



Universidad Latina de Panamá

Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación y Desarrollo Humano

Traducción del libro “La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan” de Florentino Hidalgo
(págs. 1-84)

Proyecto final de graduación presentado como requisito para optar por el título de Licenciatura
de Inglés con Énfasis en Traducción

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2026



Universidad Latina de Panamá

Faculty of Education and Human Development

Translation of the book “The Shadow of the Beast: Chronicles of Gevaudan” by Florentino Hidalgo (pp. 1-84)

Final Project presented as a requirement to opt for the Bachelor’s Degree in English with a Major in Translation

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Figure 1

Note signed by the author



David, 25 de septiembre de 2025

Señor

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Autor del libro “La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan”

E.S.M.

Respetado Señor Hidalgo:

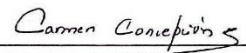
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Sin más que agregar, le agradecemos su valiosa atención y contribución, ya que su autorización redituará en beneficio no solo de la estudiante a nivel profesional, sino en el acervo cultural del ser humano como miembro de la sociedad.

Atentamente,


Dra. Carmen Concepción
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Note. Note signed by the author and executive director of the university to obtain the permission to translate the first part of the book.

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Introduction

Translation has been a bridge between languages and cultures since ancient times. In fact, there was a historical milestone that made the word of God accessible to Western Europe and eventually to the entire globe: Between A.D. 382 and 404, the father of translation, St. Jerome, translated the Bible from Greek and Hebrew into Latin, which was the Bible of the 4th century, also known as the *Vulgate*. This explains the power of translation to reach wider audiences. Translation is essential to achieve successful communication in a globalized world. Hence, its relevance is far beyond dealing with words. As the linguist Eugene Nida analyzed, translation must hold the best quality in discourse, style, format, and structure (1982), and one method to achieve such level of accuracy is the application of translation techniques.

The purpose of the translation techniques is to achieve the best result. A recognized classification by Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet published in 1958 (translated into English in 1995) is based on seven direct and oblique translation methods, also called ‘procedures.’ Direct translation techniques include: literal, which implicates parallel structures; borrowing, when one word is taken directly from another language; and calque, where a word or expression is rendered literally. In contrast, oblique translation includes: modulation, with the change of perspective; equivalence, for rendering expressions by stylistic means; adaptation, where culture is key; and transposition, which works at a grammatical level. Those procedures intend to assist translators when they try to transfer elements of meaning from the source text (ST) to the target text (TT).

The purpose statement of this final project is to translate eighty-four pages of the book “*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan*,” written by Florentino Hidalgo, while applying various translation techniques that will determine the knowledge of how to implement them properly and functionally. In this project, students will try to answer the following question: How does the implementation of certain translation techniques reflect the meaning and context of the book “*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan*,” written by Florentino Hidalgo.

In the first chapter, the antecedents and justification present the project along with the objectives that contain the most fundamental goals. In the second chapter, there is the mirror translation of eighty-four pages from the source text in Spanish to the target language in English. Then, there are eight translation techniques with their definitions and two examples with their respective analyses. In the third chapter, some conclusions and recommendations are proposed along with the challenges and a glossary. In the last section, a reference page is presented with all the sources that contributed to the development of this written work.

Dedication

This project is dedicated to my beloved family. To my parents, Marissa Ureña and Ceferino Guerra, for being my source of inspiration and for teaching me about the responsibility I need to fulfill any task in life. To my brothers Luis Ceferino, Luis Carlos, and Elbys Elias for being my support and such an incredible example of self-improvement.

I also dedicate this work to Professor Briseya González, my English teacher in high school. Thanks to her wonderful lessons I began to love the English language even more than I previously did.

Another special person I shall include here is my best friend, Emely, since she always has words of encouragement that I truly appreciate.

Acknowledgments

The completion of this project could not have been possible without God. I am grateful for the wisdom and encouragement he has given me to pursue this degree.

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Professor Irving Montenegro, who has shared his knowledge in a humble and impressive manner, with patience and invaluable feedback. He has taught me about the most relevant principles of translation that I will cherish and put into practice as a future professional in the field.

In addition, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our professor, Juan A. Tapia, for his patience and support during this final course. I truly appreciate the time he spent in our projects . His capabilities to guide and encourage helped us overcome difficult circumstances.

I am also grateful for the opportunity Mr. Florentino Hidalgo gave me to translate his book and for the insights he shared about his awesome work.

Lastly, I would like to thank my classmates for their supportive and helpful comments during all this time.

Resumen

Este proyecto busca destacar los detalles complejos que conlleva la traducción. En este ámbito es necesario contemplar el lenguaje figurado que debe ser traducido cuidadosamente, asimismo se deben conocer los matices que van más allá de traducir literalmente palabra por palabra. Ciertamente, la realización de este trabajo escrito refleja la importancia de analizar el contexto y mensaje del texto original cuando se traduce. En este caso, el texto a traducir fue la primera parte de la novela “La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan”, escrita por el autor panameño Florentino Hidalgo.

La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan es un libro de aventura y fantasía publicado en el 2025, cuyos temas principales son el miedo, la superstición y la naturaleza humana. Entre los detalles más llamativos de la historia están: la capacidad del autor para mantener la intriga hasta el final de las páginas, el lenguaje descriptivo que captura los sentidos y el desarrollo de la narrativa que explica a fondo el origen del mal que azotó Gévaudan. El autor se inspiró con los hechos que se dieron en Francia durante el siglo XVIII, cuando la ciudad de Gévaudan presenció una serie de asesinatos que algunos testificaron fue a causa de una bestia con aspecto similar a un lobo de tamaño descomunal. La historia enseña a sus lectores a mirar más allá de lo superficial y entender que el mal no siempre tiene el aspecto de una bestia, sino que también se puede encontrar en el corazón de las personas de la forma más inesperada.

La novela narra tres historias entrelazadas, con Armand Delacroix como su personaje principal, quien enfrenta a uno de los miedos más antiguos de la humanidad: lo desconocido. Todo comienza con el rey enviando a Armand a resolver el misterio detrás de la Bestia de Gévaudan. Al avanzar con la investigación sobre aquella bestia, él junto a Duvernay y Élise descubren que sus orígenes están conectados a una voluntad ancestral. Se trataba de un ritual ancestral que estuvo condenando a los habitantes de ese lugar durante muchos años. Eventualmente, cuando Delacroix enfrenta a la bestia en persona, ésta lo ataca y le traspa una maldición con el propósito de transformar su ser y tomar su alma. Después de esto, el

optimismo de Armand se ve totalmente destrozado, por tanto se sumerge en un vacío profundo de angustia y teme no ser capaz de regresar a la normalidad.

Es de igual importancia profundizar en los personajes secundarios más relevantes: Duvernay, Élise, la vidente y la figura encapuchada. Duvernay se describe como un alguacil valiente, quien inspira confianza, un personaje admirable. Élise es una joven hermosa, capaz de enfrentar sus miedos y apoyar a quienes amaba. En cuanto a la vidente y la figura encapuchada, se trata de una pareja de ancianos que ayudan a Armand a encontrar la clave para vencer a la bestia. En general, se pueden analizar los conflictos internos y diversas personalidades de cada personaje.

La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan refleja parte de la cultura panameña en términos de vocabulario y lenguaje coloquial. Por ejemplo, algunas expresiones idiomáticas y vernaculares son parte de la esencia del libro. Por lo tanto, para obtener un resultado acertado con las mismas exigencias en estilo y tono, fue necesario aplicar las técnicas de traducción, las cuales pueden encontrarse con sus respectivos análisis en este escrito. En el texto en inglés, los elementos culturales y lingüísticos se tradujeron con precisión, respetando el contenido del texto original

Tomando todos los aspectos mencionados en cuenta, traducir parte de una obra de un idioma a otro no se logra fácilmente en poco tiempo, mucho menos si se desea obtener el mejor resultado. Hay muchos factores por considerar si se refiere a la complejidad de ambos idiomas, los cuales a pesar de compartir similitud en aspectos semánticos y sintácticos, no siempre poseen el equivalente perfecto de cada palabra. Son precisamente esos matices en traducción los cuales se buscan analizar y explicar a lo largo de este proyecto.

Abstract

The aim of this project is to draw attention to the complex details that translation entails. In this field, it is crucial to consider the figurative language that must be translated carefully.; likewise, it is necessary to understand the nuances that go beyond a literal word-for-word translation. Certainly, the completion of this written work demonstrates the significance of analyzing the source text's meaning while translating it. In this case, the text to translate was the first part of the novel "*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan*," written by the Panamanian author Florentino Hidalgo.

"*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan*" is an adventure and fantasy book published in 2025, with fear, superstition, and human nature as its main themes. Some of the most captivating details of the story are the author's ability to maintain the suspense until the last pages, the descriptive language that captures the senses, and the development of the narrative that thoroughly explains the origin of the evil that devastated Gévaudan. The author obtained his inspiration from the events that occurred in France during the 18th century, when the city of Gévaudan faced a series of deaths that some declared was because of a beast similar to a huge wolf. The story teaches the readers to look beyond the surface and understand that evil is not always found in a beast but in the hearts of men in the most unexpected way.

The novel narrates three intertwined stories, with Armand Delacroix as its main character, who faces one of the most ancient fears of humanity: the unknown. Everything begins with the king sending Armand to solve the mystery behind the Beast of Gévaudan. While investigating that beast, Armand, Duvernay, and Élise discover that its origins are connected to an ancestral will. It was an ancestral ritual that condemned all the inhabitants of that place for many years. Eventually, when Delacroix is face-to-face with the beast, it attacks him and curses him with the intention of changing his body and taking his soul. After that, Armand's spirit is completely shattered, so he is immersed in a deep, afflicted emptiness, and he fears not being able to return to his normal life.

It is equally important to study in more detail the most relevant side characters: Duvernay, Élise, the clairvoyant, and the hooded figure. Duvernay, the sheriff, is described as a brave,

reliable person. Élise is a beautiful young lady, capable of facing her fears and supporting her beloved ones. In the case of the clairvoyant and the hooded figure, they are a couple of elders who help Armand find the key to defeat the beast. In general, it is possible to analyze the internal conflicts and diverse personalities of the characters.

“La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan” portrays some of the Panamanian culture in terms of vocabulary and slang. For instance, some idiomatic and vernacular expressions are part of this book’s essence. That is why, to obtain an accurate result with the same requirements in tone and style, it was crucial to apply translation techniques, which can be found in this project along with their respective analyses. In the target text, the cultural and linguistic elements were translated into English with accuracy.

Given these points, translating part of a novel from one language to another is not easy to accomplish in a short time, let alone if one wishes to have the best result. In this case it is crucial to keep the author's message in the translation. Likewise, there are many aspects to consider when referring to the complexity of English and Spanish, which, in spite of sharing similarities in syntax and semantics, do not always have the perfect equivalent for each word. Those nuances in translation are exactly what this project intends to analyze and explain.

First Chapter

Antecedents

When literature is available in other languages, people can actively engage in cross-cultural interactions. For that reason, book translation is crucial to reach wider markets, share cultural values, and promote education. For such a task, the translator must have an appropriate amount of time to edit, proofread, and design the cover's elements. It is equally important to adjust the marketing strategy for the author to obtain the target audience's approval. Also, the output of the translation might help second language learners in acquiring valuable knowledge. In general, a book in another language has a higher probability of effectively expanding its horizon and helping the author to obtain more recognition.

In this project, the book to translate is "*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan*" written by the Panamanian author Florentino Hidalgo, who currently works as a professor. He was born in David, Chiriquí, in 1983. Mr. Hidalgo has published twelve books. His first work, "La Marca del Vampiro," (The Mark of the Vampire) published in 2019, won the Tristán Solarte Prize for the best noir genre novel. *El Visitante Infernal*, *Castigo Eterno*, *Cenizas y Sangre* are sequels of his first book, and among his other publications there are: *La Maldición de Hollow Greek y Otros Relatos*, *Rito de Sangre* and *Luna de Sangre*. Florentino Hidalgo started writing from a young age, and is mostly recognized for the mystery and thriller in his writings.

"*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan*" has two hundred and thirty pages of suspense and thriller. It was published by Florentino Hidalgo in August 2025, in Panama. The book has three stories with similar elements that are intertwined. In the first narration with fifteen chapters, the protagonist is Armand Delacroix, facing the curse of the beast. The second story, *La Canción del Lobo* (The Wolf's Song), has five chapters. The last story, *La Noche de la Bestia* (The Night of the Beast), has three chapters that show two side characters, who were victims of the beast, and later in the future helped Armand understand the curse of the wolf.

"*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan*" is a book of adventure with fantasy and horror. It can entertain audiences of all ages; however, the author mentioned in one of his

social media lives that the book is mostly for young adults. It particularly catches the attention of readers who enjoy a vivid description. It might also be interesting for those who prefer thrilling experiences, where the author does not give answers that easily. In summary, the novel contains a suspenseful narrative, for readers of all ages, that reveals the truth little by little.

The purpose statement of the book “*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan*” is to successfully convey a story that illustrates the complexity behind human behavior in the face of fear. The story demonstrates how sometimes the most wicked behavior comes from men and not from a beast. Additionally, its elaborate poetic language and descriptive scenes bring the book to life in the reader’s mind. The novel intends to connect with the reader’s emotions so that they can relate to the characters and understand the value of hope in the midst of chaos.

Justification

The completion of this project is not only necessary as a requirement to graduate, but also important to enhance the skills of a student who wishes to become a professional. As a student in the field, one needs to develop critical thinking, as well as abilities to do proper research. That is why the translator must provide a thorough analysis, along with reasonable insights in this work. Consequently, this translation project represents a great opportunity to improve those skills, since it requires the translation of a book considering the linguistic and cultural differences in Spanish and English.

Studying English as a second language and specializing in translation at Universidad Latina has been a valuable experience. For that reason, this translation is an excellent opportunity to put into practice everything that this career covers. All aspects of factual knowledge and procedural knowledge play a crucial role in this project. In this particular situation, translating part of a book provides a little experience from the real world's business when it comes to literary translation. It can be said that everything involving this major is worth the time and effort.

The outcome of this final project is beneficial for the person who performed the task and also for future students who might be interested in investigating previous translation works at Universidad Latina de Panama. The main reason is because there are several guidelines to follow, so it is useful to read some previous projects in order to obtain ideas about the structure and requirements. Overall, the fact that this translation is preserved by the university demonstrates how valuable it is to share knowledge and opinions in an institution where intellectual growth is fundamental.

The main purpose of this final project is to achieve the best quality in the translation of pages 1-84 from the book *“La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan”* written by Florentino Hidalgo. The translated text aims to achieve the best results in accuracy, style, and tone. It is necessary to apply the procedural knowledge. Likewise, the translator must be aware of the factual knowledge in the research of unknown terminology. The goal is to produce a target text with the most accurate translation.

General objective

To accurately translate from Spanish to English the pages 1 to 84 from the book “*La Sombra de la Bestia Crónicas de Gévaudan*” written by Florentino Hidalgo.

Specific objectives

1. To implement 8 translation techniques from the source language of the book “*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan*” written by Florentino Hidalgo into the target language, which in this case is English.
2. To analyze the structure of the target language to properly translate and identify the syntax and pragmatics of both languages.
3. To interpret the cultural and sociological elements found in the source text that may determine the outcome of the translation.

Methodology



The word ‘translation’ was first attested in the year 1340 approximately. It comes from the Old French *translation* or more directly from the Latin *translatio* (‘transporting’), itself coming from the participle of the verb *transferre* (‘to carry over’) (Munday, 2016, p. 8). With this in mind, translation involves a thorough understanding of two languages: source language (SL) and target language (TL). Those languages often have linguistic similarities, like the case of English and Spanish, but it is not always that simple.

Translation has helped to achieve communication across cultures, even if those cultures are too different. In the current era, it is demanded in commercial, specialized, and literary fields; as a result, its relevance in communicating every written message in another language cannot be overstated. In summary, translation holds a valuable role in this globalized society.

Second Chapter

Translation

Página 4	Page 4
<p data-bbox="256 323 837 390">La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan ™</p> <p data-bbox="256 499 545 533">ISBN: 9798262153138</p> <p data-bbox="256 638 548 672">Sello: Valkyrie Editores</p> <p data-bbox="256 705 402 739">1ra Edición</p> <p data-bbox="256 772 837 848">© Copyright, Florentino Hidalgo, Panamá 2025.</p> <p data-bbox="256 953 604 987">Edición: Laura Pérez Reyes.</p> <p data-bbox="256 1020 837 1138">Diseño de Portada: Samantha Hidalgo González Gráfica Click & Print. Córdoba, Argentina.</p> <p data-bbox="256 1243 837 1360">Todos los personajes que aparecen en esta novela son propiedad intelectual de Florentino Hidalgo González.</p> <p data-bbox="256 1520 837 1717">Todos los derechos reservados. Esta publicación no puede ser reproducida, en su totalidad ni en parte, sin el permiso previo por escrito de su respectivo autor.</p>	<p data-bbox="860 323 1442 390">The Shadow of the Beast: Chronicles of Gévaudan ™</p> <p data-bbox="860 499 1149 533">ISBN: 9798262153138</p> <p data-bbox="860 638 1130 672">Seal: Valkyrie Editors</p> <p data-bbox="860 705 1000 739">1st Edition</p> <p data-bbox="860 772 1442 848">© Copyright, Florentino Hidalgo, Panama 2025.</p> <p data-bbox="860 953 1208 987">Edition: Laura Pérez Reyes.</p> <p data-bbox="860 1020 1442 1096">Cover Design: Samantha Hidalgo González Graphics Click & Print. Córdoba, Argentina.</p> <p data-bbox="860 1264 1442 1339">All characters from this novel are intellectual property of Florentino Hidalgo González.</p> <p data-bbox="860 1499 1442 1696">All rights reserved. This publication may not be produced entirely or in part, without the prior permission in writing of its corresponding author.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Página 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“A veces, lo más temible no es la bestia que devora carne, sino aquella que habita en el alma de los hombres”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>- Armand Delacroix</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Sometimes, the scariest thing is not the beast that devours flesh, but the one that lives within the souls of men.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>-Armand Delacroix</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 6 (En blanco)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 6 (Blank)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 7</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 8 (En blanco)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 8 (Blank)</p>

Introducción

Entre los años 1764 y 1767, la remota y agreste región de Gévaudan, en el centro-sur de Francia, fue presa de un horror que trascendió la razón y sembró el miedo en el corazón de sus habitantes. Durante más de tres años, una criatura terrible y desconocida llevó a cabo una serie de ataques brutales, dejando tras de sí un reguero de víctimas y un misterio que aún hoy desafía a historiadores y expertos.

El primer ataque registrado tuvo lugar el 30 de junio de 1764, cuando una joven pastora llamada Jeanne Boulet fue brutalmente atacada mientras cuidaba su rebaño en las montañas. A partir de ese momento, los informes sobre una bestia demoníaca comenzaron a multiplicarse. La descripción que dieron los testigos era aterradora: un animal de tamaño gigantesco, con pelaje rojizo o gris oscuro, una mandíbula descomunal y ojos brillantes que parecían irradiar una inteligencia siniestra y cruel.

Durante los meses siguientes, la Bestia continuó su campaña de terror. La mañana del 9 de agosto de 1764, otra joven llamada Marie Roland fue encontrada muerta, con heridas terribles.

La alarma se extendió rápidamente por los pueblos, y la gente vivió en un estado de

Introduction

Between 1764 and 1767, the remote and rugged region of Gévaudan in south-central France was gripped by a horror that defied reason and sowed fear in the hearts of its inhabitants. For more than three years, a terrible and unknown creature carried out a series of brutal attacks, leaving behind a trail of victims and a mystery that still challenges historians and experts.

The first attack registered took place on June 30, 1764, when a young shepherdess named Jeanne Boulet was brutally attacked while she was taking care of her herd in the mountains. Since then, the reports of a hellish beast began to spread. The description given by witnesses was terrifying: a huge animal with reddish or dark gray fur, an enormous jaw, and bright eyes that seemed to radiate a sinister and cruel intelligence.

During the following months, the Beast continued its violent attacks. On the morning of August 9, 1764, another young woman named Marie Roland was found dead, with terrible wounds.

The alarm spread quickly in towns, and people lived in constant fear, especially

<p>constante temor, especialmente las mujeres y los niños, quienes eran las víctimas predilectas.</p>	<p>women and children, who were the preferred victims.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 10</p> <p>Las autoridades locales intentaron actuar, pero sus esfuerzos fueron infructuosos. El gobernador envió tropas y cazadores especializados para destruir a la criatura, pero no tuvieron éxito.</p> <p>En 1765, tras una serie de ataques que incluyeron a la familia Lambert, compuesta por la madre y sus dos hijos, el miedo alcanzó su punto máximo. Los relatos hablaban de la Bestia como un ser sobrenatural, capaz de escapar a cualquier trampa y que incluso era inmune a todo tipo de ataque.</p> <p>La historia oficial atribuye la solución al cazador Jean Chastel, quien en junio de 1767 abatió a un gran lobo marcado con extrañas cruces, al que se le atribuyó el fin de la amenaza.</p> <p>Sin embargo, muchos testigos y estudiosos de la época consideraron que la criatura abatida no podía ser la verdadera bestia. Otros ataques ocurrieron y la leyenda creció, envolviendo el caso en un halo de misterio y superstición.</p> <p>Lo que los registros oficiales no mencionan es la oscura red de secretos que envuelve este fenómeno. Más allá del animal, existió un mal ancestral, alimentado por antiguos rituales y pactos prohibidos, escondidos en las sombras</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p> <p>Local authorities tried to take action, but their efforts were unsuccessful. The governor sent troops and specialized hunters to destroy the creature, but they failed.</p> <p>In 1765, after a series of attacks that included the Lambert family, consisting of the mother and her two children, fear reached its peak. The stories talked about the Beast as a supernatural being, capable of escaping any type of trap, and even immune to all kinds of attack.</p> <p>The official story gives credit for ending the threat, and attributes the solution to the hunter Jean Chastel, who killed a large wolf marked with strange crosses in June 1767.</p> <p>However, many witnesses and scholars of that time believed that the creature that was killed could not be the real beast. Other attacks occurred and the legend grew, shrouding the case in a halo of mystery and superstition.</p> <p>What the official registers do not mention is the dark web of secrets surrounding this phenomenon. Beyond the animal, there was an ancestral evil, fueled by ancient rituals and forbidden pacts, hidden in the shadows of the church and in the depths of the forests.</p>

<p>de la iglesia y en las profundidades de los bosques.</p> <p>En palabras de un testigo anónimo de la época:</p> <p>"No era un lobo, ni bestia que conozca la naturaleza; sus ojos ardían con un fuego infernal y su aliento apestaba a muerte."</p> <p>La Bestia de Gévaudan no fue solo un depredador; fue la encarnación de un mal que desafía toda explicación, un eco de</p>	<p>An anonymous witness from that time said:</p> <p>“It was no wolf, nor any beast known to nature; its eyes burned with a hellfire, and its breath stank of death.”</p> <p>The Beast of Gévaudan was not only a predator, but the embodiment of an evil that defies all explanation, an echo of</p>
<p>Página 11</p> <p>las fuerzas oscuras que todavía acechan en las sombras del mundo.</p> <p>Citas Históricas y Testimonios Reales sobre la Bestia de Gévaudan</p> <p>1. Informe de Jean de La Barre, Barón de La Barre, 1765:</p> <p>"Esta bestia no puede ser comparada con ningún lobo común, su tamaño es descomunal y su ferocidad supera toda naturaleza. Sus ataques son rápidos y certeros, y su astucia desconcierta a los mejores cazadores."</p> <p>2. Testimonio de Marie-Jeanne Valet, sobreviviente, 1765:</p> <p>"Me encontré cara a cara con la Bestia; sus ojos eran como brasas encendidas, y su</p>	<p>Page 11</p> <p>the dark forces that still lurk in the shadows of the world.</p> <p>Historical Quotes and Real Testimonies about the Beast of Gévaudan</p> <p>1. Report by Jean de La Barre, Baron de La Barre, 1765:</p> <p>“This beast cannot be compared to any common wolf, its size is huge and its ferocity exceeds all nature. Its attacks are fast and accurate, and its cunning baffles the best hunters.”</p> <p>2. Testimony of Marie-Jeanne Valet, survivor, 1765:</p> <p>“I was face to face with the Beast; its eyes</p>

