

DUNE: DIARY OF A SUMMER

Translation by Ona Bantjes-Ràfols.

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ENGLISH SAMPLE TRANSLATION

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August 1st

Hello.

I don't want to write in this diary.

I don't plan to write anything.

Bye. Until tomorrow.

August 2nd

Hello. Day two.

That's it.

Supposedly this is my vacation diary but I don't want to write. I don't plan to write more than hello and goodbye each day. I don't want to write just because he told me to. He doesn't control me, he's not my teacher anymore, and next year I'll be in high school and I'm not going back to that school to tell him anything.

Hello again. It's just, what would I say about this boring summer? Mom said the three of us were grown now and she needed a break from daughters. "I need to be alone," she told us. She left us with Grandpa's ugly face. He acts like he's so progressive. Grandpa acts like he's so progressive, but really it's just so he can ignore us. "You're grown up enough, you can do your own thing, you don't need to ask my permission for anything. Here's the fridge, here are the beds, I won't control you." He has a long white ponytail that I kind of want to try braiding. Grandma would do it, if she could see him now.

Lia acts like she's so mature, always reading, and Gala acts like a child, always stuffing her face with cookies. Literary Lia and Gala the Glutton. And me, in the middle, unable to be "the" anything. I'm twelve years old and that's the only thing that sets me apart. There's no one else in the group who's twelve.

Nothing ever happens here. Everything is blue and white. I'm counting the days, from the 1st to the 31st, until I can go back to Vellecut.

Hello again. It's dark out.

Okay, something happened that I want to write down. I admit it. Let's see.

It was close to six, but the sun was still beating down. Lia, Arlet and Xenia were telling each other secrets in the bushes, as all smart fifteen-year-olds do (even though they see each other all-year long at school). Gala, cookie in hand, was chasing poor Ferran across the dunes while Emili laughed.

I was doing what I always do: I put on the headphones I was given on the train, without music, and put the other end of the cord in my pocket, as if I had an MP3. That way, everyone will think that I won't hear them if they try to talk to me. I did that before walking away from the group, walking towards the beach, where there were still sleeping sunbathers, bright parasols and dry towels. I sat cross-legged on the sand. I didn't take off my headphones, which were still silent, but I could hear the sound of the waves. Soft. Sooooooof. If you wear black, the sun heats you up more, but I like that. I looked at the horizon, where you could see a few white sails. I took off my boots, which are made of black canvas and are already falling apart, but which Mom says can last until the end of the summer. I got up. I tied the laces of my boots together and hung them around my neck. I walked to the water, still with my headphones, but turned off, so that if someone recognizes me they won't try to greet me. I started walking along the beach, getting my feet wet. I can't believe how white I am! Those milky ankles!

Now comes the part that made me want to write.

I was walking along the water, I don't know how long I walked, a pretty long time. I got further away from the swimming area. The beach just got emptier, with more rocks and less sand. I kept walking, avoiding the rocks and sweating a bit. I looked around and I was alone, I had really gone a long way. The sun was shining on me, already a little low, in my eyes. And then, all of a sudden, I saw it. It was the roof of a rusty car peeking out from the shrubbery on the dunes. I jumped a little to see it better, and sure enough, beneath the roof was the rest of the car, half-hidden. I jumped again. Hold on. there was someone sitting inside!

I put my boots on quickly, without even dusting off the sand on my feet. I rolled up the earphone cord and put it in my pocket. I climbed the dunes, the sand sliding under my feet from the incline. I could hear a sweet melody, like from a flute. When I was high enough to see the car from up close, I realized there was a boy inside of more or less my age. He was

wearing a black shirt, like mine, but with shorter sleeves. When he saw me he jumped out of the car and disappeared between the bushes. The melody stopped. I called out as he ran: "Hey, wait!" but he didn't pay me any attention. I ran after him a bit. Then I remembered that I don't like people talking to me when I don't feel like talking, and let him go without calling out anymore.

