



FONDAZIONE MALAGUTTI
Onlus

Clarifications regarding the 8th International Illustration Competition "Light as a boulder"

The title of the 8th Illustration Competition "**Light as a boulder**" is formulated in apparent contradiction with common experience or with the elementary principles of logic, but which proves to be valid on critical examination.

It combines two opposing concepts: "light," which indicates something of little weight, and "boulder," which refers to a heavy stone. Used figuratively, it can describe a situation or feeling that, while appearing light on the outside, has great emotional weight or deep meaning.

It is a way of emphasizing that something which seems simple or superficial can be very burdensome or significant.

This expression is used to emphasize the irony of a situation in which something that should be "light" or "easy" is extremely heavy or burdensome.

For example, it could describe an emotional burden or responsibility that seems overwhelming, even though it should be manageable on the surface.

To visually depict "light as a boulder", one could play on the idea of a clear contrast between a large and heavy object and weightlessness or delicacy.

Here are some ideas for a representation:

A boulder floating in the air: A huge, typically heavy stone that floats gently in the sky, almost like a feather.

A scale: On one side of the scale there is a boulder, on the other a feather, but strangely the scale is perfectly balanced, as if the two weights were equal.

A character who lifts a boulder effortlessly: a light and fragile figure, perhaps a child or a petite creature, who holds a boulder above his head with a relaxed expression, as if it did not weigh at all.

A boulder that dissolves like a cloud: the stone, while it seems massive and solid, dissolves progressively as if it were formed by steam or fog.

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Other examples that capture the idea of the paradox between the heaviness of the boulder and the lightness that the expression aims to evoke:

- 1) the weight of the struggle for Freedom and Rights is a **boulder**, but at the same time the action that follows is light because the strong spirit of the fighter makes **every sacrifice light**.
- 2) when darkness seems to take over our state of mind and **the heart becomes heavy as a boulder**, the best solution not to remain oppressed is **lightness**.
- 3) written words are light, but their meaning can be as heavy as a boulder.
- 4) We are immersed in the heaviness of everyday life, in stress, anger, dissatisfaction, disappointments and expectations. All this often **makes us forget the nature of life**, carpe diem, **the importance that must be given to things**.
"To live, just as to swim, those who are weightless are better, because even in the storm of human life the light things serve to support, the heavy ones to sink." Apuleius
- 5) In the property of "*removing the boulders we have on our hearts*", **lightness** is the opposite of superficiality. It is a form of natural prevention against resentment, hatred and any negative feeling that usually easily takes over our heads.
"Take life lightly, for lightness is not superficiality, but gliding over things from above, not having burdens on your heart." Italo Calvino
- 6) the pharaohs of ancient Egypt were convinced that they were of divine origin and managed to convince their subjects. And so, everyone is happy to bring huge boulders to build tombs, the pyramids, for their Gods, the pharaohs, and to be beaten to death. The ravings of these madmen now appear in the history books, as moments of glory and the stupidity of their subjects and their blind obedience are not considered the opprobrium of a people. History is capable of mystifying everything and often moments of shame for humanity become golden pages to be glorified."
- 7) A philosophy of life: on the one hand, it invites us to live lightly, that is, with the ability not to give weight to the inessential, but to get rid of it by being able to "glide over things". Being light does not mean being superficial but being one step ahead of those who chase excess and those who let themselves be carried away excessively by what is accessory, and not necessary.
- 8) Zeus decided that Sisyphus should push a boulder from the base to the top of a mountain, but each time he reached the top, the boulder would then roll back to the base of the mountain for eternity. His punishment has become a rhetorical figure to indicate a "useless effort".



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- 9) Albert Camus, in his 1942 essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*, saw in Sisyphus the personification of the **absurdity of human life**, but Camus concludes **"one must imagine Sisyphus happy"** as if **"the very struggle to the heights were enough to fill a man's heart"**.
- 10) The quest for power, an "empty thing", is compared to the rolling of the boulder from the hill. Lucretius believes that ambitions are dangerous because they distance man from wisdom. For Camus, Sisyphus is therefore happy because in his condemnation he becomes aware of his limits and therefore takes his destiny upon himself.
- 11) "Blek Macigno", which is a comic book character, for his size and strength in the struggle to achieve the independence of colonial America against British dominance, clashes with the redcoats. He is a kind of corsair who fights against pirates and slave traders with a nobility of soul reminiscent of the famous characters of Emilio Salgari. A struggle that repeats itself endlessly, an enormous weight that is light if there is faith for success.
- 12) The expression "light as a boulder" can be explained in different ways, relying on irony and the contrast between heaviness and lightness. Here are some alternatives:
 - a) with an emotional comparison: "It's like saying that a worry that seems small is actually overwhelming and heavy, as if it is crushing you, despite the fact that it seems light on the surface."
 - b) with a practical example: "Imagine having to carry something that seems easy and light, but the more you carry it, the more you realize that it is a much heavier burden than you thought."
 - c) as a figure of speech: "It is an oxymoron, that is, the juxtaposition of two opposite concepts, used to emphasize a paradoxical or ironic situation: something that seems light or simple, but which is instead extremely difficult or oppressive."
 - d) linking it to responsibility: "Like when they tell you that a task is easy, but as you face it, you realize that it is much more complicated and challenging, just like carrying a boulder that should be light."
 - e) with a visual metaphor: "It's like seeing a feather made of stone: something that by nature should be light, but which surprisingly weighs a lot."

These ways help to highlight the hidden meaning behind the irony of the expression, making it understandable from multiple points of view.