

Fata Morgana

Essay

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Gavril's cell phone was ringing. He waited some longer with his hand on the phone, enjoying the sound made by the device. And he was not enjoying in vain, for he had chosen the suitable ring tone for a man with his preoccupations; he was observant about the people he happened to meet: what kind of ring tone they had chosen knowing that they were to hear it while eating, while sleeping maybe and their hands would grope for the phones in the dark, while at work or simply while getting bored. Gavril was convinced that those ring tones said lots of things about peoples' personality and he was happy about that thing he had discovered and he would secretly enjoy making approximations just like in a difficult math exercise. It may not have been a major breakthrough in terms of knowledge, but what the heck! He was a writer and he had the right to play like that. He also got it wrong sometimes, with pretty serious consequences on his relationship with those people he had hastened to judge, yet nothing had been irreparable. Eventually, Gavril pushed on the green button:

'Hi!'

'Hi, Mihai! What are doing tonight?'

'I'm coming over to finish the manuscript. So, what do you say?'

'Of course', Mihai answered while struggling to hold the cell phone at his ear and tie the laces of his sneakers.

'On your horses!'

'We haven't got any more horses, milord!'

'Then toodeloo!'



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When Gavril entered Mihai's apartment with a bottle of vodka in his hand, he noticed his friend was half bent under the sink. The latter got up and stretched a hand dirty of oil that Gavril tried to avoid in order to shake his wrist.

'Help yourself, I'll be done in a minute', Mihai told him.

'Thanks, you're being very kind' answered Gavril ironically, rotating his eyes in the search of glasses. 'Where the heck are the glasses?'

'Well, this is it, tonight we won't drink from glasses, we'll drink right from the bottle just like two real bohemians. How do you expect a good, authentic poem to come out if we behave so aristocratically?'

'Like two bohemians or like two gamins', muttered Gavril.

He opened the bottle and the pungent smell spread all over the room. He took a sip and then another one.

'I'll wait for you then', muttered Gavril.

'We can start if you want to, I've still got a bit here to finish. Let me also take a sip.'

Gavril handed him the bottle and Mihai, crooked, took a sip.

'Look, said Gavril, I have already got the beginning:

*One evening, I was walking a bit without purpose, my hands in my pocket,
and Fata Morgana was also walking a bit without purpose through the capital city.
I did not tell her anything, I only noticed the black ditches
she was walking along and... '*

Mihai emerged from under the sink: 'What did you mean by *walking without purpose*?'

Gavril: I said *a bit without purpose*, that is she little purpose.

Mihai cleared his throat:



*'... and the boards reading Our deadline is on the xxxxxxxx,
but she was walking and smiling as if all the world had been made
of women just like her, with legs of glass
and a long neck just like a glass of Odobești...'*

Gavril: It's a good thing that she hasn't got cotton legs. Couldn't you think of something wiser?'

Mihai:

*'... of women just like her, with blue legs
That she held in my arms
when they found me as drunk as lord at the dike...'*

Gavril: 'You meant Lili and that summer thing, didn't you? Admit it!'

Mihai: 'Oh, that thing... No, I wasn't talking about it...'

Gavril flings into Mihai and punches him. Mihai stares at him, unable to believe his eyes, then punches Gavril's jaws. Gavril falls and quickly recovers, plunging on Mihai who gets a good opportunity to rip the buttons off his friend's shirt.

Gavril: '... but I wasn't good enough for her, only put her smiling face on the installations at most ...'

Gavril drags Mihai up to punch him again. Mihai turns his bleeding face and eagerly hits once more. The bell rings. Gavril answers, and an old man asks him what is going on. Gavril assures him that nothing happened.



The old man returns to his apartment upstairs and listens tensely for another twenty minutes, then, with shaking hands, he opens up a drawer, takes out a file whose title is *FATA MORGANA* and continues the annotations on the blank half page left:

October 2010

I am most certain that they are homosexuals.

They had something to drink, recited miserable poems and had a fight.

I haven't seen Fata Morgana yet,

but I'll get her.

Respectfully,

Three lively eyes,

LiterNet.ro

The old man closed the drawer and looked contentedly out the window. A harsh winter was coming and the rain drops were already turning into slush, sweeping the asphalt pavement where some oddly-dressed builders were shouting shamelessly.

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