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By doing nothing, I mean doing nothing impulsive or mechanical, nothing dictated by habit or laziness. By doing nothing, I mean doing only the essential, thinking, reading, listening to music, making love, going for walks, going to the pool, gathering mushrooms.

--Jean Philippe Toussaint *Television*

For two days after tomorrow.

There was sun, there were dreams that everything would go away as easy as they had happened, there were desperations coming from the realization that everything will not, as you wish, go away after you wake up, and then there was sun, there were streets lining up in a pattern that you would have to walk on St. A, turn left to Ave. B to get to St. C. There were situations that you would get caught no matter you turn right or turn left. There were fears and anxieties and numerous other mixed emotions that you would have to give them all up or give yourself up.

There was one person that sees everything clearly from the very beginning, and he is in the darkness, an enormous darkness that makes him only a little uneasy, even with fully enjoyable privileges. He is not the player. He wasn't written in the game. And yet his mere presence has affected all every other players. He can see them. But they can not see him, at least not all of them, and not every bit of him. He doesn't really feel overjoyed by his position, not that he shouldn't be. However joy only comes from a real competition, a competition in which somebody, or everybody will announce the winner and denounce the loser, which isn't the case here because he has never been, officially, a participant of this game.

When he got a letter with what had happened written on a piece of glossy letter pad sent from a New York City address his life was not in fact affected. He smoked a pack of cigarette a day, got drunk at night with whomever by his side and was indeed, working on a soon-to-be very great book. The letter, among other things, only added flavor to the book, and the next, and the one after. It wasn't that he did not believe the story written in the letter. He was quite convinced, yet he was never determined to be affected by a true story. It wasn't like he didn't believe the story in one of his books that an unknown daughter kept haunting a man's life. Déjà vu, imaginary déjà vu, as if there were not just one daughter, but a lot, a dozen, almost every young girls in the city if you

1

Little did he know that history only changed once. Only once, the entire history turned right, he had very little idea about that. He had just gotten used to driving cars that drive on the left side of the road driven by people like him, driving on the right side of the car driven crazy by driving on the left side of the road. It was all madness to him. However, it's easier to get used to madness than to anything else. He knew very little about how history turned right before it went on the road for how long or how far without a turn to left or to right. In fact why would he care? He can drive on the left side of the street on the right side of the car. Or he can drive on the right side of the street on the left side of the car, which he used to do. He thought whatever, like always, you end up somewhere, left or right, straight or curved, red or green, on or off, or on and on and on. Little did he think about if it's right or left that history only changed, or will change, depending on where he is right now, once.

2

A love story, like always, we don't have to worry about it. We see the woman A kissing the man B who sleeps with the little girl, such a young little girl, Z, whose mother has, long ago, long long ago that she may not remember, in the bathroom of the Bar Rouge, touched private parts of A for the first time. Is this A that A? I don't know. I think A stands for A, or An, or Any. But like I said. A love story, we don't have to worry about it. They would figure it out eventually, the process of which is not going to be described here.

However, feelings are going to be described here, intensively. Which A feels daunted? Is B struggling with guilt, even if it lasts as short as his penis, who couldn't even stay in his memory for longer than 3 inches? And our little Z. Adorable little Z. What about you? What do you think?

1

Z: Whatever.

really try to number. As he started to look at young girls in the city who had the same blue eyes, the same light brown hair and especially the same wary, shy, retiring smiles like him, he believed that the chance was, in fact, depending on how much you believe it. It was, of course, impossible for him to decide how much he believed in how many details to what degree of what or whatever had or had not happened and especially how it all happened. A story, you have nothing to worry about. You get what you get, however much the story teller is willing to tell you. Truth, however, is an absolutely different matter.

2

When Jamie moved into his Union Square apartment in New York it was years later, but years before, of course, depending on where you are right now. Jamie was a young girl with blue eyes and light brown hair and a wary, shy and retiring smile, even though she was also petite, much shorter than him and, her in his memory. Did it have to be blue eyes and light brown hair and a wary, shy and retiring smile he had no idea. He had set the standard years ago, and years after he realized it had all been an illusion, a narcissistic reflection of himself. And yet, Jamie was no doubt, moving in with him.

Jamie was 25, or so as she said, a graduate student in the nearby New York University, studying film, writing poem, reading Artforum, drinking coffee, smoking cigarettes, sometimes weed, and spending some time sometimes writing and talking about the decadence of aesthetics. Jamie was an intelligent and nice girl in many ways. She was, of course, very aspiring as well. But that had been another matter after all.

