

**Estratto da Family Business**

**FAMILY BUSINESS  
(IMPRESA DI FAMIGLIA)**

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**CHARACTERS**

**BRUNO:** Major Shareholder and Sole Administrator of the Company

**LORENZO:** His son, Director of Sales

**CHIARA:** Lorenzo's wife, recently employed by the Company

**SERGIO:** The Senior Foreman

**SILVIO:** Young Contract Worker In Training

**CECCHINI:** An Older Salesman

**IMPENDING CHARACTERS – NOT SEEN ON STAGE**

**PIGNA:** Dissenting Partner: The Enemy

**IL PERITO:** Auditor, 'The Sword of Damocles' on the Company

**MARTINI:** Client open to making business with the Company: "The Small Fish" with whom you can negotiate

**ARCHITECT**

**FERRERO:** "The Big Fish" - The Hope for a turning point

**SIMONE:** The Forgotten Son

## **THE NIGHTMARES**

**CERTIFICATES:** Certificates of Authenticity, fake or real

**BATH:** The Fraud, High-Risk Credit

**THE BANKS:** Pleasure and Pain, From the Alpha to the Omega of every  
Illusion

**THE MARKET:** Omnipotent and Mysterious God, the Ghost of all Ghosts

## TIME

THE ACTION TAKES PLACE ALL IN ONE DAY

## ACT I

The set is one room that represents many rooms of an Iron & Steel Company. The back wall is a workshop encrusted and whitewashed: a window or a basement window. The window covers a majority of the back wall, giving transparency or an imagined way of catching a glimpse beyond the lit factory. Various working tools hang on the wall, such as: measuring devices, a calendar covered in advertising for pipes, some photos of the factory, a small blackboard with measurements written in chalk, and some work helmets. At the center an oily door of frosted glass, the central door, gives access to other offices.

Stage left leads to the main workshop warehouse of the factory, to the workers, and working machinery offstage. Stage right leads to the main entrance of the factory. On the left side of the set sits a couple of lockers and an office desktop worn by time and use. On the right side of the set sits another desktop with a copy machine. At the center, near the central door, sits a coffee and vending machine.

CECCHINI, standing in front of the coffee machine, thinks introspectively. SILVIO, engrossed over the desktop on the right, rummages through a record book.

SILVIO

Did you read about yesterday's brawl?

CECCHINI (not listening)  
Hunh? Oh yes. Poor people.

SILVIO

Fist fighting over a job.

CECCHINI

And in the end, the job...(shrugs, apathetically)

SILVIO

No one even hires anymore.

CECCHINI

They ought to at least send you into retirement. Instead, they nail you down here until you're a hundred years old. You'll see!

SILVIO

If I only had these problems. They still haven't hired me here.

CECCHINI studies the coffee machine.

CECCHINI (following his own thoughts)  
...Only troubles.

CECCHINI punches the coffee machine. SILVIO, surprised, looks at him. A coin drops out of the machine. CECCHINI puts the coin in his pocket.

CECCHINI (cont'd., pointing at the coffee machine)  
You asshole! Like everyone else, you're always trying to take advantage.

SILVIO (leafing through the record book)  
This shitty report... Did they take it upstairs to the auditor?

CECCHINI  
You think he gives a shit? He only wants to see invoices...

CECCHINI shakes his head. SILVIO angrily closes the record book.

SILVIO  
Enough. It's not here and I'm tired of busting my ass.

CECCHINI  
Only troubles!

SILVIO  
It's Sergio. He's out to get me. He's doing it on purpose!

CECCHINI  
So what? Lorenzo is happy with you. You're fine.

SILVIO  
Let's hope...He says this company could go big.

CECCHINI  
He's dreaming. At this point, we're lucky if we stay afloat.

SILVIO (nodding)  
True. He put me in charge of collections.

CECCHINI  
Shouldn't his wife be doing that?

SILVIO  
He doesn't trust her. He says she has no experience. I have to take care of that, too. All

day long catching debtors.

CECCHINI  
I don't envy you.

SILVIO  
I called Milan. A woman answered the telephone and said last week 'they' suddenly took off.

CECCHINI  
She said that?

SILVIO  
Yes. She said exactly that.

