

The Enchanted Book

Daniel Prior

To my grandfather Andrés, for having faith in me.

1

Will had always thought that stories were like trees. Everything began with a seed, which with earth, water and sun, would become one of these already developed living beings, although it would always remain trapped in the realm of fantasy.

When that morning she had gone with her mother to the Thursday market in her town of Granada to buy some clothes, he would never have guessed what was going to happen.

While her mother deftly haggled with the shopkeeper, Will was distracted, and from among the people walking up the street from the market, an elderly gypsy woman gestured for him to come closer.

At ten years old, he had been educated in a healthy distrust of strangers, of course they had also let him know that in a small town like his, everyone was more trustworthy.

Before he knew it, he was already face to face with the gypsy.

—I have something for you, William.

—How do you know my name?

—Between us we all know each other, don't you think?— She replied with a strange smile.

Will was perplexed.

—I have something for you. A very special gift. The old woman showed him an old-looking book, quite large that and also seemed expensive.

—I can't buy that, ma'am.

—Don't be silly, it's not worth money, no. It's yours as long as you promise to use it every day. You promise?

—I promise.

The old woman handed him the book and it took the boy half a minute to see that even the last page was blank.

When he raised his head she was already gone.

He put the notebook with a very dark purple cover in his backpack printed with those creatures

from Yo-Kai video games. Her mother came back for him and told him not to get so distracted, that they had come for a toy for him.

Will took it for granted that what surprised her mother was that in no stall near where they were they sold anything resembling a toy.

—I don't think I'm going to want anything in the end anyway.— I think I'm going to focus on passing the games I already have.

—How are you children, you don't know how to play with anything that doesn't work with electricity, eh? —said her mother showing excessive affection.

After spending half an hour browsing the market, they both had coffee and cocoa milk, respectively, in a nearby bar and headed back to their maternal grandparents' house.

As the mother opened the door, the father was heard to cry out:

—So you don't work it out.— Let's see what you think of this. Eight specialists. Eight! The best in the region and they don't explain it either. What do we do?

—We are here! Her mother said almost screaming for her husband to shut up.

Will played off as he didn't know anything and he went to the dining room to greet her father and her grandparents.

Then he went to his room, took the book out of his backpack, looked at it as if it were a hieroglyph, and decided to put it away in a drawer.

He decided to use it at some point during the day. After all, he had promised.

Although he was honestly clueless.

After eating, he retired to his room to take a nap. He put on his *New York* hat on the bedside table and lay down on the bed undressed.

He kept thinking about it. As much as he tried, he couldn't ignore that something was happening.

Before he knew it, he was sitting on the edge of the bed and took the notebook out of the nightstand drawer. He looked at it again and saw how all the pages were blank. He put his cap back on.

Turned on the light. He remembered that in his pants pocket he had a black *bic* pen, which he liked more perhaps because at school they only let him write in blue. He took it and moved the table to the bed so he could write in the notebook.

He began: *"I have always had a lot of money..."*

His room had multiplied several times its size. The bed was also much bigger. There were cabinets, tables and all kinds of wooden furniture that seemed luxurious around. He didn't understand anything.

He took a look. He was wearing the exact same clothes, except for a cream-colored shoulder bag. He looked inside and there was his notebook and his pen.

Through the window you could see an exotic and carefully tended garden. He watched him for a few moments and finally decided to go out the door.

He found himself in a very wide hallway. He spotted another window at one end, so he headed to the opposite way so he could move on. The walls were white, very bright and clean. The ceilings were maroon vaults.

He started down some spiral stairs and at the bottom a young woman was waiting for him. She was blonde and appeared to be in her twenties. She was wearing a black dress with a blue and green flower print.

—Prince William,— he began, —I hope you have at least considered my proposal.—If your subjects continue without food, it could start a riot, but I know that is not the most important thing for you, no. I know you are noble, human. Unlike your father, you...

—My father?

—Yes, the King Herald. He's still pulling the strings, right? You are in command, even verbally, you have the ability to give the order. Like me there are many. Many. Mothers whose children are dying, do you understand? She fell to her knees and put her hands to her eyes. —I do not...

