

There Is No Greater Grief Than For A Loss That Is Yet To Come

Sparked by Eduardo Galeano, Bocas del Tiempo

by

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DESCRIPTION

One man drinks two glasses of wine for him and his far-away friend. Then, one night, there is only one glass on the table.

CHARACTERS

- EDUARDO
- BARTENDER

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It is a drinking establishment—not refined, not seedy, but certainly where young people would not go except as an ironic statement about their elders—or in search of something cool.

MUSIC: Juanjo Dominguez, “Cuando tú no está”

BARTENDER—white shirt, black vest and pants—at his station reading his newspaper when EDUARDO comes in and takes his accustomed table. Perhaps today he wears a white linen suit. In any case, what he wears, including his panama, he wears with ease and indifference.

Once he settles in his seat, EDUARDO gestures, and BARTENDER brings over two glasses of wine, sets one in front of EDUARDO, sets one in front of the empty seat across from him.

EDUARDO

The shiraz?

BARTENDER

As you had requested the other night.

EDUARDO

Good. Good. It will be well-liked. Thank you.

BARTENDER backs away to his station, reads his newspaper.

EDUARDO checks his watch, waits. Then he checks his watch again. This time he picks up the glass and sips his wine. At times he looks at the other, untouched, glass—perhaps nods to it, perhaps not. At some point he checks his watch again and then drains the glass.

BARTENDER picks up the empty and full glass and takes them away. EDUARDO leaves money on the table, stands, puts on his hat, nods to BARTENDER and leaves.

When EDUARDO is gone, BARTENDER sips the wine from the full glass, nods his approval, raises it in a salute to the departed EDUARDO.

Lights down.

* * * * *

Lights up.

MUSIC: Cem “Gem” Duruoz playing Lucio Demare’s “Malena”

It is hot. BARTENDER is at his station, but his shirt sleeves are rolled up. EDUARDO enters, coat draped over his arms, shirt sleeves rolled up as well, fanning himself with his panama. They nod to each other, and EDUARDO sits at his accustomed place, after first hanging his coat on the back of his chair and placing his hat on the table.

BARTENDER brings over two glasses of wine as before.

EDUARDO

The malbec?

BARTENDER

Unfortunately not, at least from the vineyard you suggested. The markets, you know—not always reliable. I have taken the liberty of offering you a malbec from Fincha Flichman.

EDUARDO hesitates, as if unsure that this break in the routine is bearable, but then takes up the glass and sips. Both men wait, then EDUARDO nods.

EDUARDO

He will like this, I believe.

BARTENDER

I am glad he will—whoever he is.

When EDUARDO does not offer any more information, BARTENDER nods and moves back to his seat.

EDUARDO checks his watch, then drinks as he did before. BARTENDER watches him from behind his newspaper.

When EDUARDO finishes as before, after checking his watch, and puts down his glass, he doesn't pull out the money from his pocket right away. Instead, he stares at the full glass.

EDUARDO

My friend—

BARTENDER lowers his paper with care so as not to break the mood.

EDUARDO

Several months ago my friend went to Lima. A good friend—"life-long" you could say.

BARTENDER

Those are rare.

EDUARDO

We share our wine each night, as we did before he left—he there, me here.

BARTENDER

By the watch.

EDUARDO

And by the glass. And speaking of by and by, I must pay you.

EDUARDO slide a money clip from his pocket, lays out bills on the table. Coat over his arm, panama fanning himself.

BARTENDER

I trust he liked the malbec.

EDUARDO

I can say that he did. But the Luigi Bosca next time—if possible.

BARTENDER

If possible, of course.

As before, after EDUARDO leaves, BARTENDER sips the wine from the full glass and muses.

BARTENDER

Luigi Bosca it is.

BARTENDER raises the glass in a salute to the departed EDUARDO.

Lights down.

* * * * *

Lights up.

MUSIC: “Por Una Cabeza” by Carlos Gardel (guitar version)

BARTENDER at his station, reading. EDUARDO enters, wearing a light coat and a pair of gloves. He takes off the coat and sets it across the seat of the empty chair, puts his gloves in his hat, sets the hat on the coat. And sits.

BARTENDER goes to pour the two glasses, but EDUARDO holds up a hand.

EDUARDO

Just one, please.

BARTENDER brings it over. Without checking his watch, EDUARDO drains the glass, puts it down—perhaps more heavily than he would want. Then he nods, rises, pulls money from his clip, lays it out carefully on the table.

BARTENDER

I am sorry for your loss.

EDUARDO barely nods, puts on his gloves, coat, and hat, and leaves. BARTENDER sits in the emptied chair, puts his head in his hands, and stares at the empty glass.