CECCHINI (slang reference for fraud)  
We took a nice "bath" on this one! What a fraud! Who closed the deal with them? Lorenzo or his father?

SILVIO  
His father.

CECCHINI  
Then better not say anything today. The boss is already upset because of this business with the auditor.

SILVIO  
So the situation is really bad.

CECCHINI  
It's bad. But, not so bad.

SERGIO, the foreman, enters stage left from the workshop. As soon as CECCHINI sees him, to avoid eye contact, he sits at the desk on the left and focuses on some papers.

SERGIO  
Cecchi', another truck arrived.

CECCHINI  
This is the last one.

SERGIO  
How many pipes did you order?

CECCHINI

Don't you worry.

SERGIO

Like we needed the Mexican pipes. Look, we have to unload them! And we don't know where to put them anymore!

CECCHINI exits through the central door and walks stage left toward the workshop.

SERGIO (to CECCHINI)

Who is selling the stuff? (Off handed, to SILVIO) So kid, the report on last night's shift?

SILVIO

I'm looking for it.

SERGIO

Kid, you must have it at your fingertips. Quick, you have to be quick!

LORENZO enters stage right with a soccer ball under his arm. He nervously speaks into a cell phone. He opens a locker and puts his jacket and his personal belongings inside.

LORENZO (into cell phone)

Chiara, I understand. I didn't do it on purpose. I had to rush here. You know it! Please, Simone is not a kid anymore. He's so tired of us taking him to school. He wants to go with his friend on the bus. Don't you understand that?...No. Today we have to stay here. At the end of the school day he is going with Carlo's mother. Don't worry... Yes, I got the gift...And now you see I'm here as well. Ciao, ciao, ciao. (He hangs up, sighs, and twirls the soccer ball.)

SILVIO

Good morning Mister Lorenzo.

SERGIO (informal)

Hi Lore', and that soccer ball?

LORENZO (very dry)

Good morning. Silvio, what merchandise already left?

SILVIO

No truck left yet. But a load arrived from Galmine.

LORENZO

Another one?

SERGIO

Yes!

SILVIO

Mister Cecchini has ordered another load.

LORENZO

Now he's going to hear it from me. How's the hoist crane?

SERGIO

Bad.

LORENZO

But are the machines working?

SERGIO

Yes. For now. But they're old. They can't take it anymore. Last night the alarm went off again. I didn't even sleep.

LORENZO

Why? Petrosino wasn't here?

SERGIO

What do you mean? I'm the foreman.

LORENZO (suspecting)

But he could have checked and avoided setting off the alarm.

SERGIO

Petrosino works, but he's tired. He asked me to move him to first shift...

LORENZO

How come? Before, he wanted night shift. And now he wants to sleep?

SERGIO

It's not that. It's that they put his wife on the night shift, too. And so Lore', I think that someone should stay home with the children. Lore', am I right or not?

LORENZO

Why? Can't they worry about it? Are we the good Samaritans?

SERGIO

Petrosino is one of the best ones. Trust me.

LORENZO

Let me see the report on last night's shift and we'll talk about it. Did you finish it?

SERGIO  
I asked the kid to do it.

LORENZO  
Very well.

SERGIO (to SILVIO)  
Do you hear him? Find it.

SERGIO exits to the workshop.

LORENZO (in SERGIO's direction)  
Yes. Yes. Go. Go. (To SILVIO) Has the accountant arrived?

SILVIO  
Not a sight.

LORENZO  
And the auditor?

SILVIO  
Yes. He's upstairs.

LORENZO  
There, I knew it! Did you prepare the inventory that my father asked for?

SILVIO  
Yes. I already delivered it.

LORENZO  
To whom?

SILVIO  
To your father.

LORENZO  
Ah, ok. You go upstairs, too. And you trail behind him. Whatever he needs...(calling out) Cecchini!

SILVIO exits towards the storage, leaving through the central door. CECCHINI enters.



Here I am.

LORENZO (off handed)  
So, those Mexican pipes?

CECCHINI  
Here, yes. I am working on it it's not easy.

LORENZO  
And Martini? You bought them for him. You said it was a sure thing.

CECCHINI:  
Yes, it was a deal, new pipes bought at half price.

LORENZO  
Now we still got to sell them.

CECCHINI  
It's not my fault he pulled out at the last minute. "They didn't pay me," he says. "I can't handle more pipes!"

