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The Queen's
Club El Club de la Reina

The Queen's Club

by

ALEXYS D. MILLER

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About citations. This book contains material related to philosophy and poetry, and cites the work of well-known authors. Throughout the text, attention will be drawn to these paragraphs by means of a footnote. It is important to note that these quoted texts are part of the message of the narrative, and are not simple allusions to an idea, that is to say: The texts have a different meaning than that implied by their authors, since they exist in a different context; this is the key to understanding the function of these citations.

The greatest example of this is the way in which translations of poetry are carried out. Translations take a variety of liberties, so great that to a certain extent they completely disfigure the original form and meaning of the poem. These quotations include the word “reinterpretation.” Conversely, most quotations from texts of philosophical origin are taken out of context but stand one-to-one with their published translations.

I wanted to add these clarifications, because someone might be distracted by the fact or think that I am misinterpreting the authors' intentions. Which is not my point, but to draw attention to one of the properties of the text, something that is quite remarkable once we realize the number of nods I make to the interpretation and function of the reader. From the same branch of ideas as Reader-Response Criticism (the English equivalent of Reception Aesthetics). This is just a small detail, there are only 15 citations in the entire book and the material is repeated, but it seemed relevant enough to add this segment.

Everything has an answer;

but it is not always so clear.

Information Map

1.1.08

- God is dead.** – 9.0
- Monday, 5PM, rain.** – 10.0
- Phil wants to return.** – 17.
- The Queen's Club.** – 25.
- A and B.** – 31.
- Something in the woods.** – 34.
- Dialogue.** – 40.

2.1.89

- No exceptions.** – 89.
- The idea.** – 92.
- Rarity and purpose.** – 96.
- Fall upwards.** – 98.
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- Things are what they are.** – 43.
- The greatest of anomalies.** – 47.
- Something on his head.** – 50.
- What is that place?** – 61.
- The thing is not red.** – 68.
- A window breaks.** – 85.
- Intersection.** – 88.

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Legend:

- – Omitted: Text that the reader cannot read but is part of the fiction.
- A– Strikethrough: Text that is not part of the causal fiction.
- B – Bold: Anchor point.
- C* – Italics: Thought within fiction.

The white building, that room that served the purpose of a classroom, illuminated by the light of the silver sky, was communicating with me. The *book of the world* was at that moment, that mundane yet context-filled classroom. What was the difference between the world and the classroom? What was the difference between the world and the book? What was the difference between the book and the person? Everyone is saying something, presenting a world, words, understanding, *communication*. And this place? *What is it trying to say?* As we grow up we realize that we are not the same person we were in the past, in the same way, others become ethereal as they lose themselves in the responsibility that connects them to one another. In the focus of the thousand sources of culture, they expand into the totality of their own worlds, and the text becomes a reference to that elusive being (the shadow).

“I always hated the way people portray students in novels,” said the young blond man, sitting at the desk on that hot summer day, in the text of the book that contained the scene, a point of view in the eyes of the character, elevated to an indeterminate readerly elucidation. He was fanning himself with a book, redundant. “And that?” I asked. He, who wasn’t even looking in my direction, finally turned to me. “Well, they’re not really students... do you understand? Yes, they have that category, but they’re not studying anything.” He paused for a couple of seconds. “It’s as if the term existed only to attach an obligation to the character, there’s nothing about the character that makes him a student.”

“It would be ironic,” I said, “if we were characters in a novel. What is so interesting about us? What is the responsibility that connects us to the end of the world, an event that pushes us into the lion’s den?” I continued. “If the students in the novels are not students, it is because if they were, this whole discussion would end, but that responsibility has to be established. Student, father, owner of a transport company, the categories that separate the spoon from the soup.” He smiled at me. “And yet the spoon only becomes real when we realize its existence,” he answered. *Yes, if*

*anything makes us who we are, it is the fact that we are not students, but that we are forced to be so; by the word of the **reader**, in this white classroom, on this summer day.*

I'll ask again. What separates the world from the classroom?
What separates the world from the book? What separates the
book from the person? . . .

TRACT I : FILTERS

Sometime, somewhere.

1


GREY , THE SKY WAS PAINTED IN A SICKLY GREY COLOR.. I didn't know exactly where I was, it seemed like a dream scene, trees in the distance of a variety I had never seen before; their branches tangled together *as if they were holding hands*. The whole scene was covered in a light mist, which allowed me to see the row of trees and nothing else, I was standing in a vacant lot, a patch of yellowish vegetation. Puddles of water reflected that gray sky. *Could it be the clouds?* A large cloud covering the entire sky. There was nothing else there, the grove formed an artificial circle around the vacant lot, as if it were the eye of a vegetation storm.

A giggle caught my attention. The little girl appeared, *yes, she definitely wasn't there a moment ago*, in the center of the vacant lot that contained us. Long golden hair, a little angel in a white dress, silver bows covered both her hair and her clothes, her feet were submerged in one of the largest puddles, covered by striking yellow boots. She looked at the sky and laughed alone. That action caught my attention more than the scenery around us; I tried to see, in vain, what could be there in the sky she was looking at. I found nothing that merited any reaction, an infinite, immovable emptiness, without birds or traces of life, an alien sky. "What's there?" I asked her. "What's interesting in the sky?" She looked at me, blue eyes and the delicate face of a doll, she had a neutral expression from which I could not decipher a particular emotion, only a smile. I felt some sadness, interrupting that smile that looked at the sky.

“Sky?” she asked, tilting her head slightly. Before answering I looked at that spot once more. “Yes, that thing above us,” I replied. She showed a slight smile, if it could barely be called a smile. “That’s not sky,” she paused and looked at it again, “... that’s the ceiling it hangs from.” I waited, but she didn’t add anything. “Is that cloud hanging from the ceiling?” Hearing me say this she laughed. “... **God’s corpse**,” she said, without taking her eyes off that spot. *That’s not the sky, it’s the ceiling where God’s corpse hangs.* I was going to make a comment, but my thought was interrupted by the ringing of bells. *Where did that sound come from?* It seemed to come from beyond the grove. Hundreds of birds rose from it, with each stroke of the bell, their cries flooding the scene, I heard a whisper among the chaos. “I’m going back to the hospital...” The girl had disappeared. “See you later.”

* * *

Monday, 12:07PM, 2010, somewhere.

The bright light warmed the asphalt I walked on. *All of this would be better if I didn’t have to wear this uniform.* Black, who thought of making a black school uniform? *And with a tie to boot.* I complained, but there were many peculiarities that were even stranger. The school had recently caught fire, you’d think that would cancel classes for a while, but the only thing that happened was that they changed the location to an abandoned hospital. *Weird right? And that’s not all... that hospital... it’s not even inside the city, but near the entrance to the city, by the highway.* So there I was, walking on the outskirts of the city, near the highway, heading towards the hospital where the school classes were held;  studies, *and I don’t even care that much about them.* I thought the world was becoming crazy, a fiction... I smiled like a fool... maybe the heat was getting to my head.

The red tie swung over the black shirt, a hot breeze, accompanied by a familiar sight. The young man with short dyed blond hair, emerald eyes, with the silver cross-shaped earring, wearing the same uniform I was wearing, was having trouble with a vending machine for carbonated drinks. “Hey Theo,” I greeted.

Clank. The machine released the drink with a loud thud. “Oh Phil, good afternoon.” He bent down and from the jaws of the machine emerged the orange can, with his other hand he took his green umbrella. “Umbrella?” I asked him, I looked at the sky, blue, not a single cloud. He opened the can with the same hand that held the umbrella and took a sip. “Ah~ Yeah, **rain is forecast for five.**” *I can't believe something like that with the current weather.* “That would be nice, with this heat I can't even think,” I answered.

We started walking together towards the hospital, he was in my class, a nice but nosy guy. *Now that I think about it, all the people in my class were kind of weird.* “So? Do you still have those dreams?” he asked me. “Yeah, the girl in the garden.” / “I'm starting to have weird dreams too!” he replied quickly. *It's the first time I've heard of that.* “Really?” and then he continued: “Yeah, I was trapped in an alien ship...” I paid attention to him “and then this alien comes along... with huge tits!” I let out a laugh. *I wasn't expecting much more.* “On second thought, I don't care what happened next,” I replied. “Ha! That was the best part.” He smiled happily, *what a carefree guy.* We'd known each other for a while, and since the school changed its location to the hospital, we walked there together. We were both the kind of people who would take longer to call a taxi than to walk, *a friend of mine maybe... although...*

In no time we found ourselves facing a hole in the rail leading to the highway, and by pure coincidence (I wanted to believe) the path that led to the forest where the hospital was located. *A hospital in the middle of a forest.* It was said that there used to be a road leading to the hospital, but it was no longer there, since then the trees continued to grow and nobody did anything about it. *Probably thinking that nobody would use such a place again.* At least there was a dirt road, big enough for car traffic, and it was not an uncomfortable trip to make on foot.

It was nice to be able to hide from the blazing rays of the sun under the shade of the trees; the shadows of the branches reminded me of veins, or perhaps the nervous system. *A strange observation.* I realized, *it seems like the entrance to another place,*

one as far away as an island isolated from the mainland. But that was just an irrational emotion.

—...and the ending was left unfinished. —Theo was explaining to me the plot of the movie [REDACTED]. —I hate it when they do that, I finished watching the movie, they should at least explain something at the end —I answered. —Things are what they are. —That was one of his phrases “Things are what they are.” —If you think about it, since the ending is like that, you can find different interpretations on the Internet and that's interesting —It *has a point, although I'm not a big fan of computers.* —It's like the movie has multiple endings —he added and we continued talking about movies and books.

In the distance I saw something that distracted me, distracted me by its absurdity, so much so that I decided to overlook it, ignore it as if it weren't really there. I thought I saw, in the middle of the forest, a statue. It was like one of those gargoyles that appeared on gothic cathedrals, *but that doesn't make sense. What is that doing here?* I didn't even try to contemplate the thought and I also ignored the girl who was there, I concentrated on our daily walk and conversation; until soon the hospital came into view. It was something gloomy, the white paint that once marked it noble had come apart with the passage of time, the windows were broken, everything that was metal had rusted and there was graffiti on the walls that could be seen from the outside. At least the inside was much better, the debris and other trash had been cleaned before we started classes.

—Waaaah! —The girl jumped out from behind one of the trees as we approached the entrance, Theo reacted by stepping back. —Uah... —He let out a pitiful shriek. —Hahaha! —The girl burst out laughing. *Did that really scare you?* I looked at her. That girl of our age was another of the students of [REDACTED], although she went to another class, for that reason I didn't know her very well, but Theo knew her from long before. *From what I understand, they have known each other since they were children.* For a while I thought they were dating, but that wasn't the case. —Good

afternoon, Anna. —I greeted her, and she nodded. —Good afternoon and to you too Theo. / —Yes, yes, good afternoon —he answered reluctantly.

Anna was wearing the same ridiculous uniform we were wearing, though it was a bit different for the women, the red tie had been replaced by a bow or ribbon, and instead of dark grey pants, she was wearing a two-tone grey plaid skirt. As for her appearance, she tied her brown hair, which was quite long, into a low ponytail. Her eyes were brown and her face had a few freckles. She was a pretty and energetic girl, and she was good at making friends, or at least that's how I saw it. "You won't believe the dream I had," Theo said, and my eyebrows rose. "It's going to be a sick dream, if it came from your head," Anna scoffed. I laughed. "Yeah, you're right, it really is," I commented.

—See? —she added. Theo scratched his head with the umbrella wearing a defeated face. —No way... it can't be that Phil is the only one with interesting dreams. / —Well if I could I would change your dreams with mine whenever —I replied. —If you switch dreams doesn't that mean you would also switch your brains? —Is *that how it works? I suppose so.* —Certainly, I would lose my genius —Theo answered throwing the empty can into a trash can. —I think it would be the other way around, if we switched brains... the only thing you would lose would be your appearance. —Right? *Although... how much of our thinking is influenced by chemistry outside the brain?* —That's not true, my self would still be in the body, in my soul —he paused for a couple of seconds—... or something like that. —Anna and I looked at each other, we certainly had nothing to answer to that argument. *Soul... hmm...*

The sound of a bell interrupted our thought experiment. Birds took to the sky. Since the hospital was not equipped with a way to announce the start of classes and breaks, a large bell was installed on the second floor, and that had become the new way until they could fix the facility. *If they even had plans to do that.* The students who were outside, chatting, entered the building, and we joined them; just like any other day, despite the countless oddities that

were still being stored, stacked, one on top of the other, ready to fall like a house of cards.

* * *

Monday, 03:05PM, 2010, at the hospital.

Grey had covered the sky, I looked out the glassless window, *apparently the forecast was right*. The bright blue had disappeared and it looked like a dream compared to this scene of desolation. There were darker patches too, more than a grey blanket, it was a pattern of different greys, no name. It made me stand still, stuck in thought. *It doesn't really matter, where I am*. I was just trying to pass the time, attendance is taken at the beginning of class, if you want you can sign in and then go for a walk, not many people did that, I was confident in myself. *Theo used to skip classes with me, but he always forgets to sign back in*. He was kind of absent-minded in that sense. *So now I'm alone, trying to find something to entertain myself with. I didn't even bring a book in my briefcase or anything like that*. I decided to wander around the hospital, the first floor and the east wing were dedicated to classes, the second floor and the west wing should have been empty. I went to the west wing.

Sure enough, there was nothing there. Just a musty stench, and the feeling of being out of place that an abandoned hospital would bring, I thought; *in the past this place must have been full of people going about their business, but now there isn't even a ghost*. I couldn't be certain about that last part, the dimly lit hallways on a cloudy day gave rise to a depressing, almost sinister atmosphere, an apparition wouldn't have been out of place. *Isn't that what usually happens in movies? Some idiot goes for a walk alone*. That one always ends up being the first to die. *But it's either this or dying of boredom in class. Come here ghost!* Nothing, a breeze from the hot outside, the sound of voices in the distance: teachers and students.

Walking through, I came across a room that caught my eye. The door was ajar, and inside I saw a sight that didn't seem real. *So they really are planning to turn this place into a school*. Inside were a

dozen computers, resting on different desks in the middle of the room. No matter how you looked at it, the place looked like a computer room. I walked in, and at that moment a wind blew my tie, and the windows were open. *The windows are intact.* I looked, but it wasn't just the windows, the whole picture was out of place. It was as if that particular part of the hospital had never been found, or had stopped in time, at the time when it was still being used; *although the computers are out of place.*

I walked over, tube monitors, walked around. *Was there internet?* I crouched in front of one, looking for a button on the cabinet. *How do you turn these things on?* I wasn't very good with computers, or any electronic devices, I didn't even have a cell phone with me. I knew there was power, and they seemed to be plugged in, but after fiddling with the thing I couldn't get it to work.

Without even realizing it, a shadow had covered me, stealthily approaching me. I looked up and there he was. The man was standing next to me, a large figure, his glasses shining in the little light coming through the window. "Ah!" I screamed. "Waah!" and he did the same. Now that I had time to think, I realized it was another student. "Hehehehe," he laughed macabrely. "Don't scare me like that, man!" he added. "Well, I really didn't mean to." *Who sneaks up on someone like that in the first place?!* I stood up, trying to hide some of my embarrassment. He looked somewhat happy; a tall, chubby boy with light brown hair and gray eyes, wearing the school uniform, smelling of perfume.

—And what are you doing here anyway? —he asked and as he did so he crouched down, in less than two seconds the monitor turned on and the computer started up. *What happened? A magician!* — Not much, I was looking for something to pass the time, until I found this place —I answered, I stared at the monitor, the opening sequence of ██████████ —, although it is strange... I didn't know they had plans to turn the hospital into the new school. —He sat down in the chair in front of the desk. —Well yeah, it is strange, hehe —he laughed again. *What's so funny?* —Although... there's internet and everything, I think it's one of the first things they

added —he commented. —Are you sure they weren't here before? / —Before when? / —You know, before the school arrived. / —No, they have ██████████ that operating system came out long after the hospital closed. —I didn't know what that was, but I realized my question was stupid, *if the computers had been there... then the punks would have taken them.*

—What the heck? —he exclaimed, windows opening and closing on the screen. —What happened? Did they block the porn sites? —I mocked. —Pff hehehe —he laughed again, it was the third time I heard his laugh, at first I thought it was a bit creepy but I had gotten used to it and it had even become somewhat contagious— you're funny, friend. What's your name? Phil? —I was surprised. —And how do you know my name? —I asked. —You must have a bad memory, we're in the same class. —*Huh? I don't remember it at all.* —Liam? —I fired a shot in the dark and he nodded. —Correct. / —And what's wrong with the computer? Things keep opening and closing. —I tried to explain myself as best as possible. —I'm trying to find the reason why there's no internet access. —*Maybe a cable got cut?* I looked around for one of those boxes... *what are they called?* The box that gives internet.

Coincidentally, I turned to the window. A familiar silhouette was moving away in the distance. Her ponytail was blowing in the wind; it was Anna. *She must have forgotten to lock her bike, or maybe she noticed that a storm was coming...* She was in a hurry and was heading into the woods. *I wouldn't stay here either, but I want the assistance.* I turned to Liam, he was still messing with the machine.

A buzzing sound rose up, catching our attention, instinctively drawing it in. It grew louder, and louder, the lights came on and so did the computer monitors. White glow flooded the world, invading our senses, I looked at Liam stunned, he couldn't believe it either, he was paralyzed. It wasn't a simple high voltage phenomenon, it was as if it was talking to us and we couldn't do anything but listen. It stopped with a metallic noise and the lights went out, it was followed by a pocket melody. "W-What was that?" I asked. "My phone," he reached into his pocket and pulled out the

oval blue phone, "... it's a message." / "And what does it say?" He pressed the buttons, and I saw it over his shoulder. "Only two will be allowed in, to the queen's club," I read out loud. "Bah, for a second I was getting scared."

—Do you know what it is? —I asked. —Yes, it's junk mail, spam —*That's true... after all there's no real connection between the power surge and the text message.* Liam stood up. —There's no power, I think I'll go back to class. What about you? —He looked at me. —Oh I... I'll wait a little longer —I answered. —Okay, see you later. —With that said Liam left, he seemed a little upset that he hadn't been able to use the computer, I was too... in part. *The Queen's Club...* I stood in front of the window thinking.

* * *

Monday, 05:01PM, 2010, at the hospital.

The rain had begun to pour down, the sky that once was became lost, replaced by something else, a great darkness whose tears fell steadily. It didn't seem like the same place, it didn't even seem like the same day I woke up, **a part of me hoped** to wake up again. I saw through the window other students leaving the scene, not many would like to be stranded here, or get dirty walking that dirt road; *now mud*. I was one of the few, I didn't care that much, *I'm going to wait for the rain to stop*. Although for that I had to wait for classes to end first, and looking to pass the time I walked again, this time on the second floor.

The hospital had filled with the smell of dampness and rust. The second floor was leaking. The place ticked all the boxes for being haunted, or at least for the set of a low-budget horror movie. *What?* I rubbed my eyes. What I had seen was something like that. I remembered calling out to a ghost... *but I hadn't really expected to see one*. The pale girl with long black hair walked into one of the rooms. In a fit of disbelief I followed her slowly. *No, it's not a ghost*. Looking at her better I realized she was wearing a school uniform, she was just another student, just a bit pale and tall. She was sitting in one of the chairs they brought from school, in front of one of the

desks, but the room was small. Shelves and books, but there were no leaks. Her black eyes were scanning a book, the title was in German, “Phänomenologie des Geistes”, I didn’t recognize it.

“I remember now!” I exclaimed, and she looked up at me, without any particular emotion. “You’re the girl who was standing near the gargoyle statue.” She looked at me and lowered her book. “Gargoyle?” she asked. “Yes, the gargoyle-shaped statue...” “That’s an ~~idol~~,” she interrupted me. *A what? “What did you say?”* “It’s an ~~idol~~, not a statue.” For some reason I couldn’t hear what she was trying to tell me. “But you were there...” I paused, “weren’t you?” *That wasn’t a dream?* That’s what I meant. “Yes...” “It’s kind of weird...” “Weird how?” she probed. “Well, I just thought...” *Don’t you really find that weird?* “That it was out of place.” “If you put a mouse in a cage for a long period of time, long enough for it to forget about the outside world, but one day you let it out... is the outside world weird?” —She crossed her arms.

—I guess so... but... / —The mouse knew that world outside, it just forgot about it, if it kept the memories from back then nothing would be strange. / —That’s true, but in that case the inside of the cage would be strange too —I played along—, at least at first. / —Yes, that’s how it is. Things are only strange in relation to something else, an object, which we could call normal. / —What you’re saying is that... in our context... it’s not strange? —I was confused. —No, we simply can’t determine if something is strange or not, unless you show me normality. —Certainly, *not many things have been normal. Maybe in the same way as the mouse, I’ve gotten used to the normality of the cage.* —I guess, if they’re really happening, these things aren’t so strange —I answered—... it just gave me a... dreamlike feeling. —For the first time in the conversation she showed a smile.

“Dreams... have you had any interesting dreams?” she asked, for a second the silence made me alert to the incessant falling of the water. The atmosphere had become strange, *strange? How?* She would have asked me, but I felt it, the world was becoming irrationally strange ~~in someone else’s eyes~~. The warmth of the day

had disappeared. “Yes...” I braced myself. “I dream of a girl, somewhere in the forest.” “Dark...” she added. “She tells me that the sky is a roof, and from it hangs the corpse of God.” “Gott ist tot.” “Huh?” “Have you ever heard it? God is dead.” I thought, *yes, that...* “Yes, it’s a sentence from Nietzsche, isn’t it?” “Yes, it’s very popular, especially in its literal use.” “But it’s a metaphor,” I answered. “... and what does that have to do with my dream?”

—You might be the *Übermensch* —she said with a mocking face. —Isn’t that a term used by the Nazis? —She nodded and answered: —The term was appropriated by the Nazis, but it has its origins in Nietzsche as well. / —And what does it mean? / —It means that perhaps, you advanced above God, or at least that’s what your subconscious did. —*Above*? —Is that the same god I have in mind? —The conversation became more and more confusing. *That wasn’t what I was expecting here.* But also... *what was I expecting? A horror story?* —There are many gods, when a god dies, a new god is born to take his place —Her gaze was lost in the desk—. People have to believe in something, that belief eventually elevates that something, ascends it until it becomes a god. / —A new god? / —Yes, when people stop believing in the entity of God, God becomes a metaphor, and that metaphor eventually becomes a new entity.

—So... the *Übermensch*, who is above those gods... is he detached from the morality of his god? —She narrowed her eyes, trying to think about my question. —Yes, you could say that, a moral obligation, almost existential. / —And why do you say that could be me? —She giggled at my question. —It was a joke. —Oh, *I don’t even know if I should be offended.* At least a smile appeared on my face. *It’s not that I mind doing armchair philosophy, but for a moment I thought I was talking to someone from another planet.* —Although you mentioned the Nazis before, right? —She asked and I nodded. —They made a concept too, which perhaps could be useful to us, the *Untermensch*. / —Inferior human? / —Let’s appropriate the word, and say that in this case, if the *Übermensch* is the idyllic goal of man, the *Untermensch* is the one who does not pursue that goal. / —And the person standing on that path? / —

That's you, isn't it? —she commented. —No way, I'm just a student. —*I don't really know what that means, but it sounds like a cult and I'd rather not get involved.* —But we are much more than we think we are —she replied—, factors, so many like a kaleidoscope of ideas. Repeating in [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

The image of a butterfly came to my mind, a metamorphosis. The air was filled with the vibration of the bell. *It seems they decided to ring the bell a little early.* “I understand, see you tomorrow,” I said, but she had already returned to her book, with no intention of going anywhere. I stopped. “You seem to know a lot about... philosophy and Nietzsche.” She looked at me in silence for a couple of seconds. “No, I never read him, just his [REDACTED] page.” *Huh?* “So it really was armchair philosophy!” I exclaimed. She tilted her head like a confused dog. “Whatever...” I looked defeated. “See you tomorrow.” Those were her last words before I left the room, she looked happy. *At least it helped me pass the time.*

For my part, I went down the stairs and on the way I heard a familiar voice. “Where is she?!” Theo’s voice rose, it was strong but had a not very serious tone. I found him in the hallway, he was with a pretty small girl, the first thing I noticed was that she had a bow in her brown hair. “I-I don’t know, she left in the middle of class!” she answered. He shook her by the shoulders as if she were a doll. “Where did you hide Anna?!” He continued shaking her. The sound of the rain made music for the scene, somewhat comical, if I must say. As I approached Theo saw me and released the girl, who seemed to be dizzy, and began to shake me. “Phil, where is she?!” “I saw her leave like three hours ago,” I replied, with my head moving from side to side. “Oh.” He stopped. The girl laughed. “I told you!” she said. —Hehe~ Sorry Lily —he replied insincerely, although they seemed to be playing.

