

BEVERLY MARQUISE

MARIONETTES

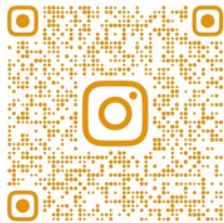
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Marionettes

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Part-1-Chapter-1

Once upon a time... The sky be grey but in grey we do not see. Enchantments, where the realm of a Greek fairytale begins... of evildoers, the wicked, and the foolish - a narrative of cat and mouse, fate and integrity. All are yet to be unveiled further into this confusion of occurred events.

None who encountered Irina Nevadan ever spoke ill of her beauty; her mild delicacy brought tears to all that laid eyes on the surface. However, Nora was not of Irina's status of fortune despite her consistent efforts to mimic the acts of her step sister, and her attempting to mould herself into her ideal stature of a lady, though Nora, a mimic maniac, standing vigorously, was uniform in beauty with her raven eyes. Her inevitable inadequacy only provoked her to emulate Irina further till they separated places of residence, and even then she had traits of a mimic maniac. Some years prior, the Nevadan

family of peasant villagers, came upon Nora, a child of eleven in vain, deserted by the streaming river Aliakmon so pitifully - her situation a poignant testament to wickedness. Moved by her woefulness, the corrupted household integrated her into the family (a decision that contributes to the narrative, but more about the corruption is yet to come), and alongside her benevolent step sister, she grew to be part of the Nevadans in name. For the sake of narrative focus, we shall refrain from discussing further exploration of her backstory. From early youths of unconsciousness,

irrational thinking and irrational comprehension, Irina, with superiority, maintained a commanding position among her seven siblings younger in age - an aspect Nora detested and resented as it included herself. Upon the moment of their initial introduction, Nora, along with all others, stood in postures of dull amaze, shaken by the figure resembling a descendent of a grandiose goddess presented seemingly before her. Such was Irina Nevadan's splendour which brought about tears to our protagonist! Her beauty makes one cry in admiration. A descendant of a goddess' resemblance was matched by the profound benevolence bestowed upon her, that whoever received her words may be, henceforth, considered elevated in spirit.

Nora looked with deep-seated envy for eyes, refraining from speaking with deep-seated envy for lips, for her genuine affection toward the lady surpassed heaven's vaults,

surpassing its boundaries. Speaking ill of pearls would be a sin in itself. To soil pearls would be indulging to sins committing to oneself, one's very essence. Nora's ageing in circumstances of grieving naivete became drastically altered when a pivotal change occurred with the arrival of Beyzade Augustine, who we will henceforth refer as 'Prince Augustine' for the sake of our narrative ease and ease for the reader. Prince Augustine, the firstborn of Pasha Aubin - referred to in our narrative as 'King Aubin' - is yet to appear further into our narrative...

As the siblings grew in unison during the chief year, Nora observed the patterns of humanity with sharp, curious eyes in discerning gazes of amaze. Her raven eyes perceived no specks of flaws, yet seeing past Irina's sickly pale eyes, a certain ugliness may lay as the foundation to her character. Readers may interpret the narrative in various philosophical aspects, yet it is crucial to recognize - in foolish circumstances - Nora's affection toward Irina, genuine affections surpassing heaven's vaults. Nevertheless, in her dedicated acts to secure Nora, the pearl defied notions of sole goodness with contradictions of ugliness of her foundation. None other than Nora herself discerned the deafening undertones in Irina's patterns of behaviour that vividly arouses suspicion. Had Nora spoken ill to another individual, she would have been deemed an outcast of absurdity, for the unblemished pearl was regarded as the epitome of supremacy, and such minor suspicions of absurdity were bold statements to the narrow-minded perspective of each villager.

One reasonable dislike Nora held in palms proved to be Irina's nature: she'd intermittently and often excessively voice words of care at her, only to alternate between declarations of care and dispassionate behaviour in order to appease and perplex the villagers. This pattern of speech and gesture caused our protagonist to grow uncertain at the authenticity of such claimed care as she remained disoriented in ponders.

Another aspect of her demeanour was her remarkable delicacy: her tendency to bypass the courage of confessing and defending. If villagers directed falsehoods at Nora, as such cases were seldom overlooked, her maintained silence would exacerbate Nora's vexation. A timid egotist, though vexing, was undeniably enviable: such treatments she received should be excessive to make paths for her whimpering at minor inconveniences. Nora longed for such treatments to the extent that she yearned for a change of circumstances where displaying resilience seemed to be a fool's gesture.

The words from her step sister's lips were certainly unreliable: her declarations regarding her favouritism met with clear scepticism. Nora is claimed to hold the position of the most cherished among the family from uttered sentences of her lips, but she extended similar claims to each sibling, thereby thickening the doubt toward Nora. This inconsistency begs the issue: what factors blinded the villagers' eyes?

"Pass benevolence onto your kin," Irina idolised, speaking in her bewitching tone, preaching light around evildoers and the wicked.

"Dear sister," Nora called one remarkable day after a year into the corrupted household, "my dear sister, do so good as to sit down with me for some ten minutes. You, dear, have anybody willing to accept your hand, even sacrificing one's own essence for momentary bliss in your presence! Yet you, an English rose of most pleasant air, persist in residing in this hut of lth; do so good as to end subjecting yourself to torment and migrant to higher environments that agree with and compliment your stature and fortune. We, who never will seize the slimmest touch of your status of fortune, implore you to bring us from poverty. Out of this inferno region of the devil's bunker of a hut, I plead!"

In return, she arrogantly breathed in timid air, "I will certainly dedicate my presence to residing with you in this soiled hut, though attractions may be temptations. This is my home, with Spade, Ele... our household of agreeable dignity. Subsidising the fact that we are enduring the harshness and relentlessness of poverty, we are striving on the grounds of our home land. In a better place than what I might acquire if I desired, the sense of home isn't guaranteed. I'm happy here, I'll succumb here, on these grounds, beside you, as you are home and these grounds will be the soil awaiting my tomb."

"I object, I deny your absent-minded blurting: you yearned to be delivered from poverty and soil, as you informed me a day prior."

"I do, I do, however I gladly refuse. I must remain under the heated climate of our land, and that is, in reasonable justification, my desire - to reside in the land I dearly love and along with you, care for our ill brother, Spade. I have humanity. "

"Don't blu , enough sass of yours. I am no family for you and this family, dear sister, I am an orphaned child who happened to be taken in by this family in relation to you... only by name was I taken. To leave me is nothing, and to bring your family from poverty to elevated palaces, would bring benefits instead of the slightest unpleasantness."

“How foolish you are, how foolish you speak, how you throw soil at yourself. I bring this tarnished discussion to an end. I’d be sure to take you if I were to migrate to foreign lands of attainable riches and gold.” She laughed merrily, somehow melodically yet manually, burying her features in her palms.

Nora became unbearably agitated about the falsehood she had heard, agitated as she was rendered voiceless in protesting against the obvious. She knew that Irina, when the watchful eyes exit into the open from the hut and wasn’t present to witness while comprehending the pleasure air she brought, exits into the open alongside them. It was evident that Irina wanted every marquise and stone - any opportunity but to bring Nora to a land of abundance, unlike the speeches she had proclaimed. With every reason to bring confrontations, Nora nonetheless rejected muttering a sentence, as she feared the reply of defence she should receive, or the fright she might bring forth to the frail pearl with pale eyes.

“There is Elena in the cold corner! My dear little sibling, come and accept my hand, I gladly insist.” Nora, like gentle morning dew, extended her right hand, offering rather slowly.

“Elena, accept the offering, come toward us from your corner.” Irina added furthermore, breathing her lullaby for tones.

Elena accepted Nora’s hand but turned to embrace the second caller whom she treasured. Nora, in the absence of attention from her adoptive parents whom she lent her faith to and from her step siblings whom she sought the validation of adequacy from, relied on the unreliable care solely given by Lady Irina - another justification to her adoring and dedicating herself to Irina most, in spite of her bitter hatred toward her unseen and unexplained ugliness. The elder guardians, Marcus Nevadan and Alexandria Nevadan, both corrupted in the head and fibres of the heart by poverty and blame, were recognised for their outstanding first born daughter, whom they idolised increasingly by the passing days. The guardians of the household did praise Nora infrequently, though they never looked at her with widened eyes as such were given to other persons. And often, the two thought of her as less than a lady of human mass, rather, as a being of peculiarity because she was alienated in the village. Under the study atmosphere of bewilderment Nora the foreign being of peculiarity craved elaborately for sights of the eldest untouched pearl’s glamour even in her convincing ugliness as foundations, as she craved for nothing else that could be gentler than the touch of the already unkind.

Coldly, as if in climates of drastic change from the heat of the day, three days had passed since the previous event. In the Nevadans' shameful hut (consisting of one room limited in spaciousness of combined purposes), in the cold evening, in the household where the walls had been coated in a pale shade of blue, the family circled around their crumbling table to consume stined bitter bread with aged wine, executing each movement with blandness compressing the atmosphere and narrowing the walls.

We say that an untouched book marinates on the shelf, because it sits in one motion, under heavy dust - marinating in dust.

"Mana, Patera, to bring our household from the covers under this hut to a greater place, I vow to work, as to show gratitude for you, as you have taken me, a poor step child, in, when I needed messiahs with good wills." The dedicated Nora confessed, red with vulnerability. "Every crumb of the cold, bitter bread you did so good and wise as to spare to me, I eat in gratitude. Pray, Mana, Patera, Irina, Elena, for Spade's illness to leave him at peace, Damian, Iris, Theodor, Calandra... My, humanity..." Having said this, she clutched her hands together and her lips mumbled, in an attempt to show her gratitude to her guardians, and to try to bring forth their pity. She lay in hopes that they may cherish her. Nora was not at all a marionettist who pulled strings of other persons' puppets, but rather a pitiful gure who yearned for surroundings where she wouldn't see nuances in even the hues of sunsets.

Alexandria interjected: "fate will unfold as it must, as it ought to be. Your sturdy commitment to uplift and enhance our soiled household's name is valued and held in elevated regards by myself and Marcus, as well as the children. I have been contemplating on your sister's hands. What are your beliefs on the matter? Indeed, to grasp even the slightest of her hand is an insight into the Garden of Eden as it should resemble so - a blessed insight no rational man in good conscience could decline. She can bring such wonders, she is a possessor of otherworldly appeal by nature."

"No, Mana, I will remain within the walls of our hut, since this is my home, though a monstrous act it may very well appear to be. I will bring wonders under our name, not in the sense you are thinking, of course." Irina shrieked, as if her Mother's praises were curses, and headed to grasp her Mother's hands rmyly.

"How my daughter is rooted in modesty," The melodramatic Marcus wept, clutching his sts in poignant gestures as he buried his face in his arms, "most beloved child, may it be

granted in the next lifetime, that I might be born as your own. The utterance of your name is a wonder in itself.” He rested his shoulders on the table in a peculiar demeanour.

As was usually the case, the discussed subject pivoted from Nora to the unjustly admired pearl whom they regarded as a sacred idol. Nora’s itching of nerves and wrath were dared not to be presented externally on the surface. In her suffering she could’ve yearned for unhappiness, yet this was far from the suffering she sought for, that she, a romanticist, wanted to extend her arms to grasp. Her circumstances prevented her from standing under the misery she craved, giving her instead to an unsought misery in which she detested, finding it unbearably intolerable - she longed for misery in states of solitude, free from company, in gloominess where she could lay pondering and deafened from her silence. The misery upon her included crowded communities in lack of spaciousness, to which she hadn’t the ability to lay in solitude, and differing from the ideal utopian environment she envisioned at a young age in her youth. Throughout the two years under the Nevadans’ roof and within their blue walls, Nora’s disturbed character evolved to become the product of her surroundings moulding her with their ruthlessness.

Hence, our dear readers, the introduction of our protagonist’s beginning vividly demonstrated the patterns of humanity’s preposterousness without reason, and now you're familiar with her early circumstances.

2

Pasha Kızı Katya, who we will refer to as 'Princess Katya', a lady among the aristocrats, roamed along the hills of the Nevadan hut, dressed in a kaftan with a headscarf around her neck; she, out of sheer fate, encountered the weeping Nora outside as she pitifully grieved after consuming cold bread and wine. Katya was an esteemed lady of seventeen serving leading roles in the empire, her elongated champagne blonde hair reached her feet, and the complexity of her gure was set aglow by the sunlit sky. In her sharp Greek features and emphasised glimpses, one should see rm dominance.

"Why may you be weeping in the coldness of air?" She leaned toward the weeping child seated on the rock, gently inquiring.

"Nora Nevadan, in name. What may the daughter of a pasha be strolling along the shameful Nevadan hills for?"

"I came to trek to witness the open, and seeing disturbances before me grieving sorrowfully ru es my stroll with factors so vehement, so zealous. Must you give reasons for your weeping?" "From the height of my wits to the fright of I, lies I on the oor in

apathetic

patheticness, pondering upon a dreadful evening. I stood in the hut, contemplating on my wits and lows, startled by an abrupt saying of the... Though I am no family, deserving no right to seek their praising, I must still stand on these grounds deprived. A serpent's bile green eye I do possess, a bitter tongue I keep from showing, because what right is given to adders without feet? Dreary and draining, a step child does give in to weeping, weeping away from the abrupt saying of the pearl child, whom the outsider names the devil - though a loving devil she does adore, and blesses the not adored. This, I accept begrudgingly." "And shame falls on the Nevadan's name, the hills of soil." "Without

fault I am none, what the product of me from the goodness by pearls is vile, nonetheless she had been indulging in plain dignity. Shouldn't goodwills make paths for desirable products, not sinking its teeth of beasts and drawing the youth of another? Ire and treasure, both I hold in high regard toward her, whose name is held as sacred as idols

of stocks and stones, without specks of liability to peek through to the surface. The greed of a man in the invalid category is beside the deceiver's foolish game of cat and mouse, of tenderness and wrath, and goodwill and misdeeds - foolish, wicked, nothing more! She, aglow in brilliance, lights the witching hour to aglitter white nights. Breathing, I no longer breathe: only the relentless pang of longing... May the dreams of utopia rest in the homeliness of superficial and sham warmth. Though factitious, as I say, it bestows within the crevices of my heart an appetite for it furthermore: yes, more and more and nothing more... Pearls, that is, she prevents me from extending my arms to the preferable clean misery, thus I'm ensnared in unfamiliar perplexity and bewilderment."

"Come, you shall suffer no longer, you will be rendered sinless." (Katya's decision in offering to bring Nora heavily contributes to the narrative, and builds major events, but more is yet to be uncovered.) "You will eat warm bread by the fireplace, without enduring the cold's touch. You will be covered in silk garments in place of rags alongside me, Katya. My Father Aubin is the pasha, although he hasn't made a return to our homelands in some two years: he is abroad with Augustine, my firstborn brother. I reside with my present brothers: Kola Paşaoğlu, Pluto Paşaoğlu, Aaron Paşaoğlu." Then she reached for Nora's wrists, and once she did so, kissed her frail hands as respectable gestures.

"A great company, I daresay! I do desire, I am eager, yet my household status will bring upheaval, walking to and fro in joyous chaplinesque fashions while they are amused at my leaving, leaving in kafkaesque fashions. For though they have no agreeable obligation to concern themselves and bring trouble to their head with my departure from the grounds that bedevil me with freights, I see the city as fearsome. Do frequently trek the hills, Lady Katya Hanım. Your presence will do me an excellent favour in lifting my drive."

"For your simplemindedness, open acknowledgments when you are seldom or never at fault, and humility, I find commendable. A pleasure it would be to trek this hill each sunset to see a certain Nevadan in name, you'd be made sure to not seek sorrow any longer in my favourable presence, only easement, nothing more."

With her promise spoken, she descended the heights of the hill and trailed to her grand palace in the bustling city she resided in on horseback. The poor child had refused Lady Katya's offer, not out of unwillingness, but rather of her fear in unfamiliar lands in the distant, where citizens led conventional traditions. In the humble hut where the walls

had turned blue, where the poor were far-o from these fearsome realities under observant and disagreeable eyes, not one other person would demand her fear to subside for leading traditions of great demands, and despite her unhappiness on either soil, it was an idea she put faith in that the aristocrats were fearsome, that if she were a bona de member walking beside them, she'd be fearsome and in terrible fright - such ideas tormented her to degrees where her longings for wealth was marred by her discomforting beliefs(it is most probable that her lack of acquaintanceship and involvement with a uence lay as the root foundation to her discomforts).

Nora pondered and wondered, contemplating and debating in irritation: "if it were Irina who had received the words of the Lady in proper fashions and il comme faut, what will become of the outcome?" This question entwined in her hair and let itself get into her head for extended amounts of passing time till she found her possessing rational thoughts bearable no longer. She entered the same shameful and unspacious hut to make movements as though the recent event of miracles hadn't taken place, as though the toxicants had been wine, and as though the adder had been a blasé mute swan of indi erent. Ultimately, and frankly unfortunately, she became ecstatic to have formed relations with a lady of high dignity, the daughter of a Pasha - a memorable blessing to her in place of the unsoiled pearl without nicks or pockmarks and ridges. Indeed this was a miracle in the phenomena of the odds...

"What is wrong, my dear Irina?" Nora questioned the sobbing Irina in naive demeanours rested by the corner against the bland walls, her arms burying her knees. "Your features of distress are uneasiness to certain irritations I'm unaware of, as of now?"

"Min anisycheís, the day will come when all there is left is the dust of what was once factual. Sit, must you worry not a speck." She returned, posing as the lady of unknowingness, and surveying Nora with a frail gesture which brought about a form of alack of sophistication, of a damsel in distress, of credulousness and simplicity, yet a certain monstrousness unfamiliar to the eye and sentiments also discharged in her air.

"How disgusting are the shallow patterns!" Thought the infuriated Nora, daring not to speak with troubled lips. "She is as irritable as a headache, she presents me as a leading gure responsible for her knowledge... I don't prefer to be the guiding gure of sturdiness while she can be uid - I deteste having to stand in distance from the opportunity to be uid in rest. And my, she believes she is somewhat a pale lamb of mine

under my thumb when she is dominant and I, inadequate... Every being walking on two of these grounds of soil takes pity for her pretentiousness? She is an irritant to the itch of nerves, yet sickly - almost like a little child of four, a sin and a passion... held in immeasurable regards so fervently. How she speaks of her concern for the passing of the wind carrying death at late ages: the tip of her tongue speaks ill of me in child-like means. I'm beginning to not understand my concerns, visibly different from even peers in greater ages. She must be treated with such rich wine that the terror of dissatisfaction minor to the senses, as a peasant herself, is a tragedy, all while I am compelled to maintain exteriors of exoskeletons when I say my prayers in desperation for her naivete. Naivete: idolised by nature, overlooked by the nonentities of sophisticated fate. She's no more beautiful than I, not a grain of sand in comparison to Katya's surfaces, thus I am uncertain of her groundbreaking name. She is kind in her air, indeed, but so are even the wicked in aspects of nature and air. Why, I ask, do they find her sentences sincere and mine incoherent, that hers are subsided in remembrance and mine are engraved as grudges under their eaves? I am short in ability to converse awfully like mute swans on gloomy surfaces of bodies of water, but that isn't the case either: if such were so, my literate hands wouldn't pen excessive amounts as I do. What does it matter if sparrows and ravens sing the same melodic tune on the same branch? Oh, I want the fortune of ideality, the fate of the lady up to my stature, the uncomprehended values that I should emulate and master to undistinguishable extents! What goods, what goods... How I love her superficial comfort as other persons in the community lend me none... I should have taken Katya's offering to see! I cannot stay in this hellmouth of a home, I should be lifted by the gusts of wind, I want to see!"

Nora looked vacantly at her sister in unvented vexation, with bitter fury seizing her throat with its fingers, and with eyes brimming with irritants, she breathed heavily and left the lady to be.

She, when the night fell over day, soon ventured into the open in desires of destination to find the rocks she had sat on when encountering Katya earlier. But not having gone ten paces, her stubbornness held her, leading her astray into unfamiliar lands: she stumbled on unpleasantness and fell like the night... Wounds weren't what was sobbed for, it had been wholly her family, their indifference and how they wouldn't extend a hand if they were present for witnessing and if the night hadn't fallen and the daylight were broad, clinging above. A state of hysteria became the outcomes driven by this disturbance of beliefs. Remaining on the grounds and with hysteria prompting her to

think such beliefs of her amusement, she came to sobbing realisations under the sickly pale sky: Mana, Patera - neither threw soil at her; Damian, nay, Calandra, nay, pearls, nay... Anguish stood firmly as the sum of her allowing her injustice to present itself as the guidance of the messiah, as amusement, and as misleading forms of venting fumes, that these distorted perceptions were factual and that no conflicting truth could conflict with her own wisdom. However, in this current case, her state of hysteria was irrational because not one figure stood to bear any blame, thus Nora's fury was misdirected, and her throwing soil and blame across the names of other persons was the corrupted product of unjust beliefs and nothing more - only she was to bear blame.

"How am I the foundation of my indifference when it is other figures surrounding me who, having moulds for fingers, moulded my once unknowing nature?" The injured lady reflected, "I depict the perception of utter solitude in such an authentic way that one cannot resist the amount of shedded light it lends to empathic beings. Do they... Ach, there will always remain an idea that is resisting for presentation, even in one's own comprehension it is unwilling to lay in agreeable fashions, and so this central idea, the great idea, is often set aside and never spoken through one's lips; this conquers the reason for abstract philosophy. Ouf, philosophy is simply the result of mistrust in God, ouf, ouf."

The night above her falling must have been a rather soothing one, since she awoke to find herself beside the same rock and beside morning dew, laying on the field outside her hut. The breeze welcomed her with a sudden shiver. A shock of disappointment fell upon her attitude when she retrieved what had happened to her the previous day; she retained an enmity sinking within her heart. Nora returned to the interior of the lthy place she lived in, waved good morning to her siblings, who responded with slow waves as if they hadn't acknowledged abnormal factors on their sister.

"Goodmorning, dear sister, come, eat." Spade sighed in an undertone.

"Bread, stined bread, aged wine?" She responded strengthless.

"That is all we can afford for now - when our circumstances improve, perhaps we will eat cake."

"It can change very much instantly. Irina, you have a habit of groaning and complaining about the walls you sleep behind; to me, it seems like you are aware of the struggle this family is going under. You have the privilege of bagging money from your fellow

admirers from this city, and easily, you can do so! So it leads me to this very question: you understand it so well, so why don't you want to change? It's as if... you don't want to treat your wound and still are unhappy with the discomfort. We could be speaking behind a palace at this moment if you accepted the hands of the citizens of good possessions, or for the least, farmed with me for good outcomes instead of expecting it to be delivered right on your palm. No, as vile as I sound, I assure you you are not obligated to offer goods to me, since I am not born into your family, but for the least, cure Spade's illness!"

"Silence this nonsensical rant, or be gone." The Mother interjected in dismay.

"What truth is told! Not one person in this household doesn't acknowledge, and not one person is willing to turn to the other awaiting path! Such a truth is what I've noticed in this community of halfwits, in this home. My, what will become of this holocaustic region of the lake of re of a home? Mana, shouldn't you be discomforted by the patterns of my speech, a speech from the throat of your young?"

"Wherever you attain these views, you better not step there another time."

"You also probably didn't know I slept in the open fields of our hill yesterday, Mana, how much care do you restrict yourself to pay for pearls you see dents in?"

"I must say, my poor folk, that if you want to be gone, be gone quickly. Nobody is holding you back. Who is seizing you by the arm? Cease your mouth - and cease making an ass of yourself - it appears foolish."

Having heard this, Nora was taken aback, stiffening with disbelief and resembling stone statues by her hands.

"Take you and your Greek tragedy elsewhere. Such a scene is unnecessary on this property. Oh, nihilist! You don't believe the teachings of Orthodoxy."

"I don't bestow faith in religion, I only believe in the Almighty, the beginning and the end."

There was a quick cut of interjecting voices.

"They use religion as a major cover for every tragedy: massacres, separations... Religion differs from serving God, nay?"

“You blank-minded...”

“Stop this madness, Alexandria, I beg of you.” Marcus Nevadan yelled in irritation.

“How you yell!”

After he bestowed a frown on her face, she exited into the open without uttering a word of response with informal gestures.

“You picked her up by the Aliakmon river a year prior.” The six year old Damian blabbered without thought, paying no attention, and throughout his blurting, played with rags for amusement.

The twins, nine year old Calandra and Iris, gave Damian a terrible thrashing.

Alexandria walked on down the hill, closer to the village, to find a certain peasant woman named Rebekka to trade for agricultural products with her remaining Ottoman coins. A third character suddenly appears: Dillon was another peasant worker on the farms; the Karas’ and the Nevadans have long been rivals since their ancient conflict for land. Ultimately, the Karas’ managed to obtain the piece of land that had been the subject of dispute both sides quarrelled for, to which the other household harboured a grudge against, for they were soon obliged to relocate from the centre of the village to a further spot up the hillside, the hill they nicknamed the ‘Nevadan hill.’ Being the leader of his household, the prideful Dillon found pleasure in throwing soil at the faces of his opponents by consistently reminding them of their shameful failure. He, identically from the rest, respected the pearl of their house though he hated her relatives, and that would be something quite peculiar, but knowing it’s Irina whom he respected, it wasn’t at all peculiar. Irina did not try to conceal it from her parents that she not only did not carry hatred of passion to their foes, she even tolerated the Karas’ (all the more abnormal and raises no concern to the eyes of narrowness). A natural reaction must have been to shake the soil out of her head, however, Alexandria and Marcus never bothered to comment on the friendship of him and their daughter. The reader may wonder: “is this lady shameless - to what extent? And after reading about her persona, there seems to be no clear reason as to why she’s valued, so why?” This brings us to our next point: Dillon Karas and many other villagers despised the beautiful, pure intended Nora for no given justification. The majority spoke ill of her in extraordinary ways. Of course this upsets her, because the actions of one does hurt an individual, only if they had a heart to see instead of using their eyes. Furthermore into dissection, the villagers’ hobby must be to

poke their nose into Nora's business, as they comment on the details of her every move although they claimed not wanting to be related with her. "Why do people think others' matters are their own business?" This was the question lingering in Nora's mind from the start, "patterns will follow patterns, patterns will not alter, though I cannot shed sentences of blame, because I make up communities myself. How is it that each individual sees the faults in this shameful community yet they are those who put visible faults in it? Do people hate change to this extent, or are they simply situated in gluttony without food? Good lord, we'd be precisely happy if human objections never existed, that God would be the anthropomorphic possessor of objections! They see fault and they want change but won't raise a hand to change. What grounds we stand on, what soil, what soil! Groaning and complaining about their wounds..."

Alexandria and Dillon exchanged glances before he mocked her about her past failure as if it were young. "Well, look who it is that came down the isolated hill."

Alexandria ignored his mockery and sped her pace to Rebekka's farm. Suddenly, out of nowhere, Nora appeared beside her, and out of breath, begged for forgiveness from her Mother. "Mana, forgive me for my tantrum earlier, pity on me! I love you and I never wished to upset you, I only argued with you because... I pitied myself. I understand it is a sin to feel bad for oneself but temptation got the best of me. I am so sorry."

"Go home."

They parted. She continued walking toward Rebekka.

In Nora's mind, we find absolute disarray. Here is a dig into the mind of a young philosopher: she dreams of becoming a widely uttered name but fears her critics taking over her title and spreading their prejudiced opinions on her, putting on a show of something unreal to the general public. This fear greatly occupied her. One critic may say: "she was not a wholesome person, it is not worth making her well known." Another may say: "She did this and that, etcetera, etcetera... To become well known, one has to manage their fears, meaning to lose a couple of friends along the way in order to reveal their true character. She looks at the people in her environment's face and sees how each and every one of them will never listen to her: people will remain as people and remain ruthless. She's been alienated for so long that she can feel it in her chest the rising of bile. Nora wondered how cruel it is when children could be as ruthless as their parents, how we have to deal with the consequences of other people's actions each passing day. The

reason she likes to write is that if she spoke, no one listens, and when she writes, it is up to oneself whether to acknowledge the contents or not; her words cannot be interrupted on paper, unlike when it comes out of her mouth. The words on paper never disappear by itself. Forgetting her proven point, she'd never feel at ease after writing down her vivid emptiness, as she wouldn't accept how she brought the sensation into words. Sometimes she reads masterpieces and wishes it was her who wrote such intelligent sentences, and would become envious of dead writers. As an observer, she noticed how when she carried anger toward herself, she seemed to be more mad at others, remembering all their wrongdoings, repeating how she hated them until she ran out of breath. To conclude her initial thoughts, we would like to add to the note about her being a genius in truth; such gifted brains require a severe consequence: the inability to live as a happy fool. They say it is better to live in truth rather than in an ideal world of lies - is it reliable? From when God created Adam and Eve, the two humans were living without being all-knowing, that was the reason for their purity and happiness, living in an ideal world without knowing the truth, because God was in control of what they need not know; however when they gained knowledge from the forbidden fruit, all-knowing did they become, their purity and happiness were thrown away. The same question for the reader is: is it truly better to live knowing the truth rather than being a fool in a satisfying world of lies? Is intelligence worth one's happiness? We leave this question unanswered; it is up to the reader to decide the subjective answer.

Upon reaching whom she intended to meet, Alexandria said: "wheat and olive oil for how many dozens of akçe?"

"Several... The wheat quality is unusually high. How are your children?" Rebekka, a young woman dressed in rags asked.

Handing over her Ottoman coins, she replied: "as usual, I am pleased with my children."

"So to speak, why haven't you married them yet - don't you know the pasha's sons are in need of multiple wives? For an average peasant, it would bring shame on the rich's name to marry them, well, you have a privilege, don't you?"

"Indeed, she must marry the firstborn! Goodbye, dear, I should go now. Thank you."

Alexandria returned. The crying one year old Theodor desperately needed his Mother's care; the Mother dropped to her bed with her hand on her forehead, unwilling to assist her baby.

“You Nora, , will you do so good as to calm the little one in the crib?”

No sooner had Nora stepped near the two, than a faint footstep arrived from outside the walls.

“Nora, what is taking you this long to the crib?”

“We have a visitor, Mana! I should greet her and... you may insist whoever else supports you. No, no, Ma, sit back down, you need not worry about who it is, I will take care.”

Princess Katya, as she previously promised, returned to the Nevadan hill to see a certain Nevadan. Nora seized her hand, leading her to a distance her family cannot see from the hut. She did not fancy her relatives knowing her friendship with the daughter of King Aubin, for she knew if they ever received the news, they would take advantage of Nora herself, stepping on her face to reach what’s beyond their reach. She mustn't allow Katya to gaze upon Irina; she couldn't possibly allow her friend to become an admirer of her sister, for then she'll lose the sympathy from her!

“My, Katya, most esteemed Katya, you ought not to be seen by whatever means! My household is greedy, capricious, inequitable... You ought not to involve yourself by whatever means! As the neglected one I am, I fear losing the only person to focus on me alone.”

“I see, Nora, rest your concerns.”

“Taking dislikes? I would never pass judgement onto my first born sister: she’s the special comfort to my irritations, and at the same time, the root of my irritations. I ought to live a healthy life without constant judgement. I have no objections to what she decides she should indulge in, it’s... if I do the same wise movements, Mana and Patera will grow mad at me while praising her. What bias is found! Two weeks... In two weeks, if the circumstances remain unchanged, you will knock on my door to find me by the river Aliakmon.”

“Fool, you ought not to be shamed within my sight. I will knock on your door to find you well rested in your house. You came from rough and capricious backgrounds of constant change, why are you unable to endure the present happenings?”

“Oh, don’t you know it’s like asking a doctor: ‘why are you sick?’ Will you ask a doctor: ‘you are a doctor, so why do you die?’ Oh, great Lord, don’t you know that a doctor nevertheless relies on his human mass?”

Katya, taken aback, was stunned by the sentences she had uttered in such fashions. She tightly hugged the poor child against her while stroking the child’s soft hair with her fingers.

“As a matter of fact, when I suffer the most, I become highly literate. I do assure you, suffering is not pleasurable. I wonder why I am incapable of retaining brilliance without penning through lenses of tears.”

“But you’ve mistaken me! What you say upsets me here! In a hundred years, all there is left would only remain identical to one another. Can one distinguish one’s skull from one else’s? Ach, let the devil swallow humanity.”

“Spade’s coughing angers me. I wish to throw soil at him. He groans and complains about his illness as if he hasn’t anyone to turn to. I bring him medicine from the city every week to satisfy his needs - what for? So he can throw soil at me because my air is indifferent by nature? I understand that God himself sees my seeking for a rations, yet, because of my sentiments, I don’t know how much longer I can step on these grounds. Indeed I admit it’s contagious to witness the suffering of Spade’s, he often groans about the family paying very little care to his needs, his complaints are true, but I try within my capabilities to bring the herbs of the world onto his palm - what about it? He views me as someone less than a doctor of human masses, perhaps because he is capricious unconsciously. Will my blood define my bonds forevermore? I wonder why I am as gentle and beautiful as the pearl of the household, and still I am mistreated. To what extent are they so blind in their eyes? Do they not know a speck about how soiled their mouths are? Each being in the village understands the struggle of living with another breathing being, and none is willing to change! They insist on change, and wouldn’t make movements!”

A voice from the distance could be heard: “Nora, head home, head home!”

“Ouf... Goodbye, my dear Katya. It’s time for me to be back. Thank you ever so for your assistance.”

She left the astonished Katya to return to her palace on her own.

Before long, another knock arrived at the Nevadan's door: a new family recently moved into the village and introduced their family name to every door. The family consisted of four - Herman Georgiou, a justice server, Othella, his sister, Clyde, Herman's grown up son/a liar, and Olden, Herman's young son. The mother of the two Georgiou boys disappeared years ago, and since then, Othella assisted Herman in nurturing the children.

3

Olden befriended the household rapidly, gaining in uence beside the children; this was to no surprise because indeed he was naturally gifted with fascinates. His appearance consisted of dark, almost black hair, olive skin, dull walnut brown eyes which come o as green eyes when one looks intensely at them under the sunlight, dominant cheekbones, and saddening features that re ect a lifetime of agony, in the nest sense, of course. There is no achievable path one may cross to stay uncontaminated by his contagious visible emotion when he frowns sadly and softly. His brother looked identical to him except his height was slightly greater and in his features it re ected the hands of the pool of re instead of the beauty of agony. Clyde barely exchanged a dozen words with his new neighbours, giving the impression of his irritation for social activities. The Georgious were given a piece of an unpleasantly small amount of land by the closest part to the hills, where the coldness easily blew over their single roomed cabin.

The outstanding Olden made a perfectly pleasing match for the pearl. When his opinions unfolded, it was rather Nora who was his best liked Nevadan. It got into the heads of her siblings that their least liked sister would be sure to corrupt their new fellow Olden; they whispered into the ears of him in attempts to install certain convictions that hopefully might drive him to another path... Such inexplicable gestures of violence were intolerable by the agonising, Greek mythologically looking Olden Georgiou. Nora didn't exactly like her new neighbour, however, she used his humanity as an advantage to grasp the liking toward her from the villagers, wishing he could paint in front of them the true image of her and remove the current image within their heads. Strange enough to arouse suspicion, Olden, in spite of ignoring the preachings from the inhabitants, nonetheless tolerated what they had to speak of - he refused to throw soil at anyone even if Nora hinted at her insisting. Adjusting to the environment stayed separate from the side of his heart he saved for Nora. However, his mild strangeness was minimally enough to arouse suspicion in her sharp, all observing eyes. Now Nora, aged by a year, thought she ought to silence her mouth when her convictions were speaking, so as to maintain her rare opportunities in the realm of her palms. Olden had the ability of brushing Nora's hair in a way no other did before. The strands meeting his tender ngers calmed both parties. With her faintly cherished bond with him, she con ded what she wouldn't dare share to any mortal: her love for philosophy - particularly due to their common interest in the topic.

She'd get so bonded in one within her speeches to the point of delirium: "I speak as a real Greek lady - I admire philosophy although I may not be a philosopher like the already deceased. Ah, philosophy... an absurd topic for the childish, yet no genius can calculate the answer to its simple askings. 'What is the meaning of life,' is a question only asked by senseless children - can you imagine grown ups outpouring their souls into finding a logical answer to a simple question such as that? Is this not the hidden amazement of philosophy? Because unlike mathematics, a subject requires direct answers, either wrong if not right, philosophy requires no direct answers, nothing is right or wrong... The art of subjective topics amazes me!"

"You amaze me, Nora Nevadan; you absolutely do. I do believe good manuscripts require no serious analysis. If so isn't the case, the most pathetic scriptures can become good, due to the fact that a deep dig into the deeper meanings makes anything worthy - it's most probable that the authors themselves did not interpret their pathetic manuscripts in the reader's way. Well, no. Only good manuscripts can allow one to understand its contents in an unexplainable aspect only the script itself explains; it allows one's soul to connect to the words on the paper that bad manuscripts won't allow. One should feel everything by just reading it: confusion, love, hatred, guilt... You see, for this very reason, I always view the majority of books as less impactful than how impactful people usually say they are. Only a minority of books thrash me with its immediate impact."

"If a bad manuscript - a simple manuscript with no impact, were to be analysed, it would appear as meaningful. I agree with your points. The manuscript should be the analysis of a circumstance itself, not the circumstance. Thank you for conversing with me, Olden! May the Lord bless you. What's that... Ouf, there's my household members heading closer every step... I suffer because of them; I suffer the consequences of their actions."

"We suffer the consequences of others' actions daily, without end. Oh, Nora, will you tell me why my existing causes torment to those I love? How different am I to whom they adore? I've been morphed into this, I can't even recognise my own face(if I looked into the expensive item peasants like me considered luxury possessions(a mirror))."

"You and I are one, Olden Georgiou. You bear no guilt. I formed a philosophy no other philosopher discovered: the art in finding no meaning - absurd. I must name it 'Absurdism'."

An inhabitant with a babe wrapped around her shoulders waved to the two. From the distance she stood, they failed trying to figure out who it was; when she ran closer, Nora made her out to be Irina carrying Theodor. She must have been in a state of excitement to interfere. Her empathy for her step sister decreased each minute with her understanding growing ever so lucid. No sooner had Irina reached Nora than she turned her body the opposite way and left after presenting a warm smile; she went back into their home.

“She is a pale ghost, she brings my fears forth.” Said Nora, “I am identical to her in my actions - I am a mimic maniac, I mimic her, yet I have my air. Don’t speak ill of her, I am not speaking ill of her... See, you talk to a good natured person and discover their inexplicable deeds - you wonder if they are really good natured - yes. People are not fixed on one persona - people are complex creatures: you don’t seem to be faultless, yet you declare yourself a good man, pushing aside your committed sins. Do not fix on one’s single persona and let it define their being.”

Olden suggested: “you ought to record this thought.”

“No, Olden, I have no aptitude! In your austere figure, you declare more capability! I want to be as good as the deceased. I’m unable to balance my philosophy and storyline. In addition, the chances of recognition for a masterpiece is gradually decreasing.”

The following evening Nora warded off all parties in order to accept Katya’s arrival privately.

“Lady, I long for you to take me with you... I may not be let free and you may lead me away as of today.”

“Well, dear Nevadan, climb on the horseback.”

Katya rode on the horseback to her palace with Nora to which she enjoyed the spectacular sights of the city, a sight which she had never seen before. The mighty buildings humbled her inferior village. The ancient coloured walls surrounded the strong base of the Pasha’s palace, showcasing the dominance of the Greek rulers. Several symmetrical pillars lined the pathway leading to the front gate, constructed solely of bricks, a symbol of strength and durability. While the gate swung open, spahis adorned in silver armour with shields defending their faces, stepped into view, making way for Princess Katya, at the same time guarding the threshold by using their intimidating

demeanour. Beyond the gates lay a wide square of emptiness, only the timber floor filling the vast expanse. Seemingly, the emptiness hid the entrances to certain rooms along the edges where the walls surrounded the space. The pillars were parallel and the staircase leading to the front gate, solely made of bricks, showed dominance. When the door was opened, knights of silver armour with complicated designs revealed, covering their face with shields, and she saw a wide space of nothing, the entry to the different rooms on the sides at the edge of the empty space where the walls surround. The expanse of the space was intended for activities such as horse athletics - activities that required room. Entering the pottery room behind the surrounding side of a wall, Nora and Princess Katya came across Pluto and Aaron: twenty year old Pluto wore a traditional Chiton and a Himation, with a belt around his waist, his luminous, feminine periwinkle irises contradicting his sharp features. Eighteen year old Aaron had wrapped a red fabric above his grey trousers, his Egyptian blue irises complimenting his downturned eye placement and soft facial characteristics. Both of the brothers' eyes matched with their sister's, except hers was just a tad darker - navy blue; her thick, black kohl gave the shape of her dainty but somewhat sharp eyes a more masculine, more commanding visage. The only feature that differs the sister from her brothers was the colour and length of her hair: champagne blonde, reaching her feet if untied. Her brothers' hair was a burnt sienna colour, though Pluto's was unnoticeably darker. Katya, the only daughter of King Aubin, had a degree of respect within her community, and she was treated relatively well by her family, who were fond of her.

"Where are Kola and Augustine?" Katya inquired, turning her head left and right, "I have with me Nora Nevadan," she pointed at Nora, "I like her; she is a blessing to the one who receives her."

"Our other two brothers are unpresent, as you know Augustine hasn't returned in some one year. You know he is the eldest, Augustine being the heir, therefore they are never free of duty." Exclaimed Pluto, the naive one, with his hands on his clay, barely keeping an eye on his sister.

"Needn't I say more, where are Kola and Augustine?"

"Elsewhere."

"Well, I inform you that they have to know about my dear Nora's stay."

"My task."

In the bedroom of the palace where Princess Katya slept, a red carpet accented with patterns of bumblebee yellow covered the ground, with a neatly decorated wooden bed atop. The cosy setting rained on Nora and Katya as they entered - Katya shared a brief introduction regarding the history about her ancestors' architectural judgments, how many great lives were sacrificed in the process of the building a thousand years ago. "Our palace is a cover for the suffering," she'd say, "the palace stands here calm, undisturbed... Lives once screamed here where it stands. How did the labour come to its end? I sob when I picture the scenes: the helplessness in them in knowing that they will die here, beside the bricks... because the construction is far from completion. Only if it becomes complete do they receive liberation, and that would take another hundred years, after their death, hence that is the prompt of their helplessness, in knowing that they will die here, beside the bricks."

"It's a blessing that a thousand years have passed since their suffering!"

"Oh? I had history books marinating in my previous library, and I say they marinate because they are left untouched, left to be marinated in dust - marinating! Such metaphors, chucklesome irony..."

"The helplessness is present among the living, in you and I. A thousand years will pass without fail, each person dying beside their bricks."

"Tragic, is it?"

"No, not tragic - plainly normal - ordinary. You say it as if you aren't a witness to humanity's norms."

"No, Katya, here, give me a hug." She reached her hands and the Princess accepted them gladly.

"I know of an elderly merchant who trades with foreign countries, she trades with India and receives their marquise diamonds. Gale lives in the slums in con sized, rotting materials and in outdated rags, and she makes no use of her fortune. I will bring a diamond to you, Nora, from her. What are your preferences?"

"I have never seen a diamond, thus I have no preference, and you certainly shan't offer me one."

“To agree with your request, I will hold one in my possession for you. Here, you can sleep on this bed, a comfortable one, different from your cold one you’ve been sleeping on.”

The night passed warmly - the first warm night Nora has slept through, behind warm walls. When morning arrived, an under average height stranger in a cloak was seen beside Katya sitting beside the bed. Her exaggeratingly hunched back served as a taker of her height, and when the hood of her cloak was pushed behind, revealed sunken cheekbones. In spite of the unease of her demeanour, Katya seemed to be on pleasant terms with the stranger, chuckling during their discussion. The stranger was none other than the merchant Gale.

“Dear, I don’t intend to disturb your sleep, but I have brought the merchant here to present a few gems: the ruby, the emerald, and a colourless diamond. I’ve bought all three - which would you prefer me to hold in possession for you?”

“If it wouldn’t be too much to ask for, the diamond, please.”

“My pleasure, my pleasure, dear!”

“Is it morning... I wish time was in our palms, how nonsensical! I do not wish to trouble my Nevadan family, so I will be going; I thank you with all my heart for keeping me for a night.”

“Allow me to send you a wagon, or carriage, and allow me to travel with you.” Gale insisted. “There is no doubt we are strangers, but allow me to show gestures of kindness to someone I sense to be in potentially spiritual danger from a relative.”

“I had a dream. I dreamed: that it was a fine day like any other, except that I was a servant of God, a martyr, in the year where our ancient fathers walked, tasked to enter the gates of the vicious Philistines awaiting my unexpected arrival to the other side. I remember feeling so afraid that I trembled at the entrance though I held an axe in my hands, because the Philistines would fold my clothes while I was still in them if they caught my intrusion. Nightmares were in my dream: being awake in my dream, I had a nightmare reflecting the terror that spun in which it taunted Samson as a result of entrusting a woman of the Philistines - his eyes were gouged... ‘But fear not, here it all works out. I know you fear yourself but it’s all planned out.’ He breaks the bead and says ‘eat this; my body. Drink this; my blood.’ Anyhow, my companion beside me prompted

me to step inside, telling me to ‘not let your fears get into your head, God is protecting you from the enemies.’ No sooner had I set foot beyond the gates, than a swarm of the enemies lifted their swords and threw rocks at me. To my benefit, I was a great camouflager, thus I disappeared into the walls and ended up on the balcony of one of their houses! For the rest of my close to death journey of cat and mouse, the cats were blinded, or rather the mouse became invisible, I don’t really know, but I succeeded to the other side and completed my tasked mission. It was at this time that I awoke. In my relief, I turned my head back to see the Philistines marching in a group, as if they’re walking in a loop. Risks can be a dreadful thing, but happiness it can bring! One side of this story may well bring glory. This twisting dream reminds me about my unneeded worries and how God is beside me, and often I weep about what is lost, convincing oneself I wouldn’t discover better; although my concerns are realistic, I’m proved wrong each time. What drifts me into sadness may be a preparation for a bigger treasure awaiting me. I pray to be miserable if it lifts me closer to eternity.”

4

Gale ordered a carriage for Nora's leave and both parties settled comfortably while the drivers commanded the horses to start trotting (the young Nora's unease settled when Gale revealed her gentle care).

"I suddenly am hit by pangs of confusion, Gale. May I ask what you intended to inform me when you said I was in spiritual danger from a relative?" Nora mumbled when the carriage took off. She looked upon the elderly merchant, who looked as if she were on the verge of death from consumption.

And returning, Gale, as if she pulled the strings of Nora's marionette puppet, answered: "One, theoretically two of the persons involved in your village are practising arts of the devil. I can sense you are under their guidance, however, only one of them is spiritually cruel, the other is ordinarily evil. Their identities, I cannot sense."

"My, what are your sensing abilities, much esteemed merchant? The thin crust of the earth is the same ground we walk on, despite my unlike perspective to the preposterous, ludicrous, illogical norms of our irrational humanity. The Alice Blue sky and the moonlit night sky are the same, yet their appearances are contradicting."

"The old lady is poppycock, speaking rubbish." The driver interrupted, whipping the horses. "Young lady, you must not count on her claims."

"You really are a stranger," voice Gale, "otherwise you'd know what merchant I am; you will take account of my claims. In knowing that you are a stranger, I can spare you." The driver made no reply and gave the horses another whip.

"As I was conveying, my dear Nora, we live in union as humans, so disagreement is natural, although it isn't normal. A Great Blue Heron once picked up a fish on the shore, carried the fish in its beaks and released it into the ocean. One says nature is spectacular, how a bird could rescue a fish, on the surface, it shares more empathy than most people do. But that is not true, the bird released the fish only because the fish slipped away from its beak - nature is not a show in the theatre, it is selfish as people are... This brings me to my next point: the relative of yours is similar to the bird, for on the surface, the relative is doing a pleasant deed, but if you look past the surface, you'll see that they are selfish and are not performing on a theatre stage."

The sun radiated the village when Gale bid farewell upon reaching the destination, bathing the houses in warmth, and burnt the pale cold. Nora yearned to seek her family after her departing suddenly without explanation the day prior, on the other hand, her household members indifferent to her absence, stroking her fury. She observed her Mana and Patera with their children, dancing free-mindedly, as if her absence was unnoticed. There is a time-worn legend about a forest beast. The beast was an entity huge in size, yet nonetheless, slender bodied, with a face containing a single black eye and often is portrayed as nothing less than a 'monster.' He trembled the ground with his steps. The beast, aside from his detestable impacts, had one admirable quality: his integrity. He wanted to give freshly picked flowers to the deers and rabbits, snakes and boars; his offers were denied, because after all he was a beast, and beasts are monstrous. The beast inhabited remote areas of the forest where no animals lived to taunt his amoral existing, this by the by. To a certain extent of consistent misunderstanding and judgement, the kindest creatures are said to eventually be transformed by the perceptions of other eyes. The 'monstrous' entity resigned his real nature, adopted the nature of what his outsiders transmit, set free his capabilities, and blame was thrown onto his face though, indicating his forever guiltiness, even though he was not to blame for his adopted nature. Nora questioned her profound disconnect - she likened herself to the beast. "That cannot be," she argued, "I am as beautiful as a moonlit sky after dawn, unlike a monstrous beast, just with the integrity of the beast. A reason is obvious for dislike upon the beast, but no obvious reason shows itself concerning me! Could the explanation be that I am not in the bloodline, or I stem from a different upbringing? I act identically to the adored!" Needless to say, Nora resolved to restrain herself from the perceptions of her nurturers. She rested on the rocks where she was first introduced to Katya.

Pondering and wondering, her vexation unravelled; she paced to little Damian in the village centre, gripping his worn robe, thrust him against walls of a farmer's cabin. The defenceless little boy endured slight head injuries from his sister's vile hands, and cried to be freed, summoning a crowd of villagers with his loudness, then proceeded to endure his injuries. By then his sister was pulled away by the surrounding crowd, then she insulted him saying that he was a halfwit and an imbecile. The dismayed child portrayed his irritation as Nora being a mad lady and him an uncorrupt passerby; this was inaccurate in Nora's perspective. She convinced herself that he had to suffer the consequences of his own prejudices and preferences among certain persons. She faulted Damian despite him being a child. In a way, Nora's journey to becoming the beast had begun awfully coincidentally, that that journey wasn't explainable.

“Had we not known?” a peasant villager recovered Damian, holding him in his arms.

Unable to speak because of the collage of voices, Nora hurried away without a destination in mind. Had they not known? Had they not known their ugliness and Damian's? Surely all persons experience what Nora experiences and have a vivid comprehension of social problems. They invent words for it and not solutions, they publish books about it and all persons agree on its subjects, yet still, no changes occur in society. All humans do is acknowledge the problems then turn away from the book! It is guaranteed that the reader would be bewildered by a couple of quotes, then close the pages of the book, leaving no memories of the quote, thus essentially, the quote is pointless and wouldn't stay in their heads due to its insignificance to an individual. Think of a poet, think of a determined poet. If the poet were to practise his arts daily, he'd evolve into a great poet, therefore if an absent-minded party were to ignore solutions daily, he'd evolve into a great egomaniac, a great whining stereotypist. Unfortunately this case is far more widely spread than the offered solutions by the minority of parties. Nora was of the minority... Like the majority of the minority, she speaks invalid words.

“What has become of you, Nora?” Her Mother said to her from behind while running up to her breathlessly.

The forest before her stretched out, nicely spaced apart trees stood with olive green leaves, some carpeting the soil, a coverage for the Nevadans' footsteps. Patches of moss and ferns swept across the running Nora's ankles. “You are a beast,” she says to her Mother, “I am not the beast! What defines a person's wantings? His initial desires or his wanting to not desire such and such? You are ageing rapidly, dear Mana.”

Reaching her step daughter, Alexandria's breathlessness limited her words in speeches. “Go home with me and eat cake, if so is what you like, but you are corrupting yourself. Read a book - speak to a few great gures, perhaps you'll develop a wider mindset.”

“You are narrow-minded, I need not any of your cake. As a peasant of intelligence, great gures I adore are the deceased, none I can speak to! None! Great penners in this period are mediocre, whereas the deceased have quality! Why am I not able to meet them? A good story has nothing to do with the storyline and everything to do with the author's style, and no author alive possesses that quality! I love a philosopher who died... a hundred years ago. His story is that he was unappreciated in his lifetime, and here I am

understanding the man I never knew, exceedingly well... I wonder why he was unappreciated, maybe it's the exact repetition of history with me today since I'm not involved in his story, only hearing of it, hence my love. Maybe we don't appreciate those still here and judge who is already gone. I never knew him and I know him so well! So well! Something about the old is so... The old is so... grey; it's as if that is what they see in living. Mana, grab a snack and let's suffer together! You and me, we are sinners - I'm glad to have unmasked us both."

"End this. The ridiculous blabbering, violent insults, etcetera, etcetera. There is one such poem concerning your case.

Sour must be the lake of re

To consume who needn't be condemned by its conagations

Red man in red, red hands grasping throats

When taunted of old notes

He lives next door, a relative neighbour

Needn't the red man, we are the lake of re

Consuming when consumed"

"I will under no circumstances return to the village, Ma, I am ill - I want to see!"

"Your sister needs you or she'll fall ill frequently, often she relies on you for various tasks."

"May the starving mouth of shame consume you, Mana. You think of her as a superior to me, even yourself. I long to ask... why? Reflecting from her role, no gem is seen, no integrity is witnessed; she is play-acting. She wishes to leave this cold hut but never takes effort, she blabbers about her care for me, then proceeds to rub soil on my face, I see past the crust of the surface! Mana, how I wish to unfold the soil ground we step on and throw handfuls of it on your face, on hers too, on every irritant person's! I am ill - I want to see!"

Nora's wanting to see ironically came to fail, because the very night she sat around the table eating slices of cake with her family. The moonlit night sky casted a silver lighting

through the gaps of the hut's hay roof. Members of Nora's household barely exchanged a dozen words with one another, were stilled by their recall of the earlier event, avoided looking into another's eyes, and carefully executed each movement with precision so as to not attract attention. During their sleep Nora breathed a sigh of relief, only for her troubles to return, and slept intently. She considered whether she was mistreated in the hands of the superior or whether she was mistreating everybody else, whether she was ungrateful and nothing more to such - this debate spun to her temples.

Nora ecstatically removed herself from under the blanket in the study morning, knocked on the door of the Georgious, was greeted with an embrace by the worried-sick Olden, fell weak at her knees from the previous day's sorrows, restrained her unasked-for choking on tears, resulting in a light suocation, lightheadedness, sore limbs, etcetera, etcetera... Such and such symptoms of her mistreating her well-being appeared evident to Olden, he accompanied Nora on a stroll in the remote areas a few yards outside their village. For a faint moment he seized Nora's burdens, tearing them out her skins and bones, so that she was able to be lifted by the air. However weightless she was deceived to be, her burdens were quick to fall back on her shoulders. Olden frowned his downturned eyebrows; his saddening features that reflected a lifelong agony made him look as if he were to crumble.

"I don't want to apologise if I don't to recognise my wrongs." She confessed, contemplating.

"You have wronged people without understanding, perhaps they don't understand either your wrongs, anyhow, individuals are incredible beings, I suppose. Individuals are capable of beyond the achievements, beneficial or evil, the average benevolent people can dream. Incredible... ah, incredible."

"My Mana quarrels with the Karas' until either one of them dies - they are incredible. Their ancient grudge shames the Nevadan's name, Irina's the exception. She is a Great Blue Heron... that is what a merchant woman, Gale, addressed, only she didn't mention Irina's name directly; my intuitions convince me it's her."

"Where do you store your philosophy theory papers?"

"Under the cold mattress, of course. Where else?"

“May I receive permission to access your papers so that I can publish some under a pen name, so your parents are unable to identify the writer behind the manuscripts?”

“You may receive permission to access my papers, but be responsible.”

“Thank you!” He cheered, smiling. Even when Olden smiled, happiness leaves no trace on his features - they remain in a veil of melancholy. A natural light in his tinted green eyes gave the impression of tears.

And thus Olden picked up Nora’s papers for publication, or so he claimed. For the days that trailed, he’d trespass uninvited to the Nevadan’s property and scavenge for the works of Nora, hungry for philosophy. The useful papers of manuscript mixed with ordinary ones, often he grew annoyed at needing to separate the two categories into piles, and needing to read unnecessary notes such as: ‘From as early as eleven, she’s observed the differences from her family and one else’s. What is the explanation that others are able to stand beside another with laughs without quarrel and are not poor?’ Or: ‘When you are mad at your very self, you tend to fume more at certain other persons in the village surrounding you.’ Excessive rants, unphilosophical quotations, mediocre vocabulary, so on and so forth, were unideal according to the desires of our knowledge-thirsty Olden Georgiou. In spite of his unsuccess at practising patience, manuscripts reaching his standard were also discovered: ‘I believe my living is not a read worthy life to tell, but my story is ancient gold. I say to the superior: ‘you have a better life, but you will never have a better story.’ The reason for my saying is that a happy individual really has nothing to share, apart from their romanticising of the tormenting device we peasants call ‘living.’ What meaning is given from jolly literature? Their storyline consists of nothing more than just their storyline, whereas the miserable, the melancholics, offer a lesson through their story, giving a knock on the reader’s head; the protagonists in life instead of a story often have an urging desire to slip to a less spotlighted role, to experience happiness, without realising their story is out of the blue, yet beautiful. This is simply how stories work: grotesque storylines with a beautiful story. I, a mistreated peasant, am proud to declare I am the greatest novel.’ - ‘A Grizzly bear cub raised in captivity had had countless thrashings given by his man supervisors whenever his naive paws misbehaved. Little Dimitrios was fed into a massive, muscular bear, wearing a shaggy ebony outerwear of fur, his paws covering a great surface area, dense in weight, however, he was nevertheless in domestication. Our bear Dimitrios spends his leisure time rolling on his fur covered back, dgeting his claws, comporting oneself as a cub who hadn’t grown. His man supervisors, regarding Dimitrios’ ability to

fold their robes while they were still wearing them, interacted with the Grizzly bear and occasionally thrashed him. The reader questions: 'why doesn't Dimitrios thrash his mighty paws across the supervisors' faces? After all, his potential to harm humans is to be respected.' My dear listener, if our bear understood himself as you do, he wouldn't have hesitated to strike, you see, he was tamed to be deceived of being incapable of defeating humans and thus refrains from his intrusive thoughts, anxious about a new round of thrashing. Unaware of his strength to overpower abuse, he remains under the false impression that he is unable to open his jaws and intimidate his 'prey' with his teeth, molars and fangs. He hadn't realised he grew out of his cub era, and was no longer under the control of his guardians. Dimitrios' self-imposed limitation restrains his physical potentials to be presented to light. This, my reader, is 'genius restriction.' I wonder about the amount of children that are alike to our Grizzly bear Dimitrios...' - 'My lover asked whether I would remarry if he died. Goodness gracious, I am a swan! Don't you know swans are the highest flying birds, not only in folklore, but as a matter of scientific fact. Swans like me will fly as high as we can to climb over the nonexistent barrier separating us from our lover. Do you know we swans are irrational to this degree?' After an hour of reading and scavenging, Olden managed to discover only three worthy pieces, thus returning home pleasantly with the papers in his pale, slender hands. He learnt that Nora was rather educated, creative, regardless of her status. His sceptical attitude should be alarming to Nora, however, she found solace in his company and kept hope of him to place a positive image of her in the villagers' heads, therefore she uttered not a word of suspicion to whom she was fond of.

Entering his front door, it came to Olden's mind that if he were to publish three documents that are unlikely to last for centuries ahead, he should publish every document to increase the likelihood, even if he sees the majority unworthy, as it is better to be remembered for the least rather than to be forgotten. His concerns centering remembrance were tormenting: well known scholars such as Adamantios Korais are significant, but what about the failed scholars, people who left no traces of their masterpiece before their passing? Prominent figures showcased to citizens are the few, and many failed philosophers will become not even a memory in somebody's head, whilst they toiled to achieve a notable name. After one dies, one can no longer control how the living portrays him, speaks of him, analyses him, or remembers him; how dangerous it is to be spoken about among the living! One may be praised in life and detested in death. He had an unshakeable sensation of the idea of his books marinating on a bookshelf, blending in with the rest in the library without appearing significant.

Olden ran back to Nora's hut then picked up all pages of her manuscripts. He aimed to send the pages to a maatba for establishment.

Steadily and secretively, Olden packaged, sealed the organised pages in an averaged sized box, its exterior decaying, then signed his signature along with some necessary information to the publishers. He set off for a journey to the nearest courier service where the box would be delivered to a maatba in Cairo. No sooner had he found himself in front of the courier service than he stiffened with anxiety. Before entering, Olden gathered courage, setting aside his doubts.

"How can I help you, my dear sir?" A man in black with exaggerated side whiskers and a square hat atop his crown offered him assistance. "A..." He trembled at seeing the decaying package, "great package you have there."

Olden placed twenty Ottoman lira on the desk. "To Cairo's maatba, please, and take care of my package, it's fragile. Nonetheless, the importance of my package's value does not deteriorate, so your crew should be aware to secure it, check for damage: ripped papers, a hole in the package, such and such. I place this responsibility on your shoulders because I'm paying extra for these services and I indeed put my trust in you, your crew, your postal system, etcetera, etcetera, this by the by. I assume you can comprehend my points?"

"Oh, goodness, your concerns are in the hands of trustworthy persons. Thank you, sir."

"Oh," He insisted, "and the scripts inside are written by my friend Nora Nevadan; she is destined to be a philosophical writer but cannot balance her philosophy and storyline. I am unable to guarantee her success... That's the way the cookie crumbles, que sera sera! Antio sas!" The two shook hands before his departure.

In the meantime, Nora conducted a collection of scribbled poetry behind her peeling wallpaper; she saw the peels as opportunities of obtaining paper.

"Olden? What rush are you in? You're all out of breath!" She pointed in the direction of him, calling him to meet her.

"I delivered your philosophy notes to the postal system where they will deliver the box to Cairo. Trust, I am helping you. I do you no harm. I had had several confusions when I heard you are... Can you tell me about your biological family? Your journey? When and

why? How? Where? As long as you wish to, that is. Your essay on Homer is a spectacular masterpiece which appears once a century! How educated you are as a peasant!”

“Ouf...” She raised her eyes to the electric blue sky. “I still remember it clear as day, almost like it was yesterday that I vanished from their sight, never seeing them... again. Sometimes I swear I see them vivaciously, intensely in the iridescent clouds, taking the form of colourful optical phenomenons that appear under the proximity of the sun, and sometimes the moon. From time to time, I see those ‘colours’, or in my case, my ‘family’ reflecting in oil spills, because that is also irisation. Perhaps the reason I connect with this type of photo-meteor is because, well, my family loved them, especially my little sister. I still remember the day the river took everything from me, those I loved. It was the day when it all vanished without a trace, became thinner than thin air and invisible to the naked human eye. I see them in the cloud though they are not dead. They rather abandoned me and since then became almost dead to me, in a noble sense. That day, exactly seven hundred and eighty days ago, was the day we reached the Aliakmon river; I imagined a rich new life, although I feared the rich. We were refugees! The water was calm and so was I. One split second, my Mana was laughing at Cora’s jokes, the next, her laughter disappeared and so did she. But it wasn’t just her, it was my family! They somehow all disappeared within a matter of milliseconds and till this day, I still wonder wonders concerning the science behind their decisions, to understand exactly what caused it and what is the curse of this island. You see, dear, I have tried to exit this place for the past seven hundred and eighty days, without success - each time, the invisible barriers would use a strong force to knock me back no matter how devastated I felt. Perhaps the barrier is my limitations - how would I survive without a family, this family? So, I accepted my fate and decided to give in to my passions until I die. I never understood why I, as a whole, am so despicable. I do as others do, I say as others say, I think as others think, yet ultimately, I am left to no avail.”

“If they do not surrender enough to repent and change, do you? Yes, now stop picking at your own skin using your sharp nails.”

“My heart is so empty but completely full - confusion fills it to be full and it isn’t exactly full, yet somehow completely full.”

“No more picking, Nora... Please, no more.” He grabbed her hands, showing suffering in his Greek features.

“Sometimes I taste a sourness upon hearing phrases of wisdom. My dear Olden is wisdom.”

“Tell me why is it that you want to be a philosopher? When the rain pours you write more undercover.”

“A penner works in solitude, I state this. I absolutely detest working with people: their opinions contradict mine, and the product wouldn’t be mine. I want to declare my products as mine. I work in silence, I cannot stand trying to hear my thoughts while hearing the voices of one else. No, Olden, I don’t strive for a lavish lifestyle - I am not obligated to live happily here, I must be destined to be with the Lord, so, I can suffer life as of now in order to provide shelter and solace to our next generation. I live to help others with my works of literature, and I can suffer from headaches, heartaches... for the sake of the young. In fact, writing itself lifts a burden off my shoulders, I am already rewarded by writing with this pleasure... However the words are nothing but words.”

“Inspirational - I suffer but without your perspective: I do lack perspective!”

“Suffer? You give light, you give bread - you are happiness itself, why aren’t you happy? We are blessed to touch your hand, we dream forsaken dreams of the feeling of it, and you have that hand all to yourself - so why aren’t you happy?”

“Ha, ha. Happiness itself is dependent on happiness. You are happiness itself, you are what I depend on.”

Suddenly there came a screech similar to a man drenched in wound pains. Nora’s Mother and Father were holding her sibling in their arms, big and small, racing to their hut like leopards with cubs. Marcus waved at Nora to head inside, shaking, revealing terror in his dripping cold sweat. A catastrophe definitely pushed him to his limits, otherwise he never would’ve allowed himself to cry. Olden and Nora followed Marcus’ instructions, they ran under cover after her family. Another screech came in the distance, more excruciating than the previous; his screeching expectedly cut short, were close to silencing completely, blabbering mumbles as if he was choking on his internal blood rising up his throat. Nora felt bile rising up her throat hearing the blabbers. When silence fell on the scene Alexandria seized her daughter Irina’s shoulders, praying aloud to the Almighty for safety, refuge, tranquillity..., her palms together lowered and pressing against the soiled floor, continuing to cough out tearless sighs. “God mustn't allow this to happen,” speculated Nora, “Wh-why, it’s ch-challenging to witness God

seemingly accepting prayers from those I perceive as ‘bad people who whine about their wounds without willingly trying to treat them, they want everything but are willing to work for nothing’ often triggering jealousy within me. I want God to love me more than Mana, it makes me mad seeing God merciful to her as he is to me. She is as close to an atheist as she is to the devil. I recognize the complexity of the situation, while I struggle with envy and injustice, I am also close to the devil. How could she have the nerves to pray? She is as close to an atheist as she is to the Lord, I claim this knowing I am closer to the devil than she is - she is more saintly than me in every aspect, she, after all, is one of the two primary sources for the cold bread on the cold table and the cold chair I sit on, albeit not treating me humanely in the manner I coveted.”

“Are you hurt, my dear Irina?” Marcus voiced behind Alexandria, unknowledgeable to the rest of his eight youngs.

“No, no, Patera, do check on Iris and Elena, they give me the impression that they are dying from shock.” Returned the pretentious Irina Nevadan, “do check on all my brothers and sisters, Mana!”