He was teaching people how to write novel in New York University and Jamie was the girl who asked him in a class about the authenticity of truth. She asked, “Does it matter to you whether your character truly believes in what they say or not?” Does it matter? It, of course does

Did you tell me “whatever”? Are you telling me it was ok to sleep with B in his closet upstairs when his wife, A, was washing dishes for both of you?

B: How did you know?

Did you ask me how I knew? Are you telling me that I am not supposed to know? Are you saying that there is something wrong with me knowing and not telling A, the wife who kisses you goodbye every morning in the Lower East Side subway station and who pretends to take the subway uptown to go to work but who instead climbs all the way up and all the way down to your platform to take the next subway on your direction and gets off on 1st Ave. to meet with somebody named A?

A: Whatever.

Whatever. In fact the only feeling I would like to describe here is that they love each other. They are like a family, if you haven't noticed already.

3

The murder happened sometime around 10am to 1pm, somewhere between her breasts and her vagina, somehow related to a woman and a man, whose identities are unclear. Nobody died.

Nobody wanted to say anything about it. It was a quiet summer afternoon in New York. Nobody wanted to break the silence. After all it was just a murder and a murder is like something slightly wrong, like driving a car on the left side of the street while driving it on the left side of the car and turns left. Just nothing is right. That's about it. Little did we know that we had killed hundreds of others dead before we were

not matter, if nothing matters at all, like Jamie would argue with him before and after she moved in with him. However, it seemed like it did matter to him once upon a time, for a long while long ago. It had had an unexplainable power on him that he could never be able to explain to Jamie, the light-weight dark blue nihilist who throws her cigarette butts and takes pictures of green fire hydrants on the street of New York.

In the city where people drive on the right side of the road on the left side of the car having difficulty turning left or right every time they try, he was looking at more young girls with blue eyes and light brown hair and a wary, subtle, retrieving smile. The city he was born in but left long ago had forgotten, definitely, the last piece of him. He did not bother to even contact his brother or his sister who had possibly both moved to Long Island for good. He was the famous writer, when he was a rich lawyer and she was a rich man's wife. It has always been the kind of family you don't have to worry about getting together in Christmas' Eve. You simply don't.

Jamie, arguably, was a girl with an incredible amount of curiosity. She had always told him her ideal job was to be a private investigator. Yet studying film, writing poem, reading Artforum and talking about aesthetics seem far away from that. Curiosity, however, may better be a hobby instead of a profession.

Jamie had been learning about him. And little did some other people living in this city know, the story really could have started from here, unless not.

3

The back or the front, the bottom or the top. All depending on how we look at it. We have the freedom, so Deleuze said. Yet Lyotard disagreed. Freedom needs prerequisites, so Lyotard said, or he did not. Who cares who said what? The problem has always been, how much you believe in what you say, what you think, anyway? How much do you believe that

born. Pure chance.

“That feels good.” one finally said.

The other didn't quite know what to say so he kept quiet. Or it may just be what people do with a murder. They keep quiet. They keep themselves quiet after they keep somebody else quiet, both forever. But forever only sounds good until it gets written into memory, then it becomes a little scary, people often feel.

So they ended up eating in a fancy restaurant in Lower East Side. That's what people often like when they do something special like a murder. A love story, like I said, there is nothing to worry about. A murder is a quite different thing. People want to know who killed who and why this first who killed this second who even though it had never been the case here. People worry about it. A love story, like I said, has little to worry about until it develops into a murder story. Then people start to worry, although they actually have nothing to worry about. What's done is already done.

After eating in the Chinese restaurant they walked out onto E Houston St.. They didn't know what time it was. Like every summer day, 10am and 1 pm and 7pm don't feel that much different. Both of them left their phones home because of the murder. They didn't know what time it was so they had little idea when they would have to do what. They didn't have very clear idea on when they did what either. And now it all became a little confusing. There was a bike whose front handle bar and back basket were both filled with garbage. Paper wraps of Falafels, Boxes of McDonald fries, Cans of Coco-cola, cups of Starbucks coffee and the New York Times. Nobody knows who left what at what time through how long a period of time into this abandoned bicycle whose owner nobody knows who might be dead parking on E Houston St. in Lower East Side of the most amazing city where a murder just happened. Sometimes you find it all very boring. But there is little they can do about

you just saw a flash of flash, bit on a flesh of flesh, or flushed a flush?