LORENZO  
And now?

CECCHINI  
Now I am working on another negotiation. Very important. With the city of Piombino.  
But at the last minute, what can I tell you? They pulled out, too.

LORENZO  
Cecchi'!

CECCHINI  
The market is the market.

LORENZO  
The truth is if Martini doesn't have the money to be a businessman, we cannot be his supplier! But you could care less, because you sit on your ass. You don't want to go anywhere anymore. You don't want to make a mark in the market. This is the truth.

CECCHINI  
Well, maybe I can offer him some other used pipes that have been left in our lap. I can go down on the price.

LORENZO  
You know used pipes are going to be trouble.

CECCHINI

No trouble. Not if you sell them as new. We used to do this with your father. One “retouches” the certificates of authenticity just a bit...

LORENZO

Cecchini, we are not the junkyard of the country, we need to sell and make them pay us on time for what we sell. Remember that!

LORENZO picks up the soccer ball and nervously spins it in his hands. CECCHINI exits through central door and crosses CHIARA, who is entering the room. She is speaking into a cell phone.

CHIARA (nervously)

Assela, you should listen to me when I speak. Turn the dial up to eight and the temperature to one hundred and ten degrees and not too much detergent. Otherwise it will smell...What do you mean how much? Not too much is not too much meaning not too much. Think about what I'm saying. Be careful! Don't make a mess.

CHIARA hangs up her cell phone.

CHIARA (cont'd.)

Lorenzo!

LORENZO

Eh.

CHIARA

Can you tell me what you have in that brain of your's?

LORENZO

No, Chiara, not today. Please, it's a difficult day.

CHIARA would like to reply, but she hesitates, sighs, and gives up.

CHIARA

...I know. As a matter of fact, I don't understand what is going on.

LORENZO

Why?

CHIARA

The auditor from the tribunal is upstairs asking questions, asking technical questions...Your father arrived, went into his office, and shut the door. Until the accountant arrives he doesn't want to be seen. He tells me, “Go upstairs to

administration and listen to what the auditor wants, then come tell me what he says.”  
Why is he so nervous?

LORENZO

Pop is not as patient as he used to be. He’s tired. This story is already too much. We didn’t need anything else.

CHIARA

Why is that Pigna always putting a stick in the spoke of the wheel? At the end of the day, he’s still a partner.

LORENZO

Chiara, Pigna can’t take losing! Since Pop took the directorship away from him, it became for him a question of principal to make us fail. Pigna, on the market, is very powerful and cannot face this humiliating defeat!

CHIARA

You all seem crazy.

LORENZO

Are you surprised? It’s always like this. Always.

Pause.

CHIARA

Did you go to the travel agency...

LORENZO

Yes, of course... but I don’t know if now’s the time...Maybe you all go.

CHIARA

It’s only one week! It’s been years since we took a family vacation! I’m not saying this for me, but Simone deserves a father! You even forgot his birthday. He was hurt yesterday, without you! Was it really necessary for you to stay here until midnight?

LORENZO

I got the gift, look. (He shows the soccer ball.) Even if the world was falling apart, before coming here, I stopped at the store and I got it!

CHIARA

It’s not enough.

LORENZO

By the way, did you call Ferrero?

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CHIARA

What does Ferrero have to do with this?

LORENZO

...Yes. I know honey. You're right. Ok. Let's go. After all, it's just a week.

CHIARA

Sure! With you on the phone all day long...

LORENZO

No. We'll get through this moment and then my colleagues can fight it out.

CHIARA

The problem is you don't trust anyone.

LORENZO

I trust you!

CHIARA:

No, it's not true, you don't trust me either.

LORENZO:

C'mon! Did Ferrero call?

CHIARA

No. But Righi called for you. Twice.

LORENZO

I knew it. When they owe you money, they're all jackrabbits. But as soon as you owe them, they stalk you like hyenas!

LORENZO kicks the soccer ball, sending it far away.

CHIARA

Wasn't that Simone's present? You want to give it to him used?

LORENZO walks over and picks up the soccer ball.

LORENZO

Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.

CHIARA

Those guys are coming back for job interviews this afternoon, remember?

LORENZO

I can't see them today. There are too many problems. Tell them to reschedule.

