

Christine YOHANNES

PART ONE

Chapter 1

She picked up the journal she hadn't touched for a while. The last time she had picked it was probably months ago. She opened a random page and read...

"I am just sitting in a corner. It is funny how sometimes not doing anything just soothes me. Most of the people that I know get easily bored with nothing to do; on the other hand I get easily bored with doing the same thing over and over. What's funny is that it doesn't even have to be a routine, the moment I start something I am already bored and I'm constantly looking for something different. I am not even in my mid-twenties but I am already tired of living, and five minutes before I give up on my life I tell myself that there is so much I haven't done yet so I keep living. I know that I have the survival spirit in me and I can say it is the only thing that keeps me going.

Most of the days I try to wake up with a wide smile and it works but I usually have trouble wearing that smile the whole day.

However, small things-- sometimes meaningless to many people-- manage to make me smile, and things that make others grin with joy make me frown or uneasy. I usually refrain from judging others, but I know they are judging me by what I say or do because I can't help but do the same. I understand that it is not a good enough excuse and anyone who really knows me can say I am made up of excuses. You have read this far and by now you are probably wondering what you are reading. I wish I could answer that by simply saying that it is a diary, a journal, a novel or even a fictional book but I am afraid it is beyond my capacities to give a specific definition to what my fingers are writing. If you have liked what you read until now either because of the style, because you feel that I am directly talking to you or even because you are intrigued or even a bit curious about what is coming next I invite you to keep reading; if not just stop right here for both our sakes.

I am not sure what I have uninvited or invited you into but I am certain that great things are about to happen, I feel a bond is about to be made between you and me. I don't pretend to be clairvoyant, having a sixth sense or having special powers to control people or the universe. I don't claim to have psychological knowledge or wisdom. I have none of these but I live like I have all of them. To me human nature is very obvious and I know that I

understand other people more than I understand myself. Even though I know they are a mirror effect of me in another body I can't seem to apply that understanding to myself.

Maybe you have accepted an invitation that you really should not have, because now that I think about it I have led you into the mazes of a young insanely normal mind and you might find out that it's not very different from yours, which might scare you. So you have the choice of closing this so-called book and never set your eyes on it again; but now would be the time to do it. I can promise you that you might not want to stop once you go beyond this point, not because it is an extraordinary book, honestly I don't even know what the next line is going to be; but because the curious little you inside the big you is wondering why so many people talked to you about this book if it hadn't been interesting.

Well for your sake I am hoping that it will be interesting enough to deserve this first page, if it's not I'll be forced to change this hooking first page or the book will just sit on my shelf back home unfinished like the many other books I have. So if you are reading this be sure that by now I have become the most famous youngest writer in the world without anybody being able to put a face to this name of mine.

Personally I know that I can't write, I don't have a style that pulls the reader into the page and inside the story, I don't have an outline that I follow and I don't have a structure to what I'm writing; this is why my writing is the breadwinner for critics. However, it neither gives me the chills nor warms me. I don't see any of them writing books but they're all criticizing what others have taken years to write. Whoever gave them that right? The answer is beyond me.

What I find most shocking are the people who actually read the critics before reading the books, as if those dead flesh eating vultures could determine your reading trend better than yourself. And to know that the heartless morons lead you by simply sitting behind a desk, sharpening their pencils to write notes directly on the book of another person and making money off of it, just swells me up with pain and anger.

You are probably telling yourself that I am not doing anything different than them, because I am behind my own desk criticizing the people I accuse of criticizing and making money off of it. You could not have said it any better. So I am like them, I make money off of others; here is a thought that could prevent me from sleeping peacefully at night!

Fortunately my consciousness is very clean and I did not actually start typing in view of criticizing those poor evil people; like I previously stated my fingers do all the typing, my brain is just a guide guided by the thoughts that come spontaneously. I am a slave, a slave

to my thoughts and I can only abide; if I don't, I might lose my freedom for rebellion. Isn't that just illogical? How can a slave lose freedom for disobedience?

It's simple! My thoughts actually free me from under their strict orders, it is that freedom I lose when I decide not to rebel. I think that whether we like it or not we are slaves, we are the ones who choose whose slave we would rather be. As selfish as I am I decided to become my own slave, at least I don't enrich someone else-- right, how greedy of me? (evil laugh) I am probably the most selfish person that could ever walk on the face of this earth. Thought I can be selfless at times, pushing myself to even give my life for others.

