said, to analyze in detail, 'cause we'll never ever find the essence of the matter.)

•••

I silenced.
And when I silence, I do so, to simply get on their nerves from time to time! Just like it suits them.

"...It remains to tell them then" I went on calmly, adding only the necessary coughing, "that they must, I'm afraid, alone try to love the other lips."
And just before they started again to shout —because this is what they would do, I know it—, I continued...

"...That they must see, must feel, that behind that which can be seen —whatever it is that eyes can see—", I whispered smiling cunningly and also sadly, such a long time only

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since I first met them, “there is a strange tiny secret, it is hiding well a simple yet invisible truth that beautifies, suddenly always tell them, all lips...”

“...All of them, they should remember,
...and each one separately...”

“That truth.
And that truth alone.”

* *

It is a small, a minimum message of hope, that travels hidden everywhere, from lips to lips...
That now, I guess, yours as well have known it.
And it might reach someday, to those lips I loved...

...To the two most beautiful
...lips of the world...

December 20

They weren’t but two leaves...
That were falling slowly from a tree high up at the edge of silence.
That were falling slowly, dancing with the wind found on their way at that time, at that edge of silence.

“Don’t fall to the ground”, it said to them whistling. “Come with me...”
“Where? To go where?”

“Where the dry leaves gather...”

A wind took them along, blowing full of freshness, gathering the dry leaves from all the ends of the world... A wind blowing towards the sea.
There where two lovers were dancing, while the sun was shining high in the sky, while the clouds were whirling round them, whirling beside them, on the blue waters, you would think.

And the sea then started also whirling quicker and quicker,

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while the clouds were getting trapped inside of it, while the leaves were gathering by its side, while two lovers were floating in its middle and the wind was freezing a sea white, all white, dripping snow to the edge of the universe...

Snow that fell on the sleeping moon and woke it up.

It, still white, all white, came near them...
Came near two lovers sliding on a planet out of snow and crystal, a planet out of ice and mist...
But the frost could never touch them... Which frost could touch two lovers in the center of the infinite sea?

And the sea then stopped and said to the sun:
"Touch me..."

It lowered, and quenched quietly its lips in the sea...

The snow melted, the wind silenced, the leaves fell into a sea of dew. Fell into a sea of rain where two lovers were walking holding each other softly, talking to each other tenderly as the snowflakes adorned a while longer their eyes...
As the moon, pale, adorned a while longer their world.

Two lovers who were now walking in the center of the trembling road that had been born... A road of gold which appeared as the sun was scattering its colour for tonight.
Who were walking while the sun was sliding around them, while the road was travelling along with it till the edge of the sea, and the stars were floating slowly till the edge of the universe...

Two lovers fading away tonight on a sea full of golden leaves, on a sea of blue once more, foaming helpless in the center of a world whirling around it.
...But the wave could never touch them. Which wave could touch two lovers in the center of the infinite universe?

And time said to them:

"Touch me"

...

Two hands that moved as one.

And time lowered itself and stood by their side...

December 24

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“Is there anyone here?” it said quietly, and a row of notes flooded the closed room.

Probably no one.

“It there anyone here?” it said louder, and the small attic was filled by sounds for the first time.

It knew that it shouldn’t ever speak alone, but it couldn’t stand it any more. So much time had gone by since they moved it up to that attic. Since they covered it with those sheets and shut the windows.

It couldn’t stand it any more! Why did they treat it this way? Things used to be so beautiful some years ago.

Not that much time had really passed since it filled their evenings, filled their dreams and their hearts with music. Had so much time gone by since then?

Since they were children, then, when they all gathered around it and clumsily pressed its white keys? Since they

climbed on it and they were shouted at for fear they might destroy the precious ebony cover, which hid so many strings inside it?

No, not that much time could have gone by.

And then again when they grew up it remembered their first lessons. When once again they clumsily pressed its keys, forcing it to strange sounds.

Children who used to play while learning, because perhaps it never was anything more to them than just another of their toys. Something like a big music box...

No, not that much time could have gone by since then!

Then, when it filled the family’s evenings, filled their dances and celebrations.

When they all wanted to sit on the little stool with the yellow gold-adorned fabric, open the heavy brownish key cover and share with it their beautiful moments.

Yes, they must have loved it back then.

It felt it from the way they touched its keys, from the way they caressed the heavy brownish cover before opening it, from how much they liked listening to it singing.

It felt it from how much they cared for it; always in tune, perfectly clean, in the central spot of the living room, of a living room once filled with people.

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...

How, indeed, everything changed; the children grew up and it was as if the house became smaller. Space, they said, wasn't enough, and there was no reason to still have the huge piano. It was time to change the arrangement of the living room and that piano didn't fit anywhere.

Yes, it still had the beautiful shimmering cover, the little stool with the golden fabric, and still produced the same melodies as before. Yet the children grew up and no more played with it.

The little stool seemed uncomfortable, the colour of the wood didn't match the light-coloured decoration, and their evenings were now flooded with music from the small, brand-new gramophone. On the corner table at the edge of the living room, beautiful as a full-bloomed flower, with a voice capable of imitating every voice.

Even its own.

Perhaps it really had no place in that house. Perhaps it wasn't any more, perhaps it never was but a large music box. Nothing more.

...

"Is there anyone here? Answer me, please."

But no one heard the music in the sealed attic.

The music of a piano covered with two large white sheets, imprisoned in the silence and the dark, somewhere at the

edge —or in the middle?— of nowhere.

* *

How much time had really passed since then...

Since a small and beautiful gramophone replaced this huge piano in their dreams and hearts.

Since they started searching for ways to give it away. A grand piano, made out of precious wood... A masterpiece of the 'so-and-so' manufacturers, preserved in excellent condition.

All for nothing!

People only bought gramophones, small and beautiful like blossoming flowers.

What should they do with a graceless piano? A huge and graceless piano?

And how indeed such a piano happened to be in a house? Pianos like this one were to be usually found at concerts and distinct shops.

