

The Soldier

The soldier entered the hut and looked at me for several minutes without saying a word. Neither did I. We were visibly exhausted. Intuitively, we knew we did not speak the same language. From his appearance, I thought he could be German or central European, but tiredness kept me from thinking clearly. I closed my eyes and fell into a deep sleep. I don't know how many hours passed. When I woke, the soldier looked at me from a corner, barely visible through a shaft of light that managed to filter between the pieces of wood that covered the dilapidated walls. I thought that my host should be called Hans. A German name. Easy. Simple. If at that moment Hans had decided to eliminate me, he would have done me a great favour. I could not remember how I arrived there and I did not have the energy to imagine any kind

of future. Maybe a blow on my head had erased a lot of things from my memory. It was better that way, I thought. Hans was playing with a revolver, always with his eyes fixed on my pitiful face. My clothes were dirty as if I had crossed through a wild forest. One thing still connected me to life: a hunger burning my stomach. I wondered if Hans felt the same anguish. But I could not find the energy to utter a single word. Something told me that we were both in the same condition. But who knows? Hans could send me to heaven with his revolver - or would he decide to tell me something? A silence of increasing density filled the space where two strangers had met. By chance. Was it by chance? Certainly. I closed my eyes and asked, God knows who, to finish my days in one go. At that moment, to me, death seemed a beautiful gift. But not for long. An animal

curiosity seized hold of my sick brain. Who was Hans? Why not a friend, a protector, that Fate had sent me? And what was I to Hans? I had nothing to offer him. The ability to dream had left my body. A body that I could not recognize. But Hans wasn't looking at me. I no longer existed. His mind seemed to have wandered in an unknown direction. Perhaps a story of two that ended badly. Perhaps a lost war. After all, Hans was a soldier. And that I couldn't understand. Just as it was incomprehensible being in that dark corner, with neither strength nor illusion. If only this man would look at me, I could exist. But his cold indifference led me gently to a certain death. Only the thought of such an inglorious ending made me breathe again for a few minutes. Hans looked at me suddenly. And then everything changed. It was clear that I existed. Maybe in another way,

like the shadow of a life that had escaped from my mouth leaving me another body, another time. Timeless. But then Hans fixed his eyes on me, coldly menacing. I should make a gesture of defence. Or try to say something. But in which language? What idiom did Hans speak? With a will that emerged from a corner of my soul, I moved my lips and mouth, looking into Hans' eyes: Who are you? A silence that seemed a century sank into my neck bathed in sweat. Maybe it was the fear, the panic of recovering hope. Hans looked at me from an indecipherable place. Finally his face became almost human. His mouth said something that I did not understand. But Hans had said something. He said something to me. So it was possible: I existed. The end had not yet arrived. I felt a desire to understand his strange language. Certain songs from my adolescence came into my

mind. The music was turning in my head, where pleasure mingled with pain. And fear. Fear of the contempt that my presence could cause to this man who seemed to keep such energy for life whereas mine was lost.. But be aware, another form of existence now took possession of my soul. Speaking with Hans, will it be possible?