

# HALLUCINATIONS OF THE SANE

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## Index:

- Dedication	4
- Repugnant Innocence *prologue*	5
- Random Quirks (1/3): Concussion	14
- Multiple Sightings	20
- The Addict	25
- The Symphony of the Grand Mansion	39
- Random Quirks (2/3): Ignition	47
- A Clamor of Portraits	54
- The Train to Horizon	62
- Random Quirks (3/3): Brink	70
- Sisyphus	75
- Unwitnessed Tales of the Morgue	83
- Awaiting the verdict	91
- The Architect	97
- The Envelope: Hallucinations of the Sane	105

## Dedication

“Why does one have to rot in silence, torn between pain and desire?” – A quote from ‘Eternity and a day’ movie, a film by Theo Angelopoulos...

In here, the pains gather to be delivered to your very possession, but desires are yours to discern, and so is the aspect to which you favor to incline: “Pain or Desire”?!

This book is dedicated to those who grieve in silence...To those who pursue recognition...

This book is inspired by my nightmares...

-The Author

# 1- Repugnant Innocence

November, fall

12 Midnight...

A thick mist casted blinding hazes upon the ancient moor embraced by the abandoned sanctuaries at its periphery.

Far across the moor, there lies a modest dwelling: a relatively limited area cottage, lit from within by half a dozen of ignited logs for a sight.

The cottage's door was breached open, kicked by Dimitri, the drunkard, who stepped in, his left hand gripped the rigid neck of Dekon, the doomed devil, who begged in despair to be released, and to the right hand of Dimitri was fisted a tarnished vial of rum.

Dimitri shut the door and dragged Dekon to the interior as he defied sturdily, but could not break free, until he was leashed by corroded, yet firm chains and locked up in a narrow cell that centered the back wall of the wooden cottage.

"You ain't potent" intimidated Dimitri in a glorified tone  
"This here is your dungeon, your earthly hell before we

reunite in the perpetual hell of the lord, and until then, you won't whisper your filth into man's ears, we're so fed up with your bloody influence ... You made me exterminate a wretch a week ago"

Dimitri took a few sips from his bottle and headed to be seated on the middle chair at the round gambling table situated at the cottage's extreme left, while Dekon settled in grief and no noise was raised over a breath!

The paradoxically somber, yet furious eyes of a typical drunk met Dekon's terrorized eyes, threatening by a plausible recurrent mischief that would last up until eternity, but soon, Dimitri was lost in his glory, blinded by his hectic alcoholic ritual; he is probably anticipating a guest, a foreign gambler whose tardiness ruins his acquired elegance.

Dekon's sole left utility was his own tyrannized and silent remarks as he perceived every corner and the subtlest details of the dwelling: the gambling table and its three wooden firm chairs, the frayed rug that spoilt the already dingy floor and the horrendous bar anchored at the extreme right, he steered his eyes and fixed them upon Dimitri, the alcoholic rascal who took hold of the once free devil that sanctified liberty ... and sins!

Dimitri was a sturdy mid-aged bastard who is a regular visitor of local taverns, renowned for his superior vanity; alcohol had fed his wrinkles and nourished on his spirit, he had always been fond of rotten rum, with its characteristic abhorrent stench, but every now and then he used to showcase some passion for the relics of Absinthe or Black Labels.

In this lonesome stay, merely Dekon interrupted Dimitri's forlorn until a thread of a few monotonous door knocks prevailed within the place.

"Come in" Shouted Dimitri as Antonio, the gambler, was granted access, attired in genuine luminous black apparel.

"I beg your pardon, if you may forgive my tardiness, Messieurs Dimitri" was Antonio's belated apology "I wager Vincent will show up soon to join our company...Oh! I see you managed to leash that god forsaken devil of the mire, good of you, Dimitri, that's astounding!"

Dekon's sorrow grew undisputable & Antonio was seated alongside Dimitri who perpetuated his muteness for a long while.

Antonio's accent unveiled his posed and fake French lingual imitation, albeit being a pure Greek, he was fond of

the French culture & used to reside there for a semi decade & quite often he was spotted being called Rene by some fellows in his local vicinity.

He revealed a decent brand new bicycle deck of playing cards which he riffle shuffled a couple of times then spread them on top of the table awaiting the final guest, Vincent!

Antonio is the shire's wittiest poker addict, he could hardly dispute the more consummate, Vincent, though.

A few more ticks on the clock, Vincent stepped in amiably without seeking permission or even a knock to signify his arrival; he then sealed the door and joined the rest on the poker table for the duel to commence, in a deliberate lack of recognition for the leashed devil yonder.

Vincent, a notorious gypsy bounty hunter of no legal nationality who used to inhabit the distant suburbs of Western Europe along with his cosmopolitan tribe before Dekon manipulated him to set a foot on his very first pathway to a quest, going after a rare bounty in a perilous search; he usually walks with pistols attached to his thighs, but whenever he went for a game, he spared them for

quests and carried a minute handful revolver to maintain his vigilance, to which Dimitri remarked.

“For Christ’s sake, what would that revolver be capable of, you bloody bounty hunter?!” Dimitri chuckled while Vincent grinned then replied: “Way beyond your non-astute imagination, my good fellow, for now, let’s wade into the game”

The gamble was signified to begin...

The three of them mingled in their trivial affair, intentionally denying the tormented Dekon who kept an eye on them. Three sinners committing every despicable blunder impersonating undistorted saints while Dekon sat still, mourning his inability to be duty bound doing what he was created for.

“I hereby settle” thought Dekon “torn amid my yearn to liberty & my lost capability of spawning sins, crimes or any other obnoxious flaw. What do people need me for, anyway?!”

Dekon kept his sight fixed upon the three of them, dueling in the coziness of the hind fire that lit the place and casted dazzling shadows all over the walls to conceal the hideous mural cracks.

Rounds went on, equally shared in terms of triumph between Antonio and Vincent who kept feeding his thirst for bounties and trophies, while the striving Dimitri growled in fury & poisoned his radicalized nocturnal rage via upping the rum dose followed by swallowing a narcotic pill which he kept in his vest lining pocket; he is maintaining a forged patience to administer a royal flush into the game, but for another once, he lost to Vincent by a full ace, Vincent almost claimed a partial wealth that included Dimitri's heirloom gold laminated dagger, this game, as usual, would be of a minor interest and benefit for Vincent, but he needed to demonstrate some abstract domain, while Antonio dueled for the mere purpose of nurturing his ecstasy, that elegant lush of daily gambling. Alcohol farther distracted Dimitri who lost the entire sum of money he possessed and imperatively, he had to offer his cottage as a playing currency to ensure the game's continuity & probably a nigh spark of brute and wreaking havoc would be the most relieving outcomes for him in case he lost his shelter, and this whole thriller was being observed by Dekon enviously...

...

“And the cottage goes to his majesty, the greatest of all, Vincent Deeson” Announced Antonio

“This bloody cottage remains my property, you pathetic moron” Shouted Dimitri outrageously as he took a sip from his vial then broke it in anger.

“Chill buddy” responded Vincent “Ain’t you got any disguised possessions in here to play with? By my beard, I’m aware that you stow lots of precious pieces in this cottage which is now delivered to my very ownership”

“This sounds fair, I would say, Messieurs Dimitri” reinforced Antonio...

Dimitri cupped his hand, hit the table twice then flipped it over...

“The cottage goes to your care” Dimitri shouted meekly  
“But your life is how you pay for it”

Dimitri rose to his feet and reclaimed his balance, then gripped Vincent’s revolver, who showed no act of defense, and shot him.

Antonio was taken aback, puzzled by what he witnessed and tripped over in panic then maintained his terrorized silence. Vincent collapsed and breathed his last then fell

down as a corpse; Dimitri blew Vincent's head with another bullet and then followed it another one, he kept the fire on until the revolver was flatulent then dropped it near the corpse.

Antonio recessed in despair, for it surely would be a crime to be swept beneath the rug! Who would be audacious enough to search the mire for a body? Nobody approaches the bog but Dimitri and his approved guests, of whom one has perished!

Dimitri headed to his bar, fetched himself a half-filled bottle of rum, then paced back in disrupt to the center of the cottage in a swaying manner.

Antonio nearly fainted as he squatted near the corner, while Dekon developed a grin, a sincere latent despise blended with a mean pleasure; Dekon caught a glimpse of his shadow yielded by the aroused flames, he could perceive his scaly wings, his feral claws and the repugnant pair of horns that topped his head; that shadowy magnified figure was drawn yonder on the wall, directly posterior to Dimitri, who kept drinking spoilt rum...

A moderate podium was set where the horizon embraces the land, and everyone gathered on top of the outdated wood, the devil recessed and gave up his role and the giant moon casted a spot to dramatically emphasize Dímitrí!

You wake up as Dímitrí, what does it seem like? And most importantly, what does it feel like?!

## 2- Random Quirks (1/3):Concussion

A wheezing ache kept deafening me; my head was on the verge of detonation. I have always abhorred no pain more than headaches; all I could recall was a dreadful nightmare of a heinous content: I envisioned myself as a morbid pervert drunk who caught held of the devil...

I opened my eyes: The cold blue florescent lights illuminated the room, it was an Intensive Care Unit ward in quarantine; I wondered when I have been presented to this hospital.

Several devices were connected to my body; my head was wrapped in a tight discomforting bandage, my head would surely blow at any moment!

Where has everybody gone? And why does any of the nurses not show up here despite I am aroused of a probable coma?! How did I end up in this place?

I barely tolerated the headache, and the irritating monotonous volume of the beeping sounds produced by those devices nearby helped modify my headache. I focused on the last few details my mind enclosed to guide me to my most recent coordinates that led me here in a

most distressed form, and then a memory was abruptly retrieved, a rather peculiar one that was played right in front of my eyes. It all started nearly a month ago, when I abandoned my former cleric career and exited my office late after the dusk, I paced to and forth in random alleys, those I knew and others that required a tour guide to ease my walkthroughs, my thoughts were raging within my mind, rallying to reach an endpoint of either oblivion or execution, both fates were abominable, the forgetful were never blessed!

I relinquished my well paid social decency and turned my back to a possible elevation in the work hierarchy, being the only one nominated to attain a managerial status, but I favored my liberty at the expense of my career, evading a great deal of recurrent duties of a typical desk job, but I could not retain my uselessness so I gave a quick heed to multiple tasks which would find me excited; however, most of the joys I had as first thoughts were likely to be coupled with guaranteed mischief or even illegal felonies and I did not want to spend an age grieving in custody, even if I proved a manifestation of dementia to elope, I would have to be transferred to a mental institute: a worse dungeon! Either ways could not be assigned as an asylum.

Days and nights raced, and my flatulence of life was gradually nurtured, I slept a couple of nights outdoors, for I could not withstand the stay at my dwelling for every reason a typical bored bloke would suffer; a week terminated and the following week almost culminated, my inner flatulence and irk were perpetuated, save for the infrequent walks by the distant quay which soon became part of the mainstream and no longer resembled an asylum, until a deadly notion grew defiant to all forces of repulsion to counteract its dominion; acting inhumane seemed the only left sanity in this bee-hive-society, a lethal urge kept taunting my thoughts long enough to be hired as my main quirk, all I wanted was a single endeavor, I wanted to fix myself midway in a street full of live traffic while the vehicles pass by me in the opposing direction; initially it sounded suicidal, but it was the thrill this thought bears, I am on it, I intended!