I went back to the car and looked it over: it must have been dark green before, but now it's a greyish green with a lot of rust on top and all over. It's missing the two doors at the front and the seats are fairly well preserved. I sat in the front passenger seat, and used my left hand to turn the steering wheel, which creaked loudly. I pressed buttons that no longer did anything. Then I noticed the glass of the windshield was gone, and put my hand through it to check. Looking at my hand I noticed what a beautiful view I had in front of me. I lowered my hand and rested my back against the dusty velvet of the seat. I gazed at the sea, like an immense movie screen. If I'd had pencil and paper I would have drawn it all. The sea, the sand, the rocks, a few plants and two palm trees in the distance, everything so far away from the white houses, the sunbathers, the parasols and the towels. I took my headphones out of my pocket and put them on to listen to the silence.

August 3rd

Hello. I thought about how Manel also asked me to practice description as part of my summer homework. I don't think he'll mind if I take advantage of the diary and kill two birds with one stone. I'll describe a place and a person.

Description of the town:

The colours: blue and white. All the white walls are well-painted and clean. The blue sea. The blue sky, which never has clouds here. The roofs are orange, of course, but unless you go up to the castle you can't see them. It's mostly white and blue. The castle is in ruins and they don't want to fix it. The mayor wanted to fix it before and everyone went against her. The streets aren't paved, I think because it's harder to get here by car than it is by boat. By that I mean that a truck carrying asphalt or a machine to make asphalt would have a hard

time getting here, on that tiny impossible road. In the middle of the town is a square. In the square is a round fountain. Around the fountain is city hall, the clinic, a school, and a church that never closes. Pretty typical, right? The ground in the square isn't paved either, but there are round white and grey cobblestones which fan out in a circle around the fountain. Although Grandpa's a man of the sea, having been a fisherman his whole life, he lives in a house at the very top. You can see the sea through the front windows, and through the back, the castle, almost close enough to touch.

(More things about the town, though I don't know if they're really descriptions. Mom and my grandparents and great-grandparents and so on were born here, but Mom left to work in Vellescut, the capital of the province, which is where the three of us were born and where we live all year. There's no high school here, and the kids in the town, like Emili or Xenia or Arlet, have to be driven to the high school by our house every day, which is where I'll be going this year. Vellescut is uglier but less boring than Dunes.)

Description of Grandpa Ignasi:

Grandpa's name is Ignasi and he's tall and skinny but with a potbelly. He always looks you in the eyes when he talks, and his eyes are black (I inherited that black colour in my right eye, but the other one is green, like my sisters, my Mom, and my grandma (this isn't a description of Grandpa but it felt relevant)). Grandpa has very white, very long hair. He puts it in a ponytail, but a really bad one, and he only does it to act hip and not comb his hair (now that we're here Gala the Glutton does it, and she's also really bad at it (This is also relevant, I hope)). His beard is also long and white (he doesn't do anything with it because he doesn't want to, I kind of want to make little braids). He doesn't iron his clothes (a waste of time, he says).

For the record, I'm only writing descriptions because nothing interesting ever happens here. Nothing at all. Nothing.

Oh! The town is called Dunes, like me but in plural, because between the houses and the beach there are these protected dunes that are famous around the world for the lizards that live there, which are also blue, like the sea.

August 4th

What a day! And here I was saying that nothing interesting ever happens here! Jeez!

For example, the face I'm making right now is my Mom's fault.

I get that it's not the sort of thing you write in a diary. A diary is for writing down the things that happen to you: what excites you, what you want to remember, what you want to go down in History, or something like that. I get that diaries aren't really for talking about what kind of face you're making, but I can assure you that right now I've got a major stink face. I checked. Before coming here to write I passed by the bathroom and saw myself in the mirror. The stink face is Mom's fault.

