

# CARICREATURES



**DIEGO MAENZA**

Translated by  
Gastón Jofre Torres



Diego Maenza

**Caricatures**

«Tektime S.r.l.s.»

## **Maenza D.**

Caricatures / D. Maenza — «Tektime S.r.l.s.»,

Over the course of a year, I undertook the task of working with twenty cartoons that stimulated my imagination. I pretended to reverse the traditional process of illustrating texts. I "texted" the illustrations daily. The initial objective was to take the characters in a comical way, but they had a lot to tell me. It was the characters who whispered the words to me. They always had a life of their own and I couldn't dominate them anymore. All the poems, stories and monologues, in a way concatenated, retain a global vision although at first glance they appear as disconnected flashes in an exhibition of fireworks. This book aims to be a celebration of humor and irony, but at the same time it aspires to become a rare invitation to reflection and strangeness. Over the course of a year, I undertook the task of working with twenty cartoons that stimulated my imagination. I pretended to reverse the traditional process of illustrating texts. I "texted" the illustrations daily. Like "action painting", I could have called it "literature in action", but it would have been to distort the nature of the project, which was a work in progress, a dynamic entity, an evolving process, a writing on the go, a progressive writing. I never had a predetermined plan and the categorization was later, but the invocations of the four classic elements influenced underground in the structure of the work. The initial objective was to take the characters in a comical way, but they had a lot to tell me. It was the characters who whispered the words to me. They always had a life of their own and I couldn't dominate them anymore. All the poems, stories and monologues, in a way concatenated, retain a global vision although at first glance they appear as disconnected flashes in an exhibition of fireworks. This book aims to be a celebration of humor and irony, but at the same time it aspires to become a rare invitation to reflection and strangeness.

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# Diego Maenza Caricreatures

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CARICREATURES

DIEGO MAENZA

*We can't stop the drawings that are created in the air.  
We can't stop the drawings that hang down at night.  
We can't stop the drawings that burn our thoughts.*

*We don't know who traces those drawings.  
We don't know why those drawings adorn  
these bum suburbs out of nowhere.*

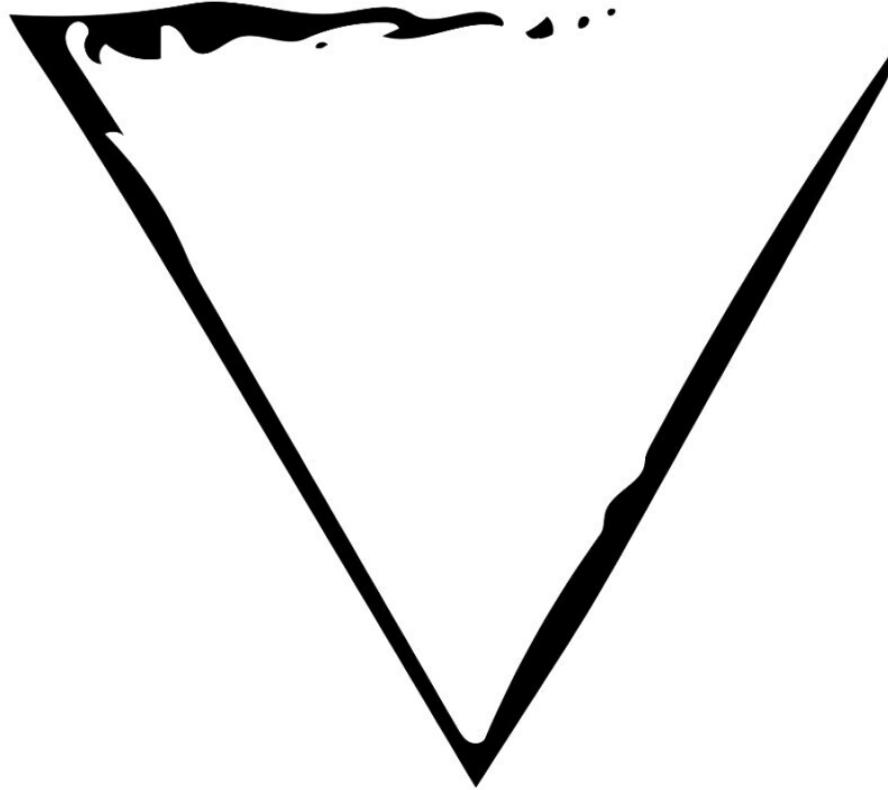
*We don't even know if our eyes are able  
to see those drawings.*