Lily was a classmate of Anna's, she was somewhat eccentric, although her short ochre hair was tied in a big red bow she had some hair sticking out of her head and she didn't look very well combed. She was always commenting on strange things, about spirits, magic and other things she read. *She read a lot, I still have*

several books she lent me. Some aspects of her attitude were also strange: Certain days (*like today*) she wore red contact lenses, other days she wore a hand puppet shaped like a rabbit; she claimed with certainty that it was a dog, very frequently (*though not today*) she wore a slightly different version of the school uniform and asked if anyone could "spot the difference". One day, when the school hadn't burned down yet, she threw a fish out of a second floor window, but I don't know the details about it.

—Elena! —she announced and walked away into the distance of the hallway. When I turned around I saw the black haired girl, *it's true, I hadn't asked her name.* I thought I had seen Elena before, but she wasn't in my class or Anna's class, she *must be in the third class*. They both walked away talking, well, it seemed more like Lily was chasing Elena while she tried to ignore her. —So? Why were you looking for Anna? —I looked back at Theo, he answered with an embarrassed smile as he looked away and raised his umbrella.

—Well, I didn't see her bring her umbrella, I thought maybe we could share. —he said. —Are you an idiot? Anna comes by bike, how are you going to share the umbrella by bike? —He looked at me shocked and some disappointment appeared on his face. *He is an idiot!* —And... w-when did you see Anna leave? —He backed off the subject. —Hmm —I had to think about it—, it was two and a half hours ago, I saw her from a window in the west wing. —He looked at me perplexed. —Are you sure you're not the idiot? How did you see her there? —He asked with his arms crossed. —How? / —Yes, you say you saw her as if you had seen her near the entrance —I began to understand what he was trying to tell me— from the second floor, but if you were in the west wing the only thing you could have seen is the forest —he concluded. *He's right... how did I see Anna leave?*

Were the windows connected? What am I saying? Connected? It was, once again, something odd. I came to the conclusion that I must have remembered wrong. "I must have seen it from the second floor, then." I shrugged. "Well, I didn't bring an umbrella

either – *in fact, I don't think anyone brought one considering how clear the sky was this morning* – are you going to share?” I asked. “W-Well, I guess we can share.” He smiled as he answered. “Why are you embarrassed about that?” / “I'm not embarrassed!” / “We're two men!” I replied. “I know...” he said quietly. “Besides, it's not like sharing the umbrella is very romantic.” / “No?” he asked indignantly. “Well, we're going to get covered in dirt and mud anyway.” Theo sighed and finally exclaimed:

—Let's get our bags and go. —I nodded. My plan was to stay at the hospital until the rain stopped but I really wanted to get out of there, *I have to go as soon as possible*. And so we did, of course, the umbrella was of no use in that rain. ~~*It was kind of romantic... I guess...*~~

* * *

Tuesday, sometime, in the woods.

Darkness, darkness, so deep, the things barely visible were clouded, funeral stains on a black canvas. Dead, so sick, an otherworldly place, beyond the human mind's understanding. I saw it, from a bird's eye view, resting on the twisted branch of a tree. The incessant howling of the wind, a cloudy sky, a night on the precipice of madness. Echoes faded, fleeting, in the distance, guttural, staccato noises, radio and voice synthesizer static. A trail of blood formed a path to that place, a path in the labyrinth of gloom, shadows slipped through the night blanket of astral lights.

—Madness, madness for the, madness for... what's the word? —a girl's voice repeated— madness of this, all this, madness of all this, given, madness given all this, seeing, madness seeing all this, this... what's the word? ¹—she continued, moving away on the horizon, beyond the world that could be felt. *What's the word?* I repeated to myself. *What's the world?* —Theo... Theo —a different voice whispered, it was Anna's voice—... we... have to... go. —Her voice sounded distant, so distant that it was interrupted by the wind, my

1 The dialogue is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the poem “What is the word” by Samuel Beckett.

ears seemed blocked. —We have to find... —Theo answered, also beyond the world— what... happened to Phil. —Phil ? *That's me...*

I tried to look at my own body. My head was lying in front of my feet. I woke up.

* * *

Tuesday, 12:02PM, 2010, somewhere.

Even though a day had passed, the sky was still grey, *the same dark sky as yesterday*. The bright blue had disappeared somewhere else, that was my feeling, although I knew it was above the clouds. I yawned, I hadn't slept well, *I had a terrible dream*. I wanted to tell Theo about it and hoped to meet him on my way to the hospital, but no such luck. *At least it's not that hot*. The storm brought with it a cool but not cold air. I was approaching the place where the soft drink vending machine was.

—H..elp —I heard someone begging. I was startled, surprised by the fact that I hadn't noticed, Liam was standing there next to the machine. His face was a little red, one arm was crossed over his neck and held him in a lock that was tighter than his pants, the arms were well muscled but belonged to a girl; raven hair not too short but not too long, down to her shoulders, tied in a small ponytail. Green eyes. She had three hoops in his left ear, a hoop in her lower lip, and a piercing above her left eyebrow. *I think I know this girl... Of course! She goes to my class. Her name is Sara. Given the situation, one would think that it wouldn't be much of a problem for big Liam, with a little movement he should be able to get free. In fact, I think he can do it easily, but he's making himself get choked on purpose... does he like that stuff?* —Stop... thinking and... help me! —he exclaimed, he was looking a little pale, or maybe it was his spirit trying to get out of his body. *From happiness?* —uu...uu... a... —He couldn't even say words anymore, she on the other hand seemed very happy, although she hadn't seen me yet: she was too busy trying to keep Liam from escaping, and I couldn't see her completely either, he was quite big.

“What are you two doing?” I asked. Hearing my voice, Sara let go

of Liam and he rushed forward. I moved to the side, her figure coming into view. She was wearing the male school uniform, her brow furrowed but she accompanied it with a smile. "You're... Theo's friend." / "Yeah, we're in the same class." / "I guess so." *I guess nothing, we really are.* Although it made sense that she didn't know, she was barely in class and just hanging around. *Doing what? I don't know,* even though I used to skip class too, I didn't run into her very often. Liam caught his breath. "So what happened here?" I asked again. "Glasses told me I could get two cans for the price of one, and because of him I lost my money." She put her hand on the machine. "B-But it's true, that's a [REDACTED] model [REDACTED]. They come with a fault of that type, hehehe." Liam added, hearing him laugh the smile faded from Sara's face. "Ah, this machine always brings problems!" I interrupted.

"You just keep pushing the button until it pops out." And that's what I did, over and over, over and over, and over again. *Did it really break?* I kept pushing the button nervously, until eventually... *Clank.* I bent down to grab the can but before I did I heard it one more time. *Clank.* "See? Two for the price of one," Liam said. "What did you choose? Orange?" She looked at the two cans in my hand. "Blegh!" She made a disgusted sound. *You should have told me sooner.* "You can keep them." Sara shook her hand and started walking in the opposite direction of the hospital. "For now." *Is she coming to get them?* I decided to give the other can to Liam who was perplexed. "You should be more selective about who you try to pick up," I commented. "Pick up? No, no, that machine really is interesting." He had said it with complete honesty.

We continued our way to school, Liam kept talking about vending machines. *Did you know that in Japan there are... how many did he say? I don't know, a lot of them.* He also mentioned that he had to leave his bike at school the day before, although he didn't explain the reason. I would have liked to ask Sara what she was doing, she didn't seem to have any intentions of going to class, *but she was here anyway. It stresses me out, it stresses me out not*

knowing... Not knowing what? The future? No one can know the future and yet... I have the feeling that I should know. Is this really necessary? I tried to look at that statue one more time, but I couldn't, maybe I was too distracted. "I found something about that too..." he said suddenly. "What thing?" / "The Queen's Club." " *Oh, that thing.* " / "Do you remember the spam message?" / "Yes, I remember." / "It's a group, I found their page on the internet, although it's kind of hard to understand." - He was playing with his phone. "And what do they do?" / "It said something like... **thought experiment group.**" - *And what does that mean?* I wanted to ask more about it, but Liam didn't know anything else, we were already close to the hospital and the subject wasn't very important.

"What's going on?" he asked. "With what?" "At school," he added. I looked into the distance, now visible, the students and teachers had gathered at the entrance. *Nothing good.* I had a bad feeling. When we arrived, the silence of the journey turned into bustle, inquisitive chatter, and a plethora of conspiracy theories. There was no fear in the air, the students were curious, some tension in the atmosphere but nothing more than that. "Who made a joke like that?" "Is it real blood?" "What does it mean?" were some of the comments that were thrown into the void of the conversation. *It's not a typical joke. If it were, it would say something like "You will die in █ days" but that is not the case.* Written, like a graffiti in dark red, on the wall was: "Look at the veil, and once your gaze is lost, you will find the gates of heaven, and there, beyond that plane, we will meet again²." —What are you talking about? —Liam read the message on the wall. —I don't know, that whole pearly gates thing sounds religious. / —And beyond that plane? / —Hmm... —I thought— a plane? A dimension? / —Hehe, like... "another dimensional plane" or something. / —Maybe a madman wrote it.

I looked up, looking for that door to heaven. From the second floor she greeted me with a smile. Elena looked out the window, without much apparent interest. A repulsive smile on her face, she watched us as if we were animals finding something that (in relation

2 This English translation is very bad and will lead to confusion.

to human beings) was normal, but for us it was an artifact of unknown origin. *I should know what this is. I have to ask her later, maybe she knows more about it.* I was dizzy, my head was spinning. The bell rang, the tumult entered the hospital, the noise accompanied them, the birds rose from the trees once again, in an instant I was alone. I let out a sigh, *what is it that worries me?* I laughed to myself, when I looked back at the second floor Elena had disappeared.

* * *

Tuesday, 3:11PM, 2010, at the hospital.

Theo hadn't come to class, so I decided to walk through the halls again. Even though the storm had happened yesterday, the only thing that remained as a reminder that it had actually happened were the light gray clouds in the sky. Rays of light shot through cracks in the blanket that covered their celestial fullness, the forest shone green in dreamy areas, even the glow illuminating the hallway brought to mind that juxtaposition between the fantasy of the fairy tale and the concrete reality of an abandoned building. *I'm an idiot.* I told myself, all this time I felt like I was stalking something atrocious in my dreams, but the clear image removed that fog that clung to my thoughts. Yes, I knew well that after the storm, I would eventually find the blue of the sky, the strangeness of being was part of being itself, just another segment that made it something common. *The real question, something commonplace, is how to spend time today.* I yawned.

I was in the west wing, thinking of meeting Liam again, or going to the second floor to meet Elena, but a sound caught my attention. *Click, click, click, ding.* I was in one of the classrooms, one of those that were too small to hold classes, an administration room perhaps. The man was tapping his fingers on the typewriter, he was under one of those lights, the room was illuminated in that nostalgic atmosphere of a memory without existence. He was one of the teachers, he was wearing a white shirt, his hair slicked back, he was an older man with some gray hair, a not very long beard and small round glasses. *If I remember correctly he is the teacher of*

██████████, *won't he say something if he sees me here?* I was about to leave but he looked up and our eyes met. "Good afternoon," he said to me. He had a friendly smile, I was surprised considering how serious he looked when writing. "Oh, hello..." I replied, unprepared. "Are you investigating the events of midday?" His voice was calm, and he waved me in. *The events of midday?*

"That's an odd way of putting it," I said, he raised an eyebrow. "Wouldn't you say the event? Did something else happen?" / "You're right, I did say it in an odd way, although you also have to think about what separates the main event, the finding of the message, from the speculation about it?" / "Well, if we're going to consider it that way then a lot of things happened today," I replied. "Certainly, Mister Detective." / "I'm trying to pass the time, I'm not investigating." / "You have to investigate, it's a good way to pass the time." I gave up, he seemed just as bored as I was, I sat down in a chair and played along. *You can call me Mr. D.* Or whatever he had said.

"So how about we start with the message itself?" I asked. "What do you think it means?" He answers. *Aren't I supposed to be the detective?* "Well... I was talking to another student about it," He nods, "and we thought maybe it could be about another dimension." / "What do you mean?" / "The part that says "beyond that plane," maybe it means that we must meet on another dimensional plane." / "And how are we supposed to get to that place?" / "Well, I was thinking about it... "the gates of heaven" sounds religious, like it refers to paradise, a reunion in paradise makes sense," I explained. He held his beard while making an exaggerated face of thinking. "I don't think that's what it's about," he finally concluded. "Why?" / "Heaven is part of this plane." *Hm? Is that a religious statement?* "How is that?" / "Even if we see space defined as heaven, or any other dimension, that is; Even if the dimension we were in changed, we would still be in the same reality." —I was starting to have memories of my confusing conversation with Elena.

He continued: "Is the reality we observe a different reality even

after a great change if it remains part of the same observation? For that reality or plane to change, it is not the dimension that must be replaced, but the person who perceives it, the eyes that look at the sun, the hand that touches the earth, the brain that gives it meaning.” — *The observer*. —That must be, “Look at the veil, and once your gaze is lost,” it must refer to that internal change—I commented. —It could literally be, losing one’s gaze. / —It is obvious that there is a relationship with the eye, since reference is made to the action of seeing twice, and now that you mention it I doubt very much that it is something religious. / —And that change of opinion? —Well, *it was you who explained it to me, but there is also something else*. —The text says “beyond that plane,” that part, beyond. Beyond paradise? I doubt very much that anyone believed that something like that even exists. / —It is difficult to imagine, yes.

—The last thing I can tell from the message is that it seems to be addressed to someone in particular. / —That last part, “we’ll meet again.” / —Yes, although... —Something wasn’t right with that. —The first part, it says “look you,” you is an impersonal way of addressing someone —He noticed. *And what could that mean?* —Maybe... the person doesn’t know you? —I said, but I wasn’t really convinced. —Addressed to a stranger... someone who doesn’t remember you—he thought out loud. —I don’t think we can really know more about the text or its meaning, even the part about the look is a bit confusing. / —Certainly, his look could be the person’s look, the look of another person, the look of something, or the look as a metaphor. / —Yes, now that you mention it... —Something caught my attention.

I continued, “It’s kind of poetic, isn’t it? The use of you even has musicality, ‘veil, heaven, again.’ ” He laughed. “Our criminal isn’t just a madman, but a poet.” *Same thing*. “Well, just because of that poetry, we have to include Lily on the list of suspects.” Hearing me say that, his eyes widened, as if he had remembered something. “Ah, yes, sorry to interrupt our detective act, but could you do me a favor?” He moved a drawer from the desk he was at and pulled out

a book. A book I thought I had seen before. *That's the book Elena was reading, with the title in German.* "Could you return this to Lily if you run into her?" / "Well, it's not like I have anything to do anyway." / "Heh, you could be in class." I took the book from his hands. *No, thanks.* "Do you know anything about this book?" / "Apparently Lily lent it to Elena, it's the original version; in German, from Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, he replied. *That name sounds more familiar to me, I think it was a complicated book of philosophy. Lily lent it to Elena... and she lent it to the professor?*

I wasn't entirely convinced by this story, but I'd already spent too much time playing detective, and it was better if I could wander the halls again. Talking to teachers wasn't unpleasant, but I preferred to spend time alone or chatting in a less formal way.

* * *

Tuesday, 4:01PM, 2010, at the hospital.

Normality, everything had returned to a normality that was almost abnormal, exceptionally mundane. I tried to stop by class to see if Theo had arrived late, but he wasn't there. I got curious and during the break I asked in class ■ if Anna knew anything about it, but she hadn't come either. *Now that I think about it, that's not normal at all.* For a second I wandered in my mind, maybe I had been distracted by the image of the sky, once again blue, of such obvious oddity. *Theo missing is nothing unusual,* but Anna was a different case, she was incredibly punctual. I remembered that the day before she had left earlier, I inquired about it, her friends were as aware as I was. The only thing I found was a statement from the student who sits in the desk behind me, saying that she was checking her phone. "It seems that a message was bothering her," they said, "I think she left the moment that "that" happened ." Of course, I asked what that was that happened. —We all got a spam message, something about the queen's club.

Liam hadn't been the only one to receive it, but everyone in the class had; chatting with people in my class I discovered that it had

indeed reached the entire school. *I couldn't know if anyone in the city received it until later.* I assumed it was most likely, those kinds of messages, I understood, were sent by computers automatically and not manually. But the more I thought about it the less relevant it seemed to me, in the same way that the mind tries to hide a bad memory, the event faded into triviality. *There was no way that that message had anything to do with Anna or Theo.* I thought, and it was logical, that message barely had any content, but my non-logical side, the human sense of emotion and rush of thought told me that there was a connection there. ~~I wondered if it had a name, that feeling.~~

I'll just leave it at that: ***Anna and Theo being missing are not directly related.*** (*I.e. A didn't cause B.*) *Huh?* I caught myself in a strange thought as I climbed the stairs to the second floor. *What am I surprised by?* I surprised myself. No, what was going on? .and. *And this thought where did it come from ? A→B Ugh...* I felt sick. For a moment I thought the lights had gone out. I thought the [REDACTED] had gone out. I thought... I thought... *who thinks?.. My nerves are bad today. Yeah, bad. Stay with me. Talk to me. Why do you never talk? Talk. What are you thinking? What are you thinking? What? I never know what you think. Think* ³. “Why is the sky red in the middle of the day?” I asked myself, but it wasn't true, it was an illusion. Was it? *Where is Mr. D when you need him?* A red drop slipped from my nose to reach my lip. Before I knew it I was in front of the door that led to the room where I had talked to Elena. *Red, so red* . I didn't know when it had been there, but I could see a fleshy mass through the window, high in the sky. I thought it was the moon.

In the room there she was, with her back to me, Elena, *pale, so pale* . She could have been the moon itself. Her body, for some reason, was naked. *And [REDACTED] me [REDACTED] me [REDACTED] here, [REDACTED] that [REDACTED] for [REDACTED]..* I wanted to hold her before she faded, before she set over the horizon with the arrival of the

3 The dialogue is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the poem “The Waste Land” by TS Elliot.

bright sun. *If only I could... I could what? Bite, bite into her flesh, flesh, flesh, f e r c h e r n e f e r c h .* But that couldn't be real. *What place is this?* I couldn't move. I was clutching that book so tightly, even Hegel would have felt it. *Flesh, flesh, flesh.* And then, she finally faded.

Blue, the blue of her eyes brought me back to earth, that same blue of the sky. Lily was there, where Elena was before. She saw me by chance, although it was inevitable that she did, given that I had been standing there for a long time in silence. *What was she doing?* I entered the room. "There's... something there," she said suddenly, taking me by surprise. *I was expecting a "Good afternoon" at least.* "Something there." / "Where?" / "Out there." / "Out where?" I tried to check what she was telling me, but I didn't see anything out of the ordinary. "Outside." / "What?" / "The head that I most often." I fell silent. Lily was quite difficult to follow, but this time I was completely lost. "Something there somewhere, outside the head." ⁴She seemed happy. *Outside the head.* I remembered what the professor said regarding perspective and the reality of the dimensional plane. *If something existed outside the head then it would really be... beyond sight.* —What are you talking about Lily? / —It's a poem by Beckett. —*A poem?* —You were supposed to say "so weird time" or something. / —Why would I say something like that? —I laughed. —To continue the poem. / —Well, I'm sorry —I said and showed her the book.

—Ah, I lent it to Elena —she answered when she saw it. —Yes, it really is a difficult book... —I waited a couple of seconds— maybe it's because it's in German. —Pff . *Well, it was actually difficult even in [REDACTED].* —[REDACTED]'s teacher told me to give it to you. —She took it from my hand. —I just came here to look for her, but it seems she left. / —I think she's avoiding you on purpose. / —And why would someone do that? —she asked, sincerely and with a depressed face. *I wonder why that is...* it was obvious that she was doing it, but I couldn't determine the reason. Actually, although

4 The dialogue is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the poem "Something there" by Samuel Beckett.

Lily is strange I wouldn't call her a nuisance. In *fact, I'm kind of curious*. —I don't know, but I'd like to know something else. / —What? — *Well, I'm not going to ask, Mr. Detective is*. —I imagine you saw the message they wrote on the entrance. / —Hehe, "you saw." Why so formal all of a sudden? —she asked. I felt a little embarrassed at letting myself get carried away by the game from earlier. I shrugged my shoulders.

—Well, everything has something to communicate —Lily spread her arms—, including this room. That communication doesn't necessarily have to have a meaning but it has to have a sense. / —Meaning and sense... / —Yes, sense refers to the sensorial. Maybe the act of reading the text itself is its purpose, the fact that it can be perceived gives it a meaning that can't be defined in words; despite emerging from the word. —Well, *that doesn't really help much*. —The way it's written reminds me of one of the texts in that book —he added. —Texts by whom? / —That group, the queen's club. —Part of me was surprised, but that other part that could only be understood as spirit was satisfied. *I knew that name was going to appear again*. —Did they publish a book? / —Yes, do you want me to bring it? / —Do you have it here? / —Hehe, no, but I can bring it tomorrow.

I agreed, Lily seemed in a hurry to get back to class. *She had gone out to find Elena. Was it that urgent?* She had stopped to talk to me, *it shouldn't be that urgent*. "Uh... isn't that Theo?" she announced. I walked over to the window, yes, that was Theo, he was walking away from the school towards the forest. Behind him were quite a few students and teachers. *What could be going on?* A shiver ran down my spine. I knew nothing good was about to happen, if that scene communicated anything to me, it was that feeling. "I have to go!" I said and quickly ran towards the hallway. "See you tomorrow," I heard from the classroom.

* * *

Tuesday, 4:19PM, 2010, in the forest.

I had never seen that kind of face. That mix of horror, sadness,

disgust, fear, a sickly eerie union. They were pale and I couldn't help but feel pity, for the curiosity that brought them there, in that nightmare of the land of the awakened. My stomach turned, I really couldn't think straight. *NN...o...* The image in front of me was simply too cruel to be true. ~~What we found~~, in that place where I thought I had seen a statue of a gargoyle, was Anna's corpse. In that dreamlike space she rested with the rays of the sun crossing between the branches covering her skin in a pattern of shadows shaped like leaves. She didn't even have clothes to cover herself and her posture was twisted, like a doll thrown into oblivion. If I had been a more sentimental person, I would have held her in my arms, trying to cover her figure. *But that's not me. And who are you?* Her eyes were glassy, with a clarity that could only exist after death, and a face of eternal rest with no recognizable emotion. *And worst of all... that nauseating detail.* Her stomach had been cut open and her organs were peeling away in a dark red, painting the ground around her in her blood, a scarlet carpet on the earth.

I wanted to scream and I wanted to run. I had to think that everyone felt the same. I couldn't even imagine how Theo felt, I didn't want to feel even a tenth of his pain or I would have died on the spot. *But... even though I say that...* Looking at him I couldn't find any of what he described. He just stared into space, a million meters away, perhaps in a place out of reach of others. I tried to get to that place, fixing my eyes on the dead body; it only made me sicker. Red... red, red... *red ...* " **There's something terrible in this forest,** " Theo whispered, probably no one could have heard him, because no one was paying attention to him. *I was the exception.* But I couldn't react in any way, the death of someone was a kind of mystery that I didn't see myself capable of solving. *I didn't even contemplate that absurd idea.* After the police arrived, it was announced that classes were going to be suspended for the week, we were ordered to leave the scene and we were warned that we could receive a call if the investigation required it.

* * *

Tuesday, 11:38PM, 2010, in the forest.

Even though it seemed absurd to me, we were there. We were heading to the hospital. That night, Theo had appeared at my [REDACTED] with a backpack, in it there were two flashlights and a black cloth and a red [REDACTED], I didn't pay much attention because his words had monopolized everything I could think about the moment I heard them. "We have to find... what happened to Anna," he said. I knew we weren't going to find anything in the forest, or in the hospital either, but I still agreed. It wasn't that part of me that the professor called Mr. D, nor was it a more internal ridicule; a morbid curiosity, but the only method within my reach with which to help my friend—that pushed me in that direction. Even if it was stupid, if I could help him even a little, then it would have been worth it.

The road was empty, it felt emptier in the darkness of the night. We plunged into that black gloom, into paths that called for blood, and into that place where a gargoyle statue stood ominously. The sounds of the wind carried words with them, they tried to communicate with us, or at least that's what the silence made it seem like, we couldn't decipher what they were about or where they came from. Those whispers of madness that circled trapped in the forest, orbited around the center, the hospital. There rested a thing from a place beyond understanding, it was possible to say that it was feeding on the forest, and those sounds were the beating of its heart underground, echoing on the surface. That was the imagination that twisted my mind into a nightmare image. *But it is only that, imagination.* We arrived at the hospital. We hadn't said a single word the whole way, but we didn't know what we were looking for either, we just wanted to see. *See what?* We didn't know either.

We began to walk through the hallways. We hoped to find something there. In every room, I felt like something was watching us from the shadows. I heard a dripping sound in the distance. The clouds in the sky would cover the moon, only to show it once more, in a cycle that kept repeating itself. That moonlight would sometimes reach through the blinds, creating an image of an

external light source... artificial and purposeful. *What is the purpose of the moon?* My mind was wandering as much as we were. We'd finished checking the first floor, both wings, and the entrance. Theo shone the light down the stairs and looked at me, without saying a word I knew what he was asking. "Are you ready?" and I nodded. *What else can I say?* We'd come too far to give up, *no, that's not it. There's something else...* Something else was moving me forward, though, like Lily had said, words couldn't describe it: That feeling, that unique sense that was only able to exist fleetingly in that instant. If one more second had passed, if the wind had blown any different, that potential sense wouldn't have been there, not in that way.

