

THE STORY OF A WINNER | Extract

ARCA.- *With a kettle and many cups. Is science just another branch of fantasy or does it have a different reality? What makes a bull more horny, a fat cow or a skinny cow? Why is it that shit smells so bad outside of a human but not inside? I, for example, drink a cup of tea filled up to the brim so as to not go any further. He serves himself. He drinks. I drink a second cup of tea filled up to the brim. He serves himself. He drinks. I drink a third cup up of tea filled up to the brim. I drink a forth cup of tea filled up to the brim. He serves himself. He drinks. I drink a fifth cup of tea filled up to the brim. He serves himself. He drinks. I ask myself: does everything that go in, come out? Any scientific question must be verifiable. Let us verify it! Let's see if I can release the five cups. Perhaps they will be four or perhaps they will be six. We will now find out. He puts the cups in a line. He undoes his zipper. He is going to whip out his penis to pee. Of course, it's not so easy. Is the outcome of the experiment independent of the subject who is carrying it out? Contemporary science, particularly that of the beginning of indeterminism and quantitative physics, has already proven that the observer conditions the observation of any object. The observer! In this case, me. And who exactly am I? When we speak of me, what do we speak of? The body? Of that which they come to call the soul? And what exactly is the soul? Is it the same thing whether I am ugly or handsome, smart or dumb, a failure or a winner...? So many questions! Fortunately, the scientific method will show us how to objectively analyze each question. That way, while my bladder is getting filled, I can specify which scientific subject we are speaking of... It all began in my mother's belly. We were quintuplets. And to tell you the truth, it bothered me. They were infinitively annoying. They would take all my food and leave me no room... Therefore, I decided to abolish them. And that way I learned very early on what it meant to fight for your life. My mother would scream: "one less; whoever is left, will be a somebody." But mom, poor woman, she couldn't handle my aggressive behavior, and after many hours of labor, the doctors had to decide between the life of the mother or the life of the child, and they didn't even hesitate for an instant: they immediately killed the mother. It was in that moment when my father took me in his arms for the first time...*

ARCADIO.- *With a baby in his arms. Son, your mother has died. Your four brothers have died. It's only you and me left in this world, the last of the Arcadios. We will be hand and glove. You're all that I have. Son, the world is an unsafe place. Everywhere, danger waits. One day you'll realize that it isn't so easy to predict the course of the*

stock exchange. That's why I've come up with a savings transaction based on secure values over a long period of time, with a return of 4,25%, that through tax payments, commissions and reductions, would stay put at about 3. Perhaps it may seem a bit low but it's of absolute security so that by the time you come of age, you can have a small capital...

ARCA.- At that very moment I understood that my father was a jackass. A 3 when there are people out there getting up to 25% in returns. Who the fuck does he think he's talking to? He must think we're all as dumb as he is... Anyway, I never went on to say another word to him...

ARCADIO.- Don't suffer, son, resignation. God has wanted you to be mute. There must be a reason. You just have to always look for the positive aspect of things. Make the most of the advantages that come from being disabled: you don't need to study. What for? The most important thing in life is happiness. And fortunately, in order to be happy, it's not necessary to be neither intelligent nor handsome. In fact, you don't even have to be normal. Anyone can be happy, even a cretin like you. Isn't it marvelous how happiness can be so democratic? Live up your peculiarity. Unravel it. Enjoy it. You know, even the most famous people do charity galas for the disabled. So check out how lucky you are. Son, I'm very proud of you. And your mother would have been too. Tell him yourself Dolores. Aren't you proud of how our little mute is growing? Why did you leave me alone? I miss you. I thought I had told you: don't insist; that if you do, God will punish you, that if we can't have children, it's okay. But no, you kept on going. You're so stubborn. You'll never learn. You couldn't quit with the hormones and the ovules and the fertilizers and the clones and the frozen *thingies* and I don't know what else... until you got you what you wanted. You left me alone. Son, people say that father love their disabled children even more. It's true. I am proof of that. I love you very much. I've been told of this new incredible specialist on vocal chords...

ARCA.- With such a moron for a father, my childhood wasn't exactly ideal. My father hated me, as is expected of most parents. It was clear to me from the beginning that I would have to get by on my own. My objective was...to triumph. One needs no reminder that the forge of a winner is no easy thing. Every winner has thousands, millions of failures. And one definitely appreciates that great majority of people who

remove themselves from the game... Anyway, what a shame that childhood went by so fast, I grew up and all those things, I encountered love...

