

Characters:

The Investigator (TI)

The Portable Object (TPO)

The Un-Invited (TUI)

Kate (K), Paul (P) or Juliane (J)

Location:

An environment with a bad smell

TI:

You will read or hear this in the early hours of the day, in the evening, later or too late. I would like to welcome you: I am glad you are here. Hello.

In case something prevents you from being at ease or if, for any kind of reason, you can't stay or continue, I wish to assure you, that you can come back, any time.

I am glad you are here.

It's not a fast movement.

TPO:

Something tiny falls to the ground, rolls or turns around for a couple of seconds, seems to come to rest but starts to grow instead and has become immense soon after.

TI:

Yes. You are standing on a mix of dry clay and sand. Slightly in front of you hair is growing

out of the ground. It is a slow movement but faster than the growth of your hair. It is similar to the travelling speed of a snail. The hair is thick and as soon as it has reached the height of three or four centimetres and is covering a space the size of an ostrich egg, you realize that you might have been mistaken: maybe you didn't see it grow. You see the surface that the hair is attached to. You see it rise at the same speed as the hair before and you are quite sure by now that it isn't growth but appearance. The portion of the surface you are looking at resembles to a bump now and continues to rise. It is longer than wide and on it's way upwards it becomes higher than it is long. The hair and this surface are similar in colour to the clay and sand you are standing on.

TPO:

It could have started anywhere.
It could just disappear again, it could grow backwards.

TI:

It could, yes.

You don't run away. You place your feet a bit further to the sides, as the closest part of the sprawling object has reached the space between your shoes. There is a second bump that starts to rise a couple of feet in front of you. Its form is more complex. It develops into the head of the camel on whose back you find yourself sitting, in a riding position. The whole object, you and the camel, moves forward. You move towards some sort of horizon. (You will certainly become camel-sick, but not yet.) The head turns around and you can see a mouth that seems to have teeth only on the lower jaw and a hard rippled substance on the upper jaw. Camels can eat cactuses and the breath coming from the direction of the head that is looking at you now smells as if they do. This is the setting. This is where it begins.

TPO:

OK. After a day or two or an hour,
my back hurts and my rear is sore. This is what I wanted. To want to get off a camel.

TUI:

Hello.

TPO:

Uh?

TUI:

Hello. Have a look. They're not expensive.

TPO:

Hello. Nice stones.

TI:

You are getting off the back of the animal and you look at a couple of stones lying around the feet of someone who is holding the broken halves of a stone the size of a coconut in his hands. The interior of this stone is hollow, but a layer of deep red crystals covers the inner surface.

All of the stones are broken in halves and have similar interiors. Their colours vary.

TUI:

Yes, beautiful, no?

TPO:

Very. Where do they come from?

TUI:

The mountains.

TPO:

Do you have one that isn't broken?

TUI:

Excuse me?

TPO:

Where you can't see the crystals?

TUI:

They are everywhere!

TPO:

Yes. But I'd like one, that has crystals and isn't broken.

TUI:

You can put the halves back together. You don't see the crack, do you?

TPO:

Hardly.

TUI :

You could use clay, paint, glue.

TPO :

I'd like to have a stone and know that it's interior is like these ones without having to look inside. I'd like you to convince someone to find a stone like this and not open it. They must know them even from the outside.

TUI :

I'm sorry, but I don't think I will find someone who'll do that.

TPO :

I'd pay.

TUI :

Of course.

TPO :

And I can wait.

TUI :

I can't explain it, but they won't do it.

TPO :

Come on.

TUI :

But why?

TPO :

Ooh.

TPO :

I want to pay them to convince me. If I searched for one I'd never be sure it really was filled with crystals, with them the ratio is very much higher.

TUI :

Let's say it's ten to one. Would you take ten of which one probably isn't filled?

TPO :

I'd like to pay to be sure. I'd like to have one, and pay the finder for the stone for his affirmation, his promise that it contains crystals. I'd pay the price for ten.

