

I passed through the rusty iron gates, one step after another, getting closer to the final judgement. The guard escorted me inside the court room. The shimmer of his armour was the first light I had seen in many days. I looked behind and saw the ever growing line of souls. The door closed behind me as I passed through them. One gigantic throne in sight, I started to shiver. I knew that I had seen him before. He was everywhere; he was the face of death.

I looked around the colossal courtroom. A glowing maiden sat beside the foot of the throne, I was sure now the seasons of the underworld and my world clashed, it was winter. And it struck me. The daughter of Demeter, the goddess of harvest, the “abducted daughter” that sat there almost bound to the throne – Persephone [The failed rescue by Hermes doomed her to be bound to the underworld after she was kidnapped by “The face of death” during winters, when the earth was not blossoming.]

It was finally my turn, I got a closer look at the “Man in Black” it was the face of death. His deep voice - the stuff that can give you chills, read in the air “Salvatore, What’s your side?”. I looked around once again, am I dreaming? No. I noticed just a few souls behind Whitney Houston was standing. It was my chance to tell my story- and “this is how it goes”.

Well, the core of my life started when I was a teen, I had just turned fifteen when my father took me into the- “family”. I started off with small jobs, such as cleaning the .22 calibers and even a few Colts, instead of going to school. It was a pity because I was quite smart. Sadly, only my mother supported me. She was a great woman but she committed suicide. Those were the worst two years of my life. Gradually I got more trapped into the folds of the Mafia, it became my passion although I would occasionally look back at what I could have been! Little did I know when I joined the Mafia that I would have to call my father – Godfather.

I was not proud of my father as much I used to be. It was a sentiment that grew over the years. One moment I was a 9 grade, high achiever, the next “Sal the shooter”. By the time I was 18, I realized how important the mafia was in New York and that Vincenzo, my childhood buddy was correct. Since we were five, he would keep on repeating “Privo la mafia, chi siamo diavolo noi?” which, literally translates as “without the mafia, who the hell are we!”, more about his later.

Lets go on to that one job that changed my life. When I turned 21, partly for being the older son, and partly for my amazing skills I had honed over the years, I became a Capo. It was something to be proud about. I had gone to ‘our’ store in Little Italy, to take a look at the accounts. After we shot a couple of guys for tampering with the accounts at the “viva il padrino”[Italian for “long live the godfather”], Vincenzo convinced me to eat at the at the pizzeria. One large, “la tatiyano”, was half over when Vincenzo got a call from the godfather. He had to leave, so I was left half of a 35 inch and ton of thoughts. Just when I started to think about my mother, three old men dressed rather strangely for a chilly autumn day, walked up to my table in silk pink tuxedos. They definitely stood out and it was quite surprising to see them sitdown, as if they knew who I was.

They introduced themselves to me as the founding pillars in my fathers first organization “Malavita”, something that my father had mentioned a couple of times over the years. Tizio, Caio, and Sempronio, rather ordinary Italian names like my own started discussing with me what my father was like in his youth and how similar I looked. Out of the blue, they started talking about my mother.

Almost everyone close knew how furious I would get whenever the topic of my mother was brought up, I found it quite daft. “Son, what do you know about the death of your mother?”, I was shocked “What do you think..(interrupted)..”, Caio interrupted and tried to correct his identical twin Tizio, “We meant do you know how she had passed away?”. “ Yes!, she is my mother afterall, if you know what

I mean, she committed suicide in 1992 for an unknown, or rather unidentifiable reason.” Sempronia, quite boldly says “ You’re wrong son”. With my fists clinched, and trying desperately not to beat the old man up, I reply “What do you mean?”.

“Be not deceived with the first appearance of things, for show is not substance.”

They went on to tell me a story of how my mother was killed. Apparently, my mother did not want me to get involved in the mafia, and concurrently be one of the only ones in the family to pass out of school, something that hurt my father’s ego. So my father, ordered the hit of my mother, using the “house .22” and a few police contacts, simulated the suicide of my mother.

At first I was oblivious to the fact that such a preposterous story could be told about my mother, but after a bit of thinking about the old man’s side, a few things started to fall in place like- the unjustifiable suicide, the gun with “no prints”, and most importantly the negligence and indifference my father showed me during that period. Well, I was not extremely convinced until they showed me a letter. No, not from my mother, but a letter written by my father to a Capo, called Capuchino,

The letter went like this;

Date: 23rd december,1992

To, Capuchino

My dearest Capo, I have one important job for you on this christmas eve. I need you to kill my wife. The job should be done with perfection and the murder should look like a suicide, nothing else will do.