After her call, when I hung up the phone angrily, Gala the Glutton yelled at me, cookie in hand: "You're an idiot! Why did you hang up? I wanted to talk to her! You know what? You've got stink face! You look so ugly! Stinky! Stink face!" At eight years old, nothing seems to bother her. The important things, I mean, like our Mom lying to us.

Lia, who talked to Mom before I did, grabbed her by the shoulders: "Don't worry, Gala, I'll tell you everything Mom wanted to tell us." Lia is so mature and sweet that she puts me on edge.

I was already climbing the stairs towards the bathroom, to check if I had stink face in the mirror, and totally prepared to not go down again, when Grandpa called out: "Dune! If you leave now, we'll clear the table but you'll be washing our dishes tomorrow morning, okay? So yes, I'm making an ugly face: I'm all splotchy, red spots of anger contrasting with pale skin, paler than ever, impossibly pale, pale as a turnip, so pale that my orange freckles and long hair look bright as carrots, so bright they look like they should give off heat. While I looked at myself in the mirror, I went over the conversation I'd just had with Mom on the phone.

It turns out that she didn't go on vacation by herself. I know because while I was talking to her I heard her muttering to someone else: "Look, they opened the buffet. Go on without me, I'll be right there." I didn't even want to know who she was talking to. I clenched my jaw, tensed my shoulders and hung up. (I paid attention to each gesture because Grandma was always telling me: "Pay attention to what your body does when you get angry, Dune, and try

to stop it,” but I couldn’t stop it). How could that woman be such a liar? When I asked Mom why we couldn’t go with her, she told me: “I need to be alone.” She abandoned us at Grandpa’s house to go on vacation with a little friend of hers? Liiiiiiar.

In the bathroom, I scrubbed my face with freezing cold water. I combed my hair, because Literary Lia said she read that combing your hair before going to bed clears your head and untangles your bad thoughts. Maybe Mom ran into someone she knew at the hotel? I breathed deep, left the comb by the sink and turned off the bathroom light.

Now I’m writing to try and calm down. It’s been a long day.

I woke up before anyone else in the house, at the crack of dawn. All you could hear was Grandpa snoring. Gala the Glutton had crawled into Literary Lia’s bed and was hugging her. The sun was beginning to leak through gaps in the blinds. I padded barefoot out of our bedroom. I felt like I was the only one awake, and having the house to myself. I tiptoed towards the stairs, wearing just my panties and the large shirt I wore for sleeping, thinking I would go down to make myself a hot chocolate to dip yesterday’s bread into. That’s when I heard Negre’s meow, and stopped. It was coming from upstairs, from the attic.

I turned around and slowly walked towards the stairs that went up to the attic. The cat was scratching at the door, trying to get out. Holding the banister, I climbed the stairs, very slowly, trying not to wake anyone. I murmured as I went: “Neeeeeeeeegre. Calm doooooown. It’s Duuuune. I’m coooooming.” I remembered that I hadn’t gone into the attic since I was nine, when I went to get firewood with Grandma Teresa. That was the last Christmas we spent with her, she died in the spring.

I had reached the door, which was very old, the only one in the house that looks like it’s never been replaced. It must be a hundred years old! I got closer. The cracked wood still holds, and doesn’t let in a single ray of the sunshine that comes in through the attic windows. I put my hand on the rusted door handle and pushed down. It went: “Creeeeeeeeeeaaaaaak.” Then I pushed on the door but it didn’t move. Not an inch. I pulled the handle up and down several times: “Creeaaaak, creeaaaak, creeaaaak,” but nothing, it wouldn’t budge. Then I realized that below the handle was a keyhole, and I squatted down to look through it. I closed my green eye and put my black eye to the hole. All I could see behind the door was white, a flat, luminous, glowing white, and nothing else. It was very strange. Negre kept on

scratching. I stood up. "Go out the window and wait for me at the kitchen door, Negre, I'll wait for you there," I told him quietly.