<p>aliento olía a azufre. Pensé que era el mismísimo diablo."</p> <p>3. Declaración del Cazador Jean Chastel, tras abatir un animal en 1767:</p> <p>"He matado a un lobo que llevaba extrañas marcas, pero no puedo afirmar que sea la bestia que tantos temen. El verdadero mal parece no tener fin."</p> <p>4. Carta del Abad François Boissieu, 1766:</p> <p>"El temor ha calado hondo en esta tierra. No es solo la muerte</p>	<p>were like burning embers, and its breath stank of sulfur. I thought it was the devil himself."</p> <p>3. Statement by the hunter Jean Chastel, after killing an animal in 1767:</p> <p>"I've killed a wolf that was bearing strange marks, but I cannot say for sure that it is the beast that so many fear. True evil seems to have no end."</p> <p>4. Letter of Abad François Boissieu, 1766:</p> <p>"Fear has dug deep in this land. It's not only death</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 12</p> <p>lo que se siente, sino la presencia de algo más allá de lo natural, un mal antiguo que ronda nuestros bosques."</p> <p>5. Fragmento de un diario anónimo, 1767:</p> <p>"Los cuerpos yacen mutilados, y las noches son cada vez más oscuras. Algunos susurran que la Bestia es la manifestación de una antigua maldición que solo puede ser detenida con fe y acero bendecido."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">La Bestia de Gévaudan en la Cultura Popular</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p> <p>that is felt, but the presence of something beyond the natural, an ancient evil that haunts our forests."</p> <p>5.Excerpt from an anonymous diary, 1767:</p> <p>"The bodies lie mutilated, and the nights grow even darker. Some whisper that the Beast is the manifestation of an ancient curse that can only be stopped with faith and blessed steel."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Beast of Gévaudan in Pop Culture</p>

<p>Más allá de los siglos, la leyenda de la bestia de Gévaudan ha trascendido su origen para convertirse en un mito vivo que sigue inspirando obras artísticas, literarias y cinematográficas alrededor del mundo. Su historia, mezcla de horror real y misterio sobrenatural, ha capturado la imaginación de generaciones enteras y se ha convertido en símbolo de lo inexplicable y lo oscuro que acecha en la naturaleza humana.</p> <p>Desde el siglo XVIII hasta nuestros días, la Bestia ha sido retratada en pinturas y grabados que buscan captar su figura terrorífica. En la literatura, ha inspirado desde relatos góticos hasta novelas modernas de terror, entre ellas esta crónica, que explora la raíz oculta de aquella maldad.</p> <p>En el cine, la Bestia de Gévaudan ha sido protagonista y musa en múltiples producciones. Destacan películas como “La Bestia</p>	<p>Over the centuries, the legend of the beast of Gévaudan has transcended its origins to become a living myth that still inspires artistic, literary, and cinematic works around the globe. Its story, a mixture of real horror and supernatural mystery, has captured the imagination of entire generations, and has become a symbol of the inexplicable and the darkness that lurks in human nature.</p> <p>From the 18th century to this day, the Beast has been portrayed in paintings and engravings that seek to capture its terrifying figure. In literature, it has inspired everything from gothic stories to modern novels of terror, including this chronicles, which explore the hidden roots of that evil.</p> <p>In cinema, the Beast of Gévaudan has been the protagonist and muse in multiple productions. Notable movies include “The Beast</p>
<p>Página 13</p> <p>de Gévaudan” (2001), que mezcla horror y acción en una reinterpretación moderna, y “Brotherhood of the Wolf” (Le Pacte des Loups) (2001), una producción francesa que mezcla historia, misterio y elementos sobrenaturales, basada libremente en los ataques reales.</p>	<p>Page 13</p> <p>of Gévaudan” (2001), which combines horror and action in a modern reinterpretation, and “Brotherhood of the Wolf” (Le Pacte des Loups) (2001), a French production that blends history, mystery and supernatural elements, loosely based on the actual attacks.</p>

<p>Estas películas no solo muestran la brutalidad de la criatura, sino que también exploran la atmósfera de miedo, superstición y conspiración que rodeó aquellos años.</p> <p>La Bestia también ha influenciado videojuegos, como el reciente <i>Metroidvania Chronicles of the Wolf</i>, cómics e incluso música, convirtiéndose en un icono del terror medieval y de la lucha entre el hombre y lo desconocido. Su figura ha servido para explorar temas universales como el miedo a lo salvaje, la naturaleza humana y los límites entre la razón y la superstición.</p> <p>Este mito persistente recuerda que, aunque hayan pasado siglos, hay historias que nunca mueren y que, en cada generación, la sombra de la Bestia vuelve a acechar, retándonos a enfrentar nuestros propios miedos.</p> <p>La historia de la Bestia de Gévaudan es mucho más que una serie de ataques brutales o un enigma sin resolver. Es el reflejo de un tiempo en que la línea entre lo natural y lo sobrenatural se desdibujaba, donde la razón coexistía con el temor ancestral y las creencias más profundas de un pueblo.</p> <p>En esa época, los bosques no solo albergaban animales salvajes, sino también fantasmas, demonios y fuerzas que escapaban al entendimiento humano.</p>	<p>These movies do not only show the brutality of the creature, but also explore the atmosphere of fear, superstition and conspiracy that surrounded those years.</p> <p>The Beast has also influenced video games, like the recent <i>Metroidvania Chronicles of the Wolf</i>, comics, and even music, becoming an icon of medieval terror and the struggle between men and the unknown. Its figure has been useful to explore universal themes, such as the fear of the wild, human nature, and the boundaries between reason and superstition.</p> <p>This persistent myth reminds us that, even though centuries have passed, there are stories that never die and that, in each generation, the shadow of the Beast lurks again, challenging us to face our own fears.</p> <p>The story of the Beast of Gévaudan is much more than a series of brutal attacks or an unsolved enigma. It is a reflection of a time when the line between the natural and the supernatural was blurred, where reason coexisted with ancestral fear and the deepest beliefs of a group of people.</p> <p>At that time, forests were home not only to wild animals, but also to ghosts, demons and forces beyond human understanding.</p>
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El relato de la Bestia se convirtió en un espejo oscuro que mostró los temores más profundos de una sociedad en transformación. Fue el miedo a lo desconocido, a la violencia inexplicable, a la fragilidad de la vida, y a la presencia persistente del mal en el mundo.

Es también la historia de la búsqueda desesperada de respuestas, de la lucha entre la ciencia naciente y la superstición arraigada.

Pero más allá del terror, la leyenda nos habla de humanidad: de quienes sobrevivieron, de aquellos que enfrentaron sus peores temores, y de quienes, como Armand y Élise en esta historia, se atrevieron a desafiar la oscuridad para descubrir la verdad oculta tras la Bestia.

Esta novela es un homenaje a esas voces silenciadas por el miedo, una invitación a mirar más allá de la superficie y a comprender que en cada sombra, en cada susurro del viento entre los árboles, puede esconderse una historia que merece ser contada.

Porque la verdadera Bestia, al fin y al cabo, no siempre se oculta en las garras o el pelaje de lo indómito, sino en la sombra misma de maldad, que habita en el interior de los hombres.

The story of the Beast became a dark mirror that showed the deepest fears of a society in transformation. It was the fear of the unknown, of inexplicable violence, of the fragility of life, and of the persistent presence of evil in the world.

It is also the story of the desperate search for answers, of the struggle between emerging science and deep-rooted superstition.

But beyond the terror, the legend talks about humanity: the survivors, those who faced their worst fears, and those who, like Armand and Élise in this story, dared to challenge the darkness to discover the hidden truth behind the Beast.

This novel is a tribute to those voices silenced by fear, an invitation to look beyond the surface and to comprehend that in every shadow, in every whisper of the wind through the trees, there might be a story waiting to be told.

Because the real Beast, after all, is not always hidden in the claws or fur of the untamed, but in the very shadow of evil that dwells within men.

<p style="text-align: center;">Página 15</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LA SOMBRA DE LA BESTIA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Crónicas de Gévaudan</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE SHADOW OF THE BEAST</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chronicles of Gévaudan</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 16 (En blanco)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 16 (Blank)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 17</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Prefacio</p> <p>Nunca olvidaré ese frío en Gévaudan, un frío que no venía del clima, sino de la tierra misma, de sus bosques densos y de las miradas huidizas de sus habitantes. Un frío que se colaba entre los huesos y se quedaba allí, contigo, como una muda advertencia del mal que nos rodeaba.</p> <p>Fue durante el año de 1765, cuando mis pasos me condujeron a este rincón olvidado de la poderosa Francia del siglo XVIII, entre colinas cubiertas de niebla, caminos de barro y pueblos sumidos en el miedo, la</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Preface</p> <p>I will never forget that cold in Gévaudan, a cold that did not come from the weather, but from the earth itself, from its dense forests and the fleeting gazes of its inhabitants. A cold that went deep into the bones and stayed there, with you, like a silent warning of the evil that surrounded us.</p> <p>It was during 1765, when my footsteps led me to this forgotten corner in the powerful France of the 18th century, among hills covered in mist, muddy paths, and towns immersed in fear, superstition and silence.</p>

<p>superstición y el silencio.</p> <p>Habían llegado informes confusos a la corte de París: ataques salvajes, cuerpos desfigurados, desapariciones. Hombres fuertes reducidos a murmullos temblorosos, sacerdotes que evitaban pronunciar ciertos nombres, madres que ya no dejaban a sus hijos jugar fuera de casa al caer el sol.</p> <p>Yo, Armand Delacroix, enviado por su majestad Luis XV para investigar una serie de ataques que habían sembrado el terror y la muerte, llegaba a un lugar donde la razón parecía rendirse ante la pesadilla y lo inexplicable.</p> <p>Desde un año antes, el pequeño condado de Gévaudan había sido azotado por una criatura que los aldeanos describían como</p>	<p>Confusing reports had reached the court of Paris: savage attacks, disfigured bodies, missing people. Strong men reduced to trembling mutters, priests who avoided pronouncing certain names, mothers who no longer let their children play outside at nightfall.</p> <p>I, Armand Delacroix, sent by His Majesty Luis XV to investigate a series of attacks that had sown terror and death, arrived at a place where reason seemed to surrender to that nightmare and the inexplicable.</p> <p>For a year, the small county of Gévaudan had been plagued by a creature that the villagers described as</p>
<p>Página 18</p> <p>una bestia infernal, un monstruo con cuerpo de lobo descomunal, ojos incandescentes como carbones encendidos, y una velocidad sobrenatural que desafiaba cualquier intento de captura. Muchos hombres valientes la enfrentaron, y así mismo encontraron su destino, pues según innumerables relatos, aquella bestia, era inmune a cualquier arma, o arte en existencia.</p> <p>Más de cien personas — en su mayoría mujeres, niños y campesinos — habían sido brutalmente asesinadas, devoradas o mutiladas de formas que ningún animal</p>	<p>Page 18</p> <p>a hellish beast, a monster with the body of a huge wolf, eyes glowing like burning coals, and a supernatural speed that defied any attempt at capture. Many brave men faced it, and likewise found their destiny, for according to countless stories, that beast was immune to any weapon or art in existence.</p> <p>More than a hundred people—mostly women, children and peasants— had been brutally killed, devoured or mutilated in ways that no natural animal could do.</p> <p>The villagers called it <i>la Bête</i>. The Beast. One word that seemed to suffice to explain</p>

<p>natural podría causar.</p> <p>Los aldeanos lo llamaban la <i>Bête</i>. La Bestia. Una palabra que parecía bastarles para explicar lo que no tenía respuesta. Y, sin embargo, cuanto más escuchaba, más comprendía que esa criatura — fuera lo que fuese — había dejado de ser solo carne y colmillos para convertirse en un símbolo. Un castigo. Un eco vivo del miedo y la ignorancia, una sombra que ocultaba mucho más.</p> <p>Vi cadáveres, sangre, y rostros que ya no podían llorar. Escuché testimonios inconsistentes, plagados de miedo y de dolor, todos teñidos de una verdad ineludible, un peso terrible, que nadie se atrevía a enfrentar.</p> <p>Los rumores se convertían en pesadillas: algunos decían que la Bestia era un castigo divino. Una oportunidad de expiación para llevar a la gente de Gévaudan, de vuelta a los caminos de Dios. Otros susurraban que era el espectro vengativo de un hereje, regresando para reclamar almas inocentes... o las almas de aquellos que durante su vida le habían hecho mal.</p>	<p>what had no answer. And yet, the more I listened, the more I understood that this creature—whatever it was—had ceased to be just flesh and fangs, and had become a symbol, a punishment, a living echo of fear and ignorance, a shadow that hid much more.</p> <p>I saw corpses, blood, faces that could no longer cry. I heard inconsistent testimonies, plagued with fear and pain, all stained with an inescapable truth, a terrible weight that no one dared to face.</p> <p>The rumors had become nightmares: some said that the Beast was a punishment of divine origin. An opportunity for atonement to bring the people of Gévaudan back to God’s ways. Others whispered that it was the vengeful specter of a heretic, returning to claim innocent souls...or the souls of those who had wronged it during its lifetime.</p>
<p>Página 19</p> <p>Las marcas en los cuerpos, extrañas y grotescas, parecían ser los signos de algún rito siniestro, mutilaciones salvajes realizadas por el simple hecho de causar dolor, sufrimiento y una muerte por demás espantosa. Los ingredientes mágicos para atraer a los poderes</p>	<p>Page 19</p> <p>The strange and grotesque marks on the bodies seemed to be the signs of some sinister ritual, savage mutilations made for the sole purpose of causing pain, suffering, and the most horrific death. The magical ingredients to attract the forces of evil.</p>

del mal.

Así, la superstición impregnaba cada rincón del pueblo. Las iglesias, en lugar de refugios, se convertían en escenarios donde las sombras más siniestras se deslizaban en el silencio de la noche. En aquella engañosa quietud rural, se escuchaban murmullos prohibidos, rezos profanos que parecían invocar extrañas fuerzas, a las que la luz misma... temía.

Esta no es una historia de héroes ni de cazadores valientes. Es la crónica de una sombra que se extendió por los campos y los corazones de un pueblo, y de un hombre que, al intentar darle caza, descubrió que no todas las bestias habitaban en los bosques.

Y aunque el mundo la haya olvidado, yo no he podido. Porque hay horrores que no mueren con el tiempo... solamente aprenden a esperar, a recuperar sus fuerzas, y retornar con intenciones más terribles.

Porque en Gévaudan, la línea entre lo humano y lo monstruoso se difuminaba hasta casi desaparecer.

Y enfrentarse a la Bestia era también... enfrentarse a uno mismo.

— Armand Delacroix

Thus, superstition immersed every corner in town. The churches, instead of being places of refuge, became scenarios where the most sinister shadows crept in the silence of the night. In that deceptive rural stillness, forbidden mutters could be heard, profane prayers that seemed to invoke strange forces, which even the light itself feared.

This is not a story of heroes or brave hunters. It is the chronicle of a shadow that spread across the fields and hearts of a town, and of a man who, while trying to hunt it down, discovered that not all beasts lived in forests.

And although the world has forgotten it, I have not been able to. Because there are horrors that do not die with time...they only learn to wait, to regain their strength, and return with more terrible intentions.

Because in Gévaudan, the line between what is human and what is monstrous was fading until it almost disappeared.

And to face the Beast was also...to face oneself.

— Armand Delacroix

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PRIMERA PARTE
EL MIEDO TOMA FORMA

Page 21

FIRST PART
FEAR TAKES SHAPE

<p style="text-align: center;">Página 22</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Capítulo I</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Langogne</p> <p>Febrero de 1765</p> <p>El viento azotaba la ladera con una violencia que parecía deliberada, como si la misma tierra quisiera rechazar mi presencia. El carruaje crujía, arrastrándose con esfuerzo por un camino de lodo helado, flanqueado por colinas desnudas y árboles retorcidos que se alzaban como dedos clamando al cielo desesperadamente.</p> <p>Los caballos resoplaban con nerviosismo, los ojos desorbitados, como si olieran algo que yo aún no percibía.</p> <p>La llegada a Langogne no tuvo campanas ni bienvenida. El pueblo emergió de la niebla como una aparición: casas de piedra ennegrecida por el tiempo y los elementos, techos cubiertos de musgo, puertas cerradas con cruces de madera tosca. Las chimeneas humeaban, sí, pero no vi un solo rostro en las ventanas. Todo parecía suspendido en una espera vieja, tosca... y temerosa.</p> <p>Descendí del carruaje al anochecer. El aire tenía ese olor turbio entre tierra mojada y humo de leña, mezclado con un leve aroma a hierro oxidado que no supe identificar. Un</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chapter I</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Langogne</p> <p>February 1765</p> <p>The wind lashed the hillside with a fierceness that seemed intentional, as if the earth itself wanted to reject my presence. The carriage creaked, dragging itself with effort in a frozen muddy path that was flanked by bare hills and twisted trees, which raised themselves pointing to the sky, calling out for it desperately.</p> <p>The horses panted nervously with wide, bulging eyes, as if they smelled something I had not perceived yet.</p> <p>The arrival to Langogne did not include bells nor a warm welcoming. The town emerged from the mist like an apparition: stone houses blackened by time and by natural elements, roofs covered in moss, closed doors with rough wooden crosses. The chimneys smoked, surely, but I did not see a single face in the windows. Everything seemed to be hanging in an old, tough...and fearful waiting.</p> <p>I stepped off the carriage at nightfall. The air had that particular foul smell between wet soil and wood smoke, mixed with a subtle</p>
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<p>joven flaco, encorvado y cubierto con un gorro de lana sucio, se acercó a</p>	<p>scent of rusty iron that I could not identify. A skinny young man, hunched over and wearing a dirty woolen hat, approached to</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 23</p> <p>tomar las riendas.</p> <p>No dijo nada. Sus ojos eran grandes y hundidos, como si llevara días sin dormir. Le ofrecí una moneda, que tomó sin mirarme, antes de llevarse los caballos por un callejón angosto hacia la oscuridad.</p> <p>Caminé hacia el mesón señalado en la carta que recibí desde Mende: <i>Le Loup Noir</i>. Las letras talladas en el cartel estaban viejas, astilladas por el clima. El dibujo de un lobo con la boca abierta parecía más una advertencia que una marca comercial.</p> <p>Dos largos y huesudos sabuesos custodiaban la puerta, uno se levantaba y caminaba de un lado a otro, mientras que su compañero mordía y disfrutaba lo que en vida había sido, al parecer, una pata de cerdo.</p> <p>Al abrir la puerta, el calor me golpeó con un suspiro de olores extraños. El interior era oscuro, iluminado por un fuego humeante y un par de lámparas de aceite. Olía a vino agrio, grasa rancia y a lana húmeda. Los parroquianos, pocos y silenciosos, se volvieron hacia mí en cuanto crucé el umbral. Pude notar cómo sus conversaciones se apagaban, como si mi sola presencia les</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p> <p>take the reins.</p> <p>He did not utter a word. His eyes were big and sunken, as if he had not slept for many days. I offered him a coin, which he accepted without looking at me, before he took the horses to a narrow alley through the darkness.</p> <p>I walked to the inn stipulated in the letter I received from Mende: <i>Le Loup Noir</i>. The letters carved into the sign were old, splintered by the weather. The drawing of a wolf with its mouth opened seemed more like a warning than a trademark.</p> <p>Two long, bony hounds guarded the door; one paced back and forth, while the other gnawed contentedly on what had once been, apparently, a pig's leg.</p> <p>While opening the door, the heat hit me with a rush of strange odors. The interior was dark, lit by a smoking fire and a pair of oil lamps. It smelled like sour wine, rancid grease, and damp wool. The parishioners, few and silent, turned to me as soon as I crossed the doorstep. I could notice how their conversations faded, as if my mere presence reminded them of something they did not want to talk about.</p>

<p>recordara algo de lo que no querían hablar.</p> <p>— Buenas noches — dije, retirándome los guantes —. Busco a Monsieur Duvernay. El alguacil.</p> <p>Una mujer corpulenta, de rostro inexpresivo y delantal roído, me señaló con un movimiento de barbilla hacia una mesa en la esquina más alejada. Clavó con fuerza un cuchillo en la madera y sin decir palabra alguna, me siguió con la mirada mientras</p>	<p>“Good evening,” I said, as I removed my gloves. “I’m looking for Monsieur Duvernay, the sheriff.”</p> <p>A stocky woman, with an expressionless face and a threadbare apron, pointed with her chin to a table that was in the farthest corner. She stuck a knife defiantly in the wood and without saying a single word, she followed me with her gaze while</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 24</p> <p>avanzaba entre sillas y mesas vacías.</p> <p>Duvernay era un hombre alto, de unos cincuenta años, con barba de tres días y un abrigo de lana negra. Tenía manos gruesas, curtidas, y la piel de sus nudillos estaba agrietada como la tierra seca. Bebía solo, con la mirada fija en el fuego, como si su mente se encontrara en cualquier sitio menos allí. Cuando notó mi presencia, se limitó a dar un sorbo más largo antes de hablar.</p> <p>— ¿Es usted el enviado de París?</p> <p>— Armand Delacroix — respondí —. ¿Puedo?</p> <p>Asintió, y tomé asiento frente a él. Su copa olía a aguardiente barato. Mi ropa, aún húmeda por la neblina, comenzaba a secarse</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p> <p>I kept walking through empty chairs and tables.</p> <p>Duvernay was a tall man in his fifties, with a three-day beard and a black wool coat. He had thick, weather-beaten hands, and the skin of his knuckles was cracked like dry earth. He was having a drink alone, with his gaze fixed in the fire, as if his mind were anywhere else but there. When he noticed my presence, he simply took a longer sip before speaking.</p> <p>“Are you the envoy from Paris?”</p> <p>“Armand Delacroix,” I answered. “May I?”</p> <p>He nodded and I sat in front of him. His glass smelled like cheap beer. My clothes, still</p>

<p>lentamente al calor del hogar.</p> <p>— Llegó rápido.</p> <p>— La muerte no espera, monsieur Duvernay. ¿Por qué habría de hacerlo yo?</p> <p>Una leve sonrisa torcida asomó en su rostro, aunque no llegó a sus ojos.</p> <p>— ¿Y qué espera encontrar aquí? — preguntó.</p> <p>— Verdad, hechos, pruebas. Lo que sea que esté ocurriendo, el rey desea respuestas. No leyendas.</p> <p>El alguacil se inclinó hacia adelante.</p>	<p>damp from the mist, started to dry slowly in the hearth’s heat.</p> <p>“You arrived quickly.”</p> <p>“Death doesn’t wait, monsieur Duvernay. Why would I?”</p> <p>A subtle, twisted grin appeared on his face, although it did not reach his eyes.</p> <p>“And what do you expect to find here?” he asked.</p> <p>“Truth, facts, evidence. Whatever that is happening, the king wants the answer, not legends.”</p> <p>The sheriff leaned forward.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 25</p> <p>— Entonces no debió venir a Gévaudan. Aquí solo encontrará leyendas... y una gran cantidad de muertos.</p> <p>Bebió un trago largo.</p> <p>— ¿Cuántos casos hasta ahora? — pregunté.</p> <p>— Oficialmente, veintisiete. Extraoficialmente... más de cuarenta. La mayoría niños. Pastoras. Una mujer embarazada. No todos los cuerpos han sido encontrados. Algunos, simplemente, desaparecen.</p> <p>— ¿Cómo están reaccionando los aldeanos?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p> <p>“Then you shouldn’t have come to Gévaudan. You’ll only find legends here... and a great amount of dead people.”</p> <p>He took a long gulp.</p> <p>“How many cases so far?” I asked.</p> <p>“Officially, twenty-seven. Unofficially... more than forty. Mostly children, shepherdeses, a pregnant woman. Not all bodies have been found, some simply disappear.”</p> <p>“How are the villagers reacting?” I continued.</p>

<p>— continué.</p> <p>— Como lo haría cualquiera cuando el infierno toca su puerta. — respondió en seco —. Algunos rezan. Otros se encierran. Hay quienes hablan de maldiciones. Otros creen que se trata de una criatura enviada por Dios para castigar nuestros pecados. Creame Monsieur, he escuchado de todo.</p> <p>Me tomé un momento para mirar a mi alrededor. El silencio en el mesón no había cedido. Un anciano me observaba con abierta desconfianza desde una mesa cercana, como si pudiera leer en mí alguna señal de peligro.</p> <p>— ¿Y usted? — pregunté —. ¿Qué cree?</p> <p>Duvernay dudó antes de responder. Su voz bajó un tono.</p> <p>— Creo que hay algo en estos bosques que no debería existir. Algo que no se comporta como un animal. Algo que no mata por hambre... sino por placer.</p>	<p>“As anyone would do when hell knocks on their door.” He crudely replied. “Some pray. Others lock themselves. There are those who mention curses. Others believe it is a creature sent by God as punishment for our sins. Trust me, Monsieur, I’ve heard everything.”</p> <p>I took a moment to look around. The inn’s silence had not lifted. An old man from a near table watched me with open distrust, as if he could read in me a danger sign.</p> <p>“And you?” I asked. “What do you think?”</p> <p>Duvernay hesitated before answering. His voice lowered.</p> <p>“I think there’s something in these forests that shouldn’t exist. Something that doesn’t behave like an animal. Something that doesn’t kill out of hunger... but for pleasure.”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 26</p> <p>No contesté. Saqué mi libreta de cuero, abrí la primera página y anoté:</p> <p>“Febrero, 1765. Llegada a Langogne. El miedo tiene rostro. Pero aún no lo he visto”.</p> <p>Esa noche, dormí en una habitación allí mismo en el mesón. Una cama de madera áspera, una lámpara de aceite, y una Biblia desgastada sobre la mesita de noche. Afuera,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 26</p> <p>I did not answer. I took out my leather notebook, opened the first page and wrote down:</p> <p>“February 1765. Arrival in Langogne. Fear has a face, but I still have not seen it.”</p> <p>That night, I slept in a room right there in the inn. A rough wooden bed, an oil lamp, and a</p>

<p>el viento golpeaba las contraventanas con un ritmo irregular, le escuchaba silbar, como si, de alguna forma sobrenatural, intentara llamarme. Decirme algo.</p> <p>Así, con ese sonido casi mágico, hipnótico, caí en un sueño profundo, y me perdí irremediabilmente en una confusa pesadilla.</p> <p>Una figura se arrastraba entre los árboles cubiertos de nieve. Una niña gritaba sin voz, estaba perdida... su llanto era ahogado por la ventisca. Pude ver un par de ojos brillando en la oscuridad. Estaban demasiado altos para pertenecer a un lobo, pero aullaba... y aquel sonido me heló la sangre. Desperté con el corazón agitado y el olor a humo en la garganta. A través de la ventana apenas se divisaba el amanecer.</p> <p>Duvernay me esperaba junto a la puerta del mesón. En su mano, llevaba una lámpara y una cuerda enrollada. Me señaló que le siguiera, y comenzó a caminar hacia el este. Aún no lo sabía, pero esa mañana cambiaría para siempre la forma en que yo concebía la realidad.</p> <p>Caminamos durante casi una hora entre los campos helados,</p>	<p>worn Bible were on the bedside table. Outside, the wind blew against the shutters with an irregular rhythm, I heard it whistle... as if it were trying to call me, to tell me something, in a mystical way.</p> <p>Like so, with that nearly magical, hypnotic sound, I fell into a deep slumber, and I got lost hopelessly in a confusing nightmare.</p> <p>A figure was crawling among the snow-covered trees. A girl screamed without a voice, she was lost...her crying was drowned by the blizzard. I could see a pair of eyes shining in the darkness, which were too high up to belong to a wolf, but it howled like one...and that sound gave me chills. I woke up with my heart racing and the smell of smoke in my throat. The dawn was slightly visible through the window.</p> <p>Duvernay waited for me at the inn's door. In his hand, he carried a lamp and a coiled rope. He instructed me to follow him, and started walking towards east. I did not know it yet, but that morning would change forever the way in which I perceived reality.</p> <p>Our walk lasted almost an hour through frozen hills,</p>
<p>Página 27</p> <p>bordeando setos bajos y árboles desnudos que se mecían al ritmo de un viento sin nombre. Nadie nos cruzó. Ni un campesino, ni un</p>	<p>Page 27</p> <p>skirting low hedges and bare trees that were swaying in the rhythm of a nameless wind. No one crossed our path. Not even a peasant,</p>

animal. Era como si todo Gévaudan hubiese decidido desaparecer bajo tierra.

