

## **The Painter.**

(To Lars)

There was a man who sold paint.

“Paint whatever you always dreamed of.” - Was his sales-pitch.

It was incredibly cheap and soon became the new fad of the town. Because it turned out to be true: Everyone could paint just what they wanted in such vivid images, but only when they used the paint from this particular seller. One would expect the price to rise as the interest grew, but no, the seller practically gave the paint away.

Joanna at first was suspicious: If something was too good to be true, it probably wasn't – she thought. But seeing how so many painted such lovely images, of all they'd ever dreamed of and how those paintings were so wonderfully true to life, she began to wonder if she wasn't missing out.

So she bought some paint – just one colour, the colour blue, to see if she would be able to do a painting with this kind of limitation. It would be a test to see if the paint really was as fantastic as all the praise it got.

She'd always dreamt of the sea. Living in a town in the middle of the country, she'd never been able to visit the sea. So she started to paint and with each stroke more and more saw the sea gushing and flushing, how the currents was flowing and how the waves were waving. It was so captivating she stopped dreaming of the sea, because now she had seen it for all it was.

Joanna had painted it all in one go. She'd forgotten to eat, forgotten to sleep, almost had forgotten who she was. But now she remembered and went out to buy something to eat. When she went outside the street was very quiet. At first she didn't take notice, but then the quiet became more and more evident. The shops were open, but the personnel weren't there, not the assistants nor the owners. She could smell the smell of paint everywhere she went. She bought some ham, bread and mustard and put the money on the counter. In a town like this one, it was an arrangement most were accustomed to. Still, it was too quiet.

Joanna began to investigate. At first she looked through the windows, but couldn't see anyone. Then she decided to do a closer inspection. She went into a house where the front door wasn't locked.

Hello? - she said. No one answered. But she discovered a man who sat in front of all he'd painted. There were landscapes of immense beauty, houses anyone would be happy to spend their lives living in, people whom Joanna found looked so very interesting she almost couldn't tear herself away from looking at them and then she saw how the mans eyes were fixed on one particular image: A self-portrait. He was so taken or paralyzed rather by his own image, it was impossible to talk to him.

And so Joanna saw how this had happened to everyone in the town, but herself. They'd all ended up painting themselves and this was their final dream.

She found the man who'd been selling the paint. He was keeping busy with collecting all the paintings. And wherever he finished taking the paintings, the ones who'd made them died.

Won't you release them? - she implored.

I'm not their captor. - he answered. - They've gotten everything they ever dreamed of.

The end.