

# JOB OFFER

written by

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**Indoors - Alessandro's apartment - morning**

*Alessandro is laying on his sofa, which is also his bed, in a shabby apartment: everything around him is dirt and squalor. He hasn't cleaned, nor tidied up in months, since the time he lost his job and was dumped by his wife, who took their kid as well. We see pictures of them in the flat. His appearance reflects his state of mind: long beard, dirty hair and clothes.*

*Alessandro is evidently depressed, lights up a cigarette, looks at his family's pictures and strokes it. He keeps the cigarette between his lips but has no energy to smoke it. He just reviews that day over and over..*

**Flashback**

*Charlotte is packing her belongings.,  
Alessandro, heartbroken, stands at the doorway, trying to stop her.*

**Alessandro**

*(voice trembling)*

Please... don't do this. Let's talk! We can sort it out. We can get back on our feet if we stick together, please don't go!

**Charlotte**

*(coldly, without looking at him)*

This is no life, Ale. You promised me the world, and now we're drowning. I can't stay here, trapped in your failure!

**Alessandro**

*(steps closer)*

Failure? Is that all I am to you now? I built everything for us! Every risk I took, every sleepless night...it was for you. For our child!

**Charlotte**

*(turns sharply)*

And now it's all gone! The businesses, the house, the dinners... the life I gave up everything for. You don't understand, I can't live like this!

**Alessandro**

*(pleading)*

I don't care about the house or the money. I'll build it all again, from scratch if I have to. Just stay. Stay and trust me, believe in me like you used to.

**Charlotte**

*(pauses, her voice softens briefly)*

I did believe in you. But love doesn't pay the bills! And faith won't fix this mess.

I have to think about our child... and myself.

**Alessandro**

*(tearfully)*

Do you even love me anymore? Or was it always just the life that I gave you?

**Charlotte**

*(silent, avoiding his eyes)*

I don't know Ale. Maybe I loved the man you used to be.

**Alessandro**

*(desperate)*

That man is still here! He's standing right in front of you, begging you not to leave.

I don't care how far I've fallen. I'll climb back up, for you, for us. Just don't walk away.

**Charlotte**

*(softens, but resolute)*

I'm sorry. I need more than promises now. Goodbye.

*She picks up her suitcase and leaves. The husband collapses onto the couch, staring at the door she just closed behind her.*

**Flashback fades - Indoor - Alessandro's apartment - morning**

*Alessandro slumps over the table, a half-empty bottle in his hand, drowning in a sea of alcohol and despair. His eyes are glazed, but the pain beneath them is unmistakable. On the table, the knife he used to slice salami gleams faintly, catching his attention. He reaches for it slowly, his hand trembling. Lifting the blade, he stares at it, a storm of desire and hopelessness swirling in his tear-filled eyes. The room is silent except for his shallow, uneven breaths.*

*Alessandro presses the knife to his wrist, his grip tightening. Time seems to freeze. Then, as if drawn by some invisible force, his gaze shifts—landing on a framed photo nearby. His wife, Charlotte, and daughter, Eleonora, beam back at him from a moment of pure, unfiltered happiness. The image pierces through his fog. He freezes, the knife trembling in his hand. Tears stream down his face as he stares at the photo, the weight of their love pulling him back from the edge.*

*With a broken cry, Alessandro throws the knife across the room. It clatters to the floor as he collapses onto the sofa, his body wracked with sobs. The photo remains on the table, a silent reminder of the light that still flickers in his darkest hour.*

**Indoors - Alessandro's apartment - night**

*Alessandro is sitting on his sofa, staring at the TV with a blank expression. He has no interest for what the TV shows. The TV volume is very loud, some neighbours knock on the wall and shout for him to lower the volume, but Alessandro is completely absent minded. Several bottles of alcoholic drinks and cigarettes surround him.*

**Neighbours**

Hey! Turn it down! It's not a fucking club! Hey, you prick! I'm calling the cops!

**Indoors - Alessandro's apartment - following day - morning**

*Alessandro goes to the bathroom and whilst going for the toilet takes a quick glance at himself in the dusty mirror. He suddenly stops, with his forearm removes the dust from the mirror to better look at himself: he's got big and dark eye circles, long untidy beard; he looks horrible. He is shocked at the sight of himself looking much older than he actually is.*

**Alessandro**

What the fuck! What are you doing?