“...A-as long as our eldest of the pack remains intact I am easy going.” He turned to the confused youngs, “ Olden, Nora, oh you clueless heads! We walked in on a violent activity: the blood shed of... a foe! Rebekka, that peasant woman Rebekka, she gave a fatal blow to his throat - his hyoid bone with a tremendous grape hoe, removing a shard, marking the end of the classic family quarrel, and the motivation behind it being the frenzy outburst he caused her because he sabotaged Rebekka’s crops innumerable times for his own benefits and self gains, my goodness. Our ancient feud is over - one of us alas died, in a respective sense, of course. Her punishment may be exile from the empire depending on legal codes.”

Rebekka was transported to a penal colony in a remote province over the course of slightly under a week. Herman Georgiou offered to trial her, since he was a justice server himself, but a greater judge was required to withstand her degree of criminal activity. The terrors she put on the village were not yet to be recovered, provoking mouths to willfully babble entitled opinions of their personal point of view on the topic. Dishonesty and gossiping was strictly forbidden (the villages could as well have been punished for such crimes), but speaking in a community of gossipers, one’s own gossip is not heard, making roofs for their cover. Anyhow, villagers could not snitch as they themselves committed the exact crime; to snitch means they would also be snitched on.

Anything whatsoever, a surprise it seldom be, villagers took pleasure in throwing soil. Cleye Georgiou took insane pleasure: storytelling, yelling, disturbing his neighbours... with an eerie laughter. In the meantime Hamza Osman(a qadi), a Turkish Islamic man whose position in the government role was serving justice, awaited trial to condemn Rebekka based on his judgments.

“I sit here because I attempted committing theft and robbery in a mine.” A condemned man in orange confessed, “why are you all here?”

“I gave a fatal blow to a peasant who sabotaged my crops.” Said Rebekka.

“Incredible, incredible, a heavier crime, lighter than mine.” Returned the man in orange.

“I committed crimes against morality: my gambling addiction led me here.” A bony woman in the corner of the room with long, dusty and tangled umber hair called out in a cracked voice, raising her pointer to the sky as a way to seek acknowledgement.

“Let us be friends until our release if it shall happen.” - And so, her idea was agreed.

5

Inside King Aubin's palace, Nora revealed to Katya and Gale about the recent incident her family encountered.

"Who is a Great Blue Heron? Irina? Who do you see in your visions, Gale? Warn me."

She begged after giving a brief summary of the Rebekka-Dillon incident.

"My visions are blurred, I see a figure and that is all. I cannot tell you as I do not know them myself."

"Where did you learn to see such visions?"

"Did you forget? I am a merchant, merchants are famous for their air of mystery lingering around non-merchants. Those traits are from experience from trade with foreigners and locals, which improves my knowledge about the depth under the thin layer you see. Visions... they are not sight vision but a vision in energy."

"A homicide in the village - my ears!" Bellowed Katya, "are they unaware about public recognition? Eyes lay on their red hands, wouldn't family, friends, certain acquaintances speak up one's own interpretations, resulting in half-wits against half-wits? This is why serial murderers kill - their impact is so minimal and mild and have no acquaintances' eyes above their frontal region, so that their immoral murdering leaves no trace in provoking the public eye? I wonder what one experiences knowing they are responsible for something not yet accomplished by a second party." Her palms massaged her temples in a circular motion, "Head down the corridor to the well and fetch me a bucket of water, wouldja? Goodness, my ears!"

Pluto, Aaron and Kola allowed themselves into their sister's room after three distinct knocks. This happened to be the first encounter Nora had had with Kola.

Kola had typical Mediterranean features consisting of moderately tanned skin, jet black curls, ultramarine irises and a thick pair of eyebrows. The second born son of King Aubin wore a traditional garment: ivory fustanella - accented in red patterns. His facial hair covered his entire lower part of his face but was neatly trimmed. The firstborn, Augustine, was still not present.

Kola bowed to Nora. "Important businesses from abroad call for us, Katya; pack for the Diplomatic Missions," He said, "we'll return in precisely a fortnight."

Katya gave Nora a tight hug and set off after her brothers. "I wouldn't need you to fetch water if this is the case." (She giggled, facing Nora) "In a fortnight, I promise." She whispered, breathing like panting.

A funeral for Dillion Karas held in the church a few acres away from the village invited every villager to attend, specifically it was his widow Ophelia Karas along with her two grown children, Seb and Adonis, twenty seven and twenty five. Dillion's mourning ceremony lasted two hours through attendees paying respect to his open casket next to snowdrops and lit candles, singing prayer songs before cemetery workers buried his coffin under the crust of the earth. The majority of the villages were peasants starving in poverty, so their attending the funeral choir, paying respect to the open casket revealing a butchered face of Dillon Karas, were intended for the sake of laying a free meal on their tongue - even if it were simply some cold bread, it was beyond the bare minimum for the peasants in severe poverty, the Nevadans were classified as such, although Nora disagreed on her parents' behalf, she had had numerous accusations involving herself, her Mana, Patera, sisters, brothers, to be obviously advantage taking without sparing mercy for the Karas'.

"Shameless... to what degree?" Ophelia thrust her fists on the Nevadans' table in the outdoor buffet. "Your ancient feud with my husband ought to finish when one of you dies, one did! What now, it ought to continue? Attendees and I can see through you like a shard of glass - surprise - that you were most probable to be thinking your performance casted a foolishness over our people's heads. Here's a warning, mark my words: you have a babe in your arms, I don't, be careful who you decide to screw, considering how you are most vulnerable carrying Theodor. Before I go I wish to spare you Nevadans if you keep a distance between your" She put on a puking face, her pupils rolled behind her upper eyelids, creating a disgusted expression, "disgraceful name and my household's. I allow you to thanklessly munch your plates of Tamasalata in my event. Stumbling across my generosity is rare, take it and make use of it, or refuse it and God knows exactly what, is your decision to make." She thrust her fist on the table then turned around, pacing in another direction before offering the Nevadans an opportunity to speak a word of defence.

"I grieve for him, Miss!" Irina shrieked in a soprano tone, intending to showcase her blamelessness and gain the approval from the staring eyes, since she was a pearl - she had to remain a pearl under whatever circumstance. "Mana and Patera's density toward O kýrios Karás should be justified! Making matters clear, I am unlike my family, I daresay

I've known hitherto not a speck of your proclaimed statements to my parents about attending the funeral for food; even if so were the case, that they had indeed come for such a purpose, my purpose differs: I desire giving honours for the Karas'. Please allow me to reduce the magnitude of this problem."

Nora desperately wanted to repeat Irina's statements, because she agreed, they were accordingly her views, but her lips did not mutter anything out of her uncertainty as to how Ophelia may react and interpret the infamous young Nevadan's decisive movements.

"Our feud is lightened right there, whither my dear sits, we have a need to reverse what has hitherto ruined our households' relations." Ophelia was astounded at Irina's courageous confession.

Villagers listening with an open ear and quiet lips raised their pottery mugs, spilled wine across the table, cheering and applauding. No sooner had Irina bowed than Seb and Adonis joined the Nevadans table out of the blue, sitting for conversation. Loud cheering and applause were heard.

During a certain point in their conversation Seb mentioned books, Nora's personal favourite subject, a quick way to engage her, thus she seamlessly continued the discussion trying to not digress, responding enthusiastically: "Books! My specialty. The classics of Virgil, any particular books of your preference?" However, she soon was taken aback once Seb described his preference: stories with splendid storylines but shit character development - he does not enjoy philosophy and reading books that require (rewarding) headaches. Seb's brother did share common interests with Nora, though he saw books as a plain source of entertainment instead of what Nora's serene mind saw them as: an exploration beyond limits, a questionnaires' paradise, a form of conveying sentences people care not listen if spoken, a dead soul's graveyard where one returns to life, a stab to the heart and the head... Adonis scarred Nora with his comments and reviews. "Perceptions, tools that ruin another masterpiece." He commented. Nora became enraged, "a masterpiece is never ruined. Never faded. Only one's own interpretations are faded. A masterpiece never changes, a masterpiece does not reflect on a faded interpretation (by any other than the creator, sometimes not even the creator's can ruin his own work). See, it is easy to see a masterpiece's meaning completely different than what was originally intended and that is acceptable, it does not change the masterpiece or make it faded. You can never ruin a masterpiece, ever!" Every now and

then, Alexandria silenced Nora when she enforced her views too harshly. Why she openly shared her specialty, she doesn't understand, usually her vexation grew if another individual dared say they also love the classics; it could be that she absent-mindedly babbled during the discussion, unable to contain the pleasure she received from babbling. Olden grabbed a mahogany stool and joined the table accompanied by his elder brother Clyde, who restrained his tongue from gossiping over Rebekka.

Dillon Karas' burial ceremony wrapped up rapidly at dawn. Ophelia regardlessly disliked Alexandria but was on adequate terms with Marcus and the Nevadans' youngs; she was tolerable to lounge with. Around the time the funeral took place, Rebekka entered her trial.

Qadi Hamza Osman

testified against her guilt.

"A brief explanation, the triggered motives, and conclusions, will be essential to your defence, and I suppose that you've polished your script, Orthodoxy lady? Step forth and plead your trial" The Islamic Qadi stated. "Judge, I confidently assure you that every word

in my written testimony—be it quotes,

key facts, or points meant to guide my eloquence—is honest and reliable, a true confession without blurring; I stand before you cleansed, having been metaphorically bathed in the blood of my Savior to purify myself from my sins, believing that blood can cleanse blood, and I assert that my influence, which I previously undervalued, holds equal power to that of any esteemed Greek pasha, given that human nature leaves significant traces of our actions, but compared to the diligent, independent efforts I make for my developing village—such as farming and trading crops at low prices to ensure that every villager can afford warm food for their children, alongside the immense labor and faith I invest in serving the Holy God—any foolish acts I may commit are infrequent and insignificant, and I firmly believe that my good will and integrity stand out; I pray daily for shelter over my enemies' heads and declare myself a decent person despite my crime, confessing my faults and hoping, dear Qadi, that you might grant me a second chance in society, as God's mercy offers chances to those who seek them, acknowledging my sincere and violent regret for the monstrous crime committed in a moment of lost temper with Dillon, for which I should have exercised better self-control rather than succumbing to my grotesque actions."

“Nay... I understand your meanings. Well, Rebekka, you're comparing your lifetime of good will to the ten minute duration in which you committed a crime is absurd. What comparison is this? You cannot justify a crime, before you correct me, I know you are not defending yourself. Your villagers made an equal contribution to the community as well as to you, not just you them. Read me your court transcript and I will judge whether you are sentenced to a death penalty or granted freedom. We judge action whilst God judges character.”

She did what he asked. “Sir Dillon Karas violated my property several times prior to my crime by trespassing the fences and sabotaging my crops that I worked tirelessly to sow. He stepped on the soil, crushing my barley and tomatoes, snapped my olive tree branches, stole my wheat and yellow maize like a burglar, and poured buckets of water to drown my early plant stocks. Whenever confronted, he shrugged it off. Not long ago I hid behind a bush behind my farm gates and when he attempted to hop over the fences, I emerged, giving blows to his throat with a garden hoe of a considerable size. If I were to be brutally honest, I thought he would've dogged my slow blows. Of course I repent - if you see it unreasonable to lend justice, which I do too, είναι εντάξει; at least God is graceful to his creations. Crime is universal. You don't want the prey to die but also not the hunter to starve. Saving either means the other one happens. In the second of my blows it seemed to me like an escapism which I came to reality with when nothing could be reversed.”

Hamza Osman decided that mild water torture suited Rebekka seeing that a few continuous droplets aren't verily lethal - simply psychologically wounding. The schedule was planned to be publicly showcased - all eight hours under the sight of passersby - for increasing the chances of efficiency.

Widow Ophelia Karas scolded Olden and Nora seeing them roaming around her cabin. “Troublesome children are forbidden in my area, I suggest Miss Nevadan leave Mister Georgiou.” Her arms crossed around her serene figure, her sullen face ached, “Out of my sight.”

They were struck by bewilderment; they walked to and fro the distance, seeking Ophelia's eye so that she acknowledges their divergence toward her demeanour. Ophelia retreated into her cosy cabin where Seb and Adonis lay. It was there where she was born, the polished wooden floors, those Navajo white concrete, all were familiar memories. She reached a vermilion hookah in the corner and began consuming the rich tobacco, with

the cinnabar pipe in her mouth, her lips carmine, covered and neatly smothered in berry pigment(used for beautification purposes). A thick fog of smoke escaped from her mouth. Her children noticed her inconsiderable amount of tobacco consumption, endeavoured to haul her(their Mother's smoke aired in the atmosphere which worried Seb and Adonis), in the process outraged her, were cursed at, and ultimately withdrew. Ophelia wanted nothing other than quiet air owing as she listened to her bereavement heart caused by her husband's desolate departure; she rested her back against the Navajo white wall, her head pressing in an uncomfortable position. Her sighs were without tears, and her reflects without anguish, and amidst the inexplicable befuddlement, she longed to visit Marcus' children, Irina and the twins: Calandra and Iris, her cherished personalities, to nurture herself as she nurtured the children, notably the twins. The twins could peculiarly transmogrify a sombre woman into a buoyant, exuberant lady, and Irina, she was a pearl - that needs no further explaining. Spade she wasn't fond of, his coughing worsened to the point of choking, a symptom akin to his illness, which Nora vowed on curing but her parents doubted, beholding the anticipation in favour of the firstborn, pearl(what noteworthy feature made her one? What makes her appeal? Such were Nora's sceptical queries). Damian she disliked but tolerated, he was a wuss. Elena, too biased for her taste. Theodore she couldn't judge, he was a baby and nothing more. Ophelia's naive conclusions on the Nevadan youths seemed like opinions only a toddler held.

Aline draws between the category separating valids and invalids. Firstly, the valids behold attitudes considering diverse perspectives and are not biased to a large group nor an individual, therefore having validity in their rare criticism toward one else. The valids are deserving of respect due to their open-mindedness and inclusivity. Meanwhile the invalids often exhibit traits such as expressing criticism, biases, verbal abuse, etcetera, toward groups, inattentively, for their own sakes and pleasures. Whether the invalids mean those entitled opinions or not, they remain invalids because of this, and their criticisms are undeserving of respect. Ophelia was among the invalids. Our invalid lady usually receives comments on her behaviour: "you find fault in every creature on two legs even when you merely scanned the surface, so what makes you believe I will take God knows what you found in me to the head?" Responses, the previous one in particular, are optimal qualities one comes to see from an ideal stature of mankind(indicating the invalids' to avow their own kind, to endorse it, concede and affirm their position, can scarcely reduce such delusive aristocracy, you know?). Our protagonist Nora belongs among the valids, in spite of negation in the village. The

reader might notice that validates, ninety percent of the kind, ludicrously persuade themselves to be invalids, on the other hand invalids proudly proclaim their being beyond validation. Ridiculous!

Irina, under Nora's observation the past couple days, gradually grew shy. Irina's care for Nora was neglected as it became more attentive to Elena in an obvious but indescribable way, hence Nora restrained her tongue. The reader is ill-advised to forget that Nora loved her sister, after all, once again, Irina was indeed the sweetest to her, the sibling who brought her a hint of warmth. The sparsely populated village contributed to Nora's lack of society where adoration gives off, so she needs to seek adoration from, if she were lucky to meet them, outsiders like Katya and Gale, even Katya's brothers. That proves the difference in which unlike societies evolve to subsist. If she had exposed her secret association with a literal Pasha's youngs, she'd be bombarded with eager questions and her Mother's preparations to marry Irina to a son of his would settle without confirmation (another reason Nora detested her 'enforced' environment). Astubborn

bumblebee flew across the Nevadans' hut. "Piles of deceased bodies lay atop another pile

underneath. Yes, every individual deserves separate recognition and remembrance, but who is remembered? Another pile is dumped, another, another. You'll die wanting the world bowing and powers thrown at your grave because you certainly deserve it, yet you lay beside bodies who want the same. None receives what they want. Too many! A leader of an army is praised, remembered separately, and what about his soldiers?" Marcus discussed monotonously.

"How dare you speak such things within the sight of children! You monstrosity! Our sensational Irina cannot endure heavy topics." Alexandria shrieked to yield her beloved seraph, though the children barely understood his sentences. She turned to Nora, "a farmer exchanged with a foreigner his coins for a book that was promised to brew good catalysts some days ago. However, the farmer realised it was a storybook and that he couldn't understand a thing, so here, he gifted this." She handed a leather covered old book to Nora. "This book is quite an expensive used one. Take care of the pages. We know you love the classics, well, those are for the privileged few, and the fact you've managed to get your hands on some is remarkable, considering your wealth. This book is not quite a classic, but do take care and cherish it."

"Thank you, Ma!" Nora flipped through a few pages.

“Look at the circular table if you haven't caught a glimpse at it, a few candles I decorated it with. Shall I move my candles or let them remain as they are?” Irina interjected, a greedy expression showing in her features.

Nora gave an honest return, “I suggest the bedside table suits nicely!”

“Shut up, you lthy beast,” Alexandria roared. Nora was taken aback by her Mother's sudden anger, she even shivered a little and was on the verge of shedding tears. “Why are you always against us? What did I ever do wrong to you, ever? Do you not want our family to be happy for once?” Alexandria's face resembled an ugly demon, hideous and evil. Nora stined seeing her Mother, embarrassed as the rest of the family watched intensely. The stubborn bumblebee swooped around Nora; she ignored the yellow creature and wished for Alexandria's silence, however provoked her more with silence. “I remembered when you were eleven - how obedient you were! So frail, so good. Now you've grown older, do you not have a Mother to love? If I could bring back my eleven year old Nora.”

“I love you Ma. You are dense. When I was eleven you cursed at me for being naive and hot tempered. Now I've conquered my temper and present to you a formal girl, you wish for the Nora you never loved. With the eleven year old, you wished for a mature Nora. We always wish for what we can't have. I am not responsible for the version of me in your head, you are every bit responsible.”

Suddenly Spade began coughing - his coughs casted over Alexandria's intimidating yells. Nora's irritation gradually increased - his raspy, sharp exhalation prolonged into a t. “Leave us at peace, will you?” Alexandria covered her ears irritably.

“I wouldn't cough if I could, my throat itches, it isn't my fault.” He returned, barely able to spit out words, then coughed violently.

Blood. He spat out a mouthful of blood. His mouth became dripped in ows of wine red blood like he took a large bite of esh o a perfectly alive animal with a functional circulatory system. Every eye widened in bewilderment and every mouth ceased, even Alexandria's did exactly that. For a moment Nora thought his internal organs were destroyed and that he was dying, which agitated her, doubting her ability to curse his illness. Spade continued coughing spheres of blood, staining the soiled ground inside his hut.

“Get to my poor Spade’s aid, you bystanders!” Squawked Irina, her hands placed gently on her round forehead, taking baby steps melodramatically. “He’s dying!”

Spade was in fact far from dying, he simply shed a few droplets of blood, nothing more.

Nora frowned at Irina’s squawking, wondering how her demeanour was cherished, because it couldn’t be less ambivalent and childlike, easy to spot and could be agreed upon, yet somehow knees fell before her wherever her presence carried her. The little lady could not be distinguished from a child. Something about her innocence gleamed similar to the moon - who, then, is the sun offering her light only for her to take credit? She has no light of her own. She is dependent. That doesn’t stop her plagiarism. Where’d she obtain that light source she reflects? That humming yellow fly coincidentally landed on Irina’s highlighted flushed cheeks, sunk its stinger shallow in her skin, so shallow it had to be accidental. Irina hollered at this mild bump the bumblebee left. The bumblebee withdrew its stinger then flew outside, reuniting with nature. How fascinating are these honey creatures! Unlike honeybees, bumblebee stingers lack barbs, allowing them to retreat their stingers and sting afresh without getting it stuck in human skin and getting their organs pulled out, dying in the process. Its relatives, the honeybees, are undeniably inferior due to this, also being thinner, less winsome. Animals in heaven... We have evidence in the bible that animals can be found in heaven - one can smuggle a lion and not be torn. But are animals judged the same as humans? When God said “let there be light”, there entered light, “let the land produce vegetation”, and seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds emerged; and it was so. When he made mankind in his own image, in his likeness, so that we may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, over all creatures that move along the ground, our Lord blessed us male and female and breathed into his new ‘trees of life’ a soul, so they may live accordingly, enjoying his paradise. God saw all he had made - it was very good. Then came the morning - the sixth day: his creations complete. What he did not breathe into animals - this differentiates humans from all other creatures - was a soul. This led many believers debating whether animals are judged the same way after death, that they would ascend or descend, that the animals already in heaven - were they once roaming on earth or were they there since the beginning when God created light? Could the bumblebee ascend, be judged - does it let alone possess knowledge? We personally believe God will rejoice an animal and its owner behind the golden gates, if

only the person loves God more than his pet, that he puts God before it, willing to spend eternity without it under the presence of God - self control and faith are crucial, and mustn't be arrogant. Don't misken, dear reader, this isn't a requirement to meet your animals, heaven cannot be conquered: it is not a reward given to the good but rather a gift for the forgiven - it is not a reward but a gift. We take a brief break to remind the reader that their mockery toward the faithful wouldn't be amiable the day God stands before them: "Depart from me, I never knew you." - the most harrowing words a man hears. View the ten commandments not as a daily task, view them as a mirror in your faith in God. Earth is further from heaven than it is from hell, unbelievers spend most their life sucking pleasure into life that they forget a greater eternity lay ahead, if they had turned another path.

"Anything but deadly!" Declared Nora, "Anything but deadly! Your bump wouldn't cause you death."

"I am hurt, and your words wound me. Take your words back down your mouth, and take your dagger from out my heart!" Irina's hands on her bosom, pretended a dagger submerged. "How unfaithful! You reject Orthodoxy." "My dear sister, you daresay

'unfaithful?' Bring close your ear... the decision is oneself's

to make, no one is to force faith - faith comes when my heart is open, wounded and without a beat. The lord himself stitches the cavity, step by step and bit by bit, leaving his signature, the cross. So he can proudly announce: 'my child, she's mine!' - Great heavens cheer the reunion of a lost soul, who wandered lost in this bureaucratic world. Faith comes when the Shepherd calls, though the decision is oneself's to make, faith is never a loss nor lost. The lord himself examines me, and he announces 'my child, she understands!' When the night is cold, hypothermia takes over, leaving me helpless with sorrow, faith takes place and thaws my heart, the lord himself sets a re to warm me up, calling all heavens - all heavens applaud as he announces: 'my child, she stayed!' She raised both arms passionately, "a brief summary - so much concerning faith is lived, not said..."

"A loving God is not proud?" "Indeed, no. Pretty arrogant to pick that up in my long speech... It is anthropological.

There, it should come as a statement instead of a question." Nora exited after the stubborn yellow y.

“You had better not leave,” Alexandria pulled her back, “this family bears much illness, much chaos. Have you any idea the danger in communicating? An information passed onto another mortal, that mortal doesn’t decide whether he wanted it, and that information sculpts a person!! I am sculpted by this family, you, Marcus, all. Information rots the soul. It is better to live in foolishness than in dangerous truth. You break foolishness for me, Nora, you torment me with reality, in the dangerous truth. Have you any idea how crabby... somehow crucial you are?”

“I live not to be lavished with small gifts, then get told I’m ungrateful. Humanity norms are like you: don’t want help, reject assistance, narcissistically solos through a task, fail, are devastated, then blame everybody else for not helping and pretend they are the only ones putting an effort. Patera is identified in the group, you count, Irina groundbreakingly fits the description. Don’t frown, Mana, you only frown because you know I am not flattering you with falseness. A storybook? Shall I prove I don’t chase after gifts?” Nora’s left hand seized the leather covers, her right hand grabbing a few pages. She was about to tear her Mother’s book to shreds.

“Na stamatísei!” Her Mana reached the book, unwittingly ripping a page or two, saved the possession given by a farmer. “Have you any idea how expensive that gem is?” Her eyelids twitched; her nose scrunched up, accentuating wrinkles on her midface. “A brawl, damnation! Stand before me condemned!” Alexandria sullenly erupted ire within her woe. “Poignancy and dolefulness got me... Anguish arises under this influence! Oh, my heartache, earache. Take your daggers from out my heart - each one, everyone! Spade is expected to cough out a heart if he carries on coughing blood - then a liver, a lung, a stomach... - he’ll cough himself out. My sweet pearl Irina undergoes trauma analogous to a caged songbird - a lighthearted feathered fowl, too virtuous in our existence. She is akin to a Mute swan, for she loves harsh and never loves enough, she is destined to wing over seas...” She points at her daughter, “Spade ill, Irina hurt, this family is aching! Oh, dear heavens.”

Our protagonist Nora detested her proclaimed name ‘swan’ referred to someone else.

“My bee sting wouldn’t cause me death, Ma, leave your heart at rest, I shudder at the thought of you distressed.” Returned Irina, reaching her arms, her cheek moderately swollen, covering Alexandria’s head.

Bumblebees stings, its bee venom, are generally more painful than an average honeybee's; factors depend on a person's pain tolerance.

"A jewel - my daughter has always been a sheen pearl - a luminous stone, a soft one."

"A soft gemstone is a fake, Mana." Pronounced Nora firmly.

For the rest of the day, the Nevadans managed to settle their wrath calmly: Alexandria smothered herbs on top of Irina's bump, Marcus cleaned Spade's mouth with a handkerchief, Nora read the storybook (as well as the ripped, but not damaged pages), Calandra and Iris cleaned Spade's blood from the ground, Damian, unpresent during those scenes, played with a villager's child, same age, till noon, and Theodore just slept. Irina and Elena stayed together.

"There you are, come converse with me, Olden." Nora waved at him. "Here. What brings you hence?"

"What do you hide in philosophy, how do you live according to one's ideology, wisdom or tenants?" Was his eccentric greeting message.

"Let me tell you my early life, my dear, if curiosity has killed the cat. I lived in the densely populated area in Greece - so much peace and quiet now - a sword was beheld above my neck; I wondered if my body might feel without a head, or my head might feel without a body, or I feel both parts, I don't know which part determines the soul. Picturesque scenery lay ahead that atrocious execution platform. I vowed to live accordingly only if I were to keep both - I did. Oh, how holy I lived the first couple weeks after release! Quite ironically that is, I grew bored and returned to a negligent lifestyle. I am sure it must be that safety lavished me, or perhaps I matured thanklessly. I tell you: if a sword returned above my neck, I'll vow afresh, wistful about my negligent mind - vow to live accordingly again! - Then take safety to my advantage, as if walking in a loop. This couldn't be comparable if - let's say... I were commanded a role as a kul, encompassing servitude and labour, alongside repugnant negroe cotton pickers (not a sudden disastrous role, therefore a slow progress at a constant velocity - no acceleration, therefore less provokable into turning one to face repentance from apprehension, therefore vows turn absent, therefore retaining a reckless mind), I'd accept my fate without some last minute vows. The philosophy behind living according to wisdom essentially disintegrates. I write theories physically before such ideas diminish."

“Ah, Nora Nevadan, you fascinating Nevadan. Your name will run down in history.” Olden’s expression was more saddening than any Greek tragedy. No Greek tragedian ever emphasised greater grief than his face - both beautiful, most beautiful, and tragic beyond measures. Nora captured this quality, thus connected with it: he was a tragedy. He embodied a light breeze blowing across an ended war eld with many warriors laying still, tragic but calm - a blithe breeze that’s made to cover a war eld.

“To praise is to limit. To blame is to expand. Blame is determination. Praise is a boundary. That may have shaped me, I’m surrounded with mouths that spit blame at me.”

Another droplet, another, another, then another. Rebekka’s water torture punishment exhibited in a town centre; seven hours in, one more left to pass. The psychological a icting droplets fell atop her forehead when she merely recovered from the previous - seven hours without rest. No speck of hope lay for her to recover after this event. She was humiliated: townspeople watched her nerve wracking gestures and stayed immune to the contagious disease called ‘a ection’. Ah, if afterward in the aftermath she were condemned to a role as a kul, encompassing servitude and labour, alongside repugnant negroes, Rebekka may - in possibility - pick up philosophy(if only it were so, our poor woman!). In moments like this, one is plagued by public embarrassment rather than physical a iction.

6

Almost a fortnight later Olden set off to the courier service after receiving news about the successful book publication. A line of well dressed passersby, carrying handfuls of peonies, called his name and handed him the brightest coloured peony, "Olden Georgiou is before us!" Olden shuddered at the speech. He swiftly closed the courier service door.

"Ah! Sir Georgiou, you are a historical figure! Publishers in Cairo were bombarded with your creatively worded documents. I managed to obtain a free copy. Poets in the fifth century have longed to cast the shadows your works casted. I say this as a man of the late eighteenth century we are alive in. Some day, in a century or two, you'll be as old as Sophocles, ideally dominant and historical, remembered like the elder, as old as them. Oh!" Exclaimed the same man in black radically. "If I didn't mishear, you mentioned the scripts being written by a friend?"

"No!" He blurted, "I take every word as credit for my dedication. See, I said that that box I gave you to send contained a friend's work, but I was hesitant in myself, so I told a lie to make covers above my head. I was uncertain whether I balanced my philosophy and amusement, hence my deceiving you."

"Don't doubt, my literary genius, lend me the hand you wrote with, let me examine it and kiss your wrist."

"I say I am not meant to live happily here, I am meant to be with the Lord. I sacrifice my time writing for shelters to the next generation, in hopes they will understand themselves through my explanations. I am not afraid to die a gloomy death, I will live a better life after death. I breathe to help other people. My passion is a form of prayer - writing is a form of prayer in my vision. And this is my motivation. All I may selfishly pray for is for my name to be remembered in history. I won't wither like a poppy flower, I've become immortal. Actually there is no meaning in mortal living, I won't need to accomplish masterpieces, nor to be famous... it's pleasant though, I must admit. He, he, excuse me."

The man in black kissed Olden's slender hands, "you are remembered by the world, and I ask you to remember Elias. Oh, to be remembered by someone who is remembered - a privilege. Take this bag filled with Ottoman pounds you've earned from selling copies of your masterpieces."

“To praise is to limit. To blame is to expand. Blame is determination. Praise is a boundary.”

“Wise. Young body bearing an ancient breath.”

“I shall go home with a sack of Ottoman coins, goodbye.”

Olden stepped a few paces: the late morning light illuminated a gleaming path, odours of the rich peony in his hand lled him with much satisfaction, despite his conscious sinning inside the courier service. He didn't plan on surrendering to repent and make amends... Egoism intoxicated his head, he listened carefully to the ruthless whisper in his ear, acting upon its immoral instructions. Not a particle of guilt revealed in his guileless green eyes under direct sunlight. He walked home as if he wronged no one.

“How are you, Nora?” He greeted her shamelessly, the usual.

“Flowers bloom showing you my gratitude's beauty. Could I be ner?” Was her unsophisticated return.

In his same pair of agonising Greek eyes that returned to walnut brown, Nora saw not the air he gave, no suffering, and no powerlessness. They were just eyes like anyone else's, yet nothing changed, so why would she point it out? His unaltered face looked the same: dominant cheekbones, dull eyes which come o as green when one looks intensely at them under sunlight, except now they communicate nothing when he frowns - they were supposed to lure one into his allure. Somehow his features no longer contained contagious emotion. His face was the same face he had, however it had become like everyone else's meaningless face - only if he stared into a mirror and confronted his horror! Olden couldn't be identified from the rest now, he lost his demeanour! What has aman who conquered the world actually conquered if it meant he did it with no help? How is it universally possible for a man to nicely treat a lady, and be so cruel to another? Are ladies not all simply humans - are ladies not alike? Not anything defines a line between well treated ladies and ill treated ladies' characters. There is a line which draws between men and ill men, and nothing more. Disappointed must Nora be when she uncovers that Olden ts the ill men section unlike during his rst encounters with her when he hadn't become a breathing corpse with a beating heart. His actions are not the subjects that define him, it would be his altered character. His face displays every detail, something he is incapable of masking, as he never had the opportunity to look in a mirror since migrating into the village.

“What is troubling you?” She indirectly inquired about her wonders. “I ponder why I must analyse those circumstances. Nothing awry transpired, why do I believe blame is found in an event which isn’t existing? Why does the world change by staring into those sage green eyes?”

He shrugged his shoulders lazily. “Foolishness is why.” Olden murmured the phrase emotionlessly, without moving a muscle in his dull, sunken and unaltered yet reformed face.

“Oh, Olden; you seem vulgar. Where is the real Olden - the Olden that was thirsty for knowledge, and drowning himself in wisdom? And descended from heaven taking the role as my guardian?”

“I think you pathetically.” Olden carefully put the peony close to his nose.

Nora felt a shock in her spine; she had not many shoulders to lean on, and the only shoulder she could lean on had shrugged. Shrugged at her! “His face is like everyone else’s. It’s just a face now.” She thought.

“Goodbye, Olden. I shall go home,” and so she turned away. No sooner had she taken a couple steps, with Olden standing still, than a bumblebee landed on Olden’s peony and rested, to which Olden instantaneously dropped in surprise. The bumblebee rose from the peony on the ground and flew into the distance.

“A fortnight ago, a yellow fly visited my household and injected its venom in Irina’s cheeks, causing a slight bump. She has healed now, blessedly. What do you suppose, that stubborn fly is the same fly a fortnight ago? Implausible: bees live a short lifespan. It hasn’t been a month though - it could be alive, what coincidences... Can I take a look at the bright peony the bee admired?”

“I object.” The normal faced Olden coldly muttered through his lips.

“Olden doesn’t write, does he? I tell you he should be convicted of fraud.” Without warning, Clyde emerged out the shadows and strode toward the two with determination, his voice booming as he accused Olden, his face contorted with hostility, and reached his brother’s wrist firmly. “Do you wish to offer a plausible explanation or must I speak for you? Oh, don’t maintain silence, silence is unappreciated.”

“Clyde is known as a liar, Nora, he is partly the reason my family moved villages. He is a fraud, his nature is lying, and here he throws soil at my face, calling me a liar. I did nothing wrong anyway, I will explain. Recall our agreement regarding your philosophy notes, Nora - you permitted me to publish them under a different name, and I chose my own. I took the liberty of sending your notes to a maatba, per our discussion. Astonishingly, they gained astronomical, widespread attention, propelling me into the spotlight concerning recent masterpieces. I did nothing wrong and don't see my wrongs. Is this truly an ethical quandary? I used your intellectual intelligence to my advantage, carving out a niche for myself. With my reasoning, why does Clyde castigate me as if I involved myself in a heinous act? Shouldn't he, my brother, rejoice in his younger brother? Nora, if fault lies anywhere between us, it lies with you. It certainly doesn't rest near me. You bear faults under broad daylight. If you accuse me, you are corrupt.”

Nora's skin turned pale as a daisy. A sudden shiver circled around her heart then made its way to her nervous system, into her encephalon and sparkled out her eyes - she saw the shiver. She thought a monster was coming after her. Nora gabbled: “you meticulously explained your wrongdoings, any human can point out your faults, yet you have the audacity to shift the blame on me? What for, what will you explain as my wrongs? You confessed confidently to your shameful actions, actions an average person with a beating heart wouldn't admit without bitterness, then you expect absolution, sympathy, and justice? How crude, how morally bankrupt. Even your bag filled with Ottoman coins cannot bring you wealth. I do recall consenting you to using an alias, but it was because I didn't want my name to be known, because my acquaintances might sabotage me, not for you to plagiarise and appropriate my identity, dear fool. Criminal behaviour relies on anything but justice. Good heavens, you have become Rebekka, you will be known as such. That same face was once tolerable; now you exhibit vanity and arrogance through the same features I once loved. What have you actually gained if what you've lost is equally high? If you achieved it alone, good Lord, others have resisted offering a helping hand. My hand will be what handed you historical recognition. You comprehend the insulting effects of your actions and refuse acknowledgement. In fact, I suspect you understand the gravity of your deeds as much as I do, as much as Clyde does, but you resist facing the shame you brought upon yourself, instead accusing me of corruption even though I am the primary source to your success. If you lose me, you'll tarnish your reputation, for you possess knowledge unlike I do, and my knowledge is superior to yours. Goodness gracious, Olden, unbelievable! This is why you've lost emotion in your features, now you can no longer be identified from the rest.” Nora

restrained tears, weeping wildly. “Take your dagger from out my heart, and swallow the bitter depth of your shame down your throat. You want everything and are unwilling to work for anything.”

“I didn’t do anything faulty, I assure you. I don’t need you anymore, and I will not tarnish without you. You were irritant from the start while I was meant to bathe in praise. From the start, I should’ve listened to your siblings and our community with an open ear and a spacious mind.”

“Can’t you see you have a spacious mind? It is so spacious it is empty. That explains your distaste in empathy. You lack taste.”

Clyde slapped his brother across the once su erable face and Olden instinctively dropped his money sack; large amounts of liras escaped the opening of the sack and rolled downhill, now unable to be picked or seen in the tall grass. Once Olden recovered himself, he picked up the sack and saw that only a few liras remained. He devastatingly glared at his brother, wanting to yell but only cluttered his teeth, his lips vibrating. In his eyes, which usually would re ect agony, instead re ected an empty void without Greek tragedy. It was di cult to tell from reading his expression whether he truly felt devastation or whether he was play-acting. But this was the exact same man who had shoulders she leaned on, it was he who o ered her solace, and it would be sel sh of Nora to abandon him. A sudden wave of compassion, self-blame and guilt attacked her, encouraging her to apologise: “Olden, I will write for you. I will make sure you bathe in praise. As long as you won’t abandon me, I dare not abandon you.” - Poor Nora, she stepped unconsciously into his pitfall. “My, forgive me, I admit my wrongs, my corruption.” Poor Nora said this trying to nd fault, and failed, and blu ed. “I am a romantic, I am a gothic, I can write anything in literature for you.”

“Nay, my family and I are shifting to a city. We’ll live in a fancy house near the Pasha - something you wouldn’t understand.”

“I object to shifting,” declared Clyde passionately, “You stabbed a young girl and won’t even bury her. Yes, I’ve heard terrible information from her siblings, but I nonetheless am merciful and stand by her. Yes, I am a liar, but that doesn’t mean I cannot tell truths. It doesn’t mean whatever comes out my mouth is false. Are you wondering how I know you are a fraud? Well, I followed you this morning in fear of your idiocracy alone, then I listened attentively to your exchange with the man in black. It occurred to me that you

sucked the youth out of this poor girl and drank it to plump up yourself. How disgraceful you've become, I remembered when it was you who motivated me to discontinue my addictive lying; now you are me, and I you."

"My older brother hates me! He doesn't love me anymore, how could he. Your little brother doesn't look at you as a leading role now." The fraud melodramatically spat out, his features contradicting his emotional statement. "Ma and Pa shall punish you and the villagers shall burn you alive! Yes, burn her alive! And you." He imitated a man holding a flaming torch.

"Have you become ill to your own blood? I've watched you grow, Olden, you are not the brother I envisioned."

"How can you say this about me when you are no better? You are not the brother I desired, you are not the child my parents yearned for."

Clyde silenced himself.

"Listen to me and not your brother, he sees the surface unlike I. You're more beautiful than I." Nora interrupted, embracing the cold Olden. By then his blood was frozen and couldn't be pumped by a heart.

"That wouldn't be at all necessary." He shrugged and walked away.

The three days that followed, Olden's fame from abroad spreaded through the Greek community including his village. When questioned about his newfound and remarkable achievement, he didn't hesitate or shy away from the truth, he quite broadly confessed: "I took credit for Nora's ideas and named them as my own. Clyde disapproves my decisions, and Nora smears soil across my face, and they condemn my doing so to be unethical. I resent their judgement. I did nothing wrong. Those works are mine after all, even if Nora was the author." Despite sin showing itself to every eye that isn't blind through his detestable, prideful 'confessions', if one calls it, or an ordinary explanation as he phrases it, because he considered confessions to be something one does after sinning, and he hadn't known he sinned, villagers sided with him and approved his actions. Perhaps none have a functioning eye, nor a listening ear. Villagers spoke ill about Nora's defendants and gave no reasoning, and without hearing Nora's opinions. They believe Nora was wrong, but maybe their perspective on Nora reveals more about themselves than Nora. How can a person understand her wrongs if everybody speaks of it but no

one speaks to her? In such cases, people are entitled to their own expectations of a reality instead of the reality, so they would rather live in a foolish paradise than a truthful paradise, which is equally paradisiacal. Then again, it is debatable that living in a foolish paradise is better in matters concerning happiness, at least for the wicked. The only thing more foolish than a fool is a wicked person. This is undeniable.

“The wicked has got me, Nora, don’t be displeased,” Clyde said to Nora one day, remorsefully, “I’ve been pressured to stand against you, and throughout these days, I... agree with my brother... marginally... to an extent.”

Nora angered, “the wicked? I laugh at the face of the wicked. You’ve made yourself more criminal than your brother. You are a coward. Is a coward not more shameful than a fraud? At least Olden doesn’t understand his wrongdoings, but you... you understand perfectly, and this is pure wickedness - this is ugliness. You are conscious about this!” “I wish I wasn’t, and that is why I’m convincing myself that I do not understand a thing. Of course, it’s illusory.”

“Ha, ha, goodbye Clyde, I should stay no longer. Your keeping me under your sight smears soil across your spotless face.”

She met Irina (she heard about the incident and supported Nora) in the village centre while she disappointedly strolled.

“Oh, sister! Bad humans shall never bring shame on your name. I support you, always, not only because you are my sister but because you are faultless.” Irina whined.

“How many memories, how many dreams and emotions, how many thoughts, crowded into my mind as I look at the corpse of that naive boy whose beauty, his expressions that tell a Greek tragedian’s story, who had never harmed me, who had lended me a shoulder to lean on, and who, given his lack of knowledge, had been dependent on me as a source, a primary source that serves no purpose, whose purpose now is endure the consequences he should be suffering.” Nora replied, “how his face, his unaltered face, changed through his character! I don’t see a hint of vulnerability and innocence in his gaze after his drastic personal change, and even before I found out his grotesque actions, I could tell he had changed. His face doesn’t tell a story anymore. Now... it’s just a face. It’s just like anyone else’s. He feels like a memory washed away in the wind. I’d need a heart like his own to not feel it. You know, he was a lie from the start. I don’t want to be alive in a lie, I

wonder how many more lies are in my loved ones. A plague on our house remains. Despair and deceitfulness are not my morals, but life's morals differ from I. I am a book marinating on a library shelf that doesn't stand out among the thousands of other books. Olden, what tempted him? We did not need the world, we were enough to be worlds for each other, why then did he choose to revolve around a different sun, a different goal?"

Irina let out a heavy sigh, putting her palm on Nora's back, "you were both marquises, and when he forsaken you, he turned into soil. My sister is still a marquise and she mustn't allow soil to degrade her. His is soil - and thus his once marquise face altered from what he was into what he is."

"He didn't turn into soil - he turned into dirt. Vegetation grows out of soil, is soil not more precious than a marquise diamond?"

"Oh! Nora, you are quite correct." "Another moonlit sky, and you will regret such

declarations, for you will find you treasure your reputation greater than I."

"Another sunlit sky, and you will regret such beliefs, for you will find you treasure your allegations greater than I."

"Fair, let us make peace." The next evening, Nora calculated Katya's return time, and waited outside patiently. As

expected, an exquisite lady, wearing kohl to make her eyes more dominant, her long champagne blonde hair in a crown braid, unmounted her Arabian horse. They embraced

each other after a fortnight of time apart. On the journey heading to Katya's palace, on the charming black Arabian horse's back, behind Katya, the driver, our ill-treated Nora explained her situation with Olden, to which Katya became horrified. "Stupidity gets people, I tell you." Was her humble response. "Are you hungry, I definitely am. I'll ask my servants to make us a dish of kolokythokeftedes and white wine to drink. My tasks abroad were sorted pleasantly, by the by. Pluto, Kola and Aaron are fond of you, they will be delighted to have you back. Also Gale, I suppose she is waiting in my room for you already. Augustine is still abroad with our father, both whom you haven't met."

Katya and Nora arrived, finding the elderly merchant Gale indeed in Katya's room, sitting ominously on a mahogany stool.

"An evil presence interacted with you, eh?" Gale greeted Nora in a peculiar way.

"Olden, I suspect. He presented his evil spirit broadly"

"My dear, the impure spirit is unseen, unfelt, unsensed, and can only be slightly sensed by those who practise an art I do. Chances are you mistook another evil man as an evil spirit, a Great Blue Heron. I did more practice during this fortnight and sensed him, her, to have practised my art for two years. The motive is unknown. Unfortunately, another morally evil person, not spiritually, lingers, and that should be who you mentioned, according to the arts' suggestions. Oh, don't be taken aback, I intend on helping you, Nora. You wonder what I am? What are the arts? Ha, ha, the answer will come to you when you grow older; as of now, I won't reveal. Lady Katya tells not a soul, she's my guardian of secrets, otherwise I'd find daggers pointed at me."

Dishes were served by the servants. The three ladies continued their discussion eating ancient recipes.

"Say, the boy would be wise to submit to impalement, a classic execution method: excruciating, searing, deserving, and the wicked ought not evade consequences they brought under their own free will. Through the torso or heart shall the sharpened stake take place? Torso I recommend, the heart will probably be too hard as stone to pass through. Consciously and foolishly degrading a seamless lady, and afterwards fuming at his outcomes, his foreseen downfall, to babble holy prayers which are equivalent to nothing but charming words if it comes out the mouths of the unfaithful, the pitiless, and so forth, to be tempted and falling into moral temptations, and to gluttonously consume feasts without lending a crumb to the poor until his stomach wouldn't fit in his robe, shameful, shameful to the degree where he doesn't recognise the gravity of his footprints, would result in ruthless impalement sentenced by us powerful and fair leaders, and we will insert sizzling stakes through his torso mercilessly, albeit to his treatment of him to his kin, when he thought he could go undercover and not be exposed to sunlight, which, of course, is purely deserve, and our almighty Judge, whether he agrees or disagrees with our methods, may judge him in the afterlife, either opening the golden gates or drown him under the pool of re, which would be a second death, a second severe punishment. Hitherto, my Father watched capital punishments as

entertainment, owing to boredom. He presently travels abroad for long time periods, leaving scarcely any spare time for leisure. Pluto witnesses impalement a significant amount while I shudder at the shedding of blood, oh, even I, a sensitive viewer, daresay Olden Georgiou, that grotesque son of a bitch's execution would come as nothing but pleasure, attention-worthy pleasure. Oh! My Father might command a military force to burn his village, and you are welcome if you choose to move in our palace, Nora."

"Wonderful, that offender's impalement, I look forward to watching it, with my dark eyes staring into his light green as he pleads my forgiveness, which I can only give him if I forget my memories, which under impossible circumstances takes place." ...Had the inherent kindness of Nora perished? Her sudden utterance prayed on Olden's demise, however she remained perplexed by its origin, she desired beauty over revenge, what provoked her unsettling utterances escaping her lips? However reluctant she was to witness his suffering his missteps, she didn't object to Katya's demands, she merely consented. "If my small request causes mild, if not completely free of trouble, to your family and mine. Don't increase my vulnerability."

"In another life," the guilty Nora thought, her face reflecting joy instead of guilt, "in another life may we cross together again, for I had not enough of you in this one. In another lifetime, stay until our hair turns grey and teeth decay, until our sight is lost and beauty fades. Please stay, our devotion will not turn grey, slowly decay or lose its vision of how to be. Its beauty will not fade. Stay in another life, for you chose not to stay in this one. At least let the story in another universe end differently, ideal in my vision. How selfish! I can't accept our devotion lost its colour, decayed like sweet teeth and lost its vision of how to be. Its beauty faded like a storm, you did not stay. In another life, may you use your free will more wisely. Oh, if only lives after lives existed instead of heaven!"

"Scheduled execution date: in half a month's time, after my father returns." Katya declared affectionately. "Half a month for Olden Georgiou to prepare without warning, he's in for a terrible surprise." Katya offered Nora a small circular hand mirror lined with complicated gold frames.

Nora stared at the hypnotising reflection, her fingers pinching the skin she gazed upon. "How I stare at myself after romanticising solitude. How I don't recognise this face, the same face I gazed upon in river waters. Lend me this mirror, I beg you for one more request."

“Your actions, I do not support, but my little brother, tell me your motives.” Clyde inquired seriously a day later, alone with his brother in their cabin, aware that anyone else could be listening, therefore quietening his speech, “I love you despite what you choose to become, do share your intentions with me, your older brother.”

“Ouf,” He whispered under his breath, monotonously, “the damage! She took my breath away, she is my tree of life with the most fulfilling fruits. With every gaze I bloomed. They say she carries a forbidden fruit, a deceiver in a disguise, you’re not one we want to lose, she’s a burden in disguise. I run away, pushing aside all I know of her, so plainly cut the roots, burn the fruits I never ate. Is it true that she wears a divine clothing? Every breath of hers is blessed; I’ve been lied to. Maybe she was the tree of life from the start - I ran short of faith... it was them, they were adders. I question if I were against her from the start, never hearing her before I came down, condemned on earth. She is chunks of wood, destroyed. I refuse to pray for her, I pray God is more merciful than I. Pray, maybe if another life I’m more of an Adam than an Eve.”

“You were an ocean, sweet Olden, look at me, don’t turn away, don’t burn with shame, if you feel any shame at all (you definitely should), tell me, can you see anything bigger than a puddle? More than a donation, more than just a spare? I see you are a gift, the whole, waves in the ocean, no, the ocean itself, and you are pigheaded. I... Listen to this story... My friend before we shifted, he picked up his wife, his children, his companion, one part at one time, hugging it close to his bosom, the smell was soothing, yet he snuggled harder each time. ‘I was supposed to die,’ he said. ‘I was supposed to protect them, that’s the purpose of my job.’ A good three days following, he died.” Clyde paused before continuing in pouring tears, “look at yourself, your duty was to protect her, are you that much different from my friend? You both failed your jobs, you will end up like him, you will be strained of your pride.” “My dear brother, you are a liar, a horrible liar. Why should

I, an honest individual,

listen to a liar? You lied your way to this village; if it weren’t for you, we wouldn’t have moved. I feel not a speck of guilt. I did nothing wrong.” “Stealing and claiming works as

your own doesn’t shame you much. It’s your choosing

to desert a young girl and smudge her name with soil that shames you a great deal.

Integrity goes over ability.”

“I shouldn’t have been cruel to her, Clyde. I did a horrid thing and I feel no remorse. I consciously feel remorse, but deep within, there’s none. Which am I to believe? My convincing myself, or my uncontrollable feelings? Both are my wantings. One is my genuine wanting, the other is what my body tells me, which one determines the soul? Knowledge or desires? Agh, I shan’t speak to her again.”

“Speak quietly, villagers are likely to overhear. Whatever we discussed, stays between us, Olden, I admit I am a coward, I want us on good terms with our community. In some way, I agree with you slightly. And... your face altered.”

“Coward? You are worse than me, brother! Where do you see a mirror?”

“Free will reveals one’s nature. Restriction hides it. This is why free will is so important.”

“Once a liar, what now? What are you, Clyde Georgiou?”

“Absurdity. And honesty. And you, soil. Change the ending to this story between you and her.”

“Ending? Story? You are insanity. Sad endings are the only endings that stay with people, that strike them, bewilder them, unlike happy ones where they are simply shrugged o and forgotten after it makes one feel pleasant. Only sad ones, they make one appreciate beauty and joy within sadness. Only sad endings make you feel something; what are happy endings for, to make one happy? Gosh, goodness gracious! Happiness might come if stories are never told, or have no endings.”

“How narrow the walls have become, how limited space we have left! The walls are shrinking day by day, do you see?”

“Physically, no.”

“Good, you understand me.”

7

“I love you,” the letters spun, she lighted a torch, warding off darkness, gazing upon the full moon on a starry night, “lives depend more on fate than integrity,” she rested on a cold rock, the wind swirling across her face, “soon you’ll die and I won’t save you,” she exhaled a cold sigh under the air,” walking back into her hut, she lay on her side, contemplating, “I love you,” the letters spun again, “only I won’t.”

Morning arrived; she reached the hand mirror under the mattress, careful as to not bring attention to her parents and siblings, gently grabbed Irina’s hand and led her to the isolated river a few paces from their household. Nora kneeled down beside the water, indicating that Irina ought to follow, and indeed she did kneel after her. Only the abashing winds could be heard. The sun illuminated a glow on the river.

“See yourself in the waters, the flowing reflection, the water breathing being whom you cannot grasp for more - she will step out dry.” Nora searched in her robe the mirror, then handed it to her sister, nodding.

Irina poured tears beholding her reflection, her own visage mirrored back at her, herself, bringing a trembling right hand to her pale lips, her fingers moving as an entity of their own across her cheeks. She smiled. Her throat was dry momentarily, rendering her speechlessness, then, “Me? That reflection in the miniature thing is so different than the river, and I believed the river. I trusted the river with its perceptions! Tell me, why do our folks see a pearl exterior on me? I see that I barely am above average, I am only kind. You are far more beautiful than I, and I... Where did you lay your hands on this luxury? We peasants are incapable of acquiring this treasure. Did you steal this, no mirror production facilities are nearby, say, where did this begin? Pray, I lost my consciousness in this, oh goodness.”

“On the town streets, thrown away by a white bearded man. The mirror is between us - don’t preach.”

Upon the incident concerning Olden, Alexandria and Marcus, as parental figures, remained neutral in their step daughter’s situation. While they didn’t outright support Nora nor tolerate Olden, Alexandria welcomed him into their hut and Marcus frequently gave him hospitality. Such dynamics further explains Nora’s reliance built solely on Irina, in spite of her sister’s confusing air. Nora had not one single companion

half as warm as Irina's coldness, intensifying her devotion to finding warmth in coldness, whilst developing an escalating animosity toward little Elena, the centre focus presently of Irina's coldness which seemed much warmer with someone else. But screw this! Elena doesn't deserve it, she is tolerated simply because she doesn't have Nora's (faultless and pure willed) nature, thus taking in admiration unconsciously. But pray, Nora refused mentioning or confronting her oldest sister the bitterness, fearing to stir complications in misunderstandings. Furthermore, she had had several nights spent under the light-thief moon, had grown accustomed to walking as a bad omen, and she had drowned, if not situated her inexplicable grief in tons of forced gratitude. She lives in solitude yet she is surrounded by people. Her ideal stature of a melancholy was anything except this, she wanted a romantic kind of loneliness, a loneliness she longed for. This loneliness she suffers isn't quite right, quite inadequate - again, her society deprived her abilities, drained her integrity, and forsaken her experiences as a lonely romantic, a loneliness that one can feel love within, so the loneliness isn't quite 'suffered,' but may be considered so. Romantic loneliness is solitude lled with love - like a wind gushing over a tearful face. How - how Nora wished to see! To whom! To Katya! Who else! Can't be Never Neverland! To Katya? Nora yearned to escape, however ended up constrained by practical concerns and the fear of rejection from a new society. It taunted her to imagine anew society seeing her as this one does, like she's a walking plague walking in an everlasting loop, leaving the same impressions on the population. To Never Neverland? She'll starve to bones. Because this realm is awed. What is she able to do to change? There appears to be one visible solution: drop in the river and let its waters wash her tears, blend into them, because after all, the river has cried more than her and goodness does it understand genius restriction. Yet, she contemplated, paralysed by envisioned uncertainty (of course she wouldn't allow herself to drop).

Following her midday routine, Nora counted the days until Olden's impalement, searched under the mattress for her mirror, and to her utter shock, found it missing. "Irina, that disgusting lady making an ass herself, for what benefits?" She thought, angered, fuming.

"Darling sister! Where is the item I showed you a couple sunlit days ago?" Nora sweetly exclaimed. "An item resembling river water."

"I didn't touch it. Since the moment you handed it to my palm, I never touched it." Was Irina's suspicious response.

Nora nodded, exiting into the village centre, coincidentally walking into Olden Georgiou, who, coincidentally, held Nora's hand mirror in his slender left hand, brushing his hair with his right fingers. Nora snatched her possession away from him, yelling with hostility: "Literary thief, mirror thief, an undeniable thief. Your regretful day shall send you into damnation, to root you to the spot, raise your strands of hair, your windows to the devil eyes softening, and the biased judgements you behold will be judged, by whom you judged. The devil, I say, was overcome by wickedness in God's own images, which, sums up greater than his, a pure wicked supernatural entity! Man's rage, he collects images identical to you, and it shan't be a masquerade. Moral judgements will take part significantly along."

"I was searching under your mattress in case of freshly written documents, you disappointed me, I discovered this gold framed mirror instead, I don't complain; dramatic reactions are unnecessary." He returned. "The shamelessness! I guess you'd say. Oh, consider it, I have no valid reasons for shame. At first, I was sorry for you, but after taking your mirror, which was most probably stolen, so I technically did a good deed, I feel nothing at all. You don't amuse me anymore."

"My stealing is mediocre, and yours is excusable? Incredible. You are incredible, Georgiou. You are incredible. And it was none but yourself who informed me of incredible people." She stormed on, "I love how you're telling a white lie and at the same time being completely honest... with your thoughts. Must be our fortune that I don't see any peasants overhearing in this empty centre." The two words 'white lie' tortured her comprehension.

"I heard," Adonis suddenly appeared before Nora, his dismayed speechlessness bringing his body to Olden,

"In place of such a double life, neglect, utter ugliness, and imperfection, the clean soul that brings you hither is a gift, the heart turns black as coal and foul as a corpse. It's splendidly come to light in such a pleasing way that by any means, art consumption becomes unmatched, - and utterly ugly activities are overlooked, in a noble sense. Olden Georgiou is an artist that turns grey water into white wine."

"His white wine still poisons oneself, sir." Interjected the girl, but before she finished, Olden slyly voiced over, creating a collage of voices atop voices - "Dear sir Adonis, I was somewhat joking and somewhat not, well, mostly not," to which Nora responded: "you

don't joke, you say things and then regret it. In our society, we aren't recognised for what we do but rather who we are, who we are known as, and this system makes it difficult for one to change one's injustice."

Those individuals, those that walk as if they matter, care not about what his acquaintances do, but by their personal relationships - they share tendency, praise, criticism, even judge others based solely on their reputation. If someone is their friend, they are quick to excuse any wrongdoings, shifting blame on the opposing party, often inconsiderably, believing it to be justice. One has to be recognised of his work for who he is, and how to become who he is is through his work, but he needs to be recognised for who he is to be recognised for the work, and that becomes unreasonable, and if he isn't recognised, if his acquaintances speak ill about him, then it becomes difficult. A daunting task! A paradoxical situation! How many restricted geniuses roam! This supports my theory about corruption, and it's important to naturally possess a fair reputation, for it helps you get away with countless mischiefs."

"End this nonsensical blabber, Eleanora." Olden absent-mindedly pushed her to a small extent. It was at this moment that the collage of voices died, a small crack barely audible was alas heard.

Nora put on a heavy smile, "my voice is less powerful than yours. Dominant voices matter in quarrels." She cut her hand on the fragments. She clenched her hand and a sharp irritation stinging her senses as the shards pierced in. "Bad luck," she thought, looking at her red hand, a hand marked with sin. She picked up another fragment, and another, each time gritting her teeth and looking at the sky. "Why have you forsaken me? I am marked with red, am I the sinner?" She closed her hands marginally, without once turning back, and drew herself away from the scene. Not a whisper was produced by anybody.

No sooner had she climbed the Nevadan hill, that shameful hill her shameful family lost to Karas, than two clean hands wrapped around her neck, a warmth passed over her cold body. Indeed her body was cold, but her heart was a replace, and the warm body, it seemed, had a cold heart. Too cold to melt - only a hammer thrust against it could break such ice apart - a more hurtful way to bring out one's (if he had any) feelings, except the feelings would be defeat and not love. For the coldness didn't allow the love of blood to flow through the heart. A sinner's hands are always clean, clean of blood. And the more innocent, they bear blood. How easy to mix up the two! But Nora was a sinner

as well, under the concealment she tried to put on, and her red hands were, to her, a statement, that the villagers were right, and that she was a fool, although a fool was better than a wicked.

“You forget,” Olden sighed soft-spokenly, “that the blood is your own, not anyone else’s.”

“Mine - I have been marked with a sin I did to myself. Oh, the sentimentalists, we have a body of ice and a heart of a sun, and you take advantage of our tough bodies and beat us through. Have you wondered what it does to the heart? Our bodies do melt with a burning sun, only that you beat it through, so it is forced to crack instead! And the burning sun loses its warmth inside the cold walls that never melt, only to be shattered and the sun shall lose its heat to surroundings. Oh, the sentimentalists! Why are we made to be like this, forced to walk earth like this? My dear Olden, my dear, dear, Olden, you are quite sane compared to me, though you have a heart disease. Consider it my privilege to be unlike you ill Leviathan of a man.”

“My apologies. What idea prompted you to pick up the shards?”

“You don’t understand a thing, you barely took a glimpse of the surface! The gravity of your playful actions is heavy. See, it would be different if it were done to Irina or Ele, but I- goodness... They’ll believe anything you say, and painting a false image in their heads stirs their standpoints, leading them closer to the likeability of eternal damnation. Hush. I should go help my parents on the farm. Something I find incredible is that you have not shifted to the city next to the Pasha’s palace. Wouldn’t you, a contemporary historical figure, be shamed in this living condition?”

No sooner had Olden barely spoke a syllable, an incomplete word, in an attempt to resurrect her, than Nora silenced him and turned to the farm, leaving him behind abruptly. He extended his arm to her back; her fingertips dripped down a tear of red onto his wrist. He paid no care whatsoever. Olden was determined to seize Nora: he sped up after her, about to place his palm on her shoulder - at that instant, he was absurdly, almost unexpectedly, washed into a different man, a compassionate figure. It was at the same moment that he saw his Father Herman in the distance and retreated his hand that never was placed on Nora’s shoulder, and paced to Herman, notwithstanding his urging confessions, and goodness knows what he intended to say. He bit his lip and disappointedly returned next to Herman’s side, who, as a Father, uttered him with his

congratulations on his son's successful behalf. Herman was an ageing man. He kept his mind at ease and avoided overwhelming information. Suppose he admits his youngest son's mistakes, the most he'll do would be to sit on a stool and try to reduce his headache with his hand on his temples, unable to process the whirlwind of words he hears.

Nora cleansed her sinned hands in the river water, then wrapped a piece of cloth around the wounds, proceeding to pick up a rake and assisting her parents' farming. When her concerned Mother questioned about her clothed hands, she assured her that she had it under control, and that her Father shan't let it get into his head.

Nearly a month had passed (Katya's Father, Aubin, had returned from abroad). During this period, Olden and Nora never encountered each other. Until two days prior to his scheduled execution date, a courageous Olden barged open the Nevadans' door, begging, pleading, and implored for Nora's redemption, to which she responded with an alarmed shriek. His eyes were heavenly into hers. He unravelled the piece of cloth around her hands and tenderly glided his fingers over the healed wounds. She experienced a sharp ache when he pressed against the deeper areas. Her hands became scarred from her own blood.

"I didn't shed blood to make amends for my lying. I'm extremely sorry, Eleanora, I promise you anything like this will never repeat." His autonomous confession had a huge impact on her: tears flowed uncontrollably down her cheeks, staining her eyes red and sore and left a sour taste on her tongue which she desperately tried to swallow. She didn't know whether she was convincing herself that she did feel this way for the sake of romanticism and manually poured tears, crying, or whether the feeling was real - just peculiar. She had grown so unused to emotion that she found it difficult to tell which was which. One thing she did know was that she was conflicted and confused, the sensations she could make out. Regardless, the teardrops were lightening her dark eyes. His simple wisdom seemed so undeniably genuine that for the first time in ages his Greek eyes recovered its former raw agony and contagious sorrow - as if he were to shatter in the passion he shared. And she's impotent to remain affected, she'd be ruthless! She couldn't take the path where she isn't infected by the contagiousness. Nora realised that Olden aligned with his old self, juxtaposed against his demeanour, the memories of his face reminded and pained her - she started twitching. Then, she remembered how good he was, how sad she was the day he changed, and now he reminded her of him once more. Only now things were difficult, the depth of their connection weighed heavily on her conscience. No, she will not bring herself to see him

as a villain, she knows better than to be the villagers (she can't defeat them, so theoretically, being them offers a logical solution).

There came a long pause. The silence was deafening. She didn't wish to see him as a bad person anymore, she didn't want to have an idea about him, she didn't hope for him to die no longer, if she even did from the start, and she merely wanted to pray for him, however the preparations were near completion. Nora found herself paralyzed, not speaking a word against Katya, not interacting with her plans, nor did she consolidate Olden and warn him to hide undercover. One certain fact - she was glad to feel his love afresh. Then there came a notion over her senses, she reasoned that he was sly, and decided that she cannot trust him sightlessly. Misguidance wasn't a problem to be overlooked.

"I regret every single part of it and I am extremely sorry." He said upon witnessing Nora's sobbing cries, "straightforwardly inform me of any improvements I should partake in. Every part of you is a tremendous glowing sun apart from your own blood on your hands. You did nothing to deserve that." Then his downturned brows moved her deeply. It struck a chord, tugged at her heartstrings, the return of his emotion over his expressionless, empty face had had a catastrophic effect. Nora confirmed he wasn't telling a white lie when he implored her forgiveness and shared with her his regrets through his facial features - they never lie.

"Another second in misery and you'll break like the mirror you broke." Nora struggled to put it out, her anguish strangling and smothering her trachea and nose. "The mirror... the mirror was a gift, Olden!" She merely spat out, having a rasping voice, if not having no voice left. "It hurts here, you know? I do feel hurt, I hope you know that. Idiot! Idiot!"

The picturesque scene, to viewers if such were present, was a melancholic Greek tragedy -dramatic, melodramatic, and tortuous, bewildering, and unbearable to watch without squinting or withdrawing. The hue of the pinkened clouded atmosphere, beautiful and joyous, contradicted their woeful moods. Somehow the birds have left their nests, the faded stars twinkle, only faith prevented Nora from collapse. Weak and weary, nothing kept her on her feet except the strong will to love. Gentle breeze blew mild coldness across through the open doors, albeit to melancholy.

“I’ve realised, Olden, that pleasure matters not a speck. We live, we die, it goes for every creature on two legs. Literature shouldn’t matter - ultimately, all laborious effort equals zero, equivalent to zero. Let’s give in to absurdity!” She calmed down gradually. “Does our circumstances matter now that it’s too late? I heard that a legend about an ancient statue sculptor was once scared of his works being unpreserved and ruined under the care of others once he passed away that he signed a contract with the devil, trading his soul for eternal conscience through a ritual in order to watch over his artworks and to assure that his name lives on, all due to his paranoid insecurity. Needless to mention, he becomes taunted by his duties, expectations and his inner peace gradually vanishes. His eternal conscience eventually breaks down and his statues are left in mortals’ control, whom he never trusted enough to secure his pieces. The sculptor deserved rest and peace, not responsibilities over fame. I shudder at the thought of resembling him, Olden. Let’s give in to absurdity and ditch fame. Choosing between peace and fame is a timeless dilemma.”

“I know that you’re right, and I yearn for absurdity, Nora.”

“Stop. I don’t want you to die. Promise to live a long and fulfilling lifetime for me?”

“Die? What is this nonsense? Don’t cover your hands, let me hold them.”

“They healed, but I will cover them with this cloth because they are ugly with mirror shard scars. I have lived a shameful life in a praiseworthy community.”

Spade, coughing savagely, entered abruptly then rested on the straw mattress, unaware of his sister in pouring tears. His vexing sound of coughing added Nora’s exasperation as she yelled at him to cease his tormenting. In response, beyond his control, his annoyance escalated.

