



Hélcio Martins Borges



**THIS COULD
BE A MOVIE**



Atena
Editora
Ano 2024



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Diagramming: Ellen Addressa Kubisty
Correction: Jeniffer dos Santos
Indexing: Amanda Kelly da Costa Veiga
Review: The author
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Atena Editora
Ponta Grossa – Paraná – Brasil
Telefone: +55 (42) 3323-5493
www.atenaeditora.com.br
contato@atenaeditora.com.br

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To my wife Ana Carolina, to my daughter Thássila and son Francisco (Chico Marley). To my brothers and specially Heloisa and Helvecio in memory, to my family in general, to all friends that inspired me to transform my ideas into this book. I utilized one of the most dramatic moments human kind faces, to the realization of this work. Maximum respect to the people that lost loved ones in this pandemic, i will dedicate myself to produce something for post global immunization.

THE TALE'S VOICE	1
THE REASON WHY EVERYTHING IS LIKE THIS	2
COVID-19 AND THE BARRIERS OF PREJUDICE!	4
DORALINA.....	8
GUILTY OR NOT?.....	10
PROJECT MARROW	12
FAMILY PORTRAITS	14
ROULETTE	15
PSYCHOLOGICAL TORTURE	16
THANKSGIVING DAY	18
A JOURNALIST AND A BARTENDER.....	19
JOURNEY IN AFRICA	22
WHERE IS THE BRIDE?	26
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	28

THE TALE'S VOICE

Bianca Pataro

When Hécio Borges asked me to read his texts, I went through the pages as if I heard voice telling me the stories. The same he crosses characters and situations, he builds situations that feel like they came out of the pages of a newspaper or were narrated, between laughter, in a bar table. The tales that follow transport us to situations that since being so real and possible, scare us and awaken emotions that oscilates between the surprise and the pain from thinking that this is the reality os many people, besides the characters.

The COVID-19 pandemic cure is located by the author in Africa, being that the antidote for the disease is right next to the cure of prejudice. One girl that walks into a bus and takes us to bump into her roots. The interrupted dreams of a black boy in a search of a diploma – who also bumps into prejudice -, who may cure us. The sickle cell anemia and the cure that bumps into prejudice again. And one more meeting with one's roots surprises us in the back of another bus. And like that, Hécio Borges takes us to think about paths and decisions that mark our stories -collective and personal ones- that are other people's hands, not always well intentioned.

And we dont know if he only tells the stories or if, he is also is a character of them. Like the wedding that brother and sister switch roles or the Spike Lee chasing. Or if, he pretends to be a psychiatrist or just paid attention to bus station stories to extract memories that mix with his own.

Going through the pages sent by him, without the pretension of a finished book, I got ink on my hands trying to draft a preface for the texts Hécio Borges wrote throughout his journey of fight against inequality, always with a sence of humor full of wisdom and humility.

To Hécio, with love !

*Bianca Pataro is historian and anthropologist, and also writes poetry. She published the books *Alma de Purpurina*, *Terceira Pessoa* (Editora Urutau) and *Ser.tão Ser.Tanto*, in partnership with Fernanda Rennó.*

THE REASON WHY EVERYTHING IS LIKE THIS

I already had everything kind of arranged with a friend, when, in 1998, we went to Madison Square Garden, in New York, to watch an NBA basketball game between New York Knicks and Milwaukee Bucks. I left Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, initially alone, later a friend met me there. We stayed for 30 days in William's house, that same friend, and he offered to help me meet Spike Lee. My idea was to give him a project i had elaborated. I had watched seven movies of his, and in my gnorance or innocence, a movie star could meet me and recieve a summary from my hands.

At the stadium, we were in in the upper level watching th game and also Spike. I had hope that when the game ended, we would go after him. Knicks has a very good team, Allan Houston and Patrick Ewing, who didnt play but was there. The game ended, Knicks won. I thought " today is the day!!" We left running after Spike, but he left by the tunnel with the team. It didn't work, but I didn't give up, I knew he used to go to a club in Harlem, on fridays or saturdays, as I was told inside the same club, after i investigated his agenda. Unfortunately I couldn't go, but i heard that neither could he.

From that day one, I was walking around the city, around the places I thought I could bump into him, Brooklyn, Harlem, Queens, etc, it didn't work out. Came home very upset, not only because of that, but also, in the days I was out, I heard about the passing of Tim Maia, one of my idols, which completed my sadness, the year was 1998 and the internet was rare, that's why i was in agony for not being able to follow in real time what had happened to "o Sindico".

I continued writing other projects and, in 2001, while working in Belo Horizonte City Hall, I got a phonecall from a person asking for a meeting to discuss her family's land. It was a brazilin singer who lived in the USA. When we talked, I told her this same story and she tols me she could introduce me to Spike, since her boyfriend was in Spike's team. Unfortunately it didn't work out, and some time ago we reconected through social media, she said she doesn't remember the story, we laughed a lot, and period.

I had already tried similar moves to meet him in Rio de Janeiro and in Bahia, when he came with Michael Jackson and shot with Olodum "They don't care about us". I thought it was better to give up and to follow the saga of meeting Spike whenever destiny decides it, which hasn't happened yet.

I've watched all of his movies that were released in Brazil. I started writing these tales by chance , in the beggining of the year 1990, and haven't stopped since. Although, since always, I have the hope someday someone will read something that I wrote and transform it into a movie. But it feels like people in the business dont alow those who didn't study cinema or art to have access to the market. I never thought about getting rich with these tales, I only wanted to materialize my ideas, but I never got support from the people that I met in this business.

Last year I participated in some books release party and I kept thinking about that saying that man should have kids, plant a tree and release a book. Kids, I have a couple,; tree, I planted in Nacional Forest of Carajás; and my mester's degree dissertation was turned in a book, but inaccessible, an expensive book, that i think it will only sell the three copies I bought to make sure my heirs know about it and to give a copy to the president of the institution I work in.

Therefore I decided to compile all my material and to release this tales collection, so that, who knows one day, someone forgets a copy in some public place, and Spike, or any other director, finds it amd decides to make my dream come true...

This is the reason why things are like thiscounting on the ironies of fate so that something interesting happen to this masterpiece.

COVID-19 AND THE BARRIERS OF PREJUDICE!

PART I

Night was falling when the Cuban health minister managed to connect with the G20 group to present the partial results of the studies conducted in Madagascar by the Cuban health team, with the support of the South African government, on the Covid-19 pandemic.

Only the extremely high number of deaths in the USA and the rapidly increasing number of cases in Brazil and the rest of the world made Presidents Trump, Bolsonaro, and Erdogan and Saudi Prince Mohammed Bin Salman participate in a meeting with the Cuban government.

In the last virtual meeting, despair had taken over the leaders of the group of the twenty largest economies in the world, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Exceptionally, Dr. Tedros Adannon from the WHO, the world's leading authority on public health, also participated.

