

THE SPRING

The Father's Servant.

OUTDOORS. MORNING. CAVE. WINTER

It's Winter. The sun shines brightly and reflects in the spring, outside a small cave on the outskirts of Madrid, Spain. Victoria takes in the penetrating smell of roses. Alejo does the same. Victoria take Alejo's hand and dips it slowly into the natural fountain. Immediately after, she takes a finger of his hands and puts it to his lips.

VICTORIA: Don't say anything! (She also wets her hand in the cave's spring and gives him a complicit look) The cave's ground water, except on rare occasions, has always been dry.

ALEJO: It can't be dry. See! (He points at the fountain)

VICTORIA: (Smiling) Yes. But it still amazes me. Never in my life have I seen water flow in this spring. Besides, this mild smell of rose petals What do you think?

ALEJO: It smells good. Nothing else!

VICTORIA: (Smiling) Yes. But we are seeing .. Something unique. It isn't just water.

ALEJO: (Remaining silent a few seconds) What do you mean? Well. It doesn't matter. Knowing you, it's bound to be one of your pilgrimage ideas. I'm getting a bit tired of situations where we only speak about paranormal stuff. I'm a bit fed up, really.

VICTORIA: (Victoria looks at him in silence) I apologise Alejo. But your derogatory comments about believing that mean so much to me in my life offend me. But I'm really sorry. It won't happen again.

ALEJO: It's just till the next time, isn't it? That's how long your promise will last. You'll see. (Laughing)

VICTORIA: And so what, Alejo? Is me being the only one who speaks about it all that matters? Don't you do the same? Besides, I only wanted to tell you the secret that this fountain holds.

ALEJO: (laughing sarcastically) Oh! The secret .. and what is this secret, if one may know?

VICTORIA: I once heard my uncle say ... What does it matter? (She wets her eyes and dries them with a handkerchief she takes from her pocket) You never believe me, nor will you ever. (She leaves)

ALEJO: Victoria! (Stays still and a bit perplexed)

OUTDOORS. DUSK. GARDEN AT ALEJO'S HOUSE. WINTER

Alejo walks along the street. Jumps angrily over the fence and goes into his garden.

INDOORS. DUSK. ALEJO'S HOUSE. WINTER

Alejo goes into the office and meets his father who is getting warm in front of his desk fire alongside his cat.

ALEJO: Hello father! (His dad turns and looks at him seriously)

Alejo senior: You'll have been in good company judging how late it is!

Alejo: Don't play hide and seek with me! We know each other. What are you trying to tell me?

Alejo senior: You've been with her again I suppose!

(Alejo keeps quiet)

Alejo: Oh! Why not? (laughs sarcastically) Victoria is my girlfriend whether you like it or not. What's more, it is nothing to do with you.

Alejo senior: You're wrong about that. It probably affects me personally more than you think.

Alejo: Don't beat about the bush. Come to the point! What have you got against me? Why do you attack me? Why don't you feel good about me going out with a girl like her? Tell me!

Alejo senior: (remains in silence)

Alejo: I'm going to bed. (He makes for the door. Before passing the door he turns to his father) You know. You're a bloody damp squib. (His father looks at him seriously and unmoved and Alejo leaves the room slamming the door behind him)

Alejo senior: (Turns towards the fire) You really do know. (Takes a log and hurls it onto the fire) Bloody hell!

OUTDOORS. MORNING. VICTORIA'S HOUSE GARDEN. WINTER

Alejo waits nearby the house. Victoria comes out of the house at that moment and sees him.

Victoria: Hello.

Alejo: (Lowers his head) I'd like to .. I'd like to apologise. (There's a silence and Victoria smiles)

Victoria: Accepted! (Victoria gives him a kiss on the cheek and takes Alejo's hand. He smiles. But suddenly he notices her hand)

Alejo: What are these wounds, Vicky? He grasps her right hand and shows it to her)

Victoria: War wounds, I suppose! (She bursts out laughing) Come on! Let's go for a walk. It's a beautiful morning.

Alejo: (Grins) You're always so baffling!

