

Twelve hours in the life of a model

Eleven o'clock in the morning, a model look Agency in Paris.

A young girl was parading up in front of a select audience; *clap clap clap* was making the sound of her high-heels, as a hammering. Everyone was looking at her, from top to bottom: delicate face without any expression, blue eyes, slim figure and endless legs. "*Space is only noise if you can see*" was saying the Nicolas Jaars' song in the background music.

The entire audience was lost in its thoughts, except the designer who was twiddling his handkerchief nervously, as he usually does during a fashion show.

In single line, five or six models were walking behind the first one; the *clap clap clap* was louder and started to be aggressive.

"*Space is only noise if you can see*" was repeating the song over and over again.

The girls, without having the same features, looked as if they were related. Indeed, something in their behaviour was oddly similar but nobody was paying attention to this detail. Only Marie, the reporter in charge of dealing with the event, found these women strange, almost distressing.

Some weak applause burst forth in the hall and got the reporter out of her observation. She stood up, trembling legs. All that she wanted was to leave this place.

Two hours later, at a table outside a café.

Marie lit yet another cigarette. *Okay*, she thought, *this fashion show was completely weird*. As she sipped some tea, she observed the passer-by and found them quite ordinary; this feeling reassured her.

Suddenly, her eyes fell on a black and armoured vehicle. It puzzled her : *in broad daylight, isn't out of place to see that ?* Besides the truck was driving in the direction of the *Grand Palais*, in which the tonight fashion show was supposed to take place. *I want to watch the situation closely.*

Three o'clock, The Grand Palais.

Once arrived at backstage, Marie became aware of something: some places are a hive of activity. She felt a highly charged atmosphere emanating from the room. The staff was bustling around: the dressmakers were making some alteration, the hairdressers with the make-up artists were focus on their model and the designer was cursing each person who had the misfortune to be on his way. *I definitely don't want to interview this man, but I could try with the young girl there.* She was the model who had paraded up this morning.

"Hi! said Marie, I'm a reporter from *Trendy Magazine* and I was wondering if we could talk together about your job. How could you describe a typical day of a model, especially during an important event like the Fashion Week? Is it a pressure to be shown this way?"

The girl looked at Marie with her big blue eyes, without a word. She was completely stoical, and it troubled the young woman. She hated the fact that someone could ignore her.

"Oh, you don't seem so talkative (*and not very lively* she thought) but it doesn't matter, I've always some question to ask to people, you know! she continues, almost enthusiastic. So...

- I am not allowed to talk to strangers, interrupted the model.

She had replied with so much gravity, pronouncing clearly each words of this only sentence, that the reporter kept quiet.

-Oh... Not even a word to share your opinion about the fashion industry?

Last cold look.

-Ok, I should leave you alone."

Marie was irritated. She had the feeling that she was out of place among these people, the feeling that something was wrong there. *And nobody is paying attention to that! Or it's just pure imagination.* Her eyes fell on another young model: she was sitting up straight, hands on her knees with a vacant look. The reporter wanted to talk to her and check if she would have the same behaviour. Her answer was similar, clear and lapidary: *I am no allowed to talk to strangers.* The sentence remains in her mind. As this morning, she left the room quite nervous, with a terrible headache.

Nine o'clock, the beginning of the fashion show.

Marie was sitting in the first row. The show was more than thirty minutes late, so she could observe the audience around her. *Nothing seems wrong...* She looked at the podium and imagined the young models, parading up in front her: tall, pretty, with stern faces. The scenery was the reflection of the atmosphere: *cold.* Indeed, the catwalk was covered with a white carpet, completely immaculate. It stood out against the black colour that was predominant in the room. *Rather gloomy, but efficient* she thought.

Suddenly, the lights went out. An electronic music started to play and only the podium lit up. In a straight line, ten models made their entrance. Marie found them fascinating. They were wearing black and white asymmetric dresses. One singular detail: a mask was covering their faces. The show lasted thirty minutes. Thirty minutes in which the reporter could not take her eyes off the girls. Thirty minutes under hypnosis.

Eleven o'clock.

Marie was confused. She was living the strangest day of her life. *Fortunately, it's time to go home and forget.* Once arrived at the parking of the Grand Palais, she lit a cigarette and closed her eyes. But a male voice interrupted her breathing space. She heard something like: "Where do the models go?" Someone answered: "I've already told you Franck, we have to put them in the black truck there!"

The young woman looked around her and saw two men. One of them was carrying a lifeless body. He *really* put it the car, as if it was an ordinary object.

"What will happened to these girls?" shout Franck.

"Can you just be quiet? and vaguely he added: They use these models for one day, after it they recycle them or something like that... I don't know Franck, just do your work and don't talk."

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