ARCADIO.- *Come here son, now that you are a man, I am going to introduce you to the daughter of some friends of mine. A wonderful, beautiful young lady. You'll see, you're going to love her. And the best part is, she's heard of you and she's looking forward to meeting you. No, don't get nervous. Everything's fine. Damn it with the shyness! I'm not chastising you, son. I know that it's difficult to withstand your burden. But don't worry this time. She knows all about your being mute. That way you don't have to try and hide anything, and you don't have to get nervous, nor deal with the disappointment of having your dream girl find out that you're disabled. She already knows and she doesn't mind at all. It's the opposite, in fact--she actually prefers it. Because look, I've decided that it's best for you to meet someone that's exactly like you, and that way you'll never have to wonder whether a girl is just with you out of pity. And boy have we had luck! I've found her! Her name is Socorrito. She is the daughter of one of my friends and she's a little bit deaf. But it's nothing, you can barely even notice, only enough so that you guys can be the same, she'll never feel as if she's superior, and you'll never feel as if you're handicapped. My intuition tells me that you guys will make a charming couple. Her parents and I are both delighted. And you won't believe how nice she is. With a beautiful set of eyes. One can even say that she's a beauty. And look, she's right there outside waiting to meet you. I'm going to tell her to come in. Be prepared. But no, don't get nervous. I am going to give you some advice that you can take with you for the rest of your life: always be yourself no matter what. She knows that she's taking you by surprise. You don't need to brush your teeth. Here, take my spray for bad breath and that's that. The best thing is to just be natural. Here we go. Socorrito! Socorrito! Come in... Oh, how silly of me. She can't hear. Don't you worry, we'll get used to it. I'm going to go get her. Just smile. I've never told you this, but you have a beautiful smile, son, just like your mother's. It's as if I'm seeing her now. Oh, Dolores, if you could be here now, you'd be the happiest of all mothers. ARCADIO goes outside. Come in. Behind him, SOCORRO enters. Son, this is Socorrito. He speaks to SOCORRO as he would a deaf person. Socorrito, I want to introduce you to my son. Give each other the hand. ARCA and SOCORRO give each other the hand. Yup, I can see it. You're made for each other. You're going to get along beautifully. If you can't speak to each other and you can't hear each other, you can always look each other in the eyes. And take each other by the hand. Come on, son, don't be such a*

bore, do something, say something. Ugh, excuse me. Am I just never going to learn? I'm such a klutz. It's just the excitement. Sorry...

ARCA.- TO SOCORRO. *It's a pleasure to meet you.*

ARCADIO.- *What? But son...? What is this? Do you not realize...? That you just spoke. You're speaking, son! A miracle. Or is it all in my head? Am I hallucinating?*

ARCA.- TO SOCORRO. *It's a pleasure to meet you.*

ARCADIO.- *I'm not hallucinating. This is really happening. You're speaking! A miracle. Son, get on your knees. Let us give thanks to God. My son talks. Or is it you, Socorrito? Do you have special powers?...*

ARCA.- *Don't start getting annoying, Father. TO SOCORRO. It's a pleasure to meet you.*

ARCADIO.- *You have to speak to her a little bit louder.*

ARCA.- *Screaming. It's a pleasure to meet you!*

ARCADIO.- *Look, son, the truth is that she's completely deaf. I'm sorry I didn't tell you before. It was a pious lie. She was born deaf, but one thing is for sure, she reads lips very well. And you'll see how sexy it is to have your lips read. Son, I had other special offers: for example, a blind girl. But I think that a deaf one is better. It's like, less bad. Tell me I've done a good job, son. It's not so easy for a father who's on his own to get it right every time. Tell me you like her. And you can't pretend with me. I know that you like her. You guys give each other butterflies. I'm an old hound. I also had my share of lovers... but that was before meeting your mother, of course. We can begin to think about a wedding, although you have to get to know each other a bit better first, find out your likes, save up for a nice little place... You guys stay right here, I'm going to go share the news with my in laws. But son, now that you talk, what do I tell them? That all of a sudden my son can speak. They're not going to believe it. They're going to think I'm a liar or an idiot. Son, what do you think...? Ruin the whole thing? Why did you have to talk on precisely this day? Haven't I always given you the best of what I have? What have I done wrong? I've been preparing for years for this set-up and all for your happiness. Ever since Socorrito was born. And now you let it all go to shit, you can talk...*

ARCA.- *Father, I promise I won't ever speak again.*

ARCADIO.- *No son, talk. Talk all you want. Talk. It's marvelous. I'll get used to it. And you can get married anyway. What difference does it make? No difference at all. You*

can whisper words of love into her ear. I'm thrilled that you can talk. And your mother is too...

