

Jealousy



Illustration by Inès Bouhouche

Jealousy has been rearing its vicious head for the first time, unmasked. A hideous smile so wide and deeply sunk, the rest of its face disappeared behind it. Only the piercing, malevolent eyes stand firmly above, so to penetrate your gaze. He sees you and you see him. A rigged staring contest in which the conqueror is already set, takes place. To your great demise, it is not you the victor, but you are the vanquished. Stranded in its potent glare, you feel disarmed, naked, exposed.

In the shadows, a new silhouette emerges, it is Time, almost imperceptible, it elapses in unmeasured ways. It is watching you. Like a partial adjudicator it does nothing to mediate but instigate the feud instead, enjoying the sombre spectacle you became. As it moves the weighty hands of its clocks, the tik-tock becomes unsteady. You wait, eager for the end. Time passes by, stops in its stride, and softly melts into a Dali pocket watch. The clicking once matching the beat of the day fades away. Becoming a thing of the past. Maybe. The then and now blends into one, lost without the surveillance of Time.

The end of this interlude breaks the illusion of a momentary distraction. In the blink of an eye, here it is again all mighty, looking fixedly at you, Jealousy. It tilts its head to the side, eyes never leaving you sight, bearing witness to your plight. You blink once. You see before you the same sorry debacle, but only clearer. So, you blink twice. Eyes closed but you can see the gloating smile turning into a hysterical laughter. Eyes open, here it is. Again. That unwavering stare blazes so brightly it bores a hole in your soul, soaking up the juices of your defeated body. Wait. The corners of its lips start flickering. It is morphing. The once lambent smile ripens into a smirk, revealing at last the rest of a less deformed face. The mask drops. Your weakened eyes are wide open but in utter disbelief. You blink once, twice, and again. Same sight. It is as if you were awakened from an enchantment. It cannot be.

The spectre that defied you with such a force and vigour was not Jealousy, it was you.

Racha Bouhouche