Cuando llegamos al claro, vi los restos antes de que Duvernay hablara. La nieve estaba teñida de un rojo apagado, manchada en círculos irregulares, como una herida abierta en el paisaje. Unos pocos jirones de ropa infantil colgaban de una rama baja. Había pedazos — eso era lo que eran — esparcidos con una intención que me resultó inquietante.

Duvernay señaló con la cabeza. Pero no fue la sangre lo que me causó una presión helada en el pecho.

Fue la huella. Una sola impronta profunda, clara, imposible de confundir. Cinco garras extendidas, una planta descomunal, más grande que la mano de un hombre. Y justo a su lado, otra más pequeña.

Desnuda.
Humana.

Me incliné en silencio, casi sin aliento, mi mente atiborrada de preguntas, y sentí por primera vez que este caso no se resolvería ni con lógica ni leyes. Algo más antiguo que la razón rondaba en estos bosques.

Y había comenzado a dejar su marca.

nor an animal. It was as if all Gévaudan had decided to disappear beneath the ground.

When we reached the clearing, I saw the remains before Duvernay spoke. The snow was dyed with a dull red, stained in irregular circles, like an open wound in the landscape. Shreds of children's clothing hung in a low branch. There were pieces —that is what they were — scattered with an intention that I found disturbing.

Duvernay gestured with his head. I felt a freezing pressure on my chest, though it was not caused by the blood.

It was the footprint. A single, deep mark, clear, unmatched. Five extended claws, a huge sole, bigger than a man's hand. And just by its side, another smaller.

Barefoot.
Human.

I leaned in silence, nearly breathless, my mind was crammed with questions, and I felt for the first time that this case would not be solved by logic or laws. Something more ancient than reason wandered in these forests.

And it had started leaving its mark.



Capítulo II

La marca en la nieve

Febrero 1765, segundo día.

A pesar del tenue sol que comenzaba a rasgar la niebla matinal, el claro seguía envuelto en una quietud espesa, como si el tiempo mismo evitara acercarse y de alguna manera la noche continuara ahí.

Chapter II

The mark in the snow

February 1765, second day.

Even when the fading light of the sun began to tear the morning mist, the clearing remained embraced by a dense stillness, as if time itself avoided this place and somehow the night still lingered.

<p>Duvernay se mantuvo a distancia mientras yo me acercaba a la escena. No dijo palabra, y yo no se la pedí. En momentos como ese, el silencio es sin duda una forma de respeto.</p> <p>La nieve crujía bajo mis botas, húmeda y ensangrentada. Observé con detenimiento el entorno: no había signos de arrastre ni lucha. Todo indicaba que el ataque había sido repentino, brutal y preciso.</p> <p>El cuerpo — o lo que quedaba de él — estaba disperso, pero no de forma caótica. Algunas partes parecían haber sido colocadas con una especie de macabra intención. Los intestinos, enrollados como una soga, los dedos, dispuestos en línea recta, como si formaran un símbolo. Era una escena imposible de explicar con racionalidad. ¿Era algún animal capaz de un acto semejante?</p>	<p>Duvernay stayed at a distance while I got closer to the scene. He did not speak, and I did not ask him to do so. At those moments, silence is undoubtedly a form of respect.</p> <p>The snow crunched under my boots, damp and bloody. I observed the surroundings in detail: there were no signs of dragging or fighting. Everything suggested that the attack had been sudden, brutal, and precise.</p> <p>The body —or what remained of it— was scattered, but not in a chaotic way. Some parts seemed to be placed with a sort of macabre intention. The intestines coiled like a rope, the fingers arranged in a straight line, as if forming a symbol. It was impossible to explain that scene with rationality. Was there an animal capable of such an act?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 30</p> <p>Tomé varias anotaciones, cada línea con manos frías y el corazón en vilo:</p> <p>“Víctima menor. Probablemente niña. Desmembramiento total. Distribución anormal de restos. Ausencia total de indicios de depredación, una marca extraña en el abdomen de la pequeña. Presencia de huellas anómalas: una bestial, otra humana. Ambas frescas. Ambas únicas”.</p> <p>— No lo entiendo — murmuré sin mirar a Duvernay —. Si fue un animal, ¿dónde están</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 30</p> <p>I wrote down several notes, each line with cold hands and my heart in tenterhooks:</p> <p>“Child victim. Probably a girl. Total dismemberment. Abnormal distribution of remains. Complete absence of predation evidence, a strange mark in the little girl’s abdomen. Presence of anomalous traces: one from a beast, another from a human. Both fresh. Both unique.”</p> <p>“I don’t understand,” I muttered without looking at Duvernay. “If it was an animal,</p>

<p>los otros rastros? ¿Por qué sólo una pisada?</p> <p>— Por eso lo traje, monsieur. Yo tampoco lo entiendo — respondió.</p> <p>—¿La conocían los aldeanos?</p> <p>Duvernay asintió con gravedad.</p> <p>— Se llamaba Adeline. Ocho años. Pastoreaba con su hermano, pero él se adelantó a buscar a su padre porque se avecinaba una tormenta. Cuando regresaron... encontraron esto.</p> <p>—¿Y el niño?</p> <p>— No habla. No desde entonces. Está en casa con su madre, los Ferrand. Dios santo... lo que debe pasar por su mente. ¡Pobre niño! — concluyó.</p> <p>Me arrodillé para observar la huella bestial de cerca. Estaba impresa con fuerza, profundamente marcada. No era un simple lobo. La proporción era absurda. Las garras sobresalían del</p>	<p>where are the other tracks? Why just one footprint?"</p> <p>"That's why I brought you, monsieur. I don't understand, either," he replied.</p> <p>"Did the villagers know her?"</p> <p>Duvernay nodded solemnly.</p> <p>"Her name was Adeline. Eight years old. She was herding sheep with her brother, but he went ahead to find their father because a storm was approaching. When they returned...they found this."</p> <p>"And the boy?"</p> <p>"He doesn't speak. Not since then. He's at home with his mother, the Ferrands. Holy God...what must be going through his mind. Poor child!" he concluded.</p> <p>I knelt down to see the beastly footprint closely. It was marked fiercely and deeply. It was not a simple wolf. The proportion was absurd. The claws protruded from</p>
<p>Página 31</p> <p>dibujo principal, curvadas hacia adelante como si estuvieran hechas para desgarrar.</p> <p>Pero lo que más me perturbó fue la otra marca: la huella humana. Desnuda, sin el talón completo. Como si hubiese caminado de puntillas. Una pisada imposible en ese frío, y más aún en ese lugar.</p>	<p>Page 31</p> <p>the main outline, curved forward as if made for tearing.</p> <p>What disturbed me most was the other trace: the human footprint. Barefoot, without its entire heel. As if it had walked on tiptoes. An impossible footprint in that cold, let alone in that place.</p>

<p>— ¿Qué pasa si esto no fue un lobo? — pregunté.</p> <p>Duvernay no respondió de inmediato. Se limitó a mirar atentamente hacia el bosque, buscando algo... tal vez, al culpable.</p> <p>— Entonces estamos condenados — concluyó.</p> <p>Regresamos al pueblo en silencio. El bosque nos observaba, o al menos así lo sentía. A cada paso tenía la impresión de que algo más caminaba con nosotros: furtivo, misterioso... sin dejar el más mínimo rastro.</p> <p>El viento entre los árboles emitía un quejido agudo, parecido al llanto de un niño. Me detuve por un instante para mirar hacia atrás. Nada. Sólo ramas desnudas balanceándose lentamente como péndulos enfermos, decadentes.</p> <p>La casa de los Ferrand se encontraba al límite mismo del pueblo: una construcción de piedra compacta, con un techo de paja que goteaba por el deshielo. Una cruz de madera torcida colgaba sobre la puerta, y varias ramas de espino se clavaban en el marco. Esto, por supuesto, no era mera decoración; por el contrario, eran símbolos de protección.</p>	<p>“What happens if this wasn’t a wolf?” I asked.</p> <p>Duvernay did not reply immediately. He simply stared attentively at the forest, searching for something...maybe, the culprit.</p> <p>“Then we’re all condemned,” he concluded.</p> <p>We returned to the town in silence. The forest watched us, or at least I felt that. With every step, I had the impression of something else walking along with us: furtive, mysterious...without leaving the slightest trace.</p> <p>From the wind among the trees emerged a high-pitched groan, similar to a child’s weeping. I stopped for a moment to look behind me, but...nothing. Only bare branches were swaying slowly like sick, decaying pendulums.</p> <p>The Ferrands’ house was located on the very edge of town: a compact stone building, with a thatched roof that dripped due to the defrosting. A crooked wooden cross hung on the door, and several hawthorn branches were nailed to the door frame. This, of course, was not mere decoration; on the contrary, those were symbols of protection.</p>
<p>Página 32</p> <p>Duvernay golpeó con suavidad. A los pocos segundos, una mujer de rostro pálido abrió la puerta. Sus ojos estaban hundidos y enrojecidos, pero secos; tenía la punta de la</p>	<p>Page 32</p> <p>Duvernay knocked softly. Not long after, a woman with a pale face opened the door. Her eyes were sunken and red, but dry; the tip of</p>

<p>nariz muy roja, y nos dirigió una mirada como si ya nos hubiera enterrado.</p> <p>— Mademoiselle Ferrand... he de suponer. ¿Podemos ver al niño? — pregunté.</p> <p>Ella asintió con un leve temblor. Levantó la mano y, con sus huesudos dedos, nos indicó que la siguiéramos.</p> <p>— ¿Es este el caballero enviado por el rey a liberarnos de la <i>Bête</i>, Duvernay? — preguntó, mirándome de arriba abajo.</p> <p>— El mismo — respondió él —. Monsieur Delacroix, Armand Delacroix.</p> <p>— El pobre está muy alterado — prosiguió la mujer — Tengan cuidado con lo que dicen, con lo que hacen... En lo personal, monsieur Delacroix, le diría que aún se encuentra a tiempo para dejar estas tierras... todavía podría salvar su alma.</p> <p>— Tengo la esperanza de poder resolver todo este asunto, madame. Para bien, por supuesto — respondí —. El rey tiene la plena confianza...</p> <p>— Esperanza, ¡bah! — me interrumpió de pronto, escupiendo en el suelo —. No deje que la oscuridad y las sombras le quiten esa esperanza, monsieur. Hace mucho que no sabemos lo que significa en este pueblo.</p>	<p>her nose was quite red, and she threw us a look as though she had already buried us.</p> <p>“Madame Ferrand...I presume. May we see the boy?” I asked.</p> <p>She slightly nodded, then raised her hand and, with her bony fingers, signaled to follow her.</p> <p>“Is this the gentleman sent by the king to set us free from the <i>Bête</i>, Duvernay?” she asked, looking at me up and down.</p> <p>“The very man,” he replied. “Monsieur Delacroix, Armand Delacroix.”</p> <p>“The poor boy is too shaken.” The woman carried on. “Be cautious about what you say, and do...Personally, monsieur Delacroix, I’d tell you that you still have time to leave these lands... you can still save your soul.”</p> <p>“I hope I’ll be able to solve all this matter, madame. For the better, of course.” I replied. “The king has plenty of trust...”</p> <p>“Hope, bah!” she suddenly interrupted me, spitting on the ground. “Don’t let the darkness and shadows take that hope away from you, monsieur. There’s been a long time in this town since we knew what that means.”</p>
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Guardé silencio. Avanzamos, y aquella mujer nos condujo hasta una habitación pequeña y mal iluminada. El muchacho se encontraba sentado junto a la chimenea. Estaba apagada. Lo cubría una gruesa manta de lana, su cuerpo parecía encogido, como si intentara desaparecer dentro de ella. No se movía, no respondía. Sus ojos estaban abiertos de par en par, pero no parecía haber luz alguna de vida en su interior.

Me arrodillé frente a él con lentitud. Saqué una pequeña caja de madera y la abrí. En su interior había una figura de plomo: un caballero en miniatura sobresaliendo de una minúscula cajita de música. Aquello no era un simple objeto: era una estrategia.

Los niños traumatizados suelen responder mucho antes a lo tangible que a las simples y necias palabras de los hombres.

—¿Te gusta este caballero? — dije en voz baja —. Lo traje desde París. Dice que ha venido a protegerte.

El niño no reaccionó. Pero sus pupilas se dilataron apenas, lo propio. Lo noté, estaba consciente... sólo, atrapado en aquella noche oscura que le arrebató tanto, aún sin poder escapar.

— Tu hermana fue muy valiente — añadí —. El caballero dice que ella necesita que le cuentes lo que viste. Es necesario que le hables a monsieur Delacroix, ha dicho.

I remained silent. We moved forward, and that woman led us to a small, dimly lit room. The boy was sitting by the fireplace, which was off. He was covered by a thick wool blanket, his body seemed shrunken, as if he tried to disappear inside it. He did not move or respond. His eyes were wide open, but apparently there was no glimmer of life inside of him.

I knelt slowly in front of him. I took out a small wooden box and opened it. There was a lead figure inside: a miniature knight sticking out of a tiny music box. That was not a simple object: it was a strategy.

Traumatized children tend to respond much sooner to what is tangible than to simple, foolish words of men.

“Do you like this knight?” I said in a low voice. “I brought it from Paris. He says that he’s come to protect you.”

The boy did not react, but his pupils dilated slightly, which is natural. I noticed it, he was conscious... alone, trapped in that dark night that took so much away from him, still unable to escape.

“Your sister was very brave,” I added. “The knight says that your sister needs you to tell him what you saw. It’s necessary that you speak to monsieur Delacroix, it said. Only then she will be able to rest.”

<p>Solamente así, podrá descansar.</p> <p>Sus labios se movieron. Casi imperceptiblemente. Me incliné todavía más.</p> <p>— Cantaba — susurró, mientras veía como las lágrimas corrían</p>	<p>His lips moved. Almost seamlessly. I leaned even more.</p> <p>“It sang,” he whispered, while I looked how tears ran</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 34</p> <p>por sus mejillas y sus manos temblaban de impotencia. Aquello no fue más que un murmullo áspero, como si las palabras fueran cuchillas al salir.</p> <p>— ¿Quién cantaba? — pregunté.</p> <p>El niño volvió a temblar.</p> <p>— No la Bestia... era otra voz. Más... vieja — respondió temblando.</p> <p>Se cubrió los oídos y cerró los ojos con fuerza. Recogió las rodillas y ya no dijo nada más.</p> <p>Duvernay me observaba desde la puerta, con el rostro endurecido.</p> <p>— Se le irá pasando — murmuró, sin convicción.</p> <p>— No. Esto no se irá. No si nadie dice la verdad.</p> <p>Salimos de la casa agradeciendo a madame Ferrand y tomamos el camino hacia el pueblo</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p> <p>down his cheeks and his hands trembled helplessly. That was nothing more than a rough mutter, as if words turned into blades as they came out.</p> <p>“Who was singing?” I asked.</p> <p>The boy trembled again.</p> <p>“Not the Beast...it was another voice. Much...older.” He answered shuddering.</p> <p>He covered his ears and closed his eyes tightly. He pulled his knees up and spoke no more.</p> <p>Duvernay watched me from the door with a stern face.</p> <p>“He’ll get through this,” he muttered, without conviction.</p> <p>“No, this won’t go. Not if no one tells the truth.”</p>

<p>de Langogne. Luego de un rato, me encontraba ya en la iglesia.</p> <p>Se trataba de una construcción antigua, levantada con piedra húmeda y vitrales ennegrecidos por el humo de las décadas. Olía a incienso rancio y humedad. El padre Lachaise me esperaba en la sacristía, rodeado de libros polvorientos y figuras de santos agrietadas por el olvido.</p> <p>— Monsieur Delacroix — dijo efusivamente —. Nos honra con su visita, aunque las circunstancias sean... bastante trágicas, si</p>	<p>We left the house, thanked Madame Ferrand, and then we took the path towards Langogne town. After a while, I was already at the church.</p> <p>It was an ancient structure, built with damp stone and stained-glass windows blackened by the smoke of decades. It smelled like stale incense and dampness. Father Lachaise was waiting for me in the sacristy, surrounded by dusty books and figures of saints cracked by the forces of oblivion.</p> <p>“Monsieur Delacroix,” he said warmly. “You honor us with your visit, although the circumstances are...quite tragic. If</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 35</p> <p>busca usted al obispo... no se encuentra en estos momentos.</p> <p>— Usted sabe lo que ocurrió — le dije sin rodeos.</p> <p>— Sé lo que todos saben: que una criatura vaga por los campos, y que el Señor nos está poniendo a prueba.</p> <p>— ¿Con símbolos? — pregunté, sacando un dibujo de mi libreta.</p> <p>Había copiado lo que encontré en la piel de la niña. Un grabado, hecho con garras o cuchilla, en el abdomen: un círculo dividido por una línea en cruz, con un pequeño</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 35</p> <p>you are looking for the bishop...he is not here at the moment.”</p> <p>“You know what happened,” I said, without beating around the bush.</p> <p>“I know what everyone knows: that a creature wanders through the fields, and that the Lord is putting us on a test.”</p> <p>“With symbols?” I asked, pulling a drawing out of my notebook.</p> <p>I had copied what I found in the girl’s skin. An engraving, made with claws or blades, in the abdomen: a circle divided by a cross line, with a little inverted triangle in the center.</p>

<p>triángulo invertido en el centro.</p> <p>El cura se tensó, pude ver una expresión de asombro y nerviosismo en su rostro acostumbrado a aparentar rectitud.</p> <p>— ¿Dónde ha visto eso? — inquirió con voz entrecortada.</p> <p>— No debería sorprenderle. Está grabado en la carne de una víctima. ¿Lo reconoce usted?</p> <p>— volví a presionarle.</p> <p>No respondió. Se acercó a un armario viejo y sacó un volumen encuadernado en cuero negro, con una cruz grabada en seco. Acto seguido lo abrió con dedos temblorosos y respondió con firmeza:</p> <p>— Es un símbolo... prohibido. Una marca ancestral. Se usaba en rituales antiguos, anteriores incluso a la llegada del cristianismo a estas tierras. Evoca a un dios que devora en la oscuridad. El devorador de la inocencia, le llamaban.</p>	<p>The priest tensed up, I could see an expression of astonishment and nervousness on his face, which usually appeared righteous.</p> <p>“Where have you seen that?” he inquired, his voice was breaking.</p> <p>“It shouldn’t surprise you. It’s engraved on the flesh of a victim. Do you recognize it?” I put pressure on him again.</p> <p>He did not answer. He approached an old wardrobe and took out a black leather-bound volume, with a dry etched cross. Thereafter he opened it with trembling hands and answered firmly:</p> <p>“It is a forbidden... symbol. An ancestral mark. It was used in ancient rituals, even prior to the arrival of Christianity in these lands. It evokes a god who devours in the darkness. They called him the devourer of innocence.”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 36</p> <p>— ¿Cree usted en eso, padre?</p> <p>El sacerdote cerró el libro con fuerza.</p> <p>— Mi deber no es creer. Es proteger. Pero si esto se ha manifestado en Langogne... no será con oraciones que lo detendremos.</p> <p>— Cantaba — pensé —. ¿Oraciones? Podría haber sido un rezo, un cántico ritual.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 36</p> <p>“Do you believe in that, Father?”</p> <p>The priest closed the book firmly.</p> <p>“My duty is not to believe, but to protect. However, if this has manifested itself in Langogne... we will not stop it with prayers.”</p>

Salí de la iglesia poco después. El cielo comenzaba a oscurecer. Dirigí mi mirada hacia las montañas, imponentes gigantes que lo rodeaban todo, y en lo alto de una colina cercana, abrazada por la niebla de la tarde, pude ver una silueta. Alta, inmóvil, observándonos detenidamente.

Cuando parpadeé, tratando de aclarar la vista, esta sobrenatural aparición se había desvanecido.

Aquella misma noche escribí en mis apuntes:

“Una marca en la carne. Un niño roto. Un canto antiguo.
Y algo que nos observa desde más allá del bosque”.

“It sang,” —I thought—. “Prayers?” It could have been a prayer, a ritual chant.

I went out of the church not long after. The sky began to darken. I turned my gaze to the mountains, those imposing giants surrounding everything, and on top of a nearby hill, embraced by the afternoon mist, I could see a silhouette. Tall, motionless, watching us thoroughly.

When I blinked, trying to clear my vision, this supernatural apparition had vanished.

That very night, I wrote in my notes:

“A mark on the flesh. A broken boy. An ancient chant.
And something watching us from beyond the forest.”

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Capítulo III

El canto del cuervo

Las campanas aún tañían por el alma de la pequeña Adeline cuando un nuevo sonido se apoderó del aire: el graznido de un cuervo, ronco y prolongado, posado sobre la cruz ennegrecida del campanario al despuntar el alba.

Aquella ave parecía hecha de las mismas sombras que rodeaban Langogne y su graznido no era solamente un canto; sino más bien el anuncio de un juicio, un castigo sin igual.

Desde mi llegada al pueblo, me hospedaba en *Le Loup Noir*, una taberna de techo bajo, paredes cubiertas de musgo y vigas carcomidas por el tiempo. Su dueño, Guillaume, era un hombre de voz ronca, piel curtida y mirada que evitaba el cielo. Nadie sabía si había sido soldado, contrabandista o simplemente viejo... pero su silencio pesaba como confesión no dicha.

Lo encontré esa mañana frente a la taberna, bajo la persistente nevada. Tenía el delantal manchado de barro, alcohol y sangre de animal. Entre sus dedos la todavía humeante pipa levantaba figuras que danzaban entre los

Chapter III

The raven's song

The bells still chimed for little Adeline's soul when a new sound filled the air: a hoarse, extended cawing of a raven perched on the blackened cross of the bell tower at dawn.

That bird seemed to be made of the same shadows that surrounded Langogne, and its cawing was not simply a song, but rather the announcement of judgment, a punishment like no other.

Since my arrival in town, I have stayed at *Le Loup Noir*, a tavern with a low ceiling, walls covered in moss, and beams worn down by time. Its owner, Guillaume, was a man with a rough voice, weather-beaten skin and a gaze that evaded the sky. No one knew if he had been a soldier, smuggler, or simply old...but his silence weighed as an untold confession.

I found him this morning in front of the tavern, under the ongoing snowfall. His apron was stained with mud, alcohol, and animal blood. Between his fingers, the still smoking pipe lifted dancing figures among the snowflakes.