4

It was such an afternoon in Chelsea. A line of NYPD cars driven by handsome or not so handsome white or black straight or gay cops were rushing into their headquarter to maybe change into normal clothes or maybe to get ready for a drink or maybe to continue this normal life. In Chelsea Museum of Art pointless collage paintings were being mounted on a blank white wall. Tourists, maybe just one of them, was listening to Leonard Cohen singing “I need you, I don’t need you” while looking up at the notorious hotel. It’s a quiet land of fantasy, wary, subtle, shy and retiring.

Jamie was doing nothing. Doing nothing at all, in fact, was the hardest thing. She had just talked on phone for minutes, with an unknown person. She was thinking, at this moment when she was doing nothing, which was something after all, that if she could do anything about what she had just thought about.

Clues. Always vague clues, and enormous amount of them, unrelated to each other, waiting for being discovered then dropped in between Avenue A and B just because walking had been too tiring for Jamie. It had never been worthwhile, Jamie knew clearly, yet nothing had been more or less worthwhile. The woman, whom Jamie had been following for four hours, who had red hair and big wedding ring, who got on and off subway in an erratic manner, had just turned out to be one of a dozen, a million, everybody, including, and especially, Jamie herself. She lost her just now, before she talked on phone for minutes and thought about what to do next.

Nobody knows what to do next.

Jamie wished she could have a cigarette but she had just run out of them. That had been what to do next.

Little does he know that his wife has a lot of money and one big secret, which is kind of a problem, but you know, a problem is not a problem until you know there is a problem. Little does he know also that his daughter is not really his daughter either, which, by “little” now I really mean little instead of nothing at all. Even though he doesn’t do anything special, he is still somehow intuitive like a man. But like I said, a love story is not made for you to worry about so he decided not to, which is kind of a problem as well. But you also know, a problem is not a problem until you sees it as a problem.

We talked about history. Now we have to talk more about history. History, like I said, can be changed only once, which he doesn’t know. And I doubt this is something he can learn from anything he is doing. Now he doesn’t do anything special. He works in a cubicle for eight hours a day. I can even give you the location of his office but why does that matter? He then walks out of his office to catch a subway back to Lower East Side, where he lives. He takes some time walking on the street. He spends some time sometimes visiting small bookstores in East Village. He spends some other time sometimes to sit with horses and play with dogs in Central Park. Nobody knows him. But why bother anyway? Then he goes home in Lower East Side and thinks about what to dream at night. He eats dinner with his wife and daughter, who live with him until they don’t anymore. His wife cleans dishes. His wife also cooks. He doesn’t do anything special.

4

What happened next wasn’t very important until it got dark. But that had been made into a different story already.

it. They have to keep very quiet at least for a while.

Jamie imagined to see a woman, a woman with a husband who might or might not exist, and a young girl, who may or may not have blue eyes and light brown hair. That moment will be the moment that she could overcome her obsession, her obsession of pressing the past on the present, spraying one black secret on a blank white reality.

Yet the moment is not there for her. And it might have been a completely different story after all. You would know two days after tomorrow when he, at the first time hold you in his arm and look at you into your pale blue eyes and melt you into an interesting shape in no more than fifteen seconds. Jamie are you ready?

What Jamie didn't know was that soon she would hear everything just like she had read about them, even though half of them are going to be benign lies, even though she would only believe half of them. How much would you find out, Jamie, is indeed, pure chance.

What did you do, Zoey. Or, the question might better be, did you do what you might have thought about doing?

If it weren't because of Zoey nothing would have happened. The story may be starting here. It may not. History can be only changed once, he wrote in one of his books. What did he mean by that?

In the letter, or letters, or letters – there had been more than one, the name Zoey was brought up. Little Zoey, the daughter conceived in an England bar, or not, but most likely yes had been living her life for years. Years like everybody else. Yet she is still very young. How many years? It is of course, very confusing, since Zoey has been the name of a girl in every novel written by him. It might have meant something. But so as he explained, for a writer a name is something you get used to, like the way

5 Life accumulates to an interesting shape, often very nasty, if it doesn't get sorted out. Soon he will find out the consequence of that.

But before that, his life is smooth and peaceful, just as he pushes the pin on his black briefcase back into the hole. After all when it turns completely dark everything seems ok. A doesn't see B and B doesn't see Z and Z hasn't woken up yet.