The following night, I stood on the parade, hesitated and lost among my infinite dilemmas; an ancestral monk once believed that the universe embraces infinities of infinities, and one has to favor some infinities over the others and bear an afterlife based on his preferences, and so did I, I chose the infinite thoughts that coerced me to step forward towards the traffic for a try, all I might risk,

probably lose, would be one of the many lives I have; this seemed solemn as much as it sounded like an alibi to cheat death!

My right foot stepped down the parade and forward, a minor shiver triggered some instant sense of vigilance, but then the other foot followed; sluggish two or three paces motioned me no more than a few inches away of the safe zone, a speeding “Wolks Wagen” almost hit me but my reflexes ensured I retreated to the very starting point, driven by the solitary accord of my adrenaline floods that would suffice to render an entire legion cautious for the bells of an inevitable warfare.

That night formulated a motive for recession, a motive to turn my back to this quirk and never recall its onset, but an endless spare time would drain me as well, I had to do it with any liability there could be, I was aware that I could not cheat death twice, or even if I did, this quirk might predispose me to quadriplegia, but it was worth it, it was promoted to a lifetime obsession that I had no guts to refute; the urge drove me insane, enslaved my spirit to the date of attaining this queer trophy.

Two nights later, I reached for the same spot on top of the low parade and perceived the fleets of automobiles as

they left their chaotic tire marks on the asphalt, it was time I left my mark on the streets as well, probably my blood marks...

I walked forward steadily when the traffic was markedly reduced; I then rotated myself so that I oppose the normal flow direction. This battle had to be fought, and the gauntlet was set, no elope would be acceptable...

The traffic's rate was restored back to its accustomed rallying rate, several cars broke, their tires screeched, others barely evaded me sparing my life and tens of drivers cursed at me, but I aspired to claim my freedom... Insanity was my freedom. I am a liberated bloke, defying fear and mortality, I shut my eyes closed to relish this ceremony, and the cold air breeze tickled my cheeks and blew my hair, the aggravated noises of honking sounds rose, the non-audible curses continued and the precious liberty meticulously approached me. All noises seemed to be attenuated for a while, a moment in which no voice was raised over the aesthetics of sham silence that I fabricated; an abrupt screeching sound awoke me from my delirium, my eyelids were forced open and I saw a black "Aston Martin" bashing me, my head hit the anterior glass of the car shattering it, everything faded and I woke

up here, surely after losing my consciousness to the efficacy of that bold concussion; now back to this aching reality, there has to be some sort of sorcery to relieve this unbearable headache...

I screamed for aid...

### 3- Multiple Sightings

Words do not count here, do not ever give them a heed...

Another mute (allegedly adorable by the crowd effect) night in the streets of London, no voice is audacious enough to take over silence, even the breezes that move along act stale to dissolve in the quietness. I have been saving my regular looks out of the window to be confined to nights, evading the confrontation of the sun's burning rays; a persistent trait of mine was observing the finest details of the city, without moving a step outdoors, all through my 24/7 opened frame to the outside world: My window...

The sky above was never destined to be clear, serenity was not an option and night clouds rendered the black skies turbid, through which the timid crescent could barely prove an attendance. Tilting my head underneath, I perceived the tongue-tied pedestrians, moving to and fro crossing each other paths in the streets, multiple fragmented dozens of them all being blindfolded, incapable of retaining full balance, skidding frequently and colliding with each other more often to disrupt the already turbulent patterns of footsteps. None of them reached to

the black folds that blinded their eyes to remove them; such a discrepancy.

Disparity showed manifestations among the gatherings extending beyond the horizon, but all agreed to a single trait: quite as a grave.

Through the other hundreds of the numerous blocks and units, my eyes were granted effortless access into - proximity of- everybody's home; leaving no room for doubt, my perception into their silent lives revealed evidence of fluctuations and disparity, for many of the windows were out of my sight range and others lost their sharpness by the effects of smoke and dust arising from their chimneys, others were shut by opaque glass and some had their lives secured behind curtains.

I chose a window and let my sight go through it into a living room where the TV was on and some 10 feet away were seated a five-member-family, staring at the forsaken silent announcer of 9 p.m. news as he presented no news at all!

The window to my anterior right block granted me the privilege of crystal clear detail identification, it was two stories below the level of my flat; I could observe a senile

elegant bloke, dressed in his most beloved comfort of his matte pajamas, reading the same distinct book I used to see held by his hands whenever I paid him an unauthorized sight visit, all content the book embraced was plenty of plain papers, on which he gathered the majority of his focus, sincerely engulfed by the cotton white pages, he flipped them every couple of minutes, unveiling another pair of flatulent pages, still mingled in his supposedly intellectual affair!

To the opposite left and into another room, I caught a glimpse of a TV channel that lacked any viewers at the room in which it was broadcasting, or perhaps the tenant was not obvious to me, he or she could be seated at the hidden distal corner of the room (That was a good guess). In the TV, I saw a concert for a singer or a performer who is deemed to have established a wide foundation of fame, he appeared through the low angle frames of live cameras; in his anticipated concert, he remained muted, poised in glory retaining the pose of a typical renowned conceited celebrity, while the spectators and geeks seemed lifted in heavens of joy, surely expressing their relish and admiration in absolute silence.

Distantly, a mid-aged lady who rented a ruined flat sat in the terrace with her radio next to her supported on the terrace's fence, she held an indistinct hot drink, claimed to be so, attributed to the organized vapors arising from the mug. She was spotted concentrating and probably enchanted by what she pretends to hear coming out of the speakers of her, god knows working or not, radio.

“An endeavor won't cost you but a trial” – always said my psychological mentor, and if I am to assemble a phrase to extend his saying, I would claim that regret of abstaining lasts lifetime, a most unbearable legacy to be left behind when one goes beneath mud, back to dust and ashes!

I stepped out of my room, out of my flat and out of the whole building in which I dwelled, prepared to intimidate this silent melancholic saga that meandered in London; I intended to interrupt this perpetual muteness and presumably potential ignorance and neglect. If it is a trend, then I would be the flaw, I am the exception, exempted from this filth I would never fancy; what would it all cost me, what would I lose? Even if I am to raise a white flag of recession, I would certainly fix atop the highest eminence to be observed for once and merely once in a lifetime, but I would still be observed!

I rose to the world, topping the summit of the city: the highest eminence of either glory or accusation of disdain. I unleashed a sounding cry, a shout of insurgence to terrorize the patent indifference and apathy, I am here to dominate, I deemed, it was high time this silent universe listens to my voice, but all I could offer was a continuous deafening cry that finally waned at the final sighting of that night: a fleet of civilians sieged me, looking to each other, haunted by wonders and latent fears, the last thing I witnessed was hundreds of stones aimed at me, hitting my body bruising and wounding my trunk, I neglected those noxious pains, for they would be accentuated later, but I could not leave a domain for regret.

Welcome pain, the worst indemnity to pay for my years of remorse.

To them, sound was heinous, but I despised silence...

## 4- The Addict

“Aren’t these lids intending to unleash a few tears, any soon?” Dr. Patrick inquired, interrupting the grave silence that prevailed in every corner of the clinic.

Following a short mental digression, I realized I was attending my third psychological therapy follow up session, “For what on earth do I have to shed tears?” I replied hesitantly.

“Why are you a regular visitor of psychiatry clinics if you’re not interested in our instructions, then?” He heavily sighed “I’m thankful your mild case is ultimately rooted to the psychosis category and is attributed the least to neurosis”

“And does crying solve any of it, Doctor?” I cynically doubted

“Would you grace my question with a thoughtful reply, why are you here, Mr. Dimitri?”

“A resort, an appeal sent to no one, I’m here for no sake, a mere elope from an unclear drudgery that’s not worth grieving over, neither non-demanding for me to deny, I, quite frankly, don’t know why the hell I am here, perhaps ‘and this is just one of my countless perhapses’ I need to

convey a speech to nobody... and everybody” I halted for a moment or two, while the doctor kept his ears open, averting any interruption that could crumble my messy pattern of thoughts, so I resumed “It’s probably lots of words that are trapped, sermons that need to be spoken, but I have no clue of how to say them... I’m sorry, doctor, I do not recognize my motives for visiting a physician of your psychiatric expertise”

He seemed mean and thoughtful for a while; he then lit his broad Swiss tobacco cigar as he replied in an abridged profundity: “An endeavor won’t cost you but a trial! Tears always answer your calls and solve your doubts”

\*\* \*\*

I was dismissed... Some unknown magnitude of time later, I weirdly ended up in a tavern; I have never set a foot in a tavern before nor have I ever moved beside one.

The blue smoke arising from cigarette ashes casted its intriguing bleakness over the place as the particles covered the dim lights of the supported spotlights; I never envisioned this beautiful version of gloom!

The stench of alcohol mixed with tar and ash established a mandatory placidity amongst everybody there including

the bartender and me. People hardly focused on whatever they had in their minds as they tried to remain vigilant and disobey alcohol's superiority, they seldom communicated in indistinct murmurs and short side talks that soon terminated.

"How may I serve you, sir?" that was the bartender's elegant voice as he approached me.

"Sorry, but I don't drink"

"Oh, dear! Who in London doesn't taste a potion? You must be a saint, I wager... So, why are you here, then?"

Why am I here, I thought. What drove me to accompany these trump wretches?!

"I seriously do not know why I'm here" I answered

"Such a defiant" the bartender sighed, shrugging his shoulders "Sir, I'm sorry to inform you that your pleasant stay here has to be paid for"

"Sure I will! Here, these are twenty pounds and do you never hesitate to charge me more should stay happen to be prolonged"

He left me as he grabbed the banknote and went to offer his services to the other guests.

I am the virtuous visitor of the bar who never tolerates liquor!

My psychiatrist's advice tampered with my neurons, I would not lose but a trial, he said! So, what could be worth grieving over, for what on earth do I have to empty my tears reservoir? Should I weep for the courteous dogma I used to adopt which was met by refusal and social abhor by everyone I knew, or do I have to cry over a life depleted over a fruitless quest? Would it be applicable to express my sorrow and sob for my losses, for the fears that impeded my whims and altered my path from a plausible thrive to an actual internal mischief?

I recalled the memory of the sole distant relationship I held onto by the canine but was not graced with success, or in fact, I did not even try going any closer... "An endeavor won't cost you but a trial..."

This must be a scam, I thought, one simple endeavor could cost an entire life; I remember the only once when I sought to restore my law-stipulated rights of being a

notorious violinist but lost my unborn yet fame and relinquished a portion of dignity for it.

What else does one have to recall? The doctor must be deranged!

Crying was never as non-demanding as he imagined, and tears do not mop uneases as they flow, tears would certainly be of no aid.

I moved out of the tavern.

\*\* \*\* \*

Nearly a week had swiftly passed; I have intentionally skipped two consecutive sessions with my psychological therapist, for which he would be infuriated when I show up the next time, because he would not be capable of providing me with any clear image of my progress if any... or deterioration! Quite frankly, deterioration was a more realistic outcome, for this I hated reality and used to elope to surrealism...