EXTRACT 2:

ARCA.- When women want something, they get it. In deciding between having a child or losing half of my fortune, the former choice was much more economic. And so nine months later, there were two. Well actually, since my father had his way with the little deaf girl, I officially had both a son and a brother. And all of a sudden everyone was happy. My father doted on his son and grandson. The ladies, who had always hated each other, became as close as ever thanks to this new happiness. They would go out together with the children...

JENNY.- *Your Arcadita has the most beautiful freckle.*

SOCORRO.- *Ah, well look at the curls on your Kevinito. They're a dream.*

JENNY.- *And Arcadita's little cheeks?*

SOCORRO.- *Yes, but she's a little dark. I would have preferred her to be a little more blonde like Kevinito.*

JENNY.- *Well then let's make an exchange.*

SOCORRO.- *Oh, yes, how fun. A month with each one. Come with you mommy, Kevinito.*

JENNY.- *Shush, don't get in the habit of calling him that way, his father is going to hear and he'll get enraged. He says he's going to grow up to be a drunkard. You can't imagine the effort it took for me to give him the name Kevin. I love it.*

SOCORRO.- *It's such a precious name! Not like Arcadia. My pigheaded husband insisted that in his family everyone has always been named Arcadio and that otherwise they would be wiped out.*

JENNY.- *Arcadia sounds very bucolic.*

SOCORRO.- *You think? I think it sounds horrible... Arcadita. It gives me a weird feeling in my stomach. I just thought of something. Why don't we all go off somewhere and live together?*

ARCA.- Said and done. How could it not be that way? Frankly, they had me up to my limits. The happier they were together, the more bored I was. Going home became a nightmare. I set out to find any kind of excuse so as to not set foot there. And the worst part, the weekends and the vacations. It was frightening. I have never been so bored. I began working like a hound. I decided to conquer the foreign market. I began doing foreign business. That way I needed to travel for whole weeks, even months. And obviously, I created a thriving multinational business in no time. I was in all of the biggest finance magazines. I had always felt very proud whenever one of our national millionaires showed up in those magazines. I felt very patriotic. I confess. I am a nationalist. I remember the day that I cried that year, when one of our compatriots was removed from the list of the 20 richest in the world. And our government did nothing for our multimillionaire! I felt it was a betrayal. I never voted for them again. That day I swore I would vindicate him and make sure that our homeland would feel proud once again. And now look how well represented it was with me. But nobody congratulated me. As always, that damn problem of jealousy. No one is a prophet in his or her country. Precisely, in one of those short family vacation stays of mine at my beach house, what needed to happen happened. Of course, my father and his family had settled themselves in my beach house permanently. My father has always been a scrounger. They were all as fascinating as always...

ARCADIO.- Isn't that so, yes, yes, yes. Isn't that not so, no, no, no. Ba, ba, ba. Me, me, me...

JENNY.- Look at that Arcadita! I would eat her with potatoes on the side.

SOCORRO.- And what do you have to say about Kevinito. I would eat him raw. Come hear, you. You're so lucky that he came out to be a boy. I've always wanted a baby boy.

JENNY.- I, on the other hand, have always wanted a baby girl.

SOCORRO.- Well then, that's it, you already know, next year, a baby girl.

JENNY.- I want to have lots of children. Like baby-maker. But my Arca doesn't want to.

SOCORRO.- I think three is perfect.

JENNY.- TO ARCA. Honey, tell me we're going to have a big family. Come on, kitten, tell me we will.

ARCA.- Today I cooked for all of you.

JENNY.- Now that's a surprise.

ARCA.- I'm so happy here, with all of you, with my family..., with my lovely wife...

ARCADIO.- You know, son, I've really come to appreciate Jenny. She has great qualities.

ARCA.- Are you referring to her tits?

JENNY.- Arca, please!

ARCADIO.- Don't be crude, son. There's no humor in it.

SOCORRO.- TO ARCA. Go on, I think you were going to say something.

ARCA.- Yes, thank you, that I'm so happy with my beloved wife, with my new mother, with my much admired father, with those two healthy children, so chubby, so blonde...

JENNY.- Arcadita has brown hair, love.

ARCA.- It doesn't matter whether they have blonde hair or brown hair. The important thing is that we're all together, that we love each other, we're going to have many more children along the way...

ARCADIO.- Don't go on, son. You know I'm sentimental. You're going to make me cry...