*But the fact that surprises us the most  
is that all the things are incomplete,  
since none of them exists or is sustained  
without the complementation of these drawings.*

*It is not strange then that these drawings seem to us  
more perfect than air,  
more inhabited than the night,  
more real than thought.*

*Roberto Juarroz,  
Twelfth Vertical Poetry, verse 32.*

## WATER



WOULD I DO IT? MAYBE I WOULD BATHE IN YOU. I would flow to the rhythm of your swells, I would let myself be carried by your waves, I would shipwreck in the hydrates of your womb, I would anchor on the shore of your islands, I would sip your fluids and I would water myself in the tributaries of your southern lips. But, would I really do it? From the clouds would fall, in a prodigious drizzle, algae and nenupharies, lilies and lotuses, and the meat impregnated with our green wateriness would meet again. But it wouldn't be like this how it would happen, because the strength of your shyness would daunt me. Your silence would be a siren song invoked from the spring. Because your art would be liquid, it would be watered through the stream and it would show your quiet interior, the mystery of that prudence so yours that would incite me to despair and disguised agony. You would be the sigiad naiad, the reserved undine that would watch over my saliva like the estuary that would protect the tranquility of the shad. It would be... You would be... The conditional would expose my inability to board. My explicit refusal to transfer in a true conflict the coldness of your eyes. Because when you think about it, this whole story would be the confirmation of a downpour that would patiently turn into snowfall: with the hail that would be your fearful arms, with the frost that would be your timid legs, with the frosts that would be your subtle hair. And as usual, you would start paying tributes to Boreas or to your pale and silent sex, which would be the same. You would appease the storm, you would appease the deluge with the thoughts that came from that interiority which would claim you; You would dominate the storm that would fight to bring your scruples down, the unhealthy flash flood of internal rapture that would sponsor the flooding of your ponds. Storm

breaker. With your laxity, you would placate the flows of my eyes that, terrified, couldn't even look at you, because we would no longer be pusillanimous waiting for our obstacles to be removed in the humidity of the hesitation, and we would overflow in the torrent of our tamed waterfalls. The lightness of your downpours would have the virtue of uncovering old leaks that would splash frugality on the weakest instincts.

At that moment, I would be aware that I would do it. I would make you gaps in the wasteland of your shells. I would end up spilling myself into the paradox of your tsunamis: because if I said it, it would be the truth and then (oh, cruel god of words and seas!) this would never happen.

## THE PIRATE



Yes, friends, I was a pirate and I'm proud of it. I served the famous Francis Drake on most of his grandiose expeditions and I participated in the last of his battles, where I lost one of my legs. But, make silence and I'll tell you.

The annoying friend, which you see over my shoulders, has been my faithful mate for a couple of years. He grooms my hair and pecks my eyes. In return, I crumble a loaf of bread daily and of course that in better days, when I want to change one of my doubloons that I guard with zeal in my chest, I buy birdseed at the market and I invite him to have a good dinner. I know that it's a little funny, but don't laugh so loud because the innkeeper can get upset with me.

Yes, yes, I assume it, I was a buccaneer too and I had to go through this business. While our captain was exploring the islands near the landing ones, I provided food. What else I could do! Those were perks of the trade that I admitted with discipline. Until I became a slave trader under the command of the big William Dampierre, the literary pirate, and we got to the shores of the New World.

Why do you laugh? Wretches, don't laugh at me. Leave me and I'll go on. As you can see, I keep my sword. It is true that it does not have the same edge as before, but I would like to stick it in his ribs seeing that they raise so much fuss preventing the youngest people from hearing my story.

