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ec... -Deux peintre

SERGE BRUNONI

Serge Brunoni lost his mother when he was only four years old. He was the youngest of three children. His father remarried and Serge was brought up by his grandparents for whom he had much affection. *“My childhood was relatively happy, After all, it was wartime and there were restrictions of course, but when you’re young, you don’t see that.”* He lived in a small town with a population of five thousand where everyone knew everybody else, and, in the company of many friends, he had a rather boisterous though problem-free childhood. Independent by nature, he soon asserted himself. *“When I didn’t agree with something, I would do everything to put my argument across! I really enjoyed brisk arguments. We lived in a valley surrounded by woods and plains. We would form “Gangs” and go play in the woods—it was a happy time, without today’s problems, there was no racism.... We lived in what seemed a secluded corner of Paradise....”* He went to school at the early age of three. At that time, this meant first day nursery, then kindergarten followed by primary school. *“I didn’t like school... because I always wanted to be free and was attracted by the woods, the wide open spaces and Nature while school benches meant being restrained. Let’s say I’ve always been a dissident. I toed the line because I had no other choice but there were some subjects I really liked, such as drawing, whenever we had a drawing class, I was in seventh heaven. School bugged me but this didn’t prevent me from finishing my eight elementary year with average grades, over there we had right primary years. No one knew a thing about painting in our town, there were no merchants of art supplies, but I drew and kept on drawing until the age of fourteen... I must have done thousands of drawings.”* At fourteen, Serge had to go to work

to help provide for his grandparents. He went from factory to factory and, as an apprentice, produced office material, fishing gear, did cabinet work, etc... *“Fortunately, I always had a very rich inner life, I dwelt on nature unfolding before my eyes, on the beauties of summer and at fourteen, working in a factory, I would ask myself What am I doing here ? I was drawing a lot less because at night I would go to get away from it all!”* Then military duty time came; Serge joined the colonial troops and, as he wished, was sent to Black Africa. *“Now here were truly wide open spaces, my eyes were opened to many things... however, after two years, my military duty was over. The question of signing up for further duty came up. I wanted to stay in Africa but to do what? I liked army life but... Oh well, you know the mess it can be! I finally found work with a company carrying out topographical surveys for the building of a railroad. That’s when I really began to discover Africa. I left to spend a year and half deep in the jungle, in a virgin forest, what a fantastic, an extraordinary adventure.... I lived in huts build by the natives. It was pure, unadulterated freedom!”*

His contract ran out after eighteen months and the need to return to civilisation brought Serge back to his small native town in Lorraine. He remained there two years to take care of his grandmother who was ill, until the day he found himself alone, without any idea as to what he could do, after all, he had no real trade. *“One day, in 1962, I received a letter on a Canadian Pacific letterhead. The writer was recruiting works for Canada. Interested in expatriation, I had visions again of wide open spaces and immediately took steps to go to Montreal as quickly as possible, as an emigrant.... With fifteen dollars in my pockets. I found Montréal to big, which was normal after having lived in the jungle and in the bush. I needed to settle in a nice little friendly town. I met someone from Three Rivers where I have lived since and where I believe I will remain”* Serge went back to drawing, married, worked as cook in a number of good restaurants, then one day, his wife gave him a paint box.

It was the beginning of a grand adventure with the sale of a few pieces, an adventure that was not to end because he is now working fulltime on the art market and very happy with life. Serge Brunoni is a fellow without any complexes or conceit. He is himself and doesn't pretend to be anything else. Unaffected and sociable, he seems to be saying:
“friendship is beautiful... I love friendship.”

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