
THE NOTHING I NEEDED
FERDINANDO FREGA

MEN'S GILLETTE, STORY

THE NOTHING I NEEDED

My wife Elisabetta decided to go on holiday with my daughter Giorgia, together with her brother Michele and his wife, Cinzia.

Their destination was a cousin's house in Sicily, where they would spend five days recovering from the stress of everyday life.

Before leaving me alone, apart from the responsibility of looking after my American Labrador, who had once had a girlfriend in Naples and had picked up the local canine accent, they made sure to tell me that the pantry was fully stocked. They also left me fifty euros for any extra daily expenses and made it clear that, when they returned, they expected the house to be in perfect order and not resemble a domestic disaster zone.

Every day they called. Both of them were concerned about the dog. Had he eaten? Had he drunk enough water? Had he gone outside for his walk? Had he done his business? Had he found company?

At some point I suggested they call him directly and let him answer their questions himself, complaints included.

As for me, I received only the occasional calm question from my wife.

'Have you eaten?'

And I would respond with equal calm.

'Yes, my love.'

Ahahahahahahahahah.

Then the day of their return arrived.

Curious beyond measure, they entered the house.

Everything was spotless. The kitchen was immaculate. Not a single dish was out of place.

They were so surprised that they stepped back outside, stood in the hallway, and wondered whether they had entered the wrong apartment.

My sister-in-law, daughter of a senior Carabinieri officer, inspected the crime scene

thoroughly and congratulated me while questioning how such a thing could possibly have happened.

Just when everyone thought the special effects were over, we gathered around the kitchen table and they watched me arrive with the fifty euros in my hand, ready to return them.

Their faces met. Their eyes spoke an entire conversation without a single word.

The question came immediately.

'Didn't you eat?'

And I replied:

'Yes, thank you. At least three times a day. But I knew I needed nothing else. Nothingness was enough for me to live. It was everything I needed.'

I smiled and went for a walk alone.

Because success should never be shared.

It is like ice cream. Everyone recognizes the flavour on their own palate, even when it is the same flavour for everyone.

Ferdinando