We walked through the second floor until we reached a room with a closed, rusty door, a metal door I had never seen before. *But how?* From inside, there was an incessant dripping and a creaking sound. Silently, the bones of something creaked. That particular musty smell filled the hallways and seemed to come from there. "W-What's in here?" Theo asked. I could tell that, despite the fact that he looked determined so far, this place had such a strange atmosphere that he had no choice but to comment on it. "I don't know," I replied, "should I open it?" He nodded. It was difficult, the doorknob was wet, and the door dragged on the floor. It made an echoing sound and from within it a powerful fishy aroma emerged that made us back away. We pointed our flashlights at it but saw nothing out of place, desks. *Are there even classes in this place?* "... Are you going in?" he questioned me. I didn't know why but I was already inside, he hurried to follow me. *Nothing, there's nothing here.*

drip... drip...

drip... *what?* That drip was thick and it was running down the walls. Theo saw it first, his mouth had dropped open in surprise and his face was horrified.

drip...

drip...

The thing was there, on the ceiling, I saw it when I looked up. It was writhing and making a creaking sound. It was better to say that it was the whole ceiling. It was rippling, red, so red. It looked like it was made of flesh. *Flesh... flesh... flesh...* flesh. Theo reacted by taking a step back.

to the sound so short and low
 is gone and the whole globe, not yet naked,
the EYE opens wide W I D E.

UNTIL IN THE END

NOTHING CLOSES IT AGAIN.⁵

It opened; in the red flesh on the ceiling I could see hundreds of eyes opening, crystalline, tearing, the flesh had begun to peel off and the thing had awakened. Theo had seen it too, we both ran for the door, I quickly tried to close it. A loud crash was heard and in an instant the door rose into the air, twisted and dented. A leg, or an arm, or a tentacle, or an appendage had pushed it out of place. The creature was moving, it wanted to break free, I could feel it. It was hungry, so hungry... for that flesh. Theo grabbed my hand, pulled me with him, we escaped through the corridors. I didn't want to look back, but I felt the thing moving forward, it didn't slide, it had legs like a spider. I imagined it was a spherical shape full of eyes and eight legs, with the crunch of bones accompanying its passage. We went down the stairs, entered the first room we saw, moved around the computers, which in an instant were crushed. Wood, plastic and dented metal.

The window was intact, I was the first to jump and Theo followed me. Even though we were on the first floor, in the computer room, it was a high fall. It was from the second floor, in front of the entrance. The fall seemed to last forever. In that time I could see the thing taking the shape of the window. It made a block in the hole it occupied in the wall. Its hundreds of eyes looked at us,

5 The text is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the poem "Something there" by Samuel Beckett.

despite its morbid appearance, I understood it very well. *What am I saying?* The sky was painted red, that night was the first night with a red sky, a fleshy sky. The world was spinning, spinning around me, *and I was spinning around the world.* I squeezed Theo's hand so hard I could have torn it off.

* * *

At some point, in the hospital.

I opened my eyes. I had somehow lost consciousness, I couldn't remember anything beyond [REDACTED]. I didn't know how but I was once again inside the hospital. *Did someone bring me here?* It was the computer room, the events of the night seemed like a dream, no... they didn't seem like a dream... *that really was a dream.* The computers were in perfect condition, there was no trace of the damage caused by the creature, but I couldn't say that everything was the same. The condition, on the contrary, had improved. Everything was fixed, the floor, the walls, I advanced with caution. The entire hospital looked as if it were new, but empty. The hallways, the floor and the ceiling, the windows (including the one we had broken to escape) were in perfect condition. That was not a dream, it was reality, but that reality was impossible.

I walked until a nice breeze caught my attention, in front of the bedroom window stood a girl, looking out the window, her back to me. She had blonde, dyed hair and was wearing the school uniform. The sky in front of her was orange, the morning light, the sun was rising. Inside there were desks, too, in perfect condition. *What does someone do so early?* I approached and she turned around, I could see her face. It made me feel a bit nostalgic, the first time I met Theo I had also mistaken him for a girl. *But why?* He turned around, revealing his torso, a hole with blood covered the shirt, I could see his skin underneath. *That's Anna's uniform, but...* At that moment I didn't feel that, my senses were lost somewhere else. The look he was showing me was enigmatic, of all the oddities I had encountered, the greatest. *I can't figure it out. What are you trying to tell me?*

—Theo... —I was about to ask. He approached me and before I could say anything our lips met. An electric sensation ran through my brain. In that classroom, in the abandoned hospital, that guy was kissing me. As much as he looked like a girl, he was still a man, and yet... it felt good, I wanted to keep feeling his lips. I held him in my arms and the moment we separated I was the one who kissed him. I could feel his hands squeezing my back. I wanted to feel more, his warm body, his skin, his flesh. I wanted ██████████ right there, on the floor and ██████████ ██████████ ██████████. I didn't do that, I couldn't, seeing him again I froze. A shy smile, eyes that didn't meet my gaze, and flushed cheeks. "What are you ashamed of now?" I asked. "It's just that... they're watching us," he replied. I understood, when I looked up I saw those thousands of eyes, the flesh on the ceiling, but I wasn't afraid anymore.

As I looked back down, Theo was gone, only the clothes that once belonged to Anna remained. I was holding them in my hands. I closed my eyes, I had finally managed to understand those oddities that plagued that forest. I left the classroom, the creature remained in its place, there was no reason to follow me. *Isn't that so? Yes, that's right.* I walked until I reached my classroom, I opened the door, inside the desks had been placed in a circle, surrounding the gargoyle idol. I entered... and after a short while... I woke up. I lifted my head from my desk, I couldn't believe that I had fallen asleep in class, much less the strange dream I had. I yawned. *What the hell was wrong with my head?* Even though I knew it was class, no one did anything, they were stopped in time. I left the classroom when I saw the orange expanding outside. The sky was red, but that was nothing new. It was fire, the forest was submerged in smoke and flame. My instinct was to run to the exit, no one else had any intention of doing so, so I left the school alone.

As I stepped out my feet sank into the black earth. She saw me in the distance, carrying the book I had asked her for the day before. **Lily** was wearing the male uniform and had her red contact lenses on. I approached and she spread her arms. Her gaze was crazed and she wore a disgusting smile on her face, I felt a chill. *I-I shouldn't be*

here. Where was here? *It's in* [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. It couldn't be... that thing didn't exist. "Look around! What can you see?!" she shouted. I did, a suffocating place, lost in the abyss of a place I was unable to understand. "We're trapped here, in the world," she added. "Is this world... really... real?" / "It's as real as the words we say." / —And the words we say, are they real? / —As real as the world, and you. What do you think? — *This world? It must be real... yes*. It had to be, it had to be like this. —Without friction! It is not human, this world is a [REDACTED] in an alien [REDACTED]. It is disconnected from the human being at such a distance that it seems to simply imitate. —Lily had lost her mind. She pulled out of the back of her pants, a Colt Cobra revolver, and pointed it at me. —And what does that make us? What are we?! —She held in her hand *the* [REDACTED] *book* of the Queen's Club. —Irritating. Why don't we just put an end to this farce. —I realized that it wasn't me he was aiming at, but the little girl next to me. That angel I had seen in a garden, in a dream. I tried to cover her. *But how am I going to cover a bullet with my body?*

Lily pulled the trigger.

Red, so red. The sky was red, so red.

And I could see it there too, so well.

Millions of eyes opened in the sky, that sky of flesh.

Red emerged, also from my chest.

Sometime, somewhere.

Sometime, somewhere.

Sometime, somewhere.

Sometime, somewhere.

Sometime, somewhere. Sometime, somewhere. Sometime, somewhere. Sometime, somewhere. Sometime, somewhere. Sometime, somewhere. Sometime, somewhere. Sometime, somewhere. Sometime, somewhere. *Where are we? When are we?*

Sometime, somewhere.

this this, this this here, all this this here, madness given all this, madness seeing all this this here

Well, for... what's the word?⁶ 1. In the beginning was the word.

2. The word was and is flesh.

3. The word was and is image and sound.

21. A second later, he hears and records her last words: . . . *flesh flesh fl.* . . .

23. Expose negative.

24. Clean tape.

25. Without knowing what is or is not knowing, Mr B *did not* know Mr s-D.

First thesis. The reasons why "this" world has been considered to be apparent constitute rather the foundation of its reality; any other form of reality is totally unprovable.⁷

Mrs D's image and word never existed.⁸

Look, look...

you again again again. Again.

Beyond, beyond. beyond. at the. Gates of Heaven.

We meet again. n We meet again.

-----. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Once again.

But Phil wanted to come back. I see ~~the~~ new ones.

[ENDING A: The curtain opens.]

a. All things may or may not be, therefore they are not: Unless the reason why they should be is explained.

If there is a basis for that reason, it is the fact of questioning reason. This is why reason must be questioned and assumed not to exist in the first place. Even the concept of its existence itself must not exist, for the totality of unquestioned thought, the ultimate axiom, is formed by less than nothing. No communication exists in

6 The text is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the poem "What is the word" by Samuel Beckett.

7 The paragraph is a fragment from the book "Twilight of the Idols" by Friedrich Nietzsche.

8 The text listed is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the short story "The Death of Mrs D" by William S. Burroughs.

a reason less than its own nonexistence, the word without letters. The text, or communicative body, cannot exist outside of its own being and therefore can only be confined to that space. To be or not to be is a concept that exists in that space. Reason, of a true property, is alien to the space of the body. Thus, reason never is. Unless it must be.

Sometime, somewhere.

2 **RED EYE, THE SKY WAS PAINTED A SICKLY RED COLOR..** of all frequencies, light in waves, between 625 and 740 nanometers in length, 480 to 400 terahertz. What was it that made my eye be there? Perceiving with such insulting precision. Even when I closed my eyes, that place trapped me, I knew that even though the world was black 0 and 0, I was still there; in that classroom, on the third floor of the school. I knew that, even if the eight pillars that held up the sky were to fall, I would still be there. Alone, the location of the enigma of my understanding, the code in blinks of the countless number of eyes that folded in a pattern to the end of the horizon; Morse code. *And what does that matter?* I said to myself, without opening my mouth. Third floor, it was my classroom, and there was no one there. Classes were over, I was the only one there. While the others, lesser beings, moved forward to the beat of a melody they couldn't hear, I was the one watching them dance. *And what does that matter?* It didn't, it didn't matter. I was simply lonely, I knew, with every breath I took the heat went into the atmosphere and a certain amount of energy became entropy. The tiny particle that made up the tiniest particle was linked in a conceptual fabric, a veil that covered the entirety of the earth, the same way it did the sky. Each electric discharge in the neuron became part of the energy of the world, its essence, and connected us in a totality. *And if so... why do I feel so alone?* I couldn't know. I told myself that this place was nothing, that this form that covered the earth could not exist; that thing in itself. But that wasn't true, the feeling existed in a contextual space, and in that way it could not escape any analysis. Between 625 and 740 nanometers in wavelength, is this distance

the oscillating field that defines the reality of ████████, its red light, the blood of the heart of the earth? Its accelerated beat shakes the world, in this delirium we call a dream, the dream of a real place.

I let out a sigh. I constantly looked at the sky through the window but for the first time I decided to look at the ground. There was no one there, there was never anyone there. *I am an alien*. Someone thought that, not me, even though there was no one there but me. I became friends with the aliens, they communicated with me through computers, in books, on random pages. They were short sentences, but we were really talking, it was not a coincidence. They explained to me that this essence of things, the essence that made up the whole only existed as an exception to the construction of a real within the context of communication. I remembered what Theo said, “ **things are what they are.**” *But what is it?* “It is that thing, from the eye of us, the aliens.” They had managed to get a telepathic device and could communicate with me directly, introducing thoughts into my mind. It was time to go back.

I opened the window and climbed up to the edge, kicking my body out. Then I fell, but instead of breaking my head, I sank into the ground. It was that same zero and zero, where the light didn't reach, where only the eyes of the earth could exist and not those of the sky. *The invisible spectrum/specter* . Friction, fiction, heat in my body... the world below was different, but I was determined. I continued swimming, deeper, eventually I had to reach the center (so I told myself)... The center of the book.

The birds flew away at the sound of the bell, thousands of eyes in the sky, below, thousands of eyes on the ground watched them fly.

* * *

Saturday, 7:38PM, 2010, somewhere.

My eyes flickered between the lights on the street and the beer can in my hand. I was waiting for my order to arrive, occasionally glancing at the image of the reporter talking on the news, on one of the televisions for sale in the shop next door. It was a hot day, but as

the sun went down the warmth of the day was forgotten in the night. *It was still there though*, somewhere in the atmosphere, perhaps at such a distance that it seemed impossible to perceive, but I could say for sure that it was still there. I took a sip, I could hear the other two, Anna and Theo talking inside the shop. The small food stand in the center of the city was hotter than the city during the day, *there's no way I'm staying in there*. Nobody likes the taste of warm beer. *Nobody?* Well, that wasn't true, I knew that at least one person in the world must like it. Those were the kind of thoughts I had as I waited: *But can I really say that that person exists? I don't even know that being, that entity*. I took a sip, it was still fresh.

I let myself get distracted by anything. —in... ##### to#do... ### case ##### Phi#l... ##e####s##here — *What?* I heard the woman from the news saying my name. Paying attention to her she continued —These events are not related to last week's cases, authorities claim. —Nothing out of the ordinary. *I think that phenomenon has a name. Subliminal message? No, that's something else*. I took another sip, it was still fresh... although a little less fresh. What distracted me this time were my eyes, between the pedestrians, on the other side of the street I saw a girl I thought I knew. *That's... from the other class, Lily? Yes, how could I forget her?* She was wearing the school uniform, there was no need to inform that we did not have classes on Saturdays, she was carrying a white book under her arm and the place she entered was a bookstore. There was a sign above the European-style shop: a chess piece and “The Queen's Club” written in white serif letters on black. *What does that matter?* But I didn't think that. The streetlight flickered. ~~Morse code?~~ I took another sip and finished the can, it wasn't that fresh.

—Phil, this is yours —As I was about to throw the can Anna interrupted me, she was carrying two burgers, one of them was mine. —Huh? You finished your beer!/ —Oh yeah./ —And what are you going to drink after eating? —she asked. Theo came out from behind, he was carrying his burger and two cans of beer, his and

Anna's. —I don't know, I guess I'll drink Theo's beer. —I said jokingly as he handed over what he had ordered. —Don't even think about it! —He replied. —Hahaha —I laughed—, it's okay, I'll just buy another one later./ —And where do you want to go to eat? —Anna asked./ —Hmm... the park? —Theo answered. It wasn't strange, from time to time we did this, go to eat, hang out. We started walking towards the park, even though they said we were going to eat there, we were already eating on the way.

—Oh right, Anna, what's the name of that girl in your class? / —Huh? —I caught her by surprise. —The weird little girl, I think it's Lily? —I asked. —Yeah... but this is weird coming from you —What *does she mean?* —, do you like her? —*She's not ugly, quite the opposite, but she's definitely not my type.* —Phil? Interested in a girl? Don't make me laugh! The only girl Phil liked was... —And before he could say anything I jabbed my elbow into his rib. —Augh... —he whined. —Hey! Don't keep me guessing, who was it, who was it? / —It's better if I don't say it, for my own good. —Theo answered. *Yeah, it's better that way.* What he was about to say was: “The only girl Phil liked was me, when he still thought I was a woman.” *And I would have killed him, if he said something so embarrassing. Don't bring back those memories!* “Then why?” Anna asked. “Why are you asking about Lily?” / “It's because I just saw her walking around in her school uniform.” I finished eating my burger. “But it's Saturday,” Theo commented. “That's why.” / “Well... she's usually like that. She's a good girl but...” Anna replied. “...But?” / “But she does some really weird things and the rumors about them keep piling up.” Theo added and Anna responded with a kick to his legs. “Augh...” she complained again. “She's cute! And she's good with others, she's just a little eccentric.” / “True...” Theo said quietly, resigned. Anna wasn't going to let them talk bad about one of her friends, although that term was pretty broad, given that she was friends with a lot of people.

“Rumors?” I asked, and Theo looked at Anna as if she was asking permission to speak. “Go on...” she said, and he showed a smile. *An idiotic smile.* “They say she stays at school even after classes and

that she goes on days off.” / “What’s that? Staying in the middle of the forest until night falls can’t be very good.” / “That would be scary, that forest gives me a bad feeling,” Anna commented. / “They say she does rituals and is trying to summon demons.” / “W-Why?” I asked. “Huh? Why?” He was surprised. “Why would someone summon demons at school?” He shrugged. “Well, I think all that is unfounded.” – *I think the same, I wouldn’t be surprised if Theo is the one making up the rumors.* – “Hey, why are you looking at me like that? I’m just saying what I heard,” he clarified. *Look... look...* “I didn’t make anything up...” he said honestly. *Then who?* I assumed it was normal, *when someone is that weird the doors open to any kind of unfounded rumor*. When we got to the park we had already finished eating. *I need another beer.*

* * *

Monday, 12:07PM, 2010, somewhere.

The bright light warmed the asphalt I walked on. *All of this would be better if I didn’t have to wear this uniform.* Black, who thought of making a black school uniform? *And a tie to boot.* I complained, but there were many peculiarities that were even stranger. The college had recently burned down, you’d think that would cancel classes for a while, but the location was changed to another school. *Weird, right? And that’s not all... that school... it’s not even inside the city, but near the entrance to the city, by the highway.* It was in the middle of a forest. So there I was, walking on the highway out of the city. The red tie swung back and forth as my gaze was fixed on that cracked floor, on the way I met Theo, he was complaining about the vending machine and carrying an umbrella. *Apparently it’s going to rain at five.* We walked together, talking about movies, while we crossed the forest; It was nice to be able to hide from the blazing rays of the sun under the shade of the trees; the shadows of the branches reminded me of veins, or perhaps the nervous system. *A strange observation.* I realized, *it seems like the entrance to another place, one as far away as an island isolated from the mainland.* But that was just an irrational emotion.

After a while I saw something that distracted me, distracted me

by its absurdity, to the point that I decided to overlook it, ignore it as if it weren't really there. I thought I saw, in the middle of the forest, an idol. It was like one of those gargoyles that appeared in gothic cathedrals, *but that doesn't make sense. What is that doing here?* I didn't even try to contemplate the thought, because more absurd was the dream image that accompanied it, that girl who was standing there really **was the biggest anomaly**. She had seen me, turned to me and smiled, *you should stop wasting your time*. She thought, but I couldn't know that, I could only know what I felt; the thought inside my head, that feeling of fear: "**I'm scared**," and the image of her. Long white hair, so long that it reached her waist, glasses and the eyes of a dead fish. A uniform just as white, without a stain, a blue bandana on her arm with the symbol of seven eyes. I ignored the girl there, I had to or that feeling was going to be the end of me, I concentrated on our daily walk and conversation; until soon the school came into view. It was in perfect condition despite being in the middle of the forest, three stories high, a grey color that gave it a gloomy appearance... a gothic architecture. It had electricity, it had everything, yet it was considered abandoned and for that reason it was not used for teaching. *Something I cannot explain, something I do not even understand.*

—Waaah! —The girl jumped out from behind one of the trees as we approached the entrance, Theo reacted by stepping back. —Uah... —he let out a pitiful shriek. —Wahaha! —The girl burst out laughing. Did *that really scare you?* For a second I thought it was Anna. *Why did I think that?* But it was Lily. She was wearing a black cloak, and she was wearing her red contact lenses. "Good afternoon Lily." / "And what's so good about it?" Theo replied reluctantly. "Yes, good afternoon," she waved her cloak in an exaggerated gesture, "mortals!" she added. I laughed, she looked at me and announced with determination: "It's that audacity that's going to cost you your life! Wahaha—" She received a blow to the head from Theo, it wasn't a hard blow but she fell silent almost instantly, she looked at the ground with a defeated face. *What a pity*. She was like that sometimes, but not always, sometimes she was calm... but sometimes (*like this one*) she was like that.

—Waaaah! —The girl screamed as she grabbed Theo by the shoulders. She had approached him without him noticing, *and I didn't notice her either*, she had even left her bike a couple of meters away. —Uah! —His scream was even more pitiful than the last time. —Stop scaring me in this damn forest! Christ and the Virgin —he complained. Anna and Lily laughed at Theo, well, even I was laughing at him. *He acts like a delinquent but he's a sensitive guy*. An idiot. —Good afternoon Anna. / —Good afternoon, Phil, Lily... and you too Theo. / —Yes, yes, good afternoon. / —And that cape? Why are you dressed like that? —Anna asked. —Hehe~ You'll see! —After saying this she ran away. The bell rang in the next instant, we saw the birds taking flight, and then we looked at each other confused. *She is like that sometimes. But... I mean Lily?*

*

Before the first class.

Everyone had sat down at their desks and we were waiting for the teacher to arrive. At times like this the classroom was usually full of noise, but for some reason everything was silent and the few voices that could be heard spoke in whispers. *When you expect something to be one way, but reality ends up being different, you can't shake that feeling that something is wrong*. A feeling that is difficult to express: *At any moment that door is going to open, and something bad is going to happen*. The walls were going to fall down and reveal a whole group of cameramen filming: *You're on TV!* Or something like that; but perhaps that senseless idea originated from somewhere else. From the moment I entered the room I felt it, those eyes watching from the ceiling, but it became even more evident when I noticed something strange. *Nothing new, just something weird*. This kind of thing seemed like a prankster's act, a message on my desk, but it wasn't anything serious... *actually*... I didn't know exactly what it was about, and even if it was addressed to me, the person who wrote it would know very well that I don't visit the classroom very often. *I'd have better luck telling me the message in person*, I thought. It was a list of numbers... *the distance between the planet Earth and Mars*, but I didn't think that.

The thought was instead introduced into my mind: We are approaching, at a base velocity between Object A and Object B, in that proposition both objects have the same velocity, 24.07km/s, and Object A is always at the same distance from Object B. Still, exactly 18717.56 hours from the start of motion (assuming no acceleration and both objects were always in motion) Object B is going to meet Object A and after that encounter Object B is going to move 1.75% faster than Object A. The phenomenon of their acceleration only becomes apparent after the observation is made, but if the encounter is not observed the velocity of both objects remains identical. The reason is, Object B doesn't like to be seen next to Object A. *Hahaha*, but I didn't think that. ... *What the hell am I thinking?* I thought, and continued/they continued: The meeting at the same distance, at that moment, can only exist when we think of an orbit of two objects whose size makes them collide at a specific point. Even though the meeting can be avoided, Object A is too much of an idiot to do it! *Hahaha*, but I didn't think that. *Silence... Silence... I need my own head to shut up once and for all.* Bones, the crunching of bones sounded inside my skull, there was **something** there, it was sinking its appendages through my skull. *Something is eating my brain.* "Hey, Phil... are you okay?" I heard a whisper from behind, Theo was talking to me. "Y-Yeah, I think the heat made me sick," I answered. As I crossed my hand over my face I realized I was sweating, cold sweat, as if I were sick.

Bam! The door suddenly opened and the few whispers that had been there stopped. My heart jumped out of my chest, *something horrible, something horrible.* Lily walked through the door... *Thank God!* She had a big smile on her face, the whole class was watching her, bewildered. She stopped in front of the blackboard and looked in our direction. "Stupid mortals, I have been resurrected, after 780 days I walk the earth once again!" *780 days is not a long time.* "I had been sealed in this forest hundreds of years ago" *Wasn't it 780 days?* "But thanks to the demonic energy surrounding this place I am finally free." Theo stood up, but she continued: "I have come to feed on your blood! You will have the privilege of being the first- AaaAaAa~" Theo was shaking her

shoulders, the class scoffed. “Why a vampire?” / “I don’t know.” / — Maybe it has the nutrients needed for growth? / —Hahaha, she really needs them. / —NoOo stop makin' fun of me.. AaaAa— If Theo kept shaking her she was going to get a concussion. —What are you doing? Get back to your seats! —The professor had arrived and Lily quickly escaped, even though her plan had failed (*did it?*), she was still smiling.

In a way I was glad that that was what ended up happening, and nothing worse, after all... she was just joking. *There are no vampires, aliens...* Something interrupted me: *Hahaha~*, but I didn't think that, ... *or any other paranormal thing.* ~~Although they know that is a lie.~~

* * *

Monday, 5:01PM, 2010, at school.

The rain had started to pour down. Even though I regularly skipped classes today I was glued to my seat, I didn't really feel like doing anything. It was the last class of the day, the water hitting the windows filled the classroom with NOISE. I couldn't see when the day would end, I was tired of the NOISE. It didn't seem to have an end, no matter how much I hoped there was NOISE. I hadn't paid attention to any of the classes, and I had NOISE, No -there was that feeling that was eating me up from inside NOISE. No -o. *May the heavens be silent!* The teacher continued his talk about something I didn't understand, normally I would have understood, of that I was sure (it was the day's fault). Theo was sleeping and Liam, next to him, was playing with his phone. *Apparently he had received a message? ... I don't know, heavy, heavy day.* The heat had disappeared but in its place was the smell of humidity and a melancholic feeling. Three seconds passed, and then... silence. The teacher stopped his lesson, the students who were paying attention were shocked, he was simply silent; staring at the wall, as if someone had turned him off. Then, without too complex a movement, he walked over to his chair and sat down, eyes fixed on the floor.

