

THE CORNER OF THE JERKS

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The corner of the jerks

Adrián Dozetas

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Me through Acoyte Avenue on my motorcycle and Sofia as my passenger covering herself from the wind with my back. Her cold hands on my ribs. She singing a song and playing with the vibrato that the holes in the asphalt produce to her voice.

“Sofia.”

“What.”

“The plan is nicer with you.”

“What plan.”

“Any plan.”

“What? I cannot hear you, it’s too windy.”

“Nothing.”

Me wanting to pass a bus of line 42, the driver blocking me, braking the bus, almost crushing us against the row of parked cars. Taking off my helmet to say something to the guy. And the guy with an elbow out of the window throwing a spit in my face, speeding up the bus and disappearing.

Getting off the bike in the La Mar passage. Sofia with a tissue wiping the driver's spit on my face, wetting a finger with saliva and running it over my moustache.

“You have ash.”

Sofia and I walking down the La Mar passage like two strangers who are ashamed to feel the cliché of knowing each other before they met. And now I'm asking Sofia to hold with one foot the mechanism that opens the lid of a garbage container. Me with half my body inside the dumpster. Fish, a still edible cake, women's underwear, moldy tangerines.

Sofia. Bicycle, second-hand clothes, organic food, those things. In social networks she calls herself sweet_foxglove but her name is Sofia Ramona Manuela Victoria Victoria Martinez de las Casas and her oligarchic lineage shows up in her corpulent white wrists of generations of white Argentinian loose living life. However, rich grandparents, poor grandchildren; Sofia now works in a call-center to support her artistic career. And she doesn't find it tragic. An aspirational dancer, married to a guy, she has no children nor would she like to have them, unpunctual, phobic of animals that carry a house on their backs. Once she tried snail, she says she threw up and almost drowned.

I don't know more than that about Sofia. Maybe her smell. Like fresh bread, like solid shampoo. But encounters has nothing to do with knowing; they belong to the field of

tobacco —they are inevitable. Sofia tugging at my pants.

“Don't dig Adriano the garbage, please this is embarrassing.”

Me coming out of the container, shaking my hands on my jacket. Giving Sofia a bouquet of flowers and an unused pepper spray founded in that garbage. Sofia's cheeks red.

“Adriano that was so beautiful. They are dandelions, did you know that the dandelion is my favorite flower?”

“You're my favorite flower.”

“Idiot. Do you have a favorite flower? A real one, I mean.”

“Yes. Weed.”

“Ouch.”

“What.”

“When I'm in love I say ouch a lot.”

“In love.”

“We have to talk about love, Adriano.”

“Talk about what and what for. Let's not pause the movie.”

“I just can't stop. When you're not there, I want you to be there. And vice versa. I really think we should talk. But after the ice cream.”

Sofia in the need of a Magnum ice cream. Riding around kiosks and supermarkets on the bike.

“You realize that the world is badly made Adriano, but how can there not be ice cream in winter, how.”

Getting a Magnum at the YPF gas station on Alberdi Avenue. Shivering between cabs filling up gas. Sofia with chocolate all over her face.

“Adriano.”

“Yes.”

“Remind me that we have to talk about love.”

After the sweet Magnum not talking about love but salty food under the smog of the sunset at the Kentucky pizzeria on Avenue Rivadavia corner Otamendi Street with the pepper spray and the bouquet of dandelions on a red Coca-Cola table, Sofia, me, half a greasy pizza, two cold Brahma's beers. Sofia's pizza edges on my plate and me giving them to a pigeon walking on our table. Sofia unbuttoning her pants button, chewing her last slice, wiping her mouth with her napkin.

“Shall we talk about love?”

"If you insist.”

“I'm a married girl. You're going to break my life. End of the speech.”

“We didn't even kiss, Sofia.”

“You have to go away.”

“Go away. Where to.”

“You have to leave Buenos Aires. That's what I feel. You can't argue against that. I feel that your destiny is not here. You remember that law that says that what you feel cannot be discussed?”

“I'm not good at any laws. Now tell me something, Sofia. If as you say I were to leave, why wouldn't you come with me?”

“I know you're going to leave. Even more. I have the feeling that you've already left. And you see. You left me here alone.”

“First, I'm not going anywhere. Second, you're going to be with your husband Alberto.”

“My husband's name is Juan, not Alberto.”

“Juan. Whatever.”

Smoking cigarettes, making balls with napkins.
The shoals of cars merging from Otamendi
Street to Rivadavia Avenue. And Sofia red,
coughing. Sipping beers.

“Still hungry, Sofia?”

“Seriously. We have to finish it.”

“It never started.”

“Enough, Adriano, let's make the effort,
let's finish this. Ask for the bill, I pay.”

3

Now we about to say goodbye at the corner of Avenues Rivadavia and Acoyte, which we baptized as the corner of the jerks. Sofia wiping her tears with her corpulent wrists. Nails of one hand painted in Pepsi blue.

A guy coming up to sell us tablecloths, a homeless man shouting the rage of god and walkers with their faces buried in their phones. The street as an office, as an online game room, as a confessional.

“Sofia.”

“Sofia nothing. This is the last time we see each other. I can't be your friend. I feel sick.”

“Sofia.”

“It's super unfair. Do you know why I have this hat on? Do you know? Don't be quiet, answer me, do you know or don't you know why I have a hat on my head? Ah, you don't know. I'm going to explain to you why I have a hat on my head. So that when I go back home while I'm walking, people don't see me crying, that's why I brought this ugly hat. You don't realize that we have nothing to do together, do you? It doesn't fit on that big, hairy head of yours. Adriano.”

“What.”

“Look at you.”

“It's just that last night I didn't sleep.”

“Is there any night you sleep at all?”

“What are you, a cop.”

“I'm snoring at eleven, at seven I go jogging in the park. Adriano all your clothes have cigarette holes. And I'm a vegan and I play the ukulele. It's absurd. For you every day

is weekend. It's not enough to love each other. To be with someone you decide with your brain. Don't you see that nothing exists together. It just doesn't exist.”

“The moment.”

“You keep looking for me. And I'm a stupid weak. And a liar. I'm lying, I'm looking for you too. In fact I'm worse, I throw you out of my life and when I miss you I look for you. I'm a mean person. No. It's not that I'm mean. It's just that I can't stop. Understand?”

“No.”

“I hate you. I hate me. I hate us.”

“Sofia.”

“I need someone to warm my hands in winter and you— don't fucking look at me like that.

“Sofia, listen to me.”

“It seems Adriano that you don't hear me, I'm telling you that it's over, there's nothing to

say, there's no Sofia, it's over. And i'm going to repeat it until it's true.”

“Sofia.”

“Again Sofia. I still remember the first time I saw you. All cute with that wild but aristocratic thing you have. And this kills me, that between A and B you always choose Z. What do you want from me? You don't believe in couples. I don't either. Or do I. Do you warm someone's hands in winter? Well. Enough of this. We're adults, aren't we? We're grown up. The problem is that we don't know how to love freely. Let's go. Get on that motorcycle and go away and I'll go home crying with this ugly hat that covers my face and that's it, and that's it. And let me know when you are in the Caribbean or in Europe or I don't know, wherever you are going. I know you are leaving, this is clear. But don't tell me

anything before you leave. Write me directly from Tokyo, promise? Promise me—”

“Sofia.”

“What.”

“I feel you're an angel.”

“Ah.”