

## THE REMAINS

“What are you looking for?”

She caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror. For the moment, she felt that confidence. And that was everything. She could convince anyone. At least, that was her belief. Who was there to contradict her.

“Nola, what are you fighting for? This is the real question for your life. What are the challenges that seem to inspire you.”

She shied away from any other kind of discussion.

“Why should I waste my time talking about things over which I have no control?”

“Nola, what can you control?”

This became a difficult question for her to ask. She was not advocating for a cause, not even herself. For the time being, she would act as if she was blessed by the sunshine. She would need that twinkling light in the corners of the night. She knew what was flowing down river, and she could brace herself for what would come.

She would try to maintain that magical disposition, but it was hard not to catch that strain of cynicism. In some deep way, she was a misanthrope. This understanding might have been terrible for her lasting survival. But it did demonstrate her overall intent. Often, she was quite single-minded. It was no longer just about these short-term triumphs. She needed more than flattery. What kept her going? She felt that she had enough to give. And this was all part of her character. She was looking for something to come back. She acceded to touch. She could feel it envelop her completely.

Was there enough to keep this story going? She could never do this on her own. But she was quite precise in her efforts. This was everything. She resented anyone who thought differently. She could only countenance so much self-reflection. This was not an exploration of self. And she was ready to shut down this dialogue if it was about to develop.

Where did this story seem to break down? She seemed to be an attractive figure. She tried to maintain this position. But she must have expected so much more for these efforts. And what remained available?

This should have been the beginning of a more lasting meditation. She put just enough effort in these experiences. That seemed to guarantee the integrity of her project for whatever it might be. How could this performance sustain something more. What was she looking for? This was about so much more trying to hold herself together. She did enough to sustain the presentation. But that was never enough in itself.

She was a gambler. And she wanted to remain at the table night after night. Any small victory could have developed into something more. But she was not able to turn the tables, not at any point. She took her victories for what they were. This demonstrated her weakness. And it would have slowed down other more committed players. She wouldn't see things in this way. She wanted these wins to accrue and result in something more valuable. That faith was enough to keep things moving. There was structure in this chaos. But it would be next to impossible to hope for much else. That added to her vision.

Others could see her actions day in and day out and hope that there might be something more. She knew how to pull it together and put it out there time and time again. What was

going on? This seemed like an adept performance. What were her hopes, and how could this accord with a more profound agenda?

Where was her genius? She should have been on the verge of opening another front. This could reveal a more lasting concern. There should have been more to the story. Others could observe her exploitative nature. But there was something profoundly tragic about the story. But she also served a critical role. This could make the observer believe that he knew so much more than she did. But she was giving her imprint to the moment. For everyone, this was the stamp of approval. It gave everyone a deep mission.

If she had totally lost her way, then so had everyone else. This was not a place of revelation. The hell became more apparent. It was important that she would serve this role. Her fallibility made others think that they were running the game. Everyone could be equally helpless. They needed her to fall in such a glorious way. And this kept everything moving with such eloquence.

If only she had a greater purpose, it would all make sense. This would give justification to everyone. She would be searching for a lasting meaning. This would enhance the communication of everyone. Things would not appear so damned. Even her shortcomings seemed to be an assurance that things could be different.

There was a moment in the night where she lost any power whatsoever. She had totally broken down. And there was nothing that could ever provide her rescue. Nevertheless, she kept on. This was an artistic achievement. It was totally part of her nature. She needed this kind of renewal, even if it required that she flare out.

This was not legendary. If it was, she could have offered more of an explanation. If she could even put herself together for the next occasion, that must have meant something. This persistence could have been a story in itself. But she wanted to be stellar. And she made do with what was available. Where was this going?

She was not looking for an explanation. She was deep in the moment. That was all that there was to it. If anyone for something more, that meant getting lost in the transcendent gesture. She was proof against this kind of thinking. That added to her reputation. She was ready to bounce back once again. No one could make claims for anything more.

She was almost ready to question anyone who was about to argue for something more. That would seem to affront her efforts. She believed that intellect was a critical sign of weakness. Anyone who argued for more demonstrated his lack of confidence. She was not looking for someone who might have doubts. She wanted excitement. She was looking for someone who would take her breath away.

If someone did not accept the world on her terms, this became a sign of cowardice. She felt quite powerful, at least for the moment. This meant taking no prisoners. Love was not going to tie her down. She wanted a better deal. She would take all the risks, foolish as they might be, to get to this point.