5 About A, what I have to say is simple. She is very good at keeping secrets. She is so good at keeping secrets that she sometimes forgets about them. We can't talk about the history if it isn't there for us to talk about, let alone to be changed.

She remembered not to tell B what had happened that night in England including what had happen nights before and days after. She still remembers. However, she doesn't quite remember what actually happened. Could it be that some sperms on a toilet seat just got into her

And that's what I mean. How problem free he makes his life is not going to teach him the lesson he needs to learn. This is a man (let's call him B for now), who carries on his history like carrying his briefcase to his office on 52nd Street. It has got so dirty and messy that his finger would be stained everytime he opens it. There are subway tickets on the bottom of the briefcase. So many of them. They sometimes get in between some documents he carries home from work and back to work from home. A shiny yellow MTA ticket sleeps, still, in between two pages of a contract now lying on his office desk, on which he doesn't have a clue where to find what either. There are also little event flyers street artists at Union Square often hand to him. There are also empty boxes of cigarettes, flattened into interesting shapes. There are, oh my god, so much shit I won't bother to describe.

you get used to yourself. The intimacy comes from the familiarity. Once you name a girl Zoey she is the girl you might have to protect, to shadow guilt upon, to shower your love on, and to blame everything going wrong for. You would not mistaken Zoey for another human being, with a single non-exception that once Zoey was the name of a dog. A mistake, or a random choice, he knew the reason but he has certainly forgotten. Time erases everything and creates curiosity, which Jamie should bitterly appreciate.

Zoey, indeed exists in the city. Jamie knows that.

But the night falls upon her with weight. In his arm Jamie smelt Zoey. The smell of a forgotten Lolita. When the shadow of his body covers up hers, Jamie's hand would touch the beginning of the story, where it all came from, where it all started, yet remained the same of no choice. The beginning of everything unfortunately is so close to our bodies that we could not cut it off, could not turn it right or left, see it from the front or the back, digest it or swallow it. Jamie had no choice. She often felt vulnerable even when she had plenty to choose from. She had been born without the prerequisites. She would have to search for them and preserve them, which is the even harder part. How much does she believe in what's in her arm?

A love story, in fact, she has nothing to worry about.

Unless She has already made it into another territory, which she has no idea.

9

We have to also notice there is another part of the town, where a woman with a not too big wedding ring is now crying, maybe, about

What else do I know? I still do not know her name. Let's call her A, we have no problem of that, but eventually we would need a name, a verification that she does have a secret and the secret is dangerous in one way or another like kissing another danger passionately in a weekday afternoon on a stranger's bed. Or maybe there will be a fire. We will see. But we have gotten too optimistic on that aspect.

She lives in Lower East Side with her husband and daughter and she enjoys cooking for them, until not anymore. Washing dishes, not much fun from the very beginning, but she does it anyway for some understandable reason. She kisses her husband goodbye every morning with fear that her husband will one day find out that she isn't heading to where she says she is but naturally she has already, long time ago, gotten over the fear like how everybody got over the fear of crossing a street full of cars and/or having sex with more than one stranger.

She frequents an apartment building right by Union Square, often in a weekday afternoon.

I do know one thing, that she secretly has a lot of money. More than B has ever made in his life. She is very good at keeping secrets, as you know. Some of them I've been able to discover. Like she doesn't really, like she claims to her husband and daughter, work in an advertisement agency uptown. It must have been hard for her to keep this secret for years, having to invent some imaginary friendships at work and a fat, drunken-ass Mexican boss. She could have been quite creative if she decided to be a writer, which, who knows she isn't.

vagina? I think it's quite impossible. But if she doesn't know how, I will not either, at least not at this point.

a man who she no longer trusts or a man who no longer trusts her or another man she only remembers vaguely yet in a significant manner, or maybe some other completely unrelated reasons, like the sudden flashback of a silly kiss in 9th grade when nothing meant anything it only seemed. She is tall and slim, yet her face is loaded with wrinkles each seemingly representing one regret. What is she crying about we don't know, and is it even slightly related?

Some facts. They may not be incorrect. A woman named Alexandra teaches literature in the City University of New York. She takes the subway from Brooklyn to somewhere on Fifth Avenue everyday.

Alexandra, like a lot of people who now teaches literature in universities, married one of her classmates in graduate school. His name is Bronson, who teaches a peculiar foreign language in another university in the city. Would that be New York University? Yes I would say, yet it has nothing to do with anything since nobody in New York University has ever heard of anybody else. What was somehow written in the book is that the couple also has a daughter, named Zoey and another daughter, younger, named something else.

