

Believe me, there is no such thing as great suffering, great regret, great memory....Everything is forgotten, even a great love. That's what's sad about life, and also what's wonderful about it. There is only a way of looking at things, a way that comes to you every once in a while. That's why it's good to have had love in your life after all, to have had an unhappy passion - it gives you an alibi for the vague despairs we all suffer from." After a pause, he added: I don't know if you understand what I mean. ✓

Just as there is a moment when the artist must stop, when the sculpture must be left as it is, the painting untouched - just as a determination NOT TO KNOW serves the maker more than all the resources of clairvoyance - so there must be a minimum of ignorance in order to perfect a life in happiness. Those who lack such a thing must set about acquiring it: unintelligence must be earned.

A HAPPY DEATH, Albert Camus HARPER'S, March 1972

"Yes, but... Well, I wanted to ask you - of course you don't have to answer if you don't want to..." She hesitated: "Do you love your wife?"

Mersault smiled: "That's not essential." He gripped Catherine's shoulder and shook his head, sprinkling water into her face. "You make the mistake of thinking you have to choose, that you have to do what you want, that there are conditions for happiness. What matters - all that matters, really - is the will to happiness, a kind of enormous, ever-present consciousness. The rest - women, art, success - is nothing but excuses. A canvas waiting for our embroideries."

"Yes," Catherine said, her eyes filled with sunlight.

"What matters to me is a certain quality of happiness. I can only find it in a certain struggle with its opposite - a stubborn and violent struggle. Am I happy? Catherine! You know the famous formula - 'if I had my life to live over again' - well, I would live it over again just the way it has been. Of course you can't know what that means."

"No."

"And I don't know how to tell you. If I'm happy, it's because of my bad conscience. I had to get away and reach this solitude where I could face - in myself, I mean - what had to be faced, what was sun and what was tears... Yes, I'm happy, in human terms."

Under his belly he could feel the faint throbs of the mountain that seemed to be in labor.

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"Yes?" the doctor said, turning around.

"Are you capable of feeling contempt for a man?"

"I think so."

"On what conditions?"

The doctor reflected. "It's quite simple, I think. In cases when lie was motivated by expediency or a desire for money."

Thus he became one with a life in its pure state, he rediscovered a paradise given only to the most private or the most intelligent animals. At the point where the mind denies the mind, he touched his truth and with it his extreme glory, his extreme love.