

CLAUDIO MARZORATI

CONNECTION



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I

A surrealistic awakening, in an aseptic room, freezing, almost like a nightmare. This is how Jacopo opened his eyes after a long sleep, finding himself surrounded by machines with tubes, wires and monitors. A ghostly light scarcely illuminated the windowless room with gray, shiny stainless steel walls.

His first impulse, believing himself to be in a hospital room, was to find the call button, most likely a nurse who would explain the circumstances as to why they had required him to be admitted, and update the conditions of his health. Among the many metallic baubles that connected his head, limbs and torso to the machinery next to his bed, he couldn't find anything that resembled a beeping device. Then he tried to call out loud, noting with surprise that the timbre of his voice was still strong and intact. Nothing, no one answered; only a total silence interrupted by slight and rhythmic sounds coming from the apparatus that monitored his vital functions.

Though still young at just thirty-eight, he had always been a decisive man, determined, able to courageously take on his and other people's responsibilities. Therefore, he decided to take off all those contraptions and, at his own risk and peril, get out of the bed that made him feel like a helpless prisoner.

Pulling the first wire, attached to the suction cup on his chest, didn't cause any consequences, with the exception of a metallic voice that mechanically repeated "Warning! The cardiac function monitor has been disconnected!" So with determination, almost angrily, he freed himself of the other wires that made him feel as if he were captured in a monstrous spiderweb. Now he was able to sit on the bed, but before deciding to put his feet on the ground, he made a rapid inspection of his body. He was pleased and almost surprised to see that his muscles were still toned and his skin taut, cool and clean, even with the recent immobility. His only clothing was some kind of

nightshirt, open at the chest, and he realized that, mysteriously, his body was hairless, entirely shaved. But what incensed him the most was the horrifying discovery that he was completely bald. Those beautiful brown curls with auburn highlights that his wife, Elena, would run her fingers through in their many moments of tenderness and ardor, were gone.

“Yeah, Elena! Why isn't she here...she might come later during visiting hours...she'll be happy to find me awake and feeling good...maybe she'll bring Sandrino...”

The memory of his family and the urgent desire to see them again made him relive the last day of his memory before falling into that inexplicable deep darkness.

It was 14 April, 2018.

On that day, Jacopo, an already highly esteemed lawyer despite his young age, had won a lawsuit at the Court of Bologna as the defense attorney to the renowned businessman Mario Bardini, wrongfully accused of tax fraud by his brother-in-law Carmine Caccamo, whose aim was to remove him forever from the company in order to take possession of it.

“...therefore, Your Honor and jury members, in light of the unequivocal proof that I have presented, based on the above mentioned fraud which has been perpetrated by the plaintiff Mr. Carmine Caccamo here present, with precise and fraudulent intent to impose culpability and responsibility upon my client with the objective of claiming possession of the company and of the entire capital, I request acquittal of Mario Bardini, whose conduct and ethics result immaculate from the effectuated investigation. I furthermore request that criminal procedures commence against Mr. Carmine Caccamo...”

Those were the concluding words of Jacopo's closing statement that would determine his personal victory and the triumph of justice. After many handshakes and warm embraces, Jacopo remembered

confidently leaving the courthouse and rushing to Sandrino's elementary school to be on time for class to be let out. Once in front of the school, he parked the car on the opposite side of the road and experienced a very strong sense of distress of having seen his son already on the sidewalk outside the gates nearly about to thoughtlessly cross that busy road alone.

"Dad!"

«Stop, Sandrino! Don't move!". . . the urge to rush towards the child to prevent the worst, then...oblivion. His memory stopped there.

He didn't know what had happened to him and for how long he remained unconscious, but the memory of that last episode cut so abruptly short was as vivid as if it were yesterday.

Still sitting on the bed, with his legs dangling, he gave a more careful and in-depth look at the room in which he found himself and, with enormous relief, he noticed at the end of the room, in the shadows, a sort of glass cabinet in which a seated human could be distinguished. Relieved and heartened he rushed toward the person.

“Hey, you! Sir! I'm awake! Can you tell me something? Can you hear me? Help me figure out where I am! Why am I here?” When he finally found himself with only the glass separating him from some reassuring human contact, he was better able to focus the silhouette that he found inside the compartment. The door opened automatically, and the seated man was sleeping, also with a shaven head, more or less the same age as him and with features very similar to his. He was wearing a sort of close-fitting, light gray tracksuit and remained motionless, despite Jacopo's repeated requests for help.

“Please wake up! I need you! How can you leave a patient without assistance!” But as he gave that mysterious guardian a vigorous shake, he realized that the poor fellow gave no sign of life. Checking his pulse, he noticed with horror that there was no heartbeat, but that gesture so obvious and humanly understandable didn't give him time to elicit the shock as it instantly caused a luminous screen to switch on which displayed the following writing:

"Welcome back, Dad! Sit down and read calmly and carefully, even if it will come as a shock to you.”

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