

The Diva

Roy Ellison



The Diva

Roy Ellison



The Diva

by Roy Ellison

Smashwords Edition

License Notes

This ebook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This ebook may not be re-sold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each recipient. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then please return to your favorite ebook retailer and purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.

All characters in this book are at least 18 years old.

Copyright 2022 Roy Ellison

The doctor frowned.

“Madame, I am very sorry, but it was to be expected. At your age, a fall can be life-changing.”

The actress raised an eyebrow. At her age! Madonna! So this was how it felt! Years, no, decades on the silver screen, fame, fortune, adoration by her many admirers, and now, at last, she had become decrepit.

“But doctor, it isn’t broken! Isn’t there some therapy you can prescribe to me?”

The doctor ran his hand over Sonia Laurent’s hip again, testing its range of motion.

“Well, the thing is, osteoporosis has set in massively already, and I’m afraid that we cannot do much. Regular exercise with a physiotherapist, supplements to improve bone health ... Unless you would be willing to join a study for an experimental treatment a colleague of mine has been developing ...”

“Experimental?” The diva was a little taken aback by the suggestion. “Wouldn’t that be dangerous?”

“Not at all. It has already gone through all the necessary tests, and this is the pre-rollout. One last round of tests to discover as many side-effects, good or bad, that haven’t been discovered yet. There would be a compensation, of course ...”

“A compensation?” The diva laughed. “My dear Dottore, this is all very nice, but ... please, donate the money to children’s cancer research or something. A Sonia Laurent doesn’t accept payment for things that are good for her!”

He smiled, nodded and said:

“Very well. Then I will enroll you in the study and we can hopefully start treatment in a week.”

A week later, the maid announced that the doctor had arrived. Sonia Laurent pushed herself up from her chair with her cane. She detested that thing, but it was a necessity now. She had at least managed to choose a stylish one, whose wood grain matched her golden-brown locks, but it was a sad reminder of her frailty.

She walked over to the villa’s entrée, careful to conceal the cane for the last steps and making it disappear behind her dark red robe with a simple swing of her hand. Now she stood straight and statuesque as she had always done. She smiled:

“Dottore! Welcome! I am so grateful you came here.”

“It’s always a pleasure, Madame ...” He gave her a slight bow.

She accepted his hand graciously and then swept him to the salon as easily as ever. The thought of getting better soon made her feel hopeful and confident. While the maid served them coffee and the doctor admired the view of Lake Geneva, Sonia was quivering with anticipation.

At last, she couldn’t resist anymore:

“Did you bring it, doctor?”

He tore himself from the sight and nodded, then pulled a bottle of pills from his suitcase. He handed it to the diva.

“Here you are. Because this is all so experimental and new, there’s no fancy blister yet. The bottle will do, though. You are supposed to take ten pills every day, two in the morning, and then every three hours through the day. I recommend to setting an alarm or something, because this drug really needs to be taken precisely.”

The actress smiled benignly:

“Don’t worry, Dottore, it is my bones that are weak, not my mind.”

As if to demonstrate, she took out a reasonably modern smartphone, and with taps of her perfectly manicured nails, she set up the alarms. She gave him a proud smile. He nodded.

“You will have to report to me on the effects. Please be precise about them, I think it will help a lot of people.”

“Certainly, Dottore. I will keep a diary!”

“Thank you, Madame.”

“Will you stay for brunch, Dottore?”

“I’m sorry, I have further patients to attend to. Good luck, Madame, and hopefully, this drug will help you.”

She wanted to get up to accompany him to the door, but her hips rebelled, so she excused herself and had the maid take over.

The actress took the bottle and looked at it eagerly. This would help!

"Madame Laurent, I am not sure what you did, but I am impressed!"

Sonia looked at her Pilates instructor. The woman was terrifyingly fit, her body without an ounce of fat, and seemingly built of tightly wound wire. The first time she had met her, Sonia had wanted to feed her. She had even offered to prepare her own homemade ravioli for her, but the instructor had thanked her and said something about "carbs". In a way, it was her loss, wasn't it?

Still, right now, the young woman was astonished by her employer's performance. After finishing an exercise routine that normally completely exhausted her, Sonia found herself wanting more.

