

PREFACE NO. 1

*In the clear glass of a dream, I have glimpsed
the Heaven and Hell that lie in wait for us:
when Judgement day sounds in the last trumpets
and planet and millenium both
disintegrate, and all at once, O Time,
all your ephemeral pyramids cease to be,
the colors and the lines that trace the past
will in the semi-darkness form a face,
a sleeping face, faithful, still, unchangeable
(the face of the loved one, or, perhaps, your own)
and the sheer contemplation of the face-
never-changing, whole, beyond corruption-
will be, for the rejected, an Inferno,
and for the elected, Paradise.*

*Jorge Luis Borges
(trans. A Reid)*

PREFACE NO. 2

When my father congratulated his friend Sam Beckett for winning the Nobel Prize for literature, Beckett's reply to him was: "Well you know, old man, if you go on saying the same thing over and over again, somebody's bound to believe you."

PREFACE NO. 3

LAYLA AND MAJNUN

It happened that the son of the emperor fell in love with a girl called Layla. He stopped eating and he spent his time walking in the forests and he allowed his appearance to degenerate. His father was very worried and sent a message to the father of the girl saying, "Would you bring her to see me?" because he thought that this girl must be so beautiful to have affected his son to the point of turning him into a vagabond.

So the father came to Court and he brought the girl with him to see the emperor; and the emperor looked at the girl who was quite pretty and attractive, but there was nothing all that amazing about her at all.

So he said to his son, "Well, she is very nice and attractive, but I don't see that she is so wonderful as all that."

Majnun replied: "To see her real beauty you must see Layla through the eyes of Majnun."

PRÉFÈCTURE DE PARIS

PROCÈS-VERBAL

I, the undersigned, Marcel Alain DRU, born in Villeneuve s/Lot on July 25, 1951 and domiciled at 6 rue Laville, 75018 Paris, do hereby declare that I was involved in an incident during the betrothal party on this day, Saturday July 21 1992, at the Restaurant A LA PANSE REMPLIE, 36 rue des Abysses, 75018 Paris, when an uninvited guest was observed to be distributing a small booklet to all of the friends and family attending the ceremony. Upon being told by my future best man and witness that the aforesaid booklet purported to contain a graphic description of this person's past relationship with my wife-to-be, a relationship about which I had no prior knowledge, I fell prey to what I considered to be justified anger and interrupted the ceremony in order to ask the person to leave the premises immediately so that my future bride and myself could complete the due process of marriage in which we were engaged with the children from our previous marriages in attendance.

I also declare that the person before me now in the Commissariat de Police du 18e Arrondissement, Mr. William Phillips, whom I have never met before this day, has identified himself as author of the abovementioned booklet entitled *Cuckold's Revenge* and is indeed the person who was in the process of distributing the aforesaid document. I furthermore admit that upon his refusal to leave the ceremony, I did commit an assault upon his person, knocking him down with the help of our witnesses and kicking him several times in the genital area.

I express my apologies to the Forces of Order who had to be called in to quell the ensuing disturbance, and regret giving way to an unconsidered gesture in the heat of the moment. I furthermore express my gratitude to the victim himself for his refusal to press assault and battery charges against my person out of respect for my coming wedding and his past acquaintanceship of my wife, and do presently attest that I consider myself bound over to keep the peace.

(Signed)

Marcel DRU

CUCKOLD'S REVENGE

I am writing to you after months of sleepless nights. Not that I have not been functioning normally during that time: I have been performing my job and have driven to London and back in order to close down the flat I was maintaining there in the hope, in spite of everything, that I would share it with you one day. I would not give up on this hope, which is only one among many delusions I have been entertaining.

When things have gone so sadly wrong, the first question one has to ask oneself is where did it begin to go off? I think the only honest answer to this is to say that it deviated right at the beginning. Not when I first met your daughters at Franco and Brigid's apartment and fell in love with these two beautiful children, nor even at Franco and Brigid's wedding when we first saw each other, nor even at the hotel in Brussels where we had our first secret rendezvous. I think the canker set in when I visited your family pile in Gloucestershire: seeing the peace and harmony of your family life in comparison to the manipulation and tension in my own home made me want to steal you away. I succeeded.