

Modela Milioniero da Oscar Wilde

Tradukita da
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Ecepte se on esas richa, ne esas utila esar charmiva persono. Romantikeso esas la privilejo di richi, ma ne konvenas al sen-labori. La povri devas esar pragmatata e racionoza. Esas plu bona havar regulala revenuo kam esar facinanta. Ti esas granda veraji pri la vivo moderna, quin Hughie Erskine nultempe komprenis. Kompatinda Hughie! Intelektale, ni devas konfesar, il ne esis tre importanta. Nultempe il dicis irgo brilanta o nur mal-humoroza. Ma il aspektis marveleze bone kun sua krispa bruna hararo, klara traito di vizajo e griza okuli. Il esis tam prizata da viri kam da mulieri, ed il posedis omna habilesos ecepte aquirar pekunio. Ilua patro legacis ad il sua kavalri-sabro e «Historio dil Milito Peninsulala» de dek-e-kin tomi. Hughie akrochis la unesma super sua spugolo, pozis la duesma sur tabularo inter «Ruff's Guide» e «Bailey's Magazine», e vivis per duacent pundi po yaro, quin olda onklino grantis ad il. Il probabis omno. Il venabis al borso dum sis monati, ma quon povas papiliono agar inter tauri ed ursi? Il esabis teo-komercisto kelke plu longe, ma balde esis tedita da «pekoe» e «souchong». Pose il probis vendar sika «sherry». Il ne sucesis. Fine il divenis nulo - delektiva, senefika yunulo kun perfekta traito e nula profesiono.

Quo plugravigis la situaciono: Il esis amoranto. La yunino quan il amoris esis Laura Merton, la filiino di retreta Kolonelo, ilqua perdabis sua bona humoro e digesto en India e nultempe retro-trovabis una od altra. Laura adoris il, ed il amoregis elu tale, ke il

Unless one is wealthy there is no use in being a charming fellow. Romance is the privilege of the rich, not the profession of the unemployed. The poor should be practical and prosaic. It is better to have a permanent income than to be fascinating. These are the great truths of modern life which Hughie Erskine never realised. Poor Hughie! Intellectually, we must admit, he was not of much importance. He never said a brilliant or even an ill-natured thing in his life. But then he was wonderfully good-looking, with his crisp brown hair, his clear-cut profile, and his grey eyes. He was as popular with men as he was with women and he had every accomplishment except that of making money. His father had bequeathed him his cavalry sword and a History of the Peninsular War in fifteen volumes. Hughie hung the first over his looking-glass, put the second on a shelf between Ruff's Guide and Bailey's Magazine, and lived on two hundred a year that an old aunt allowed him. He had tried everything. He had gone on the Stock Exchange for six months; but what was a butterfly to do among bulls and bears? He had been a tea-merchant for a little longer, but had soon tired of pekoe and souchong. Then he had tried selling dry sherry. That did not answer; the sherry was a little too dry. Ultimately he became nothing, a delightful, ineffectual young man with a perfect profile and no profession.

To make matters worse, he was in love. The girl he loved was Laura Merton, the daughter of a retired Colonel who had lost his temper and his digestion in India, and had never found either of them again. Laura adored him, and he was ready to kiss her shoe-strings. They were the handsomest couple in

mem esus kisinta elua shu-kordeti. Li esis la maxim bela paro en London, e tam l'una kam l'altra havis nula moneteto-peco propra. La kolonelo tre afecionis Hughie, ma nule volis konsiderar fiancesko.

«Rivenez, mea yun amiko, kande tu havos tua propra deka-mil pundi, e ni reflektos pri to», il kustumis dicar, e Hughie aspektis tre chagrenema dum tala dii e mustis irar a Laura por konsolaco.

Ulmatine, dum irar a Holland Park, kande le Merton habitis, il eniris la habiteyo di intima amiko, Alan Trevor. Alan Trevor esis piktisto.

Ad-vere, poka homi nun-tempe eskapas de to. Ma il anke esis artisto, ed artisti esas pasable rara. Kom persono il esis partikulara, grosiera kerlo kun lentiginoza vizajo e reda, vilatra barbo. Ma sizinte la pinselo il esis vera maestro, e sua pikturi esis avide demandata.

