



Infinite Marionettes

By José C. Elías 1991

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“I was there, I saw It all, it was him who did it.” That’s all I had to say to make him have a miserable life. But although he did it, I knew he was innocent in a sense, because his destiny was in my hands, or to be more specific, in the pages of this book where his life is being written.

He never suspected that I was his creator, he never suspected that his thoughts, his actions, and his emotions were the product of my hand and pen. He cannot suspect it, because he can’t think on his own, he needs me for every passing moment of his life. He is condemned.

But deciding his every step was a tedious job, I was getting old and began to consider writing hard work instead of pleasure. So I decided to give him the power to decide what to do with his life. It was a big mistake.

That morning, when he woke up, he felt different. He didn’t know why, but after observing the flying birds through his window he realized what it was. He felt free.

After changing clothes, he went out to the city, he walked streets up and down, he explored the new world. He didn’t know at all what was happening to him or why he felt the way he did, but that was not his concern. There was a big world out there to explore, places to visit, people to know. In short, a world to live.

Now I reflect on it and I know it was not his fault, not at all. If I just had let him have that sensation of freedom before, he would at least gain minimal experience in life, enough as to know that what he was about to do was wrong.

One clear night, on his way home, something caught his attention. There was a group of young people talking, laughing, singing, and supposedly having fun. He was curious. He got closer and stopped, they were a few away from him and still hadn’t noticed his presence. He gets even closer and that’s when one of them, the tallest, feels his presence and points his head towards him. The others did the same, and stopped what they were doing. There was no more talk, no more laughing, no more singing. The scene was retained like this for a moment. He was looking at them, they were looking at him, until finally one of them said “Who the hell are you?”

“I... was just passing by and... wanted to know what was going on, so I decided to take a look, it looks fun to me what you’re doing.”

“Listen boy, this is not place for you, just get your ass out of here and leave us alone.”

“But... but can I at least stay a few minutes, I... I have nothing to do.”

At this moment, one of them, the shortest, said to the tallest in a low voice “Hey brother, he says he has nothing to do. Why don’t we give him an *honest* job?”

“I don’t know, he might be with the law, he might...”

“You’re nuts!, he looks, and I’d bet my beer on it, just like a kid; come on, let’s give him a try, one more for the jobs doesn’t hurt...”

“I owe you a favor, we’ll take the kid, but you’re responsible for him.”

“Hey!, don’t worry about it, if there’s any trouble with the kid, I’ll make sure of giving use to my knife...”

It didn’t take the short guy too long to convince him of how good their “good life” was. Next day in the morning they were already training him in the art of robbing. He learned fast. It didn’t take him more than a few days to become an expert in this field. He loved to robe the elderly. “It’s fun to watch their faces. By the time they notice, they open their mouths, can’t let a word out, and their eyes fill up with tears. You’ve got to love it!”

But fun has its limits. One rainy night, after a “bad working day”, he was starving, and some coins is all he needed to get some energy into his stomach. Then, as out of the blue, he saw a man in his fifties walking down the street. “This is it, he will feel sorry he ever came out today...” He waited patiently behind a stone wall. The man was about to pass by. “Stop!!!, give me all you have on you grandpa!”

“Who do you think you are, young man?, I demand respect, get out of my way!”

“Listen old man, I have a nice knife under my sleeve, so why don’t you just cooperate and save yourself some time...”

“Uh, do you think I’m afraid of you little bastard!!!????”

That was it. He could feel the blood through his veins, the accelerated heartbeat, his pressure going up. The sky was suddenly illuminated, a thunder could be heard short after. He took the knife, grabbed one of the man’s hands on his old back, and applied a subtle pressure with the knife on his throat and said “This is your last chance, just behave and I’ll do nothing to you.” But this was not ordinary “old man”. He forced his way out of the situation by punching him in the face with his free hand and started to run yelling for help with the strength of his tired lungs. There was not use to yell, his voice was just a roar under the violent rain and the blasting sounds of the thunders. The young, outraged man ran after him, and seconds later put his hands on the man, and like animal instinct, cut his throat in the act. He saw blood coming down under the dark sky. He never saw blood like this before; he knew what he had done...

