

DOUBLE BLACK GREEK COFFEE

**Note:**

The terms Mandelbrot, Julia and fractal art derive from a field of study in mathematics, in particular the chaos theory, as originally defined by Benoit Mandelbrot. Fractals are images that, when you zoom in to their details, they change and reveal a new, wholly unexpected pattern, as strangely beautiful as the original. But if you keep zooming in, you eventually arrive at the same patterns as the original. There is no end to this process. Only when you can't zoom in anymore.

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## The two friends

“Come, let’s buzz, my little honeybee!”

This odd phrase and bidding was Harry’s way of advertising – at every opportunity – his great love for Helena. A love apparently rooted in the simple and strong instincts of the animal micro-kingdom. And, judging at least by his public demonstrations among friends, at parties, or old classmates’ gatherings, it was his favorite calling. The phrase confounded those new to his circle of friends. And never failed to carve the same, uncomfortable smiles across the faces of his old ones. “Honeybee,” as an amorous diminutive, is definitely an unusual, surprising and weird pet name.

But Harry buzzed with his honeybee. He buzzed non-stop. Not only at private get-togethers but in public places too. In coffee-shops, and bars, and theatres. And his honeybee, according to the dictates of feminine sauciness, would initially send him a discouraging signal. A signal she was unwilling, that it wasn’t the right time or place for buzzing. She would then, most times instinctively, pull away from Harry a little, as if she meant to reject his proposal to join him and sing in the monotonous frequency of honeybees.

Only for a moment, in the beginning, though. Because Helena the little honeybee would soon get her motor running, and shyly open her tiny wings. She would open her

wings and beat them excitedly so they would buzz for all to hear; not just their friends, but everybody within ear-shot as well. So there would be no doubt about a thing. And if Harry's attention happened to be momentarily distracted by a sudden conversation someone next to him accidentally started, Helena the little honeybee would lose her temper and speed up her wing-beating. And if the laborious, quick movement of her wings was not audible enough, and Harry continued to be absorbed in conversation with his friends, Helena the little honeybee would fly into a rage. She would recall that, apart from wings, she also had a sting. An infallible and reliable tool, not likely to go unnoticed. An unfailing remedy, a sure path through which to remind Harry the proposal he'd just made her and, for a moment there, had apparently forgotten already.

And honeybee Harry, in the face of his girlfriend's sting, would immediately return to the small pleasures of his micro-kingdom. He'd abruptly pull out of the conversation he was holding. Abruptly and rudely. He'd set his large bulk into rotary motion and once he'd brought himself face to face with Helena, he'd gaze fixedly at his beloved, with a pleading, apologetic look on his face for his inexcusable, momentary slip. And eventually become absorbed in his darling's buzzes.

But more than this weird insect communication code, more than the tiny animals and the winged little creatures of their amorous fantasies, people around them wondered about their relationship. It was the relationship itself, more than anything, which surprised everyone. Because Harry and Helena appeared to all who knew

them, without exception, to be two entirely mismatched creatures. Even worse; two incompatible creatures. Who, what's more, were guaranteed to remain so for all eternity. In other words, they didn't seem, on the outside at least, to click or agree on anything. As if fate had chosen to bring the two together, not for the usual sexual, psychological, utilitarian or any such ordinary reason. Rather, it looked like she brought them together for some kind of wild, bizarre experiment. As if she wanted to test these two organisms in her kingdom, and check out their tolerance to incongruity and disparity.

So Harry was out-going where Helena was a home-bird. Harry was tall and Helena short. Harry fat, Helena thin. And this aura of misalliance carried over and permeated more important things, too. It saturated them; all of them. Harry was into rock and jazz while Helena loved tavernas and bouzouki music. Harry loved skiing in Parnassus and Helena shopping in Ermou Street. They appeared to be from different solar systems, much less belong to the same family of winged creatures. Which was something that never skipped attention. Neither did the fact that it was Helena who always got her way eventually, each and every time. So this weird relationship, this misrelated relation, instantly rendered everyone speechless. Harry's friend, Orestes, along with everybody else.

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Orestes and Harry were old friends, then. They had the exact same age, their birthdays were just ten days apart. Harry was the older one. Their friendship dated back to

the early years of elementary school. But even before they met in the third grade, their lives ran along similar tracks.

They both grew up in different countries, and came from families living abroad which, out of sheer coincidence, at some turning-point decided to return to their original birthplace. So both boys found themselves in their homeland, simultaneously, at the age of eight.

Their families came back to Greece, then, at the same time. Orestes' family from Germany, Harry's from Salvador. The only thing Salvador had in common with Germany was that both countries were totally different from Greece. From Greece where, owing to some twist of fate, both Harry and Orestes found themselves, on roughly the same day, in the same neighborhood, at the same school. Somewhere in the area of Ilisia, in Athens. In the mid seventies, shortly after the country exited the darkness of the dictatorship.

They both felt totally alien to the other kids in their class, and were instantly drawn to one another. Soon they became what we would call bosom buddies. They were both good pupils at the time and would remain so during their entire school and academic career, in the following years. Something which, initially at least, owed probably to the fact they had few friends and plenty of time on their hands; apart, of course, from that which they shared together.

