

ct

The swings

de
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traducción de
Roger Simeon

(fragmento en inglés)

[A man (HE) sits on the right swing. His head is lowered. He stares absentmindedly at his feet that are moving nervously. As though they were not his. As though he couldn't control them]

[HE looks at his watch. Looks at both sides. Looks up and looks down: HE is waiting for someone who hasn't arrived yet]

[HE, tired of waiting, gets off the swing and, grumbling, walks towards the left side of the stage]

[SHE comes in. A woman of age and appearance similar to HE. So much that it is clear that they are, or were, or will be, a couple. They look so much alike that they can only be that. Or siblings. But that's not the case]

[They cross each other silently, almost without looking at each other]

SHE

[Sits on the right swing] Leaving already?

HE

[Doesn't stop completely] Yes...

SHE

Oh, then go, go... if you're in a hurry...

HE

[Stops] No... I'm not in a hurry...

SHE

Then?

HE

I'm just leaving...

SHE

And where do you go?

HE

[Pause] I don't know.

SHE

Have you no direction?

HE

Nor heading.

SHE

And why don't you go to the beach?

HE
The beach?

SHE
Yes. The beach.

HE
I don't like the beach.

SHE
Because there is too much sand?

HE
No.

SHE
Because there is too much water?

HE
No.

SHE
Because there is too much sun?

HE
No. [Pause] Because there are too many people.

SHE
But now there won't be anyone... it is still too cold.

HE
Then even worst. Empty beaches make me sad. The sound of the waves makes me sick and I feel like I'm going to... [but stops talking]

SHE
[Pause] Then, if you are not going to the beach... I don't know where you can go...

HE
[Doubts] Home...

SHE
Because you have something to do?

HE
No.

SHE

Because someone is waiting for you there?

HE

No... nobody is waiting for me... I'm completely alone.

SHE

Like me...

HE

You too?

SHE

Yes. Completely alone.

HE

How peculiar...

SHE

What is it?

HE

The more people there are in the world, the lonelier we are.

SHE

Alone and abandoned...

HE

[As though it was a game. In crescendo] Abandoned and forgotten...

SHE

Forgotten and rejected...

HE

Rejected and condemned...

SHE

Condemned and punished...

HE

Punished and disheartened...

SHE

Disheartened and exhausted...

HE

Exhausted and sad...

SHE

[Victorious] Yes! You've lost! "Sad" doesn't rhyme with "exhausted"!

HE

Of course it rhymes.

SHE

Really? Since when?

HE

Since the free verse was invented.

SHE

But that's not even poetry!

HE

And why do you tell me? I'm not a poet...

SHE

Neither are they, that I can assure you... but listen, weren't you leaving?

HE

Me? No. [Walks back to the swing] You were the one leaving. Like always. I'm meeting someone.

SHE

Oh! I am also meeting someone! What do you think? That you are the only one in the whole world meeting with people? Look at you... mister important!

HE

Important and mordant...

SHE

Mordant and... and... abhorrent!

HE

Abhorrent, but enthralling.

SHE

If you say so...

HE

Me and everybody who knows me.

SHE

Which is you and nobody else.

HE
What do you mean?

SHE
That you have no friends.

HE
Of course not. Friends are too demanding. They are always asking for favors, you always have to be there for them, always have to be ready to take them to the hospital at five in the morning because they are bleeding from their back...

SHE
Not all the friends are like that...

HE
Mine are. That's why I decided not to have friends.

SHE
I have a lot.

HE
Because you mustn't have anything better to do.

SHE
Just the opposite: I do a lot.

HE
Because you must have lots of time.

SHE
Don't know... just about enough, I guess. Like everybody else. Some days even too much because I don't know what to do with it and get really bored... other days, on the other hand... I don't have enough time and I don't know where to find it...

HE
Have you looked behind the closet?

SHE
Yes.

HE
And under the rug?

SHE
Yes.

HE
Inside the yellow toilet kit?

SHE
Yes.

HE
In the bedside table drawer? Between the pages of your books? Between the bed sheets?

SHE
Yes, yes and yes...

HE
And under the bed?

SHE
No way! It's too scary! No, I can't look under the bed, it is full of monsters!

HE
Monsters?

SHE
Yes!

HE
And what are they doing under your bed?

SHE
They conspire...

HE
Conspire? Against what?

SHE
Against everything!

HE
Wow!

SHE
Day and night, I hear them. Always whispering and planning...

HE
Planning and organizing...

SHE
[Doesn't follow the game] Night and day. And I can't sleep...

HE
Can't you?

SHE
How could I? If I slept, I wouldn't hear what they're saying!

HE
And what do they say?

SHE
I can't tell you.

HE
[Looks at both sides to make sure no one can hear them] Because it is a secret?

SHE
No, because I don't understand them. They speak Monsterish and I don't know a single word of Monsterish.

HE
You should find an interpreter...

SHE
Never! We fill the theaters for the interpretations. Well, we did because there's no one in the theater anymore... no, what I meant was someone to translate what they are saying...

HE
But remember that every translation is a treachery...

SHE
Perfect! Nothing better than a traitor to inform us about a conspiracy.

HE
You're right about that...

SHE
About that and everything else: I'm perfect.

HE
Perfect? But who are you? God?

SHE
What are you talking about? God died years ago, or he was killed or bored himself to death by seeing how his children behaved... don't know... don't remember... poor man... only the good die young...

HE

Is he really dead? I wasn't invited to his funeral...

SHE

Because it was a very intimate service with only the family.

HE

Well, in that case... [remembers vaguely] but, hey, don't they say that he resurrected afterwards?