No, what should they do with such a piano? Besides now they were all selling their aged pianos. Nobody wanted aged pianos any more...

So they moved it up, with great trouble it is true, to that attic.

The attic with the old things!

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* *

...It had discerned in that attic old acquaintances before they covered it with the large white sheets.

The wooden chest that once adorned the bedroom...

The old lamps of the living room...

The beautiful rocking chair they send away when it started to creak unbearably...

It didn't know where they had gone to till then. And, somehow, it didn't care. After all, some of them were sent away as soon as they acquired it; a brand-new piano, a jewel for every aristocratic home.

Had so much time really passed since then?

Since the children grew up?

...

From time to time they had come again. Back then, in the beginning still...

They had shaken the dusty sheets, had opened the windows for some light to come in, had even brought a tuner to tune it.

And then they were vanishing again, hurriedly, in the way they were coming.

So then, in the beginning, it had discerned old acquainances.

Some framed pictures. The wicker basket with the children's toys. The old sewing machine. Things that had once passed in front of it.

The sideboard with the big mirror, the small kitchen table, the baby's cradle. All covered with sheets, now yellowed.

Silhouettes only, figures forgotten for ever in the attic with the old things, there in nowhere.

Had so much time gone by since then? Since they stopped tuning it, stopped shaking its white sheets? Had so much time gone by since then?

Since it filled their dreams and their hearts?

They had returned again at other times, but it couldn't see why...

Maybe to leave something there, maybe to take something away. It couldn't see any more what was around it.

Maybe an attic full of old things. Maybe an empty attic, with only one aged piano left in the silence and the dark. An old piano left in nowhere...

"Is there anyone here?" it said quietly, and a row of notes flooded the closed room... Hoarse notes, of an untuned piano left in the dark attic.

Yes, it had grown old! It was no longer the same piano. Its voice wasn't melodic as it once was.

And that gramophone was singing so beautifully...

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...

But still it couldn't believe it! Wasn't it anything else for those hands? For those hands that touched it, over and over for long years? Wasn't it anything more than just... just a music box?

And yet it remembered how they touched it with joy, with care, with kindness!

And it sang to them as beautifully as it could. It was always singing to them as beautifully as it could, even when they pressed its keys playfully, even at their first lessons!

"...No, nobody is here..."

the big piano answered to by itself, and the notes coming out of its chords seemed to it so out of tune in that dark attic.

"...They're all gone..."

It felt void the space around it.

The old lamps and the beautiful rocking chair, the noisy children's toys and the baby's cradle wouldn't be there any more. There wouldn't be anything. No one would listen to it in that deserted attic in the middle —or at the edge?— of nowhere.

There wouldn't be anyone in the house either...

The lower floors would be empty. The children had long grown up. Maybe they had long gone. Maybe they had their own families and homes.

Maybe the only thing they left behind them would be that piano! So difficult to move. So big to fit anywhere else.

An aged piano, in an aged attic, in a house also aged. In a house lost in nowhere...

"Pity" it said, and a row of tuneless notes echoed in the attic. A row of notes coming out of a piano covered with two yellowed sheets.

* *

It decided from then on, not to speak again...

It had accepted things the way they were. Nobody wanted aged pianos any more... Hands forget whatever they have touched... Small gramophones now blossom in light-coloured living rooms...

There was no reason to be sad! It was a big and wise piano.

If only it weren't covered by those sheets, not wrapped by that darkness, not touched by such loneliness! At least not wrapped by that darkness...

To see again the sun for a little while!

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...Where did they all go?
Had so much time gone by since then?

...Since then when it filled the house with music? Since then when they sat on its small stool and sung with it?

Its voice used to be so beautiful once. Wasn't it truly the same piano? Wasn't it always the same piano that filled their dreams and their hearts? Wasn't it?

And yet it still remembered their favorite music!

A strange, intoxicating music!
When they listened to it they turned off —it remembered— the lights. They closed their eyes and left themselves inside it.
A happy melody, and sad at the same time!
Old and new at the same time!
Perhaps monotonous, and yet never boring!

Did it still remember that melody?
Yes, it couldn't have forgotten it... It was its favorite melody! But now, how could it possibly sing it?
Now that its voice had been left in the dampness of that attic, in the frost of that silence.
How?

...

...And what if it tried?

It wouldn't annoy anyone! It was a piano forgotten in nowhere. And that, a melody from the past.
But was it worth the trouble?

Was it maybe better to remember it the way it used to be? This wasn't but a small, mortal, aged piano. But that one?
An ageless melody! It would deserve to be sung perhaps by a new, tuned piano. This one had no rights any more...

No, it was so beautiful that melody!
Let it be sung by other pianos, newer ones. Let it be sung by blossomed gramophones. Beautiful melodies are to be sung by blossomed gramophones! This one was just a piano forgotten in the closed attic. It had no rights to that melody.
It shouldn't, logically, even remember it.

Perhaps memories were making things worse.

* *

And what if it tried to say it?
Sacrilege for that melody, to be sung tunelessly in a damp and dark attic, but...

...But it wouldn't annoy anyone... It would sing it only for

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itself! A melody from the past.

And they were always turning off the lights when it was singing it! They closed their eyes and left themselves inside it. Yes, this is what it would do now once again... An immortal melody sung by a piano in the dark.

By an aged piano, so be it...

It wasn’t annoying anyone...

...

The first note sounded strangely in the small attic. Sounded tunelessly by strings tired, by strings surrendered to the strokes of time.

It stopped.

No, it was no longer the same piano! And so much time had really passed since then!

But it wanted to continue. It tried again. It sung the first notes and stopped full of shame.

“Is there anyone here?” it asked timidly.

It wouldn’t want to be seen, to be heard! It was a melody for younger pianos. An ageless, an immortal melody! How could it be sung by an aged piano? By a piano forgotten in nowhere?

Yet no one was there... Once more no one answered...

It started again quietly with a hoarse, tuneless voice. It stopped and started over and over again. It seemed to have forgotten it. But it couldn’t have forgotten it...