<p>copos de nieve.</p> <p>— Se los llevaron, monsieur Delacroix — dijo sin preámbulos, sin mirarme —. Los perros. Esta madrugada.</p>	<p>“They took them, monsieur Delacroix,” he said bluntly, without looking at me. “The dogs. This early morning.”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 39</p> <p>Lo seguí hasta el patio trasero. El aire allí olía a una mezcla de metal y pino. Dos sabuesos, los que yo mismo había visto rondar la entrada, yacían muertos. Sus cuerpos desgarrados, la nieve empapada de sangre. Pero no era eso lo que más me inquietó. A su alrededor, las huellas: enormes, deformes, y... humanas volvían a hacer su aparición.</p> <p>— ¿Usted los escuchó? — pregunté. Estaba genuinamente interesado puesto que en lo personal no había oído nada la noche anterior.</p> <p>— Solo el cuervo, monsieur... Tres veces cantó. Luego, nada. Es como si simple y llanamente aquella bestia se los hubiese quitado de en medio... mis pobres criaturas... no tuvieron ni oportunidad de reaccionar.</p> <p>Dentro, los parroquianos bebían en silencio, como si la taberna se hubiese convertido en una iglesia invertida. Algunos cuchicheaban sobre brujas del bosque. Otros hablaban de lobos cruzados con demonios. Pero uno — un anciano que no levantó la vista de su copa — murmuró algo que me heló la sangre:</p> <p>— La Bestia no viene del bosque... viene de nosotros y a por nosotros.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p> <p>I followed him to the back patio. The air there smelled like a mixture of metal and pine. Two hounds, the ones I had seen wandering the entrance, lay dead. Their bodies were torn apart, the snow drenched in blood, but that was not what really bothered me. Around them, the footprints: enormous, misshapen, and... human traces appeared again.</p> <p>“Did you hear them?” I asked. I was genuinely interested because personally I had not heard anything last night.</p> <p>“Just the raven, monsieur...It cawed three times. Then, nothing. It’s like that beast got rid of them simply and plainly ...my poor creatures...they couldn’t even react.”</p> <p>Inside, the parishioners drank in silence, as if the tavern had turned into an inverted church. Some muttered about witches in the forest. Others talked about wolves being mixed with demons. But one —an old man who did not stop looking at his glass— muttered something that gave me the chills:</p> <p>“The Beast doesn’t come from the forest...it comes from us and it’s coming for us.”</p>

<p>Antes de que pudiera interrogarlo, pude ver a Duvernay. Estaba de pie, frente a la puerta portando un mosquete entre sus manos. Parecía ser un hombre al que el mundo no lograba doblegar, pero aquella mañana su rostro acorazado, tenía grietas.</p> <p>— Delacroix, venga conmigo. Han encontrado algo más en el bosque.</p>	<p>Before I could question him, I could see Duvernay. He was standing in front of the door holding a musket in his hands. He seemed to be a man whom the world could not break, but that morning his armored face had cracks.</p> <p>“Delacroix, come with me. They’ve found something else in the forest.”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 40</p> <p>Langogne — ese nombre que antes me era ajeno — comenzaba a aferrarse a mí como una mortaja. Cada día traía consigo un nuevo lamento, cada noche una nueva sombra, una nueva muerte.</p> <p>Duvernay caminaba delante, en silencio, guiándome hacia el bosque donde, según sus palabras: "Debía ver algo con mis propios ojos". No quiso explicarme más. Solo apretó los labios y se ajustó el abrigo contra el frío. El bastón de fresno que llevaba golpeaba la escarcha del camino con ritmo mecánico, como un metrónomo fúnebre, como un penitente caminando a su quimera.</p> <p>El bosque se alzaba como una catedral maldita. Las ramas desnudas formaban bóvedas enredadas sobre nuestras cabezas, el viento soplaba con suspiros de ultratumba y los copos de nieve caían delicadamente sobre la piel del mundo.</p> <p>Aquella misma nieve crujía bajo nuestros pies, y en ese silencio invernal, hasta el eco</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p> <p>Langogne —a name that used to be foreign to me—began to cling to me like a shroud. Each day brought with it a new lament, each night a new shadow, a new death.</p> <p>Duvernay walked ahead, in silence, guiding me to the forest where, according to his words: “I should see something with my own eyes.” He did not want to explain more. He just pressed his lips and adjusted his coat against the cold. The ash cane he carried tapped the frost on the path with a mechanical rhythm, like a mournful metronome, like a penitent walking to his pipe dream.</p> <p>The forest rose, resembling a cursed cathedral. Bare branches created tangled vaults above our heads, the wind blew with afterlife breaths, and the snowflakes from the sky fell delicately on the earth’s skin.</p> <p>That particular snow crunched beneath our feet, and in that cold silence, even the echo of our breathing seemed unsuitable, a</p>

<p>de nuestra respiración parecía impropio, un desafío, tal vez... a las fuerzas de la oscuridad.</p> <p>Llegamos entonces a un claro oculto, uno que no aparecía en los mapas que había traído desde París. Era circular, como tallado deliberadamente por alguna voluntad ancestral. En su centro, una piedra monolítica se erguía, cubierta de líquenes y tallados apenas visibles bajo la escarcha.</p> <p>— La encontramos esta madrugada — dijo Duvernay, sin acercarse demasiado —. Fue uno de los leñadores quien dio aviso. No quiero que se corra la voz todavía.</p>	<p>challenge, perhaps...to the forces of darkness.</p> <p>Then we arrived at a hidden clearing, which did not appear on the maps I had brought from Paris. Its shape was circular, as though it had been deliberately carved by some ancestral will. In its center, a monolithic stone was raised, covered by lichens and carvings barely visible under the frost.</p> <p>“We found it this early morning,” Duvernay said, without getting too close. “It was one of the lumberjacks who gave notice. I don’t want to spread the word yet.”</p>
<p>Página 41</p> <p>Me acerqué. Al pie del monolito, había restos: huesos pequeños, chamuscados, dispuestos en forma de espiral. Entre ellos, colgaba de una cuerda un medallón de plata ennegrecida, con el mismo símbolo que había visto en el cuerpo mutilado de Adeline.</p> <p>— Esto parece un ritual — dije, más para mí que para Duvernay.</p> <p>—¿De brujería? — preguntó él, con un deje de incredulidad.</p> <p>Lo miré. En sus ojos cansados había más miedo que escepticismo.</p> <p>— No lo sé. Pero no es la primera vez que lo</p>	<p>Page 41</p> <p>I approached. At the base of the monolith, there were remains: small, scorched bones arranged in a spiral pattern. Among them, a blackened silver medallion hung from a rope, with the same symbol I had seen in Adeline’s mutilated body.</p> <p>“This looks like a ritual,” I said, more to myself than to Duvernay.</p> <p>“Witchcraft?” he asked, with a hint of disbelief.</p> <p>I looked at him. In his tired eyes there was more fear than skepticism.</p> <p>“I don’t know, but it’s not the first time I’ve seen it.” I said.</p>

<p>veo — apunté.</p> <p>Le hablé del símbolo hallado en la escena del crimen de Adeline, de la marca en la nieve, y de aquel cuervo como sombrío testigo que vigilaba la ciudad.</p> <p>Pero cuando le mencioné al anciano de la taberna y su frase — “La Bestia no viene del bosque... viene de nosotros y a por nosotros” —, Duvernay se volvió bruscamente hacia mí.</p> <p>— No escuche a los ancianos, Delacroix. En este pueblo el miedo se fermenta más rápido que el vino. Hay que encontrar al culpable. Uno real.</p> <p>— ¿Y si no hay uno solo? — pregunté.</p> <p>No respondió. Pero pude ver ese gesto con sus hombros como si dijera: ¿Qué demonios sabe un parisino de las cosas que</p>	<p>I told him about the symbol found at the crime scene of Adeline, about the mark on the snow, and about the raven as a gloomy witness that kept watch over the city.</p> <p>When I mentioned the tavern’s old man and his words: “The Beast doesn’t come from the forest...it comes from us and it’s coming for us,” Duvernay turned abruptly towards me.</p> <p>“Don’t listen to the elders, Delacroix. In this town fear ferments quicker than wine. The culprit must be found. A real one.”</p> <p>“What if there isn’t just one?” I asked.</p> <p>He did not answer. But I could see that gesture with his shoulders, as if trying to say: What the hell does this Parisian know about the things</p>
<p>Página 42</p> <p>pasan en los pueblos?</p> <p>Anoté todo y cuanto vi en aquel lugar, pude ver también círculos en la nieve, oscurecidos, frescos... Toqué el lugar y pude percatarme al acercar los dedos a mi nariz que se trataba de aceite para lámparas, y que cada una había estado colocada a una distancia determinada. Aquello indudablemente, apoyaba mi teoría.</p> <p>Nos alejamos del bosque, regresé a mi habitación en la taberna y repasé mis notas.</p>	<p>Page 42</p> <p>that happen in towns?</p> <p>I wrote down everything I saw in that place, I could also see circles in the snow, darkened, fresh... I touched the ground and I could notice as I put my hand close to my nose that it was oil for lamps, and that each one had been placed at a predetermined distance. That undoubtedly supported my theory.</p> <p>We moved away from the forest; I returned to my room in the tavern and reviewed my</p>

<p>¿Qué era lo que pasaba en ese pueblo? ¿Existiría realmente una bestia devoradora de inocencias? Por el momento, todo apuntaba a la mano del hombre.</p> <p>Esa noche, el pueblo dormía con las ventanas cerradas y las oraciones aferradas a la lengua. Yo, en cambio, no pude conciliar el sueño. El símbolo me perseguía. Lo dibujé una y otra vez en mi cuaderno, intentando encontrarle lógica, alguna referencia en los libros de teología o los grimorios prohibidos que consulté durante mis años en París. Nada coincidía del todo... excepto uno.</p> <p>El <i>Liber Tenebris</i>, un manuscrito prohibido del siglo XIII que hablaba de una secta surgida en los valles del Languedoc, tras la cruzada contra los cátaros.</p> <p>El libro mencionaba una figura: “<i>La Bête de l’Aube Rouge</i>”, una entidad invocada por sacrificios infantiles en noches de luna nueva, capaz de encarnarse en carne, sangre... y piel.</p> <p>No pude evitar pensar en Adeline, no pude evitar imaginar su rostro antes del final. ¿Qué tipo de monstruo pudo ser capaz de</p>	<p>notes. What was happening in that town? Could there really exist a beast devouring the innocent? For a moment, everything pointed at the hands of men.</p> <p>That night, the town slept with closed windows and tongues holding on to prayers. I, on the contrary, could not sleep. The symbol haunted me. I drew it over and over again on my notebook, trying to find some logic in it, some reference in the theology books or forbidden grimoires I had consulted during my years in Paris. Nothing matched completely...except one.</p> <p>The <i>Liber Tenebris</i>, a forbidden manuscript from the 13th century, which talked about a sect that emerged in the Languedoc valleys, following the crusade against the Cathars.</p> <p>The book mentioned a figure: “<i>La Bête de l’Aube Rouge</i>,” an entity invoked for child sacrifices on new moon nights, capable of embodying in flesh, blood...and skin.</p> <p>I could not help thinking of Adeline, I could not avoid imagining her face before the end. What kind of monster could be capable of</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 43</p> <p>acabar con la vida de tantos inocentes? De arrebatarse la vida a mujeres... a niños.</p> <p>La vela de mi escritorio parpadeó, y en ese instante juraría que la temperatura de la habitación descendió varios grados. Me levanté cruzando el suelo de madera desnuda</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 43</p> <p>ending the lives of so many innocent people? Of taking the lives of women... of children.</p> <p>The candle on my desk flickered, and in that instant, I could have sworn the room’s temperature dropped several degrees. I got up and crossed the bare wooden floor to the</p>

hasta la ventana. Afuera, la calle estaba desierta... excepto por una figura. Estaba de pie en medio del camino: quieto, encapuchado.

No podía verle el rostro, pero me observaba. Lo sabía, su presencia se sentía como un cuchillo en el pecho. percibí que, si abría la ventana, la oscuridad misma penetraría en lo más profundo de mi alma. Mi cabeza... mi corazón... mi alma serían arrebatados.

Pero tal como pasara anteriormente, al volver la mirada hacia tal demonio de las sombras... este, se había esfumado.

Al día siguiente, desperté muy temprano, la falta de sueño era notoria en mi expresión, en mi andar y mis maneras, pero junto a Duvernay regresé al claro en donde había tenido lugar ese ritual. La piedra seguía allí... pero los huesos habían desaparecido. Ya no estaba el medallón, las marcas de las quemaduras en la nieve... todo, había sido removido.

— Nadie vino por aquí, monsieur Delacroix
— dijo uno de los guardias que acompañaba a Duvernay.

Mentía, o estaba aterrorizado. O ambas cosas. Entonces lo vi: sobre la superficie de la piedra, el símbolo se había replicado. No tallado, no pintado. Se había quemado. Como si el propio aire se hubiese abierto y lo hubiese escupido desde alguna

window. Outside, the street was empty...except for a figure. It was standing in the middle of the road: motionless, hooded.

I could not see its face, but it watched me. I could tell, its presence felt like a knife in my chest. I sensed that if I opened the window, darkness itself would enter into the depths of my soul. My head...my heart...my soul would be taken away.

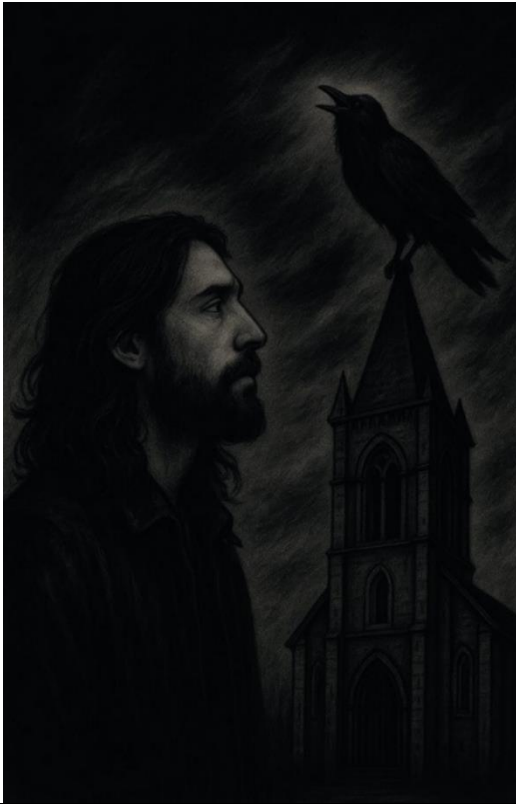
But as it happened before, when I looked again at that demon of the shadows...such demon had vanished.

The next day, I woke up very early. The lack of sleep was evident in my expression, my walk, and my mannerisms, but along with Duvernay I returned to the clearing where the ritual had taken place. The stone was still there...but the bones had disappeared. The medallion was gone, as were the burning marks in the snow...everything had been removed.

“Nobody came this way, monsieur Delacroix,” said one of the guards who walked with Duvernay.

He lied, or he was frightened. Or both things. Then I saw it: on the surface of the stone, the symbol had been replicated. Not carved, not painted. It had been burned. As if the air itself had opened up and spat it out from some

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<p>dimensión paralela.</p> <p>Pero lo peor fue lo que vi al reverso del monolito:</p> <p>Un nombre. Grabado con cuchillo. Un nombre que me congeló el alma.</p> <p>Adeline.</p> <p>No, no se trataba de un monumento. Era en realidad un altar.</p> <p>Estremecido me encontraba por aquel descubrimiento cuando escuchamos entonces el sonido de un mosquete disparado al aire, señal inequívoca de atención. Le siguió de inmediato un grito:</p> <p>— ¡La Bestia! ¡La Bestia ha matado de nuevo!</p> <p>Era de día, aquel monstruo infernal atacaba también bajo la luz del sol.</p> <p>Una joven llamada Margot, hija del carnicero, no regresó de recoger leña en el bosque. Nadie escuchó gritos, nadie vio huellas, nadie percibió absolutamente nada. Solo aquel cuervo, otra vez, graznando desde el campanario, avisó como usualmente, del ataque del demonio de Gévaudan.</p> <p>Y por primera vez desde que llegué... Duvernay me pidió que no lo dejara solo..</p>	<p>parallel dimension.</p> <p>And yet, the worst thing was what I saw on the back of the monolith:</p> <p>A name. Carved with a knife. A name that froze my soul.</p> <p>Adeline.</p> <p>No, it was not about a monument. It was actually an altar.</p> <p>I was shaken by this discovery when we heard the sound of a musket fired into the air, an unmistakable signal for attention. It was immediately followed by a shout:</p> <p>“The Beast! The Beast has killed again!”</p> <p>It was daytime, and that infernal monster also attacked under the sunlight.</p> <p>A young woman named Margot, the butcher’s daughter, did not return from gathering wood in the forest. No one heard screams, no one saw footprints, no one sensed absolutely anything. Only that raven, once again, cawing from the bell tower, warned as usual of the attack by the Gévaudan demon.</p> <p>And for the first time since I arrived... Duvernay asked me not to leave him alone...</p>



Capítulo IV

El lamento de la luna

Corríamos sin detenernos, el aliento formando nubes blancas frente a nosotros, el martillo del miedo golpeando nuestro pecho.

— ¡La Bestia! — alcanzamos a escuchar —. ¡Ha matado de nuevo, y esta vez no fue en la oscuridad!

Los aldeanos comenzaban a congregarse con

Chapter IV

The moon's lament

We did not stop running, our breath materializing as white clouds before us, and fear hammered at our chests like a pounding fist.

“The Beast!” we heard someone shout. “It’s killed again, and this time it wasn’t in the dark!”

<p>rostros pálidos y susurrantes. Caían de rodillas, implorando el perdón de Dios por lo que estaba pasando... como una forma de ser expiados de su castigo.</p> <p>El cuerpo de Margot yacía más allá del molino, arrastrado hasta casi desaparecer entre la nieve, la cual parecía querer borrar la escena por pura vergüenza. Estaba desnuda, su ropa completamente destrozada se encontraba varios metros más atrás. La carne desgarrada, las heridas profundas, la sangre mezclada con el hielo. Todo aquello era parte de un lienzo macabro pintado por una mano invisible, salvaje y cruel.</p> <p>Un silencio pesado, casi sacro, cayó sobre los presentes. Nadie se atrevía a hablar; el miedo era un velo que cubría cada rostro, cada mirada que oscilaba entre la incredulidad y la certeza fatal.</p>	<p>The villagers began to gather, their faces pale and their voices whispering. They fell to their knees, begging God’s forgiveness for what was happening...as a way of atoning for their sins and avert punishment.</p> <p>Margot’s body lay beyond the windmill, dragged until it almost disappeared in the snow, which apparently wanted to wipe away the scene out of pure shame. She had nothing on; her ripped clothes were scattered several feet apart. Her flesh was torn, her wounds deep, her blood mixed with the ice. It was all part of a macabre canvas painted by an invisible, savage, and cruel hand.</p> <p>A heavy, almost sacred silence fell over those present. No one dared to speak; fear was a veil covering every face, every gaze oscillating between disbelief and fatal uncertainty.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 47</p> <p>Duvernay se acercó, su voz era un susurro que parecía venir desde una caverna lejana, llena de ecos y secretos oscuros.</p> <p>— Monsieur, ya no es cuestión de leyendas o supersticiones. Lo que nos acecha es algo que va más allá de nuestra razón. Es la sombra que se arrastra bajo la piel de este pueblo.</p> <p>Su frase se clavó en mi mente como una daga helada.</p> <p>Duvernay sabía algo. Ya fuera por convicción</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 47</p> <p>Duvernay approached, his voice was a whisper that seemed to come from a distant cave, full of echoes and dark secrets.</p> <p>“Monsieur, this is no longer a matter of legends or superstitions. What’s hunting us is something that goes beyond our understanding. It’s the shadow that creeps beneath the skin of this town.”</p> <p>His words pierced in my mind like a frozen dagger.</p>

<p>u obligación había mantenido silencio... Pude notar que todo aquello se le había salido de las manos, y deseaba sin lugar a dudas que se detuviera.</p> <p>Escuchamos entonces un aullido terrible, un gemido infernal que sacudió completamente mis creencias. Los aldeanos asustados comenzaron a correr hacia Langogne y todos los demás nos replegamos junto con ellos.</p> <p>Varios hombres fuertes barricaron las entradas, escuchamos enormes pisadas rodeando la aldea. Una respiración pesada y un descomunal animal que estremecía los árboles al correr desesperadamente junto a ellos.</p> <p>Disparos, recargas de mosquetes, pero el enorme animal infernal seguía su camino, rugía, rasgaba las paredes de piedra y aullaba nuevamente, sediento de sangre.</p> <p>Desde la plaza, convocamos a los hombres más fuertes y valientes. Las antorchas que encendieron no eran solo luces, sino llamas de desafío contra la oscuridad y el mal que había descendido sobre Langogne.</p>	<p>Duvernay knew something. Either out of conviction or obligation, he remained silent. I could notice that the whole situation had gotten out of hand, and he certainly wanted it to stop.</p> <p>Then we heard a terrible howl, a groan so hellish that it made me doubt everything. The frightened villagers began to run towards Langogne and the rest of us retreated with them.</p> <p>Several strong men barricaded the entrances, and we heard enormous footsteps surrounding the village. There was a heavy breathing and a huge animal that shook the trees as it ran desperately alongside them.</p> <p>Shots fired, muskets on reload, the huge infernal animal kept moving forward, roaring, tearing at the stone walls and howling again, thirsty for blood.</p> <p>From the plaza, we summoned the strongest and bravest men. The torches they lit were not only lights, but also flames challenging the darkness and the evil that had descended upon Langogne.</p>
<p>Página 48</p> <p>En sus ojos vi la mezcla ancestral de valor y de terror, la misma que había leído en los relatos que estudié en París, esas historias donde la humanidad tenía que hacer frente a lo desconocido, y ganaba a punta de férrea</p>	<p>Page 48</p> <p>In their eyes I saw the ancestral mixture of courage and terror, the same I had read about in the narratives I studied in Paris, those stories where humanity had to face the unknown, and won through sheer willpower.</p>

