



Like father...

Duncan awoke still confused and with a headache, he looked around and recalled they had both fallen exhausted on the living room after spending most of the night thinking about how to continue with their lives. He rubbed his eyes and felt the soft touch of his skin contemplating carefully its details. He was a skinny white boy, he should have at least 16 or maybe 17 years old. He took his phone to use the front camera as a mirror, a sleepy and reluctant face looked back at him from a couple of hazel eyes. His pale face was adorned with a cluster of freckles, he combed his red hair as best as he could and taking a deep breath decided to follow the role as they had agreed, then he walked out of the room looking for Bruce.

— Morning! I'm in the kitchen — he was called by a voice and walked towards the room in where a robust man in his 50s was already making breakfast.

—Good day... uuhhmm... dad – he articulated with some difficulty as last night's events began to return vividly to his memory.

The boy took his breakfast quickly and unwillingly while Bruce had a cup of coffee, it looked like he was avoiding his gaze, the dad took a sip and started to look for something in the cupboard as if wanting to avoid the son completely. —Hurry, it's getting late, by the way, last night I could arrange your "transfer" to the school I work... worked in, I told them you were my nephew... although maybe I can no longer return there... Well, there should be no problem, the car keys are there near the door, if something serious happens to you please call me — said the father while organizing the cans by size, —and have a good day —.

Duncan took one last sip of his juice and left the kitchen with a weak "thank you", found the keys in its place and crossed the door out then he looked at the clock: it was getting late, he ran to the car and accelerated his pace. Bruce watched him walk out from the window, drank from his mug as he thought about the events of the previous night and the hasty solution they came to hoping to get some time with it, although they were not sure what they needed it for. They even didn't know how or what happened and even less how to reverse it, and suddenly the idea of having a... son? Wasn't really appealing, but of course, nor in his wildest dreams had he imagined it could be this way.

For almost ten years now Bruce and Duncan had been meeting at least one night a week in a bar, they had been friends for so long that you would think there was a little more than friendship between them but the truth is they didn't have any romantic interest in the other one. Bruce was an attractive 32-year-old man, blond and a little short, a High School geometry teacher at a school in the region. Duncan, 30 years old, slightly taller and with brown hair, he had been working in a pharmaceutical company but now unemployed from a couple of weeks, however as these meetings were already a tradition Bruce offered to pay for their consumption as they didn't want to cancel them.

They spent the night talking, laughing, drinking... All in a carefree mood, it was a rare event that a really serious conversation happened in one of those nights but there we had Bruce, talking with a notorious melancholic tone in his voice, at some point of the evening he confessed something to his friend: —You know? I don't know if at 32 I have already fulfilled all my goals but at least I can feel calm and somehow stable, but there is this thing I've been feeling for a couple of years, like a void, I had already been thinking about it for a long time, I mean, I've given it a lot of thought, and of course I'm a little scared because I'm afraid to find out I wouldn't be good at it, but it's kinda complicated to admit it —... He noticed the desperation on his friend's face so he rushed to conclude —... I would like to be a father—.

Duncan who noticed how real was the statement of his friend but not being able of taking his characteristic humor aside just managed to answer —Is this a marriage declaration? — And then he continued, ignoring the severe gesture of Bruce, —Well I have to admit it would be a difficult task, no doubts, but you should know I would support you when you need it and I don't think you would be a bad father, actually I would be happy to have a father like you —.

Feeling ashamed for possibly saying something embarrassing, they both continued to their drinking and minutes later with their usual silly conversations. After a few hours they both left the bar taking direction to Bruce's house, he had agreed to help his friend to prepare for a job interview he would have in a couple of days. On their way a bright light in the sky, probably a plane, caught his attention. —Look, a shooting star! — Duncan exclaimed and jokingly said, —I wish you had a son—, both laughed as the light faded out.

At home, Bruce opened a bag of chips and turned the TV on, after twenty minutes of a show that Duncan found very boring he got up and confessed: —I'm ashamed but what I need from you is to teach me how to put a tie — His friend reacted with a loud laugh after which he agreed to the request, he got upstairs and after a moment he came down with the garment: a gray, flat tie, —I rarely use this one, I'm lending it to you but you have to return it to me later —, He round Duncan's neck and slowly started to give him the instructions and repeat them slowly step by step for about ten minutes until his friend could do it completely alone. —Well, look, your first lesson as a parent was a success — they both laughed again and it was at that moment when the lights flashed, a restlessness invaded both as an omen of something strange about to happen.

Of the two friends, Duncan was the thickest, his taste for processed food was reflected in a round belly and a thick body, so it was strange to notice how the tie suddenly began to loosen, He thought he knotted it all wrong but in the moment he took his hand to the neck to fix it he came across his friend's incredulous gaze pointing precisely at the height of the garment. A shiver ran through his body and he felt a tug as if something inside pulled him from the head to toe, surprisingly he found himself now at

the same height of his friend without having to crouch, —Y-y-y-our hair - pointed out Bruce incredulously, —is getting clearer—, and indeed Duncan's hair paled but without losing its color at all, it turned reddish blond, then felt a pain on his face, as Bruce watched how it began to change, his nose thickened, His lips grew a little and his green eyes darkened. Duncan felt a suffocating and desperate anxiety and took off the tie throwing it on the ground.

Surprised Bruce took the garment and watched it in fear, then he looked at his friend on the ground, he was setting out to help him when a chill invaded his back too and a strange tug ran through his thin body. He took a hand to his chest as he was invaded by a pain and noticed how it was slowly inflating, not only that, the arms, legs and even the stomach imitated it. Duncan, still confused, looked up to notice how his friend's blond hair was changing color and turning reddish and how Bruce's face was deforming, his nose shrunk slightly, his lips inflated too and his black eyes became brighter.

After some confusing minutes they both got closer, they were exactly the same height now, then they looked at each other in the eyes, and although they couldn't notice it now they looked identical, like twins. They had changed, they didn't utter a single word about it but after looking at each other for a moment they noticed that their physical features had combined, looking at each other's faces they saw a stranger's face but it was so familiar at the same time, almost like looking in a distorted mirror.

Bruce felt tired all of a sudden, exhausted, then Duncan realized it haven't finished at all when he watched his friend growing several inches. Another tug pulled Bruce stretching him out making him taller than he has been before, his body swelled again, arms and belly grew twice as wide, in his head some red hair strands began to fall and some others lost the color completely remaining gray, his face hurt as if someone were stretching and squeezing him sharply as a couple of wrinkles began to appear in his eyes and cheeks, of course he was unaware of what was going on, he went over to watch his friend closer and put a hand on his face to feel what was going on with Duncan. He felt soft skin, very, very soft, and noticed how any age mark or scar on him vanished almost completely, it looked like it was getting younger, and although the expression that those eyes, now hazelnuts were returning to him was of confusion, he also noticed a strong innocence in the gaze. Moreover, what Duncan could notice in himself was a stomach cramp and a pain in his body contracting as he lost some of his fat and muscle mass.

They were still facing each other, a 50-year-old man and a 16-year-old teenager, they didn't look exactly alike anymore, although they were very similar, a torrent of questions invaded them: What happened? What to do? Who to return to their old selves? They spent 10 minutes in silence not understanding what had happened, then Duncan broke the silence, —Well... you wanted a son... —