Victoria: Almost as much as you. (Laughs then right away takes his hand. He looks at her and laughs more freely) Oh! By the way. I've arranged to meet Julia this afternoon. I spoke to her on the phone and we arranged to meet at the "el Corte Ingles" in Calloa.

Alejo: As always I'll go to see Tirso. This time to Vips near his parents' house. He phoned me the other day and told me he was spending a while with them.

Victoria: But, Do you know where his family lives? I've never been to his parents' house. He always tells me his brothers cause such an uproar that he prefers to meet up in a bar.

Alejo: That's true. But there always has to be a first time, hasn't there?

Victoria: Fine, but I think he's hiding something.

Alejo: What?

Victoria: I can't be quite sure. Maybe a secret he's afraid to tell us about his family. Don't you find it odd that after 15 years we haven't met anyone in his family?

Alejo: A bit. (He nods his head) But yes. In fact it is like that.. (He stares into space)

INDOORS. MORNING. SHOPPING CENTRE. WINTER

Inside the shopping centre Victoria is waiting for Julia. While waiting she's looking at dresses by different clothes designers. The roof lighting lights up all the complex. At last after having looked at the time twice, Julia arrives.

Victoria: How good it is to see you again my friend! I thought you weren't going to make it. (They come together in a hug)

Julia: Sorry. You know what Madrid traffic is like and how it gets to you. (Victoria nods her head) Wow! What a heat! (She unbuttons her coat) I hurried here. (Smiles) It's been a long time since we saw each other. How's Alejo?

Victoria: You know him. Except on a few occasions, so cynical and unbelieving as usual. (They both begin to laugh) But deep down he's a good guy. What about Tirso? How is he?

Julia: He's spending some days with his parents. That worries me less. He just roughs it up. (She says this with a shaky voice)

Victoria: I knew he was with his parents. Alejo told me. (She looks caringly at Julia) It seems to me that your relationship isn't going well, is it?

Julia: It could be better, that's true.

Victoria: Julia, do you know his parents?

Julia: Why are you asking me that?

Victoria: I don't know. I've never seen them. And that surprises me because although Alejo is his best friend, he hasn't seen them either.

Julia: No.

Victoria: Don't you notice that?

Julia: There are a lot of secrets in Tirso's life that I don't know about. He has never let me enter his world. His world is his and nobody else's. But I prefer it like that.

Victoria: Don't worry. But you know. You can count on me for anything. (Julia looks at her gratefully and smiles at her)

Julia: I'm in a hurry. I've arranged to meet Tirso now at quarter past. Thanks for making the time to see me. Albeit just for five minutes. (she takes her hand) You know I appreciate you my friend. (they smile) (When their faces rub against each other, part of Julia's makeup comes off and reveals bruising on her cheeks. Victoria makes a move before Julia leaves)

Victoria: Julia! Stop! (Julia turns round) There's something you have to confide in me. You haven't told me the whole truth. What are those marks on your face? And don't lie to me! They're bruises, aren't they? Julia: I may not be able to hide that I'm the victim of abusive treatment much longer, may I? (She takes out a hanky and dries her wet eyes)

Victoria: I was afraid of that. (There's a silence) He's sometimes violent with you. (Julia keeps her head down) And always when you are alone. (Julia lifts her head and nods) Bloody coward!

Julia: I prefer you not to say anything to anybody for the time being. (There's a silence and Victoria carefully wipes away a tear from her eye with her finger)

Victoria: Don't worry. Our secret will always be safe between us. Like at high school. Oh! By the way. Do you know who I saw only a few days ago? Lázaro Fortún!

Julia: Lázaro? His name rings a bell.

Victoria: Ye, girl! That boy in class we both fancied.

Julia: Oh! Now it clicks.

Victoria: Do you remember how we stupidly fought each other for him, knowing how much we loved each other then, where our friendship was much more than what we could feel for any boy? (Julia smiles)

Julia: (Julia looks at her in her eyes) But it was you who eventually took him to the allotment, wasn't it? (Both of them laugh)

Victoria: Yes, it was. But I must confess the one he really loved was you. In fact, when he rang me, he frequently got the name wrong and asked for you without realising it. That got me a bit jealous, really! The thing is ... He was mad about you, my girl!

