A Thousand and One Passions or a Terrible Night

Midnight struck on the tower of St. Forty-Six Martyrs. I trembled. The time had come. I convulsively seized Theodore by the hand and went out with him into the street. The sky was dark as printer's ink. It was dark as in a hat pulled over one's head. A dark night is a day in a nutshell. We wrapped ourselves in cloaks and set off. A strong wind pierced us through and through. Rain and snow, those wet brothers, beat terribly into our faces. Lightning, despite the winter season, streaked the sky in all directions. Thunder, a fearsome, majestic companion of the lovely lightning, lovely as the flash of blue eyes, swift as thought, terribly shook the air. Theodore's ears glowed with electricity. St. Elmo's fires crackled overhead. I looked up. I trembled. Who does not tremble before the majesty of nature? Several bright meteors flew across the sky. I began to count them and counted twenty-eight. I pointed them out to Theodore.

"An ill omen!" he muttered, pale as a statue of Carrara marble.

The wind groaned, howled, sobbed... The groan of the wind is the groan of conscience drowned in terrible crimes. Near us, thunder destroyed and set fire to an eight-story building. I heard screams flying out of it. We passed by. Did I care about the burning house when a hundred and fifty houses were burning in my breast? Somewhere in space a bell tolled mournfully, slowly, monotonously. There was a struggle of the elements. Some unknown forces seemed to be working on a terribly harmonious harmony of the elements. Who are these forces? Will man ever know them?

A timid yet daring dream!!!

We shouted "coachman." We got into the carriage and rushed off. The coachman is the brother of the wind. We rushed as a bold thought rushes through the mysterious convolutions of the brain. I thrust a purse of gold into the coachman's hand. The gold helped the whip double the speed of the horses' legs.

"Antonio, where are you taking me?" groaned Theodore. "You look like an evil genius... Hell shines in your black eyes... I am beginning to be afraid..."

"Miserable coward!!" I kept silent. He loved her. She loved him passionately... I had to kill him because I loved her more than life. I loved her and hated him. He had to die on this terrible night and pay with his death for his love. Love and

hatred boiled in me. They were my second being. These two sisters, living in one shell, produce devastation: they are spiritual vandals.

"Stop!" I said to the coachman when the carriage rolled up to the destination.

Theodore and I jumped out. The moon looked at us coldly from behind the clouds. The moon is an impartial, silent witness of the sweet moments of love and revenge. She had to be a witness to the death of one of us. Before us was an abyss, a bottomless chasm, like the barrel of the criminal daughters of Danaus. We stood at the edge of the crater of an extinct volcano. Terrible legends circulate among the people about this volcano. I made a movement with my knee, and Theodore flew down into the terrible abyss. The crater of the volcano is the mouth of the earth.

"Damnation!!!" he screamed in response to my curse.

A strong man overthrowing his enemy into the crater of a volcano because of the beautiful eyes of a woman—a majestic, grandiose, and instructive picture! Only the lava was missing!

Coachman. The coachman is a statue erected by fate to ignorance. Away with routine! The coachman followed Theodore. I felt that only love remained in my breast. I fell on my face to the ground and wept with rapture. Tears of rapture are the result of a divine reaction produced in the depths of a loving heart. The horses neighed cheerfully. How painful it is not to be a human being! I freed them from their animal, suffering life. I killed them. Death is both chains and liberation from chains.

I went into the inn of the Violet Hippopotamus and drank five glasses of good wine.

Three hours after the revenge I was at the door of her apartment. The dagger, friend of death, helped me get to her door over corpses. I began to listen. She was not sleeping. She was dreaming. I listened. She was silent. The silence lasted four hours. Four hours for a lover are four nineteenths of a century! At last she called the maid. The maid passed by me. I looked at her demonically. She caught my glance. Reason left her. I killed her. Better to die than to live without reason.

"Aneta!" she screamed. "Why isn't Theodore coming? Longing gnaws at my heart. Some heavy presentiment is choking me. O Aneta! go for him. He is probably carousing now with the godless, terrible Antonio!.. God, whom do I see?! Antonio!"

I entered to her. She turned pale.

"Go away!" she screamed, and horror distorted her noble, beautiful features.

I looked at her. The gaze is the sword of the soul. She staggered. In my gaze she saw everything: Theodore's death, demonic passion, and a thousand human desires... My pose was majesty. Electricity shone in my eyes. My hair moved and stood on end. She saw before her a demon in an earthly shell. I saw that she was admiring me. For four hours there continued a tomb-like silence and mutual contemplation. Thunder crashed, and she fell upon my breast. A man's breast is a woman's fortress. I squeezed her in my arms. We both screamed. Her bones cracked. A galvanic current ran through our bodies. A hot kiss...

She loved the demon in me. I wanted her to love the angel in me. "I give one and a half million francs to the poor!" I said. She loved the angel in me and wept. I wept too. What tears those were!!! A month later in the church of St. Titus and Hortensia a solemn wedding took place. I was married to her. She was married to me. The poor blessed us! She begged me to forgive my enemies whom I had previously killed. I forgave. With my young wife I went to America. My young loving wife was an angel in the virgin forests of America, an angel before whom lions and tigers bowed. I was a young tiger. Three years after our wedding, old Sam was already running around with a curly-haired boy. The boy resembled his mother more than me. This angered me. Yesterday my second son was born... and I hanged myself from joy... My second boy stretches his little hands to the readers and asks them not to believe his papa, because his papa had not only no children, but not even a wife. His papa fears marriage like fire. My boy does not lie. He is an infant. Believe him. Childhood is a holy age. None of this ever happened... Good night!