



NO HUNGER, ALL FAME: A L’ORÉAL LUNCH

The whole morning had gone by working, and what surprised me most were Giorgio's silences — he was watching this version of me very closely, discovering he didn't really know me at all.

Rita the buyer arrived at the restaurant on a motorbike, almost at the same time as us. She took off her helmet and let her long hair fall loose, as if to say: I just came from the hairdresser's, let's see if you like it.

Giorgio started smiling and said: damn it, I knew she'd go and get herself done up for you, you lucky bastard.

What are you talking about, are you out of your mind, I said, trying to cool things down, and we went inside where she picked a table in the corner — private, but not round, deliberately rectangular — and asked me to sit next to her.

Let's drop the formalities, she said, I think we're about the same age — fine by me, but I won't ask you your actual age on record with the city of Catania, that's for the people sitting at the other table.

She burst out laughing, then asked if I was a theater actor. In a way, yes, I said — but my stage is the street.

What do you do for a living? The sorcerer, obviously — what a question! Ha ha ha ha ha ha.

Well, I'll tell you what I really do: I teach men how to make themselves attractive and interesting, so they can find intelligent women — like you — and, if it happens, make them fall in love.

Off to a great start — and what would you call that job?

I'm a priest without a cassock, but with a voice.

Giorgio took over the conversation and said what he'd agreed on with his head office, and I stopped fooling around.

Nobody talked business or sales that day, but I understood one thing: a man is only as good as the mother who made him.

Ferdinando