

Chronology

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CHAPTER 1:

THE PARTY

Paul was looking at the newspaper that existed in the table of the kitchen. It was a Friday and it was with the expectation of what could offer him a warm weekend of spring. He was observing thoroughly the different holders looking for some track on what it could happen in those rough weeks.

Meanwhile little large black coffee was making use with milk. He had stopped reading the newspaper. He decided to look at the television a minute and felt famine, checked the ice-cream maker and seeing the piece of pizza of the previous night, took a portion and ate it. He always thought that the pizza had better flavor on the following day.

The coffee was finished, aunt Grace was preparing it because it was the first one in getting up. It was useless to keep on taking more white coffee and to watch TV. He looked at the clock, it was already time. Before going away, he thought that it would be better to check its agenda to verify the due appointments. An important meeting was waiting for it at about 5 PM and he checked his wallet to confirm how much money he had. He did not have very much, a few pesos and any coins. On having come aunt Grace to the kitchen, he asked her.

Have you some money to go out of the step?

Grace was taking an enormous portfolio replete with things, so much it was so only she could find something in all this chaos. The disorder of its portfolio was alike the disorders that finally would supervene in the country. The Dantesque picture forced

her to improvise. Three presidents would happen between themselves in a few weeks.

She took a few minutes to look for the money.

- I have a ticket of 100 patacones and 10 lecops - he answered him.

- 100 patacones?: lecops?: And what is that?

Grace showed him.

- But with this can I do anything?

- Look I do not know, but it is the only thing that I have. Yesterday a client paid me with these bills. Paul doubted, he found a loaded, as if there were tickets of the monopoly, but after a few seconds there was said: "this is better than nothing+.

And Grace annotated him:

- Remember that less and less cash is circulating in the street, now you have this or the card of debit. Get accustomed.

- What are you going to do today? . he asked Grace.

- I do not know, perhaps I remained here. You know that a few days ago wanted to plunder the Chinese store that is close to Panamericana freeway?

Pablo looked at it wonderingly.

- I cannot believe you.

Paul was an action person despite the problems, he felt that one could not have left depressed. The country and its life were looking like an enormous disorder.

He took his own things, the folders with the new pledges designs for the following period done by Giselle his cousin and, especially, the detachable front of its stereo.

He went out of his house located in the elegant quarter of Olive trees, which some, to give to him more cut, they called it the quarter Golf and, like every morning, he

said goodbye first of its beautiful Weimaraner dogs, which were always taking care of the entry of the house, and after the keeper of a gaming house of the corner, after which he decided to go towards its work in the capital.

He had received a few months ago of managed public accountant and with his immediate family, a small textile enterprise.

Concerned verify, obsessively, do not forget anything, specially the cell phone he lost quite often. He was learning to drive one and already had to buy another, he often said his aunt Grace.

The lukewarm sun was filtering through the trees while a soft breeze, which was moving the sheets, was provoking a harmonious shades game on its car parked in the street. The melody of the birds was preannouncing a beautiful day.

He climbed into his white car, he placed a music CD to relax, started and, lowering the windows, he prepared to enjoy what it was giving him this morning. He went towards the Panamericana freeway, he turn off the CD and syntonized the AM radio frecuency.

Soon he began to listening to the political comments of the day. The social tension was growing every second during the transmission of the program, aggressiveness, hate and uncertainty there were seeming to be the thematic axis of the journalists and the speakers. The news were riding on the histories of the journalists like riders of the Apocalypse.

It was middle of December, 2001 and, days earlier, the Secretary of the Treasury Cavallo, announced the playpen of the savings. While he was driving to Belgrano quarter he was observing how the people were doing endless tails in the Banks hoping to extract its lean savings or, in any case, obtain a card of debit to be able

to be extracting, weekly, the deposited money. Paul got anxious, decided not to listen any more and turn off the program.

He looked at the board of the car, observed that almost it did not have fuel for what decided to load petrol. He stopped the vehicle and asked one of the personnel of the petrol station if he was accepting patacones.

He indicate a big and very visible cartel to Paul and he answered him that yes, but that had to pay just, and with a ticket of 100 patacones he could not load ñ , he asked him later if he was accepting lecops and said to him that that not, not neither the federal bonds of Entre Rios State, already a client had generated a discussion that almost ends to the blows. Then he joined the coins and tickets that he had and with that scarcely money he could load a few liters of fuel.

The employee looked at him while he was clarifying:

- Do not worry young man, you are not the only one that has money and that has not not a dollar to live.

Paul received Gino's call, one of his faculty friends who had received a few days ago. He listened that he was inviting him to a meeting on the same night, in his department of the distinguished quarter of Belgrano. The department was close to the Walk of the Angel, a well-known meeting place for them. The banquet was owing to its flaming university title. They said goodbye by phone and Paul continued his trip.

That night he returned of the work and as is was custom he met Grace and Giselle that were having dinner. They invited him.

- I have a holiday, aunt . he apologized.

- You came early?

- I do not know, i have no idea, anything I call you.

- Take care - added Giselle.

Giselle was a young woman who was promising. She was a designer of clothing, of low stature, nice and of a very awake personality, in addition to flirt. She liked the piercing, especially, one that it had to the side of the nose and the showy hairstyles that were done by its chestnut-colored, frizzy and wavy hair. She was working with Paul at the company and she was very companion with him.

Paul prepared himself to go to the meeting, said goodbye to them and raised to the vehicle. In Belgrano hills he stopped opposite to the barrier where a boy approached to clean the windshield and of step to request him some currency. He tested the pockets and only he had a patacón and it gave it to the boy. Then the boy shouted to other:

-Lookõ .i have a patacón õ and it continued his trip.

On having come, he parked the vehicle in the opposite path of the department, he moved frantically the hands on its pockets verifying not to forget anything, thought in that moment what Giselle usually said to him: "you are obsessive+
But later he reflected and awarded this problem to which it had, in these days, too many worries.

He touched the timbre play in the department, they attended him for the doorman and went up.

He was received by Gino, a boy of ítalo/peruano origine that had established himself in Buenos Aires to study. They embraced each other and he congratulated it on its achievement. The department was full of guests, Paul recognized some of

them that were remaining in the entry, they were not precisely friends, but well-known faces and thought that it was not very suitable to show discourtesy.

His group of old partners were in the living room and were all seating in the armchairs. There was no empty place. The space was wide and luminous. The front was giving to the street provided with a beautiful balcony. From a distance he called them and some of them greeted him doing signs to approach. He saw several of the girls smoking like chimneys and, as he was detesting the smoke of the cigaret, he preferred to avoid the tumult and went to the kitchen that was contiguous to the living.

There were wide packing baskets, he looked Gino and asked him of why of the supposed change. He answered him that he was the last brother in be receiving and that it was already not making sense to keep on living in Buenos Aires. The Italian multinational, for which its father was working, had offered him a work in Módena.

In the kitchen, on a wide table, there were the drinks and the glasses of plastic. The bags of French fries and peanuts were in form messed up on every corner of the kitchen and it was frequent to feel the typical sound of the potatoes when they are trodden.

Hi met his old friend Nicolás and they started commenting on the days in which they were students of the first years of the career.

He usually loaded Paul for the way in which he had been received.

- you always take the examinations to February and you had that to spend the whole summer studying, but this year you put yourself the batteries and approved to the touch all the matters, you are a phenomenon - it was annotating him.

It was possible to observe a typical party of talented young people and of good economic spend, a little worried for the crisis that it was crossing the country, but with the proper optimism of the age.

While they were speaking they went to the place where the beer was, alternating the chat with the drink and the sandwich of crumb. To the moment Nicolás turned the head towards the entry and clarified:

- Look came Hellene and his group of friend.

It was doing time that Paul was feeling a strong desire to be with her but he knew that it was not corresponded.

She was the typical young woman of North Quarter, of medium-sized height, elegant, refined, of chestnut-colored and faded hair, thin eyebrows, beautiful brown eyes, wide nose, turgid bust, face and round cheekbones. She had for especially a showy and harmonious smile that was matching with its big and white teeth like the marble.

She was not a very thin woman, but it was insinuating interesting curves.

She was, fundamentally, an intuitive person and with an extremely developed intellect. His career as student marked by the effort and the success was turning it, ultimately, into a sure woman of himself, although slightly conceited, superficial and vain.

She was looking like a Greek goddess, like Afrodita, the daughter of Zeus. She was finally a young woman who, with its beauty and its personality, was inspiring the love that the ancient Greek philosophers were mentioning.

She liked tu use a large crucifix Madonna style and a black skirt with dark tights, very opaque, to notice her sleek and shapely legs. She alternated his life in the

capital with a country over the weekend that Paul ignored. They had met in the University.

-Perhaps this is the last graduation party, if there are problems in the coming months, nobody will want to do another.

-So - added Nicholas . if you want to talk to Hellen to fix something, it better to be now.

Paul felt sad thinking that perhaps that was the last time he would see her, she had always avoided any talk.

Hellen went alone to take a few glasses on the table were the boys were supported and Paul greeted her saying:

-Hi, Hellen

-Hello how are you? . She reply coldly and looking sideways.

-Want a drink with us?

-No, look, do not bother me, I am with my friends - and without giving any more explanations with this dry answer, she went away.

- She is a very pretty girl Hellen, but she has its own character, what are you going to do - Nicholas said to him - the girl has no feelings with you, extract it to yourself of the head.

With this answer Paul became very sad, since he had a shy and insecure personality.

To the moment there approached Michael, another old partner of studies with a girl.

-I present you a friend, her name is Alexandra - informed Michael to them.

She smiled nicely and gave them a kiss in the cheek. Its visage was for the boys like the Sun in the middle of the night. It was notice that she was a natural blonde, of northerly features, thin, of medium-sized height, small bust and penetrating brown eyes, what was making her extremely showy. It had a aquiline nose like extracted from a painting, in addition to be characterizing for simpatihic and verbose.

It was dressing pants of lightweight mixed fibre, quite exact with showy embroideries. The shoes and the blouse combining tones were forming a magnificent compossé that was heightening his elegant and thin legs. Everything was harmonizing to emphasize the typical quite pronounced tail of the girls well provided by the nature and that, also, they can sell well.

His personality was so extrovert that not only she was speaking with the words but also with his hands and his corporal gestures. She exaggerated any situation that was appearing before her. He was always looking for the way of handling everything, thing that normally was achieving given his sagacity and big beauty.

It was a real Valkyria, an authentic daughter of Odín. Like them, Alexandra was seeming to be sent by a top being to choose the men who must be killed in the field of battle.

The boys noticed, suddenly, that she was a being with very much angel and delight.

- Are there several friends in this party that were received, no? - Alexandra asked.

Paul and Nicholas agreed, they had given together its last Audit examination.

- Yes, we, less evil that we receive ourselves - Paul said.

- For? - Alexandra asked.

- The University is private and it is not known what can happen, It could happen they change the pesos quotes into dollar quotes - Pablo continued.

- That happened already several years ago and a barbarian disorder was armed, there was a sitting and also - Nicholas added.

- These are the original ideas of the University President, the only thing that he lacks it is to invent a credit card, the private Universities are a machine of doing money - Michael continued.

- But you receive, and you don't have to wait centuries for the university title - Paul clarified with certainty.

- For what were you received, excuse? - Alexandra asked.

- Of counters - Nicolás reported.

- You, Alexandra? - inquired Paul.

- I received last year of lawyer . she mentioned as if was nothing.

For several minutes the young woman directed the conversation and they all continued looking at her as if they were attending a stage play and she was the center of the scene.

She observed Paul thoroughly, how wanting to foresee his frame of mind.

-Does anything happen to you?, I notice you sadly.

- I feel badly.

Nicholas looked at Michael.

- You know, is Hellene.

- Who? - Alexandra asked.

- The girl who is in the door - Paul answered to her.

Alexandra took its time to look at her thoroughly.

- Aha! . she exclaimed later.

- Uh, that girl, stop yourself fucking, to me she falls down awful, the another day became hysterical I do not know why history. She is a showy girl, of course, but it does not give for any more, do not be thick look to yourself for another one, look all the women who exist, I cannot believe it to you . Michael said.

- The men fall in love a pair of times in the life, no? - Paul pronounced himself.

- You are going to remain always single - added Alexandra - you are so much indesicely, you look for too much special persons and it is never suficient.

-Very good - Nicholas added - drink a little and enjoy, also the thing in the street is that it exploits.

- But this is what always happens in the country - added Paul-: why are they surprised?, there are always cyclical periods, as happens in the Falkland War, a period of euphoria, a period of scepticism, then the depression and finally the fury. Apart I always mentioned to you that this economic plan was not straight and that it was going to take us to the ruin.

- Uh Paul, now give us these speeches - continued Nicholas - I go to speak with the girls who are in the living.

Michael looked at them to inform them:

- I left you a minute.

Alexandra took a glass.

-I am thirsty, - and looking at Paul with intrigue he said: will there be anything to drink here?

Pablo agreed and offered her what he had in his hand.

- Water not, that it oxidizes: is there whisky?

Alexandra proved whisky and looked for a cigaret.

- Smoke?

- Not.

- It is impressive as they cover the gossip here . Alexandra affirmed.

- That seems. No?

A lighter looked in his jean of Versace. She liked the mark clothes, she was a girl with style, she hated the vulgar people and of coarse manners.

She took his lighter of marks Zippo, of a beautiful golden color and it lit slowly the cigaret, like who he enjoys slowly a conversation.

She aspired, and eliminated the first smoke turning to the side.

- It seems that you not have vices.

- We all have someone . Paul answered.

Paul felt that the young woman was seducing him, felt pleased and perhaps at the end he was not a loser he thought.

- Interesting observation the one that you did with the boys, you have good ideas, but it seems that cause certain effect beetwen your friends, there is an enormous fear sensation sorround us - she continued - I should say that they do not like listening to this type of comments.

- I don't know, what I can say to you.

- Many are thinking of going away quickly to Montevideo, this is what they went away to discuss between them . Alexandra added.

Paul looked for a little drink, took something.

- They say that some lawyers are like sharks - Paul affirmed.

Alexandra looked at him fix, perhaps she was still to answer him something, she lowered the sight.

-My profession is something similar, not precisely that.

She moved towards the table. She left the glass and took a wooden statuette.

It was small, of black color, it had a shaded aspect, with head of lion, torso and human hands and legs of snake. It was supporting in one of its hands a spear.

It exhaled again the smoke of the cigaret, studying his new partner, smiled, he liked this object, and brought it over towards himself.

- What is that object?

- This statue represents a Súcubo, Paul .

- And what is that?

- For some teachers of the antiquity, the hell is also in this world. The Súcubos according to them are feminine demons. They take the vital energy of the men, which lies in the desire, across the sexual union, debilitating them mentally and physically. But they . Alexandra continued with its history after a break . they have natural opponents, the spiritual men, they are the chosen ones and, across the God's grace, they are free of the action of the sin in this world and look in this world for the resemblance and the union with the devine.

- Interesting your history . Paul exclaimed-. I do not believe in these things, but therefore what is happening now in the country, it does not seem to be a wrong idea, this looks alike increasingly to the hell.

- You have a great reason . Alexandra affirmed.

The two laughed sarcastically, how accepting that it already not at all had arrangement and that, finally, the good was consisting of spending as well as possible the brief time that one was in this world.

The looks were distended. The world seemed to stop in that moment.

She left the statuette in its place and both drank slowly.

- You know the history of Fausto, Paul?

- Not at all, for? . he answered.

- Tell me Paul: if you could fulfill a desire that would make you happy, how much you would be capable of paying? - Alexandra asked.

- A desire did you say?

Paul left the drink that was taking and they looked themselves, he tried to approach more the young woman, perhaps to kiss her. She perceived the move and passed backwards.

Close to them there was a crowded group of young people who were competing between themselves, taking abundant alcoholic beverage, %White Fund+ was the slogan between them. Nobody seemed to begin behind.

The boys who knew him saw that he was speaking with her, murmured some words and, quickly, one approached. He was the tallest and burly person of the meeting, it was notice that he was a little exceeded of drink. He took him of the shoulder and shook Paul like popes bag.

- Come, take a drink with us ò

Alexandra looked at him and gave a face return to the meddlesome visitor, not to give opportunities.

- Paul, you obtained a barbarian company, the evicted ones of the party, now yes I go away, a pleasure to met you, enjoy the night . and, with a gesture of scorn mixed with a perfidious smile, Alexandra left his glass and turned back.

While she was going away, his beautiful and showy outline was accompanied by a figure of spectral smoke. Nothing more frustrating, distressing and desolating than a beautiful girl turning back his admirers with the desire to continue the night with her.

Several remained open-mouthed.

Paul felt slightly annoying, bent the head and shook it denying the situation, again the same, whenever it was appearing a nice girl was never happening to him.

He thought that he had to speak with Hellen, perhaps he would have an opportunity. He relaxed and accommodating everything what it had between its hands he moved inside the lounge to look at her.

She saw her with the boy that she liked.

He was taking her from the shoulder and they were in lively chat with other persons of the party, between whom, now, Alexandra was. The boy was the favorite of all the girls, the typical one %be face of the group+. High stature, of blue eyes and fair-haired hair it was attracting attention immediate on the young ladyes and he was always quite accompanied.

They, neither slow nor lazy, were straining and competing between themselves for his company.

Paul was not on good terms with the people who was with Hellen and he warned that it would not be well received if it was approaching this group.

He got depressed, felt bad, upset. His conversation with the young woman had ended without concluding anything, it was alone, without the bread and without the cake.

Perhaps, finally, it would be adapted to forget them and to drink something, this would make support better the frustration. He felt that he was a loser.

Gino approached.

- Paul: What happened with Alexandra?

- Nothing happened

- I'm sorry, what a sorrow, is she the most beautiful girl of the party, all they ask about her.

Gino grieved since he had in good esteem Paul and went forward since it had matters to be attended.

In the door Gino was saying goodbye of some relatives who had been earlier. As good Italians, the familiar meetings were never short and the farewells were long.

In the end they moved back and remained only his friends.

So Paul continued the rest of the meeting drinking along with other drunkards: beer, whisky and who knows what other mixtures, grasses and other chemical experiments of the night.

In full dawn, one of the boys went to a bedroom and threw itself unconscious on a covered sacks bed. Other, which had taken too much, vomited everything in a toilet.

The party, to enter at dawn, was joining a tremendous lack of control. In the middle of the living, Gino, he was discussing with one of the friends of Hellene and, shouting to everything what could with his mixed Italian and Spanish, warned that

someone had stolen a wallet of one of the portfolios of the girls. Scarcely it was heard since the music was to big volume.

Gino approached where Michael and Nicholas were.

-Did you see that couple that was a few minutes? . Said Nicolas.

-Gatecrashers . Michael replied . would not surprised me that they had toiled something.

Gino was surprised, did not react, the problem had taken him by surprised, was frightened. He saw the front door semiopen and with the anxiety of the fright it closed it.

- Very well, the party ended - he shouted of the nerves - this is a total disaster, my department is not a whorehouse - it was mumbling while it was finishing the musician.

This way, and in more or less tidy form, they all began to move back.

Paul was slightly sick and he was one of the last ones in going out.

Gino looked at it:

- Are you well?: do you go for your house?

- Yes.

- I notice you rebadly: is it for the blonde?

- Not, it is for Hellene, I thought that he could arrange something with her this night and it was not like that.

- Good but think that if it did not happen is why she is not for you, also spent something like that to me not long ago.

- Yes sure

- But tell me: this way are you going to go out?, scarcely you have opened your eyes: is there nobody who accompanies you or takes you?

- But they all went away already, leave ò

Distracted he went to the elevator and, on having approached, Hellen entered together with its group of friends and closed in the face the sliding door of the elevator. He was considered aforesaid, sighed and supported the head on the wall moving it slightly how doing a denial gesture.

They all were in the street and the department remained completely empty, dirty and untidy, as if Atila and its Huns' army had happened round there.

Seeing this spectacle, only, relieved and sad, Gino, he sat down on the apartment, grabbed his head and lay back on a wall near the door. He was observing the spectacle that his pals had left.

In the street, Paul, was listening that while a group was discussing doing plans to continue the night at a nightclub in Recoleta, others were raised to the cars. It took the keys of his and Hellen it got in someone. This was the last time that saw the young woman.

He was handling for the streets of Palermo, he felt that the way that it was taking was becoming endless, longer and longer, it was looking like a continuation of the holiday in which it had been. With enormous sadness he knew that it would not see never again that beautiful and brilliant girl who had known in its happy and entertaining years of university. He remembered when he knew her, his beautiful garment and hairstyle and the first words that were said. In these things Paul always had an extraordinary memory, they had presented it to themselves for a friend together, but she always pushed him back inclusive like a friend.

He knew that it had to continue and he felt enormous sadness and a big gap inside himself, wanted to cry, but pain was already dry of so much, in the end he had already got accustomed to him.

He thought also about that slim blonde who made him forget for a moment his love for Hellen, perhaps the meeting with Alexandra such a beautiful and interesting woman turned out to be a fortuitous meeting and finally it occurred to him what Gino said to him, that perhaps she, Alexandra, was not the girl for him. He pondered inside himself, and concluded that the hope is the last thing that gets lost and felt in its heart a sad joy, happiness mixed with bitterness.