It was a big and wise piano! It knew that it couldn’t have forgotten it. It was a melody that it closed deep inside it.

It just couldn’t catch the rhythm...

Effort was needed.

It should try more.

It was the only thing perhaps now left to do! That aged piano, the one covered with two dusty sheets, there in the dark lost in nowhere, should try more! It was a melody that it knew, that it was hiding deep inside it...

It was the same melody...

* *

...It was the same melody the one that was pouring out of its tired strings...

A melody that suddenly flooded with warmness the locked attic! A melody that filled with broken notes an attic forgotten in time...

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Yes, it was the same melody! You could feel it, it was the same melody. And it was the same piano. The same piano singing louder and louder a melody that it hadn't forgotten.

A melody that it closed inside it.

...

It was the same piano singing with a voice unexpected for a piano forgotten for so long in the dampness and the dark... Had so much time indeed gone by since then?

It didn't know any more! It didn't want to know!

It didn't want to remember anything, except for the rhythm that was flooding its strings, flooding its dreams and its heart...

...And it could hear by its side the old rocking chair creaking discordantly, the noisy children's toys breathing once again in the wicker basket, the baby's cradle coming to life to the rhythm of the music...

Had so much time gone by since then?

No, it was still the same piano! The same chair, the same toys could be discerned covered with dusty sheets...

Silhouettes only, figures forgotten in the locked attic.

...

And there, among them, beside them, covered with one more sheet, there in the dampness and the dark, a gramophone was blossoming to the rhythm of the same melody.

They were all blossoming to the rhythm of the same melody...

...Of the same melody that was always pouring out of a piano singing in the dark.

...Of the same melody that was always ruling our hearts
and our dreams...

December 26

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“Poor star, what has become of you...
That awful comet...”

“Don’t say anything about it. It is the kindest comet I have met.”

“Why?”

“I have no time to tell you, I must leave.”

* *

“Poor star, what a huge explosion...
...We were told, a comet was to blame...”

“No, it was not at all to blame.”

“Meaning what?”

“I don’t have time to tell you. I can’t stop...”

The light of the explosion, the light of a star that had now disappeared, continued hastily its journey in space. And it was an evening like all evenings I was gazing at the stars, when it reached another blue planet...

“Unlucky star... As soon as this light passes by, you will perish for ever... Unlucky comet... As soon as this light passes, you will perish too...”

“We are not unlucky... We are the most fortunate of all the stars.”

“Why?”

“We don’t have time to tell you... We cannot stop...”

“Take me with you...”

...

I was leaving behind me just another blue planet. I saw it vanishing, getting smaller and disappearing at the edge of dream. It was the first time I was travelling to infinity. I felt a little bit confused...

...It is no small thing to watch the stars that adorned the edges of your dream, passing by your side, getting lost inside you... I watched them coming right at me and I was afraid; I will crack up I said, I will break —thousands of pieces— any minute now...

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But the light of my two friends was protecting me, was hiding me inside it. It felt so good with my two stars.

“How long have you been travelling to the universe?” I asked them.

“How long would you like? Since forever or since the moment you met us?”

“Since the moment I met you...” How beautiful it is when time doesn’t matter, I thought.

“And where are we going, do you know?”

“Where would you like us to be going? Everywhere or nowhere?”

Don’t ask me what came over me, I don’t know — I was I tell you at the edge of my dream. “Nowhere” I answered, as we were passing just another red planet.

“I want us to be going nowhere!”

* *

I could see planets around me in various colours, blue white and red suns. Black rings and colourful holes–caves. Clouds without skies and skies without clouds. How beautiful everything is when you are going nowhere...

“Poor star”, I heard the other stars saying to them, “we are very sorry...”

“But why are you sorry?”

“That you perished at the edge of the infinite... That your light passes by and disappears...”

“My light never disappears... You only stay still...”

“What did you say...”

But the voice of the stars faded away quickly. Indeed, this light had no time to stay.

“Thank you for taking me with you” I said to them.

“Our pleasure”, they replied, “it is our pleasure to have you inside us.”

“Have you been together for a long time?”

“Since we met you, didn’t we say?”

* *

It was so beautiful in the middle of nowhere. I could see things I had never until then seen again. That I had never imagined.

I could see square, polygon, cylindrical planets. I could see suns whose light changed when they got upset. I could see moons in velvet colours...

All of them suspended in the void, and yet they always

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seemed fixed on something. They were moving and yet they appeared eternally immovable. All except those colourful comets. Yes, they were so beautiful the comets I saw...

Colourful, long tails, chasing a luminous small ball that was leaving running at the edge of their dreams. How beautiful those comets were!

I turned to my stars.

"Tell me about you" I said to them.

"We are two stars... The travelling light of two stars..."

"Tell me something I don't know."

"You know everything, you just enjoy hearing it from others..."

"Perhaps" I replied. "Why do the stars of the universe feel sorry for you?"

I was watching the world around us coming towards us slowly and then slide and disappear behind us. Sometimes I enjoyed looking at the world that we left behind. At other times I enjoyed looking only in front of me.

"...It's logical", they answered me. "The stars of the sky feel sorry for us because they don't know what is happening..."

•••

One of my two friends started talking.

"I was —I remember— trapped in that dark corner of the sky. Trapped for ever in here and now.

Next to the other stars in that little corner — a company of stars in various colours. We grew up together, together we were filled by light, by the light lightening our route. Together we granted light to the stars which were found on our way.

Ever together, a company of stars at the edge of the universe.

It was beautiful..."

"The years went by, but time doesn't count, you should know, for stars. Because at stars there is no here or everywhere, now or ever.

Because stars wherever they might be, whenever they may live, live everywhere and forever. Especially you, sparkle of the blue planet, you should have known that; stars live forever, and wherever they may live, it is everywhere the same.

Thus, for us, the place doesn't matter. Time doesn't matter...

...Everywhere and forever, there is just 'here' and 'now'."

"But you had your light to tell you what was happening beyond the edge of the world!"