CHIARA

You already rescheduled them.

LORENZO

I can't hire anyone! We already have Silvio in training. The pot's boiling over. According to my father, an expert will cost too much and we don't have time to train a youngster. Understand? This is the way he thinks and there's nothing you can do, at least while he's still the boss.

CHIARA

I heard you talking with Cecchini.

LORENZO

I have to get him off my ass. He's a ball and chain.

CHIARA

What else did he do?

LORENZO

The usual! He bought rusty pipes, "It's a deal! It's a deal!" For him it's enough to "retouch" the certificate of authenticity a little, like in the old days, when the pipe used to travel with "soap money." You got it? He doesn't understand the world we live in. And neither does my father.

CHIARA

Just control him and make it clear.

LORENZO

Exactly. How can I control everyone?

CHIARA

I'll control Cecchini. Lorenzo, you need a break...(tries to smile) Tonight Simone will be happy to see his father at the match.

LORENZO

What time is kickoff?

CHIARA

Five pm. It's the tournament finals. And you promised him!

LORENZO

Of course, five pm. Should the world fall apart...

Pause. CHIARA caresses his neck. LORENZO gives in for a moment.

LORENZO (cont'd.)

Did you speak with those people in Milan?

CHIARA

I didn't get anyone, only the answering machine.

LORENZO

See, more jackrabbits. Who closed the deal with them? Cecchini or my father?

CHIARA

Your father.

LORENZO

That's fine. If Ferrero calls, transfer it to me immediately. Only Ferrero!... How agitated is Pop?

CHIARA

More than usual.

CHIARA's cell phone rings.

CHIARA (cont'd., answering)

Hello. Good morning, doctor. Yes. I called to book a visit for my son...oh yes, thank you. One moment while I check my schedule.

CHIARA exits through the central door. LORENZO sits at his desk checking some papers. BRUNO, looking restless and shifty, peaks in from stage left. He runs over to the central door and looks outside for a moment.

LORENZO

Pop.

BRUNO

Shhhh!

BRUNO closes the door and crosses the stage and peers stage right. Then, with a worried look on his face, he looks back at LORENZO.

BRUNO (cont'd.)

Have you seen? He's already here. It seems like he wants to talk to me. But he doesn't know I'm here. I parked behind the plant like a thief to not be seen!

LORENZO

Pop! Calm down. You're acting like a crazy man.

BRUNO

What?

LORENZO

Pigna is only trying to break your balls. He's always done it. At this point, for him, it's like an obsession. First, he tried to discredit you on the market, saying we didn't have one penny anymore, that we were about to close the doors. But we didn't close.

BRUNO

This time he hit the mark. He challenged the balance sheet and went crying to the court. If the auditor inspects the balance sheet we are in trouble! I don't know what to do. I was told not to talk to him. But I would like to meet him. You know how I can persuade people...maybe we can come to an understanding in another way...what do you think?

LORENZO

No. I know this one Pop. He is too young and ambitious. He's not a 'Tony I-Want-Money' yet.

BRUNO

You sure?

LORENZO

This is a chess match and we need to play it all the way out. Right now there are other pressing matters at the door.

BRUNO

Yes, it's true. I know. There's the problem at the plant. We should stop production for maintenance.

LORENZO

We can't stop production. We're already late on all the deliveries. It's Sergio who doesn't know how to prevent problems. He's old and tired.

BRUNO

Sergio is trustworthy.

LORENZO

Maybe then. But now we'll see.

BRUNO

What do you mean?

LORENZO

I know what I mean. Anyway, the urgent matter is something else.

BRUNO sits and sighs.

BRUNO

I'm listening. Tell me.

LORENZO

Last night I spoke with Vasiliu.

BRUNO

...Huhn, Vasiliu?

LORENZO

Pop, he's the agent of Pomatov in Kiev!

BRUNO

Right. And so?

LORENZO

There is a stock of three thousand tons of merchandise. Prime Choice pipes. A surplus production destined for the Chechens that is hung around their necks. They're in deep water. They need to sell. And the first one to get there, will get a steal. I have an eight day option, but I know that Malatesta is ordering, too.

BRUNO

Lore', three thousand tons. It's you that sounds crazy.

LORENZO

I'm not making a high stake gamble here. It's very possible to bring the deal home!