*He goes back to the room, one picture on the wall captures his attention, a memory:*

*in the terrace of their house, his wife Charlotte is wearing an elegant dress, her hair cascading down, holding a glass of champagne.*

**Flashback****Alessandro**

*(laughing as he leans on the railing)*

You know, when I first saw you in that crowded room, I thought there was no way someone like you would ever look twice at me.

**Charlotte**

*(smirking, swirling her champagne)*

Oh, please. You were the most confident man in that room, acting like you owned the place. How could I not notice?

**Alessandro**

*(grinning)*

I didn't own it though. Not even close. But you made me feel like I could.

**Charlotte***(leaning closer, her voice soft)*

That's because you had something all those other men didn't. You didn't just talk about what you had; you talked about what you dreamed of. You made me believe in something bigger. That's why I chose you.

**Alessandro***(taking her hand, his voice tender)*

And you made me believe in myself. You walked into my life and turned everything upside down. You didn't just make me dream, you made me want to make every dream come true... for you.

**Charlotte***(smiling, teasingly)*

Well, you've done a pretty good job so far, Mr. Dream Maker.

**Alessandro***(kissing her hand, his tone serious)*

I'm not done yet. I'll never be done. You're my dream, Charlotte. Everything else is just extra.

**Charlotte***(touched, leaning her head on his shoulder)*

Don't ever stop saying things like that. You make me feel like I'm the center of the universe.

**Alessandro***(whispering)*

You are. Always will be.

**Flashback fades - Indoors - Alessandro's apartment - morning**

*Alessandro snaps back to the present, tears streaming down his face.*

*He grips the photo tighter.*

**Alessandro***(to himself, resolute)*

I made her believe in me once. I'll do it again. I'm not giving up on her. Not now. Not ever.

*His expression suddenly changes to a sort of determination to make things better. He looks for his wallet: for coins. The wallet is empty. In a fit of anger Alessandro throws everything off the table. He keeps on searching erratically in all corners of the flat: under the chairs, sofa, clothes, ashtrays, cans etc. Hoping to find some coins.*

*He finally finds enough coins to buy what he wanted: a newspaper. Alessandro goes out and comes back with a brand newspaper under his arm.*

*He scrolls down all job offers, several minutes pass but he can't find anything suitable. Frustrated, he throws the newspaper and gets back to his sofa.*

*The following day, whilst looking for another beer or anything alcoholic, he suddenly glances at the newspaper laying on the floor, and a job offer captures his attention:*

*" Male housekeeper needed - part time - weekends only - 4 hours per day - €1000 per week"*

**Alessandro**

What? A thousand per week? Just to clean the house???  
I'm gonna call!

*He tries to call with his phone but a voice says: " you don't have enough credit to make this call". He then decides to visit his best friend David.*

**Alessandro**

Cazzo! And now?  
David! He can help me.

*Alessandro goes for the wardrobe, but realizes that nothing is clean.*

*Clothes are piled up all around his flat, and very smelly.*

**Alessandro**

Fuck fuck fuck!  
David!

*He goes out, heading towards David's apartment.*

**At the door of David's apartment**

*Alessandro knocks at David's apartment door.*

*The sound of a soccer match plays faintly on the TV. David, barefoot in sweatpants and a hoodie, is pouring coffee in the kitchen when there's a loud knock at the door. He opens it to find Alessandro, disheveled, with an overgrown beard and desperation in his eyes.*

**Alessandro**

Hi Dave, sorry to bother, but I really need your help!

**David**

Do we know each other?

**Alessandro**

Dave I'm Alessandro!

**David**

*(staring, stunned)*

Ale? What the fuck? Man, you look like hell. What happened to you?  
Come in!

**Alessandro**

*(brushing past him into the apartment)*

I don't have time to explain. I need to make a call, can I borrow  
your mobile?

**David**

Yes sure. Here!

*David hands his mobile over to Alessandro, who dials the number  
and calls.*

**Alessandro**

Hello, I'm calling for the job offer, I'm interested, is it still  
available?

Great!

Trovati, Alessandro Trovati!

Yes, and the address? 4:30pm? Johnson's. Yes, I'll be there!

*Back to David*

**Alessandro**

Dave, I need a suit! Anything decent.  
You still have that old closet full of clothes?

**David**

*(closing the door, bewildered)*

A suit? You burst in here looking like a stray dog, and all you  
can say is 'I need a suit'?  
Start talking man! Where the hell have you been? It's been, what...  
a year?