"My light wasn't the same. Light passes by and disappears... Light never turns back... It was travelling, but I was waiting in a dusty corner of the sky."

"But you had the other stars next to you."

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"...All trapped in here and now..."

"And then I saw the comet coming...
...Yes, I confess I had seen it before..."

* *

I turned to my other friend. Its figure was vaguely discernible in the abundant light that was enwrapping my two stars. We were travelling, I remember, at that time somewhere at the edge of nowhere, in between two galaxies with stars polygonal the colour of ochre.

"And you?", I asked it politely, "What do you have to tell me about you..."
"Why do the stars of the universe feel sorry for you?"

"The stars cannot see me", it said. "I disappear into my friend's brightness." "Yet if they could see me they would curse me!"
"It's logical, the stars of the sky do not know what is happening..."

It stopped for a while and started speaking again when we passed the two galaxies with the stars the colour of ochre.

"I never felt trapped in here and now, as you probably know", it said to me.

"I was, I must confess, among the luckiest creatures in the world. I travelled, alone, so be it, until the edge of the universe.
I could see stars vanishing inside me. I was touching them, I was caressing them with my colourful tail. And then I was leaving. I was always leaving. I never had time to stay.
I was just a little ball that runs pointlessly at the edge of your dream, remember?"

"I was such a lucky comet. Time, had no meaning for me. Place, had no meaning for me. I was filled by light, by the light lightening my route. I granted light to the stars which were found in my way.
It was beautiful."

"I had seen places no star has ever seen... I had touched colourful suns, crystal planets, I had seen waterfalls of light wrapping —like rings— transparent planets. Planets that inside them, you saw infinity..."

"How much I would envy you, colourful comet!
Was there anything that you hadn't seen?"

"I hadn't seen galaxies the colour of ochre, I hadn't seen white and red holes–caves. I had never seen blue planets..."

"...I was travelling, but I was always passing from places I had passed. I was leaving, but I was always turning to the stars I parted from. A journey with no beginning and ending.

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Everywhere and ever, ‘here’ and ‘now’ as I later understood. To the same suns, the same moons, the same transparent planets...
Always the same journey...”

* *

“Why didn’t you talk with them?
To tell you about them, and to tell them your secrets.”

“I was always running, always leaving. ‘Lucky comet, they would say, tell us about the colours at the edge of the dream.’
I have no time, I answered. I must leave.
‘We will be waiting for you...’”

...

We were passing at that time by the side of a dark cave.
“Why shouldn’t it be colourful?” I asked them.

“Even if the light passes by it, it doesn’t touch it...”
“Let us lighten it. Let’s disappear inside it...
Light, after all, passes and disappears.”

The world changed inside it.
We became, all three of us, a black light travelling in a white universe. Amidst black suns and grey planets.

Then, a black and white comet came near us...

“Unlucky comet”, it said to us, “whatever happened to you.
That awful star...”
“Don’t say anything about it... It is the kindest star I have known.”

“Why?”

“I have no time to tell you, I must leave.”

I saw it disappearing behind us.
“How did you two meet?” I asked.

* *

My lucky star spoke...
“We were both trapped in here and now, it wasn’t hard.
...But I was waiting for that comet thousands of years. All the stars of the little company were waiting for it. They all had something to ask. But every time it didn’t have time to answer. We should wait thousands of years for an answer. For one single answer.”

We changed so many colours passing though coloured caves.
And it was only when we entered that white cave that we

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came out again into a colourful world... A white light in a dark universe, with crystal planets and mirror-moons.

...And it was my first time seeing so many gathered blue planets. White and blue, with yellow suns at the edge of their dream...

...Planets of water, with moons of paper...

"...And what did you ask then?" I said to my lucky star.

"I asked nothing. I had so much to ask that I wouldn't have time to ask anything...

'Light doesn't turn back' I only said to it.

'Light forever passes and disappears...'

'Take me with you...'"

I turned to my lucky comet.

"...I had so much to say, that I answered nothing", it said to me.

"I only thought that the light doesn't ever turn back. Light doesn't get trapped in here and now..."

"Then I turned towards it."

"...It was a strange touch..."

...

We were travelling, I remember, amidst the blue planets. Our light had colours from all the caves of the universe. A multi-coloured light travelling amidst blue planets...

It was beautiful at the edge of the dream.

"Poor sparkle", the blue planets said to me, "what huge explosion drifted you away... Your light now passes and disappears with you."

"We were told, two awful stars were to blame..."

"They are not awful...", I replied. "They are the kindest stars I have known..."

"Why?"

"I have no time to tell you...

I must leave..."

"... ..."

December 30

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They weren't but two masks. Two faceless masks...

They could have been two lovers, two flowers, two stars at the edge of nowhere. But they just happened to have a different role in the small theater. That's how it happened, what can I say?

Two classic theatrical masks, in the small theater at the edge of a street I don't remember any more.

They were lying on an old table, at the edge of the room where the settings and the theatrical costumes were kept. Two typical masks of leather. Cut there, where all masks are cut; made to cover only the faces — they, you see, were always of the greatest importance...

"Come on - come on!", said the faceless man and grabbed one of the two. "It is time for the rehearsal to begin."

It was time for the rehearsal to begin. Another faceless man hid hastily behind the second mask.

They were ready.

"3-2-1, let's start..."

* *

I had never until then seen such beautiful masks.

So real. Every existing face would envy them. Smooth leather in the colour of the skin. Stretched, youthful leather.

So expressive; leather cut by a true craftsman. The eyes' shape, the mouth's shape gave perfectly the intended expression. The first one, smiley, was hiding behind it a world that was dancing. The other one, sad, was hiding behind it a world that was cracking up...

...

The rehearsal was doing well. As it should have.

In a few days performances would start. There wasn't much time left for mistakes any more. Everything should be perfect for the great premiere...

...For the moment that the curtain would rise.

...

...Their eyes were real works of art! I watched and admired them. Designed in their every expression to hide sufficiently the eyes behind them. Eyes of no importance. Who would notice the eyes behind them? Who would see them, hidden behind the narrow slits in leather?