Vaccines, all tested; experiments, almost all, put to the test; and no short-term solution, as desired by humanity.

In a meeting in the annex, the health ministers of these countries reported the experiences they had been going through, and each one showed the rates of similar diseases in their country. The President of South Africa took charge of presenting the graph of one of the poorest countries, Madagascar. In it, the rates of respiratory infections in a certain community near Antananarivo, they were exactly zero at a specific point.

Consultations of infection records in all countries led to the study of this region of Africa, because, for some reason, there was a differential there, something was happening.

In a community of a hundred and fifty people, there was a group that had nothing for over twenty years. The Ministry of Health of Madagascar was alerted, and a medical board, through a task force, was assigned to go to the location.

In the 1980s, an outbreak of tuberculosis devastated this community. Where there were more than six hundred people, these remained, many cured, who, even with the lack of food at times, never had serious illnesses again.

Of all these people, only two women and two men had absolutely nothing in their medical records, and the government of Madagascar had been studying this immunity with its simple technological resources and with the help of South Africa.

When reporting all this at the meeting and requesting support for an WHO delegation to go to the location, the Minister of Health of South Africa was tremendously criticized by some countries in the group; some leaders did not admit this hypothesis.

Among these, the most prejudiced, like Trump and Bolsonaro, the Saudi prince, and the Turkish president, who would never accept sponsoring such an experiment. They questioned all the time: how would the blood of a third world black person save humanity?

Covid-19 has wreaked havoc in first-world countries. Jokes on the subject take into consideration people who travel to these countries and return spreading the virus.

Poor people do not travel abroad, but they are being contaminated by those physically closest to them.

Led by German Chancellor Merkel, French President Macron, Italian and Spanish Prime Ministers, and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, the support of others was secured, and the group's decision was to proceed with the investigation in Africa. Asking for Cuba's support, a country segregated by American boycott, was the last straw for the presidents of the opposing countries to withdraw from this journey.

A meticulous study of the habits and traditions of the region suggested that these people remained healthy due to their diet; they themselves produced the food they consumed. The detail, however, that caught the most attention was that the four people cultivated the same plant in their backyard. Besides serving as food, the plant was the legacy of a hundred and three-year-old ancestor, to whom they were direct relatives of. From a combination of herbs, she generated the plant they consumed, which was supposed to be the cause of immunity, and named it "contrarius au preconceitum e esquecidums."

The result of this study is what will be disclosed at this meeting and may indicate a direction and put an end to social isolation.

PART II

Fate is indeed interesting. As a sanitation engineer, I was involved in a project to provide treated water supply to families from different critical points in Africa. I attended some meetings in Cape Town and, to return, had to take a flight to the capital of Madagascar. Due to the pandemic, it was a chartered flight by some institutions, and I boarded it.

On the flight, I met delegations from Cuba, South Africa, and Ethiopia, the homeland of Dr. Tedros. From what I could hear, they were all getting to know each other. I quickly understood that they were on their way to some noble and rare mission. I heard the Cubans talking about their work in Italy and the mission they were leaving behind as they flew to Africa. They were still in the phase of introductions and getting acquainted. So, the Cubans talked about Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and the Revolution; South Africans commented on Nelson Mandela, the post-apartheid transition, and the current political moment; and one or two Ethiopians remembered Haile Selassie, Rastafarianism, and even mentioned Bob Marley for his influence in Africa.

I didn't join the conversation, but I couldn't help but think about what I would say about Brazil: Pelé, who they say stopped a war in Africa; Santos Dumont, the father of aviation, and all of us inside an airplane at that moment; Lula, the president who publicly acknowledged Brazil's debt to the African people and created a bold policy of social reparation in Brazil. Given the situation, perhaps talking about Oswaldo Cruz would be more appropriate, maybe the greatest of our scientists.

Well, as it was a seven-hour flight, I knew there would be time to participate, and when the subject truly changed to the pandemic, I approached, and we talked a lot. It was interesting to note how all of us there, from third-world countries, were discussing a global problem. More than that! I was just a sanitation technician, but they, besides being high-level technicians, were researching the cause.

They asked me to keep absolute secrecy when they said they were going to Zion, two hundred kilometers from Tanarivo, as they affectionately called the capital of Madagascar. Somehow, my presence was important because I had all the basic sanitation and education, hygiene, and environmental information, as well as diagnoses of diseases in the region, something they needed, and I committed to updating and delivering it within twenty-four hours.

We landed in the capital, went to the same hotel, I passed on to them everything I had, and as I needed to leave, even with social isolation, for my mission in another region, I arranged all the logistics for them to arrive in Zion and start the research. They stayed there for seven days working full-time.

I had the opportunity to be in Zion on some occasions and knew the difficulties they would encounter in carrying out the mission using technology, since not even electricity reaches that place. What puts this community on the map is the fact that social workers, nurses, and family doctors are always visiting the site and doing exemplary work with the few conditions they have, despite a small assistance from the World Bank they receive.

One night, I met part of the team at the hotel. While we were talking about the progress of the research, they admitted that it was necessary to set up a headquarters at the hotel and keep part of the team there feeding the system, which was enabled in Cuba and South Africa. The other part stayed in the territory and brought the data every two days.

There were many questions: were people healthy due to natural food alone, but was this enough or was there a combination with the body? Why did only four people not have any diseases?

The team decided to collect soil and roots from the garden of the four individuals and take them to a laboratory outside of Africa. The idea was to observe whether the plants would sprout in other environments or if they only grew in Africa and in that soil.

They were working with many hypotheses because they did not know the plants that grew in that region, but they knew that this family had a different diet. The matriarch understood the power of her plants, but she did not remember the combinations she had made, and the scientists were trying to decipher the composition.

The fact is that science was proving the effectiveness of this diet, and the detail that there were no more records of respiratory diseases was the focus of the research.

The doubt grew even positively, as another path opened up when researchers discovered that people who did not get sick were carriers of the sickle cell trait, as was confirmed by Cuban and South African laboratories.

Sickle cell anemia is a hereditary disease (passed from parent to child) and is characterized by the alteration of red blood cells, making them resemble a sickle, hence the name sickle cell. It is a disease predominant in the Black race, but not all Black individuals have it. The individual who is born with the disease is the result of the combination of two traits, A and S. By genetic inheritance, a person may be born with only one of the traits and not have the disease, meaning many predominantly Black people are born with these traits.

Engrossed in this novelty, scientists devoted all their time to concluding the research.

After all, the combination of the sickle cell trait with African plants would be the reason for the respiratory immunity? What conclusion could be drawn? How could tests with the coronavirus be conducted without bringing it to this community?