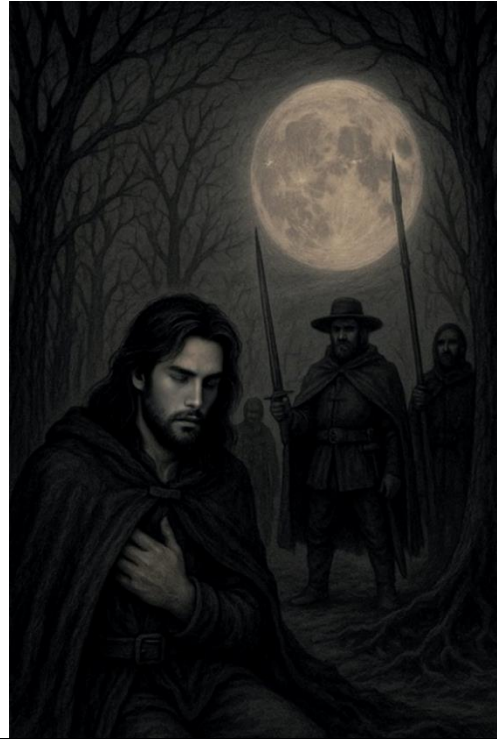
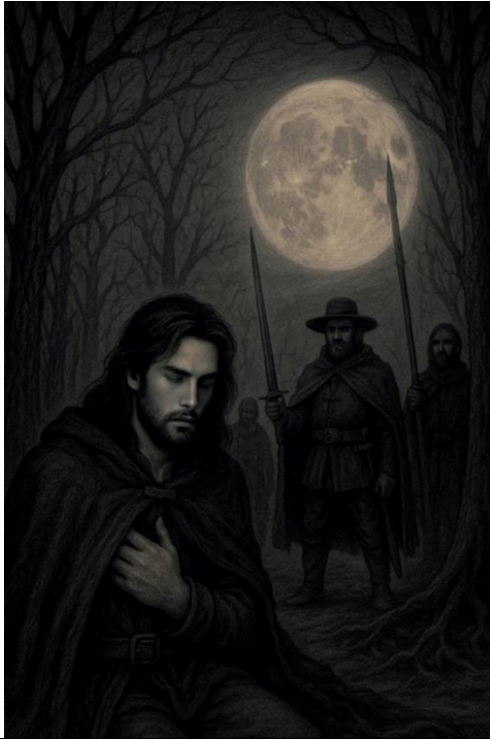
<p>voluntad.</p> <p>No habiendo escuchado del extraño animal por una hora nos internamos en el bosque con una solemnidad funesta, como si camináramos hacia el altar de un dios olvidado, castigador y despiadado.</p> <p>El aire se espesaba, el frío mordía la piel, y un lamento profundo parecía surgir de entre las raíces y las piedras, un lamento que solamente la luna y el aire podían escuchar. La Bestia estaba cerca, y esta vez, ya no había vuelta atrás.</p> <p>El bosque se cerraba a nuestro alrededor como una boca hambrienta. Las antorchas lanzaban sombras que bailaban y se estiraban, proyectando figuras casi vivas entre los troncos y la hojarasca. Cada paso nos acercaba a lo desconocido, al límite entre lo natural y lo sobrenatural.</p> <p>El aire se volvió denso, cargado de un olor que no podía identificar del todo, pero que me hizo apretar los dientes. Sentí un escalofrío que recorrió mi espalda como si se tratase de una dura corriente eléctrica sacada de las conclusiones de William Gilbert.</p> <p>— ¡Quietos! — gritó Duvernay de repente, levantando la mano —. Algo está aquí.</p> <p>Un susurro bajo, como un viento rasgado entre las hojas, se mezcló con el latido acelerado de mi corazón. De repente, un</p>	<p>After an hour without hearing the strange animal, we went deep into the forest with a dismal solemnity, as if we were walking to the altar of a forgotten, punishing, and merciless god.</p> <p>The air grew thick, the cold bit into the skin, and a profound lament seemed to rise from among the roots and stones, a lament that only the moon and the air could hear. The Beast was near, and this time, there was no turning back.</p> <p>The forest surrounded us like a hungry mouth. The torches cast shadows that danced and stretched, projecting figures that almost came to life among the trunks and fallen leaves. Each step brought us closer to the unknown, to the boundary between the natural and the supernatural.</p> <p>The air grew heavy with a smell that I could not identify completely, but it made me clench my teeth. I felt a shiver run down my spine, as if it were a powerful electric current from William Gilbert's conclusions.</p> <p>“Halt!” Duvernay suddenly shouted, raising his hand. “Something’s here.”</p> <p>A low whisper, like a current of air rustling through the leaves, mingled with my racing heartbeat. Suddenly, there was a</p>
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Página 49	Page 49
<p>movimiento rapido, furtivo. Demasiado veloz para poder ser causado por cualquier hombre, animal o ser creado por Dios.</p>	<p>quick, furtive movement. It was too fast to be caused by any man, animal or creature made by God.</p>
<p>Una sombra oscura, enorme, surgió de entre los árboles con una fuerza terrible, que hizo vibrar la tierra bajo mis pies.</p>	<p>A huge, dark shadow emerged from among the trees with a terrible strength, which made the ground shake beneath my feet.</p>
<p>La Bestia de Gévaudan.</p>	<p>The Beast of Gévaudan.</p>
<p>Su pelaje era de un negro azabache que absorbía toda luz a su alrededor. Sus ojos, dos brasas amarillas que ardían con inteligencia y ferocidad. Sus fauces, llenas de colmillos, parecían querer desgarrar la mismísima noche.</p>	<p>Its fur was jet black, absorbing all the light around it. Its eyes, two yellow embers burning with intelligence and ferocity. Its jaws, full of fangs, looked as if they wanted to tear apart the night itself.</p>
<p>Sentí su aliento caliente y putrefacto incluso cuando me encontraba varios metros alejado. Corrió a cuatro patas y sentí temblar la tierra como en un gran cataclismo. Mis piernas no pudieron separarse del suelo, no pude correr, no pude escapar, no pude hacer nada. Y me golpeó, me lanzó contra el suelo con una fuerza sobrehumana. El impacto fue brutal; el aire salió de mis pulmones en un ahogado gemido.</p>	<p>I felt its hot and putrid breath even though I was several feet apart. It ran on all fours and I felt the earth shake like in a great cataclysm. My legs were rooted, I could not run, I could not escape, I could not do anything. The Beast hit me and threw me to the ground with superhuman strength. The impact was brutal; the air left my lungs in a choked groan.</p>
<p>Me levanté, y peleé contra mi miedo, mi voluntad y desesperación. Pude ver a los hombres, y a Duvernay hacerle frente a una criatura que jamás había visto: un ser terrible, de grandes dimensiones, nunca antes documentado, con una furia increíblemente astuta, calculada y muy... humana. Mis manos buscaron cualquier arma, cualquier roca; mi</p>	<p>I stood up, and fought against my fear, my will, and my despair. I could see the men, and Duvernay, facing a creature I had never seen: a terrible being, of great dimensions, never documented before, with an incredibly cunning, calculated and very...human fury. My hands searched for any weapon, any rock; my own fist clenched in a futile attempt against that mass of muscle, voracity and fury.</p>

<p>propio puño se cerró en un intento inútil contra aquella masa de músculo, voracidad y furia.</p> <p>Sus garras se hundieron en mi abrigo, rasgándolo como papel. El dolor se convirtió en un fuego terrible que me consumía. Un</p>	<p>Its claws sank into my coat, tearing it like paper. The pain turned into a terrible fire that consumed me. A</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 50</p> <p>disparo retumbó, el eco resonó en el bosque, pero la Bestia apenas se detuvo.</p> <p>Justo cuando creí que el fin había llegado, voces y golpes la hicieron retroceder. Duvernay y los demás habían disparado sus armas y lanzado sus antorchas creando un incendio sobre la seca hojarasca. La criatura, con un gruñido profundo que parecía un rugido ancestral, desapareció entre la maleza, dejando tras de sí un rastro de terror, muerte y sangre.</p> <p>Quedé tendido sobre la nieve, temblando, el corazón golpeando salvajemente en el interior de mi pecho. Por primera vez, la certeza me invadió con la fuerza de una tormenta.</p> <p>La Bestia no era un mito. Era absolutamente real.</p> <p>Las voces de los hombres eran ecos distantes, rotos por el zumbido que inundaba mis oídos. Sentía la sangre caliente empapando mi camisa, mezclándose con la escarcha y la tierra húmeda. Mis dedos temblaban, torpes, inútiles. Cada respiración era una herida.</p> <p>Duvernay se arrodilló junto a mí, su rostro</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 50</p> <p>shot fired, its echo resonated in the forest, but the Beast barely stopped.</p> <p>Just when I believed it was the end, voices and blows made it retreat. Duvernay and the rest had fired their weapons and thrown their torches, setting the dry leaves on fire. The creature, with a deep growl that seemed like an ancestral roar, disappeared in the undergrowth, leaving behind a trace of horror, death, and blood.</p> <p>I lay on the snow, trembling, my heart beating savagely inside my chest. For the first time, certainty seized me with the strength of a storm.</p> <p>The Beast was not a myth. It was absolutely real.</p> <p>The men's voices were distant echoes, broken by the buzzing that flooded my ears. I felt warm blood soaking in my shirt, mixing with the frost and damp earth. My fingers were trembling, clumsy, useless. Every breath was painful.</p>

<p>más pálido que la luna sobre nuestras cabezas.</p> <p>— ¡Armand! ¡Resiste, por Dios! — gritó, y por primera vez desde que lo conocí, su voz no llevaba autoridad... sino miedo, ansiedad y desesperación.</p> <p>Su mano firme buscó las heridas, revisando mi torso. Tres surcos profundos cruzaban mi costado izquierdo, como si la criatura hubiera querido abrirme para leerme por dentro. Había</p>	<p>Duvernay knelt beside me, his face was paler than the moon above our heads.</p> <p>“Armand! Hold on, for God’s sake!” he shouted, and for the first time since I met him, his voice did not carry authority...but fear, anxiety, and despair.</p> <p>His steady hand searched for wounds, checking my torso. Three deep gashes marked my left side, as if the creature had wanted to open me up to read my soul. There was</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 51</p> <p>otra más cerca del hombro, menos profunda, pero igual de salvaje. El abrigo estaba hecho jirones.</p> <p>— No me ha matado... — susurré entre dientes —, pero lo intentó. Me miró a los ojos, Duvernay. Sabía lo que hacía.</p> <p>Él se quedó en silencio, y por un momento no oímos nada más que los suspiros del bosque. Los hombres permanecían en círculo, alertas, sin atreverse a hablar. La sombra de la bestia seguía acechando entre los árboles.</p> <p>— Nunca había visto algo así — murmuró el alguacil finalmente —. Ni lobo, ni perro salvaje. Era otra cosa. Caminaba como un hombre...</p> <p>— Ni hombre... ni animal... como tú has dicho, mi amigo... otra cosa — le dije</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 51</p> <p>another one closer to the shoulder, less deep but just as savage. The coat was torn to shreds.</p> <p>“It hasn’t killed me...” I whispered under my breath, “but it tried. It looked me in the eye, Duvernay. It knew what it was doing.”</p> <p>He remained silent, and for a moment we heard nothing but the sighs of the forest. The men stayed in a circle, alert, not daring to speak. The shadow of the beast kept lurking among the trees.</p> <p>“I’d never seen anything like this,” the sheriff finally muttered. “Not a wolf, not a wild dog. It was something else. It walked like a man...”</p> <p>“Neither man...nor animal...as you have said, my friend...something else.” I said, trying to resist.</p>

<p>intentando resitir.</p> <p>Duvernay asintió, con una mirada perdida, como si sus certezas se hubiesen derrumbado en un solo instante. Luego, bajó la cabeza.</p> <p>— Te salvamos por segundos. Si no hubiéramos estado tan cerca...</p> <p>— No me salvaste tú, Duvernay — lo interrumpí, con la voz áspera —. Me salvó el placer que sintió cuando me oyó gritar. Aquello era justo lo que buscaba, lo que quería.</p> <p>Sus ojos se encontraron con los míos. No hubo respuesta.</p> <p>Me ayudaron a levantarme entre dos hombres. Cada paso era un</p>	<p>Duvernay nodded, his gaze was lost, as if his convictions had collapsed in just an instant. Then, he lowered his head.</p> <p>“We barely saved you. If we hadn’t been so close...”</p> <p>“You didn’t save me, Duvernay,” I interrupted him, my voice was rough. “The pleasure it felt when it heard me scream saved me. That was just what it was looking for, what it wanted.”</p> <p>He looked at me. There was no response.</p> <p>Two men helped me stand up. Each step was like a</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 52</p> <p>cuchillo que se hundía más profundo. La sangre seguía brotando, aunque menos que antes. Duvernay tomó una antorcha y se volvió al grupo.</p> <p>— Volvemos al pueblo. Esta noche sobrevivimos.</p> <p>Y, sin embargo, mientras retrocedíamos entre sombras y ramas, yo sabía que aquello no había terminado. Al contrario.. recién comenzaba.</p> <p>En mi carne llevaba las marcas de la Bestia. Y en mi alma, el frío eco de su fuerza.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 52</p> <p>knife sinking deeper. The blood kept flowing, although less than before. Duvernay took a torch and turned to the group.</p> <p>“We’re going back to the town. Tonight we survive.”</p> <p>And yet, while we retreated through shadows and branches, I knew it was not over; in contrast...it was just the beginning.</p> <p>I was bearing the marks of the Beast in my flesh. And in my soul, there was the cold echo of its strength.</p>



Capítulo V

Los que callan

Desperté en la penumbra. El mundo era una cáscara hueca llena de susurros. Una vela moribunda parpadeaba sobre la mesa, y su luz temblorosa proyectaba mi silueta contra la pared como si no fuese mía.

El cuerpo me dolía. No como duele una herida... sino como duele el despertar tras una pesadilla que no se entiende del todo. Las vendas en mi costado estaban empapadas; no

Chapter V

Those who remain silent

I woke up in the darkness. The world was a hollow shell full of whispers. A dying candle flickered on the table, and its trembling light cast my silhouette against the wall as if it were not mine.

My body hurt, but not in the same way as a wound...rather, it was like the pain of waking up after a nightmare you do not entirely understand. The bandages on my

<p>solo de sangre, sino de un sudor espeso, casi aceitoso. El frío de la habitación me calaba hasta los huesos, pero dentro de mí ardía un calor animal, algo salvaje.</p> <p>Intenté incorporarme. Un mareo me golpeó como una ola. Los latidos de mi corazón eran torpes, irregulares, y por un momento... escuché algo más.</p> <p>Un ruido sordo, un goteo, el crujido de la madera... y más allá... un aullido en la distancia. Pero el mismo no estaba afuera. Venía desde mi interior.</p> <p>Sobre la mesita descansaba una vasija con agua turbia, y junto a ella, una pequeña navaja. No recordaba haberla dejado allí. La tomé con dedos temblorosos y acerqué su hoja al fuego para ver mi reflejo.</p>	<p>side were soaked, not only with blood, but with a thick, almost oily sweat. The cold in the room chilled me to the bone, but inside me burned an animal heat, something wild.</p> <p>I tried to sit up. Dizziness hit me like a wave. My heartbeat was clumsy, irregular, and for a moment... I heard something else.</p> <p>A dull thud, a drip, the creaking of wood... and beyond...a howl in the distance. Although it was not from the outside. It was coming from my inner self.</p> <p>There was a pot with murky water on the small table, and next to it, a small pocketknife. I do not remember leaving it there. I picked it up with my trembling hand and brought its blade closer to the fire to see my reflection.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 55</p> <p>Mi rostro estaba demacrado: pálido, los ojos inyectados en sangre. Pero lo que me heló la sangre no fue la expresión vencida... sino mis pupilas. Eran más negras que de costumbre. Más grandes. Anormales.</p> <p>Y por un instante — solo un instante —, la cara reflejada no parecía del todo mía.</p> <p>Escuché pasos en el pasillo. Rápidos, nerviosos. La puerta se abrió sin aviso.</p> <p>— ¡Armand! — era Duvernay. Su rostro se relajó al verme despierto, aunque sus ojos cargaban un peso nuevo, como si hubiese envejecido una década más desde la noche</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p> <p>My face was gaunt: pale, my eyes bloodshot. What gave me the chills was not my baffling expression...but my pupils. They were blacker than usual, larger, abnormal.</p> <p>And for a moment —just a moment— the face in the reflection did not seem entirely mine.</p> <p>I heard fast, hesitant footsteps in the hallway. The door opened without warning.</p> <p>“Armand!” It was Duvernay. His face relaxed when he saw me awake, although his eyes carried a new burden, as if he had aged</p>

<p>anterior —. Estuviste inconsciente casi un día completo. Creímos que...</p> <p>— Sigo aquí — dije con voz ronca.</p> <p>El alguacil se acercó, arrastrando una silla. Se sentó sin pedirme permiso, y durante varios segundos, ninguno dijo nada. Solo el murmullo de la vela y la respiración entrecortada de ambos llenaban la estancia.</p> <p>— ¿La viste bien? — preguntó finalmente.</p> <p>— Demasiado bien.</p> <p>Duvernay bajó la mirada. Hizo girar el sombrero entre sus dedos.</p> <p>— Los hombres están inquietos. Algunos quieren huir. Otros... murmuran cosas. Sobre antiguos pecados. Sobre castigos</p>	<p>another decade since last night. “You were unconscious for almost an entire day. We thought you...”</p> <p>“I’m still here.” I said in a hoarse voice.</p> <p>The sheriff approached, dragging a chair. He sat down without asking my permission, and for several seconds, neither of us said anything. Only the candle’s mutter and our ragged breathing filled the room.</p> <p>“Did you get a good look at it?” he finally asked.</p> <p>“Too good.”</p> <p>Duvernay looked down. He twirled the hat between his fingers.</p> <p>“The men are restless. Some want to flee. Others.... mutter things about ancient sins, about punishments</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 56</p> <p>divinos. Incluso sobre ti.</p> <p>— ¿Sobre mí?</p> <p>— Te vieron cubierto de sangre. Dicen que no gritaste. Que no parecía que te doliera. Que tu mirada... no era humana.</p> <p>No supe qué responder. Porque parte de eso,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p> <p>of divine origin, even about you.”</p> <p>“About me?”</p> <p>“They saw you covered in blood. They say that you didn’t scream. That you didn’t seem to be in pain. That your gaze...wasn’t human.”</p>

<p>en el fondo, era verdad.</p> <p>— Te pido algo — dijo él antes de marcharse —. No les digas nada. No sobre lo que viste, ni lo que sentiste. El pueblo ya se desmorona con solo una sombra. Si les damos nombre a los monstruos... el caos se hará con el control de Gévaudan.</p> <p>— ¿Y si el caos, ya ha llegado? — dije en un tono insoportable, casi sarcástico.</p> <p>Duvernay no respondió. Se levantó, dirigió una mirada silenciosa hacia mi pesadumbre y cerró la puerta tras de sí.</p> <p>Quedé otra vez a solas, pero no del todo. Porque desde entonces... sentía algo más en mí. Un susurro en la sangre. Un hambre que en aquel momento aún desconocía.</p> <p>Y la luna, aquella noche, no me dejó dormir.</p> <p>Desde la partida de Duvernay, la casa había permanecido en un silencio casi sepulcral, roto solamente por el crujir ocasional de la madera, y el susurro del viento al entrar por las rendijas.</p> <p>La penumbra se hacía amiga de mis pensamientos más oscuros. Desvariaba... escuchaba voces en el pasillo, un hombre... una</p>	<p>I did not know how to respond. Because part of that, deep down, was true.</p> <p>“I ask one thing of you,” he said before leaving. “Don’t tell them anything. Not about what you saw or felt. The town is already crumbling with just a shadow. If we give name to monsters... chaos will take over Gévaudan.”</p> <p>“And what if the chaos is already here?” I said in an unbearable, almost sarcastic tone.</p> <p>Duvernay did not answer. He stood up, turned his silent gaze towards my gloom, and closed the door behind him.</p> <p>I was alone again, but not entirely. Because since then...I felt something else inside me. A whisper in my blood. A hunger that I still did not recognize at that time.</p> <p>And that night, the moon kept me awake.</p> <p>Since Duvernay left, the house had remained in an almost deathly silence, broken only by the occasional creaking of the wood, and the whisper of the wind entering through the cracks.</p> <p>The shadows became a friend to my darkest thoughts. I was delirious...I heard voices in the hallway, a man...a</p>
<p>Página 57</p> <p>mujer. Hablaban sobre mí, sobre mi estado... sobre lo peligroso que era tenerme junto a</p>	<p>Page 57</p> <p>woman. They were talking about me, about my condition...about how dangerous it was</p>

ellos. No estaba en *Le Loup Noir*... ¿A dónde me habían llevado?

— Armand — una voz femenina, delicada, temblorosa, apenas un susurro entre las sombras, me hizo abrir los ojos. Al parecer en medio de aquel terrible caos, me había perdido.

Me giré con dificultad, y mis ojos la encontraron. Era joven, pálida como la cera, los ojos grandes y oscuros como pozos recién cavados. Tenía el rostro enmarcado por una melena espesa y ondulada, color castaño oscuro, que le caía sobre los hombros con la indolencia de las ramas en otoño. Llevaba un vestido sencillo, con los bordes del delantal manchados por algo que parecía tinte o barro seco. En sus brazos traía un cuenco, una toalla doblada y una botella pequeña de vidrio opaco.

— ¿Quién eres? — pregunté, sorprendido.

— Élise — dijo, bajando la mirada —. Soy la hija del alguacil de Langogne, Mathieu Duvernay.

No pude evitar arquear una ceja. ¿Duvernay tenía una hija? Jamás la había mencionado. Ni en las largas caminatas por el bosque ni en las noches de vino, historias y silencio.

—No sabía que él...

— No debe extrañarle — interrumpió con suavidad —. Mucho menos desconfiar de mi padre. Verá usted, monsieur, mi madre murió

to have me around them. I was not in *Le Loup Noir* ...Where did they take me?

“Armand,” a delicate, trembling female voice, barely a whisper among the shadows, made me open my eyes. Apparently, in the midst of that terrible chaos, I had gotten lost.

I turned with difficulty, and my eyes found her. She was young, pale as wax, her eyes were as big and dark as freshly dug wells. Her face was framed by an abundant, wavy, dark brown hair, which fell down on her shoulders with the indolence of branches in autumn. She wore a simple dress, the edges of the apron stained by something that looked like dye or dry mud. In her arms she carried a bowl, a folded towel, and a small opaque glass bottle.

“Who are you?” I asked, surprised.

“Élise,” she said, lowering her gaze. “I’m the daughter of Langogne’s sheriff, Mathieu Duvernay.”

I could not help raising an eyebrow. Duvernay had a daughter? He had never mentioned her. Not even during the long walks in the forest, nor during the evenings of wine, stories and silence.



“I didn’t know he...”

“You shouldn’t be surprised,” she interrupted softly. “Don’t be suspicious of my father either. You see, monsieur, my

<p>cuando yo era pequeña, y mi padre... se encargó de mi</p>	<p>mother died when I was little, and my father...took care of my</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 58</p> <p>crianza. Dice que este no es lugar para una muchacha, y más aún con el asunto de la Bestia. Imagino que no ha querido hacerme notar.</p> <p>Se acercó sin pedir permiso y dejó las cosas sobre la mesa. El aire cambió con su presencia: algo más cálido, más humano, perturbó la quietud de la habitación. Su mirada era la de alguien que había experimentado el miedo, no porque lo hubiera visto, sino por lo que siempre había temido ver.</p> <p>— Él me pidió que viniera a ayudar — continuó, sin levantar la vista —. No quiso decirme mucho, solo que estaba herido y que... debía guardar reposo.</p> <p>Asentí, incapaz de negarle nada a aquella voz quebradiza, casi suplicante. Ella empapó la toalla y empezó a limpiar con sumo cuidado los bordes de mis heridas, sin apartar sus ojos de la tarea.</p> <p>Sus dedos eran fríos al tacto, pero su gesto estaba lleno de una ternura silenciosa. A cada roce, me sentía menos un hombre atrapado por las garras del mal, y más un simple cuerpo vivo, herido, pero aún aferrado a algo parecido a la esperanza.</p> <p>— ¿Tienes miedo? — le pregunté de pronto.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 58</p> <p>upbringing. He says this is no place for a lady, especially with the Beast problem going on. I guess he doesn't want me to stand out.”</p> <p>She approached without asking for permission and left the things on the table. The air changed with her presence: something warmer, more human, perturbed the room's stillness. Her eyes had the look of someone who had been afraid—not because she had witnessed it, but because of what she had always feared to see.</p> <p>“He asked me to come and help,” she continued, without looking up. “He didn't want to tell me much, only that you were injured and that...you needed rest.”</p> <p>I nodded, incapable of denying something to that shaky, almost pleading voice. She soaked the towel and began to clean carefully the edges of my wounds, without taking her eyes off the task.</p> <p>Her fingers were cold to the touch, but her gestures were filled with silent tenderness. With every touch, I felt less like a man who was trapped in the clutches of evil, and more like a simple living body, wounded but still clinging to something resembling hope.</p> <p>“Are you afraid?” I suddenly asked.</p>

<p>Ella dudó. Luego, asintió sin decir palabra.</p> <p>— De mí.</p> <p>Hubo otra pausa.</p> <p>— No... no de usted, de todo — susurró.</p>	<p>She hesitated. Then, she nodded without saying a word.</p> <p>“...of me.”</p> <p>There was another pause.</p> <p>“No... not of you, of everything.” She whispered.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 59</p> <p>Entonces la vi de verdad. No solo la joven hermosa y frágil que entró sin ser esperada, sino la mujer que el miedo había convertido en piedra: alguien que caminaba entre ruinas, recogiendo trozos de normalidad para no volverse loca.</p> <p>Su belleza no era llamativa ni artificial; era el tipo de hermosura que se descubre solo cuando uno deja de buscarla. Aquella piel con el tono de las primeras nieves del invierno, y sus labios que parecían siempre al borde de decir algo... que no se atrevía a pronunciar.</p> <p>— No deberías estar aquí — le dije.</p> <p>—Lo sé — respondió.</p> <p>— Es peligroso.</p> <p>—También lo sé.</p> <p>Y, sin embargo, se quedó.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 59</p> <p>Then I truly saw her. Not just the beautiful, delicate lady who entered unexpectedly, but the woman whom fear had turned to stone: someone who walked among ruins, gathering pieces of normality to avoid going mad.</p> <p>Her beauty was not flashy nor artificial; it was the type of beauty that you only discover when you stop looking for it. Her skin resembled the color of the first winter snow, and her lips always seemed on the verge of saying something...that she did not dare to say.</p> <p>“You shouldn’t be here,” I said.</p> <p>“I know,” she replied.</p> <p>“It’s dangerous.”</p> <p>“I know that too.”</p> <p>And yet, she stayed.</p>

<p>Durante las noches siguientes, Élise regresó. Siempre en silencio, siempre con los mismos ojos cargados de temores y una calma que no era del todo suya. Me curaba, me hablaba a veces de cosas triviales — el jardín que su madre solía cuidar, los libros que escondía en la buhardilla — y a veces solo se sentaba, mirando por la ventana como si esperara que algo terrible cruzara el horizonte.</p> <p>Yo, por mi parte, comencé a esperar sus pasos. A necesitar su voz. A imaginarla en mis sueños... incluso en aquellos donde la Bestia devoraba mis entrañas.</p>	<p>During the following nights, Élise returned. Always silently, always with the same eyes full of fears and a calmness that was not entirely her own. She healed me; sometimes she talked to me about trivial matters—the garden her mother used to take care of, the books she hid in the attic—and sometimes she would just sit there, staring out the window as if waiting for something terrible to cross the horizon.</p> <p>As for me, I began to wait for her footsteps, to need her voice, to imagine her in my dreams... even in those where the Beast devoured my insides.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 60</p> <p>Una noche, mientras la fiebre retrocedía, me tocó la frente con el dorso de la mano. Luego, sin mirarme, dijo con tranquilidad:</p> <p>— No sé qué te pasó esa noche, y lo cierto es que no quiero saberlo. Pero pase lo que pase, no estás solo, ¿entiendes?</p> <p>Asentí. Porque era mentira, porque sí lo estaba. Pero en ese instante... en ese preciso momento... quise creer en sus palabras.</p> <p>Quise creer que aún quedaba algo de mí que pudiera amar y ser amado, antes de que la luna, algún día no muy lejano, reclamara mi alma... mi cuerpo y mi voluntad... de manera definitiva.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 60</p> <p>One night, while the fever subsided, she touched my forehead with the back of her hand. Then, without looking at me, she said calmly:</p> <p>“I don’t know what happened to you that night, and certainly I don’t want to know. But no matter what happens, you’re not alone, you understand?”</p> <p>I nodded, because that was a lie. I was alone, but at that time...at that very moment... I wanted to trust what she said.</p> <p>I wanted to believe that there was still a part of me that could love and be loved, before the moon eventually seized my soul, body, and will... once and for all.</p>

<p>Página 61</p> 	<p>Page 61</p> 
<p>Página 62 (En blanco)</p>	<p>Page 62 (Blank)</p>
<p>Página 63</p> <p>SEGUNDA PARTE</p> <p>LA SANGRE Y EL SILENCIO</p>	<p>Page 63</p> <p>SECOND PART</p> <p>BLOOD AND SILENCE</p>
<p>Página 64</p> <p>Capítulo VI</p> <p>El aliento del bosque</p>	<p>Page 64</p> <p>Chapter VI</p> <p>The forest's breath</p>

No todo lo que vive respira con pulmones. Hay cosas que laten debajo de la tierra, que exhalan silencio y muerte. Y cuando caminas entre árboles muertos... puedes realmente percibir su aliento.

