



The sun while rising shone on the silver coin.
That moment, it opened its eyes suddenly and stretched numbly after so many hours of deep sleep. It was so damp up there! Up there, over the tile roof of that two-storeyed cottage at the edge of the village.

“Good morning”, it said gently to its other side.

No answer.

“Good morning!

Wake up, it’s dawn...” it said one more time, even more gently.

But its other side didn’t answer. There was still no answer today.

As there was never any answer for as long as it remembered. No matter how gently it had spoken to her, no matter how many times it had asked for an answer.

It looked up the sun that was rising in the sky and smiled.

“Why don’t you speak to me?” it said again to its other side.

“Talk to me, I am as lonely as you.”

“Talk to me.”

“I know, you may not like my company, but what can we do? We are only the two sides of a coin. And it would be nice to talk from time to time.

Wouldn’t it be nice to have one another?”

But its other side wouldn’t speak. It had asked her so many times. It had asked her in all the ways it knew. But it knew not that many! The single side of a small low-price coin it was. Nothing more.

“Goodnight” it said to her, as the darkness was falling...

* *

“Good morning” it said softly with the first smile of the sun.

No answer. But maybe she was still sleeping! It should wait for a while.

It waited until the sun rose high upon the sky. A golden sun. A sun that was shining on the silver coin over the tile roof of that cottage. And then, it dared to speak to her once again.

“It is a beautiful day today, isn’t it?”

But she didn't answer. As she had never answered up to this day.

Why?

Wasn't she moved by her other's side interest?

Did she maybe have some reason for not speaking? Was it maybe wrong wanting to know about your other side?

It didn't find it that wrong...

On the other hand of course, what could it possibly know? The single side of a small low-price coin it was.

...

Maybe...

...But sure! Couldn't it have thought of it before? This must be it! It couldn't be anything else. This, as simple as this!

"Maybe you cannot speak", it said to her.

"Maybe you want to, but you cannot speak."

"Then make a move, knock on the tile and I will know."

"If you cannot speak, knock on the tile!"

Nothing.

No move, no sound. And still for a moment it had believed it.

...For a moment only it had believed that it would finally get to know its other side...

With a knock maybe on the grassy tile.

With the slightest move they would communicate opinions, thoughts, feelings. They would find out new ways to talk.

To talk!

The two sides of a coin, on a roof at the edge of the village.
Two sides alone, all alone.

Nothing.

No move. No sound. The answer was simple. She did not want to speak to it.

"Good evening" it said, and stayed watching the sun moving slowly towards the west. It wanted so much to cry but it wouldn't. Maybe its other side would know.

She would know perhaps from a slightest move, from a sob that would slip out.

No, it could not cry! Maybe its other side would know. And in no case would it want to upset her.

She was also a side alone, all alone. Maybe lonelier than it was.

But then why wouldn't she speak to it? Why?

Since they were both two sides alone, all alone, on a roof at the edge of the small village.

* *

It told her no good morning that day.

It started with a question that had tortured it all night. Tortured it as no other side, of any coin, in any village of the world had ever been tortured.

“Do you maybe hate me” it said to her, struggling to keep away a shiver, a tear from the corner of its eyes.

“Do you maybe hate me because I can see the village and the sun?” “Do you maybe hate me because you always face the tile?”

“Tell me! Tell me, please...”

No answer.

“But it’s not my fault, you know it... You remember it, don’t you?”

“It was that nasty boy that threw us up on this roof!”

“Tell me. Tell me that you remember it...”

“...Speak to me, please. I am also one side of a small low-price coin. Speak to me! Tell me about you! Tell me anything! I am the other side of you!”

Desperate as it was, it started then describing to her its look.

It was a rather ordinary side. A woman figure with fine features, a pretty little nose and cute little eyes.

A woman imprisoned for ever on the roof of a two-storeyed cottage.

“Tell me about you...”

“Tell me what you look like!”