The worst part is that I am not easy on myself as I would be on someone else or even as easy as someone else would be on me. My mind is always emphasizing the wrong things I have done and I have done my share of bad in this world. It happens however that I pat myself on the shoulder from time to time, but it is so rare that when I do my whole day is filled with sunshine to the point that I become the rays of the sun for the people that are around me. My view of the world is not so different than that of yours, but it is really not the same. I lose what I want to say half way through my conversations that I am forced to talk for a while longer than necessary just to find the edge of the rope I had let go of. How can I be blamed though? Hope that it also happens to you so that I can reassure myself of at least being like someone that is not labeled as a crazy person. I won't dare say that I am normal though I don't know what normal is and if it does exist I am certain I am far from it. I cannot say that I am sane either because all of the things that I do in my life, show proof of quite the opposite. If when you read this book you see yourself in me don't rush into telling yourself that you are crazy like me but I beg you to be nice and think that I am normal like you, I am sure it will do both of us some sort of good. I really appreciate you going this far into your reading because it shows me that my fingers aren't swelled up for nothing.

Now that we have broken the ice I believe it is time we started to get to know one other, I suppose I can't really know you but who knows if you are already in my life or if we will meet one day without you knowing it. Rest assured, I will know when we'll meet even though you might not. Let's just say that this simple thought of being a little omnipotent rejoices my soul as satanic as it might sound. "

She closed the journal and dozed off.

The story of her life began when her mother finally decided to give up her virginity to her father and she was born nine months later. To this day she doesn't know if she is more of an accident that turned out to be good or a gift that became more of a calamity to her parents. Her father always told her that she had been the greatest gift he has ever

received and he insists on the fact that she is Lucky and that she has been sharing that luck with the people around her. She didn't know if the house they got after her birth was directly linked to her or pure coïncidence. A special person in her life always said that there is no such thing as coïncidences. She begs to differ.

Twenty one years later she is sitting on the terrasse of a cafe enjoying the warm breeze that finally decided to turn up after months of cold and depressing weather.

She first settled on a mission in a little town in Western Europe; miles away from the town she had called home. Now as she got closer to accomplishing that mission she needed an internship in that far away land that became her first home away from home. However to her surprise most interviews didn't go as planned. Everyone knows that nothing ever goes as planned. She couldn't say that one hour in front of a panel was what she had needed to reflect on her life and face the person that she was now trying to become. She had always said that she could become anything that she wanted to and she was right. The only problem of that becoming a reality was herself, she had invested a little in everything that there wasn't really anything she was really good at. Still lied to herself by saying what a recent encounter told her. He shared with her a Gaboneese proverb which says that the man who has spent a hundred years in a village knows no more than a man who has seen a hundred villages. It probably meant that she was sitting on a far better chair than those who sat in front her making her feel worst about who she was and where she had come from. When she thought back about the hour that seemed infernaly long, she realized that she was only trying her best to become the person she was bound to become, and knowing where she had been; she was happy of the outcome no matter what others thought.

The opinion of others never really bothered her, and that is what probably made her the person that she is. In a way it didn't push her to give up on herself nor did it push her to improve; which she sees now to be to her disadvantage.

The hours go by so slowly, sometimes she thought to herself, wondering if there wasn't anyone somewhere winding the hands of time.

She felt as though the whole world was hers and that she hasn't been introduced to it yet. As if she had been inside a little bubble for the past 21 years, and suddenly today it's been popped by three women.

She looked at the time and realized it was almost time for her train back. The interview in Niort must have been the third that week when she thought about it; it tired her to go from town to town all dressed up, with eyes begging to get hired. She thought that the whole corporate system encouraged people to lie to organizations on the first day,

pressuring them into being someone they are not, but nothing was to be done--now it is almost a part of who they were. She wondered if the person the candidates incarnated for an interview stayed with them as they went on to work. She wondered if women wore that persona the same time they put on their make-up and if the men wore it as they put on their ties. She killed her thoughts and her cigarette on a plant pot next to where she sat, put her laptop back in its case, paid the lovely Chinese lady and crossed the street to enter the train station. As her friends called her to see how the interview went she explained she wouldn't get it even if the sky fell on those women. She took the train back and got in her room a few hours later.