Then music came along. Accustomed as they were to a different set of sounds in their first country, it only followed that local, folk music and the many post-dictatorship, revolutionary songs playing constantly on the radio

at the time, sounded weird to them. So they devoted themselves to more neutral sounds, more universal types of music, which they could appreciate better. Such as rock and the like. Music would become an integral part of their lives a few years later. Orestes played guitar, Harry the flute; they became a duet in music, too. They cut themselves off from the rest of the world entirely then. They shut the door to everybody else. And what happened with their music, happened in almost every aspect of their lives; their lives which were so solitary, so different from the lives of all the other kids around them.

And so the years went by, in seclusion, until they reached their teens. Then their age came knocking on the door. It knocked and they heard it loud and clear. They then felt there was reason enough to break out of the autism in which they'd been so comfortable all these years. It couldn't happen any other way. They felt the strong urge, the longing for the female sex, stir inside them, and overwhelm them.

It's a universal lust, the same the world over. And invincible, on top. It was then, when they decided to come out into the open air and set sail towards sexual intercourse, that they saw that weird music on the radio and all the countless oddities of the period, under a new light. They resolved and strove to build a bridge to all that. To view them with a sense of familiarity. To fabricate it, if necessary. To open the door to new opportunities. So their circle, their social circle, might grow wider. And let other people in. Of the female sex, of course.

They were sixteen when Harry suddenly came across and was stuck on Helena. They met at a party Harry and

Orestes had gone to, after they had decided it was no longer right, nor wise, to restrict themselves solely to each other's company. It was at that party, then, where Harry started canoodling with Helena. The two of them had, at the time, a simplified view of women. Apart from the unnatural sweetness that overwhelmed them, they approached the matter like some kind of ineffable mystery, which they had to unveil at all costs. That's how they felt about it.

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The memory of a primitive and unfulfilled attraction which had infatuated them two years earlier was still vivid inside. They experienced it both with the same, unprecedented intensity then. For Harry's cousin, Rinoula. Two years ago, at the time of their first awakening, when all three were pushing fourteen.

Cousin Rinoula was a rare early bloomer. The boys had hardly noticed her before. They used to call her stupid and a moron. They paid no attention to her. But suddenly Rinoula became a full grown – a strikingly lush – woman. Precocious but also voluptuous. With luscious curves and perfect sways. And a maddening sauciness. Thus the two radically reconsidered their view on Rinoula's mental capacity. They found a new, very engaging, interest. They never missed the chance to feel up, to touch, to brush against. Rinoula was, naturally, aware of her power and she tested it securely on these two harmless fledglings. Without feeling threatened herself and without of course giving a fig that she had them, both, hankering in vain.

Rinoula could see their anguish and sense their artlessly staged disinterest. And drew great self-confidence from it all. The more they suffered, the more relentlessly Rinoula lead them on and finished them off. And then preened herself on her great, alluring charm.

That was the great moment when the two boys first emerged from the shell of their small, private world. From their little rooms with their rock records, their flutes, their guitars, their books and their long chats. They were both utterly smitten by the aura and the image and the scents of Rinoula. They were also crazed by all the stupendous stuff that unfolded in their fantasies. Somewhat surreptitiously though, a bit obscurely and without direction. They were still too young to work up any resolve, even though they'd lost their sleep entirely.

Orestes, who unlike Harry had no incestuous restrictions, at some point considered setting himself a goal. But he set his goal only in his head though; and when such goals are restricted to one's head, without the soul and hands having any part, they usually come to nothing. So Orestes remained indecisive, idle, without ever managing to make some move. This, in any case, would probably frustrate Rinoula, who was rather more into rehearsals with the male sex, and target practicing, but still unwilling to engage in true battle.

Orestes therefore made do with conjuring Rinoula in his fantasies. Where he had more freedom in handling her. He even invited Harry and, at the peak of his excitement, shared her body with him. And that was a slight, a rare thought, which he never dared share with his friend Harry. He never dared ask him either if Harry too, during

his sweet torment, invited him to join them.

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Now that Harry was carrying on with Helena though, Orestes succeeded, in the light of that first, common, great upheaval, he succeeded in going one step further. He managed to see beyond the sweetness of the female. No small feat, considering the circumstances and preoccupations of their age at the time. He succeeded in thinking beyond sex. He felt Helena was out of tune, damn it. And her aura wasn't even close to the incredibly high standard Rinoula had set for them. In his eyes, Helena appeared inapt and indifferent. Nor was she particularly good-looking. And since he knew his friend well, since he had a distance from Harry's romance, and his mind was clear and unaffected, he could see from the start what would inevitably become evident to all. Namely that Harry, if it weren't for that cornerstone of human civilization, the unbearable sexual instinct, would never even have noticed her if he passed her on the street.

Orestes soon became convinced that once his friend blew off some steam, he'd see things more clearly and would no doubt break away from Helena's web. Even if he had to destroy that web first, tear it apart so he could break himself free.