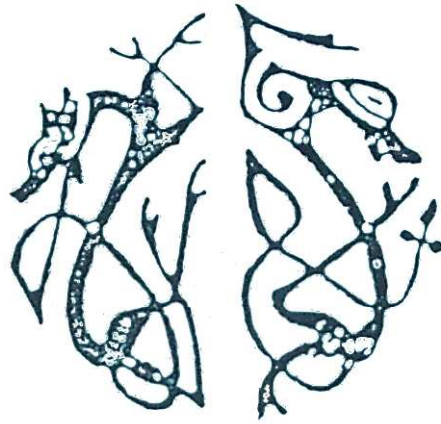




ROBERTO

LALLI



EVE AND THE



FOXES



Roberto Lalli delle Malebranche:

Eve and the Foxes

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Almost Eve and the Foxes

Do you sometimes feel the same way I do now, just forsaken, like a little leaf in the wind, with the feeling, that nobody on this whole blue sphere thinks of you? Yes?

Today I am feeling this way, and I sit by the window thinking about my little sister Eva. I stare at the horizon and feel that out there, somewhere far away out there, Eva is thinking of me just now.

Eva always loved me, she always called me MON AMOUR or AMORE MIO, but someday there came someone she loved even more than me, and along with him Eva moved away, far away. And now I am alone here by the window and I am sad, and it is raining, and Eva is not here and can't tell me any stories.

Eva is my little sister. She was so small, that she was almost invisible, when my parents moved with us from Italy to NYC. She was and is my little, beloved sister, but when she used to tell me the story about *Eve and the Foxes*, a long time ago, then she used to put on her glasses and went on telling and looked upon me with her big, earnest eyes. She was checking if I was listening carefully, and then, you know, it was me who was the little kid, Eva's little brother, and I couldn't look straight into her eyes, because Eva then became an old, strict but good hearted fairy. And





every time when I had to cry at the end of *Eve and the Foxes*, Eva held her hand before her glasses, because when you love someone, you cry when the beloved is crying, and your hearts touch each other.

You might ask yourself, why Eva always told me such a sad story, if I was already pretty sad by myself. Eva was a real fairy, and she knew even by that time, that the tears we cry out of love, become little pink clouds that jump from our cheeks and sail with the wind: to let rain far away from us a hundred times smiles or laughter on the kids and adults, who are sad there, on the other side of the moon, who are sad and waiting for a smile. And therefore, because today I am sad and Eva is living far away from me, I will tell you and myself a last time the story of

Eve and the Foxes.





Eve and the Foxes

Eve was a little, beautiful and very smart girl. Eve lived in a little room with blue wallpaper and pink shades. On the blue wallpaper little pink clouds were flying and little yellow suns shined, and on the pink shades little blue clouds floated and raindrops fell.

When Eve looked out of her window – and Eve looked out of her window very often – she saw the big, wild lake, that all the kids called “the Silver Lake”. The lake some days looked blue, on others green, sometimes, when the sun was shining, the lake was as bright as a silver coin, so that Eve couldn’t almost look at him. On other days, when it rained, the lake was dark and shaggy like the fur of an old tomcat, and the Camelducks, who were known only near the Silver Lake, then took rides over the lake on the little, dark waves and laughed and screamed:

PISTAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

PISTAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

On such days Eve watched the Camelducks from her place by the window and laughed (because she comprehended the language of the ducks, who screamed *make way!*), and the small suns on the wallpaper laughed too, because they loved Eve and because Eve too was like them, to all who knew her, a little, warm sun.





The lake, that everybody called the Silver Lake, felt very cold in wintertime when it snowed. Even the fishes, who lived in the lake, felt cold, and because of the fact that the lake felt cold (and because he liked the fishes), every year in a special night he pulled over a cold jacket made of ice: over himself and the fishes, do you know what I mean? And the next morning, when the adults incidentally took a look out of the window, they said:

OH YES, THE LAKE SEEMS TO HAVE FROZEN ...

Well, you know how the adults are.

Eve knew better, because she knew the lake and his trembling, when he felt cold, and once in a year, always in a snow night, when the lake pulled over his frozen jacket, Eve woke up. Why? Because then the suns on the blue wallpaper glowed in the dark and whispered laughing:

ICE AND SNOWWWWWWW

THIS IS FOR SUREEEEEEE

WON'T HARM THE LAKEEEEEEE

ANymOREEEEEEE

HEHIHIHEEHOOOO

That was kind of strange, wasn't it?

And what about Eve?





Eve in fact awoke and looked towards the window, but didn't stand up, just thought about the lake, smiled, listened to the whispering and laughing of the suns, laughed, kissed her Teddy and once again fell asleep.

Well, Eve is sleeping now, and in her sleep, in her dreams, where everything can become true, Eve is a little sand coloured Camelduck and screams and laughs:

MAKEWAAAAYYYYY!

Let us let her sleep, sleep for good, because tomorrow is a Sunday.

But we, we now fly throughout Eve's mansion right to the outside (like ghosts, you know), we fly together through the cold air and through the snowflakes and fly, yes, fly together through the night to the other side of the lake, where Mickey lives.

There, the small house, can you see it through the whirling snowflakes? The third window from the left, that is Mickey's window, behind lays Mickey's room, and there Mickey is sleeping right at this moment. He lays in bed, on the back, both arms spread so wide, that they really hang out of the bed on both sides. Look, Mickey's arms are kind of waving, and look, Mickey's curly head moves smoothly up and down, precisely like the head of a Camelduck.

Mickey is sleeping, isn't he?





Yes, but Mickey is dreaming too.

His skates flit over the ice, only a few meters, and Mickey will juggle the black disk before his feet with his hockey stick by the astonished and helpless goalie into the goal:

GOAL!!!

All the spectators, who have come to his dream, rejoice, throw their popcorn into the air and scream:

MICKEY!

WILD MICKEY!

MICKEYYYYYYYY!

And in Mickey's dream even the Camelducks on the Silver Lake suddenly scream in all earnest:

MAKE WAAAAAYYYY ... FOR MICKEYYY!

Well, you see, mon amour, Mickey is dreaming of skating, Mickey is dreaming of making goals, but most of all Mickey is dreaming of Mickey: Mickey as the world champion, Mickey as a hero, Mickey as the stealthy king of the Camelducks (who now have to be called Mickeyducks in his honour), Mickey as the wild thing from the Silver Lake.

Stop looking at this scene, mon amour, let Mickey dream. We have to go.

No, wait one more moment. From here, from Mickey's room I can see the Silver Lake glitter under the light of the stars. Can you see it? No?





I see it.

If it has stopped to snow, you want to know, mon amour?

Yes, it has stopped.

If there is snow on the ice jacket of the Silver Lake, you want to know?

Yes, exactly.

If the brand new ice jacket of the Silver Lake may after all have still some ice holes in it, you want to know?

Yes, it still has a couple of ice holes in it, holes with ice cold water in it.

BUT MICKEY!!!, you now will shout to me, right? MICKEY TOMORROW MORNING SURELY WILL BE EAGER TO GO SKATING ON THE LAKE. AND THE HOLES??!?!??

Well, you are right, that could get dangerous. Let us therefore shout out, shout out really hard:

MICKEY, LOOK OUT!!!

LOOK OUT, MICKEY!!!

Ouch, you see, mon amour, he doesn't hear. Mickey is sleeping and dreaming, and we have to move on again, because in a few moments it will become day, and our story heads on, and if we do not speed up, we will miss it. It's getting morning at the Silver Lake, and the children of the Camelducks carefully crawl on the backs of their sleeping parents





and smile and laugh and whisper really softly: PISTT*TAAAA ... There at the Silver Lake, in the green reed, there, where Mickey lives.

A Sunday morning it was, and Mickey woke up early, got out of his bed gently and without a noise, dressed himself up, took the skates and the stick and sneaked out of the house. So early in the morning it was, that all the adults were still sleeping. The whole world was still asleep, only Mickey wasn't, and the beaming morning sun and the shining white lake were calling for him. And Mickey followed their call, put on his skates, took his stick in both hands and headed out, all alone, onto the big, sparkling lake.

HOW THICK THE ICE ALREADY IS!, Mickey thought, and his skates flew over the ice.

MAKE WAAAAYYYY FOR MICKEYYYY!, he shouted, and there in the bright morning light his dream seemed almost to get real.

You know, a lake, a big wild lake like the Silver Lake is always a little bit similar to a crocodile.

How this idea comes to my head?

I will tell you the story.

During one of my innumerable travels through a lot of wild countries, once I saw, near the city of Crocozul, nearby a muddy river, a crocodile sleeping. This crocodile was such a big one, that no other crocodile





dared to sleep near him. Believe me, mon amour, even a lion would have feared this long dented woodchuck. But even then there were animals, which walked up and down on the long, horned back of the crocodile!

You don't believe me?

But nevertheless it is true.

They were little birds. In all directions they ran up and down over the back of the crocodile and peeped and played and flattered joyfully. At that time I was, just like you are now, very astonished at the courage of those little, yellow-blue birds, and so I asked little Sophi, a little black boy, who had guided me through that foreign wilderness:

TELL ME, SOPHI, DOESN'T THE CROCODILE EAT THE LITTLE BIRDS, WHEN THEY DO WALK SO UNCONCERNED UP AND DOWN ON HIS BACK?

Sophi laughed, looked at me with his sparkling black eyes and said:

THE CROCODILE LIKES THE LITTLE BIRDS, BECAUSE THEY SCRATCH AND BRUSH HIS BACK, THERE WHERE HE IS ITCHING. AND THAT IS A THING, THAT THE CROCODILE CAN'T DO ALONE VERY GOOD.

Sophi laughed.