Julia: Really! I wish I had known about it before! So I wouldn't have to put up with these daily insults and the chauvinistic humiliating downgrading from someone like Tirso. Totally devoid of basic feelings of any normal person.

Victoria: Do you feel a bit calmer now? Come on! Tell me anything you want to or anything you can. (She strokes her on the cheek)

Julia: (Nodding her head) Of course! I'm undertaking anxiolytic treatment, Victoria. And all because at about seven in the evening every day, the aforementioned goes down to the bar to drown his sorrows. Afterwards, hurt and frustrated by his life, he comes up blind drunk and takes it out on me by beating me up. (Victoria looks at her disgusted and stays quiet) You know, I'm getting more afraid of him. Even throwing up with nerves when I'm about to go up in the lift to our door, when it's time to make dinner. I don't know what to do!

Victoria: You've done well to speak about it. It's the first step to fixing this so messy and complex matter down to its roots.

Julia: I love Tirso, or at least I loved him. Now more than ever he needs me, but I can't help him. I'm gambling my life. (She bursts into tears)

Victoria: Calm down. We'll find the best solution for everyone. (She takes her hand) Do you trust me? (Julia nods) Then... Will you do everything that is necessary to get out of this unsustainable situation as soon as possible?

Julia: (Stays quiet for an instant) Yes!

Victoria: You're not going to alone in all of this. I'll come with you and you'll tell Tirso that you're leaving him, because you want to avoid the continuous mistreatment he inflicts on you every day.

Julia: I don't know if I dare. He's very violent. I'd rather tell him that I'll leave him if he ever does it a single time again. What's more, I have no house to go to, nor money to live on!

Victoria: (Giving her a hug) There won't be any problem. I know a Poor Clare Sisters community that will take you in with all the love and care in the world.

Julia: Really!

Victoria: Sure they will! You'll see how well they take care of you. They're very respectful and understanding. Also with a great sense of humour. You'll see.

Julia: (Stays quiet for a few moments then broadly smiles) All right! But I prefer to speak to Tirso by myself. Everything will be fine. If he sees you, he'll say everybody is ganging up on him and he'll get really violent. I know him.

Victoria: It's a deal! (Both of them smile and hug each other)

OUTDOORS. EVENING. VIPS. WINTER

Alejo opens the door and enters VIPS.

INDOORS. EVENING. VIPS. WINTER

Tirso is drunkenly standing at the bar.

Alejo: I imagined you'd already be here. (they give each other a hug) On time as usual. How are your old folks?

Tirso: Fine. They're getting along.

Alejo: Ha, ha, ha. You always tell me the same. (There's a hush) let's see! What are you celebrating this time to be in such a drunken state?

Tirso: The betrayal of a woman who I once swore my love to. That bitch, like the rest, doesn't deserve men like you or me. Fucking hags! If it were up to me she wouldn't get away with not even one of the lesson she deserves.

Alejo: What's happened to you? Have you argued with Julia?

Tirso: Yes, I have. But it's going to be the last time I'll do it.

Alejo: What do you mean?

Tirso: (Looking him in the eyes) I'm going to need your help with a matter of settling scores with this bitch.

Alejo: (Alejo says nothing) I'm a good bloke. If you want me to help you, tell me clearly and honestly. Then I'll tell you if I'll help you.

Tirso: I'm going to get rid of all the lies she tells about me, the whore of a girlfriend I've had. I who opened up my heart to her has warned me that the next time I lay a hand on her, she'll report me for ill treatment. She deserves to be given a lesson, the last one of her fucking life.

Alejo: I'm sorry. That's a filthy matter that I will take no part in. What's more, Julia's a great girl.

Tirso: Then I'll do it alone. But you won't come out of it looking pretty. You're partly to blame for what might happen.

Alejo: Why? What have I done, eh?

Tirso: I'll testify before the judges that you pestered me more and more, by telling me you hated Julia so much that you would enjoy murdering her. Because one drunken day, she kissed you on the lips and you fell head over heels in love with her, not realising that the only one she loved was me. That's why we argued coming to blows and you threatened to kill me if I crossed your path. And what finally had to come, came. You'll be considered mentally off-balanced and all your world will fall to pieces. Starting with your reputation! I swear to you! If you don't help, this is what awaits you.