He didn't run. His legs wouldn't move. He waited there until people came to see what happened. His body was incapacitated, but his mind was not. "Help me!, help me please!, someone killed this poor man!" Nobody ever saw the knife, nobody ever knew it was him; only I... knew.

That's when I decided to introduce into his manageable mind the idea of coming here and talk with me. There was something I had to do.

"Good afternoon Sir!, can you tell me where can I get a dog like the one you have in your front yard? See Sir, I have nothing in this world, and I would like..."

"I knew you'd like to have a dog already."

"How the hell did you know, just because I asked you about it?"

"No, no my friend, because of the same reason you came here."

"Excuse me Sir, what did you say?"

"Come in, I have something to show you..."

He followed me step by step, until we got into my underground room, full of books. He never saw so many books in his life.

"Wow Sir, are all these your books? Have you read them all? Are they..."

"Sit down in that chair, my son."

He obeyed, he didn't know why but he did. His thoughts were his, but his actions were not. I sat down on a comfortable chair behind my desk, facing him, with a book in front of me.

"Listen my son, I want this to be as brief as possible, it is just too hard for me to end this in such a way after all these years."

"End what Sir? I don't even know you, I don't even..."

"No, but I cannot say the same thing about you. I know every single thing you've ever done from the very first time your eyes saw the light of this world."

"Is this some kind of a joke?"

"No my son. See this book? I want you to take a look at the name on it."

I showed the book from a distance at my nervous creation.

"Hey, that's my name on it!"

“Yes, and all of your thoughts and actions are written in here. This is your life my son; this is your past, your present... and your future.”

“I don’t believe...”

“One word of what I’m saying...”

“I just want...”

“To get out of here...”

“Why are you...”

“Doing this to... you?”

“What in the world is happening here, what is this, I’m confused, I... I don’t know what I’m doing here, I demand...”

He still couldn’t move from his chair, for his destiny was already written...

“You my son, yes, my son, are my creation. I created you, I know what you’re thinking right now. You’re my masterpiece, my great creation, but as soon as I gave you free will, look at what you do; you take the life away from a human being!”

My words hit him so hard in the heart, that now he had no doubt I was telling the truth. But I decided in my book, not to interfere for the rest of the conversation...

“So you... I... I don’t know what to say; why, why are you doing this, what are you going to do, what, what!?”

“My son, the why is because I needed to distract my emotions, I’m a lonely person, my life was never the ideal life, but with you... with you I had a son, someone to take care of, someone who gave me a reason to live. The what is that as any other book, there’s a beginning, and there’s an end...”

“Is... is this the end?”

“I’m afraid yes, my son...”

“But, what’s going to happen to me!?, I don’t want to... die, I want to live, live, live!!!”

I have to admit it, his words made his way to my heart; but I had to do it. For if I die, the only “legacy” I will leave in this world will be this young man, this poor beast. I want to die with peace within myself. Because of him a life was already lost in this world, but if I stop him now, a lot of damage is going to be avoided. I have to do it.

“Calm down my son, this, I want you to know, is just a dream; a dream from which all of us are going to awake someday. It happens that today is your awakening day. Today I will write the last chapter of your book.”

He tried to move, he wanted to run, I could feel it. After trying desperately and futilely to escape my dominion, he gave up, there was no use in trying, he knew he couldn't move... A tear could be seen coming down very slowly from one of his eyes. He then looked at me with such a pitiful face, that I don't think I'll ever be able to forget it.

Before closing his eyes, all he said was “life!”

That night I felt as if I had lost a son. Actually I did, I was the origin of his life.

The other day while walking down the same streets where my son used to walk, a very old man, wrapped in winter clothes stopped me in one of those lonely corners, and unreasonable started to laugh. His laugh was a message to me. How ignorant I was, was the message. The man stopped laughing and put his hand under his black, winter coat, reminding me of when my son took his knife out to kill his victim. Instead, this man took out a book, and showed it to me... It had my name on it. He said “I'm writing your final chapters my old son...” He didn't say anything else. I understood his message.

Maybe this is not reality, maybe as I said to my son this is just a dream, a dream where I'm playing the role of a human being in a big play called Life...

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Night of 2/14/91 to 2/15/91

Addendum August 13, 2010: More info at [eliax.com](http://www.eliax.com)
http://www.eliax.com/index.cfm?post_id=8025