The first two narrow slits, matched harmonically with the big smile and the high eyebrows. Two eyes dancing behind two smiling slits, you would suppose...

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The other two slits, an unequalled sample of two eyes shedding tears below two eyebrows frowning with pain. Above a mouth almost shut by grief...

Yes, the rehearsal was doing well! They would surely be successful. Besides the play was old — tested.

There was no doubt that they would be successful.

* *

The small theater had been calm for quite some time.

They had returned again to their position. On the small table at the edge of the room where the settings and the theatrical costumes were kept.

Surely it would be a remarkable performance. A play recreating an era. You could understand it just from the settings. Facades of classical buildings. But the dresses also, the objects, everything drew you away to days of the past.

People and critics would be excited, without a doubt. It would be a great performance for the small theater at the edge of the street.

Yet, for now, they were still at the rehearsals...

“3-2-1, let’s go...”

* *

Rehearsals were taking place on a daily basis, usually in the morning. Only then our two masks —two classic theatrical masks— appeared on stage. The rest of the day they lived forgotten in the room with the performance’s objects. The small room next to the dressing rooms...

On the old wooden table...

...

“Don’t you worry”, said the sad mask to the other.

“Don’t worry, time will pass quickly, you will see... The rehearsals will finish, the premiere will take place, the play will will be forgotten, and then they will leave us again in peace...”

“All will end some day. Be patient...”

“I can’t stand it any more” replied sadly the happy mask.

“The same dialogues every day. At every rehearsal. At every performance. And I am obliged to do the talking! I can no longer stand those happy dialogues...

Nothing will ever end... As nothing ever ended for so many years. And the next play why does it have to be different? In every play isn’t there a happy mask? In every play...

I can’t stand it any more...”

“Hang in there”, repeated the sad mask, “I feel you.”

“Do you think I enjoy what they had me say today once again?

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Boring sad dialogues... Same more or less in every play I had acted up to this day...

Since you know that I would rather they have me singing and smiling. I can no longer stand those bad-mood dialogues."

"But, unfortunately, I can't imagine this skin changing its shape" it added — smiling behind the sad slit in the position of the mouth.

"...This is how it is going to remain; in a bad mood and dusty for ever.

Suitable only for tear-shedding roles."

"Awful I am telling you..."

"...Awful" it said again, and found the courage to laugh.

It wasn't but a mask with sad slits for mouth and eyes. A mask that was laughing, next to a mask with a happy face...

"I wonder where you find such cheer!" said the happy mask.

"3-2-1, let's go..."

* *

...Today they were all tense.

They were forgetting their lines, they were making wrong movements at moments they shouldn't have... I don't know what was at fault... Maybe the approaching premiere. Maybe it was just a bad day. Still, nothing was going well!

Scenes were repeated again and again, and yet each time they were getting worse.

Finally the rehearsal was interrupted for the evening and the masks returned to the small table...

...

For a long time they both remained silent.

They were looking at the dresses and the settings... They were lucky! They tried them once at the beginning and then they left them in the small room. They would take them out again, they had said, at the final rehearsals...

But then why did they carry them around at every rehearsal? Simply because of their size?

"What do you have to say about today?", finally asked the mask with the sad face.

"What should I say? I just know I can't stand those ridiculous dialogues any more. Tasteless jokes, foolish songs, and that spoony lover's monologue...

...And we have to go through all this again in the afternoon...

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Don’t they understand it? I am a serious mask with a happy face. And they want me to act the fool...”

The mask with the sad face smiled beneath the slanty slit for a mouth.
“Don’t take everything to heart”, it said...
“Play the role of the happy mask. On stage only... Is it too much?”

“But I can’t pretend any more, I’m telling you...
I have grown tired.
Each time the same thing...”

“Calm down, I feel you. However, it is our profession, don’t you forget it...
We know not what else to do...”

* *

The evening’s rehearsal was way better than the morning one.

Everything seemed to have found its rhythm again. As if it had never been lost. The dialogues rolled smoothly, there had been no confusions and gaps, the strain of sad scenes shimmered down smoothly by harmonious doses of scenes of laughter, the balance of meaning and escaping —always in relation to the story— was played well enough.
The audience would be pleased.
Everyone would be pleased...

...

“I can’t any more”, said the mask with the smiling face. “If only we could at least exchange roles between us...”

“That would be nice”, said smiling the cracked mask. “But think a while... This could not happen...”

“Why?”

“...But because what kind of actors would we be then?”
it answered, and burst into roaring laughter, carrying along for a while the settings and the dresses that also laughed with it...

“I wonder where you find such cheer...”

* *

No, from now on there was no time for mistakes at rehearsals! In a few days the curtain would rise and the performance would start in a theater —a little theater, so be it— full of people.
And those people had to see exactly what they’ve been expecting. Nothing less than what they’ve been expecting...

“Awful, awful!” sounded the voice at the back.

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"Give more emotion... You're in pain this moment. You are in pain!"
"Try again."

Weakness in expressing itself? Weakness in being understood? In any case the scene seemed funny...

"Awful, awful!" it shouted again.
"Think for a while about the mask you're wearing! It is a mask misshapen by pain... Touch it... Feel it... The mask is the mirror of the soul!
Of your soul! Your soul is in pain right now... Your soul is being misshaped by pain...

Let's go again..."

Things went much better, indeed. The role was brought out closer to what the voice at the back would like.
Yet, still something was missing! Something indefinable. They should have felt more the role by now... Strange! More work was needed...

...As of the next day, things should change. Two rehearsals per day, and each rehearsal as if it were the last before the opening night. Everything should be perfect...
At the premiere there could be no mistakes.

* *

"What's wrong?" asked the mask with the happy face. "For the first time since the day I met you, I feel you are sad..."

"I'm thinking..." replied the second mask.

"Of what?"

"Of what the voice at the back told us today... Don't you think of it at all?"
"The only thing that I am thinking of is that I have grown tired of pretending.
Nothing else."

