

What the Eyes of Beata Daury Saw

A novel by
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Chapter XII

What the eyes of Beata Daury saw

“My God, what have I done with my life?

...

What kind of world will I leave my children?”

Perhaps these were her thoughts as she leaned over the basin, toward the reed she was about to cut.

But perhaps her thoughts remained unfinished.

The fact is that the ballistics expert and the forensic pathologist concluded that death was due to a single blow, struck to the back of the neck with terrible force as she was bending over.

Like the young attorney of Nesson, Doctor Damade was bound by a professional secrecy which continued even after death. He had never mentioned his wife’s visit to his colleague.

On the other hand, and after various attempts, he managed to convince him to gradually take possession of the drawings.

They hang chronologically in Dr. Daury’s office, in the same order as the letters of a name - left to right.

...

It would seem that for the sketches, she goes down to the kitchen and takes the chalk she uses to make notes to herself, “manicure – hockey coach – suit to drycleaner” etc.

The lines are thick, since they're made with chalk, and pressed hard into the paper, but it's still possible to make out the contours of large, impressive machines digging into the earth.

As a child, she had a natural talent for drawing and she quickly regains this ability. Soon she's borrowing colored markers from her youngest son's pencil case, from the fine-tipped to the very thickest.

In these colored lines Dr. Daury recognizes the places he'd taken her for their wedding anniversaries: Florence, with the little buildings lining the Ponte Vecchio; Istanbul, and the buildings under the Galata Bridge.

After the markers, she turns to her pencil and draws the outline of metropolitan France and the sinuous shapes of its rivers; and over all these rivers she places a multitude of bridges, and these bridges support structures of all kinds, which cover them entirely.

Wanting to expand her field, and seemingly afraid to run out of time, she goes to her husband's office and borrows a pencil with thick lead, red at one end and blue at the other.

Using this thick lead, she decides to make a map of Europe.

On a board she draws the outline of the European continent in blue, and the lines of its rivers in red.

On the next board the rivers aren't drawn with lines; they're outlined by the edges of the buildings constructed along them. On this board the whole continent is covered in buildings. Only the rivers are untouched, without even bridges.

Finally, on another board, she draws a multitude of bridges over the rivers. They're hard to distinguish, however, as they're completely covered in buildings.

But she wants to be even more explicit.

In her youngest son's room, she borrows a large piece of plywood (meant for the backboard of a basketball hoop, it had never been used and in the end, he prefers hockey).

On this surface, she goes back to using chalk and draws a map of the world.

Having by now recovered all her drawing skills, and wanting more precision in her lines, she searches for a finer tool.

She looks for the reed she'd cut, one afternoon during hockey. Using kitchen scissors, she cuts it to just the right size to hold in her hand. With a very sharp knife, she then cuts off sections of reed and obtains two sharply pointed ends.

Not having any ink (none of the children had learned to write with ink), she goes into the bathroom, takes the liquid from her mascara, and thus gets the dark color of anthracite.

She can now start her work on the map of the world.

...

Coming to the doctor's office for his grand-daughter's sore throat, Paul Rivois notices that in the top corner of the plywood board, there's what looks like a splatter. He imagines that having broken the end of one of the reeds, she was afraid she wouldn't have enough and went back to cut one more. And on that day, she was wearing her green coat.

...

She draws the continents and the oceans in great detail.

These details cover the entire surface of all the continents with buildings of different shapes and sizes.

They cover the entire length of the rivers with bridges that are themselves completely covered in buildings.

They cover the oceans with a tangle of overpasses connecting the continents. And the overpasses are covered entirely in buildings...

And this is what the eyes of Beata Daury saw.