After that, the rest of the morning was pretty boring, so I have nothing to say about it. To be honest, I would have liked, come September, to be able to throw a blank diary in Manel's face: "There you go, there's my summary of my amazing summer vacation!" But I'm scared that he would complain about me to the high school teachers. Maybe I shouldn't have written that, because Manel has to read it, but if I can't even write honestly, well that would just be too much!

What happened in the afternoon? Well, I met the boy from the rusted car on the dunes. At least he is my age exactly, twelve years old, not like the rest of the group. It went like this: I cheated a bit, instead of approaching from the front I went around the back, so he wouldn't see me coming.

It was around six o'clock, like the other day. I went out the back door of the house, circling around the castle before making my way through the pines. I crossed the forest, orienting myself by the sun, walking south. On the way I found a motorhome with colourful flowers painted on the side. I got closer and pressed my face to the glass. It looked well-kept, but there was no one there. The door was locked. I kept on walking.

After a while the forest opened up. There were fewer trees and more bushes. I changed direction a bit, walking towards the sea. At the bottom I could see the rusted car. I could hear that sweet melody again. I started to walk more slowly. Branches snapped under the soles of my boots. Soon enough I could see the back of his neck, he was sitting in the driver's seat. Playing an ocarina. I took lots of very small, very slow steps, trying not to make a sound. I walked a big circle so he wouldn't see me in the rearview mirror. I approached the car from the passenger side, so he wouldn't get spooked.

The little ocarina song had stopped. I was only a few feet from the car. Then a lizard made a little noise next to me. The boy turned, and saw me. He got up like a shot, letting the ocarina fall to his chest, hanging from a cord around his neck. He started to run towards the forest like a professional athlete, if a little hunched in the shoulders. "Hey! Wait! Don't run! I just want to talk for a while! My name's Dune!" I called after him.

I was standing stock-still by the car. Then I decided that, if an attempt that cautious had not worked, my only option was to run and catch him.

The race through the forest was really hard. I could tell he knew every tree. He weaved between the trunks like a skier in a slalom race. I followed but he kept getting farther away from me. My bootlace came untied. I didn't stop to fix it. "Run, Dune," I urged myself on, "don't let him get away." I didn't think about falling. I didn't think about my bootlace. I watched him. I saw him running, dressed all in black like me. Getting farther and farther away. He jumped nimbly over small bushes. He jumped over the thick roots that stuck out of the ground. "Run, Dune, run." All of a sudden, wham! I saw him fall on his face. I was glad, at first. Then I heard him groan and felt bad. I kept running, but he didn't get up. He had gotten stuck under a root. "Crap!" he yelled. I was on him already. He tried to get up. I threw myself on top of him in a horizontal jump, like a bird with its wings outstretched. We rolled over the ground half-hugging. Clouds of dust kicked up around us, and I closed my eyes.

When I opened them we were no longer rolling. We were laying on the ground. I was on top of him. I was holding his wrists. His palms were bloody, with gravel and splinters stuck to them. Then I looked at his face. Oh my god. I think he might be the most spectacular-looking boy I've ever seen. The most beautiful. The most... I don't know. Huge, grey eyes. Red lips. A straight nose, so straight it could have been drawn with a ruler, but with the sweetest little rounded tip. His skin is darker than mine, a warm brown. I saw that the ocarina was intact, without even a scratch. We were still breathing hard, tired from the race. He was staring into my eyes. My long red hair curtained his face on either side.

"Aren't you tired of looking at me?" he asked. I didn't answer. I couldn't move. I didn't know how to tell him I could never get tired of looking at him. "Can I go?" he asked. Then I decided that, if I had him, I might as well set a condition for letting him go.

"On one condition," I said. He didn't reply. "I want to know your name."

"Max. My name is Max. Can I go yet?"

But I was reconsidering. "You can go if you let me come with you to the rusted car one day," I told him.