Alejo: That's all complete lies!

Tirso: Lies! Are you denying you haven't hinted at Julia in my face more than fifteen times in the past two years? Did you think I hadn't noticed?

Alejo: You know. You're mad! You live in another world. Full of bitterness and intrigues against all those who don't go along with your whims or simply don't think the same as you. What's more, you're just a bloody trickster to always get what you want at any cost. The same as any psychopath roaming about. The shame is that I met the worst. I'm getting out of here! I want nothing more to do with you! (He leaves)

Tirso: Well you know what's in store for you you fucking shitty bastard!

(Everybody in the bar stares at them as Alejo opens the bar door and leaves)

INDOORS. MORNING. POLICE WAITING ROOM. WINTER

Alejo is seated on a bench in the waiting room of the National Police. At this time, he's alone. Everything is quiet. Suddenly he notices a clock that says half past three in the afternoon. Instinctively he looks at his watch to check if the time is right. He gets up from the bench and looks at all the posters stuck on the walls and stares at one in particular. Specifically, about abusive treatment. In a while, a middle-aged man with a moustache wearing a police uniform comes into the room.

Sergeant: How are you lad? If hunger is getting the better of you, there's a vending machine with sandwiches and soft drinks in the corridor.

Alejo: That's very kind of you. (Smiles) the least thing I am at the moment is hungry. Thanks all the same.

Sergeant: As you wish, lad. (He leaves) (At that moment the inspector of police comes in)

Policeman: Are you Alejo Arístegui? (Alejo nods) Follow me please.

INDOORS. MORNING. POLICE OFFICE. WINTER

Policeman: Sit down please. (Alejo takes a seat) Now, tell me. What is this about?

Alejo: (Alejo lowers his head) I'm afraid. (The policeman looks at him without a word) I've heard and seen things from an old acquaintance of mine that I never would have been able to believe. Especially after all having been his friend for so many years. (There's a silence)

Policeman: Go on.

Alejo: He intends to murder his girlfriend, making me an accomplice to her death. But as you can see, I'm not willing to stain my hands in innocent blood. That's why I'm here.

Policeman: Exactly how and when did you find out about this?

Yesterday, as usual, we arranged to meet in a bar to have a few beers. When I got there, he had already had one too many and he was angry because his girlfriend had threatened to leave him that very afternoon. (There's a silence) He proposed me being an accomplice in taking her life. I told him no. That I was honest.

Policeman: Has he got any problems with drink or drugs?

Alejo: He drinks heavily but I don't know anything else.

Policeman: More or less, how much? More than three glasses a day?

Alejo: Possibly.

Policeman: I see. (Takes note on paper) Do you know if he has a criminal record? Some crime?

Alejo: No, I don't think so.

Policeman: Some mental illness? Schizophrenia? Personality disorder? A manic depressive illness?

Alejo: (Stays quiet for a few seconds) I remember some time ago he told me he injected and took speed to try new sensations. Visual hallucinations .. you know what I mean.

Policeman: Medication? Does he take any medication that you know of?

Alejo: I don't think so. But I'm not sure.

Policeman: All right. (He lays the pen on the desk) We'll now take a written declaration and see what can be done. Thank you for your assistance. (He stands up and opens the door) Please know that your testimony is essential in these cases. As you say: You've been an honest guy. (He shakes his hand) Thank you.

Alejo: (Alejo smiles) Good day to you. (Alejo leaves the room. The policeman closes the door)

INDOORS. NIGHT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. WINTER

Moonlight shines through Victoria's bedroom window. Victoria is lying on her bed. She leans over and throws up into a basin. Right away she heads for the bathroom and turns the light on.

INDOORS. NIGHT. VICTORIA'S BATHROOM. WINTER

Victoria looks at lovingly at herself in the bathroom mirror.

Victoria: Take it easy Vicky! (She gently cleans the wounds on her hands, feet and sides with a sponge dampened in the hot water that comes out the tap and dries them with a towel. She looks in the mirror again) Everything will go fine!