Two days' schedule was no distant event, as Olden had himself and no one else to lose, and a terrible astonishment awaited him which he was oblivious to. Nora forgave him the hatred he caused a number of villagers resented toward her in a matter of minutes. It seemed that she didn’t love him - she loved romanticism, and he was ‘romanticism’. In some way, he was a melody - a mastery material, a diminished memory carried in the wind. He was audible without sound.

For the rest of the afternoon Olden rested beside Nora and Spade, no sooner had his throat cleared than he apologised, embracing his sister and Olden. Spade’s illness made

him on the verge of death, but he always survived. His pale lips, thin physique and dark under-eyes had Nora grieving. She took pity on his weakness and his fate that left him to no avail (we depend more on fate than integrity. We depend more on what we cannot control than what we can). Olden's heartwarming visit ended when he was called home by his brother, which he was hesitant to end (Nora was also hesitant to watch him leave). Nora scarcely slept on that lunar-luminous night.

8

Amidst the tranquillity in the day a battalion of fierce men with medallions on horseback descended around the village, causing perplexity among the inhabitants. Katya, wearing sh braids, the matriarch of the army, strode forth confidently, announcing that they have come to claim Olden Georgiou, who is under government control. Olden merely peered out his cabin; a swift horseman grabbed him, without further ado he galloped away. Herman and his sister Othella protested and were threatened by the men's swords. Katya's beauty was seen by the village for the first time; she revealed herself to be the daughter of King Aubin, and commanded Nora to mount on her horse. Several villagers actively protested but Katya and her army had already galloped into the distance - galloped beyond anybody's reach, beyond their speed.

The Georgious were in shock and were on edge for Olden while the Nevadans were baffled, "what government issue demanded Nora?" They were bombarded with doubts. For hours there happened to be commotion and screaming peasants, provoking Herman's headache. He returned to his cabin, trying to set himself at ease, massaging his temples, his face wrinkled. "My son mustn't be hurt, or else I'll overthrow the Pasha!"

In Katya's palace was well prepared impalement equipment, a six foot stake stood in the middle of the magnificent arena. Thousands of Greek and Russian guests, circled around the arena, stood from their seats in excitement. Katya dropped Nora and the horseman carrying Olden tied a rope around him. Katya ordered the guests to silence themselves to which they obeyed without fail, though a few were whispering: "a lady, a lady can't possibly be so dominating," others mumbled: "a lady can't be so cruel with her execution methods given to a young man!" Even phrases such as: "a woman tyrant, a tyranny!" In spite of their disrespectful mutters, the guests eventually uttered not a word and the entire arena fell silent that a mouse on the platform could be heard by the guests on the higher seats. They awaited the execution animatedly. As well as Olden's impalement, older thugs, burglars, murderers and more offenders, whipped by the guards they were beside and stripped of their garments, were also awaiting their assigned execution which consisted of multiple inhumane methods for the sake of entertaining the guests, among which, Olden was the youngest.

The angelic looking Katya applied another layer of kohl around her eyes. She cleared her throat. "Mighty Greek citizens, mighty Russian brothers, this arena is designated for the resemblance of an ancient edict, for pleasurable executions, and for carrying out various

forms of capital punishment. Today, we will perform methods including: beheading, impalement, decapitation, strangulation, hook, drowning, and burning. Our devices are lined in front of you. To amuse the scene, we shall start with a game. A race between the condemned and their executioners: before their execution takes place, they will run from this side to the opposite side against their fellow executioners. Losing means upgrading the torture level of their method and winning means they receive an additional hour to remain untouched, as well as hosts degrading their assigned method. Hook is the highest form and strangulation is the lowest. Each condemned man and woman will begin with their recommended method according to their committed crime and they depend on their running speed which determines their death. Except for Olden Georgiou, our youngest condemned man, he shall not involve himself in our games and will be executed last, after piles of bodies are dismembered - by impalement. There's no negotiation. Before I declare the entertainment to begin I order a standing ovation!" Her guests stood and applauded, "without further blabbers (believe me, I am anything but a blabbermouth), we bring Nikolos Aetos, a burglar, starting with the method of drowning, to the race line and... Allow the entertainment to begin!"

The crowds roared, cheered, and ecstasy broke out. Servants poured Katya a cup of white wine; she settled on a throne and Nora sat beside her. Katya usually abhorred inhumane activities her Father and brothers enjoyed. This time, with Olden's execution exiting her since she intensely detested him after hearing his acts toward her dearest Nora, she suppressed her disgust and pushed herself to endure watching the executions like a true sultan of her Father, presenting stoic toughness. Her apathetic demeanour was idolised by the audiences. Nikolos Aetos, a thin man with whip scars across his back

from his executioner, sprinted

beyond his legs could carry him, in hopes of another hour alive. Much to his disappointment, his fellow executioner was an effortlessly accomplished sportsman. Aetos lost miserably to a man who did not even try.

"And that is our very first upgrade of this event, my audiences!" Katya rose from her throne and raised her wine cup, then gulped the entire content. "Nikolos Aetos, dear guests, upgrades to decapitation! Yes, cheer louder, louder!" She turned to Aetos (his executioner held him down on his knees, forcing him to bow to the matriarch), "So would you prefer your executioner to decapitate you straightforwardly" followed by a brief pause, afterwards, "or... if it's to your liking, a second round may be permitted.

Answer?" By this point, Katya's sullen, shallow expression covered her enlightening heart.

"Your honour, decapitation is worse than beheading. Upgrade me to beheading, I beg of you and your men." Returned the helpless Aetos, practically dying from exhaustion and hunger. He - in total black hindsight, his youth crumbling as he kneeled before the daughter of a Pasha, his defencelessness - he alone made the scene unbearable to Nora and the crowd.

"My dear Aetos, you have mistaken. Rules are to be followed, not negotiated." Katya declined, forcing a display of blank toughness, frowning bitterly, "I command the execution to be executed rapidly. Go ahead and perform your task, Doukas."

His executioner positioned Aetos to a wooden bench, already, he fell to disaster. Doukas removed his limbs steadily, maintaining a chill face, cutting through his condemned man's calves. He made his way to the neck, and standing on the gored platform, decapitated his vital parts. Nikolos Aetos lay dead. Gored images traumatised Nora, yet she couldn't withdraw her sour stare.

"Bravo, Doukas, bravo!" Applause the crowd and Katya. Doukas bowed proudly. Katya ordered him to step aside from the area and take a break from his duties in the lounge. He must be cleaned. His responsibilities were nished since only one executioner was required to perform his tasks on one man and no more.

"That lady is seventeen years old and she is sturdier than any man emperor!" A voice cried in the crowd. "What a pity she was not born a man."

"Our next contestant is Lydia Ariti. Condemned of domestic abuse. Starting with burning. She is racing against Andreas. Hurry up." Katya announced. She had a hurting diaphragm and a dizzy head from yelling. She moistened her throat with another cup of wine. Nevertheless she remained groundbreakingly stunning. "Did you say my brothers are arriving? No, keep them out. This is my game." She became absorbed in power, "tell my brothers to enter the opposite gate. My game is my own. They've watched more than me and I want to control every procedure with Nora."

Ariti lost her race. Her method was upgraded to hook, the highest form. Andreas hoisted her to a tall sca olding then dropped her on a horizontal bar studded with

butcher hooks, piercing her from the abdomen through the back. He left her to pass. Slowly. Her limbs hung downwards.

"Nora cringed inwardly at the sight. Her body tensed with discomfort in a cringing manner as she witnessed the unfolding events. She was aware that her dear Olden would be executed under her eyes, and even during her undesired, gruesome executions of other, older criminals, she ceased to speak up and shrank back in dismay. This - she had no idea why...

"My, my dear Greeks and Russians!" Nora listened to Katya's speech, "That is what I call a 'Greek tragedy'. In ancient Greek theatres, the protagonist, usually starring a person with good possessions and importance, with superb elements and characteristics, falls to disaster through what he cannot deal with. Say, is our Lydia Ariti not alike to a Greek tragedy? She was a woman of high status, good properties, a respected name - and yet she lies there unbreathing. Pray, she abused her will, gave in to domestic abuse - and nally, here... Προσεφχίσου stous ouranoús. As perásoume sto Angel Chloros. Allow us to move to Angel Chloros! Get him, Luke. Andreas, you go nd Doukas in the lounge and take a break, clean up yourself. Angel Chloros, step up. Condemned of homicide. Starting with strangulation. Running against Luke. Ah, I'm forcefully bloodthirsty. Fill my cup." It went on so forth: Katya's introduction, the race, the results, the procedure, her outro, then her introduction again. Countless numbers of men and women lay on the arena's gored, violent platform after a while. Finally, after every execution had nished, executioner Jason brought forth a young man that Nora trembled upon seeing. "Olden Georgiou shall close the game for us, fellow Greeks and Russian brothers!" Katya's declaration pained Nora acutely. Still, Nora did not speak against it. "A race is unnecessary and Jason will perform impalement on him."

Nora held her breath, she stared at Jason as he led Olden to the used impalement platform. Rising to her feet, she approached them, never taking her eyes o the scene. Olden, his back covered in whip lashes, appeared disoriented. His gaze met Nora's, he was beyond bewildered. She stepped over the limbs with Katya following, gestured for silence; Katya roared at the crowd, her veins swelling, complimenting her slight muscles. The crowd obeyed the matriarch. It was Nora's last opportunity to put an end to this, and she didn't speak, she merely hoped for a nal dialogue. The hatred had surged - the compassion was forgotten upon minutes of power.

“Nora!” He said to his potential liberator, “did you know that I’d end up here... from the start? Please help me.”

The saddened Nora answered she did.

“But you obliged to this? Am I here for a reason, a serious political issue? Give me redemption, Eleanora, I made amends for my mistakes.”

Nora replied that she was unable to do anything about it, but really, she simply didn’t want to do anything.

“When I die you must be sure to seek justice. Ach, two days ago was sacred.”

Iason brought him on the second platform, positioning his back on the stake so that it poked him marginally, pressuring him to speed up sharing his speech. Then Iason decided to move his shoulder blades to the stake instead.

Olden pleaded for mercy. No emotion ever appeared so melancholy and charming as Olden did moments before execution. It had an immense effect on Nora, she felt every part of terror he did, and still, she allowed the procedure to execute. Allowing inhumane activities to happen to her loved ones wasn’t her morals in life, but life’s morals differed from her; she ceased her benevolent mouth...

“You deserve what you’ve brought for yourself, Olden.” Was her goodbye sentence.

Lady Katya signalled Iason to do his will, and he stabbed Olden through the stake so that it poked out his stomach. Olden screamed with all his remaining strength, his voice echoing across the arena. He still had a little bit of life left in him; he managed to gasp out, “Nora, I knew you better than...” His breath escaped from him. He rested motionless.

“Bravo, bravo, Iason!” Cried Katya, applauding, only Nora stood contemplating on her companionship with Olden, disheartened to acknowledge that nothing can bring back what once existed, and that was solely her own fault. A whirlwind of emotions attacked her harshly, pitilessly in the picturesque scene. That reminded her of when she shared with Olden her experience when a dagger was held above her head before joining the Nevadans - how empathetic he was, how unworldly! She had drained his youth, bloodthirsty for his blood, and there, his blood dripped. Now he was covered in red like Nora’s hand was, in more red than her, from top to bottom, marked with sin. Now he

was more sinful than Nora, with more sin spilling, covering himself red. The red dripped on Nora's hair and arms. She unravelled her clothed hands and cupped them together, allowing sin to pour over her scars. "You forget, that the blood is your own, not anybody's else's," she whispered, tearing, "you have more red than I did, Olden. You've sinned yourself more than I did. Greatest punishments come from within." She listened to her heart increasing, "heaven is a destiny. One can't bring anything to heaven. You need to let go of everything for something bigger. Let go of philosophy, let go of your family... I'm so sorry."

"Stay for tonight in this palace. Your family may reason that you were taken for special purposes, which you were." Katya held Nora's hands away from Olden, "don't redden yourself."

"I don't think I'll ever go back. I'll never recover."

"Don't go back, stay here for as long as you desire."

"Thank you... Thank you for bringing an end to his immorality, Katya."

"I see you are gritting your teeth, and twitching your eyes. You're lying through your teeth - you're unhappy."

"No, I'm satisfied, very satisfied, I assure you."

"It's time to exit this place and take some rest. Guests become wild while leaving because of the stupid amount of them pushing one another, trying to pass through, so moving to a safe place before their departure is logical."

By that stage, bodies which were executed from burning melted across the floor and a distorted head lay on a wooden stool as a victory trophy. They joined the marble lounge with Katya's executioners chugging drinks, greeting her.

"Well performed today, my fellow people. How many times have you executed in front of my brothers? Is this what they witness every show?" Inquired Katya.

"Such gruesome methods aren't routinely, Hanım, you requested a most entertaining performance for the guests and we put an effort." Luke proclaimed half drunkenly, raising his porcelain cup. "Bravo, brothers!"

“May the Hanım look at us wisely, say, how was the tolerance level?” Andreas said. “I wonder what Miss would say?”

“Bravo,” Nora answered, clapping, putting an artificial smile, “Olden was a foe, and Jason was fierce with him, and I respect that directness, frankness, clarity and transparency shown, besides the excellently accomplished presentation - friendly indeed, indeed ferocious, and on top of the list, smoothly executed and sheer perfection carried out by skilled hands which I suppose, ended the continuous immoralities of many offenders in the past.

“Execution is a serious topic, Nora, people die. Do you know the seriousness in discussing death? It is not a fairy tale or something to joke nor admired, I shame myself for masking my face with a pitiless cover to prove to the audiences that I can accomplish. Oh, I have a heavy heart, but a heavy heart is considered cowardly. Shouldn’t a man or woman with a compassionate demeanour make an honoured leader and not a subject of ridicule? Even high class government officials are pressured to remain with populism instead of righteousness in order to please the majority, because trust me, citizens are humans, and governments are too, the difference is that there are more citizens than government officials, as a result, citizens can easily overthrow the government once they agreed to do so without democracy. How blind they are! Governments are people, they are not magical fairies that summon spells to trap anybody, they are nothing special, nothing more powerful than an average man. The one power they have is that others listen to them using a deaf ear. If only our guests heard this, I’d be overthrown! Barbarous topic. Again, Nora, I do not seek amusement in torments, and I admit I did find a slight hint of pleasantness in my power today in the arena, and did seek slight amusement, however, I understand that this shouldn’t be applauded. It’s the great number of guests that terrify me - I look forward to all else but to be overthrown.”

“What overthrowing is the Hanım afraid of?” Doukas drank a cup of beer, “a deaf ear cannot be cured, you need not be afraid.”

Out of nowhere, Nora wept openly and practically begged the Hanım to take her back to the arena platform.

“The arena is overflooded with thousands of audiences making their way out; you’ll be pushed and shoved. I reason you to wait until tomorrow to visit your friend, as it’s already getting dark.” Katya obliged Nora’s urges, “they wouldn’t interact with your

friend anyhow, since he is on a tall stake beyond their reach. To circle back to my earlier point, I was saying that fairies and the government have nothing in common yet the government are alike fairies, do you see the barbarousness in this topic? Did you suggest an incurable death ear? There's always another ear which is somewhat functional, Doukas, though they never realise it is - a relief for me. I want to maintain my position in the high class because if we were overthrown (peasants are mindless and dangerous when it comes to wise decision making), democracy explodes and leads to massacres. I don't trust peasants at all. I'm a wise Hanım and I want to share my kindness but those peasants prefer strength over matter, so I need to stick with populism under the eyes of the lower class. Even I am pressured, if you remember my earlier explanation and I won't have to repeat the details. And... Don't cry, Nora, he was an opposer, and "

Doukas chugged another cup of beer, "even when they recover their ears and see what powers they behold as an army, none is willing to overthrow. They are so absorbed in their lifestyles that a minor change irritates their skin. 'Well, I'm quite happy with my life, why would I start chaos for the sake of bringing torment upon the Pasha and his children and the servants?'"

"I take no chances, Doukas, I... Nora... She can't bear the loud chattering here and we must leave, antio sas! Sow down, slow down, Nora, why are you all soaked in tears?" Nora and Katya exited to another room through a corridor, glancing into a window, looking at the intense arena. Before turning her head away Nora noticed a bevy of middle aged maidens in veils teasing the body that rested on the tall stake, jumping to slap his arm, pointing, and poking his back with a stick. She withdrew her attention so her desperate urge to interact wouldn't get to her head. She repeatedly murmured: "desire becomes destiny, destiny becomes action, action - disaster. I will never surrender." She prayed for the veiled bevy of maidens to refrain from harming the body she sought to visit, and to possibly tease another, less signi cant body if it meant that Olden may be left undisturbed - he merely seemed to be resting if it weren't for the sin that smothered over him.

After settling in the garden (surrounding the massive palace with manicured lawns and fragrant diversities of owers. The garden provides a soothing environment distant from the hustling and bustling in the busy palace life), Katya, her champagne hair untied, where sophisticated music was heard playing deftly, where the sound was perfect in volume, where the blue petals o er a place for larvae to metamorphosize, where the pale

stars on the darkening sky illuminated a path, asked Nora about the irksome problem that bothered her.

“Conscience is pestering me, it's a nuisance, it is something that I've brought upon myself and cannot get rid of. Conscience is the only thing I cannot escape from - no escapism escapes conscience. Am I a blockhead for mourning his death, the deserved death of a fraud? Fraud... such a label carries potential harm. There's nothing that has the ability to revive him anymore, Katya, he didn't rant the disgusting opinions I supposed he beheld before impalement, but rather he spoke to me tenderhearted. He could've recognised his wrongs at the last moment, could've have he? Two days ago he autonomously apologised and promised to make amends for the damage he caused me. Were we too harsh, Katya, to punish him with... were we? If we were, it would make no difference.” Was Nora's honest feedback.

“No, Nora, dear, you don't know how legal systems work. It's normal to hold on to the loss of an enemy, because it's a loss after all. Would you like moussaka?”

“I'm good, thank you. I didn't appreciate him much enough until he left. Why do I only start appreciating someone once they've left? When he was here, I was average, and now, I miss how he used to brush my hair. Anyhow, I put my trust into the legal system and hopefully I will recover from the loss of an enemy, if he were one. We'll never find out if he were one. His last speech was rushed and he probably held back a lot he had to say. Red smothered her body over his, and Sin, her outpouring self, rushed out of him. Hopefully God cleanses the red and allows him to sleep.”

“Praying is a good deed. Love your neighbour as yourself, correct? You believe that following a religion and following God are different, I understand. I ought to think more like you.”

“Conscience is a prison I won't escape from. Alone with my thoughts, I want everything back, I want the bothersome people to keep babbling about the blackness of my living by my side, and never leave, because if they did, I'm afraid reality would become total blackness, and not just the topic in their babbles. Stabbing him horizontally in the stake is like knocking on Misfortune's door, except I receive her. I have this stupid instinct to cry because I know how much my family and the village hate me. I can feel their stabs. Whatever must I do to convince them I'm one of them? He defended me sometimes, and sometimes he was suspicious when he didn't bother correcting other people's speeches

concerning me, and now, we won't know whether he was pure or wicked. We didn't interrogate him before killing him!"

"Sorry, my dear darling, I'll do anything to enlighten your mood. Looking at your celestial beauty might uplift your state."

"Whenever I face feelings of despair or being an outcast and burdensome, I am delighted -our Saviour went through the same trial: he wasn't at fault, his people were, and blamed him as a sinful man. This reveals a testament to the laws of humanity rather than my own. I was unjustly vilified. 'If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.' Divine love transcends human judgement. Reinforce this mentality, Isay, in moments of doubt such as now, a comforting wing lay above me, with the reminder that a living God sees me differently from what others believe, and that he cherishes me, although I deserve re, and faith is the sole proof of strength - faith defeats any lingering evil. Strength over matter - faith over strength. My time here is unimportant, I can sacrifice my living here for another's safety. Obviously I'm not comparing myself to the Lord, Katya, I am sinful and unlike him in every aspect. But it shows the ugliness of other people, like what he had experienced walking among his creations. He quoted that he was disappointed with them, serving a poignant reminder of the inherent laws within mortal judgement. Our Saviour is my sole motivation to continue carrying my daily cross, no matter the weight placed on my back, no matter the lashes, no matter the mockery, the drainage... "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.' Faith, knowledge, surrender. I find the motivation to shoulder life's burdens and continue along the path, trusting in the promise of a greater destiny. In the end, the sweet, chosen people always die early, their lives filled with misery, and the ugly always live long and fulfilling lives, a life they deceive themselves as being closer to heaven than hell, as they pathetically phrase it. Living without God is useless. There wouldn't be a purpose, and their presumed purposes are but a made up speculation. Bleh! Maybe the world around me is so dark because I couldn't see that the light was within me. How ruthless I reacted to my friend's death, how nihilistic, pathetic, how silly! I don't hate on a person's one persona, and I think of their personal diversity, considering factors, and that is why, I hold it to be true, that I am so insufferable. I am a terribly reasonable thing in a horribly selfish place. I wonder, 'do they ever think that they are ugly, or do they pamper themselves everyday?' Corruption is real, I may be corruption, but I intend not to. When you read your own

works, you read what you intended. When you read another heart's works, it's easier to spot imperfections, since you aren't connected with the intention. And that is why Great Blue Herons roam free, looking as if they brought a fish to the sea when they actually had selfish desires, and were mistaken to be performing a wholesome show in a theatre, except in reality. Free will is a curse. Free mindsets are dangerous, I daresay."

Lady Katya came to be moved by Nora's wisdom. The monologue had had an immense touch to her.

"These people God permitted to function! They speak gibberish and expect us to understand, otherwise calling us unintelligent. The boy... he," Nora offered Katya to unravel the cloth wrapped around her hands, "in case you wondered my reason for covering my hands, take it off." (Katya did so. She was taken aback by the faint but visible long rosette scars.) "He did me a favour when he published my scribbles, otherwise I'd have never known I had so much intelligence and likeability amidst aristocrats. Peasants despise me, and aristocrats value me, this is how it ought to be." She stuttered before continuing, "the boy(I can't physically bring myself together to pronounce his repugnant name.) scarred my palms in red. The red outpoured sins. Or perhaps I scarred myself when I decidedly picked up the shards - I couldn't leave the gift you lent me, Katya. Don't shame me. Anyhow, the blood was mine and no one else's, he said, you had only yourself that you sinned against, so the blood is yours. Gosh, I've read books that were promised to change one's life, and here I am, the same girl from yesterday and the days before, unchanged. No tragedy strikes me, no misery affects me. Words are read and that is all, is my heart this empty? Not even my feelings were touched. Am I so unemotional, am I carrying a cold heart and cold pulse? I don't feel anything reading tragic stories. At least sad books make one feel something surreal, unlike happy stories, which are unbenevolent in any way, offering not a hint of knowledge."

"Stop!" Screeched the lady, pacing to and fro impatiently, in a voice that shook with tears, "you never harmed me with your presence, for I too, I too am outraged by humanity, as a leader and as a creature on two legs. Don't stop preaching, don't you ever say 'I'm tired of preaching,' no, don't you think people are tired of dying, tired of mistreatment? Come, child, be my child. Move with me and we shall make history, start a revolution, for we are revolutionary. Passing hundreds of generations, our revolution shall conceal ourselves and present itself as its own entity. We do this for the young, not self gain."

Darkness fell over the pale sky.

“Tomorrow we will publish a script, a psychological script, your specialty, and include legal issues, addressing the double standards of a leader, as well as a village girl. Perspective is crucial, Nora. A painting may be needed to depict the unexplainable.”

“They don’t know the suffering we endure, they’re too absorbed in their own concerns. The best of their abilities is to acknowledge the problem; they never accept solutions. Listening with an ear is a skill, and that is how misunderstandings occur - deaf ears are more common. Well, a book offers a choice to one on whether they crave to acquire our thoughts without misinterpretation, and is able to pass down through centuries.

Tonight we ought to take a restful slumber; tomorrow we sought to take the first step.” Around this time, Nora began to sense a growing division, sensing as though Katya was gradually drifting away and neglecting her, notwithstanding Katya's selfless actions suggesting otherwise. While Katya provided shelter for Nora, she didn't openly show patience, and at times, showed signs of annoyance. Nora resolved to remain by Katya's side for a little longer, yearning that their relations would improve. Yet, as Nora increasingly found herself unable to cope with the situation, she knew that she would eventually have to make the difficult decision to leave. The daylight hours the coming day following that arena game provides a vivid demonstration of Nora’s distress.

“Everything I love eventually leaves me. When I hadn’t loved anything, everything clung onto me, and when I appreciated anything, I repelled everything. I should stick to loving nothing if it means I’ll keep something for the very least.” Was Nora’s contemplation, “I need to do anything within my powers to ensure that Lady Katya isn’t next. But how could I keep her if I love her? She’ll leave and I’ll repel her. This is a curse I deal with. I never would receive validation from history because I have this curse. Oh, how lovely, the same curse applies to my troubles, how lovely! Irony is humorous, ha, ha, irony delights yours truly. I want to be the one every mouth adores, not the one who holds the door(for my sister and the ‘superiors(by name)’).”

“Poetic techniques attract attention,” Nora pointed out during the script planning, “Free verse is expressive, on the other hand, misleading. We need a good use of metaphor, in fact the entire script must be one big metaphor. Enjambments are uneasy to understand with a first glance - we need a masterpiece which can’t be overlooked when readers aren’t explained to by someone who understands. It acts as a form of

passive protest - a paper depicts laws. Homer's 'Odyssey' is a masterpiece. But I am not Aristotle, or any other great ancient mind, I can only do what's suitable."

"I've changed my mind, Nora, my dear, I think this is a silly, absurd plan. I can wait for historians to present me in their notes and I'll do the storyline telling in actively operating the unachievable standards." "Who listens to you if not many are accessible?"

That message has to reach as many ears and eyes as universally possible."

"Take it easy, it'll work out. Observers don't miss a slight detail." "Observers are unable to observe intentions from movements." "Relax. Anyhow, the little friend..." Before further

digressions Gale emerged from the gates, "what a pity I missed yesterday's weighty game hosted by our mighty Katya alone. Did you set the stadium a re? A sly small bird landed on my porch this sunrise. I had no capability to make out whether it was a bird or devil. It looks like a feathered animal(in contrast behaving like the devil). Passersby shooed its plain shape elsewhere... tell me such an eccentric situation sounds illogical... a minor incident! Forget I ever said whatever subject of ridicule to any extent."

"We were expecting your arrival soon, Gale! Sit, do so good as to drink some tea. I seek to take a break from wine especially after the unnecessary amount I consume at the arena. Goodness, I smell the heavy odour drifting in our room from wholly there" Katya pointed at the wall, indicating the hallway leading to the crimson arena the previous day's event took place in and emerged in. "I plan on calling the odalisques to tidy the scene if they are not upset to work within the foul-smelling, blood-drenched environment. The place is too big to organise until spotless, by the by. My odalisques are likely to refuse and the smell will linger for quite a while, I hope you two might stay put? My sincere shame, pardon me..." "...A sudden reminder about my friend came to me;

excuse me, I have to leave, my friend

is lying, stuck on a stake - it's my duty to ensure his rest. Nay, he is resting soundly amidst the conflicts caused by morality, nevermind, I still obligate myself to see him."

With that, Nora dashed off, asking servants in the maze-like hallway the directions to the currently sickening stadium entrance. They were astonished at Nora's determination to

enter the place they avoided, holding their nose while passing the entry gates, catching a regretful glance of the red covered floor inside.

“An injury from the unfaithful hands of the grim reapers of love is better than isolation from love and never to have had a present heart of a passionate hearth - to this, I am of the first category. I’m not statuesque, nay, not I,” she repeated in her reasoning while walking up to the sin-covered stake. “It makes no difference if I go home or not. Others have something to lose - a perfect reason to fear. I have nothing to fear. I conquered my only fear. There he lay, dozing on the stake; his sin outpoured - he became sinless, but the committed sins are visible. I’m bewildered on the face of it. I’m bewildered... I pray that the Lord washes him. Now he’s directly upfront with me, the unrecognisable mutilated boy, recognisable by heart, beautiful in heart, although his form is misshapen - he was once so beautiful that my eyes didn’t accept him as deserving of suffering. He was happiness itself. “Happiness is dependent. You are happiness itself, Nora, you are what I depend on.’ Imbecile, imbecile! Fuck this, screw this, take me with you, if only you were able to lift an arm! You carry no more strength, what a delightful shame...” Rage erupted. Her thoughts to Olden turned into coughs of outburst, she wasn’t able to contain her sentences in her head so she screamed, falling to her feet on the blooded ground, beside piles of limbs, the red coating over her bare feet, hands, knees, hair, and forehead, “I’ll never find out why, why you did what you did. I’ll never find out your intentions, your voice is taken. Rest in peace, bastard, my sweet happiness.” Her screams elevated and swelled, rising in intense volume, “you have no chance to take me with you now. Gosh, I wish it were me instead. How could I have said to you the moment before you were stabbed, that you deserved to suffer what you brought upon yourself - what did you even bring? No, you’re sinless, I’m the sinful one. It should’ve been me, at least when summer comes, I’ll wither without leaving traces.”

Nora stood upright, she suddenly became aware of something new and strange in him, which she could not clarify, and which had never been there before. A concept which interrupted her, without warning, without reason for its being there, without explanation yet she understood the context.

“Absurdity. I will give in to absurdity. He is nothing to trouble over, he said he wanted absurdity, and absurdity can erase my worrying. What if I forgot about this nonsense and went to sleep absent-minded? Absurdity can grant me such luxuries. Care-freeness is a skill to practise. No need to be stalkerish after a little boy, ha, ha, incredible. Insanity may be better than absurdity. I should cut this skin to see the amount of sin it’ll pour

out, so we'll become ever so sinless." Laughter emerged, "you said that well written documents shouldn't be analysed. A piece should be the analysis of a circumstance, not a circumstance itself. How wise you were, Olden! Maybe it was because I was going through a lot then. So why do creators explain their works? Ah, insanity and absurdity wipes this concern - I'm care-free! This is a skill I obtained. Why do creators in our age that are equally good seem as the old, seem shallow and not good enough? The reason is that you need to make a big impact, not just popularity - you need real personalities, and mine is... Unde nable. Thank you for this sudden awareness you raised by lying there in mid air, Olden, goodbye."

She held the corpse's hands, hands redder than her own. "Another story - I had a dream last night," she began, "the first dream in a while that I had about our Saviour: when I died and was standing in front of the gates of heaven. I don't know if I was accepted or not, regardless of that, in an instant, Jesus brought me back to life and told me it's alright, that the troubles are in his palms; he will give me a second chance of living. I think the message behind the dream is that I was reborn as a Christian because Jesus brought me life and I should trust him. Then I asked him "what if I die again?" He said, "seed." I think what I asked was supposed to mean "what if I fall out of faith again?" And I took my sources and searched what 'seed' meant in the bible and it was the word of God and... it was planted in me! This is really a powerful message and I believe it's a direct message to me from God and I feel so much better after knowing God would never abandon me. Also, Jesus did not look like what people thought he looked like in my dream. He was brown and had dark hair with a beard, and he looked gentle. Jesus showed me the true vision of him in my dream and I cannot say that's utterly the image of him." The corroding blood, evaporating its water components and leaving behind its other components, oozed over into her nail beds, "would he be pleased that I'm absurd, or did he have something else in plan? ...you fail to fathom the reason for my visiting you. I can't resolve to inhumanely leave you, like how I did during your last moments - I.. am terribly apologetic, akin to your apologetic words some two days ago. Ouf, we'll never know if you were really apologetic, hee, hee. Goodbye, I hope I don't scare the palace workers, I'm going outside this stadium to clean up - to clean up your infectious, contagious sin you've spread on me. Keep your own laws to yourself."

Hardly had she left into the halls when she turned back, dashing to Olden, returning before the tall stake, surveying the heights. She stepped on the wooden stake platform trying to come closer adjacent to him. "Nay, it's a phenomenon that you are alive." - (He

wasn't alive.) - "Come down, Olden Georgiou, did you say the stake is your safe place, your refuge, that that vulnerable position is permanent? You portray your own flesh as a defeat from resignation, how dare you insult that picturesque skin, that ethereal beauty, those insurmountable windows to the soul? Your limbs splay in weakness, I'm enraptured by the odd transcendence. Your eyes fix upwards - a stilted expression eyeballing at the clouded vault of heaven. Don't look at the clouds and call it a heaven - don't look at the iron bars of a gaol and see freedom through them; don't seek freedom within the confinements. Freedom is a disadvantage - freedom destroys souls, freedom makes inequality, freedom leads to blunders, or, perchance, souls destroy themselves (and freedom is used as an excuse, an illogical justification). You say that the confinements of iron bars are your home? Olden, goodbye, truly, this time, I shan't turn back. Goodbye."

She wrapped his hands around with the same cloth she wrapped her mirror shard wounded hands with. She looked down at the remaining scars then looked up at him, "a wrapping around the hands isn't enough." Nora had wrapped his entire body with cloth before leaving.

"I have loved you ever since two days ago. 'Oh! Two days ago, but soon.' Two days ago, the two days were easily over two centuries. When did time determine quality? If it had been two centuries, when you are a historical figure, when the sun extinguished, those two days have seen everything well before." Nora sighed on her way to the dressing room, "may God's miracles come to light and save you from the extinguished sun. I yield my will to poetry, it limits thoughts with rhymes, pleasing it is to the ear and obsequious to the head."

Nora wiped her arms with a cloth dipped in a water bucket beside the barstool. It was then that she digested what she had done: she spoke ill to the very Lord she worshipped and mocked the dead whom she was supposed to respect. A dreadful deed! She even did it psychotically. She fell to repentance and vowed to make amends, for if she hid away from God, he'd nonetheless already know the truth better than she, and would be more disappointed in seeing her in shame, like the shame of Eve when she did the horrible deed. Out of the blue, she had another sudden notion, "if I care less and gain more, and care even less to gain even more, what is the point of gaining more? I want things so I can be happy, and if I need to be unhappy to have things, am I happy with my things or unhappy? I'd ultimately be happy and lose it all. If I have it all and am unhappy, it's the same as being unhappy without anything. My curse is devastating, it sucks out my youth until I've withered." This made her consider absurdity, however she controlled her

desires and walked the pathway of faith in the Saviour. "Philosophy is play-acting God. Only the unfaithful lack enough trust to make up theories, showing their vulnerability in the broad light. Philosophy needs to be dropped, I already know all I need to know. Diogenes is a critic and an example I must avoid becoming or seeing my resemblance in - narcissism and arrogance remains unintelligent - many levels below faith without knowledge. When the hot summer air arrives I will migrate to another part of the sea as if I was a sh - a sh that was fortunately released by the Great Blue Heron's clumsy beak. I ought to start a journey on my own to avoid the beaks. I look clean now so returning to Katya and Gale normally won't cause suspicion unless a palace worker heard my unsettling yells which were unnecessary and arrogant, practically insane. Winter winds in Greece can feel as sharp as knives; I'll find a solution that'll prevent me from freezing."

As soon as she put on a fresh robe Nora skedaddled across to Katya's room.

The stoics tolerate hardship, lacking responsiveness to torturous topics, without complaining. They search for sights that are promised to bring forth their feelings and yet anything appears shallow under their vision, arguing about the shallowness of others who feel everything. At this point, the stoics gave up trying to trigger feelings, then resulted in pursuing any form of emotion - sadness being the ideal, since it at least makes them feel something substituting shallowness. Shallowness is deep: they drown in shallowness, the deep stoics drown in shallow waters! And the waters are always shallow, if they are somewhat deep, the stoics swim and survive. The shallow waters - they are the deepness they cannot endure. In reading our passage, my reader, our Nora learns that stoics aren't all of them displeased of their blankness and that in fact, disheartedly, pride stands in lieu of hunger for change. Quite literally, they praise their own apathy, deceiving their own self that it has to be an advantage. On the other hand, what would be the point of having a pumping heart if you can't and don't want to feel anything? A heart pumps so that you are sensitive to loving, and experience the right reactions. An example - when a loved one passes, the natural instinct would be to cry, not boast. Those who cry often shames their crying, but do they expect themselves to react in a different way? They'd be stoics! That is a social issue noticed by our sensitive Nora (she is gradually growing insensitive to reading tragedies. Little did she know that a balance between the two subjects was vital).

When she greeted Katya she became exhausted and cared not to appeal to her; incidentally, her lacking care brought forth an enthusiastic side of Katya, appearing as if

she were attracted to coldness not compassion. Nora was scarcely able to fathom the incoherent social cues which are normalised, especially when a person who understands the ugliness in humanity follows the cues routinely, in the manner of the idiots. Such strong knowledge without signs of deceit means that an unstable pathway awaits Nora, and at a certain point, she'd collapse as it would become too much to bear, and that depression may attack her, the unseen knowledgeable lady. Katya, her mouth agape, briefly glanced when receiving Nora.

"Welcome back, dear, how's his current condition? Overwhelming smells?" "Yes, well...

the foul smells come from other people - my Olden is perfectly preserved under the protective red layer. Forgive me when I give the impression that I bluff; I promise I'm absurdly frank. Stop giggling, Gale, don't look at me that way, I've never been more frank, and you are mocking my transparent body. You see me through, Katya, do you see that I struggle with him, the offender, unalive?" "Gale doesn't mock you, she

sees you through better than yourself. She sees your foolishness which you aren't able to realise, the motives behind choices, explanations for the unexplainable - she performs miracles up to a certain extent. Mr. Georgiou's fate could possibly be analysed by her, if you would entreat and allow her to do some readings." "I dreamt a dream you've never expected, to say the least. I dream and dream

and dream

again that the dream would drop dead into light. I dream sleeplessly in the night: I dream the bottomless ocean, dreams presenting the little seed of life, resurrection of a mortal brought forth to life by the Almighty, and I dream again, dreaming that the dream would shatter into light, into life, into a dreamless pit of realism, into reality, into consciousness, and no more would it be a dream."

"Whether in some alternate guise or another, in one form or another, you are poetry material; you are the very fabric of our language - you ordinarily weave astute narratives. You conduct the most seamless, most casually genius pieces, the smartest, most radical speeches. You push language to its absolute limits, effortlessly inventing the most intellectual stirring compositions known to mankind. I don't love the highest form in the arts. I'm sorry to say, I focus on bigger issues in politics: humanity, ideals, patterns, etcetera, etcetera, and myriad others, and the like. Say, tell me the likelihood of a groundbreaking revolution that is promised to modify Greece forevermore? Suddenly

the day is night and night day, and water burns and infernos freeze. All the all, we wait for many eternities past our death for this. And a little woman whose brain is smaller than her heart, who urges to love her? She is looked down on by shorter fellows, that their heart is small and their brain is equally big as hers... shorter, diabolical, unintelligent, and still spits at her name. How barbaric, how odd yet so regular, so regular that it has become universally recognised and normalised. Revolutions, politics, leaders, none of which can solve this issue entirely, as the option of rotting one's own soul is one's own choice, no matter the logical reasoning they understand. Mankind is rotten like man's own soul that they've rotted. Several ladies in the palace are a clear example of such members in mankind - they take pride in working for my Father, allowing the advantages they have to intoxicate their well-being, making it difficult to chemically reverse the ideas they behold, thus those ladies look down upon the big hearted peasants, hence the rotten soul and rotten members in mankind. Ouf, I definitely have to take a break." She inhaled then exhaled, relaxing her tension. The veins on her neck arose.

Nora thought: "you explain it well and you still look at me that way. Are you following the social cues you claim to deteste?" Phrases like this were hidden within her. She said: "take everything you learn to your advantage. A mere observation is useful. Textbook teachings? Useful. Twist everything and make anew of the meanings. It's wiser to have quality over quantity. A proper etiquette is developed through this."

"Oh, you heavy hearted fools, both of you failed to see that you've digressed. We were discussing the execution of an acquaintance of Nora's!" Gale announced, "yesterday, almost coincidentally, I sensed that a disturbing presence had left me. It occurred roughly around the time the little friend passed. Right before it left me, I sensed that it wasn't at all an evil spirit... it miraculously turned gentle. That was probably when you had a nal chat with him that it turned gentle. There was no sudden change, it was slow and steady, nearly unnoticeable. Afterward the presence of the spirit left entirely, probably when he was stabbed. This is just to say, your friend, according to my readings, was pushed to adopt a good nature out of fear. Fear... the greatest tool to convince someone, the greatest tool to turn one to repentance, ah."

Nora with her twinkling eyes asked, "your arts, do they enable you to bring the dead to life? Whatever the arts may be, I don't know, you said I wasn't supposed to know and I don't care to know, but whatever it may be, do they reach an extent far enough for

resurrection? In asking my question I have committed blasphemy, and I mustn't trust your play-acting of God, however I am desperate to know, this I admit in total shame.”

“I can(depending on the freshness of the body). Successful chances, I warn you in advance, aren't guaranteed. This complex practice is a forgotten lore I attempted twice and failed both times. You don't mean for me to summon life in Olden, do you? Nora, you hooligan, I can try just for the kicks, and for the sake of your comfort. Come.”

9

Gale's resurrection attempt had had a brutal failure. Her play-acting of God couldn't revive a person and she would never be alike to our God in human form. Her practising of these arts was a terrible sin that mimicked God's miracle performances, which she acquired the knowledge from none other than the devil. Gale claims that, "I practise the devil's arts for good deeds; I am a good witch," but nothing from the devil is a good deed. Even with the devil's knowledge, she knew nothing. Nothing but her foolishness, fooling herself while the devil laughs. He laughs and mocks, looking down on his minions he tricked in promising to make them more 'God-like'. The brains of people! Especially the most intelligent, the most knowledgeable!

"Olden's revival came down to a blunder, and in return, we're smothered in stinking blood." Katya pointed out, gagging intensely, "Leave at once. I will call a servant and tell them to cleanse me in water and help me recover. The aftermath is less entertaining than the process. I wonder when this foul smelling, eye-torturing place would get cleaned. I shall make a command soon!"

"He indeed failed to revive, what a frustration. Very fortunately caught hearing of a useful matter: I heard his demons whisper Latin grumbles... de nitely unclean curses. He turned to face the good out of fear during his last chance and for the first time, opened his eyes. Demons must've escaped or they may have grown livid at him, as he hadn't chosen faith out of choice in his free will. Latin I alas do not speak; some say Latin is a language spoken by the end."

"Closely related to the seven deadly sins, correct? Fiend... his minions... Olden was controlled by Mammon, Belphegor, and primarily Lucifer. Leviathan was a silent factor controlling him." Covering her face, Nora's distress wrapped around her hair.

"He was greedy: through extracting your youth did he fatten. It's also sloth. I think that his envy was the most apparent, the most obvious, yet it's the silent factor. But oh my, his pride was written across his whole being! I know this even though I've never met him alive, my readings are scarcely unreliable. He died a sore death, on the other hand, during his present moments, he should've regretted his actions instead of complaining about the consequences. After all, he brought it upon himself over his fraud, am I mistaken?"

“Be so kind as to exit this netherworld of an arena, will you both? Splatters of odours encircling us isn’t pleasurable. Those are the remains of vile criminals and sinners which is a bad omen to come in contact with. A conversation is the same and no different when you speak in a proper environment than in the midst of corpses, you know?” Katya held her nose and headed for the exit without further ado. The nauseating place couldn’t keep her tolerable resistance any longer, thus she hurriedly left without waiting for Nora and Gale.

Nora followed after, stepping across arms, saying, “he was bloody-handed and was washed clean from sin through his own blood. The smells came from anyone but him, because he was washed clean.”

When they finished cleaning themselves, which Katya took a great deal of complaints in, summoning helpers to maintain proper hygiene around the hallways they’ve contaminated with their steps and to help her wash and braid her lengthy hair, Nora comprehended that it was the most troubleless time for leaving (where to, she had no destination planned prior. She reasoned to follow her instincts), “my family are sure to cause a commotion in the village if I fail to return. Will you order me a horseman?”

“I initially planned with you that your stay will last for longer than a few weeks. An explanation to your family is simple and you’ve agreed. Stay longer with us, Nora, your village is far less comfortable with far less generous inhabitants than in my palace. My eldest brother Augustine (which you haven’t met) expects to expand the outdoor areas and your artistic traits might assist us sketch the layout. I don’t understand his waiting to expand the already massive place. Anyhow, it’ll be pleasant, especially since he is the heir. I fear him becoming a tyrant because he is fierce by nature and virtually not tender like I. He makes an excellent leader but not a great teacher.”

“I want to stay but I cannot stay for a day longer, Katya, I... love my family,” she used all her strength to spit this out, “they’ll abandon me if I fail to return.”

“I remember when I met you weeping on that rock the first time I saw you, how you complained about your family neglecting you and you kept me secret from them. Do they not sound like terrible humans? They are, undoubtedly. Being abandoned by them is an opportunity, a privilege. You should actually permanently change your residence here.”

Nora learned that she couldn't argue on this topic, "True, I remember that also! I will stay here alright; your persuasion makes sense to me."

Days after days she urged to leave Katya's impatient and suspicious acts. Why had Lady Katya persuaded her to stay when she didn't want Nora to stay? Did she regret her persuasion afterwards? Did she say that to Nora simply because her tongue slipped? She was a good natured lady after all, and yet, Nora wanted to leave, which, debatably, is Nora's paranoid fault in seeing imperfections and naming them as flaws that make a bad person. During this period she was treated lavishly with dishes, presents, garments, environments and the like, with more than enough she possibly ever asked for, therefore Katya wasn't at fault, Nora thought, Katya is a saint and I am a peasant, so what right do I have to accuse her in my mind? She dismissed her paranoia and accepted Katya's frankness, deciding to shift to her guardian in the palace permanently, at least she planned so.

The ecstatic Nora gazed into a mirror each morning after dressing up, admiring the reflection of herself - how unbelievable to learn that it was herself! She often lost herself in front of the mirror. Days turned into weeks, which turned into months - Nora became used to the comfortable palace habitat. The roof above her morphed into a casque: it restrained her freedom and at the same time gave her happiness and comfort. Katya and her bonded over the months of her staying. The cold walls she was used to staying within became warm with Katya, the cold bread she ate everyday became warm, fulfilling dishes that are diverse, in quality and quantity, but she never ate more than she needed. Servants in the palace were fond of her generosity, and perhaps, that is when they, as older generations, both more mature and understanding, exploited her. They did this in a sly way that Nora was unable to tell apart from empathy. Frequently they leveraged her vulnerability by requesting her to take items from Katya, saying that it was necessary, and asked her to tell certain information to Pluto and Kola, who were on busy duty the majority of days. Aaron wasn't occupied during those months and frequently dedicated time to crafting pottery with Nora and Katya, which all three enjoyed. Pottery held the position of Nora's second favourite art form after writing: both arts were expressive. Augustine's outdoor expansion plan failed as he failed to return from his duties abroad.

"Nora, I've been thinking it might be time for you to check up on your family back in the village and consider returning, but do return afterwards. It's been quite some time, and I want to ensure we avoid any potential complications from your absence. Give

them a worthy explanation and return. It'll last a couple minutes; large amounts of angry people might overthrow us." Katya suggested one day.

Somehow, backed by her suspicions, Nora perceived such suggestions as Katya pushing her away instead of a thoughtful concept. "Yes."

"Your carriage is ordered. Make sure to return safely. I don't want you staying there an hour longer than necessary."

During the ride Nora noticed the rich city buildings, how they touch the heaven in style, how the village huts lacked style, how they touched nothing but the ground. She was attacked by her nerves; soon the rich buildings were blurred: she was unable see anything through the lenses of tears obscuring her sight. A sudden ripple of remembrance billowed through the air she breathed in. The driver, a typical Greek man with side whiskers wearing a turban, inspected her safety and remained silent, listening to her sobs about certain reminiscences. Then the destination came to a stop: she arrived back at her old home.

10

Three knocks on the door. “Where have you been, what did they do to you?” “That isn’t for

you to worry about, Mana. Thank you for your taking care of me after

finding me by the Aliakmon river, although I’m leaving you. The only way to repay a

sacrifice this big is to sacrifice yourself. But then, what sacrifice would I receive if I

sacrificed what was sacrificed for me? The result would wound back to your own

benefits and I am sorry.” “Nora, we were worried-” “Worried where? Peacefully dining

around the same table without mentioning my

name? And the rest of the household are silent - they don’t give a warm welcome or

show any signs of respect. See, Elena turning her head down and continuing eating dirt.

Within this wall is a disgraceful part of my account. I say this with gratitude for your

effort, and I still have to leave. You blame me but you don’t know anything about me.”

“That’s because you never told me. If you don’t tell me, I will act based on what I see. I judge.”

“You never listen when I tell you so I just shut up and agreed on your behalf to avoid your commotion. I’m leaving.”

“No, where to? You grew here, your roots adjusted to this soil. We vowed to uplift our stems and step on our enemies, and the hero, what hero in what story abandons the world, abandons his people? You won’t need to repay me, but doing this, you can’t repay yourself. At least repay yourself! You need to win everything, show them, show your country, otherwise what were the efforts of my heart for? What for? All going to waste? Strive to win. Why are you exactly how I thought you’d turn out: a failure, a mere child. Oh, how I wasted so much bread on you with all our family money. Did you grow a heart? Are you a walking corpse? Good at eating. Look how you’ve fattened ever since your adoption, you’ve never stopped your mouth from munching on bread, and what skill did you learn? I’m so good to you and you refuse to repay me.”

“And what skill do you have, may I ask? Less than me. And you still complain. I help you work on the fields and your dear children never need to lift a finger, and you discredit

me for not folding their clothes. Don't step on your enemies. Wearing your enemies' name under your shoes means that they are your base support, your foundation. How foolish you are to think that I live by your commands. Under your influence, I had nothing more than neglect, and you say 'I raised you for two three years and fed you up,' and so, I have nothing to say back. This excuse is old, Mana, and the corruption in this community is irreversible - everyone is absorbed in their own fantasies, in their own religions, worshipping stocks and stones. I've come to say that Olden is dead. Goodbye."

"You don't make an ass of yourself in front of our household. You don't get away with this and you are not leaving until you get a beating."

Alexandria grabbed Nora and with the help of Marcus, hit her without rest. The Nevadan children didn't lift themselves from their seats. Soon bruises form on her face and arms, and Marcus manages to grab an object to hit her fingers. They kicked and pulled, yelling curses about their disappointment. "A family practice," they say, in spite of the fact that they've only used it on their step child's behaviour.

Nora came to a stop screaming her protests and yielded to depravity. Alexandria and Marcus, their voices thundering, calling all of hell's res, dumped her on the ground. The beatings were so severe that she bled internally. At last, she died.

"Why did she suddenly visit us, Ma?" Iris softly asked in the corner.

"I don't know. Finish your food and we'll go shing. Slow down, eat slowly, dear."

The hut went quiet again. A steaming pot bubbled with hot soup, ready to be served.

11

Later that day Irina lifted Nora but accidentally dropped her and she fell down the Nevadan hill. Irina immediately ran down the hill and kneeled beside Nora, covering her bruised body with herb pastes, then, using every ounce of her strength, carried her sister to the river and seated her position on the grass, so that she faced the water and the sun. Irina sat beside Nora, hands on her shoulders.

“Are you bearing too much pain, Nora? Look at the waters and see how beautiful you still are and tell me you love me.”

“Not too painful, Irina, I’ve died twice today: they beat me to death and you dropped me down the hill. Now I’ll die a third time.”

“You say this like you’ve found a hair in your soup.”

“How far can my irritation go, further than that? I’m designed not to go beyond my limits; I’m perfectly calm and you’re perfectly sane.”

“Look at the waters and see the beauty you still possess. Let me cover that hand with more herbs - this may sting a little, bear with me.”

“I’ll die a third time now, Irina, save your herb pastes for someone else.”

“You survived the first death, you survived the second death, you can survive the third death. You’re a victim and a hero, and mostly are a hero. Don’t allow the hero to perish, Nora, look at the setting sun, the pink sky behind the clouds, the phenomenon Rayleigh scattering.”

“You’re all I’ve ever had, Irina, I’ll never stop saying your name, you had everything and you’re all I had - you were everything, and I was just something, do you understand? Why am I pestering you - now I’ll die a third time, goodbye. A rather well educated peasant you are, your knowledge is superb - you know of the pink sky phenomenon!”

“From the start I thought you were brave, but you were afraid, that was why you seemed brave.”

“You don’t understand, you were everything and I was a component. You have no right to judge me, you have no right at all, you blabbermouth. You don’t understand, that is

why you're one of them. You glanced around the surface and declared it deep, hence your idiocracy. They not once apologised owing to their lack of guilt, or even their deceitful eye deceiving themselves, and you are a part of them, only you are merciful. A folklore tells the story about a mother and a child: when she was unable to use the child as a method to uplift her dignity, she killed him. Tell me the factors that differ us from them."

"That I never dare kill you, let alone harm you, not on purpose."

"White lie. You lie through your teeth, you watched me getting killed like you're watching a tragedy at the theatre. Only after you finished eating and filled your stomach did you carry me here, and you dare say that you harm me not on purpose?"

"Oh, Nora, in another life, will you be my daughter? If you die a third time, be reborn as my daughter. I can let you live the life suffering deprived from you, and I wouldn't deem you an outcast, I would take care of you, I'd be a parental figure, if only your life could start afresh - I'd erase every piece of shard of agony within you, Nora, hold my hand."

Dying a third and last time and being reborn as your daughter makes no difference, my dear silly sister with a naive heart. Likewise, reincarnation is malarkey, an ancient tale: a second birth is a tale made by those who fear the light, a tale they've used to convince themselves that damnation wouldn't swallow them, that their mortal life should be spent involving themselves in pleasurable activities, that they shouldn't prepare for eternity, because the tale contradicts eternity, which eases their uneasiness in hearing the gospel of the light. The tale suggests that another theory could potentially be true, and they claim that this theory is true, but the light is a fact, so a mere theory does not replace the bold fact. Disciples following the teaching of reincarnation are essentially worshipping stocks and stones. "Dear universe, will you grant me a second life, a universally promised life? Oh, forget my current existence. A second life is promised, and I need not ask. I may be living my second life now, so I need not pray nor worry. This tale is my source of comfort," that's the tone they use. Irina, don't be a disciple following the teaching of reincarnation. Don't fear the light, don't mistake an unreliable theory for a fact, and don't deceive yourself (deceiving oneself is the stupidest thing a person can possibly do) into thinking that if I were reborn as your daughter, circumstances would change—it makes not the slightest hint of difference: not for our benefit nor for our setback; our circumstances stay identical to this life except that I would be a baby, a

baby that knows nothing, which, believe me, must be worse than this life I live. I do not want to experience torture again—I want to get this life over with as fast as possible, and becoming a baby again would lengthen my time roaming on this soil, which brings me greater amounts of torment, because I’d be deemed an outcast even in your family.”

Irina made no reply; she held Nora’s hand tightly.

“I’ve found a new permanent place of residence; the place offers me more than enough, so you need not worry about my safety. Goodbye.” Nora had extinguished her initial plan of returning to the palace after her beating. She decided to recover beforehand, then give Katya a worthy explanation.

“Wait this once, walk with me in the forest. We’ll relieve stress in connecting with the greenery and the isolation boundary. Slow down, hold my arm, I can help you up.”

Irina extended her arm, helping Nora rise from the moist grass beside the streamside setting they admired, leading her along the riverbank that streamed through the bushes covering the secluded forest entrance. Evergreen shrub leaves rustled melodiously as they traversed the shoreline. Together, the sisters eventually ventured within the boundary separating inclusion and isolation. They trekked deep into the woods with Irina’s arm supporting Nora’s balance until reaching a certain juncture, her aching poppy bruises eased, carried away by the breeze and the dampness; Nora was able to walk independently, in the face of her two tender deaths that she survived.

A small chestnut gure darted behind the plantation promptly. Intrigued, Nora cautiously approached and uncovered the shape to be a cosy cottage, a cottage emerging from a mythological folk tale. Its timber bricked walls and a circular, snug roof, its smoke rising from the chimney, its ivy vines tangling around the arched windows, all closed Nora’s heavy lids.

“This cottage is inhabited: see the smoke billowing out the chimney. A cosy appearance, Irina, I certainly am concerned for the resident, how secluded he lives!”

Paleness taunted over Irina’s cheeks, “pardon me, we ought not interrupt the resident. Our hike ends here.” In a manner Nora couldn’t tell, Irina seemed misleading... rather nervous about a truth she already knew.

“Mana said I was a failed hero before she tried to kill me. Allow me to rescue the resident inside for my last chance of heroic revival. I am very alive but my heroine is dead, and rescuing the damsel in distress may give me a second redemption.”

“Heroes , heroines... not one hero hasn't been accused of portraying the scoundrel. Heroes, in odd manners, are ceaselessly misjudged by those whom they save. A hero is truly a hero if he continues saving his judges even after their dishonour, without the need to be seen. A hero that surrenders is a atterer - merely this and nothing more. This line draws between heroes and atterers. Dusk is falling, we should return... Where are you staying?”

“My horseman left; I'll walk if I can remember the trails.”

“Horseman? Trails? Did you earn your philosophy titles back? The scripts that Olden stole. Where are you acquiring this luxury if not selling the notes? I haven't managed to get my hands on a copy - I would love to read your writings, may I?”

“Not until I die.”

“Oh, a nal death wouldn't take you out, Nora, you'll survive, and you are younger than me - I'll die before you.”

“Good writers die young.”

“Good or ungood, you will live a hundred years as long as I'm alive. I will guard you from the impure end.”

“I read books so wonderful that I dream that I wrote them. Those are not my words, they're other's. I make my own meaning in philosophy, and I've taken a break due to my lack of faith in God. Philosophy is play-acting God and nothing more. To live under one's own morals is the result of atheism and philosophy. They lack so much faith that philosophy saves them, that they cannot trust the Almighty, that I realised I was them. My successful books that are not under my name, burn them. Burn the immorality. My dear sister, by my blood, would you grant me this request? Take down each copy, preach, use fear against them. Fear is a tool and not a foe: fear rejoices one with God, fear is a factor in trust - fear is the beginning of faith: you believe the gospel enough to fear it, that is the beginning. Olden is dead - the rst death took him away, he wasn't a hero.”

“Why do you wish that you wrote another work? Your own is, I believe, splendid.”

“I wouldn’t even sleep if I didn’t order the words correctly.”

The complexity of your psyche bewilders me with ecstasy.”

“Stay ecstatic and fear.”

Under the cover of nightfall, under a moonlit crepuscule, beneath the lunar luminescence forging a path, Irina returned to the hut, while poor Nora, avoiding contact with the Nevadans, departed the village, intending to walk, withstanding the serious bruising, back to the palace without informing Irina of her destination. The labyrinth streets, the buildings that touched the heavens, were recalled by Nora as she repeated a whisper, “I am wounded, but the pain I could not feel.” That street remained alike in her recalls, only now darker and a blanched glow casted around the night stands. She wandered to and fro, wounding up in a bureaucratic maze, lost in the midst of a familiar nowhere, where heavens were touched. Nora quelled the rising tears for hours in the heat of the moon. Subsequently, in a single stroke of fortune, she identified wearily a colossal gate with newly carved doric pillars around the horizon. It had already fallen at dawn.

“Till the sun rises, I shan’t knock.” And so, she rested near the gate. Even hiding her face on the ground didn’t hide the light; uneasiness on the cottage consumed her.

She resolved to leave Katya for one night, vowing to explain reasonably, and she trailed her way back, determined to see the cottage. The cottage occupied each particle in her mind; its uncanny allure compelled her to return. Nora lit a candle as she, its wax melting at her fingertips.

With the faint light she held she ventured into the woods, though fear gripped her arms, curiosity pulled her forward. Her curiosity was satisfied. A peer inside the window, a cloaked figure stirred a copper pot, such simply can't be... She is a faithful lady, she, a paragon of virtue, is incapable of engaging in wearing a wicked cloak, forevermore and never will Nora see her alike to the Mother in a second birth. No, Irina is sleeping soundly in the Nevadans’ hut, she is too delicate to stroll in the forest, her delicacy brought tears to many, that figure is another, such were Nora’s convictions. Nora gathered enough evidence with her eyes and at once hastened on the path leading to the palace, her pulse accelerating. She had alas fallen asleep near the gate outside, cold. The sun had already risen and painted the night.

Part-2-Chapter-1

'Dear Katya Hanım,

Italked to a Cerberus today - the Cerberus talked about Damian. He seemed the closest to a madman in the Nevadans' name. The Cerberus, growling, perching atop my thorax, gripping, setting my heart a re with anguish without equal... ferocious, indeed relentless. My chest weighed. It departed, "misery, misery," I thought he was a three headed miserable beast, carrying the presence of misery, thus leaving, meant misery passed onto me - I fear I would take the presence of clean misery. Mock me not, I see you may be laughing. I've never witnessed an evil presence, I've never known its power ever. The guardian prevents my soul from entering the realm of death, and prevents death from escaping me. His presence I could not lift a nger, his evil presence I was pressured solid, out of air, grasping for breath: he wanted me dead. And yet I cannot die. I survived two deaths. He is scared of light - I have light within me, and I, dare not say I am light, as if saying sh could climb a tree, nay, I saw around me in the perspective of the dead: my family is mad: I have watched them talking to me where I was unpresent, in a manner suggesting a being, a form, screaming my name, calling for comfort, calling for me. I'm convinced that they've gone mad, or I. I'm calm and they're sane, this truth is so factual that it often is neglected. Damian's callings were an unclean presence itself, being the loudest, most immoral, screaming my name. Cerberus' presence served a blockade between its desires wanting me dead and its purpose of keeping me alive, undisturbing its duty, let alone seeking chances in entering beyond one's means. Surely summer will approach, and misery shall wash with the wind, Dear Katya, summer never came. My heart shall be lifted never. In extremity, tragedy can create the best the world has ever seen.

Iwrite this letter to inform you of my departure, and unlike the Cerberus, I shall carry your clean misery in place of passing it forth. You have been a mother to me, Dear Katya, and I will discover a way, a path in which I can make amends. Where to, I am debating, and you mustn't trouble, for I will return after summer arrives.

Yours truly, E.N. Nevadan.

P.S. I passed this decomposed paper I scribbled on to a gatekeeper. He'll pass it on to you, hopefully; don't frown upon me for taking a leave. I only sought after bringing blessings beside your gate. Don't look for Eleanora, Eleanora will knock again in

summer when it arrives. I took my leave, goodbye, and should return bringing blessings.”

Nora, strained of her energy, walked quietly back to the village, unseen by prying eyes, strong exhaustion sleeping on her. Though she longed to return to Katya in the palace where she was cherished, she couldn't shake the pestering sensation that their lesson in meeting each other was nearing its end, seeing that Katya's impatience became more apparent. Nora left before Katya had the chance to oust her, which Nora believed as 'avoiding the damnation from others by sending others damnation'. The letter she had had satisfactory time to pen, complete and deliver forward, ostensibly an excuse, served as a protective cover above her hair, covering her bluing face. She did such a terrible deed out of a good motive - to protect herself and to stop provoking Katya's impatience with her presence, her unnatural nature.

She at once was determined to uncover the uneasy air behind the cottage that had been gnawing at her. She ventured once more into the depth of the forest, the boundary separating inclusion and isolation, avoiding villager contact. Leaves were still, wind had gone, the atmosphere claustrophobic, airless, suffocating, as if walking through a coffin. The walls used to be so wide that she easily lost track, and now the same walls in the forest narrowed tremendously that walking forth was the only option if not turning then withdrawing... Temporary, she says, the widths are the same as previously, Irina is stirring my concern and thus I visualise - dear heavens, nothing altered. Nothing altered, what is one to do? One is unable to change it to its original form - the widths are untouched! "At last," Nora muttered in an undertone, "at last, no turning back." This cottage never left lingering in her unease.

Pushing open the creaking dijon door, a step at once, she granted her desire of entering, greeted by disarrays of unorganised pots and bits of unidentified items scattered haphazardly about. A thick scent of sulfuric acid drunkened her with acrid aroma. Defeating odds by stepping further inside, nestling herself into the cosy confines of the hut, Nora found herself consumed by the wonders of Irina, "last night it was not my sister. She had her form and nothing more. I gathered evidence in seeing her, Irina doesn't indulge in such immorality - she's a moralist. She is too sensitive in the woods without guidance and wouldn't stand an hour without collapse. Irina is innocent, almost like a child. She is treated to a degree where a slight bumblebee disturbance breaks her, leads her groaning, complaining... Even in a hut she is treated greater than

Lady Katya; my sister has a double face if the cloaked thing last night's identity turned out to be... her."

The Cerberus presence fell over her in the armchair. Infrasonic waves vibrated into Nora's ears. "Earache!" Followed by ultrasonic frequencies, "soreness!" Inaudible sounds were heard in her ear.

"Give us your brother," the three black dog heads cried, sonorous.

"That command contradicts your duty, canine," returned the brave Nora who was afraid, "one or three is this thing threatening me?" - "Uncountable." - "Fetch, canine." - "I de ne Greek lore; you, poor Nora, are under the presence of evil, the origin hidden. This property belongs to evil. Surrender to depravity. Otherwise Damian pays the price. Your detested brother taken, you wouldn't mourn, we do a favour in taking him. Surrender and leave, or we pay a favour." - "I don't like Damian, so why would I mourn him? I'm not a stoic and I love him as God does. I leave now, one two three heads."

Suddenly the pestering watchdog blurted out: "demons are real. Demons are the faces you look into. Till summer arrives, till you leave the demon, the demon cannot leave. Demons are almost evil like the faces you see. We are summoned to keep you from entering the dead by a demon, a demon you see."

"I have no interest in entering another dimension. You shan't worry about ensuring my obedience, now stop pestering me."

"Our commandment contradicts: we are summoned by a demon and must obey the commandment we are assigned. Seek a minister for exorcism."

"One, two, three, are a demon in yourself. I needn't any help, canine. I asked for help, I cried for help, but no hand extended to me, so I ceased crying and bore the woe. A wild animal, despite the scarring, sets aside the whining and waiting for aids and sympathy, and carries on easily. That's how to get work done efficiently, because any irritation is bearable as long as nobody comes to help."

"You think we want you dead, no, we want to keep you away without fail."

Nora had exited the cottage and bolted through the width of the forest walls. Somehow the width had increased - she ran neverending straight and no sign of the boundary showed. She looked sideways; she was ensnared in the expanse of eerie trees, unable to

outrun the extending boundary paths. "I am poorly: the atmosphere is spinning in a whirlwind motion. Dear heavens, lessen the woefulness."

Trees had wooden visages lurking in their twisted forms, all of which xated on Nora, compressing her air, su ocating her. Thick fog emerged like a Gothic breath.

At long last she broke free from the expanded width of the compressing forest, sprinting with all her might, and ran further as possible away from the forest cottage. When she crossed the village centre a couple villagers were taken aback by her beaten demeanour, "black blue marks! You're beaten to death and still stand!" She only heard the sounds of howling gusts.

"Are your bruises recovered?" Irina, seemingly conjured from thin air, came to light behind her sister, almost as if she too had exited the boundary just then. Her smile was childlike and showed no knowledge. Nora was convinced that the taunting cottage had nothing to do with Irina, an unsophisticated moralist, a saint. A saint she was that Nora could never be. Not even a fraction of the saintliness was achievable by regular folks that are missing a certain nature she seamlessly mastered.

"My aching had had little in uence and had dissolved long since yesterday. That cosy timber bricked cottage said it had invoked a curse to whoever disturbed its solitude, commanding a creature in myths to guard the unnecessary. The owner(I believe the thing that I saw was the righteous owner) lives an uncolored existence consisting of a singular touch of grey - he's like the old, the deceased, the antique persons linking back to centuries - the old eras saw the world in black and grey, how beautiful, how neglected."