More conservative leaders could not see the progress that this technical team had achieved in Africa and decided not to invest in the project. But others, less prejudiced, decided with the WHO to fund whatever was necessary for the studies and opted to set up an advanced laboratory in Antananarivo, to conclude the research that could lead to the production of a vaccine.

After this G20, Dr. Tedros will announce to the world that there is a great possibility of finding a remedy to combat Covid-19. However, beyond this challenge, there is an even greater one, which is to overcome the barriers of prejudice.

DORALINA

At the end of the excursion organized by Father Lázaro, as he was placing the children on the bus to return from Montes Claros to Pirapora, there was a girl who had not been part of the delegation before. In Montes Claros, there had been a meeting between several delegations from municipalities in the North of Minas Gerais, mainly children. Since everyone had already left, Father Lázaro, unsure of what to do, decided to talk to the girl and take her with him. All the participants lived near Montes Claros, so he would figure out later how to return her to her family.

She sat in the only available seat, which happened to be his, and they started talking:

— What's your name, girl?

— Doralina.

— How old are you?

— Seven years old.

— Who brought you here?

— Sister Sílvia.

— Where are you from and where do you live?

— I'm from Bocaiuva.

— Why did you stay behind?

— I don't know, the bus left...

— Well, rest there. I'll see what we can do when we get to Pirapora.

Upon arrival, he looked for Sister Sílvia's phone number, spoke with her, and agreed to take the girl, as Sister Sílvia had a very complicated schedule in the following days and couldn't cancel her commitments. She explained the confusion by saying she mistook the girl for another, and the assistant, during the headcount, said everything was fine, all the children were on the bus. The sister, then, trusted the assistant. Since she had slept during the trip, she didn't walk around the bus. But she was already desperate and had even informed the police and the juvenile court about the disappearance.

They agreed, then, for Father Lázaro to take Doralina two days later, so the girl could spend some time, meet other children, and Sister Sílvia would be in Bocaiuva on the agreed day. Next day, as they strolled and exchanged ideas, Father Lázaro began to notice something familiar about the girl. She had something to do with him, with his family, something a bit inexplicable. He tried to find out more about her, but the child didn't have much information. She just said she stayed with Sister Sílvia and, on the weekends, went back home, where she met the one she called mother.

On the road between Pirapora and Bocaiuva, Doralina fell asleep, and Father Lázaro remembered when he was a seminarian in Mariana. Young, full of vigor, he began to flirt with a housekeeper who worked at the seminary. Residents of the Passagem district, in Mariana, the twins Sophia and Luísa lived together until they were twenty years old, when Luísa went

to study in the capital, and Sophia stayed in Mariana to help the family by working at the seminary, where she was recommended by Sister Terezinha from the archdiocese. What weighed most in the decision to stay in Mariana was the desire to become a nun.

Lázaro was from the North of Minas, from Coração de Jesus. In the family, he had a brother, Igor, and a sister, Thássila. At twenty-one, he was immediately interested in the young Sophia, who was twenty. Occasionally, he found a way to escape and meet her in the garden square. During one of these escapades, Lázaro impregnated Sophia, and she became pregnant at the age of nineteen and it created a problem, because, in order to take care of the child, he would have to leave the seminary, and she couldn't say she was pregnant.

The two then reached an agreement: she would go to Belo Horizonte, he would help her until the child was born, and both would keep it a secret. So it was done. However, Sophia decided to move to an unknown address, and they lost contact, leaving Lázaro unsure whether she had had the child or not.

What Lázaro was feeling for the girl was something very spiritual, familiar, a somewhat inexplicable energy. When they arrived in Bocaiuva, he began to question the sister about Doralina's family. Sister Sílvia, however, only said that the girl's mother lived on a nearby farm. He then asked her for the address, as he wanted to talk to this woman, claiming he thought he knew her.

Upon arriving at the farm, Father Lázaro found Luísa. He introduced himself, and, although she didn't know him, she remembered his existence. After talking for some time, Luísa admitted to him that she was not Doralina's biological mother. He, in turn, told her that he had dated Sophia, without revealing the pregnancy to her. Luísa then fetched a basket of letters exchanged with her sister, in which she confessed that she had become pregnant by a young man in Mariana who had helped her sustain the pregnancy, but she preferred to live alone and far away, so as not to harm the career of the child's father (not specifying his occupation in the letters). As she found out, Sophia did not survive childbirth and passed away. The child was then adopted by the aunt.

Most strikingly, however, was finding out that there were other letters in which she recounted having dated a pharmacist in Belo Horizonte, she also became pregnant by someone else. In the first pregnancy, she had lost the child. Therefore, it was with the money she received from the man from Mariana that she survived. The child who was born when she passed away was, in fact, the daughter of this pharmacist, who, as recorded in the records, was named Igor and was from the North of Minas.

Aware of the story, Lázaro said goodbye, left in tears. He remembered the times when his brother Igor studied in BH and the day when, visiting the seminary in Mariana, he told him that he had impregnated his girlfriend.

GUILTY OR NOT?

Malcolm's routine remained the same since he managed to enter university. Coming from a poor background and living in the Alto Vera Cruz community in the eastern zone of Belo Horizonte, he always hitched rides with childhood friends in large and valuable cars in the morning to go to school. These friends had many connections around the Barreiro region, Ibitiré, and nearby areas. Malcolm's family, on the other hand, consisted only of his sister and mother, as his father had abandoned them and was killed in a police raid in the Taquaril slum nearby.

The assistance of an international fund for underprivileged children was essential in the boy's life: despite all the adversities of a very humble origin, he was always able to dedicate himself to his studies. His mother, unlike many others, was not a lax woman; she demanded that her children study. And Janet, his sister, when she completed high school, went to work in an accounting firm.

Malcolm, at twenty-two, was strong, elegant, black, and studying IT at a private university in Minas Gerais. He had always studied with the scholarship he had obtained through the fund. On campus, he met Evelyn, a young white woman from an upper-middle-class family, studying law, the daughter of a prosecutor in Minas Gerais. The friendship between the two quickly took different paths and drew everyone's attention.

Evelyn's father was very protective of the family. Back in high school, he had hired a retired police officer to drive the children to school; he was a bodyguard, driver, and spy on the children's lives. Evelyn's older brother, Wenderson, who was a little older, graduated from college and went on to pursue his own life and career as a veterinarian in Poços de Caldas, a city in the interior of Minas Gerais. And their mother, Carolina, was the director of a department at the university where Evelyn and Malcolm studied.

Malcolm dealt with difficulties all the time, but he knew that intelligence and effort would never betray him. That's why he applied for a tutoring position at the university, which would be a chance to earn extra income. When Carolina heard the news at a meeting, she told her daughter that a black youth had taken a test for tutoring, but there was a maneuver to ensure he didn't pass the test because it wouldn't be right to have a black person teaching white children, children of wealthy Brazilians.