SHE

No, not him. That was the son, who actually was also the father born out of a mother who was a virgin and got pregnant by the announcement of an archangel that I don't know what did he announce her and neither I want to know it because I already have enough and too much with my own children to have an archangel getting me pregnant, that would be too much. Can you imagine it? [Pause] And, besides, we killed him again.

HE

The Impregnating Archangel?

SHE

No, I mean this son who was the father born out of a mother who was a virgin impregnated by an archangel.

HE

We killed him twice?

SHE

Yes.

HE

Out of disappointment?

SHE

Probably: poor man, what ungrateful children he had...

HE

Yes, children are not like they used to be... they were more upright... more resistant to collisions... while nowadays they seem to be made of crystal and ready to shatter with the most insignificant accident... I don't know... before, children were... better...

SHE

You're right. You only have to look at that kid over there...

HE

[Looks at the ground] Where? Underground?

SHE

No. There. Down there [and points at the kid with her finger] That kid running up and down. Can't you see him?

HE

The one on the slide?

SHE

Yes. That one.

HE

And what's wrong with that kid?

SHE

I've been watching him for a while now... look at him: he goes from one place to the other. Running around like a madman, he climbs up the ladder of the slide three steps at a time, lets himself slide like it was a life or death situation but, halfway through, his eyes go somewhere else: he has seen something else that he deems better than the slide and, almost without touching the ground, he flies towards...

HE

He flies? Is he an angel by any chance?

SHE

No. Try better a devil.

HE

Like those who stink of smoke and sulfur and have a red tail?

SHE

No. Like those who are motherfuckers.

HE

Oh, yes, there are a lot of these...

SHE

[Furious] Look at him! Look! He's already bored of another game! Don't you see it?

HE

Honestly, not...

SHE

Look at his eyes! Look at them! He's not enjoying the game... he's looking enviously towards the wooden motorbike... don't be like that! Enjoy the moment! Enjoy it! Don't waste your life looking for something else! Waiting for something better to come around which will never come. Just accept what you have and learn to enjoy it!

HE

And that? Where does this outdated speech comes from?

SHE

From the apartment 3b. It gets through the air vent and mixes with the stench of the dishes cooked by the woman in the 2a who thinks she is such a great cook because she's been chained 40 years to the kitchen while her husband is out getting drunk afternoon after afternoon; but, in fact, she only manages to burn the onions and boil the oil, and keeps going down through the air vent until it reaches the apartment 1d, which is where I live...

HE

1d? How curious! I used to live on a 1d as well...

SHE

Really?

HE

Yes.

SHE

And you don't anymore?

HE

No.

SHE

Why?

HE

Because I live somewhere else.

SHE

Because you like moving houses?

HE

No. Because I was kicked out of the other.

SHE

I'm sure you did something to get kicked out...

HE

Lots of things! I'm not going to pretend I didn't. In fact, I'm surprised I wasn't kicked out earlier.

SHE

Yes, it is quite surprising... you look like you've done so many terrible things...

HE
Is it that obvious?

SHE
Even more.

HE
[Shows his profile and touches his flat chin] Is it because of my prominent chin?

SHE
No.

HE
[Touches his scarce hair] Because of my long hair?

SHE
Nope.

HE
Because I dress badly?

SHE
No. Neither. But anybody can see from far away that you are a bad person...

HE
Well... maybe that's a bit too much... I don't think that...

SHE
No, really. I'm telling you. Just from the first glimpse at you, I thought: what an evil man! I'm sure he's in this playground to harass some kid...

HE
What?

SHE
Yes, that you were one of those who go to playgrounds to spy on little kids and when they get home they touch themselves...

HE
But what are you saying? I'm not one of those!

SHE
Oh, I'm sorry, I misjudged you: you are one of those who approach little kids and ask them to touch them.

HE
No! I respect children!

SHE

Yes, of course. I don't doubt it. You respect them, but you touch them.

HE

No! I've never touched a kid!

SHE

Not a single kid?

HE

None.

SHE

And what about your children?

HE

Never. My children even less than others! But, how can you think that I...?

SHE

You're a bad dad! A hug every now and then is not asking too much, isn't it?

HE

But... but...

SHE

Poor children of yours, what a shitty father they have who does not hug them, nor love them, nor appreciate them or anything...

HE

No... but I do... I hug them... I did hug them... every now and then... I did... when I lived with them... but... but... I respect them...

SHE

Do you respect them like you respect the plants?

HE

Yes.

SHE

Like you respect the trees?

HE

Yes.

SHE

Like you respect the parks?

HE

Yes.

SHE

Like you respect the animals?

HE

Yes.

SHE

So you're a vegetarian...

HE

What? Vegetarian? Me? What a drag! There's no tofu, nor seitan or chickpeas puree nor polenta with seaweeds that can match a good chunk of bleeding meat...

SHE

Then you don't respect the animals!

HE

What?

SHE

[In crescendo] You don't respect the animals nor the parks, the trees, the plants, the flowers, the ants and the mushrooms and the butterflies and the cockroaches and the caterpillars neither you love your children and have never done because I've always known that... and on top of everything you force little children to touch you on playgrounds!

HE

No... I... don't... I...

SHE

You what? Are you a liar?

HE

[Checks the situation and chooses what he believes to be the least bad of the two evils] Yes...

SHE

[Stands up angrily and leaves] You're disgusting! If there's something I really can't stand, it's liars. Even less than those like you who harass little children in playgrounds!

HE

[Alone] What a strange woman...

[HE remains alone on stage for a while without daring to swing, yet not being completely quiet]

SHE

[Goes back to her swing in a very casual manner] And what sort of liar are you?