

# The Genius

What I am about to transcribe onto these pages must not be shared with anyone or exposed publicly, as it could be taken as a deliberate act of treason or sedition against humanity itself. That is why I must keep it to myself, even if it is a desperate attempt to express my most irrepressible and selfish desires. But little of that will make sense soon, for it seems my brain will soon leave behind those sensations of self-repression and sail into the waters of a neurotic reality much like this one, but far from the shores of the ordinary, the crowds, and mediocrity.

I once heard—whether in reality or in a dream drawn from my fanciful memories, I cannot say—someone declared that the ultimate fate of every man is either glory or the most absolute oblivion. And it is, indeed, a terrible truth! But I must not hold back any longer, for my hands tremble with each word I ink onto these pages, as if trying to escape this self-imposed task. Yet I must go on, even if it is but a feeble attempt to save, however small, that part of me that still clings to the realm of the known.

It was, at the time, a wretched year for me, for my soul was not of a social nature, and in the city where I spent my youth, I remained alone for most of my leisure hours. I sought companionship in the books of my family's library, and for some years, they were more than faithful allies. But upon reaching adulthood, my mind began to decay within the walls of my home. It was then that I sought beyond my familiar surroundings, and in no time at all, the communal library became my second abode

of dreams and inquiries. I had also labored, though with little success and even less personal satisfaction, in the art of writing and novel crafting—but only in solitude. Never did I share my writings with family or acquaintances.

Then came an unpleasant autumn morning, when nature threatened passersby with a fine drizzle, releasing its fury at the precise moment I was making my way to the aforementioned library. It remains curious how something as mundane as an undesirable weather could be the cause of our meeting—something as natural as the air itself, yet with an outcome as unexpected as it was inconceivable.

My feet met a small obstacle I had failed to anticipate, and the ground caught me in a painful and icy embrace, where both ink from my writings and the red liquid from my lips and nose mingled freely. Then, he approached me.

A man—or rather, the shadow of one—unknown to me at the time, swiftly gathered my belongings and extended a saving hand toward my poor scattered work. He dressed like a noble, yet that did not prevent him from running to my aid from a nearby café, abandoning his own belongings just to assist me in such a humiliating scene. Without hesitation, he invited me to sit at his table and took note of my needs, which were promptly met by the local staff. And though the space we occupied was secluded and closed off from the rest of the establishment, many others crowded at the sliding doors, striving for a good vantage point from which to witness his act of chivalry.

With luminous skin, long dark hair, and a well-groomed beard, the man kept our encounter private, revealing nothing beyond his formal introduction—though I shall

refrain from stating his name. For now, it is evident, at least to me, that I must doubt his words, though not his actions.

Once my scattered writings were safe and my belongings regained their warmth, the man fell into an ominous silence for a brief moment, for one of my pages had stirred his curiosity. Whether it was due to the reddish stains from my recent stumble or the words still visible upon it, I do not know. In any case, I made no effort to stop him or divert his unsuspecting attention from such an inappropriate work, for his mere inquisitive gaze demanded an unbreakable silence.

When he finally finished reading, to my utter astonishment, the man gifted me a pleased smile. Handing me back that tainted page, he gathered his belongings and left without another word, bidding farewell with a slight tilt of his hat. The crowd outside followed him for a few meters, leaving me alone there, my thoughts racing with the curiosity sparked by that mysterious man.

It was then that my fingers encountered something beyond my own writings—a small, thicker piece of paper slipped between them and landed atop the wooden café table. It was not mine, yet there was no doubt that the man had meant for me to have it. Upon closer inspection, I discovered it to be a formal invitation to a gathering of which I knew neither purpose nor theme. Still, I could not ignore the opportunity to properly thank him for his kindness and, more importantly, to satisfy my growing curiosity about him.

On the day inscribed on that sacred piece of paper, which I still keep as if it were a relic, I directed my steps to a grand building in the city where events of various kinds

were hosted—usually recitals or theatrical performances, which seemed fitting given the interest he had shown in my writings.

Upon arrival, I observed those awaiting the opening of the doors. There was nothing remarkable about them, yet I was undoubtedly the outsider among them. My lack of social connections beyond mere courtesy prevented me from engaging with anyone to inquire about the nature or purpose of the gathering.

The great doors soon opened to the congregation, and we all took our seats in rows encircling a raised platform crowned with a lectern of dark marble. My seat was in the innermost ring, just a few steps from the very center.

Then, in a deliberate theatrical effect, the chandeliers dimmed, shrouding the room in darkness. Silence fell over us, amplifying the sound of slow, deliberate footsteps echoing from the back of the hall.

And there he was...