

Visit to a Grandfather

(Follow-up activity to a passage taken from C.P. SNOW, *The Sleep of Reason.*)

It was the 23rd of December and I was at home with my son, Charles.

We were in the living room, the fireplace was lighting the room, the Christmas tree bright, the presents under the tree, and the atmosphere quiet with the sweet smell of happiness; a lot of feelings in my soul: happiness and yet, somewhat, anguish, warmth and sadness, nostalgia and...

This is what Christmas is like, a mix of contrasting feelings. And they were all exploding inside, in my head and in my hearth.

The strongest was nostalgia... I remembered my childhood, my parents and all my family. When we were all around the fireplace, unwrapping the presents, the joy, the happiness, the warmth coming from the fire exploded again ... Oh! Oh, I...I must go, I said to myself. Yes, I must!

The day after I would go and visit my father! I asked Charles to come with me and I was very happy. It was decided. We would go!

The morning after, at about 7, we left. We took 3 hours. At last, at about 10, we rang the bell of my father's house. He opened the door and... "What a surprise!" he said; his voice, I noticed once more, as I did when, months ago, I had seen him last, still disconcertingly strong in spite of his 85 years, and his eyes very light; yes, they had not faded with age.

"Come in, young man", he said to Charles. "David..." Was his voice broken now?

We went into and sat in the armchairs in the living room. We spoke a lot, sipping my father's tea. The hours passed and the dark of the night sank onto the country.

I went out; it was very cold. I closed my eyes and memories of my family, my childhood Christmas, my father and his teas, the tea ceremony with all his cakes, and jam tarts, and custard tarts, and éclairs, and marzipan. My mother, my brother Martin... All these memories came back in a vortex. I felt happy, and yet sad, in the endless silence surrounding me.

But all that belonged to the past. Now I was in the present and I had to spend this time as happy as I could!

I opened my eyes. I had felt something cold on the nose..."Snow?!" Yeah, it was snowing!

Little snowflakes were falling on my head, my face and my coat. I called Charles and my father. They came out and we started playing, all together. We enjoyed ourselves. Very, very much!

I was happy. My father suggested we should sleep there. I accepted, grate.
"Merry Christmas, dad!"



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...and Merry Christmas to you all!