**Alessandro**

*(pacing, voice strained)*

Eight months. Look, I'll explain later, I promise. Right now, I  
have an interview this afternoon, and I can't show up looking like  
this.

Please, Dave, do you have something or not?

**David**

*(crossing his arms, leaning against the wall)*

You're telling me you disappeared for eight months, you show up  
out of the blue like some vagabond, and now you need me to play  
dress-up? What is going on?

You owe me at least that much.

**Alessandro**

*(pauses, running a hand through his hair, eyes softening)*  
 I lost everything, Dave. The business, the house, Charlotte... she  
     left, took our daughter.  
 I didn't know how to face anyone. Not even you.

**David**

*(his expression shifts to concern, the sarcasm fading)*  
 Jesus, Ale... why didn't you call? You didn't have to go through all  
     that alone.

**Alessandro**

*(shaking his head, voice cracking)*  
 I didn't want to drag anyone down with me. But I'm trying to get  
 back up now, alright? This interview...this is my shot. My only  
     shot. So, please... do you have a suit or not?

**David**

*(studies him for a moment, then sighs deeply)*  
 Of course I do. You think I'd let you show up to an interview  
     looking like that?

*David disappears into his bedroom. Alessandro leans against the  
 wall, exhaling shakily. David returns moments later, holding a  
 proper suit.*

**David**

*(handing it over)*  
 Here. Should fit you. And take these.  
*(tosses a razor and shaving cream onto the table)*  
 You're not going anywhere with that mess on your face!

**Alessandro**

*(taking the suit, his voice thick)*  
 Thank you, Dave. I'll pay you back. I swear.

**David**

*(grinning, clapping him on the back)*  
 Shut up and get ready. You can tell me everything over a beer  
     after you get that job.  
     And, Ale...  
*(his tone softens)*  
 Don't disappear again, alright? Some of us actually missed you.



**Interview day - Outdoors - Johnson's house - Afternoon**

*The Sat-Nav takes Alessandro to a castle. He thinks the address is wrong.*

**Alessandro**

What's this? Is it a joke? The address is correct.

I knew it! Someone's fucking with me!

Funny...very funny!

I'll ring anyway.

*Nonetheless goes to the main door and rings the bell (maybe inside there's someone knowing the Johnson's family, and their address). Sandra, the maid, opens.*

**Sandra**

*(grinning broadly, hands on her hips)*

Are you Mr. Trovati? Here for the job position?

**Alessandro**

*(quite shocked, adjusting his tie, flashing a confident smile)*

That's...that's right.

**Sandra**

*(stepping aside dramatically and gesturing him in)*

Well then, come on in, Mr. Trovati. Madam is waiting for you... and she hates waiting.

The last guy didn't even get to meet her as he was 5 minutes late!

You know what?

**Alessandro**

What?

**Sandra**

She is always late! One can wait for two hours or more, or she might not even show up!

But don't tell anyone I told you this.

**Alessandro**

I won't!

**Indoors - Castle - Corridor**

*The door swings shut with a satisfying thud as Alessandro steps into a long, opulent corridor. Glistening chandeliers hang from the ceiling, and the marble floors gleam like freshly polished mirrors. Sandra leads the way with a bouncy stride, her chatter filling the silence.*

**Sandra**

*(turning to him with a conspiratorial whisper)*

You look nervous. Don't worry, everyone is. Madam likes to test people.

**Alessandro**

I'm not nervous. Test?  
*(with a worried expression)*

**Sandra**

*(with a dramatic shiver)*  
 Oh yes, Madam is terrifyingly clever.  
 One wrong word, and she'll know everything about you.

*(She leans in closer, glancing at him from head to toe)*  
 By the way, do you always wear that much cologne?  
 Or is this some kind of 'first impressions' strategy?

**Alessandro**

*(frowning, clearly annoyed)*  
 It's not that much.

**Sandra**

*(sniffing theatrically, wrinkling her nose)*  
 Could've fooled me! But hey, at least it's not as bad as Mr.  
 Johnson's aftershave.  
 Smells like... burnt toast!  
*(Sandra covers her mouth so as not to show a big laugh)*

*They pass by an open study. Inside, an old and tall man stands near a mahogany desk, speaking curtly on the phone. One of his eyes is hidden behind a black eyepatch, giving him a mysterious air.*

**Sandra**

*(leaning toward Alessandro, voice dropping to a whisper)*  
 Oh that's Mr Johnson by the way, the Lord of the house.  
 But he is not the real boss, she is!