He could barely keep his eyes opened and had to be alert for a vehicle ahead on the right at high speed.

Scarcely he could have his eyes opened and alert should have put itself for a vehicle that was going forward for the right at high speed. Of sports lines, red color and polarized glasses, it spent so rapidly that the only thing that he could feel was the noise of the engine and, for worse, the gases of leakage that were entering the window finally would land in its lungs. As soon as the vehicle surpassed it, it moved towards the left and closed the way overcoming it. Instinctively it moved the frill, lost the control and hit, at low speed, a tree.

For the noise there approached a police car that was nearby, braked, and some officials went down. One of them decided to check the state of the vehicle and its occupant. Other, observing the scene, trying to look witnesses perceived a sound and the shade of a cat sliding between trees and roofs.

But the street was completely empty, there were neither persons nor vehicles, and a soft wind, unusually coldly, it began to move the sheets of the trees provoking a

strange murmur between them, as if the branches began to talk between themselves. The lights of the public lighting began ringing and losing force for some flaw, what a ghostly aspect was awarding him to the scene.

- This I do not like anything - he said one of them.

Other increased the lights of the vehicle to compensate the absence of light, the officials felt a deep chill.

They called at once to an ambulance. It took a few minutes.

The nurses observed that he had no pulse and placed him at once in the tabla that they put in the soil.

- He made a stop . the doctor affirmed with worry.

They decided to begin to do cardio-pulmonary resuscitation to him. They accommodated a cloth on the chin and did respiration mouth to him to mouth along with the corresponding massage. One of them suggested that then, if result was not giving, they would practise an electrical shock on him. After a few minutes they realized that it did not need and he recovered the pulse.

The lights of the public system of illumination had stopped ringing and they began to illuminate normally.

- One of the officials said him to other:

- What stranger: What will be happening with the lights?

- Do not be superstitious, do not pay attention.

They put an orthopedic neck and took it to hospital.

They checked the vehicle and with the information they were for its proprietor, that it was Grace. She was his tutor, since he had lost many years ago their parents.

She was a woman, of kind character, she took over, since she knew all the difficulties that he had had in the life.

She approached hurriedly in a taxi to the hospital where Paul was hospitalized. She quarreled in the entry table and she was towards the guard room.

She crossed with the chief of this area. He attended to her and led it up her to the room where Paul was. And there he informed her:

- Lady, the boy is unconscious, but stable. It had a strike, it has also some blows in the head. His state is delicate and we have him under observation.

- And what will they do then?

- Now we are going to derive him to some room or if you prefer to some private hospital. Does him have social work?

- Yes, - she answered.

The nurses took it to a private quarter and she accompanied them.

The hospital was looking like a labyrinth between trees, the different buildings and the bad lighting. She felt lost, as if it was never going to find the exit. There she tried not to stumble or not to collide with the pipes of oxygen that were distributed everywhere in the corridors.

She decided to remain the rest of the night and she called Giselle to tell him the innovations.

She, Paul cousin, would come later and one would be in charge of doing the roles to decide its transfer or not.

They came to the room. She did not had place to sit down.

He looked in another part for one chair, when she found it, returned, it was dirty and broken, but it was enough for the use that would give to her. She accommodated his sack and portfolio. The place was run down and it was not anything nice to be in that place. The cold and the bad light were giving a mysterious sensation.

She remained a few minutes pondering, stopping in the windows and she was distressed remembering that Paul parents had died in a car accident.

Perhaps it was a species of karma that was chasing him and perhaps this time would not go out well ended. She doubted what to do. She touched his hand and one pressed it.

She was a devotee of the Virgin, she looked for a rosary that it had in its portfolio, leaned it on its breast, invoked the help of the Virgin and prayed for the health of Paul.

CHAPTER 2:

THE MEETING WITH DANTE

Pablo was joining slowly of the soil and felt that the body was weighing him. He try to go out of the drowsiness that he was perceiving and of the annoying sensation of sleep that was dominating him. He was empowering of him a big disorientation.

Around him only it discerned stones, big rocks, and a dry and naked soil, the semidarkness was covering everything, neither the sky nor the ground were showing colors but shades and different gray tones. Nearby a thick forest was waiting for him.

He could only listen to the silence, the air was dense and cold, there was neither breeze nor any wind. The solitude and the absence of life seemed omnipresent. He saw its thin clock of needles and metallic mesh, he was surprised even more, all the indicators were stopped and mysteriously it was marking the two of the morning, he struck it and shook its hand trying to start it but it was useless.

Paul moved around him looking for something familiar in this scene, tried to remember where it was having been earlier. He thought about the party.

What do I do here, he said to himself?: further away perhaps?: the sky?: the hell?: or simply is it a question of a sleep of without being able to go out?+. He did not find answers inside himself. The place had not any sense. He looked with his sight for a reference point, something that allowed him to be faced, the sun or some star

probably, but it did not manage to discern anything in the sky, the place was shaded and monotonous.

He began to worry, felt godforsaken, fearfully, confused, something like that had never imagined, but being he an active person did not despair. He rested on a tree and pondered. Finally he fell down in the account of which he had to find someone who could answered him where he was and this way he decided that the best thing, instead of continuing being sorry, was to choose a way, wherever it lead him. He took a small footpath that was opening to itself between the thickness that was surrounding it, the only one that existed in this inhospitable scenery. The hours happened, it lost the account of them, perhaps it would have walked during the whole night. He did not know it safely, had no answers. He did not know in what direction it was going, everything was not mattering, if it was north or south, this or a west.

It saw from afar a mount.

He observed a tenuous light that was covering it and sat down on a rusty trunk to be rested to recapture forces.

He took his time and decided that it had to raise it. Perhaps from there it would have a finished panorama with what it was surrounding it. If this place was the sky or the hell would be the least important thing, the worst thing it was the anxiety to the unknown thing.

With difficulty he began to rise, the area was difficult and eventful. He saw old , dry tress and someones without life. He was observing thoroughly where he was walking. In the middle of all this silence, he listened to a strange noise.

Something paid its attention, could not observe with clarity, looked for a space to see better. Immediately it discerned an animal: a lion was observing him. Paul was scared, dominated its fear and, calmly, he realized that the animal was no lurking so he decided to continue its way without beginning to run. The beast that was nearby joined and, slowly, it began to follow him.

Already close to the top, he listened to the noise of a small ounce or panther that was in the distance moving between a few old trunks. It watched him and Paul realized. The look of the animal was threatening, it did the proper caterwauling of the felines and moved away with rapidity.

Paul, who was already walking, realized the local danger although the animals never unmelted fear and, if he was already not in the world of the alive ones, less than less.

On having come to the highest point of the hill, he divided a distant dawn, the sky was blunting its first colors, the yellow one and the celestial one they were mixed harmoniously in the horizon. He felt the beams of the sun and something of its heat in the skin encouraged him. He had achieved a small victory, and with her also the hope. He closed the eyes and enjoyed in a long moment of the bath of the first beams of Febo.

He turned the body and saw in the distance, hill below, a figure that could not distinguish clearly. It was going towards him, he felt mitigation and hope, remained calm, relaxed, perhaps this person who was approaching might help him to go out of the strange place in which he was.

On having approached, it became more visible. The aspect was high and skinny, of advanced but indefinite age, of white skin, big and aquiline nose, with an aged

and kind look. It was taking a hood that hid him as he was falling down for the back and was covering the ears. The outfit, of red color, was covering it from the neck up to the feet, leaving the visible sleeves. Below, in the legs, it was taking a few pants similar to the wedges that were of the same tone, with smooth wooden shoes and without blocks. Also it was supporting a book between its hands, an abundant book in sheets, seemed ancient of yellowish color and worn-out lid. The volume neither had role sheets it nor was written by a printing but by the hands of any old scribe. Paul descended from the top and they met on the halfway.

The figure is presented:

- My name is Dante, of Italy I am and I come on behalf of the Virgin to help you ð
He looked at it astonished, upside-down. He had seen rare things in his life, but never a person dressed that way. On having spoken with pronounced Italian accent to him, it caused him friendliness, something of grace and smiled.

- My name is Paul. Dante did you say? It me sounds, but I cannot remember where from, I am disoriented, and have a good headache, some blow perhaps.

There was a moment of silence, Paul lowered the look and pondered the questions that he wanted to ask to him:

- In the name of the Virgin, did you say?

- Yes, someone invoked his help, and she called me to be his mediator and your guide.

- How strange. Dante, what is this place?

- It is a place on the halfway between the earthly world and the hell. Do you feel good?

- More or less, I am lulled how, I do not very want to think and do not quite awake, in fact, do not understand anything from what it is going on. I am completely confused, a moment ago, while he was handling believe that I collided with the vehicle and do not remember another thing. This place only causes me shakes.

- It is not to be missed.

- You know what is going on?: Do you have any explanation?

- I realize that you are bilocated, i did not expect this.

- And what is this?

- You are involuntarily in two places at the same time, your body and your soul are in different spaces.

- But and how can it be?

- This is what it is necessary to find out.

- Apart I have a small problem, I saw a few animals close and I believe that they are following me.

- Yes, they are your vices that beset you. And when they join they become more dangerous.

- And what can I do then?

- Come with me and perhaps with help of the Grace let's be able to solve this mystery, someone who knows better, from another angle, the gift of ubiquity or the phenomenon that it brought to you even here.

- It is well, I go next to you where you continue.

Both were started.

Pablo saw another animal, a wolf. It was distinctly weak. It stumbled with some rocks and fell down to the soil.

- Better watch when you walk, this place is dangerous.

They left that dark forest and they were descending. The animals that Paul had seen earlier, that escorted it during a big stretch, now they were falling behind.

Enormous rocks began to appear and he observed, how, of the cracks, there were going out seams of different tones of green. He supported his fingers on the rocks and, feeling, it noticed that they were of sulfur.

- Where are we, Dante?

- Close to Jerusalem, but there we do not have to go, the person for that we look is in another part. There in this city, he walked long ago.

Paul remained quiet, anticipated that it was better not to ask. It gave him cold and played his arms to provide some warm. The way became long and began feeling the fatigue.

They came to a enormous door of wood that Paul touched. Due to the dark of the aspect and the mold that it had it was resembling very ancient, of a noble, heavy wood lodged in the rock. It had an enormous round and golden handle, with an enormous round ring that was hanging by her, which are used well to enter or to beat. The strong smell of moisture that it was generating was giving the sensation of those doors that keep something and that is never necessary to open them ò

- Do not strike the door . Dante added to him.

Then he observed in the lintel an enormous inscription that he was saying:

*Ò PER ME SI VA NE LA CITTA DOLENTE, PER ME SI VA NE L' ETTERNO
DOLORE, PER ME SI VA TRA LA PERDUTA GENTE.*

*GIUSTIZIA MOSSE IL MIO ALTO FATTORE: FACEMI LA DIVINA
PODESTATE, LA SOMMA SAPIENZA E 'L PRIMO AMORE.*

*DINANZI A ME NON FUOR COSE CREATE SE NON ETTERNE, E IO
ETTERNO DURO. LASCIATE OGNE SPERANZA, VOI CH' INTRATE"*

He looked, felt fear and worried it babbled:

- Dante do you know this place?
- Yes, of course, I long ago i went through for this door.
- What means that?

And Dante translated for him what was meaning the inscription:

- Around here enter the city of the pain, for me it falls into the abyss, for me is going to people who lost herself, the justice, the knowledge and the love of my author was severe and its power reaches all. In front of me the eternal things were created and I eternally hard. Those who pass through here leave all hope+

Later it added:

- Here, there enter the people who got lost in the life, those that being able to discern clearly between the Good and evil, chose the last thing. Those who here enter have no comeback, which here purge its sorrow are the vicious men, this is the place of the Hate and the Suffering. It is the door that he leads to the Hell, it is a dangerous place ò

- Do we have to go here?
- Not, we go on the other hand, have to go towards the Purgatory.

They took another way and entered a cavern following a small creek where they went down.

After a long stretch, they came to the South hemisphere, which is the hemisphere of the waters. They saw a clarity at the end of the cavern.

The panorama made him surprised. It was night, almost at dawn. From the height in which they were, thanks to the moonlight the enormous spectacle was turning out to be finished. The stars were shining across the dark carpet of the sky with an extraordinary clearness. There was discerning the star Venus and four stars that form the constellation of the Cross of the South that also there represent the cardinal virtues taught by the philosopher and wise person Greek Aristotle. In the distance, a long beach was opening with thin white sand, dunes, small shrubs and, finally, a sea that was forming a big downspout.

The sea was looking like a funnel. And it was forming in the center an enormous island that was culminating in a huge promontory. The enormous mountain of conical form had concentric circles, called also terraces, and it was so high that it was coming up to the clouds. There was observed on the surface a footpath that was rising for the rings. The summit was truncated, and its top was lodging clouds in the shape of crown illuminated by a mysterious light. There lies the Paradise and it the seat of the Divinity.

Between the sea and the adjacent ground, a gigantic port provided with an enormous lighthouse, was guiding to the ships that were gaining access or were going out of him. A series of dams was bordering, like a semicircle, the interior of the port for protection of thunderstorms and swells. In him were numerous stinky ships and in the sea an ancient ship was approaching, sparring, towards the coast.

Both felt the soft breeze that was coming from this vast sea. Pablo noticed that Dante was thoughtful.

- What do you think? . Paul asked.

- this place changed very much from the last time that I was.

- what so rare place . the young man insisted.

- We already spend the Hell, which is the place of the lost ones, of the vicious ones and this enormous mountain that you see is the Purgatory, which are there are the penitents and, in contrast to the previous ones, not lost the hope, at the end of the mountain there are the elected ones, which are what they are in the celestial spheres, . pointed out with its hand Dante.

- And what is this, the Purgatory?

- There come to this mountain the souls that must be purified to gain access to the Paradise.

The beach was wide and near it stood tall and big cliffs and a few enormous rocks were arising of between the sand.

- Dante: and these stars?

- There are Venus, the most important constellation of the south hemisphere, four small stars symbolize four cardinal virtues or Aristotélicas that mean the Temperance, the Fortitude, the Justice, the Prudence.

They decided to go down the cliff towards the beach, Dante, who already had a local knowledge, moved for on some rocks and guided Paul. He stretched a hand. And this way being helped mutually and with an agile jump they came towards a narrow footpath that was between the steep rocks. They arrive safe to the coast.

On having come, Paul asked Dante to rest on one of the rocks.

On having sat down, they observed the wide and serene sea and in the put up side the enormous mount with concentric rings. The sea, was always bringing his sweet memories of its childhood to Paul. For him, it was a sign of peace, an infinity and

serenity.

-The sea has form of funnel, catches my attention.

- When the devil fell down of the sky after the revolt against God, an enormous hole formed and water that occupied it they formed this sea . Dante taught.

That strange mountain attracted attention of Paul, who would inhabit this ~~%~~terra incognita, he thought inside himself, and asked Dante what was that place, and he, with its hand, began to describe the rings of the mount and what each one was meaning.

- My book . added to him Dante - describes with accuracy this incredible place, when I had your age I knew it. The Purgatory has nine rings in total. The first one is the antipurgatory, it is for the souls of the just persons that they were not saved, which turned into last moment. The second one is reserved for the soberbs ones, the third one is for the envious ones, the quarter for the irate ones, the fifth one for the lazy ones, the sixth one for the greedy ones, the seventh one for the candy lovers, the eighth one for the lustful ones and, finally, the ninth one is the last one and there the Paradise begins.

- And is it there where there is the one who can help us?

- Yes, of course . answered Dante.

When he finished his explanation, he asked him, for curiosity, for the book that it was taking. It took it between its hands, looked at the covers, it it turned round, saw it, noticed that it was very strange, with drawings, and engravings. It seemed manuscript and very ancient.

- it is an incunabulum - Dante explained.

- Of what is about these book?

- It is a comedy.
- I believe that I know something but the memory trumps me: What is exactly?
- A comedy is a work with a happy end, in contrast to the tragedy that ends badly.
- I understand, but the truth, however much I want, am not in conditions to read it - and feeling slightly disorientated he returned it to himself.

They spent several hours and recovered forces. The tide began to rise slowly, the sea tried, with its waves, to embrace the gigantic rock. If they were remaining there, of course, they would remain surrounded by this unknown sea.

- We cannot lose time, have to go towards the Paradise, where the Grace is, but earlier we must rise, necessarily, for the Purgatory, there between God and its Angels we will find the answers to this mystery. For the mountain there is a footpath, which begins for the beach and ends in the top, which is where this - Dante added the Paradise.

It was beginning dawning, the sun began to sprout behind the enormous mountain and, slowly, the horizon began to show a light white color and then the yellow color and the orange one arose.

The colors of that place began to become clearer, with the dawn there became visible the way distinguished by Dante who, from a part of the beach, was rising towards the Promontory.

They decided to go there after that moment of rest.

The tide kept on rising and Paul approached the water to freshen up and to feel more relaxed thinking that, perhaps, the worst thing had happened. He perceived that he could trust in Dante.

While he was freshening up he thought that it would be a good idea to have some memory of that place, perhaps everything would end well and it would be very useful to be provided with some memory for the whole life.

He looked for some snails, thought to take the murmur of that mysterious sea, perhaps ultimately a beautiful ashtray would be done. It chose the nicest, which were entire, which had more pretty form, those of more alive color, doubted, chose a pair and cleaned them of its adhesions. It tried to dry them with a handkerchief that it was taking. He filled his pockets.

Dante who was observing him worried, called him.

- Do you want to take a souvenir of this place?

- Is there something wrong?

Dante laughed and moved the head, perhaps he knew something that Paul was ignoring.

- Not, for nothing.

And clapping to Paul in the back they continued the march.

The way became long, from the high seemed short and easy. As they approached, of background, they saw a boat that the people were transporting, it was coming closer with serenity. The persons were dressed in target of the feet to the head.

Behind everything, someone was handling the rudder. When Dante and Paul cheered up, the boat ran aground.

The persons who went down the ship observed with curiosity Paul. They were many. Its garments were seeming completely white and it was covering them from the head, where the garment was forming a hood to them, up to the feet. They were walking forming several lines, slowly, in silence and in extremely tidy form. Few ones touched Paul. Some looks were completely lost. He remained surprised and curious. The footpath that was wide on the beach, it began to become narrower since, slowly, it began to border on the rocks of the mountain.

- Where do you climb? . Pablo asked with curiosity to the souls that were rising for the footpath.

He did not obtain answer, and continued looking as they were continuing in silence.

- Dante: What happens to these people?

- The fact is that you are still alive, on the other hand they, they have left the earthly life and on their way to Purgatory.

They continued behind the souls to rise for the mountain. To its foot, a figure was watching the ascent of the souls. Suddenly he observed them. Approached them.

- Marco Catón - Dante said as greeting.

- Dante, old friend, what is new here? In what can I help you?

As they shook hands, Paul turned his sight to the way that they had done, and saw how the tide had blocked the way. There was no possible comeback, he warned then.

- I it found the lost boy, it is involuntarily bilocated, we need to climb to the Purgatori, in the Paradise we may have an answer.

Caton, he observed them missed.

- The boy is evident that he is still alive.

Paul looked at Dante, he was surprised that he answered that way, as if he should know something.

- How does he know it? . Paul asked.

- Note that you are the only one with shadow. The souls that already left this life do not have it.

Pablo realized that Dante was right and remained astonished.

- Dante - said the distant figure and added - you cannot continue this way that would take them up to the Grace.

He wore a white dress and a garment with a wide purple border around the sleeves, shorts to the knees and a few sandals as shoes.

- What can we do? . Dante asked him.

Cato remained thoughtful. He doubted.

- Staying here cannot, I am curious, went through hell? . Cato asked.

- Not, it was not necessary . Dante affirmed.

- It is necessary to take a decision. Remain here, this is very rare, I will ask to come another person who has authority in this matter . answered Cato.

Cato withdrew some meters from himself, went towards an Angel that was on the foot of the Antepurgatorio, the First Ring, and they talked between themselves.

And the Angel ascended the mountain.

Who is him?

- He is the guard of this beach, he watches that all the souls rise to the Purgatory, he was an ancient Roman pretor.

- For whom do we have to wait? - Pablo asked.

- I do not have an answer . but we are going to have to wait.

A long time happened. The two were sitting on the sand and were speaking between themselves. To small moment there lowered a man who was taking two keys in its garment, a gilthead, of gold, and the gray one, of silver.

- Hello Dante . the bearer of the keys greeted.

- Paul presented you Simon Peter . that this way was calling.

- Hello my name is Paul, gladly.

- For me also. You can call me Peter.

- Peter, the young man is bilocated . Dante announced.

- Certainly, that's why they cannot continue somewhere here, but: how did you come then? . he said this speaking to Paul.

- I had an accident with the car and somehow I woke up in a shaded forest and after traveling a stretch, I was in this new place for me.

- The bilocation is involuntary, I had to tell to him what is and I was lost it in a forest of the underworld - Dante continued.