Do oblige.

Francesco.

Those three old men left me speechless and furious. Speechless as they left saying that I would make the ideal Godfather and furious as I could not believe that my father could have done such things and act so innocent- well after all he is the godfather, he can do anything. Who was he to control an innocent child’s life? And that also his own son.

It was time to end the godfather.

The next day I woke up determined to question my father about the atrocities and power. He did not deserve so much power after committing so many sins. A deep desire to rise in the mafia came to the surface. The only problem that persisted for about a week was that I could not think of doing such a thing. Soon then, I had decided that I would go along with someone for support, someone who had been a great friend and partner for years- Vincenzo. The Cosa nostra would change forever.

I decided to go black. I put on my pitch black Armani suit and polished my leather shoes, cleaned my .22 rugher as efficiently as I had 6 years back. I pulled out the Bentley, and hit the gas. The GPS said that the E.T.A was 55 min, I reached brooklyn in 20 minutes after picking Vincenzo who lived at Lafayette. The Bentley always supported me. I Pulled out my .22 and screwed on my silencer and ran up the steps of the Mafia headquarters. I pushed open the heavy metal door of the my father office. It creaked open. Zoop! Zoop! The bullets found there mark.

Vincenzo was still in the car. I took a look at my father again. I saw the bloody reflection of him in pain off the window pane. The image got embedded in my mind. I exited the building all flustered. Vincenzo had only one thing to say "are you done?"

I walked the roads of Battery Park, lost in the thoughts of MY Godfather. It had been only a couple of weeks since it happened. As I approached the Bowling Green station I could not spare to think to about Vincenzo . I haven't had the guts to call him for two weeks now. Climbing down the stairs, those three men in pink tuxedos stop me again. "Sup, man?". I talked to them about the extreme step I had taken, and how Vincenzo had become distant and non-responsive. They had only one thing to say "He knows", It struck me.

I couldn't sleep, eat. It was unbearable. A burden that I could not carry any longer- something comparable to "the Ring" Frodo carried to the mount of doom, only that I was carrying it to my doom. It had been exactly 22 days since my father had been shot in a because of a "clash of interest" between the triads, and us. It was time for the title to pass on. I was summoned into the chamber, where a large set of rules were read out to me, such as " you will act in the favour and only in the favour of the Mafia", to end it I had to scream out one line

"Cosa nostra per sempre" (long live mafia)

People were bowing down all around me. I finally felt complete. Vincenzo, left the Mafia the day I was "Crowned". I still look at his revolver and agonize.

A year went by, I could hardly remember the reflection of my father in that window pane. The Mafia sadly, was tanking. The charisma of THE godfather was missing. I was extremely tired. Salvatore "the unable" godfather was the word on the street. I heard some really hot stuff was developing around Little Italy. There was some business passed away as a drug link between the Bronx and Brooklyn. How can there be a job going on without my notice. It made me angry and I felt like that a lot was going on under me that I did not know about. Cecilio, the only man I had kept after my father reign ended, was responsible for bringing to me all the news around New York. Everything was not like it was anymore.

What on earth had happened to my capos! All of them were busy with jobs that I had apparently given them. It was anarchy – I felt that I had failed the Cosa nostra and I thought everyone else felt the same. It was winter and the Bronx- Brooklyn Job had accelerated beyond my beliefs. It was awkward. People in the big apple stopped talking about the Mafia. Suddenly, I had heard that the godfather was going to be removed, from three men that walked by me. Apparently I had been selfish and was not a apt leader.

"Vincenzo, the ex-right hand man of the present Godfather dies in a Subway accident"- were the headlines on the 26th of december on the front page of the New York Times. I had to do it. He was leading a mass against me in association with Darwis, the "man" in the Bronx. The drug link was actually a plan to overthrow my position. I had nothing left to hide. Cecilio, was the only one I could think of for help.