**Alessandro**

Who?

**Sandra**

The Madam. She makes all the important decisions!

**Alessandro**

*(glancing briefly, trying not to stare)*  
 The eyepatch...is it a war injury?

**Sandra**

*(rolling her eyes dramatically)*  
 Oh, I wish! It's from an accident. His aim is as good as my cooking, and trust me, you don't want to taste my cooking.

**Alessandro***(with a faint smirk)*

I'll take your word for it.

**Sandra***(nodding solemnly)*

Smart man! You know, speaking of aim...there's a rumor that he once tried to swat a fly and knocked over a thousand-dollar vase instead. But don't tell him I said that.

**Alessandro**

I won't.

**Sandra**

I mean it!

**Alessandro**

I won't! Promised!

**Sandra**

*(She glances over her shoulder dramatically, as if checking for eavesdroppers)*

He might pretend to be the strong, the silent type, but his hearing is sharp as a hawk's.

He probably listens through doors when he's bored.

If you ever hear the floors creak when they shouldn't, it's probably him. Or the ghost.

**Alessandro***(groaning quietly)*

The ghost? Really?

**Sandra***(grinning impishly)*

Oh, didn't I mention? This place is haunted. But don't let that bother you, most of the spirits are friendly. Probably.

*They walk further down the corridor, Alessandro growing more intrigued and slightly apprehensive, with every step.*

**Sandra**

Well, here we are. Good luck, Mr. Trovati. You'll need it.

*(She pauses, leaning closer for one last cheeky remark)*

Oh, and if she mentions the wallpaper in her study, agree with whatever she says.

Trust me on this one.

**Alessandro**

*(rolling his eyes, muttering under his breath)*  
Noted.

*(She knocks briskly on the door before swinging it open, her grin widening)*

**Sandra**

Madam, your candidate has arrived!

**The Salon**

*Alessandro and the maid step into a grand, sunlit salon. The room is impeccably decorated, with intricate moldings on the high ceilings and luxurious furnishings. At the center of it all, an elegant Mrs. Johnson, a lady in her 50s, sits gracefully at a small table, sipping tea from a delicate porcelain cup. She exudes an air of charm and authority, her piercing gaze softening into a welcoming smile as they enter.*

**Mrs. Johnson**

*(setting her teacup down, her voice warm and melodic)*  
Ah, there you are! Please, come in. Take a seat. Welcome to my home.  
Would you like some tea?

**Alessandro**

*(sitting carefully, trying to match her composure)*  
Yes, please. Thank you, Madam.

**Mrs. Johnson**

*(gestures towards Sandra)*  
Sandra please.

**Sandra**

Right away!

*Sandra promptly pours him a cup, her grin never fading as she sneaks a glance at Alessandro, clearly amused by his slightly stiff posture.*

**Mrs. Johnson**

*(to Sandra)*  
Thanks dear.  
*(leaning forward slightly, studying him with interest)*  
You look fit and strong! That's excellent. The job is very simple, really.

*She gestures elegantly around the room, as though presenting a vast, untamed wilderness.*

**Mrs. Johnson**

As you can see, my house is a disaster. An absolute mess! I just need someone to clean here and there, wherever it's needed. My dear Sandra here will show you the ropes.

**Alessandro**

*(brows furrowing slightly as he looks around)*  
Uh... of course, Madam.

*His eyes sweep the room. The house isn't just clean, it's pristine.*

*Not a speck of dust dares linger on the shiny surfaces, and the room smells faintly of lavender. He is utterly perplexed but wisely keeps his thoughts to himself.*

**Alessandro**

*(with enthusiasm, masking his confusion)*  
Don't worry, Madam, your place will be spotless!

**Mrs. Johnson**

*(clapping her hands together softly, her expression lighting up):*  
Perfect! I like your energy. Let's start on Saturday at 10 am, shall we?

**Alessandro**

*(nodding eagerly)*  
Absolutely, Madam. I'll be here.

**Sandra**

*(leaning toward him with a sly whisper as Mrs. Johnson sips her tea)*

Better bring your best broom. She hates lazy cleaners.

**Mrs. Johnson**

*(rising gracefully from her chair):*  
Sandra, dear, show Mr. Trovati out. And...welcome to the family Alessandro!

