

It was 7 a.m. I was going to pick up Jérémie at the police station. I was yawning, hardly awake, and still rubbing my eyes – I'd been working very late, on an obstructive paragraph, before dropping dead tired on my bed, so the phone had startled me awake. Dawn was still white, diaphanous, but imbued with an already warm breeze coming from the ocean. In my trade, if you capitulated before a paragraph, if you didn't solve the problem before going to bed, there was no way you could climb up the rungs, you were condemned to remain a second-fiddle writer.

He was in a cell. Behind bars again. The police officer reassured me by saying that I could leave with Jérémie, but I had to warn the boy that here, between those four walls, no one wanted to hear about him any more.

“Talk some reason into the boy, Francis. I wish you luck. I, for one, feel this is hopeless. What takes place inside the head of an eighteen-year-old boy who has it in him to hold up a gas station, well, let me tell you... that's tough already. It's no picnic, quite unlike helping a blind person to cross the street.”

I gave a nod.

“Don't let him drag you into this”, he advised me.

“No risk of that. I'm currently writing a novel. I have no time to spare.”

“How thrilling. Writing a novel must be thrilling. I'm thrilled.”

I gave a nod.

I went out with Jérémie in my stride. There was a cafeteria across the street. I needed to drink a cup of coffee to wake up completely. To bite into a little spongy pastry to reward me for getting up at dawn. I beckoned to Jérémie to order what he wanted. His right eye looked like an Agen prune, and his nose like a big wrinkled tomato. His right hand was bandaged with some kind of linen. The day rising on him and adorning him in gold was decidedly not enough to pull the wool on anyone's eyes.

Then, I went with him to the dog pound, where we got back his dog, and she couldn't refrain from jumping in all directions and sending spittle all over the place. We drove back along the coastline. Opposite the casino, the day's first surfers, straddling their boards, shading their eyes with their hands, hesitant, were staring at the silent horizon, erect like prairie dogs. The sky was turning a deep blue. The dog was now quiet, sitting on the back seat with her tongue hanging out.

“I've decided not to give her a name”, he mumbled. “Finally, I think it's stupid to give a name to an animal.”