"You said one condition, not two. You know my name, now let me go," he insisted. Then I asked him how old he was and he said twelve, and then he started to wriggle like a lizard and repeated: "let me go! Let me go!" some twelve times.

I breathed in. Sloooowly. Filling both lungs. It seemed to me I had played enough at being a villain, and let him go. He took off running into the forest. "Can I come back another day or not?!" I called after him. He didn't reply.

I'll wait a few days before going back. What was he scared of?

Now here I am writing with this stink face, but after writing for such a long time I don't feel quite as angry at Mom.

August 5th

Very early in the day and we already had the cousins outside in the street, banging on the kitchen door with their fists. Gala jumped up from her seat, biscuit in hand: "I'll get it! I'll get it!"

Our cousins are 10. They're not redheads and they don't have green eyes. They're twins. They got their dark curls from their mother Rita. Paula always wears her hair down, she never combs it or lets others do it. Eva always wears her hair tied back in a perfect ponytail. The only other difference between them is that Paula wears braces and glasses. They nearly always dress in white, but never exactly like each other. (Look, it seems that I've already got another description for Manuel. Bah!)

Gala opened the door, biting the biscuit: "Hello! When did you get here?"

The cousins told us that they had arrived the previous night. My aunt and uncle have a house down from ours, near the square, and the four of them come to the village much more often than we do. They both sat down at the table with us three and rubbed their hands: "What's for breakfast?" We offered them fruit juice, milk, toast, biscuits, whatever we had. They gobbled it all up like Negre first thing in the morning, but it seems they burn off everything, as both of them are really thin.

Suddenly Eva leaned forward a bit, over the table: "Is grandpa here?", she asked softly. The three of us said no, equally softly. The twins looked at one another and nodded. "We have a plan", said Paula. Literary Lia stopped reading for a moment. Gala shouted: "A plan? How cool!" with her mouth full of biscuit. The two cousins gave her a dirty look and both said "Shhh" at the same time. "Don't worry, I've already told you that grandpa isn't here", I said. Lia put down her book, raised an eyebrow and stretched her long back. This was Literary

Lia's way of showing that she smelt something big, that she didn't like mischief and had no intention of getting involved. She also put her hands in her pockets. I asked: "does this have something to do with the attic?" The twins shook their heads. "Well come on, tell us what it is", I said, before they started asking me questions.

They both began talking very quickly. They spoke over each other. They waved their arms about. They moved their hands as if they were juggling. In short, they wanted to cheer up grandpa. I told them that he was a sourpuss and that he was never going to change. The others insisted that for three years, since grandma died, he had been more subdued, that when we were little, he was friendlier. They said that the last time they came to the village, uncle Julian (their father, our mother's brother) showed them grandpa's boat. "Grandpa has a boat?", asked Lia. To tell the truth, it rang a bell that grandpa had a boat, but I'd swear that I'd never seen it. "The boat is called Theresa", said Paula. "Like grandma", said Eva. We all knew that grandpa had been a fisherman all his life, but didn't recall him having his own boat for sailing. Uncle Julian had told them that the boat had only been taken out on Sundays when grandma was alive, and only with the two of them. That's why, when we were little, on the Sundays when we were in the village, they would disappear giving any excuse! The thing is, grandpa hadn't touched the boat for three years. Nor even looked at it. Nor gone close to the seashore. He spends his days going from home to the village square and from the square back home. There he sits on a bench and chats to the other grandpas. And on some particular afternoons, he drops in to the civic centre.

The cousins' plan is to secretly go to the boat. It is in a shed. Apparently, the boat and the shed are very much in need of repair. The plan is to fix the boat, fix the shed, and give grandpa a surprise.

I've never heard a more idiotic plan in my life.

I don't know why I'm writing this.