ONLY ONCE (and Sophi suddenly became sad), YOU KNOW, EVE, THE CROCODILE MUST HAVE DREAMED SOMETHING





STUPID, AND THEN WITHOUT AWAKING HE QUICK AS LIGHTNING CATCHED A LITTLE BIRD ... AND SWALLOWED IT! AND THAT FOR SOPHI WAS A SAD DAY, BECAUSE THE LITTLE BIRD HAD BEEN THE FUNNIEST AND FASTEST OF THEM ALL ON THE BACK OF THE CROCCODILE. AS QUCIK AND NIMBLE AS THESE STRANGE PEOPLE IN YOUR COUNTRY, WHO WALK OVER THE ICE ON SABRES.

YOU MEAN ICE SKATERS?, I asked Sophi.

YES, he said, LITTLE BIRD WAS LIKE ICE SKATER, BEFORE THE CROCODILE SWALLOWED HIM, WHILE DREAMING.

And Sophi sighed.

And I am sighing too, now, many years from that day, while I see Mickey fly over the ice of the Silver Lake like that.

Do you understand now, why the Silver Lake brings to me the image of a sleeping crocodile, mon amour? Mickey flew over the ice, faster and faster. He performed turns, went along backward, drove round, produced circles and screamed:

MAKE WAAAAYYYY!

And the sun shone, and Mickey felt warm and a little bit dizzy. Do you remember? You have asked me about the holes in the ice jacket of the





lake. There they were, really near, dangerously near, and Mickey didn't think about them. Mickey flew backward ... and ... wow, you were lucky this time, Mickey! Look out! Oh Mickey, that was really a narrow escape. Be careful, Mickey, wait, not so fast ... that hole, there is a ...

SPLISH!

Mickey has fallen into the hole, right into the ice cold water, and Mickey is trying to scream, but not a single sound is coming out of his mouth. He tries to swim, but the heavy skates pull him down with dreadful force, down, and his body is already getting numb from the cold water, and the lake swallows Mickey up completely, just like the crocodile swallowed up the little bird in Sophi's story.

Yes, that's the way it was.

Mickey sank with eyes wide open down to the bottom of the lake. Mickey's mouth did not produce a sound, that's for sure, but maybe Mickey's heart did, so loud, that Eve was awakened by it on the other side of the lake. Eve opened her eyes, and the first thing she saw in the room flooded by the light, were the little yellow suns on the blue wallpaper. They were weeping, and they hold their little rays protective in front of themselves, and Eve knew at once, that something terrible must had happened. Quickly she got out of the bed, and quickly she put her things on and sneaked to the door. And as being pulled by invisible





strings, she ran to the sparkling lake, exactly to that place, where Mickey had skated, before ... well, you already know.

Eve was a smart girl, and when she saw from a distance Mickey's yellow-blue scarf laying on the ice, she shouted out as loud as she could the names of her parents all over the place and many times. But her parents didn't here her, and so Eve began to crawl very carefully and moving like a seal on the ice towards Mickey's scarf. She did that inch after inch, until she could see the big and sharp edged hole, in which the owner of the scarf must have been fallen. Eve's knees became cold from the ice and began to hurt, but Eve had only eyes for the hole in the ice and for the sharp pieces of ice, that were drifting on the dark green water. And from Eve's eyes came tears like pearls. Yes, Eve had never seen Mickey, well, she really didn't know if someone had really broke in or simply had forgotten a scarf by the hole. But as she was laying there upon the cold ice, staring into the turbid water, she had to cry. She couldn't do otherwise. And now imagine, mon amour, how Eve was startled when suddenly there in the ice hole a little, pointed, grey-blue face, two tapered ears and two little paws, long whiskers and two fox eyes did appear and came to the surface, up to the light of the wonderful shining blue winter morning.





A FOX, Eve shouted out, still crying, A BLUE FOX, Eve screamed. And she bend over the hole, trying to help the fox, who was paddling wildly to come out of the water.

AN IMPERTINENT AND SUPREME UNGRATEFUL FOX!, Eve laughed with tears in her eyes, as the fox snapped at her hand and climbed out of the ice hole: directing immediately to the green snow covered reed, where he disappeared. But you will soon understand, why Eve lost her laugh at once. I do not want to bore you with adult's tales, mon amour, and therefore I will cut the long story short, as one says.

Eve's parents came running like two annoyed rhinos:

EVE, YOU SHOULD NOT WALK ALONE ... etcetera. Eve's parents discover Mickey's scarf.

EVE, YOU TELL US IMMEDIATELY, WHOSE SCARF THIS IT ... etcetera.

GOOD GOD, WE HAVE TO CALL THE FIREBRIGADE, MAYBE SOMEONE HAS BROKEN INTO THE ICE!

The two alarmed rhinos gallop back to the house to call the fire brigade, and they leave the little rhino called Eve at the beach of the Silver Lake with the sinister yellow-blue scarf in her hand.

And now my story gets a little sad: Mickey's father (Mickey's Mom is dead a long time, you now), well, Mickey's father awakes, goes to the





room of Mickey, realizes that Mickey must have left together with his skates, get dressed urgently and runs shaking to the Silver Lake. And there, underneath the sparkling winter sun, he sees the fire brigade men, Eve's parents, Eve and – imagine his pain inside – in Eve's hands Mickey's scarf.

MICKEYYYYYY!, Mickey's father cries out so loud, that all the Camelducks stop singing. MICKEYYYYYY!, and his heart crushes like an ice cube, that has fallen on the pavement. The men of the fire brigade slip into their special suits, and they dive the whole day for the body of Mickey, but they do not find him. Big, wild and powerful the Silver Lake is, and as it seems, it wants to keep Mickey forever.

Mickey's father cries, Eve's parents cry and Eve cries, and you too are now very sad, mon amour, aren't you? In fact it seems, that Mickey has drowned and is dead. Yes, so it seems.

But that is not how it is. Mickey is alive!

What, you do not believe me, mon amour, you shake your head?

Ok, so the story ends here (because I get offended easily). Do you want to take the risk, really?

No, you don't?

You want to believe me for the time being and without obligation that Mickey is still alive, yes? Am I right?





Ok, now imagine a magician in the circus, yes, one of these strange misters all dressed up in black, who fed themselves with coloured paper and kerchiefs and do extract chicken eggs out of the ears of everyone all day. Every good magician has a cylinder, right? Right. And sometimes a magician takes an apricot and puts it into the cylinder, waits for a moment, and WHAM!, he takes out a little rabbit. (By the way: an apple produces a quail and a pineapple a middle weight rhino).

Well, exactly such a kind of cylinder were (did you guess it in the meanwhile?) the ice hole, in which Mickey did disappear. Mickey fell into it as a little boy and came out of it as a ... yes, Eve saw it ... as a grey-blue fox!

Yes, in earnest, the fox, Eve saw swimming in the ice hole and then running to the reed, that fox was Mickey.

Just a moment, mon amour, I see the postman coming along outside, he fetches a letter. Just wait a minute, wait for me, I take the letter and open it and read it:

DEAR STORYTELLER,

WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT AGAIN? A WATER HOLE IS NOT A CYLINDER, AND MOREOVER, HOW COULD A LAKE PRODUCE MAGIC? IS THE SILVER LAKE ABLE TO DO





MAGIC, CAN THE SILVER LAKE TURN LITTLE BOYS INTO
FOXES, CAN IT, HM, CAN IT? WHY, BECAUSE HE CAN'T, BAH!
NONTHELESS WITH MY BEST WISHES
THE NOT BELIEVING PIT.
4TH IGLOO TO THE RIGHT, NORTH POLE.

Well, you know, mon amour, Pit is right in a way. The Silver Lake can't do magic for sure, but, and that makes a fine difference, someone, who is living down there, deep down where the waters of the lake are the darkest, someone who is housing and living down there, this someone (it's a secret!) is able to do magic, and not to barely.

It is the grimy Poseidon, the king of the sea, who lives deep down in the Silver Lake in his coral-green water castle in the midst of the fairies. And believe me, if he, the king of all earthly waters likes to, if the mighty Poseidon likes to, than the eels dance Foxtrot and the goldfishes sing operas.

This might sound strange to you at this point (not the goldfish operas, I mean my story), that there down under in the Silver Lake lives a man with a moustache and a trident and a seahorse carriage and 117 fairy maidens who transforms little boys into foxes. And still it is true. Well,





most of the times it is. Because Mickey's transformation was performed by a fairy, who ...

Wait. First things first!

Do you remember, mon amour? Mickey has fallen into the ice hole and sinks slowly and with eyes wide open to the sandy bottom of the lake. Mickey sinks and sinks, and around him the water is getting colder and darker. Soon Mickey will no longer be able to hold his breath, and than he will have to open his mouth and he will drown.

There! Now Mickey's feet touch down on the sandy, green-blue gleaming soil of the lake.

And look what is happening now:

WELL, WHAT IN THE NAME OF AL THREE TIMES CURLED SEA-HORSES ... WHAT KIND OF BOOBY HAZARDS HERE TO ... MAKE WAAAAYYYYY!, YOU FOOLISH SEAWORM, YOU GET IN MY WAY!!!

It is a dream? Who has yelled at Mickey from behind, here on the ground of the lake? Mickey turns around on his own axis, just as quick as an astronaut on the moon, and he almost faints, and not only for the reason, that he is still holding his breath. Before him in the water are:

A man with a moustache and a trident on a carriage, who apparently tries to calm four underwater horses.





Four underwater horses getting wild, who are fearful because of Mickey and who, after a wild full brake, are apparently willing to be calmed by a man with a moustache and a trident.

WELL, YOU LITTLE GOOD FOR NOTHING EEL, DON'T YOU FIND THE RIGHT WORDS OF EXCUSE TO SAY TO ME, HM?, the man with the moustache asks the astonished Mickey.

WELL, WEEEEEEELLLLLLL???

Mickey, the eyes wide open, stands there like stuffed and is not able to say anything.

WELL, OK, the Mister with the moustache on the carriage says, with suddenly gentle voice, PERHAPS I MYSELF DROVE A LITTLE TOO FAST, YEAH. I GUESS, YOU HAVE ALREADY SOME DIFFICULTY, TRYING TO BREATH OVER HERE, LITTLE CREATURE, AM I RIGHT? WAIT, I WILL FIX THAT WITHIN A MINUTE.

