

Giandomenico Tiepolo
The Minuet

THE MASKED BALL

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As he did every Sunday, Dominic went to the park to play with his skateboard while listening to music on his mp3. That morning, without knowing why, he noticed the statue of the goddess in the park and wondered:

“When did they put that there? How many children must have looked at it over the centuries?”

The statue was now dirty from the exhaust fumes of the cars in the city and, moreover, nobody looked at it because they went walking by talking on their mobile phones.

Dominic was thinking about this when, suddenly, he began hearing old-fashioned music. He thought that his mp3 had developed a fault. But when he looked around him he couldn't believe what he saw.

THE MASKED BALL

The sky had turned a bright blue that he had never seen before and that old music was coming from an orchestra playing live, right there.

The statue of the goddess was there on its pedestal as usual, but it was different: it was no longer dirty and was looking particularly beautiful. It was surrounded by a lot of people who were in fancy dress wearing masks and dancing a dance unknown to him.

But what Dominic could not imagine was that these people were looking at him, they were surprised by his presence and were wondering who this person, so different to them, was.

Shaded by a parasol, a lady was saying, "Have you seen that boy's fancy dress? It's very strange!"

And two young people added: "Look, he's got something on his wrist that goes tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock."

And the man with a long pointed beard who was dancing like a madman in the middle of the floor shouted: "This is witchcraft, witchcraft!"

Others were asking: "Why does he have a ring through his lip?"

A man who was dancing very elegantly noticed the boy's shoes and said: "He's got coloured lights on his shoes. How strange!"

Behind him a couple was talking: "And what's that piece of wood with wheels on?" asked one of them, referring to the skateboard.

And the man with the pointed beard shouted again, "This is witchcraft, witchcraft!"

A girl asked her friend: "What can that brown bubbly stuff that he's drinking be, in that bottle with such strange lettering?"

And a lady who seemed very conceited dared to go further: "Hello strange boy. Will you grant me this dance?"

Dominic didn't know what to do. What would happen if he agreed to dance? He only knew how to dance rap! And he would surely never manage to do such delicate and complicated dance steps.

At that moment, a very frightening man burst in. He was wearing a cloak that covered his entire body and a white mask that covered his whole face. He cleared up the mystery.

"Greetings, I am Nostradamus, and this boy is like this, it is not a disguise. He dresses this way and has this strange drink because he is from the future. He has travelled with his imagination to this century, the eighteenth, and he is watching our masked ball and enjoying a minuet, but when he finishes his drink and feels like playing with his skateboard he'll go back to reality."

Then the man with the pointed beard cried: "What did I tell you? This is witchcraft, witchcraft!"

And everyone at the party repeated: "This is witchcraft, witchcraft!"

Dominic was frightened. He remembered Nostradamus' words and finished his drink straight away, and, indeed, he did begin to return to reality.

Dominic's mobile telephone rang. It was his mother.

"Come home, it's late."

Dominic hung up, put on his music and got on his skateboard.

Before leaving he looked at the statue of the goddess for the last time and thought that he would never forget this scene, so vivid and beautiful, to which his imagination had transported him.