That night she had felt like giving up on her whole project but something made her hold on and finally convinced her eyes to sleep.

The routine went on as usual the next morning. Breakfast, class, lunch followed by class or study sessions with a couple of friends at the library before ending the night at some bar,drinking beer with loud music at the background. That was how the four months had gone by, and how the next two or three would surely go. Sometimes she thought about home and the ones she had left, but she tried hard not to regret leaving as she knew something was surely in store for her. Exams came by, and after three days of complete internal stress the parties started. They went out every night for a couple of beers to start with, and ended the night with about a dozen each in their systems. The next day would start to end the same way but probably with two or three people that were different at a different setting.

After a whole month of beer drinking the need for an internship kicked in and she packed her bags to go to land farther away. It would become her home for the following three months. She felt like a globetrotter. Ready to embark on a journey whenever the need was felt without wondering what the outcome would be. Most of her friends had been very supportive, mostly her mother who made sure that the association she was volunteering for was authentic etc...

She could always count on her mother for such things; she had her adventurous blood. Her father on the other hand was not the type to pack his bags and leave for a place he knows close to nothing about unless some well established agency or someone he trusts told him otherwise, at least she thought. However she could always trust her mother to help make up his mind which he eventually did and she left town for another adventure.

The thought of going closer to home made her feel good but she regrets the older family members she hadn't seen in a while as a few months ago she had lost the only grandfather she had known. The guilt of not having seen him before she left home ate her up for a long time. She just did not want the same thing to happen with her surviving grand-mother or with her great grand-mother. She silently prayed that they stay alive at least until she went back.

During the six hours flight her heart stomped and raced as the thought of landing to nothing crossed her mind. She had no idea what she had agreed to. Little did she know that people walk the path that they are supposed to even when they are in control of their destiny.

She was halfway through the book her friend Alfonso had given her when the plane landed. A book by Paulo Coelho that she enjoyed very much, as it spoke of adventures and dream seeking and everything that was going through her mind at the moment. She was in a way seeking to realize her dream.

She didn't know what to expect and as she tried to imagine what was awaiting her ; fear briefly overtook her serenity. Knowing Faith had things in store for her hadn't helped. Two young men from the association came to greet her along with another intern who would come to leave a short while later for reasons only he knew.

Integrating the group was not a problem for her, she had befriended most of the members with a reassuring smile and they all later came to share their lives as though they had known each other for years. Who would have known that she was there to learn a lifelong lesson which made hers turn three sixty degrees in less than twenty four hours. Nature was so abundantly charming that she felt closer to her roots more than ever.

The trees and the chain of mountains that surrounded the little town of Kpalimé were so majestic every morning she felt as though she was part of those survival tv shows. And survival it was! But not your usual survival commercialized on mainstream media.

Learning a new culture, getting used to a different cuisine, and hot weather is never really easy to get used to in a day. Slowly she got around to loving her life there, sometimes she was tempted to settle there when she saw a sign for houses on sale as they walked to go work. Deep down she knew she would be going places and that her life would be wasted in one place.

The whole experience changed her view of life and of people. Her thoughts were always overflowing in her mind and her head couldn't contain them all. So she decided to take a

pen and write. She decided to contain her uncontainable thoughts, to put them down whilst they wouldn't stop flying around in her head. She took her journal and started...

« I think it is difficult not to love people. When time goes by and you start understanding their deepest thoughts, when you learn what scares them or what makes them laugh until they run out of breath, when you understand the way they look at you and what each look means you slowly learn to love them. If I consider myself to be human and I hope that I am, then I know I love everybody. The way I love them may differ from the way I should or shouldn't love them but either ways I love them. I realized, though I am not sure if the timing was right, that it is difficult not to be attracted to one when you are standing from the other genders' side. I don't know if anyone can see through another persons' eyes, if when you look in the eyes of a person you see their souls and hear their deepest thoughts. Well, I can! Somehow in their eyes I can read their deepest thoughts and sometimes it scares me so much. I don't claim to be a witch though sometimes I like the sound of that, but I manage to listen to what their hearts are telling me. I think I have remained with the animal instinct that I was born with. As the world Evolved or pretended to get modern, humans have lost their inner voices, either because they're blinded by sky-scrapers, cars or any other material shit or because of the jumbled network due to telephone lines or internet... »

Her thoughts had stopped right there. She couldn't go on or her pen refused to spit out the ink for the thoughts she was about to throw up on the page. She stood still, gazing into empty space, thinking about nothing. The empty look as her father called it was her hidding place and has been ever since she could remember.