Later that night, I went back to the tavern and was seated on the same table as the previous time; last time, I did not wade into the guests' facial details, but a quick scanning look suggested that none of them was missed, they all

attended, perhaps a little more depressed and silent; could that be the manifestation of heavy liquor intake? Alcohol is a heft!

The bartender recognized me being three tables distant from me, I waved my left hand with two banknotes each worth 10 pounds and I made them visible enough for him to fake a grin of acceptance and accommodation to my allegedly unfamiliar visits...

A wistful melody reached my ears, evolving from the night radio; a not so renowned note played by a pianist, it was lovely and it restored my memories of the once golden fingers I had, to which the piano keys have a yearn for as much as my violin craves me, but I kept repelling every notion that stumbled upon head during that eve; for just one night, I needed to empty my mind.

I paid a tremendous attention to the symphony played in the radio as it went on; I have never been an audience in a musical concert before, but there I was, pretending to be!

My attention was distorted and withdrawn as soon as a young couple stepped into the tavern through the tail gate and gloriously shouted in the middle of the place to claim people's dizzy respect and focus; they identified

themselves as a freelance married couple interested in escalated surrealism mini-plays, and that they were meant to beg our pardon to showcase one of these short plays that chiefly relied on a high grade of symbolism.

I began to develop some pleasure towards their presence as their show was bestowed upon us, the young lady was dressed in matte black, while the man, not so conversely, attired black and blue.

The girl initiated the show by wrapping herself in a soothing tapestry then was gently seated on the floor and stared away to a null point as she perpetuated a solemn smile. The youngster next to her unfolded a black handkerchief then waved it back and forth until a bunch of eleven scarlet roses magically showed up, to which merely the curious bartender positively remarked via an applause while I kept watching.

The boy sought to gather her attention but she did not respond to his calls, he fetched a silver-pleated lighter and ignited all of the roses he gripped, then oscillated them hurriedly, turning them into glamorous black roses that you could hardly locate during the falls of November, but I bet they were prosthetic flowers despite the recognizable efforts made trying not to make them look so.

The young performer dropped the flowers one following the other, creating a vicious loop as he stood in its center, later, he dropped his hat and burned it, then bowed to the clapping audiences and went back upright, after that, he kneeled and picked up the hat which was still on fire, then with a quick sleight of hand took out a white mask out of it and put it on, the mask had a small carving of a 7 of spades on its left side.

The bloke stepped out of the flower-rimmed loop approaching the silent girl who stood up in a graceful stunt getting out of the tapestry wrapping; her husband pretended to knock on an imaginary glass boundary that demarcated them, to which she pretended not to respond and stepped back twice in a clear reluctance, until the man incarnated an audacious struggler and phased through the phantom glass and pretended to faint being drained by the move he did, the girl, hesitantly, threw the tapestry above in the air while the other youngster dropped on the floor and the tapestry fell on him covering his squatted body, the girl proceeded to the flower circle, she motioned her slender fingers over the flowers petals that soon burned down to ashes, and she kneeled and plummeted her neck.

Their mini-show was over; they stood up next to each other expecting a salute or a laud; an obese drunkard stood up as his booze vial slipped and shattered, he applauded loudly and kept yelling “Bravoooooo” and the others followed his lead, soon the whole tavern was clapping turning the couple lifted!

I wept, without a latent motive driving me to cry! But tears kept flowing, although the play was not that wistful, and its crafted symbolism did not influence me negatively, but tears flew as the couple was being cheered up by the hail they gained; the couple then recessed and disappeared to the outdoor world.

The bartender came to ensure I am not kept unattended and checked my well-being, to which I instantly assured him that he had to bear no worry and that I was more than fine and I emphasized that I had to be dismissed.

During the dim hours of midnight, two contradictory notions settled over my head, one was the lacking motive behind my unexpected reaction and the other was a superfluous, yet, non-irritating inner drive to weep. I wept through the full course of the few black hours that preceded the crack of dawn, unwilling to lid an eye, and

any thought that occasionally came by to suppress my tears were soon attenuated.

I spent the following fortnight with maximum commitment, reduced to two specific rituals, one was visiting the tavern for drink-free stays and the other was weeping whenever and wherever I felt like doing so, often being questioned by multiple random parasitic people who snuck their noses into every affair, to which I responded with no clarifications.

It would sound inapplicable; however, I assigned it as my newest hobby, a one that has been bizarrely acquired. My facial expressions were coarsely incongruent to the supposedly wistful act of crying, none of my wrinkles motioned to sympathize with my alleged despair; weeping turned out to be addictive than curing, my legitimate opiate.

Days and nights kept swirling, and all I did was retreating to my hideout, my lovely bedroom, to perform my secret affair of weeping, averting any plausible wonders and even possible intimidating murmurs by people.

I often fortified my act by grieving over the mischievous events I have endured through my past or even feeling

miserable for the sermons hidden within me, left to rot and become volatile like every other thought.

But here is my word on behalf of my sacred tears:

My dogma had always revolted against the alleged trends. Advocating tears, I once deemed that they could not symbolize any latent weakness as rumored; neither have they ever spawned a nascent relief after they run out, and right after my debut in weeping, one of the aforementioned thoughts recessed and the other was proven to be the absolute reverse.

Crying is not relieving, it is rather addictive, outweighing the intensity of a holy grail of potentiated liquor; by the very instance one commences unleashing the initial tear, a flood follows and cessation would not be an imminent outcome.

Weeping is certainly the crystal clear manifestation of collapsing and experiencing emaciated soul moments; that was a confession!

Tears drained me, wiping every ounce of strength I previously owned and left me behind, tethering the weakening events together to find a motive, but there need not to be one!

Crying restored me to my comfort zone, to where I am confined, to silence; I was entirely pointless and thoroughly wilted. Nonetheless, weakness is not by any means a stigma of a heinous disgrace, and ought to never be regarded as a shame, for I have finally bared the truth and conducted the essence of our mood swings –all through weeping-; every now and then we have to reclaim the congenital nature we neglect, to claim our faint structure back and surrender for a while, to weep and wither, to wilt and retreat, to repent in preparation for other sins to have domain after we mop the past ones.

Last few lines in courtesy to tears; the weakness yielded by tears shall perpetuate the innermost light spot of integrity and serenity before it fades away, for resurrection is nigh and grief is the second to none of any beliefs one could behold. Grief is the most elegant and virtuous of all feelings known to man.

It has been three weeks since I last attended a psychotherapy session, I have missed two of them, but I finally returned back to my doctor who showcased all modalities of rage upon my arrival which were incongruent to his field of expertise!

“By hell, tell me, do you intend to demean the vitality of a psychiatrist?”

“No, certainly not my intention, Dr., I was just involved in a new activity which found me delighted; a new hobby”

“What on earth would it be?” the doctor exclaimed in baritone

“Weeping, I took your advice” I instantly replied

He leaned back in a muted ecstasy, in response to my reply; and with a smile of glory. The session went on seamlessly without interruptions, save for the few sordid moments of his allowance for me to weep, again with no reason, for which he provided emotional sustenance to keep me going.

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Later on, when the session terminated, I took the longest way possible back to the tavern; I found home in both, the placidity of the night streets and the delirium of the tavern; I sensed a vibration in my pocket, it was my cell phone as it received a text message. I accessed it to have a look at its content and it read as follows:

“Dear Dimitri,

I'm so sorry for your loss, Selena was found dead in her apartment by an overdose of a smuggled narcotic. Have my sincere condolences..."

Oh God, where do tears hide when they are needed most?!!

## 5- The symphony of the grand mansion

1:00 a.m.

Late during the post-midnight undistorted serenity, I stepped out of the tavern, my aims fixed on quitting the unmotivated rite of targeting a bar for having a paid seat without being served with alcohol. Anxiety did not creep into my soul, for casualties have been nothing but a banal cliché; it could be that a new activity would seem my best probable asylum out of this mainstream; I felt my mind open to suggestions of my very own volatile thoughts as I performed my nocturnal unaddressed walking ritual, subconsciously trespassing any territory that comes along my path, I was unguided, only left to my primitive intuitive compass, until I stood upon an abandoned alley in the former official downtown for a couple of minutes as my cell phone's reminder signaled the time for my daily medication; I took out my pills and swallowed two of them then drew a profound breath; one would hardly stumble upon that breeze of pure scent of a vacant alley's air.

A distant faint tune travelled through the muteness to tickle my ears. Roughly, exploiting my old musical career experience, I could distinguish two or three alternating

ords and levels; I kept following the trail of the melody, drawn forwards towards wherever it was amplified, where the accentuated continuous play revealed the oscillating strings of a genuine oriental violin of a precious Moroccan forgery crafted by the elder strains of mobile tribes.

The sound finally happened to originate from a recluse in a distinct spot, it came from the interior of a grand mansion, numbered as the 29<sup>th</sup> block, centering the 11<sup>th</sup> avenue in former downtown; it was comprised of three stories, painted in a slightly worn out matte black, and fortified by a nine feet metallic siege, ironically open-gated!

The mansion's architectural nature was rather eerie and inconsistent with the other ancient blocks designs which were shaped by the wittiest Greek architects; however, that mansion's unfamiliar gloomy gothic design portrayed a mystical stronghold where only necromancers would dare inhabiting, but it was weird enough to look alive through its bleakness, this mansion casted some life upon the necrosis that plagued this avenue!

Above, and within the extreme right room of the third floor, there stood a firm shadowy silhouette of the lonesome musician who played the melody; the melody was a marvelous blend of classical, wistful, appealing

oriental and ancient opera music, strikingly akin to the last musical note that I created by the very final interest in music I had, it was similar to the musical note I wrote before abandoning my infatuation in music. What solidified this queer incidence was the fact that I never published this note, nor ever played it!

The melody lasted for a long time that I did not give a heed to how much ticks on my watch were consumed, but those fine cords bewildered my spirit and refurbished every exhausted sense of rejoice I ever had; the silhouette rarely motioned at all, except for the delicate hands as the fingers pressed against distal terminals of the cords while the other arm oscillated the stretched cords by means of the violin stick, until the tune terminated, following by a gradual disappearance of the shadowy figure, and I was a loner again in this nowhere.

The tune was worth a while of my life, I kept standing where I was, embracing my inner drive to applaud and yell calling for another session of “opiate” music, but I remained silent when I should not; silence was my only sin. I was left to the company of the clam breeze...

“Returning home would certainly require a guide out of this nowhere” I contemplated, as I non-intentionally

neglected the fact that I was actually lost; the symphony mesmerized me!

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It took me an hour –could be more- through the darkened streets of the long beloved night until I reached my residence which was barely lit as I always preferred. I did not lid an eye, nor sleep wanted to pay me a visit, my eyes caught a quick glimpse of the piled heap of mess settling over my desk yonder, with a pale black envelop topping the pile, I steered my vision to my old aged violin, it was supported in an oblique orientation to the desk, covered by dust, grease relics and oblivion of several years of abandon; I fixed my pupils on it as my ears recalled the vague symphony; who could that shadow be? How could that melody be this much akin to mine? And most importantly, would I be able to listen to it for another once if I ever traversed that ancient square and paced beside the mansion?

The clarifications I had a trail of were incompetent with the first two wonders, but with regards to the third, I developed a curiosity, with a thread of possibility that the symphony would be played again in case I went back to that gloomy street.