*As Alessandro stands to leave, Sandra motions for him to follow. Once they are back in the corridor, her playful tone returns.*

**Sandra**

*(grinning mischievously)*  
So... think you're ready for this place?

**Alessandro**

*(chuckling nervously)*  
I guess I'll find out.

*They reach the front door, and Sandra winks before opening it.*

**Sandra**

See you soon, Mr. Trovati.

*As the door closes behind him, Alessandro glances back at the imposing place, wondering just what he's gotten himself into. He strides out through the ornate gates, his face a mix of elation and disbelief.*

**Alessandro**

*(thinking to himself)*

*Not heavy lifting, a sparkling house, and great pay!  
What's the catch?*

*He pauses mid-step, glancing back at the villa. For a brief moment, a gnawing suspicion flickers in his mind, but he quickly shakes it off.*

**Alessandro**

*(murmuring, smiling to himself)*

*A job is a job. I'll be back Saturday.*

**Saturday morning - Indoors, Castle**

*Dressed in the standard maid uniform, Alessandro scrubs and dusts with exaggerated determination. The house, which already gleams like a showroom, leaves little for him to clean. Meanwhile, the Lady sips tea at the table, a serene picture of elegance. Across the room, Mr. Johnson paces back and forth, barking into his phone.*

*His tall figure and eyepatch add an air of authority that commands the room.*

**Mr. Johnson**

*(sternly into the phone)*

*I want everything ready on my desk first thing in the morning.*

*It's a six-million deal, no mistakes! Do you understand?*

*Alessandro, dusting a polished cabinet, glances up at the mention of such a sum. He furrows his brow, trying to imagine the kind of life where such deals are routine.*

**Mr. Johnson**

*(irritated, into the phone)*

*Exactly. And don't-*

*He halts mid-sentence, his gaze locking onto Alessandro, who is trying, too obviously, to busy himself with the already spotless cabinet.*

**Mr. Johnson**

You!

*Alessandro flinches, turning awkwardly to face him.*

**Alessandro**

Sir?

**Mr. Johnson**

*(calm, but with an edge):*

How long have you been working here?

**Alessandro**

*(stammering)*

T-Today's my first day, sir.

*Mr. Johnson's expression sharpens, his single eye narrowing as if Alessandro's answer confirms a suspicion.*

**Mr. Johnson**

First day, hmm? Interesting.

*He takes a step closer, studying Alessandro with unnerving intensity.*

**Mr. Johnson**

You're... thorough. That's good. I value thoroughness.

But don't let it make you... curious. Understand?

*Alessandro nods, his throat dry.*

**Alessandro**

Y-Yes, sir.

*Mr. Johnson's mouth twitches, almost forming a smirk. He glances toward his wife, who watches the exchange with detached amusement, then strides toward his private study. Before entering, he pauses.*

**Mr. Johnson**

*(without looking back)*

We'll see how long you last.

*Alessandro glances up momentarily, wondering what kind of business involves deals that size. His attention shifts as he catches the Lady watching him. Her eyes glint with an unsettling mix of amusement and something more. When her husband turns his back, she suddenly winks at Alessandro and offers a sly smile. Alessandro freezes, gripping his duster tightly.*

**Alessandro**

*(whispering to himself, realization dawning)*

Ahhh, now I get it. This isn't just about cleaning, is it?

*Mr. Johnson's voice cuts through his thoughts.*

**Mr. Johnson**

*(growing frustrated)*

Yes, exactly. And I also...

*He stops abruptly, turning to look at Alessandro, who busies himself with an already immaculate shelf. Mr. Johnson narrows his eye suspiciously, then mutters something under his breath and walks to his private study, slamming the door behind him. The room falls silent, save for the clink of Mrs. Johnson's teacup. She gestures for Alessandro to approach with a curl of her finger. Hesitant but curious, he steps closer.*

**Mrs. Johnson**

*(in a low, velvety voice)*

Come Monday at 7pm. I'll be alone here.

*Alessandro's eyes widen slightly as he takes her in: her aged features, her heavysset frame, the gaudy jewelry glinting in the light. His stomach churns, and he fights the urge to grimace. Still, he forces a smile, masking his discomfort.*

**Alessandro**

*(with exaggerated enthusiasm)*

Yes, Madam, I'll be here!