The man with the moustache leans out of the carriage and touches Mickey softly with his golden trident on his shoulder. And Mickey, whose face a second ago was blue from the effort to prevent himself from breathing water, now is able to breath so deep and gracefully, like he did the last time in summer holyday at the seashore. And in the same moment Mickey feels warm, wonderful warm there in the ice cold water,





warm under his skin and warm in his heart. The dumpling in his throat is melting, and Mickey now is able to speak to the man with the moustache:

I AM SORRY, IF I' M ... DISTURBING. I MUST HAVE LOST THE WAY... I HAVE ... I THINK ... BROKEN THROUGH THE ICE, AND NOW ...

Mickey stares to the bottom and probably he will start crying soon.

NO, DON'T CRY, the man with the moustache says, sitting in the carriage before him, DON'T CRY, PLEASE ... I AM NOT ABLE TO MAKE YOU RETURN TO THE SURFACE, BUT I WILL ALLOW YOU TO LIVE WITH ME IN THE GREAT WATER CASTLE, IF YOU LIKE, AND YOU CAN PLAY THERE WITH MY OWN CHILDREN, AND YOU WILL BE ALRIGHT. BUT I MUST LEAVE NOW, EXCUSE ME. MY BROTHER SLIPPED ON AN EEL AND BROKE SEVEN OF HIS ARMS. MY SECRETARY WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU. GOOD BYE, LITTLE BOY, the man with the moustache says, raises his trident, and the four seahorses, who the whole time over pawed with their hoofs and stretched their heads up and down, break loose and float away at full gallop.

Mickey looks sorrowfully after them and then looks slowly upward, where, quite far away, maybe miles above, the opaque grey of the ice





shelf shines. Up there his father and all his friends live: all the people he will never ever see again.

While he is standing there so sadly, something, a hand, touches him quite easily at the shoulder. Mickey turns around and looks into crystal-clear, mild, green eyes. A tall, slim and young woman stands there and looks a long time into his eyes.

YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO YOUR OWN WORLD, DON'T YOU?, the fairy says softly and kind of sad, and with a voice, you would listened to gladly for a hundred years, without feeling anything else than ease, happiness and warmth. Like a strange song made of sun and springtime winds, the voice of the fairy floats through the water, lingers on, still, there at the bottom of the lake. And with every word she speaks, the water around Mickey becomes brighter and clearer and warm as sun crystal.

I KNOW YOU, MICKEY, the fairy whispers, AS WELL AS I KNOW ALL THE BEINGS, WHO LIVE AT THE LAKE. I KNOW ALL YOUR THOUGHTS AND ALL YOUR DREAMS. AND EVERY STEP YOU TAKE UP THERE IN YOUR WORLD, YOU DO DOWN HERE IN MY HEART TOO. EVERY MOMENT I FEEL YOU, AND EVERY ONE OF YOUR HEARTBEATS I FEEL BEAT INTO MYSELF. AND WHEN THE EVENING COMES AND THE





SUN GOES DOWN BEHIND THE TREES, AND YOU GO TO BED, I STAND DOWN HERE IN THE LAKE AND READ YOUR HEART AND MIND, JUST LIKE YOU READ A BOOK OF YOURS.

While these words are spoken, Mickey isn't able to solve his eyes from those of the fairy, though he can sense by the sound of her words, that she is going to tell him something sad: something sad for him.

MICKEY, the fairy says in a low, trembling voice, MAYBE IT'S NO COINCIDENCE, THAT YOU ARE HERE. MAYBE DURING THE LAST WEEKS YOU HAVE THOUGHT TOO MUCH ABOUT YOURSELF, ALWAYS ONLY ABOUT YOURSELF ... AND MAYBE YOU GOT LOST FOR THAT REASON, MAYBE THEREFORE THE LAKE HAS SWALLOWED YOU AND NOT SOMEBODY ELSE. AND MAYBE THAT IS THE REASON, THAT I HAVE BEEN SO SAD DURING THE LAST DAYS, WHILE I SURFED THROUGH YOUR DREAMS AS A BLUE-GREEN DOLPHIN. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT IS SO, THERE ARE THINGS, THAT EVEN I CAN'T KNOW. BUT WHAT I DO KNOW, the fairy continues, IS, THAT IT IS BETTER TO DROWN, THAN TO LIVE UP THERE AND TO THINK ALWAYS ONLY ABOUT YOURSELF. YOU DID FORGET YOUR MOTHER,





MICKEY, AND YOUR FATHER AND YOUR FRIENDS AND THE SOFT SOUND OF THE DUCKS, WHEN THEY CARESS THE SUNSET. AND ONLY NOW, A MOMENT AGO, WHEN YOU WERE STANDING HERE LOOKING UP, YOU DID REALIZE FOR THE FIRST TIME, WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT UP THERE IN YOUR OWN WORLD: YES, MICKEY, IT IS LOVE.

WHAT IT IS GOOD FOR, TO BE FAMOUS, MICKEY, TO BE SUCH A FAMOUS HOCKEY PLAYER, THAT EVEN THE DUCKS SHOUT *MAKE WAY FOR MICKEY?* NOTHING, IF YOU HAD TO SUFFOCATE THE LITTLE BOY IN YOURSELF FOR THAT. NOTHING, IF SOMEDAY THERE WON'T BE ANYONE LEFT YOU CAN LAUGH WITH, YOU CAN CRY WITH AND YOU CAN BE SAD WITH. NOTHING IF THERE ARE NOT OTHERS, WHOSE LIFE IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU THAN YOUR OWN.

YOUR HAPPYNESS, MICKEY, LAYS IN THE HEARTS OF THE OTHER GOOD PEOPLE AND NEVER ONLY IN YOUR OWN. DO YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?, the fairy asks Mickey and looks straight and calm into his eyes and, you know that, mon amour, in his heart.





Mickey has taken in the words of the fairy like a colour, like a melody, like a smell, like a sweet sour taste. Through ears, nose, skin, mouth and eyes they have entered his body and reached his heart. And for the first time in his life, Mickey starts to cry. Mickey cries down there in the lake, and the salty water of his tears rises upward like pearls, up to the place, where the people live, up there, where love waits for those, who are able to love and who want to love.

Mickey stood this way for a long time, crying, the gaze downward, and small fishes, maybe attracted by the brightness, that surrounded the fairy, swam small curves around Mickey's feet. In that moment the hand of the fairy touched Mickey's lips, and her face came near to his, and the eyes of the two met again.

YOU CRY, MICKEY, AND THAT IS GOOD, BECAUSE CHILDREN CRY, WHEN THEY ARE BORN. AND TODAY YOU ARE GOING TO BE BORN AGAIN, MICKEY.

YOU WILL BE SENT BACK INTO YOUR OWN WORLD NOW, NOT BECAUSE I WANT IT, BUT BECAUSE IT HAS TO BE LIKE THAT. HOWEVER, YOU WILL GET BACK THERE AS A FOX, MICKEY. YOU ARE GOING TO LIVE UP THERE IN YOUR WORLD AS A FOX, UNTIL YOU FORGET YOURSELF AND START TO LOVE ... IN ANY WAY, MICKEY.





IF YOU SOMEDAY GET THE FEELING, SOMEDAY, MICKEY,
THAT YOR LOVE HAS GROWN STRONG ENOUGH, THAN
PRONOUNCE THESE WORDS: *I LOVE TRUE*.

THESE ARE THREE WORDS, MICKEY. I GIVE YOU ONE
MORE WORD FOR SECURITY. YOU WILL HAVE THEREFORE;
WHEN YOU ARE LIVING UP THERE AS A FOX, THE
CAPABILITY TO PRONOUNCE FOUR HUMAN WORDS,
MICKEY, FOUR ALTOGETHER.

BUT NEVER FORGET:

IF YOU SPEAK THE WORDS *I LOVE TRUE* WITHOUT
YOURSELF REALLY LOVING, YOU WILL REMAIN A FOX FOR
ALWAYS. THE SAME WILL HAPPEN, IF YOU ARE GOING TO
USE THE FOUR WORDS FOR SOMETHING ELSE THAN THE
MAGIC SENTENCE. IN THAT CASE YOU WILL REMAIN A
FOX FOREVER TOO. YOU ARE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO
SPEAK MORE THAN FOUR WORDS, AND THEREFORE YOU
HAVE ONLY ONE SINGLE, TINY WORD AT YOUR FREE
DISPOSAL: ONE SINGLE, TINY WORD.

THEREFORE BE CAREFUL, MICKEY, AND ABOVE ALL,
LEARN TO LOVE.





The whole time over the fairy had spoken these words sad and soft into Mickey's heart, and Mickey, Mickey looked at the fairy and he knew that he would do everything in the world possible, in order to be loved again by her.

If she wanted it, Mickey would live as a fox, and if necessary, even as a flea in Uncle Phil's flea circus.

Mickey still stares into the face of the fairy, and for a short moment the hearts of the two touch each other. Then the fairy goes away and with her the light and the warmth and the small fishes.

A last time the fairy turns around and looks in Mickey's direction. With her sad smile on the lips she lifts the hand quite slowly, and as met from a lightning, Mickey falls slow-motion-like to the ground, sees and hears nothing more and begins to rotate, to turn and turn like a gyroscope, always about himself.

Mickey's legs are above and his head is below, and as dust through the thin tube of a vacuum cleaner, he is kicked out in never ending capers through a cold tube made of blazing light, that he can now hear and see, because everything around him now is whirlwind and speed and roaring and colour. As he is torn upward, breathlessly, Mickey suddenly knows, that he will be immediately there. There! At the surface of the Silver Lake. In his world!





And suddenly he is back in the water hole, with four paws admittedly, but without arms and with a nose as long as that of good old Pinocchio. Imagine, mon amour, a joker would transform you into a fox, and your first task as a fox would be to swim around in a water hole and to get finally over the slippery edge of it. That is no easy task for a brand new fox, as you will admit. And if somebody is as well sitting there at the ice hole with nothing better to do than to pull your ears (even if admittedly in best intent), then you definitely will snap for the first time in your still young fox life.