Lia, who at first didn't want to know anything, said: "I love the idea. I'd like to help grandpa very much. I really want to see him smiling a bit. Can I ask Xenia and Arlet to help us?". I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Is she stupid? I expected that from Gala the Glutton, but not from her! Gala, of course, wants to include Fer in the plan. And it's clear to me that at only five, this child isn't going to help at all. Also, Fer always goes around latched onto his brother, Emilio, who is thirteen but sometimes seems half that.

“And you, are you going to join in or not?” They all looked at me. I thought about the alternatives: have arguments with mum, chase after Max, give Negre some dog food, try to get into the attic, write this boring diary... The only half-way cool thing would be to be alone drawing. “Yes, I’m up for it, but take note that I already know this is not going to work. The thing is, I’m bored”. The four of them all laughed. I didn’t.

The cousins left. They had to help uncle and aunt get the house ready for summer. They said they’d come back in a couple of days and we’d go and see the boat and the shed. Then we’d begin with the plan.

When the cousins had gone, Gala got a new full packet of biscuits and went out onto the back verandah with Negre.

Lia and I cleared the table. Then I told her what I’d been preparing since the night before: “Lia. You can tell me, I’m older. Mum hasn’t gone on holiday alone, has she?

Why did she tell us that she needed to be alone? Who has she gone with?” Lia raised an eyebrow. How annoying, this eyebrow raising. She had a plate full of breadcrumbs in each hand. I was carrying a cup. We were standing on either side of the table.

She answered very seriously: “Mum treats the three of us equally, Duna. If she has secrets from you, she also has from me. Mum doesn’t care whether I can understand, and I’m fifteen, you’re not. If you don’t know, then neither do I”. I hate it that she’s so mature. That she speaks so well. But I noticed one thing. Literary Lia has feelings. I noticed that Lia is also hurt by mum. I noticed that we are sisters and we are a family. I had never thought that before.

August 6th

It was still dark when Lia got up and came into my bed. She’d never done that before. And I’d never got into hers. Not here in grandpa’s house, or in our own house. The only one who does that is Gala, who on many mornings gets up and goes into Lia’s bed. The little one in the oldest one’s bed, and the middle one just has to deal with it.

When Lia got into my bed...I don’t know, I didn’t like it at all. I thought that for sure, she’d come to ask me for a favour. I turned over with my back to her and said: “Let me sleep”. But

she hugged me, like that, from behind. "I miss grandma", she murmured, "don't you?" It was strange to me that Lia felt that way. Miss grandma? Lia? When she was alive, I was her favourite, everybody said so. Literary Lia read all the time and Gala the Glutton still went to kindergarten and didn't offer any interesting conversation. On the other hand, I'd gone everywhere with grandma: to the fishermen's wharf, to the beach, to the woods to think, to choir practice, everywhere. Grandma and I had talked lots and about everything. Her red hair had turned white but she'd still had lively green eyes. And that morning I felt Lia's arm around my waist and thought that she had no right to miss grandma.

I turned over beneath the sheets and looked at her. I moved away a little and pulled a face. Before coming to grandpa's house, she'd cut her hair very short and I have to admit that it really suited her. Behind her appeared Gala the Glutton standing with sleep still in her eyes. "What are you talking about?" I huffed, but Lia answered: "about grandma". "Make room for me", demanded Gala who was carrying Negre in her arms. Lia moved towards me and Gala got into my bed too. The three of us were lying on our backs. I was next to the wall, Lia in the middle, and Gala, making little squeals, about to fall off the other side, like a wet biscuit gone soft. They were laughing.

Literary Lia began talking in her repulsive mature voice. She told Gala that grandma was plump with rosy cheeks. She also said that she had a long white plait which she sometimes wore like a tiara. Then Gala happily said yes, that she remembered. Lia told her that grandma had knitted baby booties for the three of us when we were born: booties with coloured stripes. And that grandma liked cats very much. And that she always wore frilly skirts. And that she sang boleros like an angel. While Lia was saying all that, I thought that grandma also had her defects: she had a rocking-chair that creaked unbearably, and talked to cats as if they were children, and when she wanted to think, didn't listen to anybody, and when she varnished her nails, the paint went everywhere and looked awful. Why didn't Lia tell Gala about grandma's flaws? And why was Lia telling Gala all this, if the person who knew her best was me? Why didn't she let me speak? And why didn't I know how to tell her that I wanted to have my say? Why did I keep quiet???