A separate chapter was Gonçalves, Evelyn's father's driver. Like a faithful companion, he had done questionable work in the police force, torturing young black people in the slums of BH. When he met the prosecutor at the Lafayette Forum, they became friends, and everything that happened with the family he reported to Dr. Walter. Gonçalves had been telling Evelyn's father that she and Malcom saw each other a lot and walked together at the university, in the western zone of BH.

During one of the breaks with no classes, while the couple talked, Malcolm talked about his anxiety about being selected for the tutoring position. It would be his opportunity to have better meals, as he could frequent the teachers' lounge, and to have some financial

help for the family, who lived in Beco Vitória, in Alto Vera Cruz. Upon hearing him, Evelyn thought it was better not to tell him about what her mother had said; it would be too much frustration. The results would come out within a week, and there was a lot of family expectation in the air.

Two days before, Malcolm had received an undeniable request from his friend and comrade Jorge Baiano. The task was to leave a package with a former police officer in the Padre Eustáquio region, in Vila dos Marmiteiros. “It’s on the way to school, it’s okay!” he thought. What Malcolm couldn’t foresee was that Gonçalves was watching him. Ironically, the former policeman Souza, to whom Malcolm had delivered the package, was found dead, murdered that night. Malcolm was the last person seen with Souza in public, and Gonçalves took the opportunity to snitch on the boy, handing him over to active police friends.

The biggest embarrassment was arresting Malcolm at the university, in front of everyone. Dr. Walter, not to suffer even more embarrassment due to his daughter’s relationship with the alleged murderer, arranged for Evelyn to be transferred to a school outside of BH. He sent her to finish her studies near relatives in Juiz de Fora.

Images of Malcolm being handcuffed shocked the state. His mother fell ill, his sister was desperate, and the friends from the slum knew he wouldn’t be capable of doing that. But how to testify in favor of the friend if they themselves had asked him to look for the ex-policeman?

Dr. Walter had long been bothered by his daughter’s relationship. His dream was to see the young man convicted.

Malcolm, imprisoned in Nelson Hungria, in Contagem, and Evelyn, in Juiz de Fora. Although he was an expert in computer science, disconnected from the modern world, he could only communicate with her through letters. But all the letters passed through Gonçalves’ hands, who would inform the prosecutor, read them, and then forward them.

When the trial was set, one of Dr. Walter’s best friends was the public prosecutor accusing young Malcolm. There couldn’t be any other outcome, twenty-three years of prison.

While they absorbed the verdict, the young couple couldn’t see each other, and the father did everything to marry his daughter to Prosecutor Guilherme, a family friend who worked in a prosecutor’s office near BH. Evelyn and Malcolm, however, continued to communicate through letters.

In Malcolm’s second year of serving his sentence, Evelyn graduated in law with a focus on human rights and began preparing for exams while specializing in criminal law with the best jurists in Minas Gerais, an investment her own father made in her.

Without telling her father or Malcolm, she decided to appeal and request the reopening of Malcolm’s case. Fate was very unkind: this time, the appointed prosecutor for the accusation was the lawyer’s own father. They would face each other in the first high-profile case she would work on. But Evelyn wouldn’t be alone. A renowned professor from the University of Juiz de Fora, a defender of human rights, would be with her.

Guilty or not? We all know.

PROJECT MARROW

Three university students, friends, and founders of an NGO, two guys (Mark and Derek) and a black girl (Alicia), were discussing the presentation of the Marrow project to the World Bank in order to obtain funding for it.

Arriving at the IDB, they went to a meeting with Dr. Winston and his team, where they had the opportunity to introduce themselves, hand over a copy of the project, and explain it in detail. Dr. Winston observed the cover design of the project: the split face of a guy, half black, half white, prompting the doctor to ask:

-”So, gentlemen, what is the Marrow project?”

Alicia began the explanation, as agreed upon by the three:

-”Our NGO is called Marrow. We aim to develop work focused on people with bone marrow cancer who need bone marrow transplants. We will primarily disseminate information about the compatibility of different races as bone marrow donors and recipients.

”The idea is to set up a database here in Canada, containing detailed records of people with leukemia waiting for a donor. This information will be obtained through agreements with all the hospitals in the country. Knowing the difficulty of finding donors is why we also plan to develop work to raise awareness and recruit potential donors. People who agree to be donors will be registered in our database. That way, we can cross-reference data between donors and recipients and thus identify possible compatibilities.

You may think the idea is simple, but in reality, we are planning a much more complex and specialized work. The database we intend to develop will be as specific as possible, so that the probability of compatibility is high. Another important issue is to persuade the parties to undergo the transplant.”

-”It’s a highly interesting idea; we will certainly finance it,” - Dr. Winston affirmed.

-”But, by the way, why create this project?”

While the project was being passed to the director, he observed:

-”Let’s agree on this: while you arrange the documents, I’ll read the project.”

Dr. Winston then begins to read:

”The three, actually, had once been four. Three whites, two of them brothers, and one black. They were very rich, children of immigrants and big businessmen. She, from a more humble family, also the daughter of immigrants, but Africans, yet of great intelligence, which is why she managed to enter university.

”As usual, there was much resistance from the boys’ families to the friendship between the four, for social reasons and, more than that, for racial reasons. Mainly because she had a brother, a physical education teacher who worked in low-income family communities and always took the four to participate in volunteer actions.

”One of the two brothers, Marlon, the youngest, started feeling unwell and needed to start attending the most important hospitals in the city. Doctors concluded that it was a serious illness, bone marrow cancer, curable only with a transplant.

“And so began the relentless struggle to find a compatible marrow for the procedure. Several alternatives were attempted, and nothing... the boy’s situation worsened daily, and despair took over. Some false leads were suggested, like: ‘Oh, so-and-so is compatible, but they’re in such a city...’ The family sent for them, but when examined, there was no compatibility.

“In the race against time to find a donor, it was found that the physical education teacher was compatible. He was a carrier of the sickle cell trait, a hereditary disease characterized by the alteration of red blood cells, making them look like a sickle, hence the name sickle cell. It is a disease predominant in the black race, but not all blacks have it. The person who is born with the disease is the result of the combination of two traits, A and S. Due to genetic inheritance, a person may be born with only the trait and not have the disease; that is, many people, especially blacks, are born with only these traits.

“Because of his day-to-day work, he needed to control it annually through blood tests, when the compatibility of marrow was discovered. As all the hospitals in the city knew about this need, the teacher’s doctor contacted the sick person’s family doctor to inform that a possible donor had been found, without knowing about the friendship between the boys.

The boy’s parents received the news, and then the process of convincing the teacher to undergo the transplant began. However, when the patient’s parents saw the donor from a distance at the hospital, their reaction was immediate rejection:

-“We will not accept a transplant from a black person into our family,” - they told the doctors.