SNAP!

Mickey therefore snapped as we already know after Eve's hand (because it was Eve, who sat before the ice hole, do you remember?), and finally Mickey succeeded in crawling out of the ice hole. Poodle-wet and on four paws, he managed to slide into the red-brown bay reed. As a winter fox!

There he rested, hidden by the densely standing reed, and Mickey learned fast how one must shake oneself as a fox, in order to get the water out of the dripping fur. Finally moderately dry, but quite dizzy from the much head shaking, Mickey, or better, the fox Mickey, sat there in the warm reed and observed Eve, Eve's parents, the divers of the fire brigade and finally his father.





And when his father screamed MICKEYYYYYY!, MICKEYYYYYY! and started to cry, Mickey, the fox in the reed, cried too, and in the next moment he wanted dearly to scream I AM HERE, DADDY! He could have done that, because these are exactly four words. But then he would have had to remain for always a fox, and to use the spell I LOVE TRUE, he didn't dare yet. Because no matter how he cried: Mickey was not at all sure, to have deep down in his heart already enough love, as it would have been necessary in order to be permitted to become a child again.

So Mickey kept hiding in the reed, and that was the right decision, because what do you think, mon amour? What would the adults probably have done with a fox, that strolls out of the reed and declares in our language: I AM HERE, DADDY?

And even if Mickey's father would have believed Mickey the fox, what would Uncle Phil have said, if Mickey's father would have told him: HEY, PHIL, THIS IS MICKEY?

I tell you, mon amour: Uncle Phil's answer would have been:

OH, YES, HI, MICKEY ... EHM, COME ON, TAKE A SEAT, FREDERIC, CHILL DOWN A LITTLE BIT, THERE YOU GO. YOU ARE GOING TO FEEL BETTER IN MINUTE. AND IN THE MEANWHILE I WILL HAVE A LITTLE CONVERSATION WITH MONSIEUR LE DOCTEUR. I AM BACK IMMEDIATELY.





Yeah, believe me, that's what Uncle Phil would have said.

And Mickey?

Mickey the fox waited there in the reed, until the bright winter day embraced the glittering night, and big and small lanterns were ignited all over the heavenly streets: flickering in the icy air above him, without ever going out. The moon probably still slept somewhere behind the horizon, and the little Camelducks put their heads between the feathers of their parents, muttering quite quietly PISTAAAA and falling asleep underneath the starlight.

Everything was quiet and good the way it was. The Silver Lake lay there big, glistening and frozen, like frosted milk it lay there, and tall and taller the trees seemed to become in the darkness all around the lake. They seemed to grow in the night, until they became giants, who danced slowly together along with the wind. And the dark forest around the Silver Lake groaned, and the reed whispered in the icy breeze of the night.

In the meantime Mickey the fox crouched with his long nose in the reed and was hungry. His thirst he had satisfied by licking of the snow on the reed, but the hunger, the hunger became stronger and stronger. So strong, that Mickey began to feel very cold.





However foxes do not have so long noses for nothing, and his long nose told Mickey a lot, about what was going on around the lake. First of all Mickey's nose reported, that it would snow again soon and as heavy as never before there at the lake. And besides that, Mickey's nose was able to capture all sorts of smells, as for example:

A RABBIT SLEEPS HERE IN THE PROXIMITY.

FARTHER IN THE FRONT CAMEL DUCKS DOZE.

THERE BY THE ICE HOLE SOMEONE HAS LEFT A RUBBER GLOVE (LIGHT SMELL OF RUBBER).

And finally:

SOMEWHERE THERE BEHIND A MEAL IS COOKING, IN FACT IT IS CHICKEN SOUP AND SPAGHETTI WITH HAM AND CREAM SAUCE. AND THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE VANILLA PUDDING FOR A DESSERT.

Now, however, you have to know, mon amour, that Mickey's favourite meal had always been Spaghetti with ham and cream sauce and his favourite dessert, exactly, vanilla pudding! To be true, chicken soup he had never liked in the past, but after all Mickey now was a fox, and already from the fine chicken soup smell, his stomach now growled as strong as small dogs growl, when they meet even smaller ones.





The first snowflakes of the big blizzard, that was approaching, already fell down staggering from the night sky, as Mickey left the reed on his four paws and followed the fine smell of the Spaghetti, leaving the Silver Lake behind him.

Now, what you believe, who had chicken soup, spaghetti and vanilla pudding that evening? Right: Eve and her parents at their home. Admittedly neither Eve nor her parents had big appetite, because the day had been, as we know, a sad one for all of them. But there in the hall, at the big table made of smooth, shiny wood, near to the chimney, even the sad things could be endured: endured together and maybe even understood.

There at the table, where it was warm and comfortable, our little friend Eve sat, and before her on the table steamed the chicken soup. Eve's parents spoke only little that evening, but kept, while sitting at the wide table, themselves by the hand, as brother and sister sometimes do, when they are sad, that the other one is sad. Eve in the meantime looked down into the steaming chicken soup and thought about the unknown boy, who probably had fallen into the ice hole and drowned. But most of all, Eve thought about the strange incident with the fox in the ice hole.

How, by all grease drops, the fox had managed to get in the ice hole? The Silver Lake foxes were much too smart and their noses much too





sensitive to endanger them to break through the ice shelf. And what about the boy? His scarf nearby the ice hole seemed proof enough, that he had fallen into it. But did this boy, who were called Mickey and who Eve had never seen, really fall in the hole and drown? Eve had a quite strange feeling about that.

AN ICE HOLE, A BOY AND A FOX ..., Eve thought.

The grease eyes in Eve's soup suddenly began to blink amused, and they seemed to want to wink at Eve. Then they suddenly all looked to the right, to the right plate edge. Eve followed their gaze and looked at the pink-white napkin, that lay beside the plate ... and began to smile.

Cause you have to know, mon amour, that a beautiful, blue-pink window was portrayed on Eve's napkin, with glistening snow on the windowsill. And, believe it or not, behind this window on the napkin, Eve could see gleam the head and the eyes of a young fox.

So, almost as it would be the most natural matter of the world, Eve lifted her head and saw quite inconspicuously to the right hall window (that in fact looked exactly like that on the napkin), and she actually saw the real eyes and the real nose of a real fox behind the real snow-white window there.





I BET, THAT IS THE FOX FROM THE LAKE, Eve thought. HE LIKES ME, AND THEREFORE HE WANTED TO VISIT, WHERE I LIVED.

The grease eyes in the soup blinked slyly and shook their heads (heads they in fact didn't have) in amusement.

WHAT? THAT IS NOT AT ALL THE REASON? THE FOX IS SIMPLY DREADFUL HUNGRY?, Eve asked, with her nose almost in the soup plate and whispering to the grease eyes.

The grease eyes shut down mildly, not daring to confirm the so obvious circumstance.

WELL, OK, HE SHALL EAT THEN, Eve smiled and got up from the table, while muttering something about ORANGE JUICE. She went over into the kitchen, took three bowls and filled them with chicken soup, spaghetti and vanilla ice cream. She put them on a small tray with orange butterflies on it, slipped into father's sweater (that covered her to her feet) and went out through the double kitchen door and right into the snowy night.

It was cold, and the snow already fell so densely, that Eve could hardly see a few meters far. But that was not necessary anyway, because the fox already sat there in the silvery glistening powder snow and seemed to have waited for Eve. With big eyes he followed each and every one of





her movements, and as the three bowls steamed before him in the snow, he stood up and ate, looking into Eve's eyes, ate, looking at the house, ate again, and Eve watched him and smiled.

YOU ARE HUNGRY, AREN'T YOU?, Eve whispered, caressing the fox, and the fox did eat, and would he have been a cat, he surely would have purred. Yes, this all happened that cold night, when all the snow flakes in the world fell gently on Eve's blockhouse and on the forest and on the lake and on Eve and the little fox. The snow fell gently on a small girl and on a small fox, who were both looking at each other through the swirling snowflakes, again and again.

Then Eve heard her mother calling, and quickly she took the empty bowls, caressing the fox a last time.

TOMORROW MORNING, Eve whispered, AS SOON AS IT GETS LIGHT, I WILL VISIT YOU THERE IN THE FOREST. BUT NOW I HAVE TO GO, LITTLE FOX. UNFORTUNATELY. BYE, BYE!

And Eve went back to the house with the clear feeling, that the fox had understood every single word she had said to him. No reason to wonder about that, because Eve was able to read in the eyes of every living being, and she was able to understand what she saw there. And every living thing, that had eyes to see, understood and loved Eve, always, because down in Eve's heart there was a big light, coming out of her eyes and





falling onto everything: making the world brighter, warmer and more beautiful. Whatever Eve did, she did completely and with deep emotions. And when Eve did talk, than you did not only hear words, but you saw colours and you could hear a kind of melody. And everyone, who had at least one ear, could grasp what Eve wanted to say.

Well, you are right, mon amour: grease eyes, which float on chicken soup, do not have even one ear ... Ok, then let us just presume, that they can read Eve's lips, all right?

Eve went to bed early that night. She sang a good night tune for the small drowsy suns on the wallpaper, smiled, stretched and fell asleep. And Eve dreamed, dreamed of rabbits and lions and of their strange habits, and she dreamed of half pianos, and of very small doors and very big foxes with the voice of sopranos, and of holes in lakes and dolphin-green fairies eating sweet sugar snow flakes, and of Camelduck races and checked green chickens, and of flying hares and ugly vases jump competitions, and of yelling blue seagulls and snow white fish soccer players, and of Spaghetti with ice cream and banana layers, and than it got bright at the end of the night, and Eve awoke smoothly and gently.

Already smiling, Eve opened her eyes, but her pale face no way escaped the attention of the clever little suns on the wallpaper, and so they immediately screamed:





NO, NO, NO!

EVE IS NOT ALLOWED TO GET UP YET.