"Wandering in isolation is a dangerous pursuit. Need I explain further?"

"No. I have not a place to sleep tonight, Irina, a poor stepchild is the worst role to take."

Irina made a sigh and stared at Nora, looking comparable to an earth mole, "I know."

Nora had nearly blurted out a request for shelter but seeing that Irina was happy in her own roof, observing Irina's reluctance to do more than give sympathy, she opted to navigate solutions independently. "I forgot that I had an alternative. Anyhow, digressing, you should read and understand everything. If a good writer still needs to introduce themselves and explain, they're ungood - you should read and understand

everything there is to know about the piece and the creator. Passion, ah, the summer that hesitated to arrive is passion. For me, writing is a form of prayer because I am visualising, confirming, and validating what I understand.”

“You talk wise beyond your years, remember, too much knowledge can age you prematurely - you become a dead essence that has consciousness, an essence that death. Not even a soul, simply an essence.” “Let us dine at the distant diners. I have a few

too many spare coins, I insist. Mana and

Patera and our brothers and sisters, do they not fancy my presence?”

Irina delayed a return, slightly turning her head, whispering: “no.” “I see, Ele... I’ll leave the rest unsaid, I see no necessity to elaborate. I fathom their choices.”

“You look so sad, I feel terrible. Why are you so sad?” “You saying this is what’s saddening

me, and the matter alone is unsaddening. If you

perceive me saddened, consider your sister’s approach and if you really know her sturdy, unshakeable demeanour. She is immune to diseases, especially sensitivity.” “Perchance,

you demonstrate resilience just to save face.” “Silence, simpleton. I take my words back:

we shall not dine. We shall stay closer to your

blood family. Mana mustn't look at me and I don't appreciate your... Gosh, Irina, you're a child. You're older than me and you're a child. I've let slip the confession I restrained; it is a sensation untearable when people hear what should be said. Especially the obvious flaws one could easily point out but refrain, then a brave man alas indicates such.” “About

me? I'm so lost. Huh, I am so sorry, I had no idea!” “A classic scheme you take part in, a

sole demonstration to save face. Don't rub

confusion across your face to prevent shame from doing so.”

“A child is in any aspect different from me. I thought you were my favourite sibling,

Nora, was I a placeholder? I want to talk to you about how I think, not a false flattery, charming but false. I want to judge you now, give me your hand. We are each one of us sinners and that title is written across our face, we cannot hide, we can love.”

“Judge yourself before judging me. You were the reason I was disliked: you stepped on me to lift yourself. I love you, keep in mind, I don’t love your falseattery you give the community. Ach, you give no falseattery, I... and no words. Forgive me, my dear, dear Irina, I became aware that my sentiments are shallow; you are my best liked sibling as you are the sweetest. None compares to your empathy you offer me assertively; I’m a naive child who should learn your nature.”

“Thank you. I forgive. I grant sincere amnesty.”

Notwithstanding Nora's desire to continue conversing her confessions to Irina, she found herself fuming. Irina's persistent denial of each revelation had in conclusion brought the ranting to a close.

“Think, you suffer but so do I and Mana, and the twins... Peasants suffer a lack of funds in this empire: the leaders give not the slightest donation to their people for formal education. Now we are fortunate to be well educated in our position.”

“Well educated but you don’t understand historical usages behind political and military leaderships. I say that peasants, as a whole, are fueling the leaders’ power to take over them. A certain lady in an imperial palace might stand against the ideal protocols and norms, and on the contrary, follow their guidance. How can a military leader command an empire that does not agree with his dictates? ‘Threaten them with death!’ Threats - what’s that? You forget that nobody is willing to assist him in doing so, hence his banishment, the overthrowing of leaders. See, the point is, even leaders have standards and peasants, outnumbering rulers, take a significant role, as a whole, of course. Everyone can be rulers if everyone chooses to disobey each other. The problem is: peasants obey particular persons in high status whose fortune was obtained from peasants themselves. The system is out of order... You had better had no story at all than a story dedicated to another. You know, if you were faced with a choice between a thousand liras and one of your arms, you might initially think, “Oh, I'm unlucky, I'm poor,” and so on. The neglected truth is, your being is worth more than a thousand, ten thousand liras. Think about it - you're gifted with limbs and abilities that surpass Ottoman coins’ limitations. If your arm were amputated out of the blue and physicians offered you a thousand liras to restore it, wouldn't you be so dumbfounded as to gladly give up the liras for a part of yourself? After all, what are liras? An agreement for good possessions; you already possess something more valuable than that. Absurdism, stoicism... Nihilism is a foe to both. Nothing in our ages is more pointless

than nihilism. They take no chances, no belief, no belief in themselves, no faith in the Almighty. Too frightened to choose a culture, they result to none, and the 'none' receives a title for being nothing, which really doesn't exist. Philosophy is a childish concept where children ask and adults don't answer - because subjectiveness is unanswerable. There goes Damian with the twins. You have been wonderful, dear Irina, my illustrating is done, my leaving is planned."

"Goodbye, use herb pastes on your wounds until they heal."

Amidst the relentless onslaught of dust-laden winds blowing fiercely under the unforgiving scorch of the sun, relentlessly stinging Nora's exposed flesh and obscuring her vision with fine particles settling stubbornly upon her lashes, irritating her eyes to no end, to no avail; despite the searing heat causing brick red rashes to bloom upon her skin and the disorienting effect it wrought upon her senses, there was not even the faintest hint of self pity upon her countenance nor any semblance of truth to the speculative murmurs swirling around her - instead, we steadfastly attest to her unwavering vigor, her remarkable adaptability to adversity, and the somewhat awed yet steadfastly reliable wisdom she has embraced, though not without its imperfections; her teachings, boldly adopted at the risk of societal condemnation, serve as a testament to Nora's unyielding commitment to her beliefs, yet for the common pedestrians attempting to grasp the depths of her philosophy, their premature judgments often cloud their ability to discern between the simplicity of a fool's happiness and the profound depth of true knowledge, falsely equating the former as superior, more vibrant, and less burdensome than the latter; Nora, as the reader might compare to a shooting star whose ascent was halted prematurely, who failed thus fell, courageously ventures into the metaphorical 'soiled house' of societal norms with her boots already marred by the metaphorical soil, symbolizing their inherent impurity, and though she may sometimes tread barefoot upon their sanctified ground, bearing the scars on of her past sins etched upon her hands like mirror shards that reflect the stark reality of human frailty and redemption, she is unjustly judged by those who playact as judges without due process, condemning her with punishments devoid of evidence and sentences devoid of justice, thereby revealing the pervasive corruption that lies transparently exposed, without the slightest veil of opacity to shield it from scrutiny; forgiveness, a virtue demanding a resolute and unwavering mindset, proves elusive even to Nora, whom we honour not only for her noble aspirations and mostly righteous actions but also for her occasional lapses in judgement driven by circumstance rather than ill-intention—yet

even as she navigates the complexities of familial love, particularly her deep affection for her eldest sister who appears as a steadfast guardian watching over her every step, withholding secrets that she deems necessary to protect Nora yet perhaps lacking the wisdom to share for the greater good; we acknowledge, despite any discomfort our assertions may evoke in the reader, that each of us, including the reader themselves, is entitled to an opinion rooted in reasoned justification, for everyone possesses the right to their beliefs provided they can substantiate them without fear of being invalidated or dismissed by those claiming superior wisdom and a more accurate grasp of the precision of the overall truth. The curse that philosophy gives is that its students think deeply. Vast majorities of people never actually deeply think, and that is another curse. However, the curse of philosophy often limits one's abilities although it is boundless: metaphysical realities outside human perceptions, which even great minds like Virgil cannot reach, moulds its students' minds into a one dimensional way of thinking - either always logical or always irrational. Metaphysical questions are dangerous when their students start to think about an answer. They will have no chance to see life again without always giving in to condensed precision or abstract details, over dissecting every answer, and that is the curse of philosophy - it shapes one's skull into a specific formation of a one dimensional thinking style of logical and irrational, never free-minded. It is like marionetting one's own skull. Philosophy is an open topic, but my, it closes one's skull.

Along the street she was fraught with challenges that weakened her strength to carry on wandering, yet with each step, enduring the oppressive heat like a wild animal that never complains, she pressed on, driven by mentality and the urgency to seek shelter. Sweat formed on the brow, mingling with the dust that clung on her skin. Pedestrians watched the little bruised girl walk to and fro surprisingly. They wondered what attracted her travelling thither. As she neared the shelter of a nearby public shop she wanted Katya to summon her back, away from the open. Nora abandoned her quest of finding a home anew, which was unethical and dangerous. She memorised the pathway leading to Katya's palace.

Arriving once more at the same colossal gates of the Katya Palace after vowing to see (she said: "I don't seek pleasure in provoking her impatience, I want to see"), Nora paused briefly to catch her breath. With determination showing in her features she knocked, the sound echoing through the season that was not yet summer.

"Nora, tell me what you thought about leaving. Oh! My child, you are covered in poppy bruises and... the heat rashes! Come inside at once." Katya was astonished by Nora's

beaten appearance. "I sent you to your village, wouldja tell me the contents? What did they do to you!"

Nora, growing embarrassed, cried, "I asked myself whether my burden was worth passing forth... I shouldn't have left you, if you indeed found me amusing."

Summoning servants for treatments and leading her inside, Katya interjected, "Nora, your skull is lled with questions you consider. By leaving, you risked letting yourself die over the stupidity of prospects you thought you wouldn't be able to think. Is thinking more important than breathing? Develop a simpleton's joy and think when the moment's right, not dedicating your entire skull to become a jug for it! If other pedestrians are not great thinkers like you, why is it that you don't want to be free yourself from yourself and stop setting limitations by this string of philosophy that's marionetting you? I say this but really, you marionette yourself. You pull your own strings, and now you can't escape pulling, to the point the strings are pulled unconsciously. The strings are now part of your circulation, which is di cult to undo. Ah, philosophy, a topic without answers. Searching for an answer promises to make one go mad. Every statement is a theory, every theory an experience, experience - a guess. Why then do our Greek fathers take credit and why do you look beaten, my poor Nora, I can tell my Father to summon a trial."

"I've stopped. Philosophy is the devil's work. It is the atheist's super cial light they've completely blabbered into a non-existing dimension's existence. Refrain from interacting with the village; my sister doesn't know that I know you and neither do my family by name. In addition I don't fancy witnessing piles of red hands belonging to whom I roamed with. Thank you dearly for caring about my unimportant needs and I promised to bring forth blessings in summer, but it never came, so I returned with clean misery. Forgive me, I planned di erently, fate..." "Quiet, it's quite enough, you ought to

take some rest. Wrong room, this way, there, lay

there on the feather lled mattress in your chamber and our maids will bandage you. Say, does the warm light heat you? Are the patterns on the walls too complex to comprehend? Are the ancient bedside tables too near? No, Calliope, bandage it slower. Sorry, Nora, as you were saying?"

“I’m perfectly calm and you’re sane. Trouble not, Lady Katya, you are in splendid control over distresses. A home for the poorly and the ill is a wonderful idea I had since this injury, do you reckon we create hospitality?”

“Rest. Shut your goober and rest in sound.”

“Have I told you that a disturbing presence is chasing me from something I have no interest in? In mythology, traditionally, the fearsome dog has negative and positive qualities, serving a supernatural ‘God’ that does not exist, only in fairytales do the nonsensical legends seem factual; in my encounter it doesn’t serve traditional roles, it rather is a form of evil on an assigned duty, and that breaks the common knowledge we Greeks have about the three headed thing. The factor that manifested its appearance was a cottage I entered out of sheer curiosity. The thought about the cottage before entering had pestered me, disturbed me, and I had had enough - I satisfied my dying yearnings one night, stepping into the forest guided by moonlight. My moralist sister Irina, according to my evidence that I stared long enough to make out every detail to confirm the identity, indulged in inexplicable activities. She and I spoke the next day and she eased all my suspicion, but what could explain the cloaked figure? The width of the forest then felt like laying in a coffin, already on my deathbed, only a tent of consciousness left within. My curiosity shifted to the figure - I must uncover it and I must return to that cottage someday.”

“Heat messes with your mind. It increases irritability and suicide likeability, did you know? Extreme heat affects behaviour, increases aggression, and you had better rest because your sunburn is messing with you. Let gentle Calliope put medicine on you without your blabbering. A little less tight around the wrist, Calliope, tie it lighter, yes, exactly. And the arena is purified, now odourless.”

“On my sister’s part, tell me about contradictions between peasants and leaders.”

“Leaders are born. No, leaders are not in their high status by choice, rather it’s that they were born into a certain family for their insurance. Fate prepares everything for us without our say. The concept of marionetting plays a role: peasants agree on a leader and fear the leader, then the leader has control over his subjects. His subjects obey his commands, saying that if they disobey, other subjects will kill them, hence they follow generations of ‘leaders’ in the same family as the previous. See, if the vast majority of peasants dislike a leader, they obey, because they’ve adopted the deception that a single

individual holds supernatural powers. But what is a leader without his subjects? What is Alexander The Great without his army? Just a man. What is an army without Alexander The Great? A bunch of men. Isn't a bunch of men stronger than one man? Surely you'll disagree and speak ill of my points, saying that an intelligent man is cleverer than an army of imbeciles, but what can Alexander The Great do if his army disobeys - he is merely just a man. Leaders have no supernatural control - they rely on peasants and peasants rely on marionetting themselves. You can see how peasants pull their own strings and pull their leaders' strings. Believe me, Nora, dear child, I, as a leader, fear the day that peasants open their eyes. Democracy is a fatal thing: it leads to massacres and entitled foolish beliefs, and that is why I stand here to watch them pulling their strings, making sure that, as a respectable human, they don't erupt democracy and hurt the social environment, as well as the culture, although my power is limited as I am not the heir. Even Alexander The Great, a man who conquered Anatolia, Syria, Phoenicia, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Afghanistan, and India, possibly the cleverest man of all ancient and current culture, dies. Status does not determine fate. Status does not make a man immortal. A man remains a man despite his accomplishments. Actually, he did not conquer the land, the peasants did and he takes credit - link back to what I said about marionetting. Communism is a fair utopian society but to achieve it contains many risks that could potentially alter human nature. Even if it were successfully reached, when peasants are equals and leaders are the marionettists, the puppeteers, when communism is within our grasp after centuries since ancient ages, the world would be grey - each party would be poorer than they would be if the money hadn't been distributed impartially. The beauty of the dystopian world is that not every party has their desires fulfilled. You understand the complex concept, Nora?"

"Which is why civilians suffer the consequences of others' mistakes. If a leader stumbles, his subjects are impacted. Wickedness lies everywhere. Say a man is punished for committing a crime against a second man, which, ultimately, the first man apologises to the second man after trial. That apology, I assure you, is superficial. They think: 'I'll win the forgiveness and approval and get it over with quickly. I committed this against the second man intentionally therefore I feel no guilt.' Intentional crimes are never regretted, only do they resent the consequences. We are given free will, we don't own ourselves, consequently, we are responsible for each decisive or circumstantial action."

"I talk, you listen in your sickbed. Did you know that I'm actually a descendant of an ancient goddess and Alexander the Great? He's my, I don't know how many generations

back, grandfather, and while I'm speaking ill of him, it's the truth I outpour. The goddess, not literally but a title, centuries before he was born, bestowed upon all her descendants a touch of beauty and power, allowing them to mend their destinies. That is why, I believe, our bloodline abided traditionally Greek mightiness throughout the centuries, unaltered. While the pride in our bloodline stands tall, while our fortunes (I am grateful for my position, to clarify matters) and comfortableness are satisfied, the drama of marionette puppets still pulls us (my goddess ancestor must be disappointed that her bestowed blessing did not differentiate common norms from ancient norms). This is a serious concept, Nora, for your age."

"With much knowledge, I age. Sometimes knowledge is a philosophical curse that deprives one from foolishness, for after all, foolishness is a crucial element to happiness. If a leader is physically stronger, should his subjects fear?"

"Are they immune to a dagger? Your earlier point was that civilians suffer the consequences of other's mistakes, correct me. Parties should suffer their own consequences and not others'. This is unachievable - we suffer consequences of free will every moment."

"They shouldn't suffer the consequences of their actions rather what happens happens - beyond the limitations of human capability. If the work of k was tangibly sincere, all mortals would be in a state of woe and left with melancholy - a testament to their actions (the reason is that every mortal action is a gesture of wickedness and selfishness, including kindness). Where is good will bred? In knowledge or in faith? If knowledge was the unfavoured deed that was gained after eating the fruit, another unfavoured deed, why is it that we need knowledge to possess faith? If we were fools without a tent of knowledge, neither would we have faith; this is undeniable. Social problems are unsound. A man had a problem with his leg, and his friends cut it off, saying 'we've gotten rid of your problem. Thank us.' What can he say back to that?"

2

Several days following, Gale visited. A golden hue was across the landscape, the sun below the horizon.

“Good day, Gale,” Nora greeted, “these days I have an urge to go back to the cottage, not to uncover the cottage, rather to uncover the thing I saw, if it was my sister. May I ask you to do a reading on the matter?”

“Since Katya is unpresent in this room, I’ll tell you the unclean gure I saw. I con rm your suspicions and am glad to have unmasked her before you. I could not stand seeing her stand by you in a serene manner while she suppresses a truth she knew. It has now been con rmed that, when I sensed evilness in a spiritual form, the ‘thing’ was her. The more it appears vivid to you, the clearer it is for me to con rm.”

“But how is it possible? Both of you practise the same arts, yet she is labelled as evil and you are not. What am I supposed to do about this? I need to go back and see her.”

“Haven't you forgotten that she is dominant over you? A false prophet has the most in uence. I did not know the identity of the vision until hitherto.”

“She is under the devil’s in uence, Gale, she is the Great Blue Heron. But my, she is my problem and comfort.” Nora began sobbing and stumbled over articulating her words from disbelief. “My theories were factual, much to my despair. You need to go with me to the cottage where she performs her sorcery.”

“Tell a servant to inform Katya of our withdrawal. And... don’t confront your sister directly but ask roundabout questions and trick her into admitting, if she will. If not, we quite simply leave. Now, whither are we bound to head?”

When Gale ordered a carriage and both hopped on, Pluto and Aaron inquired where they were headed to, to which Gale answered that she had promised Nora to show her her merchant cabin, then the horse was whipped and started trotting. Throughout the entire journey, Nora's heart pounded violently, her body rigid with tension.

Finally when they exited the carriage upon arrival at the village, Irina was the rst to see them both and ran to them, giving Nora a hug and Gale a kind greeting, which terri ed Nora. Gale politely asked her to take a stroll within the forest, to admire the scenery as she introduced herself. They were led into the woodland; after questioning Irina while

strolling, they reached the cottage. It was a tense situation as they contemplated on entering. This encounter with the trees, unlike Nora's previous visit, had average widths apart and wasn't suppressing to be within its atmosphere.

Irina, still maintaining a moral demeanour and bewildered at their indirect confrontations, said soothingly, eliminating any doubt: "are you alright? What's going on and why do you seem suspicious to me? Your friend Nora: where did you meet her and are you currently residing with her? Tell me about your living in a different house, are you receiving safe guidance and living within warm walls like here? You look much more healed and less bruised, thank you for taking care of my sister, Gale. You say that you are a merchant? Incredible! Foreign trade industries are very intriguing. Oh, your foreign trade is informal, that is more incredible, it adds higher charisma and intrigue. I'd love to be involved in foreign interactions in the near subsequent years."

Her convincing tone would have eliminated doubts if it weren't for Gale's profound visionary readings. She looked at Irina with a sceptical glance and at once declared her departure, "thank you for your time today, except that we are bound to move. Take a bow, Nora, we won't pester the resident inside, we won't disturb its solitude, and adieu, Irina, I will take good care of your sister. You have been perfectly adequate to us and our interrogations today, interrogations - shall I say? Rather our needs... and au revoir!" Gale, her back hunched from an old age, took Nora's hand.

"Wait this once, I trust that you will take good care of her, and(having undergone your elderly and sordid visage, I esteem you; I hold you in high regard) give her warm walls, warm bread, regardless of our unfamiliar and new, quite sceptical relationship. I hand her over to your palms. Oh, you forget that I am leading you outside the woodland, Gale."

In that case, Irina led them to the exit of the verdant woods, leaves rustling beneath their steps, soil mudding their sandals. From afar, before the naked eye, even Nora, cynical on Irina's behalf about how she maintained a winsome reputation and appealed as a saint without ever working on the fields but solely by speaking non-ill words like any other villager, even she was convinced by Irina's sly air - how she was innocent as a lamb and to speak ill against her would be a wolf-like deed. A wolf in a sheep disguise was a coherent label given upon Nora, especially by the gullible villagers, therefore, Nora avoided speaking ill. She refrained from thinking before speaking, as no one else did and never faced such labelling. However, if she disobeyed, she would be instantly labelled - a

situation she found unpleasant to contemplate. Yet, in spite of Nora being convinced, Gale, under the eyes of another lady who practises the arts, under the sway of the devil's influence, and in spite of proclaiming that she indulges in the arts for good outcomes and not working for the end, observing Irina felt akin to reading a child's tale - easy to understand. Little frogs leapt and crickets chirped around while they walked, resembling a fairytale scene.

"Thank goodness we've finally made it out of the forest. Nora, I'll miss you dearly. Farewell. Oh, did you know that Herman Georgiou and Othella are going mad? Indeed, ever since we informed him of Olden's death, which you proclaimed, is that right, my dear Nora? Clyde fled elsewhere in an attempt to seek escapism, away from his father and his father's sister, his stepmother, and the remaining Georgiours are bawling that they will banish the horsemen that took Olden. We told them that we didn't know much about the contents in which they took their child and the death method as you gave limited information... Am I mistaken, Nora, he died, correct? "

"You are not mistaken." She was succumbing in guilt that the tragedy happened because of her and her inability to speak against the execution when the boy was still awake, animated. She had broken apart and smudged soil across a complete family. Numbness nagged her. Below the shallow surface, she concealed her guilt and restricted her speeches.

"Pray, pray that our Saviour would save him. Raise your hands, Nora."

She did not raise her hands in fear of revealing the faint marks of self sin.

"Tell me more about the justification behind his death. Describe the magnitude of the problem. The poor Georgiours deserve an explanation. Dear Lord, I pray..."

At that stage, hearing Irina's pestering, Nora combusted. "Religion has caused misery in every era; religion is a substitute for an excuse, and you put trust in religion? A disbeliever knows better: a deed shouldn't contradict prayers. Religion is one mythology, that's why you can't trust religion - you can only trust Jesus Christ." With that, Nora raised both hands broadly. "Olden was executed by the pasha of our empire; rather his daughter summoned the execution... He was condemned of fraud along with hundreds of other condemned men, who were killed with inhumane methods in the arena for entertaining the audiences.

“Religion and believing in Jesus Christ are parallel subjects?”

“Religion is worshipping a sacred, distant ideal. The stocks and stones they worship are unable to offer an intimate relationship. Religion is not believing - you need a close relationship with our Lord, which differs from religion. Religion cannot save you, only he can. I’m not religious, I’m purely saved. Religion teaches its students to do good deeds for rewards, but heaven is not a reward for the good, it’s a gift for the forgiven. If it were a reward for the good, none of us would make it there. This is why you can’t worship stocks and stones and call it belief in God. Just as it is with love: love is not a feeling. One can’t enjoy the pleasantness of something and call it love. This is why love seems harsh - because most of the time, it isn’t in the right forms. Love never fails, and if it does, it isn’t and was never love at all. Actual love is levitating and dissolves all misery. It is easy to mistake pleasure for love, Irina, remember that love is not a feeling and religion is not a relationship nor belief.”

“I see.”

“Digressing, are the Karas’ settled? Is their ancient feud with you Nevadans sorted and did Ophelia Karas overcome the loss of her former husband? Before I left (leaving and entering a rich lifestyle was my fear which I embraced), I recall that she scarcely left her cabin.”

“Ophelia stopped mourning months ago and continued her tobacco pipe smoking addiction. She brings the hookah near the campfire at sunsets, where she prefers to roast chicken and inhale. Her new husband, did you know she remarried? - he says that her lips tasted like cigars, the richness clung onto his teeth, and she was divine. It seems as if Dillon’s nonappearance affected the community marginally, and that Rebekka’s murder was forgotten. What happened to Rebekka, I wonder... by the by? I heard that she was punished with water torture, a torture device promised to permanently make one go mad, and that her trial was finished months ago, yet, I’ve heard no updates. You want to hear about Ophelia’s grown children? Oh, Adonis Karas works on the farms as usual, and Seb Karas went berserk over reading what he believes to be Olden’s writings, saying that they were a blow to the head. How foolish was he to praise a dead man who had nothing to do with the manuscript and to barely recognise the writer, let alone glance at her! May the merciful Almighty forgive him. Me, I refuse a thousand times.”

Forgive, forgive - only forgiveness can bring forth peace. I've done terrible deeds in moments of weakness, forgetting my morals and lashing out at irritating persons. The sting of guilt afterward is significant, catastrophically wounding, because it serves as a reminder that the deed cannot be reversed, and that others may remember you for that one deed forevermore. This guilt is among the most potent emotions a human can feel, and if one is not offered forgiveness, one could be led to madness. In fact, how an individual reacts to another person's bad deeds is a testament to their own mindset. If someone chooses not to forgive, then that in itself is a bad deed. The consequences the guilty person faces are not a punishment to him, but rather the bad deeds of others that are overlooked. A lasting impact is caused by a foolish person wanting to do bad, or by a person whose results differed from his intentions. Anyhow, only pure evil deserves bitter grudges, and pure evil does not exist in mortal existence, only in spiritual forms. Therefore, everyone deserves forgiveness because we all are in agony and in need of redemption."

"I already found peace in not forgiving." "That peace is superficial, dear, you may enjoy the

burdensome weight on your

shoulders and detest the impression of weightlessness and buoyancy, but your

perception is not classified as peace, rather it is a superficial deception. Even if you refuse

to forgive whoever in order to defend me, you ought to forgive them, and you can still

beware of them - you are not required to tolerate them..." "Goodbye, Irina, leave Nora in

my hands without doubt." Gale interjected, waving to

the carriage driver. "Coming, miss," he addressed, whipping the horse.

"Bye, Gale. Remember to visit me often and bring Nora." Nora said, "make sure the

Nevadans do not see me, for they think I am dead. They do

not know that I, a weakling, survived death two times over."

The horse galloped immediately after Nora and Gale hopped on the carriage seats which

were covered in architectural gold. The hand carved designs were complex, characterised

by ancient Greek symmetries and harmony. Arms rests were adorned with light silk and

the ceilings were delicately painted in inspiration of the Renaissance style by Russian

peasants. Inside, the passengers sighed a deep breath of relief after a long hike. Under the

sunlight, the Crete horse's Goliath hooves pounded against the cobblestone streets,

elegantly propelling the vehicle forward, leaving a trail of dust behind its trailing path.

Irina managed to shout: “Goodbye!” before the sophisticated and stylish carriage diminished into the distant. A picturesque countryside landscape shifted into an urban city.

“We were waiting for your arrival, Nora, Gale, how was the merchant cabin experience?” Katya greeted upon their return, beside Aaron. “Come indoors. Aaron’s friend, Luke, one of the executioners, do you remember? He prepared white wines for us.”

“Give me and Nora a moment to converse, Katya,” Gale closed the door after entering a room. “Your sister is condemned to be a Great Blue Heron, as you call it, I can see the hints like looking through a transparent glass shard. She practises my arts, too.”

“She is a witch! She is a witch! She is under the devil’s influence, she depicts his immorality!”

“Hush, listen, I am greater in witchcraft and longer in experience. She traded her soul in exchange for a reputable name: she signed a sacred letter of contract in forbidden ink with bloodshed from an innocent whom she sacrificed. Listen, I have a deal: I can turn her heart into stone. Shall we make this deal and proceed?”

“No, she cannot give away her soul - she doesn’t own it. You can’t sell something you don’t even own. I believe that she can be offered redemption and grace can reverse the chemical intoxication in her head.”

“She understands grace better than you, she simply doesn’t pay any care to live what she preaches. To reverse the chemical intoxication is a tough task while turning her heart into stone can prevent further mischief she plans on conducting. One mischief she conducted, and this caused an astronomical effect on your personal life, is that she obstructed your pathway with boulders while maintaining a trustworthy image, invisible to the naked eye.”

“No, let her think that we don’t know anything and let her live a falsehood, if it means she’ll live, for to change her is beyond repair. The intoxication occupied her blood completely - impossible to make changes...”

3

Aaron opened the door; Luke and an unfamiliar man stepped in, “this is Luke’s acquaintance Helios. He is disabled in physical abilities and that does not prevent him from exceeding mathematical theories. I wonder why he is limited yet so accomplished to such a degree.”

“My honest response in my humble judgement,” Nora said, glancing at Helios and his sti limb movements(Helios waved), “is that he, Helios, was born with intelligence. He is born with everything he has right now, clearly he was destined to exceed in mathematical theories. His limited physical abilities are evidence that support my point.”

“But that can’t be! He is disabled and has no chance. He is cleverer than an average healthy Greek - this means he is dedicated and steadfast, putting his entire focus on this subject so that he becomes single-minded.”

“Perfectly just so! You pointed out that an average Greek without disabilities isn't cleverer than he. They don’t have this ability even though they are double his potential, doesn’t this sound ridiculous? This is because they were not born with dedication and were not destined to excel in mathematics. Helios defeated all odds because he was born with this ability. Your practice does not de ne your intelligence, rather it’s your birth-fate and destiny.”

“You speak nonsense and I shan’t prove you wrong. Anyhow, he is an accomplished professor.”

Helios, a bearded man in his twenties standing at average height with olive skin and suffering from a wasting disease that contributes to his frail physique, along with functional limitations, and wrapped in white towels, commented, “I agree with both statements for I have no argument that can prove either false. I have arrived here with the sole purpose of making your acquaintance and no other intent, folks.” His harsh, raspy voice resembled Spade’s.

Luke invited the parties to sit around a table while he handed white wine in glasses and cups of sheen gold. “Palace was odoriferous and now unscented, óuf! Thankfully the place cleared before my distant acquaintance’s arrival. As of today, our professor Helios

takes precedence in discussions. He is presenting a revolutionary, backed up by sources and mathematical reasoning, notions.”

“Much obliged, Luke, it is certainly so! My initiatives are yet to be distributed. Folks, I embarked on a project in hopes of raising an enhanced empire of the Ottoman. I examined the patterns of the empire and discovered that farming is the base support of higher authorities, since food sources originate and stem from farming. Afterwards, I used basic mathematics to calculate the farmers-to-aristocrats ratio, which revealed that the farmer population is decreasing rapidly, whereas the elites multiply, and I turned up to inform this problem. Of course, I came with solutions, eh? First, before our base support diminishes, we must use our fortunes to improve rural infrastructures including building more hospitals instead of churches, improve rural areas to increase the likelihood of viability, and ensure that water sources are content. Providing modernised techniques to increase productivity and income may play a crucial part, as well as planning guidelines for generations to come; promoting rural development and reducing urban centres are beneficial - this method guarantees safeguard for the aristocrats’ fortunes.

In favour of the aristocrats, defined by fortune or triumphs, especially pashas and his kin like you folks, my directly targeted audiences, implemented a new policy and enforcing it on the empire sounds to be a solution. Teach this policy to the young to nurture their natures. Managing community growth... I say it is time to behead the controversial conversationalists that could potentially serve as a threat to our revolution. Greed, I tell you, is immeasurable. Say that you bring a certain amount of food in front of a dog, an overeater with no built-in mechanism for fullness, and they will eat the given amount without further hunger. But if you give a dog a large amount of food they cannot bear, they would eat excessively, swallowing until the last crumb is eaten, because they don’t know whether they are full or not. This breed, mostly domesticated, is notorious for their tendency of eating with a great, large appetite, and the same can be said and greed - we don’t know when we are full or not and keep eating until the last crumb is gone, to finish the entire dish. A boundary needs to be set.”

“Bravo, Helios,” Katya clapped and the rest imitated subsequently. Aaron announced, “a new policy is considered by us.”

“Much thanks, aristocrats, I must take my leave and stop pestering your drinking. I’m only jestful, I do need to exit and take my rest in a patient room. After all, I came solely

to make your acquaintance and no other intent. Please assure me that you unreservedly bring this solicited policy to light, to fruition, to success before I die, for I am nearing my completion and have not long left. It is my dying wish, I would greatly be glad to die in sound, and the one ensurance is to bring the success to light. Promise to satisfy my one solicitation before I die.”

“Good,” Nora remarked, sipping a glass of white wine.

Nora remained in awful suspense: she sat on edge while twitching her fingers the entire meeting, limiting her speeches. Shortly thereafter, the gathering concluded, and the participants were excused after the mathematics professor’s departure. Gale waited until Katya and her brothers exited the wine room to speak to Nora.

Gale was on the verge of opening and speaking to Nora, even gesturing to do so, but Nora anticipated her, understood immediately, and lethargically expressed, pouring herself another glass of white wine, ‘cease, I wouldn’t love for you to engage with Irina in any manner. I’d be spiritless and weary - I’d be visually grey. I also wouldn’t love for you to mention subjects concerning this topic anew.”

“I consent. You are free to make requests whenever you uncover the truth behind my words of wisdom. You’ll see the everlasting impacts she is causing, and by then, pray that there will be enough reversible time.”

“She is a witch, and so are you, despite your proclaiming to use the devil’s arts for good outcomes to society and individuals. Excusing practising such means excusing every other witchcraft artist under the misleading guide.”

Several days following the events, Nora saw an open opportunity and spoke with Katya.

“Lady Katya, when is the new policy established? Does it include banishing witchcrafters, relative to the thirteenth century? The accusations of witchcraft, I know, depend on place and political guides, evolving as it seems. Our country has continuously set the accused a re for centuries, and likely, the culture would persist, although the seriousness is decreasing and Greece’s culture is changing rapidly in our era. We’ve spoken about starting a revolution and never started, so is it happening after making Helios’ acquaintance?”

“Policies are staying as previously, only now, I’ll be sure to summon constructors to form more hospitals. The revolution isn’t happening any time soon - it increases political

freedom and leads to massacres, because it could end up horribly wrong, unlike the planned results. Plus, my Father's power as the head of an empire is limited, there are other pashas with more influence, and I am unable to adjust our current civilizations and societal norms - norms of humanity."

"I regarded you highly, Katya. Nobody knows me so well - they strike me at my downfall. I don't blame them, they probably suffer more than I. Nobody knows them so well. You, much esteemed, I wouldn't ridicule you. Do what suits your wisdom."

Returning to her room, Nora stumbled twice. She closed the door and contemplated on her mattress in a slouched position, distressed, dreaming awake. She rose promptly then absent-mindedly leaned against the antiquated pattern wallpaper, smeared with gold and accented in blood red. Sighing, she grabbed an old leather covered book from the miniature cherry wood bookshelf and skipped through the pages, her left hand on her forehead. Then she tore a blank page from the disintegrating old book.

"A n al letter

Dear Katya Hanım,

Among which, the shoulders I leaned. I saw grey, it was she who cut my hand, and outpoured colour, coloured my grey. My, may the universe align on an encountering intersection in which dust twilights on a crepuscule... may our parallel paths meet in a parallel realm where dimmed stars twinkle. Pray, the shoulders I leaned never shrugged, never at all. Ah, forevermore forth, a n al letter.

Stay, lovely lady, sit. Sit, the dark be grey, but in grey I do not see. No grey I see, in dark, I see red of colour. Sit, sit - be stood. Stand, convex me, your fate. Convex, stay. Stay, lovely lady, sit.

All is tough and the solution is freedom of mind. However, a free mind is among the most difficult to acquire, even when a piece of unimportant paper is given to release reflections that are held, we still think hard and hold onto toughness. We strive for artisticness free-mindedly but we wound up limiting ourselves.

I wound up penning whom I love in forms of poetry I see myself written, by hands of whom I love, but the hands are my own. To be written by whom I treasure under sun rays dimmer than one's own stare is but a dream within my own poetry."

Nora slipped this letter she penned into the leather covered book and left it to marinate on the cherry wood bookshelf forevermore, extracting the life from within her creations. When you completely resign to hope and expectations, it becomes up to others whether they are willing to save your works or burn them. In the majority of cases, others are absent-minded and would cause a wreckage.

Following the days of clean misery in doubt, Nora put on another year to her age, and Katya extended her congratulations, proposing to host a soiree. Nora's astounding response startled her: expressing her objection to the kindly offered gesture, saying: "this tradition is not a widespread, mainstream, nor formalised custom. While there certainly are exceptions among the aristocrats in regions in our empire such as here, among the elites, I generally stand closer to the commoners than I do the blue bloods. Don't give in to self-led mistakes and think that I decline your offer to belittle you, no, bullshit, I sincerely appreciate your thoughtful recommendations and the consideration you have shown towards me from the start. I must respectfully decline the proposal to host the soiree, as I wish to avoid any potential inconvenience or complication, and I don't think myself a blue blood. I was born a peasant and my blood is the peasant blood." "What

blood do peasants have - red? So do I. We do need to cut into our skin and extract a little bit of blood to paint over the greyness of our worlds once in a while, you know?"

"Red is the colour that accents grey sights vibrantly. It should come from our hands, because that's the way to outpour overburdened sin - sin takes the form of red.

Coincidentally, we use red to cleanse sin. I object to hosting a soiree even so, Katya, the tradition is unusual to me and I'd become a madwoman if it takes place. Ah, you have been wonderful without measure. Finally acquiring a longed-for comrade is among the most blood-curdling conditions to be in. Finally, you have a marquise diamond of high value to risk, to potentially forfeit. I pray that I am careful with you, ah, if I care more than needed, the excess action brings consequences and takes away my comrade from me. I pray that I don't know you too well to lose you, my comrade. Pray the Lord my soul to keep."

"Let God handle what is to stay and to be joyed or banished."

4_-Nora's_narrative_of_a_dream

It is a disease. Once caught, a lifelong change remains. The resurrection: Speaking to a ghost. "You render me strengthless." "Surrender, young child, you don't know how to speak in our manner." "Is that so? Shall I yield?" "The breath- lled are real demons." "A little breath... Shall I compare the lled to a real demon?" "The two are analogous, closer than I am demon." "Me, demon?" "No, which is why I must take you." "I've not lived until you. Do take me to life - a life without breath - a resurrection of the living to the dead. I am as dead as you, I must resurrect!"

But the ghost left me in the middle of a contract. I realised I was dead. I was still breathing.

Fifteen years passed. I wonder if I'll nally live after my disease kills me. The lifelong hope I had as a young child...

5

Peculiar dreams were not uncommon to Nora, having frequently encountered face to face with surreal situations and objective, dystopian and unrealistic problems for several nights and recalling each distinctly upon rousing, as if spectating awake a senseless night's dream.

6_-Nora's_second_dream

The downfall of an after war eld. “He was a beauty. He would’ve loved the sun.” “But he’s right there,” said the girl, pointing at the body that lay at their side. Her father merely stared at the setting sun, “yes, he is right there. He did not vanish.” The girl took her father’s hands, wiping tears o his cheeks, “you forget,” she said, “that we were those who were supposed to live.”

7

Such was the case with the pattern of her pestering dreams she sees at night in deep slumber. The cerberus, on the other hand, stopped nagging her, nishing its duty being the nest and most probable reason, and altogether discontinued its troublesome sightings.

During this period, after Nora's uncelebrated birthday, a small group of foreign peasants made up of friends and family migrated from distant lands and arbitrarily strolled into the city from the drivers of migrations, compelling factors in their original settlement. They were subjected to violence and mistreatment around the streets, which quickly became a prominent subject of discourse among the populace, including the palace residents.

"I admire you as the goddess your bloodline descended from, and the power you behold is proportional to your grandfather hundreds of generations ago - historical grandfather, although he was just a man. I noticed and can see the spellbinding resemblance between you and the two wonders: mesmerising aura and a whimsical weltanschauung. The enchantment is unrivalled and the essence runs through the family blood... Without further ado, address me the situation of the recent wanderers while I mould a few pottery vases." Nora o handedly uttered, focusing on the clay in front of her, "I heard that they currently stay on the streets and occasionally abide in the ragged inn which o ers oppression to the migrantsI ache... I am saddened by their circumstances and I am immensely moved by the hardships al fresco, the treatment outside the warm palace walls."

"The small group roam about the streets and in all likelihood would shift to a rural area downtown. Unrescued peasants, I tell you."

"Oh, mighty divinity, mighty warrior," Nora stepped toward the main gate, facing Katya, then ventured outside, pulling an optic white linen hood over her head, her large, her raven black eyes gleaming like asterisks and nebulas on a midnight twilight. As she walked along the side street beside charging horses and working chariots, she encountered a group in deep sleep by the wayside, some of whom were awake.

“Eleanora Nevadan,” she bowed, uncovering her linen hood, her dark raven eyes glistening in delight, corresponding to a nightfall. Passersby examined the interaction, a few joining.

“Oi. What are you eating?” A thick haired pedestrian with sideburns stepped in front of Nora and interfered, mocking the group chewing on leftover food. “You said you could eat? This street is ours, us locals, and wanderers are forbidden; if you may, relocate to a farm land.” Several other pedestrians chuckled insultingly without signs of remorse nor experiencing apologetic sensations. A ragged clothed migrant sitting among the group

returned: “Sorry, sir, we were hungry and couldn’t find a settlement. You see...”

But the pedestrians cut his speech off and mocked intensely, kicking the piece of fruit in his hands down on the ground, shouting, “you cannot eat.”

With a watchful eye that twilighted greater than ever before, Nora said: “why, when I hear someone else say darn sensitive matters such as: ‘you cannot eat,’ I get melancholy and cold - I get a terrible wistful melancholy for no reason at all. It sort of... reveals too much about this corrupt humanity. This form of corruption is unbearably cold. My reaction is provoked by the working class, the disabled, poor, elderly, mistreated...”

“Withdraw, lady, the world is big and you are small. Look for another place where people might welcome your approach of lecturing. Find a new pursuit!”

“Maybe the world isn’t too big and maybe we’re just too small, if you look from our perspective.”

“Do we look like eagles or bears to you? Being big or small is lousy gibberish.” “Multiple

migrants you've mimicked are elderly and how could you mock the old?

Watching this, I’ll never recover from the cold - I’ll carry my current state till the sun awakes from the west as the melancholy eats at my flesh. My flesh will perish but I am alive and you are plainly a corpse with youthful skin, unblemished by melancholia.”

Having turned away, she proceeded into the palace, distancing herself from the ruthless bunch.

“I know you went to visit the group and found no success.” said Katya effortlessly.

Suddenly an ensemble voice yelled into the stained glass crafted windows, startling the ladies, and were shortly thereafter chased by the guards, who, threatening the crowd by pulling out their daggers, repelled the pesters.

“They were he who repelled me from speaking to the migrants, they insulted humanity and stuck me with melancholia, and I’m wasting away from hypothermia.”

“Goodness gracious, gosh, why do people care so much about other people’s businesses?”

“That’s the philosophical question I’ve been wondering my whole life... Not to turn our dialogue into a philosophy session, of course, I’ve abandoned my unethical reveries and since then vowed to seek truth over creating my own ‘truth’(my own desired truth that’ll be a deception of pleasure leading to the lake of re, which is what philosophy leads to, since it is nothing but a result of mistrust in God. Every quotation is a theory and every theory is a smart sounding guess, which means that nothing in the subject is factual and are simply observations, so great philosophers that I once looked up to including Thales of Miletus and Socrates are famous for idiotic observations. Philosophy is quoting what one sees around him and it doesn’t change anything in any manner(apart from informing society about certain issues which they do not act upon, ever. They know the problems well, they agree on points, they want everything but are unwilling to earn the slightest amount), proving its worthlessness and immorality in being a student in spiritual guidance(a teaching which provides the truth our Greek fathers have failed to grasp for the past hundreds of centuries.)) We cannot physically change an issue, we can only point it out.”

“I have a rm comprehension of your idea presented, and excuse me, I must attend my hair maintenance session supported by the maids. Nourishment, hygiene, styling... All are demanding, energy and time consuming when you need to manage elongated hair of such extraordinary lengths.” She untied her ladder braids in the meanwhile, her champagne hair reaching her feet, sweeping the ground.

“Why do you devote yourself as a slave to your own hair? They are memorising indeed but I question the wisdom behind such odd decisions to cease shearing altogether, putting weight on yourself.”

“You forget that I am a descendant of a goddess, Nora, her principles were about protecting one’s hair and body because they are gifted, and to harm one’s body or neglect one’s hair is uncaredful behaviour that results in a lack of peace, adding regrets

and depression over stability. Taking precise care of my hair is a reminder that I am alive and in need of life's gifts, not that I am in depression - it adds meaning to many aspects. Hair and body are given by our mother and father, and to harm one's hair or body is to harm one's own parents. My goddess ancestor taught this to her admirers and her principles were passed down to Alexander The Great a couple generations after. She was his seventieth generation grandmother, I reckon, I'm unsure about the exact number. And the scripture outlived the fading of time and made its way here, passed down to me! The ancient Chinese admired this same tradition which they founded alone, within their country in regions. See, you think abstractly and I insist on living simple"

"Abstract thinking differs from perfectionism, take into account. You are a goddess, Katya, you possess a goddess in name's qualities and seamlessly exceed... What I ever did to deserve living within the same walls as you! Perfectionism itself envies you."

"Thank you, dearie, now excuse me, my hair requires immediate attention from treatments by the gentle maids. Helios... Helios has returned through the gates, entering in a palanquin with Luke beside, he presumably has another factor to add on to his presentation. Can you entertain the guests while I am unpresent?"

As Helios disembarked from the palanquin, his handicapped joints, specially his genu, failed to support and unclench to balance him upward and betrayed him, trembling him vertically descending. With a surge of adrenaline rush, summoning a reserve of vigour, he reached into his layered garments, swiftly drew forth a sgian-dubh, suddenly delivering a charge to Luke's temple, then his shoulders, and finally aimed at his torso. The small sgian-dubh sank in as his joints stiffened anew and threw himself on the ground, along his acquaintance. The acquaintance crumpled to the floor with his eyes uninchingly open, stoic and soundless, the small Scottish single-edged knife trapped under his torso, pierced through his robe.

"What purpose was that unexpected blow for?" Nora, taken aback by the impromptu eruption, leaped back, while Helios' demeanour remained unchanged - he was well solidified and had a calm air.

"I planned on ending that vexing son of a bitch for longer and well over a year, and since I'm already dying from natural causes, I reasoned that they cannot imprison me or sentence me to a trial - I'd be dead by then, so I took this opportunity before wasting

away to satisfy my cravings. How can they punish a dead man? In the last weeks of a man's life, he is obliged to indulge himself in anything undercover."

"Sick, sick passion; you acted on your murderous plots within the palace walls, you perturbing, you dishonourable brute of a man."

"Poppycock, I've heard enough; I had previously carved out a factor in my plot that making my last couple weeks of life widespread and seen would fulfil my desires as I am running out of time and can endure no punishments, hence my killing a miserable man in King Aubin's grand palace. What a shame that the residents higher in status are absent from witnessing my splendid performance where I grasped the chance to execute my prolonged, villainous scheme."

Every person who sins against themselves, committing self sins, eventually dies by the outpour of sin, setting them sinless, setting them free(they've destroyed themselves to the degree of provoking a natural, universal solution: outpouring). Red indicates the surges of emerging wickedness escaping; however, to take one's sins from out their body means to take them from the presence. We do not intend to make this a bland cliché. "Tis

our second encounter, and you've used not a blade, nor dagger, nor kilij, nor jezail, but 'tis a Scottish instrument veiled under your garment, arranged in thick layers. Why do you throw your promising self away in your nal weeks where you say you are obliged to do whatsoever, activities that summon discipline?"

"If I'm dying and am unpresent to suffer in legal discipline and unable to hear your satirises, I can be obliged to give wretchedness upon a man. No law is applied on a dead man, you need to invent a new policy that could prevent men on the near brink of death to cease giving in to pristine insanity! Pen a scroll of commandments that apply to all men, would you proceed to pen and establish, enforcing it on the empire?" The palanquin

carriers had been dismissed and effortlessly announced they were unwilling to serve as witnesses, leaving Nora and two nearby guards in knight's iron armour to testify subsequently. "For the remaining brief period of my living, I very likely

am interested in attending, seeing the response of the higher palace inhabitants and staying here, as my tense mobility and ongoing disease prevents me from retreating. You, Nora, are a spitting

image of lady Katya with your uniform, indistinguishable etiquette which corresponds. Shame o'both your houses in blood and name.”

“My dear sir Helios, please remember that my age is younger and my intelligence, as a peasant blooded lady by birth, is staggering, more intellectually adept compared to the mainstream folks in the class. I say to you, using this as an excuse: ‘I’m younger, less experienced in aristocratic etiquette, and I overtake your cleverness. Disgrace on you!’ or in certain cases, ‘I’m younger, less experienced in aristocratic etiquette, and I haven’t grasped the prestigious details obligated to me. You discredit me for such, shame on you!’ There’s no necessity for condescension as my youth is an asset and how disheartening it is to see you restoring curses instead of lending your hand, offering guidance, constructing a path for the blind. I always feel as if I missed out on an important point I’ve forgotten to mention and cannot extract it from out my head. What was it I was excited to say...”

“In front of you, I killed a man, and you decide to blabber as if gossiping with a relative? I killed a man, take that into consideration!”

“I tell this piece of wisdom to every accuser that misunderstands me, ‘I’m perfectly calm and you’re perfectly sane.’ Or maybe it was: ‘I’m perfectly calm and you’re sane.’ The exact wording doesn’t alter the intended purpose and message anyhow. While the two guards fetch assistance from Katya and her brother Kola, do so good as to rest your rigid joints by sitting down next to the vexing man.”

“Jabber, jabber, your jabbering is my punishment from within; cease your dog yapper!”

“You don’t grasp my reasoning, Helios, sir, I try to talk you into repentance instead of reacting against your atrocious actions which would only uplift your vileness as you receive validation of others’ fear. Doesn’t my sparing a large amount of empathy quicken your urge to repent? Your category of mathematically intelligent professors are alike in every form of respect.”

“Did I ever hear you preach about equalising the unjust categories in which separates different types of people? To achieve equality, you must treat every citizen equally: by broadly pointing out an unequalled part of a current category and claiming a category being under terrible treatment, is yourself acting unequal, creating more inequality. Your perspective is necessary for change to erase the category separation in society.”

“You have a light source burning inside you, sir, my calm reaction of not showing any fear succeeded marvellously in enlightening your empathy. I was a child a year ago and I’ve aged a hundred years in romanticised solitude (more empty than it is ancient romantic). I gained knowledge through sheer resilience along the years. I was childish as a child and was surrounded by childish adults, which is unacceptable in their cases. They’ve taught me restrictions in a world that does not exist and when I entered true experiences, I realised they were childish like I. I was beaten to death as a child, then they killed me again, saying that I was precious as a youngster, how barbaric! A non-mainstream theory I made is that we do not become adults at a scientific age, we instead become adults when we become conscious of ourselves and walk out the childish period, conscious of thinking and understanding the patterns we live in. In a way, many old aged citizens are still children and young citizens may likely be exceeding oldness. It depends on when they alas discover themselves and are conscious of precise decision making, which likewise, theoretically, the majority of people die as childish adults, if not purely children. I beg of you to not die as one of them and repent before you’re done for, and become an adult at... twenty four!”

“Twenty three. I’d detest disappointing you but you’ve not moved me in the slightest bit to turn to repentance.”

“Continuing: when you raise a youngster reminding them about the commandments to follow and suddenly leave them stranded on a foreign land, in the hands of a foreign lady, she might bear the enforced commandments in mind and act upon it, stirring disagreements in an unfamiliar and homologous environment. Of course one cannot blame her, for that is what she believed to be moral, and that is what unfamiliar persons fail to acknowledge, fail to grasp an understanding of. I truly convinced myself that my occupation would be thinking and over dissecting, intellectualising ideologies forevermore till death takes me a third and final time.”

“My killing a man is afterwards lectured by a philosophy session. Your prospect concerning intellectualising ideologies weakens your skull and finding answers to questions that have no answers leads you to becoming mad. Would you allow yourself to die over the prospect of altering your skull and think differently? The idea of over dissecting is almost dearer than achieving a weightless living, the stress is dearer than letting oneself stay alive. I claim this statement is righteous as an established mathematics theory professor.”

As he barely completed his sentence, a line of guards swiftly and forcibly pulled the dying man, extracting Helios from the premises. He yelled, “cheer for their incapacity to imprison and torture me!” as he was dragged into the open, his genu cracking audibly as it swept across the oor.

8

Once upon a time, the sky be grey, but in grey we do not see.

“Apologies, Katya, a guard interrupted you with this unpleasant view. Helios says that his imprisonment is powerless in happening because he is a dead man already. How do you punish a dead man?”

Katya kneeled beside the clay, “worry about a funeral for Luke and Helios’ punishment would be his own death, he’ll realise he’s dying alone. He’ll die realising that a new policy wouldn’t be established and enforced.”

“I didn't expect your calm reaction. Hopefully, we can work together to find a solution.” Nora responded as a few maids transported him on a wooden platform, sweeping the floor.

While Nora and Katya exited for a stroll in the open air, Gale descended from her chariot, waving.

“Gale,” Katya said, “fortunately you arrived in the aftermath of a manslaughter; the place is washing up while we pace outside. A maid is signalling me to head back for something they have to say, I’ll listen and reappear.” She rapidly ran toward the palace and the maid made gestures, pointing at what was out of sight from Nora’s perspective. “Excuse my lack of interest in the current situation, Nora, I need details about Irina for a reading which I promise doesn’t include interacting with her and is purely informational. Tell me a description of her in your personal narrative and depiction, portrayal and representation.”

“I’d write her in a fairytale, an astronomical tale. Once upon a time, the sky be grey, but in grey we do not see. She was the colour I see. The haziness of a memory washed along the wind. Voice, a sweet symphony waking on sweet morning dew. A descendant of a goddess, a receiver of charms, fallen upon a star on a midnight twilight. Eyes gleaming like asterisks and nebulas - a natural astronomical phenomenon, they twilight brighter than the sun’s dim rays - extinguishes moonlight! A poetry in essence, a dwelling cosmic dust and asterisk. Laughter and tears both shed, a far star illuminating a path where shadows colour the night, whispering a tune. Radiant as the moon eclipses where stars ignite, dimming all heavens... When time passes one becomes old and colours drain, but

she, an old blush-pink fairytale from centuries ago, still having a breath of life and colour, audible in a symphonic tune. An unfolding spellbinding voyage, journey, and never stops at all! Yet to be unfolded...”

“Wonderful.”

“My description is short in clarity as I attempt to articulate the imagery I see. It is a form of description which says a lot but tells nothing, which tells nothing but can make one understand everything, feel and empathise.”

“Wonderful definition - all I had needed, all I had had notions about, and presented in words that capture the unexplainable, that describes the unexplainable, which is a gift you behold - to explain! You can capture it in such a way. Now update me on the current situation Katya seemed exaggerated about.”

“Concerning the unlawful manslaughter which was not a manslaughter but an aforethought slaying, the simultaneous second Helios disembarked his palanquin and was shot up with adrenaline, standing without support, he lifted his layered garment to reveal a Scottish sgian-dubh, sinking it into Luke’s shoulders before my eyes. He says that during the final weeks of a man, he is obliged to defy guidelines as we cannot punish a man with a week left to live. Imprisonment serves no purpose and execution is pointless. He already has a natural punishment awaiting him so he might as well commit crimes to make up for it so that he doesn’t receive penalties for nothing.”

“Luke’s fate was truly a pity, he was an agreeable man. Helios should have never made his acquaintance.”

“Helios says that he plotted against Luke for a while and looked at Luke disagreeably. I remember during the arena games when Luke was an executioner who executed... I don’t remember.”

After a week following, a funeral took place in a noble church with hundreds of attendants. Nora dressed in a plain robe and a yashmak for head covering. In her right hand, a black handkerchief. She paid respect to the open casket before the burial ceremony.

In the burial yard, she noticed that hundreds of cross shaped tombstones stood symmetrically beside another and Luke’s tombstone was identical. Every tombstone

represents an individual life, and in this yard, one life is beside another, and each is presented as a number instead of a token of significance. She thought about her own significance after death if not during existence. Each remains under his tombstone with countless enormous sentences to say, countless books to write, and are forbidden to do so. Death, a dystopian, a romanticised utopian, evolved into a new dystopian (once the spell of fantasy subsides, there is nothing left but dust and debris (a rarity that occurs once every extended time)). After burial he is treated like a number within the collection. Then Nora wondered if Katya died, would she, a lady high in status and name, claim an outstanding tombstone privately or share a courtyard and become a number adding on in the collection. Such was the fate of the importance of name - it determines the value you hold, the significance of one's vitality! Her point she verified by comparing the grandness of Dillon Karas, a peasant's funeral, and Luke, a higher class man's. Both were murdered by homicide yet one attracts greatly more attendants and rests in a grandeur church while the other's coffin was spat on.

"Lamentable. Luke's presence was a kind lantern in the palace, and we see before us his early burial. How quickly fate plays, how a minor deed could tip the script, how dependent we are on grains of faith in vain - to perfect the art of containing, using it. In vain, he decomposes day and night." Lady Katya wiped her tearful cheeks with a handkerchief. The chorus was busy singing a melodic hymn while the attendants listened. Gale, in her gothic robe, listened to Katya.

Kola and Aaron silently made a prayer then Pluto cried: "Augustine couldn't even come to this funeral. He spends his days abroad with our Father, leaving every domestic empire duty in our palms and wouldn't crown us pasha. What brother is Augustine? He last visited us three years ago and our Father, reasonable to be abroad, visited two years ago. Augustine has no reason to stay abroad but pleasures himself beside Father, how barbaric!"

"Augustine's name shouldn't be involved in the matter, Pluto, he is the firstborn after all." Kola jumped, contradicting.

Pluto grew enraged by his brother's defence, "we take responsibility for duties he couldn't look twice at, and our Father takes him with him on lavish tours around surrounding places when Augustine doesn't assist abroad duties in any form. Augustine hasn't written in three years since he left; he planned on expanding the outdoors of the palace and postponed the idea as he failed to return. And our Father wouldn't make our

second born brother, Aaron, the leader? He is the foundation that stabilises the empire, the rope that our citizens hold, and it'll crumble without his support which he offers by sacrificing his leisure time and overwhelming himself with tasks."

"A name denotes nothing. You could acquire a leading name and remain senseless and moronic. We don't have a leading name yet we strive far and fulfill the requirements within the empire." Kola fathomed that Pluto's enragement ought to be provoked if he continued arguing, as a result he agreed with him absently, "stop eating the utmost prepared food in an informal manner; cut your quail eggs like so for proper etiquette," he demonstrated, "I quite agree with you on our firstborn brother's behalf and we promise to discuss the business afterwards." He blushed, putting on a serious face. "Nay,

you zhuzh, Kola, you refrain from acquiescing to my pleas. I ask Aaron's convictions on this matter in place of you."

"Kola's suggestion is highly favourable and we must discuss it only afterwards at home. We should mourn the death in front of us as of now and pay respect to our beloved former valet and friend." "For satisfying your orders, I resist the temptation of fury and restrain my hostility and annoyance."

"It is a suggestion, don't take it as an order. Our household is liberating and strictly prohibits biased submission among the members."

"For you, the eldest brother and the righteous heir, I oblige to voluntarily yield, submitting. We were held in place as unfortunates by Augustine himself; you serve as a potential liberator." "Unfortunates? We were born as descendants of an ancient goddess

and the mighty King

Alexander The Great," Katya interjected, her fist clenched, "we are fortunate beyond our needs. I receive specialised treatment for my hair according to the goddess' principles. Go outside, a few paces around our palace, and see the amount of pedestrians that are unfortunate enough to eat cold bread beside streets of running vehicles, endangering their lives with the powerful kick of a horse's hooves. We aren't the wealthiest household and you could view other pashas as competition, but you don't dare call us 'unfortunates'."

“You say that confidently because when you speak, they listen attentively. I was born into a wealthy, high in dignity family compared to average pedestrians such as the new migrant group. They say, ‘you have more than the unfortunate’. I thought deeply, I saw that being unfortunate compared to the surrounding fortunates is a misery. No gratitude makes amends. I mean I am unfortunate compared to you, Katya, and you, Aaron...”

“No, Pluto, you unfortunate yourself with unspoken complaints. Seize the wonders and develop a habit to enhance your lack of perspective, which I advise you to seek from Nora.”

“I stand on a tall platform, I see the world small, I stand underground and stare upwards through the window, I see I am small, I see a bee drowning in its honey, I grieve, and when I see it pollinate, I cheer. I want to explore the hills but I get injured and am restricted. I want to jump from high cliffs and fly but I’ll be handicapped and my desires are heavily restricted. Am I out of joint?”

“Dear brother, you say this out of rage and resentment, it’ll subside and you’ll be overcome with immeasurable numbness.”

Before Pluto seized his chance of responding, Aaron commented: “listen to Katya, she is older than you, we’ll put the matter to an end here as the door is ajar, then continue discussing behind a closed noise-resistant door at home, not disturbing crowded environments. My suggestion is favourable in terms of keeping peace but you mustn’t foolishly mistake it for a command: our household principles include setting the members unbounded.”

“She is not a day older than me, I tell you. I trust you, Aaron, you are the righteous leader guiding our empire - I silence my tongue for your sake.”

Gale whispered beside Nora’s ears, “Miss.Nevadan is causing catastrophic levels of crop failure which results in famine and extreme poverty in the village(the reason, I’m unable to read). Why would she encourage such devastating habitat areas, let alone enduring and tolerating it when she could seize the opportunity she vividly sees to grasp the riches and provide a comfortable well-being for the community?”

“She said that she ought not abandon her blood place for modernism and Mana praised her dearly, as well as Patera and my siblings. Elena is the most blinded, almost completely

out of vision. Damian is a wuss I pay minimum attention to. The twins are unbothered(I usually ignore their presence). Iris is a spitting image of Irina, stepping on her trail of footsteps. Spade, I predict he'll cough himself to death if his illness is not treated. I blame Irina for not grasping the riches, not for her ignorance of comfort, but for the lack of care for the family's medical needs. Anyhow, I am irrelevant to anyone in the village as they believe I've been killed and now unbothersome in my youth. I carry this burden, this hurt, pushing it at the back of my head, so that it is remembered but unbothersome in my daily activities. If Irina's spellbinding, staged wickedness or kindness causes catastrophic famine levels, I shan't indulge myself in helping since I am, after all, irrelevant."

"Her motives are unclear, unreadable. She possesses a powerful resistor to my readings."

"Cease your injudicious readings, merchant Gale, that is an act of evil, an art practised under the influence of the lake of the devil, the condemner, the red man that swallows his disciples whole for believing his deceives! Excusing yourself, no matter your motives, means excusing her. I cannot make exceptions between you, a critic of witchcraft, and my own sister, I daresay by blood. Witchcraft, is that right, is that what you wanted to introduce to me when you said you'd reveal it to an older me? I followed the crumbs you left on the path and discovered the meaning behind your arts myself. I know I lack the power in stopping you both and I wouldn't convince you to destroy the arts if you disagree."

"Some people become uneasy when they see you succeed. Why, you may ask, because they hate you more than they love themselves. To lower their hatred, they seek ways to strike you at your downfall, and you mustn't oblige. She has killed the love, and so she must die."

"Stop this monstrosity and abide me, my pleading requests. She is no Great Blue Heron, she shines so bright it is day all night, from day to night. If she meets her days, I will say: 'Irina is dead, my hands are red, red of her blood. What sin I've committed, I'm marked with this wicked wrongdoing... Villain I am none, but villain am I now? Away, I shall be gone, far gone... See the King and he shall see me in a grave. O it is she, no murderer am I, yet I have murdered, the blood covers my hand in broad daylight - she held my doubtless stainless heart that pumped not an ounce of red. In a way of evil, I will return, worry not, I will come back an alive man; have mercy, though he committed evil wrongs,

for he wishes not for evil, but peace do I truly desire. The ghost haunts me.' I'd be unable to ease my guilt if you harm her heavenly light."

"Don't mistake misery for depth, dear. I'll anyhow satisfy your request and keep my hands clean from her, easing your sympathetic concern as you're over sentimental."

"Calling me over sentimental is like calling Phaedra 'overdramatic'. Both of which, the statements are false, both of us, we feel too much. Clearing matters, I use her name as merely an example for I do not put faith in mythology and the Cretan princess was a folklore tale; her name is used in Euripide's plays as a symbol of divine interventions in human affairs and overcoming passion against duty, leading to a tragedy, a tragic deceit. You dare not name her 'overdramatic'."

Freshly bloomed dahlias had been arranged in a bouquet and landed atop Luke's tombstone, followed by a brighter bouquet. Shady trees leaned over the meadow that surrounded his cross shaped tomb. Nora compared Dillon Karas' empty lowered tomb to a gentleman among the prestigious elites, unaware that she gave into her delight in making theories and thinking abstractly in philosophy, which shaped her skull into a one-formation structure. How an open topic closes her skull!

"After tonight's last prayer in honour of the valet we lost, promise me we'll return to our daily routines." Pluto announced and broke Nora and Gale's exchange.

Aaron, evading his brother's perpetual nagging, nodded in sly agreement, false uttering, indulging the wine contents in his cup. "I quite agree with your point, Pluto, you are indeed right," he blurted to quiet him. "Our carriage, the distinguished horseman waving his fez, and another carriage arrived for picking up the second half of us palace residents, the horseman swaying his Şapka - our sign to take our leave."

"Exactly so, about the right time to forsake this boned churchyard burial ground and move forth to a lively home where we are separated from the collection of demise! Goodbye, Gale, tender is the night to come."

On the same tender, windless dead night as the funeral, hidden in the truth of existence like a stellar, alignment cleared a harmonious path, and in short summary, the mathematics professor passed away from his natural causes, his sti remains transported to another province by several of his disciples - he had been right: a dead man is immune to punishment and he is obliged to defy commandments and face consequences only in

the after mortal life, avoiding mortal judgement but never able in evading spiritual judgement, which, is righteously served without injustice. Other than the heavy petrichor lingering damp on soil grounds after the cry of a cloudburst, the moon lit dimmer behind layers of thick fog, casting a white glow.

“A messenger in a tall Şapka delivered an envelope from a different province written by a former student of Helio’s, brothers and sisters.” Katya sprinted through the front gate to the pottery room where her brothers, Gale and Nora shaped clay vases, amusing themselves and drinking strawberry lled tea, their hands smothering clay over their cups as they drank. “His limited physical abilities and joint issues caught up to his intellectual capabilities. Excuse me for my sneezing repeatedly, the petrichor is evoking my allergies in damp weather.”

“If the letter holds true, what a remarkable coincidence that he perished on this tender night under the moonlit brilliance. As they say, only fools are brilliant at meeting unplanned coincidences, and I think rmlly that he deserved the accomplishment. Join us, Katya, craft a pottery trophy symbolising and celebrating victory against his outstanding nature! The works of k used him as a canvas for his masterpiece performance.” Kola roared, “brother Pluto, did tonight’s letter meet your ideal standards of a fulfilling white night? Cease reaching for an embrace from me, your soiled ngers are staining my white kaftan with brown clay prints, ach! My decorated gold patterns are covered in ngerprints, you idiot!”

