

CHAPTER 5 – HIGH ON VIAGRA.

*23 03 2022 Wednesday. Pizza Supreme
dinner at Antonia's house. Tommy and
Anastasia present.*

Meanwhile at the Da Vinci Home in Newark.

"Hey Angelo, it's about 3 weeks since you've seen the doctor. Hope your cholesterol is down."

"Been good Antonia. Feeling better every day."

"Good, I ordered a Pizza Supreme from the Pizza Romana Restaurant."

"Sounds good. Hold on, Hold on. What's in it?"

"All things you like. Bit loaded. But makes you feel good."

"(Grimaces) Got lots of pepperoni?"

"Pepperoni, Italian sausage, onions, olives. I told them to make the topping one half with Quattro Formaggio and few more pepperoni especially for you, the way you like it."

"Wow!"

"I think the bitch is trying to kill me." (Mutters under his breath.)

"Tommy is coming too with some brunette. Not Italian."

"Down at the table in an hour."

"That's good because I have a business meeting at 8.30."

"Right O."

Angelo comes down. Goes to Antonia. Puts his arm around her and gives her a kiss on the neck. Been long time. (Thinking to herself ... He smells good. What's going on?)

"You smell gorgeous. What's up?"

"Oh things are looking good. Really good. Meeting the CEO of some construction company. They are interested in some dirt block we have on our books. He's bringing his secretary to take some notes down. So I thought I make myself more presentable."

"You're certainly looking the part."

Doorbell rings. Tommy arrives with his date.

"Hi mum, Hi dad. This is Anastasia."

"Anastasia this is my mum Antonia. My dad Angelo."

Both Antonia and Angelo greet her with a smile and a hello. Antonia is curious.

“Anastasia. Nice chime to it? Greek?”

“No. Russian.”

“You’re not a spy are you?”

“No. No. No. I am just a simple secretary.”

“Only joking. I thought I could use that one though.”

(And grins looking at Angelo). Angelo reciprocates with a grin. (Pauses)

“God, whatever it is, don’t work for Tommy and certainly not for him.”
(And laughs).

The doorbell rings again and a huge pizza is delivered.

“Quattro Formaggio for Papa. A more delicate piece for Anastasia. Another for myself. The rest for Tommy. He is big, strong and healthy and can handle it. Right Tommy.”

“Right On. Mum.”

“Do tell us something about yourself, your family, whatever.”

“My parents came here 40 years ago from the Ukraine. My father works as labourer. Fork Lift Truck. Warehouse in New York. My mum is in the translation business. English to Russian. Russian to English. I went to public school. Loved dancing but could not make it as a ballerina. I did some modelling but now I do secretarial while waiting for a break and get a career in modelling.”

“That’s good Anastasia. You got to try new things. Our parents’ background has been hard. We’re from Italian immigrants. But Tommy’s hamburgers won’t help you.”

Anastasia smiles politely.

“Yes, Tommy told me so much about his upbringing. All good. It’s a shame about Peppino.”

Angelo nods and gets up. His mind is elsewhere.

“Okay I got to go. Nice meeting you Anastasia. Tommy.”

Walks to Antonia. Kisses her on the forehead. And leaves.

“Your dad is getting very romantic the last few days. Two kisses in one hour.”

“Is that good or bad?”

“Who knows?”

“So how’s business Tommy. Dad never discusses anything. Always been like that.”

“Yes fine, we’re doing good. But expenses are up. Let’s see how we do this year. We certainly getting more traffic at the main restaurant.”

“Listen, I don’t want to keep you. I know you must have other plans for the night. So feel free to check out whenever you feel comfortable.”

“Thanks mum. We better make a move then. Off to the cinemas see what’s on.”

They all get up and walk to the door. Anastasia hugs Antonia.

“Thank you so much Mrs. Da Vinci. Very nice meeting you and Angelo. I’ll take care of Tommy.”

Antonia hugs Tommy, kisses him and all wave good-bye. She closes the door. Walks to the dining room. Sits down. Pensive.