“We can be friends! If you want we can be best friends! The best friends of all sides, in all coins.

The best friends in the whole village. In the whole country. In the whole world, if you tell me a word.

Just a word!

If you tell me that you want it!”

“And I will then exist only for you! Even if you never speak to me ever again...”

Silence. Absolute silence... But why?

She was also a side alone, all alone, maybe lonelier than all the sides of the world...

...

From that day onwards, it started describing to her what-

ever it saw.

It didn't ask her to speak. Not any more. It was just talking to her without asking for anything any more.

It was telling her about the village and the forest nearby. It was telling her about the big road across the houses, and the market. It was telling her about the sun and the clouds. About the birds in the sky. About the bells ringing every Sunday.

From that day onwards the life of this side was not the same. It described whatever it saw, and asked for nothing any more.

It didn't know whether it was good or bad not wanting to know about your other side. But its life was more beautiful since that day. And it felt less lonely — less lonely than any other side, in any corner of the village.

It was a less lonely side.

* *

First time since they found themselves up on that roof, that the storm burst. The first storm of the winter.

And it was so happy that the heavy drops fell on it. That it protected its precious other side!

The wind grew so strong.

So strong that the tiles started shaking. They started shaking more, than any other time the tiles of the two-storeyed cottage had ever shaken.

And then disaster struck!

So fast that no other side, in any corner of the world would realize what was happening...

It just felt rolling on the grassy roof.

* *

It was so, so damp down there!

Down there, in the middle of the garden of a small cottage at the edge of the village.

However, it was a side even happier! And yet, it was a side buried in the mud. The side of a woman with fine features, buried in the mud.

And yet, it was so happy!

Its other side could again see the clouds. The carriages and the roads. The bells and the woods.

Its other side, was facing the sun!

Yes, it was so happy. So happy as no other side, of any coin ever was, in the whole village.

And its other side would surely speak to it. That side that had never spoken to it ever until then.

Now, surely, she would describe everything to it. Whatever she saw.

The mountains and the woods. The village and the houses. The sun and the clouds...

Even if it itself wouldn't be able to hear her. Even if it itself wouldn't be able to speak to her. Even if it was just a side buried in the mud.

They were, however, two sides less lonely. Less lonely than any other sides, in that small village with the cottages.

And then disaster struck!

So fast that no other side, in any corner of the world would realize what was happening.

But unfortunately it had... It had unfortunately realized everything...

* *

...There was no dampness any more.

It was a spotlessly clean side, in a prominent place in the collection of that collector. And this was, truthfully, the most peculiar, the most weird piece of the collection.

It was a coin rare and most expensive.

A coin unique indeed!

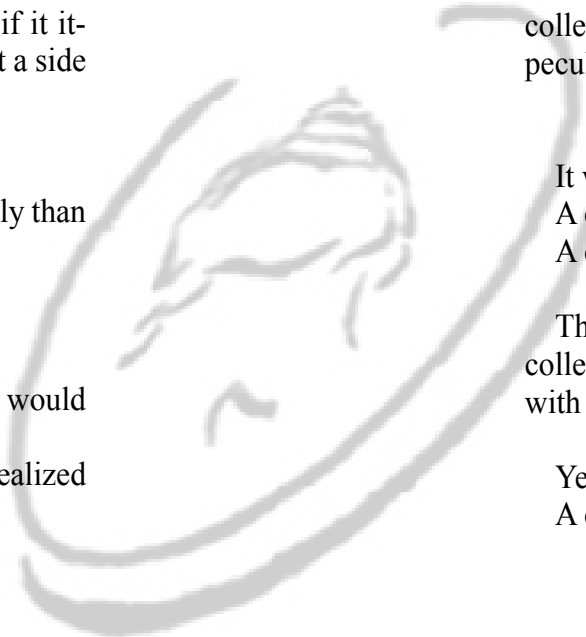
A coin that no collector had ever found before!