BRUNO

Lorenzo, I have no head now to think of Russian, Chinese, or Cuban ships. And remember, this company was saved by the strategy of the snail.

LORENZO (decisive)

The snails were good ten years ago when in the market we faced companies of our caliber. Today, the companies that didn't fail, emerged, creating conglomerates that march at a different pace than we do!

BRUNO

Here! When you fix on something you're like Chinese water torture. Ting! Ting! Ting!



But now I ask you, focus on our issue with the auditor!

LORENZO

...I've been working on this deal for two weeks. I've been sending faxes to Russia. And I'm paid for my time. I cost the company. I invite you to consider these facts!

BRUNO

Lore', stop with this story that your time costs the company.

LORENZO

Why, do you mean my time is free?

BRUNO

I am the administrator and I am the one that pays you!

LORENZO

And I am talking about work.

BRUNO (changing tone)

Lore', listen, right now I need to be calm. Maybe you didn't understand. That one upstairs is here to establish if we've done something criminal! You understand? Criminal! (Pause.) Don't break my balls with this bullshit that your time is money. You want to go, go. No one is indispensable. Is that clear?

The telephone rings.

BRUNO (briskly)

Yes?

BRUNO hands the phone to LORENZO.

BRUNO (cont'd.)

It is some...Ferrero. For you.

LORENZO

It's Ferrero!

LORENZO takes a deep breath and speaks in a smooth tone.

LORENZO (cont'd.)

Good morning architect. I received your message and I was about to call you back...I know, I'm sorry but the phone calls around here come one on top of the other. My extension is like a "hot line." (Giggling) Yes, please, tell me...Yes...Yes, no, I read your request carefully. I can't hide from you that we are very interested in the job...I imagine we're not the only ones...Certainly, you don't have much turn around time between each delivery...I understand...So, let's keep this agreement. In a few minutes I

will send you a new offer with a deeper discount of three percent. Look, I've shown you all my cards!...Don't mention it. I'm just looking out for your best interest...goodbye.

LORENZO hangs up the phone.

LORENZO (cont'd.)

Pop, this guy's looking for the exact material that is in Russia. You understand? We can place fifteen hundred tons as soon as the ship arrives. And remember that with Vasiliu we have an agreement of 100 euros per ton!

Pause.

BRUNO

Mah! With him too?

LORENZO

Especially with him.

BRUNO

Lore', I may understand you, actually I do understand you. But, please, try to understand me...

LORENZO

We need to buy this ship! With 100 euros per ton "skimming foam off the top," we'll make one hundred and fifty thousand euros coming back under the table!

BRUNO (worrying)

Shhhh!!

LORENZO (speaking softly)

Plus, I'll sell half of the shipment to this guy Ferrero already and earn so much you can't even imagine. Pop, we need more visibility on the market. A company that grows must make noise to gain the necessary respect. They must respect you Pop! Look, in this deal there is only Ilva and us!

BRUNO

Why are we talking about this? You're living an illusion. They're going to eat you alive!

LORENZO (pause)

Maybe I'm living an illusion. But maybe, for once, it's you that's wrong...

BRUNO

Ah, I am wrong?

LORENZO

When the fuck will you do me the favor of carefully analyzing my offer and understand this offer left a mark, it shocked them! Ilva will never be able to match or beat our prices. Once the order is made Pop, I want to go directly to them, sit at the table of the CEO - yes! - and say to him loud and clear, “Good morning Mister CEO. I have the sell order in my hand, and I’m importing the pipes. In the future, however, every two or three months you place an order like this and I’ll only buy the pipes from you. And I’ll be the cover in any other important negotiations. Three big orders to me and the rest to you. This way we don’t butt heads, dear CEO.”

BRUNO

But do you have any idea how much money I would have to ask the banks? We’re talking millions! They will ask for a mortgage on the warehouse, on the house, and also on our underwear!

LORENZO

And you insist. Now is the time the directors should demonstrate, as you say, to be bankers and not bank tellers!

Pause.

BRUNO

No, Lorenzo, that’s a little more than we can chew.

LORENZO

I invite you to think about it...

BRUNO (screaming)  
Enough!

Pause.

LORENZO

Pop, you scare me. You’re outdated.

**TO BE CONTINUED**

**for more info please contact**

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