Komence, il esis tre atraktata a Hughie - on devas agnoskar - tote pro la charmo di ta. «La nura homin quin piktisto devas konocar» il kustumis dicar, «esas homi sen-spirita e bela, quin regardar plezas artale e kun qui parolar repozigas la intelekto. Viri esanta dandii, e mulieri esanta dorlotati governas la mondo, adminime li devez lo.» Ma pos ke il plu bone konoceskbis Hughie, il same prizis il pro lua gaya, lejera humoro e pro lua jenoroza, sen-sucia naturo, ed il permisabis a Hughie permananta aceso a sua studieyo.

Kande Hughie eniris, il renkontris Trevor, qui aplikis finanta pinsel-stroki a marveloza, natur-granda pikturo di mendikistulo. La mendikisto stacis sur altigita platformo en angulo di la studieyo. Il esis velkinta oldulo kun vizajo quale krumplita pergameno e kun maxim kompatinda ekspreso.

Sur ilua shultri jetesis desdelikata bruna mantelo, tote ragigita e lacerita; ilua dika boti esis rapecita e reparita, e per un manuo il apogis su sur kruda bastono, dum ke per sua altra manuo il extensis sua batita chapelo por almono.

«Astoneganta modelo!!» susuris Hughie, presante la

London, and had not a penny-piece between them. The Colonel was very fond of Hughie, but would not hear of any engagement

"Come to me, my boy, when you have got ten thousand pounds of your own, and we will see about it," he used to say; and Hughie looked very glum in those days, and had to go to Laura for consolation

One morning, as he was on his way to Holland Park, where the Mertons lived, he dropped in to see a great friend of his, Alan Trevor. Trevor was a painter. Indeed, few people escape that nowadays. But he was also an artist, and artists are rather rare. Personally he was a strange rough fellow, with a freckled face and a red ragged beard. However, when he took up the brush he was a real master, and his pictures were eagerly sought after. He had been very much attracted by Hughie at first, it must be acknowledged, entirely on account of his personal charm. "The only people a painter should know," he used to say, "are people who are bête and beautiful, people who are an artistic pleasure to look at and an intellectual repose to talk to. Men who are dandies and women who are darlings rule the world, at least they should do so." However, after he got to know Hughie better, he liked him quite as much for his bright, buoyant spirits and his generous, reckless nature, and had given him the permanent entrée to his studio.

When Hughie came in he found Trevor putting the finishing touches to a wonderful life-size picture of a beggar-man. The beggar himself was standing on a raised platform in a corner of the studio. He was a wizened old man, with a face like wrinkled parchment, and a most piteous expression.

Over his shoulders was flung a coarse brown cloak, all tears and tatters; his thick boots were patched and cobbled, and with one hand he leant on a rough stick, while with the other he held out his battered hat for alms.

"What an amazing model!" whispered Hughie, as he shook hands with his friend

manuo di sua amiko.

«Astoneganta modelo!!» klamis Trevor maxim laute posible, «Ton onu certe povas dicar! Tala mendikistin quale ilu on ne renkontras omnadie. Ul trovajo, mea kara, ul vivanta [pikturo da] Velasquez! Ho, qua graburon Rembrandt esus facinta de ilu!»

«Kompatinda olda kerlo!» dicis Hughie, «Quale mizeroza il aspektas! Ma me supozas, ke por vi piktisti, ilua vizajo esas sua fortuno?»

«Certe,» respondis Trevor, «on ne bezonas mendikisto qua aspektas felica, ka ne?»

«Quanton posturisto recevas por posturar?» questionis Hughie, trovinte sidoplaso komoda sur divano.

«Un shilling po horo.»

«E quante tu recevos po tua pikturo, Alan?»

«Ho, po ca me recevos duamil.»

«Pundi?»

«*Guinei». Piktisti, poeti, e medikisti sempre recevas <*guinei>»

«Me opinias ke la posuristi devas havar sua procento», exklamis Hughie ridante, «li laboras tam penoze kam tu.»

«Absurda, absurda! Nu, nur konsiderez la peno di aplikar la farbi e di stacar avan la tresto dum la tota dio. Tu darfas parolar segunvole, Hughie, ma me certigas tu, ke esas instanti kande arto preske atingas la digneso di korpala laboro. Ma me pregas ke tu ne babilez; me esas tre okupata. Fumez sigareto e silencez.»

Pos kelka tempo la servisto eniris e dicis a Trevor ke la framisto deziras parolar kun ilu.

«Ne forirez, Hughie,» il dicis ekirante, «me retrovenos pos instanto.»

"An amazing model?" shouted Trevor at the top of his voice; "I should think so! Such beggars as he are not to be met with every day. A trouvaille, mon cher; a living Velasquez! My stars! what an etching Rembrandt would have made of him!"