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The following night led me back there amid the hardly memorized maze of similar streets, I waited for so long until my infamous patience of a creepy stalker was graced by the prominence of the eminent shadow as it was portrayed on the obsolete opaque curtains, and the hands hauled the violin to be mounted on the left shoulder and this had me at the utmost readiness, empowered by a reliable intensity of adrenaline, and the melody was played again; I swung and swayed, gently moving as the symphony proceeded, bowed to the low pitches that captivated my spirit and took off my hat in a silent salute more often.

This pattern maintained its recurrence for an estimated month, for every midnight across the winter of December; a long temporary collateral of a holy music, followed by an inevitable retreat to my accustomed misery of solitude. A month before, all I had as precious were my endless rivers of tears that flew with no purpose, but thankfully the tears were replaced by an unfathomable obsession with a queer symphony which ends with two wonders of who and how!

WHO AND HOW... On one hand, I needed to disclose this enigma and celebrate for the revelations, and probably try a drink of victory!

But on the other hand, I thought the revelations would deprive me of that optimum joy.

Who plays it and how could it be similar to my presumably crafted note?

I maintained my routine for some extra days, ultimately turning my back to the heedless tavern visits, but destiny is a lot more inexplicable than people might claim.

On the last Friday of December, I was found at the same place, seated before my preferred spot beneath the leafless branches of a former canopy of an aged tree, I anticipated my special version of odorless kind of spiritual opiate and I even pretended to forget about my mandatory pills.

The wait was weirdly prolonged, my pocket watch could not inform me about time and no map would provide me with my coordinates. My grief grew unbearable, and I acquired the whining impatience of a morbid senile who cannot withstand his gangrene.

The melody was never played that night, my wonders surged and never plummeted. Partially, I wanted to offer myself an unauthorized trespass through the open gate into the mansion to inquire about absence of the figure, but I panicked, unwilling to move away back to my home, clinging to the hope that the silhouette would still return.

Hope: that filthy mirage which ends you up entangled in the labyrinth of despair and solitude.

I reasoned that I could not stay there until the crack of dawn. I went back to my dwelling, my face radiated disappointment and frustration; why do my pleasures fade away when I require them the most? Previously, my weeping ritual was ceased, and then my spiritual refurbishment left me without a farewell, why did the silhouette not wave me a goodbye at least? Someone who stalks a mansion for a month could never be totally unnoticeable!

I forgot the count of my wonders, and my head was near blasted by the unpleasant migraine, that claustrophobic headache bane...

My violin brought me an unforeseeable company as it slipped and hit the floor, its fine collision produced a faint

noise coupled with a short lived sound of the strings; I reached for it, held it up and grabbed the violin stick lying next to the desk, its ribbon was still tightly tensed across the length of the stick; I blew some of the dust particles that have landed on the violin's facet years ago, to which I reacted with a severe couple of coughs.

Startled, I fixed my sight on it for god knows how long, my yearn to play it was beyond docility and I subconsciously mounted it on my left shoulder and played the same symphony that I have been craving... My symphony...

## 6- Random Quirks (2/3):

### Ignition

Last stage to oblivion's alternative: I folded the last paper and let it slip through my fingers to mount the summit of the paper heap I engendered. Setting fire to an individual piece of paper relieves not a single nerve, but a whole pile on fire is a dope, an anesthetic to abstract aches. I am used to developing interest in various quirks, one at a time, then watching it mature into a potent obsession; my latest was staining papers with my words, picturing every unpleasant occurrence I have encountered throughout the course of a specific time span, ones that endangered my very imitation of clinging to a normal life; formerly, I used to ignite a paper following placing the full-stop, for I relish the sight of flames and to a certain extent, this novel habituated trait of mine was later proved to spawn a temporary ease, but as it is with every narcotic, I had to up the dose, doing so more frequently, utilizing larger amounts of papers written by the very ink of sorrows that kept surging, then creating piles that never halted enlarging, and then damping them all with gasoline and throwing a lit matchstick over them to witness my hardships charring yonder and diminishing within me...

This very time, however, was distinguishable, rather unique –an unlovely kind of unique-, coupled with that sensation of diminishing joy and enchantment with regards to the quirk; that was a familiar sensation which I was accustomed to at the terminal point of every time I acquire a different quirk, by then I come to realize that the obsession would culminate; time to wave goodbye to my trait via a final trial, one good trail to be carved in my interns till the eve of promised annihilation, thus, it had to look like a relevant special farewell ceremony!

The pile was taller than ever –some three feet high-, composed of crumbled papers stained with black. Personally, I do not have faith in oblivion, nor I believe in its alleged sundry merits; loss of memories, no matter the grade of their awfulness, would count as a plausible mischief on the long run!

I grabbed a random paper, freeing it of the pile’s cohesion, unfolded it for a final scrutinized look at the lines of sorrow it embraced; the paper read as follows:

“February 27<sup>th</sup>,

Loss of last phantom hope concerning retrieving my confiscated rights...”

This statement evoked a memory of despair, back to the days when I had to retain my muteness in exchange for guaranteed misfortune evasion, when I was instructed to speak no more of the anxieties that drained my spirit; this community is wicked, it tends to implement a crisis into us, then revokes our rights to complain or to remark our pains!

God, I abhor this filthy fascism of popular reign...

I returned the paper back to its crumbliness and fetched another one at a more inferior level of the heap, it contained other several dates in a sequential pattern, but the paper had no word of clarification, I could fully recall the incidence dated by every portion of the sequence, though.

“Do I really have to craft codes even when I’m accompanied chiefly by my solitude?” I thought “Fear creeps into my forlorn”.

The clock bled lots of depleted minutes, wasted on reading already memorized abominable incidences, but this seemed to be the arrangement most applicable to the farewell rituals to my quirk which will leave along with the pile of sorrow, that adherent noxious collateral!

I unfolded another leaflet; it had a few lines describing a nigh ailment that I managed to get over. That was an unlucky week of constant confinement to bed...Let that burn to ashes...

This pattern of randomly picking papers and reading their contents continued through the course of late hours of the crescent-lit night, papers containing dates of my perpetual depression accentuated phases, others had the thoughts of projects that were not destined to be spawned, some included the memory revolving around the loss of Selena that has been haunting me for three consecutive nights, others reminded me of a symphony I never played; until destiny guided me to hold a distal paper, clumsily crumbled in clear loath, I startled for an instance upon its disheveled irregular shape and its very unique texture, it was not pulp paper! Nor its colour was white, but a yellowish brown!

I opened it cautiously, and frankly unwillingly; my eyes perceived a slightly lengthy paragraph, presumably a letter, written in my penmanship (I could swear to this), but I do not recall the memory of ever writing it, nor do I remember owning such texture of papers that is weirdly akin to ancient manuscripts of medieval scrolls.

“Dear Dimitri” The letter said!

Oh mighty! I wrote a letter to myself some unknown time ago... I must be such a loner who shall rot in despair and grief, seized by cracked walls of solitude and isolation.

“This letter is destined not to leave your very possession, for you enjoy gathering pains and being victimized, if this letter is ever found among your piles that swiftly promote to ashes of sham oblivion; subjugated, return it to the envelop on your desk. This is your pain and it is to be perpetuated, do not neglect your medication...”

I could not complete any farther; wistfully, I recalled a flashback, a most realistic one, the sole truth I chose to eradicate and never retain, but for multiple reasons I had to insert it into the envelop on my desk, for a next full read! For an upcoming reminder that shall last lifelong.

I ceased looking through my pains, they are set to an inevitable departure in a few moments anyway, even if their relics would haunt and infringe my state of short lasting peace, I had to quit my burning rite and steer my obsession to favor another quirk to adopt, but for now, let this task be accomplished, for the quitting sake!

I headed to my basement to bring up a gallon of gasoline saved in a black inert container, sealed well to merely allow a minimal threshold of endurable fuel stench.

I removed the lid and poured all of the gasoline making sure every paper, every line and every word are wet; I searched my pockets for matchsticks and found none, but could sense a metal pleated lighter which I took out. I switched off the lights and disabled my built-in fire alarm system, for this inner fire would never terrorize my stay!

I lit the lighter, slowly watching the blue spark as it rose to construct a mature flame, I then let it slip and fall, chasing wind to the peak of the pile until it landed over its destination which caught fire in a fraction of a second, it soon spread from above below; that lovely sighting would surely be missed; how the hardships turn into ashes and lots of black asphyxiating steam, how they join the unrecalled past, or that is how I chose them to sound like. The aggravated flames lit my room and the steam veiled me from the sight of spying neighbors, if I had any.

I sat on the floor, my eyes drawn to the mini-inferno and I never sought to obtain any pure breeze of air to save my lungs; burnt hardships smell better than the undistorted air of my nights...

Let them burn and I would breathe in some relief!

Merely the notion of the black envelop interrupted my watch, but for now, I will pretend it is within the heart of that fire yonder...

## 7- A Clamor of Portraits

“Excuse my passion for portraits, your majesty” I replied as courteous as Sherlock Holmes when questioned for his digression; that was when Sir Donovan, Junior, remarked upon my eerie attitude of staring at the rows of hanged portraits that ruined the mural look!

It was 9:00 p.m.

Sir Donovan, the last surviving member of the reputed Mikkelsons (former aristocrats who reigned the shire) invited me over supper to fetch himself some company in his black irksome vastness of his parlor; I was seated in the middle on a rounded luxurious dining table that belonged to the ancestors as every other possession in the mansion, to my right, Mr. Donovan was seated, and to my left was Richard Aaron, a decent amiable companion of Donovan.

“I’m glad you have a passion for portraits, Mr. Dimitri” Donovan giggled and so did Richard, I lied to Donovan: “One must be proud to be a successor of these honorable ancestors” ...

The walls that bounded the banquet hall were studded with frames trailing the history of the entire family, several

portraits were dated to mid-1880s, and others were captured in the last decades of the second millennium, some of them were impaired by the artifacts of recent colorization, but what caught my attention the most was Donovan's super inflated ego, his formidable scattered portraits reflected a latent narcissism; their scrambled pattern, however, spoke of his unorganized nature. His wealth was beyond estimation, attributed to being the only left heir of the Mikkelsons' fortified treasures which he spent on his lush life; he looked vehemently akin to his father and partially similar to his first grade of ancestors as my peek through the order of the family suggested. He owned a pair of wide gray eyes, a rugged broad facial appearance, a well-built stature and he grew a Turkish mustache which, to some extent, consolidated the rumor of his Turkish origins; the Mikkelsons are deemed to have former affiliates in Turkey, but over 90% of the family settled in Great Britain and ruled multiple shires and towns. Richard was a close friend of Donovan, a courteous gentleman of a German descent; it is rare to find even a formal acquaintance between a British and a possible Nazi!

“Why don't you give a brief about some of your portraits, Donovan” these words were attributed to Richard, they

came out of his narrow lips, he then lent his ears to the awaited tales of the unknown side of Donovan, to which I keenly listened out of curiosity.

“Oh...You must have to listen for ages, my good friend” Donovan chuckled “Each frame embraces a tale, go on and pick one as a start”

“How about you choose your favorite self-portrait, Sir” I interacted

“That would count for an astute beginning, Dimitri!” He remarked “Well, that one there is my favorite” he pointed to a picture, second to the extreme left, third row on the wall to his right; a scrutinized look at it unveiled a low angle shot frame of central subject triangle composition, such frames are normally taken for presidents, or in this case of his complicated layers of narcissism, an emperor!

