



Obsession

Albert Libertad

1898

Durand, leaving his hotel, a smile of contentment on his lips, took a small step back, to read a tiny poster:

While we perish in the street,
the bourgeois has palaces to live in
Death to the bourgeois!
Long Live Anarchy!

Then, he sneered, and yelled to the concierge “You will take these idiocies off of the door”

And his calm smile came back when he noticed, glorious in their incapacity, two officers on the beat. But he stopped at the same time as them, red flyers stuck out on the stark white of the wall:

Cops are the bulldogs of the bourgeois
Death to cops!
Long Live Anarchy!

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The cops used their nails to scratch off the posters and Durant left anxious. While at the corner of the avenue, he heard the sound of bugles and drums and from afar two battalions appeared. He felt protected and breathed a sigh of relief.

As a troupe passed in front of him, he discovered; at that moment, like a flight of butterflies, a multitude of squares of paper floating in the air; indifferently, he read:

The army is the school of crime

Long Live Anarchy!

Some of the papers fell on the soldiers, others covered them; his obsession resumed, he felt crushed by the light butterflies.

When he sat down in his usual place to have a beer or the usual aperitif, on the table laid another flyer:

Go on, gorge yourself, the day will come when hate
will turn us into cannibals.

Long Live Anarchy!

He sneered, but this time he didn't fill up saucer after saucer.

Getting up, he headed quickly toward the corner of X street, where the exploiters asked for workers and mechanically searched for the propaganda poster, he discovered it and read:

The exploiter Thing or Machine asks for your sons to
degrade them,

Your daughters to rape them, you and your wives

to exploit you

Watch out Parisians.

Long Live Anarchy!

He shook his head and headed towards his office. He read on a plaque: Durand and Cie, Society in a capitol of two million, but, below, the exasperating critique said its piece:

Capital is the product of work
stolen and accumulated by the idle.
Long Live Anarchy!

He tore himself away quickly. He took care of some business, and to distract himself, thought of seeing his mistress. On his way, he bought a bouquet of flowers to offer her.

She smiled, seeing amidst the flowers what appeared to be a love letter:

“Some verses, now, says she?”

Prostitution is the outlet of too many bourgeois.
One turns the son of the poor man into a slave and his
daughter into a courtesan.
Long Live Anarchy!

She threw the bouquet in his face and sent him away.

Ashamed and tired, he returned home, the door had once again taken on its usual appearance.

Now, upon entering the living room, his wife said to him: “Look at this vase that I just bought, what an occasion.” He took it, turned it around, and turned it around again; a piece of paper fell out:

The luxury of the bourgeois is paid for by the blood of
the poor man.
Long Live Anarchy!

This “Long Live Anarchy!” and its harsh claims, all this hovered around him, and that very evening, he didn’t see go to see his wife, in fear of finding, in a discreet and camouflaged place, a flyer where he would have read:

Marriage is legal prostitution.

Long Live Anarchy!