She thinks aloud. I wonder what he is up to. Kisses, hugs, perfume, late meetings? It doesn’t, make sense.

*23 03 2022 Wednesday. Chapter 5
Section Break*

*Antonia Finds Viagra tablets in Angelo’s
bathroom.*

She walks upstairs to his bedroom. Looks around. Nothing unusual that captures her imagination. Goes to the wardrobe and opens it. Checks the drawers. Finds a couple of new Canili shirts and new YSL underpants. He normally does his own laundry through his dry cleaners in Newark. But these underpants have not even been used. Labels are still attached. Not the cheap variety either.

“The son-of-bitch”, she mutters under her breath.

Closes the wardrobe. She goes to the bathroom to check what’s in the cabinet. But it’s locked. Why would he lock the cabinet? Must be hiding something. You don’t have to be a Columbo to figure it out. She knew he would hide the key somewhere discreet. She eventually finds the key hidden right behind the base of the toilet bowl. Opens the cabinet. Wow, besides his medication she sees a bottle of Hugo Boss perfume, and a little bottle of pills marked Sildenafil. That’s Viagra all right.

“The fucker! Bastard! Some business meeting huh. He’ll get the deal of the century with all this shit.”

Sildenafil Pills. 30 in the bottle. She decided on some mental calculations. Takes the bottle in her bedroom. Empties the bottle on the bedspread and counts. 27. Must have used 3 since he has been to the doctor. Two nights he has been late, real late. That’s two. One for tonight? That’s three. Puts pills back in bottle and in cabinet. Locks the cabinet and places the key back where she found it ... behind the toilet bowl. And ponders what to do next.

Don’t get angry get even. What’s good for the goose is good for the gander.

She goes back in his wardrobe and goes through his working suits and pants one by one looking for receipts. Finally she finds a receipt in back pocket of his suit pants. It was for the perfume showing the 2nd March, the day after his doctor’s appointment. Few hundred dollars. She makes a photo copy of it. Puts it back in his suit pants pocket.

She pulls out the wedding album and inserts the photocopy in between one of the pages but wedged behind his most favourite photo and almost completely hidden. Puts the album back. I want to see his face when he finds it, she thought.

Okay, so now what. She decides to sleep on it.

23 03 2022 Wednesday. Chapter 5
Section Break

Angelo goes on a date with Bessima.

Upon leaving his house, Angelo makes a call to Bessima.

"Bess, this is Angelo."

"Yes I know."

"I am running one hour late. My wife set up dinner with Tommy and his girlfriend so I am delayed. I'll pick you up at in 45 minutes or so."

"Okay."

He books in a hotel. A single room. He was concerned about the bloating after eating that pizza. Wind was building up. He could not hold them back. Luckily he goes to the bathroom and does his duty. Showers. The smell of garlic was killing him. Cleans his teeth thoroughly to get rid of the smell. He realizes his new perfume is gone. Splashed himself with the gratis 'eau de toilette'. Drives away in a hurry. Calls Bessima.

"Bessima, Angelo. I am parked outside. When you're ready."

"Will be there in a minute."

She walks to the car.

"Wow you're looking like a piece of art. I like that dress. You're going to kill me ... just with your looks."

"Tell me when it gets too much."

"Listen I was thinking of going to a little restaurant, have some wine and cheese and listen to a bit of jazz. You're in perfect shape. What you think?"

"Whatever pleases you Angelo."

Drives to a place called The Jazz Hideout. They wait to be seated.

"Table for two please waiter. That one in the corner."

"Bit dark over there sir."

"No. Perfect. And quiet."

“So, how you doing at the studio?”

“Really good. Interesting projects. Pay is not great. Been cutting down a bit. I could not keep up with the number of bills.”

“So I hear.”

“4 Fingers gave me some cash but it’s going to be tough. Credit cards got wiped out.”

“It’s all sorted out. Things going to be okay. Money should be in your account by now.”