*Her lips curl into a satisfied smile as she picks up her teacup again, clearly pleased. Alessandro retreats to his cleaning, his thoughts racing.*

**Alessandro**

*(to himself, sarcastically)*

So this is what they meant by "housekeeping." Fantastic.



**Indoors - Monday evening - Castle**

*The villa is dimly lit, the flicker of candles casting soft, wavering shadows on the luxurious walls. Alessandro sits on a plush sofa, dressed sharply and exuding confidence. Across from him, Mrs. Johnson reclines in a striking elegant dress, her jewelry catching the candlelight. She smiles warmly, but her eyes betray a sharp, calculating edge.*

*Between them, a bottle of wine sits half-empty. Their glasses clink softly as laughter and flirtation fill the room.*

**Alessandro**

*(leaning in, his hand brushing her arm)*  
You have such beautiful hands Madam.

**Mrs. Johnson**

*(leaning closer, her voice lowering to a velvety purr)*  
Oh, please, call me Olivia!

**Alessandro**

You're a fascinating woman, Olivia.

**Olivia**

And you are a real gentleman.  
Can I ask you something a bit, let's say...personal?  
*(she touches his hand)*

**Alessandro**

Absolutely! Please go ahead.

**Olivia**

*(suddenly, with a teasing tone)*  
What's your blood group?

**Alessandro**

*(startled, raising an eyebrow)*  
Uh... O negative. Why?

**Olivia**

Oh nothing important, I'm curious about you!

**Alessandro**

*(recovering his composure, flashing a grin)*  
Curious are we, eh? Well, Olivia, I'm curious about you too.

*He inches closer, resting his hand on her knee. Mrs Johnson allows it, smiling faintly, but then gently pulls away, tilting her head as if in thought.*

**Olivia**

You're fit. Tell me, you don't get sick often, do you?

**Alessandro**

*(laughing softly, puffing his chest)*  
Rarely! Strong as an ox, Olivia.

**Olivia**

*(nodding approvingly)*  
Good. That's what I like in a man.

*She relaxes, letting his hand linger. Alessandro seizes the moment, leaning in closer. Just as his lips brush her neck, Mrs Johnson pulls back abruptly, her expression turning serious.*

**Olivia**

*(fixing him with an intense gaze)*  
And listen...do you see well? I mean, no glasses, no vision issues?

**Alessandro**

*(chuckling nervously)*  
I see perfectly Olivia.  
And right now, I'm seeing the most beautiful woman I've ever laid eyes on!

*Mrs Johnson's laughter rings out, warm and genuine. She brushes his cheek affectionately, inviting him to continue, until she abruptly stops, her voice dropping. She stares at his eyes.*

**Olivia**

*(bluntly)*  
I wanted to ask you something.

**Alessandro**

Please do!

**Olivia**

My question might surprise you...

**Alessandro**

I like surprises!

**Olivia**

Would you...

**Alessandro**

Yes?

**Olivia**

Would you sell an eye?

*Alessandro freezes mid-motion, his confident smile faltering into a stunned grimace.*

**Olivia**  
Hello?  
Excuse me?

*Alessandro has no reaction. He keeps on staring at Mrs Johnson.*

**Olivia**  
*(leaning back with a wave of her hand, as if the question were casual)*  
Oh, don't look at me like that! It's not as dramatic as it sounds. I mean, if I'd asked for a leg, that would be unreasonable. But an eye? You can do everything with just one eye!

*Alessandro stares at her, his mind reeling.*

**Olivia**  
*(sighing theatrically)*  
You saw my husband, didn't you? Lost his eye in an accident. It's been so hard for him, finding someone with the right match is almost impossible. It's not a question of beauty you know? In his job he needs not just two eyes but three!

*She leans in conspiratorially, her voice dropping to a whisper.*

**Olivia**  
I've searched everywhere for someone like you, healthy, young, strong, with the perfect eye color. And it's clear that you are a good person.  
You were chosen out of so many. It's an honor, really.

*Alessandro opens his mouth to speak but says nothing.*

**Olivia**  
*(snapping her fingers in front of his face, her tone playful but firm)*  
Hey! Don't be such a baby. I'm not asking you to just give it to us. We'd pay you. Millions. More money than you've ever dreamed of.

*She leans back, her lips curling into a sly smile as she swirls her wine glass.*

**Olivia**  
*(softly)*  
Just think of the possibilities.

**Alessandro**

*(swallowing hard, voice unsteady)*  
Millions?