INDOORS. NIGHT. ALEJO'S HOUSE. WINTER

Alejo enters the house and finds his father asleep in the office armchair with the light on. Alejo tries not to make any noise, but going up the first step of the stairs, his father is awakened by his cat's mewing.

Alejo senior: Who's there?

Alejo: Damned cat! It's me! (Goes into the office) Hello dad!

Alejo senior: Where were you? I've been waiting for you all night.

Alejo: I've been ..You know who with. We needn't go into more detail. I'm tired.

Alejo senior: Something's up with you. What's the matter?

Alejo: What's it to you?

Alejo senior: (He looks at him in silence for a few moments) Don't you believe it! I also learn from my mistakes. (Alejo looks at him) And yes! As far as I'm concerned, you can see your little friend. I don't want to get to the point of no return and be an old grump for the rest of my life.

Alejo: (Remains quiet for a few moments) She called me on the mobile about two hours ago. (There's a silence)

Alejo senior: What for?

Alejo: She goes through a real ordeal and always manages to smile. I don't get how she manages to reach this emotional control over her sentiments! It's just impossible ...

Alejo senior: What kind of ordeal? (There's a silence) If one can know...

Alejo: (Takes a small log and puts it on the fire that is going out) She suffers from a vital anxiety. But she always avoids mentioning the causes that produce the suffering. I think these are the reasons for the deep sores on her hands, feet and sides, and that makes her bleed profusely. In so much, at midnight her uncle as a rule changes her bed sheets for clean ones. But now she's resting at this time. She's calmer.

Alejo senior: I'm sorry. (Alejo senior says nothing then takes a letter from his desk drawer and looks closely at it)

Alejo: What are you doing? (His father quickly puts the letter back into the drawer) We all keep unconfessable secrets, don't we?

Alejo senior: And fears! (Though upset, he smiles for an instant) They'll never leave you in peace till you have the courage to face them.

Alejo: Do you know my secret? (Alejo senior looks at him) I've always held you up as a model. But since I met Victoria, all my world is floundering. She challenges me with everything with a sincere smile but full of pain. That produces an uncertain anguish in me about this life that once was so full for me. Now I understand it's not a place for a lot of people, those that suffer and see life as a huge handkerchief to cry into.

Alejo senior: (There's a silence) I also so that in a person. And that's the reason for my torments. I'm frightened my son.. Overwhelmed by a nagging anguish that will never end until once and for all until the letter you've just see that has been kept in my desk for years is opened. A lot! (He sits up in the armchair) Come here! (They hug)

Alejo: How can we get rid of this really terrible anguish dad?

Alejo senior: I don't know. But we'll find out. (Alejo sighs with relief and the cat comes up to them and meows)

Alejo: Come on! Come here! He bends down to pick up the cat that's coming slowly towards them. Then he takes it and it licks his face) It's the first time he's done that!

Alejo senior: Sometimes, animals understand feeling better than people themselves. Strange is it? They smile for an instant and warmly look at each other)

INDOORS. MORNING. HOSPITAL OUTPATIENTS TREATMENT ROOM. WINTER

A nurse of about 60 years old, wearing a white coat, is taking notes on the computer while having sips at her coffee. Somebody knocks on the slightly ajar door.

Uncle Ivan: May I?

Nurse: Come in. (Victoria and her uncle enter the room)

Uncle Ivan: I've come with my niece to have wounds on the hands and feet seen to.

Victoria: And my sides uncle.

Uncle Ivan: Oh! I forgot.

Victoria: How forgetful you are! The same always happens to you. Ha, ha ha!

Nurse: Let's have a look. (Victoria holds out her hands and the nurse takes them) Do they hurt?

Victoria: Not much now.

Nurse: They're considerable sores! How did you come by them?

Victoria: They appeared. (The nurse looks at her unbelievably)

Nurse: They appeared, ye! (She takes a bandage and carefully wraps her hands with Ivan looking on closely. Victoria looks at him and smiles. He looks at her fondly. Finally, the nurse finishes bandaging the other hand using an adhesive tape) Bandaged! Now show me your sides. (Victoria pulls up her shirt) Now let's see! My goodness! How is it you still have the strength to laugh with such sores?

