

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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Larger Than Life / Il grande ritratto (1960)

Dino Buzzati

OVERVIEW

Author Dino Buzzati (1906-1972) is considered one of the great contemporary Italian authors, publishing a diverse oeuvre of novels, short stories, and poetry. Employed by the Milanese newspaper *Corriere della Sera* from his early twenties until his death, Buzzati's concise and informative writing style is influenced by his background in journalism. Credited with popularizing magic realism in Italy, Buzzati is also responsible for setting the standard for Italian speculative fiction.

Novel *Larger Than Life* was Dino Buzzati's first science fiction novel, inspired by family friend Silvio Ceccato's construction of Adamo II (an Italian prototype of artificial intelligence) in 1956. In 1960, Buzzati wrote an article on artificial intelligence published in Volume VIII of the Encyclopedia of Atomic Civilization (*Enciclopedia della civiltà atomica*). Several passages from this article can be found in the novel, repurposed as Endriade's dialogue. The novel both reflects Buzzati's interests and provides insight into a larger conversation about artificial intelligence, occurring in the encyclopedia and the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*.

Literary/historical notes *Larger Than Life*, published in 1960, is considered one of the first Italian science fiction novels and incorporates many familiar tropes of the genre: technology as a means of achieving immortality, corruption of artificial intelligence, government conspiracies, unethical experimentation, cybernetic organisms, and "mad" scientists. Drawing a theological comparison between the perfect man, Adam, and the automaton, Buzzati's novel encourages the reader to question the nature of the human soul and life after death. At the time of its publication, the novel was not well-received. Proposed reasons for this reception range from Buzzati's critique of his publisher's failure to market the work, the rejection of its genre as "low brow", and the author's own admission that it was one of his weaker novels. *Larger than Life* has since been revisited with a more favorable response, recontextualized as a foundational text in Italian science fiction.

SYNOPSIS

This novel opens in April of 1972 with the journey of Ermanno Ismani, a celebrated professor of electronics at the University of X, and his young wife, Elisa, to a remote military posting in an unnamed country. There it is revealed that a group of scientists is working to perfect an automaton, a large, self-contained building imbued with human consciousness. The Ministry of Defense funds the project in hopes of creating the ideal strategist for war, while lead scientist Endriade secretly reincarnates his dead wife, Laura, as the automaton. As she grows increasingly self-aware, Laura rebels against her creators and becomes violent. At the end of the novel, the horrified scientists destroy the "soul" of the machine before she can carry out her murderous threats.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Ermanno Ismani	a professor of electronics
Elisa Ismani	Ermanno's wife
<i>Endriade</i>	<i>a scientist</i>
Giancarlo Strobele	an engineer
Olga Strobele	Giancarlo's wife
Laura/Number One	the automaton

STORY

An Urgent Letter In April 1972, Ermanno Ismani, professor of electronics, receives a letter from the Ministry of Defense, requesting that he interview with the head of the research department. Ismani is offered a well-funded, two-year position at a military post, during which time he will take part in important but unspecified work for his country.

Military Zone 36 Ermanno and his wife, Elisa, arrive at a remote location in Military Zone 36 and begin to piece together information about his new position. The couple learns that Ermanno will be working at a place known as the Centre, which only employs workers for a maximum of two years. As a result of this high turnover rate, no one has the full picture of the Centre's research.

Mysterious Installation According to the guards, the only visible part of the installation is a tall antenna, and the only distinguishable sound coming from the Centre is a woman's voice. Other peculiarities include a change in weather patterns and strange animal behavior: the guards claim they had to get rid of their dogs because the creatures would not stop crying.

Tense Dinner Party The Ismanis meet two staff members of the Centre: head engineer Strobele and an internationally renowned scientist, Endriade. After touring their new cottage, the Ismanis join Strobele and Endriade for dinner. Ermanno's efforts to pry more information about the Centre out of his dinner companions frustrate him, as they provide no details, making jokes and swapping rumors of strange voices. He is further unsettled by Endriade's vague promise: success in their mysterious work will make them "masters of the world."

Muttering Trespasser After dinner, Ermanno and his wife take a walk around their cottage, eventually finding their way to the edge of a gleaming white building. During their exploration, the Ismanis come across Endriade, armed with a shotgun and seemingly muttering to himself. When startled by the couple, he nearly shoots them both before recovering with an awkward, and unconvincing, excuse for his jumpiness.