The two doctors were almost in despair because they could not believe that, in the 21st century, this could still happen, even with the risk of losing their own child. The longer the transplant was delayed, the worse the boy’s condition became, and the situation became critical.

After much insistence from the doctors, the mother agreed to the transplant, but it was still necessary to convince the father. After much conversation, she, along with the doctor, managed to persuade her husband to agree to the treatment.

A frantic rush began towards the hospital. In the emergency room, everyone was already on high alert when the patient was admitted to the ICU of the hospital. The doctor, in turn, rushed to surgery, but unfortunately, it was too late, there was no more time.

FAMILY PORTRAITS

On the bus ride from Campinas to Belo Horizonte, Silvestre was sitting next to Letícia, who had asked him to read one of his magazines until she fell asleep. Soon enough, she returned the magazine to Silvestre and mentioned that she remembered she needed to update her notes for the master's degree she was pursuing. They started talking, and Letícia, who was an anthropologist, explained that she lived in Belo Horizonte but frequently traveled to Campinas to study and meet with her advisor.

Letícia's research in graduate school aimed to reconnect with the family she never knew but knew originated from that city.

Silvestre also lived in Minas, in BH. He was born in Campinas and joined the Brazilian Army at eighteen, serving in his hometown. Black, strong, handsome, twenty-six years old, he became a sergeant and soon began working in administrative matters at the barracks. In his comings and goings, he met an administrative employee of the Ministry of the Army who worked in the same department, and they began to flirt. Her name was Alice. A blonde girl, very beautiful, twenty-three years old, the daughter of one of the strictest captains. Knowing this, they started seeing each other in secret; at work, they disguised their relationship. But nature was unforgiving to them. Soon, Alice became pregnant and had to reveal the relationship at home to her mother and to Captain Salvador. The captain then internally arranged for Silvestre to be transferred to Minas Gerais, instead of allowing the couple to stay together and have the child. Alice still worked for some time, and when the pregnancy began to show signs, she managed to transfer to another government agency. No one heard from her. Silvestre in Minas and Alice without contact with him was how they lived for nine months.

While they were talking, Letícia revealed that she knew her mother had died in childbirth, and she was rejected by the family, who placed her in a shelter. The family that adopted her moved to Belo Horizonte, and no one knew details of her family origin. To uncover it, Letícia chose the search for her origin as the topic of her own dissertation.

The detail was that Silvestre, as a reservist soldier, did not tell Letícia the story of his life; he only said that he visited relatives in Campinas, who lived in Barão Geraldo, and that they were all well. However, the energy between them made both feel something strange, but neither had the courage to say it.

At bus stops, sometimes one would get off, sometimes the other. At the last stop, already arriving in Belo Horizonte, she said goodbye, as she was not going all the way to BH but would stay in Oliveira. However, some of Letícia's drafts were forgotten in the bus's bookshelf. Silvestre then collected them and took them home.

The next morning, when he decided to read the drafts, he began to draw his own story. At that moment, he was absolutely certain that Alice, now twenty-six years old, and he, fifty-three, was the daughter he had with the general's daughter.

The only clue he had left of Alice was the name of the university on the letterhead of the papers.

And his daunting task became to find her.

ROULETTE

What could four people have in common when receiving different notifications to be at the same place at the same time?

That's what happened to two men and two women who had never met and were invited to be at psychiatrist Dr. Adelmo's office.

Silvio received an email. Martha, a phone call. Douglas, a message. And Soraia, a Telegram message.

Upon arrival, the doctor simultaneously ushered them into his office, asked for permission to introduce them, and declared:

- "As you all have the same needs, I've decided to put you together here." - He added, - "There will be no secrets here. You all came to me because you're disillusioned, you've hit rock bottom, and present with suicidal tendencies. So, I will guide you through the procedures, considering that you understand the situation and came because you think there's nothing left to do."

They were directed to another room, where a table was covered. There, the doctor asked his assistant to uncover the table. Four guns appeared. At the doctor's request, each one chose their own and then pointed it at their head.

- "Is this really your decision?" - the doctor questioned. - "Then pull the triggers."

Everyone pulled, but instead of ammunition, liquid paint of different colors came out of each gun.

- "Based on these colors," - he continued, - "we will make a new experiment."

Receiving a small manual from the assistant, the doctor established the order in which each one should narrate their own life story to the others and the reasons that led them to that limit. Silvio (red) would go first. Second, Martha (green). Then, Douglas (black). Finally, Soraia (orange).

After each one told their reasons, he questioned them:

- "Has anyone changed their mind?"

The therapy served as encouragement because the stories were very sad and difficult.

Then they returned to the previous room. Once again, they uncovered the table and removed the gun they had chosen.

- "Are you ready?" - the doctor asked. - "Point it to your head. I must warn you that this time, one of the guns is loaded. You may pull the trigger."

Everyone has a sad story. Some, very sad and unfair, like Douglas's.

Unfortunately, the loaded gun ended up with him...

I conclude this story with Douglas's blood dripping to the sound of "Soon" by Yes.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TORTURE

The early morning arrived cold and calm when the blue Buick stopped and dropped off Valdete at home. From the window of the building across the street, at a good recognition angle, neighbor Heloísa saw the movement, which was routine. She turned off the lights and went to sleep.

Ernesto, a renowned journalist, was covering an important case involving corruption in the municipal government, so he was under security. But at certain times, he occasionally escaped to drop off his fiancée at home, stay out late, etc.

The next morning, when he arrived at work, there was a note on the table, a message from Valdete's workplace branch stating that she hadn't shown up for work. Without understanding, Ernesto went to her department, where they told him she was out of the ordinary, as she usually arrived early and there were meetings that day. It wasn't normal for her to be absent.

Ernesto retraced all of his fiancée's movements with family and friends before calling the police.

The police department began investigations by going to the girl's house. They found nothing. After conducting many examinations and hearing from witnesses in the neighborhood, they learned from a neighbor that she had seen Valdete leave in a car that was always there, which she assumed was Ernesto's car. The police requested security camera footage and, upon analysis, found the video of Valdete leaving in the blue Buick.

There were no more doubts. Ernesto was summoned and arrested on charges of kidnapping.

During interrogation, he couldn't organize the agenda he had followed the previous night, fell into contradictions several times, and the police, with the neighbor's testimony and the images, decided to take the case to court.

While awaiting trial in prison, Ernesto, since he had been in treatment/analysis for some time, was allowed to receive a visit from his psychologist.

Michael, the inmate's psychologist, had a strange behavior, but as a university professor, he had a lot of credibility in the professional community.

The individual sessions were a kind of psychological torture, and Ernesto had been showing behavioral changes for several months. Faced with these events, even the defense lawyer and the accused himself trying to prove his innocence, clues were already beginning to emerge that the crime had been committed.