"And yet, didn't you hear the voice at the back? I've never until today felt it so warm... The mask, it said, is the mirror of the soul. We must touch it... Feel it..."

"There is nothing to feel. Things are simple... We are two masks with nonmatching faces."

"...And still, the mask is the mirror of the soul..." went on the cracked mask. "...And I am a mask misshapen by pain..."
"I see it clearly..."

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* *

Everything had really changed from today. Nothing was the same in the little theater. It seems that the two masks of the protagonists were no longer enough...

Thus, today they were all dressed in their theatrical costumes. The pieces of furniture around them defining also past times, while facades of classical buildings filled the décor in the dancing scenes.

Indeed every rehearsal from now on would be like the last one before the great premiere.

Everything should be perfect.

...

"No, no and again no!" shouted the voice in the last seats.

"This song is a happy, lively, enthusiastic song... Your voice must come out cheerfully. Not just sound cheerful...

...Think of your clothes; they are the clothes of a funny person...

...Think of your mask; the mask of a person who feels deep inside what he expresses... Of a happy person!

Let's go again!"

There was a significant change. An improvement undoubtedly.

However, the interpretation was clearly subordinate to the role... He could understand it. Yet nor did he himself know what exactly he wanted...

Nor did he himself know what exactly was wrong...

"Stop!" he shouted.

"Stop and think for a while what you are... Actors! You have played in your life so many roles till now... Remember them! The same actors you are, in different roles... You can do it. There isn't anything you can't do!

It is nothing for you. It's just another role...

...You are a happy mask, do you understand it? Let my voice touch you... Let your figure lead you... You are a happy mask..."

"3-2-1, let's go!"

...

"His voice was nervous today, wasn't it?" said the mask with the sad face.

"I noticed" answered the mask with the happy face and smiled.

"It was more a desperate voice though. The opening night is approaching and things aren't the way he wants. Something's missing, I know it... I feel it too that something's missing..."

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"The big premiere is approaching and still something is missing" agreed the mask with the sad face.

"Yet things are simple; the voice in the last seats is right. The masks are the mirror of the soul... This also is just another role... We are actors above all... We are nothing else but actors! And as actors we can play every role."

The voice of the mask with the sad face had perhaps a tone of sadness...

"I wonder where all that cheer went to!"

said the mask with the happy face unexpectedly and burst into roaring laughter, carrying along for a while the settings and the dresses, that also laughed with it...

A mask with a happy face that was bursting into laughter for its first time.

"3-2-1", and the rehearsal was starting...

* *

...In some other case, perhaps it would really be the best rehearsal.

Solid dialogues in faultless synchronization. Freedom of movement. Accuracy in the alternation of the settings. Remarkable interpretation of the intensity of feelings. Smooth unfolding of the texture of characters and roles.

Yes, a rehearsal worthy of the script, I'd say.

Yet, this wasn't just any rehearsal. In a while the curtain would rise in a theater full of people. It was the second-to-last rehearsal!

So, the setting's alternation should become even better, dialogues should roll with the greatest ease possible, emotions and characters be brought out with the maximum virtuosity and naturalism.

"No, no and again no!" shouted the voice in the last seats. "No!"

"Can't you see it yourselves? Don't you understand it?

The seats in front of you will soon be full of people! The audience waiting for exactly what they want to see. What they have to see. Nothing less than that!

And you should give it to them! You aren't but actors only, don't forget it..."

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It turned to the two classic theatrical masks made of leather.

“You are the protagonists”, it said to the faceless men standing behind them. “The two protagonists of the play!”

“Everybody’s eyes at that moment, will be looking at you!”

“You are the protagonists and they are only the audience.
They want you to make a mistake so they will mock it...
To play your roles well so they will applaud you! Worship you!”

“You are judged!
You are judged and they are always right.
They are the audience who has to see what it came to see...

You’re actors and they’re the audience!
Let your masks guide you...”

“Let’s go again...”

...

...Silence prevailed in the small room with the settings, the costumes and the two classic masks of leather, the ones left on the wooden table... In the small room next to the dressing rooms.

A justified silence perhaps, should you consider the failure of the previous rehearsal. A complete failure. A rehearsal worse than any other rehearsal.

“Don’t worry!” said the mask with the happy face to the other...

“...Time will pass again, the way it passed till now, you’ll see. Tomorrow morning’s rehearsal will end. The evening premiere will also take place. Performances will end and then they will leave us again in peace...
Everything will end some day... Be patient!”

“I can’t stand it any more!” said quietly the mask with the sad face.
“I tried so much, yet the protagonists cannot feel me. I am a mask with a sad face, don’t they understand it?
A mask with narrow slits for eyes and mouth. A mask that behind it can only be hiding a vanishing world... Don’t they see it?”

“Hang in there”, said the mask with the happy face. “I understand.”
“Don’t you know I do? I also try as much as I can but they cannot feel me... In their every word, their every movement, there still is a tone of sadness.
...But I am a mask with happy slits for eyes and mouth, can’t they see it? I am such a happy mask!”

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"...It's a pity though that the audience is going to have to judge us...", it added almost like talking to itself.

"Why indeed do they have to judge us?"

* *

That day had finally arrived. As any other day.

An important day, a big day for the little theater. Even though it was only a little theater at the edge of a street I don't remember any more.

It was the last rehearsal. In the evening the premiere would start. The curtain would rise in front of a theater full of people... The last rehearsal before the premiere! Before the first and most important performance!

Everything should be impeccable. A perfect rehearsal always was the best assurance. Lighting, settings, dialogues, songs, motion, everything should look natural.

The audience would be waiting impatiently to judge every little thing, to give applause or silence, to worship or mock. Everything should be faultless. Above all, they were actors. People should enjoy themselves. They were actors, and being actors, they needed the applause more than anything. But they had to earn it...

They were actors and they should look as natural as possible. They should feel the role! It wasn't anything else but just another role. They should let their masks lead them. It wasn't hard...

