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The dark children of Morelia

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(fragmento en inglés / excerpt in English)

1. The game of the fateful mistake.

A cabin

A circle of candles and flowers

A closed door

Upstage, another open door leading to an adjoining cabin.

Although it is not easy to notice, there is a small blood stain under the open door.

Pablo comes running into the circle of flowers. Behind him Gracián enters the circle running too.

PABLO

My children! My children! Get them off the train! Get them off the train! This is a mistake!

GRACIÁN

A mistake? What do you mean by mistake?

PABLO

I mean a mistake! Get my children off the train, it is a request!

GRACIÁN

Sir, it is not our problem if you regret it.

PABLO

(Playful and dramatic) This is a very serious mistake! These people do not love their children! These parents are heartless! I'm not like them! They are the Ramirez: Paula, Matias and Tomas! I am their father and I demand that they get off the train! I do not authorise them to leave! I have already told you: it has been a mistake.

GRACIÁN

You talk like a parrot: it has been a mistake! It has been a fateful mistake! Well, why would this be a mistake?

PABLO

Because my children are in the train and I do not want them to leave.

GRACIÁN

Oh, what a clever clogs! Neither you nor most of the parents here.

PABLO

Yes, but the others have given them freely.

GRACIÁN

Oh, haven't you?

PABLO

I'm telling you this is a mistake. I did not know what I was signing.

Beat.

Wait, wait ... (*Serious*). Have I been fooled?

GRACIÁN

(*Slowly*) Do not put the blame on us. Next time you should pay more attention.

PABLO

Please shut up, do not torment me. Are you in charge?

GRACIÁN

Aren't we all?

PABLO

I can't read or write. I thought I was enrolling them in a nursery. You must understand!

GRACIÁN

And why am I supposed to understand? Who understands anyone here? Who understands anything here?

PABLO

I just understand that I do not want to lose my children. I did not know what I was signing.

GRACIÁN

Why should I care? This is the same case for many others. Why should I favor you in particular?

PABLO

Because I confess my mistakes.

GRACIÁN

Who does not? Confessing mistakes is not the problem in this country, the real problem is the lack of consequences afterwards. Besides, here everyone is wrong all the time. There is nothing extraordinary about being wrong. How come do you pretend to have a special treatment just because you are wrong? Only those who are right should deserve a special treatment here! A ship full of children bound for nowhere! The whole thing is a mistake from the very beginning. Isn't this war a big mistake? A war between siblings ... no need to say any more. A flag is always a spelling mistake regardless of the language. You might not read or write, but you can certainly read the mistake on each of these faces. Each one of these faces is your face. Each one cries like you do. Why should I favor you over all the others? Give me just one reason. Note that I think of myself as a fair man.

PABLO

If you were, you would be less rigid. You are only impartial, but not fair.

GRACIÁN

You're right, you are not speaking with a fair man.

PABLO

I demand you to give them back to me right now.

GRACIÁN

(Histrionic) I understand your despair... but I cannot give them back to you.

PABLO

Then what exactly do you not understand?

GRACIÁN

If I give your children back I should do the same for many others. Would that be fair? Besides, we have a commitment with Mexico. They fostered our intellectuals, now they take care of our children.

PABLO

(Ironic) They can keep the intellectuals!

Beat.

I cannot read, why are you talking about intellectuals? I did not know what I was signing. I want my children back. And if half of the ship gets off for that reason, I'll be pleased, so they can see how bad your idea is.

GRACIÁN

I cannot repeat often enough : no.

PABLO

Get them off. I would silently leave.

GRACIÁN

You're crazy.

PABLO

I will not say anything to anyone.

GRACIÁN

It will be just for a year, sir, I swear. Believe me, we will take good care of them. They will not be hungry. They will go to school. They will live in a bubble of peace. And when the war is over they will come back. Now it's a painful moment, but you will not need to worry for them all this time. Think of it as a dream. A short and strange dream, but just a dream after all. Your children will not suffer the aftermath of the war forever, like those who stay in Spain. Those staying will be the ones suffering. Don't you want to save them from the effects of the war? *(Gracián slaps Pablo on the back of the neck)* Do not laugh, Pickle ...

PABLO

Mr. Carrot, can you please reconsider my request?

They laugh. They manage to hold back their laughter.

Get my kids off the train. I want to take them home. I do not want to go home and tell my wife that we have lost them. I'm afraid I'll never see them again if they get on this ship.

GRACIÁN

Too late.

PABLO

They are too young! Some of those children are thugs! Children of anarchists! Do you understand?

Laughter is contagious. To keep serious, an effort.

GRACIÁN

I'm sorry. What you are asking me is impossible.

PABLO

Who are you to take them away from me? I am their father!

GRACIÁN

(He takes a bloodstained handkerchief from his pocket and shows it to him.) You signed a paper.

PABLO

I did not know what I was signing. If I entrusted them to you because it supposedly was my will, now my will has changed and I do not want them to leave. My children will suffer the consequences of living the war abandoned by their parents. Why do you not want to give them back to me?

GRACIÁN

It's a question of principles and loyalty to our benefactors.

PABLO

Benefactors? Whose benefactors? You have just told me that all this is a mistake. So tell me, are they your children?

GRACIÁN

As if they were. The four hundred children on this list.

PABLO

The three hundred and fifty-six, you mean.

GRACIÁN

Three hundred and fifty-six, I like your accuracy.

PABLO

For god's sake, give them back to me.

GRACIÁN

I'm sorry.

PABLO

My life is in your hands.

GRACIÁN

Fuck a duck!

They roll on the floor laughing.

PABLO

(Gets out of the circle.) The train departed to Marseille, but the guy kept shouting ...

GRACIÁN

(He spins around the circle.) Paula! Matias! Tomas! Paula! Matias! Tomas! Paula! Matias! Tomas!

PABLO

Do you know who they are?

GRACIÁN

I don't know.

Beat.

PABLO

That man will see his children again.

Gracián stops.

GRACIÁN

Maybe. But not my mother.

PABLO

Do not say that.

GRACIÁN

All right, I will not say that.