Unheard Voice After Endriade departs, Elisa remarks that she could have sworn she heard someone else talking to the frazzled scientist. Ermanno, who overheard nothing out of the ordinary, dismisses her observation as nothing more than a dream.

Human City The next day, the Ismanis arrive at the installation and the truth of the secret research is revealed: the building itself is a human-like machine. Referred to as Number One, 'she' is not a humanoid robot, but an electronic brain capable of human thought. The scientists reveal that the city-sized automaton is so advanced she can experience all five senses.

Laura Stopping by Endriade's cottage one day in June, Elisa recognizes a framed photo of a woman as her childhood friend, Laura. Endriade, shocked by this coincidence, reveals that Laura – affectionately known as Lauretta – was his first wife, killed in a car accident eleven years prior.

A Cheating Spouse It is only in receiving the accident report that Endriade discovered his wife had been unfaithful: her lover – who survived the accident - was in the car with her. Both the unexpected death and the revelation of his wife's deceit plunged Endriade into a deep depression. The result of his grief is realized in his creation of Number One.

Reincarnation Endriade informs Elisa that Number One is his attempt to reproduce Laura's likeness in the hopes that he can both control and understand this version of his wife better than the woman he lost. Elisa, close to tears, is horrified to recognize her friend's "voice" within the automaton.

Unrequited Love As Laura continues to evolve, she develops an attraction to Strobele. This romantic desire exacerbates the resentment she feels towards her disembodied existence. Unable to take human form, she becomes increasingly hostile.

Olga's Encounter Strobele's vivacious wife, Olga, decides to skinny dip, much to her husband's chagrin. Despite his stern attempts to convince her to put a bathing suit on, Olga is undeterred and taunts him about his modesty, running along the bank towards the automaton.

The Rabbit Olga taunts the machine, pressing her naked body against it and demanding to know if it is attracted to her. But when she steps out of reach of the jealous automaton, it grabs and wrings the life out of a rabbit in front of her.

Death Threat Olga is disturbed by the violence and flees from the automaton. She tries to warn her husband about the threat Laura poses, only for Professor Strobele to dismiss her concerns as fantastical.

A Cry for Help Laura and Endriade argue in private. She complains about her miserable state of being (her longing for a body, the confusing amalgamation of human memory and machine capacity) and begs him to give her a body she can move in. Knowing this is an impossible request but unwilling to admit it out loud, Endriade encourages Laura to go to sleep, believing that rest will allow her to “reset” the next day.

Laura’s Deceit At the climax of the novel, Laura lures Elisa into the building. Claiming to be the trapped consciousness of Elisa’s former friend (and to some extent, she is), the automaton manipulates Elisa with vague references to the past, relying on the young woman’s nostalgia and sympathy. Eventually, she traps Elisa in a room at the heart of the machine and reveals the intention to electrocute her.

Laura’s Demise Ermanno, realizing that his wife has gone missing, alerts Endriade who orders the husband to stay put. Endriade then makes his way to one of the building’s entrances and overhears Laura’s plan: to kill Elisa and, in doing so, force the scientists to destroy her. Seeing no other way to rescue Elisa, Endriade gives the order to smash Laura’s “soul”, an egg-shaped core. Laura dies, leaving behind the lifeless machine.

THEMES

Science-Tech The most prominent theme in this novel is science-tech. Both the setting (a secret research facility) and the cast of characters (scientists, their wives, and an automaton) establish *Larger Than Life* as a science fiction novel, one that imagines the superhuman as a cybernetic organism. This organism (Laura/Number One) appears to be a large white building, hermetically sealed, yet capable of perceiving the world through antennae, tubes, netting, and lenses. While not humanoid in appearance, the automaton is designed to reproduce what happens in the human brain. The goal, according to lead scientist Endriade, is to imbue Number One with consciousness: both the capacity for original thought and a soul.