- I understand, it is preternatural of that time and the source that caused it, probably, is in the earth - kept on saying Peter - clarify me: did anything happen especially before you had the accident?

- I do not remember anything especially, quite normal, I was with my friends in a graduation party. I admit that I took enough drinks but I do not believe that the alcohol has these effects.

There was a long silence, Peter placed one of the hands under its head and pondered. Paul felt the heat of the first beams of this morning, the sun was going out behind the enormous Promontory.

- What a mystery . Dante said.

- It is like a charm . Paul affirmed.

- Not . Dante continued . this is another thing.

- It is very strange, a mystery, but something is sure, you have to turn somehow to the earthly world to find where the source is and to return to the normality. Here we cannot do anything for you. Of course when you are there the origin of the bilocation is going to appear before you with clarity . Peter answered.

- I cannot accompany him up to the earthly world with this form and alone what is going to do?, it is not prepared, is not in grace, when I found it a few beasts were chasing him perhaps there is some plan over him, remember that the bilocation are a prediction or imply a plan . Dante said.

- It is true . Peter confirmed.

A break was done.

- Alone or accompanied, I go away, I do not like this place for anything . Paul said with determined voice.

- Everything begins with an election . Dante said.

- Perhaps I could help him. What do you want Paul?

- I do not know what way to take, but if you can hel me gladly I will accept it.

- Then together we are going to quarrel what the source of your bilocation is - Peter added.

- Then it is decided - Dante finished - have you luck, you are going to need it.

And Dante put his hand on Paul's shoulder.

- Thank you . this one said.

- Do we go? - Peter suggested.

Both went towards the Port. They had to look for a ship that was going out as soon as possible. Marco Cato approached Dante and both began a chat.

- The destination of the boy is uncertain . Cato said.

- This way it is, like me when I was young, and now he is going to need the whole possible help . Dante answered.

Both looked like allowing to make out that they two would not be alone during that mission.

They walked along the footpath, and then along a series of wharves and, while they were doing it, they were feeling the noise of the old wood on that they were treading. Paul walked carefully looking at every place.

They saw movement in one of the ships. They asked. They had orders to set off.

The boat was of wood, it was taking wide sails and a showy decoration.

The ship was alike an ancient Roman galley, with oars and wide sails and with the symbol of the eagle of this time in them. In the bow there was drawn an enormous eye of Horus, ancient Egyptian God, symbol used commonly in the ships of the antiquity. In the Egyptian mythology Horus it was a good luck symbol.

They made themselves comfortable on the covering. They did it of a such way of receiving the beams of the sun that they were illuminating this fresh morning.

He looked at the horizon, thought about what it had left behind and, for especially, he felt the first heat of the morning. With anxiety he realized that its life could not go towards the past therefore only it was reducing to him to go forward. %To flee

forward; perhaps this was the phrase that more was synthesizing this moment, he thought.

And he remembered of a special moment, of what his friend Gino had said to him on Hellen, that perhaps nothing had happened with her because they were not one for other. As suggesting that it would have to have self-assurance and not to spend the life to him recalling things that had no arrangement. He took conscience of which the rest of his life could not pass longing for what was never and now more that it never had to have the certainty of which it had to avoid an enormous problem be as it is. The longed love and the anxiety to the unknown were its strongest feelings and those that of course would accompany it until the end of its way.

Pedro asked Eneas to take them to the earthly world.

Eneas looked at him and answered:

- This goes against the rules, we never take living souls towards another plane.
- I know it - Pedro added.
- We are going to leave them somewhere close as we can, it is a risk.
- Why a risk? - Paul said looking at Eneas.
- Did you say to him, Peter? - the Driver added.
- I did not say anything to him.

Paul observed missed the situation.

- You take the risk of remaining caught between this world and the other.
- Something like that but this is better than nothing - added Paul, who felt very distressed, he looked at the sides and gave a small blow to the wood, but he decided that it had to run the risk.

- Everything is going to go out well - continued Peter - I do not believe that you are here by chance.

Paul moved the head and agreed.

The boat was almost empty. Eneas began giving the orders to begin the maneuvers.

The ship set sail anchors, the sails opened. The oars spread, then, it took impulse and, slowly, the maneuvers began to leave the Port.

Paul felt a strong sea breeze and appreciated its cold. He tried to keep warm.

Dante from the beach, continued looking at them. Cato moved back to continue with his work.

- Paul, they are greeting you, - Pedro warned him touching his shoulder.

He turned towards the bow. Dante greeted them with the hand.

The same did Paul, who continued looking for himself fixedly at the gigantic Promontory and the souls that one to one and in mysterious form they were raising for him. The ship that was going out of the port began maneuvering to avoid other ships, which were entering taking with it other spirits in the middle of the dangerous currents of this sea.

Pablo wanted to observe what other ships were carrying. But Peter advised him not to look.

This way he did it, lowered the head looked at his full pockets and, to relax, Paul began to play with the snails, observed its strange colors and forms. It put one on its ear to feel the noise of the sea.

For a moment he managed to forget all its problems.

- Where did you obtain them? . Peter asked him.

- in the beach, I hope that they should serve to me for something.

- I think not.

Peter smiled.

- Are we going to come insurances?

- Yes, Eneas leads this ship, he is a good navigator.

- Who is he?

- He is an ancient inhabitant of Troy, he is a friend of the teacher of Dante, Virgilio.

- They all are known here, it seems.

- Certainly, we know each other for time.

The Promontory slowly began to be getting smaller, the persons were not differing and it was already a half a morning. And Paul wondered himself what would wait for him further on. He returned on its ancient thoughts like a repetitive obsession, repeatedly trying to find some answer or some logical reasoning.

But something for him was clear, its life would not be already the same and nothing from this moment was sure.

To the moment, a dense and cold fog covered everything.

CHAPTER 3:

TEMPERANCE

The boat took them on this big sea, the water was blue, a deep one blue turquoise. But there was no surf, he felt the cold and the breath of Paul became vapor in the air.

They entered a thick fog that was covering everything, the time seemed immobile and endless. Only there was silence.

Eneas, the captain of the ship, approached Peter and asked him why he needed to go to the earthly world. Peter, since he could, explained the problem to him. Eneas complained for Paul's situation.

- If they could have risen for the Promontory, the Divine Grace would have solved the problem to them . Eneas added.

- Yes, but since the boy is bilocated, we could not climb, so there was no another alternative to go towards another side and to look for the source.

- I understand, it is strange, something like that had never happened to me. Do I have to leave the two? . Eneas asked.

- Yes . Peter answered.

The mist began to stay slowly behind. Paul saw a wood floating on the water, did an effort to stretch and to take it. But it could not.

There was heard the flight of a bird that was made see.

- It looks like a gull - he observed insecurely.

- It is a heron, boy - Eneas informed him.

Paul noticed that its clock had worked again. He was glad to not have thrown it.

- My clock began to walk again, when i can i put in hours . notice Peter and as he could get started polish.

- It is because we are already in the earthly world . the friend remembered him.

An angel informed Eneas that, in spite of the tenuous haze, they had managed to discern in the horizon a shore and, more behind, a dense grove.

Eneas used an ancient largavista and took note. The boat, slowly it reduced the speed until finally it stopped.

When the haze vanished, they all marveled on having seen the enormous mountains that were surrounding them. The sun was forming a rainbow on the covered with snow summits. They had come to a lake.

- Peter, there is a beach nearby, we have to take them in a boat, the ship can run aground . Eneas warned.

This way they approached in a small boat with two oars. Eneas accompanied them, rowing also, up to finding a gray beach of volcanic sand.

When they arrived Peter, he was grateful to him for the trip to Eneas and the three said goodbye. With a push the captain began the maneuvers to return.

- That they are very fine . Eneas wished them and he greeted them energetically with the hand. Two friends remained static opposite to the horizon and with surprise they observed how the ship was disappearing in this mysterious mist.

- Were you nervous?, - inquirió its friend with condescension.

- A little, - confirmed the aforesaid one.

They were in a cold, humid forest and began to walk.

- Where are we Peter?

- I do not know, we have to find out it.

Paul felt the noise of some vehicles and continued in direction of the same one. He saw further away a route, but a fencing cut the step. He gave step backwards.

- It is quite wire-fenced.

- Let's continue for the rim of the lake.

Covering the place they noticed a dirt road and began to leave the beach to penetrate into a hillside that was running for the cold forest.

While they were walking towards an uncertain destination, they felt that the massifs of lavender, more other inserted Alpine flowers on the foot of the wooden houses, were perfuming the trip along with the singing of the birds.

Raúl was a small landowner of the area that reached a better to economic move devoted to the agricultural development.

He was a tenacious man and he liked the hard work, he did not belong to those who were losing heart for the adversity or difficulties of the life.

Like many of those who were remaining without opportunities, he had moved of Buenos Aires with a small indemnification got for its work like manager of a company privatized at the beginning of 90 and, advised by a friend who was already living in the area, he decided to establish himself in the outskirts of Bariloche.

He was a tall, thin man, of brown complexion and hard features. Divorced, of medium-sized age and with a small son of whom he had decided to take charge since its wife had left them.

That morning Raúl was waiting for a ranger of the area. He had called him because he needed its experience since he was dedicated, with great effort, to the production of cheeses of goat and, as in the course of last months there were desapeared some animals, he was feeling worried.

The rangers came in a van. Raúl observed them from the window of the house while it was taking a tea in company of its son.

They approached the gate, presented before themselves and he let them pass.

After the rigor greetings, he led them up to its garage. He commented to them on the problem and that there had a big ice-cream maker where he was keeping the body of an animal of his who had found died in the previous days.

The minder pondered. The refrigeration had avoided the rapid decomposition of the body. He checked thoroughly and, especially, the bites that it had received.

The assistant, who was possessing less experience, he was observing the situation and was taking some notes.

- Do you have water to clean my hands? . the official asked him.

- Yes, of course, over here. What do you think?

- It is some predator of the area . he said the ranger of major status, knowing of the problems of that place.

- What type of animal?

- A canid, a wild dog says, there are many somewhere here, but this is not frequent.

Raúl felt very annoying, thought that it would have to end with all the local dogs.

Perhaps the best thing was to throw meat poisoned to define the problem, he said as thinking aloud.

- I do not advise it to you, you can have problems.

Another ranger told:

- Also you have the park nearby, they can be enclosed, the dogs of some neighbor of the area or of the hunters who frequent the place, remember that is their period - they warned him finally almost to the unison.

The goats often were escaping to the bordering areas to look for the best grasslands and he knew it.

He remained quiet.

- Can lead me to the place where you found the last one?

- Follow me - specified Raúl.

Upon arrival, they were analyzing the area, the mountains, the ways, the accesses, the places of pasture and the water availability. The ranger looked, also, tracks, trail, indications. He found some, but despite its experience it could not be sure.

- I am going to do a report, meanwhile it is better to warn the neighbors - the dismayed minder said while he was looking for the cell phone.

- I cannot lose another animal, I am with economic problems.

- Yes, but do not take hurried decisions.

- What do we do then?

- For the time being not at all, leave. We have to keep on checking. As soon as we have more news we call you sure it is not going to be a problem difficult to resolve.

The rangers spoke between themselves and gave for the work of this day completed and both went towards the entry.

Raúl did not stay for anything similarly, thought that they had to give him an immediate solution to its problems. Without saying any more words, in kind form, but very bad-tempered he accompanied them.

He had his temperament. He knew it, hated the bureaucracy, the same one that never solved the problems. It was used to not being provided with the help of anybody, after all, he was thinking, could only counted on himself.

Finally he decided that the best thing would be to arm himself and to stretch a pitfall to these animals. He wondered where it would have left its ancient fighter shotgun. Of course in the attic, this was the surest place. He moved towards there and, after several hours, he managed to locate the old and rusty shotgun that he had accommodated in the last trunk, he never thought that he might need it again. He returned to the living of its house, polished it, he took luster, checked the mechanisms and noticed that it was unloaded, returned to the attic to look for the ammunitions but only it saw the empty boxes.

He decided that it had to be supplied of cartridges, the best thing would be to go up to the most nearby store.

It made itself comfortable and hurried the tea.

In the living of its house he met that had not money for shopping and that morning he had to deliver merchandise in a hotel of the area. He decided that the first thing would be to finish his work and, help by the personnel, he loaded the van.

Finished the work of load of the merchandise, Raúl called his son and together they left.

In the hotel he received as of custom his pay and, not wanting to make him late to lunch, decided that the best thing would be to go fast to come to the store and to be supplied of ammunitions.

After a few hours the climate was changing, it was already neither cold nor humid. The sound of the birds and the cicadas, along with the soft wind that was moving the branches of the trees, they were preannouncing a day of high temperatures.

They walked several hours along a footpath that was developing in a moorland of groves and bushes. The time had become warm, typical of the summer, the sky was cleared, with some small clouds and with the very intense sun, this, added to the wind, was doing that uncomfortable gait was returning.

The footpath for which they were age of dry ground covered by small gray stones of volcanic origin. The vegetation of the surroundings was turning out to be low with a mountains horizon with frozen peaks.

There was running to the side of the route a creek that was giving, with its light noise, a freshness sensation in this oppressive climate.

The way at first was straight and, only sometimes, it was showing soft undulations until, suddenly, it presented a curve that was covered by the vegetation, so that it was possible only to see the first stretch.

Paul, at that moment, was absorbed and worried for the conversation that he had had, one day behind, with Dante and Peter, the last one, on having observed it, he asked him:

- Does anything happen to you?

- Not, nothing, I am remembering - the words him flew alone.

Paul repaired in a small animal, an armadillo. It was to many meters of distance, but sufficient, as to throw some object. He looked at the floor and, frustrated because it was not finding solution to its problems, he warned a stone that was fitting in the palm of the hand, took it and there looked at the animal thoroughly to do aim.

Peter was staying attentive to what its friend was doing. It touched him the hand and re-lit it:

- Some things we know how they start but not how they end, do not hurt uselessly.

Paul, dazzled, him answered:

- I do what I want.

Then he did a movement with the hand, turned the head over, thought it again and released the stone. It was not making sense to hurt for hurting.

Immediately they listened to the noise of a vehicle that was turning with rapidity for the route. Paul scarcely could turn the head trying to know where it was coming.

A vehicle spent all area 4X4 to their side, so fast, that left a mountain of dust that made the two cough.

Paul, after this happened, remained thoughtful, since it could have given the blow with a stone to the vehicle, who knows with what consequences.

- You were right - he ended up by saying absorbed.

The heat of the evening, as it was stifling, did that Paul, who was already beginning perspiring, suggest to Peter to go to the side of the way to freshen up with the water of the creek and to rest to the shade a few minutes.

Paul took off his shoes he was wearing and approached the current, the feet were wetted and, taking a little with the hands, the head freshened up. At this moment the face looked in the water and he remembered time scenes behind. He pondered thinking about the relation of the current events with what it had happened that problematic night during the celebration with its partners in Belgrano.

He observed that a group of fishermen was close, they were throwing in the creek its canes to go fishing and thought that he could put on time his clock. He asked them and with amiability they said to him the hour.

- Day Saturday, no?

- Today it is a Sunday, boy . they answered him.

This way Paul noticed that the trip with Dante had taken him at least one day and, definitely, it had lost the notion of the time.

He saw Peter leaned under a tree. He approached.

- I was thinking about what happened after the graduation holiday, but I do not find a tie with the current thing - Paul added and it took a shrub splinter and it was placed in the mouth, biting it.

- Have patience, the answers will come alone - Peter affirmed learnedly.

- Tell me, is there anything more apart from the holiday in which you were?

- A girl, a relation that never worked.

- You think on her?

- Often, but only it brings to me sadness.

Paul moved reluctantly the head and left in the soil what he had in the mouth.

- I understand . Peter answered him.

- But will this last very much? - the anxious friend continued while the topic of the bilocation was returning its head.

- That I cannot answer it to you, perhaps much or little, do not know, it depends on the circumstances, of how they are happening.

- I had never listened about this phenomenon. Is it frequent?

- Not for nothing, in fact it is, in extreme, rare.

- I looked, this safe, will be my worst year, - Paul moved the head trying to deny the situation and resigned himself.

He supported his hands on the floor and on having done it, felt that its pockets were empty. He looked for the snails that it had joined, only it extracted sand of between the seams.

- It had my snails and now only I have sand.

- I tried to say it to you but it seemed to me that it was useless, the objects that belong to the subtle world do not pass it.

- That a pity, I thought that they were going to serve to me as something.

A few minutes happened, then the clothes and the footwear made themselves comfortable.

- What do you want to do?, - inquired Peter while he was turning a dry sheet in the hand.

- I am nervous, I freshened up already, better we continue. No? - he asked, of some form, while it was showing doubts.

-Okay.

They returned to the footpath and saw a person who while he was approaching said to them:

- Sure that you are the only ones in several kilometers to the region, I stopped a moment in the way and I cannot start again the van, the vehicle probably is without batteries. Can you help me?

They looked and, after some doubts, they decided to assist him. After walking along a brief stretch full of kidlings hills they met the van. Inside her it was the son of Raúl, of approximately five years, impatient, was looking worried by the lens of behind. The child was curious, own of the intelligent boys. On having seen Paul, they looked with empathy and this way the two had left clear that they might take a good relation.

After observing the problem, they agreed to push. Raúl went to the frill and Paul, who was the youngest, decided to carry the biggest effort out and placed itself behind. He pushed with vehemence several meters, they took impulse until it started.

The work was unpleasant because the van was muddy and all ended a little dirty.

Raúl left on and fell.

He observed that Paul was perspired enough by the effort that had done and, looking at him, he grieved.

- I remained slightly dirty: no? - the young man said as assertion.

Been grateful and since he knew the area, he offered to take them up to the nearest next service station to hel Paul clean himself and, also, there was a small business of general branches to do some buys of the first need, for which they all joined.

After tackling the march, Paul lowered a window to take some air and, turning the body, he observed a weapon in the back, semihidden, between different boxes. He asked on her Raúl:

- Here it is unloaded and I have no ammunitions, exactly I am going to buy now, but give it to me, this way I do not lose it, here it is necessary to walk always armed
- he answered very surely of himself and of its reasons.

Raúl mentioned to them that it would do some buys for the small house where he was living and where he was devoting himself to the production of cheeses of goat. He added that he was carrying a weapon because in the area wild dogs had appeared lately and that these, they usually marauded in its areas and in those of the neighborhood. Sometimes they were attacking the cattle, the goats, the poultry and many other animals of the surroundings.

Also it added to them:

- I do not like the dogs, I have phobia to them, I had a bad experience and I never forgot it - he mentioned doing, on having finished the phrase, a displeasure gesture.

To few kilometers they met the service station that he had mentioned to them, of which one he was a client from its arrival to the place, it brought the vehicle over and parked while he was saying:

- Do you accompany me?

- I have to look for a bath . Paul answered.

While it was going forward he mentioned to them that the house where he was living would turn out to be prompt, but that it was difficult to come since the area was mountainous. The place was finding hill it arrives and he added that the

climate was usually hard, stifling in the daytime and much night cold. Raúl before going down the van, extracted of a drawer a towel.

- Use this towel . he offered.

Paul was grateful for it and, and getting off, his father thought that it was better to leave the child inside the van. Raúl who was possessing a distinctly obsessive personality, forgot to close with key thinking about the things that he needed to buy.

- If I do not see you, here we say goodbye . Raúl affirmed.

And this way they were greeted quickly. Paul looked very rapidly for a place where to wash himself, was full of dust. Peter accompanied him seeing that could need help.

On having stopped doing the election of the products, he continued chatting with the proprietor of the place, on what it had happened to them. As of custom the man knowing of the problems of the area, gave him a good advice, for wich he thanked him.

Meanwhile, Raúl's son saw a dog, of medium-sized size, of hard hair and celestial eyes, of dirty aspect and sad look, which it was poking between some garbage in search of some food. It happened close to the vehicle and the child, onlooker, observing it, opened the door of the van, called the dog. The animal, of easily scared character it looked at it with intrigue and went away. The child, thinking of playing, follow the animal.

After a some time Raúl returned to the van replete with boxes with merchandise and, them, on having stopped placing in the trunk, he met that the child was not.

He called him, but soon he realized that it was not close to the vehicle, worried, began to cover the surroundings of the place calling his son.

When Paul stopped cleaning himself, he met several persons of the area. Raúl told them the problem, both looked between themselves and decided to collaborate.

The proprietor of the store notified the police and, after a few minutes, the local authority appeared. They took note of the problem proceeding, immediately, to the search. They penetrated in the forest. The hours happened and there was no news.

Raúl, later, went to the most nearby police station to place the denunciation of the fact. They had looked for him the whole evening. But without results or tracks that were giving indications of his luck. To the evening, Raúl warned the arrival of a cold wind that was preannouncing one night with frosts. He felt cold and looked for overcoat. Immediately he began to worry very much since, with low temperatures and little sun it was almost impossible to survive without a suitable clothing. His son was not carrying sufficiently overcoat in this opportunity.

At the end of the evening, the police communicated to Raúl that they had traced all the surroundings but without result. They suggested that it was better that they were moving back to the house to be able to begin the search again scarcely the dawn will come, and this way they did it.