"Poor old chap!" said Hughie, "how miserable he looks! But I suppose, to you painters, his face is his fortune?"

"Certainly," replied Trevor, "you don't want a beggar to look happy, do you?"

"How much does a model get for sitting?" asked Hughie, as he found himself a comfortable seat on a divan.

"A shilling an hour."

"And how much do you get for your picture, Alan?"

"Oh, for this I get two thousand!"

"Pounds?"

"Guineas. Painters, poets, and physicians always get guineas."

"Well, I think the model should have a percentage," cried Hughie, laughing; "they work quite as hard as you do."

"Nonsense, nonsense! Why, look at the trouble of laying on the paint alone, and standing all day long at one's easel! It's all very well, Hughie, for you to talk, but I assure you that there are moments when Art almost attains to the dignity of manual labour. But you mustn't chatter; I'm very busy. Smoke a cigarette, and keep quiet."

After some time the servant came in, and told Trevor that the framemaker wanted to speak to him.

"Don't run away, Hughie," he said, as he went out, "I will be back in a moment"

La olda mendikisto profitis del absenteso di Trevor por repozar sur ligna benko, qua esis dop il. Il aspektis tante abandonata e mizeroza, ke Hughie ne povis ne kompatar ilu, e serchis en sua poshi por explorar, qua pekunion il havis. Entote il havis un «sovereign» e kelka kupra moneti. «Kompatinda oldulo», il pensis en su, «il bezonas ol plue kam me, mem se to signifikas nula kabrioleto por me dum du semani», ed il pazis tra la studieyo e shovis la «sovereign» aden la manuo di mendikisto.

La oldulo tresayis, e febla rideto glitis super la velkita labii. «Danko sioro», ilu dicis. «danko!»

Lore Trevor arivis, e Hughie prenis konjedo, kelke redeskante pri to quon il agabis. Il pasis la dio kun Laura, recevis charmanta reprimando pro sua extravagajo, e mustis pede irar ad hemo.

Ta-nokte il promenis aden la Palette Club ye dek-e-un kloki e trovis Trevor, qua sidis sole en la fum-chambro e drinkis blanka vino de Rheingau e sod-aquo.

«Nu, Alan, ka tu parfinis la pikturo?» il dicis acendante sua sigareto

«Parfinita e kadrizita, mea karo!» respondis Trevor. «Cetere, tu facis vinko. Ta olda posturisto, quan vu vidis, esas tre devota a tu. Me mustis dicar ad il omno pri tu - qua tu esas, ube tu lojas, quante tu ganas, qua expektin vu havas.»

«Mea kara Alen», exklamis Hughie. «Me probable trovos il vartante por me kande me iros ad hemo. Ma evidente tu nur jokas. Kompatinda olda mizero! Me desiras, ke me povus facar irgo por il. Me konsideras kom abominenda ke irgu esas tante mizeroza. Me havas amasi de olda vesti heme - ka tu opinias, ke oli povas esar utila por il? Ho, ilua ragi ya esas tote disfalanta.»

«Ma il aspektis splendida en oli», dicis Trevor. «Me ne piktus il en redingoto po ulo. Quon tu nomizas ragi, me nomizas romantikajo. Quo semblas a tu povreso, esas pitoreskeso a me. Tamen me parolos ad il pri tua ofro.»

The old beggar-man took advantage of Trevor's absence to rest for a moment on a wooden bench that was behind him. He looked so forlorn and wretched that Hughie could not help pitying him, and felt in his pockets to see what money he had. All he could find was a sovereign and some coppers. "Poor old fellow," he thought to himself, "he wants it more than I do, but it means no hansoms for a fortnight"; and he walked across the studio and slipped the sovereign into the beggar's hand.

The old man started, and a faint smile flitted across his withered lips. "Thank you, sir," he said, "thank you."

Then Trevor arrived, and Hughie took his leave, blushing a little at what he had done. He spent the day with Laura, got a charming scolding for his extravagance, and had to walk home.

That night he strolled into the Palette Club about eleven o'clock, and found Trevor sitting by himself in the smoking-room drinking hock and seltzer.

"Well, Alan, did you get the picture finished all right?" he said, as he lit his cigarette.

"Finished and framed, my boy!" answered Trevor; "and, by the bye, you have made a conquest. That old model you saw is quite devoted to you. I had to tell him all about you - who you are, where you live, what your income is, what prospects you have -"

"My dear Alan," cried Hughie, "I shall probably find him waiting for me when I go home. But of course you are only joking. Poor old wretch! I wish I could do something for him. I think it is dreadful that any one should be so miserable. I have got heaps of old clothes at home - do you think he would care for any of them? Why, his rags were falling to bits."