That is where her stories built up though noone knew it, it was where her lines were drawn and where her dreams came true. She gazed and gazed waiting on an answer from somewhere, won't it tell her what to write next. But, nothing. Her gaze zoomed out and she stared at the half blank page again.

She slowly carressed the paper with her pen, thrusted her pen with her fingers as if to arouse it but there was still nothing. She ran out of ways to express her feelings. She loved him. She knew she loved him. She felt she loved him. She wasn't sure she loved him. Was it because her man wasn't near her? Was it because she was all alone in a country she got up to discover one day Was it because she wasn't sure if her man was thinking as much about her as she did about him ? She didn't even want to think about that last thought. No matter how certain she was of his devotion to her she always had doubts of his fidelity to the unspoken pact they had. She liked to think of him as her man because they seemed to fit for one another everytime they met but they were never

officially together. He had never been her man, and little did she know he would never be.

What if he was in the arms of another woman as she sat there thinking if her thoughts for another were real or not ? She tried to shake off the thought of him carressing a body, kissing lips that wer not hers; when it should be her he should be with. He was to be with her. No one had the right to take him away from her. She prayed whatever God looked down at her to give her just him. She never kneeled, never joined her hands, never wept praying, asking for money, safety, success, health or anything for herself for that matter. Of course she prayed for forgiveness, for her only sibling, for her family, her friends or even the whole world but she never cried for anything in prayer. She wept for him, though. As she thinks about it, she gets mad at herself. « *To think that i would cry for a guy* » she thought out loud. But it was the pitifull truth. She cried praying for his arms to hold hers and his warmth to keep her safe. Had he ever done the same ? She would find out.

Only the God that heard prayers and read inside the solid hearts of humans knew that, she didn't. The only thing she was certain of was how she felt about him and the way he showed her he felt the same. However, nothing stood in his way at the moment from rejoicing in the arms of another women. She went on...

« I hate this feeling. I hate being uncertain about something that I know for sure to be untrue. You might think it is childish of me to dream about the man that will come and sweep me off my feet. Especially when I don't believe in those fairy tell lies I had been spoon fed. To think of his arms that will hold me making me feel far from danger and protected is unreal. To think I have a special someone in my life, to think he is my knight in shining armor, to think... is just overrated. Especially when I claim to be so independent and self-sufficient. I guess we all have our flaws and I guess that he is my weakness. »

She wasn't wrong on that part. Her heart literrally skipped a beat every time she saw him. Her insides leaped with joy, her heart danced with her guts, it was a fest. She had more than a thousand butterflies in her stomach when he got near her. Maybe it was childish or even unrealistic and too movie like but when they were together nothing else mattered, to her anyway. Anyone could tell they belonged with one another. They had nothing to prove but they proved their love for one another through the years they stayed mutually in love without a physical relationship, at least in her head. They were both involved with a few people at one time or another in their lives but every time they saw each other they became little kids that were inseperable. He would do anything she

asked him to and she did everything without him having to ask. They were practically one. Soulmates don't exist but that is what they were.

She picked up her pen again with a need to let her thoughts flow on the piece of paper she had layed in front of her...

« Africa, a place where people lived together in great harmony. I wonder sometimes how such a beautiful place could be ignored by the rest of the world. We always come when we need something and we criticize our whole journey. There isn't enough water, not enough transportation, no internet connection or it isn't fast enough, the administrations are slow in action or they are corrupt etc., and it went on until we left and got shuffled in our world that barely knows of our existance except as a number on paper. Had we known we were names in Africa and not just a serial number that could be easily confused with the next as much as the previous numbers. In Africa, we are people who came from a place, who are going some place, we were somebody and not just anybody. Do we think that Africans look at us to steal our gold or belongings? Do we think that Africans stare to marry for a passport? I don't know, I know though that there are people who do this sort of thing but it isn't everybody, is it? I thought the looks reflected fear when I first got here, fear of what they didn't know, fear that globalization had brought another stranger to eat their ideas and traditions, fear of what was different from them, and of what they were made to believe was better than them. As the days went by I realized those looks were more of curiosity for the other. It wasn't like in France, where the discrimination was felt planets away. Though it was not everywhere nor by everyone in France, it was easy to feel unwanted. Here the look was a simple sign of what love and affection could grow out of it. A need to know what they hadn't, a look that said I know how you feel or even I understand what you are going through. I never knew that my perspective would change along with the places and faces that changed as I went from one place to another. I never knew that Humans, all with a set of eyes and ears, with arms and legs, with a heart and lungs, could be so different from place to place, from country to country. I remember the courses I took at the university. That man is first and foremost the outcome of the environment, educational background and so on.