“This photo was captured in my office room, could you both observe that cigar I held, it’s a genuine Steam Tobacco, Ltd., a renowned Swiss trademark; the picture was shot on a special memorable night which I chose to carve in my mind, that was when the deal of my first wine stocks went from dream to a prosperous reality”

He halted for a while to perceive the portrait with a posed grin; he then clapped both of his hands once and hardly in a trance then spoke to Richard.

“Your turn, Richard, tell us about your favorite portrait, I’m fully aware that we can’t see it here, but a story would suffice”

Richard laughed like a radical Nazi then replied: “My dear, you know I don’t fancy portraits!”

That sounded weird for a German, though...

Donovan turned to me: “What about you, Mr. Dimitri? Do you have any preferred memoire of a portrait which you feel like sharing with us?!”

I startled upon his wonder for a moment, then gathered my words as applicable and commenced my story seamlessly: “My most preferred portrait! I do have one, indeed... One that I have never seen...”

Richard was puzzled in his own distinctive placid manner, while Donovan unleashed a cry of excitement: “That is, by Lord, interesting, will you go on please, Mr. Dimitri?”

I cleared my throat intentionally to signal my start point: “Where do I start?? Alright, back in 2014... it is a recent

memory compared to yours by the way” he smiled as I proceeded “I was invited to a ceremony in Oxford street, at a grand hall of a sumptuous reputation, it was held to commemorate the notorious “Alden” family reunion’s 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary; I had no privilege to know any of the guests there, even my colleague who sent me the invitation card wasn’t in my vicinity, he either could not make to the party or possibly mingled with others and neglected me; I settled near the bar, and I’m not a drinker as you may know of me; however, I claim to be a relatively fine observer; that is a joy I disclose whenever I’m close to a giant gather as on that day, I cherished every subtle detail of the architecture and noticed the class A preparations for the ceremony. There were lots of genuine Italian tuxedos attired by public figures I knew by name for their unmotivated fame! But the crystalline props that lined the pillars caught my eyes and entrapped them; I have a special taste for glass and crystal works, they lacked any distracting artifacts as if they were bestowed upon the guests by heavens!

The mixed scents of fragrances worn by ladies made a near perfect odor that was complementary to the place and the chatters of people were amplified enough to

render none of their phrases fully audible, save for their frequent laughs that were smartly conjoined.

The melody played by the orchestra shed its warmth upon the hall, coupled with the beauty of the warm tungsten lights that established the most comforting mood for observers of my sort; it was somehow a night to be hailed by a loner amid the sumptuous crowd!

I did notice the presence of a minimum of twenty photographers, all happened to be males who worked for all major papers of London; later on, some unplanned occurrence took place, one that surely was incongruent to the strict coherent structure of the ceremony, but, weirdly, exceptions always manage to top every category of my countless preferences!

A young fair lady of mid-twenties approached me, dressed in a striking red dress studded with crystalline embroidery of a dedicated craft, she owned a couple of narrow brown eyes and a tall dark brown hair that was left loose to cover her back, unlike the strictly tied hairs of other females there; she moved closer to me and stood some ten feet distant, her eyes were fixed on me and soon she developed a grin, a lovely grin to which I responded with no reaction but a statue posture!

Her left hand held a small camera, she waved to me gently and took a photo of me; the flashlight was blinding! The lady then smiled again as she looked at my saved picture then stared at me for a few seconds and then she left in a drop of hat, and merely my sight followed her!

I could not react properly, who would be interested in having a picture of me, I thought! It's only when I realized that she had disappeared that I moved my legs and kept searching for her in others' faces, but she was gone and so was my picture... And that, my friend, was how my favorite portrait was shot and how I never saw it until the very moment, years have passed and I still docile the yearn to see that portrait..."

My tale was finished and I looked them both in the eyes, Richard maintained his steadiness, except for some amusement reflected by his facial expression. Donovan laughed loudly and applauded in ecstasy; he then gently punched my arm and said: "Oh my lord, such a story! That certainly is a memory that shall never be lost through oblivion"

Soon silence emerged and prevailed, Richard tasted his soup every now and then, Donovan took a long moment of appreciation for his red wine until he went inebriated and

I remained still, silent as a temple and fixed as an anchored mast, my mind was captivated by the memory I recalled; I was uncertain of whether I sought to obtain their aid or not, whether I awaited their pity or whether I was distressed by their apathy...

This tale of mine had no value...

## 8- The Train to Horizon

November, 2029

“Wake up, Dimitri, the commuters are begging in despair”

A deep voice called for me...

I felt his hands shaking my body to attain my arousal; I woke up in a miserable state, lying on the Swiss asphalt beneath with four drops of dry blood... My blood...

I was found in a typical futuristic city at midnight, one you would cherish and look up to moving to for establishing a life there, it was a true incarnation if Spielberg’s Hollywood movies came to life; the skyscrapers rose stories above the misty layers of clouds, electric screens and ambient laser lights illuminated the darkest hours of that night, modern vehicles moved over levelled roads and few robots were assigned to maintain the integrity of traffic lines and keep their pattern.

How and when did I land here?!

That voice to my left called me for another once, that time with a deeper tone, yet, quite faster: “Dimitri, look at me, I am your mentor; do you recognize me?”

My mentor? I never recall having one! He was a bald man of middle-age who had a relatively white skin with no characteristic age wrinkles, merely his voice spoke of his age that approached the fifth decade's final digit.

He was dressed in a blue gentle attire of martial arts top degree master; he resumed his inexplicable instructions, targeting me: "The hanged train over there, you see it?"

He pointed towards a speeding brakeless train that was going out of control due to a severe technical crash; it rushed over a hanged railway, some 350 feet high.

"The train has preceded a speed of 400 Km/hr" He emphasized "Quick, your chances are reduced to four trials, they're all you have to spare those passengers' lives, they're a few paces close to mortality... Do not tarry son, keep your fingers crossed and may success be by your very side"

"But I n..."

"No time for details" He ordered!

He then brutally grabbed me and gave me a rather fictitious boost towards the train; I saw the city minimizing as I seamlessly soared towards the train, screaming with

lots of interfering emotions of fear, agony and doubt; I landed roughly on top of the train, it was proceeding to annihilation outrageously, I clutched to the train's border with clawed hands, the air resistance would blow me to death as a best case scenario! My screams were amplified to a level beyond my vocal endurance; the railway culminated and all out of a sudden, an entire blackness was all I could perceive...

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“Wake up, son, we’re running out of time”

I abruptly woke up again, almost choking, I looked beneath where I was lying, three fresh purplish blood drops were patent; to the very distant anterior zone, I saw the train above, crashing for a second time, the whole episode of madness was being replayed.

The man claiming to be my mentor instructed me as he did in the former trial: “Now we have three more opportunities to go... Make them count”

“For god’s sake behold...”

The bald mentor gripped me once more, boosting me up with a surging acceleration compared to the previous one;

on one hand, I was capable of disputing winged creatures in terms of flying and hovering over the city, and on the other hand, I could not grasp the situation I was mingled in, provided that I was fully aware of the death awaiting me when I reach the train!

I landed clumsily, with a possible arm fracture. A killing pain prevailed through my whole body; I caught a glimpse of the passengers as they freaked out and panicked, asking for providence or probably a fabulous savior... A suicidal guardian. But soon the train met its destined abyss.

IT ALL TURNED BLACK AGAIN...

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I realized I had to wake up; I opened my eyes at the sight of my mandatory mentor.

“I know I have merely 2 more chances, and I can see the two blood drops over there, but for goodness sake, please provide me with some explanation...”

I soared again! This outcast mentor of mine was intently strict!

This time I hit the speeding train and could not make it to its roof, I gripped the exterior border that rimmed the

window and sought to climbing up, being rivaled by the wind and the slippery rim of the train; I noticed a traffic signal and an inlet to a suspended tunnel, it was narrow for even a bloke half my size; I was mashed between the train and the boundary of the tunnel as the train penetrated its darkness... I blacked out before my corpse was cremated by friction...

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“You owe me lots of goddamn clarifications” I insisted as I leapt standing upright; I noticed a solitary droplet of reddish blood which was totally fresh, I then felt my wound and reached for my forehead and touched it with my right hand, it was bleeding since my initial trial!

I looked the mentor in the eye, simulating as much as I could of his rigidity and coarse stubbornness, and whenever he threatened to make the move, I grew my expressions defiant...

“The explanations are due, this is my final chance; I need everything to make more sense” I provoked him to explain

“Alright, but make your inquiry quick” he replied

“Who are you, and how did I reach this place?”

“I am your mentor” he shouted in despair and panic “The commuters there are dying, they’re awaiting their savior and you here are acting childish, remember what you’ve been prepared for, Dimitri”

“I don’t recall a single thought of me knowing you!” I startled a bit with lots of sweat, I was fully aware I was the sole hope these faithful lives had.

“Listen to me” I resumed “I’m going to fulfill the task; it is my last opportunity, anyway! Just keep your focus while you boost me...”

He ran towards me, held my left arm and my back then posed for the throw...

I was on top of the train in a glimpse... This was a perfect shot! And an expert landing, but I had no time to brag.

I used my hands to help me proceed forwards and I still doubted what could be done in favor of retaining their lives, I could hardly spot details through the hazy vision due to the unattended acceleration, the people underneath were in sincere need for the lord’s interference, I prayed and supplicated in silence and

terror, being formerly briefed with the mischief these souls would meet and the darkness I would see for the last time, those finest moments before the aftermath felt to have prolonged for ages, even my adrenaline did not speed time up, but this all was just prolonging the inevitable; that mentor of mine must be a total freak, a desperate bonkers! What have I been prepared for, and how did I end up in this place and time, how was I ushered into this total new era?!

The trip to abyss reached its climax, and the destiny must be fulfilled, no matter how many lives one could lose for the sake of cessation of this inexplicably coherent fate! Every voice faded to silence, and all I could see was quick images of the infinite subtle details: the sparks engendered by the railways, the people fleeing in a catastrophic limited space, the several train segments detaching and the desperate me being amid this non-purposed odyssey of no known origin to be dated back to!

I witnessed the world turning into a blurred white colour! WHITE!! Blinding beams of light shone everywhere! Light??

I was blinded by the scattered lights, and I could no more sense the air or myself as I released the tension of my

clawed hands that clutched to the train; was it heaven?! Was it the superior promised blessing that comes after demise?

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I woke up following a lifelong absence, I was found at the main passengers lounge, my mentor supported me as I rose to my feet.

“I’m glad you could make it, Mr. Dimitri, You must be hailed and lauded”

Those were his last words of courtesy before he left and faded into the crowds. I saw a colossal number of people gathered in random clusters, still taken aback by the fear that incidence implemented in them; what could have happened if I did not exist? Am I their actual savior? It seemed so, but was never explained. Was it providence or my latent abilities that anonymous mentor presumed I possess?

I walked through the people who shared me flatulent silent looks and then stared away from me, everybody was involved in his saga, nobody noticed my presence, though!

## 9- Random Quirks (3/3):

### Brink

Someone I knew used to insist that people are awesome, for they could open their eyes to find themselves somewhere dazzling; I could not construct a belief in what he proposed, but not for tonight...