I carry a wooden leg because the pirate tradition stipulates it in their codes. My chest travels with me because I wouldn't know how to pay my expenses if I do not take care of my goods, and I do not leave my spyglass because I did not have it, I would not know how to envision new horizons. This has been my story, friends. If you invite me for another drink, I will tell you the adventures that I had with the pirate Colon in the far islands of Las Indias. Bless you!... But, what do you do? Why are you laughing so much? Idiots, my leg was amputated by a cannonball and not because the mule-drawn carriage crashed me as you said. Listen, don't push me and don't touch my back. Don't you dare break my sword. It's OK, I admit it: it is made of wood, but do not break it, it serves me as a cane. Where are you going little bird? Don't leave, little bird. Leave my treasure! Don't open my chest, please, don't open it. It's OK, it's OK: open it. You can see it: it is our adopted logo on the shores of the New World: the snake is covered by the feathers of the Eagle.

## THE NOOB



THE SEA MAKES HIM HAVE NAUSEA, vertigo, panic, even if he has a map in the form of a maze. The horizon is so broad that seems infinite. It overwhelms him. His desire to conquer his domains fills him with despair and helplessness and discover himself so inexperienced and insignificant in front of the vastness of the waves. He, precisely he, who is just beginning to take his first steps in the world of piracy. His ambition is huge, disproportionate, and therefore laughable. He pretends to conquer the seven seas. He wants to cover them as a whole and he can't survey them with the shortness of his gaze and limitedness of his navigation. So he chooses to remember where he walked, even if he had only been in daydreams, a novice traveler who relies more on memory than on the ability of his inventiveness: the Black Sea, the Red Sea, the Caspian Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Adriatic Sea.

And he opts for fantasy by taking refuge in the tavern of dreams, where the minstrels sing strange and foundational stories of bifurcated beings that fork and metamorphose, that are at the same

time elements, animals and gods, numbers invoked in immemorial rituals that have arrived in the ancient world to contaminate everything, precisely them, so learned in their culture which descended from Olympus and forged and perfected in the smithies of Rome.

Metaphysical and spiritual stories that infect, in a good way, the materialistic and rational sharpness of his wise friends; or fables closer to him, apprentice of a filibuster who wants to take flight like a seagull and then dive into the elusive prey, like the beggar pirate who, in front of everyone's laughter, claimed to have been a slave trader and to have inaugurated a renewed insignia that conferred courage and transformation to the acolytes who welcomed her as a banner, or like the black man who escaped from his masters and became king or the unhappy little man with a disfigured face and sad clothes who claimed to have been the victim a hex, as if his soul was worth more than Faust's. Poor him, innocent creature full of optimism who barely knows the world and thinks that the tributaries are as comfortable as veins of his gums, salty arteries that lead to the truth. What are you afraid of, sailor, that you falter at the sight your own face reflected in the calm of the ocean? That the foam of the waves hits your skull and breaks the rocks of a virgin island? Or that the bobbies go crazy and start pecking your eyes? Of the corsairs of the word standing up as supreme doers, as unequalled demiurges who consider sea as their property? You, hesitant friend, must be the quintessential pirate, the one who sabotages all the languages and codes established in the foreign kingdoms: you will have to appropriate those kingdoms. You will be the one who forces the fish and the albatross to copulate in order to give birth to a new offspring, a mythological creature born from your womb.

So, our friend, facing his fears, with a renewed but equivocal vision, clings and drinks from his labyrinth, and is determined to invent the seas where he will navigate, a traveller trained on the experiences of others, and who now trusts himself in the capacity of his inventiveness more than in his hazy memory and creates and believes:

The Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Arctic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea again, the Pacific Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico. Yes, your reality will start at the place where your imagination has culminated. It will set sail towards the banks of that world recently discovered by them, but inhabited by the immemorial.

## THE SLAVE



AND YOU HEAR from the drum  
the biggest echo drop.  
They are so static  
there they witness the son.

Dawn between dance,  
the night of rituals,  
amalgamated bamboo flute,  
that regenerates the soul.

They tell me that I was  
an intact dusk,  
I preferred  
the acacias in the chair.

I go wild at dances,  
endlessly,  
I don't stop, shaking  
by perennial sweat.