JENNY.- Really honey, lots of children?

ARCA.- How could I not cook for all of you, to whom do I owe this happiness?

SOCORRO.- Congratulations. Everything is delicious.

JENNY.- My love, you've moved me. I didn't know you were such a good cook.

ARCA.- We still have so many secrets to discover about each other. The secret of a good cook lies in the quality of the ingredients.

SOCORRO.- And in the imagination of he who cooks. You're not lacking any.

JENNY.- TO ARCA. From now on you're always cooking. I'm terrible.

ARCADIO.- And what exactly is this delicious dish?

ARCA.- A chef that's worth his salt, never reveals his secrets.

JENNY.- I know what it is. It's obvious. It's s suckling pig.

ARCADIO.- The best suckling pig in the world is the one that my father would make, Arcadio's grandfather, and it's nothing like it. I bet you it's a very tender suckling lamb.

ARCA.- You're both cold.

SOCORRO.- *This kind of tenderness tastes more like chicken or some kind of exotic bird that you've brought from one of your trips.*

ARCA.- *Cold, cold.*

JENNY.- *Honey, let it out already. It isn't rabbit or any one of those creatures with four legs, right? You know I hate those. Look, I actually prefer not to know what it is that we're eating.*

ARCA.- *Then I won't tell you.*

ARCADIO.- *I want to know.*

ARCA.- *It's a suckling, but not a lamb. It's a human, a baby.*

JENNY.- *Ugh, there you go again with your little jokes.*

ARCA.- *It's not a joke.*

JENNY.- *Enough! No one speaks any further!*

ARCA.- *I served it the way you all like it: rare and with potatoes.*

SOCORRO.- *TO ARCA. We're at the table, please.*

ARCA.- *It's important to try new things.*

JENNY.- *I'll get up, and I'll leave! Stop it already!*

ARCA.- *No one speaks any further.*

ARCADIO.- *By the way, it's very quiet. Where are the children? He exits.*

ARCA.- *In your stomachs.*

JENNY.- *Very well then, I'm leaving. You got what you wanted. We were all so happy but you just had to ruin it...*

SOCORRO.- *TO ARCA. Arca, enough, leave it alone. It's not funny. TO JENNY. Come on, don't leave. He's done.*

ARCADIO.- *He enters. I can't find the kids.*

SOCORRO.- *I'll go. Men are useless.*

ARCADIO.- *TO SOCORRO. I wasn't mistaken. I'm very happy with you.*

JENNY.- *I don't understand how you guys can be buttering each other up without knowing where the children are and with all the horrible things that happen in the world today. Did you see about the kidnapping of those two girls...?*

SOCORRO.- *Relax. They're probably off playing somewhere in the house.*

ARCADIO.- *I'll keep looking for them. He exits.*

SOCORRO.- *Let's recap. Who saw them last?*

ARCA.- *I did.*

SOCORRO.- *Where were they?*

ARCA.- *In the saucepan.*

JENNY.- *Again! You're unbearable sometimes. You just don't have any limits.*

ARCA.- *I've always wanted to know the experience of eating human flesh and since adults probably have tough meat, well, I thought that the best choice would be some tasty little juicy babies. And I see that we've all enjoyed it very much. Anybody wants seconds?*

SOCORRO.- *There's no humor in it, seriously.*

ARCA.- *Yes, precisely so, it doesn't have an ounce of humor in it. In any case, it has fat.*

JENNY.- *You've made it very difficult for us to have a conversation with you. She exits.*

ARCA.- *TO JENNY. You're already talking like my father. Is that how much you love each other?*

SOCORRO.- *Why do you always insist on being such a wet blanket?*

ARCA.- *So that I can be alone with you.*

SOCORRO.- *You've become such a fool. I pity you. She exits.*

ARCA.- *We're more alike that way.*

Pause. Voices. Terrible Screams.

JENNY'S VOICE.- *Here, in the garbage bin.*

Terrible screams.

JENNY.- *She enters with the two severed heads of the babies. What have you done?*

ARCA.- *I felt that they had too much bone for the ragú, but if you want, we can use them to make a stew. I'm sure they'll give it a ton of flavor.*

JENNY.- *Throwing herself hysterically upon ARCA. You've killed your own son! You're crazy.*

ARCA.- *Moving out of the way. To tell you the truth, I feel perfectly fine.*

JENNY.- *You're a monster. I've been married to a monster. Showing him the severed head. He's your son!*

ARCA.- *Honey, we're finally going to go down in History.*