



The Mystery of the Book

ANGELO GRASSIA



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Аннотация

The lucky occasion with Sabrina, a beautiful girl known by chance at Gaeta on a hot August day, transforms Paki's life. Thanks to her, Paki goes to a flea market. There he meets a wardrobe who, attracted by his sympathy, decides to give him a typewriter. At first Paki refuses, but given his insistence, he is forced to accept. That book reveals to him a great mystery. As soon as he start reading it, Paki is faced with extraordinary events, events that in a certain sense will change his life. Sometimes in life you are faced with things or facts really inexplicable.

Angelo Grassia

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When that August 9, 2016 in the morning Paki woke up, he did not know yet that it would be a very special day. He had been away from a week, and like every summer for about twenty years he went on holiday to Formia, a beautiful tourist resort in

the province of Latina. With his wife and his three children he usually went to the beach after midday. They always went to the "Viareggio lido", located in the beautiful bay of Serapo in Gaeta. Serapo's beach is the main beach of the town, consisting of fine and clear sand, a half kilometer long. It is closed to the south by Monte Orlando and the Shrine of the Spaccata Mountain, and to the north by another slightly lower promontory. This position makes water particularly clear in this area. From the beach it is also possible to admire a special boat-shaped rock, called "Ship of Serapo" rich in marine fauna and flora. That morning, however, Paki decided to do otherwise. In fact, he, who was a little old man, was tired of waiting for the family to get ready to go to the beach, at 8 o'clock went up to his Vespa 50 and he headed alone to Gaeta. He stopped at the Bazzanti bar, a characteristic bar full of tourists in the summer; he sat at a table in the outside veranda of the restaurant and he ordered a croissant and a cappuccino. After completing the co-operation, he pulled out the red Marlboro package of frenzy from his pocket and he began to enjoy his first morning cigar. He was a respectable smoker. Ten years earlier, he had stopped completely because one night he had woken with a pain in the chest: he thought it was a very cold, but his wise and prudent wife did everything to bring him to the first aid station. Paki did not want to go but, given the insistence of his wife, he promised he would go to bed immediately after smoking another cigarette, aware that he would not smoke in the hospital for several days. Doctors

diagnosed him an infarct and immediately they underwent him to an angioplasty with a stent, as he had a 99% obstructed artery. He saved himself by miracle. That was simply why he stopped smoking. He did not touch a cigarette for more than six years, then as a stubborn he resumed this bad habit.

He had just turned off the cigarette when his look was attracted by a female figure heading toward a coffee table. She was a middle-aged woman, still pleased: she was wearing a pair of jeans shorts that let glimpse all the beauty of her tanned legs while wearing a striped blouse that left her beautiful and prosperous breast clear; at the feet she carried espadrilles, a backpack bag on her shoulders, and in her right hand the purse to the sea. Paki, curious, watched the scene for a few minutes, while she was staggering for too much weight she carried. He followed the woman up to the arrival of the table, he saw that she had moved to sit down and almost exhausted, she had rested on the back, on the right, the backpack, and on the left hand the purse of the sea. Then she turned to the side of the table and sat down. At the same moment, the chair behind her, slipping too much on the bags, slipped away.

Paki yelled, "Careful!"

Too late, the beautiful lady was already lying on the floor. Paki in a moment reached her and helped her get up. The woman was very amazed by the gallant gesture of Paki and to return, she invited him to sit at the table. Paki gladly accepted the invitation as the beautiful lady, besides charming, proved to be very fond of

joking about the incident. The woman said her name was Sabrina and she came from Rome.

Then she added: "I've seen on the Caboto sea-front some booths, is it an antique market?"

