



The Price of Beauty

I remember her smile, a wonderful smile which never left her beautiful face. It knew how to be discreet when we had to be serious, compassionate in the difficult times, mysterious during our confidences and it always came, with its crystalline laugh, brightening each day of my life. I was able to see in her blue eyes, enameled by gold, what the others couldn't see. She hid her extreme fragility behind her burst of laughter. She was a small flickering flame in our big world that the slightest gust of wind could have extinguished. But she was gifted, very talented and she knew how to enjoy life with a simple happiness which I always envied. Hand in hand, we attacked our teenage years ready to meet challenges and I will never forget this tall blonde girl with whom I discovered life.

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I remember her passport covered with stamps with so many colors, sizes and shapes. Her work took up all her time and she traveled often. We had grown and matured but our friendship resisted all, even the distance. I envied her because, just entering in the business world, her career already promised to be prestigious. This was not a surprise, she was ambitious, determined and above all she had a powerful charisma which attracted, without her even noticing it, the people around her. I was always in the background, much more discreet, much more common, much less beautiful. I was not part of this world of pretense where smiles were handling means and words a way of persuasion. But I knew her and I was the only one. I was at her side as much as I could, I helped this little twig not to bend under the weight of life and to still continue forward. She was destined to become an important person in the world and I was destined to support this wonderful young woman with whom I launched into life.

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I remember the blinding flashes of the photographers who hunted her. She was famous for her beauty and everyone wanted her for exorbitant prices. Her efforts had paid off and the difficulties of the beginning of her career were far behind. The time when we, schoolgirls, dreamt of fabulous destinies was long gone! I finally chose a peaceful and common life while she accomplished her incredible destiny. And she was so beautiful! She was slender and she had endless legs, a face that was able to take any expression... She was simply fabulous, at the height of her career, at the height of her life.

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I remember the first refusal, the first tears. She had been the best but her time had passed, she was too old now. They took younger girls, leaner girls; it was the end of her career. I didn't think she was so old and I knew that she stayed the same even after those years, so I helped her accept that she had not ended her life, not yet.

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I remember her taut skin, her dull eyes, and her closed mouth where her smile was gone. With this smile had vanished everything: her joy of living, her beauty, her determination, her laughter... Her bony face reflected a terrible weariness and one just had to look at her to see that life had already left her and that this body damaged by time only waited for the coming of death. She no longer had the strength to stand up, her muscles had atrophied and her bones were sticking out of her skin to the point it seemed like they were going to pierce it. She suffered terribly because her illness had destroyed her trachea, she had lost teeth and also her beautiful hair and her eyes seemed enormous on her emaciated face. I sat next to her and held her hand; it looked microscopic in mine, that little icy hand. I spoke to her without stopping, I told her my life, our lives, challenges we had succeeded in together, all our good times. I knew she was going to leave and I wanted her to leave happily. Tears were running down my face but I kept talking, I told her that she would leave an empty space, I told her that I loved her but I was afraid it was already too late. As the sun descended on the horizon I finally stopped talking, my throat dry and my face wet with tears. I had said everything. Since my arrival she had not moved, had not spoken to me or even looked at me, but at that moment she turned to me slowly and with obvious effort, smiled at me. She gave me this last smile before leaving, this smile I loved so much, and this smile meant everything. Then she leaned back in her bed, closed her eyes, still smiling and finally stopped breathing. I did not cry at that moment, I smiled. I was happy because I knew she was leaving in peace despite what she had experienced, despite the dense and difficult life she had had, she was leaving in peace.

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The society had destroyed her. Her smile was famous in the modeling world, but that wasn't enough: she had to be lean, always leaner so she had just stopped eating and lost weight, too much weight. She is dead now. Anorexia took her youth and she lived her entire life in six years. She was 18.

At the age of 14, she was 65 kg for her 1m75

At age 16, she weighed 55kg

At age 17, 45kg

At 18, 35kg

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