Are we really-- though I doubt that! I thought... »

Before she could finish her thought they brought her dinner and they ate together talking about how to improve work and realise the projects that were ideas up to now. Her thoughts escaped her sometimes and took her on a long journey she couldn't come back from. She made silent prayers to the God to protect her man, as she often liked to call him. She had images of him popping in her head from time to time and she would smile. Luckily her smiles would coincide with theirs and they would never know she had just traveled to a place in her mind.

He wasn't thinking about her. He didn't even write to her when he promised he would. She thinks he probably forgot his phone in Ethiopia before he left and that is where he had saved her address. He probably has a lot of work that keeps him busy, she thinks to herself. But he wasn't thinking about her. He had bigger fish to fry. She thinks he is like her father. A nice guy with a warm heart but one who wouldn't call to say hi or write to say he is alright. That was probably what attracted her most to him. He was a copy of her father. She loved her father with his flaws. He had a lot of those according to her. He was certainly a kind man, the whole town could testify to that, he has a good heart and wouldn't refuse the universe for his children as well as the people he loved. He was honest with himself and he had a few good friends that stayed with him for years before and after he succeeded in life, as they say. He had dreams for his children. Doctors, Pilots, Lawyers, Architects but his daughter had a mind of her own.

She was herself. She passed from grade to grade, every year. Not once was she a bad student but she was never the brain of the class either. She stayed average, as she said so herself average doesn't stand out. Who would understand or even believe that she was, because she was the craziest thing that God ever gave life to, she had to lay low not to blow her cover. Once people got to know how she really was they realize she wasn't as normal as she pretended to be. She was involved in everything but her studies. Every night she got home too tired to study and all she did was read a little the night before exams which only helped her maintain an average in each course. She was an average student. All of the teachers told her father that she had the potential to do better but she seemed unwilling to do so. She was irregular they told him. Each year the same discussions took place in that house. Each year he would come home from parent-teacher meetings and call her to his room, where they would discuss her irregularities. She mostly felt like she was being sentenced for something she had done when she had done nothing.

In fact she had done nothing much at school. The verdict was always the same. « You should study more, if I had your chance when I was a child I would have embraced it, but I wasn't as lucky! » In her head the same lecture would play over and over, about how her grand-father never paid school fees for her father or his siblings. She put her plate down, washed her hand and started writing again...

« Whenever I think about my father, I remember how wonderful he is. He has always taken responsibility for his wife and children. Though I didn't understand it then, I know now why my father complained about his father never being there for him and his siblings. I see now that it is very important for a growing child to have a shelter to run to whenever the need rose. I can trust my father to hug me tight during a storm that I've created myself. He

has always covered me, taken care of me, loved me even when I was bad, hugged me when I cried and punished me when I did wrong. He has taught me everything I need to know about life, relationships and family. I can't forgive myself for having hated him for choosing the life he chose. Now I know why he walked the roads he walked; he had created his own life and he was happy which makes me more than proud of having him as a father. He was a good example and I wish for him to have all the good things he desires in this world.»

She put the pen down and reflected on life and what she had. She was silently grateful for what she had as well as what she was becoming, but her heart was saddened by what she had done the previous night. She had gotten drunk and made out with the guy she thought she loved. That was when she realized that she did not love him at all. It was just ideas she had built up in her head, it was more like infatuation. Lucky for her she wasn't very drunk so it never led anywhere but she hated herself for having yet again made out for the fun of it.

She couldn't forgive herself, mainly because she understood he had real feelings for her, and she played with his heart like she did with the hearts of many men. Her charm will get her and she knows it, but she can't understand why it always has to end the same way with her. She always manages to break some poor guys heart and each time she regrets it. Why can't she think before acting on her feelings. It is true she had her heart broken as well and heartbreaks are as common as sunsets but she didn't like hurting others. In other words she hated being the one to cause a heartbreak it disgusted her of herself. The next morning she started in her journal...