"Thank you. I have changed some little things about my regular treatments, and

I'm glad they work!"

"Seriously, Madame, you seem to have recovered ten years of fitness!"

Sonia blushed. Now this was praise she could enjoy!

"Maybe we could try something a little more intense next time?"

"I would be very glad. Let's get you massaged, and in two days, I'll bring you some exercises that just might challenge you!"

The old woman smiled. She hadn't expected it, but maybe those drugs actually worked?

"Madame, I don't know what happened, but I suggest you continue it!"

"Do you like the results, Dottore?"

"Absolutely! I wish all my patients had improvements like this! Look!"

He showed her a printout. There were so many small numbers. The actress adjusted her glasses and tried to read them. She shook her head. Somehow, her vision had once again deteriorated. She tried to move the paper around and

squinted. No chance. Somehow, it got all difficult to read like that.

"Could you tell me, Dottore?"

"Yes, of course. I ... This wasn't courteous of me ... See, these parameters tell me that your bone density has improved and your muscular strength has increased a bit. Also, your heart rate is better and your blood sugar has dropped."

"So this is good?"

"It's excellent!"

"Thank you!"

"It wasn't me, Madame, it was your effort and discipline! Did you change anything else other than the medication?"

She smiled widely:

"Oh yes! So many things! I asked my therapist, and she set up a whole programme for me. I am now doing some exercises for my heart every day, it's called cardio, obviously, and some light musculation. It feels very new, you know?"

“This is astonishing. I didn’t expect it to work in this way.” He seemed a little doubtful. “Madame, I must admit, the drug was only supposed to strengthen your bones, not to cause these changes.”

“Then write them down as an unexpected, but welcome side-effect! I can not thank you enough!”

He blushed. The diva had kept her charm in every way and he did feel drawn back to the days of his youth when he had adored her as all the other young men. He brushed his thinning hair from his forehead and smiled:

“I will. So, for now, we will just continue the therapy, is that right?”

“That would be marvelous, Dottore!”

She got up in one fluid movement. The doctor stared at this. That’s when he noticed.

“Madame, didn’t you use a cane?”

“Dottore, ‘used’ is the word. I don’t know how it happened, but I don’t need it anymore. It’s a miracle. I threw it away.”

The doctor couldn’t do anything else other than smile. In her exultation, she kissed his cheeks and bade him goodbye. He stayed behind, his face glowing and

his breath still.

“Bisnonna, what happened to you? You look so young!”

“I do, Tesoro?” Sonia took her great-granddaughter on her lap and bounced her up and down. Lifting her was easy and the little girl giggled as she rode on her knees.

“Yes! You look almost like Nonna Roberta. Only she is not as strong as you!”

Her daughter-in-law frowned, but Sonia didn’t let this spoil her mood. Instead, she lifted the little girl high, her arms somehow strong enough to do this.

That’s when it happened.

The girl swung her little legs and kicked against Sonia’s glasses, sending them flying. Instantly, the girl’s mother, Francesca, stormed at her and panicked:

“Nonna! Are you alright?”

To her surprise, Sonia was fine. Sure, the little kick had stung a bit, but that was all. And she suddenly realized that she could see them all perfectly well without her glasses.

Better even. Somehow, that treatment must have fixed her eyes. Was that even possible?

Francesca brought her the glasses and the girl, Claudia, tried to put the glasses on her. She almost managed to poke one of the temples in her eye. Sonia took them from her, folded them and hung them in her cleavage.

“Don’t worry, Tesoro, I think I can see you just fine.”

She could see that the other women were a bit confused by this new development.

After a nice tennis match, always doubles, Sonia walked over to the country club’s terrace. Time for some coffee. The other couple was still recuperating after the terrible dishing-out she had served them, and her partner had disappeared into the shower to ... shower? She had an idea what he was doing. Men!

For her, the game had been a pleasant pastime which had barely made her sweat. It was astonishing how nimble her limbs had become, how fast she could run and stop and how easy her eyes could follow the ball. It was all so simple!

Anyway, she strode to her usual table and sat down, enjoying the warm sun. She was wearing a large straw hat and a gorgeous white sleeveless dress she had recently bought to match her rejuvenated figure. It was very simply cut, but looked wonderful on her. The training had somehow recovered her entire body, tightening her skin and even filling out her breasts once more. She had no idea how that even worked, but once again, they were real and spectacular!