In a masterful move, Michael convinced Ernesto to admit to the crime, and they even created a version that culminated in dumping the body in a river near the city.

Every time they attempted to reconstruct the events, he always told the same version.

Ernesto's friends, dismayed by the situation, decided to try a parallel investigation with a former police officer, now a detective, a family friend named Sávio.

Caio, a close friend of the suspect, on his way to visit him, stopped for a coffee and recognized a blue Buick very similar to Ernesto's. That got stuck in his memory, "but cars, a lot of people have them" he thought.

Upon arriving in the city in the morning, he studied the case, read the newspapers, and in the afternoon met with Ernesto. When he arrived at the prison, upon bumping into the psychologist, he noticed a known Presence and he kept that in mind, but didn't bring it up, even after being introduced.

On the way back to the hotel, he managed to remember where he had seen the psychologist before: he was the guy driving the Buick!

Caio had always known that nobody drove Ernesto's car. Finding the situation strange, when he met with the other friends and Sávio that night, he reported his discoveries to the group.

Immediately, someone called Ernesto's house and asked the family about the car. His mother informed them that the vehicle had been stored in the basement since Ernesto was arrested, over six months ago.

Deciding to secretly and thoroughly investigate Michael, Sávio began to follow him, with little success at first, noting that for the sessions where he would torture Ernesto, Michael used a different car to move around the city.

Until the day Sávio noticed Michael with the car full of supplies preparing for a trip.

The day before, some friends had gone to visit Ernesto, who was feeling a bit down because Michael had said he would be traveling.

Sávio, accompanied by two other friends, followed Michael to a farmhouse, not far from the city, suitable for daily visits. The three remained there disguised. Caio, on the other hand, did not accompany them, as he was the only one who knew Michael personally, having shaken his hand and greeted him.

The group began to monitor the house and took advantage of Michael's departure to enter the residence. There they found a blue Buick in the garage, a clone of Ernesto's car, including the license plate being the same.

The hoax began to unravel. They felt there was someone else in the house, but with Michael nearby, they didn't investigate, just monitored all the movements in the house. When Michael finally left to return to the city, they entered the house and found Valdete chained in the basement, with visible signs of torture.

The local police were called, and the crime was uncovered.

Michael's focus was to get Ernesto's attention, as the psychologist was a homosexual who had fallen in love with the patient. To gain attention, his plan was to eliminate the fiancée and, through the sessions, induce Ernesto to be with him.

Valdete had been the journalist who uncovered a major corruption scheme in Michael's family years ago, leading some to prison and others to bankruptcy.

As Ernesto and she were once again bothering the corrupt society of the city, Michael decided to get rid of both of them, slowly killing them.

THANKSGIVING DAY

Everything happens, and almost anything can happen on a holiday like this in the United States.

When the bus stopped on Fifth Avenue, and the two young white men asked to board and travel without paying, no one could imagine the outcome.

The driver, for obvious reasons, refused: no one can board without paying. The situation caused discomfort, but William, seventy years old, who was sitting with his two granddaughters, decided to allow them to board, suggesting that he would pay for their fares.

Less than two blocks ahead, the young men announced the robbery and robbed all the passengers on the bus, except for the elderly man who had been kind to them.

When the police arrived and took the group for questioning at the police station, everyone tried to incriminate William because he, besides letting the young men onto the bus, was the only one not robbed, even though he was with his eight and nine-year-old granddaughters.

Who was William, and why did he act that way? He explained to the police that he had done it because it was Thanksgiving Day and he thought he was doing a good deed. However, the police dug deeper and found out that he was a director of City Bank. The police called the children's father, handed him the daughters, and kept the elderly man in custody. Upon consulting the bank, they found several embezzlements from the bank account in favor of William and that he had an extraordinary balance for a mere director, around thirty million dollars had been moved in his name.

For a while, the bank had been investigating the frequent disappearance of money without ever imagining that a director, someone of high trust, would do this. William couldn't explain himself and was taken to a maximum-security prison.

Despite the facts, German, his son and the father of the girls, and the entire family did not believe the version of the police and the bank. He also worked for City Bank but as a lawyer and supervisor. The family then decided to hire an auditing firm while awaiting trial. Borges & Borges was the chosen firm, and the auditors had a lot of work to follow the money trail. Jeremy, another director, who harbored resentment towards William's successful career, cloned all of his colleague's documentation and diverted the money to an account that he operated as if he was William.

On Thanksgiving Day, by luck and driven by wanting to help someone, even after going through what he did, William managed to escape moral liquidation.

A JOURNALIST AND A BARTENDER

A journalist and writer who worked in São João del-Rei had recently been transferred to Tiradentes. On his first day of work, he decided, on his way home, to stop for a glass of wine, as it was July and very cold.

Seeing a small tavern open, he decided to enter:

-Good evening! - he said.

-Good evening! - replied the bartender.

-Could you serve me a pitcher of good wine?

-Unfortunately, I'm already closing, you arrived too late.

-Yes, I know, but it's very cold, and I just arrived in town today, worked until now, and I'd like to warm up a bit.

-Look, if you don't take too long, I'll serve you a pitcher, and then you can leave.

-Okay! Thank you.

-Where are you from? - asked the bartender.

-I'm from Ouro Preto, living in São João, and now I'm working here.

-What do you do?

-I'm a journalist, they're revamping the city's newspaper, and I came here to do this job. And you? How long have you been here?

The bartender, also pouring himself a pitcher, asked permission to sit near the journalist at the same time he closed the bar door and began to tell his story:

-Well, I've been here for five years; I came from Petropolis, Rio de Janeiro. We had a big business there, but my father lost everything, passed away, and with what was left of me, I opened this bar, being an only child and orphaned of a mother since childhood.

-But why Tiradentes? - the journalist asked.

-It's a long story, it has a lot to do with my upbringing, my way of life, and the things I like. As a descendant of an immigrant, I wanted to open the bar in Ireland, but it wasn't possible.

-But what happened for that?

-I'll tell you the next time you come here.

-Goodbye! - said the journalist.

-Goodbye!

Arriving at his new home, the journalist, unable to sleep, finding the conversation interesting, began to write about the bartender.

During the next day, he continued walking around the city, meeting people, visiting churches, and collecting materials for his work.

-Good evening! - greeted the journalist.

-Good evening! - replied the bartender.

-Interesting, we didn't introduce ourselves yesterday!

-Indeed! Nice to meet you, I'm Edgard.

-Thank you, I'm Hermes.

-Well, Hermes, you came earlier today. What will you have? The same as yesterday?

-It could be, I liked that wine, and you?

-I liked it too, but there are customers, so I won't drink today.

-Can I stay here?

-You can, but I can't guarantee we'll talk...

-I'll wait.

Much later... Edgard went to the table, both looked at each other, to which Hermes asked:

-Shall we continue?