Victoria: (Smiles) You know, I'm more and more convinced that each one's life is a mystery that must unveil at God's pace. And God, regarding this, guides us with a firm hand. (The nurse looks at her sternly)

Nurse: Finishes bandaging her sides) That's it! Ready! And don't pray so much! Praying isn't good.

Victoria: (Kindly laughing) Why?

Nurse: Because later what happens happens. And you end up thinking odd things.

Victoria: But always beautiful things, don't you think?

Nurse: Look, my young lass! Let's speak clearly. In the end, What good does religion do for you? Nothing! Absolutely nothing!

Uncle Ivan: Ha, ha, ha! That's very personal and I get the impression, difficult to explain to you.

Nurse: How? Why? I only say to her not to pray so much. Nothing else!

Uncle Ivan: Well, well! (Ivan puts on a grim face) Thanks for your interest in my niece's wellbeing. But that's her choice and that which as her uncle, I never get involved in. (There's a hush) That's it over! So if you have finished with the treatment, with all respect, goodbye and good day. Let's go niece! (He opens the surgery door)

Nurse: Everyone has their opinion, don't they?

Uncle Ivan: (He's quiet for a moment) Miss! Let me give you one last piece of advice. As you will also let me have my opinion, naturally. Learn to live life as relaxed as possible. And not look for any more complications than you already have. ?????? . Crowds, tensions of a crowded long and narrow wagon, I think they get to you.

Nurse: Are you trying to mock me?

Uncle Ivan: Maybe. But I do it to show you we can all butt into other people's lives, as you are doing on this occasion. But life has shown me it's better to keep your mouth tightly shut. So flies don't get in. Or toads! (She stays quiet) Good day to you! Let's go niece.

INDOORS. MORNING. HOSPITAL OUTPATIENTS TREATMENT ROOM. WINTER

Victoria and her uncle leave the surgery.

Victoria: Uncle! You've just given the nurse a real pasting. (laughs) Poor little woman! I can imagine her taking a Valium to calm herself down and at the same time a painkiller for the headache you gave her as a small gift for putting her big foot in it by messing about with someone she shouldn't have.

Uncle Ivan: Believe me, Vicky. She is no "poor little woman".

Victoria: Why do you say that, uncle?

Uncle Ivan: You're old enough to understand what I'm going to say plain and clearly to you. (Victoria looks closely at him) Since you were a baby, I realised that my mission in life was to open up your way by teaching you how to defend yourself from these toxic people that do not understand another way of life other than to humiliate, dominate by means of "command and control" or make life hard for everyone else. So, as I have always told you .. Beware those that look friendly, polite and even loving in some cases. As all that glitters is not gold. So listen carefully. They'll always look for your weak point and will enjoy destroying your good feelings just when you're feeling more vulnerable. Always keep clear of them for they have no nice feelings, just the opposite. And they aren't exactly stray sheep but really bloodthirsty wolves!

Victoria: Was the nurse one of them?

Uncle Ivan: Didn't you notice how stubbornly she insisted you not pray because it wasn't good? Think about it, Vicky. Don't you think deep down she was trying to humble you and take you down to size by scorning your good religious feelings?

Vicky: I'm beginning to understand. And she always reached the same conclusion. These people live wrapped in a lamb's skin. So I suppose if you find them out, they'll never be able to hide it, will they?

Uncle Ivan: Exactly! So much is it like that from that moment they feel humiliated because everybody sees their real face bringing about in time, the abyss of suicide. Hard, isn't it?

Victoria: Indeed! Terrible death for those that in their time have been the tormentors of so many innocent people.

Uncle Ivan: Do you know? There's something that crackles in this society where people think they are entitled to weigh in on anything. Although they haven't got a clue. Ignorance is still very bold, my dear Victoria. But there's something much more dangerous. These people's own arrogance that only see what they want to see, always looking for reasons for confrontations and destruction.

Victoria: What can be done against this evil endemic, uncle?