« I don't know which devil came over me last night. I should have shoved him away as he suddenly kissed me but instead I reciprocated for a good ten minutes before leaving him with his eyes blinking. I don't know if I am more mad at him or myself. He was probably sincere when he admitted how he felt. But I know I told him that I already had someone in my life and he took his chances. Besides we were both a bit drunk so I am sure he won't expect me to take it as if it meant something... I hope... If he does however I will have to let him down and probably not so easy... »

She hadn't even finished writing everything on her mind when she noticed his weary look from across the room. She didn't feel like talking to him or looking at him ever. She had to act as normal as she could though because the others would then be aware of their little incident and she didn't need anyone giving her the look. Three days passed without any of them saying a word to the other, except of course when the job required it. That's when he came to her and handed her a letter. It reminded her of the time he

confessed his love to her. It was sweet and gave him an image of a harmless being. She recalled the words of his first letter to her. Which read:

« It is a word I haven't used for 6 years but ever since your arrival, ever since your first day here, everything changed in me. I have been trying to tell you but you did not want to understand me. But you know that our destiny is to be together. You are the last person for whom I will ever feel this way, because after you I swear I will be single until the end and I always keep my word. I know you will not like what I am saying but I am sorry I can't keep it to myself anymore. I am a truthful person towards myself and others. I know you have changed my mentality ! I didn't want to confess my love for you but I am ready to live the consequences. I am not telling you to accept, I just want you to know that you are the first to change my life. Forgive me but I love you and it is not my fault I feel this way but lying isn't a habit of mine so I can't lie to you. As you have said before, I am human and I have a heart that feels something. I will say it again I am sorry ! you can insult me if you want, destroy me if you wish but as you know I am not afraid of death if I've told the truth. I am weak to keep such a weight in my heart. I know well enough that you will not like what you are reading but please understand there is nothing you exchange for love or else I would do it. Willingness is love. »

She had felt pangs as she read the words he had written. She felt happy to have been courted too but she was angry he put her in such a situation. Telling her he would be single all his life if he didn't have her didn't seem like he was leaving her much choice. She felt he was trying to trap her into feeling sympathetic towards him at first and she was sure he expected the sympathy to turn into interest which might eventually grow into love. She wiped the smile off her face and wanted to decapitate him. Didn't he fear God?! she thought. He knew she had someone special in her life, he knew there was no way they could ever be together ; now he was trying to trap her heart in the maze of words he had written. She had declined with harsh but kind words.

Explaining to him that she had promised herself to be with that man of hers and she wasn't ready to replace him. She wasn't ready to give up the man she loved dearly. Somehow everything felt right when she was with him. No one could understand how she could feel so strongly about him, for years came and years went by and no matter how many people she had seen in the meantime she always found the strength to run to him. It was a sweet but bitter taste. It was this that many called love, yet she had more to know.

Excerpt from *Hyenas*

Chapter 1

They were being picked up like packages at a post office. It did not matter if it was the right one as long as the price was paid. However, it seemed like there was an imposter who enjoyed picking them up and dropping them so as they could never be recognized.

They were disfigured, and most of them were found dismembered. There was no pattern to any of the killings and no clues were found, nothing lead to this killer of the night owls. Police couldn't find a plausible explanation and the government had decided to spend their money on new equipment and their human resources on crimes they thought to be more worthy of time.

Meanwhile journalists were feeding on the death of these night owls like vultures on a hyena's corpse.

The mediatization of these unforeseen occurrences did not however discourage the other night owls from going out to deliver their usual moon light services. They still went out knowing that they were hated by people, that they were looked down and frowned upon and now on top of that they were risking their lives.

There was this one particular girl who belonged to this new generation covenant who thought otherwise. They were already risking everything when she thought about it. From the moment they step out of their doors, their safety was compromised. So whether they work or not, they would die anyways.

These night owls, as the locals called them, were not just prostitutes to many men. They were gems that shone when other women went to bed, and they were the only ones who could see them. She was not a prostitute in her own eyes, she was a companion to those seeking to run away from loneliness, and they were loyal to her at that. They didn't judge her shirt that made her chest look bigger or her skirt that was too short to even be called a pantie, nor did they view her long heels to be intimidating. All they wanted was a shoulder to lay on, and a warm body to lay next to for a few hours.