"Perhaps," replied Paki, "They did the antique-trade market, of real antique-trade, about twenty years ago, not on the Caboto se-front, but on a small street behind the Sanctuary of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. It is right here behind where is also the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, the "Golden Cave" where on 8th of December 1854 Pope Pius IX had the idea of proclaiming the homonymous dogma. Then it was nice to walk down that little street where you could really find so many beautiful things. Today, however, you find only crafts and jewelry of various kinds, which is why I do not stop for several years, I prefer other markets. "

Sabrina looked fascinated. She looked at him with her wide open eyes and the smile printed on her face. It was a mile away that Paki liked to Sabrina, also because Paki despite his advanced age was still an attractive man, with his hairy hair, wide shoulders, well-defined pectorals, and gray hair down on his chest.

Paki noticed the situation and, as he stared at her eyes, he slowly began to pull the faith out of his finger, rested it on the table and began to play. He twisted it like a spit twice, watching the spark that emanated, then filming it and stuffed it again.

He usually used this toy as a pastime, but at that moment, at

that moment with his insignificant gesture, he wanted to make Sabrina understand that he was married and never betrayed his wife.

In fact, Sabrina for a moment lowered her eyes and changed her expression, but a second later she was happy and smiling again, as if nothing had happened.

The conversation continued pleasantly for another twenty minutes, full of amazement-like looks and bright smiles from her.

Paki realized that this simple encounter could have turned into something more than a mere friendship, and to avoid the risk of temptation, he looked at the clock and exclaimed, "It was late! Sorry Sabrina, but I just have to go away. "

They greeted, both happy to have had a wonderful encounter caused by a banal caution.

Paki climbed on the Vespa 50, and headed for Viareggio, for the usual day on the sea. During the journey, he still felt his heart beat forever, a beating that revealed the strong emotion Paki had suffered from the charm of Sabrina. Had he fallen in love? No, but in any case he had been it disturbed. He was thinking of her green eyes from hazel-like edges that had literally flickered him. Women with green eyes are generally considered to be very fascinating, but Sabrina's eyes were something indescribable. Suddenly he remembered a legend he had heard at the school : "The Legend of the Nymphs". It is said that people with green eyes descend from the Nymphs of lakes. The Nymphs were very

beautiful female deities and they were the object of every man's desire, enough to look in her eyes and the same happened with Sabrina. It was so intense that he felt that he decided to stop and drink a sip of water.

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Paki reached the beach and, like every morning, he lounged under the umbrella, he began reading the various newspapers. By now he had calmed down, the effect of Sabrina was almost vanished: only his lips were ripe, they still felt the desire to savor the sweetness and the scent of Sabrina's fresh and velvety lips. He usually stayed with the family on the beach until seven o'clock, but that day, for too long, he decided to return home earlier; also because he had the desire to lie down on the terrace on his terrace, with a panoramic view over the whole gulf of Gaeta. He liked to see the ferries that were leaving and arriving from Ponza, not only for him it was a show to see the Canadair (those small yellow planes taking water from the sea to extinguish the fires occurring on the nearby mountains). He is having fun as a child watching the planes flying overhead on the roofs of the city, arriving on the mountains, throwing water on the flames, and returning to the sea to take another, continuing until sunset. Sometimes flying on its terrace leave droplets of brackish water that give a little cool.

At four o'clock, he left the beach to go home. As he walked along the Caboto sea-front, he saw the classics antiquaries market tents, or rather fleas, as in ancient times today there is nothing

more. A market that, instead of monthly or weekly, was held every day in that August. He is a great fan of these markets (because he always hopes to find a Van Gogh or a Picasso, which unfortunately never happened to him), knowing that this was not an antique market, but a simple merchandise market, he decided to pull on. After passing the last stand, however, he felt something in his heart that pushed him to stop. Was it the thought of being able to meet Sabrina again? Without even realizing it, he found himself reversed and returned to the first stall. He parked the Vespa and walked quietly to give a look. As he walked amongst the stalls, he saw from far away a refined picture of the four seasons of master Giuseppe Ciavolino, a well-known Neapolitan painter born in Torre del Greco in 1918 and died in 2011. Giuseppe Ciavolino is also known abroad: in fact one of his work is even exposed to MoMA, the New York Museum of Modern Art. In this museum, among the rare works, there is only one cameo engraved in "sardonyx" (the most precious piece of a shell); and it is that signed by Giuseppe Ciavolino. Paki, who is a great admirer and great collector of this painter, quickly went to the canvas to look at it closely. Love for the works of Ciavolino was born in 1993, when he saw for the first time a picture at the antique market held in Naples, near the municipal villa in Caracciolo rue. At that time, he used to go to the market with his wife Sally, and together they looked and decided on the items to buy. That day Paki has not forgotten it yet. In fact, as he walked with his wife, he saw a small opera 24x30 by Ciavolino master.