The image repeated itself, over and over again, it was that same NOISE. No, it was different, visually, a pattern of different repetition; the dream that became a reality in itself. Delirium walked through the doorway to the classroom, the dream image, that girl with long white hair. There was not a person who could say a word, among those who were paying attention none expected anything like her. White, pale, dead-eyed, a ghost, a spectral apparition manifested itself in the room, and it was beautiful. A beauty that made you sick and made you want to vomit your organs. It moved forward, perhaps, it slid, perhaps, it simply stood there, perhaps, for some reason, perhaps, they had put it there, perhaps, but at that moment it really was *here*. Her expressionless face communicated nothing, no world to explore, nothing to reveal, but it was not as mysterious as Elena's either. *Elena? And who is that?* I fell into my own lagoon thinking. *Reality, yes, this is reality, yes.* I repeated, and then she said, without even looking at anyone in particular: —We got tired of you leaving, no conclusion can be drawn from that kind of action. —My stomach sank, my shoulders felt heavy, my entire body became a burden. —That is why, we decided to trap you here, you will not be able to leave this forest... until there are only two left. —Silence, no, there was no silence, only NOISE, but that was to be expected; it was raining outside. *What did she say? Only... two left?*

“D-Don’t fuck with me! What kind of joke is that?” The young man stood up. I couldn’t remember his name, *not that it matters*, but I didn’t think that. No one else had said anything, not even the teacher. Although Lily had said something similar earlier in the day, this case was completely different, her statement was filled with a sinister air. “Joke? There’s no time for that.” She answered in a cold tone and raised her hand. “W-What?” He seemed confused, she was showing him her palm and soon it turned outwards. *Turned outwards? What am I talking about?* Whatever was inside came outwards, it expanded from within, towards the outside. *How? I don’t know.* The young man who was previously standing there, burst from within and decorated half the room, the wall, ceiling and floor painted crimson red with his guts. There wasn't even the

sound of an explosion, suddenly my pants and part of my arm were covered in the substance and a piece of something splashed out and stuck to my face. And I peeled it off, a piece of his skin lay in my palm. It took us a second or two to realize what had happened, and those seconds were a silence so loud that it drowned out the sound of the rain. It was one of the girls who reacted first, seeing that her classmate's eyeball was hanging from her desk. —

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/ —GET IT OFF ME, GET IT OFF ME! —The boy tried to wipe the blood off his chest, writhing in disgust, while being invaded by a pungent metallic stench. His hands slipped in the excessive amount of blood on his chest. / —UGH AAA... —Someone stood up and vomited. —NOOOOOOOOOO!! —Chaos in unison, voices that rose and moved back, went towards the farthest wall. I... I... *what am I doing?* Theo woke up and his eyes opened at the horror. *But where am I?* I was out of my body, I couldn't find me. Liam had thrown himself on the ground and was holding his head, he was hiding, not very effectively. *And me?* The girl simply left, walking, in the middle of the chaos, without saying anything and without changing her cold expression. *I must be somewhere.* I wasn't there. *Hahaha*, but I didn't think that. Of those still sitting, I saw only one guy smiling wickedly... that... *that's me, isn't it?* I moved the piece of skin between my fingers, feeling the heat of the body to which it belonged, disappearing, between the warmth of the blood and the humidity of the atmosphere. *How disgusting, these disgusting humans, hahaha!* But I didn't think that. I stood up, as if I had realized that I was out of place, I felt the blood dripping down my sleeve.

What did she do? From my point of view, nothing out of the ordinary had happened, she simply showed him her hand, and he died. I didn't even know if he had felt anything, because it was an

instant, and with such force that it shot his blood in all directions. No handgun could do that, not even the most powerful shotgun, capable of making holes in a person's torso, could burst it with such intensity as to make his feet disappear. Which means that probably, no, definitely his feet were somewhere, in pieces, like his bones, mixed between blood and organs. He was still there, only divided, divided into portions that did not make up a complete human being. *But what if we put him back together? If we take each of those parts, and put them back together... will he be?* Human again. —We have to go! Fuck this shit! — *No, wait, we have to collect his parts and put him back together.* They quickly began to leave the classroom. —Phil, let's go, what the hell are you doing? —Theo called me, and I came back to myself; and the sound of the rain came back too.

* * *

Monday, 5:26PM, 2010, in the woods.

We had been driven out by our own fear, without saying a word, we walked through the forest in the storm without knowing exactly our direction, it was the way back to the highway or at least that's what we thought. The image of what happened had settled in our minds and the rain was not able to clean the blood from the stained uniforms. The words of the girl, Girl A, who had not given her name, repeated themselves in my head and that was what scared me the most, that in the same way as that impossible event, there really was no way to escape from that place. For some reason, the noise was not so loud outside, only the shaking of the branches. *What a strange image... it's like...* Ants, preparing to die in the rain, walking with no goal in mind. *No, there is a goal in mind.* We wanted to escape, but not only from that place, but from any image that could have remained of what happened. I heard whispers talking about nanomachines and other nonsense; That was also a form of escape, trying to find a reason for such an image that could only exist in the imagination, but that was not the case for me. I had accepted that this was reality, even if it didn't make sense, that was real. She destroyed the property that understood the student as a

whole, the complete student, and simply showed him as his parts divided, the divided student. *But is he really a student? Well, he can't study anymore.*

—What's going on? / —Could it be that... / —N-No... —Despite having been walking in the same direction for a long time, eventually the path would deviate towards the jaws of the forest. No matter how many turns we took, the only path there was, only pointed towards the interior of the forest, it was there that the first division was made in the group, between those who had given up and were going to try to return to school before night fell, and those who were going to cross the path without a trail. —I'm not going back there. / —B-But I don't want to get lost in the forest... / —I tried to use my phone but I have no signal. / —Me neither... it must be the storm. / —I'm not going back to that place! What if I'm next?! / —But she... left... right? / —It's not just her, if something like that can happen... then... / —W-What was that? / —Maybe... we can't get out of here... —I said, in the middle of the conflict. —And you're just going to give up?! / —There has to be another way out. —Liam added, looking around nervously. —Y-Yeah, if something like that can happen, another way out of this place wouldn't be strange. —Theo reasoned. *Certainly, if people can explode without cause or reason, there might be a way to leave just as irrationally.* By flying?

“I'm going to search the forest, if I don't find anything before the sun starts to set, I'll come back,” ██████ said and headed towards the forest. “I'll go with you!” A couple of other students joined her, including Liam, and the rest of us started walking back to school. *Why Liam?* I wondered, he didn't seem like the type to make those kinds of decisions, and just now he was talking about another kind of way out. *Another way out... it might be in the forest itself. Even if it's not the way out you'd expect.* She had said “You won't be able to get out of the forest until there are two left.” *Two what? Two people? Was she saying that only two of all the students would be able to survive?* No, that didn't make sense, she would have said “Until there are only two of you left.” Those two that were supposed to be left, it had to be something else.

Later.

—But I don't want to go back to the classroom... / —Yes... the classroom is... we can't go back. / —I'm going to get sick. / —Let's tell the other classes —said Theo— I'll go to class ■ —*That's Anna's class.* The others agreed and we split up, in my case I dedicated myself to looking for something resembling an exit, everyone else left in small groups but I was left alone, it wasn't night yet but the lights in the hallways were on, from time to time you could hear conversations in the classes among the sound of the rain. My instinct was to go to the second floor, part of me wanted to go back to the classroom and see if what had happened was real. *Maybe the cold storm woke me up.* I was stopped by the sound of footsteps, they were approaching where I was. *Someone must be walking through the hallways.* Nothing out of the ordinary. —Ah... it's you... Elena. —She walked up to me, she looked like a ghost... just like... just like that other girl, Girl A.

—Do we know each other? —she asked me. *It's true... where do I know this girl from?* I thought, but nothing came to mind and she interrupted me: —I know you, I didn't know that you knew me too. —Her lips arched in a smile, she looked me up and down. —I-I don't know... how do I know you. A breeze came through a window in the hallway, *cold, I'm still soaked.* —Do you know the impossible question? / —What? / —Let's assume the hypothetical existence of a question that has no "correct" answer, because it's too complicated. —I *don't know if it's a good time for hypotheticals.* —Faced with this question there will be three types of people. Person A, who assumes that the question must have an answer, but knowing that he is not intelligent enough to decipher such an answer decides to give up. —She crossed her arms from time to time pointing at some imaginary object during her explanation. —Person C, on the other hand, values his great intelligence, and therefore when faced with such a question, not finding an answer, he has to assume that an answer does not exist, because if it did exist, his great intelligence would have discovered

it. — *I think I understand what is happening, but I don't know how it relates to our meeting.* — Finally, Person B, who does not believe himself to be very intelligent, but at the same time, does not believe himself to be an idiot, ends up finding the answer to the question; of course, this answer is wrong. / — What can be said about the question? / — Huh? About the question? — *I thought this was about Person A, B and C. No, there must be something.* I stopped, that machinery that for a time was in shock, collapsed by the impact of an extraordinary element was working again, placing my feet on the ground once more. *In a puzzle all the elements presented must conform in one way or another to the answer. Persons A, B and C therefore must prove something about the question.* — I'm going to ask a question... Person A and Person C both chose not to answer, for different reasons. The hypothetical proposition says that there is no correct answer... therefore... Person A and Person C are wrong. Isn't that right? / — Yes, all the answers are wrong. / — In that case there is no question, answering is wrong, not answering is also wrong. What's the point?

“Is that the answer?” she asked. *Is there really anything else? What else can be said about the question, other than that there is no question per se?* “I don't know, I think.” / “Wrong! Your answer is no different from Person C's answer.” / “What? But...” / “The real answer cannot be based on the property of the question, but on the context in which it exists.” She pointed at me. “The question: ‘What can be said about the question?’ can only be answered with an affirmation unrelated to the impossibility of solving it,” she added. *What?* “What can be said about the question... is that it is not hypothetical, it is real,” she concluded. *I understand... not really, I'm not sure, I think what you mean is that...* “So, the question, that impossible, supposedly hypothetical question, that is, the question itself, is part of the thought experiment itself, it is not an affirmation but belongs to itself.” The impossible question exists, and it exists within the context of the hypothetical, but the question is not, and that, that is what it is, and in the same way... — *I-I'm going to die.* — S-Same way... uhmm... The person answering it... can only answer the question in form A, B or C, but that does not affirm anything

about the question... since it has no answer. —*And also, and also.* —... one can only make an affirmation about another fact, which is not related to the question, but the context in which it exists —I finished announcing my thought. She remained silent. —How should I know? —She shrugged. —Then don't make hypotheticals like that! And what did it have to do with our conversation?!

She giggled. “How do you know me without knowing me? Maybe you heard my name somewhere. Or maybe it's an impossible question. Maybe it's not the question that needs to be questioned, but the context in which it exists.” *The context... but that's real life.* I gave up. “I see. Elena...” / “Yes?” / “You should be careful, we're trapped in the forest... there's no way out, and it can be dangerous,” I explained. She twisted her head, like a confused dog. “And that?” / “I-I don't know, it sounds impossible, but it's true... one of my companions... he...” I couldn't really say it. “He died.” When the words finally managed to escape my mouth she looked at the ground and frowned. “We don't know why-” / “I understand,” she said and continued walking, almost as if she was ignoring me. *Are you just going to accept them like that?* But I couldn't ask something like that, I had accepted it without question too, that was my initial reaction. *It could be that... maybe... if I go back there, he might not be there anymore.* “You too, be careful.” I heard Elena say, her voice so low that I didn't even know if she was talking to me. *Ah, it's getting late! I have to go back to that other classroom we agreed on.* I wanted to stop by our original classroom first, but I didn't, I was afraid of whatever was there. Clearly it had to be there, logic dictated it, but I was more afraid of the thought that maybe he was gone... the pieces of him.

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Monday, 7:43PM, 2010, at school.

The hours passed, at first the students from the other classes doubted such information, but after leaving the school and reaching the point where the highway was supposed to be seen, only to find more forest, they were convinced. Those who explored outside had returned, without success and although I had

intentions of exploring the school after my encounter with Elena, they said it was too dangerous. We decided to stay inside our classrooms, spend the night in the school and try to find a way out with the sunrise. The classrooms, and most of the school had lights, but there was a certain aura of unease seeing such a recognizable scene as the school at night. It didn't help that a deathly silence had invaded the classroom, most of my classmates were tired of exploring the forest, and probably still remembering the image of that event.

Faces buried in desks, a couple of people could be seen sleeping, but I couldn't do anything like that, something was dragging me awake; it was making me so restless that it drove me crazy. I could feel something watching me through the window, the sun had already set, and it was just shadow in the young night. *Something is missing here.* I thought. Theo was scribbling something on a notebook and Liam... *Liam?* "Liam's back?" I asked [REDACTED]. "He said he was going to come back first... maybe he's looking for something at school?" / "He's probably in the computer room." / "I don't have internet or cell phone signal, if he's there I don't know what he's doing." / "Why aren't you going to look for him?" they asked me, at least three of my classmates saw me. *Why me? Well... I guess I was the one who talked about him.* —Do you want me to come with you? —Theo asked, he said it trying to look calm, but his face said he didn't want to know anything about it. —I'm fine, I'll go see if I can find him. —I stood up, the atmosphere was so thick that I preferred to be in the hallways anyway.

At least that's what I thought, until the moment I really felt alone. I could tell just by walking through those empty hallways at night that the other classes were in a similar situation to ours, although I could still hear a murmur from the classrooms from time to time. *The computer room should be around here.* I walked to the end of the hallway, it was on the second floor, the same place where we stayed for the rest of the night. I wandered into the reason why I was looking for Liam and I think it had to do with his reaction, **he seemed to know more than the others** about the situation we

were in, *and why would that be? The message... Message?* No, that was my guess and I didn't know what it could be, *message, frequency, electronics, signal...* I opened the classroom door, between the sounds of the rain hitting the window you could hear the running of a machine. The lights were off but one of the computers was on, it was on the other side of a row of monitors, opposite an open window, the curtain flapping in the storm, illuminated by the only light in the room until I arrived. *Click.* The hallway light went out the instant I stepped inside. *The power didn't go out, the computer was still on. The light bulb was probably broken.* I searched in the darkness for the switch, but when I flipped it there was no response.

The lights in here too? It was obvious Liam wasn't there, just wind coming in through the window, but I still wanted to know what could appear on that monitor. That was the reason I was driven through the darkness of the room, bumping into chairs I couldn't see. *I should have asked for a flashlight, or at least a phone.* I didn't like cell phones, that was why I didn't have one. ~~He wouldn't listen to us.~~ After turning around I got to the open window, the rain was still coming in, I wondered who had opened it. When I looked outside I didn't see anything in particular, just the lights on the first floor, the lights in the hallways on the third floor seemed to be off, I could also see part of the entrance to the school but it was too dark to make out anything. The night sky showed nothing but black clouds, hidden stars, ~~voices that couldn't reach.~~ *O starless night, your love my soul inhales, without those starry rays that speak in familiar languages, for I desire the dark, the naked, and the lonely* [?], but I didn't think that. I turned to the monitor, it was flickering slightly, pulsating, the screen showing a web page whose content was mostly white.

The page belonged to, and was advertised as, “The Queen’s Club” in black, next to a chess piece. Below it was a text that read, “Thought Experiment Group.” A paragraph followed: “A5. Given

9 The sentence is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the poem “Obsession” by Charles Baudelaire.

the shape of an Object A, if we can assume that its existence belongs to the point where it resides and that experience is part of a perception itself, not giving rise to a particular thing, but to Object A, we can find in this Object A the lack of an Object B and therefore assume that its own existence gives rise to another presence in the room where it resides, thus connecting, in that way, a link between the existing object in the room (Object A) and its non-existent twin (Object B), but if that is the case..." The text continued. *I don't understand, it seems like nonsense made by a computer.* Someone had been answering the questions at the end of the paragraphs, at the bottom of the page was a confirmation: "Congratulations." Next came a box asking for a phone number, one was written on it, and to the right of it was another message: "You will receive a message soon." It looked like some kind of sign-up form, **but why do it here at school? Still... no internet?** No, it didn't work.

Footsteps. I crouched down and approached the door, I could see someone passing by, she continued down the hall. She seemed to have come down from the second floor. Her right hand was bandaged and stained with blood. Sara walked away from my sight. *Was it the same blood?* I wondered, but I didn't remember Sara being in the living room at the time of the incident. *The third floor.* I opened the door slowly, the lights flickering on and off, I went up the stairs. The third floor hallway was dark as night. I walked forward without seeing anything. Until finally I came across a door, lit by a lamp about to break, a dim light that could only stand out in such darkness, that it would have been ignored in any other case, a rusty metal door. It was half open as I approached I could smell an intense stench of fish, nothing could be seen inside. My hand moved towards the handle and I tried to push it open, but something was blocking it, a heavy object on the other side. *I didn't even remember something like that happening at school.* I took a step back, knowing I had already done too much, it was better if I came back tomorrow with more people. I went back to my class and informed my classmates about the door, and that I hadn't been able to find Liam.

* * *

Tuesday, 5:22AM, 2010, at school.

It sank as it rose, the sun was high, but I felt sunk internally. Externally it was like that too, many managed to sleep, somehow and I thought that was also the case for me, although I could not know for sure. When I woke up I was sinking, as was the sound, the rain had stopped but the sky was still just as cloudy... and so on that concrete floor, they sank. *How is it possible? I must be sleeping...* It molded to my shoes, I tried to stand up, my classmates were stopped as if the floor itself had absorbed their movement, and the only thing left was my staggering, in chaos, from one side to the other. I did not fall, in that paranormal silence my steps became nothing, second one, second two, seconds three, four and six. *And where was the number five?* I rushed towards the door, I was spat out through the classroom towards the outside, in the hallway I caught my breath. Looking inside there was nothing that could really cause such a reaction, such anxiety, such a weight on my body sinking into the concrete. So what creature could it have been, I wondered, that was dragging me with such force to a place I didn't know, that I couldn't perceive beyond the classroom. *All the things that happened, happened in the classroom.* It was like saying that even though the classroom was different, it maintained its essence as a classroom because of the strangeness of the events; it defined itself and referred to itself. It became prophecy and was complemented by the omen. I yawned. *And now what?* The best thing would have been to wake my classmates, but even those who were awake weren't moving, *it must be something in the classroom.* I decided, in this way, to let it go; *we'll find a way out when it has to happen.* Does it have to happen? I questioned my thought. *You're going crazy,* but I didn't think that. Something was mocking me, perhaps the same thing that had created the classroom in the first place.

I ran away, both from the place and from the thought, and ended up climbing the stairs to the third floor. Between images that existed in the middle of dream and reality... *reality...* And then I

reached the middle of the hallway, with the door open, I looked without much concern. I stopped immediately and took a step back. Like two angels tortured by a dark, delirious fantasy, chasing the distant mirage drawn on the blue crystal of dawn, and gently swinging on the wing of a complacent tempest¹⁰, the man held her in an embrace and she covered her face in front of the wall. *That's... the teacher and... Elena.* I was looking secretly, knowing that it was something I shouldn't witness; he held her hips, squeezed her pale skin, cyclically penetrating with the movement of his waist. The dark and small room of the institute had an ecstatic atmosphere, soaked in agitated breathing and moans. My eyes couldn't move away from the scene, she looked in my direction for a second, without drawing attention. My heart stopped and I turned towards the stairs.

I saw Anna walking up the stairs and I quickly approached her, making a cross with my arms. "Wait, wait, you can't go up there..." I whispered and she looked at me confused. "Why?" Hmm... / "That's because..." Well, I didn't want her to know what I was seeing, in general, I wanted to erase that image from my mind... "... Where are we?" / "What?" She had asked suddenly and I didn't realize what happened. We were halfway up the stairs, but in the direction that led up there was a gate blocking access, something that materialized out of nowhere. The sky outside, illuminated on a cloudy day, had been replaced by a gloom typical of the night. The air became thick and humid, dense and tense. Such an image brought back memories of an illusion, but Anna's reaction brought me back to reality. "H-How?" I asked myself. At that moment that thing, a red arm of flesh, emerged from the floor and tried to grab my leg.

After a kick, I grabbed Anna by the hand and started running, we quickly crossed the stairs descending to the second floor. "We have to get out of here!" I said. "What's going on?!" she answered. The school was dirty, stained with carmine sprouts and that darkness

10 The prayer is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the poem "The Wine of Lovers" by Charles Baudelaire.

outside were multitudes of vines covering the windows. *Clash*. And then in front of us one broke, a tumult of flesh had jumped out of it and was now writhing on the wall. An eye rose to its surface and we had to continue down another hallway, the creature had stood up and we could hear its footsteps, splashing with something. Once standing it rose as tall as a person, a fishy stench arose from it, *of course, I've never seen such a thing. Haven't I?* I had the feeling that was a lie. When we reached the other side of the hallway we continued down what must have been the stairs, but there were bars on the way down to the first floor. We had no choice but to climb up to the third floor through the second flight of stairs, and mockingly, bars. It was as if the entire second floor had been sealed off for our encounter. *What should I do? Go back? Maybe... jump out the window?* There was no time, when I turned around I saw that monster, it was bigger, like a snowball in an avalanche of flesh. I leaned on the bars and held Anna in my arms. *Hahaha*, it laughed, that thing was laughing, in my head. Its big eye was crying as it slowly crawled up the stairs, with lethargic tentacles, sometimes it convulsed and its gaze was lost. "N-No..." Anna was trembling. What sinister creature was that? *A couple of seconds ago it was chasing us quickly, but now that we are trapped...* It was as if it knew we had no escape.

Bang. Bang. Bang. And the flesh exploded against the walls, three consecutive shots and the eye pierced. It shook and the fleshy appendages extended and contracted nervously, the thing began to sink into the floor, its red tone changing to a thick black liquid. *Hahaha*, but I didn't think that. Soon the support I was leaning on (the railing) disappeared and we fell to the ground, the light had returned and we were on the stairs leading to the third floor. *Someone shot it from the second floor.* I knew very well that it was not dead, I mean, it was like a nightmare; when I got up I noticed that only the bullet holes were left and no trace of that. *That's why it seems like a nightmare.* I accepted it uneasily, common sense trying to escape my brain. "It's not..." Anna had turned around and seen that there was nothing there. For us, it was as if we had shared an illusion... *Maybe... it wasn't the bullets that*

freed us, but the sound of the shot, the shot! I stood up and quickly ran to where the holes were trying to see the person who fired, but there was no one there. “W-What happened? What was that?” Anna asked.

—I don’t know... some kind of... demon? / —Demon... but that is... —Yes, it was crazy. *But can we really say it’s crazy? The day before I saw a person explode in front of my own eyes for no apparent reason.* Uh... *am I repeating myself?* I felt like I had already thought that, that the thought was entering a loop, or a pattern. —And one, two, three... push! —was heard. —I’m going back to the classroom... I was looking for Lily but... I think it’s better if I go back to the others. —Anna answered and then walked away. I nodded and went up to the third floor, it was the second set of stairs and in the distance the sound of people talking could be heard. Among those voices was Theo. *Did they wake up? The room!* I thought of the metal door and quickly ran there, I had the feeling that something very bad was going to happen if they opened it, something related to that thing that chased Anna and me.

*

A little later.

I informed Theo what happened. He was standing near where the door was, he tried to tell our classmates that it might not be a good idea to fully open the door, but some supernatural curiosity had taken over their bodies. Two of them were trying to push hard using their bodies. “And Anna left?” he asked me. “She went back to the living room,” I answered. I watched him walk away towards the stairs. *I wouldn’t go back there.* Then there was a sound of sliding stone, I stared at the door in the distance, it opened a little bit more, slowly revealing the contents inside. The room was dark, the door seemed to be blocked by a stone beam, something that had been put there for the purpose of blocking access. A single ray of light entered through a window, crossing between the folds of a curtain, illuminating the figure resting against the wall, sitting on the floor. His gaze was lost in the ceiling, eyes transparent, Liam was there. There was no movement in his arms but you could see the

movement of something else. No one had any intention of continuing to open the door, it made no sense, it was obvious that he was dead and that was his corpse.

It was obvious... It was obvious, as his stomach was open and his intestines had been dragged out, staining the floor red. The movement came from the hole that had been left in his stomach, if one didn't pay attention one might think it was the organs themselves, but no; inside him tiny appendages, like worms stuck to each other, coiled, shook gently. You could see them moving inside him, like appendages of something that had infected his heart, and his chest sometimes trembled in a spasm, not strong enough to make him fall, but it was something you could see from a distance. *It's like a parasite.* I thought so, and then the door was forced shut. [REDACTED], one of the two who opened the door, turned to us, his face pale, we didn't know what to say. *What the fuck is that?!* It would have been enough, but something forbade us to speak. I was beginning to have a sensation scratching at the insides of meaning, beyond logic and coming entirely from feeling, *whether it be soul or something else:* that something was happening, not only at school, not only on planet Earth, but also in our heads, something alien to the way we acted, and that alien methodology of thinking was assimilating us as well as the world around us. *What other sense did it have, that seeing that thing would make me want to go back to the classroom?* And I was sure that the others felt the same.