**Olivia**

*(nodding eagerly)*  
That's right. You could start fresh. Fix everything that's gone wrong in your life.

*She leans forward, her voice growing tender, almost motherly.*

**Olivia**

I did my homework on you, Alessandro. You're a good man in a tough spot. You need this. For your family. For your child. For your wife. Think about your beautiful wife!

*She places a hand on his, her touch warm but firm.*

**Olivia**

*(whispering)*  
You could win them back. Just imagine. A new beginning. And it would be *our little secret*.  
But you must not talk about this, to anyone, you understand?  
You never met me, you don't know me, understand?

**Alessandro**

*(words hardly coming out)*  
Yes

**Olivia**

We are good friend with a top surgeon, he's the best! You'd be in good hands!

*Alessandro's face remains frozen, his mind racing.*

**Olivia**

*(tilting her head, her voice softening even more)*  
I'm not forcing you. I'm giving you a choice. A rare, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.  
Think about it. For them!

*Her eyes bore into his, her voice a siren's song.  
Alessandro gulps down the rest of his wine in silence, his thoughts spiraling.*

**Castle - Morning - Living Room**

*Alessandro hesitates in the doorway, lingering like a man on the edge of something dreadful. Mrs Johnson moves ahead, her heels clicking rhythmically against the polished floor, too loud in the stillness.*

**Olivia**

*(smoothly, with an unsettling smile)*  
Don't linger there, Alessandro. Come in.

*The door creaks closed behind him, sealing him in. Alessandro's shoulders tense at the sound. Mrs Johnson gestures toward an ornate velvet chair across from Mr. Johnson. Alessandro sits stiffly, his eyes darting around the room.*

**Olivia**

*(to Mr. Johnson, her tone overly light)*  
Darling, this is Alessandro Trovati. You remember him, he was so helpful when I first employed him.

*Mr. Johnson doesn't move at first, his face lost in shadow. Then, slowly, he turns toward Alessandro, the light coming from the window catches his glass eye, making it gleam unnervingly.*

**Mr. Johnson**

*(low, gravelly, deliberate)*  
You're healthy. Yes?

*The statement hits like a hammer, not quite a question. Alessandro clears his throat, sitting straighter.*

**Alessandro**

*(uneasy, forcing politeness)*  
Yes, sir. I've... I've always been healthy.

*Mr. Johnson's stare is unwavering, as if peeling back layers of Alessandro's soul. Mrs Johnson, noticing Alessandro's discomfort, laughs softly.*

**Olivia**

*(teasing, but sharp beneath the surface)*  
Oh, don't worry. He looks so serious. But I can tell he's impressed by you!

*Mr. Johnson ignores her. Instead, he leans forward slightly, his movements slow and deliberate, almost predatory.*

**Mr. Johnson**

*(quietly, words heavy)*  
Do you know what makes a man strong, Alessandro?

*Alessandro blinks, caught off guard. He hesitates, then attempts a nervous reply.*

**Alessandro**  
*(sarcastically)*  
 Health and wealth?

*For a moment, Mr. Johnson is still. Then he nods, the faintest movement.*

**Mr. Johnson**  
*(flat, cold)*  
 Health... and sacrifice.

*The word lingers like smoke in the air. Alessandro's hands grip the arms of his chair, his knuckles turning white.*

**Mr. Johnson**  
*(soft, with intent)*  
 My wife tells me you're willing to help us. To make a small sacrifice.

*Mrs Johnson steps beside Alessandro, placing a light hand on his shoulder.*

*Her voice is soothing, but her words cut.*

**Olivia**  
*(sweetly, a sinister undertone)*  
 Don't look so alarmed, Alessandro. It's not that dramatic.

**Alessandro**  
*(collecting all his strenght)*  
 Let's be direct! I'm bankrupt, my wife left me, and she took my child. If I'm here, it's because I have nothing left to lose. Sacrifice? Yes! But not for you...for my family!

*His voice echoes in the stillness.*

*Mr. Johnson's towering frame casting a monstrous shadow across Alessandro.*

**Mr. Johnson**  
*(sharply, the words like a command)*  
 Listen to me Alessandro..

*Mrs Johnson stops the husband for a moment and tries to calm the tone of the conversation*

**Olivia**  
*(to Alessandro)*  
 Don't be nervous. As we said before, this is an opportunity!

*Mr. Johnson steps closer. He bends slightly, looming over Alessandro, his face partially obscured by shadow. His voice drops to a chilling whisper.*

**Mr. Johnson**

*(soft, menacing)*

You don't need two eyes to see your future. But you do need courage to earn it.