“Yes it is. It’s there. I want to thank you so much. I will be careful.”

“Bess, we have a good thing going. But money is not finite. You need to manage your expenses better.”

“I’ll try.”

“Give your fashion wear, shoes, whatever a little break. You got plenty of pretty clothes already.”

“I have been thinking about that, I agree.”

“The expenses have shot up.”

The waiter places the cheese platter on the table. They start on their nibbles.

“Our business is finding it difficult to fund you at this rate.”

“I am not a good manager of money.”

“You can do better. You are an Innovator.”

“Really?”

“Yeah I mean it. You’re in the creative business. You can help yourself improve, certain qualities I must add.”

“That’s very true Angelo. I quite like that word ‘Innovator’.”

“Spot on. Bess. I am using it more often these days to motivate people. It’s getting a bit late. Why don’t we make a move. I have a little hotel room booked for to-night. It’s up the road.”

“How come Angelo. I thought you want to cut expenses.”

“True. I was embarrassed. Antonia had Tommy at the house tonight with his date. She ordered this massive Pizza Supreme full of garlic and pepperoni and cheese. I had to go and freshen myself after such extravaganza.”

“Oh Angelo, thank you for being so considerate. Garlic smell does not always agree with me I must say.”

They walk in the hotel, check in, pick the key and go to their room. Angelo takes his jacket off and drops on the bed lying down and looking at the view outside.

“Bess, could you please dim the lights. I am going to enjoy this beautiful sparkling city on such a glorious night.”

He catches a glimpse of Bessima in the reflection from the window as she undresses showing plenty of decor.

“Oh Bessima I can see your reflection in the window. As if you are descending from the heavens above. Ah you’re another one of those stars twinkling and shining out there. But you’re the best. Suprema. Meaning the ‘Best’ in Italian.”

The effect of the Viagra seems to be working fine. All the signs are positive and pointing up. It even added to his creative thoughts expressed with the smoothest of words. Truly a Supremo and Innovator he thought yet again. Bessima comes and thanks him.

“Angelo, I am really obliged and indebted to you. I don’t know how to thank you enough. Your words are like music. Creative poetry. The smoothest I have ever heard.”

“You really think so?”

“Yes I do. As smooth as my body. Just feel the smoothness – top to bottom. It’s like silk Angelo.”

She leans forward on the bed adjusting the pillows. With all the curtains raised, moved out of the way and in full view he reaches out and it all happens. He thinks this time the Viagra is doing a fine job. Better than the previous times. But then he lies on the bed with his eyes popping out trying to catch his breath.

“Are you okay Angelo?”

“Yeah I am fine” he says in a subdued voice.

“Too good to be true. Bess did I tell you that I have used Viagra.”

“No. But I have to say I was rather surprised with your ... em ... enthusiasm, still rather gentle I thought. 10 out of 10. So good luck Viagra.”

“It’s like a drug. It takes you up and pulls you down. Except it can put you six feet under, if you know what I mean.”

“Look, Angelo I don’t want you to kill yourself. You have a family and business. Take it easy.”

“Yeah.”

"Just being friends will do. Platonic relationship maybe. I am not sure I mentioned, but I do have a boyfriend. Steady. 3 years."

"I see. Do you intend to get married?"

"One day. If we save enough money."

"Nationality? Job?"

"German origin. Runs a small trucking company for his father. Upstate New York."

"How old?"

"30."

"Right age for a couple."

"At that age everything is effortless."

"Angelo, I don't want any harm to come to you."

"A platonic approach is appropriate. I will be able to tell Dieter about us. That's his name. And I am sure he won't mind."

"Okay, we'll see. I am feeling a bit dizzy. But I'll survive. Let's take a nap together here. The suite is all paid for till tomorrow. Nice breakfast in the morning. Call it late breakfast."

He chuckles.