She was quite certain that they were bigger and fuller than ever before, but that didn't inconvenience her in the slightest. She did wear a shawl over her shoulders and chest when she was in public, she had to dress her age, after all. But now that she was in private, she could just enjoy the sun on her cleavage and a cup of espresso from her favorite waiter.

Pierre did a double-take when she took off her sunglasses and smiled:

“The usual, Madame?”

“Please. And I think I will reward myself with a slice of cake. What would you recommend?”

“Well, we have an excellent ...”

He was cut off by a commotion. Someone was running across the lawn, pursued by a group of security guards and a rather breathless gardener. The man stormed on, and she immediately spotted the telltale signs of the paparazzo. The camera, the soft shoes, the sunglasses ...

One of the guards shouted a “Stop, fils de pute!” and one of them tried to tackle him. The young man, evaded this and to the spectators' surprise, jumped on a garden shed, then vaulted the high walls of the country club.

He was gone.

The guards ran on to the entrance to maybe catch him outside, but the gardener gave up and limped back to the terrace. Sonia saw that the old man was completely exhausted. She patted the chair next to her and ordered another espresso and a tall glass of water for the poor man.

He thanked her profusely, and when he recognized her, he blushed, and looked at his hands instead. She smiled and said:

“Don’t worry. Thank you for trying to catch this ... vampire. He certainly was no Tazio Secchiaroli.”

“I just spotted him as I was trimming the bushes. He must have snuck in over the wall.”

“After this jump, I believe it. Maybe he should earn his money as an acrobat!”

She laughed and the gardener smiled.

“I just hope he didn’t trouble the guests ...”

“Bah! I doubt that any newspapers are still interested in old people like me ...”

“Dannazione!” Sonia stared at the cover of her newspaper. She despised the

yellow press and never bought their issues, but apparently, this picture was considered newsworthy enough to put it on the cover of a serious publication! The horrible creature had actually managed to take a picture of her just as she took off her sunglasses and ... she had to admit, it was a good picture, and she was looking wonderful. The headline was bad, though: “The Immortal – Sonia Laurent is in the shape of her life!”

She rubbed her temples as her maid handed her the two pills and a glass of water. What foolishness would come from this?

Her phone rang a moment later. The maid went to pick up for her as she took the pills and washed them down.

“Madame, it’s Renato, your agent!”

“What? But why would he call?”

She got up and took the phone.

“Renato? How nice of you to call! It’s not my birthday, you know?”

“Sonia, Bellissima, I am not calling on courtesy, but on business!”

“On business? But Renato, Caro, I have retired. No more movies for me!”

“You know what they say, mai dire mai! I have an offer for you, and the producer wants to pay any price for you!”

“But ... I haven’t acted in years. And my look ... I don’t want to play any grandmothers any more ...”

“Ragazza, have you looked in the mirror lately? Or in the newspapers for that matter? They all want you! And the man, let’s just put it this way: He is one who would make Dino de Laurentiis look sane!”

“Stop. Enough. What kind of movie are we talking here, Renato?”

“Diva! Divissima!”

Sonia was a little irritated by the man at her feet. This was the famous man whose work had relaunched a dozen careers out of nothing? This was the auteur that still manage to bring the masses to the theaters?

She smiled. As she had learned, in situations were you can’t do anything else, smile.

The man groveled at her feet. She could see his bald spot and his longish hair and wonder what might have possessed her to come here and meet him. It certainly wasn’t the money, although the producer had agreed to the frankly rather obscene sum Renato had demanded without even discussing. Truly, the

ways of Hollywood were changing ...

No, it was something else ... Her transformation might have changed something about her perception of herself too. If she had, well, not exactly hidden from the public, she had tried to maintain her mystique and her legend. No one wanted to see a decrepit old woman that had once been Sonia Laurent!

As she was now, though ... Well, this was a Sonia Laurent people would adore. This wouldn't ruin her legend, it would expand it, make it even more fascinating, even immortal!

Maybe it was that ...

“Signor Barese, are you alright?”