*Alessandro stares up at him, sweat beading on his brow. Mrs Johnson watches with a satisfied, unnerving smile as Alessandro struggles for words.*

**Olivia**

*(resolute and with a high tone)*

Now let's talk numbers...is 50 million good enough?

Don't be shy, tell us what you'd like!

We can turn around if that makes you more comfortable.

*Mrs Johnson urges her husband to turn around, to him:*

**Olivia**

Come on sweetheart, let's turn.

*Then she speaks out loud:*

**Olivia**

How much?

**Alessandro**

*(with a much stronger voice, never heard by the Johnsons before)*

A billion!

*The Johnsons turn around sharply and stare at Alessandro with a worried expression.*

*Alessandro looks at them for a moment, then he smiles, and the Johnsons laugh out loud.*

**Olivia**

*(still laughing)*

I see you haven't lost your sense of humour! Very funny

Alessandro.

Now let's be serious though...how much!

**Alessandro**

50 millions is too little, it's my eye we're talking about!

**The Johnsons**

*(loudly)*

How much?

**Alessandro**

A hundred millions!

*The Johnsons look at each other and speak something undetectable by Alessandro, then deliberate..*

**The Johnsons**

Deal! A hundred it is.

**Alessandro**

But I still need to think about it.

**Mr. Johnson**

*(quiet, cold)*

We'll expect your answer soon.

**Olivia**

*(looking at her husband as if to soften the tone)*

Of course! Go home. Rest. Think it over.

One, two, three days, but not more, as we have our commitments.

A simple call and we'll organize everything, you don't need to worry about a thing!

Will you call?

**Alessandro**

*(evidently confused)*

I'll think it over Madam.

**Outdoors - Wandering the City**

*The city buzzes around Alessandro, its vibrant energy clashing with his blank, hollow expression. He moves through the streets in a daze, the sounds of laughter and chatter fading into the background. A group of youngsters catches his attention: they are happy and laugh out loud, ignoring the pain Alessandro is going through. By looking at them, he tries to lough like them.*

**Alessandro**

*(in a forced laughter)*

Ah ah ah!



**Indoors - Alessandro's Flat - Night**

Alessandro stands before the bathroom's mirror, his eyes are weary, bloodshot, and his expression is heavy with indecision. Slowly, he raises a trembling hand toward his reflection, the tips of his fingers brushing the skin beneath his right eye. He caresses the delicate curve of the socket, tracing it as if memorizing the shape. After a moment, his fingers freeze. His gaze sharpens as he stares intently into his own eyes. The moment feels suspended.

Suddenly, he covers his eye completely with his palm. A flicker of something, fear, regret, maybe determination, passes across his face. He lowers his hand.

Turning away, Alessandro walks toward the table. The flat is silent except for the creak of floorboards beneath his feet. The table is cluttered, a half-empty glass of wine, a full ashtray, and a consent form. Beside it, a photograph of a young girl smiles back at him. Alessandro picks up the picture. He holds it delicately, as if afraid the memory might shatter in his hands. He runs his thumb over the image, lingering on her face. His lips press together, suppressing some unspoken emotion.

He sets the photograph back down, placing it carefully beside the form. His hand moves to grab a cigarette. He lights it up, as if to take some time, and gain some strength. Then he fetches a pen.

He grips it tightly. Slowly, he lowers the pen toward the paper. His hand hovers, the tip of the pen trembling just above the signature line.

But he stops.

His gaze drifts toward the window, where the faint sounds of the city filter through. He walks over and pulls back the curtain slightly. Alessandro exhales, leaning his head against the cool glass.

His thoughts swirl, memories flashing through his mind in rapid succession: his daughter's laugh, Charlotte, the three of them together having a good time. He clenches his jaw and turns back to the table.

This time, Alessandro doesn't sit. He stands over the form, staring down at it like an adversary. His breathing grows heavier. The pen is still in his hand, but his grip tightens. He looks at the photograph again; he's now more determined.

Then, a knock at the door distracts him. Alessandro freezes. The knock comes again, louder this time. He glances at the clock on the wall, it's midnight.

Cautiously, he sets the pen down and steps toward the door.

**THE END**