Slaves of a new  
scream that drives you crazy,  
all beauty, all  
the murmurs of the people.  
They tell me that I was  
an intact dusk,  
I preferred  
shouting alone in my mind.

Prisoner, yes, sometimes  
but only of my body  
because my spirit  
remains free here.

And I furrow the sea that embroiders  
the vastness of the horizon  
like an infinite galley  
that the galleys adorn.

They tell me that I was  
an intact dusk,  
I preferred  
freedom before death.

Today, I am free: wind  
thunder, fire, ether,  
the snake or the condor,  
roaring black panther.



## THE NOMAD



FLEE FROM THE TEACHERS OF WISDOM and the plague as well. And take wisdom as your true teacher. Don't wait for it to come to you, go out and look for it in the mountains and valleys, in the meadows and deserts, in rivers and in the seas, especially in the seas that are the paths to freedom and where the never fatigued Oceanids dance to the beat of the storm. I have travelled the worlds and times. My essence is nomadism. I am a wanderer who has walked, travels and will visit all roads in search of the precious chimera: Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, Johan Ludwig Burckhardt, Cristopher Columbus, Fernando de Magallanes, Juan Sebastián Elcano, James Cook,

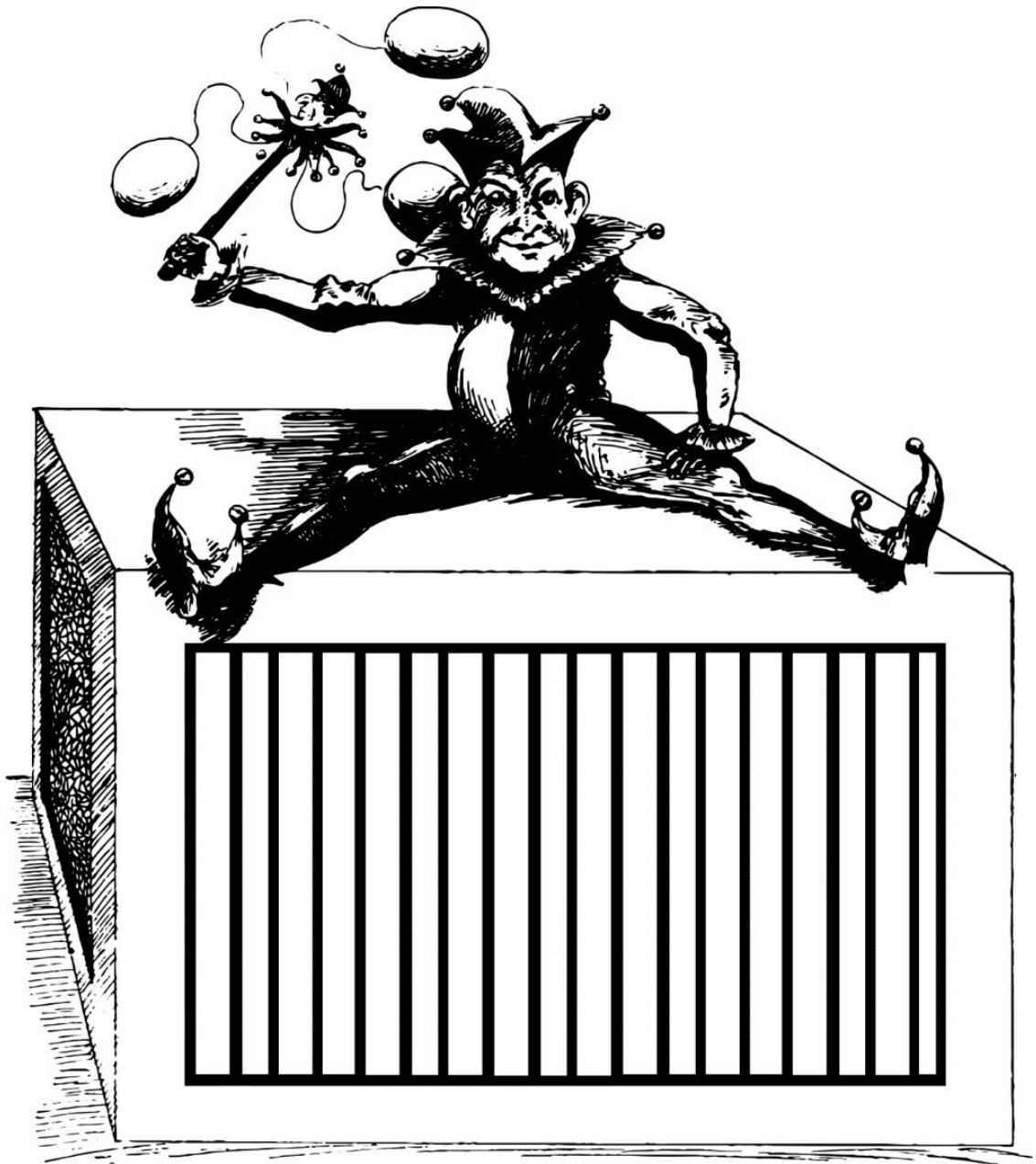
David Livingstone, Henry Morton Stanley, John Speke, Roger Casement, Richard Burton, Charles Darwin, Jacques-Yves Cousteau, Neil Armstrong, Yuri Gagarin.