Paki looked at this enthusiastic opera, this painter unknown to him attracted him, and remained staring at the picture for a long time. He liked it, he wanted to buy it, but the price asked by the seller (250,000 lire), at that time not a bit of money, made him think. He was enchanted by the picture, that picture was like a magnet, attracted him, attracted him inexplicably. He was almost about to end the deal when his wife made a desperate blow, and he went away grimly, murmuring, "Do not you see how bad it is, let it go, and where do we put it?" As he walked away, Paki constantly rolled his head in the direction of the picture, inside he felt as if he was leaving behind a piece of his heart. It was the last time he looked at the stalls with his wife. From the next market they started to turn separately so Paki could decide in total autonomy and no hurry to buy. Too much, at the market that was held the following month, Paki did not find the little painting that had so excited him because it had already been sold. Paki remained very bitter and very upset with his wife who had distanced him from buying.

Sometime later he went to a frame-maker to order a frame for a picture. At the entrance there was a picture of the master Ciavolino: a little bigger than what he had seen at the market, but much nicer. Luckily that day he was alone. He asked for the price, and without turning a hair, he bought the picture, perhaps even to make a mistake to his wife, who had not made the picture on the market, and he paid him much but much more. After a week he returned to the frame-maker and bought another one.

His wife, meanwhile, had realized that he was wrong and to remedy, secretly, she informed about the painter, who he was, where he lived. She then found all the information and in the days preceding Christmas 1994 she went to the artist's house and bought a beautiful 50x70 painting to give to Paki. Sally, in order to be forgiven, thought to make a great surprise at Paki and, to make it more beautiful, she had the idea of making two packets; in the smallest she put only the catalog of Ciavolino's works and she put it under the tree; she hid the picture under the couch. When Paki opened the smallest package and found the catalog of Master Ciavolino, his eyes began to shine, he was very happy. He asked to his wife where she had found it, embraced her tenderly and kissed her. After the enthusiasm had passed, Sally invited Paki to get up from the couch, shifted him and, expressing his own jubilation, exclaimed, "Here is your true gift, love." Paki saw that parcel coming out of the couch, took it in his hands and immediately realized that it contained a picture. He fluttered frantically and when he saw a really beautiful Ciavolino canvas, he moved. But the strongest emotion was when on the back he saw the dedication that had been made directly to him by the master, behind his wife's suggestion. It was the nicest Christmas of his life.

Later, having known the master's address, he often went to his home, establishing a great relationship of friendship and starting a collection of works. He was so strong in the emotion he felt in observing the paintings of Master Ciavolino, who on

his eighteenth birthday made him a big surprise. He went to the advertising agency of the monthly Art and published three pictures of his paintings, under the following dedication: "To You, Great Master, you are able, with your works, to make me dream day by day."

When the Master became aware of what Paki had done, he was very pleased. The joy and the emotion were such that, in order to dissipate, he gave to Paki a beautiful canvas with the following dedication: "To Paki, great admirer of my works". Even today, when he sees a canvas of Ciavolino, he remains enchanted and scrutinizes it with passion and love.

