



Bearn o La sala de les nines

Llorenç Villalonga

The Dolls' room

His soul was as transparent and ever-changing as glass. Precisely because he was such a sincere man, you could never know what he was really like, just as you cannot what images will be cast by a piece of crystal. It is strange that those people who refuse to lock themselves into a system, perhaps so as not to neglect any aspect of reality, are the ones who appear to be most dishonest. If you add to that the fact that noblemen are trained from an early age in the art of kind words that are not to be taken literally, and yet always are by those less educated, we find another reason why people mistrusted Don Toni. Ordinary people believe that only the tactless are sincere, because they are incapable of interpreting the conventional values and the things that are taken for granted in good manners. For example, I believe I already told you that he used to wear a white wig and the habit of a Franciscan. Those who compared his past and his conversation, not always edifying, with those robes, saw nothing but the disparity which undoubtedly existed, but they might also have seen the similarities (his secluded life, his love for matters of the soul) that were no less real. People who only spoke one language admired this man who spoke several. The Senyor was basically well-meaning, although some of his actions may have been disastrous; he believed that disasters were caused by errors of intelligence rather than by voluntary evil, which he refused to accept.

Translated by Deborah Bonner