...Actors and audience in the little theater.

...

The last rehearsal, and it was awful.

A total failure!

Maybe worse than any other time. Actors were forgetting their lines, movements seemed forethought, joy and sadness fake emotions...

How was it possible for everything to turn out so badly? They were actors! They were old, experienced actors! Why should they get trapped in just another little role;

No, they were actors and as such they knew —I suppose— what they should do!

How to express themselves, how to move, how to bring out emotions...

...

The voice from the last seats embraced them strangely, touched them with kindness and strictness. It was the last rehearsal!

Touched them tenderly and, at the same time, ruthlessly.

It was strange that voice...

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“No, no, and again no!” it shouted with persistence.

“Forget everything!
Forget everything I have told you until today...
It was all wrong! Everything was wrong!”

The cast turned and looked towards the side of the voice in the last seats. Everyone silent, expressionless.

Everyone, but two classic theatrical masks of leather, frozen in expressions of joy and pain.

“Forget whatever I told you until today” continued the voice at the back. “Take it out of you.”

“Take out of you all the roles you’ve played to this day. Forget them! The roles you played so far have no importance... You aren’t actors... You aren’t anything!”

The masks and the actors remained frozen on the stage of the small theater, looking towards the voice in the last seats.

“You aren’t actors!” it shouted to them. “You are nothing!”

“And around you no audience exist, nor do I exist, no settings, no lights exist... Nothing else exists, but you alone!”

“...Tonight, when the curtain will rise, no audience and actors will exist. Nothing will exist but you alone in the center of the stage...”

...

“...And the only ones watching the play, this night, will be you.

You will be the audience this night! You will be the audience in a play with no actors!

...And the audience has to see what exactly it wants! ...The audience always knows what it wants to see...

Yes,
actors will be unnecessary this night...”

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* *

The time of the great premiere had now arrived. They had already taken the right positions...

In a while the curtain would open, yet you could feel around you an unexpected calmness... The little theater would surely be full of people. People ready to see what they were expecting to see. People ready to laugh and cry with what they were expecting... Nothing less!

But they no longer worried. The play was old — tested... The masks true pieces of art... The settings —buildings of the last century—, the dresses and the objects of the era, everything would serve a great performance! Everything ready and the curtain would rise after endless rehearsals...
The velvet fabric would start in a while to open...

No, they no longer worried! People in the little theater would see exactly what they would expect! Nothing less than what they would expect... And in the end they would surely applaud with all their strength! A real, a profound applause!
An applause unexpected perhaps for the little theater... An applause unexpected for an old play —with two timeless masks though— with classical settings and clothes recreating an era...

A play with no actors, whose audience would see indeed what they wanted to see...
What they always wanted to see...

No, they no longer worried! The curtain would rise after endless useless rehearsals...

And the audience would see what they always wanted to see...

...A ***truth.***

January, 1&2

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It is the first time perhaps in my life that I feel so obliged to thank something. To thank simply five handwritten pages that granted me openhandedly what I never expected to find.

Five handwritten pages that *changed* —in a single night— my life.

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It must have surely been the biggest bookstore in town.

So many books gathered in one place. Spread on the wooden stalls. Lined on endless shelves. Shelves reaching up to the ceiling.

Bookcases in a row, the one behind the other. And people. So many people. People of every age and type were there in that bookstore. The biggest bookstore in town.

But there, on the last bookcase in the row, on the highest shelf of all, there was a lonely book.

So lonely, that it cared not about the crowd in the bookstore — this hodgepodge of people of every kind. So lonely that it cared not about the endless shelves and the stalls of an indifferent bookstore. Of a bookstore so stonily indifferent.

This book had its own story...

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...

...It had woken up some morning next to a strange printer's machine. It had woken up tied up with many other identical books. They must have been identical to it. But it remembered not any detail. It fell asleep again right away.

That book —I remember— was born tired.

The second time it woke up, it was because of a hand holding it tightly. Such a beautiful awakening. But it didn't last. The hand opened and the book was put in its place. It was perhaps the bookseller's hand.

And it was the place it lays even today. The exact same place. In the last bookcase of all, on the uppermost shelf, somewhere on the right...

...

For long, for very long, it waited so that someone would see it. Someone would come asking for it. It was hoping that this lady coming towards there, was coming for it.

To lower it, to look at it, to take it with her, to her house, to a smaller, to a more beautiful, a friendlier bookcase, full of beautiful, colourful books.

So that it could also find a place to call it home. This, a lonely book.

And where indeed had the rest of the identical books gone? To another shelf? On the stalls perhaps?

Beside it there was none like it. This small and beautiful little book, squeezed amidst fat books, like encyclopedias, on the last shelf, of the last bookcase, of the first —so what?— bookstore in town. A tragedy.

There must have been some kind of a mistake.

Yet, the days were passing by and no hand was touching it — Which one? This one! A book in need of a touch, more than any other book, on any other shelf, in any other bookstore in the world. A book so lonely.

The days were passing and no hand was touching it. None of the other books were talking to it. They had —another strange game of luck— turned their backs on it! Which ones?

These tall and graceless books, the ones as fat as encyclopedias!

So, high up there, on the last shelf, of the last bookcase in the world, there was a book that once hated everyone and everything...

It had hated all the stalls with the colourful books. It had hated the people buying from them, had hated the books themselves. It had hated the cashiers and the salesmen. Had hated the short, bald owner, the shelves and the black bookcases. The books around it, the ceiling and the big white lamps...

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It had hated its own self. It had even hated its writer.

Which one? This one! A book that the only thing it once wanted, was a touch. Just a simple touch. A book that the only thing it once wanted, was love!

High up there, on the last shelf, of the last bookstore in town, there was a book that once hated the world.

* *

The days were passing by slowly and tormenting. Its cover was losing its colour, and its pages almost turned yellow by time and hate.

So what? Either way no one would buy it any more. No one would ever notice it. An unhappy book. A lonely book on the last shelf, of some bookcase, in some bookstore. A book relating to...