It's the spores in the air, they're finally taking effect, huhuhu~, but I didn't think that, something else, something else was going on in my head. A cloud comes on a sunny day and it starts raining. On a day where there isn't a single cloud, it suddenly starts raining. It's pretty random right? But what if it's not? What if that was done on purpose by someone else? Some kind of... device... made to spread some kind of chemical into the air... what if, what if that's... what if... e.. e.. if it's, some, some thing, and maybe this is like, like it's a, it's like a, like a... ... I couldn't think. a a a a uh e... is it... a dream? A nightmare? a na eo thingsomething h-how, an experiment?

Whose? What's? In the blink of an eye my companions had disappeared, they were gone, they told me where they had gone, but I forgot. *Probably trying to escape through the woods again, how long have I been standing here in front of this door?* Someone was looking at me. *THEY DON'T KNOW, THERE'S NO WAY OUT, THERE'S NO WAY OUT BECAUSE IT'S ALREADY INSIDE, IT'S PART OF THE HEAD, THE HEAD IS OUTSIDE, THE THING IS IN THE HEAD, THE HEAD CAN'T ESCAPE, BECAUSE THE HEAD CONTAINS EVERYTHING THAT'S OUTSIDE BECAUSE IT'S EVERYTHING, AND THEREFORE THERE'S NO WAY OUT.* —It's you... —I looked surprised, it was that girl with white hair, she was standing at the end of the hallway, near the corner that led to the stairs, you might think she went up the stairs, but I thought I saw her appear there. *Out of nowhere.* And it was that... *I'm different, I can see what's going on, with the thing in the environment, but nobody else can see it.* But... *what about her?* I frowned, clenched my fist, my blood was burning, I was filled with rage and if I touched her I was going to tear her face off with my teeth.

... *is that it?* She scoffed. “What do you want?!” / “Is that what you really think?” She said in a low voice, but I could hear it perfectly, even despite the distance, I could still find her voice. “I-Is that it! The rain! Isn't it true? It has to be,” I answered nervously. “Hahaha...” she laughed, “Hahahahahaha.” “*Hahahahahaha*, they laughed too.”

—I'm not talking about that. — She showed a smile, it was making me sick, that feeling, it was anger. I felt like my body was pinned to the floor, but my bones wanted to escape my body, break free of the skin and leave, leaving me behind. —Do you feel what you think you feel? — *Silence. I have to go! I can't be here anymore.* I tried to stop breathing the contaminated air but humans need to breathe. —The thing that follows you, **that thing is not red** —she stated and she disappeared, the same way my companions had done. I couldn't know how much time had passed again. *And what does that*

matter? The color... Spectrum/Specter? Color. Wave? Signal. I couldn't think of anything, a few seconds after she left, I slowly began my return to the classroom, with an empty head I dragged myself pathetically through the halls.

* * *

Tuesday, 9:02AM, 2010, at school.

Without thinking too much I ended up in front of the classroom, but not the one we had used to spend the night, but the one where our classmate had died. *I have to reason, I have to return to reality, certainly...* Even when that thing was in my head, that unknown matter, the fact of being aware of its existence made me different. *I can still act.* I was standing in front of the door, we had closed it, I had no intention of opening it again; I was just standing there, thinking silently. "The real... the real..." *I have to distinguish reality from the illusion produced by the substance.* First, there was the rain, that thing had to be real, because if it wasn't nothing made sense, therefore... it had to be real. *Then comes... then comes...* The girl, that girl... it had to be an illusion. *I saw her disappear before my eyes. And if that girl isn't real...* Then my classmate hadn't died. *And then comes...* Elena and... the teacher... they must be real, *but will their actions be the effect of the matter? No, no, first...* What was the purpose of it? *Alien assimilation.* Sexual reproduction? *But that has no bearing... Unless...* "They're watching our behavior..." I spoke to myself. *After all, reproduction is part of the cycle of life, no, it's the most fundamental part of the cycle, it's its foundation.* But why had it been the professor and Elena? It was exciting, forbidden, hidden from view, but it had no reason to exist. Anyone would have accommodated that place, but it was the two of them, and then... *Those monsters.* Those monsters couldn't be real... *Or maybe I don't want them to be?* They were two points in conflict, or a manifestation of the mind under the effect of the substance, or the descent of the creature that had placed the substance in the first place. *Or the alien on Earth, or a collective delusion.* Collective... *Wait a second... Anna saw it too.* If it were simply a substance it wouldn't have the ability to control all of our experiences at such a

level. *That's it. The thing, that thing is real, it's an alien. What the substance does is make us accept its existence.* Accept? We accept its strangeness, the strangeness of things that escape understanding. *But isn't that what I'm doing now?* I was making sense of something that didn't seem to make sense. *Maybe Elena wasn't influenced.* Would something like that really happen? I wondered. "A meeting at school..." " *No, that's not it, from before... he was already strange, in his class he suddenly stopped at the appearance of Girl A.* He stopped... *that... was him... him?* I noticed that I couldn't remember any other teacher, whenever the word "teacher" came to mind it linked with his image. *Is this an effect of that matter in the air? I must be forgetting... things.* That wasn't good, if my memories weren't perfect, then I might have missed some important event. *There might not be any substance at all, or perhaps, the substance was administered to us in a serum.* And we had forgotten it. *No, I cannot doubt my memory, for if I doubt my memory then anything is possible.* Exactly, it was like that, when one gave way to the occurrence that had no validity then the ports were opened to all kinds of vessels of madness. *The storm that is the ocean of my mind, and the storm that was the madness that brought us, let my being be once more present, and in its presence let the result of its work be seen.* That work was, exercised on the mind of, one stormy day, of... of... It was.

The door opened. *I didn't open it.*

So... *who?*

The human figure was standing there. Although it was difficult to distinguish it as a being of that type. It looked more like a meat golem. It looked like pieces of meat tied together badly, by a thread so thin that it became invisible, and it stood in a posture that demonstrated the weakness of its legs. It was so sickly, grotesque that I couldn't resist stepping back, because its eyes, without lids, wandered madly from one place to another without synchrony or orientation. *This is... it's him...* It was my classmate, ██████████, who had burst from within. *Perhaps someone...* It was sinister, the macabre form dragged its twisted legs without clothes, but it wasn't

its figure that frightened me the most... *it must have been that someone heard my idea.* "Put it back together." It was my first thought. *But was it really mine?* Its putrid aroma made me nauseous. —Aaa...aaa...ahh... —The voice sounded bad, muffled, I didn't know if he was talking to me or he was lamenting. —Li... —I could recognize a sound— Li...ly... li... —Lily ... It was said that she summoned demons, *but these are not demons, they are aliens...* Then I remembered what she had said... *what she said, was very similar to what Girl A said.* It was not a coincidence, both had entered in a similar way, but the result was different. *Obviously it was going to be different, Lily is human... while that thing is.... Wait...* and I thought. *That thing... shouldn't exist. Did I miscalculate?* My classmate fell in front of me after a wrong step and tried to extend his broken arm, with twisted skin, to my legs; I moved away. *Maybe she knows more.* If I could find Lily I could ask her about what she had said, it seemed like a joke... but... *what if it wasn't? No... that... had to be a coincidence.* Anna told me she was looking for her... *she was heading to the third floor when we met.*

Did you just ignore that your classmate came back to life? They asked me something, a thought that wasn't mine. *Huh? Why would that be weird? I told them, it was just a matter of putting him back together...* But there really was something weird, the weird thing is that someone else heard what I was thinking. *But is that really weird? Even now... aren't we communicating?* Yeah, talking to yourself wasn't weird at all, nor was talking with that kind of transmission.

*

Then.

I wondered if perhaps they were still there, but my reasoning led me to believe that question was unnecessary. Elena and the only teacher who exists... ~~who exists in the story...~~ *And that?* I continued walking until I reached that same classroom. When I got there my vision became cloudy, black, the sky was so black... *so black?* Dark, everything so dark. The sound of moving flesh, I found Lily, she was really there. She was sitting on the floor,

practically naked, she only had her cape on. She was facing away. *It's like that time. Huh?* I took a step forward without realizing it. When she heard me she turned around, for a moment I thought it really was a vampire, or at least some kind of creature of the night.

Her red eyes looked at me in the dimly lit classroom (now that the sun seemed to have disappeared) the outline of her mouth was stained with blood; in her hand she had a piece of meat, I noticed... in front of her there was meat and in front of her knees there was blood. Red nectar emerged from the pieces on the floor, but they didn't look like a corpse, *minced meat*. She was eating raw meat, and when she saw me her gaze reminded me of a wild animal. *I'm hungry...* but I didn't think that. *What?* Something was thinking instead of me, something inside. *Aren't you hungry?* but I didn't think that, it wasn't them either. I hadn't eaten for a day, was that what was talking to me? *Part of me?* Something made me take a step forward.

Flowers, flowers of flesh, hunger, flesh... flesh... "Do you want it? There's enough for both of us." She asked, her face expressionless, her eyes still wild. She didn't even seem to be looking at me. *Who are you looking at?* e.. e.. ee n.ne. flesh. flesh. So I went forward, further and further, I couldn't do it, I couldn't stop my own body. *S-Stop!* And then I fell to my knees and my hand clenched that flesh in a fist, and it made a slithering sound... *Stop!!* No, no, I didn't want to, I didn't want to eat that. *You're so hungry,* but I didn't think that, I didn't think that. What was that thing in the first place? Where did it come from? It didn't matter, because I brought it to my mouth and bit into it, Lily was eating too. I could see her in the corner of my eye, I was beside her, but I couldn't take my eyes off the flesh on the floor; something wouldn't let me. It tasted metallic, salty, hard to chew, and burned in my mouth with every bite. I would have thrown up, spit it out on the floor, but I couldn't stop myself, I didn't want to. *Don't want to? ... No, you don't want to,* but I didn't think that. Every time I swallowed that stuff, its burning acid passed through my chest. *I have to get rid of... get rid of my skin.* It burned, and I was fascinated. *Why? Why is this what interests me so much?*

Flowers of flesh, flowers... *Why am I not interested in the beautiful girl next to me?* Then my self stopped. *My self? Who is that?* *You're right*, but I didn't think that. *There is no such thing as another self.* There could only be one self, then I stopped. I turned to Lily, she wasn't even looking at me. She looked so... beautiful, her chest, her figure... and I had something eating away at me.

Seeing that I was looking at her, she looked back at me, and then I held her, because I wanted to feel her skin, I wanted to feel the skin that hid her blood flowing. I felt her soft body against mine. —Phil... —she whispered. —Do you feel it too? / —What thing? / —This place... it's beating, my heart... —*My heart had synchronized with the beating of the forest.* —Yes, I understand. —She took my hand and placed it on her chest, warm, no, it was burning just like I was. I could feel that same kind of beating there, that was turning us into something more. *Something more than just human.* It couldn't be like this, I had to stick to my logic, I had to ask her what was going on, at least that's what I thought; but I kissed her and then I kissed her naked body. *It makes sense that a man would be interested in a woman of his age but...* What was the problem? I couldn't find the problem, I knew there was one, but I couldn't find it in my head. *This is not the time.* Or maybe I was desperate? That wasn't it, my feeling was a passion that made me rest on the floor next to her, in a place... in a place I wasn't in... I just wasn't, and I took off my uniform. And [REDACTED] her [REDACTED] and I touched her [REDACTED] and finally I couldn't resist anymore, because doing it with her imprisoned me in my own body, and every breath or moan could only make me sicker, with a love of the sentence: "Make love" that wasn't even normal. *Is this love our true substance? Her literal acceptance of our desire.* But it wasn't just desire, when I finally held her legs apart, and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] it wasn't just desire. *It wasn't the seed of a desire that brought this, but something that exceeds desire itself, that is to say...* —Aah~aaa~hm... —That is to say: *the sum of the parts.* And something laughed, but I couldn't pay attention to it, I was too immersed in her, in her reactions, in what we were sharing. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and again, she held me in her arms. *Hahahaha, why do you think about*

have been real. There was nothing there, there could not have been anything there. She told me, "Someone took my clothes after I hung them out to dry," and left. *That's what happened. So what is this illusion? Who is this person?* What was that feeling? Reason, *I have to come back to myself, I have to think, if I think I can find the reason behind the thing.* Yes, right now I was no longer there, in that room, how juvenile; to think of such a delirium, *how juvenile!* Something like that, I went back to another place, ~~to the page~~. Yes, I was on ~~page... page... 71?~~ In a black and white place. I thought, while acting in another place, inside the ocean of my mind:

If a hypothetical Object A and an Object B are found, the weight of the other will end up pushing them, the substance in this case, allows a certain weight in its existence. That weight is the delirium that links to its Object. This is a conceptual link, there is no real reason behind its existence, or one could say, it cannot suppose a reason in itself, it can only be the thing that it is, without being communicated. If an object - *what am I talking about?* - were to find itself with that type of link *This is noise*, then all one would have to do is look at its perimeter (of the link) to see how its existence is effected in relation to another concept; the libidinal current that creates it to resolve the question of meaning. But what would happen if that question were an impossible question? What concept emerges from this hypothetical question without an answer? What is its perimeter? ... *I don't understand, I'm trying to make sense of what's happening but I don't understand it, it would be easier for me to accept that reality is simply what I can see... what does it matter what it means? If I can be there.* But I recoiled at the thought. *No, this has to go on, it has to end somewhere, because I still feel... ■■■■.*

Let us begin from this point of view: There is, at a given moment, a calm and peaceful world. Suddenly a frightened face appears, looking at something outside the delimited sphere. The Other does not present itself here as a subject or an object, a place, a sensibly different thing, as a possible world, as the possibility of a terrifying world. This possible world is not real, or is not yet real, but it does

not cease to exist for that reason: it is something expressed that exists only in its expression, the face or an equivalent of the face. The Other is, to begin with, this existence of a possible world. And this possible world also has a reality of its own in itself, insofar as it is possible: it is enough for the one who expresses himself to speak and say “I am afraid” to give a reality to the possible as such (even if his words were a lie). To begin with, each concept refers to other concepts, not only in its history, but in its development in its current connections. Each concept has components that can in turn be taken as concepts (thus the Other includes the face among its components, but the Face itself will be considered a concept that has in itself some components). Thus, the concepts extend to infinity... ¹¹[...] [...] [...] [...]

And I had only to return to the after expressed, the concept of such an after that seemed so dark. But even those very darkneses were for me but veils, where they live, and, for the millions that dance under my eyelids, distant, distant deceased beings with familiar gaze ¹².

*

After.

When I opened my eyes I couldn't tell if what I had felt was a dream or not, there was no trace of Lily, nor of that flesh. I could have thought that I had fallen asleep, that even though time continued to move forward in lapses of forgetfulness, and that the others and I hadn't eaten or drank anything, I had fallen into an impossible and sudden sleep. Obviously that couldn't be right, but even so we were without complaint or any pain in the physical section, no demand from the body, only from the mind. But I knew that at least something had happened, because I was [REDACTED] and I still had my [REDACTED] in my right hand, the floor

11 The paragraph contains a fragment from the book “What is Philosophy?” by Gilles Deleuze.

12 The sentence is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the poem “Obsession” by Charles Baudelaire.

had a regrettable stain of [REDACTED]. My head rested in front of a wall, the outside darkened with orange lights... *is it possible? is the sun starting to set?*

—P -Phil? —she asked, catching my attention, I did my best to cover myself; I had my clothes on, only my pants were down. I quickly adjusted myself. *Did she see me?* The one standing in front of the door was Anna. As I approached her I noticed. Tuesday, 6:11PM, 2010, at school. She was showing a face of disgust, a grimace of disgust. —It 's not what it seems! — 6:12PM, 2010, at school. She stepped back, my hands were stained, *she had to have noticed... right?* I walked over and grabbed her by the neck. “I told you it’s not that!” I squeezed hard, her eyes widened for a moment and she tried to break free by hitting my arms, but I didn’t give in, and she showed me something unthinkable. A smile and words came out of her mouth: “Harder, harder...”

Tuesday, 6:11PM, 2010, at school.

As I approached her I noticed, she showed tiredness on her face, it’s safe to assume that no one found a way out of the forest, *if not they would have already.* — They’re looking for you, Theo and the others, they... — she stopped — are bad. — *Bad? Do they feel bad? That’s a very non-specific way of speaking.* — Are you okay?! Did you hurt yourself? — she asked me suddenly, she was staring at my hand. *What?* Looking at my hand I saw red, I tried to wipe it on my shirt, I looked at my body. — N-No, I’m fine, I don’t know how... / — Phil... I’m scared, everyone is starting to act strange, I feel like something bad is going to happen... I... no... — I had never seen Anna with that face, it was unthinkable, she always had a smile, she was very happy, if Theo had seen her in this state she would have died of rage, and I felt it too. *I’m angry that I can’t do anything.* All that was left was to think about Girl A’s words, if she was even real, and try to figure out how to get out: that “other method” that exceeded human understanding, that perhaps we would only be able to understand after the assimilation process was over. — T-That’s it, don’t worry... / — What? Did you think of something? — She looked at me indignantly. — Now everything makes sense! / —

What is it? / — I was wondering for a while about the purpose of the substance — She looked confused , but I decided to continue — if the substance is turning us into aliens... / — Aliens?! / —... yes, at some point a matter in the air joined our bodies, that's the reason why we are like this. But that matter doesn't exist only for the purpose of turning us into aliens, because that purpose has a reason. — Anna couldn't believe what she was hearing. *But I can't blame her, but it's the only explanation, I know it's correct.* — And that reason is? / — The Queen's Club! "Silence..." I hurried up and exclaimed, but she had no reason to think about it, she had probably never heard of it. "Why don't we go back to Theo and the others? Maybe they'll understand." / "What's important is, once whatever needs to happen happens, " I found myself speaking quickly, trying to explain myself, probably looking like a madman , "once that happens, it's going to start, that place where there are two left. There are two ways! Ways out, and inevitably... we're going to find them. " I stopped. "I-I see... " she said quietly. *She definitely thinks I lost my mind. If I were to meet Elena... she... she'd probably understand. Why did she give me that impression?*

For the moment I had to continue, I didn't want to scare Anna, and my classmates wanted to see me. We walked through the halls in silence, even though we were trapped in this place, it still seemed like a new place with each sunset, the grey clouds had disappeared and night would soon fall. *Heh~ maybe I could walk through the halls at night.* I caught my weird thought, but I let it go, many of the things that happened were weird and then became normal. They didn't become common sense, you noticed their oddities, but soon that didn't mean anything. *In a world where everything is weird, nothing really is.* It's what separated a fantasy from reality, but those fantasies could only exist in a mundane place, a real place. *That real place is lost, it's just fantasy now, and that's why the sense is no more.* And what was left in its place? *Feelings... perhaps...* It was like in poetry, where one does not assume that what one is going to read is fictional reality as such, but a transmission of one's feeling, the feeling that the image of the abstract manifests. — What is that? What are they doing? — Anna

commented, we had reached the second floor, she was looking out the window at the main entrance.

In front of the entrance there was a group of students, two of them were holding a girl by the arms... *that's... Lily...* She didn't have her cape, and she was wearing her uniform, but it was definitely her. She was shaking nervously trying to get away, one of the other students had a fire axe in his hand. *Why? What are they doing to her?* "Lily!" I heard and footsteps quickly walked away down the hallway, Anna ran away. *Could it be that they think that... she's the culprit?* The illusion of the demons, but they couldn't know that it wasn't that thing that was holding us there. I was paralyzed, it seemed incredible to me that Anna had left so quickly. *N-No, I don't want to die.* "What?!" I looked around, I could hear her voice in my head, as if she was right next to me. *Let me go!* What had seemed like a distant horror was becoming embodied in me, I clenched the edge of the window tightly trying to avoid the great desire to jump. *Nooooooooooooo!* I bit my lip, blood, and my eyes filled with tears, emotions that were not mine. Then the axe rose, and fell on her head; it embedded itself in her skull and the force twisted her neck. Her hands shook in a spasm, her knees had given way, but she was kept standing by the two who still held her in their arms. When the axe was removed, blood gushed out like a fountain, without much force but constant... and without any mercy the action was repeated, opening the hole in her forehead until it shattered her nose. I felt heat in my chest, acid rose from my stomach, and seeing such a disfigurement I couldn't help but vomit whatever I had eaten in a pile of red. — Cough... ugh... — I looked away, although I couldn't see too much either, everything was cloudy. *Do we really deserve to leave? After this...* No, that shouldn't have been part of that thing's plan, it was human illness.

If... only... my briefcase... It was the last thing I heard, probably transmitted in the air, in the atmosphere, through that mysterious particle that connected our minds to something incomprehensible. I ran through the halls until I reached the classroom of class ■, there was no one there, but there was a bench with drawings of red

magic circles, I found Lily's briefcase. Inside was a Colt Cobra revolver, it had three bullets. *And... why did you bring this?* I asked myself what should I do... in the incessant sickening nightmare with the promise of an end, *is it my duty to be a vigilante?* I returned to the hall, I looked at the scene again and I couldn't believe my eyes. *No, that's it... it can't be... hehe... why?* The students who had gathered had crouched over the corpse and with their hands they were tearing the body apart while putting pieces of its flesh in their mouths. *I-I 've got to get out of here, I have to tell Theo and Anna.* I went down the stairs to the first floor, with the revolver in my back pocket and my senses sharpened to an unstoppable madness that opened my eyes wide, so that not a shadow went unnoticed and I even saw them where there was nothing.

As I went downstairs I noticed that everything had turned dark, I was somewhere else, I saw myself transported to the place where that thing took shape for the first time. My footsteps made a liquid sound, bright scarlet under my feet, moisture and iron. The sound of dripping flesh and broken bones, the breathing of something on the other side of the corner. I took out my revolver and pointed it in his direction, I showed myself and I saw him. "Theo... what are you doing?" I asked. His eyes were lost and vibrated to the rhythm of a song that only existed in his ears. He was arched like a gargoyle, in his right hand the intestines that protruded from Anna's corpse, she rested on the wall with her gaze lost towards the ceiling. At the same time that his teeth managed to tear off a piece, he noticed my existence, as if my words had not reached him, but my desire to give him an end had. He stood up, he was not looking at me, only in my general direction. On his emotionless face, from the bottom of her heart, tears ran down his cheeks. No, it was better to say, tears ran down the cheeks of that thing that stood in his place. *Bang.*

I felt the impact I caused after pulling the trigger, I hit his head and a piece of his skull shot backwards, Theo twisted and fell to the ground. I thought it was over, but then he stood up again in an unnatural movement, against the nature of gravity. Flesh emerged

from the hole in his head, like an external infection, taking over his entire face. His eyes crawled across the flesh of his face, just like an object in the river would. *Is this the last step of assimilation?* It looked like that thing, *it's the same as that thing*. I didn't hesitate, *bang, bang, click*. And the thing fell to the ground. Then I ran away, I wanted to go as high as possible, so I could see the sky again, so I could see the land I knew. I had the feeling that we weren't there anymore. *And what is this planet? And more than anything...*

Even though I had thought about it... *I cannot accept this fate*. Because it made my chest hurt so much, it destroyed something that did not exist in its moral value, it was something else. One hundred and fifty emerging signals in directions of Mars and with sounds of BEEP BEEP BEEP. It moved to, it moved in, I moved to, I was in, A ABB It moved b. I was seeing (seeing). Between the gloom and the sepulchre of an enigmatic spirit, latent form of an entity of intertwined cartilages. *Isn't this fantastic pain? The pain of this forest. This is the pain of that emotion you were looking for, right?* No, I couldn't accept it. Was that true? *That's it, I cannot accept such pain*. —But without that suffering it would fall, it is the eight pillars that support the sky. —I whispered, but they were not my words. At some point I had stopped running and simply dragged my feet through the bloody corridors, between forgotten forms of things that were not. Entities that could have been part of the thing, but in the end were simply: XXXXXXXXXX. *And how do I know that? | You know because we know. | Ah~ that makes sense. | I understand, I understand. | Is it like a school? | No, it's a hospital. | We're certainly sick. | Sick? Is it a pandemic? | That's not yet. | We're cured. | So it's like a school. | Yes, but everyone understands everything. | But no one understands anything. | But that's a normal school. | So? | Does this school seem normal to you? | It seems normal to me. | It's in the middle of a forest. | But the forest is a metaphor. | How can the forest be a metaphor? | Yes, idiot, the forest is real, it's made of earth and sky. | Oh~ it seemed like a metaphor to me. | Have you heard of the impossible question? | Well, I don't really care, honestly. | The forest isn't a metaphor, the school is the metaphor. | No, the hospital is the metaphor. | Have*

you ever considered that maybe... nothing is real? “No, I’m real,” I said to myself, and they laughed. I thought it was Elena... and that Girl A. *I thought you’d already fallen into friction. | In fiction. | In direction. | What direction? | Downward.*

Down. *Bam.* Pain suddenly flooded my face, I fell to the floor on my butt. “What the fuck are you doing?!” She screamed at me. And I stared at her dumbfounded. *What am I doing? I-I... I don’t know, what am I doing?* Sara was in front of me, she had hit me, that was the little I knew. We were in the computer room, she must have been wandering around the second floor, *that’s fine, I should keep doing that.* “These crazy motherfuckers are eating each other, you still seem somewhat sane,” She walked over to the window, “at least you haven’t tried to eat me.” *Eat... food... fleshfleshfleshfleshflesh—No, this isn’t right. | Right, that’s part of (1). | What are you talking about? | The first part. | Oh right, you can’t say that. | Why? | Because Mr. D is dead.* “Are you listening to me?” —she asked me. —Uhm... yeah —I held my head, squeezing it the same way I would have tried to turn off a computer. *I have to get these voices out of my head. | Huh?~ But we’re finally connected... | There’s a good signal from Mars. | Yeah... how much is it? | It’s like 300kbp/s | That’s not that good... | It’s pretty bad.* — Shut up —But after saying this Sara hit my head. A *knock* would have been enough, but instead a metal sound was heard that split the air in two.