—Okay, I'll give the order,— Will answered without referring to her by name, since, for the strangest of reasons, he supposed that it would be strange to ask when it was obvious that he should already know. —No child should die of hunger under my mandate.

She, still kneeling, hugged him, stood up, recomposed herself and left. A man who had heard the conversation approached Will:

—Majesty. That was very generous of you. If you allow me a suggestion, we servants have long needed a raise in salary, it we can't have as much as we want.

—Well, I guess...

—And before you answer, also remember that nine out of ten rooms in the Palace are known to be empty, I think we could...

—What the hell is going on here!— boomed a hoarse, angry voice.

It was the King. He pushed that man aside and stood in front of Will.

—My son, you disappoint me, as usual. First you ask the tailors to make you those hideous clothes and now you almost give away the Kingdom.

»This ends here. You're going to learn to rule like I did. Spending fifteen years in military school. And believe me they won't treat you like you're someone already! Now get off my sight!

Will did not fully understand all this, but he was clear that he did not want to spend more years

than he already had in a military school. He got an idea. She went to the shoulder bag, she took the notebook and the pen and wrote:

...I'm going back to my grandparents' house".

—What a siesta you've slept, champ— her grandmother said at the door of her room. Go ahead and come in, it's almost time for dinner.

—One second, Grandma. —I'm on my way.

He was stunned. His cap was still on the bedside table. After a pause caused by fright, he went to the drawer. He opened the notebook and his heart almost skipped a beat when he saw with his own eyes that the story he had lived through was written there word for word, in his own handwriting and in the first person.

He dined with the family, hiding as best he could how bewildered he was. He only had one object to meditate on, which was the following: to use that notebook, whose nature and scope he did not know, to achieve a greater and necessary good; or not use it and play it in a very different way.

2

That morning he jumped up. He went to the bathroom and then to the kitchen to have a cocoa milk with buns for breakfast.

He went into his room, pulled the nightstand closer again, and prepared to write the words he had pondered until late at night.

He opened the notebook, and on the first blank page, she wrote the following words: *"I am talking to someone who can help me..."*

He found himself in a clearing in a vast forest. He again he was dressed in the same clothes and carried the shoulder bag. He knew it was huge because the nearest trees were miles away and they looked more or less the same as when they are on a distant hill. There was deep green grass and in the middle...

What words to put to that. It was like a tree, only it was the diameter of the street where he and his parents lived in Seville and it was so tall that, at least from his perspective, it had no top. Even so, at the top, numerous branches could be seen that cast shadows for hundreds of meters in all directions.

—Where are my manners? My name is Aira. It was a female voice. sharp, strong and firm.

Will already knew what he was going to say, but he took the time to appreciate everything.

What was happening. That tree. Aira. She was talking to him. That being so huge and imposing, but that hearing her in some way she was at his level.

—Are you the one who can help me?

—You'll see Will, you're not exactly asking for pears. The good thing about all this is that I'm not an elm either.

Somehow he figured she was smiling.

—And you are?

—Technically I'm a redwood, but that doesn't matter now.

»Do you really think you're ready, Will? You have to understand that I have no part or party here, but if you're really willing, I'll give you another chance. To play it differently. No more no less.

—I agree.

—Well then.

Towards Aira, there was a kind of mount that reached her product of its roots. Through the grass on top of this hill, a dirt road was opened.

Will followed it straight towards her. After a good while of climbing, by which he was exhausted, he saw that a portal had opened in her bark. To try to define it, it was transparent and somehow at the same time possessed a strange opacity.

He went through it.

He fell to the ground. Against a floor that was grassy but somehow totally smooth. The light blinded him. Still he looked up at the sky. There was a Blue Star, about four times larger than the sun, and the sky was white. There were no clouds.

Along the edges of that floor, some stone structures grew, as if flat, in which branches, leaves, flowers and fruits could be clearly seen.

The next thing he realized, the Star was making him cast two shadows, one darker than expected and the other paler.

Will thought that he had already come too far not to play her cards. After all, he had a magical notebook that made his fantasies come true. What did he have to fear?

And he used the notebook to change himself.

