

## THE SHORT STORY

### All Is Forgiven

Tedo Sharadenidze

*“When I was a child, I would ruthlessly laugh at people pondering the purpose of their being on Earth. But the older I grew, the more permissive I became with my mind, letting it look for any clues revealing the secret meaning of life.”*

I open my eyes. My eyelids are fighting back; they're too heavy. It's dark. I try to grope around to feel where I am, but I can't do that. How long have I been asleep? I have lost track of time. Did I go blind? No, my eyelashes are pressing against something. Why do I feel like I'm lying in a grave? Oh, no need to shake a leg then. Fanatical assumptions aside, where am I?

I remember falling into a deep sleep, followed by the yelping of a dog. Right now, I want to sink into the stillness of the moment. I don't let myself do so for fear that the stillness I'm relishing may soon turn into a blindfold, taking away all the thrilling moments that are sometimes greater than the appeal of never-ending peacefulness.

Let me clear my throat. I almost choked on my saliva. My nose feels itchy for some reason. I want to feel afraid and force myself to flee the dilemma, but my half-paralyzed body favors all the uneasiness surrounding me.

I have to admit it, I feel scared. I think back to times I would complain about having to get up early in the morning to catch the 6 a.m. train to the city where I worked. How many things have I taken for granted in my life?

I can hear a dog yelping again and again. A terrible odor is drifting out of somewhere. I can't tell you how disgusting it smells. I am telling myself to man up, to persevere, and not let my wobbly mind put a blindfold on my eyes.

The air feels thick and heavy, just like the air in my bedroom a few hours after closing the

window. My stuffy room... how much I miss it already! It was only yesterday (or maybe never) when I longed for a bigger and more comfortable room with a smaller window. I have always loved the dark. I felt more secure whenever I sat, stood, or lay in the dark. Closed blinds have always been my security blanket. But now how I wish someone would draw them and let the sunlight in.

I start questioning my perseverance. Wouldn't it be better to close my eyes (no use keeping eyes open when all you can see is nothing) and let this unknown force take me to the bottom of the sea instead of holding onto the pieces of a wrecked boat?

Speaking of boats, memories, though unclear, of my past days are coming to life. In my childhood, I always approached such trivial but highly sensitive things as paper boats with personal admiration and deep thought. (I guess I just wasted my childhood.) The sight of a paper boat floating on the rocking waves is not a moment to throw away; it is a moment for much-needed self-reflection. We are like gold seekers on paper boats — just think about it for a moment — sailing through the raging waves with an unwavering and never-ending desire to find a treasure island, only to chance upon worn-out shoe soles along the way. How disappointing...

Is sneezing something that can be a part of my present condition? So weird.

My mind wanders from one dead end to another without getting my head around my present situation. It's strange that the ability to think rationally is still with me. But what's the use of logic when human nature yearns to cross the boundaries of bare facts?

I have never felt lonely in my life. I have always been proud of my efforts to rid my life

ladder of people who scarred my feelings. I don't think of them as a great loss, because they were the barriers to living up to the expectations I set for myself. I know that with less unnecessary weight, the chain of connection will endure longer and will be easier to hold onto.

We all have life ladders to climb. I take this matter very seriously because the success or failure of each step we take up this ladder hinges on the strength of each rung. If and when I have successfully climbed the whole ladder (still hoping to do so), I will look for the support with each rung. I will see those who pretended to hold the rung and would immediately let it go when they saw me get closer to them, and those who mustered their strength to resist my weight from above. What would hurt the most is not the cuts or bruises on my body, but the sudden disappearance of a small consolation that my soul is crying out for right now.

I feel as if I am being watched by hundreds of unblinking eyes. The undisturbed tranquility is once again rubbing loneliness in my face, making me crave even the most trying and disheartening days of my life.

I would give everything if someone made this terrible sound of yelping stop.

I can't take it anymore. I am ready to succumb to whatever this force is. I ask your forgiveness for everything I did to you and for everything I didn't do but should have done for you. No, wait! I feel like a heavy load has been lifted. I can move my left hand. I must be lying a few inches above the ground. I try to reach my hand down to the ground to feel it. It's warm and wet. I take off my blindfold (putting on the blindfold even when you wake up at daybreak: strange, isn't it?) and see my bulldog staring at me.

Now I have to clean up the mess he'd made by my bedside. Will I have enough time to do that? I don't want to miss the train.

### Author's Note



**Tedo Sharadenidze** is a 25-year-old scholar, teacher, and published author of poetry and prose from Batumi in western Georgia. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in Humanities (English Studies) from Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University. During his undergraduate program, he studied for a year at the University of Alcalá de Henares in Madrid, Spain, in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters. After finishing his BA degree, he continued at Batumi State University in the Faculty of Education and Exact Sciences, completing the Teacher Certification Program. He then obtained a Master's degree in Humanities (English Linguistics) at Batumi State University.

As an IELTS instructor, Tedo teaches English as a Second Language (AP Language and AP U.S. History) to high school seniors at the American School Nike in Batumi where he is also the newly appointed head of Quality Management. He is also an Invited Lecturer at BAU International University in Batumi, teaching a course in Medical Communication in English.

Tedo's writings mainly address the themes of alienation, indifference, eccentricity, internal conflict, childhood mirth, and the inability "to defy what fate has thrown at you." Tedo is motivated to write by the desire "to turn simple, day-to-day occurrences into something magical... something that would inspire others to put pen to paper."