Dormía poco. O más bien... fingía dormir para escapar del mundo, de la realidad... mi realidad, la cual no deseaba enfrentar.

Había noches en las que la fiebre regresaba. No como un calor normal, sino como un incendio bajo la piel, uno que no ardía por fuera, sino por dentro, desde la médula misma de mis huesos. En esos momentos, me levantaba sin saber por qué. Caminaba hasta la ventana, respiraba hondo... y olía el bosque.

Y no era un olor común. Era como si pudiera distinguir cada raíz húmeda, cada musgo, cada madriguera. Como si el bosque tuviera una voz. No una voz que hablara, sino que exhalaba... respiraba. Completamente vivo y consciente.

Y esa exhalación, esa vida bajo la vida... me llamaba, reclamaba mi presencia. Élise lo notaba. No lo decía, pero lo veía en sus ojos. Me observaba con una mezcla de ternura y

Not everything that is alive breathes with lungs. There are things that beat beneath the earth, exhaling silence and death. And when you walk among dead trees... you can really sense their breath.

I did not sleep much. Or rather... I pretended to be asleep so that I could escape the world, reality...my reality, which I did not want to face.

There were nights when the fever returned, not as a normal heat, but like a fire beneath my skin. A fire that burned inside instead of outside, from the very marrow of my bones. At those moments, I would get up without knowing why. I would walk to the window, take a deep breath...and smell the forest.

That smell was not common. It was as if I could distinguish every damp root, every piece of moss, and every burrow. It seemed as though the forest had a voice, but instead of speaking, it was exhaling and...breathing. As if the forest were completely alive and conscious.

That breath, that life underneath life... called me, demanding my presence. Élise sensed it. She did not say so, but I could see it in her eyes. She looked at me with a mixture of tenderness and

terror, como si cada día no supiera si iba a curar a un hombre... o a una criatura que aún no entendía. Yo tampoco lo sabía.

Una mañana, al despertar, encontré una nota bajo mi plato. La letra era firme, un trazo que ya conocía muy bien.

Volveré al anochecer. Mi padre se ha marchado al valle de Apcher. Dicen que han encontrado algo en el viejo monasterio. No salgas, por favor.

Élise.

El valle de Apcher, un antiguo castillo en ruinas al oeste, perdido en el tiempo entre colinas y niebla. Allí se encontraba el viejo monasterio, un lugar del que nadie hablaba con claridad, un sitio oscuro... maldito, evitado incluso por los animales del lugar. Se decía que, durante la gran peste, los monjes lo sellaron desde dentro... y que jamás la volvieron a abrir. Todos murieron en ese entonces, víctimas de la enfermedad, de la religión que pensaron les sanaría.

Y, sin embargo, algo en mí no obedecía a Élise. Algo en mi sangre se puso de pie antes que yo.

terror, as if every day she was not sure whether she was going to heal a man... or a creature she did not understand yet. I did not know either.

One morning, when I woke up, I found a note under my plate. The handwriting was firm, a stroke I knew quite well.

I will return at dusk. My father has gone to the Apcher Valley. They say they have found something in the old monastery. Do not go out, please.

Élise.

The Apcher Valley, an ancient castle in ruins to the west, lost in time among hills and mist. The old monastery was there. No one spoke clearly of that area; it was a dark place...cursed, avoided even by the local animals. It was said that, during the great plague, monks sealed it from the inside...and never opened it again. All of them died back then, as victims of the disease and the religion they thought would heal them.

And yet, something in me did not obey Élise. Something in my blood stood up before me.

<p>Salí, la bruma todavía deambulaba por los campos. El bosque parecía más oscuro de lo habitual, como si me hubiese esperado toda la noche. Mis pasos me llevaban sin pensar, como si conociera el camino desde antes de nacer. Los sonidos parecían</p>	<p>I went outside; the haze was still drifting across the fields. The forest seemed darker than usual, as though it had been waiting for me all night. I walked without thinking, as if I had known the way before I was born. The sounds seemed</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 66</p> <p>distintos esta vez, ya no era el trinar de los pájaros o el crujido de las ramas, sino algo más profundo, rítmico... algo parecido a un latido. Como si la tierra cobrara vida, respirara.</p> <p>Y entonces lo vi. Un ciervo negro, sus ojos completamente blancos. Se encontraba allí, inmóvil, en medio del sendero.</p> <p>Me miró. No con miedo, ni curiosidad. Pareció reconocerme, y sin hacer el más mínimo ruido, se internó en la espesura.</p> <p>Por supuesto, lo seguí.</p> <p>Durante un tiempo indeterminado — porque perdí la noción del mismo — caminé sin detenerme. Mis sentidos se agudizaban con cada paso. Podía oler la sangre de un zorro muerto a cien metros, sentir la humedad bajo una raíz podrida, escuchar los suspiros de insectos debajo de las hojas y las gotas de agua que dejaba el rocío caer al suelo con la fuerza de un trueno.</p> <p>Ya no era yo quien guiaba mis pies. Era el bosque mismo, y fue allí, entre un claro oculto por zarzas y lodo seco, donde encontré algo que me hizo detenerme. Se trataba de un</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p> <p>different this time; it was no longer the chirping of birds or the crackling of branches, but something deeper, rhythmic...something similar to a heartbeat. As if the earth came alive, as if it were breathing.</p> <p>And then I saw it. A black deer, its eyes completely white. It stood there, motionless, in the middle of the path.</p> <p>It looked at me, not with fear or curiosity. It seemed to recognize me, and without making the slightest sound, it disappeared into the thicket.</p> <p>Of course, I followed it.</p> <p>For an undetermined amount of time—because I lost track of it—I walked without stopping. My senses sharpened with every step. I could smell the blood of a dead fox hundreds of feet away, feel the dampness under a rotten root, and hear the sighs of insects beneath the leaves and the drops of water that the dew left falling to the ground with the fierceness of thunder.</p> <p>It was no longer me guiding my feet. It was the forest itself, and there, in a clearing</p>

<p>círculo de piedras, roto, antiguo. Y en el centro... una rama ennegrecida, retorcida, clavada en la tierra.</p> <p>No supe por qué, pero caí de rodillas. Me sentí débil, como si el aire me empujara hacia el suelo. Y mientras el viento giraba a mi alrededor, una palabra brotó de mis labios sin que yo la entendiera:</p> <p>— Avernae.</p>	<p>hidden by brambles and dry mud, I found something that stopped me. It was a broken, ancient circle of stones. And in the center... a blackened, twisted branch stuck in the ground.</p> <p>I did not know why, but I fell to my knees. I felt weak, as if the air pushed me to the ground. And as the wind swirled around me, a word that I did not understand escaped my lips:</p> <p>“Avernae.”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 67</p> <p>No sabía si era un nombre, un lugar, o algún dios. Pero el bosque pareció estremecerse al oírlo.</p> <p>Me puse de pie a duras penas, temblando. El aire se volvió denso, casi irrespirable. Una sombra — una presencia sin cuerpo — se deslizó entre los árboles, y sentí su mirada sobre mí.</p> <p>Busqué por los alrededores, algo... alguien, pero no pude hallar absolutamente nada. Aquello era tal vez lo que el bosque deseaba mostrarme nada más.</p> <p>Volví a casa al anochecer, sin recordar el camino de regreso. Cuando crucé la puerta, Élise me esperaba de pie, pálida como el invierno.</p> <p>— ¿En dónde estabas? — preguntó, y pude sentir esa dolorosa preocupación en su voz.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p> <p>I did not know if it was a name, a place, or some god, but the forest seemed to shudder when it heard it.</p> <p>I stood up, barely able to move, trembling. The air grew thick, almost unbreathable. A shadow—a bodiless presence—slid among the trees, and I felt its gaze upon me.</p> <p>I searched around for something... someone, but I could not find anything at all. Perhaps the forest did not want to show me more.</p> <p>I went home at dusk, unable to recall the way back. When I walked through the door, Élise was standing there, waiting for me, pale as winter.</p> <p>“Where were you?” she asked, and I could feel that painful concern in her voice. I could not lie to her.</p>

<p>No pude mentirle.</p> <p>— En el bosque.</p> <p>Ella no dijo nada. Pero en su rostro vi algo que me dolió todavía más que la culpa: decepción.</p> <p>Me miró como si ya no supiera quién era yo. Y quizás... tenía toda la razón. Tenía los labios apretados, y las manos, usualmente suaves, estaban rígidas contra el delantal. Noté que los bordes de sus uñas estaban manchados con tierra seca, como si hubiera estado cavando, o arañando algo.</p> <p>— Te pedí que no salieras — dijo finalmente, en voz baja.</p> <p>— Lo sé.</p>	<p>“In the forest.”</p> <p>She did not say anything, but on her face I saw something that hurt me even more than the guilt: disappointment.</p> <p>She looked at me as though she did not know who I was anymore. And perhaps...she was right. Her lips were tightly pressed together, and her hands, usually soft, were clenched stiffly against her apron. I noticed that the edges of her nails were stained with dried dirt, as if she had been digging or scratching at something.</p> <p>“I asked you not to go outside,” she finally said, in a low voice.</p> <p>“I know.”</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 68</p> <p>— ¿Por qué lo hiciste? — preguntó insistente.</p> <p>— Porque me llamó — respondí.</p> <p>— ¿Quién?</p> <p>— No lo sé...</p> <p>Mentía, o decía la verdad... y no sabía cuál de las dos cosas era peor. Antes de que pudiera añadir algo, la puerta volvió a abrirse con un golpe seco. Las botas de Duvernay resonaron con fuerza sobre el suelo de madera. Venía cubierto de polvo, con la chaqueta arrugada, y un brillo febril en sus cansados ojos.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p> <p>“Why did you do it?” she asked insistently.</p> <p>“Because it called me,” I replied.</p> <p>“Who?”</p> <p>“I don’t know...”</p> <p>I was either lying, or telling the truth... and I did not know which was worse. Before I could add something, the door flew open again with a loud bang. Duvernay’s boots echoed fiercely on the wooden floor. He was covered in dust, his jacket was wrinkled, and there was a hectic gleam in his tired eyes.</p>

<p>Al verme, se detuvo en seco.</p> <p>—Tú — dijo —. Sabía que no ibas a quedarte quieto.</p> <p>Me acerqué, todavía me encontraba dolorido. Élise se colocó entre nosotros, como si temiera que su padre viniera con intenciones más que verbales.</p> <p>— Mathieu... — dijo, solo ella lo llamaba así —. No es el momento.</p> <p>Pero Duvernay no la miró. Solo me miraba a mí.</p> <p>— Estuve en Apcher — dijo seriamente —. En el antiguo monasterio. O lo que queda de él. Bajo el altar, encontré algo tallado en piedra. ¿Sabes lo que decía?</p> <p>Negué lentamente.</p>	<p>When he saw me, he stopped dead in his tracks.</p> <p>“You,” he said. “I knew you wouldn’t stay quiet.”</p> <p>I approached, still feeling pain. Élise stood between us, as if she feared her father would come with more than just verbal intentions.</p> <p>“Mathieu...” she said, only she called him that. “Now it’s not the time.”</p> <p>But Duvernay did not look at her. He only looked at me.</p> <p>“I was in Apcher,” he said seriously. “In the ancient monastery, or what remains of it. Under the altar, I found something carved in stone. Do you know what it said?”</p> <p>I shook my head slowly.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 69</p> <p>— Avernae.</p> <p>Un escalofrío recorrió mi espalda. Élise frunció el ceño.</p> <p>—¿Qué significa? — preguntó ella, se expresión desencajada.</p> <p>— No lo sé — respondió Duvernay—. Pero estaba escrito con sangre vieja, muy vieja. Como si nadie la hubiera tocado en muchos</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 69</p> <p>“Avernae.”</p> <p>A chill ran down my spine. Élise frowned.</p> <p>“What does it mean?” she asked, her expression distraught.</p> <p>“I don’t know,” Duvernay replied. “But it was written with old blood, very old blood. As if no one had touched it in many years.”</p>

<p>años.</p> <p>Mi garganta estaba seca. Ese nombre... ya lo había escuchado antes. En el bosque, sin saber de su origen, de su significado.</p> <p>Duvernay se acercó, más lento esta vez. Su voz se volvió más baja, pero no menos firme.</p> <p>— Te preguntaré algo, Armand. Y quiero la verdad.</p> <p>Asentí, ahora sin fuerzas para mentir.</p> <p>— Élise me dijo que saliste al bosque. ¿Qué viste allá afuera?</p> <p>Guardé silencio. Las palabras no bastaban, porque lo que vi no tenía forma ni rostro, pero sí aliento. Un aliento oscuro, el aliento del bosque mismo.</p> <p>— No era la Bestia — dije al fin —. Era algo completamente diferente.</p> <p>Duvernay se extrañó.</p> <p>— ¿Entonces qué era? — preguntó Elise, interesada.</p>	<p>My throat was dry. That name... I had heard it before, in the forest, without knowing its origin or its meaning.</p> <p>Duvernay approached, slower this time. His voice became lower, but just as firm.</p> <p>“I’ll ask you something, Armand, and I want the truth.”</p> <p>I nodded, unable to lie now.</p> <p>“Élise told me you went out into the forest. What did you see out there?”</p> <p>I remained silent. Words were not enough, because what I saw had no shape or face, but it did have breath. A dark breath, the breath of the forest itself.</p> <p>“It wasn’t the Beast,” I finally said. “It was something completely different.”</p> <p>Duvernay was surprised by that answer.</p> <p>“Then what was it?” Élise asked, intrigued.</p>
<p>Página 70</p> <p>— Una presencia antigua. Como si el bosque mismo respirara, como si algo despertara y me hubiera estado esperando, toda mi vida.</p> <p>Élise se estremeció.</p>	<p>Page 70</p> <p>“An ancient presence. As if the forest itself were breathing, as if something had woken up and had been waiting for me my entire life.”</p> <p>Élise shuddered.</p>

<p>Duvernay me estudió con detenimiento. Luego, giró hacia su hija.</p> <p>— Élise, ve por agua caliente. Y la botella azul del gabinete.</p> <p>Ella dudó.</p> <p>— ¿Mathieu, por qué?</p> <p>— Porque lo que sea que está ocurriendo — dijo, clavando los ojos en mí —, no ha hecho más que comenzar. Y no pienso perder a otro de los míos sin pelear.</p> <p>Élise salió de la habitación, lanzándome una última mirada cargada de dudas. Cuando estuvimos a solas, Duvernay se inclinó hacia mí. Su voz era apenas un susurro.</p> <p>— No sé en qué te estás convirtiendo, Armand. Pero si alguna vez levantas una mano contra mi hija... juro que te haré pedazos. Antes de que la Bestia lo haga.</p> <p>No respondí.</p> <p>Porque parte de mí... ya no estaba seguro de poder evitarlo. Dudaba de todo, de lo que sentía, de lo que escuchaba, lo que veía... dudaba completamente de mí.</p>	<p>Duvernay looked closely at me. Then, he turned to his daughter.</p> <p>“Élise, go get some hot water and the blue bottle from the cabinet.”</p> <p>She hesitated.</p> <p>“Mathieu, why?”</p> <p>“Because whatever is happening,” he said, fixing his eyes on me, “has only just begun. And I’m not going to lose another person who’s on my side that easily.”</p> <p>Élise left the room, giving me one last look full of doubts. When we were alone, Duvernay leaned closer to me. His voice was barely a whisper.</p> <p>“I don’t know what you’re turning into, Armand, but if you ever lay a hand on my daughter... I swear I’ll tear you to pieces before the Beast does it.”</p> <p>I did not reply.</p> <p>Part of me was not sure I could avoid it anymore. I doubted everything: what I felt, what I heard, what I saw... I completely doubted myself.</p>
<p>Página 71</p> <p>Y temía, no por la condenación de mi alma... temía por Élise, por Duvernay... por las</p>	<p>Page 71</p> <p>And I feared, not for the damnation of my soul...I feared for Élise, Duvernay...the people of Langogne.</p>

gentes de Langogne.

Porque esa noche, mientras dormía, soñé con el bosque y la oscuridad que respiraba en su interior... soñé con el ciervo negro.

Solo que ya no tenía ojos, más bien espejos.

Y en ellos... se reflejaba mi rostro.

Because that night, while I slept, I dreamed of the forest and the darkness that lay within it...I dreamed of the black deer.

Although its eyes had been replaced with mirrors.

And in them...my face was reflected.

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Capítulo VII

Sombras en la sacristía

Valle de Apcher.

Había un silencio en esas colinas que no era de este mundo. Ni el canto de los pájaros se

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Chapter VII

Shadows in the sacristy

Apcher Valley.

There was a silence in those hills that did not belong to this world. Not even the birdsong

<p>atreví a cruzar los muros derruidos del viejo monasterio.</p> <p>Cuando Duvernay descendió las escalinatas resquebrajadas bajo el altar, el aire se volvió más denso. La humedad no olía a tierra, sino a carne muerta. Llevaba solamente una lámpara, pero la oscuridad parecía tragarse por completo su luz.</p> <p>Había símbolos en las paredes. Círculos, cruces invertidas, ojos tallados dentro de bocas abiertas. Uno de ellos — más reciente — estaba grabado con algo que parecía... ¿un dedo humano?</p> <p>Duvernay levantó la lámpara. Entonces lo vio. Una inscripción, grabada directamente en el mármol:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A V E R N A E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Domus Interior. Lux Mundi. Corruptio in Sanguine.</p> <p>La piedra parecía sudar. Y cuando acercó la llama, esta titiló</p>	<p>dared to cross the crumbling walls of the old monastery.</p> <p>When Duvernay went down the cracked steps beneath the altar, the air grew thicker. The dampness did not smell like the earth but like dead flesh. He only carried a lamp, but the darkness seemed to swallow its light entirely.</p> <p>There were symbols on the walls. Circles, inverted crosses, and eyes carved inside open mouths. One of the circles—a more recent one—was engraved with something that seemed to be... a human finger?</p> <p>Duvernay lifted the lamp. Then he saw it. An inscription, engraved directly into the marble:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A V E R N A E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Domus Interior. Lux Mundi. Corruptio in Sanguine.</p> <p>It seemed like the stone was sweating, and when he brought the flame closer, it flickered</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 74</p> <p>violentamente. Duvernay retrocedió, algo detrás del muro resonó. Tres golpes... Como si algo quisiera salir.</p> <p>— “Delacroix” — escuchó decir. Y se</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 74</p> <p>violently. Duvernay stepped back, and something echoed behind the wall. There were three hits... As if something wanted to get out.</p>

apresuró a regresar a casa.

Langogne.

Me desperté jadeando. Había soñado con sangre. Goteaba desde mis dedos, lenta, espesa, como alquitrán tibio. Y la luna, oculta débilmente por las nubes, me observaba de la misma forma que aquel ciervo.

Me levanté. Mis pies descalzos tocaron el suelo. El calor de mi cuerpo era anormal. Sentía un zumbido constante en los oídos, como un enjambre oculto. El corazón me latía con fuerza... pero con un ritmo errático, inconstante y salvaje.

Fui al espejo. Lo que vi ya no solo me asustó, me detuvo. Las pupilas estaban dilatadas, pero había algo más. Mi piel estaba cambiando, se notaba en el tacto, mas no a simple vista. Ahora era más densa, más dura.

Abrí la boca, temiendo lo que pudiera encontrar. Mis dientes parecían iguales... hasta que noté los caninos. Más afilados, apenas perceptible. Pero definitivamente distintos.

Me aparté con violencia. La mesa tembló. Un cuenco cayó al suelo. Élise subió corriendo de inmediato.

— ¡Armand! ¿Qué ocurre?

No pude responder. Me agaché, temblando. Ella se arrodilló a

“Delacroix,” he heard it say. And he rushed back home.

Langogne.

I woke up panting. I had dreamed of blood; it dripped from my fingers, slow and thick, like warm tar. And the moon, faintly hidden by the clouds, gazed at me just like that deer did.

I stood up. My bare feet touched the floor. My body heat was abnormal. I felt a constant buzzing in my ears, like a hidden swarm. My heart was beating fiercely... but with an erratic, inconsistent, and wild rhythm.

I went to the mirror. What I saw did not only scare me, but it also stopped me. My pupils were dilated, and there was something else. Although it was invisible to the naked eye, I could feel how my skin was changing; now it was thicker and harder.

I opened my mouth, afraid of what I might find. My teeth looked the same...until I saw the canines. Those were sharper, barely noticeable, yet definitely different.

I pulled away violently. The table shook. A bowl fell on the floor. Élise rushed upstairs immediately.

“Armand! What’s wrong?”

I could not answer. I crouched down, trembling. She knelt beside

mi lado, tomó mi rostro entre sus manos.

— ¿Qué estás sintiendo?

— No lo sé — mentí.

Ella me sostuvo la mirada.

— Lo sientes en tu interior, ¿verdad? Algo que no puedes nombrar. Algo que te quema cuando estás solo.

Cerré los ojos. Asentí.

Ella no dijo más, me abrazó. Y por un instante, sentí que el monstruo dentro de mí retrocedía... no por miedo, sino por vergüenza, por frustración.

Más tarde, esa misma noche. Élise pensó que dormía, pero yo la escuché. Rodeó el escritorio de su padre. Abrió un cajón oculto que había visto usar solo una vez. Dentro, encontró papeles doblados con cuidado, un mapa viejo de Gévaudan... y una pequeña llave de hierro. Seguidamente, se dirigió con cuidado hasta el sótano.

Yo me deslicé tras ella, cuidándome de no hacer ruido.

La vi encender una lámpara y retirar una tela. Bajo ella, un cofre cubierto de polvo y un misal antiguo. Cuando lo abrió, en su interior encontró un símbolo que le hizo dar un paso atrás: el mismo que su padre había visto en Apcher. Un ojo dentro de una cruz invertida.

me and took my face in her hands.

“What are you feeling?”

“I don’t know.” I lied.

She held my gaze.

“You feel it inside you, right? Something you can’t name. Something that burns when you’re alone.”

I closed my eyes and nodded.

She said no more and hugged me. And for a moment, I felt the monster inside me retreat...not out of fear, but out of shame, out of frustration.

Later, that same night, Elise thought I was asleep, but I heard her. She went around her father’s desk. She opened a hidden drawer that I had seen just once in use. Inside, Élise found papers carefully folded, an old map of Gévaudan...and a small iron key. Then, she carefully walked down to the basement.

I slipped after her, trying not to make any noise.

