

THE PORTRAIT

December 3, 1983

Monday

I have arrived today at this lost place among mountains. I hope my editor is right and this retreat will help guide the muses of inspiration again. The house is so far from everything that I pray nothing happens to me. I've actually only managed to see four houses on the way here.

This place is too far from any glimpse of life. On the highest slope of this kind of village, although I have not seen almost anyone during the journey.

The house is small and cozy, it has few but sufficient furniture: two armchairs, a walnut table with four chairs, a walnut sideboard with a carved mirror and a large fireplace that I hope will mitigate the intense cold that permeates all corners. My publisher has promised me that over the course of next week I will have someone to take care of the maintenance of this site once a week, in the meantime I will have to manage on my own. The kitchen has a small cupboard in which they have kept all kinds of food so I can focus on writing. The stoves are very old but they work. I like this place, although the swarm of the wind has not stopped ringing since I arrived.

December 4, 1983

I have not managed to sleep too much, the wind does not stop howling, it is strange. The loneliness is so dense that I feel accompanied all the time. I have not been able to write anything, I am curious to know the environment I am in. I have thought that I am going out to explore, although I predict that what I am going to find are not going to be more than trees, grasses and the noise of the vermin that populate this hidden place.

December 5, 1983

This terrain never ceases to amaze me. Following a path that I found a few meters from here, I found an old abandoned cemetery. I could not avoid the temptation to go through it, there was nothing else to discover and I went into it.

It was gloomy, musty, somewhat gloomy. Most of the tombstones that I was discovering dated from 1800 to 1910. They were worn by the passage of time and abandoned to their fate because here in this lost place in the middle of nowhere, nobody should remember it.

At the end of the churchyard in a corner, almost hidden, I found a tombstone from 1905, I thought I read, because the text carved on it was almost imperceptible due to weather wear and abandonment. I removed the herbs that covered it so that I could see it better and discovered the portrait of a lady. It's crazy, but I thought I felt his clear eyes pierce me. The portrait is very worn, but her eyes are clear, penetrating, inquisitive. Her hair is tied up and I think I can see a necklace and a light shirt that covers her neck. It has a livid, but very beautiful, majestic appearance.

December 6, 1983

My head hurts so much I think it will explode. I have stopped feeling the cold inside my bones but the pain in my temples hits me again and again. I have pulled out my razor blade after several days, it bothers me to feel the beard on my skin. My pulse trembles. This pain doesn't let me focus on anything. I am going to take a ride. If I can breathe fresh air outside these walls, my head will thank me.

December 7, 1983

He revisited the headstone. His eyes looked at me, as if they called me. I know that it is a madness produced by the solitude of these places, but those eyes have been nailed to my mind, they accompany me all the time. The silence of the cemetery cleared the pain I felt in my head, I was there for a long time, until it started to get dark and a persistent rain made me go home. I have closed the windows, the light bothers me, I cannot write. Not now. I just want to imagine those eyes. I know it doesn't make sense, but that look has stayed inside me.

December 8, 1983

I called my editor, asked that no one come up to help me with the housework, and I lied to him saying that the book has already begun to forge. I need to be alone. I need this darkness. I've managed to see through it. I don't want to have anyone near here. My head still hurts and I can't calm it down with any pain reliever. Only the thought of her gaze makes me feel nothing.

December 9, 1983

I have not returned to the churchyard. She is here with me, her gaze accompanies me, she speaks to me. She's with me. I don't need to feed, I don't need to sleep, I just want to talk to her. It's part of me.

December 10, 1983

I have to be with her, I need her. I want to hug her, look at her, touch her skin. I know that she wants it too, she has told me, No one could understand it. She calls me. Her look. Her eyes. My head keeps hitting me. I can not anymore. I have to calm this pain, I know it's for her. If I could stop this agony.

December 11, 1983

I managed to look at myself in the mirror, in this darkness. I can perfectly see her face next to mine in the mirror. I can feel your breath. I'm going to end this. I will meet her. Your hands will help me tear my neck with this old blade and I will be part of it. This headache will end when I manage to join her.

Recorded statement: December 20, 1983

Inspector Fernández,

We have managed to enter the house after several notices from Madrid and we have found the body of the designated subject. Apparently his neck has been torn. The blade still clings to his right hand, the smell is unbearable. I have read the contents of his diary, apparently loneliness has given way to transitory madness, thus made his delusions make him end his life. We do not know the exact place in the cemetery that he talks about and the portrait he refers to. We have followed the path that we found a few meters from here and, indeed, there we found the old abandoned cemetery, full of vegetation.

At the end of it, the cited headstone of the individual's diary It is true. The portrait of the lady was there and her eyes are truly beautiful. But I don't know what must have happened to him to end his life in such a terrible way.

I will continue tomorrow with the investigations, I have a deep headache and the light bothers me. I want to be in the dark. This intense headache prevents me from continuing. I do not want to see anybody. Just being in the dark. I have those eyes set on my mind. I no longer can endure this. I will soon reunite with her and relieve this pain, for it is my destiny.