

Words

Per Jespersen and Andreas Bertelsen

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The sun is warm over the city, casting short summer shadows along the streets. The trees in the small forest rest for a while in the haze, breathing and dwelling and waiting for the coolness of the afternoon.

Jamie and Mark are riding their bikes down the street with the brand new houses, the cute gardens that are watered every night because of the shortage of rain. They are on their way to the small grill bar close to the small wood to buy some soft drinks.

«Gosh, it's hot today,» says Jamie, trying to get rid of the sweat on his black skin.

«You must feel it hotter than I do,» says Mark, laughing. «You know, your colour takes in more heat than mine.»

«That's the biggest lie I've heard in my life.» «It won't be the last,» says Mark. «I wonder what it feels like to live over there.» He nods his head towards the close neighbourhood:

Grey and saddened houses, dirty streets, a boring atmosphere, as if Life were moving to an end. No trees, no flowers, no watered and cute gardens. No nothing but dull resignation.

And yet: There is life there. Five boys and a girl are playing basketball just for the fun of it. They scream and laugh and tease each other while trying to throw the ball into the basket.

«There you go,» says Jim, who just succeeded in getting the ball in. «That's the way to do it, fellows!» «And you are SO clever,» shouts Ian. «And bright,» laughs Michelle.

Arthur takes the ball from Ian, shouting, «The brightest intelligence of the city. We do envy you!»
 «Of course,» says Jim. «But I can live with it. You get accustomed, you know!»
 «The roar of a lion!» Adam sits down. «Gosh, it's hot. Let's go get a drink.» He dries his forehead to get rid of the sweat.
 «That's because of your skin,» says Michelle. «It takes in more heat, you know.»
 «Was that supposed to be funny? It's the biggest lie I've ever heard in my life.»
 «It won't be the last.»

They all sit down, and Michelle nods towards the neighbouring area. «I wonder what it feels like to live there.»

«Are you sure, you really wanna know?» «Sure I do!»

«Damn the difference. Ain't you thirsty?» says Jamie.

They hear the drrrazling sound of two bikes coming closer.

«Course we are,» laughs Arthur. «I'm so thirsty I could die,» says Jim. «So am I,» shouts Michelle back.

The sun is burning, and the haze is almost unbearable.

«We've never been here,» Jamie whispers to Mark.

And Ian says, «Are you from another planet?» «Sure,» says Mark. «The cute planet with... «... watered gardens and neat houses.

Welcome to the grey planet.»

And suddenly they all find themselves sitting on the pavement, chatting and talking. Surprised. Overwhelmed. Emotional and a-logical. Politically incorrect.

«I want some juice - ice cold,» says Adam. «And the money. We are the owners of exactly nothing,» Arthur answers. «Money is a Siberian village for us.»

«I'll pay for all of us,» Jamie says.

«You probably earn on one day what our parents have for a whole month,» Ian says. «Who has the power has the money.»

«Twist it,» Michelle says. «What do you mean?» «Who has the money has the power.»

«In my opinion he must be a money-maker,» says Arthur.

«Making one's own money! That's something!!» Ian laughs and the sun is burning without thinking about money, colour of skin, or human differences. It's just there with its heat and life-giving light.

Mark says, «Stop that nonsense. What do you want?»

And Adam says, «Something real blue and damned icy! Put an iceberg in the juice.» «Let's go get some shade.»

They all go to the tree and sit down - relaxed, while Jamie goes to get the juice.

When he comes in, he says, «Give me seven ice-soups.»

The owner looks at the boy, as if he was the craziness itself. «Seven? Why so many?»

«They're for my friends over there.» «Friends? If I told your dad, that you are together with those guys from over there, he would lock you up until you're twenty!» «That's my problem. Give me those seven soups.»

The man gives Jamie what he wants.

«How much?»

«Twelve bucks.»

«Here's fifteen. Keep the rest!» Jamie takes the first two soups.

«Thanks a lot Mr. Richness,» the man says, still shaking his head. But Jamie does not notice - he is already with the others.

«Thanks a lot,» Ian says.

«We all need something cold and fluid to overcome the heat,» Michelle says.

«Oh, that's logic for sparrows,» Mark laughs.

«It's not logic - it's a feeling we all share.»

«You can't share feelings,» Ian says.

«Can you share logic then?» Michelle smiles her wonderful smile, and Mark smiles back, saying, «Can girls say anything about logic?»

But Michelle still smiles, «Listen, you guys. If 3 and 2 is 6, then 3 and 3 is 7.»

All the boys stop for a second, gazing into their glasses, counting the ice cubes in the juice. Then Mark takes Michelle's hands, counting her fingers. «There're only ten - following you there should be eleven.»

They all laugh, but Michelle answers, «What kind of thing do you get when you mix black and white?»