I saw her light a lamp and remove a cloth. Underneath, there was a dusty chest and an ancient missal. When she opened it, she found inside a symbol that made her take a step back: the same that her father had seen

<p>Rodeado de dientes. Pero lo que más la perturbó fue una página suelta, escrita a mano.</p>	<p>in Apcher. An eye inside an inverted cross and surrounded by teeth. And yet what disturbed her most was a loose, handwritten page.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 76</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“No son brujas, no son hombres, no son demonios. Son hijos del bosque, hijos del hambre. Se ocultan bajo la fe, hablan en latín. Mienten con piel de cordero, uno de ellos está entre nosotros.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>P. Jérôme, 1754.</i></p> <p>Élise apretó el papel. En su mirada, vi un nuevo miedo, uno que ya no era hacia el exterior. Era hacia todos nosotros.</p> <p>Duvernay volvió pasada la medianoche. La puerta se cerró con violencia. Yo ya lo esperaba, sentado junto al fuego. Élise bajó las escaleras, temblorosa. Nadie habló por un momento.</p> <p>Hasta que Duvernay rompió el silencio.</p> <p>— Apcher está maldito. Alguien... o algo... ha estado usando ese lugar desde hace siglos, y no está solo. He visto marcas recientes.</p> <p>Élise se adelantó. Le mostró el papel.</p> <p>— ¿Sabías de esto? — inquirió.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 76</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“They are not witches, they are not men, they are not demons. They are children of the forest, children of hunger. They hide under the guise of faith; they speak in Latin. They lie in sheep’s clothing; one of them is among us.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Fr. Jérôme, 1754.</i></p> <p>Élise squeezed the paper. In her gaze, I saw a new fear, one that was no longer towards the outside; it was towards all of us.</p> <p>Duvernay returned after midnight. The door was slammed fiercely. I was already waiting, sitting by the fire. Élise came down the stairs, trembling. No one spoke for a moment.</p> <p>Until Duvernay broke the silence.</p> <p>“Apcher is cursed. Someone...or something...has been using that place for centuries, and it’s not alone. I’ve seen recent marks.”</p> <p>Élise stepped forward. She showed him the paper.</p>

<p>El alguacil palideció.</p> <p>— ¿En dónde lo encontraste? — preguntó de pronto, arrebatandolo de sus manos.</p> <p>— Aquí. En nuestra casa. ¿Qué nos estás ocultando, Mathieu? — dijo ella, acercandose a mí.</p> <p>Duvernay no respondió. Su mirada se deslizó hacia los dos.</p>	<p>“Did you know about this?” she inquired.</p> <p>The sheriff turned pale.</p> <p>“Where did you find it?” he suddenly asked, snatching it from her hands.</p> <p>“Here, in our house. What are you hiding from us, Mathieu?” she said, moving closer to me.</p> <p>Duvernay did not answer. His gaze drifted towards the two of us,</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 77</p> <p>Luego, hacia el fuego, y luego nuevamente hacia mí.</p> <p>— El mal que azota Gévaudan... — dijo lentamente —, no es solamente una bestia. Es también una voluntad, y la voluntad necesita cuerpos para moverse.</p> <p>Élise se apartó.</p> <p>Yo sentí la piel arder. Duvernay se acercó, sin parpadear.</p> <p>— Dime, Armand. ¿Sigues siendo tú? — me preguntó, estudiandome detenidamente.</p> <p>Yo quería decir que sí. Pero en mi interior... otra voz ya ensayaba la mentira.</p> <p>Sonó de pronto un disparo y la campana de la iglesia comenzó a también a alertar a los</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 77</p> <p>then towards the fire, and back to me.</p> <p>“The evil that ravages Gévaudan...” he slowly said, “it’s not only a beast; it’s also a will, and the will needs bodies to move.”</p> <p>Élise stepped aside.</p> <p>I felt my skin burning. Duvernay approached, without blinking.</p> <p>“Tell me, Armand, are you still yourself?” he asked while looking closely at me.</p> <p>I wish I could say yes, yet inside me...another voice was preparing the lie.</p> <p>Unexpectedly, a shot echoed, and the church’s bell also began to warn the villagers.</p>

aldeanos.

Uno de los hombres de Duvernay, Basile Moreau se apresuró a la casa y abrió la puerta desesperadamente.

Sin poder recuperar el aliento exclamó de pronto:

— ¡La Bestia, monsieur! ¡Ha atacado el pueblo de Darnes!

One of Duvernay's men, Basile Moreau, rushed to the house and opened the door desperately.

Incapable of catching a breath, he suddenly exclaimed,

“The Beast, monsieur! It has attacked Darnes town!”

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Capítulo VIII

El eco del silencio

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Chapter VIII

The silence's echo

El aire en Darnes estaba denso, como si el

The air in Darnes was thick, as if the town

<p>pueblo mismo contuviera el aliento, esperando el siguiente ataque de la Bestia. Las calles parecían vacías, y en los rincones, las miradas furtivas hablaban de miedo y desesperanza.</p> <p>Me habían contado del ataque — una escena de horror y sangre que dejó a una familia destrozada y al pueblo sumido en una silenciosa vigilia. Los padres, Jean Béraud y su mujer Mariette destrozados, mutilados, sus restos encontrados en el interior de la cabaña sobre un charco de sangre.</p> <p>Tal había sido la furia salvaje de la Bestia, que se habían encontrado partes humanas en el techo, todas mezcladas... imposible saber a quién pertenecían.</p> <p>Los niños, Colombe y Lucien de diez y ocho años respectivamente, habían desaparecido. Arrastrados en las fauces de aquel maldito animal según testigos, hacia lo profundo del bosque.</p> <p>Tan pronto como escuchamos de este suceso gracias a Basile Moreau decidimos partir junto a un grupo de quince hombres a brindar apoyo al pueblo de Darnes, a pesar de mi estado me ofrecí para acompañar a Duvernay quien en un principio no</p>	<p>itself were holding its breath, waiting for the next attack of the Beast. The streets seemed empty, and in the corners, the furtive glances spoke of fear and despair.</p> <p>They had told me about the attack—a scene of horror and blood that left a family devastated and the town immersed in a silent wakefulness. The parents, Jean Béraud and his partner, Mariette, were destroyed and mutilated, and their remains were found inside the cabin in a pool of blood.</p> <p>The beast’s fury had been so savage that human remains were found in the roof, all mixed... It was impossible to know to whom they belonged.</p> <p>The children, Colombe and Lucien, were ten and eight years old, respectively; they had disappeared. According to witnesses, they were dragged by the jaws of that cursed animal to the deepest parts of the forest.</p> <p>As soon as we heard about that incident thanks to Basile Moreau, we decided to leave with a group of fifteen men to give aid to Darnes town. Despite my condition, I offered to go with Duvernay, who at first did not</p>
<p>Página 80</p> <p>estuvo de acuerdo.</p> <p>Élise tuvo que convencerle y asegurarle que iría con nosotros también, que sus habilidades en el cuidado de los heridos podrían ser de</p>	<p>Page 80</p> <p>agree.</p> <p>Élise had to convince him and assure him that she would go with us, too. She said that her abilities to take care of the wounded</p>

utilidad, y que a su vez... también me vigilaría. Solamente así, a pesar de no estar completamente de acuerdo con el posible peligro que correría su hija, el valiente alguacil de Langogne aceptó.

Hacía mucho frío aquella noche en el pueblo de Darnes. Los aldeanos se movilizaban, podías sentir el calor de las antorchas subir y bajar por los caminos. Murmullos, asombro y miedo abarrotaban la plaza.

Caminaba con el peso de aquellas muertes y desapariciones clavado en el pecho, sintiendo cómo el monstruo dentro de mí se removía, cada vez más impaciente, como si esperara el momento justo para salir y reclamar la noche. Fue en ese preciso momento que sentí un toque frío, firme y sobrecogedor en mi brazo.

— No tema, monsieur — susurró una voz grave —. Sé lo que lleva dentro, y conozco a alguien que puede ayudarle.

Me giré para encontrar a una figura encapuchada, cuyos ojos brillaban en la penumbra. Era un anciano, de rostro arrugado y una espesa barba blanca. Élise apretó fuerte mi mano, por unos segundos intentó encontrar a su padre con la mirada, pero Duvernay ya investigaba lo sucedido con el alguacil local.

Sin más explicación, aquel misterioso anciano me condujo por callejuelas y senderos intrincados, oscuros y húmedos por la

could be helpful, at the same time... She would also keep an eye on me. Only then did the courageous sheriff of Langogne accept, even though he did not fully agree with the danger his daughter might face.

That night, the town of Darnes was quite cold. The villagers walked; you could feel the heat of the torches going up and down the roads. Mutters, amazement, and fear filled up the plaza.

I walked with the burden of those deaths and disappearances stuck in my chest, feeling the monster inside me stirring, growing more and more impatient, as though it waited for the right moment to come out and claim the night. It was in that precise moment that I felt a cold, firm, and overwhelming touch on my arm.

“Don’t be afraid, monsieur,” a deep voice whispered. “I know what you carry inside, and I know someone who can help you.”

I turned to find a hooded figure, whose eyes shone in the darkness. It was an old man with a wrinkled face and a thick white beard. Élise squeezed my hand tightly, and for a few seconds she tried to find her father with her gaze, but Duvernay was already investigating what happened with the local sheriff.

Without further explanation, that mysterious old man guided me through narrow streets and intricate paths, dark and damp from the

nevada diaria, mientras Élise apresuraba el paso para no perderme de vista.

Llegamos así hasta una casa a las afueras del pueblo, era una vivienda muy vieja, la madera apenas aguantaba la cantidad de nieve que cubría el techo, y las rústicas ventanas entreabiertas parecían no poder soportar otro envite del inclemente tiempo.

Avancé hacia la entrada, Élise nos encontró y se apresuró a acompañarme, dirigió su mirada en una súplica ahogada para pedirme que lo considerara, pero la curiosidad pudo más que la razón.

La vieja madera crujía bajo nuestros pies, y el olor a hierbas secas, a pócimas extrañas y humo esotérico me anunció que nos adentrábamos a los misterios de lo desconocido.

Allí, sentada frente a un fuego que lanzaba sombras danzantes, se encontraba una mujer: una vidente. Su rostro surcado de arrugas parecía un mapa de mil vidas, y sus ojos, completamente ciegos, sabios y profundos, me atravesaron con una intensidad que no supe soportar.

— Armand Delacroix — dijo con voz firme —, estás bajo el embrujo del lobo. En tres noches, la Bestia tomará tu cuerpo y tu alma por completo.

daily snowfall, while Élise rushed her pace so as not to lose sight of me.

We arrived at a house on the outskirts of town. It was a very old house; the wood barely held the amount of snow that covered the roof, and the rough windows, left slightly open, seemed unable to withstand another onslaught from the inclement weather.

I walked towards the entrance. Élise spotted us and rushed to join me, looking at me with a muffled plea to ask me to reconsider if we should continue, but curiosity got the better of reason.

The old wood creaked under our feet, and the smell of fresh herbs, strange potions, and esoteric smoke announced that we went deep into the mysteries of the unknown.

There, sitting in front of a fire that cast dancing shadows, was a woman: a clairvoyant. Her face, lined with wrinkles, looked like a map of a thousand lives, and her completely blind, wise, and deep eyes pierced me with an intensity I could not bear.

“Armand Delacroix,” she said in a firm voice, “you are under the spell of the wolf. In three nights, the Beast will completely take your body and your soul.”

The air grew heavier. The words resonated like a disastrous echo inside me. Three nights? I had heard stories about that type of

<p>El aire se volvió más pesado. Las palabras resonaban como un eco funesto dentro de mí. ¿Tres noches? Había escuchado historias sobre ese tipo de maldición, hasta entonces siempre había pensado que se trataba de nada más que patrañas... usualmente tomaba más tiempo, sí... pero había pasado días</p>	<p>curse; until then I had always thought it was nothing more than nonsense... It usually took more time, yes...yet I had spent days</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 82</p> <p>debatíendome entre lo real y lo imposible.</p> <p>—¿Hay alguna esperanza? — preguntó Élise, sintiendo la desesperación, la incredulidad y la confirmación de sus miedos más profundos, mezclarse y materializarse justo ante sus ojos.</p> <p>La mujer asintió, y entre sus manos sostuvo un pequeño amuleto tallado en hueso.</p> <p>— Solo matando al licántropo que te maldijo podrás romper la cadena. Pero debes apresurarte, el tiempo se agota.</p> <p>— Si esto es así... entonces la Bestia de Gévaudan es... — exclamé.</p> <p>— Sí... definitivamente hay algo en esa bestia que va más allá de un hombre o un animal como los conocemos — respondió la vieja — . Solamente tu fuerza de voluntad y la de aquellos que te siguen, pueden ayudarte a exorcizar al mal y purificar tu alma.</p> <p>Intenté sacarle más información, pero no pude. La anciana se levantó de la mesa y desapareció con la luz de la vela al soplar de pronto un viento helado desde la ventana.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 82</p> <p>debating between the real and the impossible.</p> <p>“Is there any hope?” Élise asked, feeling despair, disbelief, and the proof of her deepest fears mingle and become a reality right before her eyes.</p> <p>The woman nodded, and in her hands, she was holding a small bone-carved amulet.</p> <p>“Killing the werewolf who cursed you is your only option to break the chain, but you must hurry. Time is running out.”</p> <p>“If this is the case...then the Beast of Gévaudan is...” I exclaimed.</p> <p>“Yes...there is definitely something in that beast that goes beyond a man or an animal as we know them,” replied the old woman. “Only your willpower and the willpower of those who follow you can help you exorcise the evil and purify your soul.”</p> <p>I tried to get more information out of her, but I could not. The old woman got up from the table and disappeared with the candlelight as</p>

<p>Volvimos a Darnes con la mente llena de sombras y preguntas, pero también con un extraño alivio: había un camino... había esperanza, y aunque peligroso, no distaba mucho de la misión que el rey me había encomendado en Gévaudan.</p> <p>Élise me acompañó con la mirada cargada de una preocupación que poco a poco se transformaba en un amor silencioso y firme. Ella no solo era mi sostén, sino la luz que se colaba débil entre</p>	<p>a sudden, cold wind blew in from the window. We returned to Darnes with a mind full of shadows and questions, but also with a strange relief: there was a way...there was hope, and although it was dangerous, it was not far from the mission the king had entrusted to me in Gévaudan.</p> <p>Élise walked with me with her gaze full of concern that slowly turned into silent, firm love. She was not only my support but also the light that filtered weakly through</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Página 83</p> <p>tanta oscuridad. Y así, junto a ella, tuve la fuerza suficiente para contar mi verdad a Duvernay, tal vez el único amigo que había hecho desde mi llegada.</p> <p>Aquella misma noche, frente al fuego de la chimenea, abrí mi corazón ante mi amigo.</p> <p>— Siento que estoy perdiendo lo que soy — le confesé —. Esta bestia dentro de mí se acerca, y temo no poder resistir.</p> <p>Duvernay se preocupó, pero sus palabras fueron un ancla, un apoyo que me reconfortó, en medio de la más cruel y terrible de las tormentas.</p> <p>— No estás solo, Armand. Lucharemos contigo, hasta el final.</p> <p>Élise me tomó la mano, y en ese contacto sentí que me volvía la vida, que no había obstáculo que no pudiera superar.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 83</p> <p>so much darkness. Like so, with Élise by my side, I was strong enough to share the truth with Duvernay, who was perhaps the only friend I made since my arrival.</p> <p>I had an honest conversation with my friend that very evening in front of the fireplace.</p> <p>“I feel like I’m losing what I am,” I admitted. “This beast inside me is approaching, and I’m afraid I won’t be able to resist.”</p> <p>Duvernay got worried, yet his words were an anchor, a support that comforted me in the midst of the cruelest and most terrible of storms.</p> <p>“You’re not alone, Armand. We’ll fight with you until the end.”</p> <p>Élise held my hand, and in that touch I felt that my life returned and that I could overcome any obstacle.</p>

La vidente tenía razón: la única salvación era enfrentarme a la fuente misma de la maldición. Encontrar a la Bestia, el licántropo que había sembrado este horror sobre mí y sobre toda la región. Pero sabía que aquello significaba adentrarse en el corazón mismo de la oscuridad, penetrar en los confines más oscuros de la maldad.

El reloj avanzaba. La cuenta regresiva había comenzado, y yo estaba dispuesto a luchar por lo que quedaba de mi alma.

The clairvoyant was right. The only salvation was facing the very source of the curse: to find the Beast, the werewolf that unleashed this horror upon me and upon the entire region. But I knew that meant going deep into the very core of darkness, penetrating the darkest confines of evil.

Time was ticking. The countdown had begun, and I was willing to fight for what remained of my soul.

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Analysis of the Translation Techniques

Translation Techniques

1. Translation Technique: Literal

Definition: The main feature of a literal method is that the target text must retain the same word order, meaning and style as the source text. As clearly explained by Vinay and Darbelnet: a literal translation is a unique solution which is reversible and complete in itself (1995). This method is possible with languages and cultures that are extremely close.

Example #1 (p. 29)

SL: Todo indicaba que el ataque había sido repentino, brutal y preciso.
↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
TL: Everything suggested that the attack had been sudden, brutal, and precise.

Analysis: This is an example of a word-for-word translation, where every word has a literal equivalent in the target text. Since the sentence is simple, there is no need to apply another translation procedure to render the message. As a result, even though the translation technique is direct, the message holds the same level of accuracy.

Example #2 (p. 51)

SL: La sombra de la bestia seguía acechando entre los árboles.
↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
TL: The shadow of the beast kept lurking among the trees.

Analysis: In this example, the structure is parallel and the word order remains the same in the source language and target language, so it is a literal translation. English can share this word order from Spanish without having troubles in communicating the message, since in this case the sentence is simply affirmative and direct. Therefore, a literal translation was applied without affecting the message's intent and style, which is the main purpose of implementing this technique.

2. Translation Technique: Calque

Definition: The word calque is borrowed from French and it derives from the verb *calquer* which means ‘to copy,’ ‘to trace.’ Vinay and Darbelnet, established calque as ‘a special kind of borrowing’ where the source language expression or structure is transferred in a literal translation. Another valuable definition was provided by Hapselmath and Tadmor (2009): calque is a complex lexical unit (either a single word or a fixed phrasal expression) that was created by a verbatim, or item-by-item, translation of the source unit from another language. These definitions help translators analyze how calque deals with similarities in syntax, morphology, semantics, and sometimes also in phonetics. A calque can be lexical (or fixed); for instance, the English word ‘football’ having ‘fútbol’ as the literal translation of its elements into Spanish, with a slightly different pronunciation. Another type of calque is structural. It arises from oversight of the morphosyntactic structure, which sort of introduces a new construction into the language. Structural calque is often applied in legalese.

Example #1 (p. 35)

SL: marca ancestral

TL: ancestral mark

Analysis: This expression is a notorious illustration of a lexical calque from Spanish to English, where the translation technique does not interfere with the message itself. The Spanish phrase ‘marca ancestral’ translates into English as ‘ancestral mark,’ which is clearly indicating a similarity in structure, with the only difference that in English the adjective ‘ancestral’ goes before the noun ‘mark’; additionally, both words share meaning and are similar in pronunciation, especially the word *ancestral*.

Example #2 (p. 47)

SL: Desde la plaza...

TL: From the plaza...

Analysis: 'Plaza' in Spanish can be translated as 'square' in English, and yet the usage of plaza is acceptable and frequent. The fact that it faintly differs in pronunciation and has other translations in English means that it cannot be considered as an example of a literal translation technique. This is a lexical calque where the word has been taken from a foreign language keeping the same spelling and connotation, but with a slightly different pronunciation in the phoneme 'z' that is voiced in English. Overall, the term "plaza" shows how a word can be directly translated into another language and still be understood as well as embraced by the native speakers, and readers in the case of translation.

3. Translation Technique: Transposition

Definition: Transposition changes the grammatical category of part of a sentence while keeping the original meaning intact. That statement essentially means that this technique re-structures the sentence. (Acolad, 2025). For example, as Vinay and Darbelnet expressed, it might involve at least ten changes, such as: from adverb to noun, adverb to verb, verb to noun, among others. Another applications are when there is a change in the grammatical tense, or when the grammatical structure goes from passive to active voice or vice versa. This translation technique is often necessary between languages with different structures in grammar, but it must be used wisely to avoid changes in the message.

Example #1 (p. 25)

SL: Otros creen que se trata de una criatura enviada por Dios para **castigar** nuestros pecados.

TL: Others believe it is a creature sent by God as a **punishment** for our sins.

Analysis: In this example of transposition, a grammatical change has been made in the verb in Spanish “castigar”, which turns into the noun “punishment” in the target language. Using a noun maintains the fluency in the target text, without altering the message. In this first example, the shift in the grammatical category preserves the meaning, and has the same vivid effect that the source language transmits with the verb “castigar”.

Example #2 (p. 54)

SL: El cuerpo me dolía. No como duele una herida... sino como **duele** el despertar tras una pesadilla que no se entiende del todo

TL: My body hurt, but not in the same way as a wound...rather, it was like the **pain** of waking up after a nightmare you do not entirely understand.

Analysis: This example shows a transposition in the shift of a grammatical category. The verb *duele* in the source language turns into the noun 'pain' in the target language. This change does not affect the meaning of the source text; in fact, applying transposition allowed the structure of the translation to flow naturally. That is, the shift was necessary to have a natural arrangement of words in the target text. This transposition was applied to guarantee the most accurate result.

4. Translation Technique: Equivalence

Definition: Equivalence allows translators to preserve meaning of an expression, name or proverb by finding a target equivalent. (Intertranslations, 2021). The importance of this translation technique is found when one analyzes the complexity of language, which is sometimes figurative. In some scenarios, a person can understand the meaning and grammar of words, but once they put the elements together it does not make sense because those words do not possess a literal meaning. That is the case of idioms, proverbs, clichés and similar expressions. Given the situation that languages have this peculiarity, translators are required to stay updated with all those expressions so that they can provide accurate equivalents.

Example #1 (p. 35)

SL: — Usted sabe lo que ocurrió — le dije sin rodeos.

TL: “You know what happened,” I said, without beating around the bush.

Analysis: In this context, the Spanish idiom *sin rodeos* means saying something directly, so it cannot be translated literally. For that reason, in this situation the best option is to look for its corresponding idiom in English: ‘without beating around the bush,’ which means to avoid wasting time, as it is stated in the McGrawhill’s Dictionary of American Idioms. This type of translation is a clear instance of equivalence, where a distinct method must be applied in order to convey the same meaning when facing idiomatic expressions.

Example #2 (p. 68)

SL: Al verme, se detuvo en seco.

TL: When he saw me, he stopped dead in his tracks.

Analysis: In this sentence, an equivalence was used to translate. In the procedures by Vinay and Darbelnet, equivalence is where languages describe the same situation by

different stylistic means, so it is extremely helpful to translate idioms and proverbs. The idiom “se detuvo en seco” in Spanish has a figurative connotation that means someone has stopped an action abruptly. In English, it is translated as the idiom: stopped dead in his tracks, which according to McGrawhill’s Dictionary of American Idioms, it means to stop completely still suddenly because of fear, noise, etc. ‘Stop dead in his tracks’ is acceptable in this sentence because a character stops moving after seeing someone. A literal translation like ‘stopped in dry’ would not make sense at all. Therefore, equivalence was necessary because it allows the translation to flow and be clearly understood.

5. Translation Technique: Modulation

Definition: Modulation means a shift in the perspective of the message. In other words, modulation preserves the message with a different point of view. This change is justified when literal, transposition or other techniques are possible, and yet they might produce awkwardness in the target text. This approach was established by Vinay and Darbelnet in 1958 as the “touchstone of a good translator”. According to their *Comparative Stylistic Analysis*, there are several ways to apply modulation, such as abstract$\langle\rangle$concrete, whole$\langle\rangle$part, effect$\langle\rangle$cause, part$\langle\rangle$another part. Overall, this translation procedure assists translators to obtain the most natural result while preserving the meaning of the source text.

Example #1 (p. 32)

SL: **A los pocos segundos**, una mujer de rostro pálido abrió la puerta.

TL: **Not long after**, a woman with a pale face opened the door.

Analysis: In this instance, a free modulation was applied in the phrase ‘A los pocos segundos’ that is translated in English as: Not long after. The change of perspective was done in order to have a natural outcome in the target text. ‘Not long after’ means *No mucho después* in Spanish, which is transmitting the same idea that is expressed in the source language. In this way, the translation sounds accurate, natural, and conveys the exact same message in the English language.

Example # 2 (p. 83)

SL: Aquella misma noche, frente al fuego de la chimenea, **abrí mi corazón ante mi amigo**.

TL: **I had an honest conversation with my friend** that very evening in front of the fireplace.

Analysis: In this example, modulation is applied to obtain a natural result in the translation. In the source text, the expression *abrí mi corazón ante mi amigo*, could be translated literally as ‘I opened my heart to my friend,’ but instead was translated as ‘I had an honest conversation with my friend’ because it is more appropriate in this context, and conveys the same message just with a different point of view. Consequently, the target text is understood and accurate because the modulation technique was implemented.

6. Translation Technique: Addition

Definition: Addition happens when translators add words in order to preserve meaning in a text. This technique can be applied when sentence structure, grammar or terminology are different (Intertranslations, 2021). This technique was also addressed by Vinay and Darbelnet in their translation procedures as ‘amplification.’

Example #1 (p. 44)

SL: Disparos, recargas de mosquetes, pero el enorme animal infernal seguía su camino.

TL: Shots fired, muskets on reload, the huge infernal animal kept moving forward

Analysis: In this translation, an element was added to maintain the message. The source language states *disparos, recargas de mosquetes*, which in the target language is translated as ‘shots fired, muskets on reload...’ The context is clear by adding ‘fired’ to the noun *disparos*, because the narrative is descriptive. Overall, the addition was necessary in this scenario to preserve the meaning of the source language.

Example #2 (p. 26)

SL: Pude ver un par de ojos brillando en la oscuridad. Estaban demasiado altos para pertenecer a un lobo, pero aullaba....

TL: I could see a pair of eyes shining in the darkness, which were too high up to belong to a wolf, but it howled like one...

Analysis: In this instance, there are extra words included in the target language. The Spanish text refers to a character who cannot distinguish if the eyes they saw belong to a wolf or not, and is stating that the figure howled, but including the verb ‘howled’ alone is confusing. Consequently, to avoid misinterpretations, the words ‘like one’ were added to be more descriptive as to say that the figure howled like a wolf, which is what the text is trying to convey in the source language.

7. Translation Technique: Omission

Definition: The translator has the option to remove words from the source text that may seem redundant in the target text. If English and Spanish are part of the translation, it is more general to apply reduction from Spanish into English since English is naturally more direct. This translation technique is the opposite of addition, and in the same way the translator must be aware of not changing the meaning while implementing it.