They accompanied him up to the housing, helped him to lower the merchandise and he seeing that could still need their help, he offered them a room. On having lowered the Sun, it began to diminish the temperature hard.

The house was cold and they placed a few logs in the old chimney to warm up.

In silence on the logs Raúl cooked the dinner. Meanwhile, they wondered if the child might find a way of spending the night. The father, worried and nervous, insinuated to them that it was highly improbable. During the unexpected dinner Paul was not hungry. They offered him of eating but he did not do it. Neither he felt very sleepy during the night and, opposite to the logs that were burning, wrapped up good, with a blanket that they gave him, he continued speaking with Peter of the problem that had arisen. Finally, very tired, he fell asleep on a carpet.

On the following morning, Paul felt that they were touching him the shoulder, scarcely he could open the eyes, lazy it made itself comfortable to keep on sleeping.

- Let's go, it is already late and they need us, dress rapid - Peter ordered.

With indolence and slowness Paul get up and on having gone out of the house, Paul scrubbed the eyes for the clarity of the morning. The floor was covered of hoarfrost and, and a few meters, several parked police mobiles were.

The officials, between themselves, were communicating by radio to decide how to begin again the raking, but warning him the father that, considering the facts, the possibilities of survival were less. Thing that the poor man was already accepting. His feelings were a miscellany of sadness, frustration and annoyance. Quite for a small oversight and now he could only hope that the effective ones should meet on its body.

For some hours they were in the search without results, until they received called by radio saying that they had found a track. They informed him Raúl of the fact, asked him to continue them. The three were raised to the van and were with the police mobile. They moved rapidly with the vehicles up to the space nearest to that

they could gain access, the forest in a place blocked the way to them. Should, from then on, continue on foot. Finally parked on the shoulder.

The place that they had informed him for radio was hill above, then, they began the climb.

The father went to the trunk, took the shotgun and loaded it, this was his custom.

- Paul I cannot walk so rapid as you, continue them later . Peter said to him.

- I rise with him then.

On having risen, there saw, of another side of a creek, a dog that peacefully was thrown, he could not observe it thoroughly since it was seen between a few rocks, he tried to pass through the waterway course but the force of its wealth it prevented. He splashed, stumbled and stepped back. Full of feelings of frustration and anger for what it happened to him, he accommodated the weapon and prepared her to shoot the animal, meanwhile Paul was observing it.

At that moment a light warm breeze blew from the base of the mountain. Peter felt it, remained thoughtful and hastened the rise. A few moments later it came to Paul who turned its head to observe where from it was coming. In this moment he closed the eyes and relaxed, despite the tension of the moment. It occurred to him what Peter had said to him: "Some things we know how they start but not how they end, do not hurt uselessly+.

While Raúl was loading the weapon, of another side of the creek a police officer saw the traces of a child along with those of a dog. To the glance towards the opposite direction, it saw Raúl who was handling the shotgun and tried to do some signs to him to prevent from unloading a shot.

Paul saw him determined, then he lowered his weapon of a slap provoking a shoot to the floor.

Raúl, furious, pushed him with all the weight of its body.

Paul fell down immediately to the ground. Raúl saw him lying rebuked him:

- Do you want to shoot you also?

- Stop! - he answered him as it could.

The police officer approached more. Following the traces he saw the dog leaned on the floor and did signs to him so that he was getting up. When dog get up he could see that, under him, the lost child was sleeping. He woke up, sheltered him with what had put and took him in arms.

The father, witness of the scene remained astonished, meanwhile the police officer who was taking the child approached them crossing a bridge that was nearby.

Paul began to get up and shake the dust above him.

Upon arrival, the officials explain to him that the child had been able to survived to the low temperatures due to the heat of the animal and without that, he should die of cold.

Raúl looked at Paul:

- Are you well?

- Yes of course . Paul answered with relief.

Finally he apologized to him for its outrage, which the young man could accept.

When Peter came, he commented to him on what had happened. In immediate form, the father looked at the weapon, took it strongly and broke it striking it with an enormous stone throwing its pieces to the creek.

After this it approached two friends and said to them that perhaps he might obtain some work to them both. Nevertheless Peter answered him that they had to continue another way.

Paul, observing this situation, made a comment to its partner.

- How change attitude !

Peter assumed the content of the answer:

- Sometimes, Paul, to appreciate a virtue, it is necessary to know first its opposite one and, in this case, a man knew of the value of the temperance because it was conciente of the price of its opposite one: the anger+

Pablo looked at him missed, but he felt that it was right. He agreed moving the head.

After which Peter touched the shoulder of his friend.

They smiled with satisfaction. They were feeling enormously relieve.

- Do we go?

- Yes, of course.

And both began to leave for the way.

Later, Paul asked him:

- Where do we go?

And he answered him:

-Where the wind take us.

On having been raised to the van, Raúl felt, again, a light breeze. He looked at the trees.

On a branch was a white pigeon. In a few seconds he remained calm observing it.

He smiled. It anticipated that, in spite of everything, it had received a special help.

The pigeon flew and he continued it with the eyes.

Later it turned its sight over towards the way and its two friends were already not.

- Where did they go away? - Raúl asked.

- No idea, - answered one of the officials.

- Perhaps they took another way - he answered other.

The father caressed its son, then he dedicated a soft clapping to the dog along with a grateful look.

What would do with the dog, would leave it to its luck?

He thought, looked at its son and asked him:

- Do we raise it to him also?

- Yes . the child answered with a big smile.

Raúl then opened the rear door of the van and the dog was raised. The same it was he who did.

Finally he was feeling more relieved, was happy and happy. It started the vehicle and took the road of return.

CHAPTER 4:

FORTITUDE

In the packer they were still to finish the shift of the evening. The workers with his blue uniforms were selecting and placing in quite visible boxes the fruits that were in the conveyor belts after passing for the chambers of degreening, to be exported or sold later on the internal market. The work was demanding, the lemons and the avocado pears gathered were perishable fruits reason for which the workers had to expire with the production goals and everything was done in meticulous form, the lighting and the temperature were controlled definitely. The clients of the company, mostly foreigners, only were buying quality merchandise and this was known by all. The compilation and packed of the fruit it was realized in a humid and warm vale of the Argentine Northwest (NOA). The area was known at national and international level by its fruit production.

At the end of the shift, several of the workers changed and went together, they were neighbors. Between them was Juana. With his work she was maintaining with difficulty his family. Of brown complexion with indigenous features and low height, she was a widow with three children who were in school age. She was recognized in the company by its kindness, eager willingness and working capacity.

She was possessing a small material house with gray bricks of cement and roof of sheet, in a small town on the hillside of a narrow vale to a few kilometers of the packer. The green mountains of low height that were surrounding the place, they

were receiving abundant rains and were generating a subtropical, abundant microclimate in vegetation, of fresh climate in winter and very warm in summer. Since of custom she was returning to his house walking during several kilometers, something to what she was used. This day, after the hard day, went of the work straight towards to his house non-stop to do buys or to take tea with someone. This way she found out about the last news of the people or about his work. Without major ceremonies she left each of his friends in the trajectory, she knew that his day had not ended, had ahead the chores and the children. During the walk Juana looked at the sky, only clouds were seen, between the coworkers commented to themselves on this, they knew that a rainy epoch was waiting for them, soon there would be a downpour. In the area strong torrential thunderstorms were happening often in the summer epoch.

Just arrived was greeted by the barking of its small dogs, more annoying than guards. She had them so that they were giving notice when there were the people marauding. Once inside it saw, immediately, his small children and, as of custom, it embraced them and gave them a kiss. The biggest two were looking at television. It noticed that the minor was not there, asked for him and the unconcerned and naughty boys answered that he had slept the whole evening and that he did not even want to play the ball. She was surprised of that he was not going to greet her. She went to the quarter of the children and greeted him. He answered her with gentleness. He thought of approaching but she had task to be done, later perhaps she talk up to him closely.

Among all they had to maintain the house in order. She then decided to end the day preparing the dinner and ordering. It met his cat, done a ball, in the kitchen

and, as of custom, she caressed it. Then she prepared the table to serve the dinner. Finally the meal for the animals, who, usually, were making use of the scraps of the previous day. She left the meal of its pets and called them all. Only the biggest two approached the table. Then she went to see the minor who was remaining stretched out. To give him fortitude he asked him how is life while it was giving him a kiss. The child answered him that it was not feeling good. She noticed that he was perspired and placed his hand in the forehead confirmed his high temperature.

Seeing this, he thought that for what he had to look was a thermometer and an analgesic tablet. He thought where the last time would have left them, it was already doing a time. He was not remembering, it was first to the bath, it checked thoroughly, but it did not find anything, then she went to its quarter and, in a drawer, she found what with so many anxiety he needed.

The thermometer was broken in its case and he had not left another option to throw it to the garbage. The analgesics were appearing in quantities, free some different in dirty bundles and broken or defeated the few ones. She decided on the one that was seeming better. Nervous he looked for a glass with water. The following thing was to give it to him with some liquid and to arrange the blankets of the bed. The child for the fever had fallen asleep at once. She got anxious but it went to have dinner with its another two children. One of them complained:

- Always stew, mom.

- This is what there is son . the mother answered and she was in charge, after the dinner, to put them to bed.

The child was right but she knew that, with his lean income, it was the only meal that could offer them. Years behind when the province was more prosperous and his husband was living, there could happen the luxury of buying variety of products for the table. There were epochs of plenty and happiness, which were already only in the memory. With sadness she made this comment to them and, kept silent as of custom, they all finished its dinner.

She accompanied the children to go to sleep, then she washed the plates and arranged the kitchen. She felt that she had no sleep, went out to the courtyard of its house and sat down on an old hammock. And this way, in company of his pets and of the singing of the crickets she enjoyed, remembering the happy moments, this time of the night that he had to take a tea and some pieces of stale bread. He listened to thunders in the distance. Then she pondered what to do. She doubted, the fever of its son was light, a flu perhaps, but if the situation was persisting on the following morning the best thing would be to make to examine the child.

The sound of the roosters woke up it at the dawn, the clock was indicating her that it was not time yet, nevertheless, it extinguished it and get up. She went to see the sick and noticed that the fever was continuing. She thought of taking it as soon as possible to the medical guard of the village. She went to the window and observed the climate, there was already blowing the wind that was presaging the rain. She was a very hard-working and tenacious woman, she knew that it had to solve the problem as soon as possible.

He listened to the noise of the rain falling down on the sheet roof. It had begun to rain in abundant form, full age epoch. She hoped that it should clarify more to go to the medical guard and to ask for an appointment. This way, in the first hour of the

morning, she looked for its umbrella and went to the place, but she met that had closed it was doing a few weeks. She realized that she had left only one option: the hospital of the capital of the municipality.

She went to the house of a coworker, despite the thunderstorm, so that she was informing the company that she had to stay away because his child was sick. She was wetted very much, some houses were flooded, the creeks filled with water.

She had to wait in the house of his friend until it should diminish the thunderstorm.

She knew the trajectory and, for the conditions of the climate, she knew that she would need help. Later she went to see his brother who was a few blocks to ask for help and to take its son to hospital of the center. It was to several kilometers and the ways were not asphalted. The abundant rains were softening the ground and were making her impassable.

Listening to Juana, Martín, his brother, older man and of medium-sized age, he offered to take them, he knew that it was not the best moment to go out. The sky was completely cloudy and the rains could continue. For the difficulties of the trip towards the hospital he realized that they could not use a remís because it would remain jammed. The best thing would be to transport them on the old donkey that was a property of Martín when the climate was improving a little and was allowing the trip with more safety.

Martín was using the donkey as load transport, the horses were better, but the animal that he was possessing was economic at the time of maintaining it and very efficient at the time of the work. It was not the donkey by Silversmith of Juan Ramón Jiménez, the famous Platero, it was a common and current donkey.

Of hair brown color, long ears and white snout, he could make a living of every day with obedience. Martín caressed it and both understood each other and words did not come up. A meek animal, and saddled him and it put a compress. Juana came with his son, she had covered him with a blanket so that he was not taking colder. He climb the two with a lot of care in the loin of the donkey, first to Juana and then to his son, and prepared to guide the donkey holding it from forward by the compress.

The trip was arduous and uncomfortable, they saw a few stranded vehicles, in some cases they had to move away from the way because it was flooded. It was very important to be able to discern the traffic that was going and coming. The rain was irregular during the trip. The child, for the fever, was sleeping. They met the fallen down posts of electricity and of signaling, but the brother of Juana who knew the way did not get lost and the donkey, despite the load that was going, could avoid the difficulties of the trajectory. After several hours of trip they came to destination thing that relieved the tension to them. Immediately they approached the room of guard of the hospital so that the doctors were attending to it.

The hospital, like all those of the interior, was almost caused to collapse, the poor people everywhere and the state of almost entire confusion. It came to the receptions room, they attended to it, it extracted number and started waiting like all. This way it was necessary to resign doing a long and cold tail with his child in arms. The hospital was in very bad conditions, dirt, dimly lit, and people sleeping on the floor.

She felt very anxious thinking in to what moment they would attend to his son who was looking very badly. Perhaps a few hours or an entire day, it was a luck

question. A young doctor crossed, he saw her with the child and felt sorry. Finally, doing an exception, they attended to them. After a brief consultation they interned the child in an observation room.

She moved back from there and in the entry of the hospital she met Martín, who left tied to the donkey in the park of the hospital, Juana commented to him the news. She had to wait many hours for the diagnosis until they had the results of the blood test, the mother asked but she only obtained evasions. She saw as the doctors were putting worry face. Then other analyses came. Finally they called her to ask where did they come from, she informed them, then they hurry the results.

The child was treated by the best resources that the hospital had, but he was enduring an infection produced by a bacterium that was resistant to all the available antibiotics, which were derived from the penicillin. It had few ones or void chances of surviving. They told to her that this type of infections had never happened in the region and that it was proper of tropical countries. Perhaps it had come brought by some seasonal worker.

The disconsolate mother started crying and wondered that why all this suffering happened to his family.

As well as a doctor mentioned to other that the child could be treated by a new drug, more effective than those that they had in stock, which could serve but, that the hospital was not arranging of it. The drug to which they were referring was used for the treatment of other illnesses. They had done an order along time of the product but, for the crisis of the national system of health, the order was exactly dead and they did not know when they might receive it. Juana immediately asked them where to be able to buy it, but they said to her that, for its European origin

and its price it was not in the whole province, perhaps in Buenos Aires yes. They wondered between them, the possibility of doing an order of the drug straight to the National Ministry but, knowing the times of the bureaucracy, they realized that they still would not come on time in case they were sending it.

- I do not know that to say to him - one of the specialists added worried.

The doctors had good will but they were young and without resources. It came walking along one of the corridors of the hospital the medical director, he had more experience and a time took to listen to them. He could give an answer. He knew that an important ONG located to a few kilometers, which was receiving periodically donations of Europe and USA perhaps there they might have storage a little. But he warned them that before it was necessary to call them. He moved back immediately with one of the young people, but before he informed Juana that it would return with an answer.

The rains had stopped. They all noticed it, that brought something from calmness, since the hospital had leaks and was easy to stumble over some bucket entrusted to mitigate the problem of the absence of maintenance of the roofs.

After a prudential time one of the doctors returned with a conclusion. He was seen satisfied, was bringing good news. They had the medicine in deposit in the ONG mentioned previously, but they had not done any distribution because they had received the asked merchandise a few days ago and they had everything with its original packing.

Juana felt that she had still some hope. She was glad. The doctors asked her what he wanted to do. She took a decision, the climate had changed and it was possible to do this extra trip. To go there it was the answer, but someone would have to

watch his son. His brother offered. She accommodated all his things and left the sick child before kissing him, to whom she promised to return as soon as possible. She walked along the route that was taking her to destination doing finger whenever a vehicle was happening, but nobody stopped – the hours they passed and the more and more warm evening was done.

In a moment, stopped a van, a classic pick up of those who are used in the field, old, in poor condition and oxidized which was moving in low velocity. Juana approached the van and the driver asked the woman up to where she was going. Juana indicated him. Fortunately the man knew the place and it might leave her to a few kilometers from there. When he offered to take her, she accepted with mitigation. He bent. He was dressed like a peasant, had a cigaret in the mouth, he extracted it, and, lacking in modals but with good spirit, he said to her that the seat of the accompanist was in much poor condition, that the best thing would be that it was making comfortable in the part of the load.

- in the trip you are going to have company, I got other persons. he added.

There she met Peter and Paul who also, for the intense heat and the moisture, had asked for the favor of being transported. The vehicle was replete with boxes with cages that were carrying birds and bags of burlap full of vegetables, the peasant opened the rear door and began, together with the boys, to accommodate the utensils so that Juana was rising. She was not precisely an agile woman, with his robust body and his low height she needed help.

She made herself comfortable and she was grateful to them for the collaboration.

They sat down and supported the back on the cabin.

- Where do you go? . Paul asked her.

This way the woman during the trajectory commented to them of its adversity. They started the march. After a few hours, sudden, the van stopped, the driver got out.

- Why the van had stopped? . Paul asked.

- Not idea . they answered him.

The driver went to look at the engine, opened the lid and an enormous steam quantity went out, he went at once to the part of the load.

He looked at them and said to them:

- We are with mechanical problems, do not know if we are going to start again.

Then the three bent and Juana thought of keeping on walking.

Peter proposed to him:

- Wait I hope we can fix the problem.

The driver concentrated on the oil and did not find problems but he loaded the water that had lost the engine. He went to the cabin and extracted a box of keys, which was very dirty, he dusted it with his hands and inside he found all the hardware that he needed.

Paul offered to help, then, they assigned him the distributor and gave him a screwdriver to check it, meanwhile, the driver and Peter, started looking for some flaw inside the engine, especially, the candlesticks. Once the distributor was extracted, the three noticed that it was much sulfated, it could be the origin of the problem, like that the driver asked Paul to clean it, who, without thinking,

negligence and without mattering for him too much, tried to do it with a dirty rag, Paul thought that it was an easy and unworthy task for a person like him.

- Rest assured, there is no work that is difficult . Paul affirmed with self-sufficiency.

To the moment he answered them that he had finished his task, the others had checked the engine. They did the attempt of starting again. But they could not. The driver knew that he had to deliver the merchandise that was carrying in good condition and if the vehicle was remaining there for a long time it would lose the value of it. He mentioned to the boys. Frustrated he gave a blow on a sheet in poor condition of the vehicle and did a small cut to him in the hand.

Peter looked for a water jerry and helped him to wash himself, then he put a few blindfolds.

They wondered what to do. They decided to verify again the state of the distributor. They extracted it again and noticed that it continued sulfated.

- You not cleaned good . Peter made him notice.

- But only they asked me to revise it a little . Paul added with reluctantly.

Then they started with a glass wool rag leaving them to point and, after a little bit, they placed them again, then it started.

Paul proved to be an curious and said to them that they were lucky.

What Peter answered him:

- It is not luck, the persons who are successful in its tasks are the most certain, never leave a work without expiring.

The van continued its march, the driver despite the injury could continue. The vehicle opposite to a detour stopped the march.

- Juana, if you walk around here in a few blocks you come to the ONG, I have to continue for the main route - the peasant commented to him.

Juana was grateful to him and prepared to go forward.

- Why do not you go with her, Paul?, perhaps need help . Peter indicated him.

- And you, what do you think to do? . Paul was anticipated.

- I am going to accompany the driver up to its destination to deliver the merchandise, since he is with a disabled hand. When he end I will look for the two again here and if I do not find them, I see them in the hospital . Pedro finished.

They agreed and Paul accompanied Juana. This way they turned aside of the route for an alternative footpath that was not asphalted but it was of refuse, walked along a short stretch up to the hospital where they were attended by the director very nicely. It was the first one in receiving them, he was waiting for them in the local entry. He asked whom were, and then he presented.

The man was Spanish, of name Miguel and of marked origin accent, the ONG was Spanish. With amiability and courteousness he introduced them in the place, mentioned to them that he had attended to a called phone company of the chief of the city hospital and that he was knowing about the problem, added to him Juana who perhaps would find the remedy because they had received a donation of Spain that was still without classifying, they had received the merchandise a few days ago. They were possessing a social drugstore and a community first-aid kit in which they had generic drugs with which they were supplying the community in basic form. Close to there and, to complement the work, there was a small school for children.

In the mailing remyths it was representing the drug. It was small but enough for the needs of a person. He did not have an administrative stock of the stored, so that it took them to the deposit and said to them that, due to the absence of personnel and the immediate of the need, the best thing was that it was they who were beginning ordering and cleaning to be able to locate the stock.

The panorama was distressing. The deposit was enormous and dirty. Fat, dust and cloths of chandelier, that was the constant in this place. Also hardware of work much oxidized for the farm work, there were combines left along with big cartons with adhesive tape that were placed on the soil. The light was only a native, scarcely some bulb was hanging by an electrical cable.

The director approached, pointed out the merchandise to them and gave them a few remyths that were indicating the received. Paul remained surprised, it would have together with Juana, who to open every box, to verify and to arrange in shelves what remedies would be in each one.

