
PLAYING AT HER TABLE
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The Art of Attraction · 02

The years went by, though not many of them, and during lessons and breaks my classroom was the gym. Between basketball, volleyball and five-a-side football, that is where I spent my time. Whenever a teacher walked into the real classroom and found me there, he worried about what I was doing — but I had only come in for dry clothes, because of the sweat.

I thought I could play and go unnoticed, but by then I already had my motorbike, a Laverda 125. I dressed well, and my mother's purse served me splendidly whenever it held loose change; if the notes had been whole, I would never have touched them. It was the perfect trap.

She took the money from my father while he slept and told me not to say a word, and I took it from her when she wasn't looking. After all, I was a boy named Frega — in Italian, the one who pinches. Ahahahahaha.

One day in the gym a pretty girl came up to me, tall and slim, and started talking. You didn't need an accountant to work out her total.

She invited me to come and see her. She lived twenty kilometres from town, and one afternoon I set off on the motorbike to visit her.

When I arrived, I phoned her house to say I was in the village and that we could meet, but she resisted, trying to persuade me to come to her house and meet the whole family — the dog

included.

I got back on the motorbike and went back where I had come from. The next day she went on the attack, asking me why I hadn't come to her house, and I answered: I wasn't dressed for an official engagement, and I hadn't even brought the rings.

She didn't let go of me for more than two months. Every day, the same question: when are we seeing each other? And every day, the same answer: let's see when my mother is free, so you can meet her.

And she: why?

And I: it's essential that you get along with her. Poor thing, she's in a wheelchair — someone will have to look after her.

When she understood the situation she would be walking into, she never came back. The next day she was gone.

I ran into her a few years later in a supermarket and introduced her to my mother, in splendid shape. Reading between the lines, she asked me what had happened — how she had recovered, how she had healed — and I answered: stem-cell therapy and the magic of women.

My mother looked at me, then smiled and told me I was truly her son, but that sooner or later someone would smooth my fur the right way. What she didn't know was that I changed my fur often, and she would never find the same version of me twice.

Ferdinando