Uncle Ivan: if only people were fully aware of this reality that has been hidden for centuries. What I mean is there are destructive people in all walks of life. The challenge would be taken seriously and there wouldn't be so much arrogance about with a licence to kill. (There's a short silence) You know, like the case of agent 007. More commonly known as .. Bond, James bond! (She bursts out laughing and gives him a kiss)

Victoria: Oh uncle! What a man! I love you ever so much and you look after me so well!

Uncle Ivan: My dear Victoria. Pay no attention to that nurse and always do what deep down you believe you must do. Do the best you can. You'll do it well and you'll find your place in this life. That's what god has reserved for you and that which will signify your whole identification with Him. It's like feeling an important part of his family.

Victoria: How nice uncle! I'll do it. (The mobile phone rings and Victoria takes it) Yes? That's fine. (she hangs up) Uncle. Alejo has rung me. He told me that Tirso is admitted in this very hospital. On the psychiatry floor.

Uncle Ivan: Go on! Go to see him! (Victoria gives him a kiss)

Victoria: Goodbye Uncle. We'll see each other at lunchtime. Two o'clock. Don't forget!

Uncle Ivan: Bye princess. I won't forget. Don't worry. (Victoria laughs, opens the waiting room door and leaves)

INDOORS. MORNING. ENTRANCE TO HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIC WARD. WINTER

The lift door opens and out comes Victoria along with some other people. Some go to Oncology, that's on the same floor, and others to Psychiatry, opposite them whose door is always kept shut. Alejo is waiting on the landing surrounded by a crowd of people.

Alejo: Victoria! (Raises his hand for her to see)

Victoria: (Smiles on seeing him) Hello! (she gives him a kiss)

Alejo: How are you coping with the throwing-up and spasms? Have you been able to rest just a bit?

Victoria: Yes, thank God, I eventually flaked out. How is Tirso?

Alejo: He's off his head. Now I was going into to see him. But I daren't.

Victoria: Come on cari. He's your friend!

Alejo: I'm sorry but.. I can't go in. It's too much for me.

Victoria: He needs you. You know that deep down he's got a good heart.

Alejo: I wouldn't be too sure about that. You go in! He takes her by the hand and looks at her sincerely) I'm asking you, please.

Victoria: all right. But you're going to regret it. (She call on the intercom)

Nurse's voice: Hello. Who do you want to see?

Victoria: I've come to the patient Tirso Molina.

Nurse: I'll let you in.

(The door opens. Victoria goes inside and closes the door. She then goes straight to the reception desk)

Victoria: Tirso Molino's room, if you would be so kind..

Nurse 2: Number 415 if I'm not mistaken, isn't it Cecilla?

Nurse: You're not wrong. Room 415 miss.

Victoria: Thank you. Victoria hesitates a second before knocking. She looks thoughtful then finally decides to knock at the door where Tirso is. She enters slowly)

INDOORS. MORNING. ROOM ON HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIC FLOOR. WINTER

Victoria: Tirso?

Tirso: if you don't mind, go away please! (Victoria carefully shuts the door)

Victoria: let's see. Let's see. I'll be more comfortable here. (Victoria takes a chair and sits beside Tirso, who's half lying in an armchair)

Tirso: Don't you hear me? Get lost, now!

Victoria: Do you think I'm a young woman you can intimidate so easily? (Tirso looks at her contemptuously)

Tirso: I only see you as a reckless daredevil. And to crown it all, full of strange goings-on.

Victoria: Ha, ha, ha. I thought it would do you good to speak. About whatever. I know how to speak about boys' things. Let's see. What's the worst paid football?

Tirso: (Says nothing) Women, when you speak about something, you usually lay set traps for boys to make us feel right idiots. Did you think I was going to counter by telling you that the question you should ask is what is best paid footballer? Well, no. What's more, I don't know.

Victoria: (laughs) You see! You finally fell for it. (There's a silence) Can I confess something to you that I believe with all my heart?

Tirso: Go ahead! You're free to do it.

Victoria: You're not a murderer, Tirso. You've just got a drink problem. That's the only truth. You've got that because life has treated you badly. Among all of us, we'll help you to break free of it. You'll see.