I have come to look for her embarked on this arduous journey with these swindlers carrying the map, the route that will lead me to the secret and with a safe voice I have claimed the place I deserve. To doubt your word and the place you assign it, would be to doubt your own existence, even though your word is nothing more than a blurred mirage in the middle of the fog for now. If here in the most beautiful part of the sea a plea could be raised to the three-faced goddess, I know that mortals (oh, filthy race of mortals) would be satisfied with demanding all the wealth in the world. I, no less mortal than them, with my wishful thinking, would ask to have the word.

In the future, I will descend to the catacombs of language and together with the slaves, Indians and the lumpen brother of mine I will utter my tirades in the most prosaic words guaranteeing the fairness of their claims. I will ascend to the cleanest strata and next to repulsive pharaohs and kings, aristocrats and learned, magnates and bourgeois, I will sing the apologies to art for art with refined symphony. The word, nevertheless, stays there, in the purgatory of those two lies. I will have to travel a thousand and one mazes more to be able to find it.

Meanwhile, I put my feet on this virgin land, I rest on these shores to give a new name to each object and beast that my eyes reach.

## THE JOCLAR



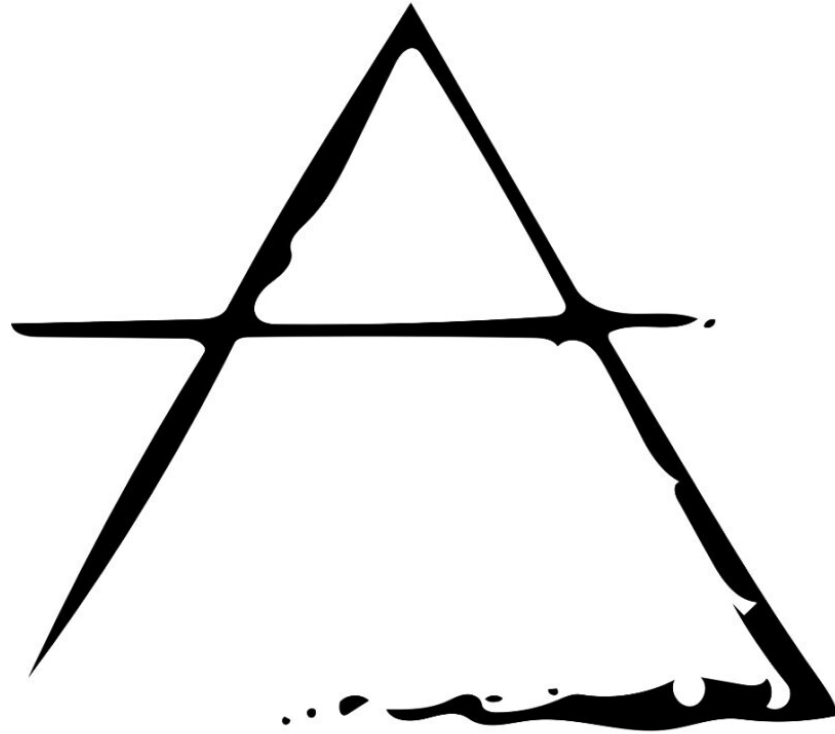
IF YOU INSIST SO MUCH, carnal, I will tell you how it happened. I was leaving a very cool performance. She was the mum of the shows. That afternoon, I shone with my own light, not even the trapeze artist could match my camel. And that's where the kick went from. They threw me the corpse hard. They say I am a thief because a coward lost its wool. The magistrate asked me in front of the defendants' bench: So you are the opium addict who was found in the red zone? Me, an opiate? You have been misinformed, my magistrate. Talk to me well because you are not with your band mates, he said to me. See my magistrate, in the end I'm going to talk to you about what the scroll is like and don't think I want to put it in my pocket, but simply tell you the truth. It happens that I was going to my home town with the bunch of potatoes in the box of my poncho. In this, when I get home, I tell my wife: Little daughter, here you have this money, go and pay what is owed to the corner store. When my wife returns, she says: A robbery has occurred in the corner. I turned around

