

OBSSESSION

A few hours of revelry had passed: shouting, laughter, the sound at full blast, the bar packed, couples enjoying passionate emotion of love on the fluffy armchairs, others, barely standing, vomiting in the corners and most of them, lost in a thick fog, mumbling incoherencies and strange lamentations, as if they didn't live in this prosaic world but in an imaginary and subtle dimension.

"It's all over," he thought "no more can be brought to a greater degree of ignominy and indignity." No one noticed that a stranger to the parish had entered the booth of the disk jockey who, by the way, smiled him with a goofy grin, returning once again to his perpetual honeymoon.

Suddenly, the music was interrupted. "That xxxx has a long hand, be careful with him", a loud voice boomed over the PA system. "Only if this individual leaves the premises will the party continue."

Everyone looked around. The message had come fast and unexpectedly. In addition, with all the physical hustle and bustle and mental dizziness they could not understand the subtlety of the adjective, although they were sure that the individual himself could only be male. They were confused, unsure of the adjective in question: fat, skinny, dark, blond, bald...? However, all those who were in acceptable condition hurried to check the length of the upper limbs of their fellows. A few, the fewest, made sure that their wallets were where they were supposed to be. No one looked down and, with their backs to the others, walked crestfallen towards the exit door. On the contrary, there was a clear look of distrust on everyone's faces.

The search was fruitless and suspicions were rampant without any concealment or restraint. The room was packed, it was almost impossible to breathe. Glasses rained down, chairs flew, dry blows were heard, swollen lips were seen, black eyes, customers and security guards' bodies rolled on the floor, in short, an excessive and extraordinarily pitiful spectacle due to the large amount of gratuitously and grossly mistreated flesh.

When the police arrived, it was over, badly, but it was over. In some circles people commented that they had come late. One, in particular, pointed out that this was not uncommon, that it happened ninety-nine times out of a hundred. Another said that talking after the fact was too easy. Another said that they should be more patriotic and stop criticising the police. This one took out a banner and brandished it with rage and tenacity.

The officers had already left, taking with them those who they considered to be the ringleaders of the altercation. However, far from calming the situation and learning that violence was not a good advisor, the verbal sparring was increasing in intensity and the looks were gaining in tension and depth. At a certain point, the saying that only man stumbles over the same stone twice came true and all this led to a fierce struggle of disproportionate muscular exercise.

So, the forces of law had to come back, but this time they came even later. An instant analysis of the situation made it abundantly clear that the conflict had ended up with a certain symmetry and in a more or less orderly fashion. Two piles of wounded bodies lay on the ground. The moans and groans could be heard incessantly. Each pile raised a different flag at half-mast, with accentuated pride in its own and marked disdain for the other.

At the end of the night, the resident of portal number five hundred and three, staircase C, fifth D, from his guard post at the dining room window, savouring a good Manchego cheese accompanied by Padron peppers, Rioja wine and Teruel ham, gave a hysterical and prolonged guffaw to the whole city.

“Stories without Mufflers” (2006 -)