

## New Year

I walk on the beach.

The sky is greyish and the clouds have feminine traces. I observe them with surprise. It is the first time that I notice something so expressive in the sky of Rio de Janeiro. A cold breeze leads my eyes to search for the sun but can't find anything. Those who pass by me appear lonely.

The sand is filled with offerings. It is New Year's Eve. A red rose suggests someone's wish. A child talks with herself, looking at her own nails.

"Rebecca?" She surprises me and I feel her cold hand, small fingers, over my shoulder. She has some make-up on and Bruno is on her lap. "I looked for you in the party yesterday," she says. "I know," I reply, "I left just after I met you."

She wears the same perfume of last night. It seems she hasn't slept. In the nightclub's bathroom, there was a confusion of smells, but hers was soft, with purple tones. "How was the evening?" I ask. I slow down my pace. The nanny arrives and gets the boy. "Marina, Sergio's ex-wife, doesn't leave us alone," she affirms, frustrated.

She grabs my arm with force and throws me off balance. I am in a good mood so I listen, since it is New Year's Eve. She laughs and says I am lucky not to have a husband, because they give a lot of work. Far away, on the sidewalk, her husband Sergio talks with someone on the cell phone.

"Did you notice that the clouds have the shape of women?" I ask. She stops talking to look at the sky. She walks clumsily on the sand, jumping over champagne bottles and other offerings spread out on the sand. "I think so," she smiles, forgetting the drama. We sit near the ocean to listen to the swell.