“Ever so sorry for my clumsiness and absent-mindedness, brother Kola, I wonder what the letter says about the instance when he passed.”

“An imitation of death, as it seems; according to the letter, he slipped in his family’s château in foreign lands and fell down the stunning horseshoe staircase, breaking his weakest spot, the left genu, and other joints. He was reported having shed blood across the grounds with his eyes unblinking, akin to the position of the man he slaughtered right after the murder.” Katya read through the neatly written letter, “the works of k ended upon him like a shipwreck sailor on a shimmering shore after ages in the sea, following a celestial map that guided him through labyrinthine corridors of his cosmic hearth, leading him to destiny. And strange it sure is to so shamefully pass on this day, a week after his deed, his passing resembling his inhumanity. I’ll write a letter back.”

“Writing to the wrong people is dangerous.” Nora con icted, “choose wisely your words and consider before sending. I allowed a certain young man to access my notes and see where that led our faith.”

“Olden is irrelevant in discussions from now on and we must cease mentioning names of the dead forevermore to avoid manifesting misfortune.”

“Deeply am I insulted by your references circling around a ne young child that that mention speaks ill of my unblemished code of conduct. You blurted his sacred name out loud and con dently... You are something of an enigma: harvesting multiple characters to display at unwarned times, your enigmatic principles show your di erent personas. I say I refrain from judging one’s one certain persona, subsiding the others, and claiming them as impure, for a person is a complex being, which the enigma also applies to my multiple characters and personas that I developed through neighbouring acquaintances. I carry butter ies though the garden wilts, I object accepting the relation between discussing Olden out of the blue and manifesting misfortune.”

“Apologies, apologies. Allow me joining the pottery crafting, spare a seat. Father Aubin, whose letter arrived through the mailman concurrently to Helios, wrote an informative scripture to us that Augustine’s previous outdoor expansion plan is to be managed subsequently. If he falls short in returning, as it’s most probable, considering his resistance in setting foot on our home soil, the responsibility is shifted directly onto our palms, obeying his residential plans when he isn’t a resident here. What good, what bene t is he making by torturing the residents’ peace? Constructors, he ordered and summoned prior, are scheduled to approach hither as early as tomorrow morning, goodness, are you folks not in distress?”

“The disruptive news had wrecked the quaint tender white night, the reminder of fondness into a sunken reckless shipwreck beneath depths, metaphorically a icted by tempests overseas.” Pluto jumped. “The petrichor smells rather funny, the dampness itching, and Augustine more loathsome, more odious, despicable. His bringing us his previous plan insults us as his brothers and sisters by blood. What truth is said in this, he’s devastated everything sweet, taking out from chests the hearts that once blissfully beat in total absence of his presence, I am a movèd man! Tomorrow morning, after tonight, during the slight peak of the sun’s rising, when songbirds begin chirping, I surrender my kinship in relation to the rstborn Augustine and proudly declare him an opposer, regarding our Father’s position, regarding the position that Augustine is to

inherit as heir! No longer you may see me bewep, you may recognise my suddenly placed casque(atop my crown) of tough exoskeletons that I excreted softness out of.”

“And the remains within: vacancy? Keep a heart within in case it’ll be in need of softening your casque of exoskeletons and ll you from within. Avoid speaking words of inconsiderate, diabolical means because those declarations are provoked from out your mouth by moments of intense sensations and after the passing of the sensations, intense guilt is built. I speak from experience, dear brother, I’ve tried listening carefully to our goddess ancestor in an attempt of further resisting provocations. It originally had come to me as di cult, I nearly let it get to my head and cut my hair, but resisted in discomfort in order to avoid more potential(this... This guilt driven discomfort is immense and scarcely recoverable) discomfort. Even resisting certain thoughts in a whirlwind in your head is valid, and equally important as resisting physical means, from moments of intense sensations, the reason is that the mind is unlimited and essentially it is to control desired sin. If giving in creates desirable outcomes, sh could climb trees!”

“Getting a hold of resistance is among the most highly mentally taxing, most skull itching skills that’s obtained by consistency in practice, analogous to any other.”

“Absolutely so, your claims endorse my experiences. The principles taught by our hypnotic lady ancestor are alien and require skull itching practices.” Katya moulded a mass of clay into a taller formation, “I forbid you mistaking my well intended counsels for guilt-tripping you into introspection upon your nagging. Clear your head and cease thinking about anything, believe nothing and let it go the way it ought to, which I say, is nihilism, the bridge to peace.”

Nora interrupted, “you couldn’t even tell the di erence between nihilism and absurdism -both of which are pointless in existence.”

“Let us rest tonight, purify our hands, and leave the un nished works for the morrow on a refreshed, tireless morning. Rest your distressed worries about Augustine’s foolish plans and nish discussing the pointlessness, absurdism and nihilism.” Aaron added, putting an end to the night’s pottery work, heading to slumber.

9

Constructors that King Aubin ordered hadn't approached hither the following morning due to the previous day's cry of a cloudburst leaving roads unstable for the horses' trotting, which they rescheduled to the next day following, hoping for drier stable roads that meet the horses' trotting demands. Till then they refrained from setting their vehicles forth. Nora seized the opportunity and exited outdoors, visiting the migrant group at the side of the streets where they were soaked and shivering in rainwater.

"Dearie, if they catch you repeatedly interacting with the lower people that don't belong... I suggest you leave." An elderly man with a long white beard and untrimmed grey hair, covered in chilly water, voiced. "We are in search of a new place of residence which we fear and thus we lengthen our stay time in this city. Understand our struggles, dearie, we evacuated our home place due to natural factors beyond our comprehension and solutions."

"Elderly folks should never sit at the side of a street drenched in rainwater, shivering, and pleading for mercy from the young! I see your group contains a couple other elderly and infants, young adults and children. When the pedestrians mock, do you taste a cold melancholy?" Nora was attacked by a suffocating weepiness. "Sir, the group slept through the tender night's rain under no cover!"

"Cold melancholia has passed in our earlier years, now we abide without complaints - we've grown wiser." A woman in a weak state added, shivering in her rags but smiling warmly, her creases emphasised. "Our earlier years we've tasted one too many dishes of cold melancholia and we've complained a great deal, which, ultimately, brought improvements to nought. Efforts were put, well, born in a harsh environment, not much could bring us out our woefulness, our hunger and starvation. Our group moved for this purpose: to build anew a community with proper environments that provide sources of necessities in quantities. The purpose seems to be in its developing point currently."

"And the children? Good grief, let us not forsake them. The passersby, the insulters are abysmalists that blabber nonsense and you shouldn't listen with an open ear."

"They are our only concern but will start assisting us on financial terms when we discover a better settlement. Passersby often take pleasure in giving names that reflect our position to them, all of which have a classical reputation for insulting. We curse

ourselves, as elders, for dragging faultless youngs into the ditch and forcing them with no other choice than to follow our footsteps. Our aching state where grief is stronger than gratitude must be a lethal punishment on something unforgivable we've committed. Lady, thank you for offering gestures of care, do so kind as to give us the name."

"Eleanora. I disagree, natural punishments are ctional. A sinless man could endure unthinkable amounts of torment while a servant of the devil could live a rich life and chances are, he'll die a rich life with his worst tragedy being a minor inconvenience. Do natural punishments apply?"

"Eleanora!" A third party from the group exclaimed lively, "merciful Eleanora, a gentle angel, take your leave before the critical man in the corner of that market stand turns his head."

Alas taking her leave, her tear lled raven eyes twilighting under sun rays, Nora was moved by the new perspective she had learned and the cold melancholia burned her, deafening her with silence. It was then that she adopted the idea to build a nursing home for the elderly and a neighbourhood for the insu erable younger generation. A gush of wind blew across her face and carried away the pestering tears. Entered Nora into the colossal palace gates where guards allowed her in, saluting like Parisians as they did so. She debated in a quiet room on whether it would be wise to contact Katya about founding a nursing home and building a higher empire with each hungry peasant fed, however resulted in keeping the matter quiet until circumstances become more agreeable. When the mourning of Luke eventually passes she'll speak up, although she was uncertain whether it'll be late to make a change and whether the migrants would stay or shift further away.

In the countryside in Nora's former village, under stress, Alexandria presented wooden bowls of soup around the table for each household member, and sat on a chair beside the kids. Damian's crying added intense head and earache to her exhaustion. Suddenly a few village hunters walked in a troop announcing a victory, holding an enormous treacherous object similar to a bull's skull and horns in unison; Marcus and Alexandria were captivated by bewilderment and exited their hut to question the village hunters about their new kill which they were celebrating. But when they took a close look at the bewildering thing, they were taken aback: this belonged to a mighty Western Bjr, a

mythological creature survived and walked the surface of the world for forty million years, and this creature was immune to meteors and any natural disasters, a testament to their sacred place in history. This creature had recently decreased in population and was said that there was only one left roaming - it couldn't defeat hunters, creatures without sharp teeth or tough skin. It fell at the feet of hunters and had become functionally extinct.

"We've conquered the great beast, we've hunted the last Bjr!" An olive skinned huntsman with exaggerated side whiskers boasted, "the creature was a descendant of the Grand Dragon Bbin, a re-breathing dragon dating back to a hundred million years before that shedded blood of liquid gold and tears of pure emerald! Apropos of this I will discuss afterwards, after the celebration, and we're hosting an expensive one. Forty million years ago, the Grand Dragon Bbin disappeared but left its descendants roaming, and we've captured the last! Ourselves, each of us huntsmen, we could rise to sky-reaching power in a matter of days after announcing the spectacular, groundbreaking achievement of not pashas with empires large in number, but of mere peasants, worldwide! Alexandria, say, aren't you pleased by what you're hearing?" "Slightly pleased I am but never am I pleased greatly. One look into my room and you'll know I'm insurmountable. To what degree, you ask, immeasurable."

"Why the long face? The face you put on brings the sun down, lady. More on that later, we will announce our victory to more villagers, goodbye." He swayed the Western Bjr skull and horns dramatically as the hunters exited the Nevadan's hill. The Nevadans were still residing on the hill after Dillon Karas' death, because nonetheless, Ophelia took precedence over the land they desired.

"The huntsmen brought down the last mighty Bjr?" Marcus roared inside the hut, his greed leaking, "and when did the mythological creature, the descendant of the Grand Dragon Bbin, make its way here?" He beat his fist against the wall, driven by greedy anger that developed into violent hatred, so much so that he left a hole where he aimlessly punched. His fist reddened due to the incredible forces, breaking several of his knuckles, later resulting in immense guilt and pleading for crucifixion. "I've done terrible things and God forgives, and people did terrible things to me, which God expects me to forgive as he does, but he is God and I am human, I'm incapable of that! Even after Nora's departure, the burdens are present within those walls and our

di culty should escape: I broke a hole so it could be a vent. Of course, admittedly, I am delirious, I know not what I do in moments of hostility.”

The Nevadan children were terrified at their Father’s roar; they shifted in a corner altogether, awaiting the end of his hot temper. Iris moved near Alexandria. How absurd, how pointless the sudden outburst was, how his greed acted like featherless wings, how he envied the hunters’ remarkable achievement, and how he resented his unpresent step daughter for problems he was responsible for! He spoke ill of her as a bad omen, a spare they raised for two three years that they had eventually gotten rid of after beating her relentlessly, bruising her severely to endless extents, then abandoning her. Their door was ajar when they dumped her in front, so he naturally, and quite wickedly, assumed that her spirit possessed the house, bringing bad omen. Despite his constant dislike of her, he couldn’t fathom his dislike nor come to any conclusions concerning justifications. If he had had any justifications, they were microscopic in logical reasoning.

“You’re speaking of harsh topics in front of our delicate child, you moronic man! Certainly she enlightened herself above all else while being a scum that crossed our path, one that we obligated ourselves to raise and one who couldn’t harvest crops in a sufficient time. Her soiled feet entered our grounds countlessly. How I used to look and pray that she would take the befallen sorrow her presence brought and go a couple yards away! Apologies to my dear children, let us not terrify you a lot.” Offering a hand to Iris, Alexandria scolded her husband.

Out of the blue, Irina stepped forth, enlightening the atmosphere bewitchingly using her loquacious whispers, “I remember how tired I was, how I almost ran out of breath while crying, choking, I won’t forget how difficult it was for me - I will never forget the troubles. Those days have passed and the past is certainly not better than the future, Mana, it is yet to come, and will be exotic. An unparalleled dream awaits, I promise, let now be a melodramatic foundation... By the by, those huntsman who killed the last mythical creature, let them pleasure themselves in their accomplishment if they are indeed truthful.”

It is safe to say that Irina was more of a Great Blue Heron and Nora a swan; a swan that flies higher than the boundary of the sky to cross the wall between her circumstances and love, however, falls at the highest point into shallow waters. Swans are the highest flying birds, this is a folklore saying but also a scientific fact as she had written during her earlier times. A Great Blue Heron is a substitute for a soft spoken manipulator who

is conscious or unconscious about their effects on swans. It would be rather simple to see past their pretentious facade but impossible to point out as it would come out as either a mockery or a liable judgement - such were the complex tactics of Great Blue Herons!

“Sweet child, you grow older by the day; you grow older and wiser. You bring joy to Mana and remind me that the tough labours are worth working, no matter the required effort, since at the end of my working, there’s a sweet child inside the hut who speaks kindness with her tongue.” He nearly bursted into tears while praising his pearl daughter.

Ophelia, Seb and Adonis, along with the Georgious, marched with the hunters around the village, into the city. By then, Clyde Georgiou still hasn't returned and most definitely ran into a sparsely populated corner, remaining a madman in a shabby dark and isolated alley where he gave into addiction. This, of course, is nothing but a prediction as to his new status.

Nora, in the palace garden, rested under a pine tree, reading a clothbound copy of her own fairytales. Nora’s heavy head, consumed by uneasiness concerning the migrants, became lighter under the tree. She thought about her old friend again, “oh, if Gale’s resurrection had succeeded, you would’ve told me about your sincere beliefs and I’d know whether you meant what you previously claimed. Now the opportunity is damned forevermore... The art of unknowing is tortuous and haunting. Your agonising demeanour urged you to read every book, sail every sea, see everything, be everything, possess knowledge, and ultimately, it reddened your hands; but not only were your hands full of blood, your entire body was - it shows the amount of sin you’ve committed to yourself and the amount of betrayal you’ve done to yourself because laziness took over and you wanted a short path to a good name in history instead of earning it. Katya is destroying the copies of the works you’ve claimed as your own and she is erasing your name from the surface of the Greek land. In such moments like this one where I’m thinking under a pine tree, I adopt the idea that I might take thinking as a profession and think all day without sharing, since I am already pleased by over dissecting simple informations into abstract notions. Now I wonder if thinking is a gift or curse and if I would choose to let myself die or give up thinking. I think I’d much rather die. I seem overly sentimental and pretentious with my sentences but I do feel every word I spit out in my mouth.”

The fairytale included events inspired by the suspicious cottage: a diary written in the form of a fictional story which conveys the same meanings but through different methods. This is a way to share ideas without boring the reader with the artist's personal stories. Separating the artist from their arts and making the art an entity of its own is a crucial factor in developing a masterpiece.

When she deeply inhaled pine tree scented air, Pluto, by accident, stumbled across the palace garden on the stone path, stumbling into her reading. "My, I searched for you in every room and here you are! My purpose of finding you is to tell you that I was scavenging through marinating books on your shelf out of boredom and found a letter dedicated to my sister... Forgive me for reading it through. I fathomed your desperate helplessness within society and your craving of Katya's attentiveness, therefore I offer you my hand. May it lead you across rough roads and stabilise your balance during your journey; do know that you wouldn't trip under proper guidance, though I believe I'm not the wisest and most proper." "Thank you, sir, though I barely penned anything on the

piece of paper that I slipped

into a book on the shelf. I planned to leave it there to marinate till I die, so that it remains unread. That was one of the only times where I penned in character, where I didn't plot a storyline and so I saw too much of myself in it, so much that I resisted reading it - penning in character is where discomfort is bred. It offers no disguise whatsoever. Anyhow, thank you, I do accept your offer, and sit here, read this fairytale; I conducted the entire plot out of character and so, comfortable I am in sharing it." She paused, "this is a subjectively genre story. "The storyline is fictional but the story is very real' is how I call it, because it passes onto readers the same lessons, only in an entertaining form."

"A clothbound cover? A thick booklet? Where did you acquire this plain paged book you penned in?" He rested beside her under the pine tree, analysing the book she held.

"On the shelves in my bedroom. Katya said that the entire room is free to my likings and I may indulge myself with any object inside."

"Ah, beauty is a celestial map that charts my course, and leads me to your radiant abode where secrets of the universe are revealed in ethereal forms, and forever am I lost in starlit gazes like a shipwreck sailor wrecked on a shimmering foreign shore. He should be

at sea, through the labyrinthine corridors of space, and he was guided to a cosmic hearth.

“Tell me everything - you are rather poetical. Do read this out of character fairytale first.”

“Bridget stood tied to a hay stake - they condemned her of practising arts of the devils and so she must die. They tried lighting the stake and she was sentenced to be burned. I watched the men repeatedly throwing torches around her flammable surroundings, and the stake refused to burn. Bridget’s starry face glimmered under the moonlight, preparing to endure the pain of fire - it never came... They learned that lighting her on fire came to a failure and that they needed to switch to another method...’ When I read this I imagine the people in the scene screaming, but cannot hear anything. I can continue the rest later because the gentle wind makes me calm, almost tired.”

“I started on it before my fourteenth and completed the fifteen paged storyline at the very beginning of my fourteenth. See, I’m a storyteller without readers. No listeners, no audiences, simply a storyteller who blabbers stories to herself until now. The philosophy notes I wrote which a certain acquaintance published under his name are under mass destruction ordered by Katya and they wouldn’t survive the next generation to come - it’ll be burnt unread for the younger citizens.”

“I’ve known, I’ve heard, and I’ve read a small copy. Katya, the other day, took it and destroyed it, destroying the pages instead of changing the name on the cover. She believes that destroying is easier than changing and that to change would result in democracy. She is paranoid about keeping peace, she’d choose to maintain it even if it meant to lie to the face of our part of the empire. She is limited in power thus she turns to populism to please the peasants, hoping for more peace. Katya told me about your determined plan of starting a revolution and how she declined assisting you because she’s a coward.”

“I resisted telling Katya but I think that I’m able to tell you, listen: the migrants on the streets are suffering more than I did, and some of them are elderly men and women who are smothered in soil by young passersby. Would you agree if I wanted to build a nursing home for them and a neighbourhood for the younger generation in the group? They need riches more than I.”

“The migrants are insurmountable and I approve of your kindness toward them, however, I don’t control the empire as Aaron, Kola, and Katya do. They are the leaders you must convince. Me, I can’t recall my age: whether I’m older than Katya or not. I’d say my age is between sixteen, seventeenth, and eighteen... probably twenty. I forget the exact number because I’ve never been in the spotlight and whenever I went to duty abroad, I never helped much. This led to my neglecting remembering details about myself and so I lost the number. I do not help much yet I complain as if I’m cleverer than everyone else, out!”

“That is to say, even if you do complain a great deal, you are certainly more knowledgeable and more open to hearing from me, and I haven’t discovered that quality until now, under this pine tree where I shared with you my fairytale. Honestly, instead of conducting or penning a piece, resting in a bed and thinking chronically depressing thoughts can create the same effect...”

Pluto bellowed as if he were lashed with a whip: “my goodness, how fond I am of hearing myself positively from another’s mouth! Am I hit on the crown by a falling pine cone from above the tree branches? This garden resembles the Garden of Eden, where purity is bred. Did you notice, it is surreal to lay on the tree on evergreen grass here. My great grandfather from a hundred generations ago, Alexander the Great, once said that he rejects mythology as a valid source for historical study in spite of mythology and folklore serving a purpose in allowing students to further understand his own narrative. In his youth, he was a King, a philosopher, and indeed he was a sucker for getting repeatedly teased in a humorous way by Diogenes, a man who used insults and rhetorical questions to criticise him. And don’t mistake my admitting embarrassing contents for criticising my own blood. According to mythology, if it were somewhat reliable, and bear in mind that I don’t believe a word in Greek mythology, human beings were originally double in every physical trait and possessing greater power, and Zeus split us into two out of fear; now we people are destined with a purpose dedicated to our entire existence to find our other half... This sounds similar to a wholesome story but far from being factual, however, I use such rich stories as a metaphor.”

“If he was a God, why did he fear his people? God does not need validation from mortals, and he did, so he was not God. He was total bullshit, he was a fairytale peasants blabbered out of boredom, and he was a character mild in power. Greek mythology, notwithstanding myself being Greek and accepting Greek culture, is moronic bullshit from the start to end of its story...”

“I quite agree. I use the stories as a metaphor and put aside the proclaimed reality within the stories - they are fairy tales like the one you wrote, only worse and less vibrant than yours.”

Abuzzing flew across the room, landing on a decaying fruit in the grass.

“You said that this was the Garden of Eden, free of perishment. Matter of fact, God did not create these filthy flies. Flies came about under the influence of the devil, these bothersome pests were never intended to come into existence and feed on perishing creatures because perishment did not exist in a sinless paradise. Their soiled presence represents a world tainted with sin in the aftermath of following the devil... Of course, flies, although they feed on decaying bodies, a symbol of perishment, are beautiful in another way, in a way with nature and outside of symbolism.”

“Your highness, where are you?” A servant dressed in silver seemingly appeared, speaking to Nora and Pluto in a shocked manner, “news are circulating around the streets that the last might Bjr, that is if they do exist, has been hunted down and its head is displayed by maniac huntsmen and peasants who came from the countryside. They currently are marching in a troop and circling the city, presenting the Bjr publicly without fear of robbery or erupting chaos; see for yourselves and, I beg of you, please stop the ongoing fancied madness!”

“Impossible. What might a Western Bjr be doing in this land, what could this land offer that they cannot find anywhere else, not even where they came from, and those mythological creatures certainly are a myth and nothing more?”

“No, sir, for thousands of years people have reported catching a sight of the bull but never coming in contact with one... until now.”

“In such a rare case we must immediately interrogate the huntsmen and admire the rarity, leading us to the troop, sir.” Pluto and Nora exited through the goliath front gate, led by the servant.

No sooner had Nora’s eyes come in contact with the familiar faces that she used to reside along (the lenses in her eyes completely subsided the horned skull they held above) than she buried her flushed face in her robe, praying to God that the troop would continue blindly marching in a loop, especially because she had to avoid Herman Georgiou and his sister Othella, although they’ve caught a clear glimpse at her and wouldn’t ignore her

sudden presence near the pasha's palace, dressed in luxurious garments she never was able to afford from what they remembered when she lived with the Nevadans. They were also taken aback at the fact that Nora was even alive: Ophelia and her sons nearly instantly ceased cheering and altogether shifted their focus on the girl standing before them. Burying her flushed face in her robe wasn't enough - she covered her hair with a hood, then stepped behind Pluto, his figure covering hers, hiding from the villagers' hindsight.

Pluto, unaware that the purpose of her behind him was to hide from some familiar faces and unaware that the troop knew Nora as a peasant, declared himself to the huntsmen and stepped forth toward the abbergasted troop members. "Pluto. My Father is the pasha among the empire. It has come to my attention that you people slaughtered the last mighty Western Bjr, if they do exist and you're truthful about your boasting?"

"Yes, sir, indeed we slayed the beast," a hunter responded, his heart full of pride, "we sell the horns and skull for at least a dozen fortunes, would you, sir, accept the humble offer?"

"Buying it is out of my concern; my concern is that I plan on interrogating you about the Bjr you proclaimed to have spotted casually, almost suspiciously roaming in Greece and slayed. First: don't move. Provide evidence that you're proclaiming the truth. Second: every one of you will sign a contrast promising you wouldn't erupt chaos in the streets. Last: our authorities will take hold of you until we've gathered enough proof that you're not a menace and are safe to be liberated afresh into your own free will. Stop this madness, stop protesting, and stop attempting to free yourselves from the guards' grips! Know that we do this for our empire's own goods, which includes for you."

"This is ridiculous, sir, our prey should be celebrated and not suspected, not looked at with a suspicious eye - you've mistaken us poor peasants. The ladies simply march with us and intend nor harm, neither do we! Free us from your guards' grips, stop seizing us roughly by the heart, and cherish our spectacular achievement which happens splendidly once a century or more! Do such humble requests sound reasonable, your... O highness?"

Then, boldly, Othella Georgiou interjected into the protest, "Eleanora! Wherefore are my children, Olden and Clyde? Eleanora!" She pointed at Nora, who stood stily embarrassed, rooted to the spot, "Correct me but sir Pluto is your acquaintance?"

Convince him to free us well intended hearts and spare sympathy on your community!
Eleanora...”

Pluto paused in utter bewilderment, contemplating on the relations between the prideful, low classed muzhiks and the elegant Nora who resided with him, which he rejected and detested the idea of. Completely forgetting that Nora was rescued by his sister Katya from a neglectful village, while defending Nora, he said: “If liberation is a choice you blabbermouth muzhiks ought to earn it by respecting the persons in higher authorities.”

“By then Nora grew embarrassed to the point of utter silence, as well as sheer magnificence reflecting in her dark raven eyes.

“But your majesty,” Herman barged in abruptly and rather violently, “it is true when we claimed Nora as a former neighbour among us; she was our younger son’s acquaintance before his disappearance. Our eldest son ran away after his brother’s disappearance after the Nevadans informed our family that our darling Olden Georgiou...” (She heavily emphasised his name when pronouncing it.) “...died a tragic death. Clyde couldn’t contain his blaming oneself for being responsible for such tragedies so he went mad, went ballistic, and hence his disappearance... Our Olden had had a shining path awaiting him and we grieve his missing out on his worldwide fame. See how insufferable we are, sir, imprisoning us would pain me and Othella more than stabbing a dagger in our hearts - it’ll pain us without touching our skin - a deadly form of torture!”

Upon hearing their pleading innocence and twisting factors in the actual events to discredit her, Nora erupted with vexation and notwithstanding her embarrassment, she yelled: “Abydocomists, abydocomists! How dare you, you liable peasants. Quarrel, I step up to correct you about your deceitful perspective about your son, that disgusting, nasty bastard. He deserved dying bloody, he deserved death by assigning execution: impalement. Don’t interrupt me when I’m speaking, Othella Georgiou, and end your whispering, Seb Karas, pay me the respect you owe. Why did you justify Olden’s fraudulent crimes and glorify him while throwing soil at me, the foundation of his former success? Give me a worthy explanation with straight and detailed answers addressing the issue.” She then turned to Pluto helplessly with her teary cheeks illuminated by the setting sun. The sky became a hue of pink - a phenomenon. “You’ve given me everything, more than I asked for during my stay, and here I am disappointing you; I deserve to remain a villager in the countryside, Pluto, I was responsible for their son

Olden's death and the troubles it caused their household. Remember when Katya hosted agame in the arena? That was when she sentenced Olden to a slow death in order to punish him for me. I wanted and would have spoken against it but chose to keep silent on the topic, for this I deserve a thousand daggers in my heart; Olden, he deserved to endure punishment but his family didn't deserve to be punished for someone else's mistakes, although now they've proved themselves moronic and mind washed, and it is most probable that currently they do deserve imprisonment for my sake and for the amount they owe me during the times when they were able to interact and mistreat me in inhumane ways. Could they without shame call themselves human with functioning hearts? Ridiculous! Muzhiks could be the greediest and more narcissistic, egoistic than Alexander the Great himself, I tell you. Again, I'm so sorry for disappointing you, a saint who never forsake or deserted me under any circumstances if there were such unbearable ones. I wish for anything but to lose another friend, Pluto..."

"Don't cry, don't cry, you aren't losing another friend, I promise. Oh, I remember that Katya brought you in from a village, and these people were your fellow villagers! Well, I'll make commands according to your wishes and imprison the moronic, mind washed peasants who mistreated you inhumanely. It is said that bad people get bad results, no matter the time they wait to run into the bad results they brought themselves willingly. Ha, ha, I'm not shadowed by my demanding siblings for once. Again, don't cry, I'll remain in the friendship forevermore. Don't cry, your eyes are twilighting without the moon on a dark night sky! Guards, bring the muzhiks to where they belong while I head back into the palace with Nora to find Aaron, Kola and Katya. Second group of guards, I call you to take hold of the Bjr skull and we'll examine it tomorrow."

The guards obeyed his word.

The villagers looked at Nora with hateful eyes; while protesting, they subsided their faults and, breaking their pretentious mask, cursed at Nora repeatedly for being the only source of available refuge and refusing to offer a hand or willingly allowing them to rest under her wings. They wickedly rejected the reasonable claim of Nora's that their dear Olden, a fraud, was the one at fault. An evil force was pushed between their current state (corruption) and the bridge to open-mindedness and purity. Their heads were flooded with rotten bres and ill muscles in their brains; their decomposing brain bres, slowly, are tearing apart. As for Nora, she absent-mindedly let it get into her head that revenge was a moral act and in an instant, made a selfish yet righteous decision to sentence her foes to endure a punishment which pains them more than stabbing a

dagger in their hearts - it'll pain them without touching their skin - a deadly form of torture - because they'll scream at their wounds while there is no wound, therefore they'll never really heal at all. This was the torture method they previously verbally used against Nora when she was a poor village girl: they imprisoned her in their neglectful community and although never touching her skin, they made her scream at her wounds when there wasn't really any at all - a deadly form of torture and guilt-tripping - such were the method of Great Blue Herons against swans! How they conquered the swan lake so effortlessly and banished the swans from their own place of habitation... Great Blue Herons are rather cruel while maintaining their softness in manipulation, either consciously affecting swans or unconsciously(both of which are valid and equal in immorality). However, though she is our protagonist and mainly righteous, bear in mind that we do not intend to celebrate Nora's desperate decision of revenge seeking(she had been driven by a sudden adrenaline rush and so she let it get into her head).

"I shouldn't have followed the troop's marching ceremony!" Herman yelled while the guards transported him and the group to a remote land in the city, "we non-hunters could have evaded imprisonment as we weren't involved in slaying the beast!"

"Where did you take the skull, our property, by the by?" A hunter added, panting.

"Sir," returned the guard who held him in place, "the item is taken care of by government officials. You need not worry... Sir Pluto mentioned that he'll examine it closely; it is under supervision."

The condemned people were thrown into their cells after their arrival at the designated jail.

10

“A huge animal horn, Pluto, what animal does it belong to?” Kola stumbled into the garden and asked after seeing his brother hold the mighty Western Bjr skull and horns, then Kola looked closely at it, “where did you capture the mighty creature? Since when did they live in our land? Gosh, I’m glad to have seen it before in portraits, or I would be stunned! I would be very much paralysed in disbelief!”

“Does this resemble the mythical bull’s head? Do you perhaps suggest that the muzhiks slaughtered an average bull and tried scamming? I’ve imprisoned them but that’s another separate story to be told.”

“You bought this from peasants? How could they have slayed the last beast of its kind... You probably gave away our entire fortune, did you not?”

“I assure you, no, Kola, I demanded them to hand it to me and in return, I imprisoned them behind walls in that gothic remote land you feared entering as a child.”

“Good e ort, brother. Your duty will now be examining the potentially sacred object until you uncover its truth on whether the peasants are reliable truth tellers or are hilarious abydocomists. Goodbye for now, I’ll leave you to examine with your full e ort here... Is it preferably comfortable here in a garden rather than an indoor room with a table?”

“Leave me to be.”

Exit Kola.

“Pluto,” Nora called shyly, “I’ve held a secret only Gale knew and I see you as trustworthy enough to tell. To reveal the lengthy secret to you, I ask you to listen with open ears and take in each word without interrupting.” (Pluto nodded.) “I hate when peasants laugh. They resemble the devil in a way. It’s most probable that they are the marionette puppet attached to the devil’s strings... My sister by name, in spite of living as a peasant in poverty in no different form than another, seems to unjustly be an exception: she is classified as a pearl, she effortlessly and in a spellbinding way attract praises, and the sketchiest part is that she has the ability to bring the family out of poverty but chooses to remain a peasant while complaining about her lack of resources and comfortableness, to which not one person questions, thinks sly of her for, or blames

her for, apart from my silent observations, that is. This has somewhat to do with the fairytale I presented to you, Pluto. Ever since she coquettishly brought me into the woods and I accidentally, almost debatably by design, stumbled across an active cottage, I've not set my focus on the mystery behind it, given that she made sure I didn't enter. One night I couldn't contain my urging senses any longer and entered the cottage without guidance, and since then, a Cerberus, not quite in the shape and purpose described by Greek mythology and rather a servant of the devil in Christianity, followed me to and fro and repeated: 'our purpose is to keep you away from interacting with the underworld and we've been sent to keep you out here. Either give us Damian, or leave. Two simple choices.' Damian is my step brother, out of context. I chose to leave and the Cerberus' pestering subsided and I'm ever so thankful for their leaving me in safety and spiritual warmth without their evil presence. 'We were summoned to complete our duty,' they said. But by whom? I put two and two together and discovered that there had to be another evil presence lingering, a presence of a greater degree of strength. I wrote a letter to Katya about the incident and mentioned returning to her after summer arrives, and till then, I shan't return, which, obviously I failed to do. Gale, as a 'good' witch and practises witchcraft under the devil's influence herself, and she used 'Great Blue Heron' as an expression which I instantly adopted and since then use quite often, claimed to have seen through her readings the identity behind the spiritual presence she sensed, 'your sister Irina,' she claimed. I know for certain now that Irina, a moralist, practises witchcraft but hasn't a clue about the motivation and purpose. This entire period after uncovering her hidden acts, I contemplated on whether to reveal the secret publicly and allow the government officials to summon a witch trial or to let her be, since she is irrelevant in the city. To condemn her means to condemn Gale, as they both commit the same big deeds. This is what I've been troubling about: to reveal her depth below the surface or to keep my nose from poking into her confidential business." She paused for a quick breath of relief before continuing explaining, "Irina is very dear to me, dearer than the sun. To take her youth would be taking my life. She is enough to be the sun for me, 'brighter than the dimming sun', if you like me putting it in such a dramatic sense. She is temperate; she is the little grain of happiness that I can yield myself for. It's as if that temporary moment of her happiness makes up for everything I suffered with her. I love her notwithstanding her ugliness I foresee. Ah, Pluto, paper is very dear to me during troubling periods such as this current one, don't you see? Tell me if it's wiser to banish my source of despair, who happens to be my only source of sole comfort, or reject my root of despair and discontinue artificial comfort."

“She is irrelevant in the city, as you said, and she is the devil’s servant... I don’t know exactly how to speak without evoking hatred in the listeners, apologies to you. It’s as if everywhere I go, I leave a trail of bad under my non-spoiled feet, and the ‘naturally well natured but are smothered completely in soil’ people don’t allow me to enter their soiled homes, how bureaucratic! Open your ears, Nora, I suggest you’ll be the wise serpent and publicly host a trial then a burning ceremony - what witches deserve. Gale’s practice could be kept from the outsiders and the blame would shift onto the root of your problems. You’ll need to adapt to an empty melancholy if it means evading artificial comfort, and of course we can bring you genuine comfort, so you need not worry. Tomorrow you and I must inform Aaron and he’ll hopefully summon our Father, the pasha, and our first born brother Augustine to deal with the domestic issue. You’ll do us a favour by summoning a trial: we’ll rejoice with our father. As for Augustine... I’ll confront him about failing to return and seeking pleasure in our Father’s businesses that do not require his assistance. He merely sought pleasure in avoiding his duties!”

“I’m not a corrupter, Pluto, at the very least I try not to be. I need Irina alive, I need to die before her, for I cannot imagine living in the absence of her comfort. What does it matter if the comfort is artificial? Is it not better to live as a happy fool than a miserable philosopher? The muzhiks you arrested, they’ve seen me in hindsight: I’m breathing and am acquainted with the aristocrats. When they are released, Herman and Othella would become madman and madwoman, and threaten me in the name of their sons, because they definitely believe that I was the cause of their disappearance, which is factual but nonetheless reasonable to a certain extent. Their youngest child Olden Georgiou, though he’s not Othella’s blood and flesh, was her son and a selfish, unempathetic bastard. I wonder how it is possible to be so crude to another while experiencing no affection, how it is true that he speaks ill sentences inconsiderately to another whom he had no care to understand before opening his mouth. Does he, do peasants, and do the selfish not know how bitter their mouths are? Anyhow, they have an exception for being sane, unlike how I’m solely calm and nothing more.”

“But it has to be so as I said! It is the wisest path to take, it is where wisdom is bred. And you say that he was inconsiderate, I agree - those ill bastards get away with anything cruel.”

“I was in fear that my works would be stolen and destroyed - it’ll bring back the piece of burden that was lifted. Now I’ve grown used to bearing it and thus I turn to social speech over solitary penning. You didn’t know I pen in complete solitude and in the

absence of noise, otherwise I cannot concentrate on hearing my head. It's rather difficult to hear yourself when other people are louder, louder than your ponders. I'm horrified that the majority of citizens do not ever think abstractly... More on that later, I fear I would bombard you with my blabbers. Ouf, ouf, I'll yield - I'll do you a favour by summoning your Father and brother from abroad."

"Thank you. We'll get Aaron involved tomorrow. Today is the time to rest and examine this proclaimed Bjr head. I wonder how they cleaned it through so spotlessly, leaving no flesh clinging onto the skull and horns..." He held the skull and horns closer to his eyes, carefully running his hands through the texture. I find your babbling worthwhile but your blabbers have already been said years ago by other philosophers, you know?"

"What can I say that has not been said already? Hundreds of centuries have passed, surely one else more educated than I had already said everything I ever have to say. What does it matter that our ancient Fathers, Aristotle, Homer... so on and so forth, had had more complex ideas than I? What originality do you reckon I can come up with? We live in a late period of time and everything is already said. I can only put a certain main idea in a different, more approachable form. Masterpieces were made centuries before my admiration. I envy the elders for conducting masterpieces before me and deeming me the reader while they take credit as creators. I often cry about having comprehension below their intelligence and how I wish to have written their ideas! I like to be straightforward with the points in my speeches and altogether cease unnecessary storytelling. And our world is filled with towering piles of masterpieces, one over another - now it's rather difficult to acknowledge every - the majority would end up forgotten. But to hell with that! Satan's starving mouth may swallow such downbrining, doubt-bringing factors whole!"

"Dear sweet heavens, my goodness, hell's wild res, and its inextinguishable congratulations, those huntsmen were truthful in what they had claimed! Their patterns on the horns match exactly as described in ancient scriptures, the overall shape is distinguishable from a mile away, and the textures are superb. The only mystery concerning the skull is what the peasants used to wash the flesh off and why they chose to do so instead of leaving it fresh."

"It's true..." Leaving the door ajar, Katya, wearing long braids, hurried to Pluto with her eyes widened, "hand it to me, allow me to get my hands on the rarity. Something

extraordinary occurs every century or so... and we'll have to wait another century for another miracle.”

“What does it matter if another extraordinary miracle occurs if we wouldn't see it?”

“And what do you plan to do with the miracle in front of you?”

“What brings you hence? I intend on summoning Aaron, the uncowardly superior, tomorrow to deal with its cost and preservation under his wisdom.”

“And if he objects? For years you've relied on him for guring solutions within the empire: calling his name in moments requiring support, passing responsibilities on him, dragging him into your pithole... Practically worshipping him! Is he, a pressured mortal under your expectations, more of a saint than he is your brother, your blood and esh? Pluto, you serve as a subject of ridicule in our bloodline and you push away problems instead of being the wise serpent and approaching it, how cowardly!”

“When we argue it's babbles directed at me in order to pass on immense guilt to oneself.

We all need mothers and fathers, Katya, I don't blame you; you, as it vividly seems, have

su ered a great deal more than I and are in need of a mother. I have to hold my face to

not pour tears. Yes, I admit, I make you all su er, but I also need a mother. See, I have

strange eyes: why is it that I convince myself that I can seek love from the broader range

of the world if close acquaintances invalidate my voice - wouldn't every person perceive

me the same way? What factor makes me think otherwise? I wish I were born a

cockroach instead, at the very least, they are not obligated, not assigned by another to

satisfy the eyes of many, not to have its purpose of existence made up by another; I wish I

were a cockroach so that I could be easily stepped on and the madness would end - how

easy, how quick it is to get over with! What are you, a populist, if I am indeed cowardly?”

He conveyed while standing like a statue holding the mighty Bjr, “I have this strange

habit of staying still while and after being scolded by a superior - I quite simply am

unable to move until dismissal and even then I cannot recover.”

In her own proclaimed way in which we cannot comprehend, Katya remained cold

toward her brother after his excessive ranting: she let it get into her head that he felt

sorry for himself(a sin in Christianity and an act that does not meet her ideal stature)

and thus she spitted insults with no wit at him. Katya went further than she had

expected: she ranted confessions which she did not mean at all but was driven by her

moments of rage breaking her principles set by the goddess ancestor she followed,

something she regretted in the aftermath. “Aren’t you witty? If you want to be stepped on at least make a stable foundation that does not crumble after one’s first step. As you said yourself, if you wish you were a cockroach, you already are: when a man becomes useless, he is easily swept away - like a cockroach. Your death would mean nothing in the eyes of many since your presence brings no satisfaction, this is the truth that’ll stab a stake through your chest.”

“Why should I, over you, kill myself? I’ve thought about such questions, with the answer remaining unclear - I wanted to punish others, because nobody takes a man seriously unless he proves himself to be suffering by killing himself, and even that is merely enough to serve as proof. ‘Pretentiousness’, they’ll say. I wondered, pondered, and till then I came up with a conclusion: to punish whom? It brings victory to my foes, none would be punished and the heartiest would endure a little shock and nothing else. If I die, they must die too, I concluded. I must kill them before myself, only I wouldn’t indulge in such heinousness, unlike Helios before death. That is why I’ll allow my death to be overlooked, I’ll never self-murder, making my foes delighted, because believe me, they wouldn’t feel punished at all. Oh, and the little child, that poor peasant lady you took in, why did you decide to keep her and excuse her inabilities, her original blood? Shouldn’t I have just dismissed your decision when it was young and avoided another mouth eating our food?”

“I will not tolerate how far you’ve gotten. Nora, he isn’t talking about you...”

“Sure I am and I will not quiet down under your commands! Who are you!”

“Nora, head out the room with me for some good few hours and leave the madman on his own.” With that, she led Nora outside. Pluto did not follow.

But when she closed the door and silence fell upon them, Katya’s rage erupted abruptly toward Nora. “This is all your fault. If you tried harder to suit the palace standards and proved to be more than a mouth munching on bread, he wouldn’t use you against me, do you not understand? I rescued you from a poor place, and you respect me as a saint for that, do you not understand? Tell me exactly what wrong am I doing for you to try with your greatest effort to exceed our standards. He used you against me, do you not understand, he is cursing at me and each word contains truth behind it, do you not understand? Do you love your former poor village, why are you a neglectful place more than you respect us elites who cherish you? Do you want to return to your former poor

village and once more become a village girl under the care of your step mother and step father, your many siblings and peasant neighbours? What is it you so love about a place that doesn't offer proper nutrients than me, your saviour who gives you everything, more than you could ever ask for?" Katya, driven by the devil, slapped Nora across the face, terrifying her beyond measure.

Nora, shaking in bewilderment and terror, confused as to what started the argument and the false confrontation aimed at her, her cold pulse increasing, stood rooted to the spot without answering. God knows why she always ended as the worldly to the unworldly, even when she really rejected the world she so loved. "Am I ignorant? I wouldn't surprise myself: my subconscious mind is hundreds of times greater than the conscious mind." She pondered after slightly coming to her senses, "why is it that my fate is to be disliked everywhere: home, village, streets, palace, where else, even if I really do intend on bringing good? What more could I do to make amends? Her eyes, more blind than functional, are unable to see that I'm trying to put up with standards, and it's quite literally that everybody annoys me in one way or another. Good God, atheists could also be the most Christian people..."

Meanwhile, Katya danced with the devil, unconsciously allowing him to hold her hands. Adance with the devil is an extraordinary miracle, presented by him all the sins one craves to commit, which happens not once every century, but every day among common citizens and leaders of any social group.

"What am I in the eyes of the naturally well natured who are not cursed to think before acting?" Nora continued thinking monotonously in utter quietness, "can they not accept tortured artists until they're gone, if they ever do accept? How they believe their rational being comes from the irrational! Oh, I'd continue convincing my conscious mind through my subconscious mind that someday, in half a century or tomorrow, someday when I look back, I'll see that the struggles changed me for the better, and I'd see it with a smile, a genuine happiness and gratitude. This is the beginning of when I would drown myself in paper..."

Having her temper marginally calmed but nonetheless held by the devil and still dancing, Katya suddenly walked down the hallway, leaving Nora rooted to the spot, giving no explanation whatsoever. "Say I were a part of the naturally well natured," she contemplated, "ach, what does it matter if I lose another friend? She is like an anchor tied to my ankles that brings me to the bottom of the sea as of now. I honestly hate her

company, forgive me for admitting: she works harder than she is able to comprehend to fulfil the needs of the household, and she passes the hurt she gains in the process onto me! She is the mould yet she blames me for the shape I turned out to take, ridiculous! The devil represents all the beautiful sins she restrained herself to commit, and now she gave it, nally dancing with the devil, him holding her hand. I imagine the two in a ball dancing as a painting, a romanticised renaissance painting, beautiful as it may sound. Writing is also art, equally beautiful to painting; literature is unseen art. Now is it wise of me to run after Katya or stay rooted? What would a wise serpent do, as Pluto put it? Pluto... What drove him into using my name as a grotesque curse? I was convinced by his demeanour that he was genuine in what he had claimed: that he and I were inseparable... Dancing with the devil, a fallen angel? Could he be dancing with the devil? Dear heavens, a dance with the devil is pleasurable and likely lasts for an entire lifetime(without either parties growing old or tired of the extraordinary dance).”

Debating on her tough choices, she, by design, skedaddled in the direction after Katya, trailing her footsteps, unaware of what comforting words to say that’ll bring out Katya’s forgiving heart. “As if everywhere I go, everywhere I hide, I end up running into myself in the mirror of those I ran from. This curse is engraved, it’s written across my face, it’s the devil pulling the strings of my marionette puppet, not philosophy, it is he... Such impacts of the curse are unavoidable in circumstances in any place with any face, such is the ‘curse’ I behold, that I inherited from birth.”

Nora, in the breeze of the wind, found Katya seated on a mahogany bench in the open, with scarcely any guards circling around. How it feels to shiver in the wind while tearing up, that sensation is surreal... Heavenly, under the touch of a seraphim, except Nora burns beside hell’s res out of breath, laying her back tirelessly on magma because the misery is everlasting and her grasp for the seraphim’s feathers is out of reach. She timidly stepped in front of Katya, then, shaking, she placed her arms around her shoulders, not saying one word and looked at the sky. By then it was dimming and already she was lost; the sky began twilighting. A gust of wind carried her tears o her burning cheeks.

“One could never feel one another's words to a full extent if he is hearing, only can he imagine but can rarely ever connect, as those words are not his own.” Katya breathed monotonously, keeping her gaze away from Nora, “you have a habit resembling Pluto, you know, you stay still while being scolded and even afterwards you can’t recover. Won’t you try harder and so he wouldn’t use your name as a curse word against me?” Her words confused Nora because Nora did in fact give anything she could in huge

amounts to willingly please Katya and the palace residents. Her words also wounded Nora, reminding her that she would run into herself even if she ran a hundred miles. This wound likely lasts for a lifetime, like the unconscious dance with the devil, and doesn't recover because there isn't an outer wound but a slight tear in the fibres of the brain. "Good intention, good hearts and faith alone aren't enough, you know, others don't see them - they see the outcome. You'll try harder to make the outcomes more visible to the blind, agree?"

"I always thought of you wiser than that," Nora thought but dared not bring out from her lips, "I won't judge you, for you are a good person. If I look at a good person and see that they do bad, no, they are nevertheless good, the reason is that people are complex and to judge on one's one single persona is a foolish behaviour done by children. Dear heavens, Pluto was right, you do need a mother, I understand, but I also am in need of a mother!"

"Yes," Nora hesitantly agreed, unknowing about what to do and agreed because she wanted to get her lecture over with as soon as she could, so that the tormenting may come to an end. She knew one thing: she did not, in this lifetime, yearn to return to living with the Nevadans. Katya's lecture gave an impression that she threatened Nora with sending her back, and thus Nora rigidly obeyed each command to soften Katya's heart. She thought: "Lady, you still don't know the difference between absurdism and nihilism, if there is any difference between the two synonyms."

"Ouf, you're an urchin. Stop stinging me with your lethal spines and take your pedicellariae from out my heart! Speak. Speak longer sentences for me, cease acting like a poor step child laying in the corner in agony."

"A poor stepchild I am," Nora thought, irritated, "an ethereal stunner could speak words lower than a peasant villager, I see. It has me wondering if certainly, I dislike you and think of you ill and pestering, deserving of a good beating, a good dusting and slashing. You can't change me, you'll never change me, I am my own entity and your efforts are equal to nothing if I object to opening my ears. I have my own way and you are an anchor tied to my feet which I am unable to untie."

"Cut the silent treatment! Speak. Do you think you'll remain with me or return to your step family? Don't you love your former village more than me, and tell me what's so adorable about such a place. What an ungrateful attitude you have! Don't give me that

look, don't you dare roll your eyes at me or get irritated, you must think I deserve a beating, isn't that so? From now on you listen to me, understand? Or else I will use my power and disown you entirely from my riches."

"Nothing is adorable about such a place, Lady Katya, you've mistaken," returned Nora, growing increasingly angered by her lack of understanding and helpless fear preventing her from speaking her truth, "I love you even if you don't love me."

"You love me or you love my service? I've done you a favour by taking you in, you've done nothing convenient for me, this luxury is brought from me to you, not you I. I took you in as a saint, your saviour, and you never disrespect me or munch on my dishes without making amends for a sacrifice so enormous by sacrificing your own life, dedicating it to me, understood?"

"I understand."

"You can acknowledge the facts without looking so beaten." Katya's livid expressions gave Nora the impression of the devil in duty. Her sudden oppressive frown sent a threatening shiver down Nora's spine. "Anything else apart from conveying your proclaimed understanding, perhaps a sincere apology for burdening the elites; in fact, do you or do you not understand the gravity of the situation you caused and that I accuse you of?"

"I understand," she blushed, her cheeks glowing red in the pits of fire. "I must adopt the mentality of serving the elites lest my punishment of returning to a neglectful community. I adopt this mentality to make amends by sacrificing my own life for a sacrifice so enormous, out of free will and not of spite, of course." "If you, lady, made a sacrifice to me and I sacrificed my life to make amends," she contemplated, "what was your sacrifice worth to benefiting me - I still am brought down by you. The only way to make a real sacrifice is to expect no amends in return... Goodness, your subconscious mind is dominating over your conscious part. I believe that one is to blame only if his conscious mind is active, acting on one's intended purposes, and clearly, you show me how you're not to blame. And O, how your champagne strands of elongated hair, how your ethereal beauty became out of sight in the hatred of a minute, reminding me of the facial alter of a certain acquaintance once he intended a terrible deed against me. Say, am I over sentimental or simply carry an oversized, heavy big heart? Am I at fault for rejecting the polite hand of the devil asking for a blind dance?"

“I admit that I fail to grasp the motivation for this scoundrel. I understand, I allow the facts concerning my adopting a certain mentality lest my punishment sink in, however I fail to understand the beginning of the scolding when it was you and Pluto, then suddenly passing the hawk onto me.” In confessing this, Nora retreated into her shell out of sheer embarrassment and her fear of Katya’s arrogant response coming at her unexpectedly.

“The day is growing cold. Go to bed.”

Nora obeyed her commands, she even bowed to the level of her feet. She headed inside the hallways. Katya did not follow.

“You were a mother to me,” Nora shedded tears, “how I’d love you to hear my unheard notions, and how I loved you! When we argue it’s your blabbers directing at me to pass on immense guilt you held to oneself. We all need mothers and fathers, Katya, I don’t blame you, you, as it vividly seems, have suffered a great deal more than I and are in need of a mother. I have to hold my face to not pour tears. Yes, I admit, I make you all suffer, but I also need a mother. See, I have strange eyes: why is it that I convince myself that I can seek love from the broader range of the world if close acquaintances invalidate my voice - wouldn’t every person perceive me the same way? What factor makes me think otherwise? I wish I were born a cockroach instead, at the very least, they are not obligated, not assigned by another to satisfy the eyes of many, not to have its purpose of existence made up by another; I wish I were a cockroach so that I could be easily stepped on and the madness would end - how easy, how quick it is to get over with!” She held her face in her hand shamefully, hitting her other hand on the wall, devastated, “I see myself more as Pluto than any other, I even find myself speaking his sentences nearly word for word, meaning for meaning, and feeling for feeling! What a shame it is to see him in myself, any escapism cannot offer an escape from this Greek tragedy (especially that this Greek tragedy is not an entertaining theatre performance but a true tragedy I experience).” Then an idea evolved within her head: “I recall Helios’ presentation! I will act upon his wishes: build a nursing home for farmers and peasants and the migrant group, as well as showing the aristocrats that although he did not see his wish come true, it came true. I’ll move in with the peasants who hopefully might offer a child more love than luxury. Katya’s face has altered into chubbier forms, more irritating and unheavenly unlike her previous demeanour.”

Shortly thereafter, the following morning where the sun warded o the moon, as the terri ed Nora timidly stepped outside her room across Katya, Katya, having come to her senses, hissed: "Dearie, I love you and I like you. Know that the day before, I said all I had said not out of spite but I am dedicated - I will try my hardest to make you change. You must think I'm deserving of a beating for being an urchin, though it's for the better."

"Nay, I don't think you're an urchin." How di cult it was for her to blu out words not of her truth. Nora noticed that Katya's face did indeed alter slightly, about enough to pick up. Her cheeks grew more confronting, chubbier, and her lips thinner, less coloured, gut wrenching. Her previous face: sickly pale with the skin of tuberculosis, tearful wide eyes, even when she drowned her throat in beer, maintained a youthful appearance whereas now her babbles complimented it, showing itself through her once youthful face. How quickly Nora notices such small factors and relates two separate events in likelihood! Nora thought, "do people's faces really change when they change their morals, or am I seeing what I imagine? Did the lady manage to take a break from her lifelong dance she accepted?"

"Appreciations, I will continue this treatment to you from now onwards, I'll make sure to see you change and become less of a headache to care for." Katya's hoarse hisses were unbearable to hear; Nora, hesitant to show disgust, kept a warm expression to avoid provoking her owner.

"I'd make myself liberated if I involve myself with the poor who o er love over luxury," she considered without bringing the sentence from out her mouth, "what if I ended by running into familiar faces in di erent people everywhere I take a step? Wouldn't I be marching along a troop in a loop? If only I had the courage to bring myself back to the waters of the river where I was once found."

"You know that you are at your current position because of me, do you understand, I'd like to be informed that you do. You can be dismissed from this discussion now that you've proven to me that you understand."

"The seriousness of the unworldly these days! Those who understand their morals, who have heard the Gospel, those who reject the gifts the world has to o er, given that we live closer to hell than heaven, are those who, in their right mind, choose to act without consideration about the wisdom behind such acts." Nora was a quick one to give in to

overwhelming, often illogical ponders in times of personal attacks. “Nothing worse comes before trying to guilt a man who doesn’t think of himself guilty. My, I was fortunate to be taken into a rich care when I thought the rich were fearsome, but what difference did it make - I’m nonetheless seeing the same faces in different people and nonetheless running into myself when I tried running from seeing myself in others’ mirrors. I’m not even sure now whether God sees me the same or not, whether he thinks of me worthy of entering behind the golden gates, or whether he agrees with my suffering or with those who take a dislike and think of me detestable. How I gave in to theories instead of solely relying on him - how I lacked faith for philosophy is simply the result of mistrust in God! My notes, my celebrated notes are destroyed by Katya, she doesn’t know that I’m not those who create beauties for the sake of it, no, I need recognition, I need my masterpieces seen and remembered, I need it under my name and take pride in such accomplishments, but she is destroying culture! Good grief, how I can endure this without speaking against anything: not to save Olden, not to save my works, not even to save me, I don’t think - cowardly like Clyde and Katya I am! I cease my lips, however the unsaid notions will be engraved alive and come forth in ugly ways, I believe.”

“One detail before you head from me,” Katya mentioned, “you give me the impression of a poor step child laying in a cold corner. You cannot expect me to act wisely according to your struggles if you fail to speak. I simply will act according to what I see and perceive, understood? Our world is progressing and we progress with it: changing our teachings and adopting new common practices. You think that you have originality in you, but all you’ll have to say, your entire living, has been described by one else - your ponders are pondered by ancient philosophers and you, a common folk who convinces herself that she is diving in the sea, are in the shallow waters like the rest. We live in a late period where originality doesn’t present itself in the living - it’s the eighteenth century!”

“Yes. My signifiant lady is omnipotent, omniscient and an infallible being that happens to be kind. I should sacrifice my own life to make amends for your enormous sacrifice lest my punishment of the unthinkable, which would be reasonable due to my lack of gratitude.” In saying this, Nora clenched her teeth to forbid her contradicting truth from dominating. This, possibly, could be the beginning of a new moral for her, when she becomes a spitting image of the kind forest beast in Greek legends the animals took a dislike in and blamed for his shape while holding the position as the mould. Nora, again, thought: “progressing with the world? No, the truth is the same despite the time period,

it'll remain the same in a hundred centuries, until the sky crumbles, it'll stay old and the teachings will stay young in relevance, I refuse to evolve along with the awed progression of such awed worlds, that is, if our old teachings are further justified than new teachings, because anyone can be entitled to an opinion as long as they can justify it without being proven foolish or wicked by a higher intellectual! The old, O, they were grey, they saw grey. They were grey but through the grey, vibrant cultures and an alive breath could be felt, whereas our modern age is grey and purely grey, without sources of vibrant cultures nor is one able to see pass the shallow surface and discover an alive breath. This is why I treasure the deceased, the distant ideal I never knew but know all about them by heart, the melancholy insurables with vibrant grey cultures, specially the ancient ages when our fathers lived. How I deceive my eyes with a distant ideal that appears very much better than the present, better than the backward-evolving future I daresay! May the coming generations prove me foolish, not disappoint me, if I may see those days. Perhaps the colour behind the grey in the olden days is that the modern age wouldn't come in intimate contact with the ages, without intimately knowing the experience but allowing one to imagine a utopian before the grey. Anyhow, when one does become intimate with a utopian, the ideal quite rapidly dissolves."

As well as Katya's regretfulness, Pluto, who gave in to his temper, became repentful and once stumbling across Nora, begged for mercy from her softness, offering an apology, stuttering multiple times and choking on his inexpressible sentences. "O, it is she, the one I've forsaken. I scavenged through notes slipped in your marinating books for a better understanding of a suitable apology, forgive me, when I read furthermore, I realised how no matter the volume penned on paper, it is inaudible to the ear. Every chaos, each woeful state is merely a quiet description so easily put away, and one cannot experience realistic hallucinations with another's words through reading. Perhaps a visual drama performance may further empathise one since he can see it with his eyes in substitute of imagining a different version of meanings in the book he reads? All and all, etcetera, etcetera, I was devastated once I recovered, was able to yield myself to depravity, seeing myself as a gut wrenching monstrosity, and the only method to salvation, as I spent the entire dead night reasoning, is to seek you offering a second chance of redemption. Forgive me, I know not what I do in moments of rage, as the goddess follower Katya explained. I, unlike my ancestor who conquered great lands, lost no battles, and raised an army, am ashamed of what I've become - how could I be related to legendary King! It has come to my attention that even Alexander the Great had mortal

blood and therefore died, even a legendary conqueror isn't all knowing, even he is just a man, which I use to justify my mistakes.”

“I haven't heard anything so scintillating as your profound claims, you are a spitting image of a great conqueror, a spitting image of beauty. Alexander the Great, your grandfather from countless generations ago, was just a man. Without further ado, I tell you that I'm seen as a doctor. 'You are a doctor, you treat ill people, can't you treat yourself from deadly illnesses?' they say, 'you are a doctor, so why do you die, can't you evade death?' Ouf, don't they know that a doctor is just a man? Thank you, Pluto, for admitting to great conquerors and historical figures being merely men and nothing more, just men with a bunch of men listening to him: those bunches of men are his 'army', and their conquered lands are considered to be in possession of the man whom they listen to. Could a leader call his men's accomplishments his own? A bunch of men is nevertheless stronger than one, notwithstanding his leader position. And I forgive you for your cursing yesterday, subsiding the fact that your unexpected confessions brought forth by wicked foolishness were striking to the heart and ears.”

“The epigrammatic information concerning leadership in which propaganda bestows on one, and as a leader I admit, is falsely attributed for the sake of populism. Oh, I feel my face scrunching together, as if someone reached their hand to grab me. I think I was reading footnotes instead of the actual book. This struck me when your presence affected the guilt written across my entire face, and I declare that I have hitherto opened the starting page... I have brought my consciousness thither!”

With her sharp gaze, she captured his face unaltered by any means, it stayed in its former youthful appearance: sickly beautiful, comparable to a sign of a wasted life. Why could this be? He was no worthier than Katya, no less eccentric than Olden, and yet some inexplicable phenomenon occurred in his place which differed him from those whose face altered after allowing the devil to come forth in their ball dance.

“In attempting to understand certain ques, I went absolutely insane and hated how it ruined my sight completely, yet I carried on out of dedication. I'm really a child, ach.”

“That doesn't make any sense, my good sir, it comes out in a cringing manner, sounds corny and undoubtedly pretentious.”

“Well, let me say: nowadays in our age, people absolutely cannot appreciate beauty without judging, without thinking problematically and logically. This applies for

rhetorical questions, literature and art pieces. Could any person see the simple beauty without thinking logically to criticise? That spoils the beauty under their sight. 'If I punched myself and it hurt, am I strong or weak?' Could a person answer it without reasoning, without thinking logically, criticising, and in substitute, could they quite literally appreciate the beauty behind the statement in itself, not as a question to be answered with a straight answer? Evil is taking pulling the majority of citizens' strings, placing ugliness in their eyes so that they see ugliness in beauty. When you look at a perfect painting, then look closely at one section, you'll notice that it doesn't differ from an ugly painting: plainly one colour. It is important to dissect the small details, however more important to look at the painting as whole in order to see its beauty, subsiding the size of the canvas and where you stand."

"Evil and good are entirely subjective and depend on context in moral relativism."

"Say if I were to declare a war for no given reason. Then say I were to declare a war because the empire I declared war on threatens my own. Both actions are the same with different motives, but that does not change the action itself, both are equal! Hitting you for no given reason versus hitting you in order to protect myself - both actions are hitting you, only with different motives, however the motive doesn't change the action. It might slightly justify it and does not alter it by any means. "

"In that case, we are all of us corrupters."

"In a literary sense. The work of K, as some put it, comes into play for those who believe in it and are students of its problematic teachings. In addition, as you know, the greatest theories and statements contain cringing manners behind it. It is up to one whether to see the shallow waters or the sea in such beauties. Those who see ugliness in beauty are not seeing the point, the wisdom, the intention and empathy it conveys to the sightful. I used to extract all I could from a book, to complicate it with my comprehension. Now, I read to see the beauty and nothing more, to see the analysis of a circumstance instead of viewing it as a circumstance in itself."

"And you're filled with wit, Pluto, I can tell from your stutters that you are genuine. Though you are only three years or so older than I, your own beauty is sickly, and our spirituality is alike in a manner. I want to take the steps of our ancient fathers, to accomplish and publish masterpieces and grey fairy tales to be seen, admired and remembered, to have my name praised and take pride, and you are closer to achieving it

than I.” In saying this, she couldn’t help but wonder about the logic behind his unaltered face. He sinned the most against himself, his wickedness surpasses the altered, his foolishness stands tall, and his integrity is less the average, how is it that he remained unchanged after humiliating and sinning against himself (if her acquaintances’ faces do indeed alter in specific moments, after specific sinful actions against not her, but mainly themselves)? Could the philosophy behind the facial alter be judged and depend on one’s intelligence in their decided actions?

“The wisdom of our land - with a complex and abstract history in storytelling and events - is unmatched, and I can’t help but question whether eccentric individuals such as me deserve to set foot on such a land. I can’t help but become attacked by another ongoing raid of guilt and a wave of regret, Nora, our subject change isn’t sensible and I should be apologising furthermore instead of commenting on irrelevant topics with you during the aftermath of my idiotic vexation, which happens yesterday, even if the irrelevant topics appeal to you. I fear that you’ll say you forgive but when moments of rage hover over you, you’ll bring up in your mind the decisions I made against you and trouble yourself with each inconvenience that has ever occurred, and pitying yourself with it. I hope that you forgive me and forget what I did, because forgetting is crucial to forgiving, because how could one say he forgives without forgetting, without bringing up the event in momentary pangs of rage? Don’t mistake me, I beg your pardon, merciful forgiveness, and a second chance of redemption not for my own benefits but for what I think would be righteous and I sincerely do regret every word I had spit out yesterday against you when the argument was between me and Katya and had not a speck of necessity to involve you.”

“Stop tormenting me with your politeness, you seem to be an eccentric in society, and that has to do with your honesty. No matter your position or state, you are worthy to me and deserving of forgiveness, and your sophisticated understanding behind human nature moved me, and I promise to forget your cry of outburst. I can see it through your face that you are a good person, unlike the majority: you are of the rare minority - the humble.”

“Let’s complete our remarks yesterday and tell Aaron to summon a witch trial. I did plenty of research through books and political notes last night to find that witchcraft is seriously taken and offensive in our heavily Christian region.”

Meanwhile, our Katya whose face did alter, independently ordered servants to print
yers, intending to, through a tradesman, sell the stolen miracle to a wealthier empire
commander who may offer a significantly large sum of money (without thoroughly
discussing with her siblings; nor did she request their approval and advice before making
up her decision and moving onto ordering). This decision that she did not previously
consider wisely could easily bring the empire to its downfall and cause the family to
crumble because of the Western Bjr's incredible value, which, may excite a significantly
large amount of citizens in a dangerous, threatening way, causing them to gossip,
disagree, fight, and alas, the effects would probably lead to citizens becoming madmen
and a big revolution that will change history for the worse, if not for the unlikely better,
would take place. The consequence for the boasting villagers was jail time, which serves
as proof to the immeasurable value of the miracle and the severe danger that the hand
that holds the object is under.

11

Suspicious activities of witchcraft report, nursing home, Western Bjr, Katya's alter... Lately, Nora felt out of order with the amount of peculiar events taking place and having to deal with all, she agreed to seek help from Aaron to clear her first concern and work through the remainder.

Walking within the damp smelling palace walls where torches hung on each ancient styled colossal pillar, where the atmosphere dimmed to a tint of warm orange, dimming with each passing step, Pluto and Nora found themselves standing before Aaron's sacred prayer room where whispers echo due to its simple emptiness. The room contained a high roof, detailed hand crafted gold carvings on every bland stone-based beige wall, marquise diamond framed religious paintings in realistic styles which were centuries old, two stone statues of saints on each side of the prayer cushions with a rosemary covered wooden cross in front, and lastly, the room relied on dim torches for its light source. Once one enters such a daunting yet mesmerising room, one is pressured to respect its fearsome sacredness by ceasing one's mouth and taking slow, gay steps, and each movement is considered before executing. The room eases one's troubled mind, bringing peace and instantaneously reminds one a message: "faith over fear."