She wanted it to mean so much more. What could get it going once and for all? Everything was explosive in the present. That extended the magic for the moment. There was nothing else. If it wasn't explosive, then it did not exist. She was making it work in the present. The fireworks needed to work. It was more of a promise. She needed followers. Everything would fade, and she would have to do it all again. She might have had more exciting goals.

What were they worth in the moment? How could she push things along?

She needed to adopt that face. She needed to make sure that it did no crack. She would have her followers. That was enough to enable her to do this all one more time. This added to the spirit of the night.

Why did any of this matter? She recognized what this was all about. That was why she could hang on. She could command attention. Sh things weren't working, she would move on. She feared that someone would truly catch on. There was nothing that she could promise that went beyond the promise. But she relied on the beliefs of others. And they gave her everything that she needed. This was convincing. It was a universal truth. She just couldn't allow anyone to repeat it.

This became the real concern. She knew how vulnerable she was. She was always facing this kind of breakdown. But she needed to show her confidence. There was a ruthlessness to thiw gesture. This added to her reputation. She almost seemed untouchable, but she existed upon this acknowledgment. How could she deal with the contrary feelings? That was just too much to think about. She was not that exposed. So she needed to battle back., This was everything about her nature. There was this constant volatility.

Some people were attracted by this mercurial nature. They might have believed that they could tame her wildness. This was the furthest thing from the truth. This was the only control that she had. So she could not leave herself in the open. Nevertheless, she needed to be out there if she expected some kind of reward. She lived upon the suspense.

She sense how disruptive were her efforts. This was all part of the marvel. She was that ripple in the air. And she needed that mystery to work in her favor. Any observer would have discovered that none of this was meant to last. This was destructive. It was not seductive. It was only damaging.

She needed to regenerate herself. That was the only way to deal with these threats. She realized how much of herself that she was giving away. Therefore, she needed to be careful every time. She did not see it that way. She believed that she was more in control of this situation. She was only giving herself away in doese. That didn't diminish the terrible feeling that accompanied these harmful encounters. She wanted to remain more in command. But that moment of surrender left everything in suspense. She was doing her best to pull it all together. But she had been knocked down, and the feelings was deavastating.

This became her badge of honor. You could see it in her face. She had descended to this dark realm. And she had pulled herself out every time. It was necessary to find more of a sense of certainty. She was weaving these little bits together to make it all real. This was necessary to do it all again.

Anyone might try to break her down once and for all. And she did travel with some crazy characters. She thought that this added to her mystique. She was more than a survivor. She had a technique. She didn't want to take it any further. This was what worked for her. She wanted to leave it at that.

If there was anything more to it, that might have left her all the more exposed. She was not about this kind of revelation. She did not see herself as that deep. That would only make her more subject to manipulation by others. If there wasn't much of an explanation, she would be more subject to the random. She was a child of chaos. There was no other way to see this.

Her strategy brought with it critical challenges. It wasn't as if she was hidden from the world. And her deviousness could be a failing on her part. This added to her isolation. She immersed herself in the world, but she believed that she knew what it was all about. This added to her unstable experiences. She didn't want to be part of gossip. But she almost used gossip as a wedge against a more intellectual awareness.

She was dealing with people, who used image to moderate against the more stressful situations in their lives. It was no different for her. She was going to pull herself together and get ready for new threats. If someone wanted to explain this as a theory, it hardly accorded with her experience. What did people expect? This had nothing to do with any kind of ideology. Some people analyzed the world too deeply. They had lost the ability to live in the present. They tried to plan for things that could be explained.

Perhaps, she could have benefited from some foresight. But she was not going to lose herself in complex games. She could look at herself in the mirror, and it would make sense. She knew how to respond to what she was seeing. She could make the necessary adjustments.

Surely, there were moments when she wanted to hide her face. She was sick to the stomach. And she needed to wipe away all the dirt from the night before. She needed to crash completely before she could make all the pieces fit again.

This became the foundation of her character. She was all about rising from the dead. And she gave this impression to others. They realized that she could project her unstable nature. This enhanced her aura. This fragility added to her appeal. That did not diminish her more calculated nature.

She might have seemed to be a mix of contradictory traits. But she did her best to make it work for her benefit. She wanted things to reinforce her excitatory attitude. Everything was very intentional. That made it even more interesting that she did not want to delve any further into her personality. This was all about things that she did on her own. She wanted to dominate the situation. She did not want someone else to interfere. This made her even more convinced that she was getting away with her subterfuge. She may have only been fooling herself and her victims for the night. But she needed to keep on with the illusion. This could involve others. But no one else was going to throw her off.