First of all, he wished he had medium brown hair. Second, the body of a man in his twenties. He wanted to be physically strong. He wanted new clothes: boots, black jeans, a T-shirt he had seen in a store, and a black leather jacket. He wanted a weapon, yes, a sword with sheath and all and...

The wind rose, more and more intense, more and more acute, it cut his right ear. When he thought he couldn't take it, he saw how the two shadows of him merged into one of an intermediate hue, and it broke away from him and faced him.

He came face to face with him, inflicting a terrible fear on him. Will understood the relationship and defended himself with the sword. But in her shadow it didn't affect it. She just went right

through it, like a dodged blow. So what? What could he do? The shadow was getting into his heart, it terrified him. He wielded it more and more furiously, until he finally did it with real anger. Then, the sword fell to the ground.

Before he had time to give up, he watched with relief as the sword reflected a beam of golden light from the Blue Star. As soon as he knew his opponent's weak point, Will picked up the sword and dedicated himself to killing her shadow with its reflection.

When there was nothing left of it, his shadow became his again. He now cast a single shadow.

Will recovered from the shock and decided to use the notebook again. He had no way of knowing how large a piece of land he was on, so she figured he needed a vehicle. He asked for a motorcycle.

—Do you see any gas stations around here?— Aira's voice sounded like a real smack.

He kept thinking that he needed to move faster than walking, so he took out the notebook again and this time a horse appeared.

He was jet black throughout all of his body, with a jet-black mane and ruby-red eyes. He did cast two shadows.

—Your name is Jacob,— Will told him. And he got on him. He advanced on the road.

3

Will finally came across a fork in the path.

The path to the left was made of stone and earth, flanked by plants, especially yellow roses. The one on his right was still that nonsense of plant soil and rock plants on the sides.

He came down from Jacob. He waited for a sign, whatever it was. Some way to know.

He was more than tempted to have something similar to what he already knew, but he took it for granted that it couldn't be that easy.

He looked up at the sky. The Blue Star was visible beyond the path to the right.

So he knew. He needed a guide and that was the best he could find.

He climbed back up to Jacob and took the one on the right following his Star. When he had already entered, he sensed how the wind strongly pushed his back, almost propelling him.

Moving a little further down the road, he realized that he was very hungry, so he went back down from Jacob and used the notebook to get food.

Nothing happened. Will was scared in case the notebook had stopped working when Jacob got close to the edge of the road and put one of the rocks, the ones shaped like fruit, in his mouth.

—Really? Will said. There was no reply.

He couldn't continue to ignore his guts and the fact that the only thing resembling something edible around here were those rocky fruits.

He went close to his horse, picked one up and, closing her eyes, put it in his mouth. It tasted like a mix of wet dirt and nothing at all, but he somehow knew that this was going to save her life.

It effectively took away his hunger and her strength was renewed, although he wasn't quite amused by what had just happened.

He picked Jacob up again and kept going. He saw a sign on the right side. Either he was in a language he hadn't heard or spoken or he was an indecipherable hieroglyph.

Will used the notebook to understand it. It read: "SEQUOIA COUNTY"

"Coming soon: Red Town".

4

Mounted on Jacob, Will entered the Red Town.

It was a medium-sized town, very similar to his grandparents' in Granada. The ground was still plant-like, but it was as if it were covered by a deep red translucent glass.

He approached the first street with houses. A retinue of its inhabitants came out to meet him.

They had human form, they were red and they wore clothes such as pants, t-shirts and some shirts, depending on their gender and age.

—It's him,— murmured first one and then the others. He is the Lord of One Shadow.

—Long live! —exclaimed a middle-aged man in corduroy pants and a white shirt.

—LONG LIVE! They all yelled in unison. They got close to Will, they surrounded him.

—Someone needs to explain the situation to him,— the same man began. Let me and my family do it.

That man, his wife and what seemed to be his son headed for one of the houses.

Leaving Jacob at the door and entering, they invited him to sit in the warmth of a blue firelight.

—Here, —the woman said, offering Will one of those rocky fruits from the County.

Will accepted it and put it on the table. She smiled and then took out another three for them.

