

Presents⁴⁶⁴

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“They aren’t any grownups.” “Grownups know things.”

William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*

It was all wrong from the beginning. I remember it as it happened yesterday, it was mid December 1982, that day mummy left us alone. She screamed “behave, I’ll be out only a little while” and she left the place all for ourselves. First thing we did was turn up all the way the heater, just for the heck of it. Then we were looking all around the flat for them. While I was checking the bathrooms my sister called me over the hall. They were stacked up under mom and dad’s bed. The twinkly and colorful boxes were all below it. We excitedly cheered together.

My sister was about to get them, and I quickly grabbed her by the arm. “You know she will find out. Right?”

“No, she won’t” she stood up “I just want to look at them, I’m not gonna open them. I’m not that silly.”

“She must be about to come back, let’s turn the heat down a notch.” I nervously said, “She will get mad.” “No, she won’t, she just left, we have at least an hour, maybe more. Let’s see them, don’t you want?”

It took me a bit to answer “Ok. But you must leave them the exact way they are.” My sister was deciding on what to do. Then she crouched and extended her arm to reach them, but she hesitated again. “You do it then.”

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“Why?”

“That’s the only way for you to know that they’re left the exact way they are now.” I knew she was also scared. But I really wanted to see them. Finally, I decided to grab them. Just when I touched one with the tip of my finger the little pile fell apart.

“What did you do?”

“Nothing! It fell off by itself.”

While we were arguing I overheard a snap under the bed. Then I saw it. I saw a hole expanding under the bed. It swallowed the presents and kept growing.

I remember to scream “run!” but my sister must’ve thought that I was fooling around. I ran down the hall without looking back. From mom and dad’s room came lots of noises, they melted with screams, my sister’s probably, or maybe the neighbor’s downstairs. The furniture was falling off the hole, it kept growing and I saw it approaching to where I was standing. The dining room table, the chairs, the shelves... all were fastly gone. Then there was nowhere to stand. I felled off too.

The hit blurred my vision. The first thing I saw when it came back were the colorful presents on the other side of the flat. The mess of all our things scattered as gravity wanted was incredible. Then I saw the fury on our neighbor’s face and my sister crying on a corner. Finally, I looked up. Just to see my mother opening the door, with a face which went beyond madness.

Notes on contributor

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