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The woman who loved too much

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(excerpt in English)

Inspired by the story of Anton Chekhov, "Olenka"

Dedicated to my sister Rosario

*A good woman and a male musician. He only plays.
 A fragile chair. On the chair: a book of Russian short stories.
 A wooden table. On the table: a bottle of vodka, a shot glass, a hammer, a cow's head.
 (The entire floor covered in feathers)
 (She wears very large sunglasses. Red lips. Short, voluminous, curly hair. Shorts.
 High cowboy boots. A black feather boa covering - sometimes - her chest)*

OLENKA

(Pours a shot of vodka. Speaks to the audience)
 I believe in God. *(Taps the shot glass on the table and drinks)*
 And in men. *(Pours, taps, and drinks)*
 I love God. And men. *(Pours again)*
 I believe in man as if he is God and in God as if he is a man.
 I am a good woman. *(Taps and drinks)*
 I am woman who is good. *(Pours)*
 I have my own opinion. *(Taps and drinks)*
 I have opinions about God and about men.
 About me, you can think whatever you want. *(Pours)*
 I know who I am. *(Taps and drinks)*
 I am a woman who loves too much.

(Begins to pour for herself. Stops)

Too much?

What is too much?

Are excesses measured above or below the center? From left to right or the other way around? From the middle? What is the middle and the end? And the midpoint? How far does it go when it goes from the middle? How much does an excess measure? Is it heavy? When does excess begin? From when does it start to be too much? Who decides what is fair, right, or balanced? And from when does love, or that thing which is given and overflows, start to be too much? Why the center, or love, explodes and exceeds all limits? And why is it not good - or perhaps perverse - to go beyond limits? And who says that evil lies in excess and good lies in shortage, or between good and evil, is there an excess?

I, even if you don't believe it, have my own opinion.

About good and evil.

I have.

But I don't have it to everyone's taste, even though I enjoy sharing it with you.

About excessive excess or measured excess, I have my own opinion.

Now, you, or at least half of you, probably thought: of course, poor woman, we don't know if she's a good woman or a woman who is good. That's why she drinks. (Laughs) No, it's not for that.

It's not for nothing that I drink. It's for them. For all those men who were left behind and lost in time and space. *(Takes the bottle of vodka).*

MUSIC

(Olenka dances. Her body moves in space. Feathers rise from the floor)

Love exists. God exists. Men exist. Theater exists. The audience exists. Wood exists. The smell of wood exists. Animals exist. Animal diseases exist. Russian short stories exist.
Theater is the most important and useful thing in the world.
Wood is the most important and useful thing in the world.
Animals are the most important and useful thing in the world.
Love is the most important and useful thing in the world.
Having an opinion is the most important and useful thing in the world.
And me? Am I the least important and the most useless thing in the world?

(Silence. Stops dancing. Looks at the book, does not touch it. The book opens by itself, pages turn, no one touches it)

Once I read a Russian short story.

My sister told me: you have to read the Russians. The Russians don't tell stories. The Russians are Russians and that's it... and that's nothing. In Russian short stories, there's no time to realize what happens because everything happens, all the time. There's a winter light, in Russian short stories, that makes me a better person. There are gardens that end, forests that are sold, people who love each other, men who remain silent. And doctors, many doctors and also veterinarians. Country houses, dead seagulls, theaters in front of lakes. Wind. In Russian short stories, there's philosophy, and that's not me saying it, it was my sister.

(Sound of rain)

The Russian short story I read in Spanish is called "A Good Woman", by Anton Chekhov, who is the most Russian of all Russian writers. It was summer, not in the story, it was summer when I read the story but in the story it was cold and it rained a lot at the beginning, but thanks to that, to the rain, he and she, begin to talk. Not from the beginning, of course. First, there's silence, rain and then they talk. *(Silence)*. In life, things don't happen like that, that's why what happens, happens. People talk without prior silence, desperately, suddenly they start talking as if words don't have a house or a bed or place in the world, without letting them be silence before they are words. In the story, since it was raining a lot, they start talking about the rain. What else could they talk about? Why would they talk about something else if that's what was happening to them, the rain together? That's Chekhov, I think. At least it was in the story I read. Life in the present. And this Russian man places himself beside her, I mean beside life, not too close nor too far, not on the edge nor on the cliff, not at the beginning nor so close to the end. By my side. I read this story on a train, and I don't remember where I was going because it didn't matter or because I was drunk or because I didn't want to know how far I could go. My suitcases and I were tired, I remember that, and we couldn't stop crying. Crying tires, it tires a lot to cry, it's exhausting, it drains the soul. And it makes you ages. A man approached us, bearded, smelling perfumed as if he wanted to hide some other smell or pain, with stratospheric dark circles around his eyes. He didn't look at me, nor I at him, he looked at my suitcases, that's for sure. He sat next to us with his backpack and with a book in his hand, a long finger like a Russian pianist. And he started crying, just like that, without doing anything, without making noise, without caring. So, I looked at him, attentively. And little by little, I stopped crying

and my suitcases also stopped. "How exaggerated this train is," I thought, "and everything that happens to us and ourselves who cry so much and the perfume so perfumed and the beard so thick and how heavy our suitcases are and the matter of not knowing where we're going. What an exaggeration." So, the more he cried, the less I cried. His crying became rhythmic, it was beautiful, he shed tears peacefully.

Then we arrived at a station, he got up, took his backpack and got off the train. Inside the emptiness that remained of him, in the seat, he left his book.

(Looks at the book)

He left it there, alone, in its emptiness, and I took it out of its deep space, very carefully, because I was afraid that its emptiness, not the book, would bite me ... it was a mysterious place and somewhat melancholic, (like Russian stories), and I feared that the book could also give me a cramp or a discharge of life... I don't know.

I managed to open the book when the train departed. Wow! A Russian book... I remembered my sister.

Only in the theater world you can truly become an educated person because you have to read books.

Me: A good woman.

The book: Not to mention the aesthetic pleasure it provides.

Me: A good woman who is good because she doesn't love too much.

The book: But does the audience understand anything?

Me: She's good because she's not annoying when she loves. Do you understand?

The book: They're just stories (*Olenka was becoming expansive and radiant with Happiness*)

Me: The happiness of those who love is annoying.

(stops looking at the book)

A good woman doesn't love too much, she loves enough to not be annoying. And that's not what the story said. I say that, me, who have my own opinion.

I like men. I like them to death. When I fall in love, I choose to fall in love, yes, it's not something silly that happens to me suddenly, as if I'm stupid. I'm not stupid. I fall in love exactly because I'm not stupid and that's why I don't fall in love with foolish men, on the contrary, I fall in love with men who cry. Foolish men don't cry. They only talk all the time. The bodies of the men I fall in love with, enter my body and make it double. They, men, and Russian writers, think my body bends, but it's not true, what happens is that my body enters his and becomes two.

When I fall in love, my nails grow. My eyes open, my lips burn. My fingers and toes stretch. My hair grows, the ideas, the opinions, the illusions. Everything grows. And so do the certainties. I run to the market and buy fruits, flowers as if a hurricane is coming, I clean the cabinets and fill them with apples, I shorten my dresses and skirts and shave my whole body and climb the stairs of my house going up and down as if everything in me is like the tail of a dog that has just come out of the cage after being locked up for a whole winter or hundreds of winters, Russian ones. The ground where I walk is covered in flowers. I fly!