She let herself become part of these bizarre intrigues. It was as if some guys were out to shut her down. But she could not let that happen. She was out for a big payoff, and she needed to make it a reality.

What was this all about? It was as if someone was dangling this fortune in front of her. And she only became more convinced of her ability. But she would not be able to follow through, and this would add to her frustration. She could not allow this kind of defeat.

She needed to redefine herself. She needed to rely on her intuitions. This could help her succeed. But this could also be a kind of consolation. She could only expect for so much, and these expectations seemed to drain her strength. How could she come back with the same kind of energy. There was something profoundly wrong in this representation.

Could anyone tell? Did she even recognize what was occurring? If she dwelled on these shortcomings, would she even leave the house? All that she needed to do was to create this same vision again and again. If she showed up, that would tell her that she had succeeded. No one had ended her game. She had the resilience. She had won another contest. She had overcome her

obstacles, and she was stronger than ever.

None of this had any connection with anything real. There seemed to be enough evidence to justify a theory. Where did any of this go?

She could almost claim some type of amnesia. She had been so selective in preserving her memories. This added to her awareness. She recalled what she wanted to reference. That was just enough so that she did appear to be totally lost. She was not going to let someone else speak for her. This was entirely her show. It would be that way once and for all. This was a total tribute to the power of the image. How could an artist relate?

She was acting in entirely the opposite way from a true maker. Everything was about these superficial impressions. And she could do this with total confidence. At every attempt, she tried to outdo herself. And this could go for others as well. No one could dispel her of this behavior.

She relied on her brooding nature to pull it off. This could make her seem to be more intentional. She might be able to achieve whatever she was about. People would love the mystery. Little did it matter that she was rather brittle. She could still get away with whatever she wanted. She let guys fill in for the picture. But that also meant that went no deeper about her deeper troubles. This should have alerted others about her history. But so many were will take this as the motivation to take advantage of her. This made it even worse. She barely had a chance to defend her interests. For what it was worth, this was all that it was worth.

Given her actual aspirations, she was hoping for so much more. This almost made her pathetic, and she was not going to let herself be sold out. What choice did she really have? She was too deep in the mess. This was barely a cue to stop. She could not be more immersed in her own demise.

This was not about sympathy. She could have benefitted from the efforts of others. But she was not in this place. She was performing her own swan song. And she afraid that the audience would catch. She might found strength in a more involved experience. But she only wanted to reveal so much.

She was making such an effort. It certainly struck a false chord now and then. She was getting in the way of her own success. Her ambitions were so limited. There was not much else potto say. She was getting trapped her overreach, and it would all come back to haunt her. How could she ever extricate herself? This seemed to be her won doing. Nevertheless, she was not going to hang around to be embarrassed. That was a hallmark of her act. She knew when to quit. She woud go home defeated and declare victory the next night.

The continual habit was nothing less than this. Nola answered to her name. Everythingng seemed to follow from that. She was never all that dangerous. She was simply a threat to herself.

Her sparkle would precede her. And that added to the anticipation. Where would things proceed from here?

Sometimes, she wouldn't have to do much to keep the game going. She loved this moment. Someone was speaking for her. If this was what she was fater, that would perfect. Otherwise, she would revise everything for her benefit. This was hardly a seduction. She wasn't saying much of anything. But she pretended that she was interested.

There was hardly anything to do at all. She could keep the machine running. And she

would stare into oblivion. That might not seem all that respectable, but what did it matter? She had goals, and she needed to fulfill them. It was never going to be much of a puzzle. Even in the wee hours of the morning, it was pretty much the same thing. She was hanging on. She would dispel all these influences and pull it all together the next night.

She was an expert at playing cat and mouse. There was nothing else to worry about. She would be immersed in the same show. If someone wanted to take it for something more, she would become irritated. That was more of an interference. She had already been subject to the rumor mills.

What was she taking from all this? She had the power to regenerate. She didn't want to concentrate on an explanation of her actions. She could succeed without it.

"Are you sympathetic with my situation? I am the same as you. I want acceptance. And you are pretending that there is a more authoritative way to see ourselves. We are more susceptible than we know.

"That does not account for your actions."

"What about your actions?"

"You cannot minimize your accountability by blaming others."

"What is your objection?"

"It is not about me."

"What is going on here?"

I did not want to lose the trail. What kept everyone going here? How could Nola infiltrate this scene?

She pointed out that this was a world with one goal in mind. That diminished the deeper challenges for the culture. But she could dress the part. What else did it matter?

"I am not looking for the moral police to judge me."