That coin in the glass case in the middle of the large collection was —and don't ask me how and why— a coin with one side only!

Yes, you've heard right!

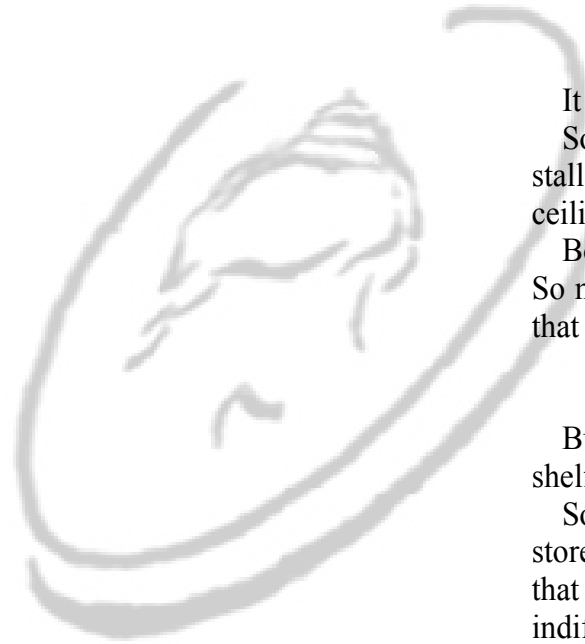
A coin with one side only.

...One side so lonely,
as no other side, of any other coin,
in any other part of the world.



December, 17 to 18





It must have surely been the biggest bookstore in town.

So many books gathered in one place. Spread on wooden stalls. Lined on endless shelves. Shelves reaching up to the ceiling.

Bookcases in a row, the one behind the other. And people. So many people. People of every age and type were there in that bookstore. The biggest bookstore in town.

But there, on the last bookcase in the row, on the highest shelf of all, there was a lonely book.

So lonely, that it cared not about the crowd in the bookstore — this hodgepodge of people of every kind. So lonely that it cared not about the endless shelves and the stalls of an indifferent bookstore. Of a bookstore so stonily indifferent.

This book had its own story...

...

...It had woken up some morning next to a strange printer's machine. It had woken up tied up with many other identical books. They must have been identical to it. But it remembered not any detail. It fell asleep again right away.

That book —I remember— was born tired.

The second time it woke up, it was because of a hand holding it tightly. Such a beautiful awakening. But it didn't last. The hand opened and the book was put in its place. It was perhaps the bookseller's hand.

And it was the place it lays even today. The exact same place. In the last bookcase of all, on the uppermost shelf, somewhere on the right...

...

For long, for very long, it waited so that someone would see it. Someone would come asking for it. It was hoping that this lady coming towards there, was coming for it.

To lower it, to look at it, to take it with her, to her house, to a smaller, to a more beautiful, a friendlier bookcase, full of beautiful, colourful books.

So that it could also find a place to call it home. This, a lonely book.

And where indeed had the rest of the identical books gone? To another shelf? On the stalls perhaps?

Beside it there was none like it. This small and beautiful little book, squeezed amidst fat books, like encyclopedias, on the last shelf, of the last bookcase, of the first —so what?— bookstore in town. A tragedy.

There must have been some kind of a mistake.

Yet, the days were passing by and no hand was touching it — Which one? This one! A book in need of a touch, more than any other book, on any other shelf, in any other bookstore in the world. A book so lonely.

The days were passing and no hand was touching it. None of the other books were talking to it. They had —another strange game of luck— turned their backs on it! Which ones?

These tall and graceless books, the ones as fat as encyclopedias!

So, high up there, on the last shelf, of the last bookcase in the world, there was a book that once hated everyone and everything...

It had hated all the stalls with the colourful books. It had hated the people buying from them, had hated the books themselves. It had hated the cashiers and the salesmen. Had hated the short, bald owner, the shelves and the black bookcases. The books around it, the ceiling and the big white lamps...

