



SO I ENDED UP WITHOUT THAT CHILD

CARLA BESSA

TRANSLATED BY FÁBIO MARIANO

(She takes the chicken from the freezer and puts it into the microwave. Then she rinses the flask with the water she's just boiled, puts the filter in the dripper and then the ground coffee inside, five level tablespoons of it)

Then I had them: my children, I had them: my seven children, I mean: six. Because: this one they killed I didn't ever get to raise him, no. I only: took care of him during the first month, then his dad: stole him from me, the dad: kidnapped the boy.

(She lets the boiled water pour slowly onto the coffee until the filter's filled. She stops, lets the water seep through. The microwave beeps. She walks over to it, holding the kettle, and presses the button to open the microwave. She reaches towards the chicken, but then gives up, one of her hands being busy)

He smacked me. I've got this thing here on my face, see, kind of broken: that was him. Well, that's why my face looks like this, like: deformed, right, if you give it a proper look.

(She pours some more water onto the coffee, stops, waits)

He stole my son from me, I: I pressed charges. So then: his mother was who got to keep my boy. He and his mother raised the kid, but: they wouldn't let me visit him. So I went: to court again and: I won the right to visit my child. I: won a right that was mine.

(She puts the kettle over the still burning flame on the stove. Takes a soft roll from the breadbasket, places it on the table, along with Itambé butter and Minas Frescal cheese. The water boils again. She pours yet more water over the coffee)

His grandmother did: bring him. Once in a while. Then the boy did: grow taller and taller. And they sent him to work as a peddler. The boy roamed: dirty: filthy: stinking: helpless. In the end: he dropped out of school, ran away. So I: talked to the teacher and he was able to: stay there, studying a little longer.

Then he ran away. And he was gone for a long time and became an adult and came back with a woman and they got this idea of moving into my neighbourhood.



(She notices the flask's full. She takes the dripper off and places it in the sink. After taking a few steps, she spills coffee on her arm and "oh, shit!" Closes the flask and brings it to the table. She opens it again and pours me some coffee, asks "do you want milk?", I say, "sure". She pours me some milk and she helps herself to the coffee, milk and – goes for sugar, but changes her mind, nods, and chooses the sweetener, Zero Cal.)

But, let me: just get back to that. When the dad got the boy to raise him with the grandmother, they: wouldn't let me pay him a visit, right, they wouldn't let him: even talk to me. And the days when we finally got together and he could talk to me or ask me to bless him, then he would: get his ass kicked. Just for talking to me, grown up ass-kicking, them: they hurt the boy through and through.

(She coats the still warm roll, the butter starting to melt, she licks the side of the roll with the tip of her tongue to keep it from dripping on the tablecloth. She bites the bread she's holding in her right hand, the left one cupped below to catch the occasional crumb or drop. These crumbs she throws into her still open mouth and chews it and swallows it all down. She eats willingly, taking long sips of her coffee, blowing on it in between)

Then he ran away. And came back with this woman and got this idea of moving into my neighbourhood. But from that moment he just: got into trouble because: the woman he went out and got himself with was into that stuff, you know: drugs. He: got dragged into all that mess. What I know is that the woman, I don't know what happened there, but the woman: ganged up with two of her cousins and some other ones of her kind and had: him killed. In the house. They killed him when he was inside. While he slept. They took: a rock, this big, like this, and: crashed it down on him. Then they: shot him anyway, until he was good and dead, them crooks: killed him right there: sleeping inside his house.

(She puts her cup on her saucer and the roll right beside it. She wipes her mouth with the back of her right hand)

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