He had accepted out of politeness. The truth is that he was beginning to take a dislike to having to feed on those things, but it was no less true that he had to feed at all costs.

—We awaited your arrival, —the father said.

—How? Will asked.

—That's the least important thing now. —Listen because this interests you. We are humble people. Miners

. We have lived together peacefully and worked everything that was required of us.

—But that changed some time ago. Some of the workers, or at least they were as much as we were before all this, are seriously endangering coexistence.

—Those slackers, —said the mother.

—Don't get like that, remember that we are the ones who believe that they are not responsible.

Will took another bite of her fruit. He frowned at it, and then their son ate some of his and smiled at him.

—The point, Lord of One Shadow, is that these former miners have somehow become immortal, leaving us with far fewer available workers. And worst of all, not conforming with it, they dedicate themselves to emptying the mine. And without its iron we will all perish.

—I don't understand what I'm supposed to do —Will said worriedly.

—You are the Lord of One Shadow. We all know you. We respect you. There is a chance, tiny as it may be, that they will too. And we must take advantage of it.

—Very good. Where are they?

—In a place next to the mine, I will guide you.

They toured the town, the miner walking and Will on Jacob, toward the top of the slope, where the mine was. Along the way, everyone was looking at them and every now and then someone would mutter 'Lord of a Shadow'.

They finally arrived at the place.

—You must go in alone,— said the miner. They won't pay me the slightest attention, and the worst of all is that if I go in with you it could harm our interests.

Will entered.

It was a much larger space than the rest of the houses. There, many former miners were talking loudly while harsh music played in the background.

Slowly, they were fixing their gaze on him and falling silent at the same time. The music finally stopped.

—Here we are the Lord of One Shadow, said one of them, which was followed by a few laughs.

—I see you know me. I have been told that you are harming the entire town.

—That's not true, —another man said harshly.

—Oh no? And what about leaving the town without inhabitants? And what about emptying the mine?

—I'm going to explain it to you so you understand —said a tall, thin woman. We are immortal. Do you understand what that means? Do you want to be immortal too?

—Never.

—Then go away! —said a voice in the background.

—He is still the Lord of One Shadow. Don't treat him like that —the woman continued. There were murmurs and then silence.

—There's only one thing I don't understand. If you really are immortal, what need do you have to exploit the mine? Aren't all your needs met?

—We'll vote for it.— Who of those present wants to leave the mine in peace in exchange for remaining immortal?

A vast majority raised their hands.

—You had luck. Now go away.

Will went out through the door of the premises and the miner received him.

—And? —he asked.

—They'll leave the mine.

—I'm very happy, but this doesn't end here. There is a path at the exit of the village. You must go there.

Will left the town riding on his horse. He realized that he had only to follow the Blue Star.

5

After leaving the Red Town and advancing a little further on the road, Will found another fork.

This time, to her left were white roses on the sides of a rocky path.

The Star guided him indicating that he should advance by the one on the right. He walked over to the Jacob and began to walk over it.

Again, he waited until her hunger was unbearable to get off her horse and decide to eat some of

those sandy fruits, which se had already taken a real disgust from.

Like the previous one, this path was flat and monotonous, however, he eventually noticed that there was something different about this one compared to the other: it was longer, much more.

He was hungry again, and reluctantly he and Jacob went back to feeding.

Will hoped that this would have been the last time, but he had to do the same on two other occasions.

Almost trembling at the thought that this would have to be repeated, she saw a sign on the right side of the path:

“SEQUOIA COUNTY”

“Entering: Incomplete Town”

6

Will finally spotted the town. It was a compendium of cylindrical huts with roofs on top of them.

As it went deeper, a translucent black layer was forming on the ground of plants.

He got off Jacob. He knocked at the first hut and, receiving no answer, he decided to get in.

Inside was a man. Or something similar. He was dark gray and his head was missing, as well as the left arm.

—Hello —Will limited himself to saying.

—We were waiting for you, Lord of One Shadow.

—Can you help me?

—We were waiting for you, Lord of One Shadow.

—I don't know what to do here.

—We were waiting for you, Lord of One Shadow —he replied again.

Will finally understood that he wasn't going to get more information there, so he went out, picked up Jacob and went to the next cabin.