Tirso: (Looks at her) Do you even know my feelings? My most intimate and unutterable wishes? Put another way. Do you know the real Tirso? He whose real identity lies hidden all through life the same as all those who are like me?

Victoria: (lowers her head) No.

Tirso: Then how are you so sure I want to change? (He looks at her unmoved) I'll let you into something. I'm the one who gets a kick out of causing the most harm possible to those who want to be good in life. He who runs around pretending to what he has never been with the aim of gaining trust of those that may be useful to me to carry out my personal ambitions. If I have to mock sick people, I grow. I like complicating life for fools, laughing inside so much that I feel superior. But above all, I like imposing my will on women. All of them! (There's a silence) but with it's different, you know! (He moves up to her with his armchair) Sometimes I think about you. (She stares at him) I enjoy imagining you with a lewd look slowly taking off that blouse with white roses that you wear. And I jerk off again and again hearing you groan with pleasure as I hump you until that idiot of a boyfriend you have at last finds us making love and leaves without daring to defend your dignity as a woman, because he's a coward and hasn't got the balls to fight for what is yours. Even knowing how precious you are.

Victoria: I'd rather not hear any more. Though I think you still have some good feelings and you'll turn out fine. Goodbye.

Tirso: (Tirso's eyes well up) Hey, you! Victoria! (They look at each other in silence) Shall I tell you a secret? (A tear falls from his eye) I feel alone. That's the truth to my existence. Whatever I do, I feel lonely.

Victoria: I thought so. That's the hell you live and that awaits you. Goodbye.

Tirso: Pray for me from heaven. I'm not made for that.

Victoria: Then what do you want to pray for?

Tirso: To remember the only time that I never felt alone in this life. Your friendship. That's what made me feel, for a moment, the real meaning of friendship. That's enough for me.

Victoria: I'll pray for you. You can be sure of that.

INDOORS. MORNING. ENTRANCE TO HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIC FLOOR. WINTER

Alejo stands still outside the door to the psychiatric floor.

Nurse: are you a friend of one of the patients?

Alejo: That's right. Tirso Molina. Though as things stand we are still friends. The truth is I daren't look him in the eyes. Though he once was my best friend, now I only see a potential murderer in him.

Nurse: Don't worry my friend. Deep down, many of us channel our anger in an aggressive way, at first, due to the most fearsome sentimental break-ups. Even more if that's possible when we are under the influence of drugs. Alcohol is included in them. But with a long stay of a couple of months he'll come out as new. You'll see.

Alejo: but what society demands at these times, more than ever, is equality based on mutual respect between man and woman. In my opinion, what really endangers somebody, whether man or woman, is the taking of life from one who once was your partner and making it your

property. Dominating the other person, taking away their self-esteem and punishing them both physically and verbally, that's what the alleged aggressor does, isn't it?

Nurse: Though I don't know at first hand the medical report, I tend to think it's a considerably more complex disorder.

Alejo: What do you refer to?

Nurse: I'll answer with another question. Do you know which is the worst of illnesses? The one that punishes and mortifies the soul? (There's a silence)

Alejo: I don't know.

Nurse: Loneliness. We've tried here to get in touch with relatives of his, but he hasn't got anybody. He's alone!

Alejo: Not anybody? He's got his siblings, his mother. Speak to them!

Nurse: Has he ever introduced you to any relative of his?

Alejo: No.

Nurse: he's an orphan. He's alone in this world and the little he had, the love of his life, he's certainly lost it for ever.

Alejo: I don't know. All this is confusing.

Nurse: That's right. You. How would you feel in his place? Confused? Terrified? Really. This situation isn't easy for anybody, least of all for him. That be it, don't think for a second that I'm justifying it. I can't. I mustn't ever allow such degrading and humiliating behaviour on the part of any human being. Under no circumstances. (There's a silence and Lope smiles) Come on! Let's go for a break and have a strong coffee at the bar in the cafeteria. It'll do us good and that way you too will feel cheered up. (Alejo smiles)

Alejo: It seems a good idea to me.

Lope: Lope. I'm called Lope.

Alejo: And me, Alejo.

Lope: Nice to meet you Alejo

TO BE CONTINUED

(They smile)