I opened my eyes, looking through the fog could not be any clearer!

It is chilling cold, lovely freezing up here and the whole world beneath me is vestigial; I am the greatest of them all, topping this summit here.

I happened to be standing on a ledge supported to the final storey of the central tower of 'Misericordia Town'; I have always sought to unravel the motive behind naming this town so, but not tonight!

This is so far the highest altitude I have ever mounted, 300 feet! Sounds like an eligible farewell to this very quirk of mine; back to the day when this obsession was commenced eight months ago, such a lengthy period for my volatile quirks to be retained! What I relish about developing an interest in an affair is that I do not excavate

for reasons or motives for performing it, unbound by the leashes of logic, I mean why do I have to offer plenty of justifications and alibis to adopt a specific pleasure?!

Nearly one month after all this began; I could recall the incidence of me standing on a ledge, some 50 meters -or less- high, that time my equilibrium was impaired by my heedlessness and I tripped with no memorable moments of defiance or clinging to the brink, I hit the ground and fractured my left tibia, a mild fracture, though, but pain is known to be of no value once a climax of joy is attained, I did not grunt or develop anxiety, but cracked into laughter and called an ambulance that never reached out to me, so I had to lean against the walls and fences for support, leaping using the other leg until I was able to hire a taxi which dropped me at the nearest medical institution.

Halt the memories of the perished past, back to the very now; this time is utterly different, my urge to watch the world from above will soon leave, but there has to be an adequate good bye as usual, I fixed myself on the brink I stood over, several blows of outrageous wind threatened to blow me off to abyss, I wonder if I will ever get back home in one piece; what are the odds? What could be my likely destiny if I tripped again and fell; worst case

scenario, I assume, would be me ending up on a wheelchair to join the handicapped community; best case scenario: guaranteed death, the only toll I will have to pay to open my eyes and witness heavens and make sure they are not mythical tales of senile gossipers, I reckon my belief regarding their presence is still intact, vehemently – and desirably- intact, though!

This could never be the same world, I thought, how does it seem peaceful and pretend to be breathtaking from above, and why does it demean those who step on it below? I wager this could be the best aesthetic of perceiving the entire portrait, and not to focus on details, for beauty is arguably attributed to generalization and totalitarian conceptions... how cynical!

I shut my eyes closed to cherish the symphony played by wind and intermittent moments of silence, whenever I rose over the world, I never lid an eye, but this time, again I insist, is remarkable, or at least this is how the end product should seem, and for this once, I hope it is amenable to my whim.

But I am no more than a lost loner with the worst luck a man could own, I am stranger in an abandoned wrecked town barely recognized through it ruins and the relics of

an antecedent life; and I was stranded to the company of a buzzing doubt: What next? What shall I do once I abandon this quirk?

My wonder was terminated, probably by misfortune, or perhaps a potential fortune that was never fathomed by the living population inhabiting the distant suburbs: death tended to chase me, my equilibrium was diminished for a fraction of second, and it extracted me from doubts and wonders, I soon realized that I was falling; why does it feel sluggish, feral, inexplicable, heart rending and comfortable all at once? And above all, why does discrepancy exist in this variety of interdigitating vibes?!

I watched the brink I stood over as I was driven away from its proximity by gravity and I reasoned that it cracked; a senile wood, similar to our souls.

Air blew against me as I kept rushing towards the nowhere, wondering what sighting would I perceive when I open my eyes again; will I open my eyes in a coffin, wrapped in a tight shroud before I step over the path to heavens gates, or will I wake up in a morgue and watch my body being humiliated by coroners?! I bet this would be an entire age of coerced patience before I am resurrected to know how my afterlife would be based on a history of

doubting whether my actions were for mere undistorted welfare or whether they were flawed by traces of hypocrisy and posing.

Literally death was the only factor left to make this quirk remarkable; this final trial could not be more memorable...

And, regrettably, I neglected my medication once more...

SOON, EVERYTHING FADED TO BLACK...

## 10 -Sisyphus

The organized fuss was augmented while everything sluggishly turned black according to my will: the musical instruments sharing the show, some indistinct words recited by a rough voice in a ritual pattern and the screams of a despondent victim. This all coaxed me to reopen my eyes...

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The room was locked and the guard yelled at me to wake me up: “Wake up, Dimitri”

I rose to his level as he squatted right in front of me, his long stature and well developed body were covered underneath a black cloak that had a hoodie which preserved his bald head, his 2-inch beard offered him a look of respect blended with a bloody feral appearance, he owned a couple of narrow eyes, narrowed by the creases of anger that never left his face and his rough voice consolidated his gruesome nature; a typical soul reaper if he lacks a scythe!

“I’m doing this because I’m duty bound” he explained “questions are prohibited and all you have to know is that I’m the guardian of your soul reapers; while harvesting

your soul they failed and I'm here to ensure they won't fail any more" He left and locked the room.

The walls were painted in low grade black to present an aggravated sight limitation within the place which was of a moderate area; to my left was a window through which I watched a figure skidding and falling from a tower, accelerating towards abyss, and not so distant were four reapers pacing towards the soon fallen corpse in steady steps, their black cloaks were much akin to the guardian's; an abrupt sound broke through the room, a loud cry that nearly petrified the soul out of me, and the four reapers responded via screaming and collapsing and subsequently falling apart; I saw the figure as it landed on the ground and soon the room lights commenced flickering as I steered my sight to look anteriorly to witness four creatures, as close as possible to human beings, totally covered by a dull blanket as they were seated on the floor; the room was hollow save for us, no tools or rugs or even a single piece of furnishing were kept inside, merely us and I could grasp nothing as to what I was doing there. The terror emerging from the four beings was vivid although it was disguised by means of the blanket; they kept moving their heads rhythmically searching for the sources of any sounds that evolved.

I stood up and approached them in extra caution as I gripped the blanket and pulled it away to reveal them, four frail beings, their bodies badly malnourished and emaciated accentuating the size of every bony prominence they had, all bald and cleanly shaved and their skin tone was fair, they all donned dirt coated grey garments that did not properly fit there long body statures, barely extending a few centimeters bellow their knees and above all, they were blindfolded and petrified, shivering in despair as they learned there was some company in the room, which apparently was me.

I removed the folds away exposing their eyes which were heavily rimmed with black contour all around their bony orbits and as they opened their eyelids, their grey irises instilled some fright in me; I sought to provoke some words out of them as to clarify the purpose of our presence there, or in fact, my presence there, to which they responded by intense fear which was shortly translated into random running all over the room around me while their screams were loudly amplified, every one of them faced a wall and started scratching the paint swiftly and never ceased screaming, this led me to sense some morbidity and my head began aching to which I screamed for aid as my sight seemed to gradually fade to

black; I noticed the door being opened and the guardian stepped in, equally affected by their sounds as I was, but his eyes turned killer red as he threatened: “NO... You shouldn’t have scared them”; he shouted in agony as he threw the keys away, and in a fraction of a second everything disappeared including my consciousness.

It felt like an eternity before I woke up again in much similar circumstances as the previous time, locked in the same room along with the four emaciated beings and through the window, again I glimpsed the same falling figure and the four reapers, this time stepping a bit quicker to collect their target.

I tiptoed, moving towards the four under the blanket trying not to produce a sound, but I retreated as the door handle was turned and the guardian came in, presumably to give me a talk that would hinder any attempts of mine to clarify this ordeal and before I could even speak he shut my mouth with a gesture and then said: “If you must speak, do it quietly”

“Why am I here” I inquired

“Questions are prohibited as I mentioned before” he replied

“What am I supposed to do?”

“That’s another question” he kept warning “soon everything will be understood, but meanwhile, you’re not allowed to scare any of your reapers”

These words strangled me, what reapers? I looked out of the window and saw the reapers approaching the still falling figure, what slowed everything down, I wonder!

I looked back to the guardian and shouted: “Can’t you notice that I’m the one who is scared here!”; the four of them started screaming without moving a muscle, and the pain crawled back to affect both of us, the guardian and me and he instructed me to zip my mouth until they were settled.

“Quite” the guardian whispered “every time you scare them will result in repeating this event over and over, make sure you maintain your low voice until the crack of dawn and beware of touching any of them”.

“What will occur when dawn hits the skies?” I asked

The guardian turned around and moved in frustration, I leapt towards him in an attempt to eliminate him and elope but he gripped my face and held me up hanging in

the air, I sobbed in agony while the four sensed some disruption and commenced screaming back. The guardian threw me away and felt the pain creeping into his head: “You screwed it again” he said in a grotesque vocal layer “You will feel the wrath of the reapers” he said it before we both were engulfed by the pain and screams of the four reapers and it went back to blackness.

An eternity later, I woke up; the distant figure was still falling and the reapers seemed too feeble to collect his soul, his cry predominated the silence and out powered the reapers in black, I looked at the emaciated reapers below the blanket and the guardian was there too, awaiting my revival to look me in the eyes, he spoke no words and I was struck by the thunder of his latent rage, sticking my back to the wall behind me, his face grew more feral without delivering any expression that may hint me a clue to what he was planning on; all I saw was him leaving while pulling the blanket away exposing the four reapers, still looking emaciated and humiliated, but not blindfolded and they had the tendency to have acquired some grit to stand upright and assemble in a line right anterior to the wall opposite to me, the guardian grinned and moved out sealing the room’s metallic gate.

I screamed like I never did, it was clear now that they are fully potent to harvest my soul, the bounty they have been chasing since long; I saw roots of coagulated blood evolving and running through the murals and the ceiling, disabling whatever dim light source that was in there and they approached me, one pace at a time in full assembly and in an undisturbed synchronized pattern, their eyes piercing me and their faces looking ghastly flatulent...

My screams went on as I saw the figure outside beginning to fall again and the reapers running towards him holding their scythes...

\*\* \*\*

I opened my eyes and felt myself falling off the ledge I stood on; that is the toll Miseria town takes on you, I was accelerating towards the void of my choice, a tube organ played a melody of retribution in the background, and some insurgent violins played the symphony of the silhouette in reverse!

I looked at the distant suburbs, but a little closer was a locked room where I saw four emaciated reapers trying to instill the fear of collecting that poor bloke's soul yonder and down there were my reapers waiting for my corpse to

land; perhaps this is what I have become, I cheated death and I will keep doing so until annihilation, until the earth falls apart and judgement is signaled; I am Sisyphus, fettered in a cleverly woven spider web and running in a loop trying to stop my death, being stuck in a single moment and I am doing this until I somehow feel the irk life thrusts upon us...

I made a loud cry of faith to which the reapers beneath me perished and I collided with the pile of my dead bodies below me as they kept rising up to form a tower which will eventually rise above the level of the tower I initially stood over; and up there on the same spot, I saw the ledge returning to its deception of being supported as I stood over it, but I already know the toll of the brink!

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The cry revived me after a whole eternity of blacking out, the four reapers look farther emaciated and the guardian looked at them as despondent as I was when I first woke up, now he will have to start it all over again...

The dawn shall never make it...

## 11-Unwitnessed Tales of the Morgue

A few strict rhythmic footsteps were heard reaching proximally through the corridor; someone stepped into the room, his voice tone spoke of his frayed temper as he threatened his subordinate: “Last week more than 5 litres of formaldehyde went missing, what is wrong with you? Are you being a senile guard fiddled by crooks lurking in the shadows?”