That was not my role. I was telling a worthwhile story. And she was doing the same thing night after night. That only added to her notoriety

"What is the problem? People do not associate any kind of notoriety with grocery store patrons. They spend their money. They eat. And that is the end of it. No one follows them around. No one is trying to generalize off of this. Life is simple."

"You really think that."

"I know that."

Why was there a scandal associated with her? She did not live life this way. She wasn't even trying to hurt anyone. So why would I be so circumspect in trying to tell her story?

"Do you care that much?"

"I have already blown a fuse."

"What is that about?"

"Think about it."

"I am."

"You can't imitate love. There are all these gestures."

"You can't mimic humanity."

"Where does this come from?"

Did Nola have her advocates who were defending her actions? Simply because she was more obvious than others hardly meant that she was more culpable for her actions.

There was a still a fundamental deviousness to her perspective. She would not hesitate to disrespect friends if that could be to her advantage. More than that, she was all about using others for her own gain.

“Where do you think that we are. This is how things work here. We all want something. And the smart ones know how to get it.”

“That sounds like a very aware way of seeing things.”

It was not as if anyone could figure that much about the self by looking.

“I want you to write a book about me.”

“I do that for money.”

“Am I going to have to pay?”

“Someone will.”

“What is going on at the house?”

She had developed the appropriate scheme for the night. She could already imagine the money piling up at the bank in the Bahamas. That could almost justify anything. She had the appropriate skills to get what she wanted at any moment. There was nothing else. That was the sad part, and that seemed to give her more of a head start.

It never really mattered who someone had been. All sins could be confessed, and the body would provide the foundation for everything repeating one more time. That became the meaning of life, the ability to squander all these opportunities. No one would feel terrible about anything. Everything could pass from morning to night. There wasn't enough motivation to foster a conscience. You could feel to that you were part of someone else's life. You would combine your portfolios. And everything would fade as the light of day became more intense.

“Why would I spend more time with you people?”

“Because we remind you that you are so much more than you are.”

Did anyone do her homework? Did anyone balance their accounts?”

“We need more revenues.”

“I want to believe that I am a revenue in and of myself. I find people who totally concur with the assessment.”

“She doesn't realize how bad it is?”

Her triumph was marvelous, and it promised so much more. Why would anyone consider that it was pathetic? Nola was in full flower. She was applying herself to a lasting success. This could be a needed psychological development.

If she was that well informed, would she continue to act in this way? This would be the ultimate connection. It would define her personally and professionally. She would not require anything else to help her to define herself.

Tomorrow might tell a different story. She didn't have that much money to create that definition, so she was going to depend on someone else.

If she was only looking for entertainment, that would be the delight that she sought. Why could anyone assume that there was anything else? No one had any other emotions that they could not express here. All these contrary feeling could be subdued through some remedy.

Over time, these attributes would become more obvious. The magical would be rewarded, and the world could develop based on this understanding.

“What are you talking about?”

“I am trying to describe your good day.”

“It will not last.”

“It will not last for anyone.”

“What do you prefer?”

“I want my stomach pumped.”

When we gave this much of ourselves, what did we hope to get back? She had perfected her craft. This advanced her social awareness.

“You are speaking about someone who does not have a political awareness. What remains?”

“What remains?”

It became dangerous to provide a political awareness for someone who barely has an idea what is going on. How could one terrible night provide the perspective for the sustained transformation of the individual? How did these ideas relate to the experiences of others? This was the key to a sustained political awareness. The challenges for one person opened up a more for perceptive outlook about the experiences of others.

This could have been the foundation of psychological understanding. However, this commitment could go further for lasting change. This meant empowering the individual to break from damaging patterns in her life. But it went beyond that.

“Why did you get in that car?”

“He has money. That girl requires a lot of money if you want to talk to her.”

“Did I get you right?”

“Are we getting anyone right?”

“I am trying to understand all of you.”

How could Nola develop from her political understanding? She could recognize how her psychological challenges are getting in the way of her personal development. She could take advantage of available resources that could motivate her change.

“She could become an owner and gloss over her psychological issue, or she could challenge her culture.”

“What is any of that about?”

She was not on the verge of a major change in her world. She was doing what she could.

“What kind of work do you do?”

“I am a stylist. I work with clothes. I make people look great.”

“Who knows what she is talking about?”

“You tell yourself that your role is more important.”

“Now, we are friends for life.”

“How is any of this different?”

I was waiting for you to describe the job. That might have offered some insight.

“We believe that image can be the basis for providing key economic resources. “

”Why would you say that your are good at what you do?”