She heard a knock at the door, putting down the book by Clara Renggli, she went to get it asking louder than the barks who it was so early in the night. She opened the door and it was her brother. They hugged each other long, like they always did and he went in. They sat by the fire and talked for hours about what the family decisions had been. He

was happy to see her smiling again with the book on her lap, even though the smell of cigarette smoke and the buds on the table weren't good news.

He sipped on the gingerale and kept explaining that they wanted her to leave her home and stay closer to her mother. Her health had been degrading and the family was concerned she would end up being hospitalized again. She did not understand it but she was in no mood or had no energy to fight him. He had only been the messenger. He asked what she thought and she on a monologue as she often did :

"It was brain-wash. They fed the hyenas like the harrari man in the night. They were all fake and expected the rest of the world to be just like them. Their exteriors were picture perfect but their inside was as dark as night and twisted like the strangler tree on a horse stable. They all seemed so happy and they would all smile and hug and pretend they loved each other because every week they had reminders that they were brothers and that they should love each other no matter what. But their smiles were just like writings on sand; they would wash away as soon as the tides came in."

She went on and he let her, like he often did,

"They had no true relationships among themselves, they strived so hard to please their god that they forgot to please each other and themselves. Every thing they did was for the sake of what others might think or how others might perceive them as a group. Every thing was staged, each movement was planned and thought through; they were learning how to better manipulate innocent people in the name of the Truth.

They were convinced that they held in their hands the key to a better life, the life that would enable them to live forever. How can anyone think to become immortal when the one life they have, they have wasted?

Had they known they were spitting on the lives that were given to them by simply wasting their time worrying about how many people they can convert and bring within their organization. Convinced that others were on the wrong path, convinced that others were mean and bad and unforgivable. Convinced they were themselves the angels of God when they did not even know him. They teach that God is Love but they know not the meaning of what Love truly is. Or am I being too harsh on a bunch of people that truly believe that they know God. Well if that is the case then the soul I had long ago lost shall not return to me and I do not know God!"

He simply nodded understanding where the rant came from without really understanding what she had gone on about. But he always enjoyed her monologues, he felt as though he was reading her; though in truth she often read to him when they were little because he despised it so much and it made it all easy for him to listen to her. He asked her what she was really thinking just so he could hear her talking a bit more before she was taken away from him once again. He had no one to blame everytime she

left, he never really understood why she had to be taken but he knew she had to leave and that was life!

She went on "Never would I pretend to know the source of life but I am certain that the one we have is a chance for our soul to be forgiven. The relationships we entertain with others shouldn't be built on whether or not we belong to the same group, neither on whether or not we believe in the same God or worship him in the same manners. God, the force of the universe or whatever names it goes by is the same whether we believe in its existence or not.

If they had known that love was accepting people as they were without worrying much about what they did? If so would they have been as judgemental? Their feelings were untrue, unreal even so that, their lives were as empty as Hell or Heaven. But to them it was full; they considered themselves having everything that a human being might ever need; when they forgot that all they possessed was the mere reflection of the imaginations of a few old men waiting to die. However it is not to be neglected that their teachings were accurate; but over the years it had become something else. Their lust for spiritual power has corrupted their natural instincts. They thought themselves being better than average human beings, better than another soul that breathes the same air in the same manner... you know? She asked as though asking for his approval even though she would go one before he had a chance to say anything, and she did.

"Convinced of having found the truth they ignore the inexistence of an absolute truth. No one knows for certain what the objective of human life on earth really is and I am bloody certain that it isn't just to populate it or to find salvation.

Salvation from what, though? I wonder!

If all is sin it isn't hard to believe to be leading our soul to perdition, and if we keep making everything into sin our soul will lead itself towards the very thing we try to keep it from.

Our soul knows what it needs and when it needs it. We aren't robots or programmed machines that spit or reflect what we are taught by some fools pretending to be all knowing. Pretentious of being on the right track they are missing out on their only life, she sighed looking up at the sky and added "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Thinking she was done, he asked her if she could read him what she had written during the three days she was locked in her room, hibernating from the winter of souls outside. He was certain she would never put down either books or pens.

She skipped to her bedside feeling like she was five again and enjoyed seeing her eyes light up again. He knew deep down that she was different, she had always been. He waited. She read.