

"MARINA AND ORAZIO'S WEDDING"

By

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31 July 2021
Acireale, Sicily
Italy

It was a December day when Orazio called me. "Are you at home? Are you sitting down?" he asked. "Yes, why?", I answered. "What happened", I continued. "I have something to tell you". "Who died?" I asked worriedly. "No, no one died. But I'm getting married." "Okay... But why?"

When Orazio informed me that I was to give this speech I shuddered.

Of course, I do it with joy; but those of you who know me know that my lifestyle does not exactly conform to the marital one.

However, the jolt was immediately followed by a sudden realisation: it was 2005 when we both started attending the Galileo Galilei scientific high school in Catania together. Sixteen years ago. That means we have known each other for more than half of our respective lives.

It took a while before we became the friends we are now. But one thing I remember well. I remember a boy - just a kid - who was free of prejudice and who welcomed me as a friend, despite my quirks, with a spirit of understanding and without ever judging.

So, almost suddenly, a space was created where it was possible to be vulnerable, without fear of rejection or derision.

We became deskmates.

Our first love affairs began. Adventures that gradually took the form of a journey; a journey that has brought us here, today.

From improbable charts to the "Spurts of Joy Fun Club" with Alessandro and Gianluca - the latter an undisputed master of life and spiritual guide for us all - we mirrored each other's emotional awareness day after day, joy after joy, anger off anger.

One love after another, our character was being formed; Orazio gradually became the man who would fall in love with Marina and with whom Marina would fall in love.

And I envy Marina a little today. Sometimes I think that I wish it had been me at the altar, instead of her marrying Orazio. But well, you can't have everything. But be on the alert, I might steal him from you for a night.

2013. It all started in 2013. I had been living outside of Sicily for three years. I knew little about Marina, almost nothing. The only thing I knew for sure - partly because it was a repeating cliché, partly because he told me so often - was that Orazio didn't know how to introduce her to me.

There was no recommendation that kept me from being as inappropriate as possible in greeting her the first time we met.

One thing that struck me immediately about her was a trait in her character.

Despite my attempt to make her ruthlessly uncomfortable, she did not get upset, but looked me in the eyes and shook my hand.

That's how I see her today, tenaciously self-confident, composed in her firm manner, grasping my friend's soul to never let go.

And together for eight years - overcoming every difficulty and crisis that life presented them (which coincidentally happened every time I returned to Catania) - they planted the seeds of their happiness together.

There are so many platitudes that could be said at this point; I want to try something different. After all, the fact that they are happy together and that they love each other is there for all to see.

I recently went to visit Marina and Orazio in Brno; I wanted to see them before this day. Pandemic and work have not been on our side for the last few years.

In those two days I was with them I witnessed a rare phenomenon in the world of traditional relationships. A confirmation that silenced all my worries.

I saw, yes, two people who love each other, who collaborate, who support each other, and who esteem and respect each other, and all those other things that are expected of two people who are going to get married soon.

But above all, I saw two people who never lost their identity by confusing it with the couple itself.

I saw a love that was independent, proud, healthy, aware, cautious, but certain of its own direction.

This aware, independent pride in loving that characterises them is precisely what allows me today not to wish them well, but to bet on their happiness.

And if I am wrong - but I am never wrong - the first strip club is on me. For the both of you.