TUI :

I'll try, but I think they won't do it.

TI :

Could we go back and stay a bit with the sore part of your body, or rather with soreness? I would like to increase the space of the bad smell until now only present in the breath of the camel and focus on the friction that takes place between your bottom and the back of the camel.

TPO :

That took place.

TI :

I'd like to start with a limit that starts to become porous. As if you were caressing or rubbing your arm at the same spot for the duration of an hour or so and the skin started to redden, to belly out and than brake open. I'd like to think of a piece of sugar in a cup of coffee. You are the sugar if you want, and the camel is the coffee. The first part of a method that Gasparo Tagliacozzi developed is interesting for us, here. Sally O'Reilly says that plastic surgery started in Venice where a lot of noses were destroyed by syphilis or mutilated by firearms. Tagliacozzi cut off the rotten tip of the nose, made an incision in the upper-arm, positioned the tip of the nose onto the incision, locked them in position by attaching the hand of the patients to the back of their heads and waited for the skin of the arm and the nose to grow together. Upon completion of the scarification, another incision was made around the nose-arm-junction to provide material to build a new tip for the nose. You go from soreness to scarification and you arrive at a third thing. Every irritation, every wound is the beginning of something new. You and the camel are becoming closer.

TPO :

We share a soreness, but it is two third things, not one.

TI :

That's is just a question of time or scale.

TPO :

That's what I'm saying.

TI:

We can make it less complicated, we can call it love or we can say it's a swamp. A place, a substance that bodies are falling into and being gradually transformed through. Or something less spectacular. Seemingly less spectacular: You lean against a wall. It is stable enough to support the weight of your body. You are able to keep on standing even though you are tired. You are standing back to back with another person. You have your photo taken next to something. And you say, this is me and Mona Lisa, me and a tiger, me and David Bowie. In being close or next to something you are infected or contaminated by its qualities. You are associated. You can call it neighbourhood, contamination, assimilation, becoming similar.

TPO:

It was evident, you wouldn't have the same opinion.

One thing that I can do for you is to say the inverse of everything you say. I can say: You are not me. That could be our contract.

You say it's about closeness, proximity and I say it doesn't exist, I give an example: The woman that was struck by a meteorite, touched, grazed while she was sleeping on her couch, somewhere in America in the middle of the 20th century. She woke up by noise and pain in the area of her left hip. She saw a hole in the ceiling above her and her hip burned in an area the size of her hands. Soon after she found a stone like thing that was hot to the touch and within days she was on television shows and her picture was in Life magazine. A bit later she broke up with her husband and both declared they wished nothing like this incident had ever happened. Today the meteorite is part of the Alabama Museum of Natural History. On a photo taken at the occasion of it's donation you can see her smiling and in her smile you can see a joy of being close, to accompany or to be accompanied – even though she knows she isn't, that she has never been, that she wasn't really there, that she woke up afterwards, for example, but at the same time she was almost there, and that this proximity is close enough for others to consider her as someone who was there, at least for a moment.

TI :

That's not the opposite of what I said.
There was a collision: there's a hole and a burnt hip.
The object is linked to her.

TPO :

It's a question of distance. A trace is just a trace. Same with the memory or the legend that remains of it. It's two things that look like one.

TUI :

Like *long before we met we shared the same dreams* and years later you find out you were not talking about the same book, film, plant, idea.

TPO :

Yes, only that this is not a deception, this is where it starts to be interesting.

TI :

The first phase is interesting as well, and in both you call yourselves US.

TPO :

Yes, exactly, you say us, you don't say ME.

TI :

Those Venetian noses, how do you call them?

It's very unlikely that this kind of junction works with the first camel that you ride on, but I don't think it is impossible.

TPO :

I don't know who invented the Centaurs, but my guess is, it was someone who saw a rider and didn't know, you could ride. Why would you want to become a Centaur, when could choose to ride instead.

TUI :

What about my stones?
You want them with a crack or without?

TI :

Without.

TI :

Thank you very much for your attention.