After the contemplation of the painting, Paki passed to the next stall, and here he was attracted by a wardrobe who sold, among other items, silver coins. Paki, who is also a numismatic expert, decided to stop to give a check. He took one of it watching carefully to establish its authenticity. As he twisted and twisted the coin in his hands, his attention was distracted by a vow that came from behind him. He turns and he sees the warden, a cheerful chubby man, who with a sarcastic laughter read to an acquaintance the contents of a sheet he clasped in his hands. The wardrobe, accustomed to Paki's amazement, approaches him and, with delight, informs him of the situation.

"You know, it is a holographic testament I found by emptying an attic." Paki looked at him amazed, he did not understand what he found so pleasant that will. Then the wardrobe continued: "In the testament it is written," Dear children, I leave you beyond my

own house, all I have been able to put aside during my life, that is a good fortune of 80,000 lire " ».

Paki looked upset, unable to understand what to laugh.

"No!" He continued, "is not over. The funny thing is that at the end there is a post scriptum in which the de cuius makes a rectification, namely that after the war events that have arisen and because of the black bag his savings have fallen. " And, continuing to smile, he said, "I imagine the face of heirs, ha ha ha."

Paki remained speechless. The warden, noticing that Paki did not share his sarcasm and was only interested in buying the coin and going away, told him: "Do you collect stamps too? Because in the same attic where I took the will, there was also a box full of letters. " And with his hand, he pointed at Paki a cardboard full of letters with postage stamps from the '40s to the ' 60s well preserved and held together with beautiful colored ribbons.

Paki replied no, and impatiently he paid the coin and he was to leave when the merchant told him: "I like you, you know? I want to present you this book that comes from the same house, it's a book that was written by the master's son in honor of his father. "

And showing him a book quite thick with the blue cover, he gave it to him. Paki, embarrassed, at first refused, but seeing the insistence of the merchant, almost reluctantly, he thanked him, he took the book and left. He was very annoyed, as he was aware of carrying a further cheating at home and that surely that book would never have read it.

When he arrived home, he placed the book and the coin on the table on the terrace and ran for a refreshing shower.

Then he made a pink grapefruit juice and went to enjoy it on the panoramic terrace. As soon as he finished drinking, he lit the classic cigarette and took the phone to find the coin he had bought on Internet, which he usually did after each purchase to check if he had or did not make a deal. He stretched out his hand to take the coin on the book, but strangely laid it on the table and took the book in his hands.

Perhaps pushed by curiosity, he looked carefully at the cover of the book, his right hand unintentionally leaned over the book and opened it. Paki found himself so suddenly with the open book on the front page and did not know how he started reading. He had never done it, because after three hours he was still reading. He interrupted only when his wife invited him for the third time, more and more brutally, to sit at dinner table. Paki stood up, ate fast and returned to reading.

The book was handwritten, but it was, in fact, not a book published by publishers, but it was a simple typewriter bound by a small artisanal workshop. On the blue color cover, imprinted with gold characters, we read the words "One Man to Remember". The book was made up of about 250 pages. Paki read it greedily until the end, and when he came to the last sentence, he found himself with a knot in his throat and his tears wet with tears streaming down from his eyes. He was so touched reading that story, who was sobbing for several minutes. The odd

thing is that Paki in his life had read a dozen or so books and when he started reading he finished them after a week. That night he read the book all in one. That book had been written by a certain Vittorio, resident in Rome, to remember his father Luigi to those who knew him and esteemed him for his tenacity and for his courage in dealing with any adversity; and to make known to other people a man whose dignity is an example to many.

Paki was very pleased to have known, reading the book, that lovely and dear father figure.

3

Luigi was born in 1885 by a well-off and wealthy provincial family, and until the age of six he lived a thoughtless infancy, full of joys and caresses. Then an adverse wind dropped on his family, and in two years, due to financial collapse, he found himself in a fierce misery. The poor Luigi from one moment to another was forced to abandon the games and find a job to earn a living. He started as a barber's assistant, and in return for his little services, he provided for his subsistence.

During this period of pain, he also lost his father, and he was forced with the family to leave the house and move to Naples.

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