

Antonio De Vito

# Doubts from the Past



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**Doubts From The Past**

«Tektime S.r.l.s.»

**Vito A.**

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Two youths, Sam and Stacie, live College years in full symbiosis. Year in and year out, circumstances and ambitions change. The two main characters separate and live two parallel lives. After some time, coincidentally, their fates will cross again but the background is no longer the carefree time of the College.

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Antonio De Vito  
DOUBTS FROM THE PAST

To my wife Stefania and my daughters Elisa and Chiara,  
with all the love I can,

In memory of my parents Luisa and Raffaele.

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Preface

Probably none had seen him getting out from that house.

While walking at a slow pace, staring into space, everything seemed to give him room.

A superhuman effort seemed to put a strain on Sam's eyes. His green eyes seemed turned off and were staring at the ground. The legs were barely proceeding ahead one for the other, though following a marked path. His arms were relaxed; his fists were open; now the veins had stopped pulsing like rivers in flood. His head down let fall forward part of his thick hair and out from the mouth, with each breath; a big cloud of smoke enveloped his head for a few moments. He was an exhausted man. Now he just needed help.

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Sam was a tall and stout man, with that kind of green eyes which don't leave you indifferent. He had a beautiful body, even though he had never spent a great deal of time on himself, in fact.

Since Stacy had made it clear that if he got a wiggle on his fate could finally change, he had tried to clean up his acts. He seriously believed in that story, though, it seemed to not be able to take flight. It had been two years now since the good days of College and it was necessary that Sam started looking for a serious job.

Stacy was a woman who knew what she wanted. It had been that way since she and Sam had met at Ohio State University and they had found out they were from the same country of Colorado.

The surprise of discovering they were fellow citizens had been just the beginning of an evening in front of a bottle of Chianti and ended like many others, lying in a bed or on a carpet in front of a fireplace still smoldering from the night before.

During College in Ohio, Sam and Stacie had never been two model students. It had immediately been bliss between them, since they met at one of the parties in the Campus. They saw things in the same way. Sam and Stacie loved to drink Italian wine and sometimes they exaggerated into a stupor. They loved to be on their own and especially if one of them had a problem the other one always knew how to solve it.

The college years, however, ended and left the two, Sam and Stacie, orphans of their dreams. Very soon the reality proved to be different from the small-time college days. Reality was waking up in the morning, as soon as possible to find a job and all those things which you don't really believe in, but a little accepted and a little suffered to avoid being crushed by everything around you at a pace often struggling to sustain.

Sam had left his family in Colorado to go to College in Ohio excited by what was happening to him. He was so excited that he wasted no time and during the years of study he found a way to make a living by cutting the grass and sometimes working part-time in a fast-food. He never had a chance to join the football team because of a physical problem which he didn't care about.

Unlike Sam, during College Stacie was able to live with fewer financial worries thanks to the study grants she could get and a small inheritance received after her grandmother's death.

The two lived together almost five years without ever worrying about what would happen to them one day. It was a true love like those in novels until when Sam decided it was time to cut off that relationship.

That evening Stacie was returning from work. She was working at a law firm not too far from home, but badly connected. She had always to walk a couple kilometers after getting off the subway. In autumn and with the rain it wasn't the best, especially if the rain helped in making a bumpy path.

"Hey Sam, are you here?" she wearily asked while taking off her raincoat,

"Hey Sam, do you think it's time for jokes?"

The lights were off, and Sam did not answer. So Stacie looked for the main switch and turned it on. At that moment the living room lit up and, while looking at the table, Stacie knew the reason of that darkness in a heartbeat. In one second Sam appeared from the kitchen door with a bottle of wine in one hand and two glasses in the other.

"How can you not realize every time that it's a surprise? This way you're making this so much easier." Sam said smugly.

"I did not want to disappoint you, who know how much effort it would take to prepare all this." Stacie replied with a hint of irony.

Regardless of the irony in Stacie's words, Sam went over to her and began to pour the wine. She drank it quickly as if it was the medicine that she was waiting for after a day of agony. For Sam, however, the reason of that greed was quite another, and in this misunderstanding background, an evening began which would have ended after a few hours under the covers of their bed.