He mentioned to him that the work was too much and that perhaps they would need something from extra help. The director reflected on the problem and answered them that later he would call a few villagers who were meeting assiduously to help them. Most of those who were working there were voluntary. He asked them to be careful on having arranged and having opened the boxes since, in many cases, it was a delicate material.

Juana knew to work, so, she suggested to Paul that, before beginning the task, it was better to organized and to look for a stairs to accommodate the stock in shelves, scissors to cut the tapes and gloves the hands not to be cut on having

manipulated the pasteboard. After some hours, very nice but slightly arrogant, the local farmers presented before themselves.

- They called us to help them to clean a little the place . one of the villagers said. Juana suggested them where to begin. This way, for many hours they were cleaning, extracting garbage, arranging and classifying the stock that existed, but without finding what they needed.

During the work Pablo saw a few roles, read them and one commented to Juana on it. To the dusk they left the tasks and, while they had dinner, Paul asked the director what he had read and with bitterness he commented to them on the truth and the fact was that only they had left the following day to finish the search since a judicial edict had delivered to finish off the place.

The ancient proprietor who transferred the space to them left them with tax debts and in much poor condition and to solve the problems they asked a lender of the area for a money thinking that further on they might pay the debt, but, for the economic difficulties, that was not possible. The debts were accumulating and, finally, a judgment was delivered. As result they were convicted to pay a sum of money and to make the payment effective a local auction was decided. He was thinking to move in a few weeks the establishment, since the municipal government had offered a place to change the capital but it would bring to them as a result that might not attend to the local people.

- All this is a pity, but it is like that, the things already have no arrangement, the important thing is that you obtain what you need . the director commented to them. Paul this night did not eat and remained with Juana speaking on what was remaining hanging.

- Untill now we do not find anything . Paul annotated.

- for the time being, not . that was she answered.

At the dawn they began to work again and close to the midday the director mentioned to them that in a few hours, for news that had received by phone, the proprietor would come to realize, with effective police, the awesome eviction.

Then one of the men discouraged said to them that why to keep on working if it was already quite lost and, of course, the medicine was not because they had already checked the whole merchandise. Juana lost heart.

- Young boy: why are you going to continue? - he said with bitterness.

- But it is necessary to see if the this merchandise in some corner, and for that it is necessary to move some very heavy furniture - Paul insisted.

- We are already tired of this . he answered him.

- But little is missing . him rebuked Paul.

- But in the corners only there is dirt, and why you are going to clean there if whole behind the shelves nobody sees. - he continued - only they asked me for that, to leave the more or less clean things - told to Paul.

Juana looked at the floor and saw like a shade surrounded with the light of the midday he was forming in the palm of its hand with form of cross, it was the shade that was creating a small window. Immediately it raised the head.

- But Good sees everything, - answered him Juana.

At this moment Pablo pondered what he had said to him and remembered the happened with Peter a little bit earlier.

- She is right . Pablo affirmed.

- That does not serve, I prefer to call the rest of my friends to prepare a protest and to do a picket so that they do not come to finish off the place, this effort does not make sense already, sure they stole the merchandise from themselves or did not send it - he ended up by saying and with a sudden lack of appetite gesture and went away. Its sad and undecided partners complained, then they apologized and continued it.

With determination, Paul continued his work and began perspiring, tried to dry off the forehead and the face got dirty with fat. They moved old wooden shelves between the two. They felt the noise of a few boxes that were falling down. With effort it moved behind the furniture and touched them. The hands filled him with dust, and he anticipated that there would be the medicines that Juana needed.

- Juana: are they these? . Paul asked with satisfaction showing him the packings. She cleaned the boxes, and warned, with pleasant surprise, that they were those that she needed.

After a moment of happiness Paul relaxed and Juana said to him to continue. He did so and kept on cleaning and saw a small lid that was differing in its color in the floor, struck it with the hand and sounded to hollow, raised it with a screwdriver and saw a bundle full of dust. Juana observed it and looked for the director, when she found it, she commented to him and he was glad very much, said to him as well as they had found an old bundle. He approached to quarrel. Upon arrival, Paul handed him the bundle that was hidden, asked him to unroll it and this way he did it. He found that there were American dollars saved.

- The old proprietor had said to us that it had saved for many years a money, that he had hidden it and that it was for us for when we needed it - said the director on

having seen wonderingly the innovation - I thought that it was quite a lie and we forget the topic - he ended up by saying.

Between the three they started counting it quickly, it was enough to pay the debts and more. Wonderingly the director put it later in a bag not to lose it.

While this happened, several local farmers organized a protest blocking the route.

Tires pulled at the route and they burned them, the place transformed in an immense soot cloud, in such a way that to breathe they needed handkerchiefs.

Those who were going to the auction, initially, had to stop, but not for long, they were greedy people, of that they privilege the business, also the edict had established the hour of the auction, there would no relays. Then the the police came, this way the neighbors were warned by a microphone that if they were not moving back quickly and were making the route free they would be suppressed with determination by the police, they were doing its work. None stepped back and, as it is never known who begins the violence, both sides faced, each one had its reasons. Shots, sticks and bottles there was the synthesis of this meeting where there was a large number of injured men.

After the fact the police came to organize the auction of the property. There came some supposed buyers, the receiver, the auctioneer and the creditor to organize the auction, which was without base and to the few rabid one.

They looked for a room to organize the auction, for astonishment of all those who had come, the auction was suspended minutes earlier since the director, Miguel, with the opposing money spoke with the receiver, and paid the debt to the lender and this way he avoided the local auction. The lender, violent, greedy and distrustful man, after receiving his money commented to them:

- They were wanting to fight, they had avoided all this if they wanted.

Kept silent and without answering, Paul and Juana with the satisfaction of the realized work, they took the decision to move back.

The commissioner, who had led the action against the demonstrators, after the facts, asked the director:

- Mr., forgives: if they had the money, why did they protest?, there was many violence and injured men, I do not understand anything.

The director did not know what to say, had shame, any answer was turning out to be dumb and without no sense, in the end he answered with an evasion.

- It is not the best moment to answer this, in another moment we speak - he tried to answer him amazed.

- Since he wants, they are all madmen in this place, now soon when they come the hurt persons you are going to have to attend to them . the commissioner answered him.

The commissioner had its character, of that they excuse only when they forget.

This way they looked, in a bad way and between them only the silence stayed, the frustrated commissioner, with villains modals and without saying goodbye he called his men and they were raised to the vehicles.

The director approached the two.

- Money remained to us, it is just that we share the benefits.

Paul interposed his hand, gave to understand that he was not accepting the offering, it was inside another topic.

- Juana needs it more than I, also I am not in search of this but of some answers . he answered him.

- I understand, anticipate that you are going to find them . the director answered him.

Juana was grateful and accepted pleasant, thought that the luck was favoring it.

- You already have what you needed: What are they going to do now? . the director said.

- I go with her . Paul answered.

- We have to go away rapid - Juana answered.

The farewell was brief, the director was grateful to them for the help, and they also, this way decided both to leave but before he forgot it prepared a medicines mailing for them for the hospital in a small bundle. He asked them earnestly not to forget.

They promised to fulfill. They walked towards the route and saw how the demonstrators were returning, some on a vehicle, others on foot, the majority needed medical attention.

The vehicle happened close to them leaving after itself a cloud of grit that was a product of the refuse. While contentments were leaving, Paul turned the head and warned with sorrow, that in this vehicle that it was taking the injured people were finding that person who had denied help to him a few hours behind, he was coming sad and aching, he had courts in the face and several breaks. Scarcely a look was exchanged.

The director was looking worried how they were turning those who had done the protest, he lowered a moment the look and grew sad, did a denial gesture, now his work would be to attend to those who were returning. He saw to the two how they were leaving slowly. Suddenly he felt a warm breeze and observed a white pigeon on a tree, continued looking at it for a few moments, had a foreboding and realized

from that it had received some type of special help, smiled and the pigeon flew. He looked with the look for its two friends, but it could not see them, they had already got lost in the horizon.

When they came to the route, well they did not even go out of the dirt road, there was waiting for them Peter who had bent the van.

- We return with the one who brought us previously: How was it they? - he asked them.

- Very well . Juana answered him.

And Paul detained a moment, they smiled and he tried, in this brief moment, to report how the facts had happened ñ and his friend was glad because there would have gone out for him well the task that had been proposed.

- You seem happy, perhaps you realized something.

- And what did I realize?

Impatient Juana called them so that they were worrying, and the conversation stayed there. They rose quickly to the van. The vehicle was already without load, this way they made themselves comfortable with facility.

The climate was mended, the rain had stopped and the day was shining. They returned. The doctors in the hospital could verify that it was the correct drug, with optimism they did its work. Juana left the mailing to them with medicines that the director of the ONG entrusted him. They were grateful for it. The drug with happening of the hours did its effect and the child recovered in short time. They discharged it quickly.

In the door of the hospital they took a decision, they all would accompany it to Juana up to its house to help her to arrange some things. They put the child on the donkey and they were together walking.

In the return Paul asked Juana:

- What do you think to do with the money that he gave you?
- To buy a few sewing machines and this way to have an independent activity, as I had it in the good times. It is going to be me fine . she answered very satisfied.

In the house while Paul was cooking a few breads in the stove, he asked Peter what he meant him when they met.

- Perhaps you realized the importance of the Fortitude.

At this moment Paul was interested.

- And why is the Fortitude important?
- The fortitude, it is the virtue that allows us to overcome the difficulties in the works that we realize, and this is very important, because the happiness, Paul, is always a product of the effort towards the Good.+ - Peter ended up by answering him.

Missed by the affirmation, he answered:

- What happiness is always a product of the effort towards the Good? Does it seem to you?
- Yes of course, check it yourself - Peter answered.

Juana did not pay attention to the dialogue, she was busy with his children. Paul extracted of the stove the breads that were already baked, touched them and they were warm but they could eat up and Juana called his children to prove them and, while it was offering them to itself, the children took of to one the breads and they

all smiled. Meanwhile, a shades cross was forming in the apartment, refracted by a white light that was entering the window.

CHAPTER 5:

JUSTICE

José was living in a humble quarter, in the Big Rosary. He had finished the secondary school and, with difficulty, he knew a trade. He was employed at a shed that had been left by his ancient proprietors and transferred by the municipality, was working like center of gathering of a cooperative of carton sellers. In it there were accumulating recycable residues that first were classified and then used for the resale. At the end of every work day when the carton sellers were coming with the load, first they were classifying it and then, after weighing it, they they were paying away from each one. The work was dirty and hard. The place was working like unexpected camp since many carton sellers were sleeping in the shed during the week to saved the traveling expences.

His mother worked as concierge in a school of the area and was attending to him and to its younger brother. José was suffering from epilepsy but was controlled by medication, sometimes, the medical treatments were complicating his life.

Until one day he met his uncle who usually was doing gifts to his two nephews when he was visiting them. He always had several cell phones and a money bundle in the pocket that he was exhibiting with boasting. He was not ever lacking the good clothes, either an ostentatious car, or an attractive company either. The younger brother of José who was in school age was mentioning that he wanted to be like the uncle.

He appeared to be a man prosperous and worth of imitating and, when he was visiting them, they were receiving him with happiness and for them he was the favorite uncle.

He had an enormous mechanical workshop with large number of personnel. With his political contacts and numerous clients he was never lacking of work. The workshop was not very visible from the outside but, inside, it was occupying almost the whole apple, something very notable for such a depressed area.

He allowed to be known as a suspicious and extremely busy man, he was never speaking about his work but about the good life that he was taking. José's mother always said to them that they should not accept his money. And as this they had several discussions.

One day, after the death of its father, the uncle invited José to join the hooligans of the soccer club. He was recruiting young people for them who were preferably minors and with economic difficulties. José did not find reason to refuse, so that he accepted.

He would find another family and this way in the weekends one might be more of the swollen.

This year was special, the managing commission of the club had brought new players and that's why they were hoping to win the ascent and the tournament.

They were trusting that the awards and profit for all would be more important, both for players and for fans.

By the results of the championship the ascent was disputed by the classic rival, who was in a next city. The encouraging at the end of the championship were

warmed. The insults and the provocations were a current currency, even more in the game that the opposite teams disputed between themselves.

They had won the game for a great triumph and the tournament was already outlining them like clear winners and such a long-awaited position would come, for what there was a big enthusiasm and the opposite club was humiliated in any sense. The comments and celebrations were continuous. José was informing and feeling that he was happy, although its mother, a more prudent person for its experience, was criticizing it when it was serving the dinner to him, but he was doing dull ears.

The last date was something special, they all knew it. For the geographical location of the games the swollen rivals could cross in some moment and place in the route. José's swollen was thinking about the celebrations, but for the opposite supporters there was nothing to celebrate but an account to pay.

The opposite ones were knowing about the situation and it was the moment calculated by them for the adjustment, a confrontation in the road in which the received humiliation would be paid.

The police expert in the problem, arranged an operative one. But the opposite swollen took a more brief route known by few villagers, for what, so traveling at high speed, they would come in an unexpected way. They would find them in some place without alertness.

After the last party of the tournament, they were raised to the buses to return to the city, they were gaining for points the championship and the ascent. The club had promised them benefits, and they had excessive motives for celebrating, with cigarets and beer.

The bus that was transporting José had stopped at the toll but, suddenly, they noticed to the personnel of the cabins something nervous. The passengers were not waiting for anything more than a good return.

Someone gave the notice, but it was already late: a stone blast and sticks began breaking the glasses of the bus. Not only the stones were dangerous but the broken glasses since they were producing the biggest damages.

Some of them tried to bend but it was very difficult. They were determined not to surrender or withdraw. In the way of the battle one of the chiefs of the swollen, impulsively, decided the most extreme thing, extracted a weapon of thick caliber hidden in the floor of the bus and used it. Shots were exchanged. José, surprised, threw himself to the floor and covered his head with his hands, the glasses that were raining covered him.

With the shots, they listened to screams and the attack ended with injured men on both sides, some of them went down the bus and noticed blood on the paving.

Without having received serious damages they decided to continue the march but they realized that there might be someone dead or much hurt in the opposite edict.

They thought immediately how to get rid of the weapon and of the alcohol. The route was spending a few kilometers further on for an important river, there they might throw the evidence that was compromising them.

The police warned quickly about the fact, went forward them. Before coming to the place, they stopped them in a surprising operative one, and this way they finished all in the police station of the area. José without his medication had an epileptic attack but it did not receive attention.

Finally, after a few hours the typical lawyers came and they notified them of the situation: an opposite fan had died in the shooting and there remained confiscated the bus and all the weapons.

The chiefs of the swollen called them to José. They persuaded him that, for his illness, would assumed the responsibility of the murder, said to him that this way, being, in principle, not attributable person and with some important contacts, he would go out quickly and promised him that to pay the debt that they would have with him, he would receive a position in the club. José accepted without pondering. But then, for him the consequences were different. Witnesses armed themselves to confirm the fact and, finally, he ended lodged in a police station.

The news came out of the local media, the fact was complicated in an unexpected way and the cause was assigned to a Judge who had no relations with the political power connected to the swollen. At the end of the judgment the experts and psychiatrists determined that he was attributable for the crime and like that José was condemned although scarcely he had the adulthood.

Finally, abandoned to his luck by those that had gained themselves his confidence, he was pled guilty and moved to prison. In the pavilion in which he was he met other convicts, and for a coincidence with a person who had been with him in the fact and who had been detained by other previous crimes and who was meeting with big detail his uncle.

This cell partner mentioned to him in a very mocking way that his uncle had a wrecking car and not a mechanical workshop as he was telling and that, also, he was aspiring to a very important political charge. Perhaps really that's why he did not appear after the fact. The easy money had its explanation. José felt as a fool.

The life in the jail was very hard although he learned many things. There also he had reflected very much on the manipulations. During this time nobody went to see him, either his friends or the swollen, or his ancient fiancée who had left him. Every so often his younger brother was going to see him with his mother.

During these short visits he found out that his mother had lost the work in the school for the rumors that had been created on his son and that he, his younger brother, was working with his uncle. José not to complicate the situation never wanted to comment on the fact to his brother without earlier speaking with its uncle, who mysteriously, he had disappeared.

Spent the time of seclusion, which lasted a few years, the judge for his good conduct gave for its condemnation complete. When the last day came in the jail, while he was arranging his clothes a cell partner said to him:

- You are lucky young boy and not put you back by fool.

After the last examinations, before going out, he was hoping that someone should wait for him at the end of the door of the penalty, was concerned and thoughtful, but there was nobody. It was the morning, already in the street he looked backwards, decided to leave the old memories and, as he was living far, with few coins that he had he prepared to take a bus to go up to his house.

After a few hours of trip, he bent to walk along a street that seemed empty and desolate. Suddenly and of the same street hand several persons together appeared. He stopped, they did not have good aspect, someone were taking beer

bottle, they were seen happy but they were not intoxicated. He thought of crossing and walking along the opposite path to avoid problems, but he doubted. Perhaps they would come from a nearby night club, which he knew. He did not want to think badly about anybody and he continued.

Scarcely fence them, they pushed him towards a work in construction. First they struck it, immediately one of them extracted a sharp weapon, threatened him. Then they took him and checked with interest his purse. José, for the surprise and the fear, could not react.

In the work there were workers in the top apartments and with the noise they went to observe but there fell down the table of the scaffold where they were remaining.

With the distraction, José struggled to recover his purse, gave a punch to the one that was carrying the knife and the blow was so strong that a tooth spat. Since he was quite agile, he loosened and began to run. This way he managed to escape.

They decided to chase him immediately and he knew it. He covered several blocks as it could, turned in a corner and came across, suddenly, with two persons who had walking calmly in the opposite direction.

- Please, I need that you help me! - he said to them with little air that he had left.

- What happens to you? . Paul asked him.

- I have to hide . José answered.

Peter observed the immediate place to him, there was a parking for vehicles that seemed abandoned.

- Hide in this entry . Peter ordered to him.

José got into a very small place. The two looked anxious, they had noticed him very scared. They traveled a few steps, immediately there came the men who were chasing him and, with the impulse, they pushed Paul who passed backwards.

- Did you see a guy? - they asked Peter.

- This type owes something to me . he said other and moving the mouth another tooth spat.

He tried to remain quiet and not answer.

- Are you going to speak or not? - someone of the group added and he extracted a knife.

One of the thieves saw that Paul was taking several personal objects.

- Give me the clock boy and everything what you should have above . he said to him in a bad way.

- What?: I do not have any clock! . he answered surprised.

On having said it, he raised the hands and one noticed that he was lying. Suddenly they beat him cruelly with the beer bottle. Already in the soil, almost unconscious, they extracted to him the little of value that he was taking.

- This happened to you by fool . they warned him.

Peter seeing similar disaster and that the aggressors were coming more tense said:

- I believe that he went away in this direction.

One of the thieves confirmed:

- He is right, I saw a person running in another block.

- We go . said his partner.

And this way the thieves went away quickly. Peter fixed how Pablo was. With difficulty he helped him to get up.

- They stole my things from me . the new victim babbled with anxiety.

- This is not the important thing. Are you well?

- I believe that yes.

José, after a few moments, went out from which hidden.

- They wanted to steal me from me firstly, I had a fight with them and almost they kill me, forgive, I did not want to put you in this problem.

- It is not your fault . Peter added to him supporting for a moment to Paul.

This way he was grateful to them both for the favor that they had done to him and went away.

Paul was recovering slowly the composure, then he looked at him with frustration for Peter:

- You lied, when they asked you where he was and this is a sin - he mentioned to him arrogantly.

Peter looked at him surprised during a moment and asked him:

- What had happened if I had told the truth?

- They had extracted to him the little that was taking and given a terrible drubbing of course up to killing him - the friend answered.

- Do you realize then? - Peter insisted.

- Realizing: of what?

- I had to be missing to a commandment; you will not lie, to fulfill one of major importance.

- And which is? . Paul was interested.

- You will love God and your neighbor as to yourself - Peter answered him.

- That is to have good line!

- Not Paul, is a principle of justice, that nothing excuses you to help those who needs you.

They kept on walking together. A few meters they met again José. They found him trying to do a call in a public phone, which "ate" few coins that he had left.

- Forgive: do they have any currency? . José requested them.

- Here I believe that yes, but I cannot answer you now, because the boy hurt himself and the wound has to be cleaned.

- We go to coffe shop of the oil station . José indicated with the hand.

They entered and made themselves comfortable in a small table. The manager looked at them thoroughly when they were entering, approached to clean the table and asked them what had happened to them. They commented to him quickly.

- Ah I know already - he answered safely - they are the people known in the area and they always bring problems, several times assaulted me.

- You know them? . Pablo asked.

- They are members of a swollen of the area, but it is better that they do not get . he reported.

Paul went to the bath, he cleaned his wound that had received in the meeting. On having returned, he remained depressed by the fact.

- At the end they ran out stealing me, and the worst thing is that they extracted me up a family memory, in addition to the blow that they gave me. Said Paul José checked his things, he was lacking his documents.

- Also they stole from me . José affirmed.

- They are going to pay this to me . Paul promised.

- I can help you to recover your things.

- And how? . Paul asked.