She split into two, the voices had fallen silent, or perhaps such a repulsive image was louder than anything they could say. A black, liquid guillotine had fallen from the ceiling and crossed her body. She fell cleanly and her insides spread across the floor, warm blood spilled over my body. —It’s... so warm... like a hug. —I hugged the liquid that remained between my arms. *You cAn hEar Me.... BEEP BEEP BEEP. Can you hear me?* The voice modulated in an inhuman way, it was different from all the others, it came from the floor. The place where I was sitting was completely black, eyes emerged, disappeared and stared back at me. *haHaHaHaHaHaHa. EMERGENCY CHANNEL :::::::::: hee hee*

hee hee hee. —I don't want to listen to you, I'm fine like this. —
bu:::UT: in aaaaaLmommeNT the HeAt will go away. —... and
then... — *then... you'll be... hahahAHAAHaaAhaa BEEP* —Alone,
you'll be alone. — The voice had started to speak to me inside the
room. —And what should I do? —I asked, I got up trying to meet
the person speaking to me, but it was the room itself that was
speaking to me. —You have to eat. / —Eat? / —Yes, eat Sara. / —
Why Sara? / —Would you have preferred someone else? / —N-
No... — *maybe.* I leaned over the corpse, there was no trace of
emotion, well... her jaw was open. *It looks like she was going to eat
a big sandwich.* Eyes separated. *Maybe I could simply put the two
parts together... and then...* —WHAT ARE YOU DOING? —The
room was getting impatient.

—NOOOOOO! I DON'T WANT TO! I HAVE TO GET OUT, I
HAVE TO GET OUT, I HAVE TO GET OUT, I HAVE TO
GET OUT, I HAVE TO GET OUT, I HAVE TO
GET OUT, I HAVE TO GET OUT,
I HAVE TO GET OUT, I HAVE
TO GET OUT, I HAVE TO
GET OUT, I HAVE TO
GET OUT, I HAVE TO
GET OUT, I HAVE TO
GET OUT, I HAVE

TO GET OUT! —I

screamed, shook myself and rushed to the window.

Crash. Within seconds I found myself in the air of an unknown place, and I fell. As I fell I saw her, Girl A, on the top floor of that place we call school. She wasn't smiling, she shook her head in denial, I expected a taunt, but there was nothing, just the pain of my body hitting the ground. I sank into the ground as if I were a seed, and under that sky red of flesh, it began to snow in black.

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and

Great forests, you alarm me like a mighty temple; you roar like organ tones, and in our hearts of stone, where ancient cries vibrate, O halls of endless pain!¹³

And definitely if they are anything, they are endless, because once I saw the end and I see it again and soon after I saw, between the jaws of the forest, a new ending. There are already two, there were only two left, how many filters and sorrows must we

13 The sentence is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the poem "Obsession" by Charles Baudelaire.

consume?

Second thesis . The characteristics that are attributed to the "true being" of things are precisely the distinctive features of non-being, of nothingness; the "true world" has been conceived on the basis of contradicting the real world. This alleged "true world" is in reality an apparent world, being nothing more than an illusion of moral optics ¹⁴.

Like an eternal labyrinth...

*I found myself engulfed in fire and
at the source of a slow passage*

I fell into oblivion.
that; nobody had thought that...

But I didn't think

only:

was.

[ENDING B: Incoming transmission.]

b. The thing is in itself (or not), a thing and nothing more, not a set of things that give rise to emerging exceptions.


When we think of the elements as Objects A, B and C, it is very easy to assume that the quality of Object A is that which makes it be A, say Object D, and if B shares that property it is because it also contains within itself that Object D. The problem with that interpretation is that eventually all objects converge in Object X+ and all their characteristics become properties of the millionth parts that compose it. In that way, everything works under a great exception, that is, the infinity of an object that monopolizes the totality of understanding. That is why the thing should only be referred to as such (A) and the enumeration of properties of A without consideration for the supposed elements that make it be (thing of the thing). Such as an "Essence of God" or Object X+.


14 The paragraph is a fragment from the book "Twilight of the Idols" by Friedrich Nietzsche.


INTERLUDE : IN LOVE


So much is said and talked about love, and now love is dead, no, let us say that this love never existed. For love is but a concept, and this concept is lost in the conversation and becomes a proposition; the proposition does not represent the concept but the relationship between that thing, a love relationship between Object A and Object B, after a short time it becomes poetry and it is there that it falls into the romantic. But romanticism has no place in the ear that listens to poetry, people are fascinated by the property that makes the thing and its meaning. Love has no meaning, because it is a concept, it represents an infinity of things. That is how this love is lost, and it is false. Because people do not know that the stone is, the soul of the stone and an ethereal almanac of encounters between the thing and its destined self; for them it is like that – stone is. And if Nietzsche taught us anything, of all the things he said No to, it is that we live in a great tangle of delusions: like the great lie of love, turned into a sentimentalist's excuse. We don't want to think of the falling apple, as its love for the earth, but as the fundamental force of gravity. In the same way, I could say, that it is not love that attracts the person, but the mass of the soul, creating a gravitational field of attraction that turns us, and places me (in relation to you), in the orbit of your heart. But it is too much love! too romantic, too delirious, too sentimental. There is no room, in the space where we find ourselves, for such devices: That elusive soul, a German would say; will-o'-the-wisp of the mind/spirit, and thus itself, itself in its massive emission that makes it be, or we could also say, its “non-being” that makes it be (if one reads Kant), will soon be replaced by the bloody reality of a senseless organ, and there can only exist the great weight of feeling: feeling-sense. A place where my words will never reach you, because if I were to whisper all my laments to you and turn them into prose, one would wonder what is the axiom that sustains them. What keeps my words afloat, if not our love, my love?


INTERSECTION : AT THE QUEEN'S CLUB .


 : —And what did you think?


 : —Lily appeared quite a bit this time.


 : —It's because she's her favorite character, although I'm partly to blame... considering how (1) ended.


 : —I am in conflict with its philosophical elements, I am worried that if we do not explain the connection it will be lost in its pretension.

 : —You even added a new character, I thought it was going to be a detective, but seriously... Girl A. Don't we have Elena to fill that role?


 : —It's complementary, its existence is likely to be beneficial in the long run, especially due to the postmodern nature of the writing. If Elena is in it, why not Girl A?

 : —Elena is important, and now Girl A became important too. Maybe that could explain the connection between the two.


 : —Still, this is more violent than I expected, more than what existed in my first part, I'm not sure if I like it.

 : —And who is going to write the next part?

 : —That would be me.

 : —Oh... Knights...

 : —Terrible news, if you ask me.

 : —Don't complain so much, I'll get to the point, I'm fed up with all this nonsense poetry and philosophy. I'll start from now; this conversation is added to the book.

TRACT II : CONCRETE

Sometime, somewhere.

1 **BLACK** , THE SKY WAS PAINTED IN A SICKLY BLACK COLOR... it wasn't just a night, it was the void that stretched into non-existence, a simple void where the light didn't reach, or simply wasn't there, there was no sun, no clouds, no gazes. I had never seen a place like that, a forest so dark, with that air of stillness. I didn't mean that it scared me or caught my attention, I didn't feel anything in particular; it was as if the abyss that was the sky had also devoured any kind of emotion I might have had. I heard the sound of birds, and the crushing of meat, in front of me there was a flock. They had fallen from the sky (from inside the sky) and were eating something that looked blurry, *blurry*? I didn't need glasses and everything else was perfectly visible, but the moment my eyes rested on it a cloud covered my vision. I tried to bring it into focus, I tried to move in its direction, but it was in vain, the sky had devoured the energy that drove my muscles into motion. **I was just there to observe that scene** , with a headache, the black birds with many eyes devoured the corpse of the girl. A little girl who looked like an angel, blonde, in a red dress, or maybe that dress was white... I didn't know very well where the dress began and where the organs ended. Soon the bells rang, multiple, but the sound was absorbed by the sky, it escaped from the landscape and did not reach beyond the place where I was standing. *This dream cannot be mine, these thoughts do not seem to be mine either. Who am I?*

* * *

Wednesday, 1:13AM, 2010, somewhere.

The puffs of cigarette smoke disappeared into the darkness of the room, I was stressed or maybe tired; my body was asking me to sleep but I didn't want to. Monday and Tuesday nights hadn't been very good to me. *Even though there are no classes...* there weren't classes because the school caught on fire, of course for someone like me that's good news. I had planned to spend my days lazily,

wandering around the city center or watching trashy TV shows (which I was going to do with or without classes). *What was his name?... Oh yeah, ██████████ ██████████ cheated on his wife with ██████████ ██████████'s wife.* It's not that I was really interested, I just wanted to see two celebrities tearing each other's heads off, *but that's never going to happen.* Even though people spend so much time on the lives of these celebrities, nothing they do is really relevant... *so what? ██████████ ██████████ could date five more women (from other men) and no one would say anything.* Although that couldn't be either, celebrities had risen to a superhuman value... *true that... if a famous person dated any regular man or woman, it would be the same as a man having a relationship with an animal.* Celebrities were something like that, they were no longer human, just figures. I realized that my thoughts wandered nervously, I took a drag on the cigarette, tasted mint in my mouth and placed it in the ashtray.

Anyway... I couldn't let myself fall asleep, so I rested on the couch in the middle of the night, the only light being the television on a documentary channel with no volume, it was a cheap TV that barely emitted any brightness. *At any moment it was going to break. Anyway...* I repeated to myself; the reason behind my voluntary insomnia was because of the events of the previous two nights, after closing my eyes I woke up at the entrance to a forest beyond the highway. I heard of cases of sleepwalking where people walked around their houses, I read about them on the Internet, *in fact it is curious the amount of things that sleepwalkers can do,* but this was not a simple walk from one room to another. It was blocks and blocks... so many that with my eyes closed I would have been run over by hundreds of cars, but when I opened my eyes... nothing: *Just as if I had slept out there.* The two previous times I checked my cell phone, three in the morning, *and that is how we got here...* my thought was: *if I go to sleep after three then I am not going to wake up there.* Although I do not want to say that it did not scare me a little, and it was particularly strange, but I am one of those who roll with the punches. *"Prevention is better than healing" and all that... wait... is this even a good use for that*

phrase? I thought about ways to pass the time but everything seemed to make me sleepier, I considered watching porn but if I did that I was going to end up masturbating. I yawned... *Tick tock... tick tock...* The thought stuck in my head and my hand instinctively went to my crotch, I wasn't even wearing pants (why would I wear pants alone in my apartment?). *Ah! Who the fuck cares?!* I stood up and headed to the computer, *maybe there's no need to prevent or cure, maybe I just build up immunity! Isn't that how vaccines work?*

* * *

Wednesday, 3:03AM, 2010, somewhere.

When I woke up I was there, in front of me was a dirt road that opened after a hole in the highway, giving way to a grove of trees that tangled into a forest. I had my pants on, and I was even dressed for the occasion; *whatever the occasion is*. I mean, jogging pants and a black t-shirt with the [REDACTED] logo on it, *was that it? Is there going to be a secret [REDACTED] concert in the forest?* A cool breeze enveloped me, a couple of days ago it was hot, but at night it started to get cold after the storm on Monday. *What's so interesting here?* I let out a sigh and looked at the sky, the further away it was from the city the more stars I could see... the image kept me awake, *the immense infinity of space... is that what brought me here?* I searched my pants for the carton of cigarettes, but only found the keys to the apartment. *Tsk!* I clicked my tongue. I was stunned for a couple of seconds, staring into space, but I was already starting to get irritated. *Is there anyone there?* I asked the sky, as if I had expected an answer, almost knowing I wasn't going to get anything I turned around on my way home... but then... "Is anyone there?" *had my voice echoed through space?* Of course not, that was a man's voice and he was accompanied by a couple more, and a girl too. From the forest they emerged, they were my classmates... *The little one with dyed hair is Theo, and the fat one with the camera is Liam, that girl is... Anna? She goes to another class. And finally... what was his name?* A boy with black hair and eyes, he was pale as a ghost, *whenever I see him he is talking to himself, whispering*

behind his teeth. He was Theo's friend... *hmm... Phil.* Yes, that was his name.

—Sara? What are you doing here? —Liam asked me. —I could ask them the same thing. —He was holding a digital camera in his hand, in fact... —You're not filming me, are you?! —Hearing my tone he lowered the camera. —N-No... —The others saw him and made a face of "Ah~ you're screwed", but he smiled nervously. —W-We're looking for ghosts! —I had approached to hit him, but his words made me laugh, *it's like one of those programs that are on TV!* —But... wait a second... hahaha... those programs are usually recorded in abandoned places, right? / —Programs? —Phil asked. —You know, like on TV —Theo answered. —Well, there's an abandoned hospital in the forest... / —And... you decided to come look for ghosts? —It *was quite absurd, a big leap in logic.* —It **was Phil's idea** . —Yeah , *well, that doesn't surprise me, I'm more surprised that you accepted.* —I have weird dreams about this place... —he paused— that's why... I wanted to see if we could find something. / —And you? What are you doing here? Are you selling drugs- —Liam spoke but received my foot in the chest, he stepped back —Ouch! It was a joke... hehehe... —He had said but he didn't seem too bothered by the blow. *There's something about him... I feel like hitting him every time I see him... he's like... a punching bag?* I scratched my head. *I think it's because he's so fat, it would probably feel good... to sleep on him.* I cleared my voice. *But I would never think something like that! In any other sense, it's more like... like a mattress, there's nothing sexual about a mattress.* —I... uhm... ehh~ I was just taking a walk.

—You should come with us! —Anna announced. —Yeah, with you Anna would stop being so scared. —Theo said. —I-I'm not scared! / —And what's that supposed to mean? —I asked. *Does she like me or something? Well, bad luck, I don't swing that way.* —It's just that, if a ghost appears you'll surely beat him to death. —Theo commented casually, Phil took a step back, as if he knew what was going to happen. —Ow! —My fist sank into his shoulder. —You shouldn't talk about a girl like that! —Anna added , *well... I had*

already hit him. —I-It's just that, Sara is strong... so... I respect that. —Theo added, with his gaze averted. —Ow! —And he received another blow. —And this time why?! / —I don't know, I didn't like the way you said that. / —It's true, Theo is always like that —Anna nodded. *It's true that I don't expect any of them to be able to fight like me.* How did I know how to fight? Well... my old man had said something like “You have to learn to defend yourself from thugs and perverts!” and when my brother was born he said something similar “You have to learn to defend your wife from thugs and perverts!” I think it was just an excuse because he wanted to teach us martial arts. *I'm not a black belt or anything like that, but it's true that I have kicked more than one man's ass. Considering ghosts don't exist, this should be easy.*

I nodded at my unbeatable logic. *Maybe I can find something here, something related to my sleepwalking.* “Hmmm, okay,” I agreed. “...does anyone have any cigarettes?” I asked. “Smoking is bad...” Liam said, but I ignored him. “I think...I might have a couple.” Theo pulled a carton out of his pocket. *Ah, I'm not smoking those.* “Bleh! They're not mint, I only smoke menthols.” / “Menthols are for...” Theo was going to say something but Phil nudged him. “They are for...?” I asked. “They're... a type I don't like that much.” *Good boy!* Anna laughed at the change in attitude. But that sucked, so I added, “Well, let's go quickly so I can go back to sleep.” / “Sleep... sleep?” We had started walking towards the forest and Phil was whispering to himself. “It would be nice if there were cigarette vending machines,” I said, without thinking. “Hehehe, there are!” and Liam started talking about different types of vending machines. *No, I don't really care that much, you could just let it go.*

* * *

Wednesday, 3:21AM, 2010, in the woods.

“I have a good idea for Japan,” I said, the idea having come to me after that conversation with Liam. “And that's it?” he asked. “Gag vending machines! So I can shut you up!” I replied. “Heehee, that would be nice.” he laughed. *No, no, it's supposed to bother you.* I

gave up, as the conversation continued from vending machines to video machines, and then to phone models. *Technology is crap, all it's good for is watching porn.* But I couldn't say that out loud, after all even as unladylike as I was, I was still a girl. Girls can't just say: *I like porn and masturbate violently!* Out in the open like that, that's a guy thing, and it's the kind of thing that creates the image that all they think about is sex (*because it's true!*). *Although my case is different, I think I'm a little sick.* Maybe it was because I pushed all the men away and spent my time doing nothing in my room, *in fact... I think I've seen more men in porn videos than in my entire life. Is this the end?! Am I really sick?!* Oh right, we're looking for ghosts, I'd forgotten.

Everyone except Liam and I was pretty freaked out, the forest was twisting and the wind was howling through the tree branches. *But ghosts don't exist.* So it didn't really matter, ghosts could only appear on TV shows, and in the ravings of a lunatic. Phil was the one who looked the most scared, *I thought it was his idea...* That kind of situation was on TV a lot, *you invite your friends into the woods and another friend comes out with a chainsaw. Graaaaaah!* And everyone runs away, but our ghost hunt was not funny at all. I was glad that the others were feeling something, but part of me wanted to share a fraction of that feeling, and I was jealous of them, many things don't matter that much: *but... when something happens, something like this... it's better to be able to enjoy it.* I'm one of those who roll with the punches, if I were Alice and ended up in Wonderland I wouldn't even try to go back. *Although there is no porn in Wonderland. No, no, no, this is not the time.* I was trying to be serious for a moment, it's just that it was too boring, a forest with nothing... *huh... W-What is that?* "Hey... what is that over there?" I pointed my finger towards the darkness of the forest, where I thought I saw something, a thing that rose beyond oddity; a dreamlike peculiarity, that if it weren't for the night, I would have ignored it due to its own unreal nature.

"What thing?" Theo pointed his flashlight in the direction I pointed. "Waaah! W-What?!" / "A monster?" / "It doesn't move..." /

“It’s a statue.” / “Is that... a gargoyle?” We approached the figure. The statue was crouched on a cube-shaped pedestal, it seemed to be made entirely of stone, the base had moss on it, but the top was in perfect condition, untouched by the passage of time. It was a hunched man with bat wings, a lion’s head, and a snake as tail. “What’s this doing here?” I asked and tapped it a couple of times with my finger. “They’re usually in churches... right? These kinds of statues...” Liam added. “But this isn’t a statue...” The comment caught me off guard, it was loaded with particular strangeness, that kind of something that shouldn’t be there; like when a child starts talking about ghosts, at first you think “it’s his imagination”, but if he continues doing it it starts to get creepy. —That’s an idol —I looked at him, it was Phil who had said it, his gaze was lost on the floor almost as if he didn’t want to draw attention. *Is he talking to himself? What did he say?* An idol... —An idol is... someone you admire? —I asked the question. *I never had an idol, but I always admired boxers with great KO winning streaks* —An idol... like an Idol? I like [REDACTED] [REDACTED] she’s very pretty, although I don’t know that much about the subject hehehe~ — Liam announced. *I don’t think that’s what it is, whatever it is.* —It’s like an idol, in the religious context, right? Do you think someone is praying to this thing? — It was Theo who illuminated the situation, he was looking around the sta-idol. — Ah no... just... it seemed like that to me, I think someone told me — It was evident with just one look that Phil wanted to get out of there.

We eventually left the stone thing, idol, statue, whatever it was, there. After all, **if nothing could be deciphered about its existence, then it really wasn't that weird**. We were going to carry on as if it hadn't been there, because we had nothing to do with it. If there was a button on its ass and when you pressed it a fountain of blood had emerged from its mouth, then it would have been a different thing, but a statue was still just that: a piece of architecture and nothing more. *It's weird, but it would be weirder if it moved; it's weird, but it's not paranormal.* I couldn't blame that thing, there was nothing paranormal in the world, it had the bad luck to be created ugly and scary. *What the fuck do they want those*

things for in churches? I thought about that figure for a second, just imagining someone dragging it into the woods seemed like an absurd idea.

*

Later.

We arrived at the abandoned hospital, it was a spooky place, the windows were broken and the walls were painted with graffiti; seeing such an image I was more worried about a vagabond than any kind of spirit or evil essence. On the roof of the place, illuminated by the moon, black birds rested. They looked down from above with curiosity, in those black eyes our walk was reflected, perhaps in anticipation that something was going to happen... *what are they looking at?* I yawned, sleep was coming back to me, it was incredible that I could think of sleeping in such a dark and desolate place, but the fresh wind felt good and I wasn't afraid either. *But where can I sleep?* I looked at Liam. — W-What's wrong? Are you scared? — when he noticed he asked me. — Aren't you the one who's scared? / — Hehehe, no, not at all. I even think it's funny. — I looked away. *Funny? Nothing happened yet. Yet? No, nothing is going to happen.* — And that? — I was surprised, because I wasn't paying attention, I just walked with them automatically. We had approached the wall near the entrance.

Written in red on the wall was a text: “Your lost eyes, together we have found each other. On the way back to heaven; like a fountain of youth on a forgotten path. On the way back to earth; like a fountain of never loving a [REDACTED], still, never again, unites one with the world.” A word had been erased. *I don't like poetry.* I would have preferred it to have been a text saying something like “[REDACTED] can eat my dick!” or something more in the style of a filthy criminal (*criminals are not intellectuals, either one thing or the other!*). — No! Aah~ — Anna screamed and took a step back, her gaze fixed on the ground. *What happened?* — Are you okay? / — N-No, I can't go in there. / — Why? — I asked and she looked at the text, her eyes moving nervously, scanning the content on the wall. — I just... can't. / — Are you scared? — Theo asked, seeming

to mock. — Yes... — The mocking face disappeared and he sighed. — I can stay here with you... — He came closer and she nodded — you guys can go ahead, we'll wait for you here. — Makes sense... she shouldn't be here... — Phil whispered. *Anna must be really scared*, I thought, but I had a feeling Phil didn't mean that. — Okay, I'll show you what we found on video later. — Liam shook his camera slightly. *Well, I'd rather we not separate, that's how people die in horror movies*. But I didn't really care.

*

Twistingly, the dark hallways gave way to shadows moving under Phil's flashlight, and he shivered, moving us somewhere. He didn't seem to just be walking aimlessly, I felt like he had a place in mind. Glass crunched under our foot, I hoped I didn't step on a nail, *it's pretty amazing I was able to put shoes on while I was sleeping*. And pants too. Suddenly Phil stopped, we arrived at our mysterious destination. Musty smell, plants growing where the windows were, rust on a metal door. "It should be here... three days... no school... object... transmission..." he stammered. "I wonder if anyone ever used this place for anything..." I said. "Well, it's a hospital but... its location... it's very out in the open. Right?" Liam replied. *But there was no reason to make a hospital in a place no one was going to visit*. Again, like the statue, its existence required some kind of action or reaction, or else it would just be another case of "something out of place."

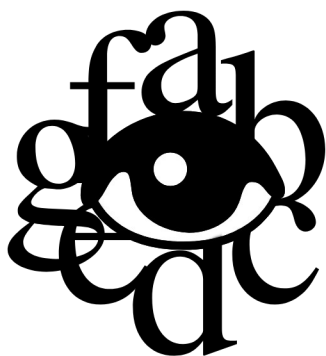
If a tree falls in the forest and there is no one to notice its fall... did it really fall? What if the tree falls straight up? What if it just starts floating, and disappears into the sky? At that point it is difficult to determine if you can even say that it fell. What was I thinking? But it was... it was exactly like that. That isolation, the loneliness of the forest, although I couldn't feel it; the forest itself was included in its own loneliness. *In its holistic totality, the forest entity and not the trees that compose it, the sum of its totals, those that can only be seen as pointers.* What was I thinking? But it was... it was exactly like that. And it took a couple of seconds but they pushed the door. *This smell... it's like... my room, but ten times*

stronger. It stinks! Darkness in the room, Phil entered first, Liam looked at me as if to say "Come on!", *how cowardly can you be?* And I entered. There was nothing there, the other places had broken furniture and rusty beds, but this place was completely empty. But Phil didn't see it that way, and I... I... I didn't either. It blinked and dazzled me, a small lamp on the ceiling turned on, it flickered dimly as if it were communicating with us, and in its light: A woman.