"But he looks splendid in them," said Trevor. "I wouldn't paint him in a frock coat for anything. What you call rags I call romance. What seems poverty to you is picturesqueness to me. However, I'll tell him of your offer."

«Alan», dicis Hughie grave, «vi piktisti esas sen-kordia homi.»

«Kordio di artisto esas sua kapo», respondis Trevor; «ed ultre, nia tasko esas reprezentar la mondo quale ni vidas ol, ne reformar ol quale ni konocas ol. Omnu restez ye sua mestiero! E nun dicez a me, quale Laura standas. La olda posturero esis tre interesata pri elu.»

«Ka to signifikas, ke tu parolis pri el ad ilu?» dicis Hughie.

«Ma certe. Il savas omno pri la necedema kolonelo, la bela Laura, e la dekamil pundi.»

«Tu livris mea personala aferi a ta olda mendikisto!?» klamis Hughie, aspektante tre reda ed iracanta.

«Mea kara amiko», Trevor dicis ridetante, «ta olda mendikisto, quale tu nomas ilu, esas un de la maxim richa viri en Europa. Il morgo povus komprar tota London sen ecesar sua konto. Il havas domo en omna chef-urbo, dineas en oro-pladi, e povus retenar Rusia de militar, se il volus lo.»

«Ho, quon to signifikas?» klamis Hughie.

«Quon me dicabis», respondis Trevor. «La oldulo quan tu vidis cadie en la studieyo esis Barono Hausberg. Il esas intima amiko; il kompras omna mea pikturi, e cetere, ed un monato ante nun il komisis me por piktar il kom mendikisto. Quon tu volas? La fantazia imaginajo di milioniero! E me devas dicar, ke il efikis grandioze en sua ragi; o forsan me devas dicar, en mea ragi: Oli esas olda vesti quin me aquiris en Hispania.»

«Barono Hausberg!» exklamis Hughie. «Ho Deo! Me donis «sovereign» ad ilu!» Ed il sinkis en stulego kom vera imajo di konsterneseso.

«Donis «sovereign» ad il!» vokis Trevor, expansante

“Alan,” said Hughie seriously, “you painters are a heartless lot.”

“An artist’s heart is his head,” replied Trevor; “and besides, our business is to realise the world as we see it, not to reform it as we know it. À chacun son métier. And now tell me how Laura is. The old model was quite interested in her.”

“You don’t mean to say you talked to him about her?” said Hughie.

“Certainly I did. He knows all about the relentless colonel, the lovely Laura, and the £10,000.”

“You told that old beggar all my private affairs?” cried Hughie, looking very red and angry.

“My dear boy,” said Trevor, smiling, “that old beggar, as you call him, is one of the richest men in Europe. He could buy all London to-morrow without overdrawing his account. He has a house in every capital, dines off gold plate, and can prevent Russia going to war when he chooses

“What on earth do you mean?” exclaimed Hughie.

“What I say,” said Trevor. “The old man you saw to-day in the studio was Baron Hausberg. He is a great friend of mine, buys all my pictures and that sort of thing, and gave me a commission a month ago to paint him as a beggar. Que voulez-vous? La fantaisie d’un millionnaire! And I must say he made a magnificent figure in his rags, or perhaps I should say in my rags; they are an old suit I got in Spain.”

“Baron Hausberg!” cried Hughie. “Good heavens! I gave him a sovereign!” and he sank into an armchair the picture of dismay.

“Gave him a sovereign!” shouted Trevor, and he burst into a roar of laughter. “My dear boy, you’ll never see it again. Son affaire c’est l’argent des

su en ridego. «Mea kara amiko, tu nultempe rividol.»

«Me opinias ke tu devis dicir to a me, Alan», Hughie dicitis budeme, «vice lasir me facar tala folo de me.»

«Nu, avan omno, Hughie», dicitis Trevor, «me nultempe pensis ke tu donos almoni tale neprudente. Me povus komprenar, se tu kisis bela posturistino - ma donar «sovereign» a leda, certe no! Ulte, fakte me ne esis heme por irgu, e kande tu eniris, me ne savis, ka Hausberg prizis sua nomo mencionesar. Tu ya savas, ke il ne esis apte vestizita.»

«Il devas konsiderar me kom granda stupido!» Hughie dicitis.»