- it is a long history . José affirmed.

Of that time José began his long history. He told them that he wanted to return to his house that he was close to there, but that needed to do earlier a call. He mentioned to them that he had gone out of the jail for a simple condemnation and that it had been for several years. Paul listened to him with displeasure.

José continued with his history and explain to Paul, that he wanted to see again his brother, who was a few less years than he, and he was sure that his brother was taking part in the same swollen that had stolen him.

- Of course they belong to the group in which I was years behind, for the tattoos that were going in the arms, I never did them to myself, I believe that if I speak with my uncle round there he can return you what they stole from you, and the little that they stole from me. Look I am not sure how he is going to react, but my uncle owes something to me therefore I suppose that he is going to do the favor to us.

Of that time Peter got up to buy a few sodas and something to eat.

- Does this possibility exist?

- Yes of course, look Paul, you look a good person, I am going to tell you something, it is not very important, but that should be a secret, - he whispered lowering the voice.

And he reported to him that it had been a part of the swollen and was this relation for which he had gone to the jail, which turned out to be forced to recognize a crime that it had not committed in a clash ruterero between swollen to conceal his

uncle who had committed the fact but who had helped them economically years behind, and that he was a proprietor of a mechanical workshop where sometimes, and for order, they were disarming cars. Since he was an important person in the quarter and in which many people were trusting, he decided to cover him with the promise that did to him of a good lawyer obtained him and to extract it rapidly, thing that never expired, and then not to generate major scandal and not to disappoint his younger brother maintained the silence during all these years, but he had hopes of which if now he was asking him for a favor, for everything what his uncle owed to him, he might return the stolen things and extract its brother of the ambience.

And this way he made him swear not to tell to anybody this fact, added to him, for his brother, he was his favorite uncle.

Peter turned and offered what it had obtained to eat. Paul remained thoughtful, pondering on the problems. José was hungry and he remembered the unwanted prison meals. Between the boys joined the necessary coins to speak by phone. He got up of the table and close to there he called his mother who, in this moment, was with his uncle and his brother. She was brief and it was annoying, the conversation turned out to be the awful, reproached all the problems that he had brought to her. Also she spoke with his uncle, who knew of his exit of the jail, and demanded explanations from him, he answered him that it was very busy and everything was a discussion therefore it ended up by ringing off with an enormous frustration.

José remained very anxious, he knew that if his younger brother was continuing with his uncle it would end like him. He had to face the new situation, this was the big problem.

- What do we do Paul? . inquired Peter.

- He said to me that we could recover what they stolen from us.

José returned quickly, decided to go to look for him.

- I know where they can be now, but first we have to happen for the house of my mother, I have to speak earlier with her . José raised them.

- Good give to him . they answered almost to the unison.

The boys accompanied him up to the house of his family. They continued waiting for him. He found his mother alone and injured. Then she related to him that when she said to his uncle that he would go up to the house, he wanted to take the kid because that was useful to him and she had refused. Everything was vain, he struck her and took him equally.

To the moment José went out and looked for his friends to inform them about the new situation. They called to an emergency and the mother was taken to hospital for medical attention.

José decided to go to look for his brother to the house of his uncle that it was near to the workshop and Paul offered to accompany it. Peter remained with José's mother if she needed him.

Upon arrival, José struck the door of the house but he had no answer. They waited for a few minutes, after which he said to the partner:

- Come we go on the other hand.

They went to the workshop, there was a latticework and they jumped it. They entered the work place, saw drugs and, immediately, they met José's uncle.

- What are you doing here with this boy? - his uncle reproached him astonished and tensely.

- I come for my brother and so that you give me some explanations.

- I come back just to get my stuff . Paul added.

This way they began to discuss for the luck of his brother.

- We finish this here . the uncle answered.

He extracted a weapon and for the noise other persons came.

- Look came the boy that we steal some things from him . said one of the villains.

- This is the type that broke a pair of teeth to me . he said other.

- Of here I do not go away . José shouted.

- You do not come to fuck us . the uncle ordered.

They struck José and extracted him of the place.

- We excuse the life to him . said the uncle referring to José . but this is a problem, take it.

José ended in the bordering open space, he was looking unconscious, seeing him like that they left him alone, but after a few minutes he got up and left to do the denunciation. Paul entered in a room, they tied him strongly and he stayed during a long time alone, at the time that betweenwreck and fat vehicles , he listened to a noise. Moving with difficulty he realized that there was close to him a handcuffed person, trembling with fear and with the capped mouth.

The thieves returned with a clear decision:

- Now we it do ballot with the storekeeper . one of the accomplices threatened.

- Sorry kid . said another pointing on what he had stolen.

They all laughed sarcastically. A young boy appeared with a weapon. In the conversation, Paul listened to his name. They were mentioning between themselves that the merchant was selling drug in his grocery, and that he had remained with a money, for that reason he had a debt to José's uncle and, somehow, this debt must be paid.

To the moment, one of the seditious ones, got a call for his cell phone, it was scared and became nervous. After going out of the surprise, he warned him the uncle that the police were already knowing about the illicit, so, they decided to kill the kidnapped merchant and to get rid of the problem.

- The drug we can arrange it, but with a dead person: How do we do? - he said one.

This way between two adults did not agree since to the knowledge that legal problems had, they wanted to make relapse the order on José's brother.

- Kill them kid, they are a problem . one of the delinquents said.

Paul, in the desperation, got away from the ties, approached the kid and while the delinquents were observing calm the ending said to him:

- No, look, do not do that.

- Why?, give me a reason, - said to him José's brother.

Paul thought of telling him the secret that José had transmitted to him, of course his uncle wanted to put it in problems to him also, but he remembered the oath of not telling anything to anybody. Undecided he remembered Peter's reproach and this way he could take a decision.

- Look I have to tell you a secret - Paul affirmed.

- Which?, - he asked him threatening him with the weapon.

And Paul reported the secret.

After which José's brother asked the others about it:

- Is that true?

And they looked between themselves and did not answer. This way finally he desisted from shooting.

- I do not want to know anything any more with you uncle . the boy answered.

- It is well, you did an election . the uncle answered.

This way for fear, they decided to leave all in an open space of the area.

They left the first merchant and after several minutes of driving, made to lower to both nearly one square.

- Take your things young boy and do not do a mess . they spoke with authority and threw contemptuously his things to the floor.

This way Paul recovered what they had stolen from him and went away with José's brother to meet again with the group in the house. Nobody was missing. They had decided to recommence.

- Thanks to God that they turned all - the mother said.

Pablo began to pass:

- Look José: you remembered of the secret that you told me?

- Yes of course, - he affirmed.

- Good it turns out that it is already not a secret, I it had to inform from the turpitude of your uncle to your brother, had to do an election, there was no alternative - Paul informed him and he continued with the story.

- Do not worry, I would done the same . the friend passed.

José clapped to Paul in the shoulder, he was grateful to them both, asked what they wanted to do and offered help.

- We have to continue - Peter said to him.
- This way it is . Paul agreed demonstrating conformity.
- Luck then . José answered them.

While they were walking Paul explained to him in a more detailed way what had happened. Then he observed him:

- And what is the problem, I notice you thoughtfully.

While the head was touching trying to analyze, he added:

- I was disloyal since I revealed a secret, but nevertheless it turned out that they were grateful to me for it. The truth, I am confused, because I committed an absence, but it result.

Then Peter insisted:

- Confused because you had to choose?
- This way it is . he answered.
- Do not be disconcerted Pablo, since, as it happened to me with the ancient Law, sometimes the values are opposed between themselves, and when this happens the just thing is that the most important value prevails,+
- And what is this value?: the most important value?
- The Love of Charity, the Love to God and to the Neighbor, is the most important value.

Paul reflected on what he said to him and asked again:

- And who is my neighbor? . Paul wanted to insure himself.
- The one who should need your help - Peter answered.

- Do we go? . he added, having understood the lesson.

- Yes, of course .

The mother entered the house and José observed them together with his brother from the door. Then they looked backwards, were greeted between themselves from a distance and left. Later, José felt a light and warm breeze. He warned a pigeon about a light post, continued looking with attention at a few minutes and anticipated something special. The pigeon went away and looked with the sight for his friends, but they were already not.

CHAPTER 6:

PRUDENCE

Andrés was a cabinetmaker who had been employed for many years at a furniture plant located in the rich and prosperous capital of the area of Cuyo. One day they called him to a meeting. In it, they informed to the whole personnel that the old proprietor had died. He had been employed in this company, in Mendoza, being a boy and there he had learned the secrets of its office, first like assistant and finally like foreman. The workers were sorry about it very much, the old proprietor, a man widower and extremely hard-working, he had maintained the company afloat across all the crises and, they, under his direction, had never lacked anything. The future was turning out to be uncertain and this had left clear. The speech was empty, many doubts appeared. The important thing was to preserve the work sources, but the new proprietors did not make their intentions visible.

The company began, after the change, to work with difficulties, the machines that were breaking were not getting ready, the orders were going down and the deliveries were slow.

The claims of few clients who were staying were more and more frequent and, the discussions between the workers and the chiefs, were increasing since there were delays in the payments of the salaries. The situation seemed to went towards the chaos.

Andrés began to suspect the worst thing, the ancient clients were buying imported articles, the production was diminishing and the work suspensions were receiving force. Finally there happened the most awesome thing, one morning, while the family had breakfast peacefully, the mailman touched stamp and needed his signature from him in a receipt chart to deliver to him a telegram. He placed it without opening it in the table of his house, looked for a local tea, while his wife was asking him of what it was the question:

- Sure is the dismissal telegram . he said with worry.
- Do you want me to open it? . she offered.
- Yes . it was the whole answer.

She read the telegram and with sadness she delivered it. Regrettably the presumption was confirmed. The company had thrown him. But it had not been the only one, with doubts and anxiety he looked for its old bicycle in the garage and said goodbye to his wife who was shining the path with kerosene in the style of the area. On having come to the factory, to find out well about the news, he met his partners opposite to the door closed with a cartel that was accounting for the causes.

It had been founded by an immigrant of Italian origin. While he lived, in spite of not giving big dividends, it had generated a good production. Also had formed generations of woodworkers and professional carpenters, between them.

But the sons of the founder were not thinking equally. Of good to spend economic, accommodated in bureaucratic positions and used to the parties, the frivolous

social relations, the typical noisy and empty holidays, they saw, the hard work of every day, like something for the people of few ambitions. That factory that had given to them of living for so many years was only an annoying load.

For many days and months there was an intense conflict for the reopening, between the management one and the workers, since the balance was not presenting losses. What was happening was that the new proprietors had realized a prolix emptying. Full of debts and with enormous commitments it already had no viability. To occupy it and re opened it like a cooperative (what many had raised in the later meetings) would not change the problem. The articles imported also had done its own part. It was more economic and it was giving less problems to import a furniture of Brazil than to produce it in the country. Since they had no cash in the company and owed many months of salary to the workers, they offered to Andrés the only thing that they had. He doubted, but advised by the lawyers of the company and the trade union delegates, finally, he accepted. They indemnified him with a few machines that were staying, almost all in the deplorable state. With the help of some of its old partners and of the family he kept them in the garage of his house.

- Why not sell the machines?, they can pay good money to you - a companion asked him.

- And with this money you can go out of holidays, later you look for another work . another companion added to him.

- Perhaps if the things improve, i could be able to open a small workshop, this is my dream . he affirmed.

His family did the same claim to him, the product of the indemnification was occupying the whole garage, to do place for the machines and hardware, it brought to them a big discomfort. Many things that were valuable ended accumulated under the eave of the house, especially the pet crate of his children: the dog, which had put a very sad face, would have to get accustomed to the new situation.

Andrés listened to them and asked them for prudence. He answered to his wife and to his children who were patient, to not wait for the money immediately. The problems were not only a economic question like many were considering.

He reported to them that it had a vision, a dream, and that was motivating him to continue, to fight, in spite of the difficulties. His hope was resting in that as soon as he had had some important cash, he would start again since with the machines and his experience, he was going to be simple to do small productions to him. He might make more economic and handmade products, to order and this way he would be improving the level of income of the family. At the end of his explanation his wife and his two small daughters accepted.

Meanwhile he had not left any more remedy to put a sign in the front of its house offering his services and to read the classified ones. Occasionally he was going out to the street, especially to the quarters where he knew that there were new constructions, to look for work and, whenever it was happening for some work, he stopped his bicycle fixed if there was some cartel asking workpeople and then, in case of not seeing any, he beat at the entry to the workers if any woodworker was needed.

Some of them, if they were kind, were asking him for a card but, in general, it was receiving a negative answer and the days were happening...

His wife had decided to maintain the house with its servant's employment, she said to him that it should remain calm, his work was sure and, although there were a few dollars, none would spend famine.

She had commented from the problem of its husband to his bosses who promised her that if they knew of some vacancy they were going to warn her. In the inside of the country the relations were extremely important and Andrés's wife was expert in the functioning, therefore, she left a card of his husband to them. The bosses, proprietors of an important travel agency of the provincial capital, had in clear that she was a decent person, since he had realized excellent works in the house.

After a pair of days of having made this comment, during a small dinner, Andrés's family received a called, telephone one.

His wife attended, thinking that there would be his bosses.

- Hope a minute, Andrés is for you . she called intrigued speaking to the husband.

Later she kept on serving the dinner. Immediately he was returned with the news.

On recommendation of the bosses of his wife, an architect responsible for the completion for a work, called him to realize an important cabinet-making work. In a hotel placed in the center of another provincial capital, near to the city of Mendoza, they needed someone with experience for the thinnest completions. He realized, quickly, a big difficulty: he should remain there, it might not, for the distance, go and return every day of the work. For the history, also, he deduced that the money that he could obtain was interesting but not too much, he thought an odd job, but well it was worth while. Its office was also its passion. He accepted with doubts, but perhaps this work would serve to him to make him know and obtain others better payments. He answered him that the would have to see the work to give a budget.

And this way he left in a bus towards the city. Upon arrival, he called her to notify, and they agreed to be in the hotel in a certain schedule. The woman was unpunctual, she had to wait for her many hours. When she appeared, it was possible to observe that she was showy, thin, elegant and simultaneously superficial. Without giving any excuse for the delay, she showed him the work. Andrés noticed his character immediately, but being a patient person, did not complain. Then, opposite to a stipend along with her, he took note of the inputs, of the necessary times and, in a detailed sheet, he gave her a tuning presupposed with period of completion and delivery. She discussed some points, he was a very meticulous, and retailer woman. At the end he accepted and they came to an agreement. As for the provisions to realize the work, there would be a nearby a woodshop and the required tools he might bring himself, in a purse. That day he went home.

So he enjoyed with his family the happiness that provides having employment. Reviewed the tools he needed and left them in a top state, dusted them off and verified the functioning of the machines needed for the work, it was doing time that was not using them. He accommodated them in a purse.

The next morning as agreed, was again to the bus terminal saying goodbye to his family. The work that had to do would demand him many days, he calculated, as much, one week. He looked for a ticket and said goodbye briefly of his wife and his daughters who accompanied him up to the bus. They wished him luck, long time ago that was not finding a work and this was already a good sign. It gave him also a kiss to its daughter who offered a religious print.

- For good luck dad . the girl added to him.

Without giving him a lot of importance to the fact, the father was grateful for it and, carefully, he put it in his wallet. He placed the purse with the tools in the load of the bus and he raised.

This way the stage began, hard, because he had to move away from his family, and also why it was not an employment either long or sure.

As soon as he came he met the foreman and started working. Since it had already arranged, he was making it alone. In the work the details were ending: the plumber and its assistant were placing the bathroom fittings, the same a bricklayer was doing with the thin plastering and the cornices.

The architect, nervous and worried, came to the place with innovations: they needed to inaugurate urgently the place, the proprietors had changed the plans and they were pressing her.

He decided to explain the problem to them, most of the workpeople already had anticipated tasks, for which for them it was not a problem. But it was not Andrés's case. This way she leave the chat with him for the last thing.

- How do we do with your work, Andrés? - she asked him in inquisitive form.

He answered her that he was doing its alone work and that, what he was claiming, was extremely difficult.

He pondered a moment. It came to the conclusion that to expire with the new time goals, he was going to need, at least, one or two assistants, then, communicated it.

The architect, with his pride, denied this possibility to him adducing lack of money. Contemptuously, he suggested to obtain, in any case, some persons who, for a few dollars, could help him. Said that, she did the last reviews with fastidiousness

and, quickly, she moved back anxious because she had many backward tasks to be fulfilled.

After the chat, Andrés spoke with other workers but none had time, so he continued with his work, after a few hours, he thought of taking a fully deserved rest, a pair of hours perhaps. It was midday and he was hungry. A sándwich and a soda would be enough to continue the day.

The day was diaphanous, dry and extremely warm, a "heavy", proper day of this region of the country. It was time of the siesta, perhaps the wind would come named zonda with its oppressive air and its mysterious maelstrom, something that he was detesting, but that was bringing to him deep memories of its childhood, something to what he had got accustomed.

Already in the street, at first sight, he came across to a showy place, it was a bar near to the work. It was occupying a corner, with big red and white signs, very showily, it opened a transparent door and felt the air conditioning. It was wide with big exhibitors of tidbits, ice-cream makers with a lot of drinks and a small lounge of games. There was electronic machines, billiards and some metegol.

He was hungry, he was first to the exhibitors, there were replete of tipsy and eatable. He chose something to eat, the classic sandwiches wrapped in role of cellophane. While he was arranging them, he asked for his favorite cigarets, kept them and took a canister of cold beer to freshen up. He paid away from the seller and she, very attentive, smiled him.

He saw a counter placed along a wall and a few empty chairs. He made itself comfortable. Meanwhile he was thinking about the problem that had to resolve. He

noticed, immediately, that a part of the place that had loose the lights, had recovered immediate the electricity.

He listened how, close to him, two elderly were speaking about the local electricity, of course, they would have solved the problem, he thought. Then he wondered why not to look there to some assistant.

He commented to the seller on his problem. She was the daughter of the proprietors of the place, a young woman, very kindly and extrovert, she answered him safely, that might collaborate since she met a suitable person.

- I know who might help you . the young woman answered him.

Sge liked a boy who was playing with his brother, she wanted to please the young man who had known was doing a little time. She thought that this way she would help them two. She went out of the counter and, with a smile, she asked Andrés to follow her to present the boy to him.

Paul and the son of the proprietor of the bar were playing billiards. As they did they shared a cold beer.

The girl interrupted the game.

- Paul, come I want to introduce to someone . the girl said to him.

Her name was Karina, grabbed his arm, and the young man looked at her.

Between them there was a simple friendship relation, although she allowed to make out that he wanted something more.

- Yes, tell me - he answered her looking at it interrogatively.

- The gentleman needs an assistant to finish a work, perhaps you could be interested in . she added to him.

- A pleasure, my name is Paul.

- I am Andrés.

Andrés decided then calmly, to report the problem.

- I need an assistant as minimum to finish a work in a nearby construction site .

Andrés annotated him.

He was adding, also, some particulars. Paul said to him that he was with his friend Peter, who was finishing an electricity work. Paul asked him to wait for him also, he would not be late very much in coming so this way together three might solve the problem. Andrés decided that it was worth while doing it.

- Do we continue with the game? . the Karina's brother asked him.

- Let's leave it for another moment . Paul answered.

This way they started arranging the game table and said goodbye.

Peter came with the proprietor, they appeared to Andrés. Paul explained to his friend the question and Andrés proposed something for both. With them would be sufficient help, why not. He mentioned to them of the task and that little he should pay, well would be worth while.

- Good: What seems to you? . Peter interrogated.

Paul had stayed owing money to Karina for the drink so he accept.

- we go - the friend answered him.

They went to the work and put themselves to the orders of Andrés quite ready to support him for several hours. With effort and determination they passed very much, Andrés realized that Paul was a skillful person and with good predisposition

for everything relating to the carpentry: nails, clinches, and strips of wood of polished wood were framing the scene along with the typical aroma that detaches the wood. Finally it seemed that it might end on time. Andrés was satisfied. During the work he asked them what they were doing in the city and Paul answered him that he was from Buenos Aires and that there, simply, just passing through. He meanwhile, was reporting to them for his need to work, his dismissal and quite what happened to him and, hence, to his family. In the chat they coincided that they were living through difficult moments and that they did not know how all this madness of the moment was going to end.

The temperature and the day were oppressive, late afternoon Paul asked to move back to take a short rest and to buy a cold drink for all. On having come to the bar, he met the daughter of the proprietor.

- How you doing? . the girl said to him.

- Very well, the work is handmade, the pay is not great, but it is interesting.

It came then the smallest brother of the girl, scarcely a child, seized Karina of the hand and claimed her with many insistence, to go to the house of the neighbor to ask him for a ball that he had lost. He, often, was playing in the roof and was usual that there was losing things. With few patience his sister answered him:

- But you always do the same.

The child complained with this answer and Karina, touching him affectionately the hair to its small brother, answered him that she was occupied, had not finished his opening hours in the bar and they could not lose a sale, which in any case later would do it.

- What did you lose? . Paul asked him.

- A ball . the child answered.

