The origin of desire

Lanto ONIRINA

‘Turn around. Hands against the wall. I don't have much time today.’

He glanced at his watch and approached her quickly. She was sitting on the edge of the bed.

Not even a glance at him. Whatever. She complied. Her head held high. She looked so young. He took a few steps towards her. He paused for a second to admire the roundness of her pelvis. Her skin was as white as the purest orchid. No imperfection whatsoever. The man's mouth went dry instantly, while the folds of his trousers stiffened.

Without further ado, he entered her. She moaned. Once. Gently.

She remained with her hands up against the wall. He had not even removed his trousers this time. As usual, he tied a knot in the used condom and threw it in the room's bin. As usual, as soon as he left, she hurried to empty it.

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Her first kiss, Vic gave it to the first boy who had wanted to give her one. She had wanted to see in her name the sign of a great love story to be born. Ludovic. Ludo and Vic. He had taken her to the end of the school park. There where almost nobody ever went.

The annex. Upstairs, a row of fifteen toilet cubicles which had hardly been used for many years. No ventilation except the door. Only a few opaque tiles up the walls.

The film of that memory often returned in Vic's dreams. Ludo guides her to the back of the room. She finds herself up against a wall. He stares into her eyes, gently sweeping away the fringe from her face. Then his lips touch hers. Vic immediately hates the taste of cold cigarettes, taking the same path as the Ludo's tongue, sliding insiduously down her throat. The boy begins to groan, clumsily caressing the girls’ stiff back. Vic, remembering all the conversations of her class friends, spouting and boasting about having finally kissed a boy. Why so much excitement ? She doesn't love anything that she's going through right now, neither the dribbly appendix which is fluttering around her tongue like a moth around a light bulb, nor the palm of his hand kneading her buttocks as though they're bread dough or even his nebulous look when he catches his breath.

‘You taste sweet. It's good.’

‘Ah...’

She manages an embarrassed smile.

‘Did you like it?’

‘Euh ... Yeah... A bit...’

‘Do you want to do it again?’

‘Yeah... If you want...’

Of course she doesn't want to start again. But the fear of hearing other students claim that “Vic doesn't like being kissed” is stronger. All the girls chase after Ludo. She is already ashamed to admit to everyone that, at 16, she has never done it, and if they must also learn that she had never even kissed before either, she'd have to stop going to school altogether. So she breathes in profoundly and closes her eyes. Waiting for the moment to pass by reciting irregular English verbs in her head. A verb, a tongue movement. A verb...

‘Vic, do you still want to?’

Vic jumps slightly. She didn't hear the beginning of the question. Probably still the same thing. She answers ‘yes’ automatically, as she did the first time. Ludo gives a wide smile.

‘I'll do it gently, don't worry, I'm used to it.’

Vic doesn't care. Can't wait for it to be over. She feels Ludo's hands going up to her breasts. They stiffen, as he gently pinches them through her tee-shirt. She winces, beginning to understand, perturbed by the troubled feelings that are invading her. A mix of fear and well-being. Fingers venture onto the cotton of her pants, tracing the skinniness of her buttocks. ‘Turn around,’ he whispers. Say no, how to say no?

She complies. ‘You'll be able to show off, you'll see Vic, it's so good.’ Insensitive to Vic's imploring expression, he penetrates her in one go, not that hard but in one go. He holds her hips strongly between his fingers. Noisily hasty. Say no, how to say no! The only cry that comes out of Vic is the one of her unshed tears.

Three minutes later, he lights a cigarette and holds it in the corner of his lips, while smiling and chatting. Vic kept everything to herself during the act. Don't ever show anything at all. Never. Her legs were heavy. Her vagina was burning. She wants to run home to take a shower. Especially before her mother gets home from work. She wants to vomit. Vomit the stuff that is sliding down along her thigh.

It's that night in her bed that Vic released all her tears she had preferred to keep so as not to lose them in the stench of the annex. It is also that same night she decided that for her, sex would never rhyme with pleasure. Or with leisure. Or with love.

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A few minutes were enough to break in a little girl the pattern they all dream of. Prince Charming. And they lived happily ever after and had lots of children. Just the once to give up on this dream. The first time. So much pain. So much disappointment. So quick. Especially so very quick. Lack of love. Lack of gentleness. Lack of everything.

In three minutes, Ludo had taken all of Vic's stars and reduced them to dust. It is thus the girl wrote in the darkness of her diary the vow that she would never have children. So that the girl – because obviously, she wanted a little girl – does not go through what she went through.