«Tote ne. Il esis di maxim bona humoro, pos tu departis; il guturo-ridis a su ipse e fricionis kune sua olda rugoza manuii. Me ne komprenis, pro quo il esis tante interesata pri saveskar omno pri tu; ma nun me intuicas omno. Il kolokos tua «sovereign» favore a tu, Hughie, pagos a tu intereso ye omna sis monati, e havos ecelanta naraco por dicar pos dineo.»

«Me esas desfortunoza kerlo», grondis Hughie. «La maxim bono me povas agar, esas kushar me, e, mea kara Alan, tu ne darfis naracar to ad ulu. Me ne audacus montrar mea vizajo en «Rotten Row».»

«Sensencajo! To maxim honoroze reflektas tua filantropala spirito, Hughie. E ne forkurez. Havez altra sigareto, e tu darfis parolar pri Laura tam multe kam tu deziras.»

Tamen, Hughie ne volis restar, ma marchis a hemo, sentante tre desfelica e livante Alan Trevor en ataki di rido

Ye la sequanta matino, dum ke il dejunetis, la servisto adportis karto, sur qua skribesis: «Monsieur Gustave Naudin, por la sinioro Barono Hausberg». «Il certe venas por demandar exkuzo», dicitis Hughie a su ipse, ed il dicitis al servisto, ke il adduktez la vizitero.

autres.”

”I think you might have told me, Alan,” said Hughie sulkily, ”and not have let me make such a fool of myself

”Well, to begin with, Hughie,” said Trevor, ”it never entered my mind that you went about distributing alms in that reckless way. I can understand your kissing a pretty model, but your giving a sovereign to an ugly one - by Jove, no! Besides, the fact is that I really was not at home to-day to any one; and when you came in I didn’t know whether Hausberg would like his name mentioned. You know he wasn’t in full dress.”

”What a duffer he must think me!” said Hughie.

”Not at all. He was in the highest spirits after you left; kept chuckling to himself and rubbing his old wrinkled hands together. I couldn’t make out why he was so interested to know all about you; but I see it all now. He’ll invest your sovereign for you, Hughie, pay you the interest every six months, and have a capital story to tell after dinner.”

”I am an unlucky devil,” growled Hughie. ”The best thing I can do is to go to bed; and, my dear Alan, you mustn’t tell any one. I shouldn’t dare show my face in the Row.”

”Nonsense! It reflects the highest credit on your philanthropic spirit, Hughie. And don’t run away. Have another cigarette, and you can talk about Laura as much as you like.”

However, Hughie wouldn’t stop, but walked home, feeling very unhappy, and leaving Alan Trevor in fits of laughter.

The next morning, as he was at breakfast, the servant brought him up a card on which was written, ”Monsieur Gustave Naudin, de la part de M. le Baron Hausberg”. ”I suppose he has come for an apology,” said Hughie to himself; and he told the servant to show the visitor up.

Olda jentilulo kun ora orel-binoklo e griza hari eniris la chambro e dicis kun Franca acenteto: «Ka me havas la honoro parolar kun Monsieur Erskine?»

Hughie salutis.

«Me venas de Barono Hausberg», il duris.
«La Barono ...»

«Me pregas, sioro, ke vu komunikez ad ilu mea maxim sincera exkuzo», stoteris Hughie.

«La Barono», dicis la olda jentilulo kun rideto, «komisis me adportar a vu ca letro»; ed il prizentis siglita kuverto.

Sur la extero skribesis: «Mariajo-donacajo a Hugh Erskine e Laura Merton, de olda mendikisto»; ed interne esis cheko de £ 10.000.

Kande li mariajesis, Alan Trevor esis honor-kompano, e la Barono facis diskurso dum la mariajala dejuneto.

«Milioniera modeli», Alan dicis, «esas ya tre rara, ma modela milionieri esas rara mem plu!»

Fino.

An old gentleman with gold spectacles and grey hair came into the room, and said, in a slight French accent, "Have I the honour of addressing Monsieur Erskine?"

Hughie bowed "I have come from Baron Hausberg," he continued. "The Baron - "

"I beg, sir, that you will offer him my sincerest apologies," stammered Hughie.

"The Baron," said the old gentleman with a smile, "has commissioned me to bring you this letter"; and he extended a sealed envelope.

On the outside was written, "A wedding present to Hugh Erskine and Laura Merton, from an old beggar," and inside was a cheque for £10,000.

When they were married Alan Trevor was the best man, and the Baron made a speech at the wedding breakfast.

"Millionaire models," remarked Alan, "are rare enough; but, by Jove, model millionaires are rarer still!"

The End.