The man looked up to her like a child on prima comunione and sighed:

“I am more than alright ... I have never been better. To be in your presence ...”

She felt flattered, she would admit it. But the man ... He was also ... annoying. His interest in her feet ... She had met all sorts, but he was rather intense.

Well, maybe she had to handle it in an appropriate way. She breathed in deeply, her now fuller bust straining slightly against the dark green satin dress she had put on for the occasion, and said forcefully:

“Get up and talk to me.”

The man instantly complied, kneeling in front of her and then getting to his feet. He negligently rearranged his hair and then smiled slyly at her.

“Of course, Signora.”

His accent was atrocious, even with such a simple word. She kept smiling.

“I have skimmed the script you sent me, and I do not understand. What are you trying to achieve?”

Suddenly, the awkwardness disappeared from the man’s face and body. He was in his element.

“Signora, the film will be called ‘Lord of Radiance - Chronicles of the Emyrean War’. It will be an homage, no, a veneration of the classic sci-fi epics of the age! I have been dreaming of this film for ages and now, my producer has finally agreed! It will have it all. I have already found the perfect crew for the practical effects. I have secured a cache of original film stock I will use. I even managed to locate one of Kubrick’s original NASA lenses from Barry Lyndon! It is in marvelous shape and the director of photography is already getting used to it. It will be incredible! We will be shooting at Cinecittà, which you might find practical ...”

She nodded slowly as the man's enthusiasm almost swept her away. It was a bit hard to follow all those things. He was already talking about the score, about trying to figure out the correct composition of the music, the idea of hiring Giorgio Moroder, or even getting one of Morricone's students to create a pastiche ...

At last, she raised her hand like a schoolgirl, with maybe a hint of mockery.

“Signor Barese, this is all wonderful and I am excited for it, but ... please ... Explain it to me as you would a child. What is the point of the movie?”

“The film. It's a film. I don't do movies.”

“The film, then. What are you trying to say?”

He looked at her. The faint amusement, the annoyance, the mockery, the superiority ...

“You are perfect. Absolutely perfect.”

He grabbed his camera and took a picture of her.

“This will be it. You will see. It will be incredible.”

“You humans love the happy ending, the ‘... and they lived happily ever after’. I have studied you and your stories and they are your greatest delusion! Happiness ... forever? It’s not even foolish, it’s a contradiction.”

Sonia towered over the boyish young man that was a quarter her age. He was quite short, and was probably about her size, but she was wearing those absurd heels and the bizarre golden armor was just making her look even taller with its giant helmet with its golden plumes and horns. It looked like a Jack Kirby-Thierry Mugler-collaboration, and it weighed a ton, though she could deal with it quite well. The thing encased her body all over, while somehow displaying every bit of her muscular physique. While it was certainly odd, it did make her feel powerful ...

The young actor pushed out his chin:

“No! You are wrong! We will win! And we will be together!”

She walked down the stairs of the throne room confidently. She had practiced this for two hours yesterday, just to make sure she didn’t take a tumble. The whole hall was blacklit, and though the set designer had found a way to combine the black marble/PVC-look with something offering a bit of a grip, she still had to be very careful.

Sonia could literally sense the sharp breath of the director as she managed her descent on the first try, looking regal.

She was now upon him, looking down on the boy from a foot above. She looked him in the eyes. For a moment, she felt the lines she was given. This movie was

rather shlocky, and everyone was encouraged to chew any available scenery, and yet, sometimes, the script allowed them a certain vulnerability.

“And so you will.” She smiled softly, as if remembering her own path. “For one precious moment, the fairy tale will come true. Maybe you defeat me. Maybe you kill me. Maybe I flee. You celebrate, you kiss your bride, you free the oppressed. You end their suffering.” Her smile turned sardonic. “Then, slowly, the world will reassert itself. You won’t break the old relations. You won’t be able to dismiss my servants. You won’t hold this ragtag alliance of yours together. And ...” She sighed. “You will find out that marrying the princess is easier than being married to her.”

She caressed his cheek. The young man shot her a look of disgust.

“It will be a slow, hidden change. You will come to tolerate the casual cruelty. And as you do, you will lose your allies. It won’t be quick. You will only notice when it’s already too late. Then, finally, you will either become like me, or understand you should have left me in charge ...”