"Well, my father was a very wealthy Irishman who came to live in Brazil about thirty-five years ago; I'm thirty today. On a trip, my mother died, I was nine years old, and he never remarried another woman. After a while, he began to go out frequently with a manager from one of his businesses, and I only realized this many years later. It was too late because they were already in a relationship. It was around my twenty-second year that I discovered he was homosexual and had a boyfriend. This man dominated my father in a certain way. He got so involved that he didn't even realize he had taken a financial hit. The guy moved abroad and left my father, after about ten years of cohabitation, alone and poor. Out of grief, depression, etc., my father passed away. I was left with a financial reserve he had made when I was born; with that money, after graduating in dentistry, already hopeless and disgusted with the profession, I came here, opened this bar, bought my house, and this car that's outside."

In silence and without jotting anything down, Hermes stored the entire story in his head to write about the bartender on his computer after leaving.

The story repeated itself for a few days...

After some time, back at the bar, the scene from the first day happened again. Edgard was about to close, but when he saw Hermes, he reconsidered, closed the door, but suggested he come in for his usual drink.

-I have a surprise and a gift for you - declared Hermes. - During our evenings of conversation, I found your life story very interesting, so, I took the liberty of writing it and made this copy of the book, entitled "The Journalist and the Bartender."

Surprised, Edgard thanked him very much, pulled up a chair closer, and said:

-Now I want to know a little about you: tell me why you always disappear once or twice a week? You are extremely interesting but quite mysterious.

-I am thirty-three years old - Hermes replied. - I have a fairly simple life, but my way of living, my choice, and your story formed the tripod to write this book. I have a serious relationship with someone.

-Who? - Edgard wanted to know.

-My boss!

-And what is she like?

-Well, Edgar, it's not a she, it's a he. Just like your father, I am also homosexual, and on the days when I'm not here, I'm with him in Ouro Preto.

There was silence, and Edgard, quite upset, said:

-Shouldn't this story be called "Love in Double"?

-Why? - asked Hermes.

-I think I was born to be alone. With this almost daily coexistence, I discovered that I like you, but...

-But nothing! I'm also starting to like you... and now what?

JOURNEY IN AFRICA

I had always wanted to visit some place in Africa, to learn about my ancestors, about the land that I believe is the Mother of all and, therefore, the origin of civilization. And that desire was realized in a way more than unusual and unexpected.

I worked in the capital city hall, and there was a world congress for which I was assigned to participate. Three Brazilians would be there representing cities and mayors. I was chosen because I mastered the agenda and had an advantage for that time, which was speaking English.

Already in São Paulo, at boarding time, a man approached me showing a badge from the federal police. He started questioning me, not interrogating, questioning:

-Where are you going?

I showed the boarding pass, which said South Africa.

-What are you going to do?

-I'm going to participate in an international congress - I explained.

He asked a few more questions. In the end, already impatient, I said:

-Look, I'm going to represent Belo Horizonte's mayor, I have my presentation letter.

He read it and let me go. But before boarding, I couldn't let that go.

-You were very concerned about me because I'm black and I have dreadlocks. - I said.

-I warn you that whoever you're looking for in me must have already boarded.

He was taken aback, said goodbye, and I boarded.

From Johannesburg, I went straight to Antananarivo, in Madagascar, where I met the other two Brazilians, a woman from São Paulo and a man from Rio de Janeiro. Our encounter was also casual, when we went to pick up our luggage, and I found out that my suitcase hadn't arrived in that country.

It was a Saturday afternoon, and until I got to the hotel and asked for assistance, there wouldn't be time to go shopping, as the stores would already be closed. I had with me an official Brazilian soccer team shirt, which I had brought to do some promotion with the local community, but I wouldn't wear it. In fact, I've never worn the Brazilian national team uniform, I'm not a fan.

When I arrived at the hotel, funny and strange things started to happen, something like that. The receptionists and secretaries of the place surrounded me talking, among themselves, in the local language and, with me, in English. They categorically stated that I was the French tennis player, once number one in the rankings, Yannick Noah. No matter how much I tried to say that I didn't speak French, I was mistaken for about four days. Until a girl who helped me a lot in the city said:

-Have you noticed that he doesn't have gaps between his teeth like Yannick?

Then it clicked. What a disappointment for them...

Well, then the saga for clothes began, because my presentation would be on Monday. On Sunday, I looked for a store near the hotel and found nothing. Then the local girl, along with the event organization, recommended a place to go on Monday and come back before the lecture. It was my effort.

They put me in a luxurious car, resembling a Limousine, with two security guards, besides the driver. When we arrived at the destination, again another surprise, the local population surrounded the car, as if, once again, someone important was there.

I tried on the clothes, but there was no fitting room, I had to change pants behind the counter, while everyone outside watched. When I came out, after buying pants and a shirt, I got in the car, and the community ran after it, something incredible, I waved and left without knowing what they understood by my presence, but one of the guards reminded me again of the tennis player.

When I arrived at the hotel, several black cars and motorcycles were parked at the door. The guards didn't let me enter, claiming that the country's president was there, at the event.

I told them that I was a speaker who would talk that morning. Then they suggested that I go up to my room, on the eleventh floor, change clothes, and wait to come down.

When I got to the first floor for the conference, two tall and strong black men, presidential security guards, approached shouting in the local dialect. I didn't understand anything until someone showed me that I was stepping on the president's carpet. A carpet that came from the street, ran through the entire hall, went up stairs, and went to the auditorium, on the first floor.

How was I supposed to know that the president would attend my lecture and that there was a red carpet that I couldn't step on? Well, after that scare, I gave my successful conference, and the event continued.

On Thursday, we had a dinner at the French ambassador's house, and I planned not to go, I didn't feel properly dressed. Around five o'clock, I received a call from that girl for a phone call, it was my suitcase. I was so happy that I proposed a dynamic until someone won the green and yellow gift that I had brought. The event's translator won.

Suddenly, I went to dinner, after requesting a car and arriving unannounced.

The next day, back in South Africa, I had a wonderful night at the hotel restaurant. I met several young people who worked there, we talked until dawn, as I was interested in their story. They told me how their parents suffered from Apartheid, but now they were all there, working and studying at universities. Everyone very grateful to Nelson Mandela.

A few years later, another surprise, an invitation to visit a project in Guinea, with possibilities of working and living in the country. This time, the trip was more tense. A short time ago, an accident with an Air France plane had happened, and many lives were lost.

I arrived in Conakry, and this time, I had the real opportunity to get to know the Africa that is so talked about worldwide. Unlike the previous trip, I was able to visit the

communities. On a Sunday morning, we visited some native, traditional communities, and I experienced the difficulty of understanding the culture and customs. While presenting a project to the local population, with an interpreter who spoke French, another English, and two locals - that is, the speech took almost five minutes to leave one speaker, reach the destination, and come back - a little animal that I didn't identify properly came towards me, I thought it was a goat, but it was a lamb, and, along with it, the translation of the speeches informed that it would be our lunch that day. I was in shock!