Karina, nicely, told to Paul that it was a ball of plastic of those that they sell in the place during the summer epoch and indicated to him with the finger the place where they were exhibited: a big plastic bag along with the cigarets.

- One of those . the young woman said.

Paul who had little free time offered to help him.

- Good we are going to look for it then . he invited him.

Karina was grateful for it and left them both, Paul took him of the hand and accompanied him up to the nearby house. They touched stamp.

After waiting several minutes, the proprietor appeared, a woman of age, of white and tidy hair, alone and that it seemed of good character, they asked her for the ball.

- Look, in summer the boys usually play in the street and in the nearby houses.

Sometimes balls fall down here, the garden is wide and it is difficult to find something, in some cases the boys become very annoying, but good, I am going to see if I find something - the lady said.

They had to wait, she came with a ball of shining leather, almost new, of big value, Paul looked at it, noticed that was not that one.

- Wait a moment lady . he said to her.

The lady stopped, placed itself behind the entry. Paul took the kid, stooped and placed close to him, backs to the lady, to say something to him softly, without the oldster realizing about what he was thinking:

- Lie, tell that this ball is yours because it costs much more.

And very apologetic the kid answered:

- My dad taught me not to lie.

Paul looked at it wonderingly.

- Very well, it is well, tell her - and with a lack of appetite gesture he resigned himself.

The child approached the large door and said to the lady:

- Forgive, but this ball is not mine.

- Good I see if i find another one . she said - and the lady moved back.

To the moment she returned with the plastic ball.

- Is this your ball?

- Yes lady . he answered.

Pablo looked at it with the crooked head and the crossed arms like reproving.

- It seems to me that you did a bad deal kid.

The woman, although she was aged, perceived something of the conversation and in this moment she added:

- Take it, too. I have it for a time and they never came to look for it, here only it does bundle to me, it is the award for your honesty - she ended up by saying with a half pleasure smile . and this way the child took two balls.

Paul received the plastic ball and remained amazed for how it finished the situation after which he looked at the side and met Peter who asked him:

- I listened accidentally to the conversation: why did you ask him to lie?

- Because I thought about the immediate profit - he answered heedlessly.

- You lack Prudence - Peter added.

I don't understand. Why Prudence?

- If you have temperance and fortitude first, the justice comes later, this is Prudence, that is to say, to have the aptitude to see what is not immediate.

- Good I do not understand what you want to say, I am not interested in the Prudence. Better I am going to buy a drink for that I came and continue with the work - Paul added.

- I have to go to buy to the woodshop some things for that they asked me . the friend said and both separated.

Paul accompanied the kid, bought the drink and left the ball that was remaining to Karina, who became very satisfied and the child, happy, returned to his games with his new ball.

As soon as Pablo approached the work, he saw a very elegant vehicle that was parking there. She was the architect that accompanied by some businessmen dressed in suit, they were coming to inspect the completions.

The professional, hysterical one for the problems that she had, came with a briefcase. The men, in general, did not seem similar, some things reproached her, they treated her as a spender and reproached the salary that he was receiving, nevertheless, noticed that the cabinet-making work was quite made. And they notice Andrés, they all were consent to his work.

During the examinations, she forgot his briefcase between some wood that they must be placed to the last moment. Paul, without intervening, came with the drink but they decided to continue, on recommendation of Andrés, with the work.

- You passed very much, it seems that you are going to end on time . the architect said to him.

- Yes, I believe that, I could obtain a few good assistants . Andrés answered.

This way, briefly, he presented his new assistant to the architect. She moved back to discuss with the businessmen the last details. Finished the meeting she received a call urgently from the cell phone.

- I have to move back, have an emergency, forgive . she said dry, cutting.

- The inspection is already done, we also move back . they answered.

The architect before moving back, spoke to the woodworker:

- Andrés you are the last one that stays, take the keys, as soon as you end warn me . she ordered him.

- I agree . he answered.

The architect immediately went away, and they continued with the work. They were missing to place a few wooden strips, on having moved them, they noticed of that there was a briefcase. Paul looked at it for Andrés interrogatively.

- You know of whom is it this? . Paul said.

- No idea: What do we do?

- Open it and we will know.

- Very well . Andrés accepted.

Amazed they saw that in the briefcase there were several money bundles. Andrés, immediately, thought about the needs for his family and about the promise that he had done of giving them a better future.

- Paul, look, this money comes to me very well, if you want we distribute it and do of account that it was never.

- Why do you say it to me? - Pablo insisted.

- My family endures need and this money can come to me very well.

Of that time Pablo pondered and thought about what Peter had taught him.

- If you keep with the money perhaps it is not Prudent . he kept on saying: how is all this going to end? If they were coming for the briefcase: what would happen?.

Andrés felt that it was not the correct thing to remain with something foreign, perhaps someone would need it more than he:

- It is well, I hope that you should be right: but how will we know of whom is it?, I do not believe that it belongs to other workers.

- Let me see . said Paul, and checking found in the pockets of the briefcase something more than money - here there is a card.

Andrés looked at it:

- It is of a lotery house, that it is somewhere here close, I when I came happened round there.

They decided to take a rest and go there. It was a few blocks and this way they would verify if the purse belonged to someone who had to do with the work.

When they came to the lotery house they met the architect who, worried, was calling. They suspected that the suitcase might belong to her. She looked at them and extinguished the phone. Andrés approached.

- Did you finish the work? . she asked as greeting.

- Not . Andrés answered.

- And then?

- Lady: did you forget a something?

- What? - unscrupulous she answered.

Then a minute remained thinking, he realized that it might be.

- My briefcase! . he said distressed.

- Can it be this one?

Andrés showed her what he had found and she recognized it. She felt a big mitigation, when they delivered it to her. She opened it and counted, quickly, the money. He warned that nothing was missing.

- Thank you very much . she said relieved.

- Of nothing - they answered together.

- This is the place of my dad, who decomposed here and I came to replace it for a few hours. I forgot the briefcase for the trouble, it is to do an urgent payment, - she answered waved.

- We go away, as soon as I finished the work I warn you . Andrés answered as giving for the chat completed.

And both left.

They met in the door of the work Peter who had done the buys and prepared to finish with eager willingness the work. He asked them about the reason of the delay and they commented to him the facts.

A pair of hours later there came the architect, who, much endorsement, said to Andrés:

- Look Andrés, I have no money. But I wanted to be grateful to you somehow for the favor, I can give you a lottery ticket, it is a Quini, the award is big, it draws lots today, perhaps you have luck.

- Thank you lady - he accepted the obsequiousness almost any more for not offending her than for waiting for the result.

- To the luck it is necessary to call it . Paul said.

Andrés kept the lottery ticket carefully. They had already finished the work. She took note, saw the realized work and remained very conform.

- It is already late, tomorrow I wait for you in the lottery house, this way we do the payment to you for the corresponding work . the architect said to Andrés.

On the following day they made everything tidy and left. The boys accompanied Andrés and when they came to the place, he found out that he had gained an award. Out the partners were waiting for him. With moderate voice and much contentment informed them:

- I gained an award!

- Fantastic! . they looked and exclaimed to the unison.

- Very well, in the end I am going to be able to begin with this award the business that was hoping to do.

- Now you can start again . Paul said to him.

- And you, what are they going to do?, I already finished my task, thanks to your advice, Paul, now I can go out of this situation.

Paul agreed with the head, Andrés continued:

- I paid already for the work that you did, it is not great: do you need more money?
. anxious Andrés asked.

- No thank you . Peter answered.

- We continue trip, we are looking for some answers . Paul answered.

- Good I hope you should find them . Andrés affirmed enthusiastically.

And they accompanied him to the bus terminal, so that it was returning with his family.

- While they were going away they passed again for the bar, there a moment remained Paul with Karina, while she was asking him:

- Do you go away?

- Yes of course . Paul answered.

- And why not you stay?, round there, at last, you can obtain a work here with us .
answered to him the sugerente young woman, expert of its beauty.

- Thanks for everything, but not.

- You are a special person, I anticipate that where you go it is going to be fine . the
girl said to him.

They said goodbye. With sadness, she saw it setting off.

They came to the terminal and asked for the return trip. The bus was still to go out,
the people were forming line to be raised, it was the only bus in this mysterious
evening. Andrés put its purse, which had the valuable hardware, in the part of load,
rose and said goodbye of his two friends. He left to them a role where it noted
down his direction and said to them were he was living in Big Mendoza and that, if
one day they need him, they could look for him in the city.

On having been raised, Paul said.

- Did not get lucky?

- Not, Paul . he answered - was not only a luck question, it was the consequence
of the straight reason, the Prudence.

- Does he look like to you Peter?

- Yes, clear, good ends, they need good means. And the values, to be a good way,
need always to act as together in a harmonious way, like a team. In this case
administering correctly the Justice, the Temperance and the Fortitude, he obtained
better results that with the lie and the trick, and this, Paul, is the extract of the
Prudence.

I understand.

- Do we go? . Peter asked him.

- Yes . he answered him still thinking about Peter's deductions.

They were satisfied, they saw Andrés rising and being located inside the bus, so that they continued their mysterious march. It was time to set off, a warm wind began blowing. He looked for the number of his seat, after which he put the passage in its wallet. At this moment a religious print fell down of him, he did not warn it. A lady who was in a nearby seat warned him.

- Sir, you dropped something.

- Where? . Andrés answered.

The woman indicated to him with the hand what him had fallen down and was observing a small role in the soil. He raised it, he knew by intuition something. He remembered, mysteriously, what his daughter had said to him, saw the religious print, and had a strange sensation, it was a simple religious print of San Cayetano Patron of the bread and of the work. He remained a few moments observing it. He looked at it for the lady:

- Thank you . he said to him with a force that it him was sprouting beyond its gullet.

Later a soft breeze entered an open window of the bus, a passenger closed it. Then he raised the look and saw a pigeon in a branch that then flew. Later it looked at the platform he hope his friends were still. He looked for them with the look to give them a last greeting but they had already left.

The driver of the bus asked him to sit down, the bus started and began the march. The day was beautiful and the movement of the branches of the trees they were announcing the arrival of such an awesome wind zonda that began to blow. He

warned it from his seat, but he did not bother. The bus was full of passengers and they all closed its windows, the wind maelstrom began to raise the dust and the sheets of the floor and this way, finally, pondering especially what had happened to him, he knew that he had received a special type of help, and kept the religious print again.

Thus, on this diaphanous, dry and warm day, the vehicle tackled, slowly, its march. The dust that was getting up of the refuse was accompanying its movement, in this mysterious morning.

CHAPTER 7:

FATE, HOPE, LOVE OF CHARITY

It was a morning of clear sky, the sun scarcely was going out. They were meeting in an enormous park with big and leafy trees. The two friends were walking without speaking.

- Paul I noticed you worried: Does anything happen to you? . Peter said opening the dialogue.

They stopped a moment, the silence was cut by a knife until the friend answered him with anxiety:

- Yes, look, I am thinking a while and only recently I come around. You had said to me that you could help me to find the source that ò -Paul did a gesture, like sign which he had forgotten, - I remember already: that bilocated, the word was not going out for me. And, nevertheless, time has happened and there are no changes.

Under the pretext of what are we in this?

- What do you mean? . Peter asked.

- I am not sure, I suppose that I can not find answers: that all this effort is useless!, I would have to remain in that place, at the end you are not helping me in nothing - he exclaimed with anger and almost desperately.

- But you can not answer to me this way - the friend explained to him missed.

- But yes, why did all this serve to me: explain to me!, to help the others, the values, what sense all this effort had: do you understand?, if I am done ball in the end.

- But what is happening to you? . Peter asked him with real worry.
- Why do not you go away of here?, I am full, tired of all this: you know?
- Wait, calm down a minute ã .- he tried to calm him down looking at him.
- Get out - said to him the friend.
- What? . Peter looked at it missed for the demand.
- Get out, I can get ready only, do not worry - he insisted with anger for the second time.

Pedro remained perplexed, one was not waiting for this situation, he pondered and maintained the silence, hoped for another answer.

- I say it to you for third time, get out - he repeated.
- Contain the anger, you can take a bad decision.

A deep feeling of rage and unease had settled in Paul's heart. For him his friendship relation with Peter was already not making sense, perhaps his friend in the end, he was only another unsuccessful poor person, thing that the aforesaid one knew by intuition.

- Did you understand or not?, I am not going to say it to you again . hi shouted reaffirming his judgment.
- Do not answer again to me this way again, remember about what we speak when we were with Dante: did you understand? - Peter scolded him calmly, but commit against his reactions.
- I can only . he answered him with certain arrogance.

At that moment, in the distance, one listened to sing a rooster, and Peter remembered what had spoken with his teacher:

Teacher, I am ready to go with you to the jail and to the death.+

%assure you, Peter, that today, before the rooster crows, you will denied me three times that you meet me.+

When the memory faded away, he thought again and noticed that he also, as young man, had committed the mistake of pushing its teacher back. Sad for this old error, but knowing by intuition the new situation, he said to Paul:

- I cannot already teach you anything more, perhaps someone is waiting for you - he traveled a few steps backwards and giving turned average he moved back slowly. In this moment, a brilliant object fell down with form of key. Without realizing he continued. Paul noticed the fallen object but, impeded by the fury, he did not warn him.

He decided to be still alone, traveled a few meters, suddenly he felt bad, the hand was placed in the face and he wondered: %What did I do?+. Then he looked again backwards thinking that perhaps he might say something more to him. Peter was already not, had remained alone.

It began despairing, if there was something to what Paul had a deep fear, it was to the solitude.

Walking, he spoke with himself aloud: "Everything goes wrong+and he gave a punch to a drinking fountain that was close to him, then he took hand in pain.

He sat down on a staircase that existed in the place, shrank on its knees and took its head with the hands remaining like that a long moment.

The morning was fresh and the warm sun, the hours happened and Paul felt the heat of the beams. He was already not feeling dominated by the anger, but he was sad, depressed and upset, there was no return. He was lost between both worlds.

How would it continue now?, was said. He joined of this almost fetal position and stood up.

He kept on walking along a few moments and something attracted attention of him. A big birds flock was in the outskirts. They were coming from all parts and were settling a banquet. With its melodious singing they were breaking with the local silence. He went towards there.

He saw a water source with decorated tiles and a wide made bank of strips of wood varnished with a base of iron of black color. There was a child in it and a space to sit alongside. The child was dressed in white and had a bread loaf on his legs and with his hands was separating the crumbs to distribute them to the pigeons and sparrows that there were approaching.

Paul then sat down and after a long silence he recounted:

- I am hunger and thirst.

The child looked at him and offered the bread and the water that he had in a beautiful ceramics canteen, elegantly turned.

- Take . announced him with serenity.

- Thank you - Paul answered.

He ate and drank, what was invited to him, and noticed how strange was the canteen.

On having ended, the child looked at a moment and asked him:

- It's been a while I waited to you, Paul: Why were you late so much?

- Do you know me?
- A little, and I know, also, that you are concerned - the child answered.
- If as something it serves to you, I believe that I am lost and died, have no arrangement.
- Don't you think that the things can change? . the child supported.
- I am not sure, I know, for everything what I learned lately, that the things are badly, that there is something that is not working well, but I do not know how or why . very worried Paul answered.
- It is possible . the child affirmed.
- This is a disaster, it has no arrangement.
- Do not believe, the persons can be reborn, this is the answer . the child alleged.
- But what is that?
- I make sure you that the one that is not reborn from the high cannot see the God's Kingdom.
- That is impossible. How can a man be reborn when it is already old? Perhaps it can enter the bosom of its mother and be born again? . Pablo was necessary.
- This is about what Nicodemo asked me long ago. I make sure you that the one that is not born of the Water and of the Spirit cannot enter to the God's Kingdom. What is born of the meat is meat and what is born from the Spirit is Spirit. Do not be surprised of that I had said to you: "You have to reborn from the high+.
- But how is all this possible?
- Do some memory, perhaps in your memories and in everything what you learned you will be able, safely, to find the answer.

And Pablo leaned back again, his torso and chest on the legs, the face wrapped up with the hands and it pondered. He looked inside himself, knew by intuition. Then he pondered with inspiration thinking that perhaps, that child, could have something of reason.

He remembered what Peter had said to him, in the south, scarcely come from the Purgatory and before meeting Raúl: "Some things we know how they start but not how they end, you should not hurt uselessly.+"

Pablo, dazzled, him had answered:

+I do what one gives me the desire.+"

Then an ancient memory arose. He remembered when he was a child, who was pushing another partner who had nearby and the father looking at it said to him:

"very well Paul, you learned to stick.+"

He remembered something more, what Pedro said to him, when the van decomposed and it was necessary to arrange it for Juana: "Paul proved to be an onlooker and said to them that they were lucky.+"

What Peter had answered him:

%It is not a luck, the persons who are successful in its tasks are the most certain, never leave a work without expiring.+"

And he remembered again something that its father said to him when it was very small: "Paul you did not do your school task, good it is not important, everything in the life is done without working.+"

And he kept on thinking, that time that had met the Karina brother and had to look for the ball that it had found.

%I listened accidentally to the conversation: why did you ask him to lie?+

%Because I thought about the immediate profit+. He had answered heedlessly.

%You lacked Prudence+, added Peter in that opportunity.

%I do not understand. Why Prudence?+

%If you have temperance and fortitude first, the justice comes later, this is

Prudence, that is to say, to have the aptitude to see what is not immediate.+

%I do not understand what you want to say, I am not interested in the Prudence.

Better I am going to buy the drink for that I came to look and continue with the work+, dazed Pablo.

Then another memory came to him:

It was going with its father to a commerce and, as he was not going so far as to buy an article that he needed, he thought, doubted, but in the end, it stole it. Later its father was saying: "Very well Pablito, you stole, you were very crafty and cheated. This way you have to help your dad.+

After remembering all these things he reflected, looked at the child who was accompanying him, and said:

- All my life was badly and newly now I can realize: Why?

And the child answered him:

- This, Paul, is the slavery of the sin, and now when you realize, you are a new man, a free man.

Paul took the head, shrank in its own body as it was its custom, started crying and its tears fell down to the floor.

And the child rested on its back to support it in this moment of pain.

Pablo, this way straightened up, and kept on reflecting:

- Of what does it serve to me to repent if I in the end do not serve to follow any law?

- The Law is the letter, but the gifts and the perfect virtues, Paul, there are like the music, they are to be lived and shared . the child affirmed.

He pondered a moment, Paul realized something and answered him:

- Then all this is not a question only of learning to live but also of learning to listen.

- Exact - the child added.

There was a moment of silence between the two. He felt slightly confused.

- Why do you waste your bread in these birds?

- I do not waste it, the men look alike to these birds, they all eat of my bread, but some of them are like the sparrows, they eat of it and go away and forget me and that's why they live in fights; but others are as the pigeons eat of him and they remain with me and that's why they live in peace.

Finally - it added - you have to take a decision, if want to live like a sparrow or like a pigeon.

- I do not understand - Paul answered.

- You are going to understand.

- Can I give to him also to the pigeons?

- Yes of course.

It took something of bread and immediately a white pigeon settled on his hand to eat.

- It is a sign of good augury, you did a big effort to come even here, it means something. Asked for a desire and God is going to grant it to you - the child commented.

- And for what can I ask? . Paul was interrogated aloud.

- Meditate, of course already you know - the child affirmed him.

The time seemed to stop. As if this moment was going to last forever.

Paul reflected, he knew that he had to ask for the correct thing and the best thing.

- I know already, want ò , I wish a heart that can listen, be comprehensive, to judge and to discern between the good and the evil.

The child was glad deeply for the election.

- You asked for a wise and understood heart. Finally, Paul, you realize that it is needed much more than the values to do the good and to be a complete person, one needs a change of heart and of the Spiritual Gifts that come from God.

Congratulations. You asked for the same Spiritual Gift as King Solomón. So be it and remember that the fire that comes from the man sometimes takes life, but the fire that brings the Energy of God, renews it.

And the pigeon flew.

- It went away - Paul said.

After this moment there was a conversation between them, but it stayed only between them, perhaps the child had said something more to him. On having finished this mysterious dialogue, he felt an enormous flame that was coming of above and raised the look. He got up immediately.

- Almost I incinerate myself! . he exclaimed.

He looked at the side and the child was already not.

- Where are you, Teacher? - Paul said.

He pondered and looked around him, he was already neither sad nor distressed, was sure of what he had to do, was feeling peace and happiness. He returned on its steps, and found the silver key that had fallen down to Peter. He inclined and, on having taken it, he said for himself aloud: "It is time to return+

Suddenly everything became dark, and returned to the place where he was when he had wake up and found, later, with Dante. It was again in that dark forest near to the Hell.

It was following the half-light, but it did not get anxious, it was feeling safe and he listened to a feminine voice close to him. It was heard in direction of its back, he turned his body and discerned it:

- Paul, sweet heart. Where were you?, I looked for you but I could not find you, something clouded my vision.

Paul turned his body

- I remember you: Who are you?

- Already you forget me? I am Alexandra.

- Ah, already I know. You are the girl that I met in Gino's party.

She, in a very seductive way, answered him:

- So it is Paul. Where were you?