She could feel her intensity radiating down on him. His face was twisted with rage:

“No! NO! NEVER!”

He screamed at her and, he would later be unable to say why, pushed her.

For a moment, she felt panic run through her. The crew gasped. The young man realized what he had done. With the costume, she would fall over and hurt herself. Worse still, she would look stupid! The whole scene would ...

Instinctively, somehow, instead of taking a step back or tumbling down, she caught his hand, and just tossed him away, her muscles tensing, but holding her balance.

The spell broke.

Mister Barese's face was transfixed by the scene. He stared at them with gaping mouth and then finally yelled "Cut!", while already running on the stage, probably to save her from falling over. In mid-sprint, he realized she wasn't going to, stopped, slid on the marble and fell to his knees, somehow managing to upend himself and land next to her.

"Brava! Bravissima! Thank you, Signora, I am ... I am floored. You are truly divine!"

She stared at him, raised her hand to calm him, the young man got up at the same time, terrified by what had just happened, as her assistant came over to support her if she wanted to get off the scene to sit down ...

The whole situation was escalating around her, but somehow, she felt incredibly calm. To her surprise, the only thing that worried her was whether they had caught the whole thing on camera.

Late that evening, with the shooting of the day finished, everybody tried to relax. They had finished most of the scenes in the throne room, with only the big fight waiting for them near the end of the schedule. It was a warm, surprisingly lush night, and Sonia was happy to be out of the costume and back in her comfortable everyday clothes. The crew was finishing for the day, which would probably take another hour or so, so she walked over to the young man, who was on his phone.

As she approached, he blushed:

“Ma’am, I didn’t want to hurt you. Please accept my apology! It was ... I don’t know what happened.”

“It’s nothing. A flight of passion ... This is what it is all about. Did you hurt yourself when you landed?”

“No, I caught myself. I practiced judo since I was a little kid, and you basically get tossed around all the time.”

“Good! Still, I think you owe me ...”

“Uh ... What do you have in mind?”

“How about we join the caterers for an hour or so and you assist me in making ravioli for the crew? I think they deserve it after all the excitement!”

He laughed:

“Ma’am, that sounds like a wonderful idea.”

She flashed him a smile, took his hand and led him to the catering area.

The young person on the screen was very excited.

“Okay, everybody, here it is: The reaction video so many of you have requested! Seriously, my social media have been flooded, flooded I say, by you! telling me to look at this, and you know me ... I have great self-control. I literally managed to not look at it immediately, so, everybody, you are now going to witness me, StarA, react to the trailer of ‘Lord of Radiance - Chronicles of the Empyrean War’ by Gus Barese. So, let’s look at it ...”

“Hoolyy ... I need to stop right now. Did you see her? This is Sonia Laurent. The Sonia Laurent. She looks ... incredible. Is that makeup? It’s gotta be. I mean, Barese said he wouldn’t do any digital effects ... Everybody, this is Oscar material ... I mean, if they really managed to make her look like that ... Wow. This is ... okay, get this. Sonia Laurent is over eighty. And this ... Whoa. Whoa. And that outfit. Gotta admit, I don’t know if any current actress or actor would be in that shape, other than right during filming some over the top superhero movie! I need to see more ...”

“Stop. Stop. Stop ... Wow. I have to take a breath here. This is ... incredible. Even the trailer says masterpiece. The duel scene ... You see, this is an allusion to the 1919 lost film ‘Mistrz Słońca’ by Łukasz Góragranicz. The main characters fight using the blades of the sun, and they did that early special effect

by literally painting over the film. It's a similar technique used in 'Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari' a year later."

"Seriously, how is she even moving in that outfit ... And those muscles ... You know I love classic action movies of the 1980ies, but ... wow ... Sonia Laurent is giving Linda Hamilton a run for her money here! For the friends of corny movies: Rachel McLish was smaller than that in Aces: Iron Eagle III. And the thing is, not to dump on world class athletes, but it's obvious that not only does Sonia Laurent look incredible, she also can act!"

"Everybody, this is the smirk that launches a thousand memes!"

"Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome ... Sonia Laurent!"