The rest of the story is so muddy that nobody now knows what to

know anymore. Or, somebody has to ask, yet everybody has been

keeping very quiet. When a letter arrived in a Lower East Side apartment address the recipient had moved away for years. However it did not get thrown away or get returned to the sender which was impossible since there wasn't one on the envelope. It got transferred, somehow, helped by a kind neighbor maybe, or a postman who has worked there longer than years, to another address in Brooklyn where the recipient lives.

Jamie, of course, never heard anything from anybody.

Yet something is going to happen, which is very sad.

But that's not part of the story after all, if you haven't noticed already.

6

If you tell me you don't know what I know, you are lying.

If you think I don't know what I think I know you know, you are wrong.

Don't think it's all unnecessary.

I'm not really all that curious if you know me deeply.

Don't think it's serious either.

That won't change anything.

That will be just a flavor, a birthmark, a rotten apple, or whatever.

Yes that won't be anything.

I don't mind you lying to me. I lie to you too.

I love you. That is why.

I love you very much. And it is getting sickening.

I hope you understand. I hope you forgive me.

But you don't have to because all these have been great fun already.

And they didn't change the fact that I still love you.

I will never tell you anything about it we all know.

Zoey was sipping an iced latte in Starbucks. She looked lonely and bored and was looking out of the window the whole time. Her blue eyes made her look very pale, even paler in a summer day. Her long, brown hair was braided. She was wearing a mini jeans skirt and a red t-shirt. If seen from a certain angle you will be able to see that she was wearing a black, Victoria's Secret underwear with maxipads on it. It wasn't hard at all to see I promise you.

In fact she had just seen a film with her friends in one of those art house movie theatres in Lower East Side. A boy of her age threw a skateboard to a security guard, killed him and did not know what to do about it except breaking up with a girlfriend and dating another. A murder story, indeed, people worry about it. And Zoey is one of them. She often feels anger, the same with the boy, that she needs to escape the incredibly hot city to kill an imaginary dragon, or whatever.

Her parents, of course, like his, are getting a divorce, but that doesn't matter much. Everybody's parents are getting divorce.

Soon she is not going to live with her father in their Lower East Side apartment. Her mother will take her to live in another part of the town, the more prestigious part, even just one subway away.

Zoey never knew why they broke up. Zoey never knew that Jamie knew why they broke up. Zoey never knew Jamie. Jamie never knew Zoey. Jamie never knew where Zoey lived. Jamie never found out the name of Zoey's mother, Alexandra, and her father, Bronson, even though they were very obvious. Jamie stopped trying and started trying.

You know everything. Or so you invented, pretended to believe or possibly never. Nothing, in fact, happened and yet everything else happened. History can be changed only once. That was a practical joke we all know.

The murder did not, actually happen between 10am and 2pm. It has only just started. It turned dark, of course, like every single day. Z was throwing up and in pain in a Lower East Side apartment. B was holding a cup of coffee, looking very weary. The man, who apparently never thought things would go like this, had no idea how to think about it. It could have been easier, if he had covered himself up for that once, except that there wasn't enough time or patience, and there wasn't fragrance or conscience. But history, like I said, can be only changed once. It was all a flash. And it wasn't anybody's fault. Z had sitten in the toilet for an hour. B's coffee had been cold for a considerable amount of time. When did it all start? B was thinking. Was it when he just got used to driving on the right side of the car on the left side of the road? Right or left. Right of left. Left of right. He really couldn't remember. It was long ago. But it wasn't long ago that he started the revenge, an unplanned one, a pleasurable, if not too cruel revenge, almost like a flame of candid, bright anger, yet also transient, short enough that nobody would, ever, notice.

There was no drama, no suspense and no dissent. They slept together on the bed of Z. They slept together also on the bed of A and B. Was it that once, a Saturday afternoon he thinks, when they ended up kissing in the closet when A was downstairs cooking for them that it all started. B can never be sure. What's done is already done. There is little to worry about. But for once there was a moment that history could have been changed. B does not know when it was. Was it when he accepted the fact that he would have to switch back to drive on the right side of the road on the left side of the car, or was it when he accepted happily that he would not drive anymore?

If you think everything will turn left or turn right at some point of their journeys you are right but at the very end there is an end ending the end before the end and nobody knows what happened, not everything.