- With a few Friends, perhaps you know what I do here then.

She was surprised for the answer, he was not hoping for that, she opened the arms, looked around him and with an ugly rejection gesture he said to him:

- With a few friends?: Where are they?

Paul did not answer. Then she looked at it provocatively and smiled.

- Come, follow me, this is not a place to speak.

She took him of the hand. Of that time Paul asked her:

- Wait: who are you?

- I already said it to you: so much are you interested in? . Alexandra answered him indifferently.

While they were traveling the place it was changing, becoming quite dark and some tenuous lights appeared. In this half-light neither walls nor limits of any type were evident. There were in the place certain well-off furniture, interspersed somewhere here and there, a big TV set was standing out between them.

The place was illuminated by sails supported by high pedestals and a big chimney where there was a fire that was dominating the scene.

- If you want you should make yourself comfortable in some place - Alexandra suggested while it was rubbing his fingers on the furniture.

- I look for answers.

- Ah already, answers. The truth is that I bilocated you, you are in two places simultaneously, with a subtle body on the one hand and one physicist for other, you had not survived the accident if I didn't do it: was this what you wanted to know?

- Good now I already have an answer: must I to you be grateful for it then?

- It would be good: does not it seem to you?
- Why did you do it?
- There is a hanging topic between us, the chat remained, partly, unfinished, also I noticed something in you that attracted attention of me.
- What thing?
- what we speak that night.
- Does it seem important to you? In the last times the things were not leaving for me for anything well - Paul continued.
- I know already, you recount you to Hellen. A thin, beautiful girl, of good manners and good happen economically. But you know what?, forget her, she likes another boy and, apart, it is going to lose not even five minutes of his time with anybody as you, for her you are a looser and an idiot.
- That I already know it - he added with sadness.
- It is good that you know it - and Alexandra went to a small furniture that existed close and took two glasses and served a drink, - take a little with me and you are going to see that you are going to feel later much better - she kept on saying without extracting his look.
- Not, thank you, I do not want.
- Forget her Paul, I only want that you feel better, also, I can cheer up the weight that oppresses you, it is not small what I offer you, if you do a place to me in your life, I can achieve it easy and successful - and it added - there are the alive ones those who are successful.
- Yes, as the one that shut me up with the car.

- Do not blame anybody for what happened to you. The errors are already paid in this life. You are in this situation for the Rule of the Comeback. You will harvest your sowing; you know this phrase not?

Paul did not answer, bit the lips. She approached, drank what it had in the glass and caressed it.

- You desire me?

Paul avoided the answer looking in another direction. Then she took the breteles of its black garment and made them fall down to the side of its shoulders, and its garment fell down.

- What seems to you this way?

Alexandra stayed in underwear and took it with its hand of the chin and the jaw and kissed it, and with another arm it brought it over supporting it on its back.

Paul put its hands on her shoulders and took distance.

- Forgive me, Alexandra, but I do not wish you - Paul answered.

- Do you say to me that not, you refused me?, remember that you are bilocated.

There was a moment of silence, it raised his garment quickly and spoke to him with spite:

- I am going to entertain you then with the reality Paul, and we are going to see what you decide, if you want to be together or to die of sorrow opposite to what I am going to show you now.

Alexandra took a remote control and indicated the screen of a TV set to him, lit it and added:

- Observe carefully what I am going to show you.

- What thing? . Paul asked.

- The Argentina is characterized because in every decade a vice prevails for over all the rest.

There was a minute of silence between both.

- When you were born Paul, in the decade of 70, it was the decade of the hate.

The men surrendered to this vice, believed that the death and the violence could solve the problems, and the hate triumphed.

- Look Paul.

And on the screen arose images of the decade of 70:

The incredible arrival of Perón to the Argentina. On an unexpected balcony to receive the leader in Ezeiza, the leading Peronists exhibiting its weapon finally to shoot the young people who were waiting for Perón with a tragic balance of dead and hurt.

The cruel asassination of Rucci in the door of its house and its sad deathwatch.

The assumption of Isabelita, its violent speeches and López Rega dictating to him what he was saying.

The putsch of '76 and the assumption of the commanders.

The support of the civil ones.

The operative military men with thousands of arrested and missing.

The infamous celebrations of the World cup of 1978.

The military men torturing in the ESMA, torturating naked women, shooting adolescents (the boys of the night of the pencils) and stealing babies.

The infamous Camps declarations justifying the massacre of Young innocent persons.

The mothers of Square of May in its first rounds.

The war of Malvinas. The Galtieri speech in the balcony. The soldiers without overcoat and patients, other estaqueados. The capitulation to the Englishmen. The British celebrations.

Finally the images stopped. The screen went out.

Alexandra and Pablo were observed and she continued his speech.

- The $\$0$. with a displeasure gesture said the young woman - it was the decade of the lazyness. The men dreamed of the democracy, of the hope that gives the freedom, but the sleep slept and they never materialized.

And Alexandra took again the remote control and showed him other files:

Images with the continuous changes of price and the on horseback inflation.

Money tables and financial kneading fortunes.

The people doing tails in the doors of Banks and Exchange offices to buy and to sell dollars.

Closing of factories and continuous social claims that never had answer. The poverty in increase.

Tails in the streets to obtain a miserable job.

General strikes and conflicts between political and trade union.

Economists lying in its ludicrous speeches ignoring the reality.

Emptying of Companies, fortunes kneaded in the tables of money, hyperinflation and plundering.

The early resignation of the president and its transfer of the charge to the new one.

The images of the screen stopped.

- And now, finally, my favorite decade . she raised the head and the hands like celebrating in advance what he was still to say to him. Alexandra continued with a cruel satisfaction smile-. Her them 90, the second infamous decade. It was the decade of the avarice, the men only thought about the serviceability of the easy money and the avarice triumphed.

And it showed him images of the people 'standing in line to buy domestic appliances and imported bric-a-brac.

Quite for 2 pesos.

The speeches exist of the politicians.

The incredible celebrations in the journalistic programs for the privatizations.

The Menemtruchos (false money).

Ferrari and the dances of the president with odalisques.

Maria Julia covered with a mink.

The suitcases of Amira Yoma.

Thousands of Argentine boys fighting to survive looking for food in the garbage.

Openings of big chains of supermarkets and closing of small business.

Broken factories.

Trips abroad and all kinds of ostentation.

Increase of the social protests, the first pickets.

Children asking in the street and doing malabares.

The desperate people begging the stale bread in the bakeries.

- Finally, to these unfortunate, after so many liveliness and of so many imprudence, they ran out of Paul spending the worst thing. Do not sit already anything for the values that God puts in the heart of the men! . she exclaimed-: either sit Love neither for God nor for the Neighbor, either do not sit the Faith and the hope! Either they have not left anything. They remained empty, they do not have the value to get up and to go out forward. Look now what it is happening in the Argentina:

Alexandra took the remote control and showed him:

The tails in the banks and the discussions to withdraw the dollars.

The first "arbolitos".

Plundering in general, plundering to the supermarkets, the small business robbed, a Chinese and his family crying because they were emptying the grocery, and the police observing without doing anything. A man stealing a French fries display and chizitos and justifying himself before a journalist.

The shots in the banks.

Useless discussions of the politicians.

The first images of the Square of May, Thursday night of December 19, with a journalist and a vehicle that approached, after the speech of the president and the people of the bordering quarters approaching to be evident.

The repression of this night.

Alexandra satisfied by everything what he had said to Paul, felt that it was sufficient.

It took the remote control to extinguish the TV set.

He observed him trying to foresee his feelings. And it added to him:

- But you Paul seems that you are another thing, it seems that yes you have left something of dignity: tell me?:

And with enormous fury she continued:

- And now: Without your Love and without the hope of a better future, with what are you going to push me back, with what are you going to get up and go out forward without me?

Paul pondered, and finally with serenity and discernment he answered her:

- I understand all these things without hate and without despondency. Every vice has a value that is opposed, we are going to see then:

He took the remote control, lit the TV set and he was indicating her:

- The temperance is opposed to the Hate.

And it appeared by the screen what Peter had taught him, when it met Raúl:

%After this he approached two friends and said to them that perhaps work might obtain them both. Nevertheless Peter answered him that they had to continue another way.+

%How attitude change!+, had said the young man.

+Sometimes, Paul, to appreciate a value, it is necessary to know first its opposite one and, in this case, a man knew of the value of the temperance because it was conciente of the price of its opposite one: the anger+.

Paul had looked at it missed, but he felt that it was right. He agreed moving the head. After which it had touched the shoulder of his friend, they smiled and they were relieved enormously.

The images stopped, the screen became rainy, without voice.

Then he did that another file began:

- The Fortitude is opposed to the lazyness . he said to her while the evidence was exhibited:

%In the house, while Pablo was cooking a few breads in the stove, he had asked Peter what meant him when they were.+

%Perhaps you realized the importance of the Fortitude.+

In that moment Paul had been interested.

%And why is the Fortitude important?%o

+The fortitude, it is the virtue that allows us to overcome the difficulties in the works that we realize, and this is very important, because the happiness, Paul, is always a product of the effort towards the Good+, ended Peter.

Missed by the affirmation, he asked:

%What happiness is always a product of the effort towards the Good? Does it seem to you?+

%Yes of course, test yourself+, had answered Peter.

The images stopped.

He continued on spending already real experiences:

- The Justice is opposed to the Avarice . he added to her and showed her driving again the remote control:

%Sometimes the values are opposed if, and when this happens the justice is that the most important value prevails,+

- %And what is this value?+ %the most important value?+

- %The Love of Charity, the Love to God and to the Neighbor is the most important value.+

- %And who is my neighbor?+. Paul had asked.

- %The one who needs your help+. Peter had answered.

The TV set stayed Stand By.

And he added:

- For the correct administration of the moral values, the Prudence - and he taught him what had lived with Andrés in another image:

%Was it lucky not?+

%Not, Pablo . he had answered him - was not only a luck question, it was the consequence of the straight reason, the Prudence.+

%Does he look like to you Pedro?+

%Yes, clear, good ends, they need good means. And the values, to be a good way, need always to act as together in a harmonious way, like a team. In this case administering correctly the Justice, the Temperance and the Fortitude, he obtained better results that with the lie and the trick, and this, Paul, is the extract of the Prudence.+

%Understand.+

- And finally for the perfection of the moral thing, THE CHARITY, the love to God and the neighbor and this way finally the real thing showed:

%He had taken something of bread and immediately a white pigeon settled on its hand to eat of him.+

%It is a sign of good augury, you did a big effort to come even here, it means something. Asked for a desire and God is going to grant it to you+, had mentioned to him the child.

%And for what can I ask?+, Paul had been interrogated aloud.

%Meditate, of course already you know+, had affirmed the child.

Paul had pondered, to ask for the correct thing and the best thing.

%I know already, want ñ , wish a heart that can listen, be comprehensive, to judge and to discern between the good and the evil.+

The child had been glad for the election.

%You asked for a wise and understood heart. Finally, Paul, you realize that it is needed much more than the values to work the good and to be a complete person, one needs a change of heart and of the Spiritual Gifts that come from God.

Congratulations. You asked for the same Spiritual Gift as King Solomón.+

Of that time Pablo ended up by saying:

- I believe that I have in spite of what getting up and going forward: does not it seem to you?

Alexandra looked at it with an astonishment gesture.

- But if everything goes out for you badly!: This is not possible! . sharp Alexandra exclaimed.

Alexandra and Paul looked fixedly during a second.

- Sos an fool! . Alexandra affirmed venomously.

She could not already retain it. Then she gave turned average and went away, and its figure desapeared in the darkness ò

Paul remained only and remembered what the child had said to him about the fire, looked at its hands and everything became igneous and shining ò

Paul get up on the bed of the hospital.

Grace, his aunt, looked at it amazed.

- Paul you recovered: what a miracle!

- I believe that I had a long sleep.

- How do you feel you?

- Well, but something sick.

In the room Pablo supported the feet in the apartment and looked that he had a silver key, to what its aunt commented:

- But you did not have that earlier.

- A friend lost it, but sure he is very far.

A nurse was in the room raising some instruments that the doctors had placed. On having come, one of them asked him to move back. He saw his Paul and smiled,

closed the door after leaving. In the corridor he met someone more who asked the nurse:

- Peter, what happened that you left your work?

- Perhaps when a sheep gets lost, the shepherd does not leave the herd and does not stop up to finding it?

- That is true, but that I taught it to you.

- This way it is.

And the two friends contentments left together for the corridors, where an intense light was opened and its figures disappeared.

- Paul, Giselle brought to me some days ago some house things, you can change your dressing, hope for me, now I will speak with the doctors.

The doctors observed him. Seeing that was well, they called Grace. In the corridor and with the reservation of the case she was notified and authorized the exit of the patient.

- They say we can go home, but you have to take some medication . Grace said.

- Good.

- Paul, I have to go to do a few papers in the reception desk.

- Are you alone?: And Giselle?

- I spoke already by phone with her. You are going to find her in the parking of the entry with the car.

- I go there - he answered him with a peace sensation.

He changed using the clothes that Grace had left to him and was going away calmly of that place, came at the entry and, to the glance of the street, he could not look Giselle, but he felt a presence nearby his.

- Happy the pure of heart because they will see God!

Paul turned, saw a familiar figure and he was glad.

- Hello, Dante.

- Hello Paul.

Dante did a moment of silence and kept on saying:

- I congratulate you, you conquered the sin by means of the only possible way, across the way of the good.

- Thank you, I am very relieved, it already finished everything.

- Not Pablo, with the Eternal Life and the Grace of Wisdom you can now to do for the others what your Teachers did for you, do not forget.

- What me querés to say with that?

- It is the golden Rule, Do for the others what you would like that they were doing for you. Are we provided with your help?

- But why do you say that to me?: perhaps it is Just?: did the others do anything for me?: do I owe anything to them?

- What you say is just but merciless, the Justice and the moral values are human dispositions and that's why imperfects for its own nature, this way they must be perfected by the God's Law, the Agape, the Love for the Good. For what I am asking you is not Justice but Benevolence.

- That is difficult.

Pablo agreed and moved the head affirming what Dante said to him. And he continued:

- The easy and simple persons are being oppressed by the desire of evil, the ignorance and the trick. You can rehabilitate them.

Paul observed him during a moment and asked him:

- But you think that how they are the things in this country this can change?

Dante complained for what Paul said, thought that perhaps he should not understand well the message. Then he moved his hands, with the palms up and clarified him:

- Yes of course. The God's Kingdom, it seems to the worm that first cocoon is done, it transforms and of that in the end a butterfly goes out. It is also, how the naked tree, that, on having come, the spring sprouts, fills with sheets and finally it comes to fruition. Understand now?

Paul pondered a moment that Dante taught him, then he added:

- It is also like the Parable of the Hidden Treasure: No?

- So it is. You found the Treasure. Now you are a new person, like a child, you have a new world to be discovered. Do not forget everything what you learned. Do we count with you?

- Yes, of course.

Then appeared Grace, which looked at him amazed.

- Paul: are you well?: you talk alone!

- Does it seem to you? - then he looked at a side and where he was Dante but only there was a pigeon the one that immediately flew.

Grace listened to someone who was calling her.

- There this Giselle, newly she comes, of course. Do we go Paul? - Grace said to him.

- Ok.

They were and his cousin was glad to see him well. Finally the three were together, happy and it seemed that in the end everything would end well for them. And this way they left in the Giselle vehicle.

While he was traveling, Paul felt in its mind an emotion that was not his, took its head and leaned back on its breast.

- What is happening to you Paul? . scream Giselle.

The car stopped, his aunt looked at him.

- Do we return? . Grace asked looking at them.

Paul rejoined slowly, extended its hand

- All is fine, take me where I say to you, they are close.

They looked disconcerted.

- Ok we go . Grace said

During the trajectory he saw two of his old friends with a few banners.

- Forgive me but I want to bend here.

- Paul: are you sure?: you do not to go home? . Grace asked.

- You should not bend . Giselle said.

- There are my friends, I have to go to see them, later I go home.

- Be careful, look that they are suppressing in Square of May, are many died and hurt, do not go for there!

- Calm, I do not want troubles.

Paul bent the car, and approached his friends.

- Hello: where do they go?

- Hello Paul, just we were thinking in you, we go for Square of May, we speak with Grace and Giselle but we had no time to go to see you, with the disaster that it is happening.

- Do not go, it does not make sense: what are they going to change this way?

- There is no another remedy, the politicians are all thieves, they remained with our savings ò

The three looked. There was silence between them, perhaps the words were already of more. Pablo was dazzled, it seemed absurd to him that they were risking going towards the place of the disaster.

- I am not going to go even there, it is a madness.

- We continue . they answered him.

- But ò

Then he gave turned average and decided to go away but Giselle had already left.

His friends continued another way, and while he was going away he thought and exclaimed:+It is incredible that they are so stupid!+

It was moving back from the square when he happened for a corner. There was a wide, luminous pizzeria with a big TV set. The place paid its attention. It fixed the look on the screen and saw how, in the square, the images of the repression were happening.

The people were looking amazed, they were small, the young boys, the teller and some messmates. They were making comfortable opposite to the TV set like metals the imam. The TV set seemed to have so many proper life as to absorb the viewers.

He lowered the look and sighed. He looked backwards and thought about everything what it had spent in its life. Hellen was already a memory, everything what he had learned also. With a miscellany of happiness and sadness he looked forward and decided to continue.

And he saw a beggar who was taking a supermarket cart and, behind him, two children were going badly dressed.

Pablo looked at him and said:

- Quo Vadis, Domine? (in Latin: Where do you go Sir?)

- I follow your friends so that they should crucify me for the second time.

He warned in his heart who was.

The beggar continued his way and Paul thought what Dante had said to him:

%Do we count with you?+

And the answer that he had given him: "Yes, of course+

Then he pondered and felt that he could not betray his teachers. He felt sad and repented of what he had done to his friends.

He observed the beggar and then to his partners who were leaving. For a few moments he could not move. But in spite of everything he knew in his heart that the worst thing could avoid them.

He returned quickly on its steps and approached them.

- I hope that we have something more important than to do.

- What thing? - asked one.

- To go fishing men!

- Paul I already know this history, do not come with that, tell me: if they beat you in a cheek, what are you going to do, give other one?

- That means something - Pablo answered.

- And what does it mean?

- That we cannot grow like persons but excuse with humility the affronts that do to us the others.

- But Paul - another friend continued - that should change the others first and later we change.

- Can I ask a question to you?

- Yes.

- You in your house you have a wide garden with fruit-bearing trees: is not it true?

- Yes, sure.

- And when the trees bear fruit: What you do?: you wait that the wild birds eat first and later you gather what stays?

- No!: how I am going to do that!

- Very well, if you wait that the others change first, this is what you are doing.

The beggar continued his steps. He happened close to them without they warning, stopped and sat down in a bank.

Paul fought of the shoulders of its friends, and it they showed to the beggar, but he was already not a beggar but Christ. On having seen it, they covered the face.

Paul released them and they saw the beggar again.

Then he said to them:

- Do not worry, I have the Faith and the Hope which the things are going to change, a Teacher taught me how.

Paul reported to them what he knew, and his friends, on having stopped listening, said:

- But I had never listened to this.

- Me too - said the other.

- Do we go?

One of its friends took the banners and left them in the guy of the beggar.

- And now what do we do?

Of that time Pablo said to them:

- We have to continue with what it started 2000 years ago.

Paul remembered the key that it was maintaining in his pocket, took it and observed it. It had a vision:

Jesus was walking along the Sea of Galilee and while his traces were resigning for the waves of this small sea, he approached slowly to a boat.

Two men were discussing hard between themselves. He raised his hands and called them.

They were Simón Pedro and its brother Andrés, to whom he said:

- Follow me, and I will do men's fishermen.

Jesus gave each one a key.

And each one took the key that Jesus was offering them.

They left its networks and continued him.

Of that time Paul said:

- This key is already not for me . and he delivered to a friend.

What is this? - I ask with curiosity.

- It is the key of the science, the key of the world . Paul answered.

- Thank you . and his friend answered nicely with a smile.

And all together left for this wide square, while the sun was going out fully this morning.

Then, a pigeon settled on the hand of a child quite dressed in white to whom he was accompanying another garment of equal way. They approached the beggar who now was Christ.

One was placed to the right and other to the left.

Then the first one asked him:

- Teacher: What did you teach to Paul?

- What I teach to the humanity for two thousand years:

%ASSURE YOU

THAT THE ONE THAT IS NOT REBORN OF THE HIGH

IT CANNOT SEE THE GOD'S KINGDOM+

And the child to its left said:

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Christ observed him, agreed with the head and answered him:

- So it is.

And the child to his right asked:

- Teacher, and what does it mean?

And Christ answered:

-As happened to Paul, when men hear and live the Word of God, the Kingdom of Heaven emerges with strength, and men are reborn and percive the kingdom, and when this happens, society is changing for the benefit of all.

The boy on the left gave him his dove, Christ took it and when released he said:

-Do I also count with you?

-Amen, answered the children.

The dove flew into the new dawn, the square which had been was empty.

Paul and his friends were gone.