Relating to WHAT?

It never learned! It never knew! And yet it had never, but never thought of it so far. It never thought of what kind of book it was!

It never knew what kind of book it was! Because it never learned how to ...read!

This book was a book that knew not how to read!

A comedy.

...

From that moment on, it started wondering. What could it be? Could it be something truly beautiful?

Bah! People buy beautiful things. It must have surely been a failure.

A book that wasn't even worth looking at, opening it, paging through, taking home, to a bookcase small and beautiful, with colourful, gold bound books.

Something stonily indifferent it would be! Some dissertation perhaps relating to the causes of hair-loss.

Bah! The short, bald owner, would look through it!

Some boring mathematics book?

But mathematicians find books like these, they discover them!

What could it be? And how did it wait so long for others to take it along, when it itself didn't know what it was? And whom could it ask to find out? Whom? Whom? Whom?

It was a lonely book, in the last bookcase on the very top shelf, somewhere on the right. A book —perhaps the only one in the entire bookstore, the biggest bookstore in town— that did

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not know how to read.

And the letters it carried on its pages, beautiful letters, artful, were saying nothing to it.

Absolutely nothing.

Letters, you see, never speak but to those only who know how to read them.

Letters are so, so proud!

* *

If only it knew its title. Nothing else. Only its title! So that it could understand, at least, it is a boring book about the causes of hair-loss. A book, at least, for mathematician collectors. Just something!

Nothing. A tragedy. There was no way. There was no one to help it. It was a book, a book alone, on the edge of a bookstore, on the edge of a world, of a galaxy of books without meaning.

A book on the top of letters without sense.

Once again it was an unhappy book.

It didn't hate any of the other books any more, it hated neither the stalls, nor the people that came and went without

pause, neither the salesmen, nor the ceilings, nor the big white lamps. It hated no one and nothing.

But it was still a book so empty. Perhaps emptier than before.

It was a book so lonely, imprisoned in a bookcase somewhere in the town. In a town somewhere on the planet. So what?

It cared not for anything any longer. Not even if it saw the world through the spine of a small book. So what? It could itself also be like the book next to it. Even if next to it there was a book big and graceless like an encyclopedia.

Nothing had any meaning any more. It was a book without content!

Perhaps indeed it wrote the same words as the rest of the books did. Maybe it wasn't by chance that they put it on that shelf. Maybe here is where they should have put it. Together with the books as fat as encyclopedias.

HERE! On the last shelf! On the very top shelf, somewhere on the right, of the last bookcase, of the first —so what?— bookstore in town.

Maybe here was its place!

So what? Weren't there so, so many?

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*** ***

It would have been so beautiful if its pages were white, wouldn't it?

It would know then that it was really a book without content. The only book without content on all the shelves, of all the bookcases, in all the bookstores of the world.

But there are no books without content! Nowhere will you find books without content! In all the bookstores of the world should you search!

Why?

Why did it have to be born? Why? Why?

It would like someone to be there to answer to it. It would like its writer to be there.

...

Was there indeed someone who had written it?

And if it were simply a defective book? A book born by mistake, in that machine, on that day, the very first day it remembered? If it were only a mistake? A book without sense? Then?

Then it would just be a mistake! So what? Wasn't it a mistake that it was found here, a book alone at the edge of the world?

WASN'T IT A MISTAKE?

And what if it were a book that someone wrote according to a plan? With much thought and according to a plan? Yes... maybe... it might... It's more likely.

But what if it didn't like it? If it were a book that its content —its unbelievably well-studied content— wasn't the one it liked?

If it were a book whose content appealed to its writer, but not to the book itself? Then what?

Then even worse! There won't be a mistake! I will be doomed for ever! A book that was designed correctly to appeal to the writer! Why?

Why didn't he ask me? Isn't it I who pays for everything? I. ALWAYS I! I, hidden for ever on a shelf, somewhere in some bookstore!

I, AND I ALONE!

...

It was a book that was shouting.

That was screaming alone, so unbelievably alone, as no client, no owner, no seller, no writer till the edge of the world ever imagined.

A book that was crying, that was shedding tears! That was drenching its paper pages.

Because they didn't matter any longer...

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Because they never did matter. Neither they, nor the titles with the large letters...

To this book nothing mattered! Because it was a book without content, a book closing inside it everything and zero.

It was a book alone at the edge of the universe. And it was irrationally closing the universe inside it.

This book wasn't in need of a title.
As no book is in need of a title!

This book wasn't in need of a writer.
As no book is in need of a writer!

This book wanted nothing! It didn't want salesmen and stalls, bookcases and shelves, it had no value, and it had no price.

This book —as any book— if it wanted a title it would give it one itself! If it wanted a content, it would write it itself!

And it would be a book for children.

A book with colours and melodies...

...

People left, and the short bald owner turned off the lights and locked the heavy iron door.

But there, in the darkness and the silence, lonely among so many books, a little book lost on the last shelf of the last bookcase of the world, was shouting alone to the other books!

And it was calling them to erase the titles from their front covers. To erase the texts on the back covers. And to simply touch one another.

A crazy book, soaked you'd think in the night's dampness, was shouting trembling to the other books.

It was shouting trembling, but no one would listen...

...They probably wouldn't want to disturb the order!

And yet they had no one to ask!

They were only some books at the edge of the world that had no need of writers and salesmen, of buyers and owners.

They were the ones who needed them, but they had never asked them.

They sentenced them to some shelves, stacked up on some bookcases of the world.

And they had never asked them.

Yet they pay the price — books alone at the edge of the

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universe...

...

It too was a book that had never been asked. That was shouting alone, that was screaming at that edge of the world.

A funny book! A book with no name and content, that was shouting to the other books and was calling them near it, till tears dissolved its empty pages...

It too was a book that once loved the other books.

And it is strange how inside such a tiny little book, on such a tiny little shelf of a bookcase at the edge of the world, could fit instantly...

such happiness!

(On the night of the 16th to the 17th of December)

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White irrationally closes inside it

...all colours...

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