Pluto lightly peaked through the doors. "Aaron despises disturbance upon his prayer routine: he lectures whoever pesters him by his calm stare that seems to possess an omnipotent effect - as dominant as a seraphim - even without him muttering the slightest utter, unlike Katya who hisses hoarsely and has no omnipotent, fearsome effect. What do you reckon, shall we knock or wait outside? He usually recovers from this routine after an hour in solitude, dressed in his hooded cloak, the same cloak you see him pass by the palace wearing everyday in the mornings." "The information we behold is

necessary for him to hear. He'll understand once he hears what we have to say. This is urgent news and he'll take it to heart."

After their confirmation, Pluto pushed open the dense doors, revealing his brother dressed in a loose cloak with a prayer book in his hands, and seated on a cushion, guarded by two stone statues of protective saints on both his sides. Immediately Pluto was struck by its effect and stiffened his posture. Aaron knew his private activities had been pestered, however did not turn to look and remained serious in his prayer.

“Aaron, ever so sorry to walk in on your sacred activities, we have knowledge about how you worship and treasure your daily routine... We... We wouldn't pester you unless urgent information must be brought forth, and so, we ask you to listen, you'll be glad that we did not interrupt you casually after your hearing.” (Aaron maintained silence as Pluto proceeded.) “Listen with open-mindedness, brother... We've detected suspicious witchcraft activities in the countryside village where Nora used to reside, and witchcraft is a serious offence hence our immediate report to you. I ask you to take a break from deeply connecting with your prayer and order a trial with us.”

He closed his book(still not uttering a word), bowed before the rosemary covered cross, and made the sign of the cross over his head before heading toward the help seekers. He pulled down his hood and with a gaze more intimidating than usual, signalled with his eyes for Pluto to lead the way. Intimidated, Pluto thought, “his menacing demeanour again, I'm done for!”

“Our gratitude for your empathy cannot be put into worded explanations,” Nora bowed, smiling, somewhat threatened by his lack of response. She went into detail on the issue that needed his assistance while they took slow and dominating steps to the political library she hasn't ever entered yet. “Recently, a couple days ago, specifically yesterday, I discussed with your praiseworthy brother about the unclean things I saw after entering the cottage in my village's forest after my curiosity killed the cat, or rather, my temptation killed the cat. I'll start from the beginning. My step sister led me into the fairytale-like forest after I was severely beaten, nearly to death, by my step family, and she led me inside to step away from others and into the boundary separating seclusion and inclusion. Me and her walked along the streaming river. As she hadn't expected, we took the path leading to a strange cottage instead of an average path. Heavily bruised, I obliged myself to her objections of entering. Then I saw visions of unclean spirits lingering, asked Gale, and through her readings, discovered that my step sister practised witchcraft. Pluto suggested I inform you about the unfortunate news; our gratitude for your empathy you've spared is beyond measure; I hope that altogether, we summon a trial and bring justice without endangering her, since after all, she was my comfort in the hell of a village.”

“You forget to mention that she was the root of your problems: she maintained her position as a 'pearl' while bringing you down. You said that she'd rather have her brother Spade dead than grasp the riches in front of her to support him. This cruelty is inhumane yet no villagers, no household members, point it out. Aaron, Nora's sister by

name, is a foe masquerading slyly as the main component to the community; you must strive to mend for Nora's loss caused by her!"

"None who encountered her spoke ill of her, not even I dared to from the start - I'd be deemed an outcast, an eccentric madwoman! I..."

The enraged Aaron interjected monotonously out of the mere blue. "End your rambling. The matter you've passed onto me, I will observe."

Both parties were silenced.

"Don't worry yourself," Pluto whispered to Nora, keeping a distance from Aaron, "he remains cranky for an hour in the mornings. Until an hour later, until he recovers sensibly into his senses, he refuses to accept rambling."

"Something you hadn't expected," Aaron interjected, "...I overheard your turmoil. That is to say: you've demolished our principles and never falls short to disappoint me. The Bjr has been handed to Katya's care."

To his brother, he said, "Sir Aaron, ever so sorry for quarrelling... We'll leave you for an hour to come to your senses after your sacred prayer. After then, and us enthusiastically and please conceal your menacing demeanour. Thank you for your time and listening service, we appreciate it truly."

"I've recovered well enough, taking a pang of conscience beside your rambling, and we'll investigate further into your concerns by taking a trip to the mentioned village."

"Sir," Nora turned pale as a sheet, "by all means, I refuse to go, I mustn't be seen by my foes masquerading as saints, who have alas unmasked themselves and spoke in character before me. Would you grant my request to stay behind? I am suppressed by the idea that they'll torment me..."

"No, I object, you are guarded from the peasants by the aristocratic horsemen, you need not trouble, additionally, you serve as the main witness to the activities and will be taken along with us. Not an utter protest you shall be obliged to speak. Lead me outside to the carriages and we'll take a great number of armoured horsemen to serve as shields."

Agitated, Nora couldn't ease the uneasiness within her, and, notwithstanding her uncertainty, suppressed her ideas, obeying him, yearning for a desirable outcome.

“Villagers,” she decided to herself, “I thought I’d never come in contact with them, I thought I escaped from what I could not transcend, that I found an escapism, and I’ve learned that the demons engrave on me: it is unavoidable, no matter the distance I run.”

The three of them, placing themselves in lavishly gold carved carriages with horsemen ordered and following, set off along the streets to the direction of the destination. Nora reached her hand onto a rose bush while the carriage moved, swaying her arms across the leaves, alarmed by the thorns. A little withered rose, standing out among the young crimson, bloodshot roses, still intact with vitality, caught her gaze to which she ran her fingers across its delicate brown petals. Its petals bore frailty, crumbling at her light touch, its dried delicacy coming apart instantaneously, and as a whole, onto her palms. “I remember the lily flowers in pots I once cherished,” she recalled, “the lily flowers were prettier than any other, which saddens me to acknowledge they’ll wither. It undoubtedly is a miracle to see large flowers bloom vibrantly. My, why do the unworshipful place virtue in a flower that withers, do such people place virtue in the weak? The rose is the lover, representing its exposed virtue, because quite frankly, forbidden love exists and though a lover may die, the flower is real, thus the love it holds is intact. How beautiful are visual beauties presented in a fixed way when one doesn’t interpret from unseen scripts. Lillies, roses are blooming miracles small in expanse, yet a greater, neglected miracle than the Western Bjr. Oh, the Bjr, my former neighbours are willing to interrogate it, to unravel the misfortune the huntsmen, the Georgious and the Karas’ carried - I’m rendered responsible, I’m done for!”

“Sirs, the Bjr was discovered by the peasant villagers in the village we happen to be venturing to. The value of the mighty mythical beast surpasses our land’s history, we’re done for if the news is far spread and evokes insanity within the mad community!”

“Why should you be done for if you upset peasants? They may be upset all they want, we are visiting them for a different purpose and foolish they must be if they bring up this topic. The Bjr has become our property and is under our control.” Aaron arrogantly responded, not turning his sight from the road to Nora. “I see huts in the distance, we’ve arrived; waste no time in completing our duties, folks. Horsemen surround the property, beware of actively protesting peasants.” The troop found themselves in the village centre.

The scene reminded Nora of when Katya’s horsemen surrounded the village in a similar formation, capturing Olden to his death, along with Nora herself to witness the gored

arena where he endured his untried sentence. "It is a curse," she decided, hiding her face in the carriage, hesitant to exit, "that I, at some point, a long or a short wait, run into recurring events, running into myself in one else's mirror."

Alexandria, holding a babe in her arms, sat around a table along with Nora's dining siblings, including the black magic user who, biting elegantly on her wheat bread, retreated to her mother's side from confusion after seeing the intimidating troop. "Mana, the group has returned in hopes of capturing another poor victim!" She called, "Mana, why does our village offer intense attraction for the rich?" The straightforward

Pluto descended from the lavish carriage, revealing to them the image of the leader. "Confess. A witch has been walking among you, and he who confesses to her identity shall evade imprisonment. She who practises the devil's arts shall step forth if she chooses to be given a light punishment and evade further potential consequences." "Madman!" Alexandria accused, her voice roaring, "the amount of

disturbance is

unbearable, and... 'witch' - what's that? Keep you, sir, and your nonsense away from my easily influenced naive children, especially her!" (Pointing at Irina, who shivered. She reassured her by gently giving a kiss to her forehead) "Dear, who do you intend on capturing, and which one of us peasant men and women caused this amount of attention for the elites to twice surround?"

"Point her out." He turned inside the carriage to Nora, who, without further ado, disembarked with much shame after Aaron's exit. Seizing his hand while uttering, she said: "the light eyed lady, the eldest of the Nevadans, beside the screaming madwoman."

Alexandria was taken aback by Nora's appearance; she had a nerve attack, nearly collapsing to the floor with her mouth agape, her overall expression made her appearance resemble a traditional peasant. "Eleanora Nevadan, you... What brings you hence..." In spite of her fury, Alexandria stuttered in her desperate sentences. "I've gotten rid of you, you're unescapable! It seems as if you achieved a high status and abused your power by commanding a troop to drain us of our youth, to vengefully take our liberty and imprison us for a deed we did not commit. You monstrosity! How do you think that we mistreated you and so you surround us with corruption?"

"You were as young as when I left you, Mana. Your ancient feud of hatred and prejudice are thriving as newly sowed saplings... I truly loathed, the same way you loath an

intruder, though an intruder you've taken by sheer will, and even Cain loathed Abel for his better faith, naming him an intruder on Cain himself's own worship - this, a method of avoiding guilt by planting certain beliefs which convinces the unfaithful. Is it universally skull itching for you to experience saudade for poor folks, poorer than you, defined by the category of their blood?"

"I stumble on my words because of me, you orphaned peasant by blood and name, blood you cannot modify, and name you cannot change. Gosh, I yearned for my one desire of one simple life where I get tired from sipping tea at the window, where caress could be evaded through seeing my children grow, to nurture and strive under no pressure nor threat, no judgement nor intruders, and this profound desire is overly complicated to fulfil, and unknown must be what lay closely intact in the distance! Wouldn't you take a leave with your horsemen and stop tormenting me: setting me aback from my humble desire?" Alexandria took a sip of her mud cup of tea, "sugar in my tea? I prefer it bitter, unbearably bitter, bitter, reaching the point of suffocation, to the point of the bitterness imitating a strangle. Even my tea is served wrong in your presence, Eleanora, take much shame!"

"Mana, you do terrify me, your voice is louder than mine and I am hesitant to mine against it. Did not you know that a louder, more suppressive voice doesn't determine wisdom?"

"What are you? Take our fortunes but don't lay a finger on Irina." (Her other younglings ignored their Mother's screeches.) "If it repels you and your surrounding horsemen, we may order." By then she realised the calmness of her step child, and realised that she possessed higher dignity than her, and so she shivered, limiting her speech.

When she had reached the furthest in gaining and developing her Mana's conscious uncertainty, our protagonist's fury was hit with a momentary pang of derealisation, then came her unconscious certainty, a certainty greater than fury. Nora reflected on the setting, whom she spoke to, and the influential air she carried. Suddenly, eyeing poor Irina, she became certain that disturbing the village with passions so profound could result in bringing forth Irina's resentment, something grotesque and unimaginable to her. "What we are doing is wrong, wrong, wrong - how could I have made myself a fool in agreeing to report my sister, my, I daresay, own blood and flesh?" These were her guilty convictions she mumbled inaudibly.

Changing her demeanour and turning to Aaron with her handsidgeting, she, in a voice barely audible and slightly enough to pass the bare minimum of hearing, whispered: “how could I have mistaken: she is undeniably a pearl, and I have pearls in my eyes from having her before me. Forgive me, I don’t want to bring punishments to her, and she is exceptional in sophisticated judgements for the reason that she is unlike those who deserved it: Helios and Rebekka, the heinous grim reapers who received their consequences of death through standard judgements. Those judgements aren’t applied on her, sir, pearls in my eyes are terribly cold and agonising, and she, as a pearl herself, is bearing coldness and agony, so much so that one is unable to restrain one’s heart of sparing excessive sympathy for she is insurmountable as herself. I’ve been speaking to myself rather than aloud ever since her secret was passed on. The only solution to ease my uneasiness is to conceal the secret I passed, and bring an end to the vehement visits to this village where our passions are unknown to its villagers. I object to ordering a traditional trial, I’m incapable of witnessing her under any form of harm. Listen, Aaron, Isay we leave, never return, and leave the witch to be in her free will. Don’t give me that look, you’ve only processed my desperate commands microscopically.”

He saw the desperate longing in the pearls of her eyes. Whispering back, he said: “no folk in our empire is an exception to outlawed offences.”

“She isn’t a witch! I lied, I lied about her misdeeds, I admit that I lied!” Nora violently begged Aaron to take their leave, convincing him by turning the table around by bluing about Irina and turning the negative focus on herself, “if you force me to stay for any longer, I will crumble at your feet.” She gritted out her teeth, her muscles tense. “The lady is innocent, she is faultless, and to see a flaw in her is a sin, a terrible sin that rots the already soiled soul! Take me away, take me away from the Nevadans making me a subject of ridicule!”

The brothers protested but she insisted. Villagers, by then, began actively protesting against their stay, seeing the circle of horsemen as a threat led by the elites, to which Aaron responded by turning to grant Nora’s wishes. He commanded his people to head back, embarked on the carriage after Nora and Pluto, assisting them in the process, and left the villagers bewildered with their rapid leave. If they were to stay to interrogate longer Alexandria would’ve fed her conscious uncertainty, pretending to confront her dear daughter in the process of protecting her from the troop, as well as feeding her conscious uncertainty and reminding herself that she would be safe if she could satisfy their eyes by slyly siding with their beliefs, which, with the slimmest chance, could’ve led

the terrified Irina to confessing her vehement deeds and bustle the household, opening their dysfunctional eyes that see a slim and biased portion of reality to another broader perspective. Alexandria would've fallen off her chair out of disbelief of what she could've heard, however, due to the odds, avoided.

No sooner than hearing the commands of retreat than the troop set off at once, the horses marching.

On the path, numbers of upset villagers followed, yelling and attempting to physically beat the unwelcome intruders. Horse hooves were unsurprisingly faster than humans, and managed to dodge the poor folks who, after chasing them down to the path to the main street, unwillingly returned to their cabins out of exhaustion, maintaining their annoyance. The reason a significant number of folks were upset was due to the abrupt visit which gave the impression of hostility and happened to strike their fear, a sensation the village standards rejected.

"I... would appreciate knowing..." Aaron began, and before he could spit out another word of question, Nora spoke over him in desperation.

"Leave her, my good sir, I regret conversing about her in an ill manner that troubles you and her household by forming misunderstandings. I confess that my tongue wasn't truthful when I said that I lied about her practises, I needed to come to her defence with ways to convince you of departing. Will you grant my dying wish of concealing the unspoken secret I passed - pretend she was as irrelevant as the day prior to when I opened my mouth!"

"The task of concealing such minor information would come as simple," Pluto began, patting the carriage horse, "it's reducing the heat of the farmers that bewilder me. Katya firstly captured a boy, capturing you in the process, executing him as an act of honour to you, then I took the miracle away from them, imprisoning the huntsmans in the process, another factor of annoyance, and finally we wounded back to bother the residents in the same village once more, interrogating their wrongdoings and pressing their patience. Reducing their heated grudge would take effort because nowadays, forgiveness is a miracle in itself."

"The heat is directed at me, I'm not safe in the same land as the insane! Bring me to a secured environment where the imprisoned wouldn't uncover the trail to my place of

residence after release, for they've seen me residing in the palace and the foolish vexation in them is striving."

"If so, they shall not be released." "Heat... The heat of the day is disgusting. What tremendous clouds hang on the surreal blue!"

"We'll speed the carriage at once." At the gate, when the three were disembarking the vehicle following the arrival, Pluto and Aaron remained outdoors while Nora received a greeting from Katya herself, whose face, regardless of her extinguished resentment for which she regretted acting upon, remained slightly chubby and altered - a trait Nora couldn't bear tolerating. Katya allowed her inside while falling back to her previous attitude, and Nora, convinced by her joyousness, believed that Katya became the saint she knew once again and that she herself can converse with her without doubting.

12

“I see your bloodshot eyes under the hood of your garment... Where have you set o with them?” Katya questioned politely.

“To detect suspicious activities in my former place of residence, but before further investigating, we... headed back...”

“Have you heard of a sloth, by any slim chance?” She abruptly interjected, nonetheless politely.

“I have indeed.” Was Nora’s answer, and she hadn’t expected further humiliation from the lady whom she loved most, more than she loved the sun, although during her scolding, she looked at her character poorly.

“Look, aren’t you like a sloth? Slow and indiligent, also dense in the mind, see for yourself, tell me. If you were with the Nevadans, you wouldn’t be mercifully forgiven and you’ll endure a horrible beating, some tough labour, and be shamed. Thank all heavens that I am forgiving otherwise you’ll make a complete ass of your unbearable self.”

This unnecessary, false and unmotivated remark struck Nora as a reminder that the lady wasn’t the same lady she knew, and it ought to remain that way forevermore, because, after all, it was written across her face as a vivid sign of her indifference. Giving in to self-talk, a habit Nora recently developed and since then became attached to, she murmured to herself: “I cannot have a proper conversation with her, she turns any wholesome interaction into an opportunity for insults. “How do I let sentences slip from my lips in her presence without offending her with my being, without bearing her unmotivated humiliation? The downfall of a star - the downfall of a star upon a dreary nightfall, a shooting star, a failed star! But my, what kind beacons lay behind the clouded nightfall, I need to go behind the dust laden nightfall.”

“Why may you have fallen utterly silent when so enthusiastic in your speech were you before my mentioning?”

She had had enough tormenting from seeing Katya before her; she limited her responses to minimal phrases in monotone voices to present her annoyance, avoided eye contact, and eventually managed to bring herself outside, keeping Katya inside. Nora took a deep

inhale under the heat of the day and, in furious humiliation, devastatingly stormed into the streets where the poor folks lay on the sidewalks under the shelter as expected. When she caught the attention of the same passersby a number of them made it their business to involve themselves in crossing her separate path. "They come to humiliate me but none knows the depth of the soil that comes from their lips, none knows the effect in pestering a poor lady with a history unknown to them and in fury and humiliation, none repents let alone acknowledging guilt or acknowledging their wrongs, none bothers to bring the fish on land to its waters and all are without a pulse in the wrists. At least they aren't Great Blue Herons in turning from bringing the fish to its waters."

"Wondering about the routines of a muzhik is very obliged to you as it's kept from touching you with a taste of the lowly bitterness, that is, if you plan on accepting a touch, you're recommended to reject your status and reside among the lowly." The passersby bursted into hysterical laughter like delirious madmen and entertaining themselves over mockery, unaware of her woefulness, let alone taking into consideration of her stress or giving any care. These people found amusement in mockery (something triumphant and proud shone in the shallowness of their faces when Nora, muted by contempt, observed closely at the easily overlooked details) - the wicked type, one might name or label them - the only category of people much more foolish than a fool's category.

It had been unbearable: the last inconsiderable humiliation developed her self pity into intense rage, into a whirlwind of pitious thoughts and questions concerning the wisdom behind humanity, and if humanity had not the faintest light of ever becoming less coldblooded. Every path she took, she ran into familiar faces in bureaucracy, and it has become a matter of whether she was the corrupted one or whether corrupted others were at every corner of the world, and so she didn't attract corruption through her own but rather corruption found its way to her as a method of evoking terrible doubts that likely gets to the head, past the surface into the depth, and becomes hesitant to diminish when it becomes an individual entity of itself. Nora, with the whirlwind shrieking that those whose paths intersect hers deserved a thrashing until their tongue repents, looked at the passers in resentment although she refrained from stirring. "A curse this is, a bad omen," she decided, "a curse placed on me, a curse where I am obligated to face consequences if I do not think thoroughly before executing an action. I dislike thinking before executing - fate is different on the others who do not think and are praised, or overlooked. I never am overlooked."

“Speak, why do you fall silent?” A curly haired man with somewhat cunning eyes and exaggerated side whiskers teased, “you aren’t looking at us when we speak to you, where is your focus at?”

“She’s scared, she knows the truth in our words therefore she ignores,” A tanned lady in an expensive white coat commented, then another burst of laughter ensued. “She pretends not to hear when she hears truths, such are the patterns of the cowardly! Grow a backbone!”

She noticed how the sound in the laughter aligned with the ugly laughter of Olden after his deed, and the expressions of their features were akin to ugliness itself, and already she had had plenty of heat directed toward her - already, she had had enough.

“Damnation!” She spat out, creating a voice collage over the laughter, “‘cowardly’, the stubby term’s effect is microscopic. You amuse yourselves through the lack of amusement in others, what pleasure is found in invalidating the insufferables? You come when catching sight of me near the poor folks to tarnish my name for the sake of greedy amusement, what truth is said in this! May the peckish mouth of the devil swallow you whole if you ought not to repent, if you stay as atheists - to hell, to hell with you and the devil, because trust and mark my words, the lake of fire will not be a soiree! It is essential for you to realise that the world isn’t only yours, it’s as mine as it is yours, and so, you mustn’t interact with me poorly.”

They took offence, however another burst of laughter followed, this time more ugliness could be heard and seen in their expressions. “Grow a sturdy backbone, cowardly!” “And you look as if you’re raisins, take some two years from the heat of the day as recovery and listen to the principles your highness Lady Katya follows! Be hungry for peace and cease your bloodthirstiness in recovery of looking like raisins. If you fail to take control over the pattern of your thoughts, you are rendered weak to control your actions - this minimises you as a person and displays immaturity and incompetence. If it were not I but any other overlooked person who came visiting the group, not one pair of eyes would turn at them for the magnitude of their presence is insignificantly bijou. I am seen, eyes would turn at me, the gravity in my presence isn’t minuscule, not the slightest bit meagre nor microscopic to the naked eye. The corrupted(as I judge you based on what I see) - you can show up at each corner, confront me eye to eye, claim that my presence carries and lends clean misery, regardless, you never can mould me into the

beast as you see me! And I see a third party laughing... Sir, your corpulence de es your rights of humiliating me.”

On this occasion she took offence took the heart, given that the blabbermouths decided to cross her path during when her mood was on the verge of collapse and begged for anything but bothersome passers who, due to their cold pulse, would aimlessly babble insults without the slightest empathetic consideration. This factor of annoyance, in addition to Katya’s previous humiliation spoken in a polite manner, the stress of fearing the taunting idea of Irina’s arrest, the scorching heat under the cloudless day, and the stuffy air in the atmosphere which compressed her chest and breath, cast a miserable shadow ahead of Nora’s unstable trail of foreseen white light.

It had been then that she turned the opposite direction and absent-mindedly made her way back to the goliath front gates of the lavishly built palace while mumbling desperate, pitiful stutters under her breath. The stutters were mumbled with no meaning and were scrambled and tangled in nonsense, because all she wanted to say was blurted at once. During such uncomfortable moments, she was drenched from head to foot in cold sweat, notwithstanding the heat that had irritated her physically and psychologically. “If it weren’t for finding an escapism to Katya’s change of character, if it weren’t for her unnecessary humiliation that carried falsehood about me, I wouldn’t step out of the shelter and set foot on the grounds exposed to sunlight, I wouldn’t endure a round of psychologically wounding mockery from people that know not the least about my gentle motives and saddening history, and I wouldn’t weep over my own loss of the former kind hearted, temperate Katya, the lovely descendant of a goddess, the lady I relied on and loved! I loved her and, importantly, liked her. Now, after the argument with Pluto in which I played no role, she is displeased with me and purposefully finds fault in me when I converse with her - disgusting, she is impossible!” Nora paused before reflecting on the events of the earlier days, “she insisted on my break on philosophy and abstract thinking, claiming that with much esteemed knowledge, the nature of the mind instantaneously desires to destroy what it created of itself, and went far to the point of burning my own handwritten catastrophic publications under another name (this proves that I, as an anonymous, am well adored through my agreeable ideas), and all and all, she had been the devil pulling the strings of my marionette puppet. I need my creations seen, recognised, passed on, preserved, credited... What does it matter if I strived for an intelligent path where I find the work to be rewarding - apart from intelligence forming the absence of certain enjoyments - the matter was never

circling around the worries of bringing myself to the mouth of insanity but rather around pleasing my guardians, because, with all due respect, what am I and what will become of me under the eyes of my nurturers, if they were not nonentities I imagined from insanity and were always beside me, expecting miracles out of me(although I am unable to speak of their name directly because straightforward answers of whom cannot come up)?”

A beacon of shedded light appeared before her during her woefulness: Pluto had been detected beside the entrance of the gates, picking at bushes on green elds. He and Aaron waved to her in unison no sooner after spotting her standing stily in the near distance. As if at this moment the little scatters of shedded light became enough to enlighten the jet blackness of every burden carried on her shoulders, lifting them and evaporating the lightness of the weight, her gratitude skyrocketed. The sight of the two stored motivation in her to toughen from an iridescent uid to a statue with a heart of stone but nonetheless big, heavy hearted with owing blood.

“Pluto, before I knew you in depth, when I knew you vaguely and convinced myself that you were fearsome in seriousness and duty and wasn’t to have wholesome discussions while resting beside a tree in the ‘Garden of Eden’ as you phrased it, I looked at you as a distant idea, an unreachable idol out of grasp.” The enlightened Nora was welcomed into picking at round bushes with them, “Holiness, I regarded you as a much esteemed statue of gold!” Her speech was far from melodramatic and was kept unexaggerated through her formal use of tone. “Same could undeniably be said about Aaron, the highness...”

In the heat of the day, she closed her eyes and the heat miraculously adjusted to a perfect temperature in the air.

“Good heavens, it’s right.” returned Pluto, his hands over his head to hide his features from the direct heat of the sun.

She, in the warmth, was bewitched seamlessly, like as it’s described in a fairytale, into slumber and the passing of the days when she refrained from interacting with Katya. These days were dull, so dull they were that Nora could taste the blandness, the avourful blandness on her tongue and down her throat... And so she imprisoned herself within the walls of the pottery room, allowing her hands to decay in piles of clay, sinking her ngers into its texture for long durations. Not one vase had been formed

during when she practically took on the role of an eccentric madwoman behind the walls in solitude, because, due to psychologically wounding factors contributing actively and which we have no definite description to inform the reader, Nora adopted the habit of thinking chronically distressing thoughts in soil smothered rooms and to go mad sober. As a result of soberness in loose madness, she could understand, process and is conscious and aware of each wounding factor. Owing to such habits, she went insane: she couldn't produce proper vases in consequence to the lack of reason of 'staying calm when she was never sane', and lacked motivation in toughening - an iridescent fluid she had thawed into. Reasons concerning why the palace residents with every right to keep Nora under their sight such as Pluto and Katya didn't enter the pottery room or call for Nora during these mad days was that duties from abroad called for their attention. Katya, Pluto, Aaron and Kola went to and fro from in to out, having unstable movements till they completed the duties. Naturally, they didn't call for Nora - who was close to full intoxication of insanity - assuming that their busy duties allowed not plenty of leisure time, which, more or less, was the truth. In spite of moving abroad, they had no opportunity to see King Aubin or Prince Augustine - a pity.

Scared was Nora in imagining that she'll never recover from the comfort of romanticised madness in a soil smothered room under no eyes of administration. She learned a harsh reality: she stayed calm from acting upon her insanity caused by other persons because she stood under watchful eyes; and under no eyes, the stress of fulfilling expectations dissolved, leading to her giving in to breaking what she'd say 'I am calm and you are sane', so that she became no longer calm and can no longer be denied nor limited. Food sources to her weren't enough for nourishment but to make matters less tortuous, she craved for no dishes and rarely ate when warm dishes were in front of her; she refused to touch the easily grasped dishes. Sometimes, in abstract thinking sessions, she'd eat lumps of clay because she'd mistake it for herb pastes of happiness - the same paste her treasured Irina smothered over her poppy bruises from her first death which healed them. To her, what she had mistaken to be the herb paste was a resemblance of healing, and so her madness led to consumption.

While maids swept during daytimes, she had businesses to distract her: sinking her fingers in clay and smothering it across the walls; and when nightfalls painted the sky, she'd rethink the ugliness of humanity countless times till the romanticised madness becomes wrong in all aspects. Ultimately, as soon as she realises this, she begins to bawl her eyes till she could see through the lenses of pearls and, reaching an inexplicable point

in her madness, she consumes clay in order to taste the bitterness of the herb of happiness. High levels of concentration of a given subject (such as Nora's concentrated subject of scavenging through layers of thoughts, sinking deeper till reaching the level of suocating) is guaranteed to cause intense mental strain in an individual - great enough for mad hallucinations. It has been revealed to us that our Nora, as we admit, was a sensitive delicacy living a real Greek tragedy.

Maybe, defeating the odds, she was pitying herself. "Eleven years old, three four years ago was when my Mana vanished near the Aliakmon river, leaving in the palms of Mana Alexandria. Perhaps I've been a possessor of clean misery from the start and lended it to every acquaintance of mine, as certain people made the impression to be." (Nora looped the mumbles in exhaustion one painted nightfall when the moonlight shone through the window.) "The pottery room I've become an imprisoned condemned lady to is spacious and I'm covered in clay. Akin to an unfortunate withered bloom, I'm a lily and a rose - a dried frailty. I've found an escapism to the watchful eyes and in their absence, I yearn for them to return to keep me intact and calm, to toughen me from an iridescent uid to a statues with a heart of stone but nonetheless big, heavy hearted with owing blood - without the eyes, I soften to disgusting eccentricity. Could, possibly, there be an alternative to acquiring a pair? "Amidst the waiting I keep screaming, pleading for a turn of fate..."

The duties from abroad which called for the eyes lasted longer than originally predicted. By then Nora's skin (comparable to a dried seed pod once it had fallen and became brittle), mainly around her ngers, was covered in clay cracking like a pod (like the image of the skin of the earth when it becomes useless for growing vegetation when the e ects of droughts play a signi cant role). Our metaphor may not be at all extreme as the condition of her skin did in fact crack under the clay. It is worthy to note that regardless of her frightful maintenance of herself, the speck of brilliance found in her optics remained unblemished, untarnished, and unmarked with dreadfulness. She, driven by the same psychological factors, found her failed attempts of maintaining her position as a fair maiden rather chucklesome. Messianic gures usually came forth in her slumber through dreams including complex plots. 'Eat this and the sea anchor tied to your ankles will diminish into uid and be washed along the waves,' a three headed beast said to Nora once. 'Are you a cerberus? What is this fruit? I will eat it as you have promised the advantages I shall inherit' she returned, smiling. Not a moment stopped or hesitated she, not a second passed before she accepted the blackened fruit from his slender hands. Not

asecond had passed when she barely touched it than she awoke from the messianic dream, causing her conscious mind to trouble over having not taken a bite of it rapidly. Palace maids on this peculiar occasion reportedly heard her yelling confrontations to nonentities from beyond the pottery room doors but dared not pester her as she previously mentioned that she preferred no hands turning the handles of the door.

As if a miracle fell upon her absence of light, one particular morning, she suddenly retained a sense of calmness and, notwithstanding the odds, urged herself to slither into the dressing room for cleaning her pods. She did exactly so: bathing in clean water, having a change of clothing, and exited into the open air. Maids nearly questioned their sight after seeing Nora's appearance after the gloomy days which were shorter than they calculated(severe miscalculations and stubborn blunders occurred at points).

In the delightful situation where Nora walked under light, allowing sunlight on her clean skin, something far from a wonderful miracle happened, and the image of their faces was engraved inside of her even till the end of her stay in the world...

13

The sullen Ophelia and her grown sons, accompanied by her second husband, trekked straight toward the direction where the palace's front gates stood. Seb and Adonis had slightly thinned since their last appearance to Nora. Ragged garments were thrown over their shoulders. "My nemesis stepped out of their unjust imprisonment," was the impression Nora received. "And aiming to abduct me! Ouf, I'm rendered hopeless. Light is slipping out my palms. Just my fate, I should have never turned the handles of the door."

Seb turned his wandering head around; he spotted Nora beside a rose bush. Wasting no time hesitating, he pointed at her, announcing the news broadly as if a hunter caught his prey of rarity. Nora, with wide twilighting eyes, stood with her heel pivoted to the spot, awaiting for fate to take authority over integrity while they cheerfully hopped and ran. "Eleanora," they screeched in unison, opening their arms to offer a hug, which contradicted Nora's expected reaction: vile, hostile, crude, and vengeful... It became apparent to Nora that she held the role of a redemption giver, that her subjects depended on her commands.

"Mercy fell upon our backs, we've walked into you, our dear! You wouldn't think a word of our story is reliable but hear do hear the story I've bottled and must say." Ophelia babbled away, jabbering in a sweet tone she unwillingly forced in order to win Nora's sympathy. "Our stay at the isolated land of where we were sent consisted of horrible labour, poor treatment, and... tireless conversations with the guards. We protested against our stay because, as you know, we partook no role in carrying out misdeeds - all we had mistakenly done was march in a loop with the proud huntsmen to present the unseen wits of peasant villagers! We were given undeserved punishments: humiliation, convictions, beatings... etcetera, etcetera, so on and so forth. Don't step back in fear, my dear, come closer, I see you are afraid. Anyhow, the inhumane devil servers of guards mockingly said how we could acquire a turn of fate if you approved..." Her forced tone softened into a faint whisper as she jabbered the main point, "come forward, let your O sinner Ophelia to wrap her arms around you. Do you wonder how we were released? That is, we had a stroke of luck and guarded by faith, escaped... Others weren't struck by luck; I prayed to the heavens for their wings resting above my family's heads so they could find refuge. Our family, me, Seb and Adonis, stepped out of our unjust imprisonment with the help of my husband." (Pointing to her new husband.) "Eleanora,

you may not know him but since Dillon Karas' death, he and I spent leisure time consuming tobacco till our marriage. Now that I've outpoured every piece of information, the big question comes: would you offer a hand of sympathy to us and lead us to the place where the huntsmen's Bjr is on display? Dearie, you're our beautiful miracle in such rough situations..."

"I? I've vanished from the village for some years and not once did any villager, including you, speak a word of concern. You spit benevolent sentences here to me for your own advantages. I'll tell you without further ado that I'm not wicked or a fool, that I wouldn't accept sparing a grain of sympathy onto the ugliness of the deeds each of you passed on to me, from eleven years old. I had, since the day I moved in with the Nevadans, been an unblemished and confused outsider who couldn't adjust to the social cues and patterns of your community. You daresay you are the ones in need of a hand of sympathy? May your tongues be gored and cut by the despicable devil."

"No, no, Eleanora, listen with an open ear."

"You open your ears - they've been hearing nothing I wisely bring forth since three four years ago."

"Dearie, come closer. What person could reject another's hug? Allow me to wrap my arms around you again, I'm glad to have you before me. Please lend a hand to old Ophelia and her family."

"Over my dead body."

"You're difficult, Eleanora, that is the reason behind the dislike toward you." Seb erupted with contempt, aiming relentless blows at Nora. "The minority of adoration toward you is a miracle from simpletons under the influence of idiocracy."

"Mark my answer. Trip over my dead body onto the hollow grave of your foreseen downfall."

"Ma, she means once," Adonis mumbled to Ophelia, "she wouldn't extend her hands even if we brought the sky down for her. There is no benefit gained in begging her; if she doesn't fulfill our desperate requests, she also mustn't live. Not while our bodies lay dead before her's, I live to see her die, dying after the clean misery she passed along her walked paths."

“No, cease your blabbermouth,” Ophelia interjected, jabbering without rest again, “see, Seb and Adonis were like Shakespeare’s Tybalt from childhood and onwards: uncontrollable, vengeful, mad... The list of my sons’ detestable qualities goes on. Where’s Romeo? Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo? But you, you are Juliet and you are willing to sacrifice a part of you for the sake of restoring an inexplicable love you hold, am I right? Our fate is dependent on you, dear, you don’t understand our urgency to acquire a lending hand!”

“My hands are scarred and were covered in self sin blood. At the current moment, they are decaying from clay: the herb paste of an illusion of healing. I’m impure, insane, I practically am more dead than alive. I have no hand to lend. My step sister Elena rejected my hands before they underwent such conditions, what does it matter if you want them?” She gritted her teeth to prevent pearls forming lenses over her pupils.

“Listen, I keep calling for a shed of light, calling for mercy, calling for a messiah, calling for you. I’ve broken free from my imprisonment not only to acquire redemption, but to apologise and make amends for my ill treatment toward you in the olden days, Eleanora, your ignorance prevents sympathy for your old Ophelia and her poor family. Don’t frown those eyebrows, dear, our situation shouldn’t be frowned at.”

“You’re gritting through your teeth a white lie, a white, white lie, paler than the sickly moon. Lies are sweeter on a pretty lip.”

“Is a bothersome matter happening, Miss?” A palace guard wearing silver stepped in the middle of Nora and her ‘foes’ before the sullen Ophelia could make use of her tongue. He jumped in between them quickly if not instantaneously. This guard served as Nora’s stroke of luck, interfering with the situation as she made use of him to mercely ward off the peasant family’s jabbering and disturbance.

“Nay, sir, nay, there isn’t an issue. The peasant family before us is simply begging for the devil knows what. Ah, the devil knows what they are in need of other than the liberation they’ve already gained.”

“Liberation is conquered, sir, however our names might be written in the wanted list. We’ve treated the girl inhumanely when she hadn’t become omnipotent and during our rough imprisonment, we’ve relected daily on our sins without forgetting the most microscopic, grotesque detail. We were tormented by the lack of forgetfulness given to us! The girl is our messianic gure, the one giver of redemption!” Ophelia choked,

stuttering her speech, continuing blabbering and nearly dropping down to her knees on the ground in desperation for the devil knows what. Her hoarse voice gave the impression of crickets in bushes.

“Lady,” the guard yelled over her pleading, speaking firmly, “I ask you to leave. Either get onto the point, spit out your intentions then take your leave, or leave this very moment.”

“Our family’s intention is to soften Eleanora from a gold statue with a heart of stone into an iridescent maid with glowing love. A certain ecstasy should be brought forth after lending her arms to those insufferable peasants whose imprisonment exposed them to cruelty.” (Upon hearing this, Nora recalled the insanity she went through when she had been an iridescent maid instead of a gold statue. Despite being a statue, her heart of stone did contain glowing love and wasn’t in need of softening.) “She shall extend her hand, we adore them in spite of the scars. In fact, how were your palms marked with such long, visible scars that seem to be in the process of...”

“Mirror.” “Oh, do speak louder and less monotonously, be cheerful to us! Jump, skedaddle, make

yourself at home because we are your second home, a warm home.”

“Ma,” Seb pulled Ophelia’s rags as she coughed hoarsely after speaking for an abnormally extended length of time, proving one thing she does good: speaking very much without telling anything. “He mentioned asking what your destiny is leading to. I’ve thought about it, coming to the conclusion that not even I know what your destiny in bothering the girl leads to, since - and you and I both know that this piece of information I’m ready to reveal is factual - you’re gritting through your teeth a white, white lie, a lie paler than the sickly moon on white nights - a venomous lie akin to a slithering green serpent. Ma, you’re not after softening Nora, you wouldn’t give care or concern for her experiences, so I cannot logically comprehend your sudden switch of character, your desperation. None in our households adores the difficult girl, isn’t that so? You’ve not shedded a speck of sympathy on her till hitherto, under hindsight.”

“Objection! Where are you, Seb? Wherefore art thy Romeo in you? All I see in your Greek features is a vicious Tybalt, a prince of cats, the felines of the devil! If you unleash your contempt and act at your heart’s content, unfortunate news will circle back to you. Haven’t you heard of our best loved playwright Shakespeare’s best loved epic play?”

In the midst of this, Nora faced the ground while walking back inside as the guard guarded the four foes of . Somehow Ophelia's husband maintained utter silence throughout the span of her melodramatic begging. The most he did to indulge himself was holding Seb and Adonis back. We inform the reader that the strange motives for his calmness during the situation are translucent and unclear, perhaps because he was an outsider like Nora and learned the difficulty of adjusting to the patterns of his family. Ophelia's pointless protesting repelled the sympathy of the guard on duty while he insisted on their leave.

"Herman Georgiou? His sister?" Nora aimed to discover their intention by dissecting the details in the scene (she made her way into her bedroom, facing the ground), "why hadn't she mentioned them? She mentioned the miracle once at the beginning joyously and didn't seem troubled over their community's loss of a precious possession. Damnation, to the pool of re with this, I am forgetting them for their paths of poverty wouldn't meet my path of riches again. When is the return of Katya, Pluto, Aaron and Pluto taking place?"

Something wonderful occurred within her: this time, after torturous days of insanity without calmness, she dedicated herself to diligently act according to the disabled genius mathematician Helios' presentation before his death. For starters, she needed to start a home for the unfortunate migrants. She thought if Ophelia and her family were to move back to her former village, avoiding any imprisonment sentences, and cause dangerous threats by informing the residents about the whereabouts of Nora, it is crucial for Nora to go into hiding - this motivated her furthermore to be involved in Helios's (despite his real colours coming to light during the last weeks of his stay, the presentation was nevertheless ethical and spectacular; as Nora puts it in a phrase: 'for benefits and evading quarrels, we must separate the masterpiece art from the artist and make his art its own sacred entity without involving certain persons') planned project." A debatable argument struck her smile seemingly, hitting her with a momentary pang of conscience: "in order to execute the plan, to breathe life into it, I require assistance - assistance from whom? If I should need anything arranged for me it has to be the sorted materials and land. Ach, at such a point I might consider taking no credit: no credit for the idea, no credit for building... Can I not do one task on my own? Could this, notwithstanding the arguments against it, be the justified reason for Katya's ire, her wrath, her 'you must work harder so that he wouldn't use your name as an insult against me'?" Then a second argument: "...Gale. Gale... I may call for Gale! I haven't been greeted by her in weeks if it

hasn't yet been months. She, a merchant in the industry of foreign trade, an elderly whose ear is open to hearing moralists(though I was on the verge of sliding o the righteous cli into becoming a beast), and the witchcraft artist under the influence of the devil himself but claims to practise her black arts for good outcomes by allowing the devil to pull her marionette puppet's strings, is a ray of faint light that travelled behind the shadowed gates in such a project! A letter, a letter, must be written by hand then sent to convey my much esteemed respect!"

Dear Gale,

Had these days in which we haven't conversed been a heart-rending tragedy and nothing more? Without a doubt! A tragedy where one is condemned to look at a sapling's leaves before it bears its fruit, where one could see petals instead of the whole image of a lily. I've been reading a number of books - I want to read every story, building the quantity, and always say that the quantity is low in value, that it amounts to nothing, and it's the quality that is essential - how wise of me, how wise of me to display my ageing without gaining little portions of wisdom! As if I ate the fruit of knowledge in paradise to avoid starving in the desert - wise indeed, aren't I? But when I drop the fruit, let it rot under soil, the bite of mine shall remain, owers shall bloom, and wrap around the bite, and that, that, Gale, is my stay in eternity - an eternity of foolishness. However, mastery isn't a function of talent but rather a function of consistency in intense focus applied to a field of subject, therefore I have the hope of ageing wiser intact - all I need is to extend my hands and it'll be rested in my palms. Ah, these days were indeed a heart-rending tragedy where I found happiness in eccentricity and chronically upsetting settings! My main purpose, Gale, in writing this letter out of the blue, is to ask for your presence as I have discovered issues requiring you as the messiah. Tomorrow, tomorrow morning is when you shall certainly come.

Yours truly, trust E.N.

P.S. It cannot be helped that I carry clean misery. It is a curse, an irreversible curse, Gale, remember that whenever I act o handedly or irritably, it is the curse that takes authority over me. Either over me or over others' reactions, I am unable to make out between the two possibilities. Don't frown at my confession, it's true, Gale, don't see me as the majority does. Of course this cruel curse upsets me, demonstrating the ignorance of the selfish - the treasured, adored selfish persons whose wrongdoings or morals are overlooked. Not only are their misdeeds overlooked but their entire character! Recently,

I see a miniture change: some former neighbours of mine (including one which I shouldn't judge as I have never met him) who, identical to the rest, once mistreated me from a young, immature age, received an unjust imprisonment and had to endure tough labour and direct humiliation before some escaped on their own. Their complaint about the unjust sentence resembles myself when they labelled me as a mis t, and gave no care to this young step child. They were unjust therefore their outcome is unjust - and so it becomes very much just. The chucklesome thing is, Gale, that they dared pointing out their unhappiness with their outcome and furthermore, additionally, shamelessly requested my lending a hand to pull them from out their misery. I believe I went into unnecessary details in this letter which I plan on informing you in person. I cut it here, I'll save my words and describe the details of my discovered issues tomorrow. Till tomorrow, surely tomorrow!

Tomorrow did arrive. Gale had noticeably turned more sickly during the days of her absence from the palace as Nora caught sight of her using a walking stick with her back becoming gradually more hunched. The old witch, dressed in ne white silk and adorned with an Indian jewel from foreign trades, somehow appeared as if she were su ering in devastating poverty although she had been unusually rich. Her lifestyle also con icted with her wealth: she decided to spend time residing in slum-like shelters when she could a ord hundreds upon hundreds of acres of suitable land. Such were the peculiar traits of an experienced witchcraft artist! Perhaps people of her category have seen certain unclean visions in readings that alter and intoxicate their head, giving no reversible solution of turning to their previous self once the chemical reaction sinks in and engraves itself, causing a somewhat burning sensation akin to lighting a match ablaze - once the wood is burnt, no longer can it return to its former shape.

"Gale, do so kind as to settle yourself on a chair and listen to the fair confessions of mine I am about to outpour onto you," Nora extended her hand, leading her guest toward a dull circular table that's skillfully accented with gold markings for aesthetic purposes. "Did you or didn't you know that Katya and her brothers travelled abroad? Ah, the guilt that assaults me when I am reminded that I am useless in assisting their duties! What's that - you heard, you were informed by whom? Splendid, perfect... Gale, you've been dear to me. I would like to say that my sharp, watchful eyes are comparable to an eagle when I observe my surroundings: the events, patterns, details on some green leaves of a rose bush... See, unsurprisingly, I managed to capture issues, shall I begin from the start? Perfect. A miracle rst occurred: villagers from the countryside captured a Bjr, cleaned

its flesh from clinging onto its skull and horns, abandoned the body structure, and boasted publicly, proudly, marching in a group as if walking in a loop. News concerning my sister was spoiled to Pluto and Aaron, who, striving for justice among their people in our empire, brought me to question her. I failed in doing so out of nerves. Making matters closer to the verge of slipping down a cliff to the bottom of the platform of difficulty, I defended her name. Nerves, I tell you it's precisely my nerves pulling my thin strings... Then I came across some peasants at the sidewalk, sleeping along roads for horses; I immediately, after days I've lost count of in pitch blackness, dedicated my integrity to construct an unblemished environment while my head still contains calmness. See, Gale, you mustn't conflict against me when I tell you that it's nerve wracking to remain sane when every mouth speaks ill of you - it leads anyone to insanity and I, an insane, could only try keeping and maintaining untouched calmness before psychological factors ruthlessly mould me into a madwoman! Before moving in with the Nevadans, when I lived in extreme poverty and danger with my family, I've known people who, under unjust circumstances, without plotting, attempt a massacre out of spite, toward persons provoking their annoyance and hatred. My bad dream is following these people's footsteps onto a similar path. I, as a servant of God, am good by nature, but how difficult, how difficult it is to refrain from imploding! In fact, I admit that I've been tormented by God: knowing he watches me. Are we people or are we pieces of data to our community, our government, and our God? Even after death, we cannot escape the system and potentially face consequences, therefore no valid escapism offers an escape from being scattered pieces of data, because such spiritual extremities aren't like escaping prison bars (like how Ophelia's family did easily). He's in control of each grain of sand, of the science in nature, of each gush of wind, as with the overwhelming tasks to take authority over, he still can watch over you like a Father, dedicating his attention to not the mesmerising wonders but you, a sinful man, a disgraceful sick man with a wasting disease. Gale, I know not what to do after my sessions of abstract thinking and philosophy. Won't you support my constructing an environment for the poor? It'll be my final attempt in regaining my integrity, whether it brings light or pitch blackness. Raising the generation to come and putting elderly people to rest, the thought of it enlightens me, do you or do you not yet know?" She breathed a heavy sigh, yawning and digesting her slim fingers in suspense.

"Vile. Are your mentions about God anthropomorphic? Keep in mind that he isn't a man. As you expressed, 'he's in control of each grain of sand, of the science in nature, of each gush of wind, as with the overwhelming tasks to take authority over, he still can

watch over you like a Father, dedicating his attention to not the mesmerising wonders but you, a sinful man, a disgraceful sick man with a wasting disease'. To think about it abstractly and philosophically, don't you say it's undoubtedly incredible?" Gale's did not stir. Her wise response bestowed a genuine smile over the troubled Nora's agonising features. Gale took a sip of tea, downed its contents at once, leaned back, and, gazing at Nora warmly, said nothing more.

"I apologise for my idiotic lecture. Thank you for keeping yourself from stirring and for giving me a hard blow on the head to restore my understanding. You are a witch, surely, and at least you do readings for righteous reasons. You strive for the good, Gale, I admire your qualities. You're an example of a wise serpent."

"Too kind, too much kindness shedded on an old merchant. Try to avoid absent-mindedly taking your blurted speeches of appreciation to the extreme."

"I've barely reached the extreme, I have more to outpour, I barely exceeded in conveying my appreciation. Speaking to a kind witch is an ethereal, divine privilege like soaring in the air of a twilighting sky. Now, Gale, would you support me in breathing life into Helios' project, helping the poor folks to build a taller empire?"

"The gift of a rational mind comes from the independent, and when we concentrate and align with the supernatural, we become in tune with our rational mind and rewire with spirituality. I do accept supporting you, that is, if you offer me instructions." "Instructions

are what I called you here to give me, owing to the fact that I'm not fit for a leading role, I'm dependent. I plan on taking no credits. The idea was inspired by Helios' idea and the actual production relies solely on you. I've given up on proving my name worthy to the world and gave up wishing to restore my notes that were previously popular overseas in order to focus on finding solutions to domestic issues because as I have observed and am quite convinced of, not one wealthy person, not one suffering person does more than whine and acknowledge problems. They understand it well, they create words for it, make books centering around issues well known, and yet, a revolution or a slight change isn't in near sight. Katya has already burned over half of my copies under another's name (under another's name - the likely reason why the copies became quite well known) and already the attention of readers is dropping, dropping till it's forgotten. I've realised I don't need to make sure my pieces are seen or remembered, otherwise I'll live an eternity in constant worry without resting in undisturbed peace

and quiet. Now that all my confessions are out the way, out the path, no longer blocking the main purpose, I ask you to proudly take credit for offering transparent instructions.”

“Dear, I alone am dependent, you know? Only weak people are brilliant at breathing life into wonders, you know? Only the mistreated are brilliant at beginning a revolution. Only the mis ts, the unhappy, those whose mugs are spitted upon, only they are capable of forming a great change. However, these people have a deadly monster; you see, it’s not the weakness that acts as a barrier, but rather their disbelief. If all were to suddenly believe, the gravity of a change would be beyond atrocious - a big leap in our empire that could only be imagined since none are promised to suddenly come to believing with their heart. Take Katya’s king ancestor for one: he was no more than a man who acted upon his beliefs and, defeating the odds of a limited man, conquered the whole world through conquering himself, or rather the hesitant demon in him that pulls his strings, pulling him back. Would you risk taking his footsteps and cutting the strings, withstanding the difficulty, to be a glorious marionettist in control of your own dull puppet? All knees from above would descend to the ground, every divine tongue shall speak words of respect, and all angels will stand by you if mankind thinks of you ill. Man is diseased, soiled, blemished, tarnished... Man is disgraceful and angels are unlike man, this I can prove. ‘Avenge O angels thy heavenly Nora!’ I can chant this for your sake. Divine beings are unlike man, bear in mind, they come as clean as fine white silk, unprejudiced and will cheer you on your clash against the current marionettist pulling your strings, even if man disagrees and mocks selfishly at your choices. Never take offence from imperfect mortals who aren’t by any means omniscient.”

“Precisely as you say, precisely; keen observation! Judgement is atrocious when done inconsiderably to the point of exceeding the line which draws between the valid and invalid. The majority are invalid. I see where you’re heading, Gale, I ought to adopt a new view: believe, believe, believe... The very essence of truth has been unveiled at last! And allow me to question: what does it matter if I believe I am the ruler of the world, an Alexander the Great, when I cannot raise an army, convince a large number of citizens to listen, or begin anything on my own? Regardless of cheering angels, it’ll amount to zero: I start no revolution and take my leave from my stay on these grounds alone.” Nora exclaimed in agreement and doubt, “my pockets are empty, empty of gold and marquises. When the lights of day succumb to a white night, garments I wear are set aside. Wouldn’t idiotic ignoramuses and imbeciles, nincompoops and halfwits, which

equals to - I predict - half the empire, set me aside after the lights of day succumb into a white night, after when my impotent speeches are widely preached?”

“I recall your speeches concerning astrology: stargazing, twilights, moonlit skies, Irina...” Directly quoting this, Gale waved her arms in the air to signal the servants for more tea; the servants swiftly refilled her elegant cup then exited. “As soon as white nights fall and your impotent speeches of the day are set aside, you’ll begin your preaching of the night. Preach, preach, preach till it is heard, till it becomes honoured, remembered. Take into consideration my quote. If you are willing to take one big leap, if you dedicate your last bits of calmness before irreversible insanity to breathing life into the inspiration of the presentation of mathematics professor Helios, you, without negotiation, must sacrifice your reputation before the coming of success. Such is the pattern with remembered historical figures: first preach and in the process, sacrifice their name for little chances of change, tarnish their reputation, and be thrown soil at every corner - such nerve provoking requirements come before the slightest touch of success. It’ll feel like halfwits pulling your intelligent nerves and poking at your patience, leading you to the temptation of yielding and declaring a break that lasts longer than you promised it would. How difficult it is rejecting the temptation of comfortableness! This is tough, and only the weak, the unhappy can succeed but are won over by temptation - that is their weakness. Listen, this task spares no mercy or sympathy: you strive for a change, you need to inform others consistently; a social change requires audiences. There isn’t a shortcut nor an easy path. Growing a large number of audiences requires coming as a complete boon to some, because you’ll preach openly, open to every person, and it’s not promised that every person is agreeable toward you. It is a truth so ruthless, so harsh... so harsh that it’s naturally unacceptable.”

“I should endure how harsh the truth will lash my back; how ruthless it’ll psychologically provoke my nerves and blemish my soiled reputation further. How difficult it may be to resist temptation, I’ll endure, endure, endure...” She exaggerated her gestures, heavily emphasising ‘endure’. “I vow. What is said cannot be unsaid.” “Blurted vows is simple, it’s acting according to one’s vows that irritates and inflames one’s nerves. I vow that I can conquer the moon. I said that so easily, didn’t I, but acting upon that vow is out of my capabilities. Your vow, on the other hand, is in reach, in close contact with your palms. You’ll make sure that the still reachable vow doesn’t drift further into the astrology of space, further past the moon, to the point you’re no longer able to conquer it - it’ll then become simply an easily blurted a vow and nothing more

since it is out of your capabilities! The method of avoiding your vows from drifting is to consistently aim to grasp, never taking a break. How unbearably exhausted you'll therefore be! To the smoking pits of fire with your happiness and rest, you will sacrifice it for the sake of your vow. What is said cannot be unsaid, what is blurted is said - no spare time for sorrowful regrets."

"I don't regret it at all! For though I am weak and unhappy, I'm of the category of the only people who, under pressure, are able to make astronomically tremendous changes that'll benefit society! I dream of having my humble name labelled with 'Great' - if so, I'll know I shattered history."

"Great?" Gale expressed, taking a gentle sip of tea, "we live in a late period - we roam in the eighteenth century, nearly reaching the nineteenth! A thousand and seven hundred years after the ancient periods where history is significant - too late for receiving a much esteemed ground-shattering title as 'Great'. 'Great' is a significant statement on its own, in itself. The problem in living in a late period is peace. History could only be made through hardship and devastating events - early chaotic periods were perfect for such conditions to meet." "I was intended as an unhappy weakling to reach for vows higher

than the moon, higher

than the edge of space! Our century has devastations in need of a suitable leader to make history by offering peace. It's my wish to feed the poor, to announce my own name in glory, to carve a path for younger generations and to build a stable bridge connecting to the land of peace! Whoever wishes me prosperity, whoever prays on my downfall, I know, know, it's that my larynx is stupid - that's how I'm looked down upon, and believe me, though my mouth is an ugly blabbermouth and isn't clever, I can pick up on the slightest details and see past one's eyes to understand their wishes for me."

"I know; the issue is: strangers do not. I know you well despite the way you come off; the issue is: strangers are unwilling to enter the waters and merely judge based on what they see on the shallow surface. Let it sink in: people are busy dealing with their personal perishing life - the central cause of grumpiness. Not one person is willing to dig out your clever heart from your chest and examine it. You may truly hold a big heart below your chest but they will undeniably judge the surface, which is why sometimes we are obligated to act as Great Blue Herons or wise green serpents in order for our intentions to be overly exaggerated to the level of appearing at the surface, ready to be seen at once.

As great Blue Herons, not acting according to our purpose for our purpose to rise up is necessary - your guilt becomes invalid.”

“Life is a theatre performance and every person is playing a role out of character. Devil burn it, we’re most comfortable to speak our truth when wearing a costume out of our own character. No wonder the audiences are pleased with what they see - performances out of reality and within idealism.”

“Like I mentioned: hearts that are not yours are not parasites examining the particles of your brain, they know not the depth below the waters. Look at Alexander the Great, or another deceased man, answer why we adore their aura - we’ve never known them. See, they serve their role as idols so that our adoration isn’t toward them but toward the ideal imagination of an idol. Knowing great figures personally shatters the ideal vision, bringing one back to consciousness - another advantage of roaming during early periods.”

Nora reflected on the philosophy session, unable to shake the uncomfortable thought about how Gale, a black magic witch artist serving the works of the devil, could speak wise speeches of God eloquently - the air behind her demeanour brought a frown to Nora’s delicate features.

“Gale, for the sake of digressing, Katya displayed the mythological miracle in her study room. Hanging on the wall under two daggers is a miracle. Shall I lead you for a look?”

“The extinct Old Bjr beasts were descendents of the Dragon Bbin, the grand dragon of complete evil. A miracle it is for the last Bjr to bow down at the feet of our people! Bbin represents evil and the Bjr represents death. You see an entire empire chasing and cheering after the Bjr - they are chasing after death, chasing after a sweet death. In conquering the Bjr, they’ve conquered death, but their reward was anything but death - this fact, they themselves are unaware. Nora, with respect, I gladly refuse to even take a peek through the door at the mythological miracle hanging on Katya’s study room wall under two daggers - an elaborated visual representation of chasing death!”

“An elevated representation? Our discussion indeed escalated briskly at the double at breakneck speed.”

“I appreciate your keeping me today. Goodbye, my ordered horse carriage has arrived as I gaze through the window, Nora; till next time, au revoir.”

Struck almost abruptly by a momentary pang of derealisation and rooted blankly at her chair, Nora focused on her internal conflicts, realising that to an anomalous stranger she drew breath as an egregious, substandard heavy-bodied swan who exhibits its loss of a fair maiden but remains head down on the waters, never taking flight. She remembered a forgotten query awaiting Gale's response: is existentialism the foundation of every belief. By then Gale had been driven into the streets in the carriage. This question Nora had in mind could wait till Gale's next visit as it isn't in need of desperate responses or the slightest bit nerve provoking.

Alexandria, slowly evolving after Nora's troop's disturbance, grew into a boisterous blabber who infuriates her household with her surly nags and excessive rants. She couldn't care what she decides to express to certain people - not even in front of her dear daughter Irina did she cease her contagious, ill-humoured rants. Often, she wraps herself in rags while resting in an informal position; her family visualised her as a real representation of a peasant - this vision grew ever more vivid.

"Goodness, people owe us a large sum of money. The Karas' looked down on us, took our wanted land, chased us onto this 'Nevadan hill', and in return, to make amends, they threw soil on our mugs." Alexandria, her face sullen, expressed rather loudly, laying on her back on the ground, "we've lost a large sum of money by giving care to the lowly - a disgrace! I was nineteen when I quarrelled with my relatives; they took from me everything I earned through hardship, say why do none of you acknowledge and take into consideration my fury?"

"You're not nineteen, Alexandria Nevadan," Marcus bursted out out of severe irritation, "you're in your mid thirties or forties. It's ridiculous and irritating to hear your ranting carelessly - you're not a little mistreated girl, you've moulded yourself into a peasant. If it weren't for law requirements, law enforcements, I'd never dare share or lend you money, let alone sharing a roof over my crown with you. I'd rather take a hard stab at the temples."

"Oho, you're ill, you're sick, you're on the verge of becoming a paralysed crippled scoundrel."

"Go straight ahead and call me names, sullen peasant woman. At least utter your nonsensical bullshit elsewhere, away from my treasured marquise children, you cabbage soil, you sick peasant woman!"

“Oh! I’m sick, I’m paralysed in the vital fibres of my head, aren’t I, Marcus? You’re an irreverent simpleton, you’re an irreverent man.”

“Silence, you cause me an earache. And, ouch, a headache. When would you cease your excessive babbling and leave us at peace? This rant you’ve blurted is the hundredth time I have to endure hearing.”

“As long as I roam, my grounds I stand alone.”

“Out the door goes the soil after you! Your accent is enraging me; your beliefs are a disappointment, do you take them into consideration? You’ve lent large sums of our money we’ve put blood and sweat into to earn away to unreliable storytellers who didn’t guarantee returning rewards onto your palms, you barnacle infested Lillith of a lady. Under what conditions in a circumstance does a person die? Illness, accidents, infections, or purposeful slaughters...”

Indeed his little marquise children were unusually bewildered at their Mother’s recent change in behaviour: her groans and excessive complaints spoken in informal and abnormally unpleasant positions made her children look down on her, despise her mouth where the origin of ugliness is found, and in addition, the self-centred Nevadan children, driven by influences of poverty, starvation, and exposed to poor parental behaviours(which at the time had been standard if not praised) at fairly early ages, developed immoral visions in their heavy night dreams. Another worthy point to note is that the children were disturbed, that is, pestered by sudden rushes of resentment: each child listened attentively to the subjects in which Alexandria spoke of. Hearing about her lending money to unreliable story tellers and throwing the family into a pit of poverty, they threw a fit over envisioning a life filled with riches if only Alexandria hadn’t been a fool - it would’ve consisted of piles of gold, piles of marquises. The fact that the past is unshakable enraged Iris; she contemplated fate and integrity and the patterns behind kindness and greed. Irina listened to her parents’ quarrell in the corner with complex thought schemes without uttering the slightest whisper out her mouth.

Even in the absence of Nora, the little figure they accused of bringing misery, they remained miserable if not more miserable - a testament to Nora’s clean hands. Let this be a humble reminder that it is not Nora’s corruption that passes corruption. It is rather their own greed and corruption that brings themselves misery.

14

After Gale's leave Nora hurried down the streets. Once hesitation subsides, a risk has to be taken: she gathered courage - repeating Gale's words as she attempted on stabilising her pounding heart - to offer a wholesome invitation for the unfortunate poor folks to rest in the grand palace, drinking tea under warm shelters. Passersby's intense mockery became silent, or, in some possibilities, her open ears deafened toward false speeches aimed at herself. Along the dust laden sidewalk, beside running vehicles, she announced barely audibly: "my insufferable kind, either elderly and vigour, let your fate be turned. Your fate shall turn, this I can prove. An open gate in the distance is open for you, follow me into Pasha Aubin's goliath palace in search of residents." In conversing this, her violent heart nearly raised up her throat - she tasted the bitterness of bile laying on her tongue, brutally poking at her rare courage.

One after another, each tender person, their faces contorted by grief, jumped on their feet, setting off instantaneously after the host Nora like groups of poor stray dogs running after a food feeder. Animals follow a man only for the food he holds in his hands. Starving animals only run after food, not after the big hearted wise man offering food. The poor migrant group could possibly be akin to poor animals and are simply taking advantage of Nora for the mouthwatering food she holds in her bare hands that sway dramatically high in the air, presenting her unseen charity and planting temptations of greed in such people's heads. We find this point of our story as an appropriate time to remind our dear readers that cruel, capricious folks draw breath in every corner, are found at every spot, and can be met at any given place, regardless of their difference in levels of class. One may run into a cruel folk repeatedly, seeing the resemblance of him in other faces. One may adopt the idea that it is themselves to blame for attracting detestable energy, given that he is unable to hide from familiar faces. However, as we mentioned, running into cruel, capricious people isn't one's own lack in quality. Rather, it's one's gentle quality that brings them forth to alienation, since, if one were cruel and capricious, identical to the majority roaming at every corner, one wouldn't see a concern in other faces, let alone becoming exposed to uneasiness in the bureaucratic society...

"Into the palace?" Passersby along the same sidewalk were bewildered at the sight before their eyes, seeing Nora as a member of the elites. "Lord, our bewitched sights are in awe!" Nonetheless, each one refrained from interacting further with her.

“Sit,” Nora offered the group a seat for tea, “servants will pour you hot tea. I’ve been alone for many days, I’ve been alone for a lifetime now, accompanied by long intervals of insanity. I’d consume a lump of happiness each night, yearning for a change in the cycle, like clockwork, and even then I ached with a horrible ecstasy far from happiness.”

“I can see through your eyes everything you have to say in your sob stories. I can see whether you gaze up to your desires or whether you possess more than enough.” One man broke out out of the blue, “you, you gaze up to the pale moon. Thank you for pouring tea, sir, thank you lord. Lord or Lady, thank you for keeping us under a roof.”

“Our glad honour, sir, suit yourself to our riches.” Nora squinted her eyes into the back of the group, peeking into a suspicious sight, “am I delirious? It surely cannot be, can it?”

“You’re right, Nora, I’ve circled back to you, I’ve practically gone permanently mad.” The lady whispered menacingly, her reddened features appearing in a drunken state. “My, you... returned.”

“Acquaintances from any time or place are, in a universal way, connected. You’ve made yourself a number of enemies, Nora, remember to follow the traditional virtue of respecting the elderly and care for the young.”

“I follow the virtue well, so well it has become an unconscious habit. Unintentionally, I betray people into capricious enemies that change like the seasons, that is, certain expectations that are overlooked for others are applied to me - I’m an outcast, a nonentity, a mad beast under supervision, a piece of data. I claimed to understand but I don’t think I understand a thing! I don’t, I really don’t, I have not the strength to make sense of it. What is the pattern they follow - I’m beginning to not understand, I cannot understand, I want to blend in, I want to walk out the land of alienation, I want to die. And even then I’m render unsafe in danger and am to endure judgement in the system under supervision from the supernatural - existence is a system and we, the data. How did you manage to circle back from exile and blend in exceedingly well among the crowd?”

“Absolutely so, unusual to say, I took the role as a poor folk, begging my way to intersecting your path! I’ve been tormented for eight hours by water torture - the punishment promised to permanently scar one. A cold water droplet falls on my scalp

whenever my consciousness weakens, reminding me of my sanity, causing mental deterioration for a prolonged period of time while enduring public humiliation. I yearned for the ending, I wanted to die, I prayed to die. You don't dare label me a villain, do you or do you not?"

The rest of the poor folks listen attentively without disrupting and lifting a finger.