It had hated its own self. It had even hated its writer.

Which one? This one! A book that the only thing it once wanted, was a touch. Just a simple touch. A book that the only thing it once wanted, was love!

High up there, on the last shelf, of the last bookstore in town, there was a book that once hated the world.

* *

The days were passing by slowly and tormenting. Its cover was losing its colour, and its pages almost turned yellow by time and hate.

So what? Either way no one would buy it any more. No one would ever notice it. An unhappy book. A lonely book on the last shelf, of some bookcase, in some bookstore. A book relating to...

Relating to WHAT?

It never learned! It never knew! And yet it had never, but never thought of it so far. It never thought of what kind of book it was!

It never knew what kind of book it was! Because it never learned how to ...read!

This book was a book that knew not how to read!

A comedy.

...

From that moment on, it started wondering. What could it be? Could it be something truly beautiful?

No! People buy beautiful things. It must have surely been a failure.

A book that wasn't even worth looking at, opening it, paging through, taking home, to a bookcase small and beautiful, with colourful, gold bound books.

Something stonily indifferent it would be! Some dissertation perhaps relating to the causes of hair-loss.

Probably not! The short, bald owner, would look through it!

Some boring mathematics book?

But mathematicians find books like these, they discover them!

What could it be? And how did it wait so long for others to take it along, when it itself didn't know what it was? And whom could it ask to find out? Whom? Whom? Whom?

It was a lonely book, in the last bookcase on the very top shelf, somewhere on the right. A book —perhaps the only one in the entire bookstore, the biggest bookstore in town— that did

not know how to read.

And the letters it carried on its pages, beautiful letters, artful, meant nothing to it.

Absolutely nothing.

Letters, you see, never speak but to those only who know how to read them.

Letters are so, so proud!

* *

If only it knew its title. Nothing else. Only its title! So that it could understand, at least, it is a boring book about the causes of hair-loss. A book, at least, for mathematician collectors. Just something!

Nothing. A tragedy. There was no way. There was no one to help it. It was a book, a book alone, on the edge of a bookstore, on the edge of a world, of a galaxy of books without meaning.

A book on the top of letters without sense.

Once again it was an unhappy book.

It didn't hate any of the other books any more, it hated neither the stalls, nor the people that came and went without

pause, neither the salesmen, nor the ceilings, nor the big white lamps. It hated no one and nothing.

But it was still a book so empty. Perhaps emptier than before.

It was a book so lonely, imprisoned in a bookcase somewhere in the town. In a town somewhere on the planet. So what?

It cared not for anything any longer. Not even if it saw the world through the spine of a small book. So what? It could itself also be like the book next to it. Even if next to it there was a book big and graceless like an encyclopedia.

Nothing had any meaning any more. It was a book without content!

Perhaps indeed it wrote the same words as the rest of the books did. Maybe it wasn't by chance that they put it on that shelf. Maybe here is where they should have put it. Together with the books as fat as encyclopedias.

HERE! On the last shelf! On the very top shelf, somewhere on the right, of the last bookcase, of the first —so what?— bookstore in town.

Maybe here was its place!

So what? Weren't there so, so many?

* *

It would have been so beautiful if its pages were white, wouldn't it?

It would know then that it was really a book without content. The only book without content on all the shelves, of all the bookcases, in all the bookstores of the world.

But there are no books without content! Nowhere will you find books without content! In all the bookstores of the world should you search!

Why?

Why did it have to be born? Why? Why?

It would like someone to be there to answer to it. It would like its writer to be there.

...

Was there indeed someone who had written it?

And if it were simply a defective book? A book born by mistake, in that machine, on that day, the very first day it remembered? If it were only a mistake? A book without sense? Then?

Then it would just be a mistake! So what? Wasn't it a mis-

take that it was found here, a book alone at the edge of the world?

WASN'T IT A MISTAKE?

And what if it were a book that someone wrote according to a plan? With much thought and according to a plan? Yes... maybe... it might... It's more likely.

