

Don't Misunderstand Me, I Love You

"Art is the lie that reveals the truth"

- Pablo Picasso

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Terra sat at her desk with a pen in her hand. She usually sat like this, shoulders slightly hunched over as if protecting herself from something, over her notebook which was the one thing that was dear to her. It contained all her thoughts. Not only thoughts, but everything she was. She could go on like this for days and days, listening to music on repeat, and writing in her notebook. It was a lonely life, because nobody ever got to know what was in that notebook.

Today, she felt like writing a story. She often had moments where she felt inspired and what that actually meant was that she felt she had a strong burning desire to say something, whether it was to someone, or just to the world in general. Sometimes it was both. But all the clarity that a story brings hinges on her ability to weave together facts, memories, emotions and all the surrealism and everything that seemed to suggest something. And that was really hard sometimes. She was used to people misunderstanding her. Whether it was because they wanted to misunderstand her, or if she was just a person that was easy to misunderstand, she didn't know. Maybe, it was bit of both. After all, the more complex and contradictory a person is, the easier it is to misunderstand them.

She usually sent her short stories to a friend. This friend was also a writer, that had come a little further in his writing journey and was in the process of writing a full length novel. She really looked forward to the day she could read this novel, and also to the day she would find the right words so she could continue working on her own novel.

Needless to say, what writing meant to her, was the whole world itself. There would be no world without writing, no emotions, no ideas, no relationships, just a giant piece of canvas painted black except for a tiny corner of white.

Today it took her a little more effort than usual to write. Usually, the words flowed out of her with a natural current, like a sine wave, but this day it was a little bit more like a Heaviside function. Maybe because she was trying to complement too many things. Nevertheless, she finished her story and wrote to her friend.

T: "Hey, John, I've written another short story :) wanna read it?"

J: "Heeey, absolutely, let me read it tonight and get back to you"

After reading it John felt that this had value but was maybe a little bit repetitive at times, but nevertheless it felt like a personal piece of work and he was moved by it in a way.

J: "Terra, this is a great piece of work, as usual :) just a few things... it seems like you use the same word quite often so maybe a bit variation would be nice... also, I was wondering, was there any motive behind the story? Like where did you get the inspiration from?"

T: "Thaaaaanks! :D Oh.. yeah, so I was thinking kinda that this story would be a shout-out to everyone who means a lot to me, you know what I mean?"

The good thing about John was that he always understood what Terra meant.

J: "Yeah, I totally get it, I could see that you put a lot of personal stuff into it, like, you were trying to let people know something, am I right?"

T: "Yes. Often I feel like I'm not able to give all of me to the people who deserve it... and, it just becomes all obstructed and the relationship becomes entirely misunderstood as a whole, and I don't want that, so I kind of... wanted to write a story so that I'd be able to express what I can't otherwise..."

J: "I understand... I think... except one point. Why is it you don't feel able to give your all?"

T: "Ok, see this is something I won't be able to talk about with anyone else, but with you I feel like I can talk about anything. And this is going to sound really weird and you might not understand but... I have to be honest right? So the reason for that is I feel like, that there's something inside me..."

J: "Inside?"

T: "Yeah, I feel that there's something inside me that makes me different from a normal human being. Like I don't deserve to be loved, or deserve to love anyone, because... what I truly feel like is... that I'm a murderer."

J: "Terra... that sounds horrible... does this have something to do with the other stuff you told me about earlier? About what happened that time...?"

T: "Yeah, I don't know how I'll be able to stop feeling this way. But what I really want is just to let the people I love know how much I love them. I guess that's why I wrote the story. Even though I feel like my love would only hurt them, and perhaps kill them, I know rationally that it would only make them happy. And maybe that's enough, to rationally know that."

J: "Ok Terra, let me know if you need anything more or wanna talk more, but it sounds really rough... I hope one day you'll be able to feel it too, and not just know it rationally. Also to feel that it's not your fault, even though I guess you know it rationally."

T: "Thanks J."

After chatting with John, Terra thought about his comments about repetitive usage of words and decided she wasn't going to do anything about that. But there was another thing she was worried about. She worried that no matter how much she tried and no matter how many

times she revised the story, that people (people other than John) would still misunderstand her. She felt that whenever she talked about something personal or emotional, people always misunderstood her.

Even though she loved writing, it wasn't her profession. For Terra, any form of artistic expression is just that, and not a means to make a living. So Terra went to school like all other university kids and wrote things in her free time. This way, she could really write whatever she liked and focus on that which was meaningful.

She decided to put the thoughts on the story on hold and go to sleep. Tomorrow there was a lecture on the usage of artificial intelligence in controlling and optimizing energy systems, and she was looking forward to it. She listened to "I Feel It Coming" - The Weeknd/Daft Punk and fell asleep.

The next morning, she arose not to the sound of her alarm but by her ringing tone.

T: "Hello?"

It was her friend, Mathias.

M: "TERRA! It's 8:14!! Where are you? The lecture is starting in ONE minute!"

T: "Oh... crap... I overslept again, as usual... geez, why didn't you call me half an hour earlier..."

M: "Hurry, Terra! Maybe you make it to the second half... HURRY"

It was strange because usually Mathias was the most chill person in the world. But maybe because he knew this was a lecture she was looking forward to for a year.

That was another thing people always misunderstood about her, her health problems. They thought she was just lazy and couldn't come on time in the mornings sometimes.

Terra was a pretty popular person, and this was mostly because she cared genuinely about others. People often felt grateful for being her friend. But despite this, she was extremely private, as she kept all her true thoughts and feelings to herself and her notebook.

She finally arrived at the lecture and sat next to Mathias and Anna. Anna had talked to John the day before and heard about her story that she wrote.

A: "I heard you wrote another short story, could I read it?"

T: "Well, I'm a bit afraid of sharing it actually."

A: "How come?"

T: "Because it's really personal, and usually people decide to wildly misinterpret what I say"

A: "Don't worry about that Terra, have I ever misunderstood you?"

T: "Yeah... you're right... but the thing is, you know how sometimes you say something and for one person they can really understand it but to another person's ears it sounds like an insult."

A: "You mean you're trying to satisfy many people with your stories?"

T: "No... I believe that a story should be written mainly for yourself, sometimes for someone special, but come to think of it, maybe that's why I'm worried about this particular story."

A: "What is it you're worried about?"

T: "That I'm trying to write it for many people. For all the people that mean a lot to me."

A: "That's not a problem Terra, maybe you're writing for a lot of people, but I'm sure in every story you write you're writing it mostly for one person. Also the other people will understand that. You can't write every story for everyone."

T: "You're right... Anna! I write a lot of stories, they could be for different people, but each one is always only for one person."

A: "Hehehe... I know I'm so wise, so hey, can I read it or not?"

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