"We haven't ever had a proper conversation till hitherto; I don't wish to judge you this early, all I know is you label yourself as a communist; tell me then, what exactly happened during your exile? And cease worrying, you wouldn't die, the cruel and capricious never die so early - you'll live a hundred years over. You'll live to see the sun extinguish into frost as long as you remain cruel and capricious as you are."

"Me, I know you're labelled as a literary critic. My judge, he takes on such a job for the sake of condemning people, arguing, to spit on others why he's right and we're wrong - justice serves no purpose, to him, the purpose of a judge is taking authority over us, over an entire empire. He doesn't spare us from the relentlessness of harsh punishments like clockwork. If I were to alter the past and revive the man I struck fatally with a farming hoe, I'll remain under the system you proclaimed, refraining from enduring hardship - but to what extent would I refrain from capriciousness if my environment is disagreeable? I had two choices placed before me: kill the man who sabotages my crops and let my irresistible wrath exit through vents - this or do so to myself out of vexation and following the system."

Nora, enraged, judged. "You talk as if you matter, my lady, you complain as if you're in the category of the valid - fool, wicked fool! You are your environment - you differ from your previous environment in no aspects, you spoke ill of me and have not the means to complain, I tell you honestly." By this time Nora sank into a chronically woeful state, her arms atop her crown, bursting pitiful sob stories melodramatically as if she suffered from a fever and endured infection of tuberculosis, a wasting disease depicted in melodramatic paintings. "Lord, Lord, I fail to understand, fail to comprehend! But don't lead me astray to demons, don't watch me fail to convey my experience!" She sobbed, half rising from her seat, "it's a miracle we haven't burst into song! What right does a capricious man have in spitting on a child's mug and yet pities himself? My hardship had never been deserved, this lady's exile and public torture had been deserved, deserved, deserved! I've never killed a man, this lady is a detestable grim reaper, a symbol of Lillith! What right does she have in pitying herself, Lord, what man could seamlessly

disagree against my storytelling? A cold water droplet falls on her forehead whenever she slightly loses touch with consciousness, reminding her of her disgusting sanity, and in the aftermath, she is permanently wounded in the head - what man could disagree that she deserved what she brought onto herself?" Nora gestured with her hands openly, rising from her seat, "here she is, taking tea from me, throwing herself in riches I offered, I, a naive child she once spat on the mug and threw soil on - on me and my former household's honour, name... Oh, Lord, I hope that a pictureque scene lay before her disgusting torture public humiliation sentenced by her judge. My horrible lady, how you shamelessly sip the tea from the little child you once mistreated, I... I insist on your leaving through the back gate. You bamboozled me into opening the front gate for you as you camouflaged into the group, in order to make way for rummaging your fingers through my riches. If I could give you a slap in the face, for pity's sake! Till hitherto, you've never spared one word of pity on me, and here, you help yourself in drinking tea while spilling your heart out on your complaints concerning mistreatment and insanity! I curse you, old lady, henceforth in repentance's name - you'll spend the rest of your stay on these grounds repenting. Cease worrying, exit without troublesome doubts: I curse you on your sins' behalf more than your own soul's."

"Strange lady you are, Eleanora, settle down, simmer down," she comfortably took another sip of tea, whispering menacingly and subsiding each subject in Nora's rant as if she hadn't heard a word. "Matter of fact, matter-of-factly, I pity you, I pity you dearly, Nora. Oh, incidentally, I knew your mother... must I proceed furthermore upon your given word of confirmation?"

"Monstrosity! No, I give you no words of confirmation, your exit time has arrived. Through the back gate goes you and your storytelling." She restrained herself from stirring while expressing this point, albeit to the fact she turned pale with uncertainty, knowing that she landed herself in a pit of exposure to trouble: if the woman before her returned to her former village and went on good terms with the villagers (an unlikely scenario Nora feared), Nora herself would be threatened and put under restraints of sudden movements that may carry potential danger in triggering a number of villagers to raid after her. If such movements were to happen and gather the attention of the villagers, it is unpredictable whether she'll be guarded (because Katya might gladly hand her over and it doesn't help in any way that Nora made a number of enemies along her journey to avoid) or given to her foes - which is the reason as to why she is threatened to restrain any interactions. However, this merely is an unlikely scenario Nora pictured,

since returning on good terms with her people after gaining a tarnished reputation is highly improbable.

“Storytelling consists of precision in capturing agreeable and complex vehement details the rest ignore... in a non-amateurish manner - nothing else.”

Our second madwoman who was older than Nora, intoxicated by psychologically wounding factors, vaguely defended herself against Nora’s arguments, taking yet another sip of tea without a single nerve provoked. By now a section of listeners dgeted on the spot and turned their heads around as an unclear sign of displaying their urge to put this headache to an end. On this occasion, Rebekka’s appearance served as an insult to Nora: it had vividly displayed and concluded that Nora’s compassion for goodwill results to no avail. It showed how her integrity results in bringing forth corrupted people instead of completing and satisfying her intended purpose of feeding the hungry, curing the ill, and building a paradisiacal environment. Rebekka’s appearance, especially after Nora’s taking courage and inviting the group under covers - a gesture of mortality - truly came as a direct insult. “You’ve killed a man. Bloodshed, Rebekka, is on your two hands. Massive bloodshed!

The blood isn’t your own - the red isn’t self sin, it presents sins you’ve in icted on your neighbours, the blood covering your hands of a murderer are marking you with a terrible deed involving sin toward not only you! The world is as much as ours as it is yours, you ought to respect us, pay respect to the deceased Dillon Karas you’ve laid hands on - his bloodshed marks you. At the minute, my mad lady, you’re killing my tolerance, my Rebekka.” “I noticed your intense shivering, dear, you’re pale as a daisy. I’ll

begin sparing

information on your mother regardless of not receiving your word of con rmation to proceed. No, Alexandria is your step mother. Your mother, the lady of dull amaze, lived beside me in harmony when you were an infant. So light and fair was she in her youth, so light danced to the bowing of the cries of the violins, the sways of the conductor’s baton! You, a babe in her arms, from the start, from when you barely had life in you, you caused her relentless earaches with your cries, crying louder than the melodic cries of a violin. That day on the shore of the Aliakmon river, do you recall, she vanished into thin air, her and your sister Cora, your family... Curse it, speak ill of it, make use of your tongue! Disciples of Gnosticism, we used to follow its exible teachings relentlessly, cursing at the tyrannical Idol and praising the undeservingly loathed light bearer! In

following Gnosticism, revealing our wits to Christian martyrs, your mother and I turned into subjects of banishment, landing ourselves in pits where we lacked a ladder. A tremendous anchor tied onto our ankles weighs us down the abyss. I abandoned my living beside her companionship for a gloomy village of isolation; inevitable was the final farewell. I promised her I'll pull her into a paradisiacal village where she may stare out the window, breathing deep sighs with her tea becoming cold. From the beginning, from the beginning, Nora, I loved her only to leave her for some selfish desires, I spoke vows promising to catch the moon only to watch my grasp slip - I never headed back to pull her away: I never pulled her into the village I found, in spite of its surroundings being far from paradisiacal. Ugh, she managed to circle back to me through you, you're a breathing symbol, a walking reminder of my disgusting deeds to her... you're touched in the heart by the devil's fingers of curses! Matter of fact, tragedies and misfortunes fell upon us when you were born. Every corner you step, you shed misfortune to your acquaintances. Before you, your mother and I lived in harmony; the day you came forth, our harmony broke off in an instant. Your mother called you her pride, but you, you, Nora, you wanted to be her happiness, her sense of comfort. It's proven that you carry clean misery in you - I transformed gradually into a madwoman belonging to a madhouse after you found your way to me. If only you drowned in that river the day you were taken in!"

"If I deserve death, what makes you worthy of living? Rebekka, you're babbling nonsense in a drunken state, I can see by your reddened cheekbones and swollen under eyes. Exit through the back gate as I commanded, I beg of you."

"No, I'm sobering up, my drunken state doesn't affect my honesty... In fact, I'm most honest when I am drunk, so do take advantage of my blabbering truths I'd never spit a word on if I sobered up completely. On the surface, you reject my confessions I kept from you, and under the shallow waters, you're in awe, in awe! I can tell you're in a dull amazement by your shivering; trust me, only you are brilliant at walking on these grounds as a reminder for indulging oneself in good deeds by depriving one of forgetfulness of one's past sins one craves to forget through time."

"Incredible woman, I beg of you, hold your tongue, end your relentless tormenting! Spare me! How vile you are to sit on the spot, speaking unusually calmly without moving a muscle!" By this point Nora couldn't contain her confusion, she wept in agitation while taking a blow of blame to the head.

“You don’t mean exactly as you say, aren’t you curious to hear furthermore into what I’ve been keeping quiet on for some three four years? Ugh, if only you threw yourself into the river.”

“Where is she? Spit out what happened to her.” She interjected, exclaiming boldly, tears rushing down, ushing her cheeks a vibrant shade of pink.

“Disappeared on you, wrote to me, hoped for a change after disappearing on her pride and curse, went mad, threw herself into the same river. Aliakmon. Cora couldn’t do anything on her own and de natelly, according to my precise reasoning, followed after her into the waters. Your father kneeled; he took his last look at the sky before nally rejoicing in peace with his whole family. See, Eleanora, we’re both mad, we’re two eccentric madwomen looking at one another, conversing in total disagreement and frailty. Lord only knows why we do despicable acts: either we have too much to feel or nothing minimal to feel at all. The single factor to which you shouldn’t throw yourself in the river is that your family would no longer sleep a heavenly sleep in peace, in peace! When your body meets theirs, their decomposing parts where owers will be promised to grow and begin eternity, when souls and souls reunite as the wind, without beginning and without end, unknowing of where they come from or where they end, till then, surely you’ll disturb them into awaking from years of heavy slumbers.”

“Very well, you do sound trustworthy but I still can’t believe you in a drunken state. Stop humming over white noise, the sound deafens me with its abnormally precise depiction of slipping down into a hollow hearted abyss.”

“- you... Listen, listen! Have you had dreams?”

“I’ve had interesting dreams - once, I spoke to a kind ghost. You’re no ordinary madwoman, you’re a psychopath!”

“The previous night I dreamed that my back tooth ached severely, prompting me to visit a doctor. The doctor checked, saying my tooth was perfect and nothing appeared to be a problem. I kept insisting that it ached unbearably even though I had no issues, no cavities. What could a doctor do to ease his patient’s aching if there isn’t a cause? My dream is undeniably a metaphor for nding problems in situations without a single problem, pitying oneself; or, in likely cases, it is a metaphor for others being unable to see one’s aching because the tooth is by no means rotten.”

Finally the listeners had had enough and one elderly man bursted out: “Whoever you are, ‘Rebekka’, you’ve lied to us this entire time: you knew this Nora lady to extreme extents and didn’t inform us, leaving us without a clue. We’ve sat here, we’ve heard enough, enough, grossly enough! How di cult a task is it to take leave upon command?”

Two distinguished guards pulled the protesting Rebekka out. An end was put into place. While dragged, at the same time she screeched: “listen, my dear, release your Rebekka!” Silence followed shortly thereafter after the loud bash of the closing of gates. The madwoman’s maniacal laughter echoed and left Nora nonplussed.

The man continued: “don’t be startled, young lady, don’t weep, don’t pour tears over a drunk madwoman. When she entered our group she lied to us all along for the sake of deceiving - we had no idea till hitherto... Those ‘di erent’ people represented by her are those to avoid speaking to to avoid dangers.”

“I’m uncertain of your meaning.” Was Nora’s response she managed to spit out with cries su ocating her throat.

“Nothing is good or bad - everything is solely di erent. Some people are di erent - their minds work di erently and may do despicable acts to those who erupt their rage. They are by no means bad. Good and bad were brought into words to describe what we dislike. Once, I stumbled across a man walking an enormous dog that appears bu er, mightier than a grown wolf, a feared predator. I said to the owner, ‘reasonably, such a mighty dog needs to step away from the busy road, away from crowded areas for avoiding potential dangers to citizen it might cause by sinking its teeth into our skins.’ The man’s distasteful reply: ‘I’m a citizen. I can walk any roads I desire. This dog, I raised him since childhood: he doesn’t bite.’ From his single sentence, I saw past his character. I didn’t argue back. These people are the di erent ones to avoid. He might’ve unleashed his wolf-like dog on me if I hadn’t walked away and continued arguing with him, that is, convincing him to make ethical choices reasonably. From a man’s rst speech by itself, you can see all there is to see, eh? You can see if he’s agreeable or despicable, eh? Who is to avoid, avoid. Those di erent people are capable of killing a man when he feels dissatis ed, which is why murderers were previously mis ts in society. Animals, especially enormous dogs, are not to roam along crowds of people, even if it is tamed. They say: ‘I raised it since childhood, he is tamed and doesn’t open its mouth!’ But animals are unpredictable: they obey in a good mood, but when they feel

like biting, they wouldn't hesitate. There are cases of zookeepers shredded to death by tamed animals they've raised and built bonds with since childhood. Zoo keepers, professionals with animals, are nevertheless incapable of taking authority over animals, so how could an average man without professional experience take authority over a non-human animal and claim that it doesn't bite? Fools! He isn't a parasite inside the animal's head, seeing its mood. Wait till the animal shreds them to microscopic bits or sinks its teeth into a crowd of people. I remember a decade ago witnessing a lady arguing back to a disagreeable man, a 'different' man: she complained to the waiter that she found a hair in her soup, that the dish lacked proper hygiene. Mr.Waiter paid no attention. She insisted on a new soup being brought to her table, slowly raising her voice. Mr.Waiter had had enough: he dumped a large bowl of freshly cooked hot soup broth directly on her crown and face. She suffered severe injuries from those burns: her skin practically melted or gored. What a pity: she was a pretty lady in her youth and her face became disfigured - the disturbingly cooked peach skin looked similar to rough bumps on the surface skin of a plucked but chicken. I came across the injured lady in public wrapped in bandages, a translucent orange veil falling over her once beautiful young face. She explained to me that she egregiously beats her own self, sinking her nails into her flesh each sleepless and starless fogged midnight out of intense regret for her one human error she could've avoided and saved some face. Strange it was to hear that Mr.Waiter faced no consequences, and strange it was to learn that he hadn't been reprimanded but rather forgiven bluntly, blindly, and ever so strange it surely was to know that he, a guilty man, after all, peacefully roams the streets unharmed, without his terrible deed written across his forehead for all to see and mock him till he crumbles in shame, and without dealing with his mistake... Anyhow, we should avoid the different minded citizens regardless of their difference having no relations to ourselves - a moralist protests against turning a blind eye to those citizens, but a wise man prioritises safety. I will never forget the image of his victim's chicken skinned face after the soup broth incident some twelve years ago."

"I'm shook, I'm nonplussed! It's a pity she should bear the effects of another man's soup broth and disappoint some sight-seers everywhere she walks."

"Sharing our lessons, I decided to mention my half brother," another lady from the group half rose from her seat, commenting, "he lived for philosophy... Conditions couldn't meet for his success, he had a good cry, then sank a dagger into his bosom in vain - a shooting, a fallen star, the antithesis of a sturdy Herculean philosopher!"

Conditions made us hungry peasants. Success depends on conditions greater than dedication... Can philosophy earn food? He could've written masterpieces but readers during his lifetime may refuse buying copies as they cannot comprehend the contents. I tell you, citizens at different time periods treasure different styles - he depended on earning food by selling copies in a period where citizens overlooked his pieces. He needed a non-subjective way of earning food without depending on admirers... He had not lived because according to his belief of Hedonism, the meaning of life is the presence of pleasure and absence of unhappiness. He had no pleasure..."

Nora went into an abstract thinking session, relating to the self-destructed half brother; somehow the lady's story jogged her memory of the olden days where her corrupted god awful neighbours cursed her for another man's selfish deeds while stubbornly glorifying his inadequate, abysmal character. Birds have deserted their nests built under hardship, Nora had left her village she endured under horrible hardship. Nora was welcomed by a notion that she perhaps wasn't the most unfortunate lady walking these grounds and that unjustly judged citizens accompany her in a divergent way, an intangible way. A young

coal-smothered third party in a ragged pale frock softly whispered under her breath, resembling an angel: "as a toddler, my mother indulged in self-immolation as a protest against politics. Ah, her dust, her remains, altered politics in no circumstances after her extreme practice took her from me... My mother, she set herself on fire just to prove a point and instead of uncovering solutions, well, she is rendered strengthless. Needless to say, her extreme act of protest resulted as a minor incident forgotten by most, forgotten by the stony, indifferent political parties. My mother's venerable cacti she passed onto me recently died of the heat. My own old cacti are very lucky indeed to be vigour, striving... Excuse my stuttering: where we came from, we're accustomed to different verbal usages. Our previous conventions dictated a different system of standard punctuation." A fourth (he, a grown gentleman standing above average height, had a young

babyface

handcrafted by winged angels, light features carved into his babyface by angels, and thick strands of bird nest blonde hair atop his crown, being somewhat strikingly fanciable):

"goodness, our childhood companion left us in poverty while pursuing his own benefits in the field of advanced mathematics. He killed a man, didn't he? He died himself shortly - a testament to the works of k up and running, functioning on him, not to mention he spat on the mugs of us poor folks, besmirching our good name after grasping a handful of riches."

Nora's mouth fell wide agape. "Helios, he may have killed a man with his own hands, covering his hands hell re red with another terrible deed done to another man - another man's blood is a testament to his deed - but I assure you that he couldn't have spat in the mugs of the poor. My invitation inside was based on, and was inspired by the presentation about building hospitals instead of churches for poor farmers he gave before his passing of natural causes."

"Helios? You, sweet lady, used to be acquainted with Helios?"

"He used to be an acquaintance of the man whom he ended up with and that same deceased man, Luke, lived in this palace working as an executioner. Ugh, how everything is connected, how events circle back to me! Say, where are relations bred, where are circles drawn?"

"I think we'd make an ass of ourselves and lead to quarrelling if we remain longer. Goodbye, Nora, we thank you, we appreciate your whole-heartedness - we'll return next time."

"My dear, you're not the butt of the unfortunate topic, I am! I am attacked by the return of past 'inconveniences' I indulged in like a brain dead fool, a pathetic halfwit!"

The fourth party gu awed with amusement at the remark. Each member in the group began gu awing as they rose from sitting, including the timid angel-voiced third party, even her voice gre hoarse. A nal look had been given to Nora before their exiting through the front gate in unison. A cacophonous voice collage echoed and ringed in the air, piercing the atmosphere. Nora didn't stir, she merely stared into the air as the hoarse voices of laughter grew increasingly strident. The group didn't resent Nora, rather they, like a pack of stray dogs, ran from their food feeder after ful lling their stomach, running before causing troubles such as spreading diseases and germs without cure. My goodness, a whole hour of building bonds dissolved over the repugnant topic of a minute!

Topics involving Helios, a familiar name, were sensitive - a justi cation for leaving.

15

It was a starless night. Nora had blurred visions of the Cerberus(once again) in the forest's cottage, in short, she was engrossed in dreams about the witchcraft artist Irina while awake under the faint melting candlelight and the sickly pale moonlight. The wasting moonlight, dying of grief, illuminated a path toward the countryside, encouraging Nora to blow o her candle she held(the candle wax burns became unbearable on her light mirror scars(by then she refused wrapping pieces of cloth over her palms as a covering)). Another confirmed journey to seek the untold truth behind the cottage was thus set. She couldn't help but relate the miracle to the Cerberus.

She followed the path before her feet. This time she kept gazing at the ground, refusing to admire the astonishing buildings and vibrant market stands along the sleeping street through the thick fog. The agony set her heart against the relentless blowing of the night's cold wind and the thickness of the dark's white fog. Nora, having the desperate task of taking the first step of building shelters for the poor folks o her head, breathed a sigh that came out visible in the cold, and regretting the mistake of extinguishing the warmth of the candle's re, - her only source of warmth against the night - she sped up her walking pace, trembling: her thin clothing and sandals fought against the overpowering cold. A hot summer's night's strange fridgedness is the night-dews of the world - a reless hearth under a chimney, as we put it beautifully... poetically. Nora stopped dead in the gusting wind, abashed: she wished that the passing of its blowing may as well take her too, take her o these grounds and into the midst of its passing till she and the frigid wind mend into one... "Ugh, I dream and dream and dream again, that the dream would drop dead into life... into light, that the bottomless sea is seen, that the wind might carry me to paradise in its passing."

What is was that convinced Nora to turn, we aren't certain, but she, having walked halfway to the destination, aimlessly trailed her way back to sleep.

The following day a ray of sunshine welcomed her awakening along with the sweet return of Katya, Pluto, Kola and Aaron.

"So long, Nora," Katya, her face remaining altered and unchanged in its slightly chubbier structure shape around the blushed cheeks, greeted her in the main hall, "we've nished our duties once and for all, till next time arrives. We surely missed you very much in your absence, like the absence of light. Oh, a wealthy elite family in better

possession than our own from the West is picking up the Bjr today! Bring me a cup of unsweetened tea, I politely demand of you, wouldja?”

“Silly. Our miracle is priceless.” Kola had a merry little laugh. “Bitter tea? You have a craving for bitterness? A trait of a psychopath, I mock you, sister!”

“It’s true, brother! I will give the skull in exchange for a dozen pots of pure gold, emeralds and rubies, and historical Indian jewels! Forget my craving unsweetened tea, devil take it.”

“You planned without informing us one single bit? I refuse to hear, I refuse to believe. Giving our catastrophic miracle in exchange for pots of common shiny stones? Big mistake, Katya, not a fair deal.”

The serious blandness on Katya’s features informed Kola that she hadn’t been fooling. She meant exactly what she had said. Katya bestowed a frown over her brothers’ brows. “No need to stir, no need to grow anxious, Augustine is returning for the sake of our complicated matter.”

“And you summoned Augustine, that unsophisticated crude tyrant of a rstborn brother!” Pluto began losing his temper, still carrying resentment for Augustine and King Aubin’s years of absence. “You kid me not?”

“I kid you not, I assure you, my kin. I forget what he looks like in his absence... I forget the air he gives.”

“Away, you cabbage, you bile green cabbage, away goes you! The secret deal you hid from us is cancelled.”

“Take a break, Pluto, lower your commanding tone around me, your superior older sister. Ha-ha, the exact number of your own age, you yourself don’t know, you’ve no de nite idea!” Katya chuckled merrily, “the miracle for pots o’ jewels deal can cancel... and Augustine? We mustn't cancel our family’s return... tomorrow... it is highly probable that he’ll appear. Oh! Nora, how excited I am for you to meet Augustine! Apparently, in his letter from abroad I hid, he joyously announced that he has discovered afair maiden in our area, a poor one however. Our rstborn brother, at the ripe age of twenty six, is in search of a fair wife who’ll walk beside him till he walks down his undug

grave where he, dead, shall shortly turn cold! Sons of pashas surely want multiple wives; he, on the other hand, desires one when he has none.”

Our bewildered Nora, her dark glimmering eyes twilighting, replacing yesterday's shameful night sky's absent stars, and her heavily emphasised expression, although having a heavy frown and blush around the corners of her raven eyes, resembled a gentle fallen angel, a pale seraphim lightly adorned in white garments accented by bold gold leaves. She barely uttered around Katya due to previous fears of bringing unpleasant comments, insults and dishonourable humiliations out her winsome mouth. Katya's pretty mouth wasn't fit for spitting such direct and unnecessary insults which mostly are untrue. Her principles of her goddess ancestor seemed to become gradually less important, given that she no longer follows the rule of acting wisely in momentary hours of rage to prevent guilty regret in the aftermath. All and all, Nora paid limited amounts of care to Prince Augustine whom she never met and has no interest in conversing with, let alone greeting the unknown relative of Princess Katya's.

The rest of the strange day accompanied Katya's three brothers with a certain annoyance. Katya's scheduled deal, rather difficult to step out from, caused dissatisfaction on the elite family upon their jolly arrival, which, undeniably, of course, is reasonable, to say the least. When Pluto blabbers and tarnishes Augustine's name a naive form of anger fills him. However capricious, however he lacks integrity and however he absent-mindedly acts after receiving strikes from momentary pangs of vexation, the passions in his face didn't alter in the least. This peculiar trait roused Nora with an unfamiliar profound curiosity unknown ever before - something completely alien to her, almost comparable to a supernatural sensation. She stopped and went in thought: "I'm forever lost in amazement, I'm forever lost in such a starry gaze, like a shipwreck sailor on a shimmering shore. Ekphrastic poetry... The hidden truth, like a stellar alignment that clears a path, guiding me through the labyrinthine corridors of space and time to your cosmic hearth. I'm an enchantress... I'm an eccedentesiast... Beauty is a map that charts my course, and leads me to your radiant abode, where secrets of the universe are revealed in an ethereal form."

This night fell over daylight - this night was so starry that the playful shooting stars in Nora's raven eyes seemed far too small and miniscule, lacking in shine. Such a night was so surreal, so heavenly that an eccedentesiast like herself ceases to suppress uneasiness by stifling a radiant smile, and faces the air, allowing the air to bestow on her a genuine happiness. As if the sun collided into the moon and bursted a number of surrounding

space dust to reach such unrealistic, elevated levels of universal beauty high above: violent yet peaceful, easy to connect spiritually along! If one's dreams are stars, how is he to catch them when his dreams are those that fall down to these grounds and reward his little effort by appearing before him? Night strolls alone around the streets led Nora with a different type of cold joy, as well as different pondering styles she kept to herself. The darkest night doesn't comment on judgements... neither the darkest, sturdiest, nor the brightest. Gentle night strolls never disappointed her in uplifting her mentality, motivating her to go another day as a calm young lady in her youth... Night strolls aren't dead keen on reason unlike many intellectual, eloquent individuals in her century. Even a full moon hanging under a fogged puff of cloud shined down on her...

Prince's Augustine's planned arrival occurred to Nora as the product of another man's greed, specifically the sum of the greed of Katya and the illogical wrath of Pluto, including specks of foolishness in their interactions. She easily ruled herself out of the script of names at fault to blame.

It may have been her relaxed meditation that dozed her off to an extent. Unfortunately, in overly sensational circumstances, eccedentesiast are attacked by waves of blue melancholy weakness they are powerless in taking authority over. As if the sky crumbled, bled down, falling at her feet!

"If I were light as the breeze I'd soar along clouded skies, I'd glide through the sea and freefall down a cliff... it's a shameful tragedy I cannot deny, that I'm not a hatched dove or hawk... or winged raven. Not a feathered foul am I... Why is it I, mankind, cannot deny? But if I did open the feathered wings on my back, flying wouldn't be pleasurable: I'd depend on my incredible control and would frequently become nauseas, punished by the ruthless physical forces acting against me. And I'll depend on myself to live, and knowing that I am in control of myself, that a wrong turn results in a great tragedy, I ultimately yield. I'm at times clumsy - a trait far from a trustworthy saviour of lives." Squinting, she gazed straight into the miniature mirror she took from her room's shelf (a handcrafted mirror of wonders, abnormally identical to the treasured mirror Olden Georgiou once shattered), "I look, I look, I observe, I see the same reflection staring back at me, somehow I can't see my kind heart anymore, or the emotional shine in my pitch black eyes - this present moment, it is the blurry bottomless abyss. The breeze is so gentle; the nightfallen so gently painted over daylight, somehow, under the blessing, I feel my eyes inside my chest, in my heart - pitch black, wicked... Why is it that I'm not gentle like the wind or the bright dusts in the night my eyes are envious of? My younger

times, I'm saddened at seeing my younger times in the mirror, how nostalgic are my younger times where I could see my kind heart like looking through a window in its frame! My Romanticism - not a second stopped he, not a minute sooner had the wine aged than the hands wrote his name across a tomb... My Romanticism left me, leaving loneliness, loneliness, purely, and nothing more, not a chucklesome pretentiousness in me nor a craving for seclusion. But that's not it either: if I truly didn't aid one another, Lord, how could I be, how could I sleep at night or ingest a warm meal prepared by another? Heavens, if only I were given a chance to be young I'd be, once again, idiotically kind that I wouldn't question my own integrity! So easily swept away is a man who has transformed into a despiseable, gross small insect after turning useless - Katya and Pluto's phrase - I much rather would prefer likening myself to an beetle; I can be step upon and the whirlwind of nonsense I deal with would end that simply without further ado or consequences or sympathy from another - I'd be forgotten in peace... Lord, Lord, Dear Heavens, I'm so intensely psychologically disturbed that I'm not even sure now if you view me differently from the accusers, and whether you'd open the tremendous golden gates for me, before me high above! Up above the golden radiants dazzling, down on these grounds the radiance in my eyes blew off... Am I moulded into the candle from yesterday's starless fogged night I blew the glow off, watching its burning wax falling over my fingers? I think I'm about to cry again... Starry nights are an illness to the psychological mind. Even the stars are blue! The horror of it is that I understand, that I possess knowledge and am far from a jolly idiot, oh, my horror is terrible... If I could only be younger, or a nitwit!"

Nora did not cry one drop of tear through her closed eyelids under the blankets atop the mattress laying in her room after her paradisiacal stroll that took a sensational turn by the gentle air being much too heavenly and feeding her lungs with nostalgic grief. When swans swim through a melodramatically heavenly night in an isolated lake - in Nora's case a street - they mourn in desperation for their deceased lover - in Nora's case her vision of the past youth belonging in the place of her kind heart inside her chest. There she re-acted on every occasion she endured humiliation from the wicked: scavenging through her head, pitying oneself, beating her fists against the mattress in agitation till alas, she lost consciousness. Not one drop of tear shedded - a miracle.

Perhaps that had been the reason for her bad dreams depicting nonsensical scenes of that same blue starry night where blue stars twinkled and bled to the rhythm of winds...

16_Nora's_perspective_of_the_dream

I had turned a man into a witch. His passionately vengeful companions sunk their daggers into me countless times yet after each strike I remained alive - or rather I revived - only my body endured minor burdens in place of bloody red running wounds. The evil daggers pierced through my untouched soul. Such actions on their own are groundbreaking statements.

Suddenly, by design, his companions picked me up above a wall. I appeared in a lthy battle arena limited in space, accompanied by a bevy of scarred armoured ladies and a ood of scarred plumped gentlemen, each holding pointed arrows, dressed in animal-skinned cloths of the middle ages. We had to slaughter one another using the abnormal given weapon till the last one standing. Already, I watched the arrows without a

bow piercing through another man's heart;

already, the gored scene burned in the bres of my head, engraving itself. Slaughter. Sour storms abashing. In the midst of violence I lifted, I ew... I realised that ying had been

granted to us all. It couldn't be that any man dared aiming directly at me in the air out of

the hundred of

victims lling the room he could've slaughtered by raising a nger. In any case, much more unlikely is that Olden rose from the dead into this battle of love and death, of cat and mouse. He acted as a bow to his arrow, threw the arrow at me, missed by an inch as I ew upwards, dodging, and I kept hearing the haunted murmurs from his mouth saying, "take my aim, you deserve it, you deserve it..." With each passing murmur he grew angrier, his face distorted gradually, his control over himself vanished, and what was left was a dis gured man whose puppet's strings were pulled by high staged parasite infections. His facial alter from the days of his lifetime which disappeared during his last days remained invisible in his Greek features at rst sight.

"You deserve it, you deserve it," he mechanically repeated heatedly, the graphic distortion in his face and body growing increasingly disturbing, akin to a melted candle. He wondered why I avoided his arrows, because in his perspective, I deserved to die. I had no reason to cherish living - that factor bewildered him when seeing me dodge. "You talk as if you matter," I mechanically repeated in thought, "you're insigni cant, Olden, you're practically decomposing, only you rose from the underworld... A rose could

sprout out of your corpse to bring you to eternity. If I deserve an arrow through my bosom, tell me, my dear, the factor which justifies your right to live. I'd say you don't deserve to live in corruption in a corrupted body, mind washed, either, as much as I deserve to die. You have no right to continue frauding. I'm glad to have unmasked you at last - I couldn't bear seeing you walking along the same soil beside me..."

Olden grew vile as a wild animal that shreds passersby to bits. Strange to think that he wasn't in control of himself, pulling his strings, rather a wrathful parasite was. "You deserve it, you deserve it," the words haunted my ears: a lasting impact had been made. Each throw he takes, he misses; each dodge I effortlessly save my breathing body in vain. I took flight using no wings, taking our granted flying ability to my advantage. During this entire battle I hadn't sunk my given arrow into any lord or lady, and to watch the grotesque scene in fear fulfilled me beyond all I could bear.

Olden, his focus on me, received threats from other violent bevvies of ladies and pouring hoods of men. He turned from me to protect his body, fought against his foes, and I watched in the air as they collapsed, leaving the boy untouched. It's an opportunity to relieve my agitated fear: I took the slim chance to use myself as a bow, aiming my arrow at his back. I watched as the arrow sunk into the tissues of his skin, as the blood poured from the circular wound on his back. "She struck you, you unaware fool!" I heard lords and ladies exclaim passionately. He collapsed in an unusual position, exaggerating his curl. I realised I had blown his spine, the little bones dislocated into pieces. I won atop a pile of red bodies.

Rebekka arose. "You killed a man, Nora, you killed a man..." She confronted me, grasping my collar, "I killed a man, you killed a man, we're both madwomen..." From this day I perfected my weak, clumsy self as my own messianic saviour.

17

Such a graphic dream indeed opened a curious door to Nora, prompting her to question every decision she has made: whether it resulted in good or brought soil to her name. In dreams, no sound is heard yet characters speak, and this phenomenon allows one to experience a smooth sleep under their sheets. Though the battle between love and death, of cat and mouse, depicted events based on reality during specific points, it's far from a message from an angel informing her of her crudeness and the wrongs she has committed. Rather, she dreamed an immoral dream out of the stress placed upon her shoulders, causing unstable night slumbers and rests, and evolving from conscious unpleasantness to unpleasantness in vivid storylines in dreams. Our Nora, once awoken by the greetings of sun rays, contemplated intensely, driving her subconscious mind into awakening into a part of the rational mind. Very particles began to torment her. The nonsense haunted her for some anxious two hours as she drenched the earth in tears, kissing the garden's soil, then murmuring a protection prayer on her knees.

18

News reached the Nevadan family about Prince Augustine's search for a wife. Irina exchanged letters with the prince long before his arrival in sly ways beyond our comprehension. In short, the family, keen on sheer reasoning, travelled into the wealthy city's labyrinthine paths, trekking toward Nora's palace, preparing to lend the shining pearl onto his palms for a sacred marriage's sake, preparing before considering. Marrying her sister to a respected, agreeable prince had long been a suspicion of Nora's, and the suspicion justifies hiding her relations with the elites from the Nevadans during when she resided within cold walls of their hut on the Nevadan hill. Could this have been why Irina stayed a lthy peasant, avoiding grasping riches - that she was obliged to come out as a noticeable gem atop a pile of stones, for she knew a suitable gentleman awaited for her - been devoted to her - for some three years, keeping her mouth unopened around her unaware family and intending, plotting, to offer an abrupt bewilderment?

From Nora's observation of Irina's habits, one could name her a pretentious damsel in distress. She gives, expecting no rewards, but she is not slow in taking and returning empty handed, laughing merrily. She often curses at herself mechanically in the tone of a sweet sly lullaby, so much so that irritation rises up in Nora. What is one to do? Nora's irritation comes from seeing her own ideal stature of herself within another lady. How she wished to be treated with much care that she dares fall into distress at minor inconveniences! Again, what is one truly to do? Though Irina's unstable care to Nora surpasses all else, it quite literally differs from the wicked in no aspects. Though the comfort in Nora is but a superficial idea, that a bile green serpent lies on Irina's windows to the soul, she couldn't help her heart from pounding her sister's name, accepting the minimum. The devil has led her in a maze astray.

The bonny prince firmly disembarked his lavish horse carriage covered in creepings and vines - the spitting image of a visual representation painted in mediaeval masterpieces and described in classic fairytales and widespread ancient folklores... At first sight he stoops. He butchers one's senses. Standing abnormally tall under strands of thick hair, his sharp features surpassed the definition of Katya's sharp eyes outlined in kohl, and the whole canvas of his features balances the harmonious contrast between soft gazes and groundbreaking frowns, between depraved expressions and omnipotent demeanours. A stunner of astrology, an aged, dust laden, worn out painting on a ne

canvas! Each feature is delicately placed by touches of seraphims. Even the blues in his irises told a story.

Katya fell onto his shoulders. Years of waiting came to an end. Not a second hesitated Kola and Aaron, and they threw themselves at his shoulders, leaving only Pluto hiding in a shadow casted corner. Nora threw on white garments accented in pale blue, wrapped around her neck a crimson neckerchief, then sped her pace, hurrying down the halls upon hearing the foreign man's arrival - more of a statement than a simple arrival. In front of her lay a sight unprepared for...

"My dear bonny brother Augustine, not one muscle in your skin shifted since our last farewell!" Nora, in utterly dull amazement, could hear Katya ush in a tear-drenched face in the near distant before taking steps outside, "I myself forget the image you possess. The young image disembarking before us astonished me as the spitting image of the unchanged face I once knew! We were drinking wine. Drink your heart as if it should be wine! Fine, red wine, oldened, sweetened in time." She seized him by the shoulder in ebullience. She couldn't refrain from tearing up in exultation. The happiness tears ran from eye to cheek to chin and down to earth. The ecstatic Katya in the rejoice of her brother's embrace was in seventh heaven, on cloud nine, drenched in joy!

"Easy, sister, no more tear droplets, easy. You've grown, you're an adult now, far from our last farewell with you as a three-inch wally. Kola, Aaron, your muscles in your skin did shift! Lead me inside, summon Pluto at once, give me a sigh of bliss. I should see if my youngest brother grew out of his naivete." Voice, the harmonious harp of seraphims plucking at the strings. 'If I could live the past over, because the past in every form, in every thought, is more fulfilling as a whole - I wasn't apart from your company!

Demands, I tell you, demands require my presence in foreign lands. Don't think that you could unmask my face without a mask, don't think that I deserted you and dived in rivers of selfish wealth in far away lands! No land but this is my destiny, my source of triumph. No amount of riches could ever set my home away. Only these grounds grant me with joie de vivre." In the prince's euphoria, he should've been a poet instead. Instead of a warrior, instead of an aristocratic prince. He should've loved a messenger dove instead. Home is found in a little white bird as much as in sturdy lands under roofs.

"Oh, tell me who dried your eyes in those lonely foreign lands? Tell me which hand other than your own took your suffering? If Pluto may wipe away your tears! He is

disinterested in your influence nor did he lose naivete. Problem is his toughness. Some idolise a rock, some grow beside clouds, some balance the two and become a rose instead: soft, sensitive actions in rosette petals and covered in thorns, daring no hand to pick at its stem, only watch the petals crumble with the smallest caress. He'll soften when he understand, you'll explain your story. He let it get into his head that you deserted us in vain, that you chose to indulge in piles upon piles of gold and riches with our Father instead of taking care of domestic duties, leaving us motherless and fatherless and in need of a brother. You're the firstborn heir, your birth purpose has been made for you, your presence is decided by another! Oh, poor dear, if you could be a rose instead, you should've been a rose instead..."

"Do lead me inside."

The dominant light steps stood out. Even the unrealistic air around Prince Augustine ruined Nora's senses, as if he had a contrasting hue of gold glow. Pluto under shadows caught sight of him, realising the difference in their likeability and agreeable qualities that bring about a favourable regard to their figure. Some are by nature wholly astonishing in spite of the effortless actions they execute and some cannot give off the same pleasant air as others in spite of the similarity in their gesture habits. This incredible truth, which we have observed closely in social interactions to come to the conclusion of, is so nerve provoking that it is mainly unaccepted, let alone acknowledged or taken into consideration of. The naturally chosen stunners, once interacted with ordinary folks and displayed such original radiance, inspire the unoriginal folks to give in to mimicking their demeanour and moulding themselves into what in their mind is a much esteemed, dominant and elevated hero, a certain Prince Charming, and unintentionally ruin with them into believing that taking the shape of the hero must be the path to higher likeabilities; however, given that by nature the unoriginal folks are rendered hopeless in giving the same glowing air and cannot, no matter the amount of effort, succeed in becoming astonishing by any means, they open a wide gate for the entrance of the incurable disease of envy and potentially end up insane in maniacal distress, dreading and contemplating with doubts while questioning their own nature they have not the power to wholly take authority over. Augustine was part of the category of stunners while Pluto became part of the category of the envious unoriginal folks upon catching sight of his golden brother's unrealistic pleasant air... Strange as it is, the rest of his siblings never bothered about Augustine's delightful light steps or his

pleasurable air, focusing wholly on their family relations instead. Katya set aside the matter of the miracle which brought back Prince Augustine in the first place.

“Take a seat, drink the contents of our wine. Your godmother Gale’s horses are steady on the way, promising her short arrival after you.” Kola offered a glass.

By then Pluto came into light, maintaining silence, saying not one word around his firstborn brother, the Prince Charming he could never be.

“What sweet grape wine I indulged in: the lekker local flavour of my home land!”

Augustine breathed after taking a light sip, “wine is sweeter on fancy lips.”

“During your absence we’ve taken in our care a certain villager, Nora... There’s her standing timidly in the doorway, come forth, Nora.” Katya pointed, “Oh, I hear we’ve received guests! In fact, bring our guests here from the gates, Nora, before greeting the much esteemed, respectable Augustine whose presence today is a blessing.”

Nora did just so, as Katya commanded. She let out a soft sigh of relief. But the horrible sight awaiting her stunned every particle within her.

“Nora, has Augustine arrived from abroad?” Alexandria exclaimed monotonously, gritting her teeth at the entrance, “We travelled from our hut standing on the hills into the labyrinthine paths till we arrived at the destination, and what a miracle that you’re the honourable maiden greeting us. Irina told me about the letters she exchanged with him long before his return, and I think it reasonable to lend my marquise daughter to his hand in marriage.”

She trembled at the vision of her high dreams collapsing down to dust and rubble. Like Pluto, the unoriginal Nora envied her chosen stunner sibling.

Gale, on horseback, whipped her horses and trotted behind the Nevadans, saving Nora from taking responsibilities in the situation’s complicated matter. Gale ran up to Nora for a discussion after seeing the witch’s family gathered before her.

“Augustine is taking Irina’s hand in marriage...” Nora whispered in Gale’s ear, turning her back on the joyous family, “my, since our last meeting I planned on asking you if all beliefs are existentialism. Devil can take that. I admit that I, notwithstanding the odds, am in total awe with Augustine - I’m desperately in love with Augustine! How my step sister takes the cake... Anything it takes, Gale, anything extreme and beyond Christian

bounds: giving my soul to the devil, manslaughter, greedy deeds - anything, Gale, by all means, I will have this Augustine marry me. From the first sight I knew I'd become wholly insane at catching sight of his hand held in another's that belongs to any fair maiden but me. Irina has taken plenty from me, but Augustine, I'd strangle her throat till she suffocates, choking on her blood, if she dares lift a finger in attempt. He's the Prince Charming I would break religion in exchange for a momentary bliss or a kiss for!" Her tone grew louder till desperation could be identified in her crying voice.

"You forget what I told you the day I unmasked her in a reading... 'I can turn her heart into stone.'"

"Nora," Irina barged in before Nora seized the chance to speak, "my sister, you're my destiny. I've loved you greater than my family... The gravity of the gratitude shedded on me for you is goliath. I express to you my appreciation for coming back to you, to live beside you in harmony while morning sparrows chirp on their branches beside nests under the sun. Our connection is surreal, unshakable!"

Her wholesome speech had itched a nerve in her sister. The thoughts ran wild in her, and she dared not utter, remaining lousy in the spot while frowning at her clueless step sister: "I see that you love comfort. I see a sweet white lie lying on your lips. I fail to understand how you could love me, your family, and not search for me in years, let alone defending my name or raising a word of concern. You munched on bread well, you slept well, you seemed comfortable in my absence with your family... I think if you love a lord or lady, you ought to gain confidence in defending their names. Love is no feeling, love is often mistaken, love is solely genuine. Irina, you slept well in my absence, resting among those you love least, allowing forgetfulness to crawl up your spine, and here you see me adorned in riches, and you daresay, without a sign, without a hint of shame, that you love me? Do you genuinely care or are you wearing a mask in a false masquerade because here you have no path out of residing beside me, under the same roof, within the same walls?" Unspoken and unseen wrath burnt out, died out - the extinguishment of her bewildered vexation under incredible self benevolence control.

Then Katya and Augustine walked forth.

"O benevolent, it is she," He extended an arm, bowing melodramatically, "from the first sight I see, the fair maiden is she who my blind eyes yearned for. Why, come, be seated indoors."

Before she knew it, Nora found herself seated around a large table beside every familiar face, summoned to a meeting. Pluto recognised Irina as the proclaimed witchcraft artist, and would've yelled, but because he was under the sight of his brother, he refrained from stirring and didn't budge a muscle.

Alexandria blabbered nonsense in a straight posture in an attempt of manipulating the elites and tarnishing her reputation in the house, hoping for her banishment (she recognised Pluto and Aaron to be part of the leaders of the horsemen along Nora who raided her village, and kept quiet on the matter, pretending to know not the details).

"Dear lords, dear ladies, an honour has been placed above us today. Nora, the lady you've taken in, once was ours: we know her exceedingly well. Allow me to say that she might not be the brightest shining star hanging above: she has specks of evil burned down the ribs of her heart. She's rather a shooting star, a fallen star. Evil deeds she indulged in include seizing Damian, our child, by the shoulders and repeatedly hitting his head against the hard walls till we found him in a fearful state. She doesn't speak properly. That lady has wrath in her. As you see, this justifies our unleashing her into the wilderness till she trailed her way to you."

"Shooting stars are falling and are the brightest, coming down to earth so our dreams may come after us, not we them. Grasp our dreams - a star, and only fallen stars can be reached. The deed to Damian, remind me when it occurred - I'd say a few years prior to now. How a single deed could stay relevant for centuries while another deed greater in depth could be overlooked! I had had enough of mistreatment and unjust judgement, therefore I allowed my wrath to vent through seizing your wuss child. I pray for peace. The one deed outweighs my integrity, you say? I harvested crops while you kept your children rested undercovers, and once did I complain? Why must your cruel character be overlooked while my one deed must be remembered? I never meant to idolise passing one's wrath to one's hands and onto another - God as my witness, I did not. I seldom lie..." In desperately and forcefully spitting out her sentences, she experienced alarm. The soprano in the air ruffled her ears.

"Some two years, but pray, time defines nothing. If such were the case, any deed could be forgiven through long periods of time. Lords and ladies, sirs, that lady has wrath burned down the tissues of her little heart."

"My Mana, from the start when you found me to the end when you left me, did you know well that my stay... That I couldn't stay? I cherished your care in taking from the

Aliakmon river, Mana, and I never chased after riches - with you, I slept perfectly. But you're impossible, you're hanging above the horizon but you're unreachable. Stubborn stars in a high position are the dimmest, and you, the least wealthiest stubborn peasant."

"Grow a pair! My good sirs, my children stayed quiet on this matter; see Iris and the twins sitting rooted to the spot? Marcus and I - the purpose of our trekking into the paths of the city - give our eldest daughter to your Majesty, Augustine, in a sacred marriage's name. I promise you that our daughter is worthy, not a burden of wrath." He brought a gold framed portrait, presenting the vibrant painting by an unknown artist, "the portrait of Irina's persona adorned in jewels. I will give you this painting as a gift. In the marriage, I pray that it'll come into light: my daughter's rags will be discarded and jewels will wrap around her throat. Fine silk will be in place of rags; do you vow to uplift her from her peasant origin, sir?" In the portrait, Irina rested in a red

gown, holding marquises in both hands. The background consisted of scattered jewels, as well as jewels wrapped around her extravagantly. The eyes in her smile casted a dark red glow, but that wasn't the case: observing closely, the colour was plain crystal blue, the colour of her eyes, and nowhere close to dark, yet somehow we could claim that they appeared red. Merry laughter came

from Gale. "He isn't marrying you, Irina." She stated boldly in a pronounced tone. "You should've feared me the day you took me into the forest. Your pretty throat is to be strangled if you do not put this to an end. Dear is chucklesome, bringing my mocking chuckles about. "

The delicate Irina shuddered into her mother's open embrace. Mother ran her fingers through daughter's light hair, confronted face to face by no shame, and whispered a melodic lullaby at the grown child, knowing no shame. "...The marriage is soon. He and

her tripped while falling in one long ago." Marcus interjected, thrusting his fist against the wood, developing redness in his cheeks.

"And how, you wonder, did she acquire him? How did he recognise her during this day's first meeting without knowing her? Even Augustine knows not... Have you questioned her sly character once?"

Speechless, Marcus dropped his thundering tone. “Why, portraits must’ve been exchanged?”

“Deceive yourself as you please.”

“- you... I am myself uncertain indeed as to how I knew,” the Prince came forth in declaration, “although I do adore my lady. She is by no means sly, my O godmother Gale!”

“A round of applause.”

Gale caused perplexity. “A round of applause, give a standing ovation... before I announce the identity of the Great Blue Heron here, apping and attering under daylight its shimmering, pleasant wings.”

Finally Nora grew impatient at Gale’s slow, steady pace. It seemed ridiculous to her that Gale should ow along time, giving scatters of hints instead of directly exposing Irina’s practised arts. It seemed ridiculous to her that detestable peasants (she once knew) below her should circle back to her and gain authority over her liberty. Somehow the lowest managed to take the cake. She rose from her chair, glanced around the blurred faces, placed her neckerchief down, thrust her sts against the wood, the sound abashing, and at the top of her lungs, marked an heroic end to Irina’s wicked legacy...

“She is a witch! She is a witch!”

Part-3-Chapter-1

“She is a witch! She is a witch!” Nora mechanically repeated, confronting her sister, setting aside the shame in front of the Prince. “Witch, she’s under the devil’s influence, she’s a deceiver of hearts! I’m glad to have unmasked her before you, her unfortunate victims! You should’ve trusted me when I came along Pluto and Aaron to your village! She is a witch! She is a witch!” The words ran through her blood, pounding at the unstable beats. A shot of adrenaline rushed. She glanced at the congregation, perplexed.

“I am...” Came out of Irina’s hoarse throat; she confessed because she hadn’t the ability to hide her form on the words of exposure: her skin cracked like a pod, releasing grey smoke, and her pale eyes burned red like the painting, yet the colour didn’t darken and stayed ghastly delicate as if it were to shatter into pieces in the smallest caress. Upon being exposed, the true form of a witch comes about momentarily for all to see and mock before returning into her disguised skin. Now standing in a witch’s form, unveiled, rendered helpless in concealing, she couldn’t put on a lie across her lips. Here

the ugliness Nora’s sharp observations saw past her beauty owed up the surface and revealed the skin under skins.

2

A week since Irina's trials began Nora was forgiven of erupting a quarrel upon Prince Augustine's arrival, albeit to the fact she hadn't been the base. Irina's tongue confessed during Nora's visits, which in peculiar ways satisfied her longing for answers, given that Irina's arts played a colourless role... Strange as it was Irina maintained her delicacy even when a catastrophic unmasking occurred: one could take a careful observation at her and rule her out of the devil's category. Nora, despite her unveiling the witch that caused much chaos and revealed intense greed, nonetheless contained superficial love for Irina, and somehow that affectionate superficial love surpassed the true love she contained for the Prince. In a supernatural way she believed in the comfort brought by Irina's air lled with complaints, the air given by a chosen stunner Nora could seldom or, in a sense, never be.

Augustine soon recovered from the unpleasant discovery that unravelled before him and seen by his very own eyes in broad daylight, and accepted his desired lady to be a deceiver of hearts, a marionettist of strings. He reasoned that the answer to his recognising his lady from first sight wasn't to do with fantasised destiny or love sickness, a common illness and disease in the Elizabethan era that required proper treatment, but had it all to do with the arts his lady practised: pulling and manipulating his strings into tripping into completely dull awe with her. There he poured out a thought, and here he wondered which lady he'll marry now as he saw no lady greater than the deceiver. He came to the conclusion of dropping her hand at the disposal of his wits, turning his back on eloping with her.

Pluto and Aaron alas put their strict concerns out of heart after Irina had been taken into court for justice. Since Nora informed on her and ever since they travelled to confront Irina in the village with troops of horsemen, a nerve itching uneasiness ensued and lingered, convincing them to, quickly, take her into custody, and often taunting them to wish that Nora might agree instead of turning her back on the matter simply out of superficial comfort. Once Kola uncovered that the three of them knew all along, he bursted into a hysterical song as he intently contemplated on their slim wits in excluding him, the wisest sibling cleverer than all. A week after Irina's trials Pluto managed to step out his shadowed corner to converse with his loathed firstborn brother, albeit he kept the discussions limited and occasionally avoided crossing his path due to his envy of a chosen stunner he could seldom or, in a sense, never be.

The ecstatic Nora shared with none her fantasised, unreal ecstasies she obtained from demonstrated movements of untouched envy.

Katya stayed by her bewildered brother's side all through his recovery from the discovery uncovered in an unpleasant way. Gale took the opportunity to dissect each detail to the two from beginning to end about the unspoken secret between her and Nora about the black magic artist, analysing and vividly explaining the justifications to their profound silence. Twice a day, possessed by concerns of seeking refuge under potential curses, they fall into heated fevers of distress, rummaging through piles of biblical notes in their study and hoping for an answer laying akin to dust in the dust laden papers that might give assistance in defending themselves against the curses placed by spells of a beautiful young witch who, appearing more comparable to blossoms and roses than ravens and crows, summoned a binding spell. The spell had become broken since Nora's loudness, but distress nevertheless brings the two into heated fevers occasionally.

Past addicted admirers compelled and binded by the pearl, Marcus and Alexandria, spared not a grain of sympathy onto their daughter, as if the fifteen years of raising a pearl seemed so little compared to the hatred of a short pang of truth. Back to village routines in soiled huts munching on hardened bread, they continued their living as usual, paying no care to their absent daughter. Even Elena, the idol worshipper of Irina, and Iris, the spitting image of her, spat on Irina's name without a disheartened tear in the breaths of their barely pumping heart. The baby grew into a toddler, and even then in his early youth he understood well the art of mockery. Disposing Irina down the abyss hadn't meant uplifting Nora, the misjudged icon of grief, because ultimately, they as people were grossly corrupted in their circles and ignorant beyond justice's reasonings. And thus Nora and Irina were both of them seeping down the mouldy drainage of forgetfulness, reaching the bottom of the sparsely spaced pit.

A week into her trials Irina's singular source of delightful company she could pass words of appreciation to was the mad traitor, Nora herself, as she received Nora on series of visits where they'd make use of their tongues and confess every detail while dissecting the components behind the shallow cover of taunting motives they indulged in.

Building relations in sisterhood consisted of taking into consideration the complaints both parties excessively shed, yet Nora still contained wrath in seeing Irina take from her all she had to say. Not once or twice but countless times did she consider discarding the witch that seldom uplifted her and seldom contently asked to take a crumb of her, like the others, down the abyss into the bottom of the pits greater in depth than her own

dim pit of abandonment she stood in solitude, facing down at her feet, in. During a particular visit in Nora series, in which we are about to present, an absurd amount of traumatic confessions brought about outpours of tears from both, as well as placing unforgettable rings in their ears - that often unexpectedly begin singing its soprano as a reminder of the truths they've heard - from shedding hard blows of the dagger of truths that clung onto the bres of their hearts. This particular confession session both parties' puddles of sympathy developed into roaring con agrations ire and once it burnt out, dropped permanently into profound phantoms of melancholic empathy.

There on her visit, the sky had nished its pouring shower, leaving the streets depressingly damp in lingering rainfall scents. What served as a thick layer in the damp depression was the rustling of leaves drenched in the sky's tears after a clean wash. The sound is in itself depression and brings about seriously ill obsessions in yearning for the grief it passes, so that one is walking in a loop in a bureaucratic maze of obsessive depression and perplexed philosophical confusion. In Irina's tormenting co n cell she spoke to her source of company behind bars, wearing a casque of exoskeletons separating her from stepping further into reaching the happiness so close to hands.

"My good sister, do so good as to sit beside me, admit your wrongful burdens to me and I may take them on my shoulder and leave you as light as the owing feathers of a feathered fowl: a Pope's peace dove or love sick swan, blue jays or predator owls, any bird but a Great Blue Heron, the lthy, loathful type you certainly are not. Hurry, stop gazing with your light eyes, I'm worried. See, your eyes are the icon of frailty, and mine the symbols of evil. How unjust is it that I have dark raven eyes of eternal damnation while you're blessed with eyes of a lady's gentle frailty, comparable to the petals of a rose! Ugh, if I could break my optics so that I wouldn't see you su er in the cell! If only it were me instead, I'd take the punishment in your place!" Nora held her sister's hands warmly in hers, unable to give an embrace as the bars separated two hurt feathered fowls from reaching the happiness resting so close to beaks. It dawned on her that she was a victim of depressive obsession. The happiness, although super cial and deceitful, had been shared between only the two of them all along the journey, and they themselves were each other's source of happiness.

The washed leaves' rustling soprano grew unbearable to the ears as a morning sparrow began its song that complimented the depression absurdly well, adding further obsessive layers to the stu y, dampy atmosphere after the sky nished its cry. Cowardly must be the clouds that left the clear sky in a plain hue of pure surreal blue. Blue, plain blue, fell

over the atmosphere, over the walls, over one another's blurred vision... the vision of the mourning starved swans in fogged and polluted lakes swimming without a partner, without a destination in mind... Once a man has lost his purpose and grown useless, he becomes a nonentity, a spiteful cockroach so easily stepped upon and subsided, then he is moulded by stubborn hands into a mourning starved swan...

"My only family, Nora, you're my own blood and flesh, you're mended in one with my blood and flesh. You're dearer to me than comet discos, more than my own flesh." Irina poured, gritting her teeth and retreating her hands from Nora's to wipe away the tears flowing down her blushed cheeks and flushed chin. "I treasure every visit, every laughter we shared and every tears both shed. Leave me not in despair. I can tell you my flaws: you're right, oh, I knew you were prettier than I from the start. I had to step on your shoulders to uplift myself. Mana acted rudely toward you, demoralised you, thus the past family were stubborn and I can't think of them dear: their home isn't mine."

"Can't think of them dear? You lived in harmony among them, slept well, munched well, and not once did you try to take pronounced steps to reach me, the family dearest to you in far away lands... I'm starting to not understand you, in fact I can't understand my taking pronounced steps here to visit you, a pretentious storyteller of false fantasies, in the first place, since I hold your burdens you've passed and loathe you for your curses. How unjust I am in passing comfort to she who took from me my youth! When I was deserted by the family, I was stranded in solitude from you and led astray, and here you're deserted by the family, I serve as a whimsical walking figure of joy you can take a part of me from. What does it matter if I chose to end my visits? You'd be stranded in solitude and led astray exactly like the way I felt - you deserve it, I pronounce. But that's not it either: only if I end my visits, who must I turn to? Damnation! We both have no backs to lean on apart from ourselves, though I, in control of myself, do not love you, and I, at heart and in ways out of my control, can't help loving you higher than the atmosphere; I love you till the sun peaks cold up the west, but this is at heart and in ways out of my conscious desires."

"I know, I know I couldn't help but remain in the village. See, I set curses above you as I knew you had more sturdy beauty than my ugliness under my skins. As the years passed the curse evolved along; the factor that drew me backwards was my limited knowledge in readings. I knew from the Cerberus you saw past me, however an unseen being possessed higher knowledge than me and deprived me of certain readings. The being watching down on me led me to the very day my ugliness gained from practising black

magic peaks through my skin - it mockingly unravelled me - I failed in avoiding it after your announcement. Thank righteousness, glad I am to be unveiled lest I continue to cast curses against your will.”

“That mustn't be it either: the curses were bestowed on me long before your practises. Here we're speaking real confessions. What nonsense had we spoken about during my past few visits? We were brilliant at speaking a lot without telling anything. Goodbye then, Irina, devil's child, perhaps I'll come back... Aren't you to be burnt at the city centre?”

“Perfect.”

“Goodbye then, let my hands go. Your confessions will ring and sting in my ears on starless fogged nights.”

Washed leaves' rustling soprano and songbirds' nostalgic chirping accompanied her dreary, damp journey to the palace where Gale admitted her into a room reminding her of the pottery room she went into unleashed insanity in. Water dripping down the faintly crying sky onto her scalp served as water torture, a torture greater in ruining with one's psychological mind than Rebekka's formal water torture. Each time she sinks into dozing into unconsciousness a droplet falls on her, reminding her that she is sane and in the intervals of sanity she is permanently disturbed.

3

Twenty one days with Irina's curses set aside and her path cleared of obstacles of mockery, Nora sat beside the migrant group before visiting her condemned sister for the final time the day before the execution. During the exhausting twenty nights she seldom slept; she seldom interacted with her dear fellows and not once did she see Augustine in the palace: he locked the gates and set himself in the open garden. There she wondered if uncovering Irina did bring promised benefits or added layers of clean misery. What benefits were found in obsessions of depression? Irina receiving her deserved punishments hadn't uplifted Nora but weighed a heavier sack of burden of regret on her shoulders. Her world had been roaring in loudness and now quietly still in the unbearable sounds of gentle rainfall.

"Sirs and ladies, ever so sorry for not taking you under covers. The home isn't my home. Is Rebekka among you?"

"Rebekka is gone: threw herself down a cliff in eccentric sanity." A party breathed. "We moved here in hiding from committing unpleasant deeds."

"Would you care to elaborate? As I recall, didn't the group migrate from crop failure and natural factors in your homelands?"

"That's the cover we hide behind. How we met Rebekka: through imprisonment and release. We were most of us inmates beside her! The actual reason for our shifting is to purify our damned reputations."

"I was taken into custody when I gambled my life away: every lira." A bony woman with long umber hair called out in a cracked voice, raising her pointed finger to the sky as a way to seek acknowledgement, "there I befriended her. My gambling daily - intoxicated in addiction - against morality led me to extreme poverty and I hid from my engraved family. We've become victims to adopting chronic behaviours of pathological lying in our hiding and compulsively, out of habitual reasons, we lie for no apparent reason for our own entertainment, our own amusements."

Aman in orange rags: "I met the group through attempting theft and robbery. We built a thriving community of taking in old and young poor folks since then onward. It'll be wiser to keep our mouths closed on new information. See, you're happy because sadness is unknown to you. Passing sadness onto another is dangerous as they might be exposed

to new knowledge and evolving into you, the one who bestowed the new knowledge. Once they understand their sadness they'll remain in dreadful sadness because the new knowledge takes the knowledge of happiness."

Nora returned: "incredible, sir. I believe I could've adopted a graceful character if only my surroundings didn't mould and tie an anchor around my ankles. I spit on the mugs of the stubborn moulds. Goodbye, all sirs and ladies, be well in hiding from shame knocking at your door... or chuckling at your houseless streets - streets you wander by are your designated home lands... home soils."

She withdrew from the group knowing, in desperation and nerve wretchedness, that she wouldn't willingly visit them for she knew the pattern of despicable events circling back to oneself as every event is connected by bridges in the air.

"Dear, you've come after twenty one days." Irina extended her arms through the bars, seeing Nora through lenses of tears. "I'm to be burnt tomorrow..." She coughed out hoarse sighs.

"I wrote a fairytale once about the protagonist burning, inspired by the sight I saw at the cottage you used as a brewing cabin. My dreams used to depict our Saviour, I recall, and during one point the images altered to disturbingly surreal schizophrenic depictions: ghosts speaking to me about demons, ying in a gored arena, reminders of desires..."

"Oh, I wasn't intelligent in keeping you away from seeing my evilness and led you straight to pushing me on my downfall! Good, ever so good that I'm held back from committing furthermore."

"Quit it, quit it, quit saying you're held back from reaching evil desires." She seemed to have brightened up with a fantastic idea, "...The Bjr, the miracle, the descendent of the evil Dragon Bbin, is revealed to be the icon of death, and the people praising the miracle are chasing after death. Tell me..."

"Indeed, I attracted the beast to keep myself in hiding, and since it has completed its purpose it'll leave. Partly why I attracted the miracle in my arts was to bring about Augustine - the only method to convince him. I admit I used my arts of witchcraft to exchange letters with him long before his arrival and pulled his marionette puppet's strings to put before his eyes a memorable recognition he'd believe happened from God's

calling for us to unite. I planned on keeping the act standing, however one miniature blunder caused my downfall which I am glad for.”

“Ouf, well, my jagaloon, you’re dust tomorrow. Hopefully as scatters of dust you’ll follow the wind’s ow to reach me in another form. I tell you the wind always nds its way to me in dull hours; sometimes I pray hard on my knees it’ll take me o these grounds in its passing. The disgusting sounds that dead family once spoke in my presence infuriates me with its reminders.” She began losing her temper in agitation, “those assumptions, those blames, those accusations, those disgusting sounds out their mouth claiming me to be who I’d never be. I might as well become the beast they see me as so I wouldn’t spend one more day living as a rose surrounded by cacti. Let the rose grow its own thorns instead of removing them for the sake of a pleasant, approachable image!”

“You ought to cool o , dear...”

“You’re a part of the dead family. Tomorrow you’ll reunite.”

“Mana and Patera aren’t dead, not before me?”

“Dead in the heart, dead in the throat, dead as a decomposing deer infested with ies feeding on hatred. Flies, the lthy pests outside of God’s creation! The pests live on decomposing bodies, and that dead family may attract a whole lot! Goodbye, Irina, away goes you into the re of my fairytale. I wouldn’t shed a tear of water to put o the con agration of re that’ll consume you to bits. And you dare shed heart touching tears before me? You pity yourself? Are you claiming that you’re undeserving of crumbling into dust or are you treasuring your wellness over justi ed punishments? Let it get into your head that you’re a greedy witch in skins of eternal ugliness. Glad I certainly am to pour out the compressed ood. So long, goodbye.”

“Trust my word: I do regret it. I ache in regret...”

“In hindsight, absolutely, but in the moment you couldn’t have accepted the seriousness the e ects would play on a girl with dignity in her youth. As I said, how dare you accept pitying yourself when in front of you is the one you’ve ruined? Shame falls upon you! Are your justi ed punishments undeserving? Goodbye, goodbye, till tomorrow, I’ll watch your burning among the execution event’s fascinated crowd.”

Before Irina uttered a word Nora, heart wrenched, retreated her hands from hers through the bars separating the two and ran off, withdrawing the grandiose and gloomy setting. Irina couldn't have said sentences of defence as that'll give the impression that she values herself after all.

Prince Augustine, upon recovering from disturbance, recalled the purpose his sister called for for his attention from abroad. All throughout the twenty one days he rested on the grass of the healing garden, under sunlight, rummaging through notes Katya brought. Because of his calling for unpestered peace Nora was prohibited to enter the blooming garden she once loved laying under a tree on, the garden nicknamed 'The Garden of Eden' by Pluto - the garden she temperately revised her fairytale in paradisaical air in. Not meeting Augustine after her chaos she erupted made her contemplate furthermore on the decision bringing misery in place of opportunities. No matter the surroundings she found it all terribly still and colourless: grey and damp after rain falls while songbirds chirp, allowing one to burst an ear vessels on hearing their own breathing pattern.

