
FIRST LOVE
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The Art of Attraction · 01

It was September 1978, and I was living with my mother in Clusone, a small town high in the hills above Bergamo, in northern Italy, where she had won a state civil-service post. I went with her and went to school there.

The rest of the family lived in Reggio Calabria. My father presented the move as a reward, a real experience. In truth, I knew I was a boy under observation, because of my character, and that I needed a controller, a tutor — and who better than my mother.

I had a new motorbike, bought by my father: a promise kept, as always. I had passed my exams with top marks, and I had won the prize.

My mother tried to negotiate my curfew, but most of the time she simply locked me in to punish me and went off to work, never once imagining that one of the first things I had planned to do was have a copy of the keys made.

I went out with my friends. All of them had motorbikes, and every one of them had a girlfriend. I didn't.

I met a girl, Carla, very pretty, but she required far too much time: courtship, the kiss, getting to know each other, introductions, parents, rituals.

When Carla understood that I was not a boy for the long game, she found a Bergamo shepherd, who handed her love together with his father's land.

Meanwhile, in April 1979, my mother obtained her transfer and we went back to my hometown.

The first concern was to move me to the nearest school so I wouldn't lose the year, but with so little time left, the school's assessment did not allow me to pass, and I failed my first year.

My sister attended the same school. The following year she asked me why I didn't have a girlfriend, and she introduced me to one of her classmates. We began to get to know each other.

I didn't know how it was done. I knew about the kiss, and what the ways of it were. But she had more experience, and after three dates she led me to a dark beach by the sea, where I had to promise her I would not take advantage of her. And so it was.

The next day she left me. Ahahahahah.

It happened so fast that she was soon with someone else, and then with another one after that. I stopped counting them for the whole year, but I understood one thing: never promise what they ask for — do what they want.

Ferdinando