She had kept her word. Never pleasure, only survival. Many men came and went. Only by appointment, to buy some of that enjoyment she refrained from having herself. Most of the men were always in a hurry. No kind words. No thoughtful gestures. Almost never any foreplay. Some flattery on her breasts and buttocks, that was all. Most often without eye contact, what for? Hands on hips, tense. Vic, insensitive. Every day for years.

Then came the *Mysterious liaison*. A man just like the others. He wanted to impose his rules, his scenario. He would come back each week if he was satisfied. Vic agreed. There was nothing special, nothing strenuous, which was fine for him. Not a word or almost never. They would always be standing, her always with her back turned to him. A *Mysterious liaison*, he had said. She had looked it up later. It was a Kama Sutra position for partners to supposedly arouse their erotic imagination and ignite their sexual passion. Bullshit. It was as fast as all the others, and just as boring. No orgasm for her. Never any fun. A man like all men.

He came back. As each time. Vic got into position, close to the chest on which she had already placed a book or notes to study while waiting. She preferred it when clients chose the bed. She could easily hide a paperback under a pillow and turn the pages discreetly. So that day, Vic had placed on the large pedestal table photocopies of a few pages of Baudelaire's Artificial Paradise. She had the ability to give pleasure while focusing on something else. The man had just penetrated her. His fingers clutched tightly to her waist as he began his back and forth movements. He was taking his time. Varied his pace. With each movement, the scent of his cologne reached Vic.

The man stopped moving. His hands lingered a moment on her breasts and then halted completely. Vic lifted her eyes a second to check in the mirror in front of her that everything was fine. He was rather handsome. Around forty. Slightly graying hair, thin lips, partly open. She had no idea of the color of his eyes. He had closed them. He breathed slowly, his pelvis moving imperceptibly. A very discreet sigh of desire sometimes escaped him. She returned to Baudelaire. The man rested his hands on her hips. Then suddenly, his fingers began to touch her belly. No client had ever explored this part of her body. Surprised, Vic lost track in her reading. He had not opened his eyes. His hands slid down her hips, studying the dip in her waist before landing again on her belly. So delicately.

From that moment on, she could no longer remove those fingers from her head. Their circular movement, shivers when the thumb tickled the edge of her pubis. He did not go any further. No further than her stomach which he explored its roundness with infinite tenderness, while vigorously accelerating his hip movements.

Vic could not stop thinking about it. The man had awakened something in her. Revived what she had so deeply repressed all those years ago. The origin of a desire, the most intimate of all.

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Caress.

Wake in the night.

Caprice of a lifetime.

Waiting for the time.

Burning with desire

Hope

Wanting life.

Tempting.

Again and again.

* * *

The man had returned, true to his *Mysterious liaison*. Each week, at midday on Thursday. Three short knocks on the door and then he entered without waiting. She patiently sat on the edge of the bed. He watched her for long minutes, sometimes just a moment. As the weeks passed, he noticed that her makeup was more discreet. A touch of color on her eyelids. She had changed her perfume too or body lotion. And she no longer read during the act, there were no photocopies on the dresser. Invariably, at his signal, she got up, poised herself in front of the wall. Arched, just as he liked it. Just as it should be. Her long brown hair falling into the curve of her back.

Never a word exchanged, that was the contract. Never a kiss. She never kissed anyway. Nervous, she waited, full of hope. Maybe he would caress her belly again. Four months later, she was still hoping. Needing, waiting ... it all contributed in fuelling this new and intense longing. The desire which lodged in the deepest hidden parts of her belly. The need becoming more and more significant. Vic only heard him.

As usual, Vic hurried to retrieve the condom from the trash. She held it by its knot, without shaking it around too much. She sat on the bed and held her breath. Her tears began to tumble down her neck. A smile appeared on her lips. This was the third time.

If you get scared in the night,

I'll be there,

To soften your tears,

And ease your pain.

With a pair of scissors, she cut a few centimeters in the latex while taking great care. Vic collected the liquid in a disposable syringe. Then she introduced the long tube as deeply as possible into her vagina and injected the sperm. Gently. If she had calculated everything correctly, chance was more likely to be on her side this time. She threw her head back, lifted her pelvis as high as possible with the help of a cushion and began to caress her lower belly, murmuring softly.

I'm here,

My darling,

Love of my life.

Soon. Soon my love.

At the same moment, in another world, shrouded in a fatal darkness, Vic's star dust vanished inevitably.

"Woman from another time
Gallant and scandalous woman
Woman of princes and powerful men
Woman writer or dreaming woman
I'm a reckless courtesan
One that knows no cost or value
And who fights with ardour
To keep the only one who makes her heart beat"
Leïla Rogon