EVE HAS A TEMPERATURE, AND IS NOT ALLOWED, NOT
ALLOWED TO GO OUTDOORS ...

IS NOT ALLOWED TO!!!

Eve lifted her head, smiled, saw by turns into their small eyes and asked
them with her fairy voice:

WELL, AND THE FOX? WHAT IS HE GOING TO DO OUT
THERE WITHOUT ME? DO YOU WANT HIM TO STARVE?

FOXES ARE CLEVER, the little suns shouted in indignation from the
wallpaper, THEY DO NOT NEED THE HELP OF LITTLE GIRLS
IN ORDER TO GET THEIR FILL.

BUT WHAT IF IT WAS A VERY SPECIAL KIND OF LITTLE
FOX, WHO WAITS OUT THERE FOR ME, A BEWITCHED FOX
FOR EXAMPLE? WHAT THEN, LITTLE SUNS?

The little suns looked helplessly mutually at each other, there on the blue
wallpaper, and not knowing what else to say, they finally covered their
eyes with their small dainty sunbeams, in order to hide their tears from
Eve.

DON'T GO, EVE, they whispered at a very low voice, YOU ARE





GOING TO GET SICK, AND WE LIKE YOU SO MUCH,
YOU KNOW ...

I LIKE YOU TOO ... VERY MUCH, Eve answered smiling, BUT
NEVERTHELESS I BELIEVE, THAT I HAVE TO GO. FORGIVE
ME. AND THINK ABOUT ME.

And Eve got out of the bed. Putting on warm clothes, she took
something to eat with her and sneaked on snow boot tops out of the
house. That was not easy at all, because it had snowed the whole night
through, and the snow lay so high in front of the house, that Eve had to
push the door hard (but at the same time silently!), to manage to get out
of the house. Once outdoors, Eve immediately sank up to the navel into
the powder snow.

COLD, COLD, COLD!, Eve laughed, and it cost her some effort, to
stick the old tennis rackets under her snow boots.

DONE!

Now Eve was able to walk over the snow, without sinking in anymore
with each step. But with the rackets under her boots, she was also forced
to make big steps, in order to avoid stumbling, and so Eve tramped as
heavy-footed as a bear through the endless snow, laughing with a
deep voice:

MAKEWAAAAAAAAAYYYYYYYY!





It was snowing still, but somewhere behind the dark trees, the sun rose exactly in that moment. All the snowflakes coloured pink and yellow, and it smelled wonderfully of fresh snow. A very soft breeze went by, and the big old trees began to tremble a little bit, and violet-green snow fell gently from their branches, while they were shivering. The whole world was icy that morning, but at the same time beautiful and enchanted. And Eve tramped from the snow white blockhouse into the snow white forest, tramped and shouted:

FOX, FOX, GOOD MORNING, FOX!, and she looked around just like little bears do, when they wander through the woods. But of the Fox no track. And while Eve continued to move her head in all directions, in order to find the fox, she was, without knowing it, only a few steps away from that unbelievable old, by everyone forgotten well. A well so deep, so awfully deep, that Eve's ancestors once had firmly believed, that it led directly into hell. Since hundreds of years its water was poisonous, and in the long ago times, when everyone still knew about the well, people living in the surroundings had told each other of terrible screams, that used to come out of the well at night time. And whoever had heard that screams in a moonless night, had got white hair from the terrible fear, he or she had felt in that moment. Snow-white hair. But all that had





happened many, many years before Eve's birth. In a time, when the grandparents of Eve's parents hadn't been born yet.

But during all that many, many years – don't be frightened, mon amour, while I am going to tell you about it – this hidden and uncanny well had waited for Eve, the evil in the forest had waited for the chance to devour and defeat the good there at the lake. For more than a hundred years, the diabolic well had waited for Eve and her love, had covered itself with branches and leaves and, like that day, sometimes with snow too. To be able to lay in wait for Eve, unseen, and get her, when the time would be ripe.

Nothing can be seen on the surface of the snow, nothing of the well with its entrance to hell. But when Eve will walk on it in a few seconds, she will crush in and fall down the dark shaft, deeper and deeper, falling and falling. And never again will Eve get back to us, and the little suns at home will die of their broken hearts.

Do it like I do, mon amour, keep your eyes closed, because Eve is walking exactly in the direction of this mean trap, and she is unaware of the danger. Close your eyes and your ears, mon amour, because Eve is going to scream, the moment she will break in, break in and fall down.

LOOK OUT!!!





Somebody shouted that, did you hear it too? Loud and in despair somebody has shouted that word, and Eve, the clever Eve, has at once understood, that in that LOOK OUT!!!, reverberating through the forest, laid the warning of a sudden, immediate and terrible danger. And therefore she has stopped on the spot. Like a statue she is standing there, the left foot still in midair, staring with wide open eyes at the snow before her. There, where her left foot would have been now, if there wouldn't have been that warning, that LOOK OUT!!!

How heavy can gazes get? Can you tell me this, mon amour?

Anyway, under Eve's gaze, the diabolic trapdoor made of branches, leafs and snow collapses, and with a loud noise, the well suddenly shows its black, deep down leading throat.

Eve's right foot is less than a hand-width away from the edge of the abyss. Eve's left foot hovers directly over the black nothingness. Eve's eyes stare directly into the bottomless darkness, they can't do differently. And Eve, the in midst of the icy air frozen Eve, begins to tremble with her whole body.

The black hole in front of her seems to get bigger and bigger, and everything around her seems to turn now. The whole world with everything on it seems to be irresistibly attracted by the black throat of the well, and all she can see now, is the colour black. Her knees tremble





and give in, the black nothingness sucks her in with a dreadful force, and Eve feels, that she is about to lose her balance and to fall forward, into this stinking, deep mouth that wants to swallow her.

It is very quite in the forest now, so quite, that the snow under Eve's right foot crunches like thunder, as Eve, Eve the frozen, but trembling statue, tips over from the edge of the abyss: unreal slow, like in a dream.

Open your eyes, mon amour, because I here something else besides the crunching of the snow ... do you also hear it?

There!

It's like the galloping of a horse, only softer. It sounds like quick, rhythmic drumming on the snow. It is ...

Look!

It's a fox! Do you see him? It's Mickey, Mickey the fox.

It was he, who shouted LOOK OUT!!! He used his supplementary word, yes, because hidden between the trees, he has watched Eve all the time, and smelling the threatening danger, the well trap, with his sensitive nose, he has warned Eve.

Like a silver-grey lightning, he now sweeps over the snow, he pounds with his feet so quickly, that he seems to fly: the long nose in the wind, the whiskers flat against his nose. Coming from the right, Mickey the fox jumps, long stretched and ducked at the same time, throwing the long





bushy tail upward, to the left and to the right like a rudder. He jumps right into Eve's whirling arms, and both do fall, yes, both fall: but not into the black throat, but to the left instead, into the glistening, golden snow.

Eve's arms relax and embrace the warm and soft fur of the fox, and his nose snuggles up to Eve's neck, and both breathe fast and heavily, and their blood rustles in their ears, and that's good, because that way, they don't hear the wild and furious scream, that reverberates from the excruciating depth of the well out into the light air under the heavens.

The evil creature has waited many hundred years for Eve, always hoping, that one day he would be able to destroy love in itself along with Eve, there at the enchanted Silver Lake. But Mickey's love for Eve, the who knows where and how born love of a little fox for a little girl, that day was as warm and shiny as the very first morning flowers in the spring time snow.

You know, mon amour, the first spring flowers in the morning snow are like a promise:

Everything cold and dark will merge someday with warmth and light, and only flowers, suns, beauty and love will remain. But that time has still to come. Still the glowing breakers on the surface of the sun throw their roaring and thunder and light far out to the stars, and still this small





blue planet is rotating around itself, here, on its always same track through the cold blackness of the universe. And while somewhere near a frozen lake and an old forgotten well, a girl and a fox embrace each other, laying on the snow, on the other side of the moon children are sitting under a blooming cherry tree and sing. It's warm there and they all look up to the beaming blue sky, and they laugh, because it's summer and warm powder sugar is snowing down on the cake, that the young father has baked for all of them today.

Eve however still lay on her back, there in the cold snow, you know, she lay there like on a glistening bed, soft and warm, or so it seemed to her, and her clear eyes wandered without haste through the cascades of green and violet snow, that poured forth from the clouds down on the snow covered landscape, covering and transforming it more and more.

The fox, who had rescued Eve's life and soul, kept his nose on Eve's neck, kept his eyes closed, but however saw the blue sky and the shady cherry tree on the other side of the moon.

In fact the fox was dreaming, and Eve's heart beat, beat in his heart, and he wouldn't have been able to say which heart he heard beating in his dream.





Time passed, a lot of time, but, you know, mon amour, the heart is a strange clock, and for those, who love, time is no more than smoke in the wind. Laying there in the snow, Eve could have watched the swarming snow flakes for ever, but finally it began to get dark there at the lake. And the shimmering snow flake rivers united to a cloudy snow fog, that, getting darker and darker, swallowed everything that had had colour, shape or light before.

Eve awakened the dreaming fox with her caresses, and looking into his eyes, she said smiling:

FOX, IT'S GETTING DARK, AND WE DON'T HAVE ANY LIGHT. AND AT HOME THEY CERTAINLY WORRIE ABOUT ME, LITTLE FOX ... WE HAVE TO GO BACK.

And smiling, she added with a mysterious voice:

SHOULD I STILL CALL YOU FOX AT ALL?

Mickey the fox began to lick Eve's nose, and laughing she got up. But how painful suddenly it felt, just to stand there or, even worse, to move a leg or her head!

Yes, Eve's heart had remained warm with love, warm and tender there in the snow, but how cold and brittle now Eve's body felt. Eve's head glowed and ached terribly, even when she didn't move it at all, and Eve's laughter suddenly choked in awful hard coughs. And Mickey the fox





suddenly sensed, knew, smelled, that Eve's entire body was consumed with cold, that Eve was sick, and that she had to get home immediately.