“Sir, regrettably I have no exp...”

“Hold on and be silent while you’re being spoken to! By the end of this very week, if even a milliliter is proven to be missing you’ll be held responsible and presented to the disciplinary council with the charge of burglary”

He then bashed the door and disappeared into dead silence...

Soon the guard followed him out and I could hear the electric box knobs clicking, he seemed to have disabled the lights and then locked the door. It was pitch black in there, all dark, the unbearable stench of formaldehyde suffocated me and irritated my corneas, I heard some other eerie noises arising which could be hardly explained;

hind to my head was an inlet to the freezing corpse chamber that embraced me and it was covered by a corroded steel lid, which I could judge by the scent of its worn out iron, I punched the lid open and strived to make my way out until I hit the floor of the morgue... A morgue! Is this where one is supposed to open his eyes?! It was barely lit by the timid moon light; I looked at my chamber and glimpsed a tag nailed half an inch above it that had the name 'Dimitri Romanov', my name!

The other corpses were miraculously resurrected and gathered close to the formaldehyde containers; they picked every vial and bowl there could be found within their reach and poured vigorous doses of formaldehyde in them, while one of the walking dead sparked a camping fire for extra lighting purpose. A few chuckles and random indistinct murmurs rose over the voice of their mess, they were all horrendously dissected; harshly mutilated bodies that could step and walk despite the multiple organs confiscated by the coroners, their flesh was reflected and numerous bones were fractured, some of them had amputated extremities and others spoke in lieu of their missing jaws, and some –I claim- retained sight although their eyeballs departed from their orbits...

I must have joined the company of the dead recently, then, I thought! Not a single dissection was made across my skin, which made me uncertain of whether to harness an ecstasy for being unmutilated or to grieve over a life I once had of which I recalled nothing! An absolute amnesia...

One of the corpses who owned a dead rough leading voice stood before them as he drank his formaldehyde dose, the warm light beams of fire illuminated his single atrophied lung and some ruins of his ribs, he bear no brain above and the wrinkles of death devastated his already distorted figure; he kept speaking a few words on behalf of the council of the dead –as I comprehended- they held in lots of elegance for a perished man!

He then introduced a cadaver next to him, and signified the commencement of his brief word to describe how he passed away; I approached the gather timidly and sat a couple of feet away from them and had a scrutinized look at the speaker; a fresh corpse of a bloke who has presumably died in mid-thirties of age, he seemed to have accessed the morgue a day or two prior to my resurrection which was made obvious by the incomplete work of the coroners over his body, merely a few torn muscle fibers

protruding out of his limbs and a patent stab at his left posterior aspect of his neck, poor fellow, I thought while visualizing multiple scenarios of his alleged murder until he provided his undoubted clarification.

“I was hiding in an abandoned warehouse, it harbored me for a while” he commenced “I knew my killer was a vengeful menacing scoundrel, he was going to get me anyway”

The leader handed him a metallic bowl of formaldehyde: “Drink for your new life, friend” offered the leader...

“He reached for the departed industrial zone and was aware of my presence, embraced by the shadows of obsolete machinery wrecks” the victim resumed with a sip “and then I was found killed a week after following the tarrying investigations of the local police department; however, my murderer hasn’t been identified yet”

“What affair did he have with you” one of the listening corpses exclaimed “I mean, why was he after you anyway?”

“He lost to me in a poker game one night before my murder, the next night he tyrannized my residence and swore to exterminate me, I offered him his possessions

going back to his care but his dignity refused to plummet! He developed an interest in reaping my soul!” he startled a bit then went by “I broke away of his sight and lurked through the old industrial territory, but he was cunning” he then paused dramatically, making sure to draw everyone’s recognition, including mine.

“You know what, that night I was staying alone away from the never ending responsibilities of my family, I know they were tormented, wasted by the search for me alongside the police detectives to disclose my whereabouts, but I never paid a heed to guide them to my killer’s identity! I mean, what would I gain in return for partially relieving their sorrow?! I’m a dead man, after all; let the living ones suffer for my sake” he ended his tale.

The rest of the dead men relished their abominable drinks, it seemed to grace them another life beyond the knowledge of the living; here ‘the walking dead’ was an evident phenomenon, a fantasy hard to believe...

Another corpse stood up for his brief, none of his bones remained intact, explaining the hardships he had to cope with through his short walk towards the center close to the fire for his word to be conveyed; his fascia remnants smelled like rotten ham, his body was drenched in

concentrated formaldehyde that resulted in lots of grade 4 post-mortem scalds; soon his word started: “They used to call me Oliver, Oliver Harrelson” He chuckled in a rather posed pride, too insolent for a weakened talking dead! “I’ve always had faith in multiple trials, one has to endeavor every single issue there happens to exist, I believe that is why we exist in the first place; to try! Even committing a felony is one of the endless probabilities of trials; recently, I had an urge to experience what death might feel like, I thought of a suicide and I surely did! I leapt off a hanged train, some 350 feet above the ground level and here I am, discussing my brief story”

“And how did it feel for you?” a voice broke in by one of the audiences

“Nothing extraordinary, a mere trial of the infinite trials there were, but remorse would have fed on my life in case I retreated and didn’t do it! All one could lose is one of the many lives he has!”

**‘ALL ONE COULD LOSE IS ONE OF THE MANY LIVES HE HAS’!!**

I remembered hearing this before, I even recalled the incidence of developing a belief in it, but never did I grasp its meaning... How many lives does one have?

I wondered if our race of the walking dead was blessed with multiple lives to spend over trials, expelling the thought of a single death!

“Your turn, I guess” Those were the leader’s words as he pointed to me and shortly every other corpse looked at me with their feral eyes, if not missing ones with flatulent orbits.

“You must have a precious story which you’d certainly like to share with us... Oh, you’re special, by this life potion I hold in my hand, you ought to be divine, look at him, he is untouched by the coroners’ scalpels, you must be Dimitri, the guest who has been still in his chamber for over a month”

A month! How long have I been in this place?! If so, why was I spared by the physicians’ scalpels?

“Want to share your tale, blessed one?” the leader insisted

I was drowned by my infinite layers of wonder, left with no clue or memory to recall and no words to speak; merely a tag with a name claimed to belong to me and a probable superstition of me being a sacred soul.

This all was real, or that is how it was supposed to feel like, I was seized by keen eyes, and ears longing to hear the story of the divine body; in here, tens of tales are left behind, unattended, totally unwitnessed...

## 12- Awaiting the Verdict

- Speaking of time, it is a treasure of no value here!

### **Afterlife...Infinite Day 1**

That deafening sacred trumpet kept blowing for an entire age, a single blow would adequately suffice to signify the revival of endless annihilated universes.

I opened my eyes to the vacant sighting of pitch black, in a dimmed nowhere beyond the drudgery of blindness, the trumpet arouse my soul from extinction, it respawned me in a deadly narrow space of near absolute vacuum, where one would barely motion a muscle but never is he able to draw a breath; 'another death after a death' is how to precisely picture the suffocating horror in which I was kept.

An upper lid tightly enclosed the box, veiling my body that I had to have multiple endeavors until I forced it open, and then rose to my feet, a perished body standing back upright! It was no wonder that I have been placed in a coffin for god knows how long; I stepped out of the coffin, ironically feeling the stale air's embracement for my body, being naked from head to toe. Nothing tended to be

visible in that long – range darkness ahead that settled over; I kept pacing forwards, guided by the unbearable trumpet’s monotone until faint threads of warmth lit a pathway to the front on which I stepped and I was exposed, made utterly patent to the holy sighting of the world awakening, certainly not timid to walk through the asylum to the nowhere!

Infinite individuals of the demised man race were lifted beyond the furthest of sky levels, awakened by the trumpet of assured rebirth, everybody naked as newborns. I maintained my steady and panicked pace towards the inferno of the dire blazing sphere (former sun of the once existent globe), never have I lived any closer than now to it where I ended up walking over a narrow asylum barely lit, despite the vicinity of the sphere’s flames.

My steps grew more cautious, gradually slowed by the primitive instinct, beneath me was the boundary-less retribution lava that rendered every Lucifer and insurgent devil a metamorphosis, and on either side at my eye level were endless blackness of no solid floor to be glimpsed; however, multiple beings were sighted anchored to the space. My eyes kept trailing them as I sluggishly progressed over the route; I could perceive a sinner

settling yonder, cleaving his throat all the way below to administer a horrific fissure in his thorax that profusely bled floods, he then dipped his hand within, gripped his heart out, squeezed it to drought then threw it to the abyss, miserably recapitulating his terminated earthly persona, but he allegedly seemed to have grinned an inch!

To my very right, a bloke desolated his mate's head with a massive sledgehammer of a rare devilish forge, impossible to wield; to his lateral aspect, a woman fed on her viscera and smeared her whole self with solidified blood.

I could not withstand any other dose of these noxious views; I stared back to the front I was supposedly heading to; quite indistinct thoughts of old memories paid a visit to my interns. A former living identity would be of no longer viability, but my history constituted the backbone of who I truly am, for people certainly should have nurtured more fears originating from their past in lieu of the ones wasted on grief over the unknown. Back when I once lived, I do not recall being a devout, merely a civilian who hardly developed any interests in a religion and of no known virtues, a random human being who did not die in a fray or never been inclined to a trending debate whence sham glories were normally obtained; just powered by a will to

live for the good of flatulence of purpose, never sought to sanctify any entity or looked up to be crowned a saint, for I have lived up to a single base: “ Dying for virtues? There is always a promised hell! “

The divine trumpet’s calls faded to null, my senses were alarmed to maximum vigilance, following the lead of the faint interdigitating light beams to the seemingly infinite continuum of the pathway until a ledge reformed, a verge on top of which I remained still, some hundreds of feet over the bloody abyss, witnessing a holy odyssey taking place underneath: sinners defying inevitable recurrent patterns of necrosis followed by subsequent rebirth. Over the parallel verge at my eye level, there stood the promised queues of mankind, outnumbering any legions or multi festival parades of super fascists, arranged in serial lines reaching beyond the ill-defined frontiers of horizon, even surrealism would seem realistic compared to that over-colossal gather.

Heart rending creaks sounded in the vacuum! The noise was amplified above the trumpet, soon, several thousands of mythical incarnations (allegedly angels) of various diversities clinging to a single dire chain, paying every ounce of inexplicably strenuous effort to drag an indistinct

gigantic structure, roughly perceived as it converged to my view amid the blackened cloud formations; a more scrutinized glimpse revealed tens of thousands of similar chains to the antecedent one, with squadrons and fleets of millions of angels holding them, grabbing them tightly as the mighty bowl of torrid inferno was pulled after them, above it were countless heedless beings falling apart in a diverging manner into the bowl to end up tormented till eternity.

The queues ahead commenced a harmonic steady forward stepping of faith in desperate subjugation, they were later on split apart into millions of sub-queues, and nearly thousands of patches of those resurrected people instantly attired white heavenly silk textures and rose above the torrid skies to the superior paradise of the mighty lord.

Almost a double number of the precedent raised souls were dressed in bleak black and were bounded with molten leashes, demising their exteriors and reaching for their interiors, a most threatening retribution prior to the perpetual flames of doom, to which they responded by undisputable cries of appeal to the upper hand of mercy,

those cries were of equal magnitudes or even preceding the creaks of the dragged bowl beneath.