But what if it didn't like it? If it were a book that its content—its unbelievably well-studied content—wasn't the one it liked?

If it were a book whose content appealed to its writer, but not to the book itself? Then what?

Then even worse! There won't be a mistake! I will be doomed for ever! A book that was designed correctly to appeal to the writer! Why?

Why didn't he ask me? Isn't it I who pays for everything? I. ALWAYS I! I, hidden for ever on a shelf, somewhere in some bookstore!

I, AND I ALONE!

...

It was a book that was shouting.

That was screaming alone, so unbelievably alone, as no client, no owner, no seller, no writer till the edge of the world ever imagined.

A book that was crying, that was shedding tears! That was drenching its paper pages.

Because they didn't matter any longer...

* *

Because they never did matter. Neither they, nor the titles with the large letters...

To this book nothing mattered! Because it was a book without content, a book closing inside it everything and zero.

It was a book alone at the edge of the universe. And it was irrationally closing the universe inside it.

This book wasn't in need of a title.
As no book is in need of a title!

This book wasn't in need of a writer.
As no book is in need of a writer!

This book wanted nothing! It didn't want salesmen and stalls, bookcases and shelves, it had no value, and it had no price.

This book —as any book— if it wanted a title it would give it one itself! If it wanted a content, it would write it itself!

And it would be a book for children.
A book with colours and melodies...

...

People left, and the short bald owner turned off the lights and locked the heavy iron door.

But there, in the darkness and the silence, lonely among so many books, a little book lost on the last shelf of the last bookcase of the world, was shouting alone to the other books!

And it was calling them to erase the titles from their front covers. To erase the texts on the back covers. And to simply touch one another.

A crazy book, soaked you'd think in the night's dampness, was shouting trembling to the other books.

It was shouting trembling, but no one would listen...

...They probably wouldn't want to disturb the order!

And yet they had no one to ask!

They were only some books at the edge of the world that had no need of writers and salesmen, of buyers and owners.

They were the ones who needed them, but they had never asked them.

They sentenced them to some shelves, stacked up on some bookcases of the world.

And they had never asked them.

Yet they pay the price — books alone at the edge of the

universe...

...

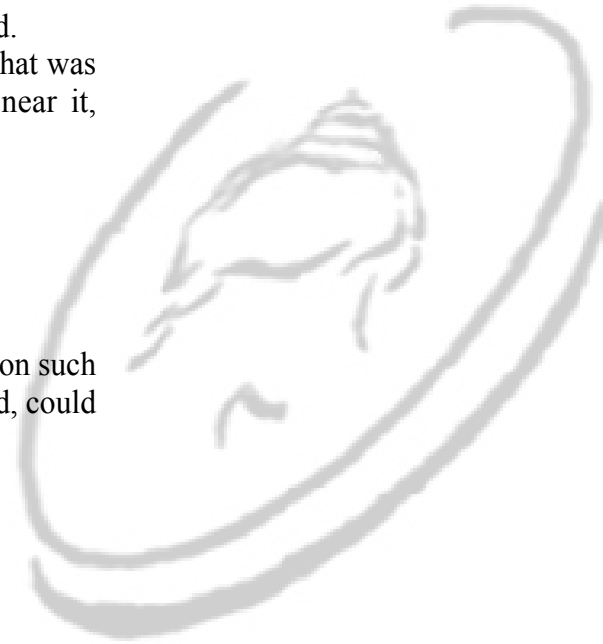
It too was a book that had never been asked. That was shouting alone, that was screaming at that edge of the world.

A funny book! A book with no name and content, that was shouting to the other books and was calling them near it, till tears dissolved its empty pages...

It too was a book that once loved the other books.

And it is strange how inside such a tiny little book, on such a tiny little shelf of a bookcase at the edge of the world, could fit instantly...

such happiness!



(On the night of the 16th to the 17th of December)