**The Man Who Shouted Teresa**

by Italo Calvino

I stepped off the pavement, walked backwards a few paces looking up, and, from the middle of the street, brought my hands to my mouth to make a megaphone, and shouted toward the top stories of the block: "Teresa!"  
       My shadow took fright at the moon and huddled at my feet.  
       Someone walked by. Again I shouted: "Teresa!" The man came up to me and said: "If you do not shout louder she will not hear you. Let's both try. So: count to three, on three we shout together." And he said: "One, two, three." And we both yelled, "Tereeeesaaa!"  
       A small group of friends passing by on their way back from the theater or the café saw us calling out. They said: "Come on, we will give you a shout too." And they joined us in the middle of the street and the first man said one to three and then everybody together shouted, "Te-reee-saaa!"  
       Somebody else came by and joined us; a quarter of an hour later there were a whole bunch of us, twenty almost. And every now and then somebody new came along.  
      Organizing ourselves to give a good shout, all at the same time, was not easy. There was always someone who began before three or who went on too long, but in the end we were managing something fairly efficient. We agreed that the "Te" should be shouted low and long, the "re" high and long, the "sa" low and short. It sounded fine. Just a squabble every now and then when someone was off.  
       We were beginning to get it right when somebody, who, if his voice was anything to go by, must have had a very freckled face, asked: "But are you sure she is home?"  
       "No," I said.  
       "That is bad," another said. "Forgotten your key, have you?"  
       "Actually," I said, "I have my key."  
       "So," they asked, "why dont you go on up?"  
       "I don't live here," I answered. "I live on the other side of town."  
       "Well, then, excuse my curiosity," the one with the freckled voice asked, "but who lives here?"  
       "I really wouldn't know," I said.  
       People were a bit upset about this.  
       "So, could you please explain," somebody with a very toothy voice asked, "why you are down here calling out Teresa."  
       "As far as I am concerned," I said, "we can call out another name, or try somewhere else if you like."  
       The others were a bit annoyed.  
       "I hope you were not playing a trick on us," the frecled one asked suspiciously.  
       "What," I said, resentfully, and I turned to ther others for confirmation of my good faith. The others said nothing.  
       There was a moment of embarrassment.  
       "Look," someone said good-naturedly, "why don't we call Teresa one more time, then we go home."  
       So we did it one more time. "One two three Teresa!" but it did not come out very well. Then people headed off for home, some one way, some another.  
       I had already turned into the square when I thought I heard a voice still calling: "Tee-reee-sa!"  
       Someone must have stayed on to shout. Someone stubborn.

**The Scorpion and the Frog**  
from *Numbers in the Dark*

One day, a scorpion looked around at the mountain where he lived and decided that he wanted a change. So he set out on a journey through the forests and hills. He climbed over rocks and under vines and kept going until he reached a river.

The river was wide and swift, and the scorpion stopped to reconsider the situation. He couldn't see any way across. So he ran upriver and then checked downriver, all the while thinking that he might have to turn back.

Suddenly, he saw a frog sitting in the rushes by the bank of the stream on the other side of the river. He decided to ask the frog for help getting across the stream.

"Hellooo Mr. Frog!" called the scorpion across the water, "Would you be so kind as to give me a ride on your back across the river?"

"Well now, Mr. Scorpion! How do I know that if I try to help you, you wont try to *kill* me?" asked the frog hesitantly.

"Because," the scorpion replied, "If I try to kill you, then I would die too, for you see I cannot swim!"

Now this seemed to make sense to the frog. But he asked. "What about when I get close to the bank? You could still try to kill me and get back to the shore!"

"This is true," agreed the scorpion, "But then I wouldn't be able to get to the other side of the river!"

"Alright then...how do I know you wont just wait till we get to the other side and THEN kill me?" said the frog.

"Ahh...," crooned the scorpion, "Because you see, once you've taken me to the other side of this river, I will be so grateful for your help, that it would hardly be fair to reward you with death, now would it?!"

So the frog agreed to take the scorpion across the river. He swam over to the bank and settled himself near the mud to pick up his passenger. The scorpion crawled onto the frog's back, his sharp claws prickling into the frog's soft hide, and the frog slid into the river. The muddy water swirled around them, but the frog stayed near the surface so the scorpion would not drown. He kicked strongly through the first half of the stream, his flippers paddling wildly against the current.

Halfway across the river, the frog suddenly felt a sharp sting in his back and, out of the corner of his eye, saw the scorpion remove his stinger from the frog's back. A deadening numbness began to creep into his limbs.

"You fool!" croaked the frog, "Now we shall both die! Why on earth did you do that?"

The scorpion shrugged, and did a little jig on the drownings frog's back.

"I could not help myself. It is my nature."

Then they both sank into the muddy waters of the swiftly flowing river.

*Self destruction - "Its my Nature", said the Scorpion...*