This time she entered without knocking. Inside it, there was a woman who was missing both her arms.

—Immortals destroy our homes —she said.

—What should I do?

—Immortals destroy our homes.

When he no longer had the slightest doubt about how it worked, he did the same thing and went to the third cabin.

There she was waiting for a man without a head or right arm.

—They made my son immortal.

Without expecting more from that place, he went to the next one.

—Immortals want everyone to be like them.

Will changed streets and entered the first house.

—The leader of the immortals is called Peter.

He already had enough information, but he still had to know where he could find this Peter.

At the next house he realized that the information was starting to repeat itself.

He went through several more houses without being told anything new.

For the first time, he tried using the Blue Star as a physical compass. Then she saw that it marked a street towards the end of the town.

He sensed that what she was looking for would be found in the last house, so he headed straight for it.

He knocked on the door.

—Come in —a man's voice answered.

Guile entered. The man who had allowed him to pass was also dark gray, but he was considerably larger and, furthermore, he not only had all four of his limbs but had two identical heads.

—You're Peter, right?—

—That's right. —Only one of the two heads spoke.

—So you are the immortals. Why do you do this?

—I see you don't understand anything at all. Is it that perhaps the greatest fear of anyone is not to die? Would you not accept if I offered you to be immortal? Think about it, Lord of One Shadow, immortality, isn't it precious?

—Never.

—But think about it. The people of this town know nothing. Immortality has allowed me to be complete at last. Yes, complete. And now I dedicate myself so that others are too, there are more

and more of us, the town will soon fall.

—If you really are so complete... —said Will—, what need do you have to convince anyone? Is it that you are not already enough alone as you are?

One head made a meditative gesture, the other said:

—It's fine. We will stay as we are and those of us who are. Of course, do not expect me to help you go to your next destination, after all, I am complete.

And he smiled, Will shook his hand with an apparently serious tone but laughing in the inside.

As he walked out the door, he remounted Jacob and glanced up at her Star.

7

He left the village and headed for a new fork. This time, the roses on the left were red. The Blue Star, as always, marked the path to the right.

Will ordered Jacob to enter the latter, but not before worrying about not being able to know what he would face. The gritty fruits were his only sustenance, but he already hated having to feed on them.

He waited again until he couldn't stand his hunger to make the first stop along the way. After this he followed his journey and had to stop for a second time.

Something told him that this path was going to be longer, and this, along with the fact that he did not know how many would remain, frightened him.

He looked at his shoulder bag and saw that the dark purple notebook was still there next to her pen. Even so, what he did be well-aware well is that he couldn't use it to get food.

This made him feel angry.

They had to make another three stops. During the third, Will almost cried when eating those mud fruits mixed with nothingness again, but he needed them to nourish himself and stay strong.

Finally, as she expected, she saw a sign: "SEQUOIA COUNTY"

"City of Warriors"

"Warning: If you are not welcome you will be destroyed"

8

Will saw something in the distance that he did not expect to find in the county: a city. A real city, perhaps even bigger than her native Seville.

As he entered on Jacob's back, he saw that the ground was beginning to get covered with a whitish

layer, although it allowed the plants that made it up to be seen.

When he wanted to get closer, he found that everything was noise. Explosions, gunshots and screams. Jacob was not scared.

—Get off the horse —an authoritative voice ordered. He was a corpulent man with a white face dressed in a white military uniform with grayish camouflage, from which hung numerous decorations.

Guile obeyed.

—Hello Will... Yes, yes, I know your real name, I coordinate the Warriors and the city, so I have to know some things.

—Pay attention. You are in grave danger. You didn't come here to sightsee. A band of ex-warriors has revolted against the Government. They are crazy. They think they are immortal, but the reality is that if the government falls, we are all behind like dominoes.

—I could... —Will began, who was immediately cut off.

—You can not do anything. These are not Red or Incomplete. Yes, Will, don't put that face, of course I know, think about it, what comes after what. As I was saying, these guys are completely out of it, they're going to destroy everything, and they're not going to respect you, much less reason with you.

There was a short pause.