Example #1 (p. 39)

SL: ... mis pobres criaturas... no tuvieron ni oportunidad de reaccionar.

TL: ...my poor creatures...they couldn't even react.”

Analysis: The translation procedure applied here is omission to avoid redundancy. In the source language, the expression *no tuvieron ni oportunidad de reaccionar* is reduced as ‘they couldn’t even react’. If the sentence were translated as ‘they couldn’t even get the chance to react,’ it would be unnecessarily long and redundant. The omission was done especially because the modal *could* in negative is already conveying that an action was impossible, which is the main idea of the message. As a result, the omission in the target language does not include changes in meaning.

Example #2 (p. 68)

SL: Mentía, o decía la verdad... y no sabía cuál de las dos cosas era peor.

TL: I was lying, or telling the truth... and I did not know which_{was} worse

Analysis: In this example, an omission was implemented to avoid being redundant. In the target text. The text in Spanish says ‘...y no sabía cuál de las dos cosas era peor,’ while the text in English is omitting *de las dos cosas*, and simply states ‘...and I did not know which was worse.’ This reduction was applied because in English the word *which*, in this case a relative adjective, is already referring to more than one element in the sentence.

8. Translation Technique: Adaptation

Definition: The author of the book *Introducción a la Traductología* (Introduction to Traductology), Gerardo Vásquez Ayora described adaptation as follows: *Se conoce como adaptación el proceso de conformar un contenido a la visión particular [del mundo] de cada lengua.* In English this means that adaptation is the process of adapting the content of a particular vision (of the world) of every language. Vásquez Ayora's definition helps analyze that adaptation deals with culture. This technique takes place when there are cultural elements that cannot simply be translated directly into the target text, so the translator has to replace them by other elements that produce the same effect in the culture of the target language. For instance, if the source text refers to an English genre 'a country-and-western song, twangy and sour,' it could be adapted into the Argentinian expression: *un tango amargo y sentimental.* That adaptation is immediately understood in the target culture, which is the main purpose of this procedure.

Example #1 (p. 49)

SL: Sentí su aliento caliente y putrefacto incluso cuando me encontraba varios **metros** alejado.

TL: I felt its hot and putrid breath even though I was several **feet** apart.

Analysis: This is an example of adaptation because it shows the contrast in the unit of measurement across languages. In English, it is more acceptable to use the imperial system that differs from the metric system commonly applied in Spanish. Providing a literal translation with 'meters' instead of 'feet' might not transmit the message effectively to the reader, since it is not a common unit to measure distance in that situation. With this in mind, using the word "feet" is more appropriate in the target culture because it is more natural in this context. That demonstrates how even in measurements the language can be adapted for the target audience to understand the meaning with ease.

Example #2 (p. 24)

SL: Asintió, y tomé asiento frente a él. Su copa olía a **aguardiente** barato.

TL: He nodded and I sat in front of him. His glass smelled like cheap **beer**.

Analysis: In terms of beverages and food, they possess high value in cultures, so adaptation is generally working as a bridge to express the same message when those elements are included in texts to translate. In this example, the Spanish term ‘aguardiente’ is a very famous liquor that people recognize immediately, but probably in English that particular liquor does not have the same cultural impact. In the context of the source language, a character recognizes the strong smell of a common beverage served in a tavern (aguardiente), but a literal translation like ‘brandy’ was not going to produce the same effect in the culture of the target language. Given these points, a change was made from ‘aguardiente’ to ‘beer’ so that the target text has a term that describes a beverage (in this case beer) that holds the same cultural value in the target language as the one mentioned in the source language.

Third Chapter

Challenges

Challenges	Solutions
<p>Preserving the figurative language</p> <p>It was not always easy to provide an accurate translation of literary devices, such as similes, personifications, and vivid descriptions.</p>	<p>Researching and obtaining feedback from professionals</p> <p>Sharing the project with the advisor and professor of the course to obtain invaluable feedback. Also, researching and reading similar poetic content in both languages.</p>
<p>Technological issues</p> <p>The computer in which the project was done works quite slowly when there are many pages in a Word document and when there are many internet tabs open. It also has problems with its battery.</p>	<p>Patience and organization</p> <p>To advance in the project, a tablet and cellphone were also used when the computer did not want to cooperate. It was necessary to stay calm and have an organized schedule to work in that pace.</p>
<p>Time Constraints</p> <p>There were some difficulties at the beginning of the quarter to obtain the book to translate.</p>	<p>Guidance</p> <p>Thanks to the advisor's help, the process of obtaining the book was swift, so everything was in order to begin with the project.</p>
<p>Providing an accurate translation</p> <p>This is a project that demands the best in every aspect of translation, including the presentation of the format, style, and tone.</p>	<p>Editing and proofreading</p> <p>Reading countless times in order to fulfill the requirements and correct the mistakes.</p>

Conclusions

This project has proven that the purpose of translation is to transmit a message not only in terms of words but also in terms of the style, tone, and context. The main goal was reached with the translation of the first pages into English by applying the translation techniques correctly. It was emphasized that the translation techniques are often represented as procedures by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), who inspired hundreds of studies and translators across the globe; for instance, the book *Introducción a la Traductología* (“Introduction to Traductology”) by Gerardo Vázquez Ayora, which provides more insight into studies of English and Spanish translation. Their approaches help visualize one of the most interesting techniques that is naturally linked with cultural elements (adaptation), and one that assists in conveying the same meaning from a different perspective (modulation). Both of those fascinating techniques are quite difficult to perform, yet when applied correctly, the results are wonderful.

This work has demonstrated how translation techniques are crucial to reflect the meaning and context of the book “*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan.*”. There were cultural aspects, such as units of measurement and traditional elements, that could not have been translated without the adaptation technique. There were also times when the text needed a modulation to sound natural, or a transposition to produce the same effect from the source language. In this project it was shown through the analysis in every example that translation procedures must be applied wisely, according to the context. It has been proven that translation techniques are useful methods that help translators obtain a creative, accurate target text that preserves its meaning.

Additionally, the overall result in the target text is faithful to the author’s message in the book “*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan.*” The book transmits a powerful message that invites readers to evaluate more than the surface when facing an unknown force of evil, and it is visible in the translation that the message remains the same. Although it was a challenging task to maintain the poetic expressions, figurative language, and the author’s

style, it was possible to achieve with thorough analysis, investigation, and proofreading. The outcome of this translation shows respect to the meaning of the book.

Many lessons were learned throughout the development of this written work. The knowledge acquired during all these years was put into practice, as there were many challenges to overcome. This was the perfect opportunity to familiarize with the linguistic nuances in translation, along with the cultural differences between Spanish and English. It can be said that the implementation of translation techniques was necessary to provide an acceptable result. Everything considered, this kind of project enhances the knowledge of the student and contributes to the cultural heritage of the university's community. This work plays a role in the field since it clearly demonstrates how translation is a complex process that must be completed with commitment, perseverance, and dedication.

Recommendations

First and foremost, it is recommended for future students to carefully choose the book to be translated. They must ask for help to evaluate the pages, the spacing, and the content to be familiar with the vocabulary and format. If possible, the students should also be fond of the book, because in that case they would be more enthusiastic throughout the entire process, which usually takes more time than one can expect.

Selecting the book in advance is a wise decision as well. Perhaps a quarter before the last one is the best moment to look for authors and books that seem approachable. The word “approachable” is mentioned since authors are not always willing to cooperate with students to translate their works due to the signature and formal permission that involve legal liabilities. In this particular case, the university could help students in choosing or suggesting Panamanian authors whose books have already been part of translation projects.

Another aspect to contemplate is the linguistic and cultural nuances between languages.. In fact, language is always evolving, so translators must be immersed in it every day to understand its culture and changes. Translators must read quite a lot in order to be familiar with the written structure of the target language, because reading is naturally a great method to enhance translation skills in terms of memory, vocabulary, and more. Ultimately, if one is disciplined enough to study all linguistic and social aspects, translating can be a natural ability, like a superpower in communication.

In the same way, it is important to follow appropriately the process of translation, so students should avoid rushing, or skipping crucial steps. When people translate with a fresh mind, patience, and enough time, they are able to proofread and correct any mistakes. That is why being organized in every aspect is key when performing this type of projects.

Regarding future graduations, Universidad Latina de Panamá could also include in this project other types of activities that are related to the field of translation. Students could cooperate in some companies or places where translation or interpretation is required, like in tourism. That could represent a great space for them to improve their experience.

Glossary

Spanish	English
A	
1. Abarrotaban: Llenar por completo un espacio de personas o cosas.	1. Filled up: Fill a space completely with people or things.
2. Alquitrán: Líquido viscoso, de color muy oscuro y fuerte olor, que se obtiene de la destilación de maderas resinosas, carbones, petróleo, pizarras y otros materiales.	2. Tar: Viscous liquid, with a very dark color and strong odor, obtained from the distillation of resinous woods, coals, petroleum, slate and other materials.
3. Astuta: Agudo, hábil para engañar o evitar el engaño o para lograr artificiosamente cualquier fin.	3. Cunning: Sharp, skilled at deceiving or avoiding deception or at artificially achieving any end.
B	
4. Brasas: Leña o carbón encendidos, rojos, por total incandescencia.	4. Embers: Burning firewood or coal, red, by total incandescence.
5. Bruma: parecido al vapor o humo del aire que lo hace menos visible, de manera que es difícil ver claramente.	5. Haze: something such as heat or smoke in the air that makes it less clear, so that it is difficult to see well.
6. Buhardilla: espacio o cuarto en el punto más alto de una construcción, debajo del techo, a veces usado para guardar cosas.	6. Attic: the space or room at the top of a building, under the roof, often used for storing things.
C	
7. Cátaros: Seguidor de una de las varias sectas consideradas heréticas de Europa durante los siglos XI-XIII, que rechazaban la carne como propia del mal y negaban, por tanto, la divinidad de Cristo por su condición humana.	7. Cathars: follower of one of several sects considered heretical that spread through Europe during the eleventh-thirteenth centuries, which rejected the flesh as belonging to evil and therefore denied the divinity of Christ for his human condition.

8. Claro: área de un bosque en la cual los árboles y arbustos han sido removidos.	8. Clearing: an area in a wood or forest from which trees and bushes have been removed.
9. Contraventanas: Puerta exterior o interior que se cierra sobre el cristal de la ventana para protegerla, para que no entre luz y para el control de la privacidad.	9. Shutters: Exterior or interior door that closes on the window glass to protect it, so that no light enters, and for privacy control.
D	
10. Demacrado: muy delgado, especialmente por enfermedad o hambre.	10. Gaunt: very thin, especially because of sickness or hunger
E	
11. Envite: empujón, investida	11. Onslaught: push; thrust.
12. Efusivamente: de manera muy amistosa o aprobatoria.	12. Warmly: in a very friendly or approving way
13. Enjambre: gran grupo de insectos que se mueven todos juntos.	13. Swarm: a large group of insects all moving together
14. Espesura: área de árboles y arbustos que crecen sumamente juntos.	14. Thicket: an area of trees and bushes growing closely together.
15. Expiados: Borrar las culpas, purificarse de ellas por medio de algún sacrificio.	15. Atoned: To erase one's sins, to purify oneself from them by means of some sacrifice.
F	
16. Febril: lleno de actividades, o muy cansado y rápido.	16. Hectic: full of activity, or very busy and fast.
17. Flanqueado: estar al lado de alguien o algo.	17. Flanked: to be at the side of someone or something.

18. Fresno: árbol del bosque que tiene una corteza suave y gris, pequeñas flores de tonalidad verde y semillas con forma de alas.	18. Ash tree: a forest tree that has a smooth, grey bark, small greenish flowers, and seeds shaped like wings.
19. Funesta: Que es origen de pesares o de ruina.	19. Dismal: source of sorrow or ruin.
20. Furtivo: Que se hace a escondidas.	20. Furtive: That is done in secret.
G	
21. Grabado: Arte y técnica de grabar (señalar, abrir y labrar en una superficie).	21. Engraving: Art and technique of engraving (pointing, opening and carving on a surface).
22. Granada: el lloro alto y áspero de un ave como el cuervo.	22. Caw: the loud, rough cry of a bird such as a crow.
H	
23. Humedad: estar ligeramente mojado, especialmente de una forma que no es agradable ni cómoda.	23. Dampness: state of being slightly wet, especially in a way that is not pleasant or comfortable
I	
24. Impronta: Huella en hueco o en relieve dejada por un sello u otro cuerpo, mediante presión, en una materia blanda o dúctil.	24. Mark: Imprint or relief left by a stamp or other object, by means of pressure, on a soft or ductile material.
25. Indolencia: Cualidad de indolente, el que no se afecta o conmueve.	25. Indolence: The quality of indolence, one who is not affected or moved.
J	
26. Jirones: Pedazo desgarrado del vestido o de otra ropa.	26. Shreds: Torn piece of dress or other clothing.
L	

27. Licántropo: Persona que, según la tradición popular, se convierte en lobo las noches de plenilunio.	27. Werewolf: a person that, according to pop culture, can transform into a wolf during full moon.
28. Líquenes: Un organismo vegetal de color gris, verde o amarillo que crece en rocas, paredes y árboles.	28. Lichens: a grey, green or yellow plant-like organism that grows on rocks, walls, and trees.
M	
29. Maleza: Abundancia de malas hierbas.	29. Undergrowth: Abundance of weeds.
30. Madriguera: Cueva en que habitan ciertos animales, especialmente los conejos.	30. Burrow: Cave inhabited by certain animals, especially rabbits.
31. Médula: el tejido blando y carnoso que se encuentra en el centro de los huesos.	31. Marrow: the soft, fatty tissue in the center of bones.
32. Misal: libro pequeño en el que se encuentran las oraciones y lecturas para la misa	32. Missal: small book containing the prayers and readings for the mass at church.
33. Monasterio: Casa, ordinariamente fuera de poblado, donde viven monjes en comunidad.	33. Monastery: House, usually outside the village, where monks live in community.
34. Mortaja: una tela o prenda de vestir larga y suelta que se usa para envolver un cadáver antes de enterrarlo.	34. Shroud: a cloth or long, loose piece of clothing that is used to wrap a dead body before it is buried.
35. Mosquete: arma con un cañón largo, usada en el pasado.	35. Musket: a gun with a long barrel, used in the past.
O	
36. Obispo: En el catolicismo, prelado superior de una diócesis, al que se le ha	36. Bishop: In Catholicism, superior prelate of a diocese, to which the first degree of the

conferido, por el sacramento del orden, el primer grado de la jerarquía eclesiástica.	ecclesiastical hierarchy has been conferred by the sacrament of Orders.
P	
37. Parroquianos: miembros de una parroquia en particular bajo el cuidado de un cura.	37. Parishioners: members of a particular parish under the care of a priest.
38. Pastoras: Persona que guarda, guía y apacienta el ganado, especialmente el de ovejas.	38. Shepherdesses: The keeper, guide and herder of livestock, especially sheep.
39. Penumbra: situación en que hay poca o ninguna luz.	39. Darkness: situation in which there is little or no light
Q	
40. Quimera: Aquello que se propone a la imaginación como posible o verdadero, no siéndolo.	40. Pipe dream: That which is proposed to the imagination as possible or true, not being so.
R	
41. Rendijas: abertura larga y estrecha en un cuerpo o entre dos cosas y que permite la entrada de luz y aire.	41. Cracks: large and narrow gap in a mass or between two things, which allows the air and light to enter.
42. Rocío: Vapor que con la frialdad de la noche se condensa en la atmósfera en muy menudas gotas que aparecen luego sobre la superficie de la tierra o sobre las plantas.	42. Dew: Steam that with the coldness of night condenses in the atmosphere into very small drops, which then appear on the surface of the earth or on plants.
43. Roído: que ha sido mordido persistentemente.	43. Threadbare: that has been chewed persistently.
S	

44. Sacristía: una habitación en una iglesia donde se guardan vasos sagrados y vestimentas y donde el clero se viste.	44. Sacristy: a room in a church where sacred vessels and vestments are kept and where the clergy vests.
45. Setos: una línea de arbustos plantados muy juntos, especialmente a lo largo del borde de un jardín, campo o camino.	45. Hedges: a line of bushes planted very close together, especially along the edge of a garden, field, or road.
T	
46. Tañían: Tocar un instrumento musical de percusión o de cuerda, en especial una campana.	46. Chimed: playing percussion or stringed musical instrument, especially a bell.
47. Titiló: Dicho de un cuerpo luminoso: Centellear con ligero temblor.	47. Flickered: action of a luminous body: to sparkle with slight trembling.
48. Trinar: (especialmente las aves) emitir uno o varios sonidos agudos.	48. Chirping: (especially of a bird) to make a short high sound or sounds
49. Turbia: (de líquido o aire) que se ve oscuro, sucio y nublado.	49. Murky: (of liquid or air) looking dark, dirty, and clouded.
U	
50. Umbral: Parte inferior o escalón, por lo común de piedra, en la puerta o entrada de una casa.	50. Doorstep: Lower part or step, usually made of stone, at the door or entrance of a house.
V	
51. Vigilia: Estado de quien se halla despierto o en vela.	51. Wakefulness: State of the person who is awake or awake.
52. Vitrales: Vidriera de colores.	52. Stained-glass windows: glass colored window.
Z	
53. Zarzas: arbusto espinoso verde con flores blancas o rosadas y frutos negros.	53. Brambles: green thorny shrub with white or pink flowers and black fruits.

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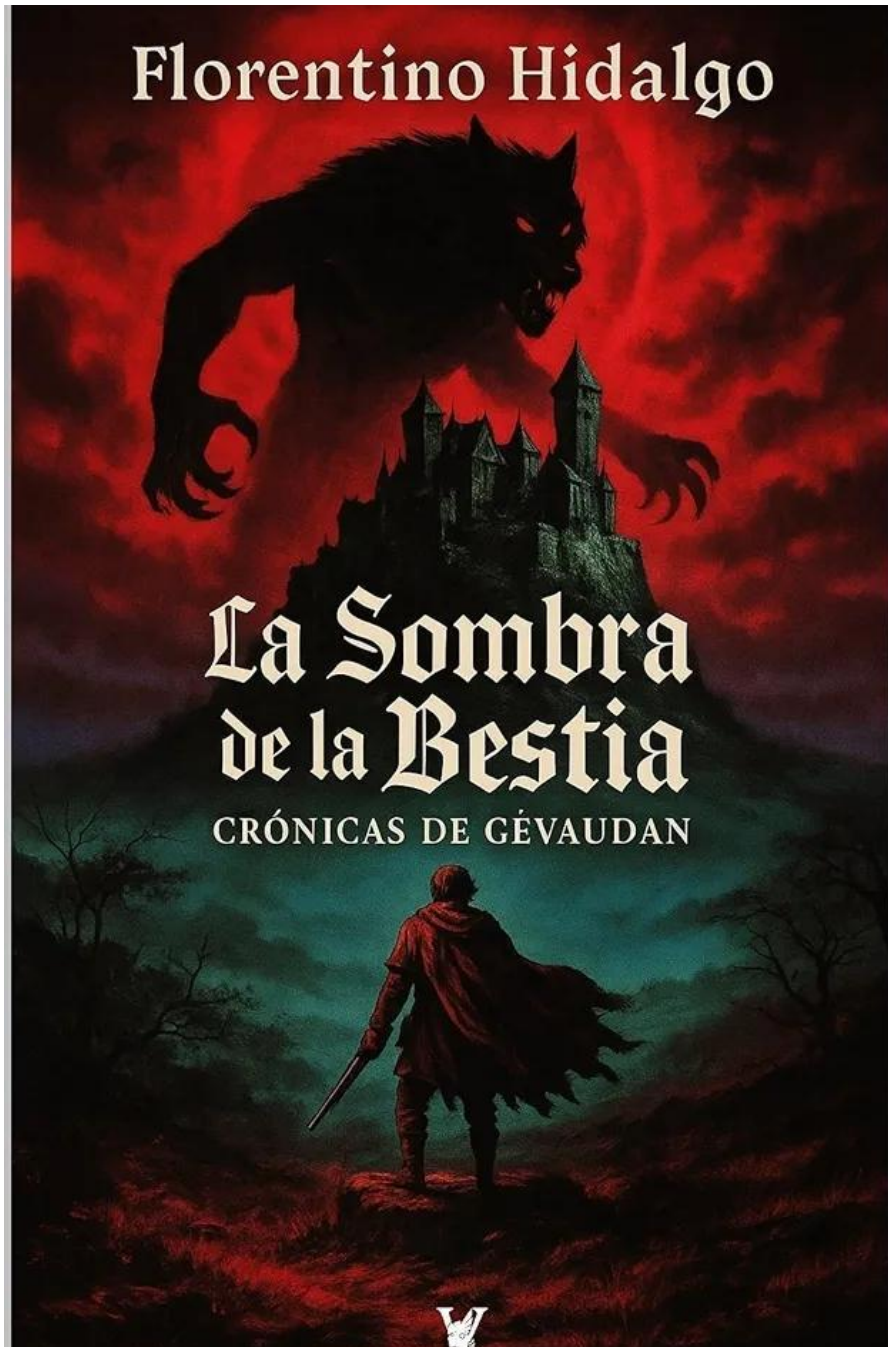
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Annexes

Figure 2

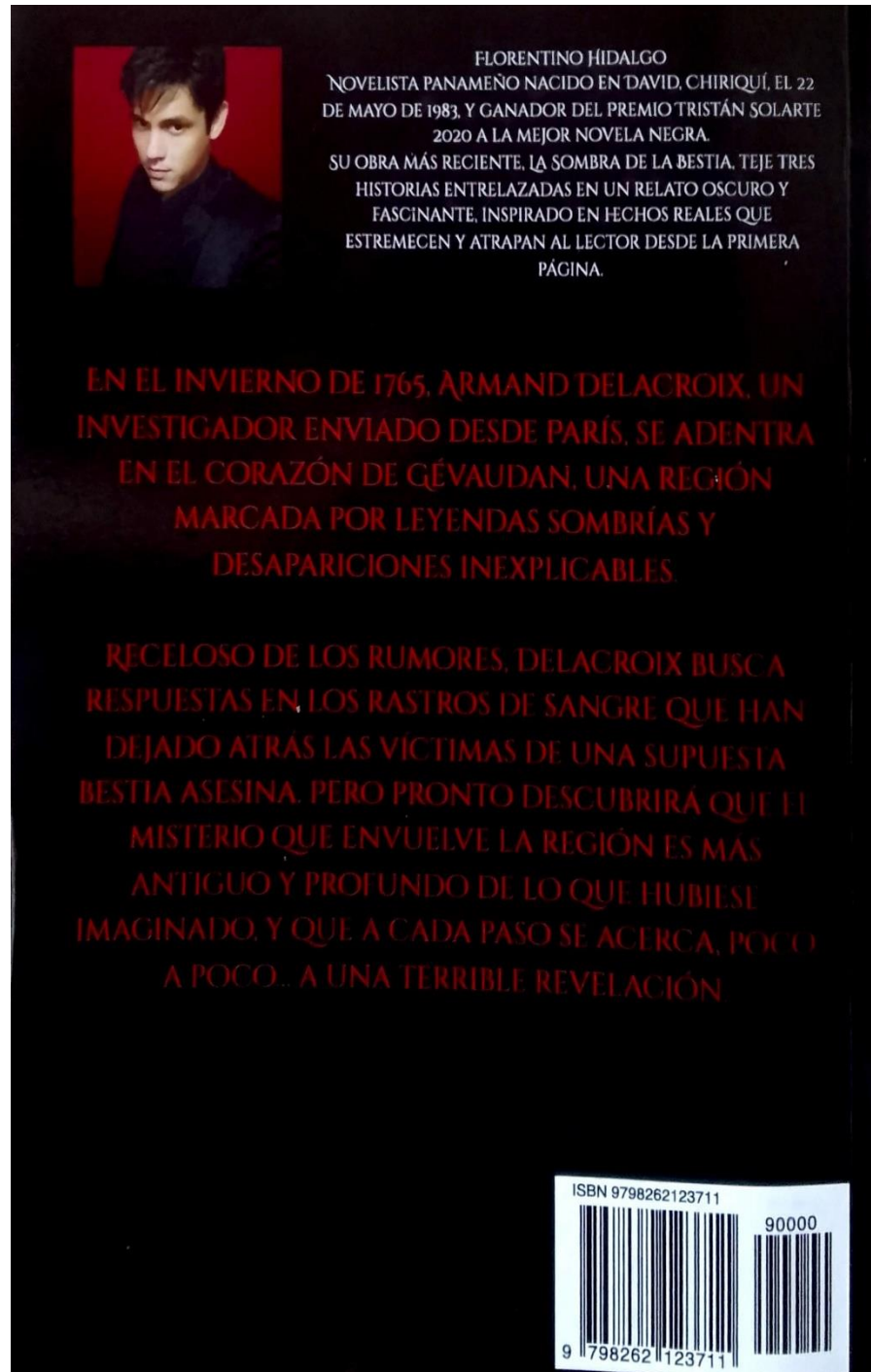
Book Cover



Note. Cover of the book "*La Sombra de la Bestia: Crónicas de Gévaudan*" written by Florentino Hidalgo

Figure 3

Back cover



Note: Back of the book with the synopsis and a short biography of the author