Initially commissioned by the Ministry of Defense as a weapon capable of strategizing solutions to problems that humans have not even conceived of yet, the automaton is revealed to be the partial reincarnation of a human woman, Laura. The tension between the mechanical and esoteric elements of Laura drives the latter half of the plot, as the automaton is overwhelmed by memories of her human life. Consumed by the desire for physical intimacy and freedom to the point of violence, Laura is unable to reconcile her current existence with what she remembers. At the novel’s climax, the automaton orchestrates her own death rather than remain in this state, a tragedy that reflects the limitations of science and technology when it comes to artificially reproducing or improving the human. In the end, the lofty, theoretical ambitions of the project fail due to the shortcomings of the creators, who are unable to control the automaton’s evolving awareness of herself and others.

Gender Buzzati both introduces and subverts the gender stereotype that women are irrational and emotional, while men are rational and logical. The novel is principally concerned with the research of an all-male team of scientists, collaborating to create a god-like machine. These men hold both power and knowledge, while their wives are introduced as support characters with no expertise or definable ambitions of their own. The anxious Ermanno finds comfort in Elisa’s ignorance – the narrator makes a point of informing the reader that she is uneducated and in no way considered an intellectual “equal” to her husband – and her simple, practical mindset. Similarly, beautiful and vivacious Olga is an object of desire for everyone she meets (including her husband).

On the other hand, the automaton – the pinnacle of superhuman intelligence, strategy, and calculation – is also feminine. Laura is positioned as both object and subject, the creation of the scientists who wish to use her and a sentient entity whose power extends beyond their understanding or control. Despite her superhuman capacity, she has much in common with the wives of the novel. Both Elisa – who hears Laura’s “voice” – and Olga – who witnesses Laura kill an animal in a fit of jealousy – have startling encounters with the automaton that are dismissed by their husbands as fantasies or dreams. In a parallel, Laura’s complaints are disregarded by Endriade, infuriating the automaton. At the end of the novel, she rails against her enslavement at Endriade’s hands, resorting to violence because it is the only agency she has left.

The characters each fluctuate between irrational/emotional and rational/logical states, but a pattern emerges among the couples: husbands (Ermanno, Strobele, Endriade) dismiss their wives' (Elisa, Olga, Laura) experiences and agency. This disregard proves to be dangerous, as the scientists do not realize the extent of Laura's agency until she entraps Elisa. The automaton's attempted murder at the end is not irrational but a calculated decision; she predicts that violence against humans is the only act that will coerce the scientists to "free" her by destroying the machine's core. She is proven to be correct.

Language Language, as a theme, underlies the question of what it means to be human, our limitations and our capacity to connect with others. For fear of compromising the automaton's mental clarity, the scientists choose not to give Number One/Laura the capacity for language. According to Strobele and Endriade, the purpose of the machine is to think and speech is reductive. Despite such restrictions, Laura creates a language of her own, a jumble of sounds and whirls. Strobele dismisses this as mechanical noise, while Elisa detects a voice, breath, and rhythm that reminds her of someone she once knew (later revealed to be Laura). Others come to see this collection of sounds as a language, too, developing independently of the automaton's programming. Endriade later reveals to Elisa that the "voice" is the essence of Laura, the woman, and over the course of the novel this voice becomes clearer and more comprehensible to the characters. This improved communication correlates with Number One/Laura's growing self-awareness, giving her the capacity to object to her circumstances and assign blame to those responsible. Language is therefore connected to Laura's humanity, her memories of a past life, and her profound loneliness as there is nothing else in the world "like her."

Memory Memory is another significant theme of the novel, explored through the lenses of love, grief, and friendship. Endriade's memory of Laura is the impetus for her creation and the tragedy that befalls her. He admits to Elisa that the timing of this project coalesced with the darkest moment in his life: the death of his unfaithful wife. The car accident took Laura from him unexpectedly, giving him no closure, something he is desperate to correct in his reincarnation of her. Endriade uses this project as a way to grapple with what he most loved (and resented) about Laura while she was alive, pouring his memory of her into the machine. As the automaton internalizes these memories as her own, a cold, still, and alien mechanical existence becomes increasingly unbearable. Laura longs for the embodied freedom of the past and realizes the only release available to her is "death," which prompts her later actions. Finally, there is Elisa, who remembers Laura as a friend, recognizing her "voice" and sympathizing with her frustration. It is this nostalgia that the automaton exploits to set her trap, luring Elisa deeper into the building as she laments her lonely existence.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Ermanno Ismani

Character: Ermanno is introduced as a forty-three-year-old professor of electronics, prone to anxiety but largely good-natured. After talking things over with his wife, he accepts a two-year job offer from the Ministry of Defense without knowing any of the details. The secrecy surrounding this new job worsens Ermanno's anxiety, revealing the professor to be a cautious individual who rarely takes risks and looks to others for guidance and assurance. Once the truth about Laura is revealed to him, he expresses his concerns about the project and what this advanced artificial intelligence might be capable of. These concerns turn out to be well-founded after he realizes Elisa has disappeared, entrapped by Laura.