The band played the theme of The Ride of the Dead King and the actress walked in from backstage. She was wearing an emerald green strapless gown that clung to her muscular physique. Her tanned, ripped shoulders were on full display and she had all the elegance of a prima ballerina at the peak of her career. The host got up and came to greet her, somewhat dwarfed by her due to the vertiginous heels she was wearing. First, he offered her his hand, but then she pulled him in and embraced him, kissing him on both cheeks.

He turned to the audience with a blushing, delighted smile, gestured at her, she set a hand against her broad, inviting chest, gave him a delighted smile. The spectators cheered, she threw kisses at them, then he led her to his table.

They both sat down as the applause died down and he rubbed the bridge of his nose.

“Sonia, it’s amazing to have you here!”

“I am delighted to be invited, Frederico.” Somehow, her accent was shining through a little more, and her deep, breathy voice only made her more alluring.

“Just say Freddy. Everybody does.”

“I will do my best, but you know I am an old woman.” She gave him a mock nana-like look.

He played along:

“Yes, obviously, this is the first thing I thought of when I saw you: ‘she looks like a fragile little old lady.’ Must be someone’s grandmother ...”

They laughed. The audience joined in.

“I just try to keep fit. Regular exercise does wonders!”

“Sonia, I exercise regularly.” The audience chuckled. “Once a month is regular!” He made a gesture of submission. “But ... this ... just how strong are you?”

“Ah, just a little, you know. I no longer have to ask my grandson to open the jars in the kitchen when I make lasagna ...”

“I hope he doesn’t feel useless now.”

“No, he is still there to help eat the lasagna!”

They laughed.

“Seriously, though, I ... I have to ask. Do you want to arm-wrestle?”

The audience cheered.

“What is that?”

“Uh ... You put your arms like this, and then you push ...”

“Ah! Il braccio di ferro! The arm of iron!”

“Is this what it is called? Amazing. I like that. How do you say it? Bracha di ferow?”

“Braccio di ferro!”

“I could listen to you roll your Rs all day, you know?”

She smiled, charmed by the compliment. He asked:

“So, braccio di ferro?”

“If you insist ... But don’t blame me, Freddy, if you win.”

“I doubt I will.”

They clasped and pushed. It went back and forth a bit, but soon, Sonia realized she was indeed stronger than the young man. She liked that. When she did slam the back of his hand against the table, the audience clapped. Sonia was amazed and decided she’d have to talk to the doctor again ...

“Bisnonna, why are you all painted? Are you going to an art exhibit?”

Claudia frowned at her great-grandmother with the practiced look of a child used to the grown-ups’ weirdness. Her granddaughter had really needed someone to take care of the girl for a week and since Sonia’s daughter Roberta felt a little tired after her hip replacement, the task of watching over Claudia had fallen to her.

The girl had certainly livened up the house since, even if it meant putting a dent in Sonia's preparations. After much hesitation, she had finally caved in to her own pride and decided to compete in a bodybuilding show.

The little girl had been a little confused by the whole concept, but after explaining that it was a kind of pageant, she understood. Of course, then she asked: "Are they all as old as you there? And why do you need to get painted?"

The trainer she had hired to prepare for the show chuckled:

"That's so the judges can see her muscles better."

"But her muscles are so big already. How can they even not see them?"

Sonia couldn't help agreeing. The last half year had been incredible. The doctor had increased the dosage of her drug and the effect had surprised them all. Somehow, it really stimulated the growth of her muscles, and she had quickly loaded up on mass, going from a level appropriate for fitness to one of lightweight bodybuilding, bordering on midweight. Also, it had rejuvenated her a little more, looking more like a woman in her forties. It was hard to tell. Her face radiated experience and confidence, while her skin suggested she wasn't a day over thirty. She loved it!

The trainer continued applying the fake tan and the makeup. Sonia explained:

“It’s like in film, you know? The lights are very strong so you can see everything well, but if you use so much light, everybody looks really pale. This is why actors have to wear makeup on stage and in the movies.”

“Is this why the women always wake up with lipstick in the morning?”

“In the movies, yes. Or if you had a marvelous evening and forgot to take off the makeup.”