The following morning Sam got up first. It was early, and after about ten minutes spent in deciding what to do, he put on his clothes, wrote a note which attacked at the mirror, quickly put on his coat and slipped out the door almost afraid that Stacie could wake up and see him go.

He had not a car, so he walked towards the metro which was a couple of kilometers away, but after only a few hundred meters he disappeared in the fog.

In the fireplace there were only smoldering ashes and it was really cold. A few moments after Sam shut the door, Stacie began to notice his absence. She rose from the bed and, using the cover to warm her up, she walked to the door quietly and still sleepy.

Near there, with still sleepy eyes, she saw the mirror in which Sam had placed the ticket shortly before.

Sam had no clear idea of exactly where to go, but that night he had decided that he would go away from home and from that city, and he would return only after arranging his life as Stacie asked for long time.

The fact that he had no clear idea was the only sure thing, as he was certain that he could not stay long without drinking at least one glass of wine.

He walked for hours aimlessly thinking back to all the time spent with Stacie and many years of passion; he thought about how everything had slowly gone dissolving. He could not stand the fact that once finished his studies, he had lost the energy and the desire to do that had enabled him to keep Stacie's pace so far.

It was getting late and Sam stopped at Wine Lounge Brother on Cleveland Avenue where he used to share much of his time with Stacie. A place for wine lovers, studied in detail by the owner Sam's friend Harry. They had shared all the College with the only difference that Harry had quickly proved to know what he wanted to do and, shortly after the end of the studies, he devoted himself body and soul to his project.

"Harry today is a really weird fucking day. You really do know your wines. What do you recommend in this case?"

It's written on your face that it's not a great day, but a good Italian red wine will make it much better.”

Harry knew Sam for a long time and knew his favorite flavors. He also knew that there was no fucking day in the world for Sam that a nice glass of Italian red wine couldn't beat.

“Give me the best you have in the cellar because for a while you won't see me around.”

“Hey, what do you do? You're leaving and you're telling me this with that face?”, in the meantime Harry was pouring some Red Lacrima Christi.

“I'm leaving alone.”

“After all, it could also be good news. But why are you leaving?” Harry said quite incredulous at the news that Stacie was not going with Sam.

“I don't know, but here I can no longer stay”. And he drank again.

It was nighttime when he left the club and he was the last client. He walked straight ahead, after all, but Harry would not have bet a penny. Outside there was a taxi waiting for him; Harry had taken care to call him and also to pay it in name of the old friendship with Sam.

“To the airport!” It was the only thing Sam could say before of closing his eyes and rest his head backward.

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Stacie grabbed the note stuck to the mirror and moments later her black eyes were clouded with tears that she could not hold back for the fact that once again Sam had more courage than her.

Yes, whereas for weeks Stacie kept wondering whether it was right to continue to drag the story that way, Sam instantly had decided to up and leave.

She had to sit down to try to tidy up the ideas that appeared confused like never before. All the certainties she had in her brain were crumbling like a sand castle.

Sam was not what it looked like, a weak man dominated by his indecision and fears. After all he had not thought a second before doing his suitcase and dumping her there alone in front of a note.

“I better get a move on,  
Sam”.

Suddenly the sound of a telephone took Stacie's petrified eyes off that note and almost running she rushed to the mobile to grab the phone.

“Hey, Stacie, are you all right? It's all OK?”

“Mark, are you?” She had not even looked at the clock because of anxiety.

“Yes, who did you want to be? Don't you know what time it is?”

“Sorry, I slept through my alarm, I'll be soon, you'll see” and she hung up.

But despite the call which should give Stacie a move on, she remained at least another half hour staring at that note while a confused series of images were flashing before her eyes and she was feeling mixed sensations of anger and remorse.

She tried to shake off the ballast and, wearing the first things she had found, she headed the office where Mark was waiting for her furious.

“This is not the way to repay those who gave you an opportunity like the one I gave you,” Mark thundered, slamming his fists on the table.

