

The Grotesque and its Castle

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The Beastlt appearedfrom the shadows. Those flaming eyes! It screamed, the shrill shriek shatteringher eardrums. Itâ€™s eyes! Their flames gripped around her throat. Fire! Theflash of lightning and her neck, her chest was on fire! The shrieking stopped.She gurgled. After all those years the daemon had returned. Now there wasnothing but silence.The RuinsGrandeurwasnâ€™t the first word to spring to EugÃ¨neâ€™s mind as he approached the shadow ofthe castle he had left a boy. Grotesque, perhaps, but that is exactly whyhis initial excitement, stirred by the scant few memories of his childhoodfaded and blended into a newborn melancholy. Seven years of spring and summer hespent at the bastion of Proust, a small village which lay in a V formed by twoslowly meandering rivers merging into one. The river Saramago, on whose bankshe had fished and in whose water he had swum and from where he would return inthe evening, exhausted and wet, but with a childish sense of fulfillment. Howdifferent these hills were in the drizzle of an autumn afternoon, he thought ashe tried in vain to wipe his moustache dry with his leather glove. He spurredhis horse and proceeded along the muddy path to the keepâ€™s gate. He passed asingle peasant on his way, but couldnâ€™t recognize the face of the hunchbackedman hurrying through the puddles, shielding himself from the rain.Hestopped his horse at the gate and called out for the guard. A miserable thug onthe wall, clumsily dressed in the castleâ€™s colours asked him his name. EugÃ¨neMarcel of Proust, he answered the gateman, who reluctantly let down the bridge,knowing that he would have to lift it again after the lost son had entered theshadows of a former glory. Melancholy, and it occurred to him that houses,roads, avenues, alas, are as fugitive as the years. He left as a boy, returneda man, but he never returned to what he had left. The dark, wet masonry of theinner keep wasnâ€™t the same stone he had thrown rocks at as a boy. The donkeyshe had in the summer sunlight werenâ€™t those clustered together under the onetree inside the walls, seeking shelter from the worsening rain. Althoughmemories came back to him, they were no more than memories, trying in vain tomaterialize before his eyes and suddenly he began to wonder, are they stillalive? How long had he been away? He had counted seventeen winters, but he wasopening the doors of the ruin of his memories. Mighty walls had been reduced toworn barricades and the proud banners of the inner keep were torn or gonecompletely. What he saw was to his past a mere ghost.***Shelightly tapped her boney fingers on the wooden armrest as she stared into thehearthâ€™s fire with hollow eyes. Save from the fireâ€™s light and the scantsunlight that fell through the only window, the room in which they were sittingwas dark. He sat on a stool close to the fire, desperate to expel the chillfrom his bones, while she sat some distance away and had long given up on thatfight. When hehad entered the room, there had been only one thing to pass his lips beyondsilence; how? How? He asked her but she hadnâ€™t answered him, she just staredinto the fire and he would have thought her dead if she hadnâ€™t beenmonotonously tapping the armrest. Grotesque, her face, deeply carved linesrunning across her forehead and down her cheeks, yet she could be no older thantwenty-two. The memory of the little girl stretched out her young, fragile armto the old woman in the chair, but those hollow eyes just stared at theever-changing fire, who knows what she saw?Yearslater, he would describe the silence from his memory as cold and endless, herecalled her greasy hair carelessly draped down over her chest and down to herlap, the endless flicker of the flame reflected in her eyes. A vision mostlyimagined in shades of pale blue, her fiery eyes the only contrast, amplifiedthrough the years.I couldcontinue âœin truth, the embers were barely reflected in her matte eyes and herdress wasnâ€™t a pale shade of blue, but rather an old white that had long becomea dark red around her groin,â€• but I reject the notion of truth and falsehoodsin memory. It is unnecessary to condemn EugÃ¨ne for telling a factual falsehood,to consider his image of blues and coldness a lie. I consider it neither afalsehood nor a lie, but the most truthful representation of his experience ashe saw the ghostly appearance of his younger sister, like a mirror thatinverted the years.He hadasked her what had happened to the keep, to the family, to the village on theriverbanks many times before the sunset â€“ he could tell by the lengthening shadowson the bare stone floor â€“ and he had already given up hope, staying only forthe warmth of the fire, when at a moment not long before sunset â€“ the room litby a deep red rectangle on the wall and a smaller flame in the hearth â€“ shebegan to scream. Youwould expect the piercing scream to have shocked EugÃ¨ne, but instead he merelylooked up. After hours of idly sitting before the small flame, submitting tothe cold as it crept into his bones, the memories of sunlight, fishing and hislittle sister in the fields, he stood up. The eyeballs of the woman almostburst out of their sockets as she screamed and he remembered the fits she hadwhen she was young. He always knew she had been possessed by some sort ofdaemon. The Beasts lurked in these forests. With a decisive cool, he folded hisfingers around the hilt of his sword and unsheathed it. At the sight of themetal blade, the woman vomited and fell out of her chair. She mimed somethingwith her mouth; words came out, but he didnâ€™t pay attention. The red light ofthe setting sun almost blinded him as he moved forward and she stumbled away innew found horror. He quickly caught up with her and struck. She saw a settingsun. A setting sun that shaded the castleâ€™s last grotesque into life and diedout in the twilight.The Fable of the Grotesque and the FinchA youngfinch once landed on the shoulder of the sitting stone grotesque. âœMustnâ€™t it bore you to look at the same road every day?â€• she asked, to which the grotesquereplied, âœbut that road was different yesterday those trees were differenttoday, people walk and ride along the road and they all leave their mark. Everyday I see a different road; it never bores me.â€•So wemust remember that we never see everything before our eyes and can recall lessstill.Â {mos_fb_discuss:22}Â