My father was dead. My best friend was dead. I had killed them. The guilt had hanged over my head like an unsheathed sword. How was it possible that I had ended up with two of my closest relatives dead? A family defines a man. Without my family I was alone, weak, isolated. After walking back home, I had stayed drunk for so many hours. Alcohol was my only support. Nobody could help me now. I had long flown past the line that separated my conscious from sanity. I was going mad. Like a blanket muffling fire – Insomnia was strangling me slowly to death. I knew that everyone was getting suspicious. Cecilio had come to check on me twice. The guards had sent him away. My health was slowly deteriorating, fever soon became common. I was confined to my bed and that was where all the soldiers and all the capos came to meet me. I could see the care in their eyes even though they kept a safe distance away from me. This went on for a month. I had not heard word from Tizio, Caio, and Sempronio.

Then came the time for the great yearly get together. I had to be there. It was important - it had to be a demonstration of my power. I had to know who was plotting against me, what was going on in the outside world. Everyone was going to be there. As I stepped out of the Bentley in my Saville Row Deluxe the guards at the door rushed to help me as soon as they saw my car. It was important for me to maintain my posture correspondent to my power. I declined their help and after stumbling I slowly regained my ability to walk. I dragged myself to the interior. Everybody stood up as I entered. I slowly descended to my throne at the end of the table.

“Please, you must know I’m a little busy. Everyday 250,000 die. I’m immortal but you know, I’m bored.” said Hades.

Okay, I’m sorry. Where was I? Thank you, for breaking my link. Yah, so I was at the dinner and everything was going fine, just when it all started. The seat for Vincenzo was empty until the door opened again and HE WALKED IN. My mind spiralled into confusion. How could he be alive? It was not possible. He was covered in blood. Large gashes spurting blood on his chest and his legs. Clothes smoking but I WAS SURE – It was HIM. I looked around in amazement at the other members around the table. They seemed to remain impervious to his looks, they did not notice him. How were so many things that seemed so impossible happening in this world? He slowly walked to his reserved seat. He was dripping blood. One of his gashed hands fell off from the impact of sitting down. I felt sick. I started breathing heavily, blood drained from my skin. I felt like vomiting. I had never seen something so gross. He looked at me in the eyes and smiled. I stood up and rushed out. Everyone was staring at me in amazement – but I had no time. I had to get some help. As soon as I was out I asked the driver to rush to the nearest Psychologist.

Suddenly just then I saw three people standing in the middle of the road. The car was heading right at them, run over them. I screamed STOP as I recognised them. It was the people who I least expected to see - Tizio, Caio, and Sempronio. The driver was surprised. How could he have not noticed the three strong men on the road? I got out, confronting them. Feeling slightly blinded in front of the headlights I put on the shades from inside the suit. They all started speaking in turns as if repeating a well-rehearsed speech. “You cannot proceed” said Tizio. “You will not proceed” said Caio. “Don’t proceed” said Sempronio. Their challenging tone urging me to pull out my gun. This was not going well. Without asking why I rushed back into the car asking the driver to run over them if they didn’t move aside. He gave me the strange expression again but obeyed nonetheless. THEY were responsible for ruining the natural order of things. THEY were the agents of chaos. THEY had killed my father.

I had a lengthy conversation with the shrink after reaching the nearest hospital. He conducted various experiments – identifying unidentifiable ink blots mostly (typically). He asked me to come again, every Monday. I asked him ‘whether he knew who I was’ to which he replied “No”. I screamed at him in rage “I am the Godfather of the Mafia. I can have 300 people here in less than 10 minutes by one phone call. Don’t waste MY TIME.” He remained calm – trying to hide his growing fear. “I am sorry but preliminary tests show that you have Schizophrenia. Have you been introduced to any new personalities recently?” THAT was when realisation hit me. Only I had seen Tizio, Caio, and Sempronio. Nobody else had. Then I remembered how my driver had stared at me on the road. He must have thought I was crazy. I WAS CRAZY.

On the way back numerous things struck my thoughts. Why did the illusions want me to kill my father? Why? Because somewhere deep down, I wanted to. I wanted my father’s position, his power.

Suicide my only option left. So here I am. In front of you – a malfunction.

“Schizophrenia? HAHAHAHahaha.....puny humans. Your world is an imagination, we, the Gods created you. But we did make some mistakes. It’s sad that someone should suffer so much just from a honest god’s mistake. It’s pitiful”, said Hades.

He continued “And now it’s time for your judgement. Thank you for that detailed insight. I need to be pitiful occasionally. You are subjected to.....”