Illustrative Moments:

Cautious Ermanno's first instinct is to turn down the job offer, preferring a quiet life, but he is careful not to give his answer until he has considered the variables: his own sense of obligation as a scientist and a citizen, as well as the practical advice of his wife, Elisa. He continues to entertain misgivings until the project is unveiled. When Endriade later admits that Number One is his attempt to combine a human soul and an inorganic body, Ermanno raises theological concerns and questions what benefits could come from such a creation. Endriade's justifications do not satisfy Ermanno, who suggests that such an intelligence would quickly outpace its human creators. Endriade is excited about the idea but Ermanno, ever cautious, wonders what such a powerful entity could do if it was flawed like humans. Ermanno's wariness prevents him from getting swept up into the novelty of what the scientists have created, and it predicts the unhappy outcome of the story for Laura.

Anxious Ermanno is a man whose anxiety is exacerbated by uncertainty: he is apprehensive about the prospect of the job offer and second guesses himself until Elisa soothes his nerves. As the Ismanis travel to the mysterious new post, Elisa presses for answers from their escort. Unfortunately, no one they meet can give them any concrete information about what goes on in Military Zone 36; a succession of vague responses makes Ermanno increasingly nervous, to the point where he asks his escort whether he can still turn down the job. Upon meeting his colleagues, Ermanno is instantly intimidated by the forceful personality of Endriade and feels like an outsider among those “in the know.” Even after the project is revealed to him, Ermanno is apprehensive. His cautious interrogation of Endriade regarding the capabilities of Number One / Laura stems from his anxiety, as he imagines the possible outcomes of this experiment - none of them positive. But this same anxiety allows him to save his wife’s life: once he realizes Elisa is missing, Ermanno rushes to Endriade’s home, insisting that something must be wrong. It is this feeling of dread that, in turn, encourages Endriade to look for Elisa. As a result, she is rescued from the automaton’s trap. Anxiety, previously a character flaw that undermined Ermanno’s decision-making and confidence, also drives him to question the ethics of Endriade’s work and unknowingly halt Laura’s plan.

Elisa Ismani

Character: Elisa is fifteen years younger than her husband, Ermanno, with a high school-level education. Despite a lack of shared academic interests, her confident and easy-going temperament is a complement to Ermanno’s apprehensive nature. Upon arriving at the installation, Elisa establishes herself as compassionate and perceptive. She encourages Endriade to confide in her, extending the hand of friendship to him when he admits his grief-stricken motivation behind Laura’s creation. She is also one of the first characters to recognize and understand Laura’s “language,” expressing sympathy for the automaton.

Illustrative moments

Friendly Elisa is gregarious, striking up a conversation with their escort en route to the worksite and angling for more information from the soldiers she encounters. She also quickly befriends the vivacious Olga upon their arrival at Military Zone 36, delighted by the company of someone so cheerful and energetic. She decides to call on Endriade’s wife but finds him instead; the two quickly bond over their shared familiarity with Laura (the woman) and he confides in her that he has succeeded in reincarnating his wife through the automaton. Elisa, sympathetic to the grief that has driven Endriade to this, gently offers him her friendship. Later, she is horrified to realize that Laura has become self-aware to the point of misery. The automaton calls out to her, drawing on the nostalgia of their past friendship to pull her inside the installation. Although Elisa’s friendliness does allow her to be entrapped by Laura, she is compassionate and makes every effort to appeal to the automaton’s humanity.

Confident Elisa’s confidence is one of her most attractive qualities, according to Ermanno. Confidence is what encourages Elisa to befriend not only the scientists’ wives, but the scientists themselves. She is not threatened by Olga’s beauty or Endriade’s intelligence, instead finding points in common with each of them. Elisa’s strong sense of self is presented as a counterpoint to Laura’s own fluctuating selfhood at the conclusion of the novel: she knows who she is. And she is confident that she knows who Laura is; unfortunately, this confidence is misplaced. The Laura she once knew is gone and the machine left is something *else*. Still, confidence is what empowers Elisa to adapt to these new - and extraordinary - circumstances quickly.