—My mission is to take you personally to the other side of the city, so that you can attack the castle of the Count, who is the one who started the war. Do you understand?

Will went to get on Jacob, which stood a feint, since the general told him:

—The horse stays.

Will hadn't taken a liking to it that you could say, but it had helped him go further.

»Hurry up.

He left it without looking back.

The general made a few fusses in the air and a translucent white bubble formed and enveloped them both.

The bubble rose a few meters into the air, granting them protection. Below, the image was terrible. It was an open war, you couldn't stop hearing explosions, moans, seeing one building fall after another and the streets were taken in such a way that the scene was that of a constant battle.

They had to travel the entire city for Will to cross safely to the other side. The bubble settled and then disappeared and the general said, pointing to a hill:

'At the top is the Count's castle. As I told you at the beginning, he was the one who started all this,

you must go... And yes, I must stay.

9

As he left the City of Warriors, Will realized that for the first time he was not on a flanked path but on an open stage. Even so, the plants that constituted the soil were still inaccessible and the trees and bushes that were made of stone, producing those foods that Will at this point had real hatred for.

Will took longer than he would have liked to even get close to the castle, feeding on those fruits and berries.

When he finally arrived he saw that he had nothing to do, the gates were tall and sturdy, the stone walls were impassable, and all of this was protected by rebels. He looked at his sword and could clearly hear someone hitting his face with the palm of his hand.

Will hid at a safe distance and tried to use the notebook to bring down the castle, but nothing happened.

He was disappointed. Then, she noticed how someone hissed at her even further back. He didn't believe what she saw.

It was the child in the family of the miners he'd helped. As he explained to him, the town had decided that the One Shadow Lord needed some form of protection, and he offered to follow him and, when the time came, offer her help.

He told him that there was another way to do things and guided him to show him. On the other side of the castle, its foundations could be seen.

These consisted of an iron rod, which was attached to a chain whose end was at a safe distance, so that in theory he could pull them to destroy the Count's castle.

Will tried to pull the chain, with all of his strength, but no matter how much the chain was tightened, the rod did not move an inch.

he used the notebook to be as strong as he were allowed to be and tried one more time.

Again, it didn't budge an inch.

—It will only fall down if you're honest with yourself—the other boy told him.

—I do not understand.

—Yes, yes you do. You know who you are, don't you? So say it out loud.

—I am the Lord of One Shadow, you know that.

—No, don't say that, you have to be honest. There is no other way.

.Will's face changed.

—My name is... My name is William Cooper, and...

—AND?

Will decided to let it all out.

—I'm ten years old —his body changed —and I was told, a year ago, that I have a disease called leukemia and... —He burst into tears. He lost his hair, and her clothes changed into one of those hospital pajamas that he hated so much. This made him snap. He fell to her knees against the ground.

—And I'm doing everything I can, but if they don't find a donor for me, I'm dead, do you understand? Dead. And I'm so scared and I don't know what this place is, for God's sake, where am I? Where?

Halfway through crying, a wisp of air distracted him. The iron rod was trembling strongly. Reacting with the speed and fury of lightning, Will heaved the chain over her right shoulder and pulled with all of his might.

He demolished the castle from its foundations.

—Congratulations —said the red boy. But now you have to face the Count. Do not snooze.

The boy left and Will advanced through the rubble until he saw a sober throne on which the person who must be the Count was sitting. He was a man in his thirties, with spiky brown hair and no beard, slim though he seemed tall and strong.

—Are you the one who started all this? —Will snapped.

—Such manners, right?— Pleased to meet you, Will, I am the First Count.

—Don't tell me off, you lead the immortals. Don't you realize that if the County falls, I fall and we all fall?

—Perfectly.

—Then?

—It's my nature, don't think too much about it. (...)

—I have something for you —said the Count, showing him a mango. It was a real one, the first food as such that Will had seen since she entered the notebook.

Will took it and took a bite.

—Thanks.

—Why? That's not what I have for you, —the Count said mischievously. You said earlier that you don't know where you are, well, you're in a county, Sequoia County, no more, no less. And the realm

is called Imagination.

Will looked at him strangely. He had already devoured the mango as the Count spoke.