SHOW ME THE WAY, FOX ..., Eve whispered with glistening eyes, and she reeled through the flaky darkness, under the weight of her tiredness and fever.

Nothing more of the world was to be seen, only the hard snow under her feet and the floating evening snow in the air: no way, no light, no sound. Only twinkling and cold grey. Cold cotton wool.

At home in Eve's room, the always with Eve connected and feeling little yellow suns cried, you know, and Eve cried too now, quietly, very quite, because of the pain, while she followed the fox slowly on her tennis rackets. The long nose immovable in the air, the fox suddenly had got up and had begun to follow an invisible track: Looking back at Eve again and again.

Mickey the fox smelled the path, Eve had taken that morning, very weakly, and he followed the small, snow covered track as well as he could. And you can't imagine, how sad and despaired he was, when he saw, turning back, how Eve dragged herself on, with tears in her eyes and coughing, and yet trying to laugh, when he stopped and cuddled at her legs for a moment.





MY DEAR, DEAR FOX, she then whispered, and her voice sounded tired.

To find the way home, that was all, which Mickey the fox could do for Eva now, and had to do for Eva now.

And Mickey, who was a fox only since a few hours, actually sniffed the weak, snow covered track, and Eva followed him, while every one of her Steps hurt there in the dark flurry. Both probably would have made it home, if not, yes, if not Puh Djehh, the snow queen, would have crossed the path of our two friends.

Isn't that strange? Never before, there at the Silver Lake, enough snow had streamed down on earth, to allow Puh Djehh with her gold-rung feet to wander on it unrecognized. A wonderful creature Puh Djehh, the snow queen, was, you have to know, so beautiful in fact, that no human being or animal could endure her sight, without immediately solidifying to ice. Beautiful and sad Puh Djehh was, because nothing alive could live in her proximity, neither human being nor animal. And made silent by her own sorrow, and lonely as Puh Djehh was, she sometimes flew through the night, enveloped in glistening garments of golden, whirling snow.





No kiss had ever warmed Puh Djehh's lips, and no warm-blooded being was there in order to comfort her, when she cried cold crystals, and no hand, she could have hold and no voice, that would tell her:

PUH DJEHH, IT IS WONDERFUL, THAT YOU DO EXIST!

A sentence, that would have made Puh Djehh realize, that somebody loved her.

The snow queen was lonesome, terribly lonesome, though she ruled over all the snow flakes in the world. And so it came, that Puh Djehh sometimes sent huge blizzards all over the country, in order to be able to rove unseen through the valleys, forests and mountains: most of the times at night, and always in search of warmth and love, in search of human beings.

As beautiful as a rose, Puh Djehh in those nights sneaked around the cottages, in which people had taken refuge from the blizzards. Wrapped in her rainbow-coloured coat made of snow flowers, she then stood outside in front of a window, and looked with her glistening grey eyes at the people inside, who sat around the chimney fire, singing softly. The singing of those human beings was beautiful, and even more beautiful was the crackling of the fire in the chimney and the warm, red light there in the cottage. But then Puh Djehh turned away fast, and sobbing. Bent over and pulling the collar of her snow flower coat upward with her





white hands, Puh Djehh sneaked away: Surrounded by a wide ocean of gold beaming snow flakes and beautiful like an angel.

You want to know, why Puh Djehh, the snow queen, had to lead such a sad life, mon amour? I don't know for sure myself. Maybe she once had fallen in love too much with her own beauty, and maybe her small heart then froze, and maybe now she has to wander around the world cold and lonely like this. Until ... yes, until when? Tell me, mon amour, whisper the answer softly in the wind, at night, when it is snowing. And maybe then Puh Djehh, the ice flower, is able to hear you, and maybe she feels your love then, mon amour, and maybe, maybe the ice in heart then will melt.

Eve and Mickey together would have found the way back to Eve's house and the little suns on the wallpaper that evening, I am sure. But Puh Djehh stepped between them and separated them. Wrapped in her icy rainbow coat, the snow-white eyelids closed like in a dream, the ice queen wandered through the to her unknown landscapes there at the Silver Lake: dragging with every step a wind gust after her, and unleashing with every sad breath a snow thunder storm before her. She was a floating, snowy, cutting cold mountain, and as she unaware stepped between Eve and the fox, for our two ones it felt just like the





entire snowy night sky suddenly had fallen down on earth. Gasping for breath and drowned in snow up to the shoulders, Eve protected her face with her hands, that way avoiding to drink the snow and to be suffocated by it. And doing that, she was lucky, you know, because the dream-stray Puh Djehh, the snow queen, passed by, and Eve didn't see her and didn't die the icy death that so many lonesome hikers had found before, seeing Puh Djehh suddenly standing right in front of them.

And Mickey the fox?

When Eve was able again to breath, it still snowed like from buckets, and whatever piece of the night she could discover between the snow flakes, the fox was nowhere to be seen. With a tremendous effort, Eve freed herself from her snowy dress, and creeping forward on her hands and knees, she desperately called the fox. She coughed, called, coughed, screamed, only to hide her head finally between her hands and to cry quietly. Foxes are small, even smaller than little girls, you know, mon amour, and Eve now was alone there in the snow.

Dense the snow still fell, and still the little girl Eve knelt there in the glistening snow and cried. Eve was exhausted, sorrowful and weary, terribly weary, you know, and now that the fox wasn't no more with her, in her heart she suddenly felt a big desire to have a rest, to sink into the snow and to fall asleep.





Just to sleep, yes, and to forget.

NO MORE FIGHTING ..., Eve whispered, and her eyes began to close.

But if Eve is going to close her eyes now, mon amour, believe me, she will never wake up again, and the little suns will die from the sorrow, and maybe me too.

Therefore now call as loud as you can Puh Djehh's, the snow queen's name, mon amour, so that she sees the misery she has caused. Call loudly, and ask her for Eve's life.

Yes, I have called Puh Djehh's name too, I am quite hoarse from calling it, but just like you, I do not know, mon amour, if our calls could melt Puh Djehh's icy heart at least for a moment.

But ...

But ... look! It is a dream? There Eve is standing upright in the snow, with her arms stretched out. As if she would like to embrace the heaven, she looks upward to the clouds, out of which now golden snow is gently falling: real golden, brightly beaming snow. And do you see, how the entire heaven is curving blue and golden over the whole world and the Silver Lake, and how every single star suddenly has become visible there above? Golden snow now falls staggering from heaven, and so as if every snow flake would carry an even tinier harp, so soft melodies now do fill the dark evening air. Eve is smiling, and the snowflakes row and





caress her face, and despite the many pains, that still burn in her body, she now feels enough strength again, to look for the way back home. Well, the snow now fell golden and not so dense anymore, that is true, but it still fell sufficiently dense, to prevent Eve from seeing, where she was and where she had to go, to get back home.

PATH ..., Eve whispered while trying to swallow her coughs, PATH!
SHOW UP, PATH!

But no path did appear, and helplessly Eve stood under the stars, snow gold in her hair, and waited, waited for something to happen.

And something indeed happened.

Dark, small shadows, coming from nowhere, scurried over her feet. Like soft, golden lightnings, they touched Eve's wool pants, virtually flew by and hushed back, twitched before Eve's incredulous eyes like light strips through the flurry, suddenly slowed down their trajectories around Eve's feet and came, getting slower and slower, finally to an halt before her.

Foxes they were, soft foxes with gold-brown eyes and gold-coloured winter fur! Foxes, who rubbed themselves joyfully in the snow drift, who licked each other's noses and looked at Eve with clear, glistening eyes.

But Mickey the fox, Eve's fox, was not among them.

HAVE YOU SEEN MY FRIEND, THE LITTLE FOX?, Eve asked them with excitement.





TELL ME, QUICK!

Three of the foxes nodded their heads, four of them shook them in a no. SO YOU HAVE SEEN HIM?, Eve asked, caressing the three foxes, who had nodded their heads. These three foxes now shook their small heads, while the four others, who a moment before had denied it, now nodded their heads with a smile. Eve had to laugh despite her pains.

LITTLE BAD-MANNERED GOLDEN FOXES, she said smiling,
AT LEAST SHOW ME THE WAY HOME!

But the seven gold foxes didn't seem to think about that. Wiggling and swirling, they fell one on the top of the other, and rolling and meowing, they played in the evening snow: snapping at the furs of the others and jamming with the front paws the noses of the their playmates. In that moment a hot tear, coming from Eve's eyes, fell just right on one of the playing foxes, and with astonishment the foxes one after another came near, staring at Eve.

The fox, whom Eve's tear had fallen straight on the nose, stretched, put his front paws on Eve's trembling knees, made his soft body longer and longer, and then nestled his long nose at Eve's small face. Eve opened her eyes full of teardrops, and the fox looked at her with amazement. Then he tilted his head a little to the right and sighed:





YOU CRY, EVE?, he asked in a low, low but clear and warm voice. BUT OUR MOTHER, THE SNOW QUEEN, HAS RESCUED YOU FROM DANGER, HASN'T SHE? YOU ARE AT HOME, CAN'T YOU SEE? AND MICKEY THE FOX, THE LITTLE BOY FROM THE LAKE, WHO WAS TRANSFORMED? HE IS ALIVE, EVE! AND YOU ARE REALLY AT HOME NOW, CAN'T YOU FEEL IT?

YOU SHOULD NOT CRY, the fox continued after a while, BECAUSE YOU DO LOVE AND YOU ARE LOVED! ME AND MY SIX BROTHERS AND SISTERS HOWEVER, WE ONCE WERE STREET KIDS. AND SENT AWAY AND FORGOTTEN BY EVERYONE, WE DIED OF FEAR, HUNGER AND COLD. WE CHILDREN DIED THAT WAY, YES, AND PUH DJEHH HAS CHANGED US INTO FOXES AND NOW TAKES CARE OF US. FOR THE FIRST TIME, SOMEBODY CARES FOR US, AND WE LOVE THE SNOW, THAT WE NEVER SAW, WHEN WE WERE STREET KIDS. BUT YOU EVE, YOU HAD ALL THE LUCK OF THE WORLD IN YOUR LIFE, YOU AND MICKEY! AND EVEN IF YOU TWO WOULD HAVE FROZEN TO DEATH TONIGHT, HOW MUCH MORE LUCKY THAN OURS YOUR LIVES STILL WOULD HAVE BEEN. MORE THAN OURS AND MORE THAN





THAT OF THE MANY, MANY THOUSANDS LIKE US, WHO
HAVE TO LIVE AND TO DIE EVERY DAY WITHOUT LOVE IN
THE STREETS OF THE WORLD.

