

One Last Favour: A Short Story [B2]

Una storia di avidità, inganno e conseguenze non volute: se ti appassionano le storie con intrecci morali e dinamiche familiari complesse, questa è una di quelle che non dimenticherai.

It wasn't that Chris wanted his father to die; but everyone died sometime, and his father was old – and he was sick, too. He had terminal cancer. And based on how he looked today, he didn't have long left. Chris and his father had met for lunch at a restaurant in Manhattan. In the past, his father would have had a [steak](#) and a glass of wine, but today he wasn't even eating the salad he'd ordered. "You don't look good, Dad," said Chris, measuredly. "Oh, just the cancer, son... but the doctor says I still have some time left. Time [to make things right](#)." "Make things right? What do you mean?" His father paused for a moment. "Is the company doing well?" he asked, ignoring Chris's question. "Very well!" Chris lied. In reality, the construction company he had started, using millions of dollars of his father's money, was [on the brink of bankruptcy](#). Chris wasn't too concerned about it, though. His father was a brilliant investor and had made tens of millions of dollars. Now he was dying, and Chris was his only child. Chris may not have inherited his father's [acute](#) business sense, but he would inherit all of his money and live the rest of his life in luxury. "I'm proud of you, son," his father said. "And I want to ask you a favour now. One last favour for your old dad." Oh-oh, thought Chris. He didn't want to do anything for his father. His father was meant to help him, not the [other way around](#). But he forced a smile. "Sure, Dad. Anything I can do to help." "There's a site I've been looking at in Saratoga County. Beautiful place. I'd like you to build me a house there." Chris was surprised. Saratoga County was in [Upstate New York](#). His father had lived on New York City's Upper East Side all his life. "You want to leave the city?" "Sure, yes. I'm too old for city life now. I want to go somewhere with more space, more time, more nature. I have \$10 million to invest and I want you to spend every cent of it on the house. [Spare no expense](## "non badare a spese"). Build me the best house that money can buy." "[Sure thing](## "senz'altro"), Dad!" said Chris, [delighted](## "molto contento") at the prospect of all that money. "We'll build the house," Chris told his business

partner, Samantha, later that day. "But we'll use the cheapest materials we can find. My dad won't know the difference." "Oh, that's so bad," said Samantha, laughing. She wasn't just Chris' business partner; she was also his girlfriend. And she had no more business sense than he had. "Are we going to use the money to save the company?" "Nah, who cares about the company? It's not like I'm personally [liable](## "responsabile") for it. We'll keep it going until Dad dies, to keep up appearances. He would be disappointed in me if he knew it was failing. Then, after he dies, we'll [file for bankruptcy](## "bancarotta"))(## "dichiarare bancarotta"). Let's just use the money to have some fun until then." And fun they had. He and Samantha spent the next two years travelling the world on luxury cruises, visiting tropical islands and organising elaborate parties for their friends. Chris paid some [contractors](## "lavoratori") to start work on the house in Saratoga County, but stopped the construction when his father became too sick to even travel to see it. And then the day finally came when his father was dying. Finally. Chris and Samantha were at his bedside to say their goodbyes. It was the least they could do in return for the millions they would soon receive. "I have a confession to make to you, son," Chris's father [whispered](## "sussurrare"). "I haven't just been sick from cancer these last few years, I've been sick from stress too. You see, after a lifetime of solid investments, I made some bad decisions. Very, very bad decisions." "What are you saying, dad?" asked Chris uneasily, [letting go](## "lasciare andare") of his father's hand. "There's no easy way to say this: I lost everything, everything but the \$10 million I gave to you. I asked you to use it all to build a house, because as an investor I know property is the best investment. And a \$10 million property in Saratoga County will increase exponentially in value. It will secure your future. And now that your company is doing so well too... I can die in peace knowing you won't have any financial concerns." And with that, his father took his final breath. Chris was left broke with a failing company and barely a cent to his name. And as a final reward for his deceit and dishonesty, by the end of the night he was left without even his gold-digging girlfriend, Samantha, by his side.

Glossary

- **file for bankruptcy** = dichiarare bancarotta
- **letting go** = lasciare andare
- **steak** = bistecca
- **Spare no expense** = non badare a spese
- **delighted** = molto contento
- **contractors** = lavoratori
- **took his final breath** = esalare l'ultimo respiro
- **reward** = ricompensa
- **deceit** = inganno
- **bankruptcy** = bancarotta
- **acute** = acuto
- **other way around** = al contrario
- **whispered** = sussurrare
- **barely** = a malapena
- **to make things right** = sistemare le cose
- **on the brink of** = sul punto di
- **Sure thing** = senz'altro
- **Upstate New York** = nord dello Stato di New York
- **liable** = responsabile
- **gold-digging** = cercare di sposare qualcuno per soldi