

The Gift of a Name

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1

She was very thin and very pale.
They said she couldn't love because she was too frail, almost invisible.
So, she dressed herself in many layers of clothes to appear more... full.
She wore narrow, pointed shoes with big colourful laces.
Thick socks to make her legs look bigger.
A stiff skirt that couldn't swirl in the wind but stayed wide, like an upsidedown ice cream cone.
She wore a big hat and an enormous coat, hiding her grand thoughts and her huge heart.
And a scarf that fluttered in the wind, light and fragrant, like her dreams travelling far away.

2

He was round.
They said he couldn't love because he looked like a ball, and balls bounce away.
You have to catch them quickly, but if no one wants to catch you, you just bounce until you stop.
Far from everyone, alone.
So he wore big clothes, to hide his soft and sweet shape.
Late at night, he would go to the sea.
He would walk into it and step towards the horizon, until the high water lifted him up.
He loved the sea because it doesn't matter how much you weigh or how round you are.
It always makes you float. And on the sea, the stars shine for everyone, even for you.

3

She was small, as tall as a rose.
They said she couldn't love because no one would ever notice her, tiny as she was.
She wore sandals with heels to look taller.
She always carried a cherry twig and wore a coloured glove to say, "I'm here too!"
She needed it when she queued up to buy sweet dango.
Her dress was the colour of stars, to feel like one of them: up there.
Her belt was the colour of the hummingbird: that tiny bird able to fly high and very far.
On full moon nights, she would gaze at the stars.

Up there, whether you're very tall or very tiny, it doesn't make much difference.
Up there, we're all tiny.

4

He was tall, actually very tall.
They said he couldn't love because it was impossible to kiss him or stroke his face.
So he dressed in bright, contrasting colours: blue and red with colourful flowers.
Maybe someone, one day, would touch those flowers, stroking him.
He often ran with open arms among the verbenas, to feel them brush against him,
even if only for a second, those tall flowers.
Like a sweet purple caress.
Other times, he would approach the sunflowers and stroke them.
Among those big flowers, he felt like a small child, one who stirs tenderness and
whom everyone looks at and loves.

5

One day, out of nowhere, a little girl arrived.
She was neither tall nor short, neither round nor thin.
It was a morning with warm sunshine, and butterflies danced in the fresh air.

6

She saw the girl in the big hat and asked her, "What's your name?"
No one had ever asked her before, so much so that she didn't know if she even had
one.
"My name is... my name is..."
"I'll give you a name: Mistral, a wind that brings scents of distant lands and friends
close by."
She hugged her with a smile, and Mistral felt her heart beat strongly, while her scarf
caught smiles close by
and scents of flowers far away in the wind.

7

She saw the boy dressed in blue and asked him, "What's your name?"
No one had ever asked him before, so much so that he didn't know if he even had
one.
"My name is... my name is..."
"Your name will be Jalandri, which means sea.
The sea welcomes everyone; you can sail among the waves to reach those who love
you and will love you forever."
Jalandri smiled and felt how much love he could receive and how much he, too, could
give.

8

She saw the girl in the starcoloured dress and asked her, "What's your name?"

No one had ever asked her before, so much so that she didn't know if she even had one.

"My name is... my name is..."

"Your name will be Akari, which means moonlight. She is small in the vast sky, but at night she lights up the whole Earth, like the greatest of lamps.

You know, even the sea watches the moon and follows it with its tides."

Akari felt a great light in her heart and a gentle warmth on her face, a soft warmth of awakened caresses.

9

She saw the boy dressed in blue and red and asked him, "What's your name?"

No one had ever asked him before, so much so that he didn't know if he even had one.

"My name is... my name is..."

"Your name will be Cantua: it's a big flower that grows on the mountains, and the Incas danced to its beauty."

The girl gave him the flower, and he felt small, imagining those mountains.

Everything is always relative.

For the first time, hearing his name, he knew he had a place in the world; he could be called and loved; he could be a child.

10

Now Mistral, Jalandri, Akari, and Cantua, with a name, could have friends, caresses, and hugs.

Cantua asked the girl, who was neither tall nor short, neither round nor thin, "And what's your name?"

She replied, "I am Aurora, the one who colours the sky in pink, awaiting the sun to shine for you."

She gave him a kiss and went off to give names to the children in the world who didn't yet have one,

those whom no one called or loved.

Aurora set out to illuminate, with her words, another part of sky and earth.

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