And I don't know why I've written all that, it makes me so angry. Instead of forgetting about it, I've spent half the morning writing this stuff, and now I'll remember it forever. And this makes me even angrier.

It's now two days since I met Max. I can't say that we're exactly friends, but that seems a good option to me. Here's Lia, with Xenia and Arlet, talking about books and singing contests on television. Here's Gala scoffing down biscuits and being silly with Fer and Emilio. I can't understand that at eight she's friends with two savages, five and thirteen years old, brothers who can't stand each other. Here are the cousins who are nice but a bit crazy. And here's grandpa, all day on a bench in the square or in the civic centre with the other dull widowers. When I woke up from my nap, I thought that this was the moment to try and approach Max a third time. Would he be in the rusty car? Or perhaps he was afraid to see me there again and had never gone back? I would feel bad if he had lost his favourite spot because of me. In any case, this time I wasn't going to play any tricks: I would reach the car by going up the dunes, a frontal approach.

I dressed in black, as always, but this time with a tank top and shorts: now was the time to get a bit of sun on this pale skin I have. I also thought that this wouldn't scare him so much. He also dressed in black, but that didn't scare me. I stuck the silent earphones into my ears and put the end of the cable into my pocket.

When I got to the dunes, the sun had gone down a bit and the colours were warmer. The blue lizards shone. I climbed up, looking at the rusty greenish grey car. Max was inside, playing his ocarina very quietly. Had he seen me? Why didn't he run away? I kept going, up and down the dunes, and he didn't move. I waved and he nodded a reply. He stopped playing. He'd seen me and not tried to escape. Was he no longer frightened of me? On from the dunes, I reached the highest place, the level of the woods. Now I had the car in front of me. Max looked at me from the driver's seat keeping very still. I moved forward little by little. He stayed still, his shoulders hunched. I went up to the passenger door. He didn't move. He looked at me out of the corner of his eye. I put one foot in the car, watching him, holding my breath. But he showed no sign of wanting to run away. I sat down in the seat and brought in my other foot. Very slowly. Finally I lent back on the dusty velvet of the seat. Then I let all the air out of my lungs. Max hadn't gone anywhere. He was sitting there at my side, with me. Both of us inside the rusty greenish grey car.

For a while nothing else happened. He looked at the sea and so did I. From time to time I snuck a look at his profile, his long eyelashes, his straight nose, the ocarina hanging from his

neck. It was hard to breathe without making a noise, my heart was pounding. I thought that again I had forgotten to bring paper and pencil to sketch the landscape. Behind the invisible glass: the sea, the sand, two palm trees, rocks, dune scrub...

Then Max said quietly: "I've been waiting for you".

Waiting for me? After what I did to him? After chasing him and holding him down? After making him tell me his name?

"I'm really sorry about the way I treated you the other day. Will you forgive me?" I said. He nodded without looking at me. I thanked him and apologized again. I saw that he'd put his right hand on his knee: he bit his nails, like me. Without thinking too much, I put my left hand on his. He didn't take his hand away. He just turned it over and very gently wrapped my hand in his fingers. I noticed that his palm still bore the scratches from when he fell two days ago.

He looked at me: "What are you listening to?" I hadn't noticed that I still had the earphones in. I took the one from my right ear and offered it to him: "Only silence". Max took the earphone and put it in his ear: "I love silence".

We stayed there until the sun went down, listening to the silence, accompanied by the soft sound of the waves.

We didn't talk anymore. We said goodbye without speaking. I don't know when I'll see him again. And now I'll make a sketch in pencil of his profile from memory.