“I know I'm a little late but you know that's not me” Stacie tried to justify herself.

“A little late!!! I am astonished. An hour ago the Bigalow hearing has begun and I had to send Peter who does not even know who is Bigalow!” Mark was beside himself.

Stacie tried to pull herself together and managed to say a sentence worthy of the attorney Stacie Scott that Mark had hired two years earlier:

“I reach him in court, in any case it was a cause already won, don't worry.”

She had managed to lie with all her might, however, giving to who stood facing her the feeling to have matters into her own hands. That was her greatest quality, or she thought this until a few hours earlier, that is, until Sam's note started poking holes in all her certainties.

Sam arrived at the airport a little dormant but convinced of what he was doing. He had brought with him a few things, only the need for a day trip and not more. This meant that whatever had been the destination he had chosen it would have been one way. At the airport he took a look at the destinations of the the red-eye flights and decided to buy a ticket to New York, for no reason in particular.

Or maybe there was a reason to go to New York. Do what Stacie had not yet been able to do and maybe, who knows when, show her that he could live up to her and perhaps one day meet her again.

It would be worth doing almost 500 miles. He felt that the decision was fairer than ever.

The next day Sam was around New York: Park Avenue, Madison Avenue; after all, he thought, it hasn't been so hard. The best, however, was yet to come. Sam's main anguish was about to reappear in his mind.

“Get a move on”

He kept telling himself like a *Hail Mary*.

He walked down Madison Av., looking around with a bewildered air, given the wild crowd on the sidewalks; he could not find a good reason for being so urgent to reach a taxi or subway stop. Yet, one of the reasons why Sam had left Cleveland and now he was right there in the midst of those people who barely avoided him, as if it were a simple obstacle on the road to whom to be careful not to trip, was to measure himself and find out for itself if he could withstand the lifestyle that Stacie loved and which she was so much aiming for.

Why a man should measure himself within an organized chaos like New York and cannot do it in Cleveland or anywhere else in the world, this was another torment that Sam was dragging on since the first angry discussions with Stacie. Unfortunately, the sense of frustration that Stacie was instilling in him ordered him to react that way, even though in his heart he was not entirely convinced it was the right way. After all he could not be convinced that leaving Stacie after seven years of passion could be the right choice, no matter what was the real reason for that choice.

While these and other thoughts overlapped in Sam's head, one of the many people who at 8am crowded the sidewalks of Madison Av. bumped into Sam causing him to fall on his knee. He had to stand with his left hand to the ground to avoid falling ruinously. The person who "invested" him, was a beautiful young girl in her 20s, with brown long hair. Unlike Sam, after the impact she had turned on herself and had fallen ruinously on the ground letting fly a bunch of sheets.

While Sam was getting up slowly and tried to figure out who had hit him, the girl was trying to get up with difficulty amid general indifference.

Sam then held her by the arm and said:

“I'll help you to collect those papers but then you tell me why you are going so fast in front of a cup of coffee.”

The girl looked at her watch, reflected a moment and then said:

“Come on, let's collect everything if you do not mind, then let's have coffee and who cares.”

The prevailing confusion made way for euphoria. Sam was not excited by the fact of going to a bar with a girl, but for the fact that this girl had looked at her watch and had blown it.

“Come on, let's start from the beginning. I'm Carla, I'm 26, I'm of Italian descent, and today I had to deliver these important documents in the office for a lawsuit but, perhaps, it was not worthwhile. It's your turn.”

“I am Sam, yesterday I decided to leave Cleveland to come in New York and after a few hours I already think it was worth it.”

“Hey, I do not know why but I feel I can say that I agree with you. Did you come today? Are you staying with some friends or relatives?” Carla asked.

“No, actually, do you know a good place to stay not too far from the center?” Sam asked without even knowing why he necessarily wanted to be so close to downtown. After all he did not have a damn thing to do and nowhere to go, so downtown or suburbs of New York... it didn't matter.

“Look, Sam, I don't know where you're from, but here if you do damage, then you must be forgiven. How about if you are my guest for a few nights? I live 6 or 7 miles from here. It is not very close, but...”