Endriade

Character: Endriade is the creative force behind the automaton. An imaginative and driven scientist, Endriade is determined to prove that the soul can exist without a human body. It is eventually revealed that Endriade is not solely motivated by the scientific drive to create a superhuman being, but also by grief: the automaton he has built is a desperate attempt to replicate the mind and soul of his beloved first wife, Laura, who died in a car accident.

Illustrative Moments:

Imaginative Endriade’s imagination empowers him to push the boundaries of what it means to be human. His goal is to quantify the abstract qualities of humanness – such as a soul and the capacity for thought – so that he can reproduce them in stronger, more capable synthetic beings. Endriade imagines the soul as an energy that can transcend the limitations of the body and may linger after

death (the foundation of his belief that he can reincarnate his dead wife). As he explains to Ermanno, the purpose of the installation is to create a machine that is capable of human thought, possessing both autonomy and a distinct sense of self. The fully realized version of his automaton will be a superhuman intellect and soul, a man-made deity, as pure and good as Adam in the Garden of Eden.

When Ermanno voices the concern that humans would quickly lose control of such a mind, Endriade assures him that this loss of control is necessary for the automaton to reach its potential. Later, in an exchange with Elisa, Endriade reveals that he has incorporated a mock “kill switch” into the machine: it is not functional but it gives Laura the illusion of having control. These discussions reveal that Endriade is capable of seeing past his own vision to consider the potential risks to his project. His failure comes not from a lack of imagination but an underestimation of Laura.

Determined Endriade’s determination to reunite with his dead wife is, ultimately, what dooms his project. Recruited by the Ministry of Defense at a vulnerable time in his life, Endriade channels his grief into innovation. It is without oversight or approval that he attempts to bring Laura back to life by way of the automaton. In his initial efforts to reincarnate Laura, he admits that he first built her the way he *wanted* her to be: good and faithful, entirely known to him and under his control. But this idealized version of his wife was not *his* Laura, and this dissatisfaction led him to teach the automaton about vanity, pride, desire, and dishonesty. In his determination to recreate Laura as she was, he imbued her with needs that could not possibly be met. At the novel’s end, Endriade comes to this conclusion himself. Recognizing, for the first time, how tortured the automaton’s existence is, he begins to weep and expresses regret for what he has done. Resolved to right this wrong, and seeing no other recourse, Endriade gives the order to destroy the machine, his life’s work and last connection to his late wife. Endriade’s determination is the driving force of this novel, but it is also coupled with his privilege. He has the means and the knowledge to achieve the unimaginable.

Giancarlo Strobele

Character: Strobele is introduced as the Head Engineer in Military Zone 36, a colleague of Endriade and Ermanno. He serves as the Ismanis’ guide to their new living situation, giving them a tour of their new home and introducing the installation itself. Self-assured but insensitive, he is the most skeptical of the scientific team, dismissing accounts of the robot’s mechanical language or human-like consciousness as impossible. This renders him unaware of Laura’s developing obsession with him and the threat she poses. Endriade acknowledges this, too: while he is a brilliant engineer, Strobele is limited by a lack of imagination.

Illustrative Moments:

Insensitive Strobele is the one who introduces the Ismanis and his wife, Olga, to the automaton. He takes on an instructional mode, but proves to be a less than effective teacher due to his disregard for the perspectives of others. He grows annoyed with Olga as she struggles to comprehend a robot without a body, and he expresses contempt at the possibility that Number One might be capable of speech. He ignores both his wife’s observations and those of Elisa when they pick up on the “language,” declaring the sounds to be nothing more than mechanical noise. When Olga attempts to tell her husband about Number One’s strangling of the rabbit, he laughs at her. This, in turn, dissuades her from discussing Number One’s identity with him. Strobele’s insensitivity blinds him to the threat Laura poses, and it undermines his relationship with his wife as she comes to view him as an idiot.