The lights go off. At 6 in the morning. Angelo wakes up. His angel is still asleep. He feels re-invigorated. His spirit says "Yes You Can". His Head says "No No No". Goes in the shower. Like a good Italian, he starts with his repertoire of Volare. He thinks he looks as good as Domenico Modugno did at his age.

He changes the original words. Volare Yes You Can. Sforzare No No No No. He gets out of the shower. Puts the robe on. And stands by the window staring at the outside. In the meantime, Bessima wakes up, gets out of the bed and heads for the shower herself.

Breakfast is served. A dark mood descends. Not a word is exchanged. Maybe he is not such a Supremo after all. Ready to leave. They walk to the Desk. He pays the bill and both leave. Drives Bessima to her unit.

And he starts singing again in Spanish this time, like Iglesias.

"Bessame Bessame Mucho"

This is going to be the last one. He is getting too sentimental. Bessima walks quietly out of the car. Not even one kiss.

“Angelo, I will wait for your call.”

“I will be in touch.”

He drives home. It is seven in the morning. Antonia is waiting.

“What fucken time you call this?”

“Antonia, don’t fucken start. I am in a bad mood. The fucken deal is off. I was banking on a big one, close to a million. You understand?”

He looked suicidal.

“What you think of Anastasia? Nice girl? Good for Tommy?”

“Does it matter? Prefer if she was Italian. That’s all. Then she’ll understand our customs.”

“Fuck you and your customs.”

Antonia goes back to bed.

Angelo goes in the bathroom, takes out the Viagra bottle and empties all its contents in the toilet and promptly flushes the loo. He presses the cistern button with anger. It was pushed so hard that it got stuck.

It promptly woke Antonia up who watered it down with some colourful comments that can’t even be mentioned here. He replied in kind.

He said to himself, ‘Good Riddance’. He places the empty container in his suitcase. And goes straight in bed without even crossing himself. His mind was clear and ready for a change and slept like a baby.

*25 03 2022 Friday. Chapter 5 Section
Break*

*4 Fingers tells Giacomo to go ahead and
start on the plan. Giacomo sees Ivan for
a hacking job.*

“Angelo, this is Sonnerfeld. All finance is in place. Paper work done. You can call 4 Fingers.”

Angelo calls 4 Fingers.

“Johnny. Tell Giacomo to go ahead and get us that London Dealership.”

“You got it Guv.”

4 Fingers telephones Giacomo.

“Pronto.”

“Giacomo. We got the money and your cash. Your pilot Francesco will bring it on his next flight out of JFK. Get it going please. Find us the right company. Make Angelo happy.”

“Right away.”

“Grazie.”

Giacomo puts the phone down, gets in the car. Drives to an undisclosed warehouse in a Rome suburb 15 kilometers from the Rome Train Station. It's derelict. Seemingly suspicious mechanics work on vehicles on the ground floor. They briefly exchange greetings.

Giacomo goes straight to the lift. Up to the top floor, Floor 3. Clean offices are erected on this floor. Heavily secured with lots of electronic gadgetry. Gets a paper out and punches in a lot of numbers. Walks in through glass doors using a second set of digital codes. Greets the person looking at 4 different monitors. Pages of Information appear to move like waterfalls on the screens. Ivan was heavily bearded with glasses. Looked like a nerd. No tattoos. Very approachable. Possibly from the Eastern Bloc.

“Hi Ivan.”

“Eh Giacomo. How are you? Expected you yesterday.”

“Just got the papers We already discussed.”

“Yeah yeah. No problem. You already sent me the specification before I gave you the estimate.”

“The cash will be in your account in a couple of days. Like the cash, Ivan, the result must be perfect and swift. Big boss in New York.”

“Huh. One of them. I have to get into or hack the Department of Transport in London, Company Register, Taxation Department, many sources. I hope your customer understands.”

“He does but he needs to move fast. Ok. I’m on the way out.”

“Giacomo. No problem.”

“When will you call me?”

“End of the week. We still need some female assistants. But I got it covered. Make it Friday 1st April.”

“Ciao.”