—And now that?

—You're lucky that my nature also makes me hate lying.— As you have said, what you are looking for is not in your hands. There is a river in the limits of the County, the River Time. Only there will you find an answer.

—You know how to go, right? The Count looked mockingly at the sky.

10

He didn't know how long. Will didn't know how much time had passed since she left the Count's castle.

He didn't have Jacob, so she had to get around by walk. He knew that in all probability it would be useless for her to ask for another means of transportation.

And again the hunger. It was even sharper since he returned to the real physique of his. He, again, would have to feed on land.

He picked up one of those fruits on the side of the road and, after doubting it, crushed it with his fingers until it made a dent and threw it away from him.

—So you don't want to, huh?— Aira said somewhat annoyed.

—Yes! Will exclaimed angrily.

Then, gradually, all the trees and all the rock fruits disappeared. Will was very scared, he thought that he had gotten into a lot of trouble.

So worst of all. A somewhat thick fog rose, and he almost stopped seeing the Blue Star, which Will already took for granted that she guided to the limit of the County and therefore to her goal, the River Time.

Although he had no notion of time as such, Will saw how many hours passed, perhaps days, of a terrible hunger, until finally the fog began to dissipate.

The border of the County was the other bank of the river, which consisted of a rock wall that sloped down as far as the eye could see.

The water of the River Time was not only clear, but it was completely transparent, so that, when Will got into the water and looked straight down, he saw what one should do when looking at something invisible and which is also infinite, that is, nothingness.

He wasn't scared anymore. He couldn't breathe, and he wasn't scared. What he was experiencing went against all logic, and he was not scared.

Then she found himself on a grassy floor.

He looked forward and there was Aira:

—What an adventure, isn't it?—

—What's going to happen to me?

—Your decision is taken from the start. You have something new in your shoulder bag, something much more powerful. Of course, by now you should know that everything has a price.

Will looked at the shoulder bag and went to grab it, when he saw that at that moment he was positioned in such a way that he could only look at Aira out of the corner of his eye.

—One last thing, William. I love courage, don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

Will opened the shoulder strap and at that moment he was already completely with his back to Aira and facing the forest.

He took out what was there. It was also a notebook, but this one had a cover made of gold and it shone.

He wrote:

“...FIND A DONOR FOR ME”

Then he turned into a bird, flying towards the forest, faster and faster...

—Because it has happened. I believe it because it has happened. —It was the voice of his oncologist.

He sounded jovial and happy.

Will could imagine that he was talking to another doctor, perhaps older; he could imagine the gestures that naturally accompanied his voice.

Out of the corner of her eye, he saw an older doctor walk past her and freaked out a bit. He then opened his eyes wide.

—Will, Will, my child... —It was her mother, who, crying, she didn't know whether to look at her son or at the sky—. It has already passed. Everything.

—Oh. your donor. She was very insistent that you have this. —Her mother passed her a book.— Guile watched him. It was a collection of Grimm's tales. He saw the dedication,

“Enjoy your gift.”

In a similar way, he was able to know that this letter corresponded to a woman, perhaps older, and that she, in all probability, had learned to read and write in her adult age.

She then understood: the highest he could aim for was to tell the same thing in other words.

Epilogue

I had gone down to the courtyard to collect some prints for the academy. I was going to meet Peter at the portal for it. On the way, on her bench, were little Angela and her grandmother.

I was sitting on the right, the girl in the middle and her grandmother on the left. As usual, I had gotten us into an unusual conversation:

—Do you understand, Angela?— That is the difference between fiction and history. Fiction is the creation of an author. History is what actually happens.

—But then, television?

—Scripts. Written by people. Do you think everything is written?

—I would say yes.

—Next question: Written by whom?

She did not stop smiling cheerfully and awake at any time during the dialogue.

—I would also tell you to write. Write now that you are still a girl. Write a diary, write stories. But write. When you have grown up and read it you may be surprised...

—Do you believe that magick exists?

—Of course not, what nonsense!

—However, I think there are similar things, like writing, don't you think?

—And why is that, hum?

—Think about it. You exist. I exist. That day we talked. However, this part of the conversation never took place, did it?