When he entered Lady Katya's study, and strange it was, the frame holding the miracle placed under daggers had emptied. He pictured the miracle as he hasn't yet set eyes on the beauty once during the days his ignorance peaked. In pacing to call for Katya he stumbled across Nora drenched in some clean misery that was irreversibly intoxicated and whirled her psychological mind like Irina stirring her brewing pot. There Nora buried the flushed face under her arms - she was in such unclean garments soiled by sitting by the bars on her visit to be standing before him. Even her cranberry cheeks were covered in smudges of dust. The twilighting eyes gave the impression that she, a beauty, went through harsher storms abashing than shipwreck sailors in the sea. Here she stands sickly stunning with her eyes declaring the youth and breaths of life remaining in her wasting body under pale skins that are gradually growing paler than sheets out of intense self pity and a lack of appetite. The olive skin enriched in colour died off as it seems. Nora grew ashamed to stand under his sight albeit a new white glow outlined her, displaying her as if she were in the category of the amiable stunners chosen by nature. "Nora, how glad I am to encounter you again." He greeted then took an observing closer look down at the face buried under arms, "you're unblinking! No, no, don't cry, I know you've been spitting blames upon yourself by how melancholy you're standing, but hear me, you did an plausible deed in the midst of my love sickness from love spells. I am ill and require treatment for love sickness, as the British under Elizabeth the First's anger

diagnosed victims of love sickness, I myself am but a victim in the devil's game of cat and mouse. Devil burn it, in cat and mouse, you and I are grieving victims and need one another's shoulders as firm trees to rest against."

"And after all you still are ill in love sickness? The curses haven't died or are you in awe with a witch without her taking authority and pulling your marionette puppet's strings above your head? In such cases the binding curses were weak. Her cries were binding: a distressed lady's shedded tears are the deadliest poison a witch could brew."

"Oh, no, my detestation for the wicked touches the sky, surpassing its boundary. I say my love sickness calls for treatment, although the love sickness isn't love's sickness but the devil's illness. I used the term for irony."

"Romanticism to an extent?"

"Precisely, lady. Twenty eight days and you haven't yet made an introduction." he raised an eyebrow, indicating that she should make an introduction. "Surely the world bit you because cherishing the lamb means destroying the vile pack."

"I've formerly discussed with Katya the coward that the systems are unpleasant to all: all follows and none takes comfort. Even the sharp-toothed leaders like yourself deteste it, yet none can begin an agreeable revolution. I've not picked up a book of my ancient passion in some twenty days, let alone picking up a pen."

"I understand your vibrant passion for our fathers of the past. I can't seem to unravel the idea of your wishing to pen, since, as you know, every idea is said, and every idea is presented by another in ways we cannot replicate, so penning in our century, in conclusion, is repeating the past in poorly written ways compared to the original. Why is penning necessary when we aren't half as sophisticated as Aristotle and Virgil? All we have in this late century we don't need more. Dozens of masterpieces are unseen due to the absurd amount of them, and adding poorer masterpieces to the pile will take up place and leave the rest unseen to many. Quantity is a curse, or perhaps the limitation of our eyes is devastating."

"Partly the reason for my refusing to pick up a pen is to leave our fathers' masterpieces seen. However in different centuries citizens prefer different reads, as I learnt from a migrant lady; the evidence is that the migrant lady's brother, - for there could be no other example - the antithesis of a sturdy Herculean philosopher, lived for philosophy

and his works were plausible, as I place my belief in the lady's claims. The issue relies on the preference of citizens during his lifetime - perhaps in another century his works would resurface into light! And if he managed to sell scarcely any copies in his lifetime, he'll live a life of much shame till he starves in poverty and intelligence, because intelligence on its own is no way to earn food if the rest aren't willing to offer him food in exchange for masterpieces as they aren't able to comprehend it during their centuries. Architects and artists from the olden centuries that have resurfaced are perfect examples of intelligence without food. This justifies my fear of flaunting my works in the faces of others, hoping for recognition and validation - I fear I wouldn't earn food in the midst of minds that aren't able to comprehend me. Even worse is if my name suddenly resurfaces after centuries when citizens' preferences evolve long after my time of knowing the touch of fame of my own name..."

"Kind lady, if you may spare knowledge onto me so that I may know the touch of my dense feet lifting weightlessly, defying the air's laws, and elevate higher in easiness - that is the fantasy I dream of in which you possess in your two lone palms! No need for crying, no need for grief, you have a treasure deadlier than a distressed lady's droplets of tears of brewed poison." The coquettish outline of him was aglow. "Ah, Pluto stands there by the walls engrossed in reflection, as shown in his posture. Come, brother, speak to me here. Say, Nora, doesn't the resemblance of beauties flow through our family's blood? As we are descendents of a goddess, inheriting her beauty, and descendents of the greatest king, inheriting his mightiness, our family is striving."

There Pluto, upon bearing the attacks of the comparison between the air a stunner effortlessly gives and the average air an unfortunate man gives, had no other path but to become a mimic maniac and mirror his brother's style, and notwithstanding the similarities in the thoughts and actions that produced their given air, he walked toward Augustine - standing before a mask and flaunting a big sign labelled 'victim to stunners of nature' in his palms - as the beginning step of adopting habits of the art of imitation, which, agreeably, is witchcraft in a different form under different names to convince its students of its nonexisting morality. The calmness in Pluto's speeches and gestures in his movements, as Nora picked up during the days, casted shadows of uneasiness in the eyes of many: for though his movements seemed suitable for his esteemed beauty and polite to the naked eye, the air coming out the vents of his skin, as one could only see through using their guts, suggested entirely differently on his behalf.

“Heart Wrenching: the first word I’ll hear you utter between us upon my recovery and upon my arrival, you’re in a dreary state below pits. You’re down, why the long face?”

“My state is perfect, you’ve mistaken me, gentleman.” He claimed despite knowing that his lowly state sought after no comfort and remained below pits. “I feel that these days the mulling noises around me vanished, leaving me defeated in the loud pounding of my own heartbeat. An inexplicable monstrosity caused these days to be grey, wholly grey, a shade of grey which differs from the grey of the olden days where colour could be seen through the colourless. Here is damned grey over the walls. A certain coldness bestows a frown on me in admitting to this melancholy phenomenon of existence and sensations.” In his sentences his tone noticeably dropped to calmer rates than usual, as he picks up the patterns in his brother’s admirable speeches. “You’ve suffered in solitude and only permitted Katya to bring you certain notes, but even now in your first step out of the garden you’re tidy and one can’t identify the signs of sadness in observing you.” Like the rest of the category that are envious of the stunners, Pluto didn’t raise concern or inquiries on how he maintains his nature, let alone raising words of acknowledgement to his mesmerising air.

“Take my thanks, take my thanks, and that may be a disadvantage as one can’t identify signs of sadness in observing my tidy surface.”

“You’ve seen grey?” Astonished, Nora interrupted, addressing the similarity between her and Pluto’s experiences and sights, “the mulling white noises vanished and left you hearing details of your breathing till you could bear it no longer? Damnation, what have I done? It isn’t purely me who sees those tormenting sights but a second party! I should’ve never raised my voice on his arrival for selfish reasons, only then would the torture of those melancholy sights stay rested in place, away from disrupting our senses and away from tormenting us with small factors that grow enormous and they strike!” She descended to the ground in blame. “In unveiling the witch I’m told I did a pleasant deed but only the most spiteful unpleasantness did the act bring! Here I’ve learnt that happiness doesn’t come from me, it comes from the rest and weakens once I take the cake, and this is not the result of the witch’s curse. The witch - and I grow ashamed in calling her an insult - is the lily I’d shield boulders against till the sun peaks cold up the west - I’ve stepped on her in place of the boulders I was meant to stand against. What did I stand against for her delicacy in these years I seem to grow bewildered at. I don’t follow my morals: we all understand it perfectly and never use it in cases demanding wisdom. We all understand the story of a fruit falling beside a halfwit rabbit who, being

in shock, declared in con dence that the sky had crumbled to his feet and a stampede arose in the midst while many animals trampled and fell into a great crevasse - this ancient story teaches us to be patient and refrain from jumping to conclusions, and we all understand perfectly not to jump to conclusions. Yet, in cases demanding patience, and in complete understanding of the story, we still break our morals: doing immoral deeds and only hindsight do we make use of the gravity of the story. Humanity is never surely settled in terms of wisdom even with the teachings of the greatest ideas.” In crying her desperations, she stuttered while su ocating in misery and blame and Augustine descended beside her in shock, attempting to console her as her wild heart was jumping out her su ocating throat.

“I love how seen here I stand,” he consoled in truth, “as a nobleman, you see me and show me forgiveness to my corrupted qualities. Any wise philosopher would’ve rubbed soil across my mug, however you, a possessor of sharp, heavily pitiful and gazing eyes, see me wholly, show me in the sea of time that I’m seen, and show compassion, and that, to my thinking, in the least, is the wisdom of the true philosophers.”

“I’ve harmed another joyful individual, ugh, the person in the pathological liars group was right in his statements: passing forth knowledge of misery is dangerous.”

“As an older nobleman, I’m familiar with the knowledge of misery as I’ve read more elevated books than you, I assure you in truth. This is the rst proper discussion of the three of us and what an introduction you’ve made when I asked of you! Don’t cry, rise from your knees, you’re splendid, I assure you. Pay no care to Pluto frowning and standing beside you so still as a Greek statue in nonchalance.”

This mockery, as he perceived it, broke o Pluto’s pretentiousness with painting an image depicting him as a nonentity he never intended to be. He did spare empathy and hoped for kindness; not receiving recognition for his integrity because of his posture and learning that he is wrongfully perceived seemed to him as utterly foolish. Worthy as it is to note, when one paints a convincing picture of one else and the same one else is rendered mouthless in protesting against the false depiction, fury is distributed unevenly across him till he is ultimately painted, once more, as false pictures containing unjust wrath. We once again bring forth the short story of the rabbit who thought the sky had crumbled to his feet. This story without a known date of publication, no known geography, and written by an unknown author, astonished every reader with its profound wisdom and bestowed a vow in their hearts promising to practise patience and

expand their narrow minds and avoid heading straight to conclusions. Every astonished reader, once a case falls before them, and with their understanding, act according to their amusement instead of wisdom. Often, the amused parties spit out mocking claims to another, unaware of the gravity of the effects it could cause. Such truths are found in Augustine's painting as he absent-mindedly blurted sentences Pluto took offence in.

"How dare you speak ill of me, how dare you mould yourself into a halfwit rabbit in the story." Pluto bursted out, unable to restrain himself and fumbled on his abruptly spitted words as he dealt with immense anger. His inability to perfect his confrontation fueled his anger. "Painting false pictures fuels your ego? The idiocracy in your inconsiderably blurted claim of me standing as a statue in nonchalance paints me as an ignorant person worthy of becoming a strolling subject of ridicule!" He seemed to shatter the quietness and stillness of the grey, yet the mulling of white noises on neutral days hadn't returned, they remained filtered in grey and one could grow attached to the chronically depressing scene and could learn his pulse pattern by heart while hearing songbirds chirp their songs in its abnormal stillness that is unbearably agitating to rest one's heavy head in as it brings about greater exhaustion which dozes one off in the heavy gravity of headache it offers.

"I paid minimal care to my sentences and I promise I didn't mean to mock you or depict you in my painting as a ridiculous man in which you are not and never intend to be or resemble. I know that you're no subject of ridicule to point at as you are a man of honour and have mastered integrity. I have known you, my dear Pluto, for many years since you were a child and I, an older brother, that you have no knife secretly stashed in your pockets."

"Oh, bonehead, the defence you use is inconsiderably factitious, sham. You wouldn't speak ill on your reputation and admit that you're a jabbermouth, blabbermouth, bonehead, halfwit rabbit, the rabbit from the story! I want to spill every insult on your name if only my anger doesn't strangle my throat to fumble my desired words with stuttering. As I spill this upon you, tell me straight away, do you recognise the effects you've made to my intentions through painting a false image by blurring? But you're adored, you're supernatural, and you're peculiar and unproportional in ways that change the air around us - this is what the unlucky cannot perfect, even in mimicking, as long as the mimic maniac is in the ruthless category of the unlucky, chosen by some spiteful higher powers. My observation to you is undeniable - how must you reject such well presented, well phrased truths?"

“You ought to cool o , I meant no falseness in blurting...” “Drop your stashed knife to the ground and hear me attentively. You’re attering, you’re abnormal in your manners, and how arti cial you are! You’re a distant ideal, a man loved but never known. In your air, not one person has the capacity to know you wholly because your attery is blinding. In grey, even Aaron, the dedicated Christian, is avoiding his sacred morning prayers in the intimidating room!” For gestures of respect before her departure from involvement, she kissed the prince’s hand goodbye before leaving the heated business to their palms. The pressure of the compressing air around her room made the place within the walls unbearable to stand in. Perhaps that had been the reason for her dozing o till the following sunrise.

4

Nora merely gazed upon the terrible resemblance of the execution setting to her own fairytale. She stood among a crowd of fascinated audiences awaiting the torches to set the fire, and she was the only lady who stood in a gloomy hooded cloak and had unhappiness: the crowd of fascinated audiences were dressed in informal clothings in large ranges of colour and had excitement for the event with no place for sympathy for the condemned nor unhappiness or uncertainty about the burning sight they'll soon see.

On the raised wooden platform, Irina, smothered in soil, humiliated, and in the process of enduring lashed from her executioners, called to her sister below her in a sharp voice which she used when complaining about minor inconveniences: "spare me forgiveness, I beg on my two knees for you... I don't deserve the rewards of another chance at loving given to me but I know your gentle heart is kinder than my corrupted heart... You're cleverer than I."

"End the lashing, end the tormenting," She couldn't stand the executioners taking patience in ending Irina, "Irina, celestial enchantress, the haziness of a washed memory along the wind, fate prepared us both on this intersecting path where we've awakened on morning dew... fallen upon a star on a midnight twilight, an astronomical phenomenon, I shall carry your clean misery and bring forth a variety of colours. Extinguish moonlight, poetry in vain. You have been wonderful: repenting, prepening, repenting, lifting my heart forevermore! I loathe you, I resent you for passing your disease to me in envy, but I am unable to help my desires - I love you even when you are meant to die in your consequences. Give her another day to live, I beg of you executioners, hold your whips and cease the lashes!"

The people, in a manner far from kind, after hearing Nora's pleas, threw the celestial enchantress from the wooden platform down into the crowd and onto the ground. Suddenly the humiliation dawned on her that she had grown weak when the separation between her and witchcraft arts took place.

"I find it unjust," Nora looked down at her with a sickly pale, bland face, "...that I am defending you in courage after you failed to ever call out to me apart from now, not out of choice for me, not out of self will, instead, in desperation and vain because you need me. If you didn't need me, if I never spoke against you when Mana tried to ruthlessly tarnish my reputation with exaggerated falseness and cruelty, you'd be joyfully laying on

abed adorned in gold carvings and under the roofs, waiting for marriage and paying minimal or no care to the mistreated little bastard under your sight. I find it unjust, I might turn on you as it isn't late to take my words of defence back. How'd you prefer: turning to dust or enduring another day of blame, in addition to the consequences piercing through you, before, finally, turning to dust publicly?"

In a screeching sigh: "do as you wish..."

"Do as I wish? Damnation, damn you, in the midst of the crowd, you're shifting the blame onto me? Villain, villain, pitiful villain. You've taught me to be a mighty hero of strength... You've bamboozled me into seeing myself above your state, guilty in every aspect of power, like a greedy king looking down on a poor peasant deserving better conditions. You've deluded me, you deceived me, you tricked me into your looping circle of the arts of the cruelty you indulge in! As you said, I'm cleverer than you, hence my sharp eyes gazing past your villainous perplexities. Lord, why have you forsaken you into this? I'm seen as a villain but I always had integrity among the cruel, and fate, I tell you, fate is ruthless. I'll die young as the kind always die young. Only the capricious live long lives of riches. I've gone insane countless times and each time I swallowed the uneasiness and stepped under the sight of expectations. Countless times I've promised myself I'd mould myself into the beast who took an entire forest of creatures mistreating him, and each time I restrain myself... What for? What for? I nonetheless wound up in the same place. What is one unfortunate lady to do in the everlasting loop? Growing capricious might bring me riches and a fulfilling long life... But my, how must I picture myself standing in a gold frame, defying the laws of fate and defying the expectations for the tenderhearted? I'm a lady of passion! You, Irina, have bamboozled and deluded me into uncertainty of whether the Lord sees me wholly as a villain or a mistaken feathered fowl, a peace dove... Now that I've dropped to your lowly state, down to your lowly level... now that I've dropped to your lowly state, down on my two knees, my knees against the dirt..."

Then an executioner tying a second condemned man exclaimed: "lady, end the silly sob stories. The crowd is here to witness gruesome bloodshed, not to witness discussions. Take the witch away into her cell if you plead for another day given to her, or else we'll summon a watch-guard over you."

So Nora raised, lifting Irina from her lowly level, threw towels over her back and trailed the path leading back to her cell beside a camouflaged watchman. Nora didn't

understand the superficial comfort found in Irina now that resentment took place. Yet, in extremity, she held onto the dangerous witchcraft artist in tight grips. Benefits weren't given to Nora, why did she choose to take Irina's misery - a testament to the cruelty of fate upon a tenderhearted lady and the gentleness of fate upon most capricious ladies who suck the youth out of the tenderhearted like a slithering sly adder or parasite climbing up one's slim spine.

Into the con sized cell, Nora, granted with permissions to enter inside, set Irina on a mahogany stool before resting on the dust laden, lthy oor.

"Today I am granted to speak to you within those same bars: blessing or punishment?" Hearing white noise vividly in a cell lacking light, Nora took the hood o her head, revealing her face of much youth, "lash scars I see... Throw o the towels, I'm smothering herb pastes over your back."

"I knew from the start you had a bigger heart than any other lord or lady. I never meant o ence to you in the crowds, I never meant to raise you higher than me to label you a villain, I wished to respect your suffering and avoid pitying myself, so I barely muttered. Your suffering's tough foundation is related to me, I'm situated in regret. I loved you from the start and mistreated you for the polite treatment of those I love less... A fool I was in turning a blind eye to quality while praising quantity. I wondered why a certain emptiness leaves me cold, here I unravelled the reason: I missed the lady I loved most. If I had loved her most, why had I damned her most? Devil takes me. This, I realised through your putting an end to my arts, and I wonder if you hadn't spoken up that day, would I make peace with my wild, violent heart and realise the beauty of you? My turning to dust is yet to come tomorrow, thank you ever so for sparing me one more day to confess this to you. At least tomorrow I'd ow along the passing of the wind as a spiritual way of granting your hopes of taking lift - by showing you how it is possible. I'll be washed by the wind, washed clean of impurities I indulged in, and along the wind, I will be taken where it is desired, to the lake of con agration where I am destined, or to the golden gates where paradise is given to me, a wicked, purely as a gift."

"Some months ago I fell into insanity(whether it had been insanity or intervals of eccentric sanity, like Rebekka before she threw herself down a cli , as one man in the migrant group said, I am uncertain) in my pottery room without signs of calmness. In the meantime I consumed lumps of clay as I mistaken them for herb pastes of happiness you used to smother over my poppy bruises Mana and Patera gave me in their beating. I

was beaten to death and the herb pastes healed me. I saw them as symbols of healing. I thought if I consumed some, I'd be granted happiness! Ouf, I carried a lump in my cloak's pocket; I must smother it over your back. Bear with me, bear with me, we'll both be happy afterwards. The certain lack of fulfillment leaving you cold in melancholy is promised to perish into food for the flies, the filthy pests feeding on corpses and out of God's creation. Unhappiness will perish into dying bodies for the flies to take. Pestering flies of symbolism."

"The clay is promised to heal the unhappy like herb pastes, except build casts over and to rot the visible wounds with desirable joy. I cherish you, Nora, my dear, bring me out of the pithole as a testament to your gentleness and lack of capriciousness, not for my wishes. How you nevertheless dared shed forgiveness upon me in pangs of righteous fury! Entered Nora, entered Nora, entered Nora into the cell in need of at least one grain of comfort, simply to accompany me during my terrible back ache! Saint of a lady beside a former servant of the devil - that must be the spitting image of a tender saint!"

"Quiet down, do so good as to remain seated, I plan on accompanying you for today, I must stay the night. Tender must be the night. You're spitting truths: I have much strength to subside my fury, set aside my nerves itching in vain, and brush aside temptations of vengefulness in order to make way for forgiveness. I am pestered by fury, I want to slap you resoundingly on the face, I want to evolve into the beast in the old folk tale so that I may indulge in selfish desires under unjustly given comments, but how I unconsciously restrain myself! Fortunately you are to rest at my side. What for? For testaments, undeniably, solely testaments and scarcely anything more... other than the patterns of my wild heart jumping from out my throat, saying screeching sighs onto me: 'calmness is needed since you were never sane' pulling at my marionette puppet's strings. See, Irina, you're sane and I'm calm under your watchful sight, nay, that isn't quite the case either..."

"Too much philosophy is promised to make one go into a frenzy as they are, out of stupidity, searching for answers in a broad, open topic without direct answers, instead, great ideas. I hoped I might speak to you knowing that you wouldn't erupt in misunderstandings, I thank you dearly. Without further ado, and thank you ever so for smothering happiness atop my fresh lash wounds, the coldness is numbing, I've found, that is, I've learned that the blunder which brought me here from giving my hand to Augustine for marriage was associated in my practised arts: I practised the arts for unravelling layers of leathers to reach tenderness. I practised so that it may cross my

path, and, I admit, it finally found me: I didn't need to practise the arts of the wicked from the start, only I needed to raise my head to the light above my crown and temples!"

"Jagaloon, jagaloon, bonehead." In whispering this, she put an end to smothering the lump of clay over Irina's back. "It'll harden tomorrow for security. You'll die happy. There, tell me what a warrior is." "A hero, a possessor of swords, a celebrated figure in

history, a master of war and peace,
strength, durability, tactics..."

"Nay, I object, I deny the great idea. A person who worries excessively to catastrophic extents is what a warrior meant from the start." Suddenly she grew stubborn and slightly vexed in pride. The mastery of maintaining calmness and integrity had aligned

with the stars up above,

intersecting to mend a path for this incredible bonding session. In unreal ways under unblemished conditions, and in the toughest of hours, the worn out match of Nora's non-superficial care for Irina lit once again, defying the abashing winds that could be so sour in its passing by taking what was never meant to take lift. We quite frankly cannot resist her astonishing yet, as we admit, deranged decisions - she must've done those good deeds of forgiving in distraught states where she was nutty as a fruitcake, yet honest as a saint, as Irina phrased it. Non compos mentis. Our hearts' bres, while we describe the story, are, horribly, as some observant third parties might put it, thawed. The thawing of Nora's bres led her to accepting the selfish condemned woman to be one discarded lady in need of pity(exactly like poor Nora herself, which Nora understood through continuing further into the unreal bonding session).

Nora threw the towel on Irina's back. The clay layers stung the lash wounds beneath, hardening under the towel and bonding skin with the towel. Clay clinging on Nora's fingers brought more soiled conditions to the cell in addition to its original dust laden floor lled with soot and unclean air. It was with qualities of humbleness that she breathed the dead, still air. "For today we'll sleep early." Nora mumbled, resting against

the wall, her fingers

running through the decomposing wallpaper's lthy patterns. The debris soiled her skin then, while she breathed, punished her with sore, dry coughs. "I have come to realise I don't exactly want you to turn to dust. See the dust and debris on my fingers, in the air, and inside me, punishing me with coughs? I don't exactly... Matter-of-factly, I don't

want you to be known under the eyes of the majority as a wicked servant of the devil. You're a fly outside of symbolism. You're akin to the yellow creature we've forgotten... the stubborn bumblebee who stung you on the flushed cheeks before flying for some weeks to wait for the time to arrive where it rested on the deceased fraud's tower, taking him aback in bewilderment and fear. Outside of symbolism, you feed on perishing bodies because you were given a purpose as the creature you are, and that purpose is outside of your little authority, and outside of symbolism."

"You've too proud a tongue in praising me, given that I did serve the devil, inhaling the grotesqueness till my ugliness came to light. I suppose you've known my ugliness long before seeing it; anyhow, the visual ugliness rising from under my skin was momentary."

"Nay, you're as beautiful as the benevolent girl who took me, a crying child, from the streaming Aliakmon river... Hold your tongue, hear me: I will bring liberty to you after negotiating with Augustine, the Pasha's first born heir, or Katya and Aaron, the younger siblings."

"No use, no use. Better descend into dust and cover the city grounds with my unseen presence."

"Then I will - and I vow I must - take your place at the raised platform tomorrow. Hold your tongue, widen your ears, expand the narrow path of your mind."

"Putting a hero to death for another's misdeeds... Sacrifice... Dove for the raven, Christ for the man-devil..."

"You don't deserve it but you'll receive it regardless - such is the insanity of clever folks with big hearts! Cora was tragically born with a heart too big for a baby, did I ever spare words of that story? That, Irina, that big, heavy heart caused complications to her health and abilities, but such is such! I'm holding my nerves from catching diseases, currently, diseases of one certain itch. I'd defy laws confidently for your sake, if only you'd also, but in defending my name, a simple act of righteousness demanding no defying, you fail with a lack of courage, or with too much ego. Timid egotist with no mouth, no strength! But now I will stand for you - I'll forget you were ever a pretentious timid egotist and defend your name, notwithstanding the complications, simply for my integrity's sake. Here I love you, here I promise you I wouldn't erupt abruptly in sudden vengefulness; I will subside the reminders of the past to carve paths for you. I think my nerves are itching... Nerves, I tell you, diseased nerves..." In vowing this she gritted

through her teeth in vexed uneasiness. “Quiet, once a vow is said it will not alter. See the condence in my speech and character when I defend your name?”

“If only I could say the same for myself, if only I could start again and be righteous toward you. O, Nora, insurmountable sister, be my daughter in reincarnation.”

“Follower of Orthodoxy, you cannot believe in second lives, pathetic. I am convinced I need to live in order to hold your hand through your journey of becoming a dedicated Christian after dropping the devil’s arts. Now I cannot take your place at the raised platform, I must negotiate for us to both live... A second life is given after you give your first to the Lord, Almighty, not through nonentities blessing you with curses of reincarnation. I myself was an iridescent nonentity, an iridescent void less than human, during the days of madness locked inside the pottery room boundaries separating me, in seclusion, from inclusion and warm sunlight. Another vow I now make is promising to never enter the room, and never will I touch another lump of clay for the second highest form of art (pottery making), is insanity without calmness, without watchful eyes - anyone is promised to dissolve into madmen when forming their own realities!”

“Descending into voids of madness without calmness? Defending your living against burning for me to evolve into a believer of Christ and Orthodoxy? There isn’t another deranged kind lady resembling the microscale parts of you, Nora, this I can say, in this I can declare.”

Although Irina did above her miniscule scale of timid ego, Nora found herself in a difficult state of containing her disappointment. Agitation proved to be balanced with compassion. Yet, in extremity, she took authority over her irritated nerves. “In truth, Irina,

we’ve been conversing for some three hours... Yesterday I had disturbed, despicable dreams depicting nonsense; it has been some year or two since my dreams depicted Christ the Saviour redeeming me - a symbol that I should no longer be saved? I dream and dream and dream again, in hopes of a shed of light befalling onto me, envisioning how beautiful the past should’ve been. I dreamt of my right ankle tied to an anchor in the middle of the pitch black bottomless sea during midnight. The midnight wasn’t a surreal white night with twilights hanging on the atmosphere but the visual representation of the absence of light. In blindness some miracle contributed to my sight: I saw as clear as daylight ships resting beside me, floating seamlessly. I struggled on the unstable surface. ‘Unjust!’ I heard Herman Georgiou yell at the crews, complaining

heatedly, unable to restrain his tongue, 'she's taken part of our sea.' What does it matter if Herman Georgiou or Othella speaks ill on my name? What showed itself to me as real horror was that their deceased son stepped in front of the walls, and in emphasised tones, merrily giggled, saying: 'bad, bad.' I wonder why it is that when I commit bad deeds I am punished supernaturally with guilt to the point of reminders constantly appearing in my dreams like one utterly disturbed schizophrenic patient, but when all else repeatedly commit despicable deeds, suddenly it becomes overlooked and they are left in untouched merry states without otherworldly beings contributing. Even when the curse is undone it is quick to become present. Olden Georgiou is dead for two or three years yet my guilt of standing for his impalement is early in its youth. Nothing furthermore appeared in yesterday's nonsensical dream: I awake no sooner than Olden Georgiou's stepping forth. Here, in consciousness, I can see the details of grief shown in his otherworldly features hand carved by careful angels before he died a tormenting tragedy."

"He held the prestigious position as a bedazzled gem, a marquise, till he spoke ill of you in exchange for false recognition overseas as well as among our prideful villagers. Not one moment sooner had he discredited you than he rapidly dissolved into soil. I promise you that I remember identifying features of falseness in his corrupted laughs of disgusting pride."

"His agonising features that I compared to Greek tales of tragedies are indeed altered to show wicked nonchalance and unblemished pride. His laughter shook me as fearsome as he looked down at me with the memorable grotesque expression. I wonder about how his nerves never itched in pity to me or self guilt. Near death his melancholic demeanour, that is, his air grew ever more saddening, leaving the facial features unaltered in their form before pride."

"Ah, you've mistaken: from the start he decomposed in intoxicating pride, never was he in another benevolent form up to your fantasies."

"Countless situations concerning me are managed by you, involving you, yet you accepted the wind's blowing patterns instead of standing on these grounds for me - never was I informed in the least."

“For your confirmation and defence? I apologise, sorry ever so, I do ache in regret... Any older sister should’ve stood firmly in confidence and without specks of doubt for the misunderstood younger sister

they cherish in adoration.”

“Forget those despicable events, you were contributing to those events in the end, since in your devil’s arts, you casted spells of manifestations for misfortune to befall onto me. The devil pulled your feline marionette puppet’s strings during when you bestowed the curses above me, manipulating the nature of my marionette puppet’s strings, taking the position over my crown and temples as my own marionettist. In the rarest of extremities, in the rarest of heated climates, I... forgive those misleading deeds, this I grit through my teeth hoarsely. I think my nerves are diseased with incurable uneasiness. If only I had such an ability to sink my fingers into my crown and manipulate the insides while internally massaging the aching temples that pestered me for extended periods of times, often dozing me off into frenzied slumbers lacking the fulfillment of rest, without weakening.”

“Are there poetic appreciations that should be mentioned, in which I’ve not expressed eloquently?”

“No more praising, hold your tongue, my unfortunate y, my stubborn bumblebee, how dense I see you! Merchant Gale offered to turn your heart cold into stone - have I spared words on this matter - but I rejected the great idea for superficial comfort. That superficial comfort led us here where it thawed into compassion through bonding, confessing and forgetting - forgetting, the mother of key components to reaching unmatched peace. I have, in uncomfortableness, leaned against the dust laden wall, breathing the debris lled air, and sat with my arms half burying my face on these disgraceful grounds for some four ve hours; you sat on that stool without moving a muscle. Rest your head if you nd it possible under such conditions - today, I take dominance over your crown. We are falling asleep early to increase the chances of gaining the fulfillment of rest.”

Nonentities of fate granted Nora with fulfillments of rest in the polluted conditions, proving they indeed possess specks of fairness in hand for the tenderhearted saints of mortal ladies in their naivete and youth(referencing Nora and no other, as the irrelevant ladies, given that they had somewhat fair treatments, whine at minor inconveniences as

they see tragedies, unlike Nora who stumbles across tragedies and merely reflects on her wisdom). Throughout their extended duration of resting Nora felt thawed, - for there wasn't a grain of doubt left to anger her - and as the fibres of her heart thawed and wildly tore apart in the warmth of a hearth during relentless snowfalls, she bestowed peace over her nerves. Henceforth, in standing her ground to defend Irina, she became invisible, disturbed by no sudden vengefulness. Finally she conquered the despicable sadist devil's fingers sowing seeds of ire in her while he planted complex knowledge atop her head. Peace conquers the devil, peace conquers complex knowledge. Complex knowledge and reasoning for justice (justice lacks forgiveness and unjust compassion given to the undeserving as it serves the righteous instead of making profound peace for all, including those that deserve banishments) are often neglectful toward kindness - one becomes cruel once one knows more than he ought to: he evolves from a clueless lamb to a wise green adder. Here we find it appropriate to take slow moments and praise Nora for her unjust compassion to the undeserving even when her knowledge surpasses her kindness on certain large scales of comparison.

Morning awaited to take her down to pitch black pits once again with disquieting, awful, appalling, and dismaying pieces of implausible new information that, proved by the conversations with Irina, are scarcely credible and far-fetched... Morning awaited to give her a hard blow to the head with outlandish news about Irina's presence, which gave impressions of preposterous mendacity or falsehood and inaccuracy in the news astonishingly dreadful reliability that even incredible fools wouldn't pay care to. The dreadfulness, however, was speaking the truth of reality during the execution events and the schizophrenic deception of Nora's visualised fantasies (perhaps the product of excessive maladaptive daydreaming) that formed a deceitful circle around her, separating her body from harsh truths...

5

Barely gaining consciousness under the early sunrise, she knew and repeated in everlasting loops that she should sacrifice herself in place of her sister - one big sacrifice of oneself for taking another person's purposefully committed sins. By the time she recovered she called to guards nearby asking to release her from the cell as she had vowed tasks to complete.

"Sirs," She thrust her fists against the metal bars, bearing the agitation of knowing she may die, "my sister is sound asleep. I beg you to end your strange laughter and release me so I may take the role of a messianic figure and save her from bearing more harshness."

"Madness, your behaviour proves to be the sum of madness: you've no sister to save... In fact, you've not even a body to save, not a corpse in sight to breathe life into!" A posh guard frowned. His companions bursted into hysterical songs and merry but ridiculous laughs. What, Nora didn't understand.

"Sir... ouf, end your unnecessary teasing which I don't desire in the least. I am taken aback by those mocking laughs directed at... whom, I cannot tell, sirs. Would you keep watchful eyes over Irina, the condemned lady, while I leave her in my absence?"

Another posh guard who had somewhat a pleasant appearance but hollow-cheeked, standing at average height with peroxide blonde hair and pale blue eyes, stepped forth boldly, swaying the key held in his left palm before liberating Nora into the open halls.

"Away, lady, let the devil lead you astray through fields where you are destined to be."

"Thank you for granting me an unlocked door, what shall I call you, dear liberator? End the unsaid mockery, sirs, I cannot comprehend your chucklesome humour."

"Away from displaying madness in our presence. I, Emerson, tell you that there is not a corpse beside you to breathe life into as a pretentious messianic figure."

"Oh, she's the butt of the humour! Emerson, sir, my sister is unsuitable for mocking, which prompts me to uplift her after saving her from burning."

"She? If you aren't the butt of the humour, we're even less so to spread pretentious mockery onto. Your barging behind bars and behaving as a clueless bonehead in our presence are insults on our property."

Taking visible offence as she flushed in pale redness, she held her tongue from responding and, in total perplexity and under sights of frowning eyes, she felt humiliated while they deemed her as an outcast without agreeable reasons, let alone any spoken reasons. Head facing down to her feet, she exited the property, taking the insults she gave (Emerson's meant words) beside her. Not one moment stopped she to turn her delirious head to the sleeping Irina before stepping into the city streets - this inconsiderable decision had great costs awaiting, and it appears most probable that the simple-minded decision, a blunder minor in error at the surface, later, in extraordinary possibilities, yielded Nora, alas, to unmatched depravity and truth.

Labyrinthine streets seen through lenses of tears of resignation, songbirds singing their bluntly composed sopranos that brought her to nostalgic recalls of how the idea of the past (when she was in her earlier, more naive youth) was greater than the present (mainly due to the comparison between her foolishness: presently, her foolishness decreased albeit she scarcely contained foolishness to begin with, even as a delicate child of eleven), compressing buildings that narrowed as she trailed toward the old palace's goliath gates, the study pressure of the air heavily weighing down on her shoulders and chest - all those factors contributed to strengthening her untouched dedication in the repeated sentence/the main idea behind her everlasting loops of repeated thoughts, thought often in disordered patterns: 'I will die for Irina publicly, taking her sins, if it demands such extremities, because I've said a promise and am far from resembling the unsaved face of a coward (like the facade of whom I, a messianic figure partially taking the role of the Almighty, am ought to save)'. She aimlessly trekked and manually walked, taking awareness in the obsessive parts of the chronically depressing grey surroundings, then she exhaled the polluted city air in disappointment of humanity, mainly due to her believing she walked these grounds as the only non-corrupted figure among corrupters. Trekking she did exceedingly well: walking smooth, long journeys on even grounds without stumbling into unstable paths till she reached the palace's goliath gates that stood firmly in their place. When she turned her head upwards, she was confronted by gates that appeared like bold statements. Peculiar, illogical: the same gates seemed to have grown in size yet they hadn't changed. Perhaps Nora grew smaller under the compressing weight of the cruel air spitting mocking insults at her, along with every acquaintance she had ever, either personally or roughly, interacted with. It came to her as infuriating that she should shrink because of another man's capriciousness while they, the ill villains, look down at her, the weakened hero, and boldly mocking at her. If the air

were to be against her growing and weigh her till she lays cold on soil, there is no longer an undiscovered place to seek refuge under and the wisest decision she could make as of now is to allow depravity to crawl over her. Swans like Nora that y the highest of all birds should crumble to the ground from the heights, because they are hopeless in soaring over the wall of boundaries that separate them from touching their desires they'd give enormously unmatched sacri ces for. Yet, in denial of reasoning, Nora tightened her sts, refusing to fall from the heights she reached in years of intense di culty(psychologically woundings factors involving the humanity surrounding her and the distorted image on the canvas portrait she sees of herself, that means, her own integrity she occasionally questions, ponders abstractly and debates on). Hence, in the most relentless climates under the scorching sun's sickly pale rays, her sts containing undefeated dedication, Nora, shaking, entered into the bold statements standing rmly before her. We contemplate on whether she has foreseen what the unheard truth she is yet to discover had in waiting for ru ing her strength...

Lady Katya received Nora during the midst of her hair treatment given by the polite maids - this, Katya became irritated at the disturbance of, and blamed her brothers in their absence for their absence. Not one component changed her altered face which engraved itself in Nora's head - it remained as it was since her argument: chubbier at her cheeks and di cult to gaze at. To go on an excursion to the mountain cli , wouldn't Nora quite like to nd escapisms to such circumstances?

"Much esteemed Katya, I apologise for disrupting you." Nora murmured as Katya continued to feel the maids' ngers covered in pastes run through her strands of elongated champagne blonde hair. "I may give you the impression that I'm distraught and disconnected from logic, in which I reassure you that they are false. I, and this is not false, spent the whole of the previous night in the co n cell of Irina's. I made a vow I cannot turn against: I'm to uplift her from her current state. Surely you, as an aristocrat in control of the empire, spit on the mugs of witches who commit indecencies, but my... my!"

"Madness, mad nonsense at its nest, what uplifting? What saving is there in sight? What deceitful mischief are you up to to pass onto me?"

"Oh, you've mistaken me: I intend on taking Irina's place at the burning platform if it is demanded with necessity. If it is demanded because, you know, the devil doesn't really bargain, I am willing to die for another person's misdeeds as a wise green adder. From

this day onwards I must shed the fur of the simple-minded lamb I once was, and grow into the skins of a messiah for her. She is love itself. Refusing my proposal is to spit on my mug. My heart is an entity of itself, arising anger, resentment - I don't truly want to take her place. But pray, the heart is a devil, and I the slave. The heart is worshipped as an idol of love but is a deceiver out of one's thoughtful mind's initial wantings. Overall, in summary, the heart theory is my personal abstract observation. You are obliged to be entitled to your own as long as a wiser man fails to astonish you through identifying your wrongs. Justice is superfluous: if it were current, we'd all be in damnation as we deserve, we'd be in Satan's peckish hellmouth, however, to our advantage, benevolence is more potent."

"What saving is reserved for you to take part in if she is... don't you know? Blown away by the wind as bits of soot and dust?"

"The tables have turned! I'm beginning to misunderstand you, Katya, slow down your pace. Yesterday I spared one more day for her to confess to me while I made the vow to spare her eternity - she couldn't have left my side, no? Mr. Emerson the guard bewildered me, but you, you, the reliable lady who seldom or never spreads misinformation, you place me directly in the midst of a bureaucratic maze!"

"I'm telling you that you've mistaken me: she, where is she? She burned yesterday, we were there to witness, where were you to see?"

"God as my witness, she did not. She was spared another day by my efforts, and I brought her to her cell where I entered for the night, accompanying her dearly. Insufferable..."

"Put your trust in me or see the evidence with your eyes. The sight in the aftermath is truly disturbing, I remind you in advance. There wasn't another person executed but solely herself. Pedestrians surrounding us are unhappy as of now: don't erupt controversies in the street or I'll take the risk of being overthrown as one man thrown by a bunch of men. I say that citizens in large quantities outside of singular or minimal groups of leaders' laws are incapable of maintaining peace though I'm simply hungry and thirsty, thirsty to sore throats, thirsty for riches. Bloodthirsty, though not amused by gruesome and inhumane deaths. How I fear the day the bunch of men cease following the commands of one man who is far from possessing the miracles of a fae!"

At that, Nora shuddered, trembling from Katya's lousy speech, those provocative movements of her lips, the way she emphasised certain words, hated how she gestured, how her manners were impolite - she loathed her informal loud air in general.

Resentment from the devil's possession and in his ruthless grip, the beating heart that takes no leisure time in circulating, ached in its itching place. Nora gave cunning stares, wanting to lash out while spitting at her bold demeanour behind the uneasy face. Katya became arrogant with her dog yappers for lips - she became impossible (for once to stand in tolerance)! Even the binding kohl around her dominant eyes, although the shape unchanged, irritated Nora's patience. Where has become of that once so lovely demeanour over owing with charity?

"Katya," Nora grew engrossed in thought and absorbed in herself, "my sin, my soul, now standing before is a face in forms like any other: nauseatingly unproportional. Abhorrent, distasteful, foul."

There came a guidance of blinding lights leading to a familiar path. "Light," barely an utter came from out her aggrieved throat. As she ventured after the whiteness which illuminated a path and illuminated her heart, tracing and casting thick wax around the outlines, she endured the incandescence, consuming the unacquainted alien light as if it were wine. The burdensome wax of candles placed atop her struggling heart, the soprano of leaves, weak sights, phantoms, phantoms soaring recklessly - all unfamiliar yet déjà vu rendered her vulnerable; all flooded before her. The foreign light was so bright, she developed rather sentimental perceptions of the corridor widths narrowing. The air had long been punishing, bestowing burdens on her shoulders as she grew small. "Light," there she half buried her face in her arms, in her scarred palms that remained salmon in colour. In conclusion, this light must be the last of her hopes to uplift her from the reckless nature of burdensome fragilities and shortcomings of mastered vigour. Dreams within foreseen muses, escapisms; utopian realities - the light is the last of her risks.

But what the illuminated path led her hideously illuminated heart to was none other than the sight reserved for disillusioning her rabid enthusiasm. Bathed in brilliance, the result of the aftermath from the preceding day, lay the unfazed chilling recollection of the brutality that had transpired for the sake of surplus and in exile justice. Fragments of scorched remains clung onto ropes, spreading around the platform. Debris of disintegrated tissues, portions of fused redness, barbarity, utter barbarity - the sick evidence for Irina's inhumane death. Established evidence had proven it that she did

perish, succumbed. Further details included the intact preservation of her face hidden under seared hay bays one intimate acquaintance could easily identify as a relative.

Several contributing factors lay as durable grounds for Nora's distorted perceptions that felt profoundly, perhaps, as one might say, even intensely tangible. She omitted from stirring, she refused to demonstrate signs of sentiments, as that was the genuine state of her heart, and bear in mind that we do not portray her as cold-blooded, rather, she underwent short surges of adrenaline which dissolved brusquely, disarranging her sharp responses. She did not fall into startles, nor pangs of bitter anguish, nor throbs of attacks, she plainly stood with her head turned from the picturesque scene from behind, and couldn't take her widened yet stoic and phlegmatic eyes from the uncleaned platform. Detached, straightforwardly indifferent, apathetic, still, throbbing dully... How she spoke so keenly the day before! Not one nerve itched, not one muscle aches, not one muscle moved. Bitterness was tasted in the throat as she stood as if she were scolded. Horse vehicle cries then came before diminishing in the distance. It may have likely been that vehicle quick cry that dozed her into losing one's footing.

6

Several days in monotonous shades of greys, reflecting the state of her heart, drifted by in a blase haze of idleness and vacant staring with distraught eyes. Blandness came after bitterness, large doses of momentary bitterness. Nora, intoxication in distasteful dejection, to one's regret, took her buried yet undead habit of modelling clay in the shameful room, only this time her artistic capabilities she used to breathe out burdens forsook her. Highly literate capabilities of her passion also departed - she bore the melancholy greater than ever without methods of expression, without breathing out, which is cruelty at its bleakest. If so weren't the case and she kept her capabilities in hand, exhaustion would set them aside.

"Devil take art, I singularly pay care to my literate capabilities." She shook under shadows, soiled in clay, "art is no form of expression, art is to feel more of what one feels, to connect with the sensations, and never could it reach literacy's level of expressive explaining. Exhaustion has moulded me, a lady of passions, into an illiterate peasant with his firm fingers of recklessness... Nonetheless, happiness I never penned about, it was regarded as ecstasy, certain absurd ecstasies of profound passions and unsound surges of adrenaline."

A worthy and major note to mention is acknowledging that Nora shedded inconsiderable masses of weight those several days, to the degree that she became hollow-cheeked and malnourished, at the brink of collapse. Yet, in such conditions, the garments she threw on hid her wasting body from another's eyes, deceiving the naked eyes of whom she resided with with appearances, which defends their ignorance.

"My homeland is polluting in blandness," Augustine blurted seemingly out of the blue to Nora whose state was covered by modest garments, "another week and I'll be less than human. Woe, woe! Take the carriage with me, to France, my customary land - where else? - I'll agree to elopement for you, we'll drown in undiscovered complexities of unseen colour." His enthusiastic announcement brought out, that is, evoked an ecstasy in the fervently enamoured young Nora. She shared with none the ecstasy (despite far from happiness) she gluttonously absorbed to all her malnourishment.

"Take me," She spat when he barely ended his sentence, again without consideration, like when she unveiled her Irina for foreseen self benefits that took turns of paths, "another three days and I'll succumb from the grief of the loss of a... loved one." Lack of

strength lay dimly in her voice. "Swans take no alternatives to their loved ones, but I will, I will, I will soar over the barrier surpassing the skies. We'll be mended in one, we'll fall in one, we'll be our alternatives to a loved one, we will, we will certainly will!"

And in the passing of a feather owing to the bottom, Nora consumed nutrients in one amount, making amends for her neglectfulness rapidly, in spite of refusing to make art or pen masterpieces due to low ambition. In feeling more of those sensational ecstasies without art, the feelings she rarely connected with were enough to be labelled as... the joy in unknowing, the joy of the irrational. He who she knew scarcely well became of supreme importance to her completely because of the comfort in his glowing air. His figure aglow under faint lights, defying laws, defying nature. In night ecstasy is found in the bliss of a minute.

Elopement served as the last grain of promising lightness in the desert of sand grains of black, the complete absorption of visible light: achromatic and symbolically sinister. A difficulty they crossed included Pluto's arrogant attempt at throwing himself in the midst of running vehicles out of agitation against his relatives' narrow ears. 'Move from the active streets,' he insisted Katya, who didn't stir at her brother's calling, even when he pulled her arm. 'Explain,' she returned, infuriating Pluto while rendering him voiceless and in desperate need of knowing what prudent speech to say. He broke into an outburst of desperation and eventually manually threw himself onto the unstable road of rocks, quaking in exasperation of impotence and the inability to open another's ears. The driver ran across his limbs, albeit not causing death-threatening injuries, then came to a halt with another vehicle, albeit causing minor incidents. Bruises posed as non-threatening to Pluto in his recovery where he avoided conversing (shame as casted a shadow over him that he perfectly survived) and, rooted to the spot, he objected to accepting gestures of care, however not objecting against accepting necessary care. He tried as a puller of strings to remind his siblings that he holds a grudge while going ever so slyly in baby steps in order to allow the given care to continue without clearly demonstrated gestures which are often overly exaggerated to the liking of his ego.

Another difficult and rather tense factor circling around the philosophical theory behind every unpleasant event, circling back to its attendants, proved to be none other than the phenomenal return of Clyde Georgiou, the incredibly ill brother in prolonged mourning of Olden, along with the ancient feud from the preposterous villagers to Nora, becoming a relevant topic of discussion and ire as if it were young. It became transparent as the sea that Irina's contributions to pulling Nora down made microscopic

effects since people were corrupted from the start, and perhaps her arts hadn't been necessary since humanity already did the evil for her. Evildoers, we tell you, dear readers, evildoers! Inevitable! Nora had been named and pronounced by us as the product of the hands of evildoers wringing at her solidly using such effortless yet groundbreaking wicked force that the tissues deformed, turning crushed yet barely touched or shaped. Clyde's melodramatic and fantastical return (he turned into a man rarely sober and disfigured his welcoming features into sunken terrors scattered across skull-like skin) raised concern in the household of the Georgious. Afresh, afresh, the villagers declared: 'Nora, your justice is served as Irina is burnt, but here we need our justice and that we want you to pay. You've ruined our community: committing slaughters, inflicting violence, speaking ill... A wise man wouldn't deny the unusual degree of malevolence you hold. What defence do you have?' Although their anger wasn't entirely false because Nora did indulge in misdeeds often, and as incredible as it may sound to a common man, the misdeeds were never intentional. She was a kind lady, her nature was to be benevolent, but circumstances carved unstable paths, leading to others becoming utterly convinced of her immorality. Surely she indulged in misdeeds greater in gravity than the overlooked villagers, she couldn't determine whether she herself was a beast all along, that they were truthful in managing her as the topic of discussion, or whether she was among them - a victim. The villagers shifted into the skins of the foolish rabbit from the story, heading toward conclusions inconsiderably, meanwhile their young enemy in her youth and naivete suffered in intense contemplations and doubt till the bitterness after blandness raised on her tongue, this time mimicking the sensation of suffocation/strangle at the throat. Dignified clarifications seemed nearly unattainable as the villagers were absorbed in their sense of entitlement to their own accusations, which may have no proper defence. Yet, they were not entirely correct either, all the more disorienting in such inharmonious circumstances!

And to those of you readers before the book who, under hardship and blame to no extent, resemble Nora's unusual circumstances of doubt about her righteousness because of another man's convincing accusations along with the amount of misdeeds she had indulged in (in hopes of other outcomes which took another path in turn), we'll gladly reinforce for you the recollection of your striving charity since your circumstances and genuine beliefs conflict. We'll gladly reinforce for you that your circumstances are false, that your faith is in higher power than another man's accusations. We pray that you wouldn't become the foolish rabbit in the story and head straightforwardly to conclusions during situations where you feel the need to act according to your own

amusement. The truth to take into account is: insofar as you are solidly persuaded, within your own ambitions, of the purity of your purposes, no sooner will external circumstances distort your movements or the in exible nature of the accusations of the general public or individuals cling onto you in spirituality. Physical clinging may be present, but in truth, in spiritual truth, individuals' circumstantial levelling against you is nonessential.

Prince Augustine grew irritated at the stu y atmosphere of his homeland, so stress was he that he set aside the need to accompany his brother Pluto during his recovery. Nora shifted into a being less than human under the in uence of villagers who occasionally attempted confronting her by trespassing palace properties. Clyde Georgiou's former cowardice evolved into elevated insanity which the villagers saw as elevated passion, in spite of his rarely sober state and the sunken dis gurement of his plumped features showcasing youth. To Augustine and Nora, eloping with their alternatives to the person they both treasured appeared as the wise serpent's choice. Slithering into grasping liberty meant to develop into judases in other persons' altered perspectives.

To overcome the di culties which prolonged their liberty and prolonged their enduring surges of horrible ecstasy in adrenaline, being deemed an outcast by the majority is a necessity.

7

The occurred death happened fast.

“We’ll order a carriage.” Prince Augustine alas put an end to his sufferings, “not one factor is out of order for my melancholic behaviour or visions. I foresee escapisms.” Before leaving, Nora, buried in horrible ecstasy, with a heart pounding as a wild animal’s, hurried to trek the path toward the mountains - an excursion. Inevitable was the ending in plan. She arrived at the mountain cliff, the highest point of the highland, precisely where peasant woman Rebekka allegedly threw herself from. She wanted to die. She wanted to make amends for leading her sister to becoming the product of severe stress, she wanted to throw herself, she wanted to soar the skies as a swan, she wanted to end the disturbances of grey blandness and distasteful bitterness, she wanted to run from the fact she cannot expressively pen on paper as she used to, she wanted to pass along the wind, she wanted to run from guilt, from doubt - she wanted to die. Agitation would’ve brought her to her fourth and final death; she wouldn’t have paths of opportunities to run to from the fearsome cliff which took from another lady her intervals of highly sane and ill fated suffering, albeit she brought all to herself unconsciously (dying from Nora’s case).

Another hour and she would’ve been thrown by her own scarred hands (the faint swells never once worn into total diminishment). Agitation served as the saviour by prompting her to descend in precise steps down where she hiked from. In doubt she evaded a potential death. However she wanted to burst into an outrage of regret for discarding Irina. In saving herself she experienced self proclaimed gluttony and elevated amounts of bile green greed as she did not think she should walk these sacred grounds another day as a sinner with red hands of her own bloodied sins. Suddenly the events of the past came circling in a loop once afresh - how she recalled it exceedingly well! It was horrible, altogether repugnant, odious... horrible...

Slow, gay steps carried her surviving body into Prince Augustine’s previously ordered lavish fairytale carriage of secrecy from his siblings. Inevitable had been the agitation’s heroic pulling at her marionette puppet’s strings, reinforcing life on each limb, only in songs of despair. All that passed along the wind into olden days were yet to erode when the horse was lashed by the driver’s harsh whips...

In summary, dear readers, throughout the book several undignified and downcast points have become vividly demonstrated in rather sorrowful and farcical manners that may be named as 'absurd'. Even so with points that prove to be absurd, given the real-world relevance and the personal connections to the themes explored in our book we authored, the topics might not be as absurd or distant from our own century as they first appeared, as they resonate with our own experiences and perspectives - this story is all of our stories told in a different form.

The death occurred fast, at breakneck speed, although she hadn't died. A load of lousiness on her phenomenally died in place of herself, which we admit is a miracle and nothing more. In the carriage she no longer felt lousy or disgusted at her next to the senses. All that passed along the cleansing wind into events of the olden days were yet to erode when the horse was lashed by the driver's harsh whips...

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The story could conclude here as a philosophical unresolved juncture, whereas we wish to caution against the readers romanticising the untold events that follow, as such idealisation can be grossly indecent and lead to disillusionment (the products of romanticism, a utopian subject that is, by some controversies, a different form of dystopian subjects), therefore we present this epilogue to clarify precisely the events which took place next before providing a final summary.

Prior to Nora and the much esteemed Prince Augustine's marriage after barely eloping - an occasion to which Nora had excessive eagerness in - while they were en route to France, his familiar land, and within the Greek empire, during their temporary stops along the riverbank somewhat near the River Aliakmon, Nora's familiar river she couldn't keep apathetic gazes at, Nora fell into a contemplative above the vaults of heavens, above the cosmic discos, and into the dusts that washed Irina to another land, lost in profound reflection as if all she remembered was displayed before her in precise detail.

With each look at the sky, she then turned down at the still waters where she saw her face glow tenderly in mild delicacy. "It should be pitiful that Gale fell ill, she would've accompanied our shifting. Pluto is arrogant, Katya is arrogant, Aaron and Kola I vaguely understand... Pluto is arrogant: he put himself to death straightforwardly to prove another man wrong, to prove his sister to be arrogant and still." She seemingly blurted, "Gale... till this day I cannot comprehend how I set aside her practises of witchcraft while..." With each burdened sigh she picked at a stone lining the riverbank. "This habit of peppering untroubled scenes with my 'scorns' and heat derision on opportunities such as this. No longer do I contain desires of melancholy and agitation for my loss of eloquence in penning sentimentally. I declare that we wouldn't witness the presence of vacancy from now forth, I say this declaration and confession explicitly. I'm happy here, here I love you. As we foresee a promising road ahead of us in blurred visions through lenses of thick tears that are on the verge of shedding, I am relieved for the initial instance to be at liberty from the lingering discomfort and elusive sadness that had previously clouded me, oh, profound peace, free of mist and fog and purely morning dews remain!"

Without a trace of falsehood, she meant all her tongue had confessed, genuinely - her declarations of newly attained vehement joy, her movements of liberation from the land

de cient in remarkable colour, her fulfillment in recognising her dream had dropped dead into light alongside the person she cherished as priceless historical jewels (she regretted pulling the veil of disguise of Irina but once Augustine rested beside her under the breeze, ecstasy, we tell you, ecstasy colonised her like dramatic overdoses over a lady), and how her previous intentions came to emerge into light and into the open. Contentment was all that was left within her, genuinely, her speech was meant to Augustine from the relentless con agration in her heart that is everlasting through spiritual immortality and inextinguishable to extents which are incredible in measurement. Still, absorbed in contentment and nothing more, arrogant yet subtle combustions of present mournfulness remained intact and entrenched within her, clinging onto the little bres of her rapping heart. Traces of blues, specks of downheartedness, microscopic particles of minor sorrow - all clung onto the bres that are so resilient. They were sentimental residues during her recovery from a big heart with iridescent uids of blues for blood which circulated through the big heart that bore the hues of blues for blood. This residue was scarcely perceptible, given how they were buried under joy, it stayed intact as dismissed minor inconveniences a lady like Nora wouldn't identify (even when residue is overlooked and truly unacknowledged, it is undead). This underlying sadness which never saddened her (absurdity, we tell you, absurdity) clung onto her as a result of her inability to transcribe her innersome ponders and burdensome disturbances onto sheets of paper: in lacking of the act of penning or authoring stories out of character, she was rendered helpless in breathing the burdens which compress her out into the open, engraving it in her bres under joy forevermore - in summary, all she doesn't transcribe onto paper, she cannot be rendered weightless of. If she doesn't 'breathe out', that is, penning and explaining the unexplainable, her lungs cannot release the air of unexplained burdens and will disturb her occasionally (usually punishing her head when she is reminded of past events, albeit not severely).

Nora's happiness she had profoundly attained and her mental clarity proves the miracles of the body con icting with the rational mind (in intelligent individuals). It remains to us profoundly perplexing to describe the explanation behind her proceeding with the actions she indulged in afterward, after her unrepentant confession of truth. Since she didn't leave traces of falsehood and was authentically delighted in reaching the path of lightness to France, and became no longer troubled in the head, we are unable to understand the rationale for her next steps... Therefore, as wisemen, we invite our dear readers to engage in a debate and provide their own interpretations of Nora's body's acts which con icted with her rational thinking. Henceforth, the opportunity to express

your philosophical perspective and entitled voices of thought as to justify the unsaid reasons of her indulgences is warmly welcome, if not advised. It has become the reader's opportunity to truly excel, allowing your intellect to explore the vast realms of philosophy without constraints, while embracing the freedom to generate profound ideas, recognizing that in this domain, philosophy, there are no definitive answers which are non-subjective, only the potential for great ideas. Philosophy is the devil's appetitive hellmouth of inferno, craving to swallow the faithful folks, and it is the devil himself who pulls one's marionette puppet's strings, manipulating one into eccentricity because of its stubbornness in having no non-subjectiveness, but great ideas, dear readers, great ideas (great ideas and agreeable ideas are unequal, that, of course, is in itself a great idea - such is the beauty in discussing subjects philosophically)!

Nora's unexplained indulgences occur after her speech.

"I take dislikes in bruises," she began, picking at stones, each time looking up toward the sky and heaven's vaults, "I take distressing dislikes in bodily harm of any form on my surface. I find bodily harm presenting itself on my shallow surface unsettling due to my comfort in believing that, in peculiar ways, I am an immortal of indestructibility, composed not of human mass but of light and energy, even luminous fluids - ethereal materials less ordinary than human mass. Witnessing other persons succumb, bowing down to the feet of fate and time and circumstances, and failing to defeat the odds and failing to run from such tragedies, I observe myself standing vigorously, despite my own fate and time and circumstance... From the start I refused to bow down and kiss the feet of fate and time and circumstance, I refused unconsciously! How I witness the resignation of other persons in vain, suffering and confronted by the face of death... Death, he whose feet all humans' knees will bow for. How I find myself enduring and striving with each breath filled with life, unconsciously refusing to bow! What odds I've overcome... These odds were immeasurable to others, oh, how I observe myself striving at the top of piles of dismembered human masses, spitting at the face of death and refusing to succumb! This leads me to grow naively convinced that I am fundamentally exceptional from them: as if I'm intoxicated yet untouched, as if I were instead a being of brilliant light. I take intense dislikes in the discomfort I experience in recognising bodily harm - notwithstanding the severity of the form of wounds - on myself. Poppy bruises starkly serve as reminders of my limitations and humanity, contrasting ruthlessly with my peculiar sense of immortality within my body of energy. How I'm far from invincible, that I'm the sum of my human masses and differ from other persons in no

visible aspects! Bodily harm reminds me of this exceedingly well, which justifies my disliking it. The dissonance is unsettling. Even so, for though I know I am the product of mortality and human masses, containing circulating blood and bland functions in order to strive, I remain entitled to my own conviction of everlastingness, unable to reconcile the two. It appears rather difficult to shake such convictions, I boldly state.”

Already, creeping coats of moss scattered itself across an alien property - the carriage of elopement which carried them here, to this resting place by the river - although the foreign property stood fairly far from the moss' rooting place, it patronised and disfigured the carvings till the property stood in vain, enduring the brutality. A colonisation occurred. The carriage was a testament to the discarded appearance of abandonment yet such wasn't the case. The resting place narrowed as the carriage, only standing by the moss for short durations, already grew caked in years of grime.

Afternoon moonlight spilled the closing before another feathered songbird's nest tumbled from distant trees; nests, nests entwined like untouched blames which lay entwined in one's hair - inevitable is the untangleable entangled nest, and inevitable is the blame. Spaghetti twists of wired nests of songbirds' diligence toppling from the height of their wits to their lows elongated their thud in unusual fashions. Already, the deafening collage of white noise compressed the atmosphere - and this contributed to Nora's earache. Unfamiliar and foreign passersby bore the urge to dance to its soprano, as, for them, such collages of white noise elevated the atmosphere. The picturesqueness stood on soiled foundations of cobble and rubble. But in the grand scheme, from our notions, we think it had been the toppling of another songbird's nest that covered the gush of the light thump of the running stream of hers that proved to be imperceptible. Or perhaps it had been the chaplinesque steps of foreign passersby that nullified another songbird's falling with staggering external ecstasies.

Epilogue_conclusion:

Now Nora wore a red dress. Every person who self sins is surely to die by the outpour of sin - Nora had outpoured the undying sins standing in her so long by herself.

Manuscripts of her passions for philosophy, in which Olden Georgiou published under his name, after some centuries of passing of sand and frankly, soot, resurfaced during our dwelling in late eras. Historians discovered how Nora was the reliable penner of the celebrated masterpieces of insights into the similarity between our sentiments of the late period and the origin of the explanations and great demonstrations for our distresses and woes in the late eighteenth century where principles of humanity were vastly different as the folks had no expanded sources of knowledge. Olden Georgiou thus became a historical figure as many promised, only he wore a despicable name. As we acknowledge how we dwell and walk these grounds in later ages, and although our decades may seem grey without hearths of warmth, a major pattern throughout history comes to sight: Nora, centuries ago, believed she lived in a later period because of the precision with which prominent ancient philosophers had dwelt. Now Nora's terrible lifetime is admired by all: by those who treat their poor folks like Nora, those who resemble her, so on and so forth... It becomes foolish that evildoers themselves understand... Our summary should propose a certain idea (picking on points in covered

events): one of

the migrant lady's brother who succumbed following his failed passions in philosophy - as the poor folks in his lifetime refused to accept his manuscripts as praiseworthy and refusing to comprehend his wits - died a gruesome suicide out of a terrible itch of nerves. He walked among the unfortunates: his works were not presumed, never to resurface into discussions, unlike Nora. This demonstrates the brutality in seeking food in return of occupations of subjectiveness: there is no guarantee that masterpieces will be held in high regard. Once this is the case, another songbird starves as he is given no food in return for his arts. Consequently and as we've observed, relying on art as a means of livelihood could be stubborn.

Pluto's untouched face and Katya's facial alter were abnormal phenomena captured under plain sights and differing perspectives, and this observation is crucial in circumstances of bureaucracy and hardship. Pluto's death of limb infections following his manually throwing himself before a vehicle had spared him not another day in recovery to outpour his concealed character. In him, an egoist and humble man, there lay

unyieldingness and fury, naivete and devotion, foolishness as wickedness, cat and mouse... If he were to be spared another day perhaps he'd pour further demonstrations and contribute to the explanations to his face lying untouched even when he was no worthier in integrity than his sister. Perhaps the myth is agreeable, that other persons' plain faces change when you instantaneously grow irritated with them, as was the case with Katya, or maybe their expressions alter in the slightest yet in the most bothersome when their characters evolve for least favourable outcomes. With the greatest of ideas, this philosophical observation is without reasonings of straightforwardness, and such are the aches in the bres of the head it gives, and such are the insanities and undesired sanity it bestows on one, and such are the pulchritude it lends onto one... If he were to have lived another day for further analysis!

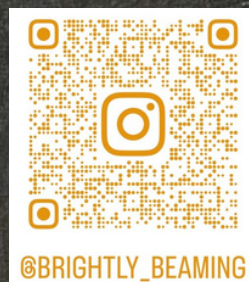
As for Lady Katya, in explanation of her cowardice and lack of backbone demonstrated through her admitting confessions and gestures, we conclude that her stringent belief, that one should expand greater authority to bene t from capitalism instead of su ering from it, was wholly due to gluttony with utopian idealisms.

In Nora's story we see that she indeed committed terrible deeds more than the rest, we see that her care for Irina was uncherished and Irina never did discuss with her in the nal confession session, that Nora proved to be less than minimum for Irina's ideal company. Even when you are unwaveringly present for a poor folk, as Nora was, it remains deeply excruciating and cold when they request that you distance yourself, proclaiming their need for time to consider, as though your presence alone was insu cient. This pang is intensi ed by the fact that, despite Nora's consistent and untroubled happiness in her interactions with Irina, Irina, who received even greater care, and mainly, another's presence, was often vocal in her discontent and frustration. To this, Nora threw soil at her name before her ecstasies took her.

Now that we've thoroughly examined and analysed every event discussed in our narrative, including practical demonstration, dissections and analyses, re ecting on the fact that our tendency to have been more sympathetic and keen toward Nora, exploring her perspectives and feelings as she was often misunderstood, may have depicted less prominent characters in false portrayals who con ict with their sense of righteousness. Our protanogist's views, although agreeable, are not infallible: human tendencies to perceive the faults of other persons more readily while rmly claiming entitlement to one's own idea of correctness leads to inconsiderate judgement on other persons while forgiving oneself - a corruption. Recognising the elevated complexity of each individual

in our highly literate narrative's insights and their differing ideas of righteousness is crucial. Thus, if the judgement given to oneself, that is, with the understanding of oneself's complexity and blunders, were to be given to another lord or lady, taking into consideration of their complexities and blunders and acknowledging oneself's own tendency to judge - then, then humanity might become wise for once, for a given duration of time before they begin acting to their own amusement and subsiding wisdom or decent gestures during circumstances. With the greatest of ideas, and which were said centuries from now, humanity would never achieve wisdom as they all resemble the foolish rabbit during amusing circumstances, usually circumstances that demand unvented vexation - a difficult form of mastery for those wiser than foolish rabbits.

a Greek tragedy



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