

## Chapter II

### *The Solution by the Violence is an Option*



Of course, if one is the strongest, such option is justified and it's kept as a slogan, but if the forces are similar everything depends of how brave you are.

To be so, consists in facing someone who is stronger.

To face someone, who is similar or weaker, doesn't make you feel like a hero.

I don't recall clearly the first treacherous spanking I received from my aunt Giolanda (a sister of my father's).

But I do remember one which I learnt from, there's always a possibility of self-defence, however big the opponent might be.

At my granny's house, there were lots and lots of flower pots and a sour spinster, everlasting fiancée of somebody who hadn't made up his mind to marry yet. According to my six-year-old sorting out: some were beautiful yellow five litre oil tins with the picture of a duckling or a cook....

The plants were more or less all the same. They were sorted: with and without flowers. Among the first ones: some with pretty flowers and some with no so pretty ones.

The sour and spinster aunt was only one. Sour and spinster caused fear even terror. Above all when her fiancé delayed in coming. As the pinnacle of that show, there was a real flower pot "it was bought", highly decorated and with arabesques, all white with black raised patterns.

It was placed on a tinned flower pot holder with four long legs, too high for such a small kid; my head hardly reached to the first tray; at the middle of the legs a second tray held something green and prickly called "cactus".

It wasn't to be watered. I hated such a deadly structure, because it was my aunt's favourite and because it was very uncomfortable to reach with a bottle to water it; except when it was raining. Once I thought stepping on an armchair to reach it.

But my aunt had one of her tantrums when she discovered the mark of my muddy pump on the cushion; however, after the usual spanking, at six years old something good I got, I mused she was very intelligent because she had noticed it, although I denied it...

I also hated it, because when I watered it from the top, the water came out from the bottom; of course, the pot had a hole... nothing is perfect... and I must confess I gave it too much water as I had read somewhere that the plants got rotten.....And that was what

I wanted to do: to revenge myself from my aunt.

To make things worse, that water from the stop (three full one litre bottles) was falling directly on the prickly cactus (not to be watered) consequently, she saw it immediately, although I had tried to dry the water with the hairdryer.

And once again, the endless amount of bumps on my already full of lumps head.

I transferred my hate from my aunt to the plant. I always put out my tongue, and as it was a creeper falling over the sides, I pulled out the leaves every time I passed by it, imagining I returned to my aunt all her boxing my ears that hurt me so much....

One day I tore some leaves as if they were eaten by ants. It was very funny to see my aunt's face looking for them and throwing poison all around the plants. Luckily, plants don't talk. Now as a grown up I understood that: "...one repeats actively what one suffered passively..."

But one day the plant took revenge against me, or perhaps it wanted to teach me a lesson.... I don't know. I was walking next to it, and as usual I took one of its leaves, pulled it out to cut it... and I couldn't. The plant fell over me and my aunt's sublime flower pot came behind heavily with a load Paff.

Its pieces scattered everywhere, but the plant and soil remained in the middle. Looking at it, I saw it was very beautiful and so innocent or guilty like me for having come to this house. I began to love it, but it was too late.

My love didn't last very much. I heard my aunt's voice and my head began, once again, listening to the echo of that Paff, Paff, from the flower pots. Paff the ceiling of the corridor, Paff the supports, Paff the sky, Paff the clouds, Paff the floor tiles, Paff my little body shaking with fear...until my very wicked aunt appeared waving a belt, the thinnest one (she had always hit me with a wide belt, but her engineer fiancé had taught her that a thinner belt was more painful, once again: science at the service of punishment.)

Seeing her and remembering a film where the Indians attacked to cowboys was the only movement in my frightened head, if they had escaped, well I'd do the same... and I started running in the garden with my fat aunt behind me. Between us there was a piece of cultivated soil that nobody dared to step on.

In was my shelter and my shield.

If she ran one way I'd go along the other, always with that garden in between...But I couldn't do that forever.....She stopped. She changed her sour-lemon countenance, lowered the belt and with a mockingly sweet voice, told me: - "Come immediately, your father allowed me to punish you as much as it's necessary..."

But these reasons didn't satisfy me, and on giving myself up wouldn't minimize the moment of being spanked, but at least I was delaying it.

- "Come immediately, if I catch you it'll be worse", she repeated dragging the words.

The situation was getting worse and worse and it promised an increment of punishment; and she didn't hesitate in carrying on her threats. She enjoyed doing that, meanwhile she shouted insults against my mother. As her fiancé, the engineer, would be coming any moment, and between them, my gambit of escaping in circle wouldn't succeed.....

I hadn't any other solution but giving myself up, though my small cleverness had defeated, for a few minutes, her enormous beastly strength.

I walked towards her in short steps, hesitating, hesitating, seeking for a slight chance of escaping from her claws. But when I was near, she jumped and took me by my hair, raising the belt like San Martin, his curved sword, I had seen in a picture at school and she began beating me...

Each blow burns, surprises, paralyzes...and then following one and another, on another place, that mercifully helps to forget how painful the previous one was, and on and on, until you stop feeling the pulling of your hair considering it like a caress...

At first you resist, but the endless blowing always obliges you to give up, then you turn to cry and shout aloud trying the satisfied beast stops, but it's a mistake, she's so furious that never listens and if she does, gets so excited as if she needs to strike for a long time to be able to calm down.

You are aware of your loneliness, you won't get any help, when suddenly you find your small arms and legs have a head to move them...

I get hold of the belt and twist it round my wrist so she can't tear it off.... but loses it, then hits my face with her fist... I'm not too dizzy: so I can see there's another blow coming; I move my head aside and her hand crashes against a pillar with a dry puff that sounded like a victorious bugle.

She lets me go, and howls furiously it's my fault her hand is getting swollen. My grandmother came. Luckily. She took her to a seat and put her hand in water and salt while she picked up the pieces of the broken flower pot and sent me to the bathroom as a penance...what I felt deeply relieved for, like to be exiled.

I was used to it. In the bathroom I had my routine of games. After so many hours I had spent at penance: the coloured toothbrushes fighting a black toothbrush (my aunt's), the soap spring boarding into the water of the loo, a tiny football with the soap and pieces of toilet paper as goals.

It was the result of long penances, lots of them of a prophylactic character; for instance, when the witch waxed the floors and I didn't stay in my place, going to eat bread in the kitchen and smeared her work, that was the penance.

But I couldn't play that day, due to the injuries. I had my arms, legs and tummy with pink stains...some of them with swollen edges showing little blood drops like a thin mist in a winter night, were the most painful...

I looked at my torn T shirt, what will they say now? That I had torn it my self? Was I guilty or not? I felt tired..... exhausted. I laid down on the bathroom floor and I fell asleep. I dreamt that mother soap walked her baby soaps in the park...

At the following day (I never knew, but I woke up in my own bed) they took me to Sunday Mass. The witch was two places in front of us. She was quiet and very pious. The congregation began singing:

- *"If I have no love, I'm nothing Lord...."* ♪ ♪

Once again, Fate allowed me to revenge; it crossed my mind in a flash.

With all the power of my six-year-old lungs, joining the people and the music I sang:

- *"If I have no love, GIOLANDA, I am Loooooord...."* ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