Old Artist

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The Sad Gregorio
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He sat there, dressed in unfitting clothes and gray shoes. His foggy eyes staring into the same world he was ignored by. The customers who attended the bar were oftentimes irritated by his shadowy presence. They heard him whisper strange questions from time to time and saw him shaking his head from side to side as if he was tormented, but more likely deranged. They noticed his wrinkled face, his crooked nose, his dirty hands, and they ignored him. All except Alfredo, the owner of the bar, who would say, “Here you go, Gregorio,” while pushing a glass of whisky on top of a napkin into Juan Gregorio’s twitching hands. Juan Gregorio would simply take the glass, ignore the white napkin, and direct his piercing eyes around the bar. It never failed that whatever he saw made his face lose all color, mutilating him.

At 12:30 am the bar was full, and the wax began to drip from the white candles, blending the faces of the customers with the darkness. Yet, despite the obscurity of the bar, the paintings that hung on the red walls always stood out. It was these paintings that Juan Gregorio would stare at for a long time, the torture inside of him becoming even more unbearable. His eyes lingered on one piece in particular. It was one surrounded by aesthetic beauty; an evocative piece of an old man and a woman sitting side-by-side staring directly at the viewer. What stood out about this piece were the eyes of the two figures, powerful and penetrating eyes that carried an unquenchable fire, a connection that reigned between the two.

Having finished his drink and fearing losing the only cure to his torment, he turned around to wait for Alfredo to pour him another glass of whisky, when suddenly, out of nowhere, he heard a soft voice asking for his name. No one ever spoke to him, except the seldom voice of Alfredo. Therefore, Juan Gregorio believed the voice to be a figment of his imagination, but upon hearing it again, he decided to turn around. Then, he noticed a woman sitting next to him. She looked to be about thirty years old. She was drinking white wine. She was tall, lean, and wore a tight, elegant dress. But none of that mattered to Juan Gregorio, he cared only for the dark eyes that acknowledged his presence. Staring directly into them and mistrusting them, he said with his most powerful voice, “Why do you care?”

The woman, whose name was Angela, was taken aback by his rude response. But seeing his blurry eyes focused so deeply on her face, she responded with the same soft voice, “I simply wanted to know your name because I have seen you here