«Grey.» A chorus of boys' voices over the city. «No way,» Michelle says. «You get a child!» Arthur tries to make fun of it, «A grey child!» And Michelle laughs, «Oh God, thank Heaven for little boys, without them, what would little girls do!»

«What's so wrong about boys,» Jim asks. «Listen. We have something in common. We get older - every day - every second, and when we are old we all turn grey. Do you see?» «I see nothing,» Arthur says.

«Cause you're a boy!»

«Don't boys see anything,» says Jim.

«Yeah, they do. They wear glasses of logic - they have forgotten the emotional glasses.» Michelle is really serious now.

«So what about your glasses,» says Arthur. «You attack logic with feelings. You can't do that.»

«Why not?» Silence.

They all look into their glasses of juice. Long silence.

The air is wordless, the sun's heat is wordless, and the thinking is wordless.

Then Michelle says, «Logic is made up - sort of constructed. Emotions have always been there. Logic is an invention - an artificial system - emotions are natural - the heart-beat of Life. Listen: the body can't function without the air your lungs breathe - and Life can't be lived without the heartbeat of emotions.»

Andreas: How did we get to this point? *Per:* I really don't know.

Andreas: You always push things back to me. Come on - give me an answer!

Per: No, it's you, Andreas.

Andreas: It's typical for you to do this to me. Answer!

Per: We have been working for hours with one sentence, and it was difficult. But when we agreed on this line, the story told itself.

Andreas: Finally! Finally I got an answer from you. Let's go on!

«Listen,» Mark says, almost dizzy by looking into Michelle's eyes. «You simplify things. There are two sides of logic - the mathematical side and the linguistic side, because language and emotions are connected.»

Michelle feels as dizzy as Mark. «I never thought about it that way.»

The sun is still burning, but the shadows are growing longer. There is no more shade, where they all sit, but they do not seem to recognize. They are all thinking deeply. «So don't you see a gap between logic and emotions?»

Mark ponders for a while. «It's still too simple.»

Now Jim wakes up. «Yeah, it's too simple. We are all talking about words here. It's much deeper - deeper than words can reach. That's what philosophy is.»

Jamie smiles. «It's only words, and words are all we have.»

And Adam says, «Sure, that's the way the song goes.»

Michelle asks, «I don't understand you. What should we do without words?»

«I know that: Think.» Jamie is frowning, because he is not completely sure about his own opinion.

Michelle jumps up. «There's something here I don't understand. I still see logic as an artificial construction. And emotions as the basic of Life. And you, Mark - you're talking about emotional logic.»

«Of course,» Mark says. «Don't you see: Logic

But Jim interrupts, «You're still discussing words. There are such things as intuition, telepathy, atmosphere, and love. You can't express these things by words - they are wordless - and if you try, you only - listen - a fly hits a window, because it wants to fly into the living room, but it just gets a touch of the room - it doesn't get in - and we don't get the point of the heart of philosophy.»

Adam laughs, «I have never heard Jim use so many words on a whole day!»

Jim hears nothing. He is in his own world - and yet together with the others. So there might be two sides of one point.

Now Michelle smiles, «How does it feel to be in your head, Jim?»

«I never tried anything else.»

They all laugh - but Michelle is still confused: «Words - are they really so weak? Is there more than words can express?»

Mark answers, still dizzy, «Of course there is. First of all there's you!»

Michelle flushes.

Now Arthur comes in, «You flush - that's a feeling you can't explain.»

«Sure,» Michelle says, a little shy. «There are no words for it.» «You're right.»

And Mark says, «And next there's - listen - language is logic - and what you feel is something else - emotional logic - no, I really don't know.»

Jim comes back from his own inner world, «What are we - all of us - here and now? Friendship, love, being human. Difference is only a word - we share the difference - we have the difference in common - that's what philosophy tells me. Listen folks: Logic divides, and philosophy unites.»

So now Michelle says, «Boys are really more emotional than I ever imagined. I see boys through other glasses now - brand new glasses.»

She takes Mark's hand - without flushing. There they stand, holding each other.

«Good,» Jim says. «There is some philosophy between those two hands of yours. I like that. That's what I said - philosophy unites. Philosophy is the wisdom of Life, and differences bring people together.» He looks up into the clear blue sky. «It's like a cloud - you can see it from here, but if you fly up there, it's gone.»

A boy's and a girl's hands together, a gang of youngsters discussing, the burning sun, and a wonderful world all around. Philosophy and the heartbeat of life. Differences disappear, transparent as a summer fog, transparent as philosophy, transparent as the human thoughts. Could anyone ask for more?

Per: We ended up in another way, didn't we? *Andreas:* Yeah, that's strange.

Per: How did this happen? Did you like it? *Andreas:* Oh yes, but it's ... I don't know, how to express it. I can't find the words. This is wordless!

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