

OLD BOOKS AND WIDE ROOMS

Every morning, when the sun rises, it's a my pleasant habit to lose myself in reading.

This morning the cock was in a good mood, really wanting to crow. To wake up, I waited for the first brave light-ray to seep in. Trying not to disturb the stillness of dawn, dotted only by birds' frisky twitters in addition to cock crow, I got off my creaky old bed, wore my faithful slippers and opened my room's shutters.

The sightseeing from up there - a mansion in Tuscany, the family house of my grandparents and of their forefathers before them - is always pretty, although never the same - today there is a darker and ruffled cloud there in the corner; yesterday mist was rising from the valley. In front of me, in all its beauty, lies the well attended garden, with its walks and paths and gushing fountains; but the tall wall fence doesn't avoid the sight to stretch on the surrounding hills, vineyards, the road leading to the village climbed up on that hill. Look! Yesterday our all-around gardener forgot the hand-cart below that tree; and far there a small cart goes around the near countryside. And those dark clouds announce bad weather is coming. For the rest it's all right, it will be a normal day just the same as usual.

To reach the library I walk in front of the closed doors of aunt Luigina's and of my daughters' rooms - two of them are still at home unmarried, and God knows if they will. Then I step down the large staircase. The servants are still sleeping too, but sometimes I find aunt Luigina in the kitchen busy with the burners or with the vegetables from the garden.

I read very slowly, so usually I pick the book up from the table of the library exactly where I had left it the day before. But when I finish it, I spend tens of minutes to choose the next one, pulling them off the shelves one by one, turning them around in my hands and trying to understand from preface or introduction if they fit for my taste and mood, or if I happen to have already read them.

Lastly I am reading some not very famous Tuscan authors of the previous century, of which clearly my grandfather - the main responsible for this little book collection - was very fond. But sometimes I enjoy myself a lot, and for a lot of time, browsing the pages of those two or three hand-written Latin volumes with golden and decorated initial paragraph letters. Those books, coming from who knows where and who knows when - probably some ancient monastery - are the most important pieces of the collection.

Nobody attends to that library except for me. I can say it for sure not only for the dust I find on the books and on any object there. "Books are not for women", tell me my daughters and uncle Luigina, always busy with lace pillow, fabrics, crochet or, for the youngest, with paint brushes. And no matter I remind them of women poets and writers who, at least them, would deserve their interest and attention. It's useless.

But perhaps it's better this way, so the library is all mine, my exclusive kingdom and shelter. If anyone looks for me, he can find me there at least until nine a.m., when I hear hens scratching about and dogs barking; then I close my book and start to get ready for receiving visits or better, depending on the day, going out for a pleasant hunting.

Every morning, when the sun rises, it's a my pleasant habit to lose myself in reading. But today, instead, I preferred to stay in my bed,

awake but with my eyes closed, imagining how would have been my day in one of those large mansions - which remind me my grandfathers' - described by some not very famous old Tuscan writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Writers which I meet wandering around the huge library which is internet, every morning until my small living recess - a forty square meter studio apartment with toilet and kitchen corner - is invaded by the noises of the busy street, horns, vans, people speaking loudly, and by the crying voices of my neighbours: three children with their hysterical mother who have to take them to school and who are always late.

In that moment I know I have to stop my reading, and for me too it's time to begin my usual day.