It was a struggle, as our director tried to convince the local leaders that it could be the mascot of the equipment we were going to build, but the voices responded:

-We will get another mascot, this one is to eat today.

The discussion was tough, lasting over half an hour, and in the end we decided to go to another community and come back to eat the poor little lamb. I tried to come up with any excuse not to do it, but on our way back to the community, we were informed that several mayors were already gathered to talk to us at the city hall. The director, committed to the stance he had taken, asked, -"Does anyone speak fluent English to go ahead and talk to the mayors?" I wasn't that fluent, but off I went. I heard they ate and enjoyed it... that's good! I took a three-hour flight with a group, and the pilot, seeming like one of those hippies, more like a rock musician than a pilot, was super funny, around sixty-five years old, approximately.

The plane carried no more than twenty people, and the control was strict. Soon, the pilot approached with a paper and pen, asking for everyone's weight. He was noting it down to add up later and see if the plane could handle it. After that, he opened some compartment and refueled with some gas cans he had, invited everyone to board, and handed gave the commands:

-"Ladies and gentlemen, there's the emergency door, if anyone sees me heading in that direction, run after me, cause there's a problem, and the plane might be going down. If you don't want to use the seat belt, feel free. Smoking cigarettes is prohibited, but if you're smoking marijuana, offer some to me..."

And so we went, on a strange, fun trip, but very peaceful, flying over parks, rivers... even a stop in the middle of nowhere we made.

This was already the last night in Guinea. I ate little on this trip because I admit I have difficulties with exotic foods, different from the usual. But an American colleague, who would fly to Paris on the same flight as me, invited me to have some beers and eat a special dish. It was a rare steak (which I never eat) with potatoes.

I ate, drank a few cans, and went to sleep. In the middle of the night, I woke up feeling like I was dying. How my chest hurt! It was around three in the morning, and I started pacing in the room, hoping to be alive by dawn.

At six o'clock, I called the friend who invited me on this reconnaissance trip and told him:

-"André, help, I'm dying."

André arranged an ambulance, which picked me up at the hotel and took me to the hospital. When I got there, it was like a scene from a movie, crowded... Africa, right?

But there was a special ward for workers on this project. For the first time in my life, a black doctor saw to me, a cardiologist. I told him I was going to Belgium that night, to which he replied:

- "You could have a heart attack in the air."

I went crazy! He gave me some tests, and I waited thoughtfully as the results came out. I did an electrocardiogram and other heart tests. In the end, the doctor told me I had constipation, the traditional kind. He gave me four boxes of a powder I didn't know what it was, but the relief was general. I flew to Paris; from there, a subway to Lille; then, Belgium.

The fact is, I didn't manage to make the transfer to live and work in Africa, but I got to know parts of three countries - Madagascar, South Africa, and Guinea - and a wonderful people. That's what matters in this life!

WHERE IS THE BRIDE?

The small town of Gstaad, near Lausanne, Switzerland, was experiencing a different moment, full of excitement, with the wedding of Severine and Edward. So far, so good, as weddings are common worldwide. However, no one had been married in that place for over fifteen years. Families were concerned because the population, which was already small, had little chance of increasing since no more children were being born. Even a campaign inviting other Franco-Swiss people to live in the area had been conducted.

What made this occasion interesting was that Severine, a successful lawyer, fell in love with a grain businessman, and they decided to get married and change the city's routine. So, everyone was talking about it in the town. Severine came from a well-respected family in the area. Her parents owned some businesses, and her only brother, who happened to be a twin, was named Jean.

In addition to the wedding, which was one of the bride's goals, she had a long-standing ambition: she wanted to become a judge. She saw many injustices and, as a social activist, aimed to contribute to changing things. Already registered for a judge's process in Bern, the country's capital, she scheduled the wedding and prepared for both occasions.

From then on, the groom and she began organizing the wedding with their families. The date was approaching, about two months away. Then, they started following the ritual, organizing the trousseau, clothes, setting up the apartment, etc. At the same time, Severine studied for the competition, knowing that this time she would pass, as she felt well-prepared after having participated in two previous competitions.

With the world returning to normal life after the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, things were getting back on track, prompting the Swiss justice system to reschedule the competition coincidentally for the date of the wedding. Severine was shocked! She only talked about it with her parents, an aunt, her brother, and of course, the groom. It would be impossible to reconcile the two events because the competition venue was over a hundred kilometers away, with not enough time to arrange both things.

A real problem arose, and in jest, the aunt suggested joking that Jean dress as a bride and go in place of his sister to the wedding since they were very similar twins. The joke stuck, and Jean ended up accepting the challenge. He had to come up with a professional excuse to be absent from the wedding and not be in town, as he had already encountered all the guests. And he had the bigger task of sorting things out with Edward. The detail was that Severine didn't tell her future husband that she had decided to take the test, so the bride left to travel only on the day of the wedding, completing all the activities she could before leaving.

Well, getting married wasn't a problem for Jean, not even facing the brother-in-law as if he were his groom. The most difficult part would be dealing with the final preparations for the pre-wedding agenda (the day before and in the morning). Under the pretext that he

couldn't sunbathe because of the makeup, Jean put on a mask, which he was already used to because of its use during the pandemic. At the ceremony, he entered dressed as a bride and went through the entire ritual he had practiced with his sister, including the kiss, in a lighter tone, of course. Severine, on the other hand, did well in the exam, rented a car, and returned to the ceremony and honeymoon. Meanwhile, Jean was circulating through the hall, speaking little and greeting people.

Just before they were about to leave for the honeymoon, Severine informed the family that she had returned, to which the relatives suggested that the bride change clothes, enter through the back of the hall, and leave for the honeymoon. Meanwhile, Jean put on the clothes made for the wedding and entered through the front door, amidst the crowd, announcing that he had missed the ceremony but was there for the party.

HÉLCIO MARTINS BORGES: Was born in Belo Horizonte and raised in the eastern zone of the capital. Graduated in civil engineering, he is a social engineer by vocation. He published the book “Popular Participation in Institutional Relationships,” the result of his master’s degree.

Since always fighting against social injustices and in favor of inclusion, he defines himself as a true “black on the move.” His love for cinema inspired him to write and publish what is his second book.



The world as it is, the world as it should be. In this collection of stories, Hécio Borges reveals his struggle against inequality. With this book, readers can better understand how certain paths and prejudiced decisions mark our history and the history of humanity. Racism is one of these evils. A special touch of the work is the hope that, one day, these stories might become a film. Hécio is inspired by the director and icon of African-American cinema, Spike Lee, and awaits some irony of fate that might bring this work to someone who can transform it into a cinematic piece.





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