“Okay, okay, but now let's drink this coffee otherwise it cools.” Sam's reply was peremptory.

Carla did not know how to ask Sam to stay a while over her, nor even was sure she had made a mistake to invite a stranger of whom she only knew he was coming from Cleveland and maybe it was not even true.

But it went well, they drank coffee and they make a date to meet at 6pm outside that bar.

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Stacie jumped at the first taxi that was just passing and headed to the court which was about ten minutes from there. In those ten minutes she forced herself to concentrate on the job and to remove anything that might give her trouble. As she was setting out to do this, some images of that damn piece of paper were right in front of her eyes as the flashes of the journalists after the end of an important trial.

“Miss, it's 22\$.Miss!” The taxi driver was more in a hurry than Stacie.

“Keep the change. Thank you.” Stacie knew she had reached the court with a sigh of relief. She gave the taxi driver 30\$ and she catapulted out of the car.

“Peter, what are you doing out here? And the hearing? Tell me I'm still in time.” She began to sweat cold. The fear that months of work had gone up in smoke seemed to materialize.

“You were born with a platinum spoon in your mouth; they pushed it because of the unavailability of the witness. The court decided to postpone by one week.”

Peter seemed extremely peaceful, unlike Stacie.

“Okay, I'll be there this time and we'll get those pieces of shit. However, it's time you accept my invitation and that I explain you all the details of this trial. Should anything ever happen to me, you're on your own and I don't want to have to rush into a taxi again to try to get the court in time.”

“Hey, I would agree, I always did, but you know well that Sam can't stand to see us together even outside of work.” Peter retorted.

“Don't worry; Sam and I are not dating anymore.” Stacie replied laconic.

“Since when? If I may say so.” Peter said with curiosity.

“Since this morning. And if you love me, stop asking me questions about Sam.” Stacie could not but betray the still alive feelings for Sam, although wounded in the depths by an unexpected and misunderstood gesture that had not allowed any reply.

“Okay, okay. For me, we can meet tonight if that's no problem.”

A few months earlier, Peter had joined as a lawyer the law firm where Stacie worked and, although he was not lightning fast, a particularly irresistible charm was on his side. Stacie had immediately appreciated Peter since his arrival at the office and, of course, Peter had always known that he wasn't blithely indifferent to Stacie. It was clear to everyone, however, that Stacie was having an important love affair with another man and would hardly have granted distractions.

Just got home, Stacie paused a moment in the doorway, glanced at the stairs almost as if to exorcise the absence of Sam and then after a long sigh, she entered the house and began to tidy up, since the morning she had gone away in a hurry, leaving everything as it was. She gathered everything and quickly tried to make it disappear almost as if to hide the traces of a lover to his companion. She moved with difficulty as if it was already late although it was more than two hours to the meeting with Peter.

She cleaned everything thoroughly and once assured that the house had regained a more than decent appearance, she allowed herself a shower.

The two had to work for the defense of a boy - Frank Bigalow - fired by the company he worked for (a multinational in the telecommunications sector) because of its "inconvenient" open homosexuality.

Some months before, Frank had knocked at Spencer's office to ask for legal assistance. Once Frank had told his story, Mark immediately understood the media weight that the suit would have covered and how much its law firm could benefit to win against a giant of the communication, despite the risks.

It was for this reason that he immediately decided to entrust the lawsuit in Stacie's hands, because he had always considered her a phenomenon in the field of jurisprudence, despite the lack of experience and youth.

All in all, Mark was more capable in business acumen than legal knowledge, while being an experienced man of the law; but just that sense of business that distinguished him, had pushed him to choose Stacie in what would probably be the most important suit of his life.

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Sam walked long after Carla went off and tried to spend time in every way. He did not know why Carla had insisted particularly in offering to host him; after all it had been a trivial incident what had happened earlier. A simple "sorry" would have been enough for ending all there. While this and a thousand other thoughts like this turned into Sam's head, he planted himself on the spot as if struck by an illness. He opened his astonished eyes and trying to react to what looked like a real paralysis, he tried to process a step forward. His astonished expression did not change but he managed to move again, and advanced more rapidly heading towards a bench where he reached out and grabbed the woman who had caused that reaction, turning her.