Eve now cried, without holding back anything, and everything inside her,
but most of all her heart, was aching. Jumping up from his knees the
golden fox said:

DON'T FORGET ABOUT US, EVE!, and three foxes nodded their
heads, while three others shook them. DON'T FORGET ABOUT US!

And the golden foxes shot apart like a firework, and Eve cried, kneeling
in the snow, her hands before her face, and Eve's parents heard her
crying. They finally found their daughter only a few meters away from
their home: sobbing, burning with fever and completely exhausted.
Starting to cry themselves, but out of joy, they thanked god almighty,
that their daughter, who they had sought the whole day over in vain in
the forest, had not died in the ice storm.

Yes, they had Eve back, but not her laughter and not her mild voice,
because Eve was sick, very sick.

Hot fever ate her body up from inside: burning, biting and acid. And
Eve fell so cold and weak into the embrace of her parents, that these
started to cry again, but this time from pain and despair. .

They had Eve back, yes, but for how much longer?





Icy white walls surrounded the house, and once again it began to snow wildly and densely. To leave the house in order to fetch Eve to a hospital, was impossible, and no doctor could be called, because the telephone didn't work since hours. And even if it had worked: Would any doctor have been able to fight his or her way through to that forlorn area and Eve's home?

The whole world drowned in snow that night, and the human beings captured in their houses around the Silver Lake realized for the first time, what it meant to be really alone.

Eve's parents began to understand, that this lonesome storm night would decide, whether Eve would live or would die. And that only themselves, the parents and Eve and nobody else, would be there to take up the fight with the fever and with death.

No doubt: death had stretched out his moist, hot hands towards Eve. With eyes wide open and flickering, Eve now laid in bed in her room, near the glowing chimney, thick wool blankets all over her, her shiny hair weakly on the pillow. And Eve's forehead gleamed, and Eve's eyes glowed and scurried over the ceiling, back and forth, restless. Like in a dream, almost without being aware of it, Eve drank the lime-tree flower tea with honey, her mother had prepared. The empty gaze directed straight ahead, the aching head lifted a little bit with the help of her





father, Eve sipped that old remedy spoon-wise from her mother's hand like a little child. Hardly Eve realized, that her father put in regular intervals wet towels on her calves, hardly she saw her mother crying, while she was caressing her daughter's forehead with a moist cloth.

Eve trembled, no, Eve's body trembled. Eve's body was like a wide land, whose cold and nonetheless glowing parts broke and moved under the force of a sawing earthquake, and, so it seemed to Eve, drifted away from her, swinging up and down on a hot sea.

Oh yes, I know, I am tormenting you with these words, mon amour, you and myself. But how could I leave alone Eve, now that she is so sick? Whatever ending this story may have: I can't leave her alone. And please, stay with her too, because without your love for Eve, mon amour, death is going to win the battle for her life for sure. But if you believe along with me, if you believe quite strongly, that Eve will stay alive, then, yes, I know that, this story will have a happy ending.

But listen, listen to what Eve is shouting in this moment:

THE FOXES!

THE FOXES, she is shouting, and her head is twitching like the palpitation of a dying butterfly's wing from one side of the pillow to the other.





THE FOXES, THE FOXES, Eve is coughing, her grey-veined eyes closed and turning over and over in her fever dream.

THE FOXES!

And her hard coughing tears apart the silence of the room again and again.

Do little suns, who once were painted on wallpaper, have a heart? I think, that Eve's suns did have hearts, because every time Eve shouted out, the little yellow suns on the blue wallpaper trembled. Soon they began to cry in despair and without a sound, and their ray-arms all hang down chilly and withered, like the dying eyelashes of the sunflowers, when autumn comes.

THE FOXES!, Eve moaned again, her eyes wide open. Death, now cold and dispassionate, grasped with his suddenly thin and bony hands at Eve: in order to take her with him, to lead her away to that winding path, that, getting darker and darker, ends in the nowhere. But without force, death grasped at Eve, without strained persuasion and without rush.

If Eve, the fever glowing Eve, would have looked at death with her beaming eyes and would have whispered NOT YET, POOR DEATH, old death probably would have twitched his shoulders and would have replied with a tired smile:

GOODBYE ...





And he would have shuffled away. Believe me.

But Eve didn't think about death. While she, without knowing it, in fact had already followed that path a long way down, losing already a tiny piece of her life, Eve didn't think neither about death nor about the life and the love, that still lay before her. Eve thought about the story of the golden foxes, and deep down inside her, her heart screamed. If other children, as soft and bright as Eve was, died in the streets of the cities from cold and hunger, sleeping for years in midst of garbage, torn apart by sickness and slowly dawning, fading away, until their eyes became blunt and broke: How could she then early in the morning lay in her warm bed, waiting for the dark red morning sun, in order to go outside to play with her pets? How could she then in cold nights lay near the chimney, dreaming about spring time and being happy? And how could she then go outside after dinner to feed the squirrels, with a napkin in her mouth, because of the wet noses of the squirrels tickling her hand, while they ate the nuts, and their running away in all directions, when she finally had to laugh nevertheless? Why should she have all this, if other children had nothing and had to die, without having been happy for an hour, not for one, single hour?

Do you know the answer to this question, mon amour?





Eve didn't find one, and turning round and round in fever, she thought about the golden foxes and didn't see death, who, tired but patiently, sat at the edge of her bed and waited for her.

Eve didn't take up the fight with death, but Eve's parents fought for the life of their daughter, wildly and without pause. With tea, with the few medications, they could find in the house, with always new rollers and with quiet prayers, they fought until exhaustion. And as the struggle with the fever went into the seventh hour and night's blackness was the blackest, suddenly and incomprehensibly a strange calm fell down on the battlefield there at Eve's bed. Eve's breath became regular again, and quiet, deep and sweet sleep came over her glowing limbs, that now didn't twitch anymore under the wool blankets, but began to dream softly too. And Eve's parents, who could not see the old man at Eve's bedside, already believed to have won the fight. And exhausted, but full of hope, they sank on their chairs beside Eve's bed and fell into a restless sleep.

And the little suns?

They didn't know or feel anything since hours.

But the old man at Eve's bed knew, and knew better. Smiling he looked at the parents sleeping on their chairs, remaining where he was. In order to wait. Nothing was decided. Nothing.





But why then that calm, that gentleness on Eve's pale face, you ask yourself, mon amour?

I tell you.

You have to know, mon amour, that Eve, somewhere on that dark path, which maybe led to nowhere, had met someone: a young woman. You know this woman. Eve didn't know her, when she met her on the dark path, but as soon as the green eyes of the fairy caressed Eve's face, Eve loved her. So the two met, and bright and warm the voice of the fairy was, as she took Eve's hand and spoke:

YOU ARE SAD, EVE, BECAUSE OF THE FOXES, AREN'T YOU?
BECAUSE OF THE CHILDREN, BECAUSE OF THE
FORGOTTEN CHILDREN, IS IT SO?

And for what seemed an eternity to Eve, the fairy remained silent.

AND NOW YOU ARE ASHAMED BECAUSE OF THE LOVE
AND THE BEAUTIFUL MOMENTS, YOU PICKED AND
CARESSED ON THE MEADOWS OF YOUR HAPPY YEARS, IS
THIS TRUE, EVE?

Eve looked in the fairy's eyes and nodded.

AND WITHOUT REALIZING IT, EVE, YOU FOLLOWED THIS
DARK PATH, AND NOW YOU ARE STANDING HERE: DEATH
AHEAD OF YOU, YOUR LIFE BEHIND YOU.





OH, I KNOW YOUR HEART, EVE, and a sad smile appeared on the fairy's face, YOUR WONDERFUL HEART, AND I CAN FEEL YOUR PAIN, EVE.

And the fairy pressed Eve's hand for a moment.

LOVE IS WHAT I CALL YOUR PAIN, EVE, BECAUSE ALL OF THE LOVE WE FEEL TOO LATE, AND THEREFORE WE DO NOT GIVE, SOMEDAY CHANGES INTO PAIN. LOVE IS WHAT I CALL YOUR PAIN, BECAUSE THE LITTLE BOY, I HAD TO TRANSFORM INTO A FOX, IS A CHILD TOO, EVE. HE IS WANDERING SINCE HOURS THROUGH THE SNOW NIGHT, LOOKING FOR YOU AND CRYING, AND HE WILL DIE, EVE, IF HE WILL LEARN, THAT YOUR PAIN WAS STRONGER THAN YOUR LOVE. AND THAT YOU ARE DEAD.

The fairy sighed quietly.

LOVE IS WHAT I CALL YOUR PAIN, EVE, BECAUSE IF YOU ARE ABLE TO TRANSFORM YOUR PAIN INTO LOVE FOR MICKEY THE FOX TODAY AND YOUR PAIN ABOUT THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN INTO LOVE, THOUGHTS AND CARE FOR THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN TOMORROW, THEN YOUR PAIN WAS NOTHING BUT LOVE FROM THE BEGINNING. LOVE, THAT WAS GIVEN TO YOU BY THE





DEAD CHILDREN, LEND TO YOU: IN ORDER THAT ONE DAY, YOU WILL CARRY ON THEIR LOVE, IN ORDER THAT YOU MAKE SURE, THAT THEY DIDN'T SUFFER IN VAIN, THAT THEY DIDN'T DIE IN VAIN.