“Because I used my makeup once, and when I woke up, there were smudges all over my pillow and Mamma was really furious! She said that Nonna Roberta shouldn’t always give me stupid presents! And then Nonna Roberta was angry when I told her. And then Mamma was angry with me because I told her.”

“But you apologized, didn’t you?”

“I tried to clean it first.”

“Did it make everything worse?”

Claudia couldn’t help grinning.

“Yes!”

“There. I think you learned something.”

“I did?”

“You did.”

The trainer smirked and said:

“Alright, this should do it. Now we try the suit, okay?”

“Please.”

Claudia watched as the coach helped her great-grandmother put on the emerald green posing suit.

“It’s so sparkly! I love it. Mamma says I can’t have a swimsuit like that.”

“She is right.”

“Bah! I want a sparkly suit too!”

“You just have to ask your Nonna ...”

The trainer had to repress a laugh.

Finally dressed, Sonia set herself in position. Her body was impressive, alright. The treatment had tightened her skin over those muscles and they looked all tense and energetic now. Her pecs supported her revitalized breasts, her abs were cobblestones carved from her tanned skin, and her biceps bulged hard from her strong arms. She went through the poses, flexing them in turn and showing off their mass and symmetry. Claudia followed her movements, obviously impressed. The trainer called out the various poses and said:

“Very well. I think you might be able to win this!”

“Over the last decades, the sport of bodybuilding has existed mostly out of media attention. After a burst of popularity due to the success of Arnold Schwarzenegger as a mainstream actor, it had returned to a niche occupation. Now, to the world’s surprise, the comeback of Sonia Laurent and her subsequent athletic career have reinvigorated the sport and it has become surprisingly popular among older women!”

The presenter smiled at the camera as it panned out.

“Today on Verba Manent, we talk about the challenge to female esthetics presented by Sonia Laurent in her new role as a bodybuilder. For this, we have invited philosopher Emmanuele Specchia, political scientist Diana Lancia, theologian Pio Bordoni and of course, Sonia Laurent herself.”

The camera showed each participant in turn. The bearded philosopher with his subtle smile and tweed jacket, the short-haired, slim scientist with her wary eyes and black turtleneck, the priest, his bushy dark eyebrows contrasting his bald head and his slight nervousness shimmering in his eyes. For the occasion, he was dressed in the simple suit of a priest, collar visible.

The camera lingered on Sonia, however. She was wearing an incredible robe, cut from navy blue silk, shining and marvelous. The dress showed off her rounded, strong shoulders, the auburn hair cascading down her back. Her chest was broad now, supporting an ample bosom and tapering down to a slim, strong waist. Her legs were columnlike and powerful and she was wearing simple sandals, that only underlined the absolute ease with which she lived her sexiness.

She smiled at the camera, her eyes smoldering.

The camera returned to the presenter, a tanned gentleman of indeterminate age and impeccable sense of dress.

“Let us begin right away with Signora Laurent. In a way, Signora, you are a reverse Schwarzenegger, aren’t you?”

She smiled and replied:

“But weren’t we both at our strongest in the eighties?”

The philosopher produced a chuckle, while the scientist still seemed vaguely intimidated. The priest seemed a tad confused.

“I meant because you were a successful actress first, and then a bodybuilder.”

“Yes, I think you might be on to something. Although we both started our careers by being famous for our chests!”

Another chuckle, a frown from Diana Lancia and a blush from Monsignor Bordoni.

The host nodded:

“You are right, of course. So, tell us. What is it like to win the Ms. Olympia?”

“It’s a bit like winning an Oscar, but you have to worry less about your dress.”

The host, normally known for his stoic nature, bit his lip for a moment.

“It is impressive. Let us just take a look at your presentation.”

On the screen, Sonia walked on stage her heavyweight body a perfect sculpture of muscle. Her symmetry was obvious even to the casual observer and her

physique was amazingly defined. She was wearing a dark green posing suit which revealed everything. With a smile at the judges which almost suggested a faint timidity, she started her presentation. There was a perfect fluidity in her movement, something which was even more unbelievable given her age. Every flex was precise and intense, making her strong muscles bulge and harden at will.

Her show was more of a dance, full of little, elegant movements that really teased the audience. She let her glutes jiggle for a fraction of a moment before hardening them with a quick flex, then demonstrated the control over her back muscles with a wavy motion that reminded the spectators of an Indian dance ...

