



Tommy

‘Welcome Tommy, began kindly Doctor Strauss. I’m so glad to meet you! Why did you come here? I mean... You’ve always refused to see me!’

‘My mommy, I replied, has always advised me to come here as soon as I feel sad and lonely... this is how I feel today.’

‘You’re a good boy Tommy. Your mommy must be very proud of you. Go ahead! Tell me your story.’

His voice, soft and calm, made me feel confident: getting over my shyness, I started relating, choosing my words carefully.

‘Well, yesterday it was my birthday. Maybe the worst day of my whole life... All over the world, children organize parties for their birthday... Yet, I didn’t. I did try, but the other kids ignored me and let me down. You see, I’m not kind of... popular. Anyway I had planned everything: birthday cards were written, the buffet prepared, the room decorated... I spent a lot of time managing my guest list. I invited people I knew best, people I used to trust. And among them was my girlfriend.’

‘What happened then?’

I wished I couldn’t be able to answer... I strongly hoped all that had never happened. Nevertheless, I knew I had to go on; this was supposed to help me, right? My mum told me so.

‘None of them joined me. I didn’t even receive a single phone call.’

I realized at that moment that tears were running on my cheeks. I wanted to go home, to be hugged by my parents’ warm arms. However, Doctor Strauss, breaking the tense silence, didn’t let me rest after the effort.

‘What about the girlfriend you evoked? He asked’

‘Oh, you mean Lily! She is incredibly pretty. You ought to know her Doctor! She is definitely lovely..’

‘Did she join you for your birthday?’

While replying - ‘No’- I found myself glimpsing an unusual expression on Doctor’s face. Something looking like ... relief. Nonetheless, I guessed I must have been mistaken.

I remained delighted a few seconds, remembering the many qualities of my Princess. I could even see her face, her shining big blue eyes, her golden hair...

Suddenly, painful memories were back. My heart was like stabbed by a poisonous knife: she was not in love with me.

‘She’s not actually my girlfriend, I corrected. I’m in love with her for sure, but I doubt it to be the other way round ...’

‘How do you know?’

It was not really Doctor’s curious look but his encouraging smile that gave me the bravery I needed to continue my narration.

‘Valentine’s Day is a beautiful day when you can give your heart, or just some chocolates, to the person you love. You know, when you are in love, you can’t just forget this person: dreaming of her, thinking of her; you would do anything for a small kiss... I believed Valentine’s Day was the perfect occasion to try something. I wanted to be a bit more original than the other guys: I bought a cute princess’ dress, exactly what she needed for her little curved body.

On D-day, as usual I was waiting for Lily in front of the school. I was a bit stressed but... you know... I mean, telling a girl you love her it’s not as easy as drinking a glass of water.... But I had to tell her.

As soon as she reached me, I grabbed her arm to stop her, otherwise she wouldn’t even look at me. But I scared her, my sweet love: she fled ... She fled and my whole life collapsed.’

I paused, taking a breather; Doctor Strauss was waiting.

‘She ran towards a forty-year-old man. He was staring at me from the beginning: for God sake, Doctor, his terrible scornful look gave me chills! I should have run away, as animals do when they hear gunshots ... But I did not.

Pointing at me, it didn’t last long before, sobbing, she began to shout: “That’s hi-him, Daddy! He’s been follo-following me, harassing me for d-days! Please make him disap- -pear, I cannot stand him any-anymore!” “Come on, sweetie, he answered ... Has he TOUCHED you in a strange way?” “Ye-yeah he has ...”

‘Have you? I mean ... have you touched her?’ interrupted Doctor Strauss, his smile imperceptibly fading away.

‘Eh ... eh ... Of course, as I told you, I clutched her arm...’

‘Fine. Go on.’ His voice kept being indulgent but the way he regarded me had changed.

‘Before I could move, he was right in front of me, punching my stomach, my head, my back ... He claimed: “Don’t ever talk to her again! Don’t ever LOOK at her!!! I forbid you, you fucking freak! Once ever again and I’ll beat the crap out of you! Can you hear me little bastard?! I’ll beat you up!”

He left me there, lying on the rough floor, crying. I was craving for some help but people were staring at me. I wished my mommy could come and reassure me... It was not so much the pain than this miserable feeling of betrayal. Why did my Princess lie? Why did she ask her daddy to hurt me, whereas I’ve been the kindest boy ever? Why am I not allowed to fall in love, as the other kids? What have I done to deserve such a punishment?’

For the first time, Doctor Strauss remained silent for a long time. Finally he said coldly and sharply:

‘Please, Mister Tom Adams, listen to me. Miss Lily Brown is eleven years old: you cannot love her.’

‘Why not?’

‘Because you are fifty-two years old. This is not love. This is pedophilia.’

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