

# The Inhabitants of the Transparent City

In Clarísima, people were transparent.

Not only could you see their bones and heartbeat, but you could also observe their thoughts: lies were yellow clouds, sadness took the form of inner rain, and happy memories swam like goldfish behind their ribs.

The inhabitants were proud.

“Here, no one can hide anything,” they said. “That’s why we’re an honest city.”

Vera had grown up under that constant gaze. At school, the teachers could see when she didn’t understand a lesson. Her friends knew if a joke had hurt her feelings. Her parents discovered any secret before she could decide how to tell it.

When Vera turned thirteen, a small, opaque mark appeared on her wrist.

She covered it with a bracelet.

The mark grew. Within a week, it covered her arm. Beneath the surface, no one could see if she was nervous, happy, or angry.

The doctor from Public Transparency examined her.

“It’s spontaneous opacity. We’ll have to eliminate it before it spreads.”

“Does it hurt?”

“No.”

“Does it hurt anyone?”

“Not exactly. But it prevents others from truly knowing you.”

Vera left the consultation room without scheduling an appointment for treatment.

Over time, half of her body became opaque. Some people distrusted her. In stores, security guards followed her. In class, when she gave an answer, the teachers couldn’t tell if she was sure or just improvising.

But Vera also discovered a new sensation: she could have an idea before defending it, a sadness before sharing it, a feeling of affection before naming it.

One afternoon, she met a group that gathered in the city’s basements. They wore thick clothing, hats, masks, or layers of paint. Some were transparent, but they claimed the right not to be constantly observed.

“We don’t want to lie,” said Aurora, an elderly woman wearing black gloves. “We want to be able to decide when we open a window.”

They proposed a new rule: no school, company, or office could demand total transparency. People could cover their faces, and thoughts wouldn’t be considered evidence of a crime.

The Council reacted with indignation.

“Darkness protects lies!”

“And transparency protects hasty judgments,” Vera replied.

To demonstrate this, she asked the Council members to explain the meaning of everything they saw inside. One council member had a red cloud on his chest.

“Rage,” someone stated.

“It’s shame,” he said.

A female council member displayed a blue fish behind her eyes.

“A sad memory.”

“No. It’s the song my mother used to sing to me.”

Seeing something didn’t mean understanding it.

The debate lasted for months. Meanwhile, more residents began wearing opaque clothing: not to hide misdeeds, but to protect their grief, prepare a surprise, or escape the scrutiny of others.

Finally, Clarísima approved the right to privacy. It also maintained laws against deception and mechanisms for demanding accountability. They discovered that trust didn’t mean seeing everything, but rather being able to ask questions, listen, and compare actions.

Vera didn’t become completely opaque. Her body retained transparent areas and areas that only she could see.

Some days she went bare-armed. Other days she wore a coat up to her neck.

When someone asked her how she felt, they no longer looked directly into her body expecting to find the answer.

They waited for her to decide if she wanted to share it.