The fairy still held Eve's hand, and Eve still looked straight into her eyes. NOW TURN AROUND, EVE, FOLLOW THE WAY, YOU CAME, BACK, AND WAKE UP. WAKE UP AT YOUR HOME. WAKE UP AND LIVE, EVE.

And Eve, Eve felt how the words of the fairy began to make her heart soft and light, but even there in the nowhere, there in Eve's dream, Eve was sick, and suddenly the green eyes of the fairy changed into whirling eddies, and Eve began to turn around together with them. Her heart was light now, but she was still very tired, and tired Eve closed her eyes, and it seemed to her, that a wonderful warm wind was about to take her up from the bottom and take her away.

That was beautiful, to be taken away by the wind, and to fall asleep and to forget everything at the same moment. To forget ... Everything was easy now, and Eve felt completely relieved, like a feather, that in spring time performs little turns along with the breeze, getting higher and higher, getting there, where the blue is.





WAKE UP!, somebody somewhere on the other end of existence said softly and suppliant.

WAKE UP AND LIVE!

But Eve didn't want to wake up. Eve flew, faster than a swallow she sailed along with the warm wind, her eyes closed softly. Tired, but happy, she let the whispering wind have its way.

FALL ASLEEP, LITTLE EVE, SLEEP!, the wind whispered with the voice of an old man.

TO FALL ASLEEP ..., Eve thought, HOW BEAUTIFUL TO FALL ASLEEP, WHILE FLYING. SOON I WILL BE SLEEPING.

And spreading her arms like wings, she flew, her hair floating in the wind, through her dream.

Oh, mon amour, but this sleep, to which Eve in her dream got closer and closer, this sleep was the sleep of death!

The last thing, the fairy saw, was Eve being carried away by a grey wind, along the path and into the lead-black without horizons. And shouting WAKE UP, EVE. WAKE UP, AND LIVE! after her, the fairy sank on her knees and buried her face in her hands. There, where Eve now was flying, the fairy could not follow her. Nobody could follow her there, where she now was.





No, mon amour, please don't cry. Is it not enough that I am sitting here crying and shouting for Eve, shouting again and again for Eve? Why wasn't our love strong enough to shake her up, to prevent her from falling asleep, to keep her here, here with us, who need her laughter so desperately to be happy?

Well, mon amour, I think it's time for me to stop to tell this story, I am tired, I have no force in me anymore.

The fairy is tired too, there on the road to death. She is still kneeling there, her face in her hands, like absorbed in a prayer and with tears in her eyes. And the moment, she is going to rise, everything will be over: this story and everything else.

Now she is raising her head, and she is ... smiling?

The fairy is smiling, mon amour! How can that be?

Please tell me, how is that possible? Didn't Eve fell asleep forever, in her bed at home as in her dream? Did a miracle, did a small miracle really happen? Eve is alive?

Yes, now I see, what happened! And laughing and jumping up and down for joy just like you, I am now really going to narrate you the end of my story!

Eve's parents were still sleeping on their chairs, there at Eve's bedside, and death still sat on the edge of Eve's bed and waited, and near the fire





in the chimney Eve still dreamt her feverish dream of a wind, that carried her away and whispered her into a sleep without awakening. In that moment, Mickey the fox fell like a shooting star through the chimney and into Eve's room. Coughing because of the thick smoke in the chimney, the fox really fell right into the fire, but like a snow-wet lightning, Mickey the fox only a heartbeat later jumped out of the fire: with all four paws stretched out and with his ears flat against his head. Flying through the room like a sea hawk, he landed on Eve's yellow-blue blankets, his long nose pointing at her head, his eyes glowing for joy. Wet, but unharmed as he was, he threw his bushy tail back and forth because of his excitement.

Not the snow storm and not the chimney's fire had been able to prevent Mickey the fox from searching for Eve and from finding her. And no silly old death could hinder him now from nestling his head at sleeping Eve's face and from licking over her cheeks with his long tongue.

In her death dream, Eve had felt a strange cold on her face, and almost already asleep, she had experienced the urge to check, what kind of cold and wet something was stroking over her face there. And in her dream Eve forced her tired eyes to open up a small split wide, and there, at her home, in her room, Eve's eyes suddenly opened up a small split wide, and doing so, they brought Eve back to life.





Through that small split of her eyes, Eve saw a fox with a long, soot-smearred nose and an even longer tongue, who, joyfully opening and closing his eyelids in turns, licked over her face with great pleasure! So near the tongue of the fox came to Eve's eyes, that it seemed to her, that a funny little monster with big goggle eyes and a three square-meters wide tongue was thinking, that her head was a lollypop. And obviously that little monster now was happily and with all the time of the world on his side trying, to lick her head away with his rough tongue.

As strange as this stunning sight was, as weak and tired Eve still was, and maybe she would have closed her eyes again nevertheless, and you know, mon amour, what that would have meant.

But precisely in that moment, in that wonderful, never ever recurrent moment, the fox stopped his licking. And looking straight in Eve's eyes, Mickey the fox said clearly and with the voice of a little boy those strange and rare words, which are able to mend almost everything:

I LOVE YOU.

Eve's eyes opened up wide, and wide opened up her heart, and embarrassed, turning his head slightly to the left and then to the right, the fox lowered the gaze, and his muzzle lay again, like before in the snow, nestled at Eve's neck. And a little, tickling fox tear fell on Eve's left shoulder.





Mickey the fox had used up his three magic words.

Yes, it's true.

Still his I LOVE YOU echoed there in the quietness of the room, like a magic sound, that can't go by and never will: Because Mickey loved, loved for the first time as deeply and as mighty as the sea loves the morning. And Eve was the one he loved.

Never again would he be able to say the words I LOVE TRUE, in order to become a little boy again, but how unimportant that was to him now. Everything, everything within Mickey, loved Eve, and with his declaration of love, he had pulled back Eve, the almost dead Eve, into life. He had pulled her back just like the sun pulls the big, tawny eyes of the sunflowers to herself, when she rises in the morning, coming out of the everlasting sea along with her irresistible red, awakening everything around her, making the whole world, all the plants and all the animals, shiver under the glowing red of her rays, until they do begin their chant, their joy chant:

I AM ALIVE, AND IT'S BEAUTIFUL TO BE ALIVE, BEING
ABLE TO FEEL THIS UNIQUE AND MARVELOUS MIRACLE,
TO REALLY FEEL IT. LIFE!

TO FEEL, mon amour, how smooth these words are, and what precious miracles they do contain.





Mickey the fox felt, that with his sweet renunciation he had saved Eve's life, and together with her life, the huge love for her, that burned inside his heart. And therefore he wept for joy and released pain. Eve felt, that inside her pink-blue heart, the warm and timeless sun of life was rising again, again, yes: dissolving the last fever clouds within her body. And so Eve started to cry too. She cried and laughed, laughed and cried, and her gaze flew to the blue wallpaper, and the bright light of her eyes fell like clear water onto the little, almost forever withered suns. At first slowly and cautiously, but then confidently and quickly, the little suns threw their rays into the world again, yes, out to the world, to the stars and to Eve again. And like the flush of the wind in springtime, their favourite word resounded from the wallpaper, full of relief and small yellow-heads-shaking-reproaches:

EVE ... OH, EVE!!!

And the old man, who had set for so long at the edge of Eve's bed?

You know, mon amour, he had gone away, as soon as Eve had opened her eyes. Without haste and without rush he had gotten up, maybe kind of tired and maybe smiling. And without turning back once, he had left the room, only pulling up the shoulders a little bit: Maybe because he knew, that he would come back one day, yes, that he would have to come back one day.





Well, there in Eve's room, somewhere in time and space, Eve caressed Mickey the fox, crying for joy and yet laughing. And Mickey the fox cuddled at Eve's neck, and the little yellow suns on the wallpaper sang happily their morning song. Yes, because the first light of the morning came through the large windows and gently touched the faces of the parents, who were still sleeping on their chairs. The first light of the morning was like a promise, it made the snow outside new and shiny, and it said, that soon there, where snow and ice still covered the Silver Lake, the Camelducks would ride on the warm waves again, shouting their MAKEWAAAAYYYY! like before.

And soon there, where snow covered firs still stuck out of the glittering white, colourful flowers would bloom.

Spring was on the way, and soon it would reach the Silver Lake and the hearts of the people there. So clear and warm the sun rose that morning into the cloudless winter sky, that the windows in Eve's room changed into rainbow coloured crystal, and behind them, the form of the body of the fox dissolved, without that Mickey himself noticed it at first. And listening to a strange melody, that seemed to come along with the sunrays all through the windows, Eve, Mickey (the boy!) and the little suns turned their heads, and the bright light of their eyes melted with the radiating light of the morning sun. And like that, with their bright, shiny





eyes, they stood motionless, looking outside, looking at their life and their future, while they listened to the strange melody, that with the voice of the fairy sang wonderful softly and clearly about the things to come.

They all were children, they all were foxes and they all were little suns that morning, and flowers, yes, they all were flowers that morning, believe me, mon amour. Listening to that melody, just listening, while the warm red light embraced them, every one of them was the other one: Mickey, the little boy, was a flower, Eve was a sun, and the little suns were golden foxes. What they actually were in that moment, how unimportant that was, but how mighty instead their love shone, the love, they felt for each other in their own hearts and in those of the others.

And how clearly they did understand the promise within that strange melody, there in that room, that morning, somewhere underneath the sun, somewhere underneath the moon and the stars:

Everything withers and becomes born again.

Everything dies and wilts and changes and transforms itself

and vanishes.

Without beginning and without end.

But nothing goes away.

THE END





Yes, I know, what you are going to whisper in my ear: Mickey and Eve and the little suns should not leave us and our life for always. I know, but things are precious ... exactly because they fade away and ...

OK, I promise you, that we are going to meet them again in my next book, in **Michelle, mon amour**, in Rio de Janeiro, in a different story, in a different kind of love story. And then you will learn, that Eve and Mickey and the little suns ...

R o b e r t o L a l l i d e l l e M a l e b r a n c h e

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