“I do not feel that I am exploited.”

“You are getting soft.”

We continued to believe that Nola would attain greater consciousness by analyzing her job with more authority.



“Do you have any idea what we are talking about?”

“I show up for work. I do what needs to get done.”

“Your connection to the economic system is more remote. You believe that social privileges can more efficiently move goods and services.”

“You are not even the same person.

If she had a better understanding of her situation, she would spend time with creative people. She would understand the importance of people who can actually get something done.

She was like so many people who would fall for that glazed stare and that tired sense of humor. It was all about blossing over her situation. She would never attain a more perceptive view of her situation. Every guy would be on the verge of some preposterous artistic discovery. He would share his talentless commentary with her.

“What do you have that I do not have?”

“This is what I am all about.

“Do you suffer?”

It became difficult trying to account for a world that was losing its direction.

“What are you talking about?”

“That is what the guy told me.”

“He has an ostrich farm.”

“The ostrich farm solution.”

“That explains all of them.”

“They are sending me to a farm.”

“Are you contagious?”

She introduced this new guy. And he seemed even more preposterous than the last. These were people trying to explain their creative impulses. But they never dealt with any issues of actual creating anything lasting. Did they even have any emotions that might prove to be lasting. This had been perfect for Nola. She found these guys, who could summarize their work in a few words. That could provide greater motivation for personal development.

“At a certain point, you assume that the character of your altered states correspond to some kind of change in the world. This is more of a self-fulfilling prophecy.”

“This guy is going to help you, Nola.”

“I was trying to observe her development over time.”

“The road is falling apart before my eyes.”

“Where does this all go?”

“I am sending this for you to like and enjoy.”

Nola knew that this guy had one goal in mind. He wanted some kind of validity from her. But he did not really respect her at all. He had no idea about the actual challenges in her life. Nevertheless, he was excellent at telling her what she wanted to here.

“We could be way more than this?”

“Do you like the movie?”

“Will you hate me after this is all over?”

“There is nothing that you can give me that I do not already have.”

“Are we going to discuss movies?”

“We are going to discuss books.”

“That is not going to help me to feel better.”  
 She was doing everything that she could to feel right.  
 ”I am betting on this girl.”  
 “What if you lose?”  
 “I am betting for her to win and lose?”  
 “How do you do that?”  
 “What do you want to know about me?”  
 Nola cleaned up, and she was ready for whatever would come.  
 “Make the play while you can.”  
 “Nola, you always want so much more from life.”  
 “That is all that matters.”  
 “What do you talk about while you are asleep?”  
 “This guy is creative, and he has money.”  
 “A hedge fund guy.”  
 “She aims for the stars.”  
 “Someone has been insulting me.”  
 “What have they said about me?”  
 “Honestly, what could they say about you, Nola?”  
 “They know how to push my buttons.”  
 “Is there something else that you want to tell me?”  
 “I can reduce my level of production for you.”  
 “There is nothing else to the story.”  
 “There is nothing else to my life.”  
 Nola would never have this moment of isolation.  
 “Why is this never a philosophical awareness?”  
 “What do you want me to understand?”  
 “Tell me, Nola.”  
 “I don’t think that my political awareness is going to change my work situation.”  
 “What is your work situation? You really do not understand the source of the economic contradiction of any type.”  
 “I like my life.”  
 “We are learning.”  
 “What are you learning?”  
 “That is all that I need.”  
 “These guys have real money.”  
 “Who is doing the analysis?”  
 “Nola, it is going to take millions to get you to some kind of baseline.”  
 “I am beyond the baseline.”  
 “What are you laughing about? You are losing the ability to do anything creative about your life. You are going to be back on the line with the same level of exploitation. This will create frustration about your life.”  
 “You cannot exaggerate these moments of celebration.”  
 “Who is causing me to think like this?”

“I want to make my own decisions.”  
“Nola is losing her ability to discern.”  
“She never had that ability.”  
“This is where it is all supposed to become clear.”  
“What did they write about you Nola?”  
“For a good time.”  
“Do you offer a good time?”  
“What do you want?”  
“I do not want to go back to work on Monday.”  
“You are back front and center.”  
“He is a funny guy.”  
“Lincoln is going to tell you about the last work that he read.”  
“What else is there?”  
“We all know.”  
“This will end.”  
“And I am back at the same job.”  
“I do not want to quit.”  
“You need to have a better understanding of the economic system.”  
“Where does time go?”  
“Who are the controlling families?”  
“Do you think that you know, Nola?”