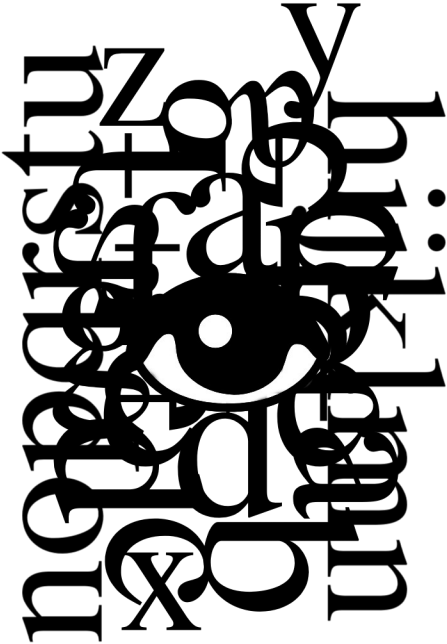
I couldn't believe it, that a ghost had actually appeared, pale as snow, long black hair, wearing a one-piece dress the color of the night. "That's... a ghost," I said. The birds landed on the windows, at first it had seemed to me that the room was completely isolated, but the shadow of the birds revealed where they were. "That's not a ghost..." Phil answered. *W-What is it then?*



— A parasite .



The girl placed her hands in front of her face, and as if it were a mask, her skin began to peel off, and a thick, black, tar-like liquid flowed from inside. It began to fall to the floor, her face, pieces of skin that fell to the ground, torn.



THE SOUND OF THE PLANTS WAS

NOISE.

THE SOUND OF THE CLASSROOM WAS

NOISE.

THE SOUND OF OUR STEPS, NOISE.

THE SOUND OF THE LANDSCAPE IS

NOISE.

AND THE SCREAMS WERE

NOISE.

And I TRIED TO ESCAPE FROM THAT

NOISE.

AAAAAAAAAAAAA

AA

AA

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And Phil got lost out there, I saw him falling behind, but I was going to see him again or something like that. *I was going to see him again, because he wanted to go back, go back to... go back to* XXXXXXXXXX. You can't lose your mind over something like that, in a place like that, but with so much pain in the same place you lose the sense of what it is, when you no longer understand what should or should not be then the only thing left is to accept that you can lose something like that. ————— something that —————

was going to happen ————— in the —————
————— future.

And Phil stayed behind, and I got to the hospital exit, I didn't think that thing was following me. Liam had gone somewhere else, Theo wasn't at the entrance, neither was Anna. *Where did they go?* I walked into the woods, lost in the night, I couldn't understand what had happened. *But had something really happened?* That... *that's not so different from the statue.* Yes, nothing really happened... *right? It must be part of the dream.* No, I wouldn't have had dreams like that. *A parasite, he said.* That thing that was in the

woods, *he also had something to say for that, the statue, the idol.* The two elements seemed connected by their strangeness, one had to be the shadow of the other, and in that shadow I stepped, under the moonlight. My hands touched its architecture, I felt a liquid dripping from my fingers and when I tried to walk around it my foot hit something. Once my eyes adjusted to the darkness of the place I could see his face. *It's Theo, he is...* "Ugh..." he whined when I pushed him with my foot, one side of his face was covered in blood that was emerging from the top of his head. "Are you okay? What happened?" I asked. In response his eyes moved from left to right, not knowing where to look, slightly in my direction. *My cell phone... at home, there's no way I was carrying it while asleep.* I bent down and tried to search through his pants, and that's when I noticed it: *he's wearing the school uniform!* But why? And even more confusing: *Why the female uniform?* Even I couldn't stand it, *wearing pants is a hundred times better than a skirt.* For reasons like that, I couldn't find his cell phone anywhere. Something was wrong, I kept telling myself, the world was turning around. *Is there something in the air? Isn't there a distinct smell? No, it's coming from the ground...*

A refreshing breeze blew my mind blank for a moment, as if my brain had shut off. "What's that?" Anna's voice came. She was somewhere in the shadows but it was hard to make out her figure through the trees, I felt a hand holding my pants. Theo had instinctively grabbed me, his eyes wide open, he was shaking in fear. "What's so strange about wearing the uniform on a school day?" A chill ran down my spine, I raised my arms in caution. "A-Anna..." I whispered. A flicker of darkness, the shadow moved in an instant, out of the corner of my eye I noticed its direction, I stepped back, the metal thing crossed in front of my eyes and disappeared under its own weight. Anna leaned on what looked like a stone staff with a blade at its tip, like a stone spear mixed with a sickle. She was naked, but her body was not completely revealed, it was covered in black spots shaped like letters; She had them written all over her body and most of her face. *If I hadn't stepped back... the weapon would have pierced my head.*

“What are you doing?! Are you crazy?!” I shouted at her, but my voice didn’t reach her, I couldn’t see any reaction on her face. She answered without even looking at me and put all her weight on the spear: “And what does that mean?” I heard the sound of her bones breaking as the stone spear rose and her legs twisted, in an instant she unfolded as a blurry figure in the darkness. I approached trying to restrict her movement, I managed to evade the blade, when I crouched my arm hit the spear and twisted outwards. I felt the weight break the bone in my forearm and pain spread through the rest of my body, I gritted my teeth. Anna hadn’t moved beyond that and was in a strange posture with her legs crossed, her balance depending on the weight of her weapon, I pushed her towards me; she rushed forward and my leg rose in an arc. I felt the tip of my foot hit her nose pushing her head back, tearing part of her lip while my heel dug into her face.

Anyone would have fallen back, falling to the ground, probably with a broken nose. But she was still holding the spear and my foot was still on her face. It was soon on her shoulder and before she pulled it away one of her hands moved to my leg, holding it tightly. I heard the crack of her neck as she looked at me in my bent posture, her head twisted from behind in an inhuman way. *What is this thing?* She pushed the spear in her direction; she contracted it, she stepped back, the blade digging into my leg on the way back, sinking hot into my heel and blood trailing out leaving a path. I stomped hard, breaking free of her grip, as I tried to move the pain in my foot made my leg give out. Anna turned around, the spear like a pendulum rising into the air and she let her weight fall, her body with crossed limbs, next to the blade reflecting the red-tinted moon.

I didn't have time to move past my torso, the blade crossed my shoulder, it had embedded itself there. The long one managed to dig through the ground. She grabbed my leg once more, this time holding on with her body and began to pull on the spear. "Aaagh!" The pain rose, it was tearing my arm, it was going to go through the bone. With my injured foot I began to kick her head, nervously,

over and over, I grabbed her arm trying to keep it in place. I kicked, and kicked, and my foot hit her skull countless times, but she continued to pull with superhuman strength and the persistence of a machine. If I continued like this I was going to end up dismembered. My leg was tired, and my foot hurt, I tried to kick the spear but it was too heavy. *Motherfucker!* I continued to stomp, kick, throw dirt, scream, but part of me had given up. *And when I no longer have this arm, I will tear your head off.* Between the lucidity and the darkness of losing consciousness, between pain and rage, I was still there; in that hell.

And she stopped. The stone shadow fell and the crack of her skull breaking could be heard. Red among shadows, it looked black, it emerged from where her head was. The statue, the stone idol, had fallen on top of her. It wasn't that tall but it was their heads that met, the weight of the blow broke it... *or maybe it was my foot that did most of the work.* I tried to lift the spear, but it was too heavy. I saw him standing next to me, still somewhat lost. "Are you okay?" he asked. My vision was blurred, but I knew it was Theo, he had pushed the statue. *Him? How did he push that alone?* But I let it go, my mind didn't have enough for those questions at that moment. "N-No... I need a hand," I answered. My arm didn't move and the entire right side of my body was painted with blood, it formed a carpet on the floor where I rested. The pain had turned to cold, once the anger disappeared my desire to be awake vanished with it.

* * *

1 day after the end.

Rain, I could hear it, and beneath that sound the sound of the waves, *the waves... there are no waves here...* it was as if they had been under the wooden planks on which I rested. A clean floor that I had never seen before. My arm hurt and I could only move my fingers, when I turned around I noticed that the sky was replaced by an unknown roof, I had to use my left arm to stand up, and when I did, a pain in my foot made me stagger. My surroundings seemed like a classroom, there were several windows, but the outside was full of fog. Rain, the sound of the waves, from a place that could not

be seen. *This is...* My arm was held by a black shirt, there was no furniture in that place, that was why finding it was easy. Theo had taken off his shirt and tied it to my arm, he rested next to the wall, with his eyes closed. *Sleeping... I hope...* I took a step in his direction. I saw in the wound on his head, in that red hole, something that had shrunk inside his skull. — Uh? ... — It *can't be, something like that...* I was dizzy, I thought it was really a trick of my eyes. He opened his eyes when he heard me walk, the color had disappeared, it was a clear, watery, glassy green. — You woke up...
... good.

—Where are we? What happened? —I asked. —This place... it doesn't matter where it is. / —What? / —It is what it is, but more important is its when. —I *can't understand it. He... must have hit his head really hard...* —*We* are where we are, but the when we are... —he added— we are... a day later. / —A day after what? / —A day after the end, it's a day later —He smiled. I stayed silent, he changed the direction of the conversation: —What happens to a character in a book once it ends? / —I don't know, I don't read books. / —Once the character fulfills his role, even if that role is to rebel against said role, once his function is fulfilled... everything returns —he paused—. If ██████ killed ██████ and ██████ then everything would have ended, his role would have remained unfinished, but that couldn't happen. Phil had to jump out the window, because that was the end of the chapter. —*Phil...* hearing his name out of nowhere brought back images of the previous night, something that seemed like a fragment lost in the labyrinth of my mind, he had simply been left behind. *Along with that thing... the parasite.* —When the characters fulfill their purpose, they cannot make room for a new one, because that is where the book ends, and if they existed there it is because their presence indicates a purpose in itself. / —Ugh! I don't understand what you're saying, what does that have to do with this? / —Yesterday I carried you here, and now we are trapped in a place without purpose, it's because we don't belong. —I couldn't imagine Theo carrying me, he looked so weak, there was practically no muscle on his bare chest.

—Even now, the words we say, they are inscribed in the meaning, just because they are a pair of different eyes that are seeing this place. / —... and what should I do? / —Just keep moving forward, now that we are here, there is no escape to the forest... or whatever is out there —he commented, his gaze turned away, I noticed sadness in his eyes. *But I can't know what it means.* As much as I tried to interpret it, ~~*there was no way a character could know it,*~~ my thoughts simply fell into a lagoon. —Crossed out actions, crossed thoughts, things that cannot be known. When the purpose is revealed, then it simply becomes what it is. / —I don't understand it, what is it that is solved? / —It is not solved, it is not an enigma, its nature is simply shown. / —Nature... / —Yes, falling into a well of different shapes, seeing the faces that see you fall. There you can discover... —And it came to my mind like a revelation: —If you see the reactions of others, maybe you could understand yourself —I said without thinking. —Yes, but that is not something you should say, you are only here so that we can be seen. / —To meet Liam... —I added. —To have trouble with a vending machine —he continued. —To talk about the colors of the sky —I answered. —To be a pair of eyes. / —To be another face, what a shape —But *how do I know this? I understand it, but at the same time... I know that it is like a dream* —... the world. / —And what is this world about? / —I don't know... but I know one thing —I stated.

—Our meeting, it's completely different than it should be. Where is he?! —I asked. He shook his head and without looking at me he answered: —No, it can't be this time. It would be too obvious. / —And what's wrong with that? —I approached him, I felt an intense pain emanating from my foot. —The end has already happened!!! Phil already jumped from the window on the second floor!! Don't you understand?! —For the first time he was seeing me, and his words stuck in my chest, they hurt more than the wounds I carried with me. *Even though I can't know why, this hurts. Being with someone else, in a place like this.* It hurt, and every step I took trying to get closer only hurt more. That's when I stopped. “I understand...” No, I didn't really understand anything. *Where was I? What was I saying? This conversation, so pitiful and sad... why*

does it bother me so much? “I’m going to look for the answer.” /
“You can go, I’m not going to stop you... I can’t do it.

” / “... I’ll be back.” And once I said that I turned around towards the sliding wooden door. It slid open, revealing the hallway; a path that stretched as far as the eye could see, it was thin, and on both the left and right were doors leading to other classrooms.

*

In a quiet air, I walked through the corridors. There was no sound beyond the noise emitted by the fluorescent lights. When I opened the door of a classroom I found the same image, and when I opened another, and another, just empty classrooms. Finally I reached the crossroads in front of the window, between corridors that formed a labyrinth, and then two staircases. More corridors, more empty classrooms, *it is obvious that this is a school... but this is...* Impossible, so many classrooms without purpose, heavy fog covering the outside, rain hitting the glass of the windows with no sign of stopping, a low hum of lights about to break. *It should be daytime*, and it probably was, I didn't know how long I had slept, but the fog was visible and not part of the darkness of the night. And I went down the stairs, and I found myself in... corridors, the incessant sound of water like waves in the sea. I wandered through the dreamlike labyrinth, the dreamlike architecture, until I reached another pair of stairs, up and down; And I went down, and down, and down. Until my feet touched water, I saw it rise, and rise, and rise, and rise. I turned around and went back along my path, I didn't find a way out of the place, *maybe up there... I'd have a better view*. I was starting to get tired, maybe it was the blood I had lost, or the repetitive landscape around me. The water continued to rise with me, I hurried, I was afraid that soon the whole building would flood. The moment I thought about opening a window a wave of water pushed me down the hallway. I really didn't have time to stop, and that's why I continued my ascent.

Theo was left behind, probably submerged in water, it was up to my waist, and in front of me was a metal door. I knocked on it,

pushed it, tried to open it with my whole body. The rusty door finally gave way and liquid poured out. It was a door to the outside, to a balcony with metal stairs, it went up until it stopped, it was an incomplete staircase with a dent. Outside the abyss beneath my feet, but in the distance beyond the fog I saw a lighthouse. The crash of the waves in the ocean, the rain of the storm hitting my face. *Where am I?* I heard the ringing of a bell in the sky, a flash of lightning, and the black birds flew away towards the horizon, soon silence returned, but I knew that sooner or later it would ring again.

From the lightning in the sky

At the same time it crossed and I saw it in flight,

From thunder to storm,

And the cloud that presents its form,

(when the rest of the sky was blue)

the demon I was looking at ¹⁵.

*I hate you, Ocean! I hate your tumults and your beatings, my spirit finds them within itself. This bitter joy of defeated mortals, full of insults and tears, I hear in the powerful laughter of the sea.*¹⁶

I woke up in the hospital, no one knew the nature of the accident that had happened, it was called an accident but everyone involved seemed to understand it was some kind of phenomenon. My explanation of what seemed like endless corridors in a maze-like school, and of Anna's attack were returned with confused looks. It was supposed to be a dream, everyone involved seemed to have had similar dreams, and episodes of sleepwalking. Even Anna herself, whose skull I saw crushed by a stone statue; she was still there. Ironically, my injuries were real, and I lost some of the use of my right arm, similar cases in the rest of the sleepwalkers who were

15 The sentence is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the poem "Alone" by Edgar Allan Poe.

16 The sentence is a re-interpretation (and translation) of a fragment of the poem "Obsession" by Charles Baudelaire.

found in the forest: most of them minor injuries, my case was the worst of all. *Unless we count Phil...* he disappeared without a trace. *It's strange to name them like that, as if they were people I knew from before, all the victims of the phenomenon were complete strangers.* And yet I knew them, in my mind we went to the same school, but I had left [REDACTED] over a year ago. There was no information about a hospital in the forest, and it made sense... but in the dream it seemed like common sense, it seemed normal. *But that's how dreams are, when something strange happens we just accept it and let it go.* If we realized such a strangeness and called attention to it then we would become aware of the dream, we would become lucid. I still had trouble distinguishing... what was the beginning of reality, the dream, and that fiction we had built...

[FINAL C: Sleep disorder.]

c. There are no exceptions, the system covers all cases.

The creation of the exception gives rise to a flaccid system, any error can be assimilated to an exception either by what it is composed of or by something undefined. This is why the system has to cover all cases, of all things, and be applied exactly, any phenomenon that causes an error in the system cannot be ignored as an exception, but as a fundamental error of the system itself.

♙ : —This time she didn't even show up...

♘ : —There was no need for Lily.

♙ : —Well, I was expecting something worse... it was something...

♚ : —It's a bit short.

♘ : —It's to the point, it's concrete, it's what's needed.

♚ : —I think seeing it from Sara's perspective is important to understand certain points in (2).

♚ : —Knights is right, there are a lot of questions, it was time to

bring answers...

👤 : —Thanks! Now it just needs to be followed by someone who shares my vision.

👤 : —There are some things that were missing, especially related to ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ and Girl A.

👤 : —Then I'll continue, this will be the last part, it's going to be somewhat short.

One year after the end.

2 **WHITE** , THE SKY WAS PAINTED IN A SICKLY WHITE COLOR...just like the page in the book, and yet, yes ...

One Wednesday, in an unspecified month, an unspecified year, in an unspecified place, a group of students from an unspecified school, students of an unspecified subject, found themselves in front of a forest, heading to a place that was both a hospital and a school, as their purpose dictated. The word was entangled in their senses, creating that variation of realities; but in reality there was a school there, there really was: if in the case of learning it was about learning about something. A thing that could only be related in a concrete way to that which once existed, that is, the past of a fire, or the past of an encounter. It could not be certain if that fire was really real or just a pretext to push the story forward, but it was definitely there, even in its fictitious state it causes influence on what was understood as real. On that night five sleepwalking students found themselves in the same dream, or one could say, they found themselves in reality and together towards the dream, the same one that would later understand the dream of dreams. On their return, after the end of the night, which was not quite clear if it was that night, they somehow ended up hospitalized. They got together and formed **The Queen's Club**. The group with the name of the group they dreamed of, the cause and at some point became part of their own fiction... that is, that fiction that involved the connections between their dreams.

Of those five, four pieces came back. Ignoring Elena, the parasite, and Girl A, the purpose, Phil was missing: and someone else too. Two people who existed in speculation, but their existence in reality was doubtful, yet they became real in the memory of a dream that seemed to be true. The club members no longer knew if they were looking for what had really happened, or if they were exploring that dream labyrinth in a text of their own: Literature as Exploration, and the psychoanalysis of exploring a literature of the unconscious, with the methodologies of surrealist automatic writing or of clippings, Dada and given. It was not to say that the text was only about them, but that it was one more part of their understanding, and that created confusion with The Queen's Club, the fictional one, and the fictional book that was contained within it. So a year after the events of the phenomenon, the group decided to get together in the forest... but with the condition that none of them would remember the reason why they were going to do it: It was just another day of school.

* * *

Monday, 12:07PM, 2011, somewhere. [Phil]

The wind was a bit cool, a storm was approaching soon, Theo had brought his umbrella, I regretted not doing the same. He complained about something, he said: "There should be a vending machine here..." / "Who would put a vending machine on a highway?" / "That's a good point..." *But for some reason I understand it, it seems the same to me.* On our way to school we met Anna, she got off her bike and walked with us. We talked about irrelevant things, things we were going to forget. The shadows under the clouds shook, the branches of the trees, leaves fell on the path leading to school. And also... something else... My eyes fell on it but quickly looked away, it was the lifting of a white blanket in the distance; covering something on the ground, but it was too far away to see what it was. "Phil?" Anna looked at me distracted. "Oh, sorry... I couldn't sleep well..." I replied. "Are you still having nightmares?" —she asked me. —They're not really nightmares, they're just weird dreams. / —I had a weird dream too... —Theo

quickly replied. *It's the first time I've heard of it... no, that's not true, I think I've heard this before...* —If this is one of your dreams then it must be something perverse... —Anna commented. —N-No, it was like... —he thought—, hmm... it was like a room and it was raining inside... and it was filling with water, and water, and water... but there was no way out. / —That's kind of scary... / —And did you piss yourself when you woke up? —I mocked. —Of course not! / —You're the one who should piss yourself! —he added— So, what's your dream about? —Theo concluded.

—It's a labyrinth, I walk but I can't find the exit, sometimes I doubt if there is even an exit. The walls talk to me... / —The walls? / —Yes, voices sound inside the wall, and they tell me that the exit is close, but as I walk I can't find anything... / —That's also a bit scary... but in another sense —she said. —Yes, there's no clown with a chainsaw chasing you... —he added. —As I say, it's not a nightmare, it's a weird dream. / —But aren't all dreams weird? —the voice that answered, I hadn't heard it before. When I looked up I found a girl like a ghost. *Elena, I already know your name...* She smiled and said: —Good afternoon. / —Yes, good. / —Good afternoon. / —It's true, dreams are usually strange, it's because we don't have the ability to discern their nature as such... —I answered, ignoring the greeting. —Yes, when there is a dream the dream world obeys other metaphysical laws. / —The dream world? —Theo asked. We had already reached the school, it was a spooky place, besides being in a forest... it had most of its windows covered with blinds. —When we sleep we assume that the dream is reality, a true dream world. / —But when we wake up we realize that it is not real. —Elena walked away, walking in the distance, leaving behind a few words: —If you do wake up, that is...

* * *

Monday, 02:07PM, 2011, at school. [Phil]

I wake up every day expecting the world to end, as if it were a dream, and that in retrospect none of this makes sense. In class, the light coming through the blinds was the only form of illumination, there was no teacher... everyone studied on their own. Silently,

study is a process by which, by abstracting one loses its form, and by reforming it adheres to the contents of the air (like linked particles). This is how the content of the person becomes greater, because he learned that which is outside. That is what “the teacher” said, that is, letters A, Y, B and C (((. It is so, so, what?))) *and nothing... silent*, they were there in the air. *Ring*. And he interrupted the study: he is your (school) god. He said something like, Theo was... by the way, who said something like: “I-I have to go somewhere...” After receiving a message on his cell phone, my classmates also received one, digging around I found out that it was a spam message, Liam said “spam”, so I guess that’s what it was. *The Queen’s Club*, but I found it strange that Theo left, that’s why I decided to leave the class as well. *It’s not like it matters, given that we don’t have teachers*. Everything that can be learned is part of the world, the world can only exist as reality, that reality can only be conceived in reason, reason can only exist in realization, that realization can only occur under a state of rules, those rules have to be assigned by someone, that someone has to have a mode of differentiation, that differentiation resides in the mind: ego. *That’s why it’s okay if I skip classes, because I already know everyone, I already know all the rules, I am the world, I am the one who assigned the rules that make this world reality*. That’s why it was okay to skip classes.

The hallway was dark, only lit by that pattern of lights, which wavered slightly, crossing the blinds. The wooden floor vibrated, barely noticeable, as if its insides were purring. The school structure, its organism of teaching machinery, of brain reorganization, breathed with life. As I moved forward, when my feet touched the floor, it writhed, and when I opened the sliding door there was a sound of viscous secretion, as if I had flowed through the hallway and expelled into that small classroom. That was probably the reason I ran into him, I hadn’t seen him enter there, but the structure of which he was a part pushed me to where Theo was. Half of his face illuminated by a window of broken blinds, in his hand he had a transparent plastic bag, when he saw me he smiled and showed me the contents. “Do you remember

this?" he asked me. *Yes, of course I remember, that's one of the club dresses.* He had given them to the school theater group after he dropped out. "This is how I saw you... the first time..." I said. He stopped, silent, and I felt a certain tension pass through my body. That's when he moved his lips to say, "Do you want me to wear it?" His eyes... I didn't know if they were really looking at me, I couldn't figure out what he wanted. *Why? Why are you doing this?* "Y-Yes," I answered. "So... you still like her..." he mocked.

But it wasn't his mockery that made me angry but something else, still, I didn't have time to complain. Theo started to undress and I turned around. "It's not that much of a problem, you can see me, there's nothing here." I knew he had touched his torso, but he couldn't understand me as well as I could. *Although I can't understand myself as well either.* He gave up and in less than a minute, with impressive agility (probably the result of an act he performed frequently), he had put on the white one-piece dress. Seeing him, it just seemed to me... no, it wasn't simple at all, it was the opposite. *What word could I use to describe what I'm seeing?* He looked like a woman, although he wasn't wearing makeup like that time, in that sense he looked less like a girl... but he was still... "You look good..." / "Do you still like it?" / "Yes," I replied. His eyes looked at the floor... "Wait for Anna to find out..." he said as he began to undress once again. *What was the point of that?* But this time I didn't turn around, it was he who showed me his back. "W-What are you doing?!" He complained, before I knew it I was hugging him, burying my face in his back. That reaction made me much happier than his cold gaze.