As the clip ended, the camera showed the reactions. The philosopher was clearly impressed, while the political scientist was obviously still making up her mind. The theologian, though, was absolutely outraged. Sonia smiled enigmatically, just enjoying the moment.

The host asked:

“Monsignore, I believe you want to say something right away?”

The cleric took a deep breath and launched into a tirade:

“What is this? Why is this even shown on the television? This is not just sinful. This is an affront against God himself! Look at it: This woman has always been a public danger. We thought she mellowed with age and understood her role, but this? This is ...”

Diana Lancia leaned over to him and raised an eyebrow:

“You had your difficulties averting your eyes, Monsignor ...”

“I was only looking to be indignant over this.”

There was the slightest smile on the old woman’s face:

“Then you did very well. I am proud that you are still able to fulfil this important role in our society.”

The priest glared at her, while the philosopher leaned back and tried to find some common ground.

“Monsignor, how about you consider Signora Laurent’s performance as art? How different is her work from the sculptures of Donatello or, for that matter, of the paintings of Michelangelo? You do have a fair share of very ... muscular women in the Sistine Chapel. And few of them are as amazingly, well, detailed, as Signora Laurent?”

The theologian’s eyes narrowed, while the political scientist bit down on her finger.

Sonia smiled. She adored this whole situation ...

Epilogue

The sun was out and the lake was glittering in the distance. It was a marvelous early morning and the air was still cool, which suited Sonia fine. Today was arms day and she was going to make the most of it. A few years ago, she had a special custom rubber surface installed on this part of her garden which could deal with the enormous weights she had been using lately.

The dumbbells she had prepared today were special one-of-a-kind pieces, constructed from a special alloy that would challenge her with its weight while not getting overly massive. Having built her muscles for over twenty years now, her mass had grown so much that it was quite useful to not bog down her range of motion with big lumps of iron. Also, she enjoyed the elegance as well as the practicality.

As she started pumping out slow, painfully controlled repetitions, she couldn't help realizing just how lucky she had been. Some scientists had finally discovered that the drug she had used back then interacted with some genetic sequence activated by an epigenetic trigger or some other biological vocabulary, and this had triggered her transformation and progress.

They were working on making this replicable, but for now, it was still a miracle by itself.

Sonia no had stopped competing in bodybuilding shows a decade ago. When invited, she would occasionally appear for a guest posing, displaying the famous "Laurent Body", which had been immortalized in the trophy of the Classico d'Italia, usually referred to as the Sonia Laurent Classic.

By now, she had outgrown that little statue, but she still found it all very flattering.

Competing didn't make much sense, and she considered it somewhat demeaning for the other participants. Even the guest presentations had the tendency to ruin everybody's palate.

Not many celebrities had actually spawned a church of sorts that actually venerated her as a goddess, even if she found the idea both blasphemous and somewhat concerning. Tragically, Sonia had to agree with her venerators: She was, in her way, superhuman.

She finished her set and lowered the absurdly heavy dumbbell on the rubber, then stretched and flexed her arms. The mass of ripped muscle that brusquely erupted from it was incredible. She wondered if she would ever have enough ...

She bounced her pecs just for fun and then ran her fingers down her cobblestone abs. Being massive and feeling young and strong was just incredible! At almost a hundred years old, she had to admit to a certain pride in her physique.

Just as she was starting to feel the tingle of lust, she heard her phone beep its alarm.

She had to get ready! Claudia was going to be here in an hour, and she still had to put everything away, shower, and get dressed. Over the last year, her great-granddaughter had started training with her once a week to compensate for all

the sitting at the university. The girl wasn't making much progress, obviously, but they were having fun and it was a thing they could enjoy together.

As Sonia quickly put away the weights and wiped down her equipment, she wondered whether Claudia also had this special gene set. Maybe she would be able to really train with her one day ...

She would see. After all, she had all the time in the world!

###

Roy Ellison writes weirdo erotic fiction. Despite evidence to the contrary, he insists it is about the characters and the plot.

He thanks you deeply for your trust and support.

Commissions are available at El_Roy_1999@gmx.de. Rates upon request.