



The Whispering Windows of Chacarita

Zbyněk Luskač



Yarulla Serranos stands at her window in the old house overlooking the school in Chacarita, Buenos Aires. Her short, dark brown hair is parted perfectly down the middle, framing her sharp grey-green eyes. Dressed in her usual dark blue T-shirt, black compression pants, and leather loafers, she clasps her hands behind her back and watches the morning neighborhood come alive, making sure no detail escapes her notice.



Every morning begins at the local post office counter, where Yarulla leans in close to the glass window. The postman shuffles letters while Yarulla happily exchanges the latest neighborhood gossip, soaking up every rumor and sharing everything she knows, though she strictly avoids speaking on what she hasn't verified.



As dusk falls, Yarulla visits her best friend Ophelia Villas at her home in Palermo viejo on Santa Lucía Street. Sitting on the porch, Yarulla sips her drink and recounts all the chatter she gathered from the morning, laughing with Ophelia under the warm streetlamps.



When night fully arrives, Yarulla sneaks into the quiet cemetery under a silver moon to water the parched graves. Caught by her kleptomaniac urges, she carefully plucks vibrant rock flowers from the well-kept plots, slipping them into her deep pockets with practiced stealth.



Yarulla works like a versatile whirlwind cleaner in the shadows, gathering rotten, withered flowers from the graves and tossing them over the back wall of the cemetery. Seeing a plastic water bottle left behind by the grave of the old Shimakos family, she picks it up and flings it over the wall too, keeping the sacred grounds tidy in her own eccentric way.



On sunny afternoons, Yarulla enjoys long, slow walks through the countryside, passing the sprawling vineyards and the local gardening colony. She folds her hands behind her back, pausing to admire the peaceful landscape and the wildlife, though she secretly eyes the ripe fruits and vegetables hanging near the fences for a potential midnight raid.



During one of her rural strolls, a pheasant squatting on a tall stack of golden straw catches Yarulla's eye. She stops to watch the bird as it lets out a loud, funny burp, bringing a bright smile to her face amid the quiet nature.



Passing by the old road where the deep agricultural cellars are built into the earth, Yarulla hears muffled male voices speaking from below. She quietly steps up to the small, open cellar window and stands perfectly still, listening intently to the secret conversations of the men working inside.



On a freezing winter evening, Yarulla walks the old path with four heavy plastic candle cups stuffed into her jacket pockets, forgotten items from her cemetery clean-ups. She approaches a lit cellar window and, acting on a sudden mischievous impulse, tosses the plastic candle cups straight through the open frame.



Inside the cellar, an elderly couple named Anča and Sváta freeze in shock as the candle cups crash onto their table right next to their glasses of red wine. By the time Sváta runs out onto the dark, empty road to catch the culprit, Yarulla is already safely hidden in the thick bushes opposite the cellar, holding her breath with a quiet smirk.