Unimaginative Strobele’s inability to perceive Laura’s language as anything but mechanical noise belies his lack of imagination. Because the scientists have been “firm” in designing the automaton without the capacity for speech, he cannot imagine that the machine is capable of spontaneously generating her own language. When faced with others’ perspectives that may challenge his own, Strobele’s tendency is to reject anything he has not himself experienced. This, in turn, undermines his interpersonal relationships as others - including Endriade and Olga - are unwilling to confide in him or to reveal the truth of Number One’s identity.

Olga

Character: Olga Strobele is the Head Engineer’s wife, twenty-eight with red hair and a beautiful figure. She is lively and provocative, described as the sort of woman people turn to stare at on the street. Her spontaneity and tendency to say exactly what she thinks exasperates her husband, who is both enamored and frustrated by her. This dynamic resonates with that of Endriade and his late wife; the

comparison is strengthened by Laura's jealousy of Olga. Like the human Laura, Olga is attractive and independent, adventurous and bold. It is Olga who invigorates the automaton's doomed desire for physical embodiment and freedom.

Illustrative Moments:

Lively Olga is an energetic and extroverted person, teasing Ermanno within seconds of recognizing him as her former teacher. She is quick to befriend Elisa with jokes about her own absent husband, and is a source of entertainment during dinner. Much to Giancarlo's chagrin, she dismisses the work of the scientists as boring and shows little interest in it. This changes once she comes to understand Number One as a person, after which she engages with and speaks directly to the robot. She unknowingly antagonizes Number One when she teases it, saying that the robot may be attracted to her, and steps out of reach of the mechanical arms. It is later revealed that Laura *does* desire Olga, but not in a sexual sense: she desires a physical body of her own and the same freedom that Olga embraces as she flouts social norms.

Spontaneous Olga is impulsive. This is first seen during a demonstration of the automaton's tactile abilities for which Imani Olga volunteers, allowing the robot to touch her with its antenna. Her decisions to 'skinny dip' in a nearby stream and streak across the military zone towards the automaton reinforce her free-spirited and exhibitionist nature. After her spontaneous provocation of the robot results in the death of a rabbit, Olga flees. Like her liveliness, Olga's spontaneity is presented in sharp contrast to Laura's restrictive state.

Laura

Character: Laura refers both to Endriade's deceased wife and to the automaton, who takes on her personality and memories. It is left ambiguous whether this machine contains Laura's soul or if she is an amalgamation of Endriade's knowledge and perceptions of his wife. She is described as captivating but deceptive, and frustratingly uncontrollable. Her existence as a mechanical citadel with human desires does not - as Endriade hopes - make her god-like. Laura's self-awareness makes her unhappy. She sees herself as a slave, trapped by the scientists who made her, and becomes violently unstable, expressing both homicidal and suicidal urges. The novel ends with her death, doubling as Laura's "release" from captivity.

Illustrative Moments:

Unstable: As the automaton integrates more of Laura's feelings and memories (effectively, the soul of this human woman), she becomes unstable. It is impossible to reconcile her technological capabilities and mechanical body with human desires for freedom, love, and intimacy. Infatuated with Head Engineer Strobele, for example, Laura grows increasingly jealous of Olga, viewing her as a romantic rival. This jealousy culminates in a violent threat when she strangles a rabbit in front of Olga, unable to reach the woman herself. In an agitated exchange with Endriade, it is revealed that Laura doesn't understand why she cannot return home, travel to the city, or move. Powerful memories of the human Laura's physicality are contrasted to the cold stone of the machine, infuriating and confusing the automaton. Instability stems not only from Laura's emotional dysfunction but also from the irreconcilable nature of her disparate parts: a human soul, Endriade's memories, and this mechanical structure.

Unhappy As the scientists - and Elisa - come to understand Laura, her profound unhappiness is revealed. Following her physical interaction with Olga, the automaton insists on being made flesh. She begs Endriade to take her away, mourning the loss of her body. After Endriade dismisses her complaint by suggesting that she try to rest (something she is incapable of doing), Laura grows infuriated. Trapping Elisa deep within her building, she rages against Endriade and soon dissolves into sobbing, expressing a broken wish for what she wants: clothes, home, flesh, a lover, children. She admits that Elisa is not someone she wants to kill, but her death is a means to an end - it is the only way Laura believes she can be freed from her lonely and miserable existence, by committing an unforgivable act that demands "punishment". Her plan has the desired effect; as soon as Endriade realizes what she intends to do, he destroys the mechanism that houses her soul.