Several other subgroups met either fate, in an astounding solidarity with others engulfed by black torn pages of disgrace that were shed upon them from above.

And I hereby settle, grounded to the very ledge, mounting a dire fate below me; my nose was stimulated by a divine scent that prevailed amidst the brawls of deserved torment. My throat was drier than an abandoned rotten log that had been promoted to charcoal and dispersed ash, sweat showered my body and I did not belong to the queues ahead on the facing front, I am a forlorn demeaned slave standing in the nowhere, uncertain of which texture would cover my body: The divine or the bleak? The holy white or the hectic chained garment of the forsaken ones?

I was stuck in the middle amid the insatiable flames and the enchanting scent of locked heavens, awaiting my verdict in despair, where hope does not serve the purpose of prayers we once had before judgement...

## 13- The Architect

Incoherent confessions that constitute my identity...  
Found profoundly within the nowhere!

I was led here by a sturdy intuition, I was led to inhabit those dusty pages that I fear could be burnt to oblivion, but here I can no longer abide by the rules, rules that I have founded...

- The Architect is a morbid fascist; I can peek through the fences to witness his fortress collapsing and eavesdrop to record his last belated monologue. I still question the fate that approved of this fortress's capability to linger its very existence, and I am doomed till eternity, leashed by the corroded chains and merely permitted to watch the shows that speak of rot and invalidity. But no remarks are to be spoken, although they resemble an inexplicable infatuation!

- The fortress is falling down, run for your life –

A circus evolved from the pit of melancholy yonder, it was abandoned as the ruins of a damned sanctuary, and I am the only audience, still leashed and my mouth was stringently stitched ensuring my grave muteness.

Through the brown ashes that were dispersed all over the relics of the circus, a clown came in; the sole host left, he attired some dingy apparel and his face powder was not carefully applied, or to be precise, the left overs of the powder defied time, and over his lips was drawn a striking black scowl, his eye makeup was distorted and his pale gray hair emphasized a senile clown appearance which was farther consolidated by his back arch and his emaciated built up.

As the clown approached, he mumbled with some horrendous jokes that bring about melancholy, yet he called them jokes, courtesy of this siege we live in.

He lastly gave a monotonous Greek sermon before he was blown into dust signifying the termination of his show.

- The fortress is falling down, run for your life –

I am in a field of red roses that were stretched to embrace the horizon and continued to be planted in the skies, and as I walked forth pulling the chains behind me the roses were disfigured and wore the seasonal black; I wonder how could a disfigurement conjure an unconditioned charm that has no thorns?!

Twenty nine carriages passed by and threw blazes of torrid flames that burnt the entire field and the skies wept their roots and petals, it all looks more charming and could engender an appeal, a cult of melancholy which you may produce a sect out of it to offer gratefulness for the lord as he bestows the desire to endure this sorrow upon us, upon me.

The flames brought in warmth, though the fire was black and blue in colour; blessings might be multiple varieties you do not remember seeing!

A young lady dressed in a frock marvelously weaved by combining those ignited black roses that covered her entire body, save her cleverly crafted face and hands, the lady stepped forward to confront me, and as she went closer the flames arising from her dress burnt me down, peeling my skin layers and administering me into a new show, one of the infinite shows of this gloomy night, and I generally obtain my passion from the gloom, but my mouth was always shut and I could never express how thankful I am to the sinister architect.

- The fortress is falling down, run for your life –

I have no memoire of me being granted the grace of owning an operating tongue, yet I could vividly see a world of mirrors, one of them is broken into three sectors and some shards went missing, through the sectors of the frayed mirror I could see three reflections of mine, arguing over what seemed to be a celestial contract.

The contract stipulates that this one man show has to continue until annihilation knocks the mirrors down, and I saw one of my versions swearing over his grave to shred this contract and to displace the other two reflections with just one after combining both of the plain sectors, and the two other reflections perished following his affronting last words: “This one man show has to come to an end”. The two sectors merged together forming a larger one and a new reflection commenced claiming its virtual domain, judging by the outline that was still under construction, it was a female with tens of glowing black roses that were weaved to her frock.

The mirrors shattered simultaneously, imagine what the sight of millions of mirrors collapsing may look like! After the disaster has set the last mirror on the ground fully smashed, I cleared a few piles of glass shards until I

excavated a lock and a rusty key that can no more fit into the lock.

Oh lord, bless the architect, this eternal damnation suits me the most and I am at full ecstasy.

- The fortress is falling down, run for your life –

Hundreds of couples walked in a retrograde manner, everything takes place in reverse, and the globe is on the verge of going back to its nascent origin prior to the big bang, a sole couple moved forth against the laws of this queer physics that rules the show, the lady with the roses on fire held tight to her bloke as she looked back at me and literally mocked me then looked back to her bloke who was also me, moving against my desire, but somehow she coaxed me into relishing this mandatory walk.

- The fortress is falling down, run for your life –

The black curtains never opened and the theatre remained dead, I am still the only audience to silently admire this silence and never express my contentedness. Deafening applaus barged in from the nowhere and they were surely created by no one, the claps were patterned and

synchronized so that such imposed cheer seems to appraise the show that never took place.

There was nobody to save me, I felt myself burning, but I was tied to the chair and my mouth was knotted by a surgical procedure as to maintain my silence, but I could not resist, I had an urge to speak out loud about how amused I was, I secretly admired the fire that melted my organs down and fed on my flesh tearing me apart, that was the jolly modality I deserve that I have had a latent yearn for it since so long. I wanted to express my joy but I could not...

- The fortress is falling down, run for your life –

“Infinities could run out, and that is what makes them vulnerable according to the constitution that rules our shows, and this vulnerability ought to be admired” Explained the lady in burning roses signaling the end of the shows for tonight with one last trick up her sleeve.

She set me on fire as I wished earlier and anchored me on my knees; in a quick paced moment, she created a Roman theatre and brought Eros back to life from the scrolls of ancient myths, then she fixated a silver mirror in front of me, the mirror had sacred carvings running along its rim

and all I could observe as I looked through it was the reflection of Eros, not mine, the lady then mentioned that her name was Psyche, the mortal.

Aphrodite was the only audience watching, I am no more the audience and I can no more silently craft opinions. Psyche then melted in her frock and the fire made me wither as I witnessed the Roman pillars being demolished by a heinous act of unforgiven vandalism.

- The fortress has officially been buried along with the realms of forgotten biographies –

I was abandoned, my intuitions could not falter, and they are the only compass I could invest some trust in. I came by to disclose the nature of what we do to survive, we, the architects, carefully weave the threads of surrealism to dismantle the crusts of despair and silence that rule the bog we drown in. We are totalitarians, morbid fascists who oppress ourselves via creating our own curse, but it is always a splendid curse, a charming one that we choose to nourish at the expense of violating our solitude and infringing our tranquility.

And no matter what ramifications there could be, we favor breaking our souls, believing that through the residues of

our spirits come the undisputed glories that manage to find their places among the tales of known history; it was the only viable formula to extract our biographies from the realms of oblivion.

This is what the architect does, through the lies, ultimate truths are spoken and through surrealism, multiple acceptable realities are born.

There should be not a fortress to fortify the truth, but that was the only regulation that had to be met in order to become an architect...

## 14- The Envelope: Hallucinations of the Sane

### \* Epilogue \*

Chilling cold of December...

Random thoughts of midnight...

My mind was vehemently occupied, no room for a patterned conception, every fold of my brain enclosed its own anarchy of thoughts ruins; an expected aftermath for a conventional travelling soul...

The room was lit by burning logs, the black steam evolved out of the chimney spread around my residence and surely my fire alarm was disabled; honestly, it has been disabled since the day I implemented it in my residence to meet the local compulsory safety measures, but fire lit rooms are always more comfortable, that is only where I agree with the old parable "Old ways are always the best"!

I was drained by my vigor of thoughts, too exhausted for executing any task, and too frustrated of being unable to gather the remnants of my strength to make a way out of this silent melancholy.

I looked at every corner of the room through the dark and glimpsed the cracks running on the walls extending up to the ceiling all the way to the barely hanged chandelier; the comforter was an extra mess over the messy bed, my windows were half open to inlet some cold to blend with coziness of my fire and there distantly lied my stiff obsolete desk; on top of it were haphazardly placed paper folds of dusty musical notes, some tarnished Parker pens, a few pencil drawings and scratches of irregular intersecting lines of pointless purpose save for a minute catharsis, some books and outdated DVDs...

Nothing remarkable or compelling except that black envelop that invested a special texture of eerie paper with a note, a rather message to myself, now I have stood before the cross-roads; it is time for my obnoxious reminder; time to read it like never read before, time to pretend that I will unravel the truth which I have kept submerged beneath floods of frauds and fallacies.

Five paces forward were all it would take me to reach the envelope, and I did. I opened it and took out the paper then unfolded it; for a detailed read, I moved across the room towards the burning logs to offer some light...

“Dear Dimitri,

This letter is destined not to leave your very possession, for you enjoy gathering pains and being victimized, if this letter is ever found among your piles that swiftly promote to ashes of sham oblivion; subjugated, return it to the envelop on your desk. This is your pain and it is to be perpetuated, do not neglect your medication.

It all took place when you attempted a potential suicide for a change, when you opposed the normal traffic flow direction and woke up in the Intensive Care Unit at the very news of a harsh concussion that fortunately was not expressed as adverse mental manifestations, save for the mild frontal lobe affection that tampered with your mental chemical levels; the physicians threatened of recurrent onsets of severe migraine coupled with probable prodromal effects that are susceptible to promotion to visual and auditory hallucinations; the medication schedule you are following is aimed to equilibrate your chemical levels, please do not favor your mind travels at the expense of your health and always remember, two pills at 11.00 p.m. sharp”

That says I am a fascist to myself...

Abruptly, the whole events were played swiftly by my sight; I captivated the devil and consented to my urge to

taste liquor then claimed to be a saint who never smells wine, I died more often than I lived and witnessed the several tales of the morgue, then saw the proof of judgement and resurrection; I was resent to dominate the Earth but found my symphony burglarized by a mirage of a silhouette, then went to dine with a repugnant aristocrat who made friends with a former Nazi and confessed my tale of the most exotic portrait ever, I also saved tens of endangered lives and was met by no recognition, but this could not be a mere utopia that would be forgotten with the sands of time; we, people, have the tendency to intimidate utopia advocates for no sake, is it because we refute the thought of perfection existence in life? But I have seen the utmost perfection, or I would claim so! This is my utopia, the endless lives of mine that shall never be revoked by any means as long as I breathe; hallucinations are the property of the sane and I would not relinquish any of the many lives those trips beyond nature graced me with!

Could I fabricate another round of life? Could I fabricate a million others?

If I ever happened to live in a lie, it suited me more than an aching truth!

I returned the message back into the black envelope, and without a moment of hesitation, I threw it to be eaten by flames, to be forgotten among the perished realms of vapor.

I looked back at my packet of pills kept over a rounded stool next to my bed and fixed my eyes on it. No more pills, no more lives to be revoked; without the medication, all I could lose is one of the many lives I have...

THE END

# HALLUCINATIONS OF THE SANE