"It is not possible..."

The woman jumped up and put her hands to her mouth as if to try to silence a scream ready to go out, and looked at the man who had turned her so violently.

Sam, however, had again planted himself and had looked down; his arms were limp as if to blow off steam.

He had seen Stacie in that woman, he was not confused. He was sure he had seen her and had wanted to go to her to ask her the reason for such a persecution.

Then he turned his back without even apologize and started walking aimlessly looking straight forward.

Sam took a few steps and heard him say in a loud voice:

"In the name of the law, stop where you are!"

And after having read his rights, two agents who had seen the incident handcuffed him and escorted him by car to the Police Department.

Sam now had not to find a way to pass the time until the meeting with Carla but he had to invent a way to get out of that place.

After more than an hour waiting in there, Sam began to ask himself the reason for that waiting.

"Hey, why did you lock me in here?"

"Don't worry, about the harassment you'll manage with a couple years if you cannot afford the bail." Agent Berrimow replied as he passed while Sam was wondering why such a long wait.

"Hey. But what harassment, I only confused a girl with mine. I don't really know what came over me." Sam had just said what he really thought.

"Look, stop whimpering. There will be a court, a trial..."

"Can I at least have a call?"

"Sure, but be careful that you have a single phone call. You'd better choose a lawyer who can pay you the deposit if you want to get out of here."

Sam thought for just a moment to Stacie, but then passed to Carla. He had no intention of involving Stacie the day after having left that way. There was a problem. He did not know which law office Carla worked in. His only hope was that the policeman could help him.

"Hey, listen up. I know only one lawyer. She's from New York. Her name is Carla and she works in a law office here in the city but I don't know her phone number. Can you help me, please?"

The policeman looked at him with a half smile on his mouth and said:

Maybe it's your lucky day today. Here in the Department we know well the lawyer De Sena. Think that I started a month ago and I already remember her. You hardly forget a beautiful girl like that. She comes to visit us constantly because she often gets office cases. I know the office where she works. I'll get the number.

"Carla, it's Sam. Yes, the one you have overwhelmed this morning. I need your help. I'm at the police precinct. Can you come here?"

After about half an hour Carla had reached Sam. She actually had not asked herself too many questions. Maybe she was used to rescue the scoundrels at the Police District in her role as a lawyer, but in this case she had decided to take Sam at home.

"This is the right time to begin to tell me more about you if you really care for my help." Carla told Sam.

"Look, get me out of here and I promise to tell you everything. I assure you that I am the first who needs to talk about it." Sam did not say those words with the intention to flatter Carla; he really needed to understand what was going on in his head.

In the meantime, the policeman who had got Carla's phone number was filling out the documents needed for the release.

"Sam Cary, born on November 18th, 1968 in Colorado...Hey Sam, tomorrow you'll be 26. Happy birthday." The policeman revealed unintentionally to Carla the first news she missed about Sam, then he got closer to Sam and added in a low voice:

"Young man, this girl has a way with men, believe me, and so *get a move on* if you want to keep her.

As soon as those last words reached Sam, he suddenly turned his eyes and stared at the policeman as a little cat before jumping to the neck of its prey.

The policeman was impressed by that look, so he closed the file he had in his hands, he turned and went into the next room silently.

"Sam, but what's the matter with that cop?" Carla asked Sam.

"Maybe he doesn't feel well, it happens." Sam said, while rubbing his temples because a big pain in his head was exhausting him.

Carla looked at him for a moment then she pulled up her shoulders and took the bag to go.

He was released with no problems, as the complaint against him had not been presented. When they were out of there, they headed for Carla's home.

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Stacie was frantically waiting for Peter, when she heard knocking on the door.

"At last! I was waiting for you." Stacie had not yet taken off the feeling of a faithless meeting that was accompanying her since she had invited Peter that morning.