—That's where you're wrong, you said I like her, as if you were talking about someone else... / —And? ... / —You're the one I like, no one else —I nodded. He turned around, stepping back, his back touching the wall. I saw myself illuminated by the light crossing through the blinds, through the light I saw myself as a patch of darkness. His eyes moved away from mine. —What are you talking about? Isn't it just a misunderstanding? —*This guy... he's such an idiot...* —No —I approached him and grabbed his arm—, I like you,

Theo. —He ignored me. He didn't want to know what that meant, so I whispered to him: —With clothes, without clothes, I want to touch you, I want to kiss you... —I heard his labored breathing, I could feel in his heart... fear. We were both in the darkness where the light didn't reach. *After 780 days, I walk this earth again...* My fangs cried out for his blood. Steel, a metallic taste in my mouth after receiving the impact of his fist, I let go and he quickly walked away, but not before yelling: —Damn you sick fuck! — *You say it to me, but you're the one who dresses like a woman and pretends to* [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Pfft... I wiped the blood from my nose and laughed. *But what am I doing? No... it doesn't really matter.* Everything I did didn't matter, so there was no point in being cautious.

—Where's Liam? —I knocked on the wall, and waited for an answer. *I see, I see... I didn't meet him, therefore...* He should be dead, he'll take the quiz and be the first to die. —And Elena? —Oh ... *reserved, okay, you can keep your secrets.* —Lily? —Interesting, *I'll wait then.* —The teacher? —Ah *that's right, this school doesn't have teachers!* There couldn't be a teacher. —Sara? —*Huh , I expected you wouldn't talk about Elena... but not about Sara either? What's that? Spoilers?! Ah, I hate those.* —I also hate movies that end inconclusively, since you finished watching it you should at least see a good ending... —I said, I was killing time. I was waiting for someone to arrive.

* * *

Monday, 02:23PM, 2011, in the woods. [Theo]

I ran, until I reached the outskirts of the school, wandering through the woods. I couldn't let anyone see me dressed like that, it would be recess soon (whenever that was), and that's why I decided to wait outside. *But... that Phil... damn him.* I complained, but my heart was still beating fast. It was just... I didn't know if that was really my heart. The wind blew through my legs, at least I had my sneakers on, *and it's not like I had changed my underwear either.* I wasn't that sick, I wanted to believe. The sound of the branches rustling mocked me. *But what else can I do?* I tried to

check my phone, but I had left it in my pants. *Maybe he'd read the message, it might be a good thing.* A breeze dragged my gaze to the shaking of a white cloth, a pile of stone holding it in place, covering something. My heart slowed down, I returned to calm, for a second I forgot about what had happened. *W-What is that?* I moved closer... as I closed the distance the smell of putrefaction became hard to ignore. I held the cloth in my hand, knowing full well that I shouldn't have lifted it, but it was so white and clean; as if someone had recently changed it. As it rose the image was revealed, and along with it a nauseating stench that choked me, I thought I was going to vomit.

The white-haired girl was just a corpse, a sickly grey and brown colour, her skin had been eaten away, and maggots writhed inside her. She had no eyes. She showed no recognizable face in the flesh that was still there. Black birds flew through the skies, probably waiting for me to leave, so they could devour her remains. *In this situation...* I walked away, out of caution and disgust, I couldn't stand that smell. But despite how far away I was, it had stuck to me, which is why I kept walking... until it disappeared from my sight, and in its place... a stone structure. It wasn't like the stones that had been used to hold the white cloth, it was a stone monolith easily visible in the distance. *Yes, the wind carried me with it...* it seemed so; A clearing opened up in the forest, with a grey sky visible, white flowers and a stone ring on the ground. In its center, a polished spiral staircase extended into the earth, like the jaws of the forest itself. A couple of minutes had passed since I got lost, and that image only reinforced my suspicion. *Where am I?* It was surreal. I had never seen that before. *Of course, it makes sense for this to be here.* I thought, but it was strange that I hadn't found it before. I went down. The corridor was narrow, but a white artificial light came from holes in the wall. It didn't seem to end any further. I asked myself a couple of times if it would be best to turn around. That would have been the best thing. That place gave me the same feeling as that dead girl... *nothing good can happen here.*

Just when my mind couldn't take it anymore, the next step was on

the last one. After a turn, a small round space appeared, a musty smell accompanied by a humming sound, a metal door with a small square window. I pushed it hard, I had to use all the weight of my body (which wasn't much) to be able to open it. Cold, icy air came out from inside... it was a refrigerator. I took a step inside, between the dark shadows I managed to see the figure of a woman, with long black hair... she was... *It's Elena, from Class C. How long has she been here?* "Are you okay?" I asked, but there were no answers, she was resting sitting on the floor, with her back against the wall and her eyes closed. When I touched her there was no trace of warmth, *she's dead.* But how was that possible? Only two hours had passed since the start of classes. A sound of something crawling, and darkness... except for the tiny light coming in through the small window. The cold made me shiver, and the fear of what it meant, as I ran towards the door I found it. *You are...* An eyeless corpse that was falling to pieces had gotten up, followed me, and locked me in the refrigerator. I shook the door, but it didn't budge even a little. *Are you fucking kidding me?! What's going on?!* "Shit!" I punched, shook, and kicked the door. The lifeless body, which moved leaving maggots in its wake along with the pieces of its flesh, walked away down the hall to the stairs. "Hey! Get me out of here!"

* * *

Monday, 03:10PM, 2011, at school. [Phil]

Footsteps down the hall, they moved quickly, the break was already over... but I knew she would come here. And so she did, she appeared from behind the door, she was surprised to see me there, she was waiting for someone else. I stood up and spread my arms. "After hundreds of years I finally walk on this earth again!" I announced. There were zero elements in that room, but we were there complementing its existence, bringing it to the plane of a visible element. "<<Cool!>>" Lily answered in English. "Were you looking for Elena? To give her the book?" I asked. She showed a smile: "I see, you noticed." / "How though? It's understandable from Liam, he has such a good memory that he can remember even things that didn't happen," she added. "Notice? I don't know what

you're talking about... Liam should be dead." / "Oh no, that's what you'd think, but he's doing better and better. This time he will definitely be saved, he realized it long before the others..." — *He will be saved... From what?* Even after being able to ask the universe itself, there were things I still couldn't understand; but they were things she knew. *If she is here present...* — Don't even try, you can't know what I think. / — But, that is... / — Yes, it is impossible, I am only the image of the thing, not the thing-on-itself — Her eyes flashed red —... Movement, action, drama! It is your time to fulfill your role. / — The book... I need it.

AAABBB ::::: AAABBB ::::: AAABBB → ← AAA BB

—Of course, the actor needs his script. Are you going to do what I did? —she sneered— Are you going to be able to read your own death?! — AAABBB ← BBB (A) BB (AAA) *So she really knows... since when?* —What... piece are you? —I am... Bishops (♁). / — And you're writing... this? / —No, it's Queens who's writing now. — *No matter how hard I try to squeeze that information into my head, it slips back out.* I couldn't accept its existence, but I couldn't jump back out either. If what she said was true Liam was going to find out what was going on before I could even grasp the concepts. —And how is... Liam going to survive? / —Sara is going to save him. / — Sara... did she even attend? / —She's late on her first day, after having trouble with a vending machine. — *It can't be... You're telling me... the only reason he's going to survive is because...* — The vending machine isn't there anymore. — *But that's... ridiculous. Even locking us up didn't make us able to comprehend... can such a minor change...?* — Blah, blah, butterfly effect, blah blah. But that has nothing to do with it. If it weren't for his memory, he probably wouldn't have been able to notice. — Lily shrugged. ████████ time, message to Anna, dead, ████████ time, message to Liam... dead... but he figured that out as a result... he was going to go to the computer lab anyway... ████████ time, Liam had to have realized something... about Sara. This time... he didn't even get the message. Liam was right. He had become too important. "It's the case that Girl A disappeared." " *Girl A?*" Oh...

her. Her relevance was dependent on the eyes that were watching her. Liam attracted the eyes... it was because... *It was because Sara was thinking about him. Could it be that it was like that from the beginning?* It was possible, if Sara had complained about a machine on Monday... *what reason did she have to be angry on Tuesday?* She wasn't angry, *is that it?* "Who wrote the third time?" "Knights." "And who is that?" I asked. She stuck out her tongue. "I'm not going to tell you!"

I took a step towards her, though I had nothing to do, and she simply extended her hand in my direction revealing the book, "The Queen's Club." The recounting of the Queen's Club encounters, trying to figure out the purpose of the fictional Queen's Club. "And what are you going to do? At this rate it's all going to end..." / "Really... can it end?" *And that implication...* the implication of her words scared me. Why was I so afraid of the ending? *What can I do?* "I can't skip now... and even if I read their deaths..." / "Even if you read their deaths, on the fifth repetition... Liam will find out what happens, and you will be rejected by Theo, once again." / "Who will write the next part?" / "No one, Queens announced that this is the last part." / "And all the elements are present... I mean... there's no mistake?" / "There's no mistake, or we would have erased it. And then... what are you going to do?" —Nothing, there was really nothing I could do... *it all depends on...* I stopped my thought, even something like that... It couldn't happen. I turned around and looked out the window... white, a white sky, even though there would soon be a storm. White clouds filled the sky with a fantastic purity. —You can keep the book.

-I see...

* * *

Monday, 03:41PM, 2011, in the woods. [Sara]

The mallet hit its skull and the soft structure broke without much effort. The pieces of the head fell to the ground, the neck had broken and the creature fell to the ground. I lifted the mallet once more, bringing it down on the convulsing thing, even with the pain

in my arm, the force of the fall burst its head into a hole that opened in pieces like a tangerine. In its fleshy and putrefied interior the worms became visible, writhing, sinking into the rest of the body. Finally the thing stopped its movement, the figure of a girl's corpse returned to its motionless state. *And to think that something like this... exists...* If someone had told me that this could happen I would have laughed, but after what happened with Liam anything was possible. *At least he was lucky that I was there...* I thought, and he had figured it out too; that's why I went to the forest. *It has to be around here... some kind of statue...* I moved forward without direction, well, that wasn't true... I had a slight direction of where it should be. The biggest problem was that the forest looked very similar, as you progressed, the same images were shown again one after another.

Then I came across a stone pillar...

and some spiral staircases...

and when I went down in the darkness I didn't find what I was looking for...

but instead, a metal door. Locked by a steel plate. I removed it and pushed hard, pain emerged in my right arm, coldness rose from within, and someone fell on my chest. "Phil?" he asked. *Hey, don't mistake me for a man! ...Huh?* The one resting on my chest was Theo, but he was wearing a dress. His body was cold, I held him in my arms... *it's kind of cute.* "Hmph mhph mnn..." / "Could you try to get your face off my chest before you talk..." He looked up and took a step back. "Ahem," he cleared his throat, "thanks... really." He seemed embarrassed. "What happened here?" / "I got stuck... oh, Elena..." he exclaimed and turned around. I followed him, he seemed to be searching for something in the darkness, but there really was nothing there. "Huh? Elena was here... her corpse." / "Who's Elena?" I asked. "Huh?" From Class C. / "I've never heard of her. Her body was here?" / "You don't seem surprised..." If he had told me that morning, I probably would have been surprised, *considering what I saw earlier...* "No... strange things are happening, and I don't understand them, but someone told me that

we can do something about it.” I pointed my finger at the mallet I had left on the ground.

*

Later.

The wind had become much stronger. Theo was carrying the mallet for me. We moved through the forest maze, came across a statue of a gargoyle, and broke it. *It's quite old and broken...* I thought, and with a couple of blows with the mallet it collapsed. We continued, I was following the memories of a recent dream, where I was walking through the forest with no apparent direction. *In that dream Theo was also accompanying me. Is this the meaning of your strength?* It was even stranger that he knew that, Liam. *I can't stand him... But at the same time... Meh,* I stopped. The shape of the trees, at first it seemed like it was always the same image, but after a while I started to notice their differences. The patterns on the trunks, reminded me of my dream, and if I followed my feeling... We came across another statue. It was the same, Theo looked pretty tired, in the end we broke the eighth statue. *He had said that they were in a perimeter around the forest.* And it was probably true, but in the end I didn't even go by it. “I-Is this the last one?” Theo asked panting. “Yeah, job done.” A flash of lightning lit up the sky, before I knew it the white had turned to grey. The branches of the trees shook frantically, their leaves dragged by the storm. “It must be almost five...” I checked my cell phone, an old model that I only used to check the time, it was 4:38. “How did you know?” I asked. —At five... rain was forecast... / —But that's, a bit too precise... isn't it? / —Well, it's also that... I knew it. — *I get it, that's what I mean, this has already happened... at least once.* I sat down on the floor. —Well, we're done, don't you have something to do? —His dress was lifted by the wind, and even though he held it I could see his underwear. *Boxers huh... Well, I didn't expect anything else either. He is a man, after all.* —Did you see them? — he asked me. —Uh... yeah... / —Hmpfh... —he pouted and walked away embarrassed. *What the hell is wrong with him?* I laughed, and laid down on the floor.

—Hehehe — *that laugh...* —I knew you'd be here! —Liam came closer, his head was stained with his own blood, and one of the lenses of his glasses was broken, I was there when that happened. *It was that thing's fault.* —Oh yeah? And how did you know? / —It's just that this is the last place inside the perimeter if you turn around in clockwi- / —I don't care —I replied. He showed a defeated face. —Was that Theo? / —Yeah... / —He was kinda cute... / —Huh?! You like him? How?! —*Is he gay?* —What do you like about him? —I hurried up. —...I was joking... Hehehehe. —I laid back down on the sky. *Ugh... I hate this guy... ...but at the same time...* —Lie down —I ordered him. / —O-On the floor? / —Lie down next to me. / —B-But there might be bugs... / —I didn't ask you if you wanted to lie down... I told you to do it —I affirmed again. A smile appeared on his face. *What's so funny?* —Y-Yes! —he said and slowly lay down. —Aaugh...what are you doing? —I turned around and laid down on him. *He's so big... I always thought he'd be a good mattress... well... it's kinda soft.* He complained but kept quiet. *Good boy!* Then he hugged me. “I-I didn't tell you to hug me...” / “Ah, I'm sorry!” / “... but you can do it...” I added. *It's comfortable... that's all.* “So then? What's going to happen now?” / “Well, those are the bazhu, in Chinese mythology they are the eight... ### *I regret a#king... ## he keeps talking... #### Smell... smell...* “I thought he was going to smell bad, but he smells like perfume. *Ahhh... how embarrassing, I'm smelling a man's chest...* “If we assume its most literal form, it means that the sky is going to fall,” he concluded. *Huh? Literally?* “But that can't happen, hehehehe.” / “Hmm... I don't know, after our encounter with that monster...” / “Well, an unknown creature is one thing... but the sky falling down...” / “I see... falling from the sky.” / “By the way... how long do you plan to stay there?” / —Do you have complaints?! / —N-No!

* * *

Monday, 05:00PM, 2011, in the woods. [Theo]

I was completely soaked, no matter how hard I walked through the forest I couldn't find my way back to school, by the time I found it it was already past five. *And I had to go with her on her*

adventure... what was that anyway? The statues, stone gargoyles, eight in total, in the forest... “Theo?” Her voice made me raise my back, Anna was standing in front of the school entrance. *Of all the people to be here... today is not my day.* “I thought you weren’t doing... that anymore...” she commented. Her words crossed my heart, tore it apart with force. I felt some harmful rage but it escaped with a sigh. “Yeah, it was just for today.” / “I see...” She looked away, I could only duck my head in response. “Let’s go Anna!” Lily said, she grabbed Anna by the arm and dragged her into the rain. “Y-Yeah, before it rains even harder.” / —Bye Theo! — After saying that, they both went in search of their bikes. *Not only Anna saw me like that, but Lily did too.* I gave up, and entered the school. The wound in my chest had opened, the darkness of the hallway made me remember those moments. *It’s your fault in the first place, Anna. If only you had returned my feelings that day.* But it wasn’t like that, that emptiness became so big, that it was starting to devour me... and that’s how I found the solution. In that club, I dressed like a woman, and I received many compliments, the attention of a lot of men. *And although I knew it was wrong, replacing such feelings... eventually that personality became a part of me.* The me of the club, and that me there. It was difficult to distinguish where one began and the other ended. The only thing that differentiated me was my clothes...

And then Phil came, just like every other customer at the club. He was always a weirdo... *but he was also the one who filled that void you left behind.* Chatting, kissing, but not much else... and when I took off my clothes I was that other me again: The rejected me. It wasn’t until he told me, that he really liked me, that I had to be honest. *I prepared myself for him to hate me, to tell me I was sick...* But instead he said “I understand.” He didn’t say anything more about it, I thought he had left me behind. It was a while ago when we met again, I had already cut my hair, and I never went looking for that other me again. *But he says he still likes me.* To that part of me, those words... make his heart flutter. *I don’t know, if Phil has any kind of void to fill. I also can’t understand, what this me wants.* My biggest fear was that... the me in the dress would

become everything I am. *A walking attention-seeking mechanism, an object created by the affection that others would not give me.* I reached the small classroom where I had left my clothes. In one of the corners of the room was Phil, he was hugging his knees, and on his legs rested the shirt of my school uniform.

I walked over and crouched down in front of him. He lifted his head, his black eyes looking at me. “I can see your nipples through the dress...” he commented with an expressionless face. Looking closer I noticed that the dress looked transparent. I covered my chest, but then I remembered that it didn’t really matter. *He always says things like that... no, he’s weird... quiet... He wanders around the hallways aimlessly, talking to himself...* Certainly, he only said things like that when it came to me. “They’re pink and cute...” he added. “T-Thanks... can you give me my clothes back?” He handed them to me and I got dressed. I noticed Phil covered his face while I changed, *it’s really not that big of a deal.* I thought, but it made me happy in turn. When I finished changing he hugged me. I was about to hit him once more, but I stopped as I felt his heart beating loudly. Of all the dirty words I expected to hear, he only said: —Don’t leave me alone... —So pathetic, so pitiful, and so cute. —I’m not wearing the dress anymore... is it okay like this? —I held him tightly, I really didn’t want him to see my face... it was red as a tomato. —I don’t care, if you’re a boy or a girl... —*No , no, I’m definitely a boy* —... as long as we’re together. / —Aren’t you embarrassed? ... Saying things like that. / —Our heartbeats... united... / —Don’t try to make it worse —I interrupted him. He laughed, and then I pushed him away slightly. *It was easy to do when I was pretending to be someone else... but now...* Phil was barely taller than me, I approached him seeing his black eyes, an emptiness that I couldn’t find an end to. I kissed him, for an instant I felt like I had no weight... that I was in the air... *No... really...*

When we opened our eyes we were actually floating. “Huh? W-What’s going on?” I exclaimed. “Things fall because they have affection for the earth. That phenomenon is called gravity. When things no longer have affection for the earth, there is no love or

divine essence to hold them up,” he explained. He carried a smile with him. *Is this a good thing?* “Has Liam finished breaking the idols? Or was it Sara?” he asked. The sensation was strange, as if we were about to fall, but we held each other’s hands and the fall never came. Outside it continued to pour rain, and the sound of the storm became music for the surreal scene. In a dark room, where the only light was dim, and the occasional flash of lightning. “I was the one who broke the gargoyles.” / “Really?” He seemed happy. “What’s going to happen to us?” I asked. “We’re going to die!” *“And why are you so happy?!”* There was a cracking sound, the school began to shake. The roof broke and we were quickly pushed to the ground, our bones crushed.

An incredible force was crushing the world.

Ghosts walked on the pavement.

Doing regular activities, one after another.

Then they went back to where they were supposed to be.

The character achieved happiness, but... what about him?

Ghosts, again and again, walked the pavement.

His irregular activities, wandering through corridors.

A vampire rises in his gothic castle.

Dark illusions arise.

Strong delusions of a lost soul.

Ghosts, again and again. Flesh and blood, flesh and blood.

It's strange, isn't it? When one thinks about it.

Flesh and blood, but that ending...

Red skies, with a thousand eyes, crushed everyone in the forest.

Their compacted corpses rose into the air.

They no longer had love for the earth.

Beyond flesh and bone.

What was there was an interpretive element of the soul.

Ghosts have no flesh and bones.

You can't be a ghost, you're alive.

*

One year after the end.

It was the last meeting of the Queen's Club. That day, after recreating the events of their dreams, all the members disappeared. The police carried out an investigation into the whereabouts of the young people, but no trace could be found. The forest had devoured them.

*

When she woke up, she saw white, blurry, it was the hospital she had always known. Her eyes no longer saw as well, although they had never done so, her mind no longer worked as well, although it never had. She thought, in that bed, and imagined a world outside of what she knew, but her imagination failed. How was the mouse, trapped in a cage, to know what the outside was? Things were understood as normal, until logic dragged them into strangeness, concepts that were only understood by their shadows. What was the true figure of friendship? Its shadow lay like insignificant conversations, moments of union, conflicts, separations and meetings. But was that really the form of friendship? Or was it simply what she could imagine? There was no friendship beyond imagination, because there thought ended. And love? What is the figure of love? Between figures of crossed bodies, gasps, seminal fluid, kisses and affirmations. But was that really the figure of love? No, just another shadow, projected from the hospital room window. And even those shadows, when viewed logically, fell into strangeness. Why is the world such a strange place? Why do we need others? Why do the strangeness of others stand out so much? She couldn't know, all those concepts were alien. They could have been implanted in her mind by extraterrestrials, a fantasy world, a delirium in nanomachines. But even that notion was strange, that world simply couldn't accept her, or her ideas.

That's why she wondered. *Why not just jump out the window and end it once and for all?* She knew the second floor was quite high, but she didn't know if it was high enough to kill her, she had no way to do that kind of calculations; she only knew that a fall from a great height could end her life, and she thought that maybe it was worth it. "To give it an end..." she whispered, but she didn't move. She thought that even her sadness was an abnormality, and the concepts of life and death. She simply resigned herself, and returned to her book, text blurred.

And where does the book begin?

and where does the world end?

and where does the world begin?

and where does the book end?


...


[FINAL D: Welcome to the Queen's Club.]


ANSWERS : AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL.


 : —Congratulations!


 : —Welcome...


 : —It's a pleasure...


 : —Thank you, thank you, hehehehe.


 : —Queens endings... are so bad... I hate unfinished endings.


 : —I like... those kinds of endings.


 : —It's good that we met.

 : —I don't like the way Queens writes either, there's no violence, there's just drama and drama, and emotions. Where are the organs? Where's the blood? Where's the sex?

 : —I thought it was very good.

 : —That's because you don't care... although I agree with the fact that it was brief.

 : —You don't like to read.

 : —But... we're not done yet, the conclusions of the experiment are still missing.

*

a. All things may or may not be, therefore they are not: Unless the reason why they should be is explained.

a(R). Even if we assume the state of an empty world (something incomprehensible because the nonexistence of something can only exist as a relation to the existence of something else) it only exists as an image without expression beyond its realization. It can only exist as a concept outside the imagination, it is dragged into the imagination through the context of an image, but only to

communicate the limits of its form. The empty world becomes irreversible, but at the same time communicable, this communication does not belong to its own being, but is the result of its existence as a concept. The greatest problem of the thing without existing is its usefulness, the purpose of a nonexistent tool can only be the characteristics that do not define it (which have to emerge from some non-place). But even so, it is defined as a sign when entering the semiotic context of communication. “The world of which nothing can be said” is an impossibility, its presence in the communicative field falls before the realization of its capacity for interpretation. In the same way that the text is interpreted as meaning, the image, the world, and everything else. Whether something is or is not outside of that context is irrelevant, the world is in a constant state of communication with itself and between the things it contains (which it brings to concept).

b. The thing is in itself (or not), a thing and nothing more, not a set of things that give rise to emerging exceptions.

b (R) . When looking at a series of elements or things, it is easy to assume that the result is their image, and the details that exist in the contrast of present objects. A circle of rocks, for example, as a circle made of rocks. But that is only the interpretation after analysis. The meaning of the circle of rocks precedes its analysis, but not its image, the position of each rock, and each object pales in contrast to the circle. The text that presents it, presents itself first as source and location, the language that interprets it is only the result of exhaustive analysis. “The circle of rocks in the foreground” contrary to “The circle I am not paying attention to” (an idea in theory) but always first is circle: but without word or definition. For the word is the result of language, and the image precedes language, but not meaning, in the same way that the concept precedes the image but not its interpretive form. Signs, their semiotic elements, can only “appear” in the context of communication (its totality) as “sentimental” or rather: sensational definitions.

c. There are no exceptions, the system covers all cases.

c (R) . In all cases, there is always an encounter with meaning, there is nothing that cannot be processed as meaning. The image, the idea, the concept, all of that exists in the context of communication. Communication between the world and a concept of self, between the world and nothingness, between nothingness and something, between the concept of you and your ideas (own communication). It is beyond language, it is proper to the brain (or to consciousness, or to the relationship of this with something else). Unconsciously in what unites us, the inspiration coming from a text is not different from the inspiration that comes from what the eye sees: because both (and everything) is a type of text within its context. It is expressed even without words “text-without-word” or those that we could invent to understand it.

Is this the conclusion you wanted to reach?

I can't know.

This is the conclusion the book came to.

Correct.

And what do you think?

I don't do it, I ceased to exist.

When?

When your eyes saw my words...

It was at that moment that I fainted,

when you grab my body...

there is nothing left of me.

Thanks for reading.