and I was afraid. But like a big asshole, trying to sap the move, I run to the street, I got to the corner and I realize that the whisk was effective. Of course, when I arrived they were calm as dead people. Next to me, there was a young boy, with some floors more or less, a tilt from the watuses, a cross that marked the Yoni-style t-shirt with an anchor that looked like a ship. And there was also a smart guy. The man realizes that the boy was loaded with green and zaz who sends the shovel to the left wallet and takes out all the cocoa.

I was not to blame for anything, my magistrate, if I had even been paid in the circus that day and when I arrived, the fighting had already occurred. Do you get me? Or you don't get me, my magistrate?

What do you think, colleague? The magistrate believed that he was not speaking to you from the right. Now they throw me in the drawer, crazy. As I don't have an oar to go out, they say I'm a smoker. I'm not an opiate, buddy. Furthermore, they taught me not to investigate the how, nor when, or where, but why. I would like to know why you ask me so many bullshit, as if you were going to take me out of the dungeon. But as the trip to the bastard island of the damned is long, now you tell me the why of your history.

## AIR



YOU WILL BE A MAIDEN, a carnation or lily, a hydrangea or jasmine. I will be the happy faun that smells you, that frequents your garlands and boasts the impregnation of your fragrances. Rationalization will be for automata, feelings will serve free spirits forever. You will be pubescent, a poppy or mugwort, a lily of the valley or spring. I will be the youthful whole, the initiatory youth who will suck your doctrines like layers of honey or like sighs in a stampede. Logics will be formulated to dislodge them, sensations will bow in front of us and we will bow before them.

You will be the virgin, a dahlia or magnolia, a camellia or sunflower. I will be the libidinous centaur that will sweat ecstasy and that will reject the invalidity of the tiresome arguments. Good sense will suffer from the enigma of the equivocal, sensitivity will lead us to the perennial. You will be the nymph, a tulip or chrysanthemum, a pansy or daisy. I will be the clandestine ephebe who will perceive with passion the miasms of concavities. The method will be the explicit sample of an erroneous prudence, the freedom will constitute the criterion of the new future city. You will be the harlot, a gentian or chicory, a gold button or dragon's mouth. I will be the snort of the bison, the morbid ethereal that will project its masturbations on your colored gardens. The preaching will dawn floating on the landfills, our transgressions will ascend us to diverse atmospheres.

Your rainbow will remain intact like a nymph that will hide its rattles to the sound of my flute. It will be the time when your guidelines will be shattered. They will advise you to define yourself by the way of the submissive, but your forms will not be suitable for the carpets of the fearful people, because your exuberance does not lie in the defects of modesty, but in the delimitation of less complex laughter. It will be the defloration, because I will separate your scarlet petals with the breath of my desires, and your most intimate sights, your interior blizzards will swirl my anachronisms. You

will live in the visions that I will invoke in the name of Dionysus, in the dawn of our masquerade, in the northern lights that will blush your four cardinal cheeks.

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