"I don't think it's late. You, rather, you look nervous, really nervous actually. Are you all right?" Peter asked.

"Yes, I'm sorry but I have yet to get used to the fact that Sam and I are now two people with two completely separate lives."

Meanwhile, Peter took off his coat, put the bottle of wine he was holding down and sat in the living room.

"Look, I would tell you what I think about this story and about Sam in particular but it was you who asked me to not talk about it. Maybe you were not wrong when you asked me to avoid going back on this subject, at least for the moment." Peter said.

Stacie smiled, accepted Peter's proposal and began to put on the table the trial documents. They worked for a long time that night; they just stopped for a pizza at around 10pm and took the opportunity to drink Peter's wine. It was not a great wine, for her who usually always sought the right one with Sam for every situation, but she was fine with it.

That evening Stacie discovered with some surprise that, after all, she could begin to live a new relationship, beyond how it would end. She felt the satisfaction in sharing an interest and she thought that Sam and she had never discussed anyone of her causes, although Sam had done her own studies.

“Stacie, it’s getting late, but I think we gave it our best shot for being the first day of work together.” Peter said.

“Sure, Peter. It sounds like a good start. Above all, I must thank you because I felt really good tonight. Believe me, after Sam went on, I did not imagine that tonight I would be nearly five hours working and eating pizza with one of my colleagues at my house.” Stacie said.

“Am I just a colleague to you?” Peter dared.

“Well, I would say my favorite colleague, but do not add more. I would not spoil the evening.” Stacie had unbalanced beyond what she believed she could do that night.

“All right, you got it. Then I’ll see you tomorrow. This time, you’d better pay attention to the alarm, though.” Peter said.

“Once more, thank you for everything.” Stacie greeted.

Peter went away pleased more of the effect his presence had had on Stacie than for the work done.

Peter was not one who lived for success but he considered the career functional to achieve his goals. Stacie had always been among them. Unfortunately, he had always had to give it up, because it was not in his nature to fight with another man for a woman.

As soon as he had heard that Sam and Stacie had discontinued their relationship, Peter had immediately thought this was his chance, and that trial was perfect to stay as long as possible close to Stacie. He knew well that Stacie was not giving up a second her job, so there was no better condition to exploit than that one.

After Peter left, Stacie tidied roughly the papers and after filling another glass of wine sat on the sofa where she usually liked to think.

Unlike previous evening, this time she was feeling really good. Stacie was alone now, she could admit it. She had always liked Peter and perhaps that feeling of discomfort she recently felt while dating Sam, it was also due to Peter. Stacie perhaps could not admit to herself that the history between her and Sam was coming to an end because of her but, for this reason, she had dragged Sam in an apathetic relationship. She still could not give an explanation for Sam’s unexpected departure, but she could not stay the whole life looking for the why. Start feeling new sensations for a man without having to suppress them under feelings of guilt was a great good start.

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While Sam was in the car with Carla, he thought back to as that cop had changed expression after he had stared at him that way. It was not the first time that a similar episode happened. A few hours before the woman on the bench had the same behavior, and now that cop.

They were both speechless and their faces turned pale as if they had seen a ghost when Sam had given them his gaze.

“Hey Sam, what are you thinking? You know you've got some explaining to do about this morning. Not that I want to know your business at all costs, let’s get that clear, but...” Carla broke the tie.

“You’re right, we don't really know each other and, in fact, I don't even know why you’re taking me over you, after what happened this morning.” Sam said.

“Look, maybe I should not do it, but it's what I want. After your phone call and after I got you out of there, I have even more desire to host you. What I mean is that it's getting very interesting right now. In short, now you're not just a simple passer I slammed into the ground on the sidewalk. I hope not to be disappointed.” Carla added.

“Do you expect me to be a serial killer or something like that? Tell me, do you collect men with twisted personality or anything like that to do a piece or write some kind of documentary?” Sam asked smiling.

“I see that the color is back in your cheeks, at least. Yes, I do... if you want an answer. A nice serial killer